TEACHING, TENDING, TRAINING:

THE PASTORAL THEOLOGY OF

HERCULES COLLINS (1646/1647–1702)

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of

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APPROVAL SHEET

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To Kara:

You are the greatest gift God has given me, apart from Jesus.

I love you more.

I win.

And to Robert Graham and Abby Grace:

I pray you will love Jesus with Herculean might, all your days.

I love you both.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS vii
LIST OF FIGURES ix
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1
Personal Interest 1
The State of the Question 2
Thesis, Methodology, and Philosophy 5
Thesis 5
Methodology 6
Philosophy 8
CHAPTER 2 HERCULES COLLINS IN CONTEXT: SETTING THE STAGE AND MEETING THE MAN 11
Introduction 11
A Quick Handshake with Hercules Collins 13
Hercules, Located Historically: Tracing Early Modernity 14
A World in Transition 14
The English Reformation and Its Consequences 15
The Making of English Nonconformity 17
Collins in Theological Context: Puritanism and the Particular Baptists 22
Baptist Origin Stories 22
Particular Baptists and the Puritans 25
Puritanism's Expressions: A Common Theological Core 29
Confessional Continuity and Coherence 30
The "Mighty Exact" Particular Baptists 33
Ecclesiological Conviction and Hercules Collins 35
Hercules, Located Pastorally 37
The Man Everyone Names and No One Knows 37
Hercules, "Actually and Habitually Ready" 40
"Zealously Bent to Promote" the Interests of Christ 40
A Diligent Servant of the Word 43
Herculean Tenderness and Faithfulness 44
Hercules, Ready to Suffer 46

A Convictional and Convicted Nonconformist 46
Persecution, Prison, and Publishing 48
Afflictive Providences, Submissive Heart 49
Hercules, Ready to Shepherd 51
A Confessional Pastor 51
A Pastor-Theologian 53
A Serving Senior Shepherd 54
The Shepherd Among His Sheep 55
CHAPTER 3 HERCULES, THE PASTOR-THEOLOGIAN: SURVEYING *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM* 58
Introduction 58
Referencing Pastoral Theology Historically 60
Catechisms and Collins 63
Tussles in the Titles: Tracing Context from Collins's Public Literary Engagements 68
***An Orthodox Catechism*: Introduction, Sources, and Survey** 71
Sources and Origins 72
Baptist Borrowers 75
Apologetics and Answers 76
Stated Reasons for Writing *An Orthodox Catechism* 79
Personal and Ministerial Faithfulness 79
Ecclesiological and Apologetical Concern 79
Doctrinal and Affectional Renewal 80
Experiential and Evangelical Stability 80
Convictional and Congregational Order 80
Doxological and Applicational Clarity 81
Spiritual and Practical Edification 82
Essential and Universal Catholicity 83
Pastoral and Local Concern for Families 84
Analysis of An Orthodox Catechism 85
Rearranging, Editing, and Expanding 87
On My Editorial Methodology 87
Putting Hercules Beside Heidelberg 89
On the Scripture Proofs 91
Questions Added to *An Orthodox Catechism* Comprising Further Distinctives 94
Credobaptism 95

The Laying on of Hands 95
Congregational Singing 96
Church Discipline 97
The Ten Commandments 97
The Form of the Lord's Prayer 97
Toward Collins's Pastoral Theology: Analysis of Major Themes in *An Orthodox Catechism* 98
Calvinistic Emphasis 98
Credobaptism 100
The Westminster Standards 100
The Heidelberg Catechism 102
The Moral Law 109
The Preface to the Ten Commandments (OC #104–105) 109
The Fourth Commandment 110
Church Discipline 113
The Form of the Lord's Prayer 116
The Sealing of the Sacraments: Application and Assurance 117
A Modified View of Sacraments as Seals 118
A Strengthened Sacramentology 121
Pastoral Theology in the Contested Ordinances: The Laying on of Hands and Hymn-Singing 124
The Laying on of Hands 124
An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing 129
Conclusion 132
CHAPTER 4 COLLINS THE COUNSELOR: THE PAINFUL CASE OF JOHN CHILD (1638?–1684) 135
Introduction 135
Puritan Casuistry and Collins 139
The Nature of Puritan Casuistry 141
Touching on the Obvious Question 144
The Uniqueness of *The English Spira*: Categories within the Puritan Corpus 145
***The English Spira*: Components and Arrangement** 149
A Provenance Born of Persecution 151
The Initials in *The English Spira*: Persecution and Possible Identification 156
Ministering to a Difficult Man…and Marriage 160

Approaching John Child: By Way of Francis Spira (1502–1548) 168
Collins's Most Challenging Counselee: The Curious and Sobering Case of John Child 174
Collins's Counseling and the Question of Malice 179
John Child's Troubling Book: *A Second Argument* 183
Brief Analysis of *A Second Argument* 188
Comparison and Inversion: Not a Circus Mirror 198
Collins's Critical, Consistent Response 200
Collins's Pastoral Counseling of an "English Spira" 201
Summary of Collins's Counsel and Meetings with John Child 203
Meeting #1: Undated 203
Meeting #2: August 21, 1684 204
Meeting #3: August 30, 1684 205
Meeting #4: September 13, 1684 206
Meeting #5: The "Warm Discourse" of the Previous Week: Undated 206
Meeting #6: The "Collected Passages": Undated 207
Meeting #7: The "Collected Passages" at "Mr. C.'s" House: Undated 207
Considering Collins's Method in the Meetings: Consistent Components 208
Investigating: Gathering Data 209
Interpreting: Grasping Problems 211
Involving: Gaining Traction 212
Inspiring: Giving Hope 213
Instructing: God's Word 214
Implementing: Guiding Next Steps 215
Ten Further Elements of Collins's Pastoral Biblical Counseling Instincts 216
Speaking Experientially 216
Dealing Seriously 217
Reasoning Biblically 218
Framing Theologically 218
Arguing Evangelically 219
Engaging Relationally 220
Documenting Accurately 220
Conversing Constructively 221
Directing Respectfully 221
Returning Persistently 222

Collins's Effectiveness: Child's Retraction ... 223
Conclusion ... 225
CHAPTER 5 "EVERY CHURCH WAS THEN A SEMINARY": HERCULES COLLINS AND *THE TEMPLE REPAIR'D* ... 228
Introduction ... 228
Approaching The Temple Repair'd ... 229
***The Temple Repair'd*: Introduction and Survey** ... 235
Context and Occasion ... 238
The Lord's House in Disarray: The Need of Collins's "Repairs" ... 243
The Dedication: A Letter to the Churches ... 247
An Outline of the Dedicatory Letter ... 247
The Dedicatory Letter: A Threefold Aim for TTR ... 248
The Dedicatory Letter: Considering the Offices ... 250
The Dedicatory Letter: May Only Ordained Officers Preach? ... 255
A Foundation of Five Biblical Arguments ... 260
A Sermon for the Improvement of Ministerial Gifts ... 264
An Outline of Collins's Sermon ... 264
SIMG: Its Importance, Method, and Didactic-Theological Perspective ... 266
"Further Helps": Collins, on Collins ... 273
An Outline of "Further Helps" ... 273
"Further Helps": Collins's Homiletical Instruction ... 274
"Additional Directions and Instructions": The Counsels of an Experienced Shepherd 276
An Outline of "Additional Directions and Instructions" ... 277
Continuity and Emphasis in ADI ... 280
Amesian Influence and Collinsian Developments ... 281
A Notable Contribution: Tracing Perkins, Ames, and Collins in ADI ... 284
The Aim of Collins's ADI ... 287
An Additional Word to the Churches ... 294
An Outline of "An Additional Word" ... 295
The Pastoral Theology of "An Additional Word" ... 295
Collins and Controversy ... 300
Broader Considerations in the Doctrine of the Gifted Brother ... 303
A Forgotten Doctrine? ... 303
The Doctrine of the Gifted Brother in the Wider Seventeenth-Century Context ... 306

Gifted Brothers in Particular Baptist History: The Witness of Selected Associational Records 310
Conclusion 317
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION 319
Teaching: Feeding the Flock with *An Orthodox Catechism* 320
Tending: Binding up the Wounded in *The English Spira* 321
Training: Equipping Shepherds for the Next Generation in *The Temple Repair'd* 322
The Integrated Pastoral Theology of Hercules Collins 323
Collins as Pastoral Exemplar for Today 325
Implications for Baptist Studies and Pastoral Theology 326
Future Research 327
A Final Word 328
APPENDIX ONE: A PROBATE INVENTORY RECORD OF HERCULES COLLINS'S BOOKS 330
APPENDIX TWO: THE NUMBERS AND PROPOSED HEADINGS OF *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM* 331
APPENDIX THREE: A SUMMARY OUTLINE OF "AN APPENDIX CONCERNING THE ORDINANCE OF SINGING" 341
APPENDIX FOUR: ADDED QUESTIONS AND MAJOR EDITS COMPRISING *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM*'S UNIQUENESS 345
APPENDIX FIVE: WAPPING CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS 349
APPENDIX SIX: PRIMARY BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES OF JOHN CHILD 350
APPENDIX SEVEN: A TRANSCRIPTION OF "*THE EFFECT OF SEVERAL CONFERENCES BETWEEN MR.* CHILD*, AND MR.* H. C" 353
APPENDIX EIGHT: TRANSCRIPTION OF "*SOME PASSAGES BETWEEN MR.* JOHN CHILD *AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS, COLLECTED BY MR.* H. C." 358
APPENDIX NINE: COMPARATIVE PASTORAL RESPONSES IN THE SPIRA AND CHILD EPISODES 360
APPENDIX TEN: HOW MANY MEETINGS DID COLLINS AND CHILD HAVE? 365
APPENDIX ELEVEN: A SUMMARY OUTLINE OF *THE TEMPLE REPAIR'D* 368
APPENDIX TWELVE: WILLIAM AMES'S "ORDINARY MINISTERS AND THEIR OFFICE IN PREACHING" IN SUMMARY FORM 377
APPENDIX THIRTEEN: TUSSLES IN THE TITLES REDUX: SELECTIVELY SKETCHING THE RECEPTION OF *THE PREACHER SENT* 380
BIBLIOGRAPHY 383

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1C2A	*One Covenant, Two Administrations*
1LC	*First London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1644/1646*
2LC	*Second London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1677/1689*
ADI	*"Additional Directives and Instructions" (in TTR)*
ASA	*A Second Argument (in TES), 1684*
COC(s)	*Case(s) of Conscience*
COE	*Church of England*
DNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
GB(s)	*Gifted Brother(s)*
GMMV	*The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated, 1689*
HC	*Heidelberg Catechism, 1563*
JLJ	*Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church*
LOH	*Laying on of Hands*
MOPE	*Mischief of Persecution Exemplified, 1688*
NT	*New Testament*
OC	*An Orthodox Catechism, 1680*
OT	*Old Testament*
PBA	*Philadelphia Baptist Association*
RPW	*Regulative Principle of Worship*
SDF	*Savoy Declaration of Faith, 1658*
SIMG	*"A Sermon for the Improvement of Ministerial Gifts" (in TTR)*
TES	*The English Spira, 1693*

TTR	*The Temple Repair'd, 1702*
WCB	*Wapping Church Book*
WCF	*Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646*
WLC	*Westminster Larger Catechism, 1647*
WSC	*Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1646/1647*

LIST OF FIGURES

3.1 Comparing Selected Heidelberg Catechism and Orthodox Catechism Scripture Proofs 91

4.1 Initials and Possible Identifications in TES 155

4.2 Malice in John Child 180

4.3 Biblical Exhortations and Doctrines Used, Attempting to Comfort Spira and Child 191

4.4 Theological Echoes in Spira and Child 192

5.1 Tracing the Biblical Practice of Unordained Preaching in TTR 257

5.2 Continuity and Emphasis in ADI 278

5.3 Similarities in Uses in Collins and Ames: "Further Helps" and "Ordinary Ministers" 280

5.4 Similarities in Emphasis in Collins and Ames: ADI and "Ordinary Ministers" 280

5.5 Tracing Collinsian Developments from Perkins and Ames 283

5.6 Applying Collinsian Uses to Perkinsian Categories 284

A1 The Written Probate Inventory Record 328

A4 Added Questions and Major Edits Comprising *An Orthodox Catechism's* Uniqueness 345

A9 Comparative Pastoral Responses in the Spira and Child Episodes 358

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are due to my close friends and co-laborers in the gospel, the officebearers of Reformation Baptist Church. Our congregation is faithful, fears God, and loves Christ and one another well—in large part due to your faithful stewardship of divine mercy, consistency in prizing "the pattern of sound words" (2 Tm. 1:13), and diligence (and delight!) in the ordinary means of grace. I am profoundly grateful for the joy of serving our Lord alongside you, and love you dearly. Thank you for loving my family and for your great patience with me.

The saints at Reformation have been among the greatest blessings God has given me: "the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight" (Ps. 16:3). I love being your pastor, even on hard days. Your zeal for Christ awakens mine. Thank you for such generosity and endurance to afford me time and resources trying to become a better shepherd; I pray that you reap rich fruits from the effort. If this labor does not ultimately serve your souls, then I have misspent these years. You have invested your prayers, love, and care for my family. I am glad to walk toward Home with you! May we be found faithful.

Longtime friends are rare gifts of grace, and three have been unflagging in their encouragements and help. Matt Bingham has been a faithful brother and godly whetstone through both adversity and peace, challenging and comforting me in equal measure. Joshua Wallnofer has modeled for me the shepherd-scholar, embodying the old pastoral dictum: "preach and pray, love and stay." Ben Bush has shown steadfastness and a servant's heart in a ministry of consistent encouragement. Your appetites for truth feed mine. I praise God for you men.

My father instilled in me a foundational, surpassing esteem of the Scriptures; my writing and whole world are an attempt to gaze upon the mercy and majesty of the King whom this holy, all-sufficient Word proclaims. My father-in-law introduced me to the Puritans nearly thirty years

ago by their expositions of Scripture and its godly effects in his soul…so, in many ways, this is all his fault! I am grateful that you both consistently point me to Jesus.

Tom Nettles has been longsuffering with the ups-and-downs of my schedule, health, and plodding pace through this material, as both supervisor and friend. Your SBTS shepherding group many years ago was one of the happiest, most consequential providences of my life. You helped me approach these precious old writers on their own terms, seeing what they saw of God in Scripture, and walking after their pattern (Phil. 3:17); it has immeasurably shaped my love to Christ and labors for him. Merely saying "thank you" seems utterly inadequate, brother. It has been an immense privilege to study under your oversight once more. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1:7).

Finally, Kara: where could I start, baby? For loving and helping me; for putting up with me; for caring for our family with a skill and sacrifice which regularly leaves me stunned. For listening to me wrestle with Scripture and all things theological and Herculean. For serving tirelessly (often thanklessly) beside me, as we enter our twenty-ninth year of gospel labors. For your willingness and enthusiasm to engage these Reformation and Puritan writings that have become so life-giving to me. For delighting with me in the beauties of the God we have come to perceive through the words of these long-dead saints. For keeping both eternal and every-day things before my eyes. For your steadfastness and immovability, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For the life we share. None of this would be, without you. Many women do nobly, indeed virtuously; you excel them all. I love you with all my heart.

This work is offered in the sincere hope that it might help the Church and honor her Lord. After all, that was Hercules Collins's great aim, too.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal Interest

I was first introduced to Hercules Collins (1646/1647–1702) by way of his 1695 work *The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism Shaken.*[1] The title caught my attention: a "Herculean shaking" of a difficult doctrine sounded both meaty and engaging! In forty-five closely-reasoned pages, this Puritan writer indeed demolished much of the structure and substance of the paedobaptist position in a manner robustly biblical, workmanlike, and yet somehow also personal and pastoral. I was intrigued and had to learn more about him.

I vaguely recalled something about a Particular Baptist minister who had dared to edit the venerated *Heidelberg Catechism*, but knew almost nothing of the man. Upon digging further, I realized that Hercules Collins was responsible for both works—and that he had a good number more. A providential conversation with Dr. James Renihan at a meeting of the Southeastern Association of Confessional Baptist Churches led (with almost breathtaking speed!) to an editing partnership for Collins's collected *Works* with Mark Smith in Australia and a contract with H&E under Dr. Michael Haykin to bring them to print. Dr. Tom Nettles, who had supervised my initial

[1] Hercules Collins, *The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism SHAKEN: Or, An Answer to a Book, Entitled Vindiciæ Fœderis, Published by Mr. MENCE. Whose Arguments have been weighed in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and found too light to prove all the Children of Believers in the Covenant of Grace: And on the contrary demonstrating, that none but the Elect, and all true Believers are in that Covenant. And is a full ANSWER to Mr. Michael Harrison of P's P. his Book, Entituled Infant Baptism God's Ordinance. Together with a NARRATIVE, which contains the Foundation of the Controversie. By Hercules Collins, an unworthy servant of Christ and his Church in Wapping. To which is added a LETTER by a private hand, with a PREFACE and APPENDIX, containing, I. The Pedigree of Infants Habitual-Faith. 2. The Judgment of Learned Men against it. By RICHARD CLARIDGE* (London, 1695).

masters work at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and kept inviting me to write for *The Founders Journal* over the last decade, enthusiastically agreed to take on a research doctoral student and supervise this thesis. My dear friend Matthew Bingham encouraged me to take up the work. Most importantly, my wife agreed, and our longsuffering church gave their blessing (and generously supplied the funding as well).

Prior to beginning this work, I researched John Flavel's (ca. 1627–1691) pastoral theology for four years in an unaccredited Th.D program under Puritan scholars Drs. Brian Cosby and James La Belle, and edited in volumes 2 and 3 of John Flavel's *Works* under Dr. Cosby as part of The Banner of Truth Trust's reprint project. I had studied the Puritans for over fifteen years at that point. Learning from Flavel was wonderful, but I could not shake the sense that it was time to focus on a Baptist; further, our congregation and elders needed my attention closer to home. The Hercules Collins corpus fell into my lap and I have come to see it as a particular stewardship for my lifetime from the Lord. *Deo volente*, upon fulfilling the work for H&E, I hope to offer some future fruits gleaned from his corpus to help others as Hercules has helped me. This thesis, then, constitutes something of a public exercise in pastoral sharpening and theological retrieval.

The State of the Question

That goal is a needful one: Collins's entire corpus has never been republished since he died. The leading Collinsian scholar, Stephen Weaver, notes that:

> Between Crosby and Ivimey, however, selections from Collins' work on the decrees of God were published in a work featuring "extracts from sundry old and eminent divines." Also during this period, John Bailey republished Collins' book on believer's baptism twice, in 1803 and 1808 respectively. In 1846, the final chapter of *Believers-Baptism from Heaven* was republished as an article in *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* under the title "The Reputed Anabaptists of

Germany.[2]

One finds an occasional short-run cameo of *An Orthodox Catechism* or *The Temple Repair'd* (Chapel Library, Particular Baptist Heritage Books, and Reformed Baptist Academic Press currently hold that distinction), but the *Works* sit unavailable as a whole in any format outside digital scans of the originals—and have since Collins's death in 1702.

Further, there is only one book-length academic work on Hercules's thought at present: Weaver's dissertation[3] focusing on Collinsian identity and ecclesiology. Weaver and Michael Haykin have printed an edited, gently modernized version of *An Orthodox Catechism*[4] (omitting Collins's questions concerning the laying on of hands and his "Appendix on Singing") and a small volume entitled *Devoted to the Service of the Temple: Persecution, Piety, and Ministry in the Writings of Hercules Collins*,[5] which offers a brief summary of Collins's life and a topical sampling of highlights from his *Works.* My co-editor on Collins's *Works*, Mark Smith, is also

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[2] G. Stephen Weaver, Jr. "Hercules Collins: Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 2–3. Crosby and Ivimey's work was printed in R[ichard] H[all], *A Library of Divinity: Or, Select Extracts From Sundry Old and Eminent Divines, Collected in a Course of Reading for Private Use* (London: George Keith, 1780). Weaver notes that "Collins was the only Particular Baptist cited"; sees "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist (Ph.D diss.), 2n7. Bailey reprinted Collins's *Believers-Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine Institution. Infants-Baptism from Earth, and Human Invention* (London: J. Hancock, 1691). His 1803 reprint was Hercules Collins and John Bailey, *Believers–Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine Institution. Infants-Baptism from Earth, and Human Invention. Proved from the Commission of Christ. With a Brief, yet Sufficient Answer to Thomas Wall's Book, Called, Baptism Anatomized. Together with a Brief Answer to a Part of Mr. Daniel Williams's Catechism, in His Book Unto Youth* (London: E. Justins, 1803). His 1808 reprint was Hercules Collins and John Bailey, *Believers' Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine Institution: Infant Baptism from Earth, and of Human Invention: Proved from the Commission of Christ, the Great Lawgiver to the Gospel Church* (London: E. Justins, 1808). The final chapter reprint of *Believers-Baptism* was Hercules Collins, "The Reputed Anabaptists of Germany," *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* 5, no. 11 (November 1846): 330–34. Weaver adds that the chapter was used in "defense of the Anabaptists of Europe with whom the English Baptists were often associated and derided" in "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist (Ph.D diss.), 3n12.

[3] Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), op. cit. His dissertation has been published as *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist: Hercules Collins (1647–1702) and Particular Baptist Identity in Early Modern England* (KG, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

[4] Michael Haykin and Steve Weaver, eds., *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and Gospel* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014).

[5] Haykin and Weaver, eds., *Devoted to the Service of the Temple: Persecution, Piety, and Ministry in the Writings of Hercules Collins* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007).

working on a volume of John Piggott's[6] (ca. 1670–1713) funeral sermons. Piggott preached at Collins's funeral, from which sermon we glean the vast majority of what we know of the man under consideration. Weaver has produced a few other chapters and articles engaging some aspects of Hercules's thought[7]; these are excellent (as far as they go, which is no criticism!), but he is really the first-generation trailblazer. Much more work is needed on these questions and six hundred more.

Almost nothing, however, has been published on Collins's pastoral theology—a few sentences here, a paragraph there. Thus the state of the question is simple: what is it? What major themes might we observe as governing principles for Collins? What is its relationship with the broader Reformed and Puritan confessional and doctrinal tradition? How was it reflective of and shaped by his unique historical-theological context? Weaver cleared the ground to begin pursuing such inquiries with his work on Collinsian identity and ecclesiology: he locates him

[6] See Weaver's account of Piggott's life in Michael A.G. Haykin and Terry L. Wolever(1957–2020), eds. *The British Particular Baptists* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2019), I.362–383, and Garrett Walden's account prefacing the reprint of Piggot's sermon *UNION and PEACE Recommended ; IN A SERMON Preach'd to Several Congregations assembled together April 17. 1704. By John Piggott* (London, 1704); repr. as *Union and Peace* (Knightstown, IN: Particular Baptist Heritage Books, 2026), v–xxiii.

[7] Six particular studies of Hercules Collins by Steve Weaver should be noted here:

1. Weaver, "Baptists and 1662: The Persecution of John Norcott and Hercules Collins," in *The Founders Journal*, #89 (Summer 2012): 34–43.
2. Weaver, with Michael Haykin, "To 'concenter with the most orthodox divines': Hercules Collins and his *An Orthodox Catechism*," in Karla Apperloo-Boersma and Herman Selderhuis, eds., *Power of Faith: 450 years of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 71–82.
3. Weaver, "The Puritan Argument for the Immersion of Believers: How Seventeenth-Century Baptists Utilized the Regulative Principle of Worship," in Richard Barcellos, ed., *Recovering a Covenantal Heritage: Essays in Baptist Covenant Theology* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014), 109–125.
4. Weaver, "Hercules Collins (ca. 1647–1702)," in Michael Haykin and Terry Wolever, eds., *The British Particular Baptists* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2019), I.315–342. This chapter is largely material excerpted from his dissertation.
5. Weaver, "An Orthodox Catechism," in Tom Nettles and Steve Weaver, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: The Study of Catechisms in Baptist Life, revised edition* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2017), 37–54. This chapter is largely material excerpted from his chapter in *Power of Faith*, lightly developed; it is helpful, though introductory.
6. Weaver, "A Patient Wearing of Christ's Cross: Hercules Collins and a Baptist Theology of Persecution," in Terry Delaney and Roget Duke, eds., *The Spirit of Holiness: Reflections on Biblical Spirituality* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 33–46.

squarely as an orthodox minister, both Puritan and Particular Baptist. Anyone working on his life and thought for the next one hundred years will start with Weaver's book. It is therefore the aim of this thesis, building on his foundation, to begin looking at the lay of the land and discern what drove Hercules's thought and theology by a careful treatment of choice primary sources.

This thesis begins to help the reader consider the man himself by way of a brief biographical-contextual sketch (chapter 2); observes his burgeoning-but-faithful applied confessionalism by way of catechetical theologizing in *An Orthodox Catechism* (chapter 3); examines his care of souls in crisis in *The English Spira*, which treats the tragic case of John Child's (1638?–1684) suicide (chapter 4); and traces his theology of preaching and training of preachers—and specifically, gifted brothers—in *The Temple Repair'd* (chapter 5). It concludes with a summary of findings and applications gleaned, along with reflections upon how Collins's life and thought might help pastors and churchmen today serve the Christ he so loved (chapter 6).

Thesis, Methodology, and Philosophy

Thesis

Given that so little literature presently exists on Collins, the thesis is likewise simple: I argue that Hercules Collins is a confessionally Reformed and Puritan pastor-theologian of the seventeenth century whose works are worth reclaiming for strengthening our understanding and practice of gospel ministry today. I demonstrate that his pastoral theology necessitated a writing ministry, serving his labors as a convictional and intentionally doctrinal shepherd; we observe his compassionate and experienced efforts as a curer-of-souls, who found it no conflict of interest also to serve as an effective gospel preacher; we witness his diligent and studious work in the Scriptures developing him into a battle-proven and blood-earnest soldier of the Cross, one

deeply concerned to entrust "the good deposit" (2 Tm. 1:14) of full-orbed Christian truth to faithful men whom the risen Christ placed within the stewardship of his ministry at Wapping.

These are not merely points of historical record, but exhibitions of a most vibrant and vigorous pastoral theology. I show that Collins's pastoral theology is at once simple in its demonstrable biblical and confessional fidelity, yet also robustly multifaceted in its breadth, reach, and ministerial comprehension of biblical truth. As such, it endured vehement tests of faith under the persecutions Collins faced in his day, and it has stood the test of time—such that it ought to merit very careful consideration in ours. It is Puritanism at its most workboots-and-overalls, blue-collar level, for the good of Christ's church and the praise of his name. I argue that *An Orthodox Catechism* shows Collins teaching saints through sound doctrine, *The English Spira* shows Collins tending souls through pastoral counseling, and *The Temple Repair'd* shows Collins training shepherds for gospel ministry.

Methodology

This thesis presents a historical-theological survey of Collins's life and ministry, employing critical textual analysis and intellectual history toward developing his pastoral theology. Studying the life and thought of a great man recalls a former way of approaching history long-neglected in our day of identity-political and social-cause historical interpretations. This approach closely examines selected key works from the Collinsian corpus in light of the whole, providing contextual-historical analysis, literary synthesis, and theological interpretation of their contents within the broader milieu of English Puritanism. Placed in this light, this thesis offers a recovery of significant-but-forgotten texts on their own terms, aiming to re-situate Hercules Collins as a leading pastoral theologian of the seventeenth century, alongside his better-known contemporaries.

Yet interpreting Collins requires more than simply assembling historical data—it requires a method capable of handling the fragmentary, pastoral, and occasionally polemical nature of Early Modern dissenting sources. His writings are not the systematic treatises of Owen or Flavel, but pastoral, catechetical, and occasional works—forged in the crucible of ministry, controversy, imprisonment, and ecclesial duty. To read Collins well, one must employ an approach which honors the integrity of his texts, the texture of his world, and the theological instincts enlivening his pastoral imagination.

For this reason, this study employs a theological-grammar reconstructive method: an integrative historical-theological approach anchored in the same close reading that governs my exegesis of Scripture, and the same attentiveness to historical context. Several commitments discipline this approach and guard against anachronism, reductionism, or the imposition of later Baptist categories onto a seventeenth-century pastor-theologian.

1. Historical textual humility requires approaching Collins on his own terms, within his own world—not reading him through the lenses of modern debates or contemporary concerns.
2. Conceptual integrity demands that Collins's categories, instincts, and theological logic be reconstructed from within his own writings rather than imported from outside (not an eisegetical engagement).
3. Textual responsibility treats each document with the seriousness of close exegesis—attending to genre, authorial intent, intertextual and inter-corpus echoes, and the material history of a given text.
4. Cautious interdisciplinary awareness recognizes that theology, history, and pastoral practice are mutually interpretive in Collins's world; none may rightly be understood in isolation.
5. Developmental sensitivity acknowledges Collins as a thinker who grows, allowing doctrinal emphases and pastoral strategies to be traced across his corpus.
6. Relational-contextual analysis situates Collins within the networks, relationships, and institutional structures which shaped his ministry—particularly the Wapping congregation and the broader world of English dissent.
7. Evidence-based synthesis disciplines reconstruction and interpretation by tethering every theological claim to demonstrable textual patterns rather than conjecture.
8. Pastoral realism interprets Collins's theology as the working theology of a pastor whose doctrinal commitments are inseparable from his catechetical aims, ecclesial responsibilities, and personal experience of suffering.

These commitments shape a disciplined sequence of analysis. First, I establish the text through close reading and attention to provenance, genre, and compositional context. Second, I

reconstruct Collins's historical and ecclesial setting, situating him within the milieu of English Nonconformity, the intellectual currents of Puritan and post-Reformation theology, and the most immediate context of all: his Wapping church. Third, I employ relational-contextual analysis to map Collins's influences, pastoral collaborations, and ministerial networks. Fourth, I identify the intellectual and theological sources informing his work. Fifth, I reconstruct Collins's theological grammar—the underlying categories, instincts, and tacit assumptions giving coherence to his thought. Finally, I integrate these findings into a pastoral-theological synthesis reflecting the unity of doctrine and practice in Collins's ministry.

Taken together, these methodological commitments provide the scaffolding necessary to approach Collins with fitting historical rigor and pastoral sensitivity. They allow his writings to be handled as he intended for his church to handle them—not as abstract theological exercises (or bare historical curiosities), but as the ministerial labors of a shepherd tried and refined in the furnace of affliction (Isa. 48:10). Because this study operates at the intersection of historical retrieval and pastoral theology, it is wise to make explicit the theological and philosophical commitments undergirding its interpretive posture. At the heart of these commitments lies a distinctly Reformed conviction about the providential shape of history—a conviction which governs how Collins is read, how his world is reconstructed, and how his pastoral theology is understood.

Philosophy

D.G. Hart asks, "Do Christian historians pursue historical scholarship differently than non-Christians?"[8] I reply with a resounding "Yes, we do; and we must." This thesis works from

[8] D.G. Hart, "Baptists Are Different," in Matthew Bingham, Chris Caughey, Scott Clark, Crawford Gribben, and D.G. Hart, *On Being Reformed: Debates Over a Theological Identity* (Cham: Palgrave Pivot, 2018), 60.

the perspective of a decided providentialist,[9] firmly convinced that Christians ought not study historical narratives, documents, events, or persons apart from understanding them as located squarely within the meticulous providence of God. This conviction is even more imperative for confessionally Reformed believers: our own symbols teach us, on the basis of multiple biblical texts, that God ordains all things, whatsoever comes to pass. The 1677/1689 *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* (hereafter 2LC), of which Collins was a signatory, presents the decree of God as of such essential biblical and theological import that it is located immediately after the doctrine of the Trinity! "God executeth his decrees in the [twin, yet singular] work of Creation and Providence," the 1693/1695 *Baptist Catechism* reminds us. Closer to home for our purposes, Collins wrote:

> 25. Q. What believest thou when thou sayest, I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth?
>
> A. I believe the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who made of nothing Heaven and Earth, with all that are in them; who likewise upholdeth and governeth the same by his eternal Counsel and Providence.
>
> 26. Q. What is the Providence of God?
>
> A. The almighty Power of God, every where present, whereby he doth as it were by his hand uphold and govern Heaven and Earth, with all the Creatures therein, so that those things which grow in the Earth, as likewise rain and drowth, fruitfulness and barenness, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty; in a word, all things come not rashly and by chance, but by his fatherly Counsel and Will.
>
> 27. Q. What doth this knowledg of the Creation and Providence of God profit us?
>
> A. That in adversity we may be patient, and thankful in prosperity, and have hereafter our chiefest hope reposed in God our most faithful Father; being sure that there is nothing which may withdraw us from his love; forasmuch as all creatures are so in his Power, that without his Will they are not able not only to do any thing, but not so much as once to move.[10]

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[9] By "providentialist," I intend essentially an application of what Tom Nettles argues for in his coherent-truth model. See Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity: Beginnings in Britian* (Ross–Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications/Mentor, 2005), I.35.

[10] Hercules Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error, by H. Collins* (London: 1680). The numbering is my own; see treatment in the chapter on *An Orthodox Catechism*, below.

Surely students and heirs of the Reformed confessional heritage ought to approach our theological forefathers on their own terms—starting by viewing their lives as they did: as entirely subject to the various outworkings of God's holy decree, executed in his sovereign, wise, and good providences. Hence, it seems to be a matter of historical integrity and faithful confessional subscription to approach Collins from a contextualized providentialist view.

This thesis demonstrates that Hercules Collins's pastoral theology is not merely present across his corpus, but is structurally integrated—forming a coherent pastoral program in which catechesis, counseling, and ministerial training mutually interpret and inform one another. It is to that robust pastoral theology—and that man who embodied it—that we now turn.

CHAPTER 2

HERCULES COLLINS IN CONTEXT: SETTING THE STAGE AND MEETING THE MAN

> "In a word, he was faithful in every relation, a Man of Truth and Integrity, one entirely devoted to the Service of the Temple, and zealously bent to promote the Interest of the Lord Redeemer."[1]
> —John Piggott (ca. 1670–1713)

Introduction

What kind of man preaches a funeral sermon with vigor and spiritual power on Sunday, then "discourse[s] on…the day of his death…in an affecting manner"[2] upon that same text just a few days later? What kind of man *begins* his ministry by writing a catechism for his church—one still valued today? What kind of man turns imprisonment for preaching Christ into evangelizing his captive audience, while still continuing to shepherd his persecuted flock? Who buries his young son, yet quietly learns from his wife's steadfast faith under suffering? What kind of man gets out of prison for preaching the gospel and immediately throws himself into a complex, politically-charged intervention counseling case, trying to reclaim a fellow—if former—preacher in crisis? What kind of man gives himself (and his congregation!) to the work of training heralds of Christ's gospel, even as he labors to define and defend its doctrines amidst

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[1] John Piggott, "A Funeral Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr. Hercules Collins preach'd Octob. 9. 1702. from Mat. 24. 44. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh," in his *Eleven Sermons Preach'd upon Special Occasions, by the Late Reverend Mr. John Piggott, Minister of the Gospel. Being all that were Printed in his Life–Time. Together with Mr. Pilkington's Recantation of the Errors of the Romish Church, as 'twas published by Mr. Piggott. To which is added, Mr. Piggott's Funeral Sermon, preach'd by Mr. Joseph Stennett : Containing some Account if his Life and Character* (London: John Darby, 1714), 239. Piggott is accounted as "a most judicious and doctrinal preacher" by Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834), *A History of the English Baptists: Comprising the Principal Events of the History of Protestant Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1668 till 1760; and of the London Baptist Churches During that Period* (London, 1823), III.262.

[2] Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, III.305. Collins's sermon text was Revelation 12:11.

great personal physical difficulties? What kind of man is in demand across London, but serves for his entire ministry contentedly at one church? Hercules Collins[3] (ca. 1646/1647–1702), that's who.

Scripture's repeated commendations of studying godly lives helps us realize church history's indispensable role in providing examples of faithfulness across a massive spectrum of sins and struggles. The apostle Paul encouraged the Philippians concerning the value of faithful examples: "Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us" (Phil. 3:17). Again: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, *stand firm thus* in the Lord, my beloved" (Phil. 4:1, emphasis mine). The apostle commands Christians to cultivate piety by "considering the outcome of [the] way of life" (Heb. 13:7b) of faithful Christians, both living and dead—this "considering" might rightly encompass both personal conversations with contemporaries and the printed corpora of saints long dead. Rehoboam foolishly limited his counselors to the men of his own generation (1 Kgs. 12:6–8), a strong warning against historical myopia. Heb. 11, often denoted "the hall of faith," applies this broad principle of examining the lives and labors of those who have come before us to a series of biblical case studies; perhaps it may also fittingly be termed "the hall of church history."

This thesis attempts to pursue and apply Scripture's holy exhortations by "comprehend[ing] the love of Christ…*together with all the saints*" (Eph. 3:18a, emphasis mine) —and specifically, with English Particular Baptist minister Hercules Collins. To that end, this study examines his pastoral theology.

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[3] Collins sometimes spells his name "Collings"—for example, at multiple points in the *Wapping Church Book* (where he also seems to write "Hurcules" a few times) and on the title page of *The English Spira* (1693). Without digressing into onomastics, he signs his name inconsistently and seems (perhaps?) to have gone through stages of orthographic preference for one rendering or another in this respect. As L.P. Hartley observed in *The Go-Between* (New York, NY: New York Review of Books, 2002), 17: "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."

A Quick Handshake with Hercules Collins

Named by many but known by few, Collins has frequently been overshadowed by better-known contemporaries such as Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), William Collins (d. 1702), Hanserd Knollys (1599–1691), Nehemiah Coxe (d. 1689), and William Kiffin[4] (1616–1701)—though he was counted among "their most efficient ministers."[5] In his day, he was a faithful, influential, and sought-after pastor-theologian: active in training preachers, discipling saints, defending the gospel, and serving as a trusted voice among the Particular Baptists. One disgruntled former colleague mocked him by suggesting he would be the Baptist replacement for an Archbishop—an insult which inadvertently revealed his stature![6]

Contemporaries regarded him as a "respected member" and "faithful representative"[7] of English Particular Baptist Puritanism. A productive and "relatively prolific"[8] theological writer, he was "outpaced among seventeenth-century Calvinistic Baptists by only Benjamin Keach and John Bunyan."[9] Understanding this blue-collar pastor-theologian requires locating him within his

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[4] Also sometimes spelled "Kiffen."

[5] David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Louis Colby, 1848), 336.

[6] John Child (1638?–1684), *Mr. JOHN CHILD'S BOOK, Entituled A SECOND ARGUMENT, For a more Full and Firm UNION AMONGST ALL GOOD PROTESTANTS; WHEREIN The NONCONFORMISTS Taking the SACRAMENT after the Manner of the CHURCH of ENGLAND, is Justified. The Root and Foundation Of the POPISH PLOT Further Discovered In a LETTER to a Friend, Now Republished upon the Occasion of. his Disperation and Fatal End: which Book (as he hath often declared) was the Occasion off it* (London: 1684), 6: "You shall in the room of the two Archbishops, viz., *Canterbury* and *York*, have a *Tinker* and a *Taylor*, men of great confidence and long standing." The "Taylor" here refers to Hercules Collins.

[7] Steve Weaver, "Hercules Collins: Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 6.

[8] Weaver, "A Seventeenth Century Baptist View of Ministry as Seen in Three Funeral Sermons by John Piggott" (unpublished SBTS paper; written August 14, 2006), 5.

[9] Cf. Nathan Sherman, "The Wapping Baptists: Murky Origins and the Silence of John Spilsbery" in *Baptist Quarterly*, August 2023 (DOI: 10.1080/0005576X.2023.2247693). Sherman's inclusion of Bunyan raises the question: was he a Baptist? Michael Haykin and Jeff Robinson affirm; see Haykin and Mark Jones, eds. *Drawn Into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates within Seventeenth–Century British Puritanism* (KG,

historical, theological, and pastoral contexts. This chapter therefore introduces the world in which he lived and ministered, concluding with a sketch of his life and corpus. We do this with an eye toward developing his pastoral theology in later chapters.

Hercules, Located Historically: Tracing Early Modernity

A World in Transition

Collins was born into the Early Modern era (roughly 1450–1800)[10]—an age of discovery, upheaval, reform, and rapid intellectual change.[11] The late medieval centuries (1350–1500) witnessed the confluence of Renaissance humanism,[12] materialistic thought—for example,

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Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 285–286; and Haykin, *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), 59. So does James Renihan in "An Excellent and Judicious Divine: Nehemiah Coxe," in *Covenant Theology from Adam to Christ*, eds. Ronald Miller, James Renihan, and Francisco Orozoco (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2005), 10–11, though presenting him in a third category outside the mainstream. Richard Greaves considers him nearly beyond classification: "No single theological label without careful qualification will fit Bunyan." In *Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology: John Bunyan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 159. Timothy Haupt also demurs in "The Palace Beautiful: The Evangelical Independent Ecclesiology of John Bunyan" (Ph.D diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), arguing that Bunyan was neither Baptist nor Congregationalist, but an evangelical Independent. With or without Bunyan, Collins's *Works* represent a significant contribution to British Particular Baptist literature.

[10] See, for example, Eugene Rice's *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460–1559* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), ix–x, or Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Cambridge History of Europe: Early Modern Europe, 1450–1789* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–13. D.A. Weirh dates it 1500–1800 in *The Dictionary of the Presbyterian & Reformed Tradition in America*, eds. D.G Hart and Mark Noll (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 230. Defining the period is challenging: the confluence of the several streams of late medieval thought, Renaissance influence, materialism, humanism (of atheistic and believing varieties, with multiple points in–between), political extremism, and burgeoning globalism presents a fascinating and frustrating path to trace. Quite so as well with attempting to articulate specifics of theological advancement and maturity: "The identification of a single line of doctrinal development in seventeenth-century English theology is quite impossible." Richard Muller, "Reformed Confessions and Catechisms: British Confessionalism from the Westminster Standards to Salters' Hall," in *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, Trevor Hart, ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 482.

[11] Hans Hillebrand, *Historical Dictionary of the Reformation and Counter–Reformation* (Lanham, MD, and London: Scarecrow Press, 2000), xxix–xxxvii.

[12] As Paul Oskar Kristeller noted in *Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and the Arts* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 178:

> Early Italian humanism, which in many respects continued the grammatical and rhetorical traditions of the Middle Ages, not merely provided the old Trivium with a new and more ambitious name (*studia humanitatis*), but also increased its actual scope, content, and significance in the curriculum of the schools and universities and in its own extensive literary production. The *studia humanitatis* excluded logic, but

French Catholic René Descartes (1596–1650) and English atheist Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) —new scientific curiosity, and the first stirrings of reform. By the early sixteenth century, Europe was shifting: gunpowder warfare spread,[13] transatlantic slavery began, and a stream of literary and theological works—Erasmus of Rotterdam's (1466–1536) Greek NT, Sir Thomas More's (1478–1535) *Utopia*, and others—signaled a world in motion. In 1517, Martin Luther (1483–1546) nailed the Ninety-Five Theses to the Wittenburg castle church door,[14] igniting the Reformation. Soon after Leo X (1475–1521) issued his 1520 *Exsurge Domine*, Luther openly began challenging Rome's authority and calling him the Antichrist.

The English Reformation and Its Consequences

England's Reformation unfolded with dizzying speed. 1534 saw Henry VIII (1491–1547) break from Rome, declare himself head of the Church of England[15] (hereafter COE) in the Act of Supremacy, and set in motion a century of religious instability.[16] Under Edward VI (1537–1553),

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> they added to the traditional grammar and rhetoric not only history, Greek, and moral philosophy, but also made poetry, once a sequel of grammar and rhetoric, the most important member of the whole group.

Hercules evidences solid working competency in classical categories and was unquestionably influenced by the best of Renaissance humanism.

[13] Iqtidar Alam Khan. *Gunpowder and Firearms: Warfare in Medieval India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 9–10.

[14] In one of the Reformation's great ironies, Luther sent a copy of his Ninety-Five Theses to Albert of Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mainz, intending to alert him to the abuses of the indulgence–hawkers…unaware the Archbishop stood behind them. "Presumably at the time Luther did not know all the sordid details of Albert's transaction." Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 62.

[15] See Torrance Kirby, "The Elizabethan Church of England and the Origins of Anglicanism" in Andrew Hiscock and Helen Wilcox, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern English Literature and Religion* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 55–58. Helpful here are Anthony Milton's introductory essay "Reformation, Identity, and 'Anglicanism'" in his edited *The Oxford History of Anglicanism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019), I.1–27; and Ethan Shagan and Debora Shuger, eds., *Religion in Tudor England: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016).

[16] Henry's break with Rome was "unquestionably a political dispute, whatever may thereafter have grown from those beginnings. It opened as a jurisdictional quarrel between the king's authority and the pope's…"—indeed, "pre–Reformation England was not calling loudly for the reform." Geoffrey Elton, s.v. "England," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans Hillebrand (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), II.44–45. To the

Thomas Cramner (1489–1556) advanced Protestant reform by introducing the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) and aligning English Protestantism more closely with continental Reformed tradition. Meanwhile, the wider European scene continued to shift: the Council of Trent opened in 1545, and in 1549 John Calvin (1509–1564) Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) issued the 1549 *Consensus Tigurinus*.[17] Edward VI's death in 1553 brough the reign of "Bloody Mary" Tudor (1516–1558), whose attempt to restore Roman Catholicism ended with her death only five years later. Elizabeth I (1553–1603) succeeded her, inaugurating a new Protestant settlement which would shape English religious life for decades.

By 1560, Elizabeth I's religious Settlement had taken effect, Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) had died, and the Reformation had reached Scotland. Calvin's death in 1564 marked the passing of another major Reformer, and in 1568 Elizabeth imprisoned Mary Stuart of Scotland (1542–1587) after years of political and religious tension. Revisions of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* finalized in 1571, attempting to wed Reformation Calvinism and lingering elements of medieval Roman Catholicism under a single ecclesiastical structure—strange theological bedfellows! The next year witnessed the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre and the death of Pius V (1504–1572); his successor Gregory XIII (1502–1585) reoriented the Western calendar in 1582.[18]

Narrowing our focus to the religious landscape, Edward Fox's summary of the state of Christianity is apropos: the Church was "an all-pervasive aspect of medieval life itself. The

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same end: "No religious motive complicated Henry's ecclesiastical policy." Rice, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, 168.

[17] Latin: "the Zurich Agreement"; their accord concerned "a doctrine of the Eucharist which conformed with Calvinist principles and was free from the objections which, in the eyes of the Zwinglians, attached to Consubstantiation." F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, revised*, s.v. "Consensus Tigurinus" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 336.

[18] Gregory XIII's "Gregorian Calendar" or "New Style" of date-keeping corrected an accumulated error of roughly ten days. This change gradually spread through the Catholic states. Britain and her colonies made the change in September 1752, such that a then-eleven-day gap was corrected: September 14 followed September 2. Neville Williams, *Chronology of the Expanding World 1492–1762* (Oxford, England: Helicon Publishing, 1969), vii.

papacy was no more the church than the empire was feudalism. The church was Christendom, and Christendom was the totality of European society."[19] In the following century, that relatively unified world fractured—setting the stage for the rise of English Nonconformity, and eventually, the Particular Baptists.

The Making of English Nonconformity

The pressures shaping English Protestantism only intensified in the seventeenth century. Richard Muller's categories of *Early* (in two distinct phases, 1565–1618–1640), *High* (also in two distinct phases, 1640–1685–1725), and *Late* (1725–ca. 1800) Orthodoxy[20] help frame the theological landscape in which Collins ministered. These eras witnessed the end of the Tudor line (1485–1603), the rise and fall of the Stuarts (1603–1680), the intricacies of the first English civil war (1642–1646), Charles I's beheading (1649), the Interregnum (1649–1653), the Cromwellian protectorates (Oliver, 1653–1658; Richard, 1658–1659), the restoration of Charles II (1660), and the Great Ejection (August 24, 1662).[21] From 1660 to 1688, Nonconformists endured sustained persecution, even as they grew increasingly convinced that Scripture—not crown or bishop—must govern the church. Out of this volatile soil the Particular Baptists

[19] In Marshall W. Baldwin, *The Medieval Church* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1953), viii.

[20] Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520–1725, second edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), I.31–32.

[21] The Act of Uniformity which has come to be known as the Great Ejection of 1662 was the fourth such Act (the previous three: 1549, 1552, and 1559). The 1662 Act was part of the Restoration settlement:

> A Bill for reintroducing the BCP passed the Commons in July 1661, but as the Convocations did not complete the revision of the Book until December, the Bill was again considered in 1662 …. The Bill received the Royal Assent on 19 May. Before the ensuing St. Bartholomew's Day (24 Aug.), all ministers were required publicly to assent to the Book, from which day its exclusive use was ordered. Ministers not episcopally ordained by that date who refused to conform were to be deprived. …. Some 2,000 Presbyterian ministers who refused to conform were ejected from their livings. The Act still remains on the Statute Book.

In F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, revised second edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), s.v. "Uniformity, Acts of," 1407–1408.

emerged: a movement forged in the crucible of English dissent and committed to a biblically-regulated vision of church life.

Yet the roots of this dissent reached back much further, and God was at work in this time of explosive change and seemingly global turbulence. The life of Hercules Collins is a narrative of divine grace, running along the tracks of the Protestant Reformation and English Puritanism, and both movements were shaped by earlier reforming impulses. John Wycliffe (ca. 1328–1384), "the morning star of the Reformation," laid a foundation for English Protestant thought through his writings and his translation work. As Montagu Burrows (1819–1905) lauded, "To Wiclif [sic] we owe, more than to any one person who can be mentioned, our English language, our English Bible, and our Reformed religion."[22]

Nearly a century and a half later, William Tyndale (1494–1536) built on that foundation by translating the Greek New Testament into English (1525). He paid for it with his life, but his dying prayer—"Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"[23]—was partly answered in just two years: in 1538, Henry VIII required each parish church to make an English Bible available to its people:

> That ye shall provide, on this side the feast of All Saints next coming, one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church ye have cure of, whereas your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it…that ye shall discourage no man privily or apertly from the reading of hearing of the said Bible, but shall expressly provoke, stir, and exhort every person to read the same, as that which is the very lively Word of God.[24]

Royal licensure of the English Bible catalyzed the spread of Reformation principles,

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[22] Montagu Burrows, *Wyclif's Place in History: Three Lectures Delivered before the University of Oxford in 1881* (London: Wm. Isbister, 1884), 8.

[23] David Daniel's account of his life and death is superb in *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994), 83–154, 383.

[24] As quoted in F.F. Bruce (1910–1990), *History of the Bible in English, third edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 68. The specific date was September 5, 1538.

though not without resistance. The account of young John Porter (d. 1540) poignantly illustrates the moment's tension: in 1540, he displeased his bishop by reading the church's public Bible aloud to a crowd. This (legal!) act cost him liberty and life in the space of only a few days.[25] Cranmer's reforms likewise advanced unevenly, despite success in implementing his *Book of Common Prayer*; he "left significant elements of the old Roman Catholic liturgy in place…for political reasons, liturgical reform had to be gradual."[26]

This halting theological context provoked sharper calls for reform. The monk-turned-bishop John Hooper (1495–1555), shaped by the same Spirit-wrought convictions that animated Tyndale and Luther, became a leading voice for thoroughgoing biblical worship. "A man of Puritan scrupulosity," Hooper had little patience for compromise, insisting there could be "no adiaphora"[27] in the things of God. Frequently denoted an early father of Puritanism[28] and English nonconformity, his "ceaseless flow of criticism"[29] eventually cost him his life under Bloody Mary.

Mary's 1553 accession marked yet another turn in Britain's theological whiplash,

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[25] J.H. Merle D'Aubigné (1794–1872), *The Reformation in England*, ed. S.M. Houghton (East Peoria, IL: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2020), II.440. So much for Henry VIII's declaration!

[26] Samuel Logan, s.v. "Puritanism," in *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America*, eds. D.G. Hart and Mark Noll (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 204.

[27] Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal 1519–1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (University of California Press, 2021), 74. Grindal was a man of similarly deep conviction, one who "as archbishop would risk everything (and lose) by defending the godly cause." Ethan Shagan and Debora Shugar, eds. *Religion in Tudor England: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 529n1.

[28] Though J. I. Packer (1926–2020) considers that "Puritanism, as a distinctive attitude, began with William Tyndale." In Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1986), xvi, and again in his *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 28.

[29] S.T. Bindoff, *The Pelican History of England: Tudor England* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1982), 163. Hooper did eventually conform in 1551 after pressure from Cramner, Nicholas Ridley (ca. 1500–1555), and Martin Bucer (1491–1551), among others, following incarceration in the Fleet Prison. J.C. Ryle, "John Hooper: Bishop and Martyr," in *Five English Reformers* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 46–48.

reflecting in microcosm the conflicted instability of European reform. Within a single generation, Englishmen had worshiped as Roman Catholics (1529), Henrician Catholics (1534), Edwardian Protestants (1547), and Marian Catholics (1553), returning to Protestantism in the Elizabethan Settlement's Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity (1558).[30] Elizabeth inherited a deeply divided country: Catholics and Protestants alike were weary of the ongoing national spiritual unpredictability. A.G. Dickens (1910–2001) summarizes well that "perhaps no young woman of twenty-five has ever undertaken personal decisions having consequences so momentous."[31] Her Settlement, closing out the Tudor Age (1485–1603), finally created space for something approaching a basic Protestant consensus to emerge.[32] The multifaceted movement disparagingly nicknamed Puritanism[33] burgeoned under the Tudors and blossomed under the Stuarts—despite James VI's rejection of the Millenary Petition (1604) and demand that they conform quickly, producing "substantial increase in Separatist agitation."[34]

Urgent theological concerns roared through Europe and across the Channel. Reformation principles took deep root in the heart-soil of British Christians, and in that confessional age[35] of

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[30] Brian Cosby notes that "English monarchs through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries attempted to unify the Church of England by various Acts of Uniformity, which required ministers to subscribe to the official doctrine *and* worship of the state." In *John Flavel: Puritan Life and Thought in Stuart England* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 8.

[31] A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Shocken Books, 1975), 295. On women in that era, Alison Plowden's *Tudor Women: Queens and Commoners* (UK: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1979) is insightful.

[32] John Guy, "The Tudor Age," in *The Oxford History of Britain, revised edition*, ed. Kenneth Morgan (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 257–326.

[33] John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

[34] David R. Como, "Radical Puritanism, c. 1558–1660," in Coffey and Lim, *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 246.

[35] As Lyle Bierma terms the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age: The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 184. Historians also characterize the seventeenth century as "the age of revolution," as Richard Greaves notes in *Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology: John Bunyan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 13.

high orthodoxy, Puritan impulses toward worship regulated by Scripture and a qualified gospel ministry caring faithfully for souls matured into what has been called "the family tree of Reformed theology."[36] As David Hall described it, "the Puritan movement aspired to evangelize the British people, transform local churches into sanctified communities, introduce godly rule in civil society, and eliminate every 'remnant' of Catholicism from worship."[37]

Wittenberg's reformist spirit traveled to England by way of Geneva,[38] codified in Westminster's (1643–1649) magnificent Standards. Their core doctrines articulate the apostolic *depositum fidei* with a precision and beauty that little else in church history can meet. Through the vast corpus produced by these Puritan divines, God's Spirit taught these invigorating Reformation truths to a young pastor on Old Gravel Lane in Wapping (a working–class east London neighborhood near the River Thames).[39]

In that Stuart world, Hercules Collins lived, preached, wrote, ministered, and died to the glory of Christ. It is to Collins's theological setting—both Puritan and Particular Baptist—that we now turn.

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[36] See Richard Barcellos, *The Family Tree of Reformed Theology: Geerhardus Vos and John Owen, Their Methods of and Contributions to the Articulation of Redemptive History* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2010).

[37] David Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), 356.

[38] Though, as Hughes Oliphant Old notes, "One thing one has to reckon with in the English Reformation is that it stems as much from Wycliffe as from Luther." See *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 136.

[39] Collins was deeply familiar with the writings of the Reformation, listing recommended books for ministers in his 1702 *The Temple Repair'd* (#37) and leading his church to purchase many books for gifted brothers, ministerial aspirants, and new ordinands. Steve Weaver gives the lists from the *Wapping Church Book* in his "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss, SBTS, 2013), 223–226. On the question of the Puritan corpus, see Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and Theology, 1550–1682, revised edition* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2016); Joel Beeke, Randall Pedersen, and Fraser Jones, *Meet the Puritans: a guide to their lives and books, revised and expanded edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2025); and N.H. Keeble's "Puritanism and Literature" in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 309–324.

Collins in Theological Context: Puritanism and the Particular Baptists

To understand Collin's theology as an expression of Puritanism requires definition—an exercise roughly comparable to nailing Jell-O to a wall. As Liu observes, "A series of questions may be raised, though few of them can be easily and definitely answered."[40] Locating the Particular Baptist tradition within this polysemous Puritan world is no easier task: one historian characterizes it as "one half of a stressful relationship,"[41] while another likens it to "trying to untangle a snarled fishing line in the dark."[42] We locate historically to engage helpfully—clarity here is essential—and it leads naturally to the hotly-contested question of Baptist origins.

Baptist Origin Stories

James M. Carroll's (1852–1931) Landmarkist booklet *The Trail of Blood* famously[43] argues for a perpetual historical succession of Baptists (surprisingly akin to papal defenses,

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[40] Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes.* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986; the quote is in the second paragraph of his preface (unnumbered pages). Brian Cosby gives thorough treatment of this question: "Toward a Definition of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism': A Study in Puritan Historiography" in *Churchman* 122.4: 297–314, and Beeke and Pedersen's discussion in *Meet the Puritans* (2006), xv–xix. Cf. Clifford Boone's survey in *Puritan Evangelism: Preaching for Conversion in late–seventeenth century English Puritanism as seen in the works of John Flavel* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2013), 3–5, and Gribben's in *The Puritan Millennium*, 7–13.

[41] Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), 143; see also his 'Anti–puritanism' in Coffey and Lim (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 19–33 (the definition revisited, 24).

[42] Steve Weaver. "Baptists as Puritans: How Seventeenth–Century London Particular Baptists Viewed Themselves" in *Kettering: A Newsletter of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies* #2, Feb 2015: 17–24; the William Allen quote is in Weaver's essay, 18. Helpful recent book–length studies engaging the question of Baptist identity include Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity: Beginnings in Britain* (Ross–Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications/ Mentor, 2005), vol. 1; Stephen G. Weaver, *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist: Hercules Collins (1647–1702) and Particular Baptist Identity in Early Modern England* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Matthew Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); and Matthew Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity: London Baptists and the Hymn-Singing Controversy* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2022).

[43] Famously, though unconvincingly. His brother, B.H. Carroll (1843–1914), founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, also held a modified version of the successionist view; see his "The Baptists One Hundred Years Ago" and "The Great Unities: The Sixth Unity" in *Baptists and Their Doctrines*, eds. Timothy and Denise George (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 41, 134. A modern scholarly response to the successionist position is a desideratum.

though he would abhor such a comparison) from John the Baptist onward; his historical headcount roped in heretics and sectarians alike as buttressment, provided they immersed. Henry Vedder (1853–1935) similarly posits unbroken continuity after 1610 "established by indubitable documentary evidence."[44]

John Spilsbury (1593–1668), founding minister of the Wapping[45] church Hercules later served for a quarter-century (1676–1702)[46] and signatory of the *First London Baptist Confession* (1644/1646), charted a different course. He sought to demonstrate a distinctively Protestant apostolic continuity while rejecting Roman apostolic succession[47]—a theological continuity doing justice to church history while not giving away the farm doctrinally. Spilsbury's concern was the perpetual coherence of the apostolic *depositum fidei* across history, though not seeking a replacement papacy or reinstating apostleship.[48]

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[44] Henry Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907), 201.

[45] Scholars agree that it is difficult to ascertain the specific year Spilsbury (also spelled in good seventeenth-century fashion as Spillsbury or Spilsbery) began serving the church: 1633, 1638, or somewhere in between? Nathan Sherman's discussion in "The Wapping Baptists: Murky Origins and the Silence of John Spilsbery" in *Baptist Quarterly*, August 2023 (DOI: 10.1080/0005576X.2023.2247693), concludes that we cannot be positive. The extant record does seem to play several discordant notes at once. For context, 1633 is also the year that William Laud (1573–1645) became archbishop of Canterbury. It is an interesting study in contrasts that Spilsbury argues for his distinctive Protestant apostolic continuity as a Separatist! B.R. White (1934–2016) notes that "[T]he nonconforming Edwardean Anglicans under Mary became the Separatists because they regarded the Roman church and its ways as false and its worship as idolatrous." See *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 6. Michael Thompson clarifies that "The John Spilsbury of the Particular Baptist Church in Wapping is not to be confused with the 1650s Puritan minister of Bromsgove, Worchester, of the same name, who died in 1699. Several sources have confused this Puritan non-conformist John Spilsbury with" Collins's predecessor; see his *Outside the Camp: John Spilsbury, the Pioneer of English Particular Baptists* (Charis Publications, 2011), 117n5.

[46] Murdina MacDonald dates his installation as 1677 in *London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2022), 333. So too J.M. Cramp (1796–1881): "Hercules Collins became pastor of the church in Broad-street in 1677. Whether he was Mr. Spilsbury's immediate successor, we have not the means of deciding." In his *Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1871), 345. It is difficult to ascertain whether this difference in dating his installation is based on the calendar changing, actual distinctions made in primary source documents, or inference.

[47] Per Tom Nettles, in private correspondence.

[48] Spilsbury's concern is reflected in Nettles's "coherent-truth model" approach to the question of Baptist

Baptist roots have frequently been treated as an analysis of one family tree possessing two major branches—a model which has its drawbacks, but is not unacceptable. I employ the analogy loosely, recognizing it is a highly-nuanced question. Traditionally, the first branch—Continental Anabaptism—is considered the offspring of the "socially radical and theologically primitivist"[49] Radical Reformation. These Arminians "clashed with the Reformers,"[50] quite particularly in affirming free will and prevenient grace, while denying original sin, divine election, and even aspects of Christ's true humanity.[51] General Baptists, emerging from John Smyth's (ca. 1554–1612) and Thomas Helwys's (ca. 1575–1616) exit from Puritanism, [52] sprang

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history, summarized concisely: "The Bible is the deposit of this truth that tells clearly how God saves fallen, sinful creatures and what constitutes the nature, function, and future of the church." In *The Baptists,* I.35.

[49] G.H. William, s.v. "Radical Reformation," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, III.375.

[50] G.H. William, s.v. "Radical Reformation," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, III.375. Erroll Hulse, while somewhat awkwardly arguing that Anabaptists were essentially early Baptists in nearly 1:1 fashion (21), notes well in *An Introduction to the Baptists* (Northants, England: Carey Publications Ltd., 1976), 13–14, 21 that:

> Those who study the Radical Reformation for the first time should be warned against disillusionment in regard to some of the Reformers. Their part in the persecution of the Anabaptists is not a pleasant subject… Lest we be righteous overmuch about the maltreatment of the Stepchildren let us remember that the Reformers truly believed that social anarchy would prevail if the radical movement was allowed to hold sway. As far as they were concerned, the preservation of the Reformation was at stake and the church-state relationship was essential to the Reformation.

[51] Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power, vol. 4: The Age of Religious Conflict, 16th to 18th Century*. (Ross–Shire, Scotland/UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2016), 309n9. He refers to the "heavenly flesh" Christology prevalent among 16th century Anabaptists, which held that Jesus did not receive his flesh from Mary, but had a unique heavenly flesh prepared for him. To his credit, John Smyth was careful to distance himself from this Docetic falsehood, as was second-generation General Baptist Thomas Grantham (1634–1692); see his *Christianismus Primitivus, or the Ancient Christian Religion* (Cornhill, London: Printed for Francis Smith, 1678), II.3–4.

[52] Anthony Chute, Nathan Finn, and Michael Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 20. Nettles observes in *The Baptists* (I.53) that:

> Difficulties immediately arise in seeking to call John Smyth the first modern Baptist…he was not baptized by immersion nor did he give any defense of that mode…[he] later repudiated his own baptism, as well as those he administered, dissolved the church he established, and sought to be united with the Mennonites in Amsterdam.

Adam Taylor (d. 1832) argues similarly in *The History of the English General Baptists, part first: The English General Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1818).

up from this Anabaptist soil,[53] affirming a general atonement of Christ for all men.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Anabaptists and early Baptists (General and Particular alike) were often lumped together by critics in both Reformed and COE circles, despite publishing efforts demonstrating substantial confessional and theological distinctions. Indeed, the General Baptists "placed their emphasis on concepts which do not even appear in the Particular Baptists."[54] An instance of this tendency is Daniel Featley's (1582–1645) *Καταβαπτισται καταπτυστοι: The Dippers Dipt, or, The Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over head and ears*.[55] The General Baptists themselves soon drifted from their Puritan heritage.[56]

Particular Baptists and the Puritans

On the other branch of the family tree, the Particular Baptists self-consciously identified as sons of the Reformation.[57] They explicitly denounced and distanced themselves from

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[53] Austin Walker notes the distinctive connection between General Baptists, Tudor Anabaptists, and Lollards in *The Excellent Benjamin Keach, second revised edition* (Ontario, CA: Joshua Press, 2015), 35–36n40. Interestingly (if perhaps arguably?) the 1660 General Baptist *Standard Confession* states in its title and its introduction that they are "(falsely) called Ana-Baptists." In William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith, second revised edition*, ed. Bill J. Leonard (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011), 206–207.

[54] Glen Stassen (1936–2014), "Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists," in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 6:4 (October 1962): 341. Stassen cites the General Baptist understanding of baptism itself as signifying an inward cleansing of the heart by means of the candidate's previous repentance. This stance is quite distinctive from how the Particular Baptists confessed it—cf. 2LC 29.1 and its nearly verbatim replication in *The Baptist Catechism* (1693/1695) #97. Hercules Collins follows 2LC 29.1–2 closely in composing his *An Orthodox Catechism* (London, 1680), #68–69; see treatment in Chapter 3, below.

[55] Daniel Featley, *Καταβαπτισται καταπτυστοι: The Dippers Dipt, or, The Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over head and ears, at a Disputation in Southwark : also a large and Full Discourse of their 1. originall, 2. severall sorts, 3. peculiar errours, 4. high attempts against the State, 5. capitall Punishments* (London, 1647).

[56] That is not to assert that there was no relationship between the General and Particular Baptists. We need look no further than Thomas Grantham's desire for greater concord between the two groups, or Thomas Lambe's (d. 1672) retention of the doctrines of original sin, perseverance, and the bondage of the will amidst a General Baptist ministry, to realize that this question is intricately nuanced. See Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 27; cf. Matthew Bingham's assessment in "English Radical Religion and the Invention of the General Baptists, 1609–1660." In *The Seventeenth Century*, Volume 34, Issue 4 (2018): 469–91 (DOI: 10.1080/0268117X.2018.1463287).

[57] Piggott's funeral sermon for Collins summarized his theology to his bereaved congregation: "…his doctrine you have heard…[it] was agreeable to the Sentiments of the Reformed Churches in all Fundamental Articles of the Faith…" *Eleven Sermons*, 235. See Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 239. Richard Muller writes that "The Baptist churches, whether in England or in America, are certainly to be regarded as branches of the

Anabaptism's excesses and errors[58]—in other words, they would probably differ—perhaps vigorously?—with many modern diagrams of the Baptist "family tree." Emerging from the Separatist wing within English Puritanism (specifically, the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey church, rather than Smyth's 1612 congregation),[59] they affirmed *particular* redemption and viewed themselves as Protestantism's "'third wave,' following on from the Reformers and earlier Puritans."[60]

Reformed movement" in Ulrich Lehner, Richard Muller, and A.G. Roeber, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 169. The editors of the 1689 2LC explicitly note twice in their introduction that they are Protestants in doctrine; see Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 226. Hence Pascal Denault concludes, "It is obvious that the Baptists were concerned with identifying themselves with the heritage of the Reformation." *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison Between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013), 10. Hence Tom Hicks summarizes succinctly that they "are not a species of the genus 'Baptist'…[but] of the genus 'Reformed.'" *What is a Reformed Baptist? An Overview of Doctrinal Distinctives* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2024), 20.

[58] This disavowal was evident in the titles of their confessions of faith: for example, the 1644/1646 *First London Baptist Confession of Faith* is formally titled *The Confession of Faith Of Those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called ANABAPTISTS.* The title continues at some length: *As Likewise for the taking off those aspersions which are frequently both in Pulpit and Print, (although unjustly) cast upon them.* Their reference is to the political and social extremism of the Anabaptists. See Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 141–142, 202. Jim Renihan's treatment is also helpful in *For the Vindication of the Truth: A Brief Exposition of the First London Baptist Confession of Faith* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2021), 289–297.

[59] Hereafter, the JLJ church. Nettles argues that "the Particular Baptists had an independent origin" from Smyth and the Anabaptists in *The Baptists*, I.53; cf. his "'Traditional' Baptists Under the Microscope of History," in *The Founders Journal* #89 (Summer 2012): 7–8. In consensus: Thomas Crosby, *The History of the Baptists*, 4 vols (London: Printed for the Editor, 1738–1740), reprinted in 2 vols by Church History Research and Archives (Lafayette, TN: 1978), I.ii; Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, (London: Printed for the Author, 1811–1830), I.v, vi; Robert Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1980), 40–41; Michael Haykin's "British Baptist Origins: From Thomas Helwys to Andrew Fuller" in Thomas Kidd, Paul Miller, and Andrew Walker's *Baptist Political Theology* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023), 49; Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 25; Michael Haykin, "Declaring Before God, Angels, and Men…that wholesome Protestant Doctrine: The Historical Context of the Second London Confession," in Robert Gonzalez, Jr., ed. *The Confessing Baptist: Essays on the Use of Creeds in Baptist Faith & Life* (Conway, AR: Free Grace Press, 2021), 60.

[60] Austin Walker, "The 1677/1689 Confession of Faith: A Historical Overview," in Rob Ventura, ed. *A New Exposition of the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* (Ross-Shire, Scotland/Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications/Mentor, 2022), 22; echoing his previous argument in *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, locating their understanding of themselves as such in their continuing the work of reform by "exposing…and reject[ing] the error of paedobaptism and all that it implied," 40. To this point, Jim Renihan notes that "It is a mistake to draw a straight line from the paedobaptist Puritan ecclesiological writings to the beliefs and practices of the Baptists." *Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists, 1675–1705* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock/Paternoster, 2008), xx. Similarly insightful (if not persuasive at every turn) is Gordon Belyea, "Origins of the Particular Baptists," in *Themelios* 32:3 (May 2007): 40–67. We must understand their distinctiveness and desires within the broader context and complexities of Puritanism, while recognizing their unique concerns and contributions within both its theological corpus and ecclesiology.

The Puritans (broadly conceived) were a diverse company: conscientiously Protestant, vigorously Calvinistic, robustly confessional, convictionally experimental. They appeared appearing "not a monolithic structure—not, in short, as 'Calvinism'—but as a form of Augustinian theology and piety capable of considerable variation in its form and presentation."[61] Within their number were men of tender biblical consciences, patient pastoral hearts, and impressive exegetical and theological comprehension. They hailed from multiple quarters; its shared theological core and confessional expression included pastors and churches within COE, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Particular Baptist circles.

Puritanism, properly considered, existed within the bounds of the COE. Its Reformed, confessional, theocentric, experiential-doctrinal core, however, reached across the Conforming aisle to encompass Nonconformist Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Particular Baptists, and found counterparts in Dutch, French, Scottish, Swiss, Irish, and American contexts embracing its fundamental theological instincts and drives. Rigid insistence upon defining Puritanism in the narrowest of understandings[62] is to remove many of the Westminster divines from its ranks, alongside Independents, Congregationalists and Presbyterians such as John Bunyan (1628–1688), James Ussher (1581–1656), Thomas Watson (ca. 1620–1686), John Flavel (ca. 1627–

[61] Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Durham: Labyrinth, 1986), 176. For expanded treatment: Crawford Gribben and Graeme Murdock, eds. *Cultures of Calvinism in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[62] For example, Richard Greaves (1938–2004): "Puritanism can be usefully defined as those Protestants in the Church of England who sought to purge both ceremony and liturgy of Catholic accretions and who shared a distinctive religious experience." The definition is correct in the narrowest of technical readings, and yet wildly inadequate. In Ronald Fritze, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Tudor England,1485–1603*, s.v. "Puritanism" (Westport, CT/London: Greenwood Press, 1991), 405–406. In our day, R. Scott Clark has carved a niche for himself in denying that there is a category of "Puritanism"; he frequently names the descriptor as a better marketing catchphrase than historical denominator. While acknowledging wide diversity within English Protestantism—for instance, Baxter is unsound on justification, differing from any "Puritan" confession; Flavel and Owen differ on polity; Conformists and Nonconformists (often denoted as Separatists) sparred over the regulative principle's validity and application; Henry Jessey and John Bunyan held mediating views on baptism—those within recognized Reformational, Three Forms, or Westminsterian-stream confessional bounds are generally intended by the term as it is used in this thesis.

1691), Thomas Brooks (1608–1680), John Owen (1616–1683), Stephen Charnock (1628–1680), and many others.

In the strictest definition, Puritanism was "born in Geneva [and] christened in England"[63] —a reform movement within the COE, led primarily by pastors deeply concerned for its "but halfly reformed"[64] state. One writer aptly summarized its tensions in presenting "a Romish ritual, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy."[65] Originally, the term "Puritan" connoted derision, scorn, and even heresy. Despised as *catharii* (from καθαρός, pure[66]) and precisionists, these Christians "did not, at least at first, call themselves Puritans…[but] indignantly repudiated the word, since to anyone versed in church history it implied…perfectionist heres[ies]."[67]

Later caricatures and witticisms quipping that the Puritans lived in the haunting fear that someone somewhere was happy,[68] or Garrison Keillor's joke that his Puritan ancestors came to America in search of greater restrictions than were possible under English law at that time, certainly make us smile—but also capture well something of prevailing attitudes toward the Puritans in their day. To say that they were hated might well constitute the understatement of the century.

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[63] Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997), 49.

[64] So William Fuller (1579/80–1659), chaplain to Elizabeth I, complained to his queen: the Reformation had proceeded "but halfly forward and more than halfly backward." From "Booke to the Queen," in *The Second Part of a Register*, ii.52, as cited in Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 29, 36. Impatience with the slow pace of reformation led to the Separatists being known as "hasty Puritans!" (B.R. White, *The English Separatist Movement*, xiv).

[65] Lord Henry Brougham (1778–1868), as quoted in David Steele and Curtis Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963), 71.

[66] It was "a title initially given to medieval heretics"—which has undergone quite the shift in usage today! Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans* (2006), xv.

[67] Patrick Collinson, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, s.v. "Puritanism," 365–366.

[68] H.L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 624.

Puritanism's Expressions: A Common Theological Core

These pastors endured frequent social hostility, real persecution, and the constant threat of informants and betrayers amidst the perpetual uncertainty of royally-imposed religious change. Yet they remained steadfast, insisting on Scripture's primacy in all of life: biblical authority was of utmost consequence and authority; biblical faithfulness was expected of shepherd and sheep alike; biblical worship springing from biblically-ordered hearts and churches was the aim. Puritanism sought "to effect thoroughgoing reforms of ecclesiastical practice…and a godly way of life,"[69] concerning itself with glorifying and enjoying God from a biblically—informed conscience[70] devoid of offense toward God and man (Acts 24:16). A Puritan, as Horton Davies (1916–2005) described him, "longed for further reformation in England according to the word of God," and J.I. Packer (1926–2020) notes that it "was at heart a spiritual movement, passionately concerned with God and godliness."[71]

John Geree's (ca. 1600–1649) depiction enheartens with its ethos, even in its explanation of aspiration:

> He was careful in all relations to know, and to duty, and that with singleness of heart as unto Christ. He accounted religion an engagement to duty, that the best Christians should be best husbands, best wives, best parents, best children, best masters, best servants, best magistrates, best subjects, that the doctrine of God might be adorned, not blasphemed…he was immoveable in all times, so that they who in the midst of many opinions have lost the view of true religion, may

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[69] Ernest Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria/ Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), 17.

[70] So John McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 263–265 (in English Puritanism), 275–276 (in American Puritanism).

[71] Davies, *Worship of the English Puritans*, 11; Packer, *Quest for Godliness*, 28. Packer styles it "essentially a movement for church reform, pastoral renewal and evangelism, and spiritual revival; and in addition—indeed, as a direct expression of its zeal for God's honour—it was a world-view, a total Christian philosophy…" William Haller (1885–1974) notes that "Puritanism, so called, was nothing new or totally unrelated to the past, but something old, deep–seated, and English, with roots reaching far back into medieval life…a movement for reform of religion, Puritan in spirit, begun by the successors of Chaucer's parson early in the reign of Elizabeth." In *The Rise of Puritanism, or, The Way to the New Jerusalem as Set Forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570–1643*. (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 5.

return to him and find it.[72]

This impulse for biblical and theological reform expressed itself comprehensively. The Puritan vision of God, painstakingly mined out from Scripture, birthed an irrepressible drive to a relentless examination of every doctrine in sacred Writ's unflinching light. This theological center spanned denominational[73] lines—even if not often recognized at the time—and begat a mighty voicing in the Puritan corpus. To term their literary output "massive" constitutes a significant understatement: as Nigel Smith notes, "Being a Puritan often meant being an author, and nowhere was this truer than in London."[74]

To realize that most of its (substantial!) treatises began as sermons "or works of edification directly derived from sermons"[75] boggles the modern atheological mind. These pastor-theologians sought to reform every aspect of their churches by the preached word of God, bringing the "whole counsel" (Acts 20:27) to bear on the whole man. They insisted upon the principle of *sola Scriptura*: the Bible alone must define not only faith and worship, but all of life —home, hands, and heart.

Confessional Continuity and Coherence

That commitment led to differing conclusions regarding the church's fundamental identity and nature: Establishmentarian Conformity, or Separatist Nonconforming[76]

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[72] Excerpted from *The Character of an old English Puritane, or Non-Conformist* (London: W. Wilson, for Christopher Meredith, 1646).

[73] I recognize the highly anachronistic nature of this term here and use it strictly for delineating and distinguishing purposes—not attempting any historical "import" role.

[74] Nigel Smith, "Literature and London," in David Loewenstein and Janel Murel, eds. *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 722. See too on this head Smith's *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 23–72.

[75] William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 25.

Independency. It birthed sacramental and ecclesial breaking points regarding the proper subjects of baptism (credobaptism or paedobaptism) and specifics of polity (episcopal, presbyterian, or congregationalist governance), evidenced by distinct confessions of faith: the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571), the *Westminster Confession* (1646), the *Savoy Declaration* (1658), and the *First and Second London Baptist Confession(s)* (1644/1646/1677/1689). Retaining Puritan instincts within a Separatist context, Particular Baptist congregations arose from the "antecedent"[77] JLJ Independent Congregationalist church.

Despite intense intramural debates—pastoral, political, and printed[78]—three centuries'

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[76] J.P. Kenyon observes (a bit more strictly, but helpful for sketching downstream development) that "After 1660…Puritanism was subsumed into nonconformity." In his *A Dictionary of British History*, s.v. "Puritanism" (London: Secker & Warburg, 1981), 293. Timothy Larsen elsewhere elaborates:

> In an English context, the term 'Nonconformity' usually refers only to Protestant Dissenters during times when the Established Church was itself Protestant. Such communities can be identified in the sixteenth century, but a continuous, stable Nonconformist tradition is better traced from the second half of the seventeenth century.

He goes on to locate the Baptists as emerging from the nonconforming Congregationalists of the seventeenth century in *Friends of Religious Equality: Nonconformist Politics in Mid-Victorian England* (Great Britian: The Boydell Press, 1999), 15–16.

[77] Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 40–41. See Michael A.G. Haykin and Terry L. Wolever (1957–2020), eds. *The British Particular Baptists* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2019), I.87–116; Hulse, *Introduction to the Baptists*, 25; Nettles, *The Baptists,* I.112; and Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1987), 42–44. It is in this context that Liu observes that the "specter of Independency loomed large in the City of London." See his *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes*, 103.

[78] Online comment thread battles of today have nothing on the "pamphlet wars" of the seventeenth century. J. Gresham Machen's (1881–1937) "warrior children" verbiage comes to mind as an apt descriptor! For a small taste of the struggle, see Thomas Corns's fascinating "Radical pamphleteering" in N.H. Keeble, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of the English Revolution* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 71–86. See further Stephen Bardle, *The Literary Underground in the 1660s: Andrew Marvell, George Wither, Ralph Wallis, and the World of Restoration Satire and Pamphleteering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britian* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Toward the broader literary culture of Early Modern England, see Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds., *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Alan Sinfield, *Literature in Protestant England, 1560–1660* (New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2009); and Erin Peters, *Commemoration and Oblivion in Royalist Print Culture, 1658–1667* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

removal affords a wider view: the core theology which defined Puritanism was utterly biblical and Reformed. Proper distinctions inherent within polities, ecclesiologies, and sacramentologies must be acknowledged, and specific historical points of political and physical tension given their due; yet, granting its broader cross-denominational expressions,[79] Puritanism presented a remarkable theological coherence in its common foundation of creedal, confessional, and catechetical conviction. As Liu reminds us:

> [T]he divisions between the Presbyterians and the Independents began to become hardened only when the Civil War was near its end…[it] must not conceal the fact that there had, indeed, existed a united Puritan brotherhood and alliance, strenuous as it might have been, at the beginning of the Revolution…when the Revolution began, all Puritan groups—future Presbyterians, future "middle way" Independents, and future sectarians—were allies against a common enemy: the Laudian episcopate. …. [T]he Independents—that is, both the "middle way" men and the so-called sectarians—were an essential part of a united Puritan front.[80]

This theological coherence focused intentionally on a robust Calvinism joined with what they often called "heart-religion" or "heart-work."[81] They shared a vision of God as the triune, self-existent, holy, sovereign Lord, the One who alone had acted in righteousness to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21) in his Son and by his Spirit—hence the great commonalities in the confessional and catechetical standards they produced. They held forth a shared pattern of personal, familial, and congregational piety—lived in the light of Scripture, under the providence

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[79] Michael Haykin, *A Cloud of Witnesses: Calvinistic Baptists in the 18th Century* (Gateshead, UK: Athanaeum Press/Evangelical Times, 2006), 22.

[80] Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 105. Liu is careful to note that distinctions in doctrine and polity remained, but were set aside—in writing!—in a united recognition of mutual Reformed instincts and desires, occasioning a united response to the threat posed by Laud. Both sides pledged that:

> [F]or advancing the publicke cause of a happy Reformation…neither side should preach, print, or dispute or otherwise act against the other's way : And this to continue 'til both sides, in a full meeting, did declare to the contrary. (Ibid., 105; this quote he provides is cited from Vicars, *The Schismatick Sifted*, 15–16).

[81] J. I. Packer, "The Puritan Approach to Worship," in *Puritan Papers vol. 3, 1963–1964* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 9. Horton Davies, in his otherwise-excellent *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603–1690* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 495, seemingly misreads the nature of this "heart-work" in its Particular Baptist expression, charging them with being "already over half-way towards Quakerism."

of God, and animated by eschatological hope secured in the new covenant of grace.

The "Mighty Exact" Particular Baptists

Matthew Bingham argues that the Particular Baptists understood themselves as "baptistic congregationalists," nonconformists interacting frequently with other recusant Independents, but self-consciously and intentionally Reformed.[82] They located themselves squarely within the Reformed confessional and creedal stream,[83] while owning a distinct covenant theology[84] and seeking to apply specific ecclesiological convictions reached through careful biblical exegesis and theological reasoning. These convictions, exercised with an intentional pastoral focus, included regenerate membership; biblically-regulated worship; the baptism of disciples alone; preaching of an expository, evangelistic, experiential, and doctrinal nature; catechesis; diligent church discipline; and earnest efforts to maintain church purity and a

[82] See his *Orthodox Radicals*, 9; cp. Tom Nettles's gracious-and-probing response to Bingham in his review of *Orthodox Radicals* in *The Journal of Andrew Fuller Studies*, no. 2 (Feb. 2021): 98–100. For our purposes, it is worth noting the specific verbiage Hercules Collins uses to classify himself on the title page of his 1682 work: *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England, and the Unreasonableness of Persecution Upon that Account, Soberly Debated, in a Dialogue between a Conformist, and a Nonconformist (Baptist)*. The question of historical Baptist identity is indeed nuanced, complex, and multi-layered. See further Bingham's "Reformed Baptist: Anachronistic Oxymoron or Useful Signpost?" In *On Being Reformed: Debates over a Theological Identity*, eds. Crawford Gribben and Scott Spurlock (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 27–52.

[83] As evidenced by their employment of the Westminster and Savoy confessional and catechetical tradition. Witness Particular Baptist creedalism in Hercules Collins's inclusion of the four major ecumenical creeds with his *An Orthodox Catechism*: Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian, and the Definition of Chalcedon. In his preface, Collins affirms that his is "a day of great declension in love to God and to one another also," and intends to do what he can to help preserve "those Gospel truths, the least of which is worth more than our lives." Davies questionably argues that initial Puritan creedalism (pragmatically?) gave way to the "substitutes" of confessions and eventually church covenants in *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1997), 273–277. Hercules was a pastor-theologian who underwent principled suffering for his doctrine—he was practical, but not a pragmatist. I cannot presently see this pattern or trajectory as holding true within his corpus.

[84] For example, read Thomas Patient's (d. 1666) *Baptism and the Distinction of the Covenants* (London: Henry Hills, 1654), or Nehemiah Coxe's (d. 1689) *A Discourse of the Covenants That God made with Men before the Law* (London: Printed by J.D., 1681). Pascal Denault's *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison between Seventeenth–Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013) traces this theme usefully, as does Samuel Renihan—see his "Above and Beyond: Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist Covenant Theology" in *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 26.1 (2022): 90–114. Hercules Collins likewise employs a faithful baptistic covenant theology throughout his corpus (briefly discussed in chapter 3).

biblically-qualified ministry.

Hercules Collins expressed this conviction creatively through a simulated discussion:

> Conformist: You are mighty exact, neighbour.
> Nonconformist: So we ought to be in the things of God.[85]

These Particular Baptists distinguished themselves by their insistence upon consistently applying the regulative principle (or "the Puritan principle of worship"; hereafter RPW)[86]—that Scripture alone provides the warrant for the church's faith and worship. While independent Congregationalists emphasized a body composed of "visible saints,"[87] Particular Baptists extended the RPW's application to a strictly confessor's ecclesiology[88]: they considered that Christ governs by his Word both his worship (e.g., sacramentology) and his worshipers (the consequent church fellowship and membership). Their debates over close, closed, and open communion[89] were not mere boundary-drawing, but public pastoral exercises in consistently applying their exegetical arguments to the life of the church. Their zealous effort reveals incredible ministerial concern.

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[85] Hercules Collins, *Some Reasons for Separation* (London: John How, 1682), 6.

[86] William Young (1918–2015) appears to have coined the term in his "The Puritan Principle of Worship," in *Puritan Papers vol. 1, 1956–1959* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 141–153; the article later appeared serially under Johannes G. Vos's (1903–1983) editorship in "Blue Banner Faith and Life" (1959–1961), vols. 14–16.

[87] The language is found in the *First London Baptist Confession* (1644/1646), XXXIII. Geoffrey F. Nuttall's *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), and Edmund S. Morgan's *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1963 both similarly utilize the verbiage in their respective treatments of the Puritans.

[88] Renihan, *Edification and Beauty*, 37.

[89] For example, William Kiffin's (1616–1701) 1681 *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church Communion* (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, repr. 2006) was directed against John Bunyan's open communion and open membership practices; see pp. 13, 61, and Nettles, *The Baptists,* I.138–142. It prompted Bunyan's reply in *On the Terms of Communion and Fellowship of Christians at the Table of the Lord*, in *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), II.591–674. Given Kiffin's history of working closely with John Spilsbury in the early 1650s, this conflict seems to have been a matter of close concern for him both theologically and personally; cf. Larry Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and His World, part 3* (Regent's Park College, Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, 2013), 204–208. Recall here that Henry Jessey (1603–1663) practiced both open communion and open membership.

To cement these exertions, they systemized their theology both confessionally[90] and catechetically. The RPW appears consistently and prominently in the early Particular Baptist symbols:

> *John Spilsbury's Confession* (1643): #10.
> *The First London Baptist Confession* (1644/1646): chapters VIII, XXXIII, XLVIII.
> *The Somerset Confession* (1656): chapters XX, XXIV–XXV, XIX–XXX.
> *The Second London Baptist Confession* (1677/1689): chapters 22.1, 22.5, 26.5.
> *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680): #108–110.
> *The Baptist Catechism* (1693/1695): #56–58.

Ecclesiological Conviction and Hercules Collins

These commitments anchored the Particular Baptists firmly in their Puritan roots. Applying the RPW as per its NT exposition meant rejecting Augustine's conception of the *corpus permixtum*,[91] instead insisting that only believers—not infants—be baptized. Consistent with seventeenth-century Particular Baptist literature, Collins argues for a confessor's baptism in seven of his twelve major works:

> *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680).
> *Some Reasons for Separation* (1682).
> *Believer's Baptism* (1691).
> *Animadversions upon the Responses of the Athenian Mercury* (1691[92]).
> *The Antidote Proved a Counterfeit* (1693).
> *The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism Shaken* (1695).
> *Truth and Innocency Vindicated* (1695).[93]

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[90] On this head, cf. James Renihan, "'An Ingenious Unfolding of Our Principles': Confessionalism Among 17th Century Particular Baptists," in Thomas Ascol and Nathan Finn, eds., *Ministry By His Grace and For His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2011), 249–263.

[91] Helpfully considered in Brett Williams, "Augustine's View of the Church as Revealed in his Use of Cyprian's *Contra Donatistas*" in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, #27 (Allen Park, MI, 2022): 103–111.

[92] Weaver demonstrates that while *Animadversions Upon the Responses of the Athenian Mercury* is "often listed as having been published in 1692, probably because it has an advertisement for Collins' *Believer's Baptism from Heaven* 'lately printed,' which is known to have been published in 1691," it had to have been printed in 1691 as well. See "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 46n202. An absorbing introduction to *Athenian Mercury* is in Helen Berry, "An Early Coffee House Periodical and Its Readers: the *Athenian Mercury*, 1691–1697," in *The London Journal*, Volume 25, Issue 1:14–33 (DOI: 10.1179/ldn.2000.25.1.14); developed a bit further in her *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003).

These works, together with his signature on 2LC (1689),[94] clearly stake out his position. While credobaptism is certainly not his sole focus in all seven works, Collins's expositions of the doctrine are consistently theological, pastoral, and Scriptural. For him, only professing, visible saints were qualified to constitute a church's membership—fit to carry its privileges and duties, submit to its censures by discipline, and enjoy the blessings of its ministry.

While the Particular Baptists cared for other churches—for example, the Wapping congregation's Christmas offering for Benjamin Keach after he was robbed in 1679[95] and 2LC's emphasis on churches "holding communion [that is, fellowship] together" for the "mutual edification" and aid of churches needing aid, counsel, or encouragement[96]—their ecclesiology was primarily expressed at the local level.[97] This Separatist instinct in pursuit of faithfulness led Henry Jacob to demit COE ministry, forming London's first independent church[98]; it led John Spilsbury to withdraw Jessey's successor John Lathrop's[99] (1584–1653) ministry to join the church meeting at Old Gravel Lane in Wapping (1633/1638), receiving their appointment as

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[93] *Truth and Innocency Vindicated* also argues that children dying in infancy are numbered among God's elect, foreshadowing Charles Spurgeon's (1834–1892) position in his re-issuance of *The Baptist Catechism* some 160 years later. On twelve works, if one includes *The English Spira* in his corpus (assuming he was its primary editor), the number rises to thirteen works in all.

[94] The 1689 was reprinted in 1699 with the names of the 37 initial signatories included.

[95] *Wapping Church Book*, entries on December 25, 1679, and December 30, 1679; the church ultimately raised three pounds, eight shillings for Keach.

[96] 2LC 26.14–15.

[97] Cf. Matthew Bingham, "On the Idea of a National Church: Reassessing Congregationalism in Revolutionary England," in *Church History* 88, no. 1 (March 2019): 27–57 (DOI: 10.1017/S0009640719000519).

[98] On the Separatists, see B.R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, and Michael Haykin, "Separatists and Baptists," in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, vol. 1: The Post-Reformation Era, 1559–1689*, ed. John Coffey (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2020), 113–138. Consistent with the heritage of his Separatist forebears, Hercules strongly rejected a national church, insisting to his imagined interlocutor that he could not affirm "a church national. For you say a true church is a 'company of faithful men, etc.' and you do not suppose the whole nation to be such, I humbly conceive.'" *Some Reasons for Separation*, 3.

[99] Sometimes also spelled "Lothropp" or "Lothrop."

pastor of what is widely considered London's first Particular Baptist church.[100] The same theological convictions brought John Norcott (ca. 1621–1675/1676) to that office after Spilsbury's death, and led Hercules Collins to the Wapping pastorate on March 23, 1676.[101]

Hercules, Located Pastorally

The Man Everyone Names and No One Knows

Hercules Collins was born ca. 1646 during the uneasy pause of a temporary ceasefire between the English civil wars.[102] His birthplace remains unknown, but he entered a nation undergoing interregnal awkwardness—Britain's theological invertebracy mirroring her temporary lack of a monarch. That same year, the "parliamentary advisory body" known as the Westminster Assembly published their influential *Confession of Faith.*[103] Bingham notes that:

> Collin's life spanned some of England's most tumultuous decades, and this influential minister is commonly regarded as having become one of the key figures in London Baptist life by the start of the long eighteenth-century.[104]

His early years unfolded under the Republican Commonwealth (1649–1653) and the respective protectorates of Oliver (1653–1658) and Robert Cromwell (1658–1659), followed by

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[100] So Ernest Kevan (1903–1965), *London's Oldest Baptist Church: Wapping 1633–Walthamstow 1933* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1933); Robert Oliver, *From John Spilsbury to Ernest Kevan: The Literary Contribution of London's Oldest Baptist Church* (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1984). Nathan Sherman, given "sparse primary documents," raises the question as to whether this church is indeed the first Particular Baptist congregation; see his "The Wapping Baptists: Murky Origins and the Silence of John Spilsbery" in *Baptist Quarterly*, August 2023 (DOI: 10.1080/0005576X.2023.2247693). Michael Thompson notes that "The Spilsbury church was a group of Protestant believers…gathered together by God with no certainties about the future." *Outside the Camp*, 114.

[101] Ivimey records that Collins "succeeded Mr. Norcott, and was settled as pastor of this [Wapping] church in 1677." In *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1823), III.301.

[102] The first was from 1642–1646; the second, February–August 1648.

[103] Sinclair Ferguson, in Ferguson and Mark Dever, *The Westminster Directory of Public Worship* (Scotland, U.K.: Christian Focus, 2008), 24.

[104] Matthew Bingham, "Becoming 'The Baptists': Baptistic Denominational Development at the Beginning of the 'Long' Eighteenth Century" (presently unpublished paper).

the restoration of Charles II in 1660. The next twenty-eight years under Charles II (r. 1660–1685) and James II (r. 1685–1688) have aptly been termed the "Era of the Great Persecution"[105] of English religious dissenters. Some two thousand Puritan ministers were expelled from their churches in 1662's "Great Ejection," though its "immediate, personal impact at the time" on the Baptists "was marginal."[106]

As with many historical figures, little is known of his early years, few personal details appear in his corpus, and most scholars pass quickly over his life: Collins is often named, but little known. Thompson Cooper (1837–1904) observes[107] that John Piggot's funeral sermon (leaned on heavily by biographers and historians) "contains no biographical particulars,"[108] though a careful reading offers snapshots of his character. Piggott provides a hint concerning his childhood: Hercules "began to be religious early,"[109] perhaps reflecting a religious upbringing.[110]

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[105] B.R. White, *The English Baptists of the 17th Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1985), 93. Even more to the point: "For most of the period between 1558 and 1689, the English state can be described as a persecuting state. It was committed to securing religious uniformity, and to achieve that end it was prepared to employ coercive measures." In John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (Harlow, England: Longman Publishing Group, 2000), 11.

[106] White, *English Baptists of the 17th Century*, 101; he further notes that "some seven hundred ministers whose appointments had been made during the interregnum had already been compelled to vacate their livings by various kinds of pressure before this," 102. In other words, 1662's Great Ejection simply culminated a long-term series of Protestant ministerial terminations.

Geoffrey Nuttall, echoing White, concurs that the Great Ejection also encompassed some Baptists; see "Another Baptist Ejection (1662): The Case of John Norcott"; in William Brackney, Paul Fiddes, and John Briggs, eds., *Pilgrim Pathways: Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B.R. White* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 186.

[107] "A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the The Reverend Mr. Hercules Collins, Late Minister of the Gospel," in John Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 201–240. Steve Weaver surveys the sermon in *The British Particular Baptists*, I.371–373.

[108] Thompson Cooper (1837–1904), s.v. "Collins, Hercules (d. 1702)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1885–1900*, ed. Leslie Stephen (1832–1904) (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1887), vol. 11, 367–368.

[109] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

[110] Michael A.G. Haykin, s.v. "Collins, Hercules (d. 1702)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), eds. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, vol. 12, 709: "A keen interest in Christianity showed itself at an early age, which may indicate religious parentage." Steve Weaver concurs in "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., SBTS, 2013), 10.

Apparently Collins was converted ca. 1669,[111] just three years after the Great Fire of London (1666[112]); it seems he began preaching shortly afterward.

On September 6, 1669, he married Sara Peirson in Croxton, west of Cambridge, and worked as a "taylor" (tailor) through at least 1683.[113] In *The Scribe Instructed* (1696), Hercules records that Sara loved the Scriptures; amidst a "variety of temptations" faced by his "dearest relation,"[114] she found great comfort in their pages. Their union of thirty-three years was marked with both joys and sorrows under God's providence: they were graced with at least one son, Joshua (b. 1673), who died in September 1685 at age twelve. One need not speculate long to suppose that many of those varied temptations were occasioned by that sorrow, on the heels of Hercules having been released from the Newgate gaol only some eleven months prior to Joshua's death (August 1684). Hercules's battles with chronic illness may also have contributed to Sara's godly dependence on Scripture.

Collins "had not a learned education,"[115] as Thomas Crosby (1683–1751) records, yet

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[111] In his *Three Books*, the letter of dedication introducing *The Scribe Instructed* and *Mountains of Brass* notes that these works contain things learned in his twenty-seven years as a Christian, probably referring to his conversion; this would put it around the age of twenty-three. It does bear considering, however, that at one point in *The Scribe Instructed*, Collins refers to an event some twenty-eight years prior, which raises the possibility of the twenty-seven years reference either 1) being a common typographical error or 2) referencing the timeframe of his calling to the ministry.

[112] Ronald Fritze and William Robison, eds., s.v. "London," in *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603–1689* (Westport, CT/London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 305. The Great Fire's aftermath featured regularly in Puritan preaching, offering a fruitful reference point for applying the gospel's call to lost men with urgency. For example, Thomas Vincent (1634–1678) wrote *Gods Terrible VOICE in the City, Wherein you have I. The sound of the voice in the history of the two late Dreadful Judgments of Plague and Fire in London. 2. The interpretation of the voice in a Discovery of the Cause and Design of these judgments* (London, 1667); repr. *God's Terrible Voice in the City* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997).

[113] *Middlesex County Records: Indictments, Recognizances, Coroners' Inquisitions Post–Mortem, Orders, Memoranda, and Certificates of Convictions of Conventiclers*, temp. *19 Charles II to 4 James II*. (London: Middlesex County Records Society, 1892), IV.208–209, as cited in Steve Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 15. The embittered, suicidal John Child (1638?–1684) attempted besmirching Collins's reputation very publicly in his *A Second Argument* (London, 1684), 6—dishonoring him as a "Taylor" and accusing him of being therefore unfit to serve as a pastor.

[114] Collins, *The Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*, 20–21.

what survives of his life opens a window into Collins's soul—revealing a man of remarkable diligence. Habitual earnestness in studies marked his life—by the time of his death, he had amassed a respectable library, and his prolific writing demonstrates that he used it faithfully.[116] Ivimey does not dismiss his lack of university training, but recognizes that his private labors bore much fruit: "It appears from Mr. Collins's publications, that he was a man of respectable learning."[117]

We may readily conclude that he was disciplined and careful in self-education. His unflagging labors in preaching, pastoral care, and exhortations to ministerial candidates[118] offer further glimpses into his mind and heart. Placed alongside his own suffering for the gospel, these fragments of the historical record reveal one marked by an immense love for Christ.

Hercules, "Actually and Habitually Ready"[119]

"Zealously Bent to Promote" the Interests of Christ

In Piggott's funeral sermon, he describes Collins as a man "actually and habitually

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[115] Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists, from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I* (London: 1740), III.129. On Puritan views toward education, see John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Toward Reason, Learning, and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[116] Samuel Renihan's unpublished lecture notes for HT45, "Historical Origins of Baptist Covenant Theology" (a course at Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary), include his photo of a probate inventory list from Hercules Collins's home following his death on October 4, 1702. Under the heading "Back Garrett," it records "300 of books of which is 50 large ones & the rest all small books." Accessed at The London Metropolitan Archives: TLA DL/C/B/030/MS09174/028/024. Probate Inventory of Hercules Collins, taken 24 October 1702. See Appendix One.

[117] Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, III.305.

[118] Weaver notes in "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 55, that Collins was regularly asked to preach at the ordinations of young ministers. Hercules held ordination in very high regard, urging churches not to neglect or lose it in his 1702 *The Temple Repair'd* (#7 in "Additional Word"), and esteeming preparation for gospel labors as of critical importance; *The Temple Repair'd* serves as something of a ministerial training manual. Discussed in chapter 5, below.

[119] John Piggott, "A Funeral Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr. Hercules Collins preach'd Octob. 9. 1702. from Mat. 24. 44. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh," in Piggott's *Eleven Sermons*, 211, 235. The sermon is edifying: both evangelistic and experiential.

ready." By *habitual* readiness, he means that Hercules was truly converted, resting in Christ's righteousness alone for the forgiveness of sin; it was his habit to hope in Jesus. Such readiness for death and judgment consisted in "a relative Change in the State, and a real Change in the Nature of a Man."[120] The result of this new state (justification) and new nature (regeneration)?[121] "Such a one will live a Life of Communion with God, and Conformity to him,"[122] as Collins's church had long witnessed in him.

Actual readiness consists in a believer's "frame,"[123] or habitually and increasingly holy actions and affections shaped by grace, joined with freedom from the "tormenting and slavish" fear of death. This "frame" will be established by means of "consider[ing] what Christ hath done for him,"[124] through "diligen[ce] in the discharge of every Duty, and in the exercise of every Grace,"[125] remembering that "no time is properly ours but the present."[126] He assures the mourning congregation their "late worthy" pastor died "in [precisely] such a posture of Soul."[127]

Collins was consistent in his example: Piggot notes that his life, "seen for many years…did adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour."[128] He was steady in deportment, even while

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[120] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 211, 235.

[121] Special thanks to my dear friend and co-editor on *The Works of Hercules Collins*, Mark Smith, for his concise verbiage here.

[122] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 215.

[123] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 216.

[124] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 220. Piggott went on to explain the distinction concisely: "Now Christ having by his Death fully satisfy'd for Sin, Death hereby is disarm'd of its Sting and Terror, the Guilt of Sin is remov'd by the Merit of our Saviour's Blood, and the Power of it destroy'd by the Efficacy of his Spirit: And when these are witness'd to the Conscience, and the Person is well assur'd concerning 'em, the slavish Fears of Death do vanish" (221).

[125] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 222.

[126] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 231. Again: "'Tis only the present time that is ours, yet that is sliding away while I am speaking to you" (232).

[127] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

suffering "Imprisonment for the Name of Christ…[h]e was not shock'd"—that is, overwhelmed or disheartened—"by the Fury of Persecutors."[129] A distinct humility marked Hercules: he was one consistently walking in the fear of the Lord, but "not…lift[ed] up above measure." His patience, tenderness, and godly response to trials—trials which "kept him at the foot of Christ"—embodied beautifully what Hugh Binning (1627–1653) described as "heart-humiliation."[130]

His speech bore "a becoming Seriousness," marked by a constant desire to "promot[ing] Religious Discourse," a "Practice" Piggott lamented was "almost out of fashion." Collins was one "zealously bent to promote the Interest of the Lord Redeemer"[131]—not merely fulfilling the course of his duty as a minister, but as the burning of "a constant Flame" within him as "one entirely devoted to the Service of the Temple."[132] His dealings with the things and people of God were not dry, impersonal, detached, but his joy and delight—Hercules always spoke of Christ "with a due relish."[133]

His happy devotion to Jesus was evident in his sound doctrine through two-and-a-half decades of public labors. Under his ministry, what his congregation unswervingly "heard…was agreeable to the Sentiments of the Reformed Churches in all Fundamental Articles of Faith,"[134] characterizing his consistent biblical and confessional fidelity. As Hercules humbly but firmly owns in his preface to *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680), "I concenter with the most Orthodox

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[128] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

[129] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

[130] See Scottish philosopher's Hugh Binning moving *Heart Humiliation or Miscellany Sermons, preached upon some choice texts at several solemn occasions* (Edinburg: R. Fleming and Co., 1735). Published posthumously.

[131] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235, 237.

[132] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235, 237.

[133] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 236.

[134] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

Divines in the Fundamental Principles and Articles of the Christian Faith."[135]

In an otherwise-excellent article, D.A. Carson once wrote that the seventeenth-century Particular Baptists were "theologically tight and sound" but "as cold as corpses."[136] Whatever may be true of others among their number, Hercules Collins stands out as a compelling counter-example: in his case, the charge simply does not hold water.

A Diligent Servant of the Word

Collins proved himself a diligent student of the Scriptures, having developed "a solid Acquaintance with Divine Things"[137]; he handled them with reverence and steadfastness. Thought "not [having] some mens Accuracy,"[138] his knowledge was no bare bookishness, but was experiential and personal, the fruit of careful thought on God and his ways, in light of his Word. Piggott reminds the mourning Wapping congregation that Hercules "was much given to meditation" and thus "so often dispers'd Knowledg amongst you" with effectiveness and spiritual strength.[139] That dispersion of "Knowledg" specifically "*amongst* [*them*]" is witnessed enduringly in his published works, as most are addressed to the Wapping congregation.

His self-discipline evidenced itself further in his exemplary work ethic and pastoral

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[135] Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism, Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and Gospel, published For preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error* (London, 1680), 4.

[136] See D.A. Carson, "The Puritans: What They Have That the Moderns Have Not," in *Northwest Journal of Theology* 1 (1972): 80.

[137] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

[138] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235. This assessment reflects his lack of formal education, but constitutes no insult; the case was common for recusant and nonconforming ministers, creating something of an informal but real refusnik class amongst dissenters. James Renihan notes that this was due to the English universities being closed to dissenters at the time, in Michael Haykin and Steve Weaver's *Devoted to the Service of the Temple: Piety, Persecution, and Ministry in the Writings of Hercules Collins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007), xiii.

[139] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 60, 240.

diligence, such that Piggott characterizes his life as "an unwearied Endeavour to recover the decayed Power of Religion." Piggott's sermon urges the congregation to remember "how well he discharged the other Branches of his *Pastoral Function*," specifically citing his careful oversight and ministerial visitation among them for a quarter-century.[140]

Herculean Tenderness and Faithfulness

Collins, Piggot recalls, was an exceptionally loving man. He loved souls: "no man could preach with a more affectionate Regard to the salvation of Souls."[141] Love for his congregation appears early in his ministry: in his preface to *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680), having served them for about four years, he writes that he had "in charitable regard to your Souls, presented you with this Small (but I am bold to Say) Sound piece of Divinity."[142] Far from an exercise in self-promotion, he viewed his writing labors as an expression of brotherly and pastoral love to his people.

That he loved his family well is seen in the closing exhortation of *The Temple Repair'd* (1702), urging his readers to pay their ministers a living wage lest their families grow embittered, their children be hardened against the gospel, and it occasion much temptation in the home.[143] This others-oriented concern holds with Whitley's remark that Hercules "revived the Association of churches."[144] While personal details of his life are sparse, tenderness echoes throughout

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[140] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

[141] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 236.

[142] Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism*, 4.

[143] Collins, *The Temple Repair'd*, 63.

[144] W.T. Whitley, *The Baptists of London 1612–1928. Their fellowship, their expansion, with notes on the 850 churches* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1928), 104. What Whitley specifically intends by his observation of Hercules's "reviv[ing] the Association" is somewhat undefined; what Whitley does make clear is his concern for their wellbeing.

Collins's writings.

Piggott notes his love as well under the "Discipline of the Rod [in] …. the Affliction he had with a near Relation," probably referring to the death of his son Joshua (ca. 1673–1685). He asserts that Hercules's manner of suffering was exemplary, worthy of Christian imitation. "I have thought him in that respect one of the best Examples that ever I knew; surely no Person could be more tender and sympathizing"[145]—quite a contrast with how many people suffer, particularly in the loss of a child.

Collins was also "much given to…prayer,"[146] Piggott recalls. His zeal, fervor, constancy, and seriousness in earnestly warning and persuading his hearers to close with Christ were all evidences of his great love to God and men.[147] Piggott paints him as a "useful minister" and an "excellent pastor"[148]: doctrinally careful, conscientious in duties, devoted to family and flock, and steadfast under afflictions. Ivimey (probably echoing Piggott) describes him as "eminent for…usefulness,"[149] and God blessed his faithfulness with fruitfulness in the harvest of souls. "It pleased God to succeed his Endeavours in the Gospel after a wonderful manner…[such that] many must call him Father, whom *he hath begotten thro the Gospel*."[150]

In sum, Hercules Collins was one "Faithful to the last."[151] Those attending him during his

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[145] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237.

[146] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 60.

[147] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 240.

[148] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237, 239.

[149] Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists, Containing Biographical Sketches and Notices of Above Three Hundred Ministers and Historical Accounts, Alphabetically Arranged, of One Hundred and Thirty Churches, in the Different Counties of England: from about the year 1610 till 1700* (London, 1814), II.46. Ivimey likely echoes Piggott's allusion to Collins's reputation and regard when describing ministers in general and certain ones in particular as "ever so eminent and useful" in *Eleven Sermons*, 206.

[150] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 236. To "succeed his Endeavours" means to grace them with success.

[151] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 235.

final illness reported that he "retained an excellent Savour of Divine Things to the Day of his Death."[152] Indeed, he preached "after a very moving manner"[153] at a funeral from Rev. 12:11 the week of his death! Piggott considered it a point of common lament that Hercules was taken at too early of an age:

> …certainty the Removal of such a one by Death must be a sad sign of the Divine Displeasure; especially when, according to the Course of Nature, he might have been useful for many Years to come. This, my Brethren, you might have hop'd for from your late Pastor, who was suddenly snatch'd from you.[154] …. The Lamp of Life is sometimes blown out with a sudden Blast, when there is Plenty of Oil to feed it.[155]

The humble shepherd died well. His last day in this world was October 4, 1702; he was laid to rest on October 9 in Bunhill Fields, the dissenter's cemetery. His "readiness" was evident, witnessed by his faithful doctrine and life, affording a plain proclamation of Christ's gospel at his funeral. Though dead, he spoke—and yet speaks.

Hercules, Ready to Suffer

A Convictional and Convicted Nonconformist

"Between 1660 and 1668, the Puritan cause was a church under the cross."[156] As a convictional nonconformist,[157] Collins knew this struggle firsthand; Piggott marvels that "hardly

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[152] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237.

[153] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237.

[154] Piggott, "Dedication: To the Church of Christ, Lately under the Pastoral Care of the Deceas'd Mr. Hercules Collins," in *Eleven Sermons*, 203.

[155] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 227.

[156] Michael Haykin, *A Cloud of Witnesses: Calvinistic Baptists in the 18th Century* (Gatehead, UK: Athaneum Press, 2006), 21.

[157] In *Some Reasons for Separation*, Collins presents his argument by means of a fictitious dialogue between a conformist and a nonconformist. Though conscientiously a Separatist in this respect, he was no schismatic. His attendance at each London General Assembly should be noted carefully in regard to this question. The differences between "Separatist" and "Nonconformist" within Puritanism (broadly conceived) are generally negligent; within confessional circles, the terms are functionally equivalent: one separating could not conform.

any Man was more grievously tempted of the Devil than your deceased Pastor."[158] Hercules's lot, in other words, had many crooks in it. He embodied Luther's three marks of a true theologian from Ps. 119: *oratio*, *meditatio*, *tentatio*[159]—prayer, meditation on Scripture, and temptation under trial. Suffering and spiritual combat under the painful providences marking that era deeply influenced his ministry, writing, home, and soul.

Like many nonconformists, he was imprisoned at least twice. June 29, 1670 saw him imprisoned for less than two months upon attending an illegal conventicle, while March 10, 1683 brought charges after not attending his local parish church under the Second Conventicle Act (a modified version of the Clarendon Code).[160] This 1670 Second Conventicle Act codified the penalties for anyone sixteen years of age or older "present at any assembly" of more than five people "under…pretence of any exercise of religion in other manner than…the Church of England." They would be fined five shillings, and anyone hosting the meeting "in his or her house, outhouse, barn, yard" or otherwise would "forfeit the sum of twenty pounds"[161]—a heavy penalty intended to dissuade supporters with the prospect of significant financial consequences. That 1670 Act remained in force. Collins's violation led to his arrest and an imprisonment in the infamous Newgate gaol from May 1683 through (apparently) August 1684.[162]

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[158] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 236.

[159] Martin Luther, "Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings," in *Luther's Works*, eds. L. Spitz and H. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 34.285.

[160] See Richard P. Belcher and Anthony Mattia, *A Discussion of the Seventeenth Century Particular Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Southbridge, MA: Crowne Publications, 1990), 28. Stephen Bardle gives fascinating treatment in *The Literary Underground in the 1660s: Andrew Marvell, George Wither, Ralph Wallis, and the World of Restoration Satire and Pamphleteering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 121–154. See also the *Wapping Church Book*, entry on September 1684.

[161] Andrew Browning, ed. *English Historical Documents 1660–1714* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 384–385. The 1644 Conventicle Act suppressed "seditious conventicles," assessing several penalties: for the first offense, three months' imprisonment or a five-pound fine; for the second, six months' imprisonment or a ten-pound fine; for the third, banishment to an American plantation for seven years.

Persecution, Prison, and Publishing

During this difficult period, the Wapping church met secretly for a year (1683–1684) to avoid the heat of persecution (1683–1684). Ivimey records that Hercules "was not long in this situation [of his new pastorate] before he was called to 'suffer as a Christian.'"[163] From prison, Collins wrote, "Forasmuch as I am at present depriv'd by my Bonds, of the liberty of preaching; I bless God that I have the Advantage of Printing."[164] *A Voice from the Prison* (1684) encourages his people to faithfulness and steadfastness in life and doctrine despite hardship: "for more than two years the meeting-house in Gravel-lane, and all others, were shut up, and the congregations scattered"[165]—a severe trial for a young minister and his people.

Perhaps, in Hercules's case, this season of incarceration was not entirely unexpected? In 1682 Hercules had published *Some Reasons for Separation*, arguing boldly for religious liberty and defending nonconformity.[166] Its *chutzpah* may have reserved him a spot on a hit list of sorts. His home was burglarized and possessions seized to pay fines of a questionable nature shortly afterward (a fairly common occurrence for dissenting clergy). Characteristic of his pastoral heart,

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[162] Haykin gives a poignant description of the wretched conditions of the Newgate prison in *Devoted to the Service of the Temple: Piety, Persecution, and Ministry in the Writings of Hercules Collins*, eds. Michael Haykin and Steve Weaver (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007), 13–15. John Coffey explains that prison conditions varied widely under Charles II, perhaps especially as his toleration toward dissenters waned. See his excellent *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (Harlowe, Essex: Pearson Education, 2000), 173–176; cf. Raymond Brown's informed and edifying *Spirituality in Adversity: English Nonconformity in a Period of Repression, 1660–1689* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2012).

[163] *A History of the English Baptists*, III.301.

[164] Collins, *A Voice from Prison, or, Meditations on Revelations III.XI. Tending To the Establishment of Gods Little Flock in An Hour of Temptation by Hercules Collins, Prisoner in Newgate* (London: Printed by George Larkin, for the Author), 1684.

[165] Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, III.301.

[166] For a sense of the sort of tracts being written just a generation before Collins wrote his *Some Reasons*, see E.B. Underhill (1813–1901), *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution, 1614–1661* (London, 1846). The volume helps to display the rising tensions and affords excellent context for what Collins faced.

while in gaol he did not simply focus on his own comfort, family, or congregation, but also sought to evangelize his captive audience. In 1684, Collins penned (and perhaps preached?) the warm *Counsel for the Living* to speak of Christ to his fellow prisoners.

Afflictive Providences, Submissive Heart

We have already mentioned two of Collins's most sorrowful trials—the loss of his son Joshua (ca. 1673–1685) scarcely a year after his release from Newgate and the chronic illness marking his ministry. Collins's manner and submission to God under these most painful providences were exemplary and imitable.[167] Briefly consider his manner of life (Phil. 1:29, 3:17) beneath the afflictive hand of God.

Piggott characterizes him as suffering from perpetual and hindering bodily troubles, such that "his own indispositions were frequent and great."[168] One readily imagines the difficulties these (apparently chronic) physical ailments must have posed in that era, particularly for the minister of a large congregation, deeply burdened for souls and the glory of Christ.

Hercules lived in the scrutinizing crosshairs of the informants, a hostile public, and officers of the law, along with the stresses of persecution, vandalism, loss, and normal daily uncertainties. Factor in slanderous printed attacks by Gyles Shute (b. 1650/1651), Michael Harrison (1640–1729), and Francis Mence (1639–1696) over the question of infant baptism—misrepresentations which would dishearten and unnerve most men. Collins endured significant public heat due to (intentional?) misrepresentation of his confessional baptismal position, including the unsettling experience of being repeatedly accosted and angrily accused in the

[167] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237.

[168] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237. MacDonald posits that his "indispositions" may have provided impetus for his urgency in training aspiring pastors in *London Calvinistic Baptists*, 342

street. He spent over a year in the Newgate gaol for preaching Christ, a facility renowned for its cruelty and harsh living conditions. It is hardly surprising when we find lingering symptoms and regular illness as a defining feature for Collins.

Here the window into his daily experience opens wider. Bodily weakness accompanying (apparent) chronic illness distinctly colors every aspect of pastoral labors and life. Would he be strong enough to preach? Could he physically handle the rigors of another meeting? Endurance for study and writing would be in question at times; plans would have to alter, commitments shift; and those considerations assumed the Hilton Gang[169] (and others like them) left him alone.

We might imagine the types of thoughts running through his mind: *The sermon must be completed. The gifted brothers must be trained, their development seen to. That correspondence must be answered. Discipline must be pursued—has repentance appeared? That pastor needs aid. Is young Joshua sick again? How faithfully Sara walks before God amid such trying days. Another family requires counsel. May that visitor from Sunday be trusted, or is he an informant? Lord, uphold me for this work.*

His imprisonment raises further questions: what toll did Newgate's conditions exact on his body? That he devoted himself to evangelizing his fellow prisoners suddenly appears in sharper relief; his concern for their souls outweighed concern for his safety. His efforts for the Wapping church during that season similarly reveal a greatness of heart and a willingness to

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[169] In "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 31n122, Weaver describes the Hilton Gang as a "gang of over 40, including at least 15 women, who were responsible for breaking up more than forty meeting houses." Their activities were quietly encouraged by the government. John Child (1638?–1684), whom Collins counseled before he committed suicide (see Chapter 4), feared something similar: "I had a fancy the other morning, that the Sheriffs and their Officers were coming to seize all that I had." See *The English Spira*: *Being a Fearful Example of An Apostate, Who Had Been a Preacher Many Years, and Then Apostatized from His Religion; Miserably Hanged Himself, October the 13th 1684. Giving an Account of his Dispair, and Divers Conferences had with him, by several Ministers and others of his Friends. Together with his Answer; and Papers Written by his own Hand. Left Attested by Mr. T. Plant, Mr. H. Collings, Mr. B. Dennis, Mr. B. Keach*. (London: Tho. Fabian, 1693), 20. C.E. Whiting (1871–1953) speaks of a similar instance in his *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution 1660–1688* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 111.

"endure all things for the sake of the elect" (2 Tm. 2:10). Sick and confined, he nevertheless gave himself to study—even, it seems, to the biblical languages.[170] Who does that?!

His deference to his people in the matter of the Lord's Supper[171] may also be illuminated by this context. Perhaps it also subtly explains his relative silence during one of the interviews with John Child, allowing others to speak while he listened?[172] That persistent weight of such burdens would be enough to overwhelm most men, much less one with protracted illness…who also bore the charge of souls.

And yet Hercules kept preaching—kept shepherding—kept writing—kept going. His submission to God under these "personal and relative trials"—the seventeenth-century way to speak of one's own trouble, and that within the family—was "exemplary" and "well…carried." He practiced godly self-control and continually directed himself to the Lord. As Piggot reminds his mourning congregation, "in Patience he possessed his Soul, and was always learning from the Discipline of the Rod."[173]

Hercules, Ready to Shepherd

A Confessional Pastor

Many words aptly describe Collins—Englishman, husband, father, Puritan, Protestant Nonconformist, Particular Baptist, sufferer, theologian—but perhaps the most fitting is also the

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[170] *Counsel for the Living occasioned from the Dead* (London, 1684) is full of Greek and Hebrew, easily representing the highest concentration of the biblical languages within the Collinsian corpus. It seems that he likely employed some of his time in Newgate to strengthen his grasp of the biblical tongues; this realization further colors his exhortations concerning their importance in his final publication, *The Temple Repair'd* (1702).

[171] See chapter 5.

[172] *The English Spira*, 28.

[173] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 237.

most simple: Christian gospel minister. For him, the church's life—consisting in its doctrine, worship, and pastoral care—was of primary importance.

As a Reformed pastor, confessing the faith held a significant place in his life and labors; it was needful for both the being (*esse*) and well-being *(bene esse*) of the church.[174] Collins inherited a rich confessional legacy at Wapping. John Spilsbury, the church's first pastor, penned a robust ten-point confession of faith at the conclusion of his *Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Subjects of Baptisme* (1643)[175] and played an influential role in drafting the 1LC (1644/1646), of which he was a signatory.[176]

Though little is now known of his ministry,[177] John Norcott succeeded Spilsbury in either 1662 or 1668. While neither producing nor signing a confession of faith, he faithfully expounded credobaptism in keeping with the confession's biblical emphases. Weaver notes that his book *Baptism Discovered Plainly and Faithfully, According to the Word of God* (1672) offered "a more positive biblical treatment"[178] of the doctrine, a fitting counterpart for Spilsbury's more polemical work. Collins continued this pastoral and ecclesial confessional legacy in *An Orthodox Catechism*, "a Baptist revision of the influential Heidelberg Catechism of 1563,"[179] and in his

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[174] J.V. Fesko, *The Need for Creeds Today: Confessional Faith in a Faithless Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), xvi.

[175] John Spilsbury, *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Svbject of Baptisme* (London: 1643), 43–44.

[176] Lumpkin considers that if Spilsbury authored 1LC, it was with the help of William Kiffin and Samuel Richardson; see his *Baptist Confessions of Faith, revised edition* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011), 133–134. Cf. James Renihan, *For the Vindication of the Truth: A Brief Exposition of the First London Baptist Confession of Faith* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2021), 9–11. Renihan states the case plainly; see "John Spilsbury (1593–ca. 1662/1668)," in *The British Particular Baptists*, eds. Michael Haykin and Terry Wolever, I.21–22: "Spilsbury's relationship to the origin of the First London Confession is unknown, though several authors hypothesize that he was its primary author."

[177] See Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach, second edition*, 172–177.

[178] Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 24.

[179] Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 327.

own role as a signatory of 2LC in 1689.

Holding unswervingly to sound doctrine demonstrated his steadfastness in owning and proclaiming "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), in loving concern for souls.

A Pastor-Theologian

For one "not having a learned education,"[180] Collins showed himself a formidable pastor-theologian. He authored twelve substantial works[181] and contributed to (and appears to have edited) a thirteenth.[182] Seven of these works—spanning fifteen of his twenty-five years of eldership—serve to defend, develop, and popularize credobaptistic exegesis. This portion of his corpus demonstrates the underlying baptistic covenant theology as coherent and biblically-grounded. Collins's efforts preserved a strong Particular Baptist sacramentology, while building upon his predecessors' confessional and theological legacy.[183]

Worship was also a central concern. The Particular Baptist singing controversy emerged in the 1690s,[184] contributing to the decline of the London Baptist Association. Hercules, ever a

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[180] Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, III.129.

[181] *Mountains of Brass* was published twice: by itself in 1690, and as part of *Three Books* in 1696 alongside *The Scribe Instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven* and *A POEM on the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST*.

[182] His contribution to *The English Spira* (London, 1693) is treated in chapter 4.

[183] Steve Weaver has helpfully examined this legacy. See "The Puritan Argument for the Immersion of Believers," in *Recovering a Covenantal Heritage: Essays in Baptist Covenant Theology*, ed. Richard C. Barcellos (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014), 109–125. Spilsbury contributed one work on baptism (*A Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Svbjects of Baptisme*) and treated it again in the first half of *God's Ordinance, the Saint's Privilege* (1646). Norcott's *Baptism Discovered Plainly and Faithfully* was a workmanlike exposition wherein "arguments for believers' baptism are plainly and strongly exhibited, and infant baptism is shewn to be a rite of human invention; but there was nothing in it that could justly give offence to any one."

MacDonald dates Norcott's book as ca. 1672 (*London Calvinistic Baptists*, 333), though Crosby records his uncertainty in *History of the English Baptists*, III.299; a second edition is dated as 1675, and a corrected third edition (corrected by William Kiffin and Richard Claridge [1649–1723]) as 1694. It merited a response from John Eliot (1604–1690): *A Brief Ansvver to a Small Book written by John Norcot against Infant–Baptisme. This Answer is written by John Eliot for the sake of some of the Flock of Jesus Christ who are ready to be staggered in point of Infant-Baptisme by reading his Book* (Boston: John Foster, 1679).

[184] Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 143.

man of great conscience,[185] held hymn-singing to be a biblical ordinance, one required in the worship of God by the RPW. He codified this position by including an "Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing" at the end of his *Orthodox Catechism*[186] and practiced it faithfully in his Wapping liturgy, thus standing alongside Benjamin Keach, William Collins, Nehemiah Coxe, and other London Particular Baptist leaders in his biblical conviction.[187] For Collins, anticipating heaven's pattern, theology must be sung into the soul (Col. 3:16).

A Serving Senior Shepherd

Hercules's deep concern for the strengthening and stability of the broader Particular Baptist cause appears clearly in the case of Thomas Harrison's (d. 1702) ordination. The invitation came toward the end of his life (in 1699; Collins died in 1702), and his presence there would naturally have carried something of the "accrediting" weight of a senior statesman. The White's Alley church had recently suffered a public split, with their delinquent and schismatic members forming into a separate congregation meeting at Loriners' Hall.[188]

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[185] MacDonald notes that from 1689–1727, among the London Calvinistic Baptists only Collins scrupled taking the 1690 oaths prescribed by the Act of Toleration. He did, however, sign the 1696 Association Oath along with most London Particular Baptist ministers. See *London Calvinistic Baptists*, 22.

[186] James Carnes notes that Collins's *Orthodox Catechism* "seems to be the Particular Baptist counterpart to Thomas Grantham's *Christianismus Primitivus*" in "The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and His Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth Century England" (M.A. thesis, North Texas State University, 1984), 82. Matthew Stanton concurs in *Liturgy and Identity*, 55, further stating that Collins's two appendices to *An Orthodox Catechism* (on singing and on the laying on of hands) were rejected by the 1677 General Assembly. His history is accurate, though his date appears to be askew; Collins published his catechism in 1680. Stanton likely intends the 1689 General Assembly.

[187] Particular Baptists approving of congregational singing: Benjamin Keach, William Collins, Hercules Collins, Hanserd Knollys, Joseph Maisters, Richard Adams, James Jones, Leonard Harrison, Benjamin Dennis, and Richard Allen. Disapproving: Isaac Marlow, Robert Steed, William Kiffin, Richard Halliwell, George Barrett, and Edward Man. MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists*, 68–69. Henry Forty, signatory of both 1LC and 2LC, also approved of singing. The controversy is discussed briefly in *Baptist Theologians*, eds. Timothy George and David Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 53–56, 63–65.

[188] Most of these members remained unrepentant upon a reconciliation attempt and were excommunicated on December 24, 1699. See Samuel Renihan, *The Petty France Church, Part 1* (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2019), 41.

In mid-December of 1699, the Loriners' Hall church desired to ordain Harrison—formerly assistant to the late William Collins—as their minister. Both the White's Alley and Barbican churches sought a delay:

> [W]ent 12 & 13th instant [December] to Mr Leonard Harrison Mr Hercules Collins & to advise them to forbear the ordination of Mr Thomas Harrison at Loriners Hall till the matter of difference between the church of White's Alley and them shou.d be more fully heard and determined whereupon with some difficulty they were prevailed upon to defere it.[189]

Collins and the Wapping congregation agreed to a pause. The WCB entry dated December 14, 1699 records:

> It was further agreed that Br Collins Br Gardner Br Mills & Br Gandar be appointed to meet with the Church in White's Alley & the people at Larremers Hall in order to heare & accomodate the difference between them.[190]

Thomas Harrison was ordained within a month, but "it is unknown if Leonard Harrison and Hercules Collins participated"[191] in the process any further. Regardless, the episode reveals Collins's consuming desire to see the faithful, well-ordered churches established—an instinct entirely consistent with his broader pastoral and confessional commitments.

The Shepherd Among His Sheep

Finally, Collins's pastoral care was multifaceted—shaped by the varied needs of the saints under his oversight. Diligence in church discipline and careful accounting for the state of souls were essential elements of his work. Entries in the WCB range from public admonition of Brother Minge in 1690 for failing to "maintain his mother and aunt that they be not chargeable to the church," to bearing public witness between two members concerning a loan to be repaid in

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[189] Renihan, *The Petty France Church (Part 1)*, 40–41.

[190] Renihan, *The Petty France Church (Part 1)*, 41. See the original entry in *The Wapping Church Book*, fol. 88r.

[191] Renihan, *The Petty France Church (Part 1)*, 42.

February 1679/1680, to recording excommunications and other matters of congregational order.[192]

Cases of conscience (treated in chapter 4) formed another critical dimension of Collins's ministry. Beyond his robust treatment of God's decrees and providence in *Mountains of Brass* (1690), Collins wrote *The Scribe Instructed* (1696), a study in Puritan casuistry. There he offers his readers:

1. Twelve "propositions" concerning the saint's troubles,
2. Twenty-five spiritual advantages gained "in the School of Correction and Affliction,"
3. Four points of "Counsel and Comfort for the Afflicted Soul,"
4. Twenty-six observations on spiritual assaults by evil spirits, and
5. Fourteen principles distilled from Thomas Brooks's (1608–1680) *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (1652).

These writings alone would suffice to demonstrate his pastoral heart, but in good Puritan fashion Collins sprinkles godly counsel throughout all his works. This effort is clearly the work of a loving pastor deeply concerned for his people's spiritual wellbeing. Indeed, most of his treatises, in substance, constitute pastoral theology—fitting for one so "devoted to the Service of the Temple."[193]

In the end, Hercules Collins presents us with an embodiment of the seventeenth-century Particular Baptist ideal: a confessional, convictional, humble servant, deeply shaped by suffering. His life was driven by Scripture, forged in affliction, and poured out for the good of Christ's church. His labors reveal a man who held the Reformed faith with clarity, preached the gospel with courage, embraced the RPW with integrity, and exercised the cure of souls with tenderness, courage, and joy. His writings, wounds, and witness all testify to a pastor who lived and died faithfully, to the glory of Christ.

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[192] For more on the *Wapping Church Book*, see Nathan Sherman's recent study of it. It focuses on the people of the congregation, not simply their pastors. See *The Wapping Baptists: A People, Their Pastors, and Their Church Records (1677–1712)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2026).

[193] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 239.

From here, we examine his compelling theological vision for the biblical and Christ-exalting care of souls through ecclesiastically-rooted catechesis, counseling, and preaching. We will move chronologically, taking us from his first publication as a burgeoning pastor-theologian (*An Orthodox Catechism*, 1680), tracing his developing pastoral counseling (*The English Spira*, from the 1684 case of John Child), and concluding with his mature concern for the proclamation of the Scriptures and training of preachers, specifically gifted brothers (*The Temple Repair'd*, 1702) at the end of his life.

CHAPTER 3

HERCULES, THE PASTOR-THEOLOGIAN: SURVEYING *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM*

"Grace is the root of true Devotion."[1]
—Hercules Collins, in *An Orthodox Catechism*

Introduction

We now transition from Hercules Collins's (ca. 1646/1647–1702) life and context to examine his thought more directly. Behind Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), and depending where one locates John Bunyan (1628–1688) ecclesiologically and sacramentally,[2] Collins was either the second or third most prolific Particular Baptist writer.[3] Though providentially hindered from university training as a nonconformist,[4] his writings demonstrate articulate, experiential faithfulness: practical in nature, displaying an admirable scope of thought and grasp of theology. His work may lack some of the polish of his university-trained contemporaries (as Crosby noted, he "had not a learned education"[5]), yet it runs along the same doctrinal paths, exhibiting nearly

[1] Hercules Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error, by H. Collins* (London: 1680), 85.

[2] On Bunyan, see chapter 2, note 9.

[3] "The only author during this period who could rival his production being his friend Benjamin Keach." G. Stephen Weaver, "'A Patient Wearing of Christ's Cross': Hercules Collins and a Baptist Theology of Persecution," in *The Spirit of Holiness: Reflections on Biblical Spirituality*, eds. Terry Delaney and Roger Duke (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 34n4.

[4] Michael Haykin, *A Cloud of Witnesses: Calvinistic Baptists in the 18th Century* (Gateshead, UK: Athanaeum Press/Evangelical Times, 2006), 22.

[5] Thomas Crosby (1683–1751), *The History of the English Baptists, from the Reformation to the Beginning*

identical pastoral instincts as theirs.

Like his predecessor John Spilsbury (1593–ca. 1668), Collins dealt in both symbolics and apologetics, pursuing pastorally-minded theological exposition. Spilsbury's *Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Svbject of Baptisme* (1643) concludes with a ten-point doctrinal statement. Its publication constitutes the first known Particular Baptist confession of faith and likely influenced his significant role in drafting the *First London Baptist Confession* (1644/1646). In producing *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680),[6] an edited expansion of the continental Reformed tradition's beloved *Heidelberg Catechism*[7] (1563), Hercules issued one of the first full-pedigreed Particular Baptist catechisms as the first of his published works. (Hereafter, OC and HC, respectively).

Collins's corpus remains a sorely neglected area in Particular Baptist studies. Extant work is largely referential or lightly biographical; more analytical engagement and development is needful. This chapter engages the OC through its themes, doctrines, and emphases. By assessing Collins's editorial approach, didactic structure, unique contributions to the Baptist symbolic and

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of the Reign of King George I (London: 1740), III.129. Hercules's life was "of sufficient repute to find a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*," observes Ernest Kevan (1903–1965) in *London's Oldest Baptist Church: Wapping 1633–Walthamstow 1933* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1933), 64.

[6] Unless otherwise noted, citations of *An Orthodox Catechism* are abbreviated OC and originate in *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error, by H. Collins* (London: 1680). Pagination is inconsistent in this edition, but wherever possible I provide it. Numbered questions reflect my own numbering. Though I have carefully consulted James Renihan's work in *True Confessions*, his study is comparative, placing the OC alongside the HC in a helpful record of Collins's edits and additions; Renihan further does not attempt to provide numbering for OC. This chapter aims more analytically; hence numbering the OC proved necessary to reference it usefully. For my numbered questions (answers omitted for space, as well as for more readily discerning its theological structure and method), see Appendix 2.

[7] Jeffrey Jaynes, s.v. "Church Ordinances," in Hans Hillebrand, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), I.349. "In Reformed circles, no catechism was more highly regarded." Often called "the church's book of comfort," the *Heidelberg Catechism* was written primarily by Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583) with significant contributions by Caspar Olevianus (1536–1587). This theory of its authorship has been challenged by some; Lyle Bierma finds their objections unpersuasive in *An Introduction the Heidelberg Catechism: Source, History, Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 67. Apparently, not all its readership received comfort from the HC; see Karin Maag's sketch of its several objectors in her "Early Editions and Translations of the Heidelberg Catechism," (ibid., 111–113). Richard Muller concurs in s.v. "Reformed Confessions and Catechisms," in Trevor Hart, ed. *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 2000), 473–474.

catechetical tradition, and early theological method, we may begin understanding something of his burgeoning pastoral theology.

An Orthodox Catechism thus represents Collins's earliest and most foundational attempt to articulate a coherent pastoral theology for the Wapping congregation. It reveals his developing method as a pastor-theologian: grounding doctrine in Scripture, applying the RPW across the church's life, and cultivating a confessional, catechetical, and experiential piety among his people. This chapter demonstrates that the OC functioned as Collins's first major effort to stabilize the doctrinal identity of his church amid ecclesiastical turbulence, to correct theological errors circulating among both Particular (and General) Baptists, and to provide a biblically-regulated framework for Christian faith and practice. Examining its sources, structure, editorial method, and theological emphases offers a window into Collins's developing pastoral vision and the foundations of his later ministry.

Referencing Pastoral Theology Historically

Thomas Murphy's (1823–1900) classic definition captures pastoral theology's aim: "that department of study whose object is to assist the Christian minister in applying the truths of the gospel to the hearts and lives of men."[8] Puritan pastoral care "grew out of a profound grasp of human sinfulness, overmatched only by a sense of greater grace in Christ."[9] The practical

[8] Thomas Murphy. *Pastoral Theology: The Pastor in the Various Duties of His Office* (Willow Street, PA: Old Paths Publications, 1996), 13.

[9] Mark Noll, s.v. "Pastoral Counseling of Puritans," in *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, eds. David Atkinson, David Field, Arthur Holmes, and Oliver O'Donovan, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 714. D.J. Tidball notes that pastoral theology "is notoriously difficult to define with precision…[it] has to do with the mutual relationship between theology and pastoral work. It provides the theological foundation for pastoral ministry, stimulates theological reflection on pastoral experience and at the same time reflects on theology from a pastoral perspective." See his "Practical and Pastoral Theology," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Sinclair Ferguson, David Wright, and J.I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 493–494.

divinity of William Ames (1576–1633), whose writings deeply influenced Collins, "gave a comprehensive perspective of how every part of life ought to be dedicated to the glory of God, for exact understanding of divine truth must be reflected in the appropriate meaning of every detail of daily life."[10]

Reflecting on Puritan practice, McNeill adds the distinction that "the true preacher is one who also gives his energies to personal ministry."[11] Martin Bucer (1491–1551) reminds us that true ministers "exercise their ministry in the care of souls and the pastoral office for the true salvation of Christ's lambs; so that we may at last be a true and rightly ordered church of God."[12] Thomas Hooker (1586–1647) summarized the aim: "our whole labour in this kind is to honour God, and to save men."[13] Ultimately, pastoral theology consists in the wise *cura et curo*

Further reading to learn more of this approach to biblical eldership should include Thomas Oden, *Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition: Theology and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984); Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); John McNeill (1855–1975), *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951); J. Stephen Yuille, *A Labor of Love: Puritan Pastoral Priorities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013); Joel Beeke and Terry Slachter, *Encouragement for Today's Pastors: Help from the Puritans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013); and Albert Martin, *Pastoral Theology, 3 volumes.* (Montville, NJ: Trinity Pulpit Press, 2018).

[10] I. Brewer, s.v. "Puritan Theology," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 551. For more, see Jan van Vliet, *The Rise of Reformed System: The Intellectual Heritage of William Ames* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013).

[11] John McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls*, 269. Consider how John Flavel (1628–1691) characterized it in *The Character of a True Evangelical Pastor, Drawn by Christ*, in *The Works of John Flavel* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), VI.568–569:

> The labors of the ministry will exhaust the very marrow from your bones, hasten old age and death. They are fitly compared to the toil of men in harvest, to the labors of a woman in travail, and to the agonies of soldiers in the extremity of a battle. We must watch when others sleep. And indeed it is not so much the expense of our labors, as the loss of them, that kills us. It is not with us, as with other laborers: They find their work as they leave it, so do not we. Sin and Satan unravel almost all we do, the impressions we make on our people's souls in one sermon, vanish before the next. How many truths have we to study! how many wiles of Satan, and mysteries of corruption, to detect! how many cases of conscience to resolve! Yes, we must fight in defense of the truths we preach, as well as study them to paleness, and preach them unto faintness: but well-spent head, heart, lungs, and all; welcome pained breasts, aching backs, and trembling legs; if we can by all but approve ourselves Christ's faithful servants, and hear that joyful voice from his mouth, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

[12] Martin Bucer, *Concerning the True Care of Souls*, transl. Peter Beale (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), xxxiii.

animarum per Scripturas—the care and cure of souls by the Scriptures—in the hope of the gospel and help of the Spirit, under the whole counsel of God, to the praise of Christ. While Collins never formally defines his pastoral theology in OC, this chapter will demonstrate that these principles consistently characterize his operative view of ministry.

Converted somewhere around 1667–1668, Hercules apparently began preaching in 1669. His early years were spent seeking the Lord, studying Scripture, learning to suffer for Christ (he was imprisoned briefly in 1670 for attending an illegal conventicle), and soaking in the richest works of Reformed theology. None of these experiences were wasted; God used them all to shape him into a shepherd "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24).

The Spirit's grace through those early efforts also convinced him of the absolute necessity of sound doctrine for church's life and spiritual vitality. Collins wrote the OC four years into his twenty-five-year pastorate—not merely to publish, but to care for his congregation and serve the broader cause of Christ. His subtitle indicates his intent: "for the preventing of the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error." Two Scriptures featured on the title page frame OC's purpose: Jn. 14:39 prods readers with Christ's command to "search the Scriptures," while Jn. 12:48 sets doctrine, duty, and devotion into their biblical and eschatological context: "The Words that I have spoken, the Same shall judge you in the last day."

Collins's emerging pastoral theology is already visible here, demonstrating excellent ministerial instincts at an early stage in his service: Scripture as his foundation, and robustly biblical and Reformed experiential piety as his aim. This ministry philosophy—*streng exegetisch entwickelt*, rigorously derived from Scripture—would mark his entire career. A glance at his corpus evinces his concerns:

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[13] As quoted in Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry, with An Inquiry into the Causes of its Inefficiency* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 8. A helpful study on Hooker is Frank Shuffleton, *Thomas Hooker, 1586–1647* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

1. Evangelism and the salvation of souls (*Counsel for the Living Occasioned from the Dead*),
2. A true church, exhibiting biblical and Reformational marks (*Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England*),
3. A pure church, consistent with Baptist covenant theology and a right application of the RPW (*The Sandy Foundation of Infant-Baptism Shaken*; *Believers Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine Institution*; *Animadversions Upon the Responses of the Athenian Mercury to the Questions about Infant-Baptism*; *The Antidote Proved a Counterfeit*),
4. A congregation faithful under difficult providences (*A Voice from the Prison*),
5. Right doctrine and esteem of God's majesty (*Mountains of Brass*),
6. Instruction of the saints, especially young people, in sound theology (*An Orthodox Catechism* and *The Marrow of Gospel-History*),
7. A faithful and godly ministry, carefully stewarding the ordinances and sacraments of Christ's house (*The Temple Repair'd*, *Truth and Innocency Vindicated*, and his co-authoring *A Just Vindication of Mr. William Collins*),
8. The care and cure of souls (*The Scribe Instructed*, a collection of classic casuistry[14]; and *The English Spira*, the account of Collins's care for a suicidal preacher friend),
9. And Christian devotion and adoration of the Lord (*A Poem on the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*).

Catechisms and Collins

Derived from the Greek κατηχέω and the Latin *catechismus*, catechesis may be defined as hiding the pattern of sound words (2 Tm. 1:13) in the heart. The term enters church history with Augustine of Hippo (354–430), referring not to a printed work, but to a pedagogy of oral instruction. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was the first to use *catechism* to describe a book designed to teach children and new believers the foundational truths of the Christian faith.[15] Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583) later described a catechism simply as "a summary declaration of [the] sentences of Scripture."[16] Collins longed for such a faithful summary to help establish a lifelong pattern of doctrinal and daily faithfulness among his people.

[14] In *The Scribe Instructed*, Collins primarily presents his own material, but includes a few pages of excellent summarized excerpts from Bishop Joseph Hall (1574–1656) and Thomas Brooks (1608–1680) at the end.

[15] George Richards, *The Heidelberg Catechism: Historical and Doctrinal Studies* (Philadelphia, PA: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1913), 16.

[16] As quoted in Bierma, *An Introduction the Heidelberg Catechism*, 69.

As Nettles observes, "Baptist catechisms have existed virtually since the appearance of modern-day Baptists in the seventeenth century."[17] Several seventeenth-century catechisms were produced by men influential for, or adjacent to, the emerging Particular Baptist tradition.

In 1652, the celebrated Henry Jessey (1603–1663) published three catechisms—including a brief poetic summary of the first—under one title: *A Catechism for Babes, or Little Ones, Suitable to their Capacity more than others have been Formerly*. Though Jessey came to baptistic sentiments, he did not lead his paedobaptist church to follow him.[18] The fervent anti-paedobaptist John Tombes[19] (ca. 1603?–1676) released his 1659 *A Short Catechism about Baptism* arguing against infant sprinkling. A convert from Presbyterianism, Tombes gathered a non-paedobaptist congregation while still formally remaining within the COE. No seventeenth-century English writer produced more material challenging paedobaptism. Bunyan's *Instruction for the Ignorant, being a salve to Cure that great Want of Knowledge, which so Much Reigns both in Young and Old* (1675) likewise belongs to this stream, though his ecclesiological classification remains difficult. His pastoral prudence is evident, though one wishes for a more definitive confessional stance.

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[17] Tom Nettles, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: The Study of Catechisms in Baptist Life* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1998), 22.

[18] Jason Duesing defends classifying him as a Particular Baptist in *Henry Jessey: Puritan Chaplain, Independent and Baptist Pastor, Millenarian Politician and Prophet* (Mountain Home, AR: BorderStone Press, 2015). Nettles similarly characterizes him as "one of the early leading Baptists"; see "An Encouragement to Use Catechisms," in *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 4.2 (2014), 9.

[19] Leon McBeth, explaining the reluctance of some scholars to call Tombes a Baptist, notes that Tombes "was content to describe himself as a Presbyterian after 1672." In *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 110. Murray Tolmie noted the same ten years prior, characterizing Tombes as "envisag[ing] a Reformed or Presbyterian national church practicing believer's baptism." In *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 62. The pressing question of properly classifying Tombes is admirably treated in Michael Renihan, *Antipaedobaptism in the Thought of John Tombes: An Untold Story from Puritan England* (Auburn, MA: Baptist & Reformed Press, 2001). Placing Bunyan alongside Tombes offers something of an idea of the breadth of the theological spectrum for the Particular Baptist camp and its cobelligerents and offers something of a picture of transitional early years.

Two names, however, stand out with an undisputed Particular Baptist bloodline[20]: Christopher Blackwood (ca. 1605–1669/1670) and Hercules Collins. One of the few nonconformists of his era with "a learned education," Blackwood proved "equally zealous against national churches as infant baptism…and as much opposed to the establishment of presbyterianism as episcopacy."[21] He issued two separate catechisms: *A brief Catechism concerning Baptism* (1644) and *A Soule searching Catechism* (1653).

In 1680, Hercules Collins published *An Orthodox Catechism.* He intended his OC to offer needful correctives to prominent theological figures within General and Particular Baptist camps alike. His preface suggests that catechesis had been somewhat neglected among some Particular Baptist pastors. The preface to the *Baptist Catechism* (1695) reflects a more positive situation:

> [W]e do now put forth a short account of Christian principles, for the instruction of our families, in most things agreeing with the shorter Catechism of the Assembly. And this we were the rather induced to, because we have commonly made use of that Catechism in our families.[22]

But speaking thirteen years earlier, the final paragraphs of the OC's preface paint a different picture. Addressing "those whom the Lord hath committed to my Charge," Collins hopes that "Parents would but conscientiously read those Divine Oracles which hold forth their Duty to their Children."[23] His language begins to broaden beyond Wapping: "As for this I have

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[20] Jonathan Arnold adds Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), Nehemiah Coxe (d. 1689), and William Collins (d. 1702) to this list in *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)* (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2013), 24.

[21] Benjamin Brook (1776–1848), *The Lives of the Puritans: Containing a Biographical Account of those Divines who Distinguished Themselves in the Cause of Religious Liberty, from the Reformation under Queen Elizabeth, to the Act of Uniformity in 1662* (London, 1813; repr. Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994), III.389.

[22] *The Baptist Catechism* (London [s.n.], 1695). The work is properly anonymous, though most likely edited by William Collins (d. 1702); see Nettles, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts*, 49. Paul Fiddes concurs, though noting that Keach was probably involved as well; see "Covenants, Confessions and Catechisms," in Stephen Copson and Karen Smith, eds., *Revolution and Resistance: English Baptist Life in the Seventeenth Century* (Didcot, UK: The Baptist Historical Society, 2026), 38.

[23] "Preface" to the OC, A5–A[6].

presented to publick view [emphasis mine], I beg the Readers kind indulgence as to the faults escaped therein."[24] His verbiage anticipates a broader readership, suggesting a catechetical inconsistency as symptomatic of a broader laxity in family worship—one he sought to help remedy in his OC.[25]

Catechesis has long been subject to cycles of diligence and negligence in Reformed history. Its ministerial neglect motivated Richard Baxter's (1615–1691) *Gildas Silvianus, or The Reformed Pastor. Shewing the nature of the Pastoral work; Especially in Private Instruction and Catechizing*.[26] The second half of the book is styled "The Duty of Personal Catechizing and Instructing the Flock Particularly Recommended." The parents at Wapping had apparently fallen out of the practice in Collins's day as well.

It is difficult to ascertain how broadly the OC circulated—it was never reprinted, typically indicative of a limited reception. Given its firm positions on the disputed points of hymnody, laying on of hands (hereafter LOH), and sacramental seals, as well as its lengthy answers[27] on baptism and LOH, an apparently cooler reception is not terribly surprising; the pressing tensions of non-toleration almost certainly contributed as well.[28] The influence of

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[24] "Preface" to the OC, A5–A[6].

[25] Two hundred years later, James Petigru Boyce (1827–1888) would issue his *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine* (1885) to address the same basic problem amongst Baptists in the United States. See his "Original Preface," in the Particular Baptist Heritage Books (Knightstown, IN, 2025) reprint, 1.

[26] Richard Baxter, *Gildas Silvianus, or The Reformed Pastor. Shewing the nature of the Pastoral work; Especially in Private Instruction and Catechizing* (London: Printed by Robert White, 1657).

[27] Calvin's Genevan Catechism (1536/1541) similarly comes to mind here: some of its answers run to half a page or longer! Part of his method for catechizing, accordingly, was simply to have the child respond (as in Q. #82): "Yes, it is so"; perhaps Hercules took a page from Calvin's playbook here! See Elijah Waterman, transl. *The Catechism of the Church of Geneva, by the Rev. John Calvin, Translated from the Latin by the Rev. Elijah Waterman, author of the life of Calvin. With an Appendix, in a letter addressed to Wiiliam S. Johnson, L.L. D. Showing that the Catechism commonly called Dr. Alexander Nowell's, which was sanctioned in the Convocation of Bishops and Clergy in 1562, and published 1570, as a standing summary of the doctrines of the English Church, is in substance the Catechism of Calvin enlarged* (Hartford, CT: Sheldon & Goodwin, 1815), 29.

[28] This is not to say that there is no value in the OC; quite the contrary. It remains highly valuable for its

Thomas Collier (ca. 1613–ca. 1690) may also have played a role; his *Body of Divinity* (1674) and *An Additional Word* (1674) had poisoned the well, prompting the editors of the 1677 2LC to speak carefully in its preface of "we" instead of "I." Its editors seem perhaps to have worked as a team, not produced something individually. Collins's OC, by contrast, was his own—perhaps offering a subtle, but consequential element at play in its reception history.

Many Puritans wrote catechisms for their churches, a fairly common Reformation and post–Reformation ministerial practice; most of them never circulated beyond their local context, and few generated lasting attention. In this sense, Collins producing the OC is not extraordinary —except for its unprecedented choice of source material, his distinctive editorial method, and its clearly baptistic positions. In the end, the *Baptist Catechism* rose to prominence instead.[29]

Consistent with this more congregational focus for many Puritan writings, Collins's catechism does not seem to have garnered much attention in the broader literature of the day. That is not to say his work went altogether ignored. One known work references the OC, the Anti-hymnody polemicist Isaac Marlowe's (1645–1710) rather annoyed treatise *Truth Cleared: Or a brief Narrative of the Rise, Occasion, and Management of the present Controversy concerning Singing in the Worship of God* (1692). Marlowe complains that the OC was not yet answered concerning congregational singing—demonstrating that it enjoyed some level of public standing among those involved in the controversy:

> In the year 1680, about ten Years before the printing of the first part of my Treatise concerning singing, Mr. *H. Collins* published a Book, intituled, *An Orthodox Catechism*, with an Appendix concerning Singing, wherein vocal Singing is asserted to be the publick Duty of the whole Church, (which for want of an Answer to it, has been brooding among us for so many years).[30]

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theological, historical, personal, and congregational aspects—even in the places where it demonstrates a young minister's early convictions and zeal for truth.

[29] Note, however: as the *Baptist Catechism* is also considered to have been edited by William Collins, the solo–editor aspect may have very little to do with much of anything!

[30] Isaac Marlowe, *Truth Cleared: Or a brief Narrative of the Rise, Occasion, and Management of the*

Beeke, Pederson, and Jones accordingly consider the OC as "one of the three main confessional standards that united Particular Baptists," though Samuel Renihan differs:

> So as not to overstate the point, Collins' catechism was not necessarily representative of any other Particular Baptist during his day. It was not authorized or adopted by any group of churches, nor did it enjoy subsequent editions or occupy a place in Particular Baptist literature. This is likely due to the fact that congregational singing was so controversial at that time, and Collins explicitly affirmed the practice in the catechism.[31]

The cycle of catechetical neglect continued transatlantically through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1738, the Philadelphia Baptist Association requested funds to reprint "the [1693] catechism," lamenting that copies were "expended, and few or none to be had, and our youth thereby not likely to be instructed in the fundaments of saving knowledge."[32] At least part of the underlying reason for its low availability: the general use of catechisms had simply fallen off. C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) complained of "greatly need[ing] more Bible catechizing of the children of all classes,"[33] and J.P. Boyce's (1827–1888) introduction to his own *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine* (1885) mourned that many in his day considered "Keach's Catechism" too difficult for children to memorize; as a result, it had fallen into disuse.[34]

Tussles in the Titles: Tracing Context from Collins's Public Literary Engagements

Collins's literary productivity did not go unnoticed—nor did it go unchallenged.

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present Controversy concerning Singing in the Worship of God, in his *Truth Soberly Defended* (London, 1692), 3–4. *Truth Cleared* is the postscript to *Truth Soberly Defended*. (Thanks to Samuel Renihan for helping me with this reference).

[31] Joel Beeke, Randall Pederson, and Fraser Jones, *Meet the Puritans: a guide to their lives and books, revised and expanded edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2025), 250; Samuel Renihan, *Crux, Mors, Inferi: A Primer and Reader on the Descent of Christ* (Columbia, SC: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2021), 119.

[32] *The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from 1707–1807*, ed. A. D. Gillette (1807–1882) (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851); repr. (Atlas, MI: Baptist Book Trust, n.d.), 39.

[33] G.H. Pike, ed. *Speeches by C.H. Spurgeon at Home and Abroad* (London: Passmore/Alabaster, 1878), 12.

[34] See Boyce's "Preface" to *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine* (Published for the Author, 1885), 1; repr., Particular Baptist Heritage Books (Knightstown, IN), 2025.

Marlowe's irritation over the OC is one example; the civil authorities provided another. Shortly after Hercules published *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England* (1682),[35] his house was raided and his possessions seized to pay fines accrued for non-attendance at the local parish. In 1683, he was imprisoned in Newgate for around eighteen months, during a period of such intense persecution that the Wapping church had to meet in secret. It seems someone had noticed his book!

Another instance is somewhat more involved. The titles alone tell quite the story. Following his *Believers Baptism from heaven, and of Divine Institution. Infants-Baptism from Earth, and of Human Invention* (1691) and *Animadversions Upon the Responses of the Athenian Mercury, to the Question about Infant–baptism* (1692) came Collins's 1693 publication of *The ANTIDOTE Proved a COUNTERFEIT, OR, ERROR DETECTED, AND Believers Baptism VINDICATED Containing An Answer to a Nameless Author's Book, Entituled, An Antidote to prevent the Prevalency of Anabaptism*. This work answered Gyles Shute's (b. 1650/1651) initially anonymous *An Antidote to prevent the prevalency of Anabaptism, Or Infants Baptism Vindicated By Way of Query and Answer* (1693).

Shute then replied to Collins's *The Antidote Proved a Counterfeit* with his work *The antidote to prevent the prevalency of Anabaptism clearly vindicated from that foul aspersion of being a counterfeit, and the aspersors totally confuted : or, another broad-side against Anabaptism* (1694). Shute's reply prompted Keach to write his *A Counter-antidote, to purge out the malignant effects of a late Counterfeit, prepared by Mr. Gyles Shute…being an answer to his vindication of his pretended Antidote to prevent the prevalency of Anabaptism, shewing that Mr. Hercules Collins's reply to the said author remains unanswered : wherein the Baptism of*

[35] *SOME REASONS FOR SEPARATION from the COMMUNION OF THE Church of England, and the UNREASONABLENESS of PERSECUTION upon that Account, soberly Debated, in a Dialogue between a Conformist, and a Nonconformist (Baptist)* (London, 1682).

believers is evidences to be God's ordinance, and the baptized Congregations proved true Churches of Jesus Christ : with a further detection of the error of paedo-baptism : to which is added, An answer to Mr. Shute's reply to Mr. Collins's half–sheet (1694).

Collins responded again the next year with a broadside aimed at Shute, Michael Harrison (1640–1729), and Francis Mence (1639–1696) in his *The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism SHAKEN: Or, An Answer to a Book, Entitled Vindiciae Foederis, Published by Mr. MENCE. Whose Arguments have been weighed in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and found too light to prove all the Children of Believers in the Covenant of Grace: And on the contrary demonstrating, that none but the Elect, and all true Believers are in that Covenant. And is a full ANSWER to Mr. Michael Harrison of P's P. his Book, Entituled Infant Baptism God's Ordinance. Together with a NARRATIVE, which contains the Foundation of the Controversie. By Hercules Collins, an unworthy servant of Christ and his Church in Wapping. To which is added a LETTER by a private hand, with a PREFACE and APPENDIX, containing, I. The Pedigree of Infants Habitual-Faith. 2. The Judgment of Learned Men against it. By RICHARD CLARIDGE* (1695). The title itself—*The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism SHAKEN*—represents a direct rebuttal to Shute's *A new naked truth, or, The sandy foundation of the Sacramental test shaken, by a Warning-piece discharged from Heaven against all sorts of Persecutors wherein you may hold Christ crucified mystically and sacramentally, upon the Cross of the Sacramental penal test, with all the rest of the penal laws and tests attending thereon, and contributing thereunto* (1688).

Shute did not appreciate Collins's and Keach's work at all. Shortly before his death he published *A general challenge to all the Antipaedobaptists* (London, 1696), naming them—along with Benjamin Dennis[36]—on the first page.

[36] Shute's work was not the first time Collins, Keach, and Dennis were cobelligerents; they also labored together to help the suicidal John Child, and each then contributed to the account of his life in *The English Spira* (prepared 1684–1685, though the account was not printed until 1688/1693); see chapter 4.

Michael Harrison's next book named Collins in the title: *INFANT BAPTISM Gods Ordinance part II. WHEREIN the Antiquity of Infant Church–Membership and Baptism is Clearly Proved both from the Scriptures and Fathers : Proving the Anabaptists Plea of Antiquity to be a meer Untruth. As also, that Dipping is not the right way of Baptizing. TOGETHER with a Seasonable Rebuke of several Erroneous Opinions the Arminian Anabaptists hold concerning Original Sin, Universal and Sufficient Grace, Redemption, Free VVill, Perseverance, & c. Being an Answer, To several Scandalous and Erroneous papers put out by the Anabaptists ; and particularly, Mr. Collins of Wapping his late Book, Entituled, The Sandy—foundation of Infant-baptism Shaken, against Mr. Mence (late of Wapping) and me* (1696). Harrison's account of some of Mence's final words—recorded the day before he died—reveals the intensity of the controversy and depth of resentment both men held toward Collins.

These public theological controversies and personal ministerial burdens trace the backdrop against which Hercule's OC must be understood. His catechetical work emerged from a ministry marked from its earliest days by biblical precision and pastoral care. It constitutes no detached academic exercise, but the labor of a working shepherd: contending for the faith, defending his flock, careful to articulate a coherent, confessional, biblically-regulated vision of the Christian life. It stands not simply as a "Baptist adaptation" of the HC, but as Collins's first major effort to stabilize and shape the doctrinal life of his congregation during turbulent ecclesiastical times. To understand its structure, sources, and theological emphases, we now turn to the catechism itself.

An Orthodox Catechism: Introduction, Sources, and Survey

Hercules opening his writing ministry with a catechism bespeaks a certain level of both pastoral savvy and doctrinal perceptiveness, with a practical recognition of catechetical

usefulness in the personal and public labors of the ministry. Understanding the OC as an early-career exercise in Collinsian *pastoralia* helps us grasp how its development and publication set a trajectory for his life and labors. Its argumentation periodically betrays a younger minister, but the overall picture which emerges shows one with strong theological gifting and concern for the souls entrusted to his watch. It also carries a particular weight, given the relative scarcity of seventeenth-century Particular Baptist catechisms when compared to the broader English Reformed tradition.

Sources and Origins

Most references to the OC usually classify it as a Baptist reproduction of the HC. Nettles describes it as "a virtual duplication."[37] Haykin and Weaver concur, characterizing it as "a baptistic edition" of the HC" [38]; Beeke and Smalley speak to this as well, noting that Collins "adapted the HC for Baptist use."[39] Weaver's dissertation posits that most of Collins's edits are best explained as pastoral clarifications for his congregation's understanding.[40] Renihan considers that Hercules "adapted (or perhaps supplemented)…[the HC] to accord with his own convictions of believer's baptism."[41] MacDonald observes that the OC was not endorsed by the

[37] Nettles, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts*, 18.

[38] Michael Haykin and Steve Weaver, "To 'Concenter with the Most Orthodox Divines': Hercules Collins and his *Orthodox Catechism*," in Karla Apperloo-Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis, eds. *Power of Faith: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 71, 73. Haykin uses this language again in *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands: Recovering Sacrament in the Baptist Tradition* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), 35. Weaver's later work on OC (lightly expanded from the *Power of Faith* survey chapter, an introduction) names it "a revised edition" of the HC; see "An Orthodox Catechism" in Thomas Nettles with Steve Weaver, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: The Study of Catechisms in Baptist Life, revised edition* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2017), 37.

[39] Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024), IV.477n137.

[40] Steve Weaver, "Hercules Collins: Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 70.

[41] James Renihan, "Foreword," in Haykin and Weaver, eds. *An Orthodox Catechism, Being the Sum of Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and Gospel* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014), 7.

London General Assembly in its day, since it:

> [M]ade no specific mention of the divine decrees, specified acceptance of the six principles of Hebrews 6:1, [including] two commonly associated with General Baptist churches, among them the controversial fourth principle of laying on of hands, and was printed with an appendix advocating singing, so it is hardly surprising it was not deemed suitable for the assembly's purpose.[42]

Collins himself gives the clearest summary: his revisions chiefly concern "Church-constitution."[43] Viewed through this ecclesiological lens, his additions and deletions reflect a robust commitment to applying the RPW across the church's life and work.[44] In other words: he seeks to argue what Scripture shows as normative for the proper biblical makeup, structure, faith, and practice of the congregation—a confessing, baptized, biblically-governed, orderly, Scripturally-submissive congregation, composed of those demonstrating a credible profession of faith. He revises, because Scripture regulates.

His choice of the respected HC as a base text was pastorally astute. Comprised of three major "movements" (guilt, grace, and gratitude[45]), the HC underwent three successive editions, follows the basic structure of the book of Romans,[46] and aims to answer basic inquiries concerning the Christian faith and life. Ursinus composed two catechisms—the *Summa* (larger)

Michael Haykin has employed this language elsewhere as well, calling OC a "baptistic adaptation" of the HC; see *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands*, 6.

[42] Murdina MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2022), 74. To be fair, the HC does not speak so explicitly to the decree as does the *Baptist Catechism*; it addresses the doctrine more indirectly and contextually, not the direct systematic-theological manner of the Westminster stream. Further discussion is in Bierma, *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, 75–102.

[43] OC, A6.

[44] Sam Waldron addresses this concept in *The Regulative Principle of the Church* (Pensacola, FL: Chapel Library, 2015), where he extends the RPW to the polity, people, and practice of the church—entirely my point here as well.

[45] Or law, gospel, and sanctification; or sin, salvation, and service. There may be other summaries.

[46] Bierma differs here; see *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, 85.

and the *catechesis minor* (smaller); the HC draws from the latter.[47] It wielded a profound influence on the English Reformed and Puritan tradition, even serving as the "model on which the Westminster Assembly framed the *Shorter Catechism*" (hereafter WSC).[48] George Richards's (1869–1955) classic description captures its character well:

> [I]n spirit and tendency [being] Calvinistic; yet its Calvinism is modified by influences from other Reformed, and from Lutheran, sources. One may define it as Calvinism modified by the German genius. To use Goebel's rhetorical phrase: "It has Lutheran inwardness, Melancthonian clearness, Zwinglian simplicity, and Calvinistic fire, harmoniously blended." Yet it is not simply a mosaic of excerpts from various sources but a new creation with original strength and beauty, both a work of art and a book of doctrine.[49]

Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834) notes that eventually the London Particular Baptists asked William Collins (d. 1702) to produce a catechism for their churches.[50] Quite apart from Hercules's contested positions, his answers (especially on baptism) tend to be lengthier than the HC's, making memorization challenging. He may have intended the OC to function as a short exposition, or perhaps as something akin to a hybrid between the HC and the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (hereafter WLC).

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[47] See Bierma, "The Origins of the Threefold Structure of the Heidelberg Catechism: Another Look," in Karla Apperloo-Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis, eds. *Power of Faith: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 31–40; and his *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, 139: "Those familiar with the HC cannot help but notice a significant overlap with the structure and content" of the *catechesis minor*. He concludes, "It may be going too far to say that the HC was 'something completely new,' but it was certainly more than a lightly edited version of its predecessor' (ibid., 140)—an observation which, for our purposes, situates Collins's edits of the HC as another limb on the family tree of that practice. It also further establishes the Particular Baptists as rightly located within the broader Reformed historical and theological tradition.

[48] No author listed, s.v. "Heidelberg Catechism," in *The Encyclopedia Americana*, eds. George Edwin Rines and Alexander Hopkins McDannald (New York/Chicago: The Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, 1919), XIV.69.

[49] Richards, *The Heidelberg Catechism: Historical and Doctrinal Studies* (Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in America, 1913), 96. Similarly, Bierma, commenting on the HC's family of origin, observes concerning the *Summa*: "If, as several have suggested, [the *Summa*] reflects the combined influence of Melanchthon's doctrine of the law, Bullinger's doctrine of the covenant, and much of the structure and content of Calvin's Genevan Catechism, then we find already in Ursinus's first major theological work a convergence of all three of the Protestant traditions in which he was nurtured." In *An Introduction the Heidelberg Catechism*, 139.

[50] Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 1:533.

Baptist Borrowers

The Particular Baptist pattern of freely adapting preexisting confessional and catechetical symbols comes into sharper focus here. In shaping his *Baptist Catechism* (1693/1695), William Collins followed the precedent of 2LC's production (1677), as well as Hercules's earlier use (1680) of the HC, and adapted the WSC to reflect Baptist convictions. These men were not plagiarists, but careful pastors seeking to commend orthodox theology through the "pattern of sound words" (2 Tm. 1:13)—words already well-tested and established in the practice of faithful churches. As the preface to the 2LC wryly states, they had "no itch to clogge Religion with new words, but [did] readily acquiesce in that form of sound words, which hath been, in consent with the holy Scriptures, used by others before us."[51]

Bierma records that one factor occasioning the HC's commissioning by Elector Frederick III (1515–1576) was the need to replace "the eclectic collection of homemade catechisms" and restrain teachers who tended "to make daily changes at will" in their texts.[52] In 1680, Hercules's preface to OC affirmed the same intent as the 2LC he subscribed and publicly signed in 1689. Reflecting the same instincts and the same approach, he noted that he had "industriously expressed them in the same words, which have on the like occasion bin spoken" and that he desired to "concenter with the most orthodox Divines"—in other words, he aimed to exhibit his "basic unity with the larger Protestant community."[53]

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[51] *A Confession of Faith, Put forth by the Elders and Brethren Of many Congregations of Christians (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country* (London: Printed for Benjamin Harris, 1677), 4. This confession was published anonymously during the persecution facing nonconformists and Puritans in 1677, but was adopted publicly by the London Particular Baptist General Assembly following the Act of Toleration of 1689. Collins's willingness to publish his 1680 catechism in his own name amidst that decidedly (and often violently) anti-Puritan chapter of English history reveals tremendous depth of conviction and bold courage of heart amidst the urgency of the care of souls, which proved to be hallmarks characterizing his entire ministry.

[52] Bierma, *An Introduction the Heidelberg Catechism*, 104.

[53] OC, A4; Nettles, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts*, 18.

Apologetics and Answers

Collins further saw his catechism in an apologetical light.[54] It functioned as a corrective to Thomas Collier's (ca. 1615–ca. 1691) multiplied heresies, and perhaps as something of a respectful Particular Baptist rejoinder to the General Baptist Thomas Grantham's (1634–1692) influential work *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678).[55] Carnes suggests that the OC "seems to be the Particular Baptist counterpart"[56] to Grantham, a reasonable possibility. Grantham, a prominent General Baptist, desired greater concurrence and fellowship with the Particular Baptists, while firmly denying Calvinistic tenets (though he valued the major ecumenical creeds).

Also of consequence for Collins, Grantham argued against congregational singing—asserting it should be done in the heart, not with the voice.[57] Collier (spelled "Collyer" at times) had written much of the well-known *Somerset Confession* (1656)[58] and was widely influential among the Particular Baptists, but his doctrine degenerated into a mixture of mysticism, Arianism, anti-Trinitarianism, semi-Pelagianism, and subtle Quakerism.

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[54] Collins's pastoral apologetics served for both community and congregation. His theological method—perhaps imitating Ursinus, but consistent through his corpus—begins to develop in the OC. He states his doctrine, defends it Scripturally, and answers questions and objections.

[55] Thomas Grantham, *Christianimus Primitivus, or the ancient Christian Religion*, *in its Nature, Certainty, Excellency, and Beauty (Internal and External) particularly Considered, Asserted, and Vindicated, from the many Abuses which have Invaded that Sacred Profession* (London: Printed for Francis Smith, 1678). Though theologically not a Puritan, Grantham's life is helpfully summarized in Benjamin Brook (1776–1848), *The Lives of the Puritans: Containing a Biographical Account of those Divines who Distinguished Themselves in the Cause of Religious Liberty, from the Reformation under Queen Elizabeth, to the Act of Uniformity in 1662* (London, 1813; repr. Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994), III.456–461.

[56] James Carnes, "The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and His Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth Century England." M.A. thesis (North Texas State University, 1984), 82.

[57] See his *Christianimus Primitivus*, II.VIII.99–117.

[58] William Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith, second revised edition*, Bill Leonard, ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011), 186.

In fact, the initial (albeit virtually anonymous, given the formal non-toleration in effect in Britain at the time) 1677 publication of the 2LC represented at least something of an effort to counter Collier's views publicly.[59] Nehemiah Coxe's *Vindiciae Veritatis, or a Confutation of the Heresies and gross Errours Asserted by Thomas Collier in his Additional Word to his Body of Divinity* (1677)[60] gave a pointed and devastatingly capable answer to Collier. A thorough response of this sort was needful given Collier's stature among the Particular Baptists, but a catechism could summarize those doctrinal responses more accessibly. Thus Collins's OC served as a timely resource to protect and instruct his own congregation, while also offering a concise and timeless statement of biblical theology to the reading public.

Hence, his specific nomenclature of "An *Orthodox* Catechism" (emphasis mine) was deliberate. The title was calculated to signal emphatically to his reader: herein lies faithfulness and sound doctrine for your soul's good. Weaver argues that Collins followed the General Baptist *An Orthodox Creed* (1679) at several points: their shared titular adjective, the addition of *Nicene* and *Athanasian Creeds* (the HC includes only the *Apostles' Creed*), the distinctive verbiage on the Athanasian Creed's final sentence, and the clarifying note on Christ's descent.[61] Hercules also seems to have followed *An Orthodox Creed*—at least to some extent—in the laying on of hands.[62]

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[59] Samuel Renihan, *The Petty France Church, part 1* (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2019), 97–106.

[60] Nehemiah Coxe, *Vindiciae Veritatis, or a Confutation of the Heresies and gross Errours Asserted by Thomas Collier in his Additional Word to his Body of Divinity* (London: Printed for Nath. Ponder, 1677). Repr., James Renihan, ed. *Nehemiah Coxe's Vindiciae Veritatis: 'A Vindication of the Truth'* (UK: Broken Wharfe/T.J. Books, Ltd., 2023). Renihan's introduction provides helpful context for the work's importance, in light of Collier's egregious heresies and heterodoxies (pp. 9–13). For a contemporary's view of the multiplied heresies of the day, see Ephraim Pagitt (1574/1575–1647), *Heresiography: A Description of the Heretics and Sectaries of These Latter Times* (London, 1645).

[61] Steve Weaver, "'Three Subsistences…One Substance': The Doctrine of the Trinity," in *Perichoresis* 20.1 (2022), 13; though note Jonathan Arnold's pushback that his following the *Orthodox Creed* is only a probability in *Themelios* 41.2 (August 2016): 354–355.

[62] See OC #81 and *An Orthodox Creed*, XXXII.

The OC's structure reveals Collins's intent that it function as a comprehensible (and fairly comprehensive) tool for theological reference, doctrinal instruction, devotional assistance, apologetical engagement, evangelistic clarity, and ecclesiastical application. Luther's maxim comes to mind: "Peace if possible, but truth at all costs!"[63] Quite so here: Hercules's careful nomenclature emphasized that the doctrine therein was *orthodox* and true, not heterodox or heretical.

The two additional creeds Collins includes in the OC appear to be secondhand citations, not scholarly renderings from the original sources. Perhaps he drew them from *An Orthodox Creed*?[64] This secondhand access makes sense: Hercules wrote as a working shepherd, not a patristics specialist. One must remember that his nonconformity meant being barred from university training (which also usually included university books); but he proved resourceful and conscientious in securing the historical references he needed.

At points through his corpus, Collins employs citations from selected Church Fathers using English translations found in other books. Given his counsel to aspiring preachers concerning acquiring a "commonplace book"[65] in *The Temple Repair'd*, he likely collected (and perhaps indexed?) such material. The practice is reasonable; truth remains true irrespective of

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[63] Is it apocryphal? This sentence, frequently credited to Luther, certainly captures the essence of his approach—yet appears nowhere within his *Works* or sermons. R.C. Sproul (1939–2017) is the most credible of these crediting-but-not-citing sources, in his *Before the Face of God: Book 4: A Daily Guide for Living from Ephesians, Hebrews, and James*, electronic edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; Ligonier Ministries, 1994).

[64] Weaver, "'Three Subsistences…One Substance,'" 13:

> Collins likely received his creedal commitments to the doctrines of the Trinity and the person of Christ, not directly from the patristic tradition, but rather through Reformed statements such as the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England …. The language introducing the three creeds used in both article 38 of the *Orthodox Creed* and "The Preface" to the *Orthodox Catechism* is almost identical to the language of article 8 of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

[65] See his "Additional Directions and Instructions," #37.

how one accesses it. His pastoral impetus to consult and apply the best thinkers of Christian history for shaping his theological engagement with Scripture, informing his care of souls, and anchoring his people in truth is admirable and worthy of emulation.

Stated Reasons for Writing *An Orthodox Catechism*

The OC's Preface[66] submits Collins's reasons for writing, framed by the brevity of life and urgency of ministerial faithfulness. Haykin and Weaver observe "at least three purposes" prompting the work: it was to serve as "a tool for pastoral instruction," a "polemic against false teaching," and a "plea for doctrinal unity."[67] While their basic assessment is sound, Collins's Preface presents at least nine distinct purposes. Each one helps illumine his burgeoning pastoral theology.

Personal and Ministerial Faithfulness

Collins desires to "leave behind me Some poor token and testimony of my Love and Duty towards [Christ], and his blessed Spouse the Church," rather than "return to him with my Talent wrapt up in a Napkin."[68] He wishes to be found faithful to Christ and useful to Christ's people in the exercise of his spiritual gifts. Thus, his writing, his preaching, his counseling, and his training of men to proclaim Christ and thereby build up his church.

Ecclesiological and Apologetical Concern

Concern for ecclesiastical purity and faithfulness in doctrine compels him to write,

[66] Several similar themes are found in 2LC's "Letter to the Judicious and Impartial Reader."

[67] See their "'To Concenter with the Most Orthodox Divines': Hercules Collins and his *An Orthodox Catechism*," in *Power of Faith: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 71–73. Weaver's revised introduction to OC echoes the first two and gently develops their third from unity to identity and alignment, arguing that Collins penned OC to "identify himself and his fellow Particular Baptists with the orthodoxy of the Protestant divines of Europe." In *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts, revised edition*, 42–43.

[68] OC, A2.

particularly given their day's sorrows as related to theological dissolution. He notes it being a time "very gloomy and dark full of Error and Heresie, which spreads more and more" such that many are "shaken, shattered and carried away with every wind and blast, every puff and breath of Error, and Heresie."[69] He hopes that men will be well-established upon the doctrines of the Scriptures.

Doctrinal and Affectional Renewal

He knows that love to God and men kindles rightly only "from those Gospel Truths, the least of which is more worth than our lives"—that the "great declension in love to God and to one another"[70] marking their age sprang from doctrinal ignorance—failing to see God's truth rightly. He wants the Wapping church to love "the truth as it is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21) for an intensely practical reason: so they can love Jesus and one another truly.

Experiential and Evangelical Stability

Hercules seeks their peace of soul—that they find rest in a greater grasp of the gospel. He longs to help them "be the better established, strengthened, and Settled on that Sure Rock and Foundation of Salvation, Christ's Merits," not their own works as "impotent Creature[s]."[71] This statement definitively expresses his Protestant and Reformed convictions, grounding assurance in Christ alone.

Convictional and Congregational Order

Collins aims to "settle" them in solidifying their "foundation of Church-constitution,"[72]

[69] OC, A3.

[70] OC, A3.

[71] OC, A3.

[72] OC, A3. By "church-constitution" Collins refers to their being a congregation comprised of professing

and "the true form of God's House,"[73] considering their polity and particular ecclesiological convictions biblically and catechetically. A disordered people will ultimately build a discordant church. A Christian congregation must be duly constituted, with a rightly ordained ministry[74] and proper understanding and practice of membership, according to the Scriptures. Anything less risks constructing something aping what Jesus established, while failing to enter its realities and richness.

Doxological and Applicational Clarity

He aims at increasing comprehension of and peace in true worship by helping them better understand Scripture. They have already been "stirred…up to search the divine Oracle, and Rule of Divine Service"[75] concerning faithful ecclesiology and the Lord's authority in governing their worship. Zeal for God's house consumes this young minister (John 2:17).

Hercules hopes to confirm their consciences by encouraging continued obedience to Scripture, particularly in matters of baptistic polity and practice. He refers to the Feast of Tabernacles "for many years was not practiced after the due order, though a general notion was retained about it."[76] Under Ezra and Nehemiah, that "almost lost Ordinance of God" was

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believers. See OC, A4–A5. A credobaptistically-constituted ecclesiological focus occupies a significant percentage of his published writing.

[73] OC, A4.

[74] Collins consistently holds to the doctrine of ordination throughout his ministry. Reflecting his mature thought, he returned to the theme in his final publication, *The Temple Repair'd. Or, An Essay to revive the long neglected Ordinances, of exercising the Spiritual Gift of Prophecy for the Edification of the Churches; and of ordaining Ministers duly qualified. With proper Directions as to Study and Preaching, for such as are inclin'd to the Ministry* (London, 1702), 58–59.

[75] OC, A3.

[76] OC, A3. One thinks here of J. Gresham Machen's (1881–1937) famous dictum that truth is explicit in the first generation, assumed in the second, and lost in the third (a summary of chapter two in his famous *Christianity and Liberalism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1923]); or of John Brown's (1830–1922) observation concerning post-Puritan England as Cambridge Platonism gained ascendency: "both preacher and people continued to speak their fathers' language after they had lost their fathers' faith." *Puritan Preaching in England: A Study of Past and Present* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), 126–127.

restored.

His language in this sixth concern reflects their shared conviction of the RPW and lays a prefatory foundation for his catechetical exposition of baptism exercised under that rule—the authority of Scripture. Collins would spend the rest of his life developing this doctrine in both written and verbal formats; his corpus features references to it throughout. Even as a young pastor, he was deeply concerned for biblical faithfulness:

> That God whom we Serve is very jealous of his Worship; and forsasmuch as by his Providence the Law of his House hath bin preserved and continued to us, we look upon it as our Duty in our generation to be Searching out the mind of God, in his holy Oracle…and to reform what is amiss…as it is written…as God signified his mind in that particular, so we having our Judgments informed about the true way of Worship, do not dare to stifle the Light God hath given us."[77] And again: "If God shall enlighten any into any Truth, which they shall Stifle for base and unwarrantable ends, know that 'tis God must judg…[78]

Spiritual and Practical Edification

He hopes his catechism will prove concretely spiritually profitable and cast a wide net in usefulness. He intends it as "Milk for Babes, and Meat for Strong Men," issuing in saints "not only taught to be good Christians, but good Moralists."[79] Jesus says it best: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Collins's concern is for the Christian holiness which J.C. Ryle (1816–1900) a century later would call "practical religion,"[80] a holy piety bred from proper acquaintance with this "Epitome of Law and Gospel, suited to every ones capacity in God's House."[81]

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[77] OC, A4.

[78] OC, A5.

[79] OC, A3.

[80] J.C. Ryle, *Practical Religion* (Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), vii. On this heading, see Charles Hambrick-Stowe, "Practical Divinity and Spirituality," in John Coffey and Paul Lim, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 191–205.

[81] OC, A3.

Hercules writes consistent with truths they already knew and loved, "concenter[ing] with the most Orthodox Divines in the Fundamental Principles and Articles of the Christian Faith."[82] He intends both to identify his doctrine as, and to anchor their faith to, soundly biblical and historical Reformed theology.

Essential and Universal Catholicity

Collins appeals to a godly catholicity rooted in deep Christian charity, especially toward men of like evangelical faith. He acknowledges "some differences between many Godly Divines and us in Church-Constitution," though these points "are not the Essence of Christianity" and should not hinder love among believers: "there is Sufficient ground to lay aside all bitterness and prejudice, and labour to maintain a spirit of Love to each other, knowing we shall never See all alike here."[83]

To this end, though Heidelberg already provides a brief exposition of the *Apostles' Creed* (which Hercules retains), he appends the *Nicene* and *Athanasian Creeds* to his OC as together containing those matters which "ought thoroughly to be believed and embraced by all those that would be accounted Christians."[84] He aims to demonstrate the historic orthodoxy of his doctrine, comforting suspicious or sensitive consciences within that turbulent theological climate. Collins memorably pleads for:

> A perpetual Rule, That whatever is good in any, owned by any, whatever Error or Vice it may be mixed withal, the Good must not be rejected for the Error or Vice sake, but owned, commended, and accepted.[85]

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[82] OC, A4.

[83] OC, A4.

[84] OC, A5.

[85] OC, A5.

Pastoral and Local Concern for Families

Finally, Collins writes for the benefit of the families in his congregation, and especially for the children.[86] He desires that his readers gain "utility and profit" by his "gathering these broken fragments," and encourages reading and applying them "seriously and observingly… humbly and frequently…with prayer and meditation."[87] Their enjoyment of the catechism, he hopes, will be secondary to the duty of "Parents…conscientiously read[ing] those Divine Oracles which hold forth their Duty to their children," for diligence in this practice will "doubtless be to them of great advantage."[88]

In other words, personal and familial piety, including more faithfully and effectively evangelizing and discipling one's children by means of the Scriptures, is the intended end of catechesis: "the Divine Oracles…hold forth" the child's "Duty" to repent and believe in Jesus. Thus, for Collins, regular family worship must be both evangelistic and devotional in its character, and catechesis is a vital component of leading a child to realize the nature and ruin of his sin and come to know the Saviour.

Concern over devotional and catechetical neglect in families spurs Collins to write, for in neglecting the catechism, parents could hobble a child's more full and profitable understanding of the Scriptures. The analogy of faith[89] provided a hermeneutical lens through which children

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[86] This loving concern also prompted him to write his *POEM on the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST* (1696), intended to be read as a fun pastime for children. Reading poetry may seem an odd diversion for children in today's pragmatic environment, but they delighted in it during the seventeenth century. See, for example, the anonymous *Aseop Improved* (London: Thomas Pankhurst, 1673), A2: "Men may read those books for their Profundity which Children read for their Pleasantness."

[87] OC, A5.

[88] OC, A6.

[89] Collins identifies this principle explicitly in his *Appendix on Singing*, #6: "Every Duty must be performed according to the Analogy of Faith, and founded on God's Word." The "analogy of faith" (*analogia fidei*) is a foundational Reformed hermeneutical principle: [It is] "the general sense of the meaning of Scripture, constructed from the clear or unambiguous loci, as the basis for interpreting unclear or ambiguous texts…distinct

can approach the Bible on its own terms with suitable confidence and comprehension, thus equipping them to read the Word and know its God.

Collins, while speaking respectfully as one would expect from a younger minister, minces no words in what he desired to see within his own church: "it is heartily Desired that Parents, especially professing ones, were more concerned for the everlasting welfare of their Children."[90]

To conclude his preface, Hercules offers a touching prayer on their behalf, submissively asking God that "Grace may be opened to your Hearts, and your Hearts to Grace."[91] Even his benediction instructs his readers in experiential Reformed theology.

Analysis of An Orthodox Catechism

With Collins's pastoral aims in view, our next task is to examine the OC itself—its structure, revisions, and expansions—in order to grasp how these stated purposes shaped the catechism's final form.

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from the more basic 'analogy of Scripture' (*analogia Scipturae*), the analogy of faith presupposes a sense of the theological meaning of Scripture." So Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), 33. In other words, Scripture interprets Scripture—its plain texts are both primary and sufficient to explain its less-clear passages. The Protestant doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is drawn from both *analogia fidei* and *analogia Scripturae*. These closely-related principles stand in sharp contrast to Roman appeals to the sufficiency of the Church and Tradition in defining and developing doctrine. Collins speaks to the concept several times in *The Temple Repair'd* (1702), such as in this key excerpt from his "Additional Directions and Instructions" #3 (pp. 27–28):

> Let all you Deliver be according to the Analogy of Faith. Never interpret one text of Scripture in a way that thwarts or Contradicts another. Abandon all private Opinions, although they seem ever so attractive. Peter saith, "no Prophecy of Scripture is of any private Interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20). That is, no particular Scripture differs from the whole, or any part of it. No man, no Company of men, no Church or public Officers are to interpret the Scriptures out of their own heads, according to their own minds, so as to make their Private Sense the sense of the Scripture. But they must seek the understanding of it from God, who shows the Meaning of the Word by the Word itself.

[90] OC, A6.

[91] OC, A6.

In revising and expanding the HC, Collins maintains its basic threefold structure of guilt, grace, and gratitude. As he notes, his OC revisions "differ…only in some things about Church–constitution,"[92] meaning that his most substantive changes concern sacramentology and ecclesiology. Even so, the scope of his editorial work is significant. He freely adds and edits Heidelberg's biblical prooftexts,[93] gently rearranges the order of certain questions (particularly in treating baptism and the moral law), substantially revises the answers to three questions (OC #94, #101, and #119), provides an extended preface to one question (OC #92), and adds twenty-five questions and several marginal notes of his own: while HC presents 129 questions, the OC expands to 152.

Collins's questions and answers sometimes lightly reword the HC's or add a clarifying word or clause, though he generally maintains their intent, integrity, and primary concerns. For example, Collins omits HC #23 ("What are these articles?") but retains the *Apostles' Creed* in its same place there, following HC's structure. He further appends two of the four ecumenical creeds, thus omitting only the *Definition of Chalcedon* (451), and includes his own "Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing." The result? OC is a working pastor's tool, a striving Christian's resource, a sincere congregation's reference.

Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583) produced the classic *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*[94] (intended for congregational and collegiate use) and "the learned doctor"

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[92] OC, A4.

[93] The HC presents over 700 proof texts in some editions, most of which Collins retained. "The church's book of comfort," as it is often called, simply echoes Scripture—in both versions.

[94] *THE SUMME OF CHRISTIAN FAITH DELIVERED BY ZACHARIAS URSINUS First, by way of CATECHISM, and then afterwards more enlarged by a sound and judicious EXPOSITION, and APPLICATION of the same. First Englished by D.HENRY PARRY, and now again conferred with the best and last Latine Edition of D. DAVID PAREUS, sometime Professour of Divinity in Heidelberge*. (LONDON, 1645).

William Ames (1576–1633)[95] provided faithful biblical exposition of the HC's doctrines birthed from his lectures at Franeker University in *The Substance of the Christian Religion*.[96] Hercules did not publish an exposition of his OC, but in *The Temple Repair'd* (1702), his final publication, he warmly recommend Ursinus's and Ames's books as faithful guides for gospel ministers.[97] His silence (in not producing his own commentary) is itself telling: the OC is meant to function as a pastoral instrument, not a scholastic treatise.

Rearranging, Editing, and Expanding

Having traced Collins's stated pastoral aims in composing the OC, we now turn to examine how those aims shaped the catechism's final form. This section analyzes Collins's editorial work—his rearrangements, additions, deletions, and structural decisions—in order to understand how he implemented his pastoral theology in the text of OC itself. To do so with clarity, a brief explanation of this study's editorial approach is necessary.

On My Editorial Methodology

Because Hercules removed most of the HC's structural markers—its numbering, major

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[95] Called "Puritanism's Elijah," the descriptor of Ames as "the learned doctor" is even found on his son William (junior's) gravestone. Keith Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds of English and American Puritanism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 248, 253.

[96] Beeke notes a peculiarity of Ames's *Sketch*: in its 1659 English translation, Ames omits all references to the HC, including quoting it! Instead, he selects a significant Scripture proof as the basis of his exposition for a given Lord's Day portion. *The SVBSTANCE of the Christian Religion : OR, A plain and easie Draught of the Christiane CATECHISM, in LII. Lectures, on chosen Texts of Scripture, for each Lords-day of the Year, Learnedly and Perspicuously Illustrated with Doctrines, Reasons, and Uses. By that Learned and Worthy Labourer in the Lord's Vineyard, William Ames, Doctor in Divinity, and late Professor thereof, at Franeker in Friezeland* (London, 1659); repr. Todd Rester, transl. *A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), xxx.

[97] Collins, *The Temple Repair'd*, 49. Other than Benjamin Beddome's (1717–1795) *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism, by Way of Question and Answer* (London, 1752)—following Matthew Henry's (1662–1714) interrogative approach in his *A Scripture-catechism, in the Method of the Assemblies* (London, 1703)—Particular Baptists have not enjoyed many expositions of our symbols.

headings, and subheadings[98]—the OC presents as a nearly-continuous text block. The absence of structural markers obscures the OC's internal organization, renders its method opaque, and complicates basic navigation as well as ready comparison with the HC; it also somewhat hobbles theological analysis of Collins's editorial decisions.

To present the OC accessible for modern scholarship while remaining faithful to Collins's original text, I have reconstructed its architecture by:

1. Assigning sequential question numbers to the entirety of Collins's text for standardization,
2. Restoring the HC's major structural divisions where Collins's content plainly follows them,
3. Supplying new headings where Collins's edits or additions create these distinct thematic units, and
4. Excerpting all of OC's questions, placing them (sequentially numbered) under these headings in Appendix 2 for standardizing reference.

My supplied headings are *descriptive rather than interpretive*. They clarify the catechism's thematic units, helping readers grasp its pedagogical and theological flow, and carefully trace Collins's editorial logic without imposing a foreign conceptual framework. I do not claim he had my structure in mind; I am simply providing a scholarly apparatus for modern analytical use.

This reconstruction enables a more precise mapping of Collins's editorial method, doctrinal emphases, and catechetical logic (as examined below)—his additions, deletions, expansions, and relocations—while preserving the integrity of his work. It also provides a functional apparatus for formal citation, pastoral and pedagogical use, and comparative analysis. Numbering the questions permits Collins's OC to be referenced with the same clarity as the HC, WSC/WLC, and later Baptist catechisms. Restoring and supplying headings simply foregrounds the catechetical, ministerial, and theological logic governing his labors with the HC.

In sum: this approach in no sense modernizes or recasts Collins, but allows his OC to be read as he intended—as a pastoral, doctrinal, and ecclesial instrument—while offering structural

[98] Or possibly the printer? More awkward things have happened in Early Modern publishing, but it is far more likely that the removal reflects Hercules's editing work than a printing error.

clarity, necessary for rigorous engagement and practical employment.

Putting Hercules Beside Heidelberg

With the methodological framework in place, we may now compare Collins's editorial work directly with the HC to see how he reshaped its structure and content. The HC is divided into fifty-two "Lord's Days" intended for weekly congregational instruction. Collins follows the HC's overall structure closely, but deletes most of its headings (thus offering no divisions) and removes all numbering, while inserting his own questions.[99] The result is a text preserving HC's doctrinal flow while presenting as a nearly-continuous block: beautiful theology, but burdensome to navigate.

Collins retains (though interestingly, he also slightly rewords #5 and #8) the following nine headings from the HC in *An Orthodox Catechism*:

1. Preface (pp. A2 through what would be A6),
2. Of the Holy Ghost (pp. 20–24),
3. Of the Sacraments (pp. 25–37),
4. Of the Lord's Supper (pp. 38–46),
5. The third Part is of Mans Thankfulness (pp. 46–63),
6. Of Prayer (pp. 63–71),
7. The Nicene Creed (pp. 71–72),
8. Athanasius his Creed (pp. 72–74), and
9. An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing (pp. 75–86).

Because Collins removes the HC's numbering and supplies no alternate reference system, readers lack a reliable means of citation or structural orientation. Assigning sequential numbers to all of OC's 152 questions therefore provides a stable reference system—making his editorial method much more visible by allowing his additions, deletions, and relocations to be mapped

[99] James Renihan helpfully harmonizes—but does not number—the OC's questions alongside the HC, noting distinctions between the two documents in his *True Confessions* (Owensboro, KY: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2004), 233–291. Haykin and Weaver's gently modernized RBAP reprint numbers OC's questions, but omits questions #79–82 on the laying on of hands (as well as the Appendix on singing)—indeed making it very "useful for churches in our day" ("Acknowledgements," by the editors), but challenging for historical work. Both resources are valuable and have their proper place! I have simply offered a more formal third option.

against the HC's structure. For example, HC #23 ("Which is the Creed?") is deleted, though the OC maintains the HC's order in keeping the *Apostles' Creed* as immediately following.

The following headings do justice to the OC:

1. Of misery under sin: questions #1–10,
2. Of mercy to sinners: questions #11–21,
3. Of the Apostles Creed: questions #22–24,
4. Of God the Father: questions #25–27,
5. Of God the Son: questions #28–51,
6. Of God the Spirit: questions #52–64 (Q. 57 concludes treatment of Apostles' Creed),
7. Of the sacraments: questions #65–67,
8. Of baptism: questions #68–78,
9. Of the laying on of hands: questions #79–82,
10. Of the Lord's supper: questions #83–91,
11. Of the keys: questions #92–94,
12. Of Christian thankfulness: questions #95–96,
13. Of Christian conversion: questions #97–99,
14. Of God's law: questions #100–137,
15. Of prayer: questions #138–152,
16. The Nicene Creed,
17. The Athanasian Creed, and
18. An Appendix Concerning the Ordinance of Singing.

On the Question of Headings

One immediately notes Collins's curious omission of any headings whatsoever for the first fifty-two questions. While the first and second German editions of the HC lacked the Lord's Day divisions (as with the Latin), the third edition added them. Presently, we are simply unsure why he made this editorial choice. Renihan concludes that the 1645 edition of Ursinus's *The Summe of Christian Religion* was "obviously the edition [of the HC] used by Collins"[100] as his base text, which is reasonable…but Ursinus's edition numbers the questions.

Perhaps the printer made an error in omitting them? Stranger things have happened in the broader Reformation and Puritan literary history. Maybe Hercules purposefully deleted them? Perhaps he wished to emphasize catechesis, not systematics? Perhaps he desired to foreground

[100] James Renihan, *True Confessions*, 236. The reference is to *The Summe of Christian Religion, Delivered by Zacharias Ursinus, First, by way of CATECHISM, and then afterwards more enlarged by Sound and judicious EXPOSITION, and APPLICATION of the Same* (London: Printed by James Young, 1645).

Scripture's arguments instead of human reasoning? Perhaps he aimed at his OC functioning more as a didactic dialogue than a scholastic outline? Perhaps he wanted to avoid any potential appearance of composing a new confession (particularly given his relative inexperience as an elder)?

Some other motivation may have driven the decision. Hercules did not know German, so far as we can ascertain, though he had some facility with Latin.[101] If he accessed an older Latin edition of the HC for comparative study (Pareus's 1616 edition underlay the 1645 edition Collins most likely consulted[102]), it might have suggested to him some reason for omitting the Lord's Day divisions. Beeke notes a peculiarity in the famed Puritan father William Ames's (1576–1633) treatment of the HC: its 1659 English translation shows that Ames omits all references to the HC, including quoting it! Instead, he selects a significant Scripture proof as the basis of his exposition for a given Lord's Day portion. Perhaps Collins adapted something of an idea from Ames?[103] At any rate, his rationale is presently unknown.

On the Scripture Proofs

Additionally, Hercules's OC retained many of the Scripture proofs from the HC, but he edited them freely. For example, compare the cited texts in these selected questions as laid out

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[101] For example, Collins's recommended reading in *The Temple Repair'd*, 50, includes a commendation of "Mr. Cole's Latin and English Dictionaries."

[102] The elongated title notes that the "Englishing" (translating) of the work was "now again conferred with the best and last Latin Edition of D[r.] David Pareus, sometime Professour of Divinity in *Heidelberg*." G.W. Willard (1818–1900) notes that Pareus (1548–1622), a German Protestant theologian and reformer, was "the intimate friend and disciple of Ursinus." See *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, transl. G.W. Willard (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954), iv. His 1616 Latin edition (considered to be definitive) features numbered questions, but does not organize the questions into Lord's Days. Maag observes that "The English edition of Ursinus's commentary, published as *The Summe of Christian Religion*, was…extremely popular—at least twenty-three editions appeared between 1587 and 1663." See her "Early Editions and Translations of the Heidelberg Catechism," in Bierma, ed., *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, 111.

[103] See Todd Rester, transl. *William Ames: A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), xxx.

side-by-side in Figure 3.1:

FIGURE 3.1: Comparing Selected Heidelberg Catechism and Orthodox Catechism Scripture Proofs

HC #1	***OC #1***
Rom. 14:7–8	
1 Cor. 6:19	1 Cor. 6:19 (adds 1 Thess. 5:10)
	Rom. 14:8 (deletes v. 7)
1 Cor. 3:23	1 Cor. 3:23
1 Pet. 1:18–19	1 Pet. 1:18–19
1 Jn. 1:7 1 Jn. 2:2	1 Jn. 1:7 1 Jn. 2:2
1 Jn. 3:8	1 Jn. 3:8 (adds Heb. 2:14–15)
Jn. 6:39	Jn. 6:39
Matt. 10:29–30 Lk. 21:18	Matt. 10:30 (deletes v. 29) Lk. 21:18
Rom. 8:28	Rom. 8:28
2 Cor. 1:21–22 Eph. 1:13–14 Rom. 8:16	2 Cor. 1:12 (typo in 1680 edition; should read v. 21; deletes v. 22) (adds 2 Cor. 5:5) Eph. 13–14 (typo in 1680 edition; should read ch. 1)
Rom. 8:1	(deletes Rom. 8:1)
	(adds Rom. 8:24–25)
HC #2	***OC #2***
Lk. 24:46–47 1 Cor. 6:11 Tit. 3:3–7	Lk. 24:47 (deletes v. 46) 1 Cor. 6:11 (adds Rom. 8:15) Tit. 3:3–8 (adds v. 8)
Jn. 9:41 Jn. 15:22	Jn. 4:41 (typo in 1680 edition; should read ch. 9) (deletes Jn. 15:22) (adds Rom. 3)
Jn. 17:3	Jn. 17:3
Eph. 5:8–11 1 Pet. 2:9–12 Rom. 6:11–14	Eph. 5:10 (deletes vv. 8–9, 11) 1 Pet. 2:9 (deletes vv. 10–12) (deletes Rom. 6:11–14) (adds 1 Pet. 3:10–12)
HC #27	***OC #26***
Acts 17:25–26	Acts 17:25 (deletes v. 26) (adds Ps. 94:9) (adds Is. 29:5) (adds Ezek. 8:12)
Heb. 1:3	Heb. 1:2–3 (adds v. 2)

Jer. 5:24	Jer. 5:24 (adds Acts 14:17)
Jn. 9:3	Jn. 9:3
Prov. 22:2	Prov. 22:2
HC #28	***OC #27***
Rom. 5:3 Jam. 1:3 Job 1:21	Rom. 5:3 (deletes Jam. 1:3) Job 1:21
Dt. 8:10 1 Thess. 5:18	Dt. 8:10 1 Thess. 5:18
	(adds Rom. 5:4–5)
Rom. 8:35, 38–39	Rom. 8:38, 19 (typo in 1680 edition; should read Rom. 8:39) (deletes v. 35)
Job 1:12 Acts 17:25–28 Prov. 21:1	Job 1:12 (adds Job 2:6) Acts 17:27 "& c." (deletes vv. 26–26, 28)
HC #66	***OC #65***
Gen. 17:11	Gen. 17:11
Rom. 4:11	Rom. 4:11
Dt. 30:6	Dt. 30:6
	(adds Lev. 6:25)
Heb. 9:8–9	Heb. 9:8–9
Ezek. 20:12	Ezek. 20:12
	(adds 1 Sam. 6:6–7)
	(adds "54:9–10") (typo in 1680 edition; should read Is. 54:9–10)

Collins's editing of the Scripture proofs begs the question: why? To what end? Several reasons seem likely. Certainly, he aimed at more rigorously affixing his people to biblical truth; thus his edits, additions, and deletions tend toward the more demonstrably-plain statements in Scripture. He desired to adhere closely to the RPW, hence the inclusion of more explicitly-focused references.

Hercules evinces pastoral concern for simplicity and precision, sometimes omitting context-setting verses not so immediately or obviously dealing with the doctrine under discussion. Recall his concern for children's comprehension: direct clarity is generally best in

such cases. Further, he wrote, in part, to correct a schismatic and prominent heretic's doctrine[104]; hence his rigid anchoring in and multiplying of biblical proofs. Finally, he aimed to edify the saints, and therefore brought forth as much as possible of the whole counsel of God.

More examples could be given, but these comparisons suffice to demonstrate Collins's treatment in editing the HC. He preserves Heidelberg's core doctrines, structure, and warmth, yet exercises liberty in revising prooftexts to strengthen clarity, doctrinal precision, and pastoral usefulness. Having examined Collins's structural and textual revisions of the HC, we may now engage the specific questions he added in his OC and the distinct theological concerns they reveal.

Questions Added to *An Orthodox Catechism* Comprising Further Distinctives

Hercules added twenty-five questions to his OC, alongside what Weaver styles his "relatively minor"[105] edits of the HC. Eleven of the twenty-five questions simply recite the Preface to the Ten Commandments and rehearse the Ten Commandments themselves, asking "What is the first, second, etc., commandment?" The remaining fourteen questions are of his own composition or adaptation, revealing his distinctive pastoral and ecclesiological concerns.

In addition to these new questions, he made three substantial edits—OC #94 (on church discipline), OC #101 (on the law of God), and OC #119 (on the what the Fourth Commandment teaches Christians). He also retained one significant element from Heidelberg—HC #66's language of sacraments as "sacred Signes and Seals" in OC #65. The theological significance of his additions, edits, and notable retention will be analyzed in this section. They are highly consequential elements of his developing pastoral theology.

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[104] In a future study, I hope to compare Collins's additions to OC—specifically his Scripture proofs—against Collier's primary Scripture proofs in his books (his *Body of Divinity* and *An Additional Word* would likely be the major ones to consider here), but it is beyond the present scope of this chapter.

[105] Weaver, "An Orthodox Catechism," in *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts, revised edition*, 42.

Credobaptism

Collins first inserts six questions introducing credobaptism between HC #68–69; these are OC questions #68–73[106]:

68. What is Baptism?
69. Who are the proper Subjects of this Ordinance?
70. Are no Infants to be baptized?[107]
71. Doth the Scripture any where expressly forbid the Baptizing of Infants?
72. May not the Infant Seed of Believers under the Gospel be baptized as well as the Infant Seed of Abraham under the Law was circumcised?
73. Seeing the Infants of Believers are in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents, as some Say, why may not they be baptized under the Gospel, as well as Abrahams Infant Seed was circumcised under the Law?

The language used in the answers to OC #68–73 is largely Collins's own, though #69 draws almost directly from 2LC 29.2. It presents a noteworthy contrast with the HC—HC features no question formally defining baptism; its answer to #69 includes only a brief description. Collins follows 2LC 29.1–2 closely in composing his OC #68–69, while also incorporating elements of 2LC 29.3–4 into his answers. OC #70–73 then clarify and distinguish his affirmations and denials of lawful sacramental practice under the RPW.

The Laying on of Hands

Collins inserts four questions concerning the laying on of hands (hereafter LOH) after baptism between HC #73–75, omitting HC #74 ("Are infants also to be baptized?"). These appear as OC questions #79–82:

79. What principle of Christ's doctrine in the Holy Scripture followeth baptism in order?
80. What is the form and end of this ordinance?
81. Is it the duty of every Christian to be under this practice?
82. Did not the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit follow upon layin on of hands in the Apostles time?

[106] Collins's treatment of baptism continues in OC #74–78, but his questions are virtually identical to HC #69–73.

[107] OC #70 modifies HC #74.

The answers of OC #79–82's are largely Collins's own, though seemingly somewhat loosely drawn from *An Orthodox Creed* XXXII. For example, his OC #81 echoes and expands upon that creed's language: "we believe [it] is a principle of Christ's doctrine, and ought to be practiced and submitted to by every baptized believer in order to receive the promised spirit of the father and son." Hercules presents the practice's necessity as an expression of the RPW.

Congregational Singing

Hercules inserts one question on singing after the Lord's Table between HC #82–83. It appears as OC #91:

> 91. How ought this ordinance of the Lord's Supper be closed?[108]

His answer is original. Here, he speaks simply of "singing Praises to God vocally and audibly for his great Benefits and blessings to his Church…which Blessings are pointed out in this Sacrament." He grounds warrant for the practice in Christ's example: "we find our Lord and his Disciples did close up this Ordinance in singing an Hymn or Psalm."[109] He then presses singing home to the conscience:

> [I]f Christ did sing, who was going to dy , what cause have we to sing for whom he died, that we might not eternally dy, but live a spiritual and eternal life with Father, Son, and Spirit, in unexppressible Glory.

"An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing" at the conclusion of OC expands his argument from singing post-Table to defending it as an ordained element of public worship under

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[108] Ivimey similarly records Benjamin Keach's congregation concluding the Lord's Supper with a hymn as well in his *History of the English Baptists*, I.384. Collins considers that singing ought to be done *a capella*; see "An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing," in *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680), 81–82(2): "We have not anything as typical now to look at, as the Lute and Harp were in the Law, as also those Ceremonies which typed out Christ's Sacrifice; but when the Substance came, the Shadow ceased. So the Spirit being more abundantly poured out, we have no need of those Instruments…"

[109] This sort of theological reasoning is a precise application of what 2LC 1.6 intends in its distinctive "necessarily contained in" clause. It was also the Wapping church's practice, not simply Collins's preference—for example, in the "Dedicatory Epistle" of his *Three Books* (London, 1696), he expresses his hope that his work will encourage the saints, "just as some of our Hymns sung at the Lord's Table will be brought to your Remembrance," they would thereby be enabled to glorify God.

the RPW. It asserts singing from the heart as a congregational duty and a means of grace.

Church Discipline

Collins edits OC #94 extensively, his first notable adjustment of a HC answer:

94. How is the Kingdom of Heaven opened and shut by Ecclesiastical Discipline?

HC #85 has 115 words in its response; Hercules deletes fourteen of them and adds thirty-nine of his own in OC #94, a significant percentage of change. He roots his answer in both the RPW and the moral law: church discipline is "according to the Commandments of Christ."[110]

The Ten Commandments

Hercules next inserts three questions concerning the preface to the Ten Commandments between HC #93–94; these are OC questions #103–105:

103. What is the Preface to the ten commandments?
104. What learn we from this preface?
105. Do these things belong unto us?

OC #103's answer simply recites the Scripture, as one would expect; the language of OC #104–105 appears to be Collins's own.

He inserts additional questions throughout the Decalogue's exposition: OC #109, #113, #118, #120, #122, #126, #129, #132, and #134 are of his own composition. Each of these insertions follow the pattern of #106 in asking "What is the (first, second, third, etc.) Commandment?"

The Form of the Lord's Prayer

Collins's final addition to the OC proper appears in OC #142:

142. Are Christians tied to this very form of prayer?

His answer reflects his pastoral theology: Christian prayer is biblically regulated in its

[110] OC 45–46.

"Set or Course of certain Heads or Generals," though "not tied to this Form…as touching the [specific] Words." This response balances the RPW's duty with pastoral sensitivity to Christian liberty in prayer.

Having surveyed the questions Collins added to the OC, we may now engage what these additions reveal about the major themes and contours of his developing pastoral theology.

Toward Collins's Pastoral Theology:

Analysis of Major Themes in *An Orthodox Catechism*

This section begins to trace the early pastoral theology witnessed in the OC. It treats it under nine headings or categories: its Calvinistic emphasis; Collins's distinctive formulation of credobaptism; the moral law (with particular attention to the fourth commandment); church discipline; the form of the Lord's Prayer; Collins's modified view of the HC's sacramental "seal"; the contested ordinance of the laying on of hands upon newly baptized believers; congregational song at the Lord's Supper; and his "Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing." Together, these themes reveal the major doctrinal instincts and pastoral priorities shaping Collins's early ministry.

Calvinistic Emphasis

MacDonald surmises several reasons that the OC was never formally adopted. One reason specifically stands out to her: she argues that it lacks an emphasis on God's decrees. Her position that the HC has only a minimal Calvinistic accent is, frankly, odd.[111] It is also unpersuasive: HC situates its teaching on divine sovereignty within its exposition of providence

[111] See MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727*, 74. It is, strangely enough, also echoed at several points in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*; for example, II.140. A Baptist scholar might be excused for lacking familiarity with Continental Reformed catechetical theology, but for Reformation scholars to overlook such a foundational matter of context and content is unusual.

(HC #27–28) as the expression of the Father's holy will (HC #26).

Far from being thin, HC #26's answer is robustly, explicitly decretal in nature:

> I believe, the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath made of nothing heaven and earth, with all that are in them…*likewise upholdeth and governeth the same by his eternal counsel and providence* [emphasis mine].

More examples could be cited throughout HC, and Collins carefully preserves its decretal and providential framework throughout his OC. A few representative instances, however, suffice to demonstrate the point (emphasis mine):

22n2. "[B]y Catholick, we mean no more then the universal Church, which is *a company chosen out of whole mankind unto everlasting life*, by the Word & Spirit of God."[112]

25. "I believe the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who made of nothing Heaven and Earth, with all that are in them; *who likewise uphodeth and governeth the same by his eternal Counsel and Providence…*"

30. [Christ] "…hath opened unto us *the secret Counsel, & all the will of his Father concerning our Redemtion*…and [is made] a King, who ruleth us by his Word and Spirit…"

51. [The Lord Jesus] "…will come Judge from heaven…*to translate me with all his chosen unto himself…*"

53. "[T]he Son of God doth from the beginning of the World to the End thereof, gather, defend, and preserve unto himself by his Spirit and Word, out of whole Mankind, *a Company chosen to everlasting Life…*"

104. "[*H*]e *sheweth to whom the right of all Rule belongs, that is, to God himself*. for I am (saith he) JEHOVAH."

In short, the Reformed theology shaping and undergirding the HC is shot throughout its entirety, the framework upon which its biblical vision of God is hung. Collins preserves it[113] in his OC at every significant point where God's predestining, electing, or providential work is spoken to, or where his sovereignty is referenced.

[112] This excerpt is a marginal note of Collins's own composition.

[113] He also develops it substantially in his 1690 *Mountains of Brass: or, a Discourse upon the Decrees of God. From Ephes. 1. 11.*

Credobaptism[114]

To understand Hercules's own distinctive credobaptist formulations in the OC, it is useful to trace the basic covenantal logic of the Westminster Standards and the HC. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (hereafter WSC) presents a classic paedobaptist formulation of federalism within the one-covenant, two-administration schema (echoing WCF 7.5–6). So too for the HC (see HC #69–74)—though preceding Westminster historically by some eighty years, it does not present quite so precise a formulation as that of WSC, and is more pastoral in tone.

We shall engage the HC second. It should also be noted that Collins's application of the RPW in OC is not something unique to him only, but represents an aspect of his contribution to an ongoing question within Particular Baptist life.[115] We now turn to the question at hand.

The Westminster Standards[116]

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[114] A simplified adaptation of this portion on credobaptism appeared in *The Founders Journal* #129 (Fall 2025): 9–17, under the title "Revised, Because It's Regulated: Hercules Collins and *An Orthodox Catechism* on Credobaptism."

[115] See Steve Weaver, "When Biography Shapes Ecclesiology: Bunyan, Kiffin, and the Open–Communion Debate" in *The Journal of Baptist Studies* 9 (October 2018): 31–54. Collins continues to reason consistently from the RPW throughout his baptismal works. On Collins's distinctive baptistic covenantalism, see footnote 127 in this chapter.

[116] It is immediately acknowledged that this survey of both Westminster and Heidelberg is very brief and that much more could be said toward a full engagement; my intent is simply to offer a flyover of the catechetical-confessional context for comparative purposes. The best treatments of the Westminster Standards include Chad Van Dixhoorn, *God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643–1653* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017); Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2009); J.V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context & Theological Insights* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014); John Bower's *The Confession of Faith: A Critical Text and Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020) and *The Larger Catechism: A Critical Text and Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010); S.W. Carruthers (1866–1962), *The Westminster Confession of Faith: The Preparation and Printing of its Seven Leading Editions and A Critical Text* (Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 1995); William Hetherington (1803–1865), *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edmonton, AB Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, repr. 1993); Alexander Mitchell (1822–1899), *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards, Being the Baird Lecture for 1882* (Edmonton, AB Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, repr. 1992); John L. Carson and David W. Hall, eds., *To Glorify and Enjoy God: A Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994); and B.B. Warfield's (1851–1921) 1932 *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, repr. in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003).

WSC asks the following questions relevant to our consideration:

94. What is baptism?
95. To whom is baptism to be administered?

In expanded form, WLC similarly asks:

33. Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner?
165. What is baptism?
166. Unto whom is baptism to be administered?
177. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?

WSC concisely affirms a covenant of life, also called the covenant of works (*foedus operum*; cp. WLC #20–22 and #30) made with man, upon the condition of perfect obedience (WSC #12). It was made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, such that all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression (WSC #16). God did not leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery, but entered into a covenant of grace (*foedus gratiae*), to bring his elect into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer (WSC #20; WLC #31) through the person and work of Jesus.

WCF 7.5 describes this covenant as singular,[117] yet "differently *administered* in the time of the law, and of the gospel" (commonly expressed as "one covenant, two administrations"; hereafter 1C2A). So too WCF 7.6: "There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in

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Helpful treatments of Heidelberg include Lyle Bierma's *An Introduction the Heidelberg Catechism: Source, History, Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), his *The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism: A Reformed Synthesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), and his edited translation of Caspar Olevianus's (1536–1587) 1567 *Vester Grundt*, repr. as *A Firm Foundation: An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1995); Karla Apperloo–Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis, eds. *Power of Faith: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); Jon Payne and Sebastian Heck, eds., *A Faith Worth Teaching: The Heidelberg Catechism's Enduring Heritage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013); and G.W. Willard (1818–1900), transl. *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing, 2015). R. Scott Clark has also recently produced a thick exposition: *The Heidelberg Catechism: A Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2025).

[117] It should be noted that the Westminster Standards explicitly teach a third covenant, the covenant of redemption, in their companion document *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*, II–III. The doctrine is simply implied, however, in WCF 3 and 8.

substance, but one and the same, under various *dispensations*" (cf. WLC #33–35).

Here arises a fundamental hermeneutical distinction between Westminsterian and 2LC verbiage concerning their respective covenant theologies, linguistically speaking—namely, administration versus revelation.[118] Their divergent ecclesiological and sacramental outworkings thus quickly become evident. WSC #95 asserts that "the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized" (cf. WLC #166 and #177).

This administrative continuity between circumcision and baptism is the key point Collins rejects.[119]

The Heidelberg Catechism[120]

While Westminster defines baptism in WSC #94, WLC #165, and WCF 28.1, the HC provides no definition of it. The HC does identify baptism as a sacrament in #68, at the start of six questions concerning the sacrament:

> 68. How many sacraments did Christ institute in the NT?
> 69. How does holy baptism remind and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross benefits you personally?
> 71. Where does Christ promise that we are washed with his blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with the water of baptism?
> 72. Does this outward washing with water itself wash away sins?
> 73. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the water of rebirth and the washing away of sins?
> 74. Should infants also be baptized?

The HC presents Adamic federal headship in the fall and disobedience of our first parents in paradise (HC #7). The result is that man is altogether lost and corrupt, in need of the holy

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[118] Note 2LC 7.3's language describing the covenant of grace: "This covenant is *revealed* in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full *discovery* thereof was completed in the NT."

[119] On Collins's covenant theology, see Samuel Renihan, "From Shadow to Substance: The Federal Theology of the English Particular Baptists (1642–1704)" (Ph.D diss., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017), 222–229.

[120] Sebastian Heck provides an excellent exposition of Heidelberg's baptismal views in *A Faith Worth Teaching* (op. cit.), 79–109.

gospel first revealed to Adam and Eve in the covenant of grace (HC #19). The HC's formulation is more pastoral and comforting than Westminster, but their shared covenantal framework is evident.

The sacraments, particularly baptism, come into view in HC #68–74. While HC #69 speaks of baptism's function in comforting the believer, #71–73 focus on baptism as a means of presenting Christ's promise to wash believers of their sins, assuring them of his efficacious work in them by his Spirit. HC #69–73 are virtually identical to Collins's OC. HC #74 (modified in OC as #70) asserts that infants and adults alike are "included in God's covenant and people." HC #74 anchors infant baptism by maintaining they "no less than adults" will receive "deliverance from sin" by virtue of the promises of the covenant. It holds baptism as a mark "distinguishing" them from the unbeliever's children, and avers it as replacing circumcision.

While Westminster employs different verbiage, it presents an identical hermeneutical view: 1C2A, with its sacramental continuity functioning by the replacement of circumcision with baptism. Operationally, however, the two "sign[s] of the covenant" are nearly interchangeable in both their respective subjects and efficacy.

Theology from Germany, Transposed to Old Gravel Road

Hercules accepts Heidelberg's theological structure through OC #64: OC #1–64 are very close in form, theological method, and biblical reasoning to their HC counterparts. While Collins regularly modifies the Scripture proofs, the doctrine is retained *in toto* and remains that of the HC. OC #65 begins Hercules's treatment of the sacraments—one distinctly Particular Baptist in its nature. Rooted in the RPW, Collins inserts six of his own questions introducing credobaptism between HC questions #68–69; these are OC questions #68–73[121]:

[121] Collins's treatment of baptism continues in OC #74–78, but there it is virtually identical to HC #69–73.

68. What is Baptism?
69. Who are the proper Subjects of this Ordinance?
70. Are no Infants to be baptized?[122]
71. Doth the Scripture any where expressly forbid the Baptizing of Infants?
72. May not the Infant Seed of Believers under the Gospel be baptized as well as the Infant Seed of Abraham under the Law was circumcised?
73. Seeing the Infants of Believers are in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents, as some Say, why may not they be baptized under the Gospel, as well as Abrahams Infant Seed was circumcised under the Law?

The language used in the answers to OC #68–73 is largely of Collins's own composition, though #69 is drawn almost directly from 2LC 29.2. It presents a noteworthy contrast with the HC: Heidelberg features no question formally defining baptism, though its answer to #69 includes a basic description. The WCF defines baptism in 28.1; some of its language is retained in 2LC 29, thereby shaping Collins's verbiage in the OC.[123] Collins follows 2LC 29.1–2 closely in composing his OC #68–69 and works portions of 2LC 29.3–4 (contra WCF 28.2–3) into his answers as well. OC #70–73 then function in clarifying and distinguishing his affirmations and denials of lawful sacramental practice under the RPW.

Defining Baptism's Substance and Subjects

Throughout his treatment of baptism (OC #68–73), Hercules repeatedly and demonstrably anchors his arguments in the RPW; he saw credobaptism, not paedobaptism, as the only proper biblical application of the Reformed RPW. His sacramental and ecclesiological concern is ultimately doxological in nature. What is the result? Didactically, theologically, and pastorally, the OC presents a more satisfying treatment of the doctrine than does the HC.

He begins his exposition of baptism (OC #68) defining it as immersion of a believer in the triune name of God by "such who are duly qualified by Christ." OC #69 addresses baptism's

[122] OC #70 modifies HC #74.

[123] Recall that the 2LC was first anonymously published in 1677; Collins's OC was published in 1680.

"proper subjects"—professors who have repented, believed, and obey Jesus. Collins handles a clarifying question (OC #70) by reasoning from the RPW—no infants should be baptized, because Scripture lacks any positive command for it: "we have neither Precept nor Example for that Practice in all the Book of God."

Addressing objections follows (OC #71–73). Scripture's silence does not constitute Scripture's smile; just because the Bible nowhere "expressly forbid[s] the Baptizing of Infants" (OC #71) does not mean it approves it. Again he appeals to the RPW: "It is sufficient that the Divine Oracle commands the baptizing of Believers, unless we will make ourselves wiser than what is written." Aaron's sons had no prohibition of strange fire, but had a positive command of "tak[ing] Fire from the Altar," and their proud innovation rightly "incurred God's Wrath." OC #72 anticipates an interlocutor shifting his objection to the continuity of the relationship between the Old and New Covenants, as seen in their respective signs: if "Yes" to OT infant circumcision, why "No" to NT infant baptism? His reply is concise, appealing once more to the RPW: "Abraham had a Command then from God to circumcise his Infant Seed, but Believers have no command to baptize their Infants Seed under the Gospel."

A Five-fold Apologetical Exposition of Confessor's Baptism

OC #73 is the longest question in the catechism, presenting as a concise exercise in pastoral apologetics and theological exposition. The question begins with the hypothetical objector's assumption that "the Infants of Believers are in the Covenant of Grace with their parents," and asks concerning their baptism: if so, then "why may not they be baptized under the Gospel, as well as Abrahams Infant-Seed was circumcised under the Law?" Collins answers in five basic movements.

First, meeting the question's assumption *prima facie*: if the infants of believing parents

are members of the covenant as "absolutely considered"[124]—meaning, if by virtue of them having been born into a believing family, it should be presumed that they will come to faith, because the covenant of grace is unconditional and unbreakable—then apostasy is actually impossible. In such a consideration, none will or can be lost; all infants of believers are necessarily elect and infallibly will be regenerated.

Second, meeting the question's hermeneutic: if infant membership in the covenant is meant "conditionally, on consideration that when they come to years of Maturity" they believe, then:

1. What "real Spiritual priviledg" do these infants of believing parents gain, versus infants of unbelievers who also eventually trust Christ?
2. Would the covenant seal not also be the right of children of unbelievers as much as children of unbelievers? Would it not "belong as much" to them as well?
3. What about when children of unbelievers trust God, but children of believers do not? It happens often and is painful to both the parents and the pastor. Further implicit in Collins's framing of this point: it begs the question of the covenant's nature and efficacy.

Third, Collins raises a hypothetical case: what if one assumes that all the children of Christians are members of the covenant of grace "absolutely"? The church still lacks the express command to baptize them, just as Lot had no express command to circumcise his family—only Abraham received that command and sign for his family. Applying Abraham's command to circumcise his infant males as though it constituted a NT command for baptizing all infants of Christians would result in a command to bring those infants to the Lord's Table as well.

Fourth, he turns his attention to the question's root—the Abrahamic Covenant. Collins notes it has "two parts"[125]: (1) spiritual, and (2) temporal or physical. Spiritually considered, it

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[124] Collins's language of "absolutely considered" echoes Ames's themes in his treatment of the application of Christ; see *The Marrow of Theology*, I.XXIV.1–11.

[125] This twofold distinction of the Abrahamic covenant is key for Collins's exposition of the covenant of grace and its consequences for ecclesiology and sacramentology. He develops it further in *Believers-Baptism from heaven, and of Divine Institution. Infants-Baptism from Earth, and of Human Invention* (1691) and *The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism Shaken* (1695).

involved God's promise to be Abraham's God, and to "all his Spiritual-Seed in a peculiar manner…which believed as Abraham the Father of the Faithful did." The promise stood irrespective of their circumcision, and was received by faith alone. Temporally, it assured Israel of God's good intent toward them: Abraham's offspring would "enjoy the Land of Canaan, and have plenty of outward blessings…[God] sealed this Promise by Circumcision."[126] They would be distinguished by this rite as "being God's People from all the Nations of the Gentiles," though the Gentiles were not yet members of the believing "Seed of Abraham." At that time, "then Circumcision, that distinguishing Mark, ceased"; now God's children have believing, circumcised hearts.

Fifth, Collins concludes summarizing and underscoring his arguments by a close application of the RPW. Whatever "pretense" one employs to defend paedobaptism—asserting infants as the "Seed of Believers," assuming their membership in an external administration[127] of

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[126] Collins's language of "sealing," while typically considered paedobaptist in nature, is perhaps reflective of his church's tradition for nearly thirty years. Spilsbury's *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Svbject of Baptisme* (London: Henry Hills, 1652) speaks of the Abrahamic covenant as "nationall, and admit[ing] all of the same to the Seals thereof" (11). Note, though, his successor John Norcott's (ca. 1621–1675/1676) 1675 work *Baptism discovered plainly & faithfully according to the word of God. Wherein is set forth the glorious pattern of our blessed saviour Jesus Christ, the pattern of all believers in his subjection to baptism. Together, with the example of thousands who were baptized after they believed. By John Norcott, late servant of Jesus Christ, and of his church. The third edition, corrected by Will. Kiffin, and Rich. Claridge. With an appendix by another hand* (London, 1694) differs bluntly: "Baptism is no *Seal* of *Covenant of Grace*. Christ is the Great Blessing of the Covenant, and the Holy Spirit *Sealeth him* to the Souls of the Faithful." (This is Norcott's answer to the fourth objection, on the last two unnumbered pages). Such language is also not without precedent in the broader Particular Baptist corpus; for example, Thomas Patient (d. 1666) argues circumcision was an ordinance of the covenant of works—his verbiage for the old covenant—and was of sealing use to Abraham. Cf. discussion in Micah Caswell, *Thomas Patient: The Father of the Irish Baptist Church* (Peterborough, Canada: H&E, 2019), 60.

[127] Collins, in other words, does not affirm a 1C2A view of the covenant of grace. The language of 2LC 7 is intentionally broad, aiming to comprehend a spectrum ranging from baptistic expressions of 1C2A to (apparently several?) expressions of what in our age has come to be called "1689 Federalism." For a few representative Particular Baptists who did affirm 1C2A: Robert Purnell (1606–1666) of the Broadmead church, *A Little Cabinet Richly Stored with all sortes of Heavenly Varieties, and Soul-reviving Influences* (London, 1657), 35ff; see also Purnell's co–elder Thomas Hardcastle's (1637–1678) unpublished exposition of the WSC (n.d.), 52, 109–110 (note that Hardcastle's manuscript is found at Bristol Baptist College). So too Robert Steed (d. 1703) of the Broken Wharfe church, *A Plain Discovery of the Unrighteous Judge and False Accuser* (London, 1658), 8ff; and the Irish martyr Thomas Delaune (ca. 1635–1687/88), *Truth Defended or a Three-Fold Answer to the Late Triumverates Opposition in their Three Pamphlets* (London, 1677), 7ff.

Keach's variation of 1C2A is distinctive: he holds the covenant of grace as essentially the historical expression of the pretemporal covenant of redemption (his verbiage throughout the work is "one covenant in two

the covenant of grace, or arguing "that the Infant-Seed of Abraham a Believer" received circumcision—"all this," he emphasized, "avails nothing."[128] It still lacks biblical warrant because it lacks express biblical command. Circumcision was limited to a single family, such that "all Others, though Believers, were Excluded."[129] The rite was strictly limited to the eighth day, and "what ever Pretence might be made, it was not to be Done before or after."[130] Finally, circumcision was limited to males; thus if baptism fulfills circumcision's type, "none but the Males must be Baptized, because none but the Males were Circumcised."[131]

The issue in worship, sacraments, and all of life is what God requires in Scripture: "it depends purely upon the will of the Lawgiver" as to "season[s], persons, and terms" of baptismal

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parts"), and the covenant of works as demonstrating its necessity; see his *The Everlasting Covenant, A Sweet CORDIAL for a drooping Soul L Or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened IN A SERMON Preached January the 29th. At the FUNERAL of Mr. Henry Forty, Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks. Who Departed this Life Jan 25th 1692/3. and was Interr'd at Southwark. WHEREIN The ARGUMENTS urged to prove the Covenant of Redemption a distinct Covenant from the Covenant of Grace, are Examined, Weighed, and found Wanting. To which is added, An ELEGY on the Death of the said Minister* (London, 1693).

John Spilsbury (1593–ca. 1668) and Andrew Ritor (fl. 1642) held the same conclusion on credobaptism as Hercules Collins, but articulated it differently. Spilsbury's language in *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfvll Subject of Baptisme* (1643) affirms 1C2A (see, for example, A3), but Ritor's development in *A Treatise of the Vanity of Childish–Baptisme: WHEREIN The deficiency of the BAPTISME of the CHURCH of ENGLAND is considered in five particulars thereof. AND wherein also is proved, that Baptizing is Dipping, and Dipping Baptizing* (London, 1642) essentially aligns with Collins's in OC. John Norcott's (ca. 1621–1675/1676) argument in *Baptism discovered plainly & faithfully according to the word of God* (1675) is basically what Hercules presents in *Believers-Baptism from Heaven* (1691). Immediately relevant to this matter, it bears noting that no less a luminary than senior 2LC signatory William Kiffin (1616–1701) retains WCF 1.6 language of "necessary consequence"—contra 2LC 1.6's "necessarily contained in" and *The Baptist Catechism* #97's explicit denunciation that "there is neither command or example in the holy Scriptures, *or certain consequence from them*, to baptize [infants]" (emphasis mine)—when quoting Jeremiah Burroughs's (1599–1646) *Gospel Worship* in *A Sober Discourse*, 49.

In other words, it seems there was somewhat of a continuum along which the confessional Particular Baptists faithfully articulated their convictions regarding covenant theology. The indisputable presence of such a spectrum within the luminaries of the Particular Baptist heritage ought to inform, shape, and temper present conversations on this subject.

That Kiffin was willing to speak of "necessary consequence" ought to inform our historical considerations of the nature of verbiage such as Collins's sacramental "seals"—it was sometimes employed, though in a selective and redefined manner. Other examples undoubtedly may be identified within the broader Particular Baptist corpus.

[128] OC, 30.

[129] OC, 30–31.

[130] OC, 31.

[131] OC, 31.

administration.[132] Collins revised the HC because Scripture's regulating of ecclesiology and sacramentology—issuing in doxology—required it. Christ's positive and explicit commandment in Scripture always holds the authority, informing the conscience and directing the one who would draw near. Christian worshipers must "hearken" to him in his word.

The Moral Law

The Preface to the Ten Commandments (OC #104–105)

Fiddes notes that "the Ten Commandments were always included in Baptist catechisms,"[133] whether authored by Particular or General Baptists. Collins stands firmly within this tradition. In the OC, the questions concerning the moral law are rearranged (#97–133): the HC recites the Ten Commandments in #92, but in the parallel question, "Which is the law of God?" (OC #101), Hercules simply answers "The Decalogue, or ten Commandments."[134] He treats to the Preface to the Ten Commandments (#103–105) and moves the recitation of each commandment alongside its corresponding exposition. As Haykin and Weaver note, "This rearrangement has an obvious pedagogical benefit."[135] Collins's aim is plain: "Here you are taught not only to be good Christians but good Moralists."[136]

Collins's editorial choice also presents a quiet appeal to the instincts of a Reformed

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[132] OC, 31.

[133] Paul Fiddes, "Covenants, Confessions and Catechisms," in Stephen Copson and Karen Smith, eds., *Revolution and Resistance: English Baptist Life in the Seventeenth Century* (Didcot, UK: The Baptist Historical Society, 2026), 38.

[134] OC, C6 (49).

[135] Hercules Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism, Being the Sum of Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and Gospel*, eds. Michael Haykin and Stephen Weaver (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014), 20.

[136] OC, A3.

catholicity in following the instructional pattern of the WSC (1646/1647). Several well-known Puritan expositions of the WSC had demonstrated the excellence and utility of this approach, likely helping to solidify the decision for Collins. His choice of the HC as the underlying text, his imitation of WSC pedagogy on the moral law, his employment of 2LC language on baptism (anchoring himself to Particular Baptist distinctives, while still tipping his hat to the WCF-Savoy confessional stream), his inclusion and commendation of the *Nicene* and *Athanasian Creeds*, and his title—"An *Orthodox* Catechism" (emphasis mine)—all serve to demonstrate an earnest desire that his doctrine be recognized as squarely planted within, and aligned with, the confessional mainstream of biblically-Reformed Protestantism.

Turning to Collins's treatment of the moral law proper, OC #104 emphasizes three key points taught by the Preface to the Ten Commandments. First, it references God's sovereignty; he is the one "to whom the right of all rule belongs."[137] Second, naming himself as "the God of his people," his "promise of his bountifulness" is seen as the means through which "he might allure them to obey him."[138] Third, the Lord declares that he would know his people. He brought them out of Egypt, demonstrating his "manifest[ing] my self" and "all those Blessings upon thee," thus they were "bound to show Thankfulness and Obedience unto me"; OC #105 beautifully draws this typological line—God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt "do[es] figuratively comprehend and imply all the Deliverances of the Church," serving as "a Type of our wonderful Deliverance achieved by Christ." [139]

The Fourth Commandment

[137] OC, 49.

[138] OC, 49.

[139] OC, 49–50.

His didactically-strengthened[140] approach is echoed in his treatment of the fourth commandment in OC #119, an important and substantial change from HC #103. The HC asks, "What doth God command in the fourth commandment?" Beginning our obligations are the church's diligence in maintaining local and broader ecclesiastical duties, particularly in supporting pastors and seminaries. The Sabbath "and especially…Holy Days" are to be kept by "frequent[ing] studiously divine assemblies," personal and "diligent" attentiveness to hearing the Word, "using" the sacraments (that is, preparing for them, partaking of them, and applying them to one's soul), engaging in prayer congregationally, and giving to the poor "according to my ability."[141] HC #103 does not speak to the rest, change, or one-in-seven pattern of the Lord's Day. It does point to all of life being affected by the fourth commandment—a comprehensive effect of holiness, "yielding unto the Lord, that he may by his holy Spirit work in me his work," in view of the eschatological hope that "I may begin in this life that everlasting Sabbath."

Hercules extensively revises[142] both the question and the answer in OC #119:

> Q. What are we taught by the fourth commandment?
>
> A. That one Day in seven be kept in the Worship of God, which under the old Testament was the last Day of the Week, but under the Gospel changed to the first Day of the Week, and this Lord's Day to be spent in private and publique Devotion, as hearing the Word diligently, practicing the Gospel–Sacraments zealously, and doing Deeds of Charity conscionably, and resting from servil Works, cases of necessity excepted, this being the laudable Practice of the holy Apostles, who best knew the Mind of Christ as to the time of Worship; neither do we find in all the new Testament, that any Gospel Church in the Apostles times did set any other Day apart solemnly to worship God, save the first Day: and well might they so do, for if Israel, the natural Seed of Abraham, was to keep the seventh Day, to keep up the Remembrance of their Deliverance out of temporal Bondage, how much more are we bound to keep the first Day in Remembrance of

[140] His edit of the question itself, from HC #103's "What doth God command in the fourth commandment?" to OC #119's "What are we *taught by* the fourth commandment?" (emphasis mine) applies Calvin's third use of the law; see his *Institutes*, II.VII.12.

[141] For what Collins intends by "Holy Days," see Ames, *Marrow of Theology*, II.XV.49–53.

[142] The quote is in OC, 55–56. Hercules's revisions here reflect decidedly more concurrence with the 1677 2LC's Sabbatarianism, as well as that of the WSC, than does the HC.

Christ's Deliverance of us from eternal Bondage?[143]

While HC #103 reasons from broader ecclesiastical and gospel duties to personal piety, OC #119 focuses primarily on worship, personal piety (as regards its *right* keeping), and the change of the day itself, emphasizing rest and the keeping of the day. OC's duties of "public and private devotion" are largely identical to HC's, rooted in apostolic pattern and practice as constituting positive law and thus Christian precept—in other words, the RPW. The day is recognized as a "Remembrance" of deliverance by Christ. Therefore the OC takes a more cruciform view, but lacks no eternal vision.

Unique to the OC's exposition of the fourth commandment is its emphasis on the change of the day.[144] Collins begins with the creation principle of "one day in seven be[ing] kept in the worship of God."[145] He notes the change "under the gospel" from the seventh day to the first, and defends it vigorously—describing its keeping as "the laudable practice of the holy apostles" and reminding his readers that they "best knew the mind of Christ as to the time [that is, the day] of worship."[146]

This statement serves as a gentle rejoinder to those who practiced seventh-day[147] worship, including other Particular Baptists. Because the first day is the NT pattern, it is binding in both practice and conscience; the NT's purported silence on the change of the day is not recognized, given that we do not find "in all the NT, that any Gospel church in the Apostles times

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[143] OC, 55–56.

[144] Thomas Grantham warmly concurred in affirming the change of the day from seventh to first. See his *Christianimus Primitivus*, II.13.

[145] OC, 55.

[146] OC, 56.

[147] For example, Collins's funeral sermon was preached by a seventh-day Particular Baptist minister, John Piggott (ca. 1670–1713). See *The British Particular Baptists*, eds. Michael Haykin and Terry Wolever (1957–2020) (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2019), I.367.

did set any other Day apart solemnly to worship God, save the first Day."[148]

Israel's duty to observe the Sabbath Day "in Remembrance of their Deliverance out of temporal Bondage" is even more consequentially and fittingly delivered to Christians, in remembering "Christ's Deliverance of us from eternal Bondage."[149]

Church Discipline[150]

OC #94 presents one of Collins's strongest statements concerning discipline: the church is Christ's earthly authority on earth, exercising the power of his keys entrusted to her. While congregations are accountable to the moral law (the "Commandments of Christ," encompassing both the Ten Words and the NT expansion of the commands of Christ), Collins's language here speaks even more specifically to the RPW. An analytical outline helps clarify this dual sense:

I. When according to the Commandments of Christ,
    i. they who in Name are Christians,
    ii. but in their Doctrine and life shew themselves Aliens from Christ,
        1. after they
            a. have been some time admonished,
            b. will not depart from their Error, Heresies, or Wickedness,
    iii. [they] are made known unto the Church;
    iv. and if neither then they obey the Churches Admonition,
        1. [they] are by the same Church
        2. {by Authority received from Christ}
            a. kept from the Sacrament, and
            b. shut out from the Congregation or Church,
        3. and by God himself out of the Kingdom of Heaven.[151]

OC #94 reflects the Particular Baptist distinctive of maintaining a strict discipline in

[148] OC, 56.

[149] OC, 56.

[150] Church discipline among the Particular Baptists is helpfully surveyed in Ian Birch, *To Follow the Lambe Wheresoever He Goeth: The Ecclesial Polity of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1640–1660* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 96–128. Its eighteenth-century expression may be seen in *A SUMMARY of CHURCH-DISCIPLINE. Shewing the QUALIFICATIONS and DUTIES, of the Officers and Members, of a Gospel–church. BY The BAPTIST-ASSOCIATION, in CHARLESTOWN, SOUTH-CAROLINA* (Charlestown, 1774); repr. in James Leo Garrett, Jr. (1925–2020), *Baptist Church Discipline, revised edition* (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004).

[151] OC, 46. I have [bracketed] supplied words and {braced} when shifting a phrase from its original location for clarity. This practice may be seen further applied in my *Analytical Outlines of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith* (2024) and *Analytical Outlines of Particular Baptist Confessions of Faith* (2025).

ecclesiastical practice: the strong statement reflects a credobaptistic, confessor's ecclesiology and their exegetical and experiential emphasis on a credible profession of faith. All these efforts are undertaken in love, and the desired outcome of restoration to the fellowship of the congregation upon repentance is to be completed in that same spirit of "love and tenderness"[152] befitting a brother returning to his Father.

His reply reflects an immediate, direct congregational focus in the exercise of church discipline; transgressors answer to Christ through his church. Whether for "Error, Heresies, or Wickedness," those in sin must be "made known unto the Church."[153] The HC speaks of those persisting in sin as being "made known unto the Church, *or to them that are appointed for that matter and purpose, of the Church*" (emphasis mine). HC's language has in view the distancing of discipline from congregational oversight and accountability by naked delegation to the elders, but Collins insists that they must "obey *the Churches* Admonition"[154] (emphasis mine)—in other words, the offenders must "hear the church" (Matt. 18:17).

OC #94 speaks to a specific pastoral duty to secure evidence of repentance concerning a specific point of sin. Discipline is not intended for general matters, but for specific transgression of God's law—"nothing to the contrary being to be proved upon strict scrutiny and search."[155] This verbiage is a strengthening and distinction from the HC's more general language. For Hercules, the elders necessarily lead in this labor of the keys,[156] but the process of admonition is congregational in nature, not merely presbyterial: those under censure are "*by the same Church*

[152] OC, 46.

[153] OC, 46.

[154] OC, 46.

[155] OC, 46.

kept from the Sacrament"[157] (emphasis mine).

This action applies to excommunication as well: unrepentant offenders are "*by the same Church*…shut out by Authority received from Christ, from the Congregation or Church" [158] (emphasis mine). Such finality exposes the church's assessment of their true state of soul—to be "shut out…from the Congregation, or Church" reflects the conclusion that they had ultimately been barred "by God himself out of the Kingdom of Heaven."[159]

Evaluating the offender's repentance is a point of significant distinction from HC in the final paragraph of OC #94, reflective of Hercules's prefatory remark that his revisions primarily concern "Church-constitution."[160] In other words, Collins sees in Scripture that a regenerate church membership will faithfully confess biblical truth and conduct themselves accordingly. HC #85 leaves the matter of confession of sin and "reformation of manners"[161] largely private: "if they profess, and indeed declare amendment of life, [they] are received as members of Christ, and his Church"—a penitent presentation would constitute grounds for restoration.

OC #94 takes a different tack: specific change concerning the offense is both expected—they must "declare *an* amendment of life" (emphasis mine), e.g., particularly and definitively—and inspected—"nothing to the contrary being to be proved upon strict scrutiny and search."[162] A unique distinctive of Particular Baptist ecclesiology comes into view in OC #94—namely, a

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[157] OC, 46.

[158] OC, 46.

[159] OC, 46.

[160] OC, A6.

[161] See John Craig, "The Growth of English Puritanism," in Coffey and Lim, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 45. The phrase took on a different meaning in the eighteenth century after Puritanism waned; see Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds. *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560–1700* (New York, NY: Saint Martin's Press/MacMillan Education, 1996), 264.

[162] OC, 46.

stricter discipline, in light of a credible profession of faith, in keeping with the nature of a confessors' church.

As the discipline was a public congregational matter, so too the restoration of fellowship: it is the church who "ke[eps] from the Sacrament, and shut[s] out by authority received from Christ," and the church who again "receive[s] in Love & Tenderness as Members of Christ and his Church." [163]

The Form of the Lord's Prayer

Collins's primary concern in OC #142 is fundamentally pastoral: he aims for his readers to grow in piety and a faithful, fruitful communion with God. The concern raised in the question is reflective of and informed by the RPW: has Christ commanded the specific words Christians are to use in prayer? The question is natural; the Lord commanded, "Pray then like this" (Matt. 6:9) and gave his prayer for our use. Particularly in that seventeenth-century context of the *Book of Common Prayer's* repeated litanies and heavy influence, careful consciences could easily be troubled by such an inquiry.

Hercules answered, "We are not."[164] He then provides five reasons, which are rich in pastoral doctrine and bear careful consideration spiritually and academically.

First, this Prayer is "a brief Sum of those things which we are to ask God," and Christ wants us to "descend unto specials"[165] (that is, to make particular requests). Second, its petitions are "a Set or Course of certain Heads"[166] comprehending life's needs; they serve as reference

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[163] OC, 46.

[164] OC, 65. They call to mind Luther's wise counsel to Peter the barber in 1535. See Martin Luther, "To Peter Beskendorf," in Theodore Tappert, ed. and transl. *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955), 124–30

[165] OC, 65.

[166] OC, 65.

points to our prayers. Third, this is a "general Form" to guide and assist our prayers, though we are not tied to it "as touching the Words."[167] Fourth, many prayers in the OT and NT do not employ these specific words, but "all they asked was comprehended in this Prayer."[168] Finally, he concludes, the form is "wholly a thing indifferent."[169]

In other words, the form functions as a basic framework and support for Christian prayer, not a straightjacket—it is a pattern, not the only permissible form. Christians should be joyful in their prayers, confident that the all-sufficient Scriptures give both structure and liberty.

In OC #142, Collins sets his catechumens at ease and warmly encourages them to press on in the duty and grace of believing prayer.

The Sealing[170] of the Sacraments: Application and Assurance

In OC #65, Collins responds to the question "What are the Sacraments?" with an answer that can raise Baptist eyebrows (emphasis mine):

> They are sacred Signes, *and Seals*, set before our Eyes, and ordained of God for this cause, that he may declare *and seal by them* the Promise of his Gospel unto us, to wit, that he given freely Remission of Sins, and Life everlasting, not only to his all in general, but to every one in particular that believeth, for that only Sacrifice of Christ which he accomplished upon the Cross.

Historically, regarding the sacraments as seals is an element of paedobaptist doctrine vital

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[167] OC, 66.

[168] OC, 66.

[169] OC, 66.

[170] Flavel defines the sealing of the Spirit as "his giving a sure and certain testimony to the reality of that work of grace he hath wrought in our souls, and to our interest in Christ and the promises, thereby satisfying our fears and doubts about our estate and condition." From *Sacramental Meditations upon Divers Select Places of Scripture*, in *The Works of John Flavel* (London: Banner of Truth, 1997), VI.402. Similarly, Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) posited the sealing of the Spirit as "a thing distinct from faith," "a higher light than the ordinary light of faith," and "the electing love of God brought home to the soul." See *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria/Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), I.237. Cf. Joel Beeke's excellent survey of the spectrum of Puritan perspectives on the sealing of the Spirit within the Westminsterian tradition in his "Introduction" to *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, I.15–22.

to their theological formulations in defending infant baptism. Yet Collins retains the HC's sealing language while reshaping it to fit a credobaptist framework under the RPW. Compare Hercules's language in OC #74 and #83 to their parallels in HC #69 and #75 (emphasis mine):

> OC #74 on baptism: "How art thou *admonished and assured*…that thou art Partaker…?"
> OC #83 on Lord's Supper: "How art thou in the Lord's Supper *admonished and warranted* that thou art Partaker…?"
>
> HC #69 on baptism: "How is it *signified and sealed* to you that you have part in…?"
> HC #75 on Lord's Supper: "How is it *signified and sealed* to you that you partake…?"

A Modified View of Sacraments as Seals

Something of Collins's view of the "seal" of the sacraments comes into view here by his distinctive, but consistently edited language: his is a modified[171] view of the sacraments as seals. For Collins, the sacraments are seals to the saint's faith by the Spirit's grace, public channels by which the Spirit's "admonishment" is given to his elect disciples, and the Spirit's grace assures God's people of their welcome to Christ's Table. In other words, the sacraments are means of both correction ("admonishment") and comfort ("assurance" and "warrant") to the believer and therefore could never be appropriate for an infant or other unregenerate person; hence his strong stance that infant baptism constitutes no true baptism. Collins holds the sacraments as confirming and assuring means of grace, not memorials or promissory tokens to it—as God's welcome and warrant to draw near, not merely something to walk through or watch. They are not effectual in themselves; he affirms no *ex opere operato*! The Spirit's effectual grace must accompany the sacraments for any conferral of spiritual benefit unto the saint.

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[171] E. Brooks Holifield, though not referencing Collins, notes in parallel manner to our point that this was an identifiable view within Baptistic circles: "The Baptists therefore considered baptism a covenant seal only in the carefully defined sense that it signified entrance into 'the part of the covenant of grace' that was 'spirituall.'" He cites here the General Baptist Henry Denne's (1606–1660) *Antichrist Unmasked in Two Treatises*; see Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570–1720* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1974), 77.

Positing the sacraments as seals staked out a more specific stance than 2LC records (cf. 28.1, 30.1), though 2LC does identify them in language of close theological proximity as a "confirmation of the faith of believers" and the "bond" of a saint's communion with Jesus and his people (30.1). Note that 2LC does not use the language of "sacrament," instead employing "ordinance" (28.1; 29.1–4; 30.2–7). That alteration from the WCF-Savoy tradition constitutes no denial of the viewpoint; its substitution is strengthening. 2LC affirms the ordinances as promised and precious means of grace, which is Calvin's sacramental view; the verbiage of "ordinance" intends to emphasize their ordained or prescribed nature for the public worship of God. Insistence upon this specific term confessionally held consistent with the RPW and a regenerate confessors' ecclesiology. Collins intends no denial of this aspect; instead, he focuses his OC on the saint's comfort, in keeping with HC.

Indeed, the verbiage and robust Calvinian concept of "sacrament" certainly appears within the broader Particular Baptist corpus and within its confessional stream.[172] For example, Keach speaks of "the holy sacrament of the Supper."[173] Hanserd Knollys references "the holy sacrament."[174] Nehemiah Coxe describes a "sacramental use"[175] of the Tree of Life and denotes Noah's ark as "an extraordinary sacrament."[176] Separatist Henry Ainsworth's (1571–1622/1623)

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[172] See for example, Stanley Fowler, *More Than A Symbol: The British Baptist Recovery of Baptismal Sacramentalism* (London: Paternoster Press, 2002); Michael Haykin, *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands: Recovering Sacrament in the Baptist Tradition* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022). One need not agree at every point to recognize a basic establishment of the argument.

[173] Benjamin Keach, *Tropologia: A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors* (London, 1677); repr. Herbert Lockyer, ed. *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1972), 632.

[174] Hanserd Knollys, *An Exposition of the Whole Book of Revelation* (London, 1688), 12. For more on Knollys's thought, see Barry Howson, *Christ Exalted: Pastoral Writings of Hanserd Knollys with an Essay on His Eschatological Thought* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2019).

[175] Nehemiah Coxe, *A Discourse of the Covenants That God made with Men before the Law* (London, 1681), 3.3.

[176] Coxe, *Discourse of the Covenants*, 3.5.1.

1596 document *A True Confession*—enormously influential upon 1LC—insists that "no Sacraments [are] to bee administred vntill the Pastors or Teachers bee chosen and ordeyned into their Office."[177] Its usage reached into the eighteenth century as well: Benjamin Beddome's (1717–1795) *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist catechism by way of Question and Answer* employs the verbiage three times.[178] The Particular Baptists were clearly never afraid of the term, and Collins ought not be regarded as employing it irregularly or in a manner inconsistent with confessional baptistic doctrine.

2LC further speaks of the Spirit's employing the Table as "confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits" of Christ's death. Consistent with Collins's retaining sacramental "sealing" language, Weaver notes that the practice of laying hands upon the newly baptized "is a variant of the belief held by some Puritans about the sealing of the Spirit."[179] Both doctrines concern assurance, a consistent underlying theme for Collins (developed further in his 1696 *The Scribe Instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*). It should also be noted that the language of sacramental "sealing" is not unique to Collins; this verbiage presents nearly a century's precedent in the influential *True Confession* of 1596 (see articles 18, 35). The Particular Baptist tradition was never allergic to such language.

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[177] Henry Ainsworth, *A TRVE CONFESSION OF THE FAITH, AND HVMBLE ACKNOVVLEDGMENT OE THE ALEGEANCE, vvhich vve hir Majesties Subjects, falsely called Brovvnists, doo hould tovvards God, and yeild to hir Majestie and all other that are ouer vs in the Lord. Set dovvn in Articles or Positions, for the better & more easie vnderstanding of those that shall read yt: And published for the cleering of our selues from those vnchristian slanders of heresie, schisme, pryde, obstinacie, disloyaltie, sedicion, &c. vvhich by our adversaries are in all places given out against vs* (Amsterdam?, 1596), art. 34; cf. art. 18, 35. Ainsworth, of course, is not a Particular Baptist; but given his upstream influence for them, the linguistic precedent is further established by his employment of it.

[178] The verbiage is found in questions #93 and #96 in Benjamin Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by way of Question and Answer* (London, 1752); repr. by same title (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006), 156, 161–162.

[179] Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 208n272.

A Strengthened Sacramentology

From Signification to Spirit-Wrought Application

Hence the OC's sacramentology strengthens that of the HC's in at least two ways. First, while HC's "signifying" nature of the sacraments is comprehended in OC's "admonished," OC goes further in its application of the sacraments by the Spirit to the saint's soul. That is, Collins holds that the seal of the sacraments lies in their use by the Spirit for assuring the saints. The picture portrayed in the sacraments and the reality it represents has classically been understood as the relationship between the sign and the thing signified, language broadly rooted in the HC, Calvin's *Institutes*, and Amesian doctrine.[180] Similar in some respects to defenses of iconoclastic thought in the eight century, the HC's language instructs worshipers to look at the sign and perceive by it the spiritual reality it represents or "signifies." Collins's OC insists the sacraments do more than simply proclaim something *to* us; instead, they work something *in* us. The Spirit employs the sacraments to conform us more to the Christ they signify to us, thereby admonishing the saint toward a living hope in Christ.

The sacraments, for Hercules, are didactic and hortatory, giving exposition to the work of Christ for us, even as they are used as a means of changing us by his Spirit's working in us through them. Ames distinguishes this in his *Marrow*: "A bare sign only represents something. A seal not only represents but presents something by sealing," and again: the sacrament, as a seal, "present[s] the thing to be communicated," namely, "seal[ing] the whole covenant of grace to

[180] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, transl. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), IV.14; Ames, *Marrow*, I.XXXVI.7. Calvin's *Institutes* and Ames's *Marrow* were books Collins recommended for ministers; see *The Temple Repair'd*, 49. In particular, Ames was one of Hercules's favorite theologians; the *Wapping Church Book* records Ames's books among those in the small libraries the congregation purchased for their ministerial aspirants and gifted brothers. These are noted in Weaver, *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist* (Ph.D diss., SBTS), 223–226.

believers."[181] Ursinus affirms this doctrine in his *Commentary* and Ames in his *Sketch*,[182] and Collins codifies it in his catechism.

Most Particular Baptists were unwilling to stake out such territory as confessing sacramental sealing (even in a modified form like OC's), given its perceived paedobaptistic overtones and ecclesiological consequences…not to mention how frequently it was hurled at them in the various publications of the day.[183] Perhaps Hercules's readiness to do so informs something of his vigorous expositions and defenses of credobaptism (note, however, that Spilsbury's repeated employment of the term[184] undoubtedly influenced the Wapping church's verbiage for years to come in this respect). At any rate, Ames's language of "seal[ing] the whole covenant of grace to believers" is directly comparable to Collins's retention of HC's language in OC #65: the sacraments "are sacred Signes, and Seals, set before our Eyes, and ordained of God for this cause, that he may declare and seal by the Promise of his Gospel unto us…to every one in particular that believeth."[185]

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[181] Ames, *Marrow*, I.XXXVI.9, 19, 25.

[182] Ursinus: "The sacraments declare and seal unto us only such blessings as are contained in the promise of the gospel." In G.W. Willard, transl. *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing, 2015), 394. Ames: "The sacraments do not propose to seal under condition of faith, but they presuppose that faith has already been implanted, and they singularly strengthen it." In *A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism*, transl. Todd Rester (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 128.

[183] More aligned with the mainstream of 2LC, Nehemiah Coxe (d. 1689) argued that "A Seal is for Confirmation, and Assurance; and in this notion of a Seal there may be some respect to that visible Mark and Character which remained in the Flesh of him that was circumcised; for we read not that any other Ordinance (no not Baptism) is so called in Scripture; but in the New Testament the sealing of Believers is attributed to the Holy Ghost." Cited from Coxe's *A Discourse of the Covenants that God made with men before the law wherein the Covenant of circumcision is more largely Handled, and the invalidity of the plea for Paedobaptism taken from thence Discovered* (London: 1681), 186. That said—Collins signed the 2LC in 1689, and its doctrine clearly informed his thinking. He apparently found no contradiction between these documents.

[184] Spilsbury, *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfvll Subject of Baptisme*, 14, 29.

[185] OC, 25.

From External Mark to Personal Warrant

Second, the sacraments assure us of our "warrant"—our authorization—to trust in Christ's promises, to come to him by faith alone, to rest in the finality of the Cross and the hope of the empty tomb. The Supper, in particular, "warrants" to the believer that he is "a partaker in Christ." The Table is the kiss of the Bridegroom to his beloved, the word of his welcome yet again to us sinners, as sinners, as we "proclaim his death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26) in eating from his hand. The warrant of the Table, for Collins, is the saint's authorization to say with all confidence, "I am my Beloved's, and he is mine" (Song 6:3), as Christ communicates himself to us afresh in his Supper.

In this sense, there is also something of a secondary aspect—that of assurance—bound up in this "warrant." The believer, seeing the spiritual promises depicted in the sacraments and receiving the formative work of Christ witnessed in the Word by his attending Spirit's grace, is emboldened by their right use to believe that the Father really does receive and welcome him, in his Son's name and for his Son's sake. Thereby he is encouraged in his "accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for salvation."[186]

Collins's modified sealing language is not a theological curiosity, but a pastoral strategy. His OC is deeply concerned with assurance and welcome, warrant and comfort, and the Spirit's work through the means of grace. For Hercules, the sacraments are not bare signs, but Spirit-attended ordinances that strengthen faith, deepen repentance, and draw the saint nearer to Christ.

Once Hercules's sacramental framework is clear—especially his modified understanding

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[186] 2LC 14.2. In "Recovering the Historical Practice of Delayed Baptism and Pre-Baptismal Instruction for the Purpose of Restoring the Standard of a Regenerate Church Membership in Southern Baptist Churches" (Ph.D diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 220, Alan McCullough writes: "Though calling the Lord's Supper a 'sign and pledge,' Collins perhaps held that the partaker experiences communion with the Lord in the Supper through the Spirit, which is very close to Calvin's 'spiritual presence' view of the Lord's Supper." McCullough himself is "very close"; Calvin's doctrine is precisely what Collins owns. Their views in this respect are identical.

of sealing and the Spirit's use of the ordinances for assurance—his treatment of the disputed ordinances stands out all the more sharply. It demonstrates with clarity how his pastoral theology operated in both the practical and the debated matters of church life.

Pastoral Theology in the Contested Ordinances: The Laying on of Hands and Hymn-Singing

Doctrinal conflict is almost always clarifying: it forces a person to define the issues as Scripture does, defend them as Scripture allows, and determine how much weight Scripture affords a given position. In the questions of the laying on of hands (hereafter LOH) and in congregational hymn-singing, Hercules applies the same RPW reasoning, the same concern for a regenerate church, and the same pastoral instinct for forming believers in obedience, assurance, and worship. These two ordinances—both hotly debated in his own day—serve as windows into how he guided his church in arguable matters of faith and practice.

The Laying on of Hands

Concerning the laying on of hands (hereafter, LOH), Collins posits it in OC #79 as a "Principle of Christ's Doctrine…follow[ing] Baptism in order."[187] As per OC #80, it consists of:

> Christ's Ministers laying their hands solemnly upon the Head of the Baptised, with Prayer to Almighty God for an increase of the Graces and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, to inable us to hold fast the Faith which we now visibly own, having entred into the Church by Holy Baptism, as also be helped thereby to maintain a constant War against the World, Flesh, and the Devil.[188]

Its practice is fairly straightforward. Collins's doctrinal reasoning appears in his Scripture proofs[189]: God is pleased that the gifts of the Spirit come to the believer by means of the laying

[187] OC, 33.

[188] OC, 34.

[189] OC, 34.

on of hands (2 Tm. 1:6); God's promise encourages and accompanies our obedience, particularly in baptism (Acts 2:38–39); the Spirit is the church's Helper and Teacher, sent by the Father and Son to indwell the saints, bringing them to grow in the knowledge and graces of the triune God (Jn. 14:16–18, 16:7); and all this by the Spirit sealing the Christian's faith and securing unto us all the promises of God in Christ, preserving us until he comes (Eph. 1:13–14). *Prima facie*, one may be surprised that this should be controversial, but it was. As with every consequential point of theology in church history, clarity is generally only gained in the context of conflict and time.

Disagreement arose due to the perceived innovation of the practice—it was considered as violating the RPW[190]—and because of Collins's answer in OC #81: "Is it the Duty of every Christian to be under this Practice?" He replied, "It is so: And it appeareth plainly."[191] He went on to blaze a lengthy and closely-argued trail in OC #81.

First, Christians should consider that apostolic practice constitutes apostolic precept[192]; thus when the NT records the LOH, believers should pay attention. Acts 8:12–19 records its embrace of both men and women; Acts 19:6–7 demonstrates the Spirit's benediction upon it; Acts 1:4 contains the Spirit's promise to come upon believers in sovereign blessing in his baptism.[193]

Second, Collins engages an imaginary interlocutor: what about Pentecost?[194] The Bible is silent about LOH there. He offers a three-part reply. First, Heb. 5:12 shows they had been taught

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[190] And perhaps as crossing Particular Baptist lines? Ivimey records a "Mr. Barber" as serving the church that "first practised the laying on of hands upon baptized believers," calling him an "Anabaptist." *History of the English Baptists*, I.163. Of course, Ivimey uses "Baptist" and "Anabaptist" as virtually synonymous, applying them interchangeably and with only periodic distinction, so that descriptor may be entirely moot.

[191] OC, 34–36.

[192] OC, 34.

[193] OC, 34–35.

[194] OC, 35–36.

this practice as part of the "first Principles of the Oracles of God, of which Oracles, Laying on of Hands was one."[195] LOH was listed as one part of the elementary doctrine of Christ (Heb. 6:1); the "Apostle writing to the Jews"[196] urges them to grow in grace so that they will not need to lay a foundation once more. Second, where many in the NT are said to have submitted to LOH, we must also note others who are not recorded as having been baptized—including the apostles. It is illegitimate to conclude they were unbaptized simply because it is unrecorded; their pattern was their practice, even when unspecified in particulars.[197] Finally, LOH is as the nature of "the Moral Law was, which is perpetually binding and universally obliging."[198] Heb. 6:1's "repentance from dead works" is the first principle of the oracles of God, and it comes only by the Law's work upon the saint's conscience to convict him of sin and lead him to see his need of Jesus Christ. Thus it is:

> [A] Principle of Christs Doctrine, yea one of the *first Principles*; and that is not all, but called *a foundation Principle*, this with the other five must be laid first in that foundation, on which the Superstructure of Christianity must be built.[199] (emphasis original)

Collins concludes his reply to the objector by asking: would it be wrong for the Jews to delete the fourth commandment of the moral law? Then why would it not also be wrong for Christians to delete the fourth principle of Christ's "elementary doctrine"?[200]

OC #82 provides the final piece of Collins's argument for LOH. Once again, he employs pastoral apologetics to answer an objection: "Did not the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit follow

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[195] OC, 35.

[196] OC, 35.

[197] OC, 35–36.

[198] OC, 36.

[199] OC, 36.

[200] OC, 36.

upon laying on of Hands in the Apostles time?"[201] He crafts a well-reasoned answer: God did "honor and crown that Ordinance with Signes and Wonders in the primitive time, *as he did other of his Appointment*"[202] (emphasis mine). God honored prayer by the place being shaken (Acts 4), preaching by three thousand being converted (Acts 2), and the gift of the Spirit by tongues (Acts 10). He also "crowned the holy Ordinance of Baptism extraordinarily"[203] in the Spirit's descent and the Father's voice at Christ's baptism (Matt. 3), and the eunuch's baptism in Philip's being snatched away (Acts 8).

Therefore, Collins concludes: baptism, prayer, and preaching do not cease, "though it be not so miraculously owned as in the Primitive times"—neither, then, does LOH cease, by the same "Parity of Reason, though it be not so crowned now, as in the Apostles Days."[204] He reminds his readers that their brethren "do hold, that five of those Principles in Heb. 6 are the Duty of every individual Member to believe and practice."[205] He sees no warrant nor any good biblical reason to omit the sixth, that of LOH; Christians neither delete commandments nor deny ordinances. For Hercules, Reformation hermeneutics and the biblical RPW set the pace of what is to be confessed and practiced in God's instituted worship.

Collins does not count LOH as a sacrament, but classifies it as an "ordinance"[206] (OC #80) immediately related to the sacrament of baptism. In other words, for Hercules, a sacrament is an ordinance, but an ordinance is not necessarily a sacrament.[207] This distinction is readily

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[201] OC, 36.

[202] OC, 37.

[203] OC, 37.

[204] OC, 37.

[205] OC, 38.

[206] OC, 34.

observed by placing several questions from OC alongside one another (emphasis mine):

> 64. Q. Seeing then that only Faith maketh us Partakers of Christ and his Benefits, whence doth it proceed?
> A. From the Holy Ghost, who kindleth it in our Hearts by the preaching of the Gospel, and other *Ordinances*, and confirmeth it by the use of the *Sacraments*.
> 67. Q. How many *sacraments* hath Christ ordained in the New Testament?
> A. Two: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.
> 91. Q. How ought this *ordinance* of the Lord's Supper be closed?
> A. In singing praises to God vocally and audibly…

This distinction is important to note and is clarified when contrasting how Collins speaks of ordinances in OC. He refers to "ordinance(s)" thirty-two times in the OC. A representative sample:

1. Speaking of the commanded elements of God's worship in general, e.g., those things which God has ordained or required of his people.[208]
2. Speaking of baptism as that which Christ has both required in his worship and rightly ordered.[209]
3. Speaking of the Lord's Supper as that which Christ has both required in his worship and rightly ordered in its purity and practice.[210]
4. Speaking of singing as that which "is generally owned to be a Gospel-Ordinance," though not a sacrament.[211]
5. Speaking of the laying on of hands as accompanying the sacrament of baptism.[212]

Among seventeenth century Particular Baptists, Collins, Keach,[213] and Blackwood[214]

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[207] Haykin and Weaver also cite the distinction while introducing their reprint of *An Orthodox Catechism*, 28. Matthew Ward gives a helpful overview of ordinances in *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 116–118.

[208] "…the Grace of God which stirred you up to search the divine Oracle, and Rule of Divine Service, as Ezra and Nehemiah searched into the particular parts of Gods Worship, by which means they came to the practice of that almost lost *Ordinance* of God, the Feast of Tabernacles, which for many years was not practised after the due order…" Preface to OC, A4. Collins employs the recovery of the Feast of Tabernacles once more in pleading for the congregational singing in his Appendix; see OC, "An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing," 75.

[209] OC #69.

[210] OC #90–91.

[211] OC, "Appendix concerning Singing," 75, 81(3). Collins aims at its practice at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper.

[212] OC # #79–81.

[213] See Keach's *Laying on of Hands upon Baptized Believers, as such, Proved an Ordinance of Christ* (London: Benj. Harris, 1698).

[214] See Blackwood's *A Soule Searching Catechism* (London: Giles Calvert, 1653).

were apparently the primary practitioners of LOH upon newly baptized believers as an act of obedience to Christ, though it was a question much engaged.[215] It is critical to note that the practice was distinguished from that done in ordination. Their custom was considered a minority report at best, as it drew in part from General Baptist doctrine and custom[216]—obviously a practice frowned upon by the Reformed.[217] Demonstrating its eventual acceptance among some Particular Baptists, *The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 1707–1807* records a 1783 query from the Newtown church:

> Whether laying on of hands be an ordinance of the gospel to be administered to all baptized persons, or only in particular cases? we observe, that imposition of hands on baptized persons has been the general practice of the churches in union with this Association, and is still used by most of them; but it was never considered by the Association as a bar of communion. Resolved, That any person scrupling to submit thereto, may be admitted to the fellowship of the church without it.[218]

An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing

The OC's "Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing" is deeply instructive in discerning Collins's developing pastoral theology. His 1680 defense of congregational singing at the conclusion of the Lord's Table (OC #91) represents the first printed defense of this practice by a Particular Baptist,[219] though Keach had advocated for congregational hymnody several

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[215] Take, for example, the Somerset Particular Baptist Association meeting (November 6–7, 1653): "The laying on of hands for all baptized believers was the foremost question discussed," and Thomas Collier was deeply involved in these circles. That Collins includes the practice in OC demonstrates something of his own sacramental–ecclesiological conviction and early pastoral theology, as well as an effort to bear a faithful witness both affirming truth and denying error while Collier was losing his doctrinal marbles.

[216] See *An Orthodox Creed*, XXXII. On Heb. 6:2, cf. Thomas Grantham, *The fourth principle of Christs doctrine vindicated being a brief answer to Mr. H. Danvers book, intituled, A treatise of laying on of hands, plainly evincing the true antiquity and perpetuity of that despised ministration of prayer with imposition of hands for the promise of the spirit* (London, 1674). Ivimey speaks to this as well; see *History of the English Baptists*, II.278.

[217] Ivimey notes, "This practice was adopted by many of the Baptist churches, and is still attended to by some of the General Baptists." *History of the English Baptists*, II.340.

[218] A.D. Gillette (1807–1882), ed. *The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from 1707–1807* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851), 194.

[219] So Weaver, in *The British Particular Baptists*, I.372n44. A defense of singing in the broader

decades before the public controversies of the 1690s.[220] Given Collins's friendship with Keach, their convergence is unsurprising. Hercules's defense of congregational singing indicates some growth of the practice among the Particular Baptists, but it remained a minority report for quite a while after he published the OC.

W.T. Whitley (1861–1947) observed that Hercules's pastoral practice in this respect was patiently and graciously done: having "urged congregational singing as a public duty," he "gradually persuaded his Wapping church to enrich its worship"[221] in the singing of hymns—a consequential and publicly-costly position to hold in that fiery era.

Collins's broader concern is decidedly practical-theological in nature: he wants his readers to walk in full-throated truth. For him, that means knowing the gospel, loving the Scripture, learning sound doctrine (as presented in his OC), obeying the moral law, and worshiping the Lord rightly. Singing is an integral aspect of this right knowledge and worship of God. As Coffey observes, writing and singing faithful hymns allowed pastors to "reinforce Nicaean orthodoxy and revive Puritan piety."[222] For Hercules, singing is didactic and experiential

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Congregationalist tradition may be found in John Cotton (1585–1652), *Singing of Psalmes a Gospel Ordinance, or a Treatise, wherein are handled these foure Particulars. I. Touching the Duty it selfe. 2. Touching the Matter to be Sung. 3. Touching the Singers. 4. Touching the Manner of Singing. By John Cotton, Teacher of the Church at Boston in New-England* (London, 1647). On the the singing controversy amongst the Particular Baptists, helpful surveys include Stanton, *Liturgy and identity*; Matthew Ward, *Pure Worship: the Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014); Murdina MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2022); and John Gray's "Biblical Authority as the Basis for Singing in Benjamin Keach's Philosophy of Congregational Song" in *Artistic Theologian Journal* 7 (2019): 25–44.

[220] Matthew Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity: London Baptists and the Hymn-Singing Controvery* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2022), 143.

[221] W.T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Charles Griffin, 1923), 187.

[222] John Coffey, ed. *Heart Religion: Evangelical Piety in England and Ireland 1690–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 39. This concept of singing as discipleship continued to develop into the eighteenth century and beyond; a useful study in this respect is Joseph Carmichael, *The Sung Theology of the English Particular Baptist Revival: A Theological Analysis of Anne Steele's Hymns in Rippon's Hymnal* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020).

—hymns worked theology into the soul, lifting worshipers to God in praise. In Reformation and Puritan catechisms, the first question of the catechism (and of each subsequent section) usually serves as a short summary of all the doctrine to be expounded within; similarly, Collins's "Appendix" serves as something of a theological summary and application bookending the back.

His Appendix begins with the assertion that of singing is "generally owned to be a Gospel-Ordinance"[223] and that the real questions should be what the songs should be about (their "matter") and how they should be sung (their "manner and mode"). He defends his thesis, "That Singing vocally and audibly, hath been and still is God's Ordinance," [224] by constructing seven arguments for its practice from Scripture (#1–7; pp. 75–80), answering five objections to it from Scripture (#8–12; pp. 80–84), and providing eleven points of pastoral instruction for rightly singing praise to God (pp. 84–86).

Collins clearly put careful and creative thought into composing the Appendix: fitting musical references are to be found in nearly every paragraph, and his exegetical skill is on display as he often applies the same Scriptural passages to support multiple points of argument, without committing category errors or overburdening his text.

A concise summary of Collins's Appendix is helpful here.[225] Singing is:

1. God's command to the whole church.
2. A moral and universal duty to all men.
3. Scripture's pattern (eight examples given).
4. The "musick of Nature…Ordinances…Angels…[and] Saints."
5. Was done "in the greatest Numbers…Straits…[and] Deliverances" of Scripture.
6. Has been constantly practiced by the saints throughout Scripture.

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[223] OC, "Appendix," 75. Striking a *via media*, 2LC 22.5 allows room for congregational singing, calling it "part of the religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him," though it does not explicitly name it an ordinance—an interesting (and quiet) mediating point within the Confession. Echoing 2LC, *The Baptist Catechism* #56 says "The Second Commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, *or any other way not appointed in his word*" (emphasis mine).

[224] OC, 75.

[225] For my full summary outline, see Appendix Three. Stanton also briefly summarizes the "Appendix" in his *Liturgy and Identity*, 55–57.

7. Has been blessed of God and gives spiritual benefits.
8. Objection: what if nonbelievers sing?[226] Prayer and praise are natural duties.
9. Question/objection: but what is the right way to sing? From the heart, but with the voice.
10. Objection: What about instruments? Not for use in the NT.
11. Objection: Shouldn't Spirit-given solo gifts should be permitted, but not set forms of composed hymns? That weakens Scriptural authority, encourages hypocrisy, and teaches Christians to seek what God never promised (thus going beyond what is written).
12. Objection: But what should we sing—psalms, or hymns of human composition? Both, provided the hymns are faithful to Scripture.
13. The natural question arises: "But how must we sing?" Eleven points of pastoral instruction and exhortation given.

In other words, Hercules argues, congregational singing to God is a positive duty under the RPW.[227] It is further a moral and natural duty, in which saints have engaged throughout redemptive history. Creation from the lowest to highest sings God's praise under all imaginable circumstances. God honors it and accepts what he requires, adding his blessing by its means. All men owe God praise and prayer, but Scripture must set the rule in all elements and expressions of Christian worship. ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖςπνευματικαῖς (Col. 3:16) should not be treated as though it says "psalms, psalms, and psalms," or "hymns, hymns, and hymns." Collins operated on an exegetical and pastoral principle in terms of a difficult and disputed text. God commands singing of these sorts, though the NT does not offer much detail as to primacy or distinctions between them. Aiming to see that both faithful inspired and faithful uninspired praise is included in the worship of God is an act of submission to Scripture's rule.

Conclusion

Collins concludes his *Catechism* and his Appendix by exhorting his readers to sing,

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[226] We see another aspect of the OC as providing a Particular Baptist answer to Grantham, who objected strenuously to congregational hymnody as "promiscuous singing" in *Christianismus Primitivus*; cf. Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 90. Collins answers the objection in #8.

[227] Stanton argues that Keach's approach to congregational singing represents a movement away from the RPW to the normative principle (*Liturgy and Identity*, 184–185). This chapter has demonstrated throughout that Collins adhered closely to the RPW, such that his defense of singing starts with its positive command.

having meditated on the glorious praise which will fill eternity. The pastoral theology behind such hortative speech at the conclusion of a robust biblical-theological catechism cannot be missed. God's majestic truth should issue in the heavenly harmony of holy praise. His imagery is beautiful and brilliantly executed in its biblical and theological breadth:

> Let us sometimes raise our Hearts into holy Contemplations, let us think of the musick of the Bride-Chamber, there shall be no crackt Strings, displeasing Sounds, harsh Voices, nothing to abate our Melody; there shall be no Willows to hang our Harps upon, Psa. 137.2. In the Bride-Chamber, there shall be no sorrow to interfere. When we sing the Song of the Lamb, there shall be no Grief to jar our Harmony: for which Day let us all pray.[228]

The vision is glorious: only regenerate hearts will be in heaven, but "no crackt Strings." Every tear will be wiped away by our Bridegroom, such that we will need no "Willows" for our weeping. It will be a place of purity and peace—no "displeasing Sounds, harsh Voices, nothing to abate our Melody…no sorrow to interfere…no Grief to jar our Harmony."

This brief summary epitomizes Hercules Collins's burgeoning pastoral theology. His concern is for heart-religion, not hypocrisy; contemplation of God and communion with God, in view of the coming Day of the Lord. His desire is that his readers will see in Christ the one who wholly restores what sin has "crakt"[229] and ruined, who tunes his people to sing his song all their days, who is himself their peace (Eph. 2:14). His labor until that Day is to call men to repentance in light of the glory and mercy of that King, to equip them to live unto his praise, to bring his whole counsel (Acts 20:27) to bear upon their souls and homes, teach them to honor his word and his worship, and to hold forth Christ as a complete Saviour who welcomes broken sinners (Lk. 15:2), hears their prayers (1 Jn. 5:14), and makes all things new (Rev. 21:5).

For that Day, let us all pray indeed.

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[228] OC, "Appendix," 86.

[229] OC, "Appendix," 86.

Having examined Collins's emerging pastoral theology in OC, our fourth chapter will consider his applied theology under stress. The doctrines one truly holds are seen most plainly when facing a crisis. The nature of the John Child (1638?–1684) case will demonstrate Hercules's faithful biblical instincts when undertaking the care of souls.

CHAPTER 4

COLLINS THE COUNSELOR: THE PAINFUL CASE OF JOHN CHILD (1638?–1684)

> Mr. *Child.* (To Mrs. *M*.) How deplorable a thing is this, that I who have preached so much of the Glory of another World, should now be deprived of it all! —You will as surely see me damned, as you now see me stand here.
> —John Child, in late September or early October 1684.[1]

Introduction

In his funeral sermon for Hercules Collins (ca. 1646/1647–1702), John Piggott (ca. 1670–1713) notes Collins's tireless labors in pastoral care among the Wapping church members:

> [H]ow well he discharged the other Branches of his *Pastoral Function*, this Church is a Witness, whom he has watched over and visited above five and twenty Years. …. [his] Lips that so often dispers'd Knowledg amongst you, are seal'd up till the Resurrection.[2]

The language of "watch[ing] over," "visit[ing]," and "dispers[ing] Knowledg" is standard Puritan verbiage indicating that Collins not only called on and catechized his people, but also counseled them. Much of this counsel would have included assisting them with "cases of conscience"—how the Puritans broadly denoted the labor of the care and cure of souls (with its concomitant work of pastoral counseling), whether formal or informal in its nature. Per Piggott, Hercules was not only well-known as a powerful preacher and prolific writer, but as a diligent

[1]John Child, as recorded by Hercules Collins, in *The English Spira: BEING A Fearful EXAMPLE OF AN APOSTATE, Who had been a Preacher many Years, and the Apostatized from his Religion ; miserably Hanged himself, October the 13th. 1684. GIVING An Account of his Dispair, and Divers Conferences had with him, by several Ministers and others of his Friends. TOGETHER With his Answer; and Papers Written by his own Hand. Left Attested by Mr. T. Plant, Mr. H. Collings, Mr. B. Dennis, Mr. B. Keach* (London, 1693), 28–29.

[2] John Piggott, "A Funeral Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr. Hercules Collins preach'd Octob. 9. 1702. from Mat. 24. 44. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh," in his *Eleven Sermons Preach'd upon Special Occasions, by the Late Reverend Mr. John Piggott* (London: John Darby, 1714), 236, 240.

and careful pastoral counselor who "often dispers'd Knowledge amongst" them. In other words, as per the NT injunction, he was careful to "shepherd the flock of God" entrusted to the "exercise [of his] oversight" (1 Pet. 5:2).

That "oversight" presented as a careful stewardship of souls for whom Christ died by means of his revealed truth in the all-sufficient Scriptures—not a leaning upon his own understanding (Prov. 3:5). Its exercise is well-represented in the broader extant Puritan corpus, where its collective inscribed instincts demonstrate an application of the Bible for almost every circumstance imaginable. Within these treatises, sermons, letters, journals, and records, this casuistic[3] impulse surfaces as containing robust exegetical, theological, and confessional reasoning, brought to bear upon the conscience, concerns, and choices facing their congregants in a noteworthy pastoral tenderness. As such, it has prompted substantial treatment in the secondary literature[4] over the past century and consistent employment for three and a half

[3] From the Latin *casus*, "case." Leo Stelten, *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin with an appendix of Latin expressions defined and clarified* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2020), s.v. "casus." The derivative "case study" commonly used in counseling circles today traces its origin to this basic line of thought, beginning with the various "*cases* of conscience" treated below. Thus Brooks Holifield summarizes it as "the application of general principles to particular cases" in *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self–Realization* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1983), 17. Note that "casuistry" in some literature is used as nearly synonymous with "sophistry"—basically, to dodge or complicate a problem. We use it here in the sense of making things better, not worse!

[4] Studies abound. A very small sample of the last forty years: Thomas Wood (1919–1987), *English Casuistical Divinity During the Seventeenth Century, with Special Reference to Jeremy Taylor* (London: SPCK, 1952); Erroll Hulse (1931–2017), "The Puritans and Counselling Troubled Souls," in *Foundations* 8 (May 1982): 6–28; Thomas Oden, *The Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Edmund Leites, *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Germany: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Ken Sarles, "The English Puritans: A Historical Paradigm of Biblical Counseling" in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling: A Basic Guide to the Principles and Practice of Counseling* by John MacArthur (1939–2025) (Dallas: Word, 1994), 21–43; Kenneth Roth, "The Cure of Souls in the Thought of Richard Baxter (1615–1691): A Study in Historical and Practical Theology" (Th.M thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 1995); Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books/Soli Deo Gloria, 1997), 63–136; Kenneth Roth, "The Psychology and Counseling of Richard Baxter (1615–1691)," in *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 17 (1998): 321–334; David Herding, "Counseling the Depressed Person: The Puritan Alternative to Secular Psychology" (MAR thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2010); Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 909–946; Ivan Davis (1945–2024), *Samuel Annesley and the Cripplegate Morning Exercises: A Study in Seventeenth–Century Casuistical Ministry* (Bloomington, IN: Thomas Nelson/ Zondervan/Westbow Press, 2023); and J.I. Packer, ed. (1926–2020), *Puritan Papers* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), I.31–43; II.219–257. Many others could be referenced, but this list is sufficiently representative.

centuries by ministers similarly concerned for their people's souls.

Interestingly, Collins's pastoral counseling—along with that of the broader Particular Baptist tradition—presents a point almost entirely untreated to date.[5] It seems to be altogether unknown. Just as *The Temple Repair'd* preserves Collins's only known extant sermon (treated in the next chapter), so the account of his meetings with John Child (1638?–1684) codifies the only known records of Collins's counseling.[6] These meetings are recorded in *The English Spira: BEING A Fearful EXAMPLE OF AN APOSTATE, Who had been a Preacher many Years, and the Apostatized from his Religion ; miserably Hanged himself, October the 13th. 1684. GIVING An Account of his Dispair, and Divers Conferences had with him, by several Ministers and others of his Friends. TOGETHER With his Answer; and Papers Written by his own Hand. Left Attested by Mr. T. Plant, Mr. H. Collings, Mr. B. Dennis, Mr. B. Keach*[7] (hereafter TES). Further adding weight to this work is that Collins was the one entrusted with much of TES's preparation and editing.[8] These facts make careful consideration of Child's case and Hercules's labors on Child's behalf to be of critical importance for developing a more complete picture of his pastoral theology.

It is incredibly difficult not to be drawn into Child's situation on a very personal level, and even harder to engage it with much objectivity. His case is dark and deeply trying, and it was

[5] The sole treatment of Collins's counseling I have found is in Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., SBTS), 36–39. It is a brief but worthy consideration; and in fairness, much development of the question of Collins's counseling lies well beyond the scope of Weaver's focus.

[6] It should be noted here that Collins's *Three Books*—particularly *The Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven* (London, 1696)—contains much in the way of specific pastoral counsel; but it is presented in prosaic form as opposed to the "real-time" case study which TES affords. In future work I hope to put Collins's method in TES alongside the relevant casuistic material within *Three Books*, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter.

[7] All citations are from this edition of the work unless otherwise noted.

[8] Note the headings in TES on pp. 28 and 39.

of such a character that TES's compilers hesitated to print it…even apart from the persecution factor.[9] The uniqueness of the John Child event is even more sharply apparent when realized as occurring amidst the hottest point of the great persecution of 1660–1688. But the light of the gospel shines through in the counsel these faithful ministers gave—and particularly that of Hercules Collins. This chapter situates Collins within the landscape of Puritan counseling, sketches the context of John Child's case, places Child and Francis Spira (1502–1548) alongside one another, engages Child's *A Second Argument* (hereafter ASA) by way of analysis of TES, and explores Collins's pastoral counseling. It argues that, as *The English Spira* provides the only extant window into Hercules Collins's pastoral counseling, it therefore constitutes essential evidence for reconstructing his pastoral theology in practice. By these means, I hope to recover more of Collins's applied pastoral theology.

As revealed in TES, Collins's pastoral theology may be defined as a Scripture-governed, conscience-oriented, casuistic ministry in which he diagnoses spiritual distress through doctrinal categories, and applies the Bible with tender, discriminating precision to lead wounded souls toward repentance, assurance, and perseverance in Christ.

Within this casuistic landscape, Hercules Collins must be viewed not as an eccentric or isolated figure, but as a minister formed by Puritan pastoral instincts, particularly in the cure of souls. The habits evident in TES—his theological reading of the conscience, discriminating use of Scripture, careful distinctions, and gentle-yet-unsentimental exhortations—are not crisis-driven improvisations, but the practiced reflexes of a seasoned casuist. Standing downstream

[9] "Postscript," in TES, 43; note that they identify other complicating factors as well. Michael Haykin summarizes well that "From 1660 to 1688 the Baptists, along with other groups outside the Church of England, were hurled into the fierce fire of persecution. Baptists who refused to go along with these laws often ended up experiencing state harassment, paying substantial fines, or experiencing life-threatening imprisonment." In his *Revival: Spiritual Awakening in the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2024), 100. An informative further study is Raymond Brown, *Spirituality in Adversity: English Nonconformity in a Period of Repression, 1660–1689* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2012).

from William Perkins (1558–1602), William Ames (1576–1633), Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), Richard Baxter (1615–1691), and the broader pastoral culture that treated the conscience as the arena where distress meets doctrine, Collins approaches John Child's collapsing soul not as a theorist—but as a pastor applying well-honed tools. TES is therefore not an anomaly—but a rare glimpse of Collins laboring in classic Puritan fashion. It is an utterly unique document in seventeenth-century Particular Baptist literature, and it demands our careful attention toward tracing Hercules's pastoral theology in a very personal expression: counseling.

Puritan Casuistry and Collins

Puritan casuistry emerged from a pastoral conviction that Scripture speaks directly and comprehensively to the varied conditions of the soul. Ministers trained in this tradition—via university or apprenticeship—approached the conscience not as a psychological curiosity, but as a theological faculty requiring careful instruction, correction, and consolation from Scripture. Their sermons, treatises, and correspondence reveal a consistent method: reading spiritual distress through doctrinal categories, distinguishing with precision, and applying the Word with a holy balance of gravity and tenderness.

Collins's counsel in TES did not arise in a vacuum; it reflects this well-developed casuistic tradition which trained Puritan ministers to read, diagnose, and treat the troubled conscience with theological clarity and pastoral care. Situating Collins within this broader landscape clarifies both the instincts surfacing in his meetings with Child and the significance of TES as a rare, real-time embodiment of that tradition. Let us now consider this casuistic framework.

One approaching the Puritan corpus faces a massive collection of printed sermons (note contextualization of Collins's own preaching within the seventeenth-century post-Reformation

Particular Baptists in the chapter on *The Temple Repair'd*). Yet these Puritan pastors, for all their gloriously thick theological exposition, were not merely preachers—but shepherds charged with the oversight of souls. To that end, they spoke frequently of casuistry—a term Hulse concisely defines as "pastoral care according to the Scriptures."[10] Their sermons were only one expression of a broader ministerial vocation: the careful, intentional, biblically-full oversight to the particular souls entrusted to them. Lewis captures this pastoral instinct well:

> The Puritans were physicians of the soul, skilled enough to avoid that vagueness and subjectiveness which leaves the anguished soul clutching at uncertain straws of uncertain hope. They believed the Word of God in Scripture to be comprehensive enough to cover every basic human condition and knew their Scriptures well enough to apply with responsible authority the available salve to the exposed sore. They were also clear, logical, and fearless enough to apply these Scriptures. This is not to imply shallow application of proof texts to particular situations; this deduction could not be more astray. These men had such a grasp of Scripture as a whole that even though they may begin to treat a problem by opening up a particular verse of Scripture, before long the full scope of Scriptural truth—with all its balancing nuances—would be brought to bear upon the condition.[11]

Holifield concurs:

> Puritan pastors were adept at diagnosing spiritual pride and fleshly temptation; they were cartographers of the inner life...as a consequence they eventually began to believe that all true religious experience followed broad patterns that could be discerned through careful introspection.[12]

At one level, then, their sermonic corpora might almost be as readily classified under pastoral *counsel* as pastoral *exposition*. Collections of their solutions to these common cases of conscience (COCs) circulated widely, shaping both English devotional literature and the hearts of their readers. The weight they assigned to this work appears plainly in the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (1651); it requires an aspiring minister to

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[10] Erroll Hulse, "The Puritans and Counselling Troubled Souls," in *Foundations* #8 (May 1982): 9.

[11] Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1997), 65.

[12] E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978), 138; cf. Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570–1720* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), 40. Holifield is no fan of Puritan ministry, but his cartography verbiage is excellent.

prove his "skill in the sense and meaning of such places of the Scripture as shall be proposed unto him in cases of conscience."[13] In other words, ministers were expected to show not only exegetical competence but pastoral discernment—how Scripture should be applied to the varied struggles of the soul.

Taken together, these patterns show that Puritan ministry rested on a casuistical instinct: Scripture was applied to the conscience with doctrinal clarity, biblical discernment, and surgical pastoral precision aiming at practical godliness. Whether in sermons, private counsel, or public cases, the aim was to guide Christians through the soul's varied conditions by wielding the Word wisely. Collins's counsel within TES reflects these patterns of thought as deeply engrained.

The Nature of Puritan Casuistry

Within this broader pastoral framework, the terms "casuistry" and "cases of conscience" function almost synonymously, though the latter properly denotes a subset of the former. In its broadest sense, casuistry referred to the care of souls with the word of God. Beeke and Jones sharpen the point by defining Puritan casuistry as:

> [Th]e art of moral theology applied with biblical integrity to various cases that a person is confronted with in his conscience or life. …. Casuistry is practical theology, training Christians to live uprightly, humbly, and gladly in the presence of God.[14]

This was the Reformational ministerial ideal: to live as a faithful Christian, preach as a faithful gospel herald of the gospel, and serve as a faithful curer of souls—as a "comforter of

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[13] *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (London, 1651), 76. On the *Directory*, see *The Westminster Directory of Public Worship Discussed by Mark Dever and Sinclair Ferguson* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland, Great Britian: Christian Heritage, 2008) and Richard Muller and Rowland Ward, *Scripture and Worship: Biblical Interpretation and the Directory for Public Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2007). Some portion of this demonstrative response would have been prepared beforehand, but some of it would be done in the moment.

[14] Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 927; chapter 57, entitled "Puritan Casuistry," merits careful study.

troubled consciences"[15] (note their distinction between the public and private ministry of the Word in Acts 20:20–21). The pastoral casuist therefore held Scripture's body of divinity in his head and its power upon his heart,[16] discerning when to wield the Spirit's broadsword and when to apply his scalpel.

The hearing and resolving of COCs arose naturally from this larger casuistical instinct. Today, COCs would be classified under pastoral biblical counseling, though the Puritans would be unconcerned with modern therapeutic categories. Their "psychology"[17] was truly biblical: they dealt with the ψυχή, the soul, according to the Scripture's exposition of its nature, needs, and τέλος.[18] As Thomas Case (1598–1682) summarized, they sought to help believers be "carried on in a daily progress of gospel proficiency."[19]

Because this casuistical instinct permeated their ministries, "formal" COC volumes

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[15] As Richard Greenham (early 1540s–1594) was widely noted to be. So John Craig, "The growth of English Puritanism," in John Coffey and Paul Lim, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 42. On Greenham, cf. Debora Shuger and Ethan Shagan, *Religion in Tudor England: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 529–532.

[16] Thus Thomas Brooks was described by his friend John Reeve (fl. 1670s–1680s) in Alexander Grosart, ed. The *Works of Thomas Brooks* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1866/2001), I.xxxvi.

[17] The term is employed classically and cautiously for its specific reference to the care and cure of souls—its use in no sense constitutes endorsement of the modern discipline.

[18] For example, shortly after the Child incident, John Flavel (1627–1691) wrote an entire work on the soul: *Pneumatologia, a treatise of the soul of man wherein the divine original, excellent and immortal nature of the soul are opened, its love and inclination to the body, with the necessity of its separation from it, considered and improved, the existence, operations, and states of separated souls, both in Heaven and Hell, immediately after death, asserted, discussed, and variously applyed, divers knotty and difficult questions about departed souls, both philosophical, and theological, stated and determined, the invaluable preciousness of humane souls, and the various artifices of Satan (their professed enemy) to destroy them, discovered, and the great duty and interest of all men, seasonable and heartily to comply with the most great and gracious design of the Father, Son, and Spirit, for the salvation of their souls, argued and pressed* (London, 1685).

[19] Thomas Case, *The Morning Exercises Methodized: or certain chief Heads and Points of the Christian Religion Opened and Improved in divers SERMONS by Several Ministers of the city of London, in the Monthly Course of the MORNING EXERCISE at GILES in the Field* (London, 1660); in *Puritan Sermons 1659–1689 Being the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, and in Southwark by Seventy–Five Ministers of the Gospel in or near London, with Notes and Translations by James Nichols, in six volumes* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts Publishers, 1981), V.28.

represent only a portion of the Puritan output. Their sermons also routinely address COCs—common struggles, spiritual declensions, ethical uncertainties—within the homiletical "uses," reducing doctrine to practice by careful, closely-reasoned applications and counsels from Scripture.[20] Many such expositional series were occasioned by congregations undergoing seasons of providential trial. As "the Puritans regarded the Bible as a trustworthy guide for all of life…[they] subjected every case of conscience to Scripture's directives."[21]

These pastoral solutions were also gathered into compilation volumes such as the famous *Cripplegate Morning Exercises*, largely organized and edited by the "Puritan casuist of ability"[22] Samuel Annesley (1620?–1696).[23] Others appeared independently for the benefit of troubled saints. For example, Richard Baxter (1615–1691)—unsound on justification, but unmatched on pastoral theology—produced his massive *A Christian Directory*,[24] offering biblical directives (hence "Directory") for faithfulness across an exhaustive spectrum of practical and theological

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[20] Cf. chapter 5 on *The Temple Repair'd* for treatment of Puritan homiletical methodology.

[21] Joel Beeke and Randall Pederson, *Meet the Puritans, second edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2025). Kindle ed. loc 1787.

[22] John T. McNeill, "Casuistry in the Puritan Age," in *Religion in Life* XII (New York, NY: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943): 76; cf. his *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper, 1951), 270–286.

[23] This famous collection has been reprinted through the years; for this question, the title of one early edition says it all: *The Morning-exercise at Cripple-gate, or, Several Cases of Conscience Practically Resolved, by sundry Ministers, September 1661, third edition* (London, 1671). On the Cripplegate sermons, see Davis's excellent *Samuel Annesley and the Cripplegate Morning Exercises*.

[24] Joel Beeke has called it "one of the most practical and helpful biblical counseling manuals ever written" in numerous settings. J.I. Packer (1926–2020) writes of Baxter's *Directory* in his introduction to the Soli Deo Gloria reprint (section III; n.p.):

> The sheer brilliance of Baxter's achievement in crystallizing a proper form for the life of faith on a canvas as broad as life at a very high level of intelligent, Bible-based, theologically-integrated wisdom, and with unfailing compressed clarity, is dazzling to the mind. Granted, he had behind him five centuries of Western work on the Christian life, from Bernard in the twelfth century and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, through the later medieval scholastics, the epoch-making contribution of the Reformers, and the great mass of Puritan, high church Anglican, and counter-reformation Roman writings on cases of conscience in his own seventeenth century—most of which he appeared to have in his head.

questions.

It is precisely at this intersection of Puritan pastoral practice and casuistry that we encounter Hercules Collins, who would soon face the ministerial challenge of a lifetime: the tragic case of John Child.

Touching on the Obvious Question

A necessary question arises quickly: does TES reveal Collins's typical pastoral practice—especially in counseling—or does it merely preserve his best effort with an exceptionally difficult case?[25] In other words, how representative is it, *really*? Are we encountering extraordinary pastoral theology deployed under crisis conditions, or witnessing Collins's ordinary pastoral theology in concentrated form?

The answer appears to be: "Both." Child's case is undeniably exceptional, but it seems that Collins's care of his soul is not. Extraordinary cases often disclose a minister's underlying pastoral theology with unusual clarity (albeit sometimes in condensed or distilled form)—pressure has a way of forcing long-formed instincts to the surface. Hercules's "surfacing" instincts are precisely what TES preserves.

While TES does not (and could not) map Collins's entire pastoral system, it does furnish its only sustained witness to his pastoral theology in practice. More importantly, Hercules appears throughout TES as remarkably steady, coherent, and theologically-governed in his rigorously-biblical care of Child's soul. Such consistency does not suddenly materialize in crisis moments; consistency then is the fruit of habits of thought, conviction, and practice formed over years. The best reading of the evidence, then, is that TES represents not an aberration, but

[25] Several of the painful instances in Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert's *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God's Resources in Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2012) repeatedly came to mind in writing this chapter; they helped raise and clarify this question for me.

Collins in action: his ordinary pastoral theology brought into sharp relief under extraordinary circumstances.[26]

The Uniqueness of *The English Spira*: Categories within the Puritan Corpus

The incredible rarity of a document such as TES must be firmly grasped. Most modern studies of Puritan and post-Reformation casuistry focus on one of five basic categories of publication:

1. Sermons,[27]
2. Sermonic treatises,[28]
3. Manuals of devotion and Christian living,[29]
4. Volumes of directive instruction,[30] and
5. Letters of pastoral counsel.[31]

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[26] Collins never says anything about intending to record his casuistic method in TES, so this conclusion must be understood as consequential—though likely not intentional.

[27] Consider here Thomas Manton's (1620–1677) *A practical Commentary, or an exposition with notes, on the epistle of James, delivered in Sundry weekly lectures at Stoke-Newington, in Middlesex near London* (London, 1653); repr. in *The Works of Thomas Manton* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), volume 4, or Thomas Goodwin's (1600–1680) exposition of Ephesians 1–2; repr. in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria/Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), volumes 1–2.

[28] For example, Flavel's *Divine Conduct: or, The Mysterie of Providence Opened* (London, 1678), or *A Saint indeed: or, The great work of a Christian in keeping the Heart in the Several conditions of life* (London, 1688); repr. in *The Works of John Flavel* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), volumes 4–5.

[29] This category includes works like Henry Scudder's (d. 1659) *The Christians daily Walk In Holy SECURITY and PEACE* (London, 1674); repr. as *The Christian's Daily Walk* (Harrisburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1984) or Lewis Bayly's (d. 1631) *The practice of pietie: directing a Christian how to Walk, that he may please God* (London, 1613); repr. as *The Practice of Piety* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994).

[30] Such as Robert Bolton's (1572–1631) *Some generall directions for a Comfortable walking with God* (London, 1634); repr. *General Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God* (Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria Publishers, 1991), or Richard Baxter's massive *A Christian directory, or, A body of practical divinity and Cases of conscience. Directing Christians How to use their Knowledge and Faith; How to improve all Helps and Means, and to perform all Duties; how to Overcome Temptations, and to Escape or Mortify every Sin. In Four Parts. I. Christian Ethics (or Private Duties) II. Christian Economics (or Family Duties) III. Christian Ecclesiastics (or Church Duties) IV. Christian Politics (or Duties to our Rulers and Neighbours).* (London, 1678); repr. as *A Christian Directory*, in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books/Soli Deo Gloria, 2023), volume 1. Given the vast scope of Baxter's *Directory*, most studies engaging it deal selectively.

[31] One thinks here of Samuel Rutherford's (ca. 1600–1661) collected correspondence, published posthumously by his secretary Robert Makeward (fl. 1660s) as *Joshua Redivivus* (London, 1664); repr. by Andrew Bonar as *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford, with a Sketch of His Life and Biographical Notices of His Correspondents* (Edinburgh, 1891).

Most modern studies concentrate on one category, though some blend a few, or situate them biographically. Many extant primary sources comprising these categories began as sermons or lectures and were modified for print[32] (as seems to be the case with portions of the Collinsian corpus). Cohen's observation is apt: "The ministers' gift of the Word came gift-wrapped in words."[33] Collins himself produced a casuistic manual of Christian living in *The Scribe Instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven* (1696).[34]

Recent scholarship has analyzed and systematized this Reformational care-and-cure-of-souls instinct.[35] From one angle, much (perhaps most?) of the Puritan corpus could be classified as casuistic—particularly sermons, doctrinal works, and catechetical expositions—and even more so in their applications of the moral law. These writings are rich veins for mining out their robust confessional and pastoral theology therein, affording much instruction and help for their readers even today.

Alongside these five better-known categories stands a sixth: the "cases of conscience"

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[32] Haller notes that many Puritan "works of edification were "directly derived from sermons"; this makes sense to me in reading much of Collins's corpus, explaining why much of it *feels* sermonic. See *The Rise of Puritanism, or, The Way to the New Jerusalem as Set Forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570–1643* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 25.

[33] Charles Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 280.

[34] *The Scribe Instructed* is again consistent with Collins's regular practice of editing and building upon trusted works. In this case, he borrows from and builds upon Thomas Brooks's (1608–1680) work *The Precious remedies against satan's devices. or, Salve for Believers and unbelievers sores. Being a companion for those that are in Christ, or out of Christ ; that fight or neglect ordinances, under a pretence of living above them ; that are growing (in spirituals) or decaying ; that are tempted, or deserted ; afflicted or opposed, that have assurance, or that want assurance, &c.* (London, 1652).

[35] See, for instance, Colin McCulloch's fascinating *Sanctified by the Spirit: John Owen, Habits of Grace and Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2024); or Mark Deckard, *Helpful Truth in Past Places: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Counseling* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2010). My own "Counsel from the Confession? The 1689 and Biblical Counseling" in Chris Chumita, ed., *Anchored in Truth: Reflections on Biblical Counseling* (Elyria, OH: Soul Doctor Publications, 2025) develops something of the same approach. Timothy Yates presents another attempt at applying something of this observed catechetical didactic-casuistic principle; see "Adapting the Structural Perspective of the Westminster Larger Catechism for Biblical Counselor Training" in *Unio Cum Christo—International Journal of Reformed Theology and Life* 9.1 (April 2023): 27–50.

(COC hereafter). Though sometimes overlooked,[36] these works are highly valuable. For instance, COCs produced by Perkins,[37] Ames,[38] and Goodwin[39] function as an early form of case studies[40] for the benefit of Christians and ministers. The General Baptist Thomas Grantham's (1634–1692) *Christianismus Primitivus, or the Ancient Christian Religion*[41] includes fourteen chapters of

[36] For example, Tim Keller's (1950–2023) "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling" in *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9.3 (1988) is a highly useful and substantial resource, but says nothing of the cases of conscience; he focuses instead on the sermons and sermonic treatises. So too Deckard's excellent *Helpful Truth in Past Places* concerns itself with "specifically chosen Puritan books to make direct application of their principles to biblical counseling concerns today" (pg. 9), again looking primarily at the categories of sermons and sermonic treatises.

[37] Perkins, *A discourse of conscience wherein is set downe the nature, properties, and differences thereof: as also the way to get and keepe good conscience* (Cambridge, 1596) and *The whole treatise of the cases of conscience distinguished into three bookes: the first whereof is revised and corrected in sundrie places, and the other two annexed. Taught and deliuered by M. W. Perkins in his holy-day lectures, carefully examined by his owne briefes, and now published together for the common good, by T. Pickering Bachelour of Diuinitie. Whereunto is adioyned a twofold table: one of the heads and number of the questions propounded and resolued; another of the principall texts of Scripture vvhich are either explaned, or vindicated from corrupt interpretation* (Cambridge, 1606); repr. in Stephen Yuille, Joel Beeke, and Derek Thomas, eds. *The Works of William Perkins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), volume 8. Jonathan Hall observes that "Perkins demonstrated great concern for Spira's case, revealing a pastoral familiarity with similar cases of conscience that needed comfort and deflection from such morbid patterns of piety." See his "'Read This That Others Read Not Thee': Francis Spira and Apostasy in the English Reformed Tradition (1618–1652)" (Ph.D diss., Saint Louis University, 2010), 183.

[38] Ames, *CONSCIENCE with THE POWER and CASES THEREOF. Divided into V. Bookes. Written by the Godly and Learned, WILLIAM AMES, Doctor, and Professor of Divinity, in the famous University of Franeker in Frieland. TRANSLATED OUT OF THE LATINE into English, for more publique benefit* (Leyden and London, 1639).

[39] Goodwin, *Certaine SELECT CASES RESOLVED : Specially tending to the comfort of Beleevers, in their chiefe and usuall Temptations : 1. The case of Desertion, or walking in Darknesse : the cause, remedies, 2. How to discerne Answers to our Prayers, 3. The Case resolved, whether after sound repentance a child of God may fall into the same sin, 4. How it is to be understood, that every Beleever bringeth forth all his fruit in Christ, 5. How to discerne our Growth in Grace, heretofore all published in THREE TREATISES: 1. A child of light walking in darknesse 2. Return of prayers, 3. Tryall of growth. But now reprinted, and to be put together, with other divine tractates. By Tho. Goodwin, B.D.* (London, 1645).

[40] Note, however, that these COCs can vary widely in format; the Puritans generally do not demonstrate much concern with what moderns term "standardizing" their approach or their findings, apart from evidencing biblical faithfulness and ministerial usefulness. Note also that Ames corrects Perkins at several points in his understanding of conscience's nature and function; the student surpasses the master! Helpfully discussed in Davis, *Samuel Annesley and the Cripplegate Morning Exercises*, 91–97.

[41] Thomas Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus, or the Ancient Christian Religion In Its Nature, Certainty, Excellency, and Beauty, (Internal and External) particularly Considered, Asserted, and Vindicated, from The many Abuses which have Invaded that Sacred Profession, By Humane Innovation, or pretended Revelation, Comprehending likewise The General Duties of Mankind, in their respective Relations; And particularly, The Obedience of all Christians to Magistrates. And the Necessity of Christian Moderation about things Dispensible in Matters of Religion. With Divers Cases of Conscience Discussed and Resolved* (London: printed for Francis Smith, 1678).

COCs (his entire Book III), affording a rough sense of the sort of questions COCs addressed:

BOOK. III. Of divers Cases of Conscience.

Chap. I. The Baptized Churches unjustly charged with Seditious Principles. They are strictly obliged by their principles to obey Magistrates.
Chap. 2. Of the great Duty which lieth upon the Rulers of this World.
Chap. 3. Of the Power of Magistrates in matters of Religion.
Chap. 4. Of the Lawful use of an Oath, to attest the Truth before a Magistrate.
Chap. 5. Of Christian-Moderation concerning their differing apprehensions about some Matters of Religion ; or the profession of Christianity, both in Faith and Practice.
Chap. 6. Treateth of Marriage, how lawful, and how prohibited to Christians. Also in case Divorce is lawful.
Chap. 7. Treateth of Christian-behaviour, both Civil and Religious : And particularly, of the behaviour of Women in Christian-Assemblies, where they are not permitted to Preach.
Chap. 8. Whether Christians may lawfully dissolve their Church-Meetings, or Assemblies, when Humane Laws require it of them ? resolved in the Negative. Six Considerations to justifie their constancy in holding their Church-Assemblies, according to the Scriptures.
Chap. *9*. Treateth of the Duty of Christians, to bear Offices in Civil State, and Arms in the Military State, of the Nations where they live.
Chap. I0. Christians may lawfully make use of that Provision which the Laws of Nations have made for the relief of their Poor, and for Burying their Dead.
Chap. II. Treateth of Usury.
Chap. I2. Treateth of the Government of Christian Families.
Chap. I3. Whether the Jews being converted, are still bound to keep the law, namely Circumcision, Sacrifices, and all other Rites, according to the law of *Moses*, resolved in the Negative, against the spreading of Judaism.
Chap. I4. Of the Government of the Tongue.

These works often include a treatment of the nature and office of conscience according to Scripture (much as begins TES), a biblical philosophy of the care and cure of souls, and a series of questions or "cases." Sometimes brief, sometimes extensive, these cases address concerns ranging across theological, ethical, relational, devotional, ecclesiastical, domestic, vocational, and similar headings.[42] When appropriate, cases are anonymized; the inquiry posed

[42] For instance, John Geree's (ca. 1601–1649) *A Case of Conscience Resolved: Wherein it is cleared, that the King may without impeachment to his oath, touching the clergy at coronation, consent to the abrogation of episcopacy. And the objections against it in two learned treatises, printed at Oxford, fully answered. / By John Geree Master of Arts, and preacher of the word of God at St. Albans. Published acording to order* (London, 1646) addressed a more public question politically–oriented question, while David Dickson's (ca. 1583–1662) *Therapeutica sacra : shewing briefly the Method of Healing the diseases of the Conscience, concerning Regeneration / written first in Latine by David Dickson ; and thereafter translated by him* (Edinburgh, 1664) answered theological and practical questions. Don Kistler's reprint of Francis Roberts's (1609–1675) *Believers evidences for ETERNALL LIFE collected out of the first epistle of John which is catholique : explained and confirmed by very many subservient Signes, or undernotes grounded upon Scriptures and illustrated by Testimonies*

determines the instruction provided.

Viewed in this light, TES checks several boxes: it uniquely presents an intensely challenging COC, offers an exposition of "the Nature and Office of conscience," and lodges a respectful but earnest protest against state-sanctioned persecution of Nonconformists.[43] Yet it also introduces a seventh category, or a subcategory within the COCs: the dialogical case study.

The backdrop of these categories unmistakably highlights TES's uniqueness. Accounts offering a glimpse with this sort of "in-the-room" nearness are exceedingly rare. Puritan ministers seldom recorded specifics of their counseling "sessions" (as we would term some instances of their COCs today), and extant COCs typically do not normally preserve the dialogue, affect, or texture of an actual meeting with a troubled soul. *TES does—all of it—in spades*. That fact alone makes it an invaluable window into the real-time ministerial application of Collins's robust confessional and pastoral theology. It offers a crucial sense of his maturing ministerial method, without which any treatment of his thought remains substantially incomplete. It further affords an uncommon avenue into how seventeenth-century Particular Baptist and late-Puritan casuistical theory functioned in practice. Set beside these categories, TES stands in a category of its own.

The English Spira: Components and Arrangement

The book is laid out as follows:

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both of ancient Fathers and modern Writers whereby persons truly regenerate may divers wayes discover their present state of grace and title unto glory (London, 1655); repr. as *Believers' Evidences for Eternal Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria, 2021) includes one of Roberts's COCs in an appendix; it treats the sin against the Holy Ghost and helps one assess whether it has been committed.

[43] As Hercules observed in *Counsel for the Living occasioned from the Dead or a Discourse on Job III. 17, 18. Arising from the Deaths of Mr. Fran. Bampfield and Mr. Zach. Ralphson* (London, 1684), 8: "a persecuting Spirit is not of a Gospel-complexion." While the "Attestors" are careful not to blame the COE directly (TES, 43–44), TES does constitute something of what Patrick Collinson terms the "martyrological technique of 'gathering' and 'registering' the troubles of the godly, learned…from John Foxe." In *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press/Clarendon, 1990), 394.

1. To the READER (pp. i–iv), an introduction explaining the purpose of publication—namely, to recount Child's story, exhort readers to Christian charity, and protest the persecution which, in their judgment, occasioned Child's fear and eventual apostasy.
2. REMARKS UPON THE Nature and Office of CONSCIENCE (pp. 1–8),[44] an exposition framing Child's life, struggles, and death.
3. *A brief Account of the Life of Mr.* John Child (pp. 8–9).
4. *A Narrative of Mr.* John Child's *Trouble of Spirit, and Deplorable End. Of some of the Conferences had with him in the times of his Troubles, and of such Papers as were written by him on this Subject* (p. 9).[45]
5. *Some Account of Mr.* John Child, *by Mr.* ——D. (pp. 9–11).[46]
6. *The Effect of a Conference between Mr*. John Child *and Mr.* B. K. (pp. 11–13).[47]
7. An exchange of letters between "*Mr*. J.[J.] and Child, with a summary of their encounter (pp. 13–18).
8. *The Effect of several Conferences between Mr.* Child, *and Mr.* H. C. (pp. 18–22),[48] recording four meetings.
9. *A Conference of some Friends with Mr.* John Child (pp. 22–23).
10. *The Substance of some Conferences held between Mr.* John Child *and Mr.* E.P. *who was frequently with him in the year before he died* (pp. 23–25).
11. *The Substance of another Conference between Mr.* John Child *and Mr.* H.D. *Mr.* E.M. *Mr.* F. *and Mr.* J. B. (pp. 26–27).
12. *A Conference between Mr.* John Child, *Mr.* T.W. *Mr.* A.B. *and Mr.* F. M. (pp. 27–28).
13. *Some Passages between Mr.* John Child *and some of his Friends, collected by Mr.* H.[ercules] C.[ollins] (pp. 28–30), recording (up to) three more meetings.
14. *The Effect of a Conference had with Mr.* John Child, *by* T.[homas] P.[lant] *between whom there had been for divers years more than a common Intimacy and Conversation* (pp. 30–32).
15. A two-columned portion, organized in "Aspersion"/accusation-recantation format. The first column: *Mr.* John Child's *Aspersions in his printed Plea of the Nonconformists for the*

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[44] This portion is properly anonymous: "The Discourse of the Nature and Office of Conscience, that you find in the beginning of the Narrative, was written by a worthy Brother of ours, for Private Satisfaction, which we have presumed to publish, we humbly conceiving it to be for the Publick Good." In TES, "Postscript," 44; it is the same in Plant and Dennis's earlier-but-identical (and oddly enough, unattributed to Keach and Collins) version of TES which they titled *The Mischief of Persecution EXEMPLIFIED,* (London, 1688). In terms of writing style, content, and method of argument—as well as the Latin liberally sprinkled through this section—the "Discourse on Conscience" portion seems more consistent with Keach than Collins. Collins had some facility with Latin—in TTR (p. 50), he recommends preachers reading a Latin dictionary, after all!—but this portion reads like Keach.

[45] This *Narrative* is really only a summary paragraph, but it receives its own heading.

[46] The concluding application by "*Mr*. ——D." (p. 11) is haunting:

> When God wounds the Spirit of a man, neither he himself can bear it, nor can any other aid him. Therefore it is a fearful thing to fall under the Wrath of the living God, who is a consuming Fire, and can at his pleasure awaken a stupid Conscience, and revive upon it the memory and horror of such sins as seem to be past over and forgotten. My Prayer is, that this man being made as a Pillar of Salt, may warn the present and future Ages of the danger of sinning against the present Light of their Understandings.

[47] "*Mr*. B. K." appears to be Benjamin Keach.

[48] "*Mr*. H. C." is Hercules Collins. These four "crisis counseling" or "intervention" meetings took place across the space of approximately two months: the first (p. 18) records no date, the second is "*Aug.* 21. 1684." (p. 20), the third is "*Aug.* 30. 1684." (p. 21), and the fourth is "*Sept.* 13. 1684" (p. 22). See discussion below.

Conformists, to which, as we suppose, his Paper, written with his own Hand, transcribed in the other Colume, refers. The second column: *Mr.* Child's *Recantation in his Paper, written with his own Hand*. *That it is a dishonour to the Church and Clergy of* England*, to have such an one, that hath no more Wit, so little Justice, Reason and Conscience, plead for them; that the Author of this Libel is worthily so represented, appears by divers base, false, devilish, and most scandalous Passages therein contained* (pp. 33–38).

16. *A further Account of the State of Mr.* John Child, *as it was written with his own Hand, being found in his House after his death, and delivered by his Wife to Mr.* H.C. *take as followeth* (pp. 39–41), a retraction.
17. *Another Paper written as a Postscript to the former, by Mr.* John Child's *own hand; a Copy whereof take as followeth* (pp. 41–42), another retraction.
18. POSTSCRIPT (pp. 43–46).

A Provenance Born of Persecution

TES is both pastoral and polemical, decisively shaped by the pressures of persecution. It first appeared in 1688 under a different title: *The Mischief of Persecution EXEMPLIFIED, BY A TRUE NARRATIVE OF THE Life and Deplorable End of Mr. John Child, WHO Miserably destroy'd himself, Octob. 13, 1684. GIVING An Account of his Dispair ; And divers Conferences had with him by several of his Friends. TOGETHER with his ANSWER and PAPERS ; Written by his own Hand. ALSO A DISCOURSE of the Nature and Office of CONSCIENCE. With a POSTSCRIPT, shewing, The Reason of its Publication at this Time* (hereafter MOPE). MOPE is textually identical to TES—down to the printer's smudges. The sole substantive distinction lies on the title page, though the latter half of the title is preserved almost verbatim in Collins and Keach's 1693 edition.

A second edition of TES appears in London in 1693, though omitting the printer's name. MOPE names only Thomas Plant[49] and Benjamin Dennis on it as the case's "Attestors" to Child's "deplorable death."[50] Specific reasons for the alternate publications are unknown, though

[49] Thomas Plant was a Calvinistic Baptist serving a previously-General Baptist church; the congregation's story is irregular to say the least. See William Brock, "Paul's Alley, Barbican, 1695–1768," in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 4.1 (April 1914): 46–54.

such variations are not unusual in seventeenth-century print culture.

The *Wapping Church Book*'s (hereafter WCB) entries, however, grow noticeably sparse from 1683–1684, reflecting the congregation's experience of persecution. As Collins himself kept the WCB during his pastorate, the pattern is quietly significant. Sherman notes that the WCB contains only four entries from 1683 (all in April–May), and the first entry for 1684 does not appear until August; indeed, the WCB records only "three meetings in both 1682 and 1683 (the height of the Tory revenge)."[51] Given that MOPE appears in 1688, and Collins was imprisoned from May 1683 to approximately August 1684[52]—released only a few weeks before Child hanged himself on October 13—the timing is suggestive. During Collins's incarceration, the Wapping church endured intensified persecution and began meeting in secret. His imprisonment was likely provoked by his 1682 work *SOME REASONS for SEPARATION From the COMMUNION of the Church of England and the UNREASONABLENESS of PERSECUTION Upon that Account, Soberly debated, in a dialogue between a Conformist and a Nonconformist (Baptist) By H.C.*, a creative dialogical defense of Nonconformity and a critique of persecution.

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[50] Adam Taylor (fl. 1810s), *History of the English General Baptists, Part First: The English General Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1818), 249.

[51] Nathan Sherman, *The Wapping Baptists: A People, Their Pastors, and Their Church Records (1677–1712)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2026), 21, 35.

[52] We have only an approximate date for Collis's release from the Newgate gaol, though his sentence overlaps that of Thomas Delaune in 1684. His initial "Conference" with Child (pp. 18–20) provides no date, but his second visit to Child (pp. 20–21) is specifically dated "*Aug.* 21. 1684." In that meeting, Hercules "Find[s] the Troubles of Mr. *Child* still continuing and increasing," suggesting that at least some portion of time has elapsed since they last met. Collins, having been in Newgate for over a year, serving a large and growing church which is having to meet in secret, and newly reunited with his family (one wonders here if his son Joshua was already sick at this point, perhaps taking after his father with a chronic condition? Collins buries him in September 1685), has not been at liberty for long—yet apparently visits Child three times that month. Child publishes his *A Second Argument* in late 1682 and is quickly conscience-stricken. He "bare the trouble so, as not to make any great shew of it in his general Behaviour, until about the beginning of *July* 1684. when he could no longer bear or conceal the horrors of his mind" (TES, 9) and began to disclose his troubles to his friends. Hercules plainly sees Child's condition as one requiring significant pastoral urgency, returning a third time three weeks later on September 13.

This background positions TES, at one level, as continuing Collins's anti-persecution argument. Given the dialogical format of *Some Reasons*, that approach's usefulness may have influenced Collins's editorial approach to TES. As argued in chapter 5, heightened persecution likely helps explain a somewhat quieter period in the WCB during that period (especially regarding the training of gifted brothers) and likely informs MOPE's title-page omission of Collins and Keach from its "Attestation." The precise reasoning of Plant and Dennis, however, remains speculative.

Beyond his specifically-cited contributions to TES (pp. 18–22), Collins appears repeatedly in the document's provenance. He is named as the recipient of "*Some Passages between* Mr. John Child *and some of his Friends, collected by Mr.* H.C." (pp. 28–30) and of Child's unpublished retraction, "*A further Account of the sad State of Mr.* John Child, *as it was written with his own Hand, being found in his house after his death, and delivered by his Wife to Mr.* H.C. *take as followeth*" (pp. 39–41). Immediately following Child's "further Account" we find "*Another Paper written as a Postscript to the former, by Mr.* John Child'*s own hand ; a Copy whereof take as followeth*" (pp. 41–42). Given its intent as a postscript to a "further Account," its placement, and the repeated editorial cue "take as followeth" strongly suggest Hercules prepared it as well.

It is also reasonable to conclude that Collins compiled the previous six pages (pp. 33–38). Presented in two columns, the first summarizes "*Mr.* John Child's *Aspersions in his printed Plea of the Nonconformists, to which, as we suppose, his Paper, written with his own Hand, transcribed in the other Colume, refers.*" The second transcribes "*Mr.* Child'*s Recantation in his Paper, written with his own Hand*"). The organization and editorial logic of this accusation-recantation section align closely with Hercules's known polemical and pastoral instincts; it is

almost certainly Collins's work as well.

Hercules's earlier publications—*An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error* (1680), *A Voice from the Prison, OR, MEDITATIONS ON Revelations III. XI. TENDING TO the ESTABLISHMENT OF Gods Little Flock, IN An Hour of Temptation. By Hercules Collins, Prisoner in Newgate* (1684), and *Counsel for the Living Occasioned from the Dead, or, a Discourse on Job III.17, 18. Arising from the Deaths of Mr. Fran. Bampfield and Mr. Zachariah. Ralphson. By Hercules Collins, their Fellow Prisoner in Newgate* (1684)—rarely employ section headings in their layouts. Collins appears not to consider them very useful at this stage in his compositional development; recall that he removes many of the *Heidelberg Catechism's* headings from his *An Orthodox Catechism* while retaining others in ways which are, at best, inconsistent (and surprising, given the high level of theological coherence and consistency in OC). This somewhat quirky convention of irregular or incomplete headings marks the early-to-mid Collinsian corpus.

Some of this reflects a writer still maturing; some probably reflects his focus at the time. For example, *Counsel for the Living* is saturated with Greek and Hebrew—the highest concentration of the biblical tongues within his writings—suggesting that Hercules employed some of his time in the Newgate gaol (1683–1684) to strengthen his facility with the biblical languages.

As to sourcing Child's contributions to TES, it appears that his bereaved wife discovered several handwritten-but-unpublished retractions postmortem and delivered them to Hercules Collins.[53] Reasoned thus, Collins is directly responsible for at least thirty-three of the forty-seven pages in TES, including:

[53] Probably reflective of his relationship with John Child; see below.

1. The prefatory "To the Reader" (pp. i–iv), probably his work;
2. "A brief Account of the Life" and "A Narrative of Mr. John Child's Trouble of Spirit, and Deplorable End" (pp. 8–9), whose phrasing and self-identification ("some of us, who are called *Anabaptists*," p. 8) align with Collins's voice;
3. His account of counseling Child (pp. 18–22);
4. Certainly his further counsel given in "Some Passages collected by Mr. *H.C.*" (pp. 28–30);
5. The editorial conclusion following "Mr. *T.P.*'s" account (pp. 31–32), likely his;
6. The "Aspersions and Recantation" columns (pp. 33–38), almost certainly his editorial construction;
7. Certainly Child's unpublished retraction "A further Account" (pp. 39–41);
8. The postscript to "A further Account" entitled "Another Paper" (pp. 41–42), almost certainly his; and
9. The "Postscript" (pp. 43–46), whose tone and structure match "To the Reader" and Collins's authorial patterns.[54]

TES is, of course, a compilation document. Four men are named as "Attestors"—that is, witnesses and primary contributors—on the title page: *T.*[homas] *Plant* (fl. 17th c.), *B.*[enjamin] *Keach* (1640–1704), *B.*[enjamin] *Dennis*[55] (d. 1702), and Mr. *H. Collings* (Hercules Collins). Yet several lines of evidence point strongly to Collins as TES's primary editor. Given:

1. As a compilation document, TES requires an organizer's mind, not merely a gatherer's hand;
2. The "Attestors" explicitly note that the materials were "collected"[56] (p. 28) and thus prepared—language implying editorial labor;
3. Collins alone is named as receiving documents directly from Child's circle (Hercules "collected," pp. 28–30, "Some Passages" from "some of [Child's] Friends"), placing him at the center of TES's formation;
4. The arrangement, order, layout, and structural logic of TES aligns with Collins's broader corpus in terms of ordered sequences, sparse headings, catechetical structuring, and balanced parallelism;

[54] Specifically for "To the Reader" (pp. i–iv) and the "Postscript" (pp. 43–46)—the lexical and syntactic habits in these two sections are virtually identical. Both sections use balanced clauses, parallelism, measured hypotaxis (that is, subordinate clauses used to qualify, soften, or nuance), common moral vocabulary (fearful, example, conscience, despair, charity, persecution), biblical diction without explicit proof-texting, and gentle admonition rather than sharp rebuke. These features are hallmarks of Collinsian composition.

[55] Benjamin Dennis signed an attestation of Hercules Collins's character when he was slandered by Congregationalist minister (and Wapping neighbor) Francis Mence (1639?–1696?). See Collins's *The Sandy Foundation of Infant-Baptism Shaken* (London: William Marshall, 1695), 44–45; and Samuel Renihan, *The Petty France Church (part 2)* (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2022), 171–172. Two years later, Collins co-authored *A Just Vindication of Mr. William Collins, and of several other Elders and Ministers, from the unjust Reflections of Mr. Isaac Marlowe* (London, 1697) along with (in order) Benjamin Keach, Richard Adams, Leonard Harrison, Joseph Stennett, Richard Allen, John Piggott, Jeremiah Basse, Benjamin Dennis, and Thomas Harrison.

[56] To "collect" these "Passages" means Collins did more than merely receiving them; he gathered, evaluated, selected, and assembled them (and likely solicited them as well). Here is an instance of good and necessary consequence I can wholeheartedly support!

5. Keach's style is dramatically different: verbose and homiletical,[57] Dennis's plain and doctrinal, and Plant leaves almost no literary footprint—and none of them match TES;
6. On this head of literary conventions, the quiet titular paralleling of Child with Spira: cf. *The Fearefull Estate of Spira* and the "Fearful Example" of Child on the TES title page. The language is intentional; its careful craftsmanship reflects Collins's keenly symmetrical literary touch as observed in his OC's "Appendix on Singing"—a wordsmithing artisanship;
7. The tone of both the preface ("To the Reader," pp. i–iv) and the conclusion (pp. 31–32) match Collins's pastoral cadence, rhetorical patterns, theological emphases, moral framing, and stylistic fingerprints;
8. Hercules's recent dialogical approach in *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England* (1682) finds great similarity in the dialogical format of TES—such dialogical formats were uncommon among the Particular Baptists;
9. None of the other "Attestors" exhibit this dialogical creativity, a contrast which makes Collins stand out;
10. From producing *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680), Collins had previous recent editorial experience—something the other "Attestors" lacked. The recent editing and expansion of a major Reformation catechism recommended and prepared him for the role: a highly technical and exacting labor, requiring structural judgment, theological precision, textual harmonization, and the ability to integrate new material seamlessly;
11. Collins's ministerial energies and exertions being greatly expended upon Child's case in terms of time invested personally (Collins visits Child more than nearly anyone else); his counsel is more theologically-structured and ministerially-engaged than most others; and
12. That Hercules personally received from Child's bereaved wife some of the most sensitive pieces of TES—written in Child's own hand—is highly significant. A bereaved spouse typically entrusts such materials to the minister most involved and most trusted. Collins was the natural custodian of Child's spiritual legacy. In seventeenth-century practice, the one receiving such materials is normally the one intended to prepare them for print;

it appears highly probable that Hercules served as the primary editor of TES.[58]

The Initials[59] in *The English Spira*: Persecution and Possible Identification

Given the context of government-sanctioned persecution—which TES argues played a decisive role in Child's fears, apostasy, and eventual suicide—the four "Attestors" carefully

[57] Particularly so when writing with Thomas Delaune, e.g., in *Tropologia*.

[58] This means that Collins was also editor of its literary predecessor, *The Mischief of Persecution EXEMPLIFIED, BY A TRUE NARRATIVE OF THE Life and Deplorable End of Mr. John Child, WHO Miserably destroy'd himself, Octob. 13, 1684. GIVING An Account of his Dispair ; And divers Conferences had with him by several of his Friends. TOGETHER with his ANSWER and PAPERS ; Written by his own Hand. ALSO A DISCOURSE of the Nature and Office of CONSCIENCE. With a POSTSCRIPT, shewing, The Reason of its Publication at this Time* (London, 1688). See discussion below.

[59] Since TES itself preserves names inconsistently and often only by initials—for example, H. Collings, "*Mr.* H.C.," and "*Mr.* C." are all Hercules Collins in this work—some identifications remain tentative.

conceal the identities of Child's visitors by using initials. Some of the initials correspond to known Particular Baptist ministers, and TES identifies several "initialed" visitors as ministers (or implies as much). Identifying them some three hundred and thirty years later is necessarily a tentative exercise, but the very presence of initials pointedly underscores that Child's fears were not irrational or unfounded—and that he was not alone in his concerns toward reprisal.

Complicating matters: several contemporaneous Particular Baptist ministers share the same initials, making firm conclusions difficult. Yet the importance the initials, for our purposes, lies elsewhere: they reveal a deliberate, coordinated (if informal) "network" of Particular Baptists, probably largely located within the London Association, who intervened on behalf of their friend in his darkest hour. Collins appears to have served as "the tip of the spear" in this effort—a role highly significant, and one even more clarified upon considering that Child's widow specifically entrusts him with Child's most sensitive final papers for the purpose of telling Child's story, and making known his struggles and retractions. The initials appearing in TES are as follows (see Figure 4.1):

FIGURE 4.1: Initials and Possible Identifications in TES

	Initials in TES	Possible Identification	Notes
1.	"Mr. *T.P.*" / "Mr. *P.*"	Thomas Plant. "Attestor."	Contribution pp. 30–32; possibly the same "Mr. *P.*" on p. 29.
2.	"Mr. *H. Collings*" / "Mr. *C.*" / "Mr. *H.C.*"	Hercules Collins. "Attestor."	Central figure; multiple appearances.
3.	"Mr. *B. Dennis*" / "Mr. *——D.*"	Benjamin Dennis. "Attestor."	Contribution pp. 9–11.
4.	"Mr. *B.K.*"	Benjamin Keach. "Attestor."	Contribution pp. 11–13.
5.	"Mr. *J.*" / "Mr.	James Jones (d. 1685).[60]	Contribution pp. 13–18; possibly

[60] It is uncertain if this is same James Jones (d. 1685) who penned *Modesty and Faithfulness In Opposition to Envy and RASHNESS* (London, 1683).

	J.J."		the minister denounced on p. 19.
6.	"Mr. *E.P.*"	Edward Price of Hereford-City (fl. 1680s–1690s)?	"Frequently with him in the year before he died"; contribution pp. 23–25.
7.	"Mr. *M.*"	Edward Man of Houndsditch (fl. 1680s–1690s)? Possibly the same as "Mr. *E.M.*" (#9), "Mr. *F.M.*" (#14), or the same "Mr. *M.*" as #20.	"Such a minister" and one admired by Child; referenced by "Mr. *E.P.*" on p. 25.
8.	"Mr. *H.D.*" / "Mr. *D.*"	Henry Danvers (1622–1687)?	Asks opening question on p. 26; member of the "Company" (pp. 26–27).
9.	"Mr. *E.M.*"	Possibly same "Mr. *M.*" as #7, and/or the same "Mr. *M.*" as #20?	Member of the "Company" (pp. 26–27).
10.	"Mr. *F.*"	Henry Forty (ca. 1620s?–1693)? Possibly the same "Mr. *F.*" on p. 29.	Member of the "Company" (pp. 26–27).
11.	"Mr. *J.B.*"	John Ball of Tiverton (fl. 1680s–1690s), or John Bunyan (1628–1688)?	Member of the "Company" (pp. 26–27); possibly the denounced "Mr. *B.*" on p. 19.
12.	"Mr. *T.W.*" / "Mr. *W.*"	Thomas Wilcox (1622–1687), or Thomas Winnel (d. 1720)? Possibly the same as "Mr. *W.*" (#16).	Member of the "Company" (pp. 27–28); possibly the same "Mr. *W.*" on p. 28.
13.	"Mr. *A.B.*"	Unidentified.	Member of the "Company" (pp. 27–28).
14.	"Mr. *F.M.*"	Perhaps the same "Mr. *M.*" as #7 and/or #20?	Member of the "Company" (pp. 27–28).
15.	"Mr. *R.*"	Richard Ring of Southampton (fl. 1680s–90s)?	One of the "Friends" whose "Passages" Hercules Collins "collected" (pp. 28–30); appears in multiple visits[61] with Collins (pp. 22, 27–28).
16.	"Mr. *W.*"	Lawrence Wise (d. 1691) of Moorfields? Possibly same as "Mr. *T.W.*" (#12).	One of the "Friends" (p. 28).
17.	"Mrs. *M.*"	Unidentified.	One of the "Friends" (p. 28).
18.	"Mr. *P.*"	Unidentified.	One of the "Friends" (p. 28).
19.	"Mr. *L.*"	Thomas Lamb (d. 1686)?	One of the "Friends" (p. 28).
20.	"Mr. *M.*"	Possibly the same as "Mr. *E.M.*" (#9), "Mr. *F.M.*" (#14), or the same "Mr. *M.*" as #7?	One of the "Friends" (p. 28).

The lengths taken to protect the identities of those involved highlight the danger of the times. That all four "Attestors" are named on the 1693 title page reflects a somewhat measured

[61] He visited Child with Collins on September 13 (p. 22), again with Collins in a visit "last week" which temporarily positively affected Child (p. 28), and once more with other friends (perhaps with Collins, though he is not named and there is no date given) on pp. 27–28.

boldness born of the new toleration:

> This NARRATIVE was prepar'd for the Press soon after the Death of Mr. Child, but the Severity of the Times were such, that no Printer would undertake it, nor durst the Compilers appear to own it. [62]

No other full names appear in the accounts of Child's meetings; the only full names are biblical characters or authors of publicly printed work (e.g., "the learned Dr. *Twiss* in his *Vindiciae Gratie* confesseth there were…").[63] This anonymity is almost certainly intentional.

A further example of this guarded instinct occurs in Keach's account: he "mention[s] some worthy Ministers…whom he knew Mr. *Child* formerly had a great esteem for"[64]—but they remain unnamed. It is unlikely that Keach summarizes for brevity or forgets who was "mention[ed]"; a significant element of TES's central argument is that persecution drove Child to these extremes. Anonymity probably proved a pastoral necessity.

As per above, England's acts of toleration tended to be temporary and selective. TES thus preserves a record, but one whose participants are intentionally obscured—though presumably decipherable to contemporaries within the Particular Baptist churches. The initials themselves reinforce that Child's apostasy and suicide were rooted in an overwhelming fear of persecution:

> That which we shall add, with respect to the Narrative it self, is this, That it's a true and dreadful Instance of a Man scar'd into Conformity, by the Severity he saw on others, and in part felt himself ; that the Temptation met with his Corruptions …. So, after his Conformity, he drew his Pen, and dipt it in Gall against his Brethren, going on to do violence to his Conscience, till God in a dreadful manner awaken'd it against himself, so as prov'd terrible to all the beholders, as well as to himself…we account it a loud Voice against Persecution.[65]

Indeed, speaking three times to "Liberty of Conscience" three times in its final two pages

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[62] TES, "Postscript," 43.

[63] TES, 29.

[64] TES, 12.

[65] TES, "Postscript," 44.

(pp. 45–46), the "Postscript" functions almost as its own apologetic against persecution—an appeal for its cessation, without naming or accusing its agents. Alongside providing an account of Child's case, the "Attestors" insist their "naked Design" was "only to Arraign the Practice of Persecution it self, without reflecting on any who have been the Instruments."[66] A desire born of Christian love and the Sixth Commandment duty of lawfully "preserving of our own lives and the life of others"[67] seems the most likely explanation for the anonymity protected in TES by use of initials. Collins's own exposition in his OC on the Sixth Commandment makes the point explicit:

> 125. Q. Is it enough then that we kill no Man, in such sort as hath been said?
> A. It is not enough; for when God condemneth Anger, Envy, Hatred, he requireth that we love our Neighbour as our selves and that we use Humanity, Lenity, Courtesie, Patience, and Mercy towards him, and turn away from him as much as we may whatsoever maybe be hurtful unto him; in a word, that we be so affected in Mind as that we stick not to do good also unto our Enemies.[68]

Ministering to a Difficult Man…and Marriage

Collins's care for Child stands as a natural extension of his longstanding concern for souls and the state of Christ's church alike—within and without. The same pastoral instincts born of love which led him to train pastors and GBs for twenty-five years also drove him to repeated attempts to "snatch [Child] from the fire" (Jude 1:23). Care for the wellbeing of Christ's church includes her servants, in whatever state of soul, frame of mind, or providential season they may be. Collins sought to care for Child, both as a soul in need of a shepherd and a former preacher in need of the gospel he once proclaimed.

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[66] TES, "Postscript," 43.

[67] As per *The Baptist Catechism* (London [s.n.], 1695), Q. #73.

[68] Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error, by H. Collins* (London: 1680); the numbering is my own as per above in chapter 3 (cf. Appendix Two).

The complexity of Child's case lay not only in his despondency, but also his having been a writer and preacher "of some eminency, especially amongst the *Anabaptists*…often holding forth in their publick Assemblies."[69] Unlike a typical counselee, he essentially stood on equal vocational footing with those who came to help him—he too had heralded the gospel, and thus counted himself quite free to dismiss or recast its consolations and counsels. He had performed the same crisis counseling now being applied to him by Collins and his friends: reasoning with the unreasonable," urging the despairing toward gospel hope, and reminding those burdened with "overmuch sorrow"[70] of Scripture's promises. In other words, he knew the pastoral "playbook" and anticipated the biblical texts, doctrines, pleas, and comforts his visitors would employ. In

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[69] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1. That said, it is questionable whether Child ever served as a pastor, though Jonathan Arnold appears to classify him as one; see *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)* (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2013), 16n22. Child is typically described as a "preacher of God's Word"—while not absolute, it is language generally more consistent with a GB's role than a minister's office. For example, James Hitt (fl. 1680s–1690s) was a signatory of 2LC, listing his role on that document as "preacher" in the Dalwood church in Dorset; Hitt was a GB and the only man to use this designation for himself. All other signatories of 2LC use "pastor" or "minister" (or "Do.," which means "ditto").

See this "preacher of God's Word" verbiage describing Child in the anonymous broadside (a single-page tract) *A Warning from God to all Apostates ; OR, The Nature, great Evil, and Danger of APOSTACY discovered. Wherein the fearful States of Francis Spira and John Child are compared ; the latter whereof, under dismal Despair, hang'd himself, Octob. 13. 1684.* (London, 1684); or James Jones's (d. 1685) pamphlet *Modesty and Faithfulness in Opposition to Envy and Rashness: Or, an Answer to a Malitious Pamphlet, Called, A Second Argument for a More Full Union Amongst Protestants; Wherein the Nonconformists Taking the Sacrament After the Manner of the Church of England, is Justified, &c. in which Pamphlet the Church of England and the Clergy, as also the Protestant-Dissenters, are Abominably Abused. the Demonstration Whereof is Humbly Presented to the Consideration of the Conforming and Nonconforming Protestants. / by James Jones, a Protestant-Dissenter, and Citizen of London* (London, 1683), 2; or the very title of TES, which names Child as one "Who had been a Preacher many Years." Ivimey cites a "Mr. Grantham Killingsworth, physician at Norwich," though, who names Child as "an Anabaptist minister" (*History of the English Baptists*, III.210, 213). It is difficult to be definitive here.

Child, however, was denied a call to the pastorate by two London churches (*Modesty and Faithfulness*, 2):

> He removed from the Country to the City, and joined himself with a very worthy Congregation of faithful Christians, where the pure Word of God was preached, and the Ordinances of God were duely Administred; who also were a numerous Wealthy and Bountiful People, but it seems that they did not find any Extraordinary need of this new Members Assistance, so as to employ him and settle him in the Work of the Ministry, though their pastor was newly dead, however there was another smaller Church of good Christians that had more need of help, and as they did partake of his Spirituals he did partake of their Temporals; sufficient for that pains that he took amongst them, but they did not see cause to continue him as their constant publick Preacher, and so they parted.

[70] 2 Corinthians 2:7, KJV. This verbiage Richard Baxter applied to strong depressive tendencies in *Preservatives against MELANCHOLY AND Overmuch Sorrow. Or the CURE of both BY FAITH and PHYSICK. Written above Thirty Years ago, by the Reverend Mr. Richard Baxter, for the Benefit and Comfort of all such as are afflicted in Mind, in Body, or in both* (London, 1713).

short, he understood the ordinary consolatory logic of Puritan ministerial counsel, and remained immovable, intractable—aloof to the gospel's call. At one point Child even gives "Mr. *J.*" what amounts to a performance review on his counsel, telling him that his casuistic and evangelical crisis care would have sufficed for nearly anyone else![71] This awkward, rather discouraging dynamic pervades his every interaction in TES.

A central difficulty lay in Child's fixed belief of his reprobation—he was convinced God had irrevocably withdrawn mercy from him. Indeed, he "apprehended the Arrows of the Almighty to stick fast in him."[72] Collins and his co-contributors never ultimately pronounce on his final state, but clearly regard his condition as an observed instance of a man being "given over" to what Scripture calls "a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:28). Their reactions are striking. These seventeenth-century ministers were firmly grounded in Reformational views of God's meticulous providence and sovereignty, and were intimately familiar with despair, danger, discouragement, and death. Yet Child's case shook them deeply.

Child's suicidal ideation added another layer of gravity. His friends and family were tormented by his growing—and frequently verbalized—fixation on death. At least one suicide attempt was prevented. Severe depression marked his declining days and shaped his home.[73] His

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[71] On July 30, 1684, Child's note to "Mr. *J.*" is proud and critical—a performance review indeed (TES, 14):

> Your tender aim and charitable design in the balmy Application you sent, I have reason well and kindly to resent, and wish they had been high enough to hit the mark, and have answered the design. Had I been a Backslider of an ordinary size, they might have had an effectual Operation.

So too in *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2—after a paragraph citing many of the promises of Scripture presented to Child, his response is very consistent—refusing to engage Scripture, exalting his struggles above God's sovereignty, and expressing that he is neither interested nor "inclinable" (he is beyond spiritual change by their ordinary means):

> To these and may the like saving promises and offers of life and salvation, freely tendered in the Gospel, he made little answer to the purpose, but rather expressed his case to be desperate, and himself not inclinable to pray or beg for mercy or at least not to do it sincerely as he ought.

[72] TES, 31.

[73] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2. Cf. his final lament to Collins that "Husband cannot Pray, Wife cannot

final days were an anguished existence, such that the ministers could scarcely endure witnessing them, and could not bear thinking about them afterward.[74]

Little is presently known of what happened to his family after his suicide, though one wonders if a subtler component of TES's composition may be to solicit public and ecclesiastical sympathy and aid for his widow and children. One account describes his wife upon discovering her husband's body:

> The Wife wearied with continual watchings, and his servant and Children absent, while she slept stole out of the Room, and going down stairs fastened a small cord to hook or staple on the Celler stair-case, and there strangled himself….about 7 or 8 in the Evening : the Wife waking and missing him, run about the House in search of him, and soon found to [her] unspeakable grief, what his unhappy hands had done, waling…[and] shrieking aloud…whereupon through grief, and out of a sense, that by her drousiness, he had miscarried, fell into a distraction, under the which she yet labours, and from which God of his infinite mercy deliver her.[75]

Indeed, the question may validly be raised as to whether Child views his suicide not only as a means of relief for himself, but of perhaps affording some level of provision (and perhaps exoneration, or clearing from any reproach?) for his family. Writing offered a source of income in the literary-heavy culture[76] of Early Modern London. Child tells his Mr. *P.*[lant] and his

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pray, Children cannot pray, servants cannot pray…while others serve their God we do nothing." TES, 28–29.

[74] For example:

1. The opening editorial/prefatory note that his "Horrours of Conscience…have not been parallel'd in any other that we have heard of, since the Case of Francis Spira." In other words: "We have not seen anything like this before." (TES, ii).
2. The end of the opening editorial/prefatory note: "[W]e make not, so much as in our thoughts, any Reflection upon (or Application of any thing we have herein said to) the state of him that is dead." (TES, 8). In other words: "It was so bad that we will not even speculate as to his state now."
3. The painful closing editorial note: "I suffer not my thoughts to run out on his Eternal Estate." (TES, 31–32). In other words: "I cannot bear to think about it."

[75] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2.

[76] A very interesting study in this respect is N.H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth–Century England* (Great Britain/Athens: Leicester University Press/The University of Georgia Press, 1987). On this question, see further Steven Zwicker, "Habits of reading and early modern literary culture," in David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller, eds. *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 170–200; Andrew Hiscock and Helen Wilcox, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern English Literature and Religion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 119–260; and Andrew Hass, David Jasper, and Elisabeth Jay, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15–114.

distressed wife at one point—evading their questions—that they "shall have the full account of it in Print…I have resolved to give the World a full Account of my Condition in a printed Paper."[77] His story would be published after he was gone, to which she responds with a practical and exasperated "Who shall print it?"[78] It is not far-fetched to wonder if he thought of the account of his life as potentially offering some form of future revenue for his family.

Though obviously upset and justifiably struggling with the situation—Child laments to Collins that his wife "can not pray"[79]—she clearly cared for him. When Mr. *B.*[enjamin] *K.*[each] visited him "about the middle of *July* 1684,"[80] she told him that she "found sometimes in the night-season, that the very ends of his Hair did stand in drops, thro' the anguish of his Spirit, continually crying out against himself for writing that Book."[81] Her words are not accusatory, but tenderhearted concerning him.

Child's wife is never named in TES or the broader literature,[82] and her specific role goes largely undefined in TES—though Collins demonstrates her involvement in the appointments (she is mentioned six times). The anonymous work *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS* notes that "fearing by the wildness of his looks, that [he] would lay violent hands upon himself,"[83] his wife

[77] TES, 24–25.

[78] TES, 24.

[79] TES, 28–29.

[80] TES, 11.

[81] TES, 13.

[82] The role of women in TES is largely in the background. Clearly some were involved in the visits—perhaps with their husbands (for example, "Mrs. *M*." speaks several times in Collins's sixth meeting with Child; TES, 28). It is not a major point of emphasis in the account, but it is also not unfounded to assume they sought to minister to Child's wife and children, as well as to Child (if perhaps to a lesser degree, given social conventions of the day). Useful studies on the role of women in the Puritan context include B.R. White (1934–2016), *The English Baptists of the 17th Century, revised edition* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 2022), 107–128; Rachel Adcock, "Women in Congregational Life," in Stephen Copson and Karen Smith, eds. *Revolution and Resistance: English Baptist Life in the Seventeenth Century* (Didcot, UK: The Baptist Historical Society, 2026), 49–70; R.C. Richardson, *Puritanism in north-west England* (Manchester, UK: The University Press, 1972), 105–114.

took decisive action: she "watched him as narrowly as possible, hiding or conveying out of the house all mischievous instruments, sending for sundry Ministers to pray with him,"[84] and foiling at least one suicide attempt by involving his children's tears and pleas. In TES, readers witness something of her frustration and growing fears under such a burden, respectfully but plainly underscoring the tense environment of the home and the emotional, relational, and mental strain his prolonged and verbalized suicidal ideation—indeed, his open suicidal *fantasizing*[85]—kept them under. Her question to Child ("Who will print it?") presents, then, both weary exasperation and practical consideration: what printer would realistically hope—or want!—to sell a suicide note? At the same time a sense of dread is present, such that the somewhat irritated statement perhaps attempts to get him to commit to a plan which will preserve his life.

An additional element of her strain is social—on top of the relational, familial, and marital pressure. TES records that Child "married twice, and by his last Wife (of honest Parentage, and good Report) he had several Children; after his second Marriage, in appearance he increased in his Estate."[86] In the seventeenth century, this summary means that Child's first wife had died, he had remarried honorably to a woman of good character, and had done well for his growing family. The next sentence notes that he had lived in London for about five years before taking his own life. The social strain for his wife would have been significant: she was

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[83] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1. The same language is used of the coroner's careful investigation and report at the conclusion of the same tract (p. 2): "On the 15*th* instant the Coroner sat upon the Corps, after and much inquiry, found that through disorder of mind, he had layed violent hands upon himself." In other words, the investigation into his death took approximately two days (Child hanged himself on October 13), a significant investment of time and attention speaking to how public his case was.

[84] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2.

[85] After his wife frustrated his suicide attempt, Child apparently became fixated on his death: he "made it from that time his study, how he might destroy himself." *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2.

[86] TES, 8.

married to a man of some means; indeed, he had grown wealthy,[87] who then had become a preacher of reputation having some two decades' experience, who then grew increasingly crippled by paralyzing fear and bitterness, leading to a very public abandonment of nearly all he had once stood for…only to be gripped with even stronger pangs of conscience.[88]

Nearly incapacitated—"his answers were for the most part in sighes and groans"[89]—this man who once exhibited honor and spiritual vitality now no longer cared for her soul or those of her children.[90] Instead he passed his days as something of a spectacle, almost like a talking beast on public display: "appear[ing] much dejected…expressing the disorder of his mind, and the war within him…he fell as it were into a kind of distraction."[91] Consider the contrast with the impressive figure he had previously presented: "*John Child* was [like Spira] also a man of considerable Natural Parts, and...a Preacher of Gods Word, and of an austere Countenance and piercing Eye."[92] He was a man who could command respect in his role, manner, and appearance. Apart from concerns of persecution, she would have a good life with him, and could reasonably

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[87] Consistent with many of the Particular Baptist ministers, Child is described as a tradesman by vocation: he was "by trade a Slopseller, having formerly kept the same trade near *Ratscliffe-cross"* prior to his relocation to London. *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1. A slopseller is one who provides "cheap, readymade coats, cloaks, etc." B.R. White, ed. *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1971), III.215. However, his success did not serve his soul: "In Process of time from being very poor, he began to grow wealthy and then he decayed in his Christianity, and made some change of his former Principles though still in the way of Separation." *Modesty and Faithfulness*, 2.

[88] Child's conscience tormented him relentlessly. Benjamin Needler (1620–1682) helpfully explains:

> The Greek word for conscience is συνειδησις; it signifies "a joint knowledge," or "knowledge with another." It takes notice of things together with God. Conscience is God's deputy, God's spy, God's intelligencer…in our bosoms, an exact notary of whatever we think or do, a co-witness with God, as St. Paul is bold to call it. (Rom. ix.1).

In his "How May Beloved Lusts Be Discovered and Mortified?" in *Puritan Sermons 1659–1689* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts Publishers, 1981), I.60.

[89] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1.

[90] TES, 28–29.

[91] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1.

[92] *A Warning from God to all Apostates*, 1.

expect a certain level of social rank alongside a comfortable standard of living. The fear and frustration she felt were intensified through what had to seem, at some level, like something of a betrayal. She would forever be publicly marked as the wife of John Child, the apostate preacher who ruined and then killed himself.

Couple that sense of betrayal with her own documented sense of failure[93] in attempting to keep her husband alive: Child succeeded in killing himself when she dozed off briefly due to exhaustion from a constant suicide watch.[94] Pain then progresses in this home: Child had, under his self-accusation, fallen "into a kind of distraction" and upon discovering his body, his wife follows suit.[95] This language of "distraction" is how seventeenth-century writers expressed self-accusation, self-blame, and despair. Based on the multitude of published diaries and letters of seventeenth-century England, it is not difficult to imagine the thoughts running through her mind: what honorable man would consider marriage to her with that sort of tarnish on her name? What then would become of her four children, given her husband's great disgrace? How will these events come to define, immeasurably shape, and follow the family for generations? Social implications would have been severe, and she found her family in a vulnerable state—sharply intensified through economic uncertainty and public memory.

That Mrs. Child entrusts her husband's legacy—and in many respects her family's future—to Hercules's editorial and pastoral judgment is thus quite vividly emphasized. His relationship with the Child family[96] appears only in glimpses along the narrative's edges, yet they reveal a

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[93] *SAD AND Lamentable News*, 2.

[94] *SAD AND Lamentable News*, 2. So too *A Warning from God to all Apostates*: "after he had spent four or five Months in languishing Despair, Octob. 13. 1684, at Night, his poor Wife being wearied-out by watching, falling asleep, he…hanged himself, to the great Terror and Grief of all his Friends."

[95] She "fell into a distraction, under the which she yet labours." *SAD AND Lamentable News*, 1, 2.

[96] His heart of mercy toward the Child family is evident, and that mercy holds steady toward ministers and

minister marked by compassion, steady presence, and godly, effective labors with them. In a culture where print shaped public memory and preachers held significant moral authority, her "delivering"[97] these documents to Hercules speaks volumes of her trust in his discretion, comprehension of the situation, and wise biblical counsel and care for their souls.

It is precisely at the intersection of pastoral care meeting a collapsing conscience that Collins approaches Child through the lens of Francis Spira (1502–1548). For seventeenth-century Protestants, Spira was the paradigm of apostasy, despair, and the dreadful workings of a wounded conscience. His story provided both a theological framework and a pastoral analogue for comprehending Child's condition. And Collins, like many of his contemporaries, read Child's anguish in light of that earlier, infamous example.

Approaching John Child: By Way of Francis Spira (1502–1548)

Francis Spira's case functioned in Puritan thought as the archetype of apostasy, despair, and the collapse of conscience. His dying words to a friend set the tone for virtually all later Protestant reflection on his condition:

> [T]he devil hath possest me, and God hath left me to his power, for I find I can neither believe the Gospel nor trust in God's mercy. I have sinned against the holy Ghost, and God by his immutable Decree hath bound me over to perpetual Punishment, without any Hope of pardon.[98]

A century later, John Child would echo this same terror in a letter[99] to "Mr. *J. J.*" (August 1684):

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their families throughout the rest of his life. One thinks here of his leading the Wapping church to give a love offering to Benjamin Keach after he was robbed (see the *Wapping Church Book* entries on December 25, 1679, and December 30, 1679); his involvement with the publication of *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated* (1689); and his exhortation to the churches at the conclusion of TTR ("A Final Word," #10; 1702) to pay their pastors a living wage lest their wives and children be destitute and tempted toward fear and bitterness due to their lack.

[97] TES, 39.

[98] Nathaniel Bacon (1593–1660), *A Relation of the Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira, after he turned apostate from the Protestant church to popery. In the Year 1548. Compiled by Nathaniel Bacon, Esq.* (London, 1638), 19. Hereafter FE.

[99] The moment of this letter's delivery was quite intense and reflects well Child's confused state: "…Mr.

> Wrath is coming to the utmost : I am forsaken of God ; Good Men are mine Enemies ; I hate my self ; I am afraid and ashamed abroad ; I am confused and distracted at home ; The Scriptures look dreadfully upon me ; I have not only taken up a Reproach against my Neighbour, which excludes a man [from] God's holy hill, Psal. 15. but have raised Reproach, invented Reproach, and by it wronged multitudes …. Afraid I am to live, afraid I am to die ; Judgment I fear will be terrible in this World, and more in the World to come …. I know Gods mercy is great above the Heavens, but it is barred up and cannot pass to me …. I remain him that calls himself, a Devil incarnate.

The title of this work under consideration—*The English Spira*—necessitates a brief sketch of Francesco Spiera's life (commonly anglicized as "Francis Spira"). As with Child, Spira's story begins not in rebellion, but religious seriousness. An Italian lawyer, Spira began questioning Roman doctrines such as purgatory and the veneration of saints through Reformation literature. Around 1547, his Protestant interest became known to his neighbors—an untenable position under the Inquisition. Keach's *A Trumpet blown in Zion* (1694) presents Spira as a converted man, showing him as initially fixed upon the biblical view of redemption:

> *Spira* having received the Light of the Gospel, became a Teacher of the Blessed Truths thereof amongst his Friends and familiar Acquaintance; and (says the Narrative) in comparison seemed to neglect all other Affairs, much pressing this main point of Doctrine, viz. *That we must wholly and only depend on the free and unchangable Love of God in the Death of Christ, as the only way to Salvation*.[100]

Nathaniel Bacon's (1593–1660) account of Spira "appeared in 1638 and was reprinted transatlantically, over thirty-seven times prior to 1800."[101] Bacon echoes Keach on Spira's zealous transition to Protestantism:

> [S]earching into the scriptures, and into all books of Controversy that he could get, both old and new, and finding more than fame or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well as that he entertains, loves and owns them at length ; and with such zeal, as he became a professor ; yea a teacher of them, first to his wife, children, and family, and after to his friends, and familiar

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Child, with a dreadful look, fixed his eyes on Mr. *J.*[*J.*] snatcht the Letter out of his hand, and then was troubled he had so done; whereupon Mr. *J.* consented to his carrying it away, that he might not increase the trouble of his mind…" TES, 16–17.

[100] Keach, *A trumpet blown in Zion, or, An allarm in God's holy mountain containing an exposition of that metaphorical Scripture, Matth. III, 12 : lately delivered in two sermons* (London, 1694), 44.

[101] Hall, "'Read This'" (Ph.D diss.), 4.

> acquaintance ; and in comparison, seemed to neglect all other affairs ; intending ever to press this main point, that *We must wholly, and only depend on the free, and unchangeable love of God in the death of Christ, as the only sure way to salvation*.[102]

For around six years, Spira's fervor "could not keep itself within private walls, but at length it brake forth unto public meetings; so that the whole province of Padua dawned with the lustre thereof."[103] By 1548, Spira's Protestant convictions had become a public crisis. The Roman priests became angry at his effectiveness, bringing him to trial between May 24 and June 20, 1548. Facing prospects of suffering and execution, Spira's zeal for the gospel proved insufficient before his mounting fears:

> [D]ost thou not consider what Misery this thy Rashness will bring thee unto ? thou shall lose all thy Substance, gotten with so much care and travail, thou shalt undergo the most Exquisite Torments that Mallice itself can devise, thou shalt be counted an Heretick of all : and to close up all thou shalt Die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking Dungeon, of the bloody Ax, the burning fagot, are they Delightful ?[104]

Terrified his convictions would also impoverish his family, he confessed himself as one "excessively Covetous of Money…[who] applied Myself to get it by Injustice, corrupting Justice by doing it."[105] He feared the physical cost to his children and friends: his beliefs would "now cut their throats, and inhumanly butcher them."[106]

In a state of dread, Spira returned to Rome. He abjured Protestantism twice: once at St. Mark's in Venice, again in his home church,[107] finally presenting a recantation to the papal representative at Venice. He was fined thirty gold pieces and required to read a statement before

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[102] FE, 8.

[103] FE, 8.

[104] FE, 10. John Child has a strikingly similar passage; see TES, 20.

[105] Keach quotes Spira here in *A trumpet blown*, 44.

[106] FE, 10.

[107] Michael MacDonald, "*The Fearfull Estate of Francis Spira*: Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England," in *The Journal of British Studies*, 31.1 (January 1992), 32–61. See further M.A. Overell, "The Exploitation of Francesco Spiera," in *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26.3 (Autumn 1995), 619–637.

the church at the conclusion of mass:

> Having for these divers years entertained an Opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox and Received judgment of the Church ; and uttered many things against the Authority of the Church of Rome, and the universal Bishop, I humbly acknowledge my fault, and error, and my folly in Misleading others : I therefore yield myself in all obedience to the supream bishop, into the Bosom of the church of Rome; never to depart again from the Traditions and decrees of the holy See ; I am heartily sorry for what is past ; and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.[108]

Recantation marked the turning point for Spira: from this moment, his undoing began. Realizing he had denied Christ shattered him, and what followed was darker still:

> No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direful voice, saying to him : *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy Obedience, thou hast broken thy vow; hence Apostate bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal damnation* : he trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a swoon; relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forwards description he never found any peace or ease of his mind ; but continuing in incessant torments, he professed that he was captivated under the revenging hand of the great God : that he heard continually that fearful sentence of Christ, that just Judge : that he knew he was utterly undone : that he could neither hope for grace, nor Christ's intercession with God the Father in his behalf, thus was his fault ever heavy in his heart, and ever his judgment before his eyes.[109]

Accounts of his life post-apostasy depict an increasingly horrified man, overwhelmed with guilt and terror at his declension. Spira steadily spirals downward, "calling excessively for drink" even as his physicians conclude he has no bodily illness; "therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort."[110] He receives many visitors, seeming almost to find a perverse glory in their attentions as he writhes in his miseries.[111] Torments of conscience were unrelenting; his agonies were horrific. He finally concludes that God has left him, insisting he

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[108] FE, 11–13.

[109] FE, 13–14.

[110] FE, 15.

[111] With both Spira and Child, one cannot help but draw comparisons at points to characters like Mrs. Bennett (*Pride and Prejudice*), Mrs. Harris (*Anne of Green Gables*), Mr. William Dorritt and Mrs. Clenham (*Little Dorritt*), or Colin (*The Secret Garden*)—literary characters who exploit and seem to enjoy their condition. Their despair is real, but it also gets them attention. Thus it is sometimes difficult to discern: is despair or display the dominant note in this given moment? Hercules largely seems to see through that approach with Child and refuses to play along, which seems to be part of why Child at times will not engage (e.g., in their fourth meeting; see TES, 22).

knows exactly the moment he became a reprobate.

Spira's declension and defenses against friends' exhortations concerning God's grace echo those of John Child with nearly-parallel prescience. Spira held that promises were for God's children, not reprobates, insisting his sins were greater than God's mercy.[112] Comforts were sure for God's elect, "but as for me, Wretch, they are nothing but grief and torment because I contemned them."[113] He told friends that God "would not have damned *reprobates* to be saved: I am one of that number; I know it, for I willingly and against my knowledge denied Christ, and I feel that he Hardens, and will not suffer me to Hope."[114] He grew weary of godly company and desired to be rid of them, along with his own life.[115]

Hall notes that "Calvin judged Spira to be reprobate from the beginning and a fitting exemplar of his blind countrymen."[116] His case was so dark that a century later John Bunyan (1628–1688) based his man in the iron cage in large part on Spira, as one who believed that he dare not and could not hope in the mercy of God.[117] Keach records:

> *My sin*, said Spira, *is greater than the Mercy of God*; nay, answered his Visitors, the Mercy of God is above all sin, *God would have all men to be saved*; *it is true*, (said he) *God would have all the Elect to be saved; he would not have damn'd Reprobates to be saved: I am one of that Number; I know it, for I willingly denyed Christ, and I feel that he hardens me, and will not suffer me to hope.*
>
> *The mercy of God* (said he) *is exceeding large, and extends to all the Elect, but not to me, or any like me, who are sealed to Wrath: I tell you I deserve it, my own Conscience condemns me, what needeth any other Judge; if* Peter *grieved, and repented, it was because Christ beheld him with a merciful Eye, and in that he was pardoned; it was not because he wept, but because God was*

[112] FE, 15.

[113] FE, 17.

[114] FE, 16.

[115] FE, 16.

[116] Hall, "'Read This'" (Ph.D diss.), 32. Hall also argues that "Calvin's engagement with Spira's biography is devoid of theological nuance." In "'Read This,'" 32n74.

[117] Hall, "'Read This'" (Ph.D diss.), 3.

> *gracious to him; but God respects not me, and therefore I am a Reprobate; I feel no Comfort can enter into my Heart, there's place only for Torments and Vexings of Spirit: I tell you, my Case is properly mine own, no Man was ever in the like plight, and therefore my Estate is fearful*.[118]

This verbiage could have been excerpted from TES. Child's language is not merely reminiscent of Spira's; it is nearly formulaic, as though he internalizes the very pattern of despair that Spira's case made infamous.

Some accounts report that Spira starved himself to death from grief.[119] Keach illustrates this tradition, writing that "they forcibly infused some liquid Sustenance into his Month, most of which he spit out again."[120] Other reports depict self–harm due to grief, though these narratives are disputed. Either way, Keach characterizes him as one under God's awful punishment:

> So the consuming wrath of God, whether it seizes on the consciences of Men only whilst alive in the body, or on Body and Soul both here, or on the Soul at Death, it turns all joy into sorrow. O what extremity of misery do such feel! ask *Judas* or *Spira*, they could tell you.[121]

> The Wrath of God like Fire sometimes also *seizeth on the Consciences of men*, by which means they are fearfully tormented, for their horrid *Blasphemy, Prophaness, Atheism, Apostacy*, &c. We have had two Examples of this sort, *viz*. Mr. *Francis Spira* in the *last Century*, and Mr. *John Child* in this. It is enough to make all who read those Naratives to Tremble, at the very thoughts of the incensed Wrath and Anger of an offended God. *Who can stand before his indignation, when his wrath is poured out like fire*, on the Souls and Consciences of Men? O how doth he seem to Tear them into pieces, even to such a degree as they seem to be in the very torments of Hell, while in the Body…[122]

Spira's legacy was such that his case became a byword, a cautionary tale provoking both fear and fascination amongst Protestants. For more than century and a half, Spira's case

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[118] Keach, *A trumpet blown*, 46. Given the well–known account of *A Relation of the Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira, in the year 1548* (London, 1649) by Nathaniel Bacon (1593–1660), and how closely Child identifies himself with Spira, it legitimately raises the question of whether Child is framing himself in Spirean terms by saying "my Estate is fearful."

[119] FE, 36.

[120] Keach, *A trumpet blown*, 45. John Child similarly refused to eat or drink "for a considerable time"; see *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2.

[121] Keach, *A trumpet blown*, 32–33.

[122] Keach, *A trumpet blown*, 43–48. Hall finds in this cumulative case an unexpected conclusion: that Spira is "a victim of misapplying Calvinism itself." See his "'Read This'" (Ph.D diss.), 183.

remained a touchstone in Protestant conscience literature—a narrative invoked when ministers sought to describe the terror of a conscience convicted of its own reprobation. [123]

Collins's Most Challenging Counselee: The Curious and Sobering Case of John Child

John Child had served some twenty years a Particular Baptist preacher, authoring at least one book and apparently endorsing another during his early tenure among the Nonconformists.[124] At some point, however, he grew dissatisfied with the Nonconformity broadly and the Puritans and Particular Baptists specifically. His bitterness snowballed until he accused many of his former colleagues and friends of teaching heresies, knowingly propagating falsehoods, living licentiously, and consciously leading others astray.

Child then very publicly defected to Church of England (hereafter COE), vigorously censuring all he had held dear among the Nonconformists. Given the COE's "but halfly

[123] A partial list of references appears in Hall, "'Read This'" (Ph.D diss.), 197–203. Hall's list omits TES and his dissertation appears unaware of its existence. In fairness, his list does not attempt to be comprehensive, but simply representative.

[124] John Child, *A MODERATE MESSAGE to QUAKERS, SEEKERS, AND SOCINIANS, By a FRIEND And Well–wisher to them all. OR Some Arguments offered to clear up three points in difference betwixt them and others, viz. the Baptism with Water, the Right of Administration in this Age, and the Pre-existancy of the Son of God to his being conceived of the Virgin* (London, 1676). Among other points, it provides a closely-reasoned and fairly strong argument for the water baptism of believers (pp. 3–38) and denies the necessity of "Ordination by a Lineal Succession" (e.g., contra Romish apostolical succession as validating their ordination, p. 45), demonstrating that—at that point, at least—Child was still firmly numbered with the nonconformists. During his years of ministry, Child is noted as "contending strongly…having been highly concerned in many disputes, especially against the deluded People called *Quakers*." In the anonymous broadside *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS from Brick-Lane in the Hamlet of Spittle fields, or a Dreadful warning to such as give way to the Temptation of the Devil, in the deplorable example of Mr. JOHN CHILD once a Famous ANABAPTIST TEACHER. Who falling into DISPAIR ; committed a Barbarous and unnatural MURTHER upon his own Person, on the 13th of Octob. 1684. Together with the circumstances that attended it, likewise his behaviour towards such MINISTERS as prayed with him, and administred other spiritual consolations, as also what else materially happened on the sad occasion, being worthy the perusal of all Christians, and published to the end, that it might deter others from falling in to the like Snare* (London: Printed for A. Banks, 1684), 1.

Interestingly, James Jones's *Modesty and Faithfulness* asserts (accurately) that Child's *A Second Argument* contains none at all: "I can not find any thing of Argument in that Pamphlet, for the matter proposed" (p. 1)—but Child's earlier *Moderate Message to Quakers* is argued quite well. Fear of persecution (along with envy, bitterness, greed, and pride, according to Jones) apparently had an effect on his reasoning.

reformed"[125] state, his contemporaries regarded the shift as an act of apostasy, and his congregation excommunicated him for leaving a true church to join a false one. Hercules, who was a friend of John Child's, had argued in his *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England* (1682) that the COE was no true church, lacking a true gospel, administered no true sacraments, governed by no true polity, and was led by no true ministers.[126] The COE, Collins contended—and as the Separatists, Nonconformists, and Independents broadly maintained—had genuinely apostatized by her doctrinal compromises and impurities. As such, the only faithful response to her defection for a true Christian was to "come out from among them and be separate" (2 Cor. 6:17). Seventeenth-century Particular Baptists held that it was the duty of true churches to rebuke and discipline any members who worshiped even occasionally within COE circles, and to excommunicate as unrepentant and unregenerate any members who would frequent them, partake of her Table, or join themselves to her number. They held such actions as refusing to "hear the church" (Matt. 18:17).

Child's work *A Second Argument* (1684)[127]—referenced repeatedly throughout TES, though seemingly recanted in papers written in Child's own hand discovered postmortem—was

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The book Child seems to have endorsed is *A VINDICATION OF THE BOOK CALLED, Some Gospel-truths opened; according to the Scriptures, and the opposition made against it by EDWARD BORROUGH, a professed Quaker, (but proved an enemie to the truth) examined and confuted by the word of GOD. AND ALSO, a plain Answer to his Quæries, given in simplicitiee world by me, are a second-time born witness to, according to truth: with the answer of Edward Burrough to the quæries then laid down in my Book reproved. And also, a plain answer to his quæries, given in simplicitie of soul; and is now also presented to the world, or who else may read, or hear them; to the end (if God will) that Truth may be discovered thereby. / by John Bunyan, Preacher of the Gospel of CHRIST* (London, 1657). Given Child's 1676 *A Moderate Message to Quakers*, thematically speaking, this endorsement fits. Child would have been approximately 27 years old at this point.

[125] William Fuller (1579/80–1659), "Booke to the Queen," in *The Second Part of a Register*, ii.52, as cited in Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 29, 36.

[126] A position Child had also maintained for a time; cf. *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1.

[127] When placing Child's apostasy alongside Thomas Collier's (ca. 1613–ca. 1690), one begins to see the truth of the common Puritan dictum that Satan often makes particular choice of ministers in his designs.

produced shortly after his defection and excommunication. It offered a scalding denunciation of any opposing the COE alongside a spirited (and fairly doe-eyed) apologetic for the Church and her priests. Child asserts in it that those who oppose her do so without and against reason: she is a true church, having true sacraments and a true ministry, better than that of the nonconformists. She boasts the testimony of antiquity and the approbation of the king, requiring the conclusion of possessing the approbation of the Lord who has established him as ruler and head of the COE. Her detractors are villainous scoundrels, fearful of truth, trafficking in contrivances, desiring nefarious ends. Their sufferings are deserved and needless; they suffer as wrongdoers, not righteous men. They should come back to the true church, and find in her superior ministry true rest for their souls and true peace for their persons.[128]

Having delivered so blistering and public an attack on those with whom he had served and suffered, Child then painfully "came to himself"[129]—and came undone:

> [C]ertain it is, that for some years past, he appeared much dejected, still giving way to the tempter to prevail against him, by negating or rejecting the saving advice given him, by such of his Neighbours, and others that came to visit him, whose importunities could not rest from the cause of his disorder, but he instead of applying himself to sacred matters, whereby to attain that grace, which might be sufficient for him, grew careless of himself, as also of his imployment, seldom appearing abroad, and as much as he could shunning the conversation of Mankind, delighting in his melancholly Recess, nor could the tears and intreaties of his Wife and Children, oblige him to alter his purpose, who importuned him to be sociable, and strive for mirth by frequenting the Company of his Neighbours, to banish those heavy thoughts, that clogged and oppressed his mind.[130]

Toward Hercules Collins and others, he maintained hopelessly that—like Esau—he could not repent[131] (Heb. 12:15–17). Despairing, he asserted that the imprecatory prayers of the saints

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[128] Argumentation like this served only to strengthen Particular Baptist suspicions that those within the COE were indeed "but halfly Reformed" themselves, and ultimately sympathizers with Rome.

[129] Luke 15:17, KJV.

[130] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 1.

[131] TES, 22, 23, 26; Child makes this statement explicitly several times and expresses the idea in other ways as well.

were applied to him in heaven,[132] thus he could not and dare not pray. But Child—as Spira—was also horrified at the depths to which he had so rapidly sunk. Following the account of Thomas Plant's interview, with whom Child "*for divers years* [had] *more than a common Intimacy and Conversation*,"[133] the editor of TES (most likely, Collins) wrote:

> I suffer not my thoughts to run out concerning his Eternal Estate. His remorse of Conscience, self-condemnation, frequent asking of forgiveness of his offended Brethren, begging the Prayers of others, and attempts to pray himself, seemed to savour of that which himself would not allow to be called repentance, perhaps because his publick recantation of the injuries done to his Brethren (which he acknowledged to be just, but by reason of shame, and thereby exposing himself to sufferings and losses, he could not bring his heart throughly to consent to it) were by some made the terms of it.[134]

Child had dishonored Christ, denouncing his faithful servants by name, including Hercules.[135] In what appears to be Collins's final meeting with him, Child was occupied "in discourse concerning *Francis Spira*,"[136] asserting that his own sin surpassed even the notorious apostate of the previous century—for while Spira fell by weakness and fear, Child knew what he

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[132] TES, 24; e.g., Rev. 6:10.

[133] TES, 30.

[134] TES, 32. A similar statement occurs in *A Warning from God to all Apostates*: "He is gone, and Charity ought to be exercised by us; for secret things belong to God only. Let his Fall be a warning to us." Note, Collins was one who urged Child to a public recantation of his writings, but he never speaks as though it were a condition of his forgiving him. Witness instead Collins's gentle encouragements to look to God's Word and accordingly to deal in a manner commensurate with repentance (Matt. 3:8):

> Mr. C.[ollins]: We are not capable of making God restitution, he pardons and justifies for his own Name's sake, and Christ's sake; but restitution is to be made to our Neighbour; and if you are sensible God hath been dishonoured, and his People wronged in that Book [of yours], your next work is to make restitution in like manner, by publick Recantation (TES, 18).

> Mr. C.[ollins]: Two things are essentially necessary to the peace of your Soul, with all speed to publish your Recantation, and set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it (TES, 20).

Hercules applies the common Puritan principle that the scope of the sin and its offense determine the scope of the necessary repentance. In other words, public sins by public persons require public repentance and public restitution.

[135] Child to Collins: "I have wronged many a poor Soul by writing as I have done… I have discoursed you, and Mr. *B.* and *J.* and have thought to run down your Opinion by a Spirit of Insolency and Pride, but the Judgments of God have followed me…" (TES, 19).

[136] TES, 28. Consistent with Child's lengthy monologues summarized in TES, the 1684 tract *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS* records that "many extravagant expressions frequently [came] from him" (p. 1).

had written was false and published it anyway. “I am an hundred times greater sinner than Spira, a thousand times ten thousand times; yea, a hundred thousand times a greater sinner than he.”[137]

Child became irrevocably convinced his sins were too great for God’s mercy. He was certain that he was reprobate and that God was actively hardening his heart. “I am an example to you,”[138] he told visitor after visitor.

Child’s true spiritual posture in these final months is exceedingly difficult to parse; the narrative presents a man oscillating between horror, regret, self-loathing, and a kind of perverse fixation on his own despair. Thus the question of Child’s genuine penitence is sticky: he presents a complex blend of crippling fear of man, alongside nagging regret at having hurt his friends by his slander. Moments of bitter sorrow over his false speech appear, where he evidences an acute sense of something lost in these events having transpired.

At times he appears almost to take a perverse delight—almost as though echoing or imitating Spira—in his sorrowful condition. He also seems to qualify his final retraction[139] (as well as his repentance? It is exceedingly difficult to tell with certainty) at points. In other words, he confesses that he was wrong in *how* he wrote, owning the indecorum and maliciousness thereof—though not necessarily in *what* he said.

Some of these qualifications perhaps reflect elements of his short–lived improvements.[140]

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[137] TES, 28.

[138] TES, 10, 23, 31. The “attestors” of TES agreed, citing him as an example in the title.

[139] “Publickly to discover Nakedness, *tho’ matters of fact were true* [emphasis mine], is against all good Nature, and a very great piece of prophaneness.” Child, “*Another Paper*,” in TES, 42.

[140] Spira’s fluctuations call to mind Bunyan’s realization in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, in a Faithful Account of the Life and Death of John Bunyan, or A BRIEF RELATION OF THE EXCEEDING MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST TO HIM, Namely, In His Taking Him Out of the Dunghill, and Converting Him to the Faith of His Blessed Son Jesus Christ. Wherein Is Also Particularly Shewed: What Sight of, and What Troubles He Had for Sin; And Also, What Various Temptations He Met With, and How God Carried Him Through Them* (London, 1693), para. 229, 113: “I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good Frame of Heart that made my Righteousness better, nor yet

For example:

> Mr. *P.*[lant]. (Walking with him in the Fields) You seem now to be more setled in your mind.
> Mr. *Child.* Tho' no consideration can yield me peace or comfort, yet the violence of my Torments admits of some intermissions; and therefore I am not so sensibly afflicted at all times.[141]

His recantation expresses personal, relational, and ecclesiastical regrets, and Child several times declares with a sense of finality (including to Collins) that he is incapable of repentance:

> Mr. *C.*[ollins] said, Are you not heartily sorrowful for writing this?
> Mr. *Child.* Oh that I could repent; I cannot repent.
>
> [*Then a little later in their first meeting*]:
>
> Mr. *Child*. What an astonishing consideration is it for a man to die in this condition I am in ; To be under horror for writing such things, and yet have no power to renounce it…Oh that I could repent![142]

Collins's Counseling and the Question of Malice

Before Collins and the other ministers could meaningfully address Child's despair, they first had to untangle his own understanding of malice—a category he invoked repeatedly, inconsistently, and with mounting confusion. His case is frequently a study in what initially appears as contradiction and "astonish[ed] confusion."[143] A key example: he claims several times that his actions were malicious. It raises the question of what he comprehends by the term. In speaking to Mr. ——*D.*[ennis]:

> [Child] immediately acknowledged that he was the Author of [*A Second Argument*], and bitterly exclaimed against himself, that he wrote it in malice, and by the instigation of the Devil, from

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my bad Frame that made my Righteousness worse; for my Righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, *The same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13.8."

[141] TES, 25. He also tells Hercules that he "thought [he] had some comfort and relief" for a time, but it did not last (TES, 22).

[142] TES, 18, 20.

[143] TES, 41. So too, his visitors describe him as confused (pp. 10, 31); he describes himself as confused (pp. 17, 21, to Hercules Collins; p. 26, twice; p. 29, "confused and confounded"; p. 30, to Mr. *T.P.*; in his retraction, pp. 39, 40, 41).

very ill principles of Pride, Vain-glory, and Hypocrisie.[144]

He repeats himself with Mr. *K.*[each], insisting that "what he had done therein, was out of Malice and Revenge against those People."[145] In his handwritten postmortem retraction ("*Pride, Folly, Madness, Villany, and great wickedness retracted*"), speaking in the third person, he states his "chiefest design was to advance his Pride, vent his Spite, and maliciously to spit forth the very Fire of Hell against some, yea against many he had taken offence at."[146] His handwritten postscript again "confesse[s it]…to be a rash, injurious, and uncharitable, but [also] a devilish, spiteful, and malicious Slander."[147] Yet he elsewhere denies malice.

Plainly, Child was a deeply conflicted[148] man—*not* contradictory, but internally divided. In conversation with "Mr. *H.D.*" and several others, when asked directly whether his actions were malicious against God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or God's people, he flatly denied it: "No." Yet in his first meeting with Hercules, Child distinguishes: "I think I did not formally sin against the light of my Conscience and Spirit of God; yet what I did, was mixt with malice, with this cheat in my heart, It may be it do them good."[149] In other words, he claims his conscience did not prick him and he did not think the Spirit of God convicted him, but he knew he was being malicious in his heart toward Collins and other Particular Baptists. Thus he justifies himself with the thought that he was actually helping them by writing what he confessed just a few lines prior as intentional exaggerations of their doctrines, falsehoods about their intentions, and purposeful

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[144] TES, 9.

[145] TES, 11.

[146] TES, 39.

[147] TES, 41.

[148] For example: "These are my Arguings in me…" (TES, 20). This sort of language appears several times.

[149] TES, 19.

misrepresentations of their character.[150] He knew what he was doing when he did it and his conscience will not permit him to forget it or set it aside; his qualification that "The Night before the Book was published, I had some reluctancy and gripes of Conscience"[151] demonstrates that comprehension and suppression of conscience.

His reasoning increasingly grows clouded—he insists he is guilty of the unpardonable sin, but also "cannot tell"[152] if he acted with malice sufficient unto its commission. It is a functional denial: he cannot assert having committed that specific sin of malice, though he is haunted by many others.

The denial also helps to define his understanding of that sin—for Child, maliciousness toward God would constitute rejection of his grace, thus committing the unpardonable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Herein his distinction to Hercules clarifies: Child admits his "mixt malice" against men, while repeatedly denying his "formal malice" against God. He is caught in the perfect storm of a Scripture-informed conscience accusing him of sin against his brethren, personal despair fearing that he is damned, and his theology wherein only malice *against God*—rejecting of grace—constitutes the unpardonable sin. He conflates categories at times (evincing his increasing undoing), mixing malice toward men, with malice toward God, with reprobation, with the unpardonable sin. Thus he oscillates between affirming and denying malicious intent and action; his qualifications and denials always eye the unpardonable sin against the Spirit.

Collins and the other ministers counseling him seize upon this distinction, repeatedly pressing him as to whether he acted maliciously against God, intended to destroy the gospel (by going to the COE), and knowingly blasphemed the Spirit. Child affirms none of these things—

[150] TES, 18.

[151] TES, 19.

[152] TES, 26.

the very point his counselors use as a pastoral pry bar in trying to move him away from despair. He mirrors Spira in many respects (treated below), however, which pushes him to magnify his sin, universalize his guilt, interpret every motive as damnable, and collapse all the categories into the conclusion: "I think I have not only out done Cain, Balaam, and Judas, but many of the Devils themselves. …. I shall lye lower than Judas, lower than Judas, I have sinned worse than Judas."[153]

Thus his words to Mr. *P.*[lant] expose his increasing sense of guilt and platform his conception of a perverse remedy: "if I had but such a sence of my sin as I ought to have, I should burst asunder, or (like Judas) use extremity towards my self."[154]

Child's is a performative, curated despair, dramatizing his hopelessness and elevating his own case—truly, a perverse exceptionalism echoing that of Spira in 1548. He is even convinced of hearing in the first person from God: "God said he will deal in a singular manner with me here on Earth, and in Hell also."[155] But for all his sorrowful cloudiness, he is consistently specific and non-contradictory in this respect: malice. See Figure 4.2:

FIGURE 4.2: Malice in John Child

Type of Malice	**Child's Claim**	**Citation**
Malice toward men: slander, spite, revenge.	Affirms repeatedly.	TES, 9, 11, 39, 41.
Malice toward God / the Holy Spirit (formal malice).	Denies.	TES, 26.
Mixed motives (malice + self–deception).	Admits.	TES, 19.

These distinctions—malice toward men, denial of malice toward God, and the tortured category

[153] TES, 17, 21.

[154] TES, 25.

[155] Pridefully, and delusionally?! TES, 22.

of "mixed malice"—form the hinge of Child's despair and become the fulcrum of Collins's pastoral strategy in ministering to him. The engine driving that despair was not theology alone, but his book—whose composition and consequences he believed had damned him. We therefore turn to *A Second Argument* itself, for only by considering "that cursed Book's"[156] contents can we grasp why Child regarded it as the catalyst of his ruin—and why Collins treated it as central in his pastoral counsels with him.

John Child's Troubling Book: *A Second Argument*

To understand more of why Child was in such anguish, we must consider the cause he repeatedly identified: *Mr. JOHN CHILD'S Book, Entituled A Second Argument, For a more Full and Firm UNION AMONGST ALL GOOD PROTESTANTS, WHEREIN the NONCOFORMISTS Take the SACRAMENT after the Manner of the CHURCH of ENGLAND, is Justified. The Root and Foundation Of the POPISH PLOT Further Discovered. In a LETTER to a Friend. Now Published upon the Occasion of his Disperation and Fatal End : which Book (as he hath often declared) was the Occasion off it*[157] (hereafter ASA). He often refers to "that cursed Book"—"that vile and Accursed Book"—"that hellish Book [which] would ruine him in Body and Soul."[158] His bitterness and pride during his tenure in the COE swelled into the scathing, sarcastic denunciations of ASA.

That a work ostensibly written to promote union amongst Protestants should contain such venom constitutes a double tragedy. The dissenter James Jones (d. 1685) answered ASA point-

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[156] TES, 28.

[157] This edition (London, 1684)—obviously published posthumously—is the only one I have been able to find to date.

[158] TES, 28, 41, 29.

by-point by in *Modesty and Faithfulness In Opposition to Envy and RASHNESS*,[159] wherein—among many other refutations—he records that even Child's title (*A Second Argument*) is deceitful: there was never a first argument,[160] Child does not engage the Romish plot, and he could not aim at any Protestant union—for he argued no Protestant doctrines therein.

Child begins ASA with a veneer of charity, acknowledging his former companions as "well–meaning Dissenters from the Church of *England*,"[161] but quickly pivots to naming their convictions as "folly…groundless Scrupulosities in Religion"; he even suggests that those who converted to the COE were *helped* by "the close concurrency of Penal Prosecution."[162] In other words, the very reality which terrified him to the point of denying the gospel *he here argues was a benefit and should be applied to others*. They are reckoned "Adversaries" along with Rome, "misled and alike Dangerous, if not more than the Papists are,"[163] aiming only at deceit and power. He then gives a contorted summary of Dissenting and Nonconformist doctrine:

> That it is a sin to go into the Places where the English Clergy [COE] Preach, because they are Idol Temples; a greater Sin to hear them preach and pray there [using the *Book of Common Prayer*; hereafter BCP], because 'tis as Meat offered to an Idol : but like the Sin against the Holy Ghost, eternally impardonable, to communicate with them in the Lords Supper.[164]

Child goes on to affirm positive matters—"The Learning of a good Catechism to aid and

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[159] James Jones, *Modesty and Faithfulness*, 2, 3, 4. The next year, Jones wrote in support of the Dissenting cause: *A PLEA FOR Liberty of Conscience: Grounded Upon The HOLY WORD of GOD, AND The ROYAL WORD of the KING. CONTAINING Twelve Weighty Reasons Against the Prosecuting of Protestant-Dissenters FOR MATTERS OF RELIGION Humbly offered to the Consideration of all that are in Authority. By JAMES JONES, a Protestant–Dissenter, and now a Prisoner for Nonconformity, in Woodstreet-Comp.* (London, 1684).

[160] Though Child acknowledges to Collins that he had written a book before ASA, which had been "Answer[ed] in a Manuscript…[by] a Gentleman [who wrote] some Animadversions upon it." TES, 21. I have been unable to identify this previous book thus far.

[161] ASA, 2.

[162] ASA, 2.

[163] ASA, 2.

[164] ASA, 2.

conduct their Faith," "Prayer to discharge their Devotion" (in context, he intends the BCP, hotly disputed by the Puritans), "To hear learned and good Men Preach to revive and quicken them to Duty," and "To Square and Regulate their Lives by Moral Precepts (or the Law of Nature)."[165] These points, taken in isolation, might appear commendable. However, he then affirms human merit by works as an element of salvation, "the which whosoever shall humbly and carefully observe, constantly and conscientiously perform; we will assure them salvation…"[166] Works, he insists, are meritorious: if the Calvinistic doctrine of the decree is true, then "[God] has left himself no Liberty to advance the most Excellent and Vertuous…"[167] Partaking the Lord's Supper is a civil matter, not spiritual, as participation "['t]is Commanded by the laws of our Countrey."[168] His reasoning:

> 'Tis no natural injury to a mans Neighbour, therefore can be no real hurt or prejudice to his own Soul ; for what God forbids not, the Laws of Countrey commands to be done, and my Neighbour no way injured by, cannot be really hurtful to my self.[169]

As though the natural bears no relation to the spiritual! Scripture's silence never constitutes Scripture's smile. Setting aside the regulative principle, Child denies the spiritual nature and efficacy of the sacrament, asserting in the name of the normative principle what amounts nearly to a salvific statism. He defends COE practice by their seriousness in partaking the Table, that it is administered in both kinds (contra Rome), and asserting that if taking the

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[165] ASA, 2. This language is careful on Child's part, undergirding his naturalistic argument in ASA. He reasons from common kingdom realities, rather than evangelically; from and for externals, not heart-change wrought by the Spirit of God; or, as here, from "the Law of Nature" rather than Scripture's argument from "the law of grace" (as the *Geneva Bible* renders Prov. 31:26b).

[166] ASA, 3.

[167] ASA, 5. He then refutes himself in affirming that the COE as a true church does "own, defend, and stand by all the Necessary Articles of the Christian Faith *which is the only Foundation of the True Church*" (ASA, 5); emphasis mine.

[168] ASA, 3.

[169] ASA, 3.

sacrament in the COE is wickedness, "then the best Church men must be all wicked men,"[170] an uncharitable conclusion (and one few Particular Baptists would have affirmed). If the COE is a true church, then "it is an holy Rite truly appropriated to the Church of God…one of the highest instances of Positive Religion cannot possible be dangerous and unsafe."[171] Moreover, the COE's sincerity and willingness to suffer demonstrate her a true church.

Child then waxes poetic in a highly emotional argument: the COE has the best clergy, the best members, the best country, and the best martyrs. The COE "hath renounced the Power and Headship of Antichrist, and in her constant Doctrins and Practice keeps up and defends a Seperation and Detestation of him."[172] Ultimately, "if a People under such Qualifications be no Church, then there can be no such thing as a True Church in the World"[173]—certainly not "the Sectaries." Why? "The greatest number of them do hold Principles dangerously Heretical and most abominably Abusive of the most Holy and Blessed God…[they] un-god Him."[174]

Specifically, these Nonconformists fall short in that they:

> [H]ave made no Solemn Covenant with God and one with another [e.g., they have no real church constituted, and thus no membership covenanted], which is the onely right Basis and Foundation of a Church State; or if they have, it cannot be better than that already set forth [in his apology for the COE].[175]

Child argues against God's decree,[176] asserting that it removes human agency and

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[170] ASA, 3.

[171] ASA, 4.

[172] ASA, 4.

[173] ASA, 5.

[174] ASA, 5.

[175] ASA, 5.

[176] Child's arguments against God's decree were consistent and public. The anonymous single-page tract *A Warning from God to all Apostates* records that he "was troubled much for his prying into God's Decrees."

undercuts God's dealing with humans based on their inherent virtue:

> For if, as they hold, God hath so limited his Power and bound up his own Hands (by unalterable Decrees) as that he has left himself no Liberty to advance the most Excellent and Vertuous… what greater Folly can be found amongst Mortal Men? … Oh excellent and stupendous Folly![177]

This proposition is untenable, Child asserts; it makes God the author of sin, elects men against their will, and strengthens antinomian impulses; in fact, every sinner in Scripture and history may blame their sin on God as "the sole Author of all the Mischiefs in the World. …. Poor miserable Wretches they could no ways help it ; an irresistible Destiny was the cause of it."[178] Such false teachers and worshipers ought not think their churches too pure for the COE—the COE is too pure for *them*: "shall *we* joyn with *them* as a Pious Church [emphasis mine]?"[179] It amounts to a decided affirmation of Arminianism.

He portrays the sectaries as foolish and disordered, seeking only power and money. Child begins to name specific livings and roles the Nonconformists will assume, and Hercules Collins is one of the men referred to at this point: "You shall in the room of the two Archbishops, *viz. Canterbury* and *York*, have a *Tinker* and a *Taylor*, men of great confidence and long standing."[180] Collins is the "*Taylor*" he intends.

Child's insults and defamations continue for two more pages; for him, the sum of the equation is that Dissenters will destroy the country, return it to Popery, and worsen things by their craftiness, greed, and multiplied heresies.[181]

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[177] ASA, 5.

[178] ASA, 5.

[179] ASA, 6.

[180] ASA, 6; cf. TES, 19. "Collins…was a tailor by trade." So Beeke, Pederson, and Jones, in *Meet the Puritans, revised and expanded edition*, s.v. "Hercules Collins." (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2025), 247.

[181] Jones's response essentially flips Child's criticisms back onto the COE (in *Modesty and Faithfulness*, 8, 9):

Brief Analysis of *A Second Argument*

Understanding the context and content of ASA is essential for grasping Collins's pastoral theology, as it constitutes the bulk of the troubles Child faces. He is wracked with guilt for his assertions therein, and Collins spends most of their seven meetings addressing Child's state in direct correspondence to its publication. In short, ASA reveals substantial theological drift and is riddled with doctrinal errors—many of which Child later confesses to Hercules as intentional. Collins would witness his unraveling over its content in their 1684 meetings.

ASA is poorly argued at best; the dissenter James Jones bluntly states that it contains no argument at all.[182] It attacks strawmen, appeals to emotion, overburdens tradition, and locates authority in the Crown instead of the Canon. Its treatment of the Lord's Supper is abysmal—naming it a civil matter—and approaches blasphemy. Child's sketch of Calvinistic doctrine and its adherents is caricatured, which he later confessed was intentionally misleading: "I have represented those of Calvin's Principles beyond whatever they conceived, strained their Opinions beyond their Intentions, and drawn such Consequences as never were in their minds."[183]

Child's vigorous denunciations and vitriolic rhetoric[184] expose both his fear and the

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> And now from the whole of what the Pamphleteer hath said in his arguings and conclusions concerning *Conformity*, it may be properly said unto him, O Stupendious Obsurdity! For all that he hath said may be argued over again to perswade and prove that the Members of the *Church of England* ought to take the Sacrament amongst the Dissenters…I will only except one thing, *viz.* The want of a Penal Law to force persons to it… I have humbly returned the Pamphleteer's Arguments such as they be, upon his head, but chiefly desire that they may reach his heart…

[182] *Modesty and Faithfulness*, 1.

[183] TES, 18. Jones classifies Child's work as "us[ing] such blasphemous expressions, and…draw[ing] such diabolical Conclusions concerning the Professors of such Election, and the Electing Gracious God…no marvel that he whose Principle is, that men may fall from true and saving grace, should himself fall from seeming grace." See his *Modesty and Faithfulness*, 10.

[184] Child's vehemence was such that Keach charged Giles Shute (b. 1650 or 1651) with sounding like John Child by his abrasiveness toward Hercules Collins and the Particular Baptists in general. See his *A Counter-Antidote to purge out the Malignant Effects of a late Counterfeit, prepared by Mr. Gyles Shute ... being an Answer to his vindication of his pretended Antidote to prevent the prevalency of Anabaptism, shewing that Mr. Hercules Collins's reply to the said author remains Unanswered : wherein the Baptism of Believers is evinced to be God's Ordinance,*

foundation of his subsequent undoing. He fails to distinguish between faithful Christians still within the COE and the COE doctrinal system—if the good qualities of individual members validate the system, their poor qualities would invalidate it—an inconsistency he never acknowledges. Instead, he toes the party line with vigor, his thinking obvious: if he points at others, nobody looks at him.

To malign an entire group is bad enough; to single out their leaders as a threat to Crown and country was inexcusable—"that vile and Accursed Book,"[185] indeed. In TES, we read Child's retraction of nearly every point argued in ASA (albeit posthumously).[186] Of striking significance: in a work of fifty[187] pages, ten are Child's *abrogatio*. Collins ensures these are printed alongside the various accounts of his grief contributed by the four "Attestors" and Child's friends. Perhaps the key summary is Child's own: "…to stretch the consequences of mens Principles, beyond the sense of their minds, and then charge wickedness upon them is against Justice, Mercy, and all good Nature."[188]

ASA's theological distortions and rhetorical excesses expose the instability of Child's doctrinal framework, but do not yet explain the depth of his despair. To understand why his conscience collapsed so completely—and why Hercules Collins approaches him as he does—we must consider how he handled Scripture itself. Child's undoing was not just in what he wrote, but in how he read—and *misread*—the Word he once preached.

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and the Baptized Congregations proved true Churches of Jesus Christ : with a further detection of the error of pedo-baptism : to which is added, An answer to Mr. Shute's reply to Mr. Collins's half-sheet / by Benjamin Keach (London, 1694), 1–2.

[185] TES, 41.

[186] TES, 33–42.

[187] Forty-six numbered pages; but fifty including the preface.

[188] Child, *Another Paper*, in TES, 41.

Child's (Mis)use of Scripture: Revealing His Operative Theology

Suicide occurs infrequently in Scripture, but it is present. Samson's suicide expresses vengeance (Judg. 16:28–30); Abimelech's reflects pride and invites judgment (Judg. 9:53–57). Saul's suicide (1 Sam. 31:1–6) is a dishonorable, faithless act consistent with his reprobate state.[189] Ahithophel's suicide is a tale of God's sovereign providence (2 Sam. 17:23); Zimri's (1 Kgs. 16:18) demonstrates divine judgment. Judas's suicide (Matt. 27:3–5) likewise presents as the wicked decision of a reprobate given over to his sins—"the son of perdition," destined to destruction "that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12, KJV). Like Child, Judas is portrayed as one stricken in conscience and overwhelmed with grief: "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood" (Matt. 27:5). Judas's final act is not mechanical, but moral: an accountable image-bearer staggering beneath the weight of his sin.

John Child's anguished assertions that he has exceeded Judas's sin in his betrayal[190] begin here to demonstrate something of his operative theology by his hermeneutic. Scripture teaches that Christians are those whom the risen Christ forever indwells through his Spirit. The Lord is always present with them—impassible, immutable, immovable—yet never indifferent to their sorrows or detached from their sufferings. The glorious condescension of God to his people, such that "in all their affliction he was afflicted" (Is. 63:9), has always been the divine *modus operandi*; hence the glorified Jesus confronts Saul "Why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). Child increasingly recognizes that he has betrayed innocent blood, like Judas—but in his mind, surpassing him, for Judas betrays only One. Child somehow sees his betrayal reaching further:

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[189] His armorbearer's subsequent suicide in the same passage underscores the commonality: as go the leaders, so go the people.

[190] One is tempted at times to wish Child could have received a response similar to that recorded in the case of the young woman claiming to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost in Ichabod Spencer's (1798–1854) *A Pastor's Sketches: Conversations with Anxious Souls Concerning the Way of Salvation, vols. 1 & 2* (Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006), I.225–229.

"O how many thousands of godly Christians…have I grieved!"[191] That level of betrayal is the substance of what he means by "maliciousness" against men, even as he distinguishes it from formal malice against God (as per above).

Statements like these emerge in crisis—but they expose Child's operative theology. He repeatedly demonizes himself: "I…have an heart of a Devil"[192]; his attitude and actions have been "devilish"[193]; and he has thereby shown himself "a promoter of the Devils designs."[194] Writing as he had "by instigation of the Devil"[195] thus "makes the Author a grand Devil…a blind and besotted Devil,"[196] "a Devil incarnate."[197] He considers he must therefore be a servant of Satan, not an object of mercy—for he has acted as an agent of deceit and assault against God's elect. His mindset reflects a conscience acutely aware of sin,[198] sharpened by his knowledge of Scripture (hence his ready catalogues of transgressions). One is reminded of Luther's torments prior to conversion, when legal training collided with the demands of divine law.

Yet no relief breaks upon Child's horizon; he holds his condition as absolute, irreversible. Collins urges him in their third meeting:

> Mr. *C.* You make application of the Curses in the Book of God, but not of the Promises ; Consider *Isai.* 55. *Psal.* 34. 5.

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[191] Cited from the tract *A Warning from God to all Apostates.* I intentionally—and loosely—deploy the anachronistic term "denomination" here. Cf. Gal. 1:13.

[192] TES, 29.

[193] TES, 33, 36, 37, 41, 42.

[194] TES, 41.

[195] TES, 9.

[196] TES, 37.

[197] TES, 17.

[198] Confessionally speaking, this represents Child's conscience identifying indwelling sin's first motions (2LC 6.5).

> Mr. *Child.* Promises are Bread for Children ; They lookt on him, and were lightened ; I look unto him, and am darkened ; he knows, that I have committed such wickedness as never hath been done.[199]

Here Child turns the doctrine of election against himself, concluding he cannot be a child of grace and therefore has no share in the promises of its covenant. At least three times (their first, second, and fifth meetings), Collins discusses the sovereignty of grace. At the beginning of their sixth meeting,[200] Child notes had "a turn in my Spirit the last week, as a result of that warm Discourse I had with…Mr. *H.C.* concerning the eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God, but it is now gone again."[201] The pattern is consistent: Child weaponizes Scripture, wielding its doctrines and promises against himself. As Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676) observed, "The things that *always* accompany desertion are the aversion to or non-acceptance of consolation."[202]

Multiple biblical promises, doctrines, and exhortations were employed, aiming to console both Spira and Child; their overlap and distinctions illuminate Early Modern pastoral care. See something of these various efforts at reclamation attempted for each man, respectively, in Figure 4.3:

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[199] TES, 21.

[200] It is difficult to argue definitively for a seventh meeting between Collins and Child (seventeenth-century printing and editorial practices are consistent only in their inconsistency), but a seventh meeting is highly probable. For a detailed reconstruction of the sequence and number of Collins's meetings with Child—five certain, six almost surely, seven likely—see Appendix Five.

[201] TES, 28.

[202] See Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676) and Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666), *Geestelijke Verlatingen* (1646), transl. and repr. as *Spiritual Desertion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 34, 85–88. This pattern is present in Spira as well; this treatise is superb on questions which troubled both men. On desertion, see Joseph Symonds (d. 1652), *THE CASE AND CURE of a deserted Soul, or, A Treatise Concerning the Nature, Kindes, Degrees, Symptomes, Causes, Cure of, and Mistakes about, Spirituall Desertions* (Edinburgh, 1642); repr., Don Kistler, ed. *The Case and Cure of a Deserted Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria/Reformation Heritage Books, 2024); and Samuel Willard (1640–1707), *Spiritual Desertions Discovered AND REMEDIED. BEING the substance of divers SERMONS Preached for the help of dark Souls, labouring under Divine withdrawings* (Boston, 1699).

FIGURE 4.3: Biblical Exhortations and Doctrines Used, Attempting to Comfort Spira and Child

Exhortations/Doctrines for Spira	Exhortations/Doctrines for Child
God's mercy for repentant sinners: "He…hath said, that as *often as a sinner repents…he will remember his sins no more*."[203]	God's abundant pardon: "[U]pon repentance and returning, Isai. 55. 7, God will abundantly pardon such as have abundantly sinned."[204]
Peter and the thief on the cross: "Peter…denied him thrice…yet God was merciful unto him…consider the thief…"[205]	Examples of specific biblical characters: "Consider the greatness of *David*'s Sin… *Manasseh*'s…*Peter…Paul…*"[206]
God's covenant faithfulness: "O *Spira*, my Covenant I will not break."[207]	David's prayer for pardon: "*Forgive me my sin, for it is great*."[208]
God's chastening of his children: "If thy Children forsake my Law…I will visit…nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from them."[209]	Encouragement from Jeremiah 3: "*Return thou backsliding Israel…I am merciful… I will not keep anger for ever…*"[210]
Encouragement not to judge by present sense: "You must not…seek out the secret counsels of Gods election and reprobation."[211]	Christ is able to save completely: "Christ is able to save to the utmost, Heb. 7. 25, them that come to God by him."[212]
	Christ gives repentance: "Christ is exalted…to give repentance and forgiveness of sins."[213]

[203] FE, 31.

[204] TES, 13.

[205] FE, 31.

[206] TES, 15.

[207] FE, 52.

[208] TES, 12.

[209] FE, 52.

[210] TES, 31.

[211] FE, 53.

[212] TES, 13.

[213] TES, 16.

	God does not reject repenting sinners: "Go to Christ as one condemned, and deserving to be executed, and plead, that you have heard the King of Israel is a merciful King."[214]

Some of these differences may reflect documentation patterns, cultural distinctions, or translation tendencies, or pastoral practice developing over time. The English record shows that Child receives more encouragements from Scripture, more reminders of God's mercy and character, and more consistently Reformation-minded counsel than Spira.[215]

Figure 4 highlights ten primary categories of overlap between Spira and Child, demonstrating the shared hermeneutical grid with which each approached the Scriptures they once proclaimed—and underscoring why Hercules Collins and company describe Child as "the English Spira."

FIGURE 4.4: Theological Echoes in Spira and Child

1. Self-Condemnation and Certainty of Damnation.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Declares himself damned.	"I know I am utterly undone… I can neither hope for grace… I am a reprobate like Cain or Judas."[216]	"Sir, I am damned, I am damned; it is most certainly so! my day is over."[217]	Each expresses a sense of finality and irreversible doom; belief that each has crossed an irreversible line.
Believes that God has withdrawn grace.	"God hath taken away from me all power of repentance… he hardeneth me."[218]	"God hath taken away my Tallent from me, and the influence of the divine Spirit hath altogether left me."[219]	Each describes judicial hardening.

[214] TES, 15.

[215] Recall that Spira was visited several times by Roman priests.

[216] FE, 14–17

[217] TES, 31.

[218] FE, 19–20.

[219] TES, 24.

2. Loss of Ability to Pray.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Cannot pray.	"I earnestly desire to pray…yet I cannot."[220]	"When I think to pray…I am dumb and cannot speak…I cannot pray."[221]	Afflictive paralysis: inability to pray taken as evidence of reprobation; spiritual numbness as proving divine judgment.
Prayer is torment.	"I call on him to my eternal damnation."[222]	"I cannot call God Father… I cannot say, Forgive me my trespasses."[223]	Each considers prayer as terrifying and endangering to the soul, not comforting it.
3. Exceptionalist Conception, with Consequent Isolation.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Considers himself an example to warn others.	"God is just in making me an example to others."[224]	"God will glorifie himself by me… but it shall end in my destruction."[225]	Both see themselves as living warnings.
No one ever suffered like me.	"My case is properly my own, no man was ever in the like plight."[226]	"I am one of the greatest Hypocrites that ever lived… I shall lye lower than Judas."[227]	Both claim unparalleled guilt.
4. Self-Accusation of the Sin unto Death.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Belief he committed the unpardonable sin.	"I have sinned against the Holy Ghost… God hath bound me over to perpetual	"Whether my sin may not be that against the Holy Ghost… I think I have outdone	Each man explicitly fears apostasy.

[220] FE, 23.

[221] TES, 21.

[222] FE, 24.

[223] TES, 24.

[224] FE, 20. Keach agreed: "God made a dreadful example of" Child, noting how Child considered "that his State was worse than *Cain*'s, *Judah*'s [Judas's], or *Spirah*'s" in *The Counterfeit Christian or, The Danger of Hypocrisy Opened in TWO SERMONS: Containing an EXPOSITION of that Parabolical Speech of our Blessed Saviour, Matth. XII, 43, 44, 45. When the Unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, & c. By BENJAMIN KEACH, author of τροπολογία, Pastor of the Church of Christ meeting on Horsly-down in Southwark* (London, 1691), 53.

[225] TES, 23.

[226] FE, 18. Spira's exceptionalism ran deep (as did Child's)—he spoke regularly in these terms: "I tell you, there was never such a monster as I am…it is a new and unheard of example that you find in me." FE, 55, 73.

[227] FE, 20.

	punishment."[228]	Judas."[229]	
5. Scripture Applied for Self-Condemnation.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Scripture weaponized against himself.	Cites Heb. 6, Heb. 10, 2 Pet. 2: "It is impossible…there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."[230]	Cites Ps. 50, Heb. 10, 2 Pet. 2: "He shall have judgment without mercy…I cannot repent."[231]	Identical passages weaponized against themselves to prove their damnation.
Scripture no longer comforts.	"The promises belong only to the elect [e.g., not to me]…God deals one way with the elect, and another with reprobates."[232]	"The Scriptures look dreadfully upon me…Promises are bread for children."[233]	Each experiences Scripture as accusatory.
6. Perception of Divine Wrath as Present Reality.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Wrath has already begun.	"I feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of hell within me."[234]	"His wrath is come upon me to the uttermost."[235]	Both see divine wrath as present, not future.
Hell on earth.	"Desperation is hell itself."[236]	"I shall be an eternal Monument to the Wrath of God."[237]	Both describe anticipatory damnation.
7. Sense of Judicial Hardening.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
God is hardening me, or has already	"He hardeneth me…I feel he daily more and	"My heart is perfectly hardened… I cannot	Both articulate Rom. 9-level-reminiscent

[228] FE, 19.

[229] TES, 12. Bacon's Spira in FE similarly sees himself like Judas, comparing himself to or referencing Judas at least eight times.

[230] FE, 30–31.

[231] TES, 12, 21.

[232] FE, 26.

[233] TES, 17, 21.

[234] FE, 21.

[235] TES, 21.

[236] FE, 21.

[237] TES, 30.

hardened me.	more doth harden me." "The judgment of God hath overtaken me, not to correction, but to condemnation…"[238]	desire Jesus Christ to pray for me."[239]	hardening; view of hell as reaching into the present.
8. Despair over Loss of Previous Spiritual Experiences.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Once knew God, but now believes himself abandoned.	"I once did know God to be my Father…now I know God not as a Father, but as an enemy."[240]	"Oh that it were with me as in days past!"[241]	Former assurance contrasted with present despair for both men.
9. Enmity toward Divine Things.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Expresses enmity toward God and divine things.	"…my heart hates God..."[242]	Hatred toward God's people: "I have maliciously spit forth the very Fire of Hell against some." Enmity toward God's ways and truth: "I have forsaken the Ways of God, and done that which I knew to be Evil." Rejecting God's witness, conscience: "I acted against the Light of my own Conscience."[243]	Child has no direct equivalent to Spira's hatred of God; while Child confesses (in several ways) that he has acted hatefully against God's people, ways, and truth, he maintains that he has not acted in "formal malice"[244] against God himself. There is some overlap in categories.

[238] FE, 19–20, 73.

[239] TES, 24.

[240] FE, 27.

[241] TES, 31.

[242] FE, 27.

[243] TES, 39.

[243] TES, 26.

10. Desire for Death as Relief.			
Theme	**Spira**	**Child**	**Notes**
Wishes for death.	"Oh! that I were gone from hence, that somebody would let out this weary soul."[245]	"I am afraid to live, afraid to die…I would give ten thousand worlds for a God."[246]	Both see death as ambiguous relief, to some degree; they desire death but fear damnation.

These parallels, however, do not amount to a simple mirroring. The pastoral strategies employed in each case share deep similarities, yet the structural dynamics of their situations diverge in crucial ways. The following analysis traces both the continuities and the inversions distinguishing Spira's case from Child's.

Comparison and Inversion: Not a Circus Mirror

Both narratives include similar pastoral strategies: repeated visits, prayer (or at least making an attempt); Scripture read, reminded of, and referenced (its promises, doctrines, and examples); appeals to God's mercy; rebukes of despair; encouragements to resist Satan; attempts to correct doctrinal misinterpretation; and modeling the right use of Scripture under afflictive providences.[247] Theologically, both accounts show doctrinal and hortative commonalities by echoed emphases: God's mercy to repenting sinners, the dangers of judging one's state by one's present sense, and the possibility of restoration after grievous sin because of the sufficiency and compassion of Christ. Practical directives given by visitors to both Child and Spira are likewise remarkably similar: prayer, believing the promises, considering biblical examples of mercy,

[245] Robert Bolton (1572–1631), *Instructions for a right Comforting Afflicted Consciences with speciall antidotes against some grievous Temptations: delivered for the most part in the lecture at Kettering in North-hampton-shire : by Robert Bolton Batchelor in Divinity, and preacher of Gods Word at Broughton in the same Countie* (London, 1626), 19. Repr. as *A Treatise on Comforting Afflicted Consciences* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1991), 13.

[246] TES, 28.

[247] Brian Cosby's *Suffering and Sovereignty: John Flavel and the Puritans on Afflictive Providence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012) helpfully traces many of these themes in Flavel and the broader Puritan literature.

resisting despair, and returning to the means of grace.

These commonalities help establish the distinctions demonstrating a precise structural inversion between the two cases:

1a. Spira is urged toward *private sacramental participation* (the Eucharist)—not the means of grace, but the Romish instrumental means of *restoration to* grace, in and by an act of personal ecclesiastical submission.
1b. Child is urged toward the means of grace amongst the gathered people of grace, where those means are properly to be found.

2a. Spira is urged toward public recantation unto absolution.
2b. Child is urged toward *public repentance and recantation*, unto assurance of salvation.

3a. Spira is counseled more theologically (appropriate for a layman) and individualistically.
3b. Child is counseled both theologically and ecclesially (repairing the public scandal; appropriate for a former preacher).

Their structural inversion is as follows: Spira churns inwardly as something of a reluctant Catholic—fairly sure Protestantism is true, but convinced it is inapplicable for him, as he believes himself non-elect.[248] In Child, the opposite dynamic presents itself. For Independents, Separatists, and many Presbyterians and Congregationalists, the COE was considered apostate. Child conforms to COE out of fear,[249] publishes a hit piece (ASA) attempting to assure his new associates that he really is waving their flag…and reluctantly slinks to Protestantism with Spira's verbiage on his lips and Spira's horrors in his heart, intensified by ASA's highly public nature. Their cases mirror each other—and each man concludes he has denied the truth and is therefore damned. Spira becomes the archetype of Protestant despair under Catholic pressure; Child, that of Dissenting despair under COE pressure. Each man violates conscience, betrays theological

[248] Spira's despair is Calvinistic in nature, not Catholic. Even surrounded by Roman clergy, he interprets his condition through the categories of election and reprobation, the unpardonable sin, the Pauline warnings (1 Cor. 11), and the impossibility of renewal (Heb. 6). He is trapped between Roman sacramental assurance—which he distrusts—and Reformational experiential theology, which he believes condemns him. Spira is Protestant in conscience, but Catholic in action.

[249] Child believes the dissenting position is true, but not safe. He interprets his condition through dissenting categories of denial and damnation: fear of suffering leads to his conformity (for safety); in so doing, he denies the faith, slanders the brethren, and betrays the persecuted church; thus he is apostate, and therefore damned. His despair is Separatist, not COE. Child is the inverse of Spira: Dissenting in conscience, but COE in action.

conviction, acts in fear, collapses under guilt, and interprets despair through Reformed experiential categories—though from opposite directions.

Collins's Critical, Consistent Response

I labor the point of Child's condition to demonstrate plainly how Hercules Collins (and others) answered it: *Collins always responds with Scripture's promises in Jesus Christ to sinful men*. He argues with a rigorous theological framework, reasoning from classical Protestant confessional and creedal exegesis of Scripture. Given how Child is approaching the Bible—weaponizing its curses, excluding himself from its promises—Collins's thorough, consistent method is absolutely necessary. Any other approach, on any other terms, would have dealt unfaithfully with Child's soul. Moreover, it would have conceded the biblical ground Child was claiming and thus confirmed him in his errors. Only an approach rooted in the deepest comprehension of his condition, answering with the most theological—and specifically, Christological and evangelical—arguments, refutations, and promises from Scripture could avoid doing positive and eternal damage to his soul.

Positioning Child as "the English Spira," then, was not a clever literary angle from which Collins could work from in editing TES; it was the inescapable conclusion of two cases virtually identical in their mental, doctrinal, and experiential despair. The Particular Baptist and Collinsian verbiage of "the English Spira" now comes quite distinctly into focus[250] as we turn to examine

[250] The two men's cases are frequently linked together and paralleled in Protestant hortative, sermonic, and theological literature in the sixteenth through seventeenth centuries. Examples from Keach, Delaune, and Collins will suffice here.

Keach exhorts his readers to caution against similar sins as the two men:

> And not knowing but that a faithful reciting of some Passages concerning the inward Horror of the said *Spira* and *Child*, may be of some use to Caution all to take heed of such like sins which they fell under, I shall tho' more briefly then I intended compare their States, Circumstatces, inward Anguish and Horror of their Spirits, together. (Keach, *A trumpet blown*, 43–44).

Similarly, in his 1691 *Believers-Baptism from Heaven*, Hercules Collins twice reminds his audience to exercise godly moderation in speaking of other Christians—particularly in theological dispute. The first instance:

Hercules's counseling of Child. Having established this framework, we now shift from Collins's theological reasoning to his pastoral practice itself—how he ministered to John Child in the crucible of despair.

Collins's Pastoral Counseling of an "English Spira"

How does any pastor handle a case where every pitch seems wild? Child is marked by a mental and theological unraveling and initially presents as one deeply in conflict with himself. As per above, his statements on maliciousness or non–maliciousness show a tortured consistency

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> Let that great Instance of Despair in *John Child* never be forgotten; that which lay with the most weight upon his Conscience, before he hanged himself, was, the Sin for his Writing and Speaking against this very People, as may be seen in that Book of his Despair. And those Scriptures were of great weight upon his Soul; *He that offends one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better a Mill-stone were hanged about his Neck, and he cast into the midst of the Sea*. *O*, said he, *I have touched the apple of God's eye: and*, says he, *this deserves a tearing in pieces, to sit and speak against thy brother, and slander thy own mother's son*, Psal. 50. Let all the People of God have such Thoughts, speak such Words, use such Carriages one toward another, and one of another, as we may have no occasion to repent of, when every secret Thing shall be brought into Judgment. (Collins, *Believers-Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine Institution. Infants-Baptism from Earth, and Human Invention. Proved from the Commission of Christ, the great Law-giver of the Gospel-Church. With a Brief, yet sufficient Answer to Thomas Wall's Book, called, Baptism Anatomized. Together with a brief Answer to a part of Mr. Daniel Williams's Catechism, in his Book unto Youth* [London, 1691], 106–107).

In the second instance, Collins employs Child's case to exhort saints toward godly decorum, even when engaging contentious points of doctrine such as baptism. He is answering John Wall (1588–1666):

> Query 3. Whether his [a theological interlocutor's] Language savours not more of *Ashdod* than *Canaan*? and whether it be not full of hard Speeches against those which *John Child* paid dearly for, and of whom Christ saith, *it were better a Mill–stone were hanged about his Neck, and he cast into the midst of the Sea?* …. My Prayer shall be…that thou mayest not run the hazard of thy Soul (as *John Child* did) so thou mayest but reproach the Innocent People of God. (In *Believers–Baptism from Heaven*, 110–111, 114).

Hercules touched on the same theme a final time in *The Antidote Proved a Counterfeit* (1693): "Remember, remember : *John Child*, whose chief cause of Desparation, was his speaking and writing against those very People of God you now do." (*The ANTIDOTE Proved a COUNTERFEIT, OR, ERROR DETECTED, AND Believers Baptism VINDICATED Containing An Answer to a Nameless Author's Book, Entituled, An Antidote to prevent the Prevalency of Anabaptism* [London, 1693], 11).

It bears noting that Thomas Delaune (d. 1685) also wrote *An Answer to Mr. John Childs paper, called, A Second Argument, &c.* which also apparently links Spira and Child, though I have thus far been unable to secure a copy of this work to engage it properly. I am uncertain if it is still extant.

At least one element of Child's gloomy predictions came true: he certainly was remembered.

—but he is also terribly conflicted, discouraged, and confused.[251] Complicating matters for Collins as a somewhat younger minister: he is thirty-six or thirty-seven years old and has pastored for only about eight years. Child, a veteran of twenty-plus years of preaching and ministry, has been a colleague and apparently something of a friend, but then defects to the COE. This move is to a body Collins has publicly and recently denounced in preaching and in print as a false church (*Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England*, 1682)—denunciations for which he has just spent over a year in prison. Child, in turn, has denounced everything and everyone (including Hercules) he once held dear—likewise in print—and has now defected from COE to come back…somewhat.

In his shame and self-condemnation, he believes himself reprobate, arguing from the basis of multiple biblical texts which seem (to him) to support his conclusion. Factor in his increasing suicidal ideation and intent, which are observably growing. The perfect storm has brewed for our young pastor to navigate without capsizing.

Yet he handles Child with great grace. Hercules does not record the same details as Keach or the other men do in TES, but what he does give constitutes the only extant record of Collinsian pastoral care, and one of the only known records of seventeenth-century Particular Baptist pastoral counseling—and it is a substantial record. His fervent, tender-yet-tenacious ministerial poise in that uncertain environment is remarkable; his insightful applications of biblical doctrine to bitter difficulties are instructive and imitable. Piggott's statement in Collins's funeral sermon concerning his constant care among his people is here robustly exemplified.

[251] One additional element of Child's confusion seems, perhaps, to have been from ungodly friends who influenced him, as per Pro. 13:20: "We…have some ground to suspect, when he was about this evil work which caused his downfall, he conversed with some persons, who rather promoted rather than cautioned him against it." In "To the Reader," TES, i/A2.

Summary of Collins's Counsel and Meetings with John Child

Before examining the meetings individually, a brief word on their structure is necessary. Evaluating TES[252] as presenting five, six, or seven meetings depends largely on how one interprets a printed column in the original document. My numbering of these meetings is functional, not attempting any reproduction of Collins's own (he gives none); I simply note carefully any clues within the text. Collins very well may have had additional unrecorded meetings with Child. That said: while acknowledging the difficulties of absolute certainty here, I believe that TES intends to record seven meetings between Collins and Child.

The fifth meeting is not recorded, but referenced on p. 28. If only six meetings are intended, then the record of the sixth meeting runs from pp. 28–29, with Collins present but largely silent until the end ("Do you love me?"[253]). If a sixth and seventh are intended, then Collins's contributions are not recorded in the sixth meeting, but his being named constitutes his presence at the sixth—and he hosts the seventh, which appears as a private conference between him and Child ("Being at one Mr. *C.*'s"[254]).

For analytical clarity, I treat these meetings as distinct events. Sketching these meetings affords a sense of a basic flow of Collins's pastoral care, providing a vantage point from which to observe his operative pastoral theology in motion. With this clarified, we now trace the meetings themselves in sequence.

Meeting #1: Undated[255]

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[252] Cf. Appendices Seven and Eight for exact transcriptions of the conferences between Collins and Child; see Appendix Ten for the respective cases for five, six, or seven meetings between them.

[253] TES, 28.

[254] TES, 28–29.

[255] TES, 18–20. This account and that of their second meeting are the most detailed of Collins's records.

In their first recorded conference—apparently at Child's home—Collins visits soon after being released from the Newgate gaol. Child's despair has become uncontainable, and Hercules finds him already convinced that he has committed an unpardonable sin and is irrevocably damned. Child, evidencing a deficient view of repentance while agreeing that recanting ASA "ought to be done,"[256] insists Scripture's promises cannot belong to him, interprets his inward terrors as divine judgment, and refuses every encouragement offered.[257]

He asserts he cannot bring himself to retract ASA publicly (a key tension in his conscience). Collins—whom Child confesses having "discoursed [against] you…hav[ing] thought to run down your Opinion [that is, reputation] by a Spirit of Insolency and Pride"[258]—responds by pressing the sovereignty and freeness of grace, revealing his pastoral instinct to confront despair and fear of man with doctrinal clarity and God's holy character, not mere sentimentality.

Meeting #2: August 21, 1684[259]

Collins returns roughly a week later to find his condition intensifying[260]: Child is terrified, and increasingly convinced that prayer is now impossible. Hercules opens by asking what he thinks would bring relief. Child replies that heaven itself would only deepen his shame,

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[256] TES, 19.

[257] During the process of withdrawing from Bunyan's church (1658–1659), Child apparently evidenced a willfulness and something of a resistance to heed the counsel of the body of Christ; as such, it is sad (if unsurprising) to find him still rejecting the counsels of his visiting Christian friends. See B.R. White (1934–2016), ed. *Association Records*, III.215:

> [T]he 'Bunyan' record…is clear that Child was not going to join the Quakers but that he linked up with 'Mr. Harris congregation' avoiding those he had been recommended to meet such as Simpson, Jessey and Rogers. This could have been Edward Harrison's congregation.

[258] TES, 19.

[259] TES, 20–22.

[260] His wife said that he often was sleepless; that struggle was likely presenting at this point. TES, 13.

insisting that God's "wrath is come upon me to the uttermost."[261]

Child applies biblical curses to himself, rejects every promise, and recounts failed attempts at prayer, declaring that neither men nor angels can help him. Collins responds with calm doctrinal reasoning—pressing the sovereignty of grace. But Child insists that his "day of grace…is gone."[262] He seems altogether hopeless, and Collins records no progress from their meeting.

Meeting #3: August 30, 1684[263]

The third meeting's record seems to begin somewhat mid-conversation. Collins asks if the book *before* ASA had been "Answer[ed] in a Manuscript."[264] Child acknowledges it had been "rationally Answered,"[265] but that he still published his book. After some productive and "calm reasoning,"[266] Child's desperation and unbelief rise; he considers himself "worse than Judas," insisting that the promises of grace "are Bread for [the] Children" of God—but not for him.[267] He insists he cannot pray or trust God.

Collins appeals to Is. 55, Ps. 34, and Job 13:15. He also challenges Child's misuse of Heb. 10 and 2 Pet. 2—revealing a pastoral counseling approach combining theological clarity, patient questioning, and a determination not to allow despair to override Scripture's witness.

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[261] TES, 21.

[262] TES, 21.

[263] TES, 21. This account and that of their first meeting are the most detailed of Collins's records.

[264] TES, 21. This book is apparently no longer extant; the Dissenter James Jones said in his *Modesty and Faithfulness* that it never existed and that the "*Second Argument*" was deceitful even in its title. Hercules seems (??) to acknowledge it, though his question could be taken as a genuine inquiry. Toward identifying the "Answer" given, we cannot be certain which specific book Hercules has in mind—there were multiple responses to Child's case.

[265]TES, 21.

[266] TES, 21.

[267] TES, 21.

Meeting #4: September 13, 1684[268]

Collins returns roughly three weeks later, accompanied by "Mr. *R.*," and finds his condition worsened: Child rejects major points of the Lord's Prayer. This rejection echoes Spira's logic, both emotional and theological: he believes that praying would be hypocritical. He argues that he cannot call God "Father," desire God's will, forgive, or give thanks: "All that I have is curst to me."[269] Collins urges the necessity of submission to God's terms of repentance and salvation (rather than demanding his own), showing a pastoral commitment to speaking truthfully and persevering graciously even when the attempt yields no visible fruit.

Their meeting is brief; it seems largely unproductive. Child refuses to pray, engage, or receive comfort—but Hercules likewise refuses to abandon him to be sifted in isolation.

Meeting #5: The "Warm Discourse" of the Previous Week: Undated[270]

In a later unrecorded (but plainly referenced) meeting with several friends, Child tells "Mr. *R.*" that he "had a turn in [his] spirit last week" as a result of a "warm discourse" with him and Collins "concerning the eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God,"[271] though its effect has since faded. The remark to "Mr. *R.*" referencing this fifth meeting occurs in the context of the sixth meeting.

Though no details survive, Child's remark reveals that Collins had pressed the doctrines of grace[272] with unusual warmth and that, for a moment, Child's despair had been interrupted by

[268] TES, 22. This account is the briefest of Collins's records.

[269] TES, 22.

[270] TES, 28. I demonstrate this meeting's existence in Appendix Ten.

[271] TES, 28.

[272] Remember that Child told Collins in their first meeting that he had "represented those of *Calvin*'s Principles beyond whatever they conceive, strained their Opinions beyond their Intentions, and drawn such Consequences as never were in their minds." (TES, 18). He had also spoken against them in ASA—rejecting both the principles and the people holding them.

hope at such an exalted view of God's greatness. This unrecorded meeting shows Collins's theological instincts at their most pastoral: he aims to re-anchor Child's imagination in the character and mercy of God rather than his own turbulent conscience.

Meeting #6: The "Collected Passages": Undated[273]

Child opens the sixth meeting reflecting on having had "a turn in [his] Spirit" the previous week after "that warm discourse I had with you and Mr. *H.C.* concerning…the soveraignty of divine grace"[274] (their fifth meeting). He now finds, however, that all such encouragement has vanished.

As his friends urge him toward prayer, repentance, and recantation, Child expresses both terror and longing, insists he cannot pray, believes God will not hear him, and interprets his despair as proof of non-election; he even declares to "Mrs. *M.*" that she will "as surely see [him] damned"[275] as she sees him standing before her. The exchange reveals a man oscillating between the poles of fleeting openness and crushing despair. It further shows Collins's pastoral circle laboring together in the same pattern he models: urging repentance, confronting false interpretations of conscience, and pressing Child concerning God's mercy even as he resists every comfort.

Collins is apparently silent during (much of?) this meeting, allowing the friends to take the lead in speaking to Child.

Meeting #7: The "Collected Passages" at "Mr. C.'s" House: Undated[276]

In a later, apparently private, final meeting "at one Mr. *C.*[ollins]'s" house, Child engages

[273] TES, 28. I argue for this meeting as #6 in Appendix Five.

[274] TES, 28.

[275] TES, 28.

[276] TES, 28–29. I address the case for this meeting as #7 in Appendix Five; it is a very brief record.

in what appears as an extended "discourse,"[277] expressing both terror and longing, and at one point taking "Mr. *C.*" by the hand and charging him quite emotionally to care for his wife and children. Trust and terror meet in his request. Child focuses on Spira, his despair over his own and his family's spiritual state, and his relationship with Collins. Hercules appeals to Child's love for him, and his presence in this meeting—as well as that he hosts it in his own home!—evinces a costly pastoral willingness to enter Child's social and emotional world, not merely his theological one.

Considering Collins's Method in the Meetings: Consistent Components

While pastors through two millennia of NT church history have practiced the careful cure of souls, what we now recognize as formal, standardized counseling methodology is largely a nineteenth-to-twentieth century development. Collins does not always begin in the same place, yet his foundation and framework remain remarkably consistent and beautifully simple: "Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2)—Christ, "clad in his promises,"[278] overflowing in all-sufficient mercy, as witnessed in his unfailing Word. Anchored in Scripture's immutable truth, no matter how many wild pitches he must swing at across these meetings, one thing becomes clear: Hercules is not improvising, but implementing.

Surface details shift—Child's terrors intensify, friends come and go, settings vary—but Collins's pastoral instincts remain remarkably stable. Why? His biblical and confessional center grounds his work; thus the shape of his pastoral care emerges from the narrative itself. He enters calmly; gathers information patiently; interprets Child's despair theologically, not

[277] TES, 28.

[278] As Calvin put it, "We enjoy Christ only as we embrace Christ clad in his own promises." In *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, transl. Ford Battles; ed. John McNeill (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), II.9.iii.

psychologically; probes, corrects, reasons, and exhorts from Scripture; presses the character and promises of God; calls for concrete acts of repentance and faith; and perseveres even when no progress is visible. The story, in other words, contains the structure of his pastoral counsel.

That structure may be observed by means of a six-part framework—not imposing a modern schema onto a seventeenth-century text, but a sketch which simply attempts to *categorize* what Collins does instinctively and unswervingly—thereby allowing his pastoral theology *as per TES's record* to come into clearer view. When placed alongside a basic contemporary biblical counseling framework (investigation, interpretation, involvement, hope–giving, instruction, implementation), Collins's pastoral practice in TES suggests substantial parallels.[279] The point here is not anachronistically wresting Collins into our era, but observing his basic controlling categories as biblical and far more ordered than may initially appear when considering Child's case. These categories are entirely unsurprising, given the common source then and now: the Bible.

This framework is merely an observed parallel as a simple analytical and organizing principle; I am not at all suggesting that Collins has these "six steps" in mind as he engages Child. They strictly afford a temporary trellis so we may better examine the vine of Collins's work on its own terms. His approach demonstrates his commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture and his consistency in applying his theological presuppositions methodologically.

Investigating: Gathering Data

Collins asks a series of specific data-gathering questions throughout their meetings. His posture is kind, persistent, and theological. That said, his questions are quite diagnostic in nature

[279] I develop this framework in *Authority and Application: A Pastoral Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Winter Springs, FL: The Greater Heritage, 2023).

and plainly intend to get to the heart of the matter:

1. To gather information as to the points of pain: "What part of that Book troubles you most?"[280]
2. To clarify and verify the duration of persistence in sinful behavior: "Did not you write a Book before the second Argument?" "Did not a Gentleman write some Animadversions upon it, by way of Answer in a Manuscript." "Was it a sufficient Answer." "Yet you printed this Book afterward."[281]
3. To assess spiritual practice and vitality: "Do you not sometimes find an inclination to Pray?"[282]
4. To evaluate Child's sense of sin and guilt: "Are you not heartily sorrowful for writing this?"[283]
5. To assess Child's grasp of the eternal danger he faces: "…can you contentedly sink into the Abyss of Misery, without striving for Salvation?" "Have you a desire to be saved?"[284]
6. To ascertain what exactly he still believed (in *A Second Argument* Child nearly redefines the gospel altogether): "If God should impute to you the righteousness of Christ, would it be of any advantage to you?"[285]
7. To determine intent: "Did you do what you did, in writing that Book, against the light of your Conscience, or motions of the Spirit?" [286]
8. To determine whether he suppressed his conscience: "Did you do what you did, in writing that Book, against the light of your Conscience?"[287]
9. To determine whether he consciously resisted or refused to acknowledge the illumining "motions of the Spirit."[288]
10. To discover his reasoning: "Why did you not call them in [cancel the printing order] before they were published?" [289]
11. To assess his openness to pastoral care: "Can you not desire my prayers?" "Shall I pray for you?" [290]
12. To ascertain perceived relief: "What do you think would give you relief?" [291]

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[280] TES, 18.

[281] TES, 21.

[282] TES, 21.

[283] TES, 18.

[284] TES, 19, 22.

[285] TES, 19.

[286] TES, 19.

[287] TES, 19.

[288] TES, 19.

[289] TES, 19.

[290] TES, 20, 22.

[291] TES, 20.

13. To determine if he is breaking off from his sin: "if it were now to do, would you do it again?"[292]
14. To probe for volitional paralysis: Child says he "cannot" do certain things—pray, hope, believe. Collins tests whether this is inability or refusal: "Can you sink…without striving for Salvation?" "[Why] would you not run to Christ?"[293] These are investigative questions in hortative form to diagnose whether Child's despair is functional unbelief or willful passivity.
15. To test for self-deception and mixed motives, not merely overt sin: Child admits he had a "cheat in my heart."[294] Collins presses him to discover what it was.

Interpreting: Grasping Problems

Collins works to discern Child's problems and patterns in light of Scripture's categories—he interprets Child's despair as spiritual and theological error, not modern clinical or psychological pathology (my anachronism here is intentional), nor merely historical "physick"[295] as Baxter was known for dealing in at times. Hercules operates with categories such as melancholy, temptation, and spiritual error, not diagnostic or clinical frameworks; his depth of conviction regarding the authority, effects, and sufficiency of Scripture shines here. He identifies:

1. Child's misuse, or imbalance in use, of Scripture: "You make application of the Curses in the Book of God, but not of the Promises."[296]
2. Diagnoses Child's hermeneutic as slander against God, not merely emotional distress: Child insists that God's "wrath is come upon me to the uttermost." Collins responds that such a despairing statement "reflects upon" God's sovereignty and graciousness—indeed, it "reflects upon"[297] his character.
3. Misinterpretation of conscience: Collins distinguishes between formal malice (against God) and material malice (against brethren), not readily allowing Child to collapse his sin—though serious

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[292] TES, 18.

[293] TES, 19.

[294] TES, 19.

[295] That is, medicine. Just as any wise biblical counselor would do today, Plant advises Child to "take care of your health, and consult with some able Physician, lest this distress and horror of mind bring you under such Distempers as may render you more uncapable of receiving that advice and comfort that may be offered to you from the Word of God." TES, 31.

[296] TES, 19.

[296] TES, 21.

[297] TES, 21. Hercules sees Child's statement as violating the Third Commandment.

—into the unpardonable sin.[298]

4. Challenging Child's caricatures of and fears concerning those he has wronged: by hosting Child at his home, multiple visits and appointments to attempt caring for his soul, and continually refocusing their conversations on Scripture, God's promises, the mercy of Christ, and their relationship in spite of having been sinned against.
5. Collins reads Child's despair as self-exaltation. It is not humility, but theological misjudgment of God: "To despair, reflects upon the Soveraignty of God's grace."[299]
6. Interprets his "I cannot pray" as unbelief, not inability; Collins responds not with sympathy but theological correction: "[C]an you contentedly sink into the Abyss of Misery, without striving for Salvation? … [S]trive to take hold of him."[300] Hercules will not allow unbelief to masquerade as inability.
7. Diagnosing his exceptionalism as spiritual pride and distortion: Child claims he is "one of the greatest Hypocrites that ever lived upon the Earth, and shall be so accounted; God…will do his will upon me." Collins replies, "You [do not] make application…of the Promises [in the Book of God]."[301] His case is not singular, and he ought not think of himself as somehow special in his sin.

Involving: Gaining Traction

Collins invests himself very personally, relationally, and sacrificially in Child's case. He models pastoral involvement as presence, affection, and embodied care in attempting to help him move past his despair:

1. Demonstration of relational priority: he visits Child multiple times just a few days after being released from over a year of prison.
2. Willingness to assist however possible: opens his care of Child's soul promising to help him "if it lye in my power."[302]
3. Hospitality: he opens his own home to sit with Child for their sixth (or seventh) and final meeting.[303]
4. Making a relational appeal: to their mutual love for one another: "Do you love me?"[304]
5. Patience: Collins does not demonstrate irritation, shock, or impatience in his meetings with Child.
6. Attentive silence: twice in their first meeting (pp. 18, 20), twice again in their third meeting

[298] TES, 19.

[299] TES, 21.

[300] TES, 19.

[301] TES, 21.

[302] TES, 18.

[303] TES, 28.

[304] TES, 28.

(pp. 21, 22), perhaps once in their fourth meeting (p. 22), at least once in their sixth meeting (p. 28), and at least once in their seventh (p. 28), he allows long stretches where Child appears to speak uninterrupted. In their sixth meeting (p. 28), Collins appears largely silent. His silence, however, is a form of pastoral involvement by restraint—giving Child space to reveal his heart (Luke 6:45) and (particularly in that sixth meeting) to be ministered to by others. It is a subtle pastoral counseling skill to be "quick to hear" (Jam. 1:19) and not constant in speech—but one which must not be mistaken for passivity.

7. Persistence: returning repeatedly despite apparent lack of meaningful progress.
8. Allowing physical contact from Child; this occurrence is not incidental, but deeply illustrative of Collins's tenderness toward a straying soul: "(And taking Mr.*C.* by the hand…)."[305]
9. Receiving Child's charge concerning his family, understanding in it both physical and spiritual need being expressed (TES represents an element of his execution of that charge): "I conjure thee by the eternal God, that thou take care of my Wife and Children…Oh, what an ungodly Family have I!"[306]
10. Simply absorbs without comment—or deviation from the gospel—Child's accusations and admission that "I have discoursed you…and have thought to run down your Opinion by a Spirit of Insolency and Pride."[307] Hercules never defends himself or corrects Child's portrayal of him.

Inspiring: Giving Hope

Collins holds forth the promises and mercy of God to Child consistently—he relentlessly encourages him to believe that they are true for every repenting sinner, through Jesus. His hope-giving for Child is not sentimental, but doctrinal; he roots it in God's character and promises:

1. Offering specific verses of Scripture: "Consider *Isai.* 55. *Psal.* 34. 5."[308]
2. Promising things God has promised in Scripture, particularly concerning the gospel: "If God would take you into his favour, that would relieve you."[309]
3. Giving hope by contrast—Child magnifies his sins, but Collins magnifies God's mercy: "If God would take you into his favour, that would relieve you."[310] Child's imagined God is harsh; Collins knows the God of Scripture is kind to repenting sinners.
4. Reminding that God deals with men differently than we deal with him: "[God] pardons and justifies for his own Name's sake."[311]

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[305] TES, 28; cf. Mk. 1:41. This instance speaks also to Collins's physical proximity to Child while meeting, which is a pastoral-theological act in itself.

[306] TES, 28.

[307] TES, 19.

[308] TES, 21.

[309] TES, 22.

[310] TES, 22.

[311] TES, 18.

5. Encouraging with sound doctrine: the unpublished-but-referenced fifth meeting gave Child "a turn in [his] Spirit…as a result of that warm discourse I had with…Mr. *H.C.* concerning the eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God."[312]
6. Pointing him to the "purchased blessedness"[313] of Christ's sufferings for sinners.

Instructing: God's Word

Hercules gently but firmly corrects and instructs Child in biblical categories of repentance, faith, and obedience. His handling of Scripture is catechetical, doctrinal, and pastoral. For example:

1. Correcting false notions of repentance: "[T]he best part of repentance is to turn from evil."[314]
2. Contradicting false notions of merit or self-payment (underscoring inability and insufficiency) in justification: "We are not capable of making God restitution."[315]
3. Exhortation concerning biblical endurance from those who have suffered in faith: "*Job* saith, *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*"[316]
4. Instruction concerning God's authority in redemption: "To despair, reflects upon the Soveraignty of God's grace."[317]
5. Demonstrates his despair as a theological error in action, not just a feeling: "To despair, reflects upon the Soveraignty of God's grace."[318]
6. Reflection on and exposition of the glory and grace of God's decrees: apparently their unrecorded fifth meeting focused in large part upon "the eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God."[319]
7. Instruction in the right use of Scripture: "You make application of the Curses in the Book of God, but not of the Promises."[320]
8. Correction and instruction concerning the all-encompassing effectuality of grace: Child states that if he "were in Heaven, it could not relieve me…for there I should behold the face of a holy God…with shame and confusion of face." Collins corrects him: "If God would take you into his favour, that would relieve you."[321]

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[312] TES, 28.

[313] TES, 19.

[314] TES, 18.

[315] TES, 18.

[316] TES, 22.

[317] TES, 21.

[318] TES, 21.

[319] TES, 28.

[320] TES, 21.

[321] TES, 21.

9. Teaches the right use of conscience, distinguishing formal malice (against God) and material malice (against men).[322]

Implementing: Guiding Next Steps

Collins gives practical steps for Child to take toward repentance and faith. He directs him to finding peace of conscience and soul before God and men with concrete, actionable, biblical counsel, not vagueness:

1. Public repentance: "Your next work is to make restitution…by publick Recantation." "With all speed…publish your Recantation."[323]
2. Cast yourself on Christ's mercy for sinners: "Would you not run to Christ?"[324]
3. Forsake evil, do good, and you will feel better: "[T]he best part of repentance is to turn from evil."[325]
4. Returning to Scripture will be returning to God: "Set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it."[326]
5. Actively cultivate and stir up faith: "Strive to take hold of [Christ] and his purchased blessedness."[327]
6. Prayer: he repeatedly urges Child to pray, and to desire prayer.[328]
7. Prayer: Collins also urges Child to *receive* prayer as an act of faith, if he "cannot pray" himself: "Can you not desire my prayers?"[329] Receiving intercession is an act of faith and humility.
8. Pushes for urgent, immediate action: "with all speed," "set your self."[330] These terms are not coercion, but great concern.
9. Urges earnestness and heart-level dealing with God and his word: "[S]trive." "[S]et your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it."[331]

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[322] TES, 19. Note, #8 is closely related to #7; a conscience not informed by Scripture overestimates self and underestimates God.

[323] TES, 18, 20.

[324] TES, 19.

[325] TES, 18. "The best part" in Collinsian verbiage generally intends something along the lines of the main, chief, or most important part. However, remember that Collins is encouraging one severely downcast; themes from Ps. 34 echo in aspects of his counsel. "Best" is certainly within the semantic range to speak hearteningly here as well.

[326] TES, 20.

[327] TES, 19.

[328] TES, 19–22.

[329] TES, 20, 28.

[330] TES, 20.

[331] TES, 19–20.

In short, TES shows that Collins's pastoral counseling is carefully ordered by the Canon, not merely reactive to Child. Its several components, while presenting with a high degree of interchangeableness, map well onto the modern biblical counseling categories—again, strictly as comparative points—because they all derive from the Bible's categories and concerns. These components outline a basic structure of Collins's pastoral counsel.

The narrative also uncovers subtler ministerial instincts—habits of heart, reflexes of soul—formed by Scripture, suffering, and the Spirit of God. These essential elements of his pastoral counseling, animating and shaping his ministry to John Child, now come into clearer view.

Ten Further Elements of Collins's Pastoral Biblical Counseling Instincts

Collins's multiple visits to Child afford at least something of an emerging and readily observable pattern throughout TES. His tone is gentle and patient, direct yet respectful, reasoning and reasonable, and thoroughly evangelical and Reformed. He embodies Paul's charge of "entreat[ing] an older man as a father" (1 Tm. 5:1), the priestly "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Heb. 5:2), and the pastoral authority of "command[ing] and teach[ing] these things" (1 Tm. 4:11). This tender steadfastness was born in Collins of his own afflictions and temptations, and it surfaces repeatedly in his care for Child. These instincts frame his pastoral counseling of John Child.

Speaking Experientially

Piggot considered that "hardly any Man was more grievously tempted of the Devil"[332] than Hercules. Given his struggles to this point, Collins does not engage the heart's sorrows theoretically, but personally and experientially. He counsels with Child from the Scriptures, the

[332] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 236.

gospel, and the character of God because he is well-acquainted with clinging to those same holy verities in seasons of darkness. His gentle-but-firm consistency in these matters illustrates Piggott's testimony[333] concerning his constancy in care among his people. While no other counseling records survive from Collins's ministry, TES affords a rare glimpse of what his sympathy and steadfastness looked like in action. His own experiences of severe temptation and suffering appear to have shaped a pastoral tenderness, producing an instinctive and sympathetic awareness which surfaces again and again.

Dealing Seriously

Hercules takes the threat with full seriousness, regarding Child's condition as genuinely dangerous to his person, family, and soul. His concern is evidenced in his repeated visits—more than anyone else recorded in TES except "*Mr*. E.P. *who was frequently with him in the year before he died.*"[334]

Collins makes probably seven visits to Child—a substantial investment of time given the size of his Wapping congregation and that he had only just returned from over a year in prison. He was also simultaneously negotiating widely-varying challenges: mentally processing his prison time and subsequent legal situation; navigating re-entry into his home, with all the attendant complexities of emotional and relational adjustments that reunion would entail; facing the ongoing heat of religious persecution; wrestling with his own chronic health struggles; enduring the emotional toll a case like Child's takes on a pastor of any tenure. Child hangs himself in October 1684, and Collins's son Joshua is dead eleven months later; was Joshua Collins already ill? We do not know. Yet amidst all this, Hercules's deportment and counsel are

[333] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 240.

[334] TES, 23. One wonders, humanly speaking, whether the outcome for Child might have been different had Collins not been imprisoned for that year.

exemplary: he neither provokes nor tempts Child, but speaks with Scripture's mercy, a sense of eternal sobriety, and the urgency of love. Others wrote letters; Hercules showed up.

Reasoning Biblically

Hercules consistently derives his counsel's rationale and responses from Scripture, meeting Child's objections with the Bible's record of Christ's person, work, and promises. He arms himself with the Word, not his own wisdom—in the process demonstrating a biblical foundation far outpacing his pastoral tenure. His interactions with Child display a deep conviction of the full sufficiency of Scripture for the sorrows of the soul.

The Bible, as the Reformers and Puritans repeatedly insist, is true (αλήθεια) and trustworthy (αυτοπιστης) in and of itself because it is the Word of the living God. As such, it is worthy of faith (αξιοπίστης) and obedience. Thus Child's despair is not virtuous humility, but impious unbelief. Collins reasons from the eternal perspective of Scripture, not the temporal perspective of fear, faithlessness, and the "fleeting pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25). Convictions like these undergird Hercule's every word in TES.

Framing Theologically

Calvinistic doctrine is the framework from which Hercules reasons, and its biblical contours are plainly his instinctive reflex in counseling. He uses election[335] to comfort, not terrify; Child himself testifies that their fifth (unrecorded) meeting gave him "a turn in [his] Spirit"[336] (receiving encouragement) as Collins spoke of the "eminency and soveraignty" of God.[337] Here, God's "eminency"[338] means that the divine attributes and majesty feature

[335] TES, 21, 22.

[336] TES, 28.

[337] TES, 28.

prominently in Collins's counsel.

He responds to Child's insistence of reprobation as an affront to the "soveraignty of God's grace"[339]—in other words, Child wrongs God in drawing that conclusion. Hercules speaks of reprobation to warn, not to condemn[340]; he recognizes it as a legitimate *category*, but not a legitimate *conclusion* for Child. He urges perseverance to draw him toward grace, not presuming upon Child's sense of his state; Hercules never affirms him as reprobate or regenerate. Instead, Child must "strive to take hold of" [341] Christ. He charges him to study Scripture's truth and knead it into his soul: "Set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it"[342]—the language of covenantal perseverance.

Collins's counseling instincts are deeply theological, deeply Reformational, deeply pastoral[343]—and deeply applied.

Arguing Evangelically

Collins's counsel returns repeatedly to the gospel's promises. He knows a soul wounded by sin needs the balm of Christ's pledges of pardon in the gospel. Thus he persuades his friend with Scripture's conclusions concerning Christ's work and merciful welcome. He argues the arguments of Scripture concerning the willingness of Jesus to receive sinners. Here we glimpse something of the fervor Piggott describes as characterizing his ministry (he was one "entirely

[338] TES, 28.

[339] TES, 21.

[340] TES, 21.

[341] TES, 19.

[342] TES, 20.

[343] Perhaps something of why he edited the *Heidelberg Catechism* comes into sharper focus here?

devoted to the service of the Temple"[344]), an intensity and urgency which recognizes the need of the moment and the danger of Child's state of soul. He is under no delusion about the stakes; his actions and efforts in TES plainly reflect his comprehension.

Engaging Relationally

Hercules expresses concern, love, and friendship in every visit as he counsels Child. He also participates in at least three multi-party visits (meetings #4–#6), refusing to let Child drift into isolation. He deals very personally—Hercules's final recorded words in TES ask Child, "Do you love me?"[345] as Child takes his hand. Such a relational, affectionate appeal is potent: Collins adopts no professional distance, but serves as a shepherd who has left the ninety-nine to pursue the one (Luke 15:3–7). That he not only was trust-*worthy*, but *trusted by* Child's family is seen poignantly in his final charge to Collins to take care of his wife and children[346]—demonstrating Collins's relationship with them as well. That he continues to visit Child also puts Hercules at risk of arrest again; after all, his public defection attracts attention. He further opens himself to costly emotional (and potentially physical) risk in trying to snatch Child out of his suicidal ideation.

Documenting Accurately

Multiple friends were involved in attempting to dissuade and encourage Child, both pastors and laymen alike. Collins goes to several of them after Child's death to "collect"[347]—and presumably also to verify—their summaries of their efforts, alongside his own. He also is

[344] Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 239.

[345] TES, 28.

[346] TES, 28.

[347] TES, 28.

responsible for preparing for publication (editing) the papers Child's widow gave to him comprising his retraction, and most likely TES as a whole.

Knowing how prominent and public Child's case was, Collins clearly gave significant attention to accuracy and clarity in his own record-keeping of his counsels to Child; his documented interactions are vivid and lively, detailed and animated, affording a genuine sense of the moment. His counseling notes were unquestionably set down with great care.

Conversing Constructively

While counseling, Collins labors to prevent Child's focus from resting on his sins or his increasingly-distorted perceptions of reality as they meet. Instead, he aims to encourage, and to redirect him to God's mercy, Word, and providence. For example, in their first meeting, Child insists he has "all the signs of one whom God hath left forsaken and hardened"[348]—an attempt to draw Collins into speculation about God's decree. In a striking move, Hercules does not even respond to the statement. Instead, he immediately asks him about the gospel—quite a redirect!

He points to God's mercy while also noting positive things in his life which God has providentially preserved—primarily his relationships: his wife, children, and friends who care about him. When Child fears others will not forgive him, Collins redirects him to Scripture's hope through the means of repenting and recanting.[349]

Directing Respectfully

Hercules is gently but firmly confrontational and directive in his counseling. He maintains self-control and stays calm for the sake of guiding his friend. For example, he gives

[348] TES, 19.

[349] TES, 18. Some of Collins's language here seems quietly, but suggestively, allusive to the offended parties' duty and willingness to forgive a repentant brother; cf. Luke 17:3–4, Matt. 18:21–35.

Child specific directions: "turn from evil"[350]; make restitution[351]; retract ASA publicly[352]; seek reconciliation with those he has wronged[353]; "run to Christ…strive to take hold of Christ"[354]; attend public worship, so as to be under preaching and the means of grace[355]; "cleave to…the truth of God"[356] rather than his own thoughts and feelings; pray, or at least desire prayer[357]; and pay attention to biblical examples and promises of mercy.[358]

Returning Persistently

Collins counsels with Child seven times—and is unsuccessful every time. For six out of those seven visits,[359] when they part ways, Child remains deeply discouraged. For one trying to give counsel, little is more difficult than seeing the sufferer's troubles persist, despite one's best efforts. Yet Hercules keeps coming back. He visits again—listens again—asks questions again—reminds of mercy again—quotes Scripture again—tries again—holds forth Christ again. Collins keeps returning with a persistence born of the love that would not let *him* go; he likewise points Child to God's mercy in Jesus over and over.

Ultimately, his every directive comes to this *sine qua non*: Child must trust in Christ's

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[350] TES, 18.

[351] TES, 18.

[352] TES, 20. Others instruct him in this matter as well; see TES, 12.

[353] TES, 19.

[354] TES, 19.

[355] TES, 20: "set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it" would necessarily involve the Fourth Commandment and the ordinary means of grace in the context of the gathered congregation.

[356] TES, 20.

[357] TES, 22.

[358] TES, 21.

[359] TES, 28—referencing the unrecorded–but–referenced fifth meeting, which occurred somewhere between p. 22 and p. 28—where Child said he felt encouraged after Collins's counsel (with "Mr. *R*.").

mercy, ability, and willingness to give repentance, not presume to know the decree of God concerning his soul.[360] Hercules speaks to specific points where Scripture requires his obedience, repentance, and faith—and he does not speak in generalities. His calls are actionable and clear, consisting of biblical propositions to be believed and practical particulars to be pursued. He is both direct and directive as he identifies these points, balancing truth and grace well—no mincing of words, no pulling the punch—but no twisting the knife, either.

Collins's Effectiveness: Child's Retraction

With Collins's pastoral instincts in view, the question naturally arises: what fruit did his counsel yield in Child's final days? The retractions provide the clearest and most tangible window into Hercules's effectiveness as a counselor.

I have documented above at least twenty people referenced in TES; thus I do not contend that Hercules was the *primary* reason Child retracted his writings. That said, given his strong presence, Collins was deeply influential in Child's repentance—and perhaps more so than many others, judging by the role he plays during Child's decline and after his death. He is certainly not the only presence in this narrative, but he seems to be the most consistent one. Hercules's counsel shapes Child's repentance through his presence as one of the most theologically-formative and pastorally-steady influences in his final days. Child dies in despair, *but he dies confessing sin, retracting error, seeking forgiveness, and finally asking for prayer*. This is what Puritan repentance looks like—because it is what *biblical* repentance looks like. Puritan categories simply reflect Scripture's categories.

TES itself quietly frames Collins's counsel as effective by its layout. The retractions are placed immediately after the interviews, helping the reader to see what Hercules and the other

[360] TES, 21, 22.

"Attestors" saw. In editing and arranging TES in this way, Collins and his friends aim not at self-promotion, but at helping their readers draw the same conclusion they had drawn. It also serves an evangelistic function, where those who similarly despair should learn from Child's example to trust in God's mercy in Christ, rather than "leaning on their own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

Based on the three retractions Child left behind, we should conclude that he renounced his apostasy to the COE. In other words: by grace, Collins's counseling (along with that of many others) was blessed of God unto the fruit of Child's repentance and faith.

In his longest retraction, "*Mr.* Child'*s Recantation in his Paper, written with his own Hand*,"[361] Child moves section-by-section through his published aspersions, decisively withdrawing each sinful statement. In TES, Collins places it first, just after the attestations conclude. He organizes it in a clear point-counterpoint, assertion-retraction manner. Hercules's arrangement delivers a powerful note of hope after readers wade through the darkness of Child's decline: one finishes reading the testimonies of his friends, soberly reflecting on the charges Child levels—and then finds them vigorously withdrawn.

His "*Recantation*" alone would suffice (negatively), but his two handwritten retractions[362] go further (positively): they make explicit confession of sin, hypocrisy, malice, and calumny against the brethren. Child confesses that he forsook the ways of God, acted against conscience, and preferred safety and reputation over truth. He owns that he has wronged the dissenting churches and knowingly published false accusations, aligning himself with "the Accuser of the

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[361] TES, 33–38.

[362] "*Pride, Folly, Madness, Villany, and great wickedness retracted*" (TES, 39–41) and "*Another Paper written as a Postscript to the former, by Mr.* John Child'*s own hand ; a Copy whereof take as followeth*" (TES, 41–42). Perhaps the only question is in his final paragraph. He writes, "Publickly to discover Nakedness, tho' matters of fact were true, is against all good Nature, and a very great piece of prophaness" (TES, 42). The language *could* suggest a qualifying of his repentance (e.g., because "the matters of fact were true"), but the context persuades me otherwise.

Brethren."[363] He concludes his retractions saying he doubts he can be forgiven, but "for all the base Reflections, Slanders, and most astonishing Accusations and Censures, I beg Pardon of all good men, and their Prayers to God, that I may obtain Pardon and Forgiveness at his Hand."[364]

Crucially, Child also retracts his defense of the COE, acknowledging his arguments as driven by fear, pride, and self-interest. He confesses that he slandered the Dissenters knowingly, and repents of having "forsaken that which is good." He never uses the explicit verbiage of "renunciation," but—considering:

1. That he repudiates and recants in writing, multiple times, all that he had embraced and defended;
2. That he does not destroy[365] those papers containing his retractions, but leaves them to be found posthumously, in some coherent form suitable for their publication;
3. That he returns to Dissenting ministers—however falteringly—for final pastoral care; and
4. That he dies outside the COE,

—in the seventeenth century, it constitutes a full renunciation.

Conclusion

We began this chapter with the "obvious question" as to whether TES reflects how Hercules Collins typically counseled. TES cannot give a definitive answer, of course—but the evidence strongly suggests that it does offer an accurate portrayal. The "start-and-stop" dynamic of Child's case, the volatility of the crisis, and the emotional turbulence of the meetings all serve to reveal Collins's pastoral instincts under substantial pressure. Far from improvising, he reasons, exhorts, comforts, warns, and directs from the same biblical and confessional categories which shape his entire corpus. He would not have been able to recite our modern, neatly-categorized "six elements of biblical counseling," but TES overwhelmingly demonstrates that those elements

[363] TES, 42; Rev. 12:10.

[364] TES, 42.

[365] TES, 28.

were in his heart—for they are the categories of the Bible itself.

TES thus opens an uncommon window into the "coming-of-age" of a young minister forced to navigate a nightmare. What surfaces is not uncertainty, but a steady, maturing pattern of faithful pastoral instincts: every casuistic impulse is governed by a well-formed biblical and theological mind. The Hercules we see in TES is the same Hercules we meet in his writings—only here, we see him in motion. TES affords us a clear view of an exceedingly rare occurrence in Puritan and Particular Baptist history: it offers the great gift of witnessing the "in-the-room" dialogue, demonstrating something of how Collins cared for never-dying souls.

We must conclude, though, with another obvious question—but it is the one Hercules himself, as a pastor, would be most concerned that we ask: was John Child repentant? Based on the interviews alone, reaching that conclusion is difficult: he fixates on a perceived inability to repent, wallows in nagging doubts that he was not sorry enough, and vents heavily emotional responses toward both the climate of ecclesiastical persecution and the heavy hand of God upon him. But when those meetings are placed alongside his written retractions, the evidence builds a strong case for his repentance. By placing the retractions at the conclusion of TES—after the interviews, just before the postscript pleading for toleration and the cessation of persecution—the editor signals that grace must have the final word.

If Child indeed died repentant, then Collins's pastoral labor was not in vain. TES strongly suggests that Hercules's faithful biblical counseling bore true evangelical fruit, even if he did not get to witness it in this life. Pastors often sow in tears, and reap in ways unseen.

The case of John Child does more than illuminate Collins's pastoral method in crisis; it also positions us to consider some wider contours of his pastoral theology as a whole. What we witness in TES—the instincts, categories, and habits of mind that surface under pressure—are not

isolated features of a single crisis, but windows into the deeper structures governing Collins's labors. Thus TES both reveals his pastoral theology and demonstrates its fruitfulness. Our next chapter explores how these same instincts and commitments came to bear in his pulpit ministry.

CHAPTER 5

"EVERY CHURCH WAS THEN A SEMINARY": HERCULES COLLINS AND *THE TEMPLE REPAIR'D*

> "You must not expect that Preachers will drop down from Heaven, or spring out of the Earth; but due Care must be taken for the incouragement of humble men that have *real Gifts* and let such be train'd up in *useful Learning*, that they may be able to defend the Truths they preach."[1]
> —John Piggott (ca. 1670–1713)

Introduction

Nearly the entire Puritan corpus is ultimately comprised of what modern theologians refer to as pastoral theology. It appears in varying forms and genres: they published deep theological treatises, biblical commentaries, collections of expositional sermons, and practical guides to piety. Almost all are intended as *theologia pro ecclesia*, applied to the soul's concerns, reasoned from the Scriptures to help ordinary people know their God. When a Puritan minister redirected his pen from pew to pulpit, addressing his pastoral theology to those entrusted with preaching the gospel, he still surveyed his subject through an expositional, experimental, exegetical lens. Published in 1702, Hercules Collins's (ca. 1646/1647–1702) treatise *The Temple Repair'd, or, An ESSAY to revive the long-neglected Ordinances, of exercising the spiritual Gift of Prophecy for the Edification of the Churches; and of ordaining Ministers duly qualified. With proper*

[1] John Piggott, "A Funeral Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr. Hercules Collins preach'd Octob. 9. 1702. from Mat. 24. 44. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh," in his *Eleven Sermons Preach'd upon Special Occasions, by the Late Reverend Mr. John Piggott, Minister of the Gospel. Being all that were Printed in his Life-Time. Together with Mr. Pilkington's Recantation of the Errors of the Romish Church, as 'twas published by Mr. Piggott. To which is added, Mr. Piggott's Funeral Sermon, preach'd by Mr. Joseph Stennett : Containing some Account if his Life and Character* (London: John Darby, 1714), 239.

Directions as to Study and Preaching, for such as are inclin'd to the Ministry[2] (hereafter TTR) provides a fascinating and homiletically-fruitful example of just such a work.

TTR also carries the distinction of being his last known book, published shortly before his death. One discerns a sense of *gravitas* about it, almost an awareness that he stands on the precipice of eternity—a sense of finality and fervency frame each point. Subtle urgency runs through its pages: a comprehension of the weight of souls, a recognition of the majesty of Christ, a realization of the necessity of his appointed means of preaching his gospel for the ingathering of his elect. Collins writes as one who has labored hard and long for the cause of God and truth, and he yearns with a godly jealousy for the wellbeing and upbuilding of Christ's blood-bought church. He writes to set in order what is lacking, strengthen what remains, and to offer one final act of service to his Lord.

Approaching The Temple Repair'd

Despite being the final work of one of the most prominent Puritan and Particular Baptist pastors of the seventeenth century, TTR has largely been forgotten by Baptist historians. Given Collins's standing among London Particular Baptists, his corpus's neglect and near-burial for three centuries is puzzling[3]; given the seasoned counsels and defense of the gifted brother (GB

[2] All citations are from Hercules Collins, *The Temple Repair'd, or, An ESSAY to revive the long-neglected Ordinances, of exercising the spiritual Gift of Prophecy for the Edification of the Churches; and of ordaining Ministers duly qualified. With proper Directions as to Study and Preaching, for such as are inclin'd to the Ministry* (London: Printed for William and Joseph Marshal, 1702). I hope in a future study to put Collins's work in TTR alongside Robert Purnell's (1606–1666) chapter on preaching in *A LITTLE CABINET RICHLY Stored with all sorts of Heavenly Varieties, and Soul-reviving Influences. Wherein there is a remedy for every Malady, viz. Milk for babes, and meat for strong men, and the ready way for both to obtain and retain assurance of Salvation: Being an Abridgement of the Sum and Substance of the true CHRISTIAN Religion; wherein The Cause of our Salvation, the Way, the Guide, the Rule, the Evidence, the Seals, &c. and the connection of these points together, and Dependancy of them one upon another: This I have endeavoured to do orderly, exactly, methodically, with much plainness and clearness. By Robert Purnell* (London, 1657); repr. Jeffrey Johnson, ed. *A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity from 1657* (Conway, AR: Free Grace Press, 2026). There are several interesting points of correlation.

[3] That his work was not reprinted within his own day was likely due to his advocacy of controversial positions, primarily laying hands upon newly baptized believers and congregational singing. Its neglect by historians

hereafter) within TTR, its oversight means that modern Reformed Baptists are operating with a deficient grasp of seventeenth-century ecclesiology. Most contemporary 1689 pastors affirm the doctrine of the GB on a basic level, with its attendant qualifications and a general sense that it should be a training-wheels stage for future elders; but they cannot articulate the role much further. Thus TTR is of critical importance for a faithful and full–orbed confessional ecclesiology.

While Collins's 1680 *An Orthodox Catechism*[4] (hereafter OC) represents his revision of a broadly-accepted Reformed standard, TTR is of a somewhat different character. In it, Hercules draws primarily from four sources, though their development is his own. He references John Owen's (1616–1683) corpus, primarily via excerpts from his Hebrews commentaries[5]; he draws from the 1658 Congregationalist book *The Preacher Sent*[6]; and he leans on William Perkins's (1558–1602) *The arte of prophecying*[7] (1592, Latin; 1606, English). A fourth uncited—though

since the seventeenth century, however, is one of the most curious oversights of Baptist history. Thankfully, Hesed & Emet has undertaken the labor of restoring his corpus for publication and preservation.

[4] *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and Error, by H. Collins* (London: 1680).

[5] Collins sometimes quotes and sometimes summarizes John Owen's treatment of Heb. 5:12–14, drawn from Owen's *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews also concerning the Messiah wherein the promises concerning him to be a spiritual redeemer of mankind are explained and vindicated, his coming and accomplishment of his work according to the promises is proved and confirmed, the person, or who he is, is declared, the whole economy of the mosaic law, rites, worship, and sacrifice is explained: and in all the doctrine of the person, office, and work of the Messiah is opened, the nature and demerit of the first sin is unfolded, the opinions and traditions of the ancient and modern Jews are examined, their objections against the Lord Christ and the Gospel are answered, the time of the coming of the Messiah is stated, and the great fundamental truths of the Gospel vindicated: with an exposition and discourses on the two first chapters of the said epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1668).

[6] John Martin (1595–1659), Samuel Petto (ca. 1624–1711), and Frederick Woodal (b. 1614). *The preacher sent: or, A vindication of the liberty of publick preaching, by some men not ordained. In answer to two books: 1. Jus divinum ministerii euengelici. By the Provincial Assembly of London. 2. Vindiciæ ministerii evangelici. By Mr. John Collings of Norwich* (London: 1658/1657). Michael Brown has surveyed Petto's life in *Puritan Reformed Journal* 2:1 (January 2010), "Samuel Petto (c. 1624–1711): A Portrait of a Puritan Pastor Theologian."

[7] William Perkins, *The arte of prophecying, or, A treatise concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of preaching first written in Latine by Master William Perkins ; and now faithfully translated into English (for that it containeth many worthie things fit for the knowledge of men of all degrees) by Thomas Tuke* (London: By Felix Kyngston for E.E. and are to be sold in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Swan, 1607). Several recent

recommended[8]—source, both stylistically and materially instrumental for TTR, is William Ames's (1576–1633) *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*[9] (1623, Latin; 1638, English). He weaves together their thought with his own to produce a significant contribution to the Particular Baptist seventeenth century corpus. If, as Irvonwy Morgan surmised, Puritanism must properly be "assessed in terms of the pulpit,"[10] Collins's work in TTR is Puritan theology in its overalls and work boots.

Hercules's indebtedness to Owen's commentaries and *The Preacher Sent* is obvious, given his attributions to those sources and (with *The Preacher Sent*) his summary reproduction of its basic argument. I have accordingly not given great attention to their influence on him; further study is merited, but beyond the scope of this chapter. Less clear, though, has been the weight of Ames and Perkins for Collins's thought; it made more sense to trace their fingerprints. Doing so helps further cement both Hercules and the British Particular Baptists as properly located squarely within the Reformation and Puritan heritage. Given Collins's prominence among the Particular Baptists, it also quietly helps to establish the ongoing effect of Ames's and Perkins's

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surveys of Perkinsian thought include Joel Beeke, Matthew Payne, and J. Stephen Yuille, eds. *Faith Working Through Love: The Theology of William Perkins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022); Joel Beeke and Greg Salazar, eds. *William Perkins: Architect of Puritanism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019); and Andrew Ballitch and J. Stephen Yuille, eds. *The Wholesome Doctrine of the Gospel: Faith and Love in the Writings of William Perkins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020).

[8] TTR, 49. In the original edition of TTR's list, it is printed as #36 (a typographical error); this is the second #36 in TTR and should be considered #37. The first #36 is found on p. 47.

[9] *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method. By WILLIAM AMES, sometime Doctor and professor of Divinity in the famous University at Franeken in Friesland. Translated out of the Latine, for the benefit of such who are not acquainted with strange Tongues. Whereunto are annexed certaine Tables representing the substance and heads of all in a short view, directing to the Chapters where they are handled. As also a table opening the hard words therein contained. A Worke usefull for this Season* (London: 1638).

[10] Irvonwy Morgan (1910–1998), *Puritan Spirituality* (London: Epworth Press, 1973), 7. Note further: Collins clearly appreciates Italian Reformer and Bible translator Giovanni (John/Jean) Diodati's (1576–1649) *Pious Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, citing it twice and recommending the work at the end of TTR. Andrea Ferrari surveys his life in "A Biographical Sketch of John Diodate," in Richard Barcellos and Robert Martin, eds. *The Reformed Baptist Theological Review*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Jan 2007); see also his *John Diodati's Doctrine of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage/Soli Deo Gloria, 2006).

respective writings within those circles.

Literarily, Ames's *Marrow* wields a unique influence on Collins's thought in TTR, Particularly his chapter "Ordinary Ministers and Their Office in Preaching."[11] Homiletically, Collins adapts and develops William Perkins's categories of hearers from *The arte of prophesying*, and replicates something of that same impulse and methodology from Ames's *Marrow*. Stylistically, TTR's layout is reminiscent of Amesian format. Materially, TTR presents something of an adaptation, in part: Collins simplifies, modifies, and perhaps even abridges both the *Marrow* and *The arte of prophesying* at points, while also developing his own material. This practice seems reflective of Collins's context—nonconformity meant no university, of course—and of his concerns for his intended audience (with GBs in view).

It is absorbingly interesting that Collins's first and final publications consist to some degree of edited-and-expanded works,[12] demonstrating him as both confident and competent to digest, synthesize, present afresh, and build further upon another theologian's work—while also doing his own exposition, composing his own arguments, and defending his own positions. His consistent efforts to glean from the best of the Reformation traditions evinces his solidly Reformed instincts, and highlights his concern that the Particular Baptists walk in those faithful paths as well.

Despite Collins's connections with (and standing among) leading Particular Baptists of

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[11] William Ames (John Eusden, ed.), *The Marrow of Theology* (repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), I.35.

[12] As does his *The Scribe Instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, Under Variety of Temptations. Or, Things, New and Old, brought out of the Householder's Treasury of the Heart. Published for the Comfort of all the Lord's People; but especially the more solid and grave, tempted and experienced Christian. By Hercules Collins of Wapping.* (Printed for the Author, 1696). *The Scribe Instructed* includes excerpts from Thomas Brooks's (1608–1680) *Precious remedies against satan's devices. or, Salve for Believers and unbelievers sores. Being a companion for those that are in Christ, or out of Christ; that fight or neglect ordinances, under a pretence of living above them; that are growing (in spirituals) or decaying; that are tempted, or deserted; afflicted or opposed, that have assurance, or that want assurance, &c.* (London, Printed by R. White : for John Hancock, 1671).

his day, his work has garnered surprisingly little attention after his death. Demonstrating its neglect, the literature on TTR is scant: Leon McBeth (1932–2013) offers a quick summary treatment,[13] positioning it as Collins seeking to advance the cause of an educated ministry. TTR surely encourages a studied ministry, but Hercules appears to have been an autodidact, and one who instead presents a strong penchant for the Puritan mentorship model.[14] A conscientious Nonconformist,[15] he was also formally barred from university training under the Clarendon Code —throwing at least a small wrench into McBeth's gears. Given his extensive personal reading,[16] coupled with two-and-a-half decades of ministerial experience[17] and reflection, he had learned not merely "what works," but what Scripture requires to steward Christ's gospel and shepherd

[13] Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 191–193.

[14] TTR, 13–14. The unique developmental role of Puritan lectureships and prophesyings, alongside their ministerial apprenticeships, bears noting here as well. Able treatment is found in Paul Seaver (1932–2020), *The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent, 1560–1662* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970); Patrick Collinson (1929–2011), *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (New York: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1990), 168–176; Joseph Pipa, "William Perkins and the Development of Puritan Preaching" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985), 22–23. See also Geoffrey Nuttall (1911–2007), *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 75–89; cf. John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603–1689* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 53–54. Much of the Puritan approach was modeled after Calvin's practice in Geneva; cf. Scott Manestch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536–1609* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012). Elements of all of the above appear in TTR.

[15] In *Some Reasons for Separation from the Communion of the Church of England, and the Unreasonableness of Persecution Upon that Account. Soberly Debated, in a Dialogue between a Conformist, and a Nonconformist (Baptist)* (London: Printed for John How, 1682), Collins frames his entire argument by means of a fictitious dialogue between a conformist and a nonconformist. Fairly recent and valuable work has been done treating nonconformity; see Robert Pope, ed. *The T&T Clark Companion to Nonconformity* (London and New York: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2016), 3–74, and R. Tudor Jones, ed., *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, vol. 1: 1550–1700* (Aldershot, England: Wipf and Stock, 2007), esp. 266–274.

[16] Sam Renihan's unpublished lecture notes for HT45, "Historical Origins of Baptist Covenant Theology" (a course taught at Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary), include his photo of a probate inventory list from Hercules Collins's home following his death on October 4, 1702. Under the heading "Back Garrett," it records "300 of books of which is 50 large ones & rest all small books." Accessed at The London Metropolitan Archives: TLA, DL/C/B/030/MS09174/028/024. Probate Inventory of Hercules Collins, taken 24 October 1702; the photo is in Appendix One. On this subject, see the fascinating work by Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580–1720* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[17] Possibly including participating in prophesyings? A remark here and there throughout his corpus seems to offer some suggestion to that effect, though it is difficult to conclude definitively.

Christ's bride faithfully and effectively. Thus his counsel and model sermon in TTR hold exceeding value as bearing firsthand witness to the seventeenth-century Particular Baptist experience and mindset.

James Renihan characterizes Collins as "typical of the Particular Baptist position on"[18] GBs,[19] offering a paragraph tracing Collins's usage of *The Preacher Sent*—a book Geoffrey Nuttall notes was "written specifically in defence of the preaching by 'gifted brethren,' [those] 'not in office.'"[20] GBs are understood as a "special class of"[21] unordained lay appointees, affirmed by the church after privately undergoing testing of their gifts,[22] whose work overlaps the minister's in preaching and teaching. Renihan's engagement is valuable, though more focused on ecclesiological inquiries than on Hercules or TTR itself. Sam Waldron mentions the doctrine briefly,[23] and Steve Weaver, devoting a dissertation to Collins's life and thought, considers selected TTR themes in abbreviated fashion through the lens of Puritan homiletics[24]—quite useful, but an incomplete treatment of the work as a whole.[25] Thus there is a need for a

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[18] James Renihan, *Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists, 1675–1705* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock/Paternoster, 2008), 108–109.

[19] Particular Baptist confessional statements on the GB are consistent across *The First London Baptist Confession of Faith* (1644/1646), XLV, and *The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* (1677/1689), 26.11; designated hereafter as 1LC and 2LC, respectively.

[20] Geoffrey Nuttall, *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640–1660* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 87.

[21] James Renihan, *Edification and Beauty*, 107.

[22] He also includes examples of when the church's evaluation was that the brother was not (or not yet) gifted sufficiently for preaching, 111–112.

[23] Waldron's treatment appears in his *A Modern Exposition of the 1689, 5th edition* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: EP Books, 2016), 382–383, and again in virtually the same form in Robert Ventura, ed., *A New Exposition of the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* (Glasgow: Bell & Blain/Mentor, 2022), 464, in what he terms "the auxiliary ministry of the Word by others."

[24] G. Stephen Weaver, Jr. *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist: Hercules Collins (1647–1702) and Particular Baptist Identity in Early Modern England* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 118–122. All citations of Weaver here reference this volume, unless specifically identified as from his 2013 SBTS dissertation of the same title.

study like this one, treating the whole of TTR to develop his pastoral theology and his doctrine of the GB more fully.

Similar to his friend Benjamin Keach's (1640–1704) book *The Breach repaired in God's Worship* (1691) asserting congregational singing as part of biblically-regulated worship, Hercules argued for the "repairs" needed for faithfully exercising the preaching ministry in God's *Temple* —which he saw in part as fulfilled in and necessitating the lawfully-handled labors of GBs. Accordingly, Particular Baptist concerns for consistent purity in ecclesiology, doxology, and proclamation under the regulative principle (hereafter RPW) are forefronted in approaching TTR.

***The Temple Repair'd*: Introduction and Survey**

Collins lays out TTR in five basic movements.[26] After sketching introductory and contextual matters, we shall engage each section of TTR in turn:

I. Dedication (A Letter to the Churches).
II. A Sermon for Improvement of Ministerial Gifts: 2 Tm. 2:15.
III. Some Further Helps by way of Direction and Instructions (Collins explains and expands upon his work in the previous sermon).
IV. Additional Directions and Instructions (he gives thirty-seven[27] points of instruction to preachers about preaching).
V. An Additional Word to the Churches (he offers ten[28] points of counsel to churches about preachers and preaching).

Carrying some influence into the long eighteenth century,[29] TTR is intended as a

[25] In fairness, Weaver states no intention of treating TTR in its entirety; my statement observes this without criticism.

[26] While not universal in practice, Puritan sermons typically feature three major movements—first, they handle exegetical and expositional matters. Second, they treat theological and instructional considerations. Third, they apply the text. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1961), 332–333. Collins's doctrinal and practical Puritanism becomes rapidly and exceedingly plain in his homiletics.

[27] While numbered at thirty-six points, the final two points are each printed as #36.

[28] While numbered at nine points, as with as the previous footnote, two points are printed as #2.

[29] Though, as with much of his corpus (and the broader writings of the Particular Baptists), it did not secure multiple reprintings and eventually fell out of use.

hortative and instructional manual—a general reference tool for training Christian pastors, ministerial aspirants, and GBs in rightly conceiving of, approaching, and executing the preaching task. [30] It also offers a pastor's plea to churches to receive faithful preachers as from the hand of Christ. History forgot, but Hercules's ministry bore unusual fruit in this respect: "a large number of men went into the ministry during [his] Pastorate."[31] It also intends to give instruction to the congregation in the receiving of the minister and the message alike. Just as the sad narrative of John Child (1638?–1684) preserves the only extant account of Hercules's pastoral counseling, so TTR canonizes Hercules's only extant sermon[32] and offers the only

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[30] Treatment of the GB's congregational role and responsibilities comprises a substantial portion of this chapter. In our own day, the practice of "licensure" to ministry often operates with several parallels to seventeenth-century conceptions of the GB.

[31] Ernest Kevan (1903–1965), *London's Oldest Baptist Church* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1933), 65. In *London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2022), 356–357, Murdina MacDonald notes the frustrating next chapter at Wapping following Collins's 1702 death:

> Hand in hand with the strong leadership offered by Hercules Collins had gone an interest in developing spiritual gifts within the congregation. Clearly Collins was not a man so jealous of his position as to discourage sharing the pulpit with others. …it would not be unexpected to have found a strong assertion of lay leadership under [Collins's successor] Edward Elliot's ministry. This does not appear to have happened. …. No men with spiritual gifts were called out under Elliot's ministry 1704–1712 and in 1709 three men refused to serve as deacons.

[32] In the question of extant sermons, Thompson Cooper (1837–1904) asserts that Collins's corpus includes "some single sermons"; such would mean either that Hercules published other sermons which are now lost, or that Cooper classifies some of his books as sermons. See Thompson Cooper, s.v. "Collins, Hercules (d. 1702)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1885–1900*, ed. Leslie Stephen (1832–1904) (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1887), vol. 11, 367–368. I respectfully differ with Cooper's assessment.

Mountains of Brass: Or, a Discourse upon the Decrees of God. From Ephes. 1.11. Begun at a Lecture in Devon–Shire–Square, Oct. 29. 1689. And finish'd in a Congregation at Wapping, Nov. 5. following. by Hercules Collins, Minister of the Gospel (London, 1690) began its life as a lecture for William Kiffen (1616–1701) and was concluded as a sermon for the Wapping congregation a week later; but Hercules published it in literary form, not sermonic. Its hybrid pedigree casts a dim light for establishing much of his preaching pattern. *A voice from Prison, or, Meditations on Revelations III. XI. tending to the Establishment of Gods Little Flock, in An Hour of Temptation* (London, 1684), though not lacking expositional elements, is more hortative and epistolary in form than kerygmatic. *Counsel for the Living occasioned from the Dead or a Discourse on Job III. 17, 18. Arising from the Deaths of Mr. Fran. Bampfield and Mr. Zach. Ralphson* (London, 1684) is an exposition and likely began its life as a sermonic, but appears to have been edited (significantly?) for publication. *Believers-Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine Institution* (London, 1691), while robust, resembles an essay more than a pulpit exposition—though there are portions which seem a bit more homiletical than others. *The Sandy Foundation of Infants–baptism Shak'n* (London, 1695) is more polemical-apologetical than sermonic in nature (likely influenced by the Mence episode). His other works, while usually offering exposition of various doctrines, are plainly not sermonic.

known seventeenth-century Particular Baptist work on the GB,[33] making it extremely valuable for our analysis.

TTR covers handling Scripture properly, approaching preaching rightly, navigating interpretive and hermeneutical matters attentively, and the calling and care of the gospel minister, while speaking directly to the congregation on behalf of her servants. It further provides a brief pastoral justification of ordination, as well as the Particular Baptist distinctive of the GB as an unordained-but-recognized lay preacher in the congregation.

Indeed, at one level TTR may even be viewed something of a defense of the broader Particular Baptist and nonconformist cause. The COE regarded all non-Establishment ordinations as illegitimate at best or unlawful (even seditious) at worst. Much of Archbishop Laud's (1573–1645) acrimonious view of Nonconformists was realized precisely here: illegitimate ministers led illegitimate congregations with illegitimate worship. Collins's work, then, is of greater historical and theological consequence than one immediately realizes. A rich repository of ministerial wisdom and counsel, TTR reflects his mature thought and offers an important lens

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As an example: *Counsel for the Living* (1684) is closest to a sermon proper beyond TTR's SIMG (1702). While its basic expositional structure reflects Collins's structure in SIMG, its (heavy) Greek, Hebrew, and Latin verbiage sharply contradicts the Amesian source TTR adapts: Ames argues that words or sentences of Latin, Greek, or Hebrew should never be used in preaching. Amesian influence is sufficiently consequential for Collins that the *Counsel for the Living* should probably be regarded at most as only loosely representative of his preaching. See William Ames (John Eusden, ed.), *The Marrow of Theology* (repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997): "Ordinary Ministers and Their Office in Preaching" #55, 194–195; cf. my Figure 5.4, below: "Similarities in Emphasis in Collins and Ames: ADI and 'Ordinary Ministers.'" Additionally, the practice would contradict his specific point (accessibility) in TTR's "Additional Directives and Instructions," #4. If posited instead that *Counsel for the Living* reflects something of Collins's earlier practice, and TTR reflects his mature homiletic, thus tracing proclamatory development: I readily concede the possibility, and may be wrong, but presently find it unpersuasive.

The most we can assert in each of these cases (other than TTR) is that they are somewhat sermonic, reflecting his homiletic only to a degree. Haller's verbiage of many Puritan "works of edification [being] directly derived from sermons" has been a helpful hat-peg for me in reading Collins's corpus. See *The Rise of Puritanism, or, The Way to the New Jerusalem as Set Forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570–1643* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 25.

I am considering attempting to piece together excerpts of these three (*Mountains of Brass*, *A voice from Prison*, and *Counsel for the Living*) alongside SIMG toward establishing more of his basic expositional thought. I am uncertain how definitive such a study could be, but attempting it would be worthwhile.

[33] Purnell touches briefly on the *function* of the GB, but does not develop the doctrine very far. See his *A Little Cabinet* (London, 1657), 209–211.

into seventeenth-century Particular Baptist views concerning such questions.

While drawing extensively from Congregationalist sources, it must be emphasized that TTR constitutes the only known Particular Baptist treatment of the doctrine of the GB. It should be approached as a development of Congregationalist thought, transposed into Particular Baptist practice—further demonstrating their continuity of Reformational practice from a fundamentally Puritan theological identity, and helping to cement their status in the Reformed family tree.

Pastoral to the end, Hercules opens and closes his final work with both a Letter and a Final Word to the churches—as John Piggott said, he was "one entirely devoted to the Service of the Temple."[34] His concern was always for the bride of Christ.

Context and Occasion

TTR characterizes well the several distinctives of Particular Baptist ecclesiology, pneumatology, and practice in its view of the nature of a lawful ministry of the Word "duly and truly preached,"[35] a regenerate congregation, and the Holy Spirit sovereignly gifting Christ's people (Eph. 4:11–16). The Cavalier Parliament's 1661 Corporation Act,[36] passed just after the restoration of Charles II (broadly part of the Test Acts, several of which comprised portions of the Clarendon Code), functionally barred nonconformists from university study.[37] Necessity has

[34] In his *Eleven Sermons*, 239.

[35] As Hercules's friend, Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), described it in *The articles of faith of the Church of Christ, or Congregation meeting at Horsely-down Benjamin Keach, pastor, as asserted this 10th of the 6th month, 1697* (London, 1697), XXII.

[36] The Act was part of the Second Parliament of King Charles II (13 Cha. 2 St. 2. c. 1.), which met from May 8–July 30, 1661.

[37] Traced helpfully in Robert Strivens, "Early Dissenting Academies" (London: The Evangelical Library, 26 November 2012). Originally a lecture given at the Evangelical Library in London, it was published online at http://www.evangelical-library.org.uk/articles/Early_Dissenting_Academies_-_EL_-_Nov_2012.pdf; accessed 22 October 2024. See also Rosemary O'Day's fascinating survey of Early Modern British education in John Morrill, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford/Ney York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 119–138.

always been the mother of invention—or in this case, recovery and restoration: such painful years of formal disfavor and persecution[38] prompted a fresh revisiting of the NT pattern of training elders, facilitating further development of Puritan apprenticeship models and prophesyings.

As a leading minister serving London's oldest Particular Baptist church, Hercules demonstrated a personal concern in training ministerial aspirants and GBs to preach—and he had plenty of them in his final years. Undoubtedly his own "frequent and great…indispositions"[39] (chronic illness?) alongside the high mortality rate of the day and the fluctuating political climate contributed to his didactic focus, though he plainly held this conviction throughout his ministry. Weaver particularly notes his investment in "younger Brethren" as they learned to "exercise their gifts" until August 1682; then "sparse"[40] entries in the *Wapping Church Book* (hereafter WCB) until August 1684 reflect something of persecution's impact. The 1690s witnessed "a flood of brothers allowed to exercise their gifts before the church."[41] The low levels of concern for developing a future ministry in the 1689 General Assembly's documents[42] were clearly not the case at Old Gravel Lane!

Collins had no interest in developing mere talkers, but whole men, as wholly as possible. The gospel demanded nothing less than men mighty in and faithful to the Scriptures, men given

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[38] A representative sample (from 1674) of the persecutions faced is found in E.B. Underhill, ed. *The Records of a Church of Christ Meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640–1687* (London: The Hanserd Knollys Society, 1847), 212–233.

[39] Piggott, "A Funeral Sermon," op. cit., 237.

[40] Verbiage from private correspondence with Nathan Sherman: "1683–84 are not silent [in the WCB], but they are sparse. There are only five entries in 1682."

[41] Steve Weaver, "Hercules Collins: Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 55–56.

[42] See James Renihan, *Faith and Life for Baptists* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2016), 20.

to the Bible—and the Particular Baptists expected nothing less in their pulpits. As the West Country Association's 1654 general meeting records conclude that "it is [the minister's] duty, to wait on the Lord in the reading and meditating on the scriptures"[43] in studying and preparing to preach, so TTR speaks throughout to this central concern. Given Collins's characteristic boldness in his work—for example, his 1682 *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England* seems to have contributed directly to confirming his reservation at the Newgate gaol!—it is highly probable that the WCB's restraint from 1682–1684 reflects neither a meaningful pause in his work nor a cessation of training GBs and aspiring elders, but is occasioned by Collins's imprisonment and the heat of persecution; it also reflects that "for more than two years the Meeting house in Gravel-lane was shut up."[44]

WCB reflects significantly fewer entries from 1682–1685 than the norm (see Appendix Five). Given the pressing threat of government-sponsored informants, ecclesiastical saboteurs who frequently sought to infiltrate nonconforming church circles, the stiff financial penalties incurred by arrested worshipers, the maliciously and prohibitively increased fines levied, and the harsh punishments assessed to their preachers, Hercules likely saw no need to risk naming many more men than himself under the particular dangers of that period.

Collins experienced prison life early in his ministry and was no fool; holy boldness did not translate to brashness. In fact, the Wapping church began meeting in secret in 1683/1684 to

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[43] B.R. White, ed., *Association Records*, II.57, query 6.

[44] So Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834), *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1830), III.301. In *The Wapping Baptists: A People, Their Pastors, and Their Church Records, (1677–1712)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2026), 21, 35, Nathan Sherman notes:

> The WCB only includes four entries from 1683, all occurring in April–May, and the first 1684 entry occurs in August. (p. 21)
>
> The frequency of the [member] meetings varied, from as few as three meetings in both 1682 and 1683 (the height of the Tory revenge) to as many as twenty-six and twenty-four meetings in 1703 and 1704, respectively (the years of Hercules Collins's death and the search for his successor). (p. 35)

avoid persecution while their pastor was imprisoned for at least a year for violating the 1665 Five-Mile Act.[45] *A Voice from the Prison,* (one of two works he published in 1684 while incarcerated) heralds a very bold call to endure suffering for Jesus's sake, and specifically exhorts sufferers not to embrace a sinful escape; but—to our point—neither does it suggest that suffering is a matter to be sought out.

Some controversy colored the broader question of training men for a preaching ministry, however. Edward Underhill's (1813–1901) sketch of the labors of Particular Baptist ruling elder Edward Terrill (d. 1685) notes that "[t]he subject of an educated ministry had for several years been agitated among the baptists." Indeed, Mr. Terrill "was confirmed in his intention and desire for an able and learned body of pastors, by a circular letter issued in 1675, inviting brethren to London, 'with a view to form a Plan for an orderly standing Ministry.'"[46] Terrill envisioned a theological college,[47] but the point is illustrated. Eventually the question was at least somewhat addressed when the 1689 General Assembly approved a fund to train GBs in learning Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.[48]

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[45] Ernest Kevan states that Collins violated the 1664 Conventicle Act (*London's Oldest Baptist Church*, 66), but the *Wapping Church Book's* entry identifies his imprisonment as being occasioned "upon ye Oxford Act," another name for the 1665 Five-Mile Act. Both Acts were aspects of the Clarendon Code and caused much trouble to conscientious Nonconformists like Collins. His works *A Voice from the Prison* and *Counsel for the Living Occasioned from the Dead, or, a Discourse on Job III.17, 18. Arising from the Deaths of Mr. Fran. Bampfield and Mr. Zachariah. Ralphson. By Hercules Collins, their Fellow Prisoner in Newgate* were published during his incarceration (1683/1684). Keith Durso provides an overview of Collins's time in the Newgate gaol in *No Armor for the Back: Baptist Prison Writings, 1600s–1700s* (Macon, GA/Atlanta, GA: Mercer University Press and The Baptist History & Heritage Society, 2007), 167–170. On Baptist responses to persecution, see Underhill's *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution 1614–1661* (London: The Hanserd Knollys Society, 1846).

[46] Underhill, *The Records of a Church of Christ Meeting in Broadmead, Bristol*, xcii.

[47] McBeth mentions that this school as still operating in Bristol at the time of writing; see *The Baptist Heritage*, 193. Note Ruth Gouldbourne's treatment: "Ministerial Education," in Stephen Copson and Karen Smith, *Revolution and Resistance: English Baptist Life in the Seventeenth Century* (Didcot, UK: The Baptist Historical Society, 2026), 157–168.

[48] No author listed. *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly Of divers Pastors, Messengers and Ministring-Brethren of the Baptized Churches, met together in London, from Septemb. 3. To 12. 1689, from divers parts of England and Wales : Owning the Doctrine of Personal Election, and Final Perseverance. Sent from,*

Along these lines, Benjamin Keach[49] asserted that churches should:

> Give due encouragement to the Exercise of such Gifts that are amongst you : first, if you apprehend any Brother hath received some competent Ministerial Gifts ; let him freely Exercise those Gifts privately, and being in time Approved, let the Church call him forth to preach more Publicly; else how shall the Church be provided with Ministers in future time? or how shall an Approved Ministry be continued in the Church? "As every man hath received the gift, even so let him administer the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," I Pet. iv. 10.

Unsurprisingly, we find Keach's and Collins's controversial positions (and writing energies!) mirroring one another: on congregational singing and the laying on of hands, they walked in lockstep. GBs, however the broader cultural battles raged, were not a disputed position within Particular Baptist circles—probably helping to explain the tradition's overall silence on their doctrine and deployment. Collins held that they were broadly underutilized,[50] and one may surmise that they were perhaps accordingly misunderstood; but they were not controversial among the confessing churches.

Haykin concludes that TTR was apparently occasioned as a rebuttal to some within the Calvinistic Baptist community who decried preparation for preaching.[51] If this is the case, it may reflect just how deeply the subjective, individualistic inroads of Quakerism and mysticism were plowing into the Particular Baptists[52]—a situation complicated by pockets of festering infection

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and concerned for, more than one hundred Congregations of the same Faith with themselves. (London, 1689), 12. On the biblical languages, cf. Ivimey, *History of English Baptists*, II.492, 518–519, 531, 533, 535–536, 545–546.

[49] Benjamin Keach, *An Exposition of the Parables, and Express Similitudes of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London, 1701), III.3.xvii; repr. as *An Exposition of the Parables* (Grand Rapids, Ml: Kregel Publications, 1981), (on Mk. 9:50), 302.

[50] TTR, 6.

[51] Michael Haykin, *A Cloud of Witnesses: Calvinistic Baptists in the 18th Century* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Times, 2006), 24–25.

[52] Horton Davies (1916–2005) draws an interesting (if unpersuasive) reverse connection, tracing a declivity of Baptist iconclastical "reductionism and stripping of the Christian religion to what [were] believed to be its essentials" as helpful to Quakers with "the process of interiorization" in their disposing of an ordained ministry: "In many respects Baptist congregations had led the way by having laymen with spiritual gifts, but without formal theological training, minister to them." *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603–1690* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 495–496. Nuttall, arguing similarly (though only slightly

still oozing from Thomas Collier's (ca. 1615–ca. 1691) apostasy? It further underscores the necessity of Collins's intensive, multifaceted focus in TTR. Whomever he had in view, Hercules leaves his interlocutors undefined, focusing instead on the task at hand—Collins offers no free airtime to those he perceives as opposing the work of the gospel.

The Lord's House in Disarray: The Need of Collins's "Repairs"

Hercules wrote *An Orthodox Catechism* in 1680 because catechesis had largely fallen out of practice among many Particular Baptists—as Ivimey summarizes, it was "evident…that the work of catechizing children was not cordially entered upon in London."[53] So too he writes TTR

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more persuasively) that Puritan practice led to Quakerism, held that the tendency to encourage prophesyings served as a natural bridge: the Quakers were "following the practice of the more radical Puritans in their 'prophesyings.'" Quoting the Duchess of Newcastle, he further links the practice to Quaker egalitarianism: "…first, the minister expounds the Scripture, and then the women expound the sermon." See *The Holy Spirit*, 87, 88; it is unsurprising, then, that the Brownists also built on the basic idea that if one layman may speak or prophesy, any could; and any might also therefore preach.

These developments represented significant and unacceptable hermeneutical, ecclesiological, and theological departures from Puritanism's high view of the Bible and the church. One recalls here Matthew Poole's (1624–1679)—one of Collins's favorite commentators—observation on Luke 24:45 that "The devil cheats those souls whom he persuades to cast away the Scriptures in expectation of a teaching by the Spirit. The Spirit teacheth by, not without, not contrary to, the Holy Scriptures." In *ANNOTATIONS upon the HOLY BIBLE. WHEREIN THE SACRED TEXT is inserted, and VARIOUS READINGS ANNEX'D, Together with the Parallel Scriptures. The more Difficult TERMS in each VERSE are Explained. Seeming CONTRADICTIONS Reconciled. QUESTIONS and DOUBTS Resolved. And the WHOLE TEXT Opened. By the late reverend and learned divine Mr. Matthew Poole* (London, 1683).

Collins's fellow Particular Baptists tightly ordered their worship under a robust commitment to the RPW (particularly those of confessional persuasion), rejecting any disordered doxology as biblically-illegitimate and therefore false worship, a genuine and unauthorized "strange fire" (Lev. 10:1). For example, Thomas Plant (fl. 17th c.) argued strongly against Quakerism in *A Contest for Christianity, or A Faithful Relation of two late MEETINGS Between The Baptists and the Quakers; THE One, on the 9th of October 1674, in Barbican. The Other, on the 16th of the same Month in Wheeler-Street 1674 Together, With several Letters that have passed between some of both Parties, both before, and since the aforesaid MEETINGS. Published and Submitted To the Judgment of all judicious and Impartial Men. By Tho. Plant. Read Consider, Examine, and then Judg* (London, 1674), and in 1675 Benjamin Keach wrote *The Grand Imposter discovered; or the Quaker's Doctrine weighed in the Balance, and found wanting* to demonstrate the unbiblical nature of their thought and practice. Evaluated through a strict societal or sociological lens, attempting to trace Quaker lineage from certain elements within Puritanism is arguably at least partially valid and possibly even meritorious; but considered in the context of the gripping biblical-confessional perspective of Particular Baptist pneumatology—with its attendant ecclesial concerns and great pastoral carefulness (particularly regarding polity and the pulpit), held with such intensity that many suffered imprisonment for their convictions—such assertions spring a significant leak.

[53] Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, II.414. Catechesis was an expected part of a Particular Baptist pastor's work, as the Midlands Association concluded in their 1656 general meeting (as cited in B.R. White, ed., *Association Records*, I.25, question 3):

because theirs was a "sad and careless day, wherein there is so little Provision made in the Churches of Christ for a future Ministry"[54] (a concern shared by the 1689 General Assembly).[55] The duties of church members to exhort and teach one another "are now generally lost among us."[56]

The veteran shepherd concerned himself with the prospects facing his sheep and the broader Reformed cause. As Collins's final work, TTR represents a quarter-century of pastoral reflection on the nature of his office, its multifaceted charge, the unique setting and era in which the Wapping church providentially found itself, and how Scripture spoke concerning all these matters.

While his opening sentence explains that his material in TTR represents an edited, expanded form for publication, the exposition comprising "A Sermon for the Improvement of Ministerial Gifts" (hereafter SIMG) is unpretentious: clear, imitable, and compelling. Readers quickly realize why, in an age of excellent preaching, Hercules was considered so widely as an exemplar of effective, powerful preaching. As his only extant sermon manuscript, SIMG possesses unique weight within his corpus and merits careful attention. While showcasing his capacities as a seasoned penman and pastor, TTR also serves as an admirable capstone to the

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> Question 3. Whether it be not a great part of a gospell minister's worke to instruct his flocke by catechizeing of them as well as preaching for their more perfect education. Answer: by catechizeing only is meant questioning for the more perfect knowledg of the condition of members soe that by the discovery of weaknes suteable strength may bee added. Wee judge it a dutyof a minister of Christ in this as in all other particulars as occasion offereth itselfe to shew himself a man approved in the worke of God's house, 2 Tim 3.15, which wee conceive he cannot doe except hee enquire into the state of the flocke that hee may give everyone his portion of meate in due season and, wee judg, there ought to be a readinesse in every member to give an accounte of their state and condietion to the elder or any appoynted therunto, I. Thess 3.5ff; Prov 27.23; I. Pet. 3.15.

[54] TTR, 6.

[55] Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, I.479. The 1689 General Assembly located a great deal of the apathy in "a great decay of first Love, Faith, and Zeal for the ways and Worship of God; which hath been apparent, not only in our Churches, but also in private Families." *Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly*, 7.

[56] John Owen, as quoted in TTR, 6.

breadth and consistency in his reasoning, method, and "voice" seen throughout his *Works*. Weaver makes no exaggeration in classifying TTR as Collins's *magnum opus*.[57]

Published in 1702, TTR came to the reading public in the wake of a raging, century-plus-long, trans-denominational open dispute[58] over unordained lay preaching. Collins explains that:

> [T]here hath been a great Controversy in the Church, whether none but ordain'd Officers, who have preaching Gifts and Graces, and are apt to teach, may ordinarily exercise those Gifts in publick Assemblies, tho they be not ordain'd Officers.[59]

For example, Elizabeth I's (1533–1603) 1577 directive "To the Bishops for the purpose of Suppressing the Exercise Called Prophesying…" ordered:

> *May 8*: Neither that any manner of person be suffered within your diocese to preach, teach, read, or anywise exercise any function in the church, but such as shall be lawfully approved and licensed, as persons able for their knowledge, and conformable to the ministry in the rites and ceremonies of the church of England. And where there shall not be sufficient able persons for learning in any cures, to preach or instruct their cures, as were requisite, there shall you limit the curates to read the public homilies, according to the injunctions heretofore by us given for like causes.

Parliament weighed in (twice!) in 1645. Their April ordinance forbade regular, unordained preaching if the man had no aspirations to ministerial office, while November's dictum forbade functioning as one holding ministerial office without possessing lawful ordination:

> *April 26*: It is this Day Ordained and Declared by the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, that no Person be permitted to Preach who is not Ordained a Minister either in this or some other Reformed Church, except such (as intending the Ministry) shall be allowed for the Trial of their Gifts by those who shall be appointed thereunto by both Houses of Parliament.
>
> *November 8*: And whereas it is also manifest by the Word of God, that no Man ought to take upon him the Office of a Minister, until he be lawfully called and ordained thereunto; and that the Work

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[57] Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 54.

[58] In Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 553. In that work, "Appendix III: Preaching Regulated: Articles, Injunctions, Canons, and 'Directions Concerning Preachers,' 1536–1686" offers a fascinating (and sometimes frustrating) collection of these instances; see pp. 546–569.

[59] TTR, 8.

> of Ordination, that is to say, an outward solemn setting apart of Persons for the Office of the Ministry in the Church, by preaching Presbyters, is an Ordinance of Christ, and is to be performed with all due care, wisdom, gravity, and solemnity.[60]

This question of lay preaching's validity launched a significant dispute between Presbyterians and Congregationalists during the Commonwealth era, sparking a pamphlet war which raged until the disputants largely fell into two camps.[61] First were those Presbyterians (along with some "Traditioners,"[62] as those in the COE were often called) insisting that all preaching must be performed *ex officio* ("from office")—for these, preaching was strictly the provenance of duly ordained clergy.[63] *The Westminster Confession* (1646; hereafter WCF) "frequently speaks of ministers of the Word as alone competent to preach and administer the sacraments,"[64] while *The Westminster Larger Catechism* (1647) deals more directly:

> Q. #158: By whom is the Word of God to be preached?

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[60] Both ordinances begin their titles with the prefix *Die Sabbathi*, "on the Sabbath." *Die Sabbathi: Ordinance that none shall Preach but such as are Ordained, Apr. 26. 1645*; and *Die Sabbathi: An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for the Ordination of Ministers. 8. Novemb. 1645.* In John Rushworth, "Historical Collections: Parliamentary and civil occurrences, 1645," in *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 6, 1645–47* (London, 1722), *British History Online*, accessed October 20, 2024, https://www.british–history.ac.uk/rushworth–papers/vol6/pp141–228. The November 1645 ordinance defines the approved ordination process at length, noting their dependence upon certain "Advice had with the Assembly of Divines now convened at *Westminster.*" Much of the November ordinance's verbiage and particulars are reproduced and expanded upon in *A directory for church-government and ordination of ministers, to be examined against the next Generall Assemblie* (Edinburgh: Printed by Evan Tyler, 1647), 24–32, and was referenced in the Westminster's Assembly's 1644 *Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1644), under the heading "Of the Preaching of the Word."

[61] See Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit*, 78; the conflict's intensity and subsequent deep entrenchment of positions spanned nearly half a century. Following the Savoy stream, subsequent Particular Baptist practice in utilizing GBs lends something of an indirect support to Matthew Bingham's argument concerning the origins of "baptistic congregationalists" in *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[62] B.R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 27.

[63] The Presbyterians recognized that some level of testing had to occur prior to ordination, though by general consensus they opposed a GB-type ministry. See Chad Van Dixhoorn's brief summary in *God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643–1653* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 114–119.

[64] So Samuel Waldron, "Of the Church," in Rob Ventura, ed. *A New Exposition of the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* (Mentor: Glasgow, 2022), 464; Waldron cites WCF 15.1, 27.4, 28.2, and 29.3 as demonstrating his point.

> A. The Word of God is to be preached *only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office* [emphasis mine].

Their Congregationalist and Particular Baptist counterparts held that the NT pattern presented preaching as a fundamentally *ex dono* ("from gift") exercise—thus affirming the biblical validity and abiding lawfulness of unordained preaching alongside that of ordained ministers. TTR was sent forth into this divided legal and ecclesiastical setting, offering a reasoned and seasoned apologetic for, and instruction to, preachers of the *ex dono* persuasion.

The Dedication: A Letter to the Churches

Collins opens TTR with an eleven-page Dedicatory Letter to churches, pastors, GBs, and aspirants. In it, he gives encouragements and arguments to persuade churches to make provision for (meaning, to take specific steps and make specific preparations toward) a future ministry, so that their labors will not end with their deaths.

An Outline of the Dedicatory Letter

1. Dedication (A Letter to the Churches): encouragement to make provision for a future ministry.
2. Threefold aim for writing:
    a. Churches need to be stirred up to see and employ the gifts Christ has given.
    b. Pastors and teachers have a duty to attend to this matter.
    c. Church members should give attention here as well.
3. Two key observations from John Owen:
    a. "Churches are the schools of Christ" where he trains his servants.
    b. Ministers have a duty to instruct their people unto maturity.
4. Four further considerations from John Owen and Nathaniel Hiller:
    a. Faithful ministers rejoice when their hearers surpass their own abilities.
    b. Members have the duty to "exhort, entreat, beseech, and comfort" one another.
    c. "These duties are now generally lost among us."
    d. Church members have a particular duty to one another in exercising their gifts unto mutual edification.
5. Biblical grounds for his argument:
    a. Twelve verses showing duties of instruction, counsel, and edification to one another within the congregation.
    b. Teaching not restricted to those holding office (*ex officio*), but to be received *ex dono* from GBs having lawful biblical and congregational approval.

    c. GBs in no way invalidate or minimize the necessity and blessing of an ordained ministry.
6. May only ordained officebearers preach? A controversy, meriting five considerations from *The Preacher Sent*:
    a. Election precedes ordination of church officers, meaning churches must have time and sufficient opportunity to assess a potential officebearer's giftedness.
    b. The NT commands exhorting one another (Heb. 3:13 and 10:25), and ministering and speaking to one another (1 Pet. 4:10–11).
    c. The NT promises blessing to the one who uses his gift (Matt. 25:29) and does not neglect it; not restricted to preaching, but certainly including it.
    d. The NT gives examples of unordained preaching:
        i. Apollos, Acts 18:24–28.
        ii. The scattered and persecuted church (laymen, not the apostles), Acts 8:1, 4 and 11:19–21.
    e. The NT gives rules concerning prophesying, 1 Cor. 14. "All may prophesy" means *all who have the gift of teaching or preaching*. Congregationalists have been inconsistent in "their principle and practice" here.
7. The duty's necessity calls for nurturing the gift, not neglecting it.
    a. What if God took away most of the ministers?
    b. Churches must pray and set themselves to this work of cultivating Christ's gifts.

The Dedicatory Letter: A Threefold Aim for TTR

In that initial Dedicatory Letter, Hercules offers three primary reasons for composing TTR. First is to arouse them to take note of Christ's blessings: since churches are "the Schools of Christ"[65] (a quote from John Owen concisely encapsulating Collins's position), he desires that they "be stirred up to see the spiritual gifts that God hath given them, and put them to their proper exercise."[66] The "spiritual gifts" he has in view are ministers and GBs; "seeing" those gifts is no precursor to modern spiritual gifts tests, but a call to careful, conscientious shepherding with an eye to forgetting none of the risen Lord's benefits (Ps. 103:2).

Second, Collins wants to argue his point as per 2 Tm. 2:2—aiming to convince "all Pastors and Teachers" to "look on it as their Duty to instruct those Members who are most capable into the knowledg of Gospel Mysteries."[67] Having identified such church members

[65] TTR, 3. Hercules quotes and summarizes John Owen's treatment of Heb. 5:12–14.

[66] TTR, 3.

[67] TTR, 3.

who have promise of ministerial or didactical and homiletical usefulness, he seeks to stir up pastors to their duty: they must give themselves to intentional, intensive, deepening discipleship of those who may hold "promising gifts." Note that he charges the teachers with this work as well. This work entails both a stewardship of Christ's gifts and a submission to Christ's will on their part: that Jesus gifts others means that Jesus would have their graces to be benefited from and their ministry to be received. In other words, Hercules quietly recognizes a plurality of leadership and preachers within the congregation as being part of the good design of Christ for his church (2 Tm. 2:2).

Third, he desires that church members apply themselves as well to this good work, particularly those to whom God "hath given a good degree of spiritual Knowledg" to the end of edifying the congregation. Church members must remember their duty to fan into flame the gift of God (2 Tm. 1:6), both personally and congregationally,[68] in all humility and love aiming for edification. He explains that the work must be gone about with "a regular proceeding and managing"[69] of the process. By "regular," he means it must be "regulated"[70] or governed by Scripture—the ministry of every true church must at all points be guided by the Bible (1 Cor. 14:40).

His goal is the widescale recovery of a faithfully-trained and biblically-qualified ministry according to the NT pattern: "the Churches…are the Schools of Christ" …. "every Church was then a Seminary."[71] Thus, he urges, those who hold office as pastors or teachers

[68] Exercising that duty in the seventeenth century would look like a congregation noticing, praying for, and encouraging an apparently-gifted man to the work, having observed how the Spirit seems to have fitted him for it, and the man himself also coming to desire the work (1 Timothy 3:1).

[69] TTR, 3.

[70] From the Latin *regula*, "rule," applying the regulative principle's instinct to ecclesiology in order to preserve orderly, lawful, biblically-regulated worship.

[71] TTR, 3, 4. Hercules here quotes and summarizes John Owen's exposition of Heb. 5:12–14. Owen's

should give attention to discovering and developing men who are gifted for public ministry in ordained or unordained roles. The pneumatological category of *giftedness*[72] is of quiet, but critical and shaping importance for Hercules's argument in TTR—and the broader Particular Baptist understanding of gospel ministry. Hence, his greeting recognizes those with a "promising Gift for the edifying the Church," his opening blessing desires "Grace and *Gifts*[73] [to] be multiplied upon you, through the Knowledg of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ," and the book's "Substance…was deliver'd at a Meeting designed for the promoting [of] Spiritual Gifts in the Churches of Christ."[74] Biblical faithfulness and pastoral concern (and undoubtedly the memory of recent persecutions) prompted Collins to write.

The Dedicatory Letter: Considering the Offices

Though basic aspects of the offices and roles of pastors (or elders[75]) and deacons were nearly universally understood among the Particular Baptists, questions concerning other offices, roles, and functions required clarification. Collins's TTR quietly codifies this case in its opening sentence, addressing "pastors *and teachers* [emphasis mine], and others who have a promising

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assertion in that chapter that "Churches are the schools of Christ" concisely encapsulates Collins's driving philosophical foundation in TTR. Cited from Owen's *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1668).

[72] Nomenclature of the *gifted* brother "speaks to its essentially charismatic nature," avers Nuttall in *The Holy Spirit*, 76.

[73] The Particular Baptists of this era often spoke of their ministers and GBs as "gifts" from the ascended Lord. For an example, see B.R. White, *Associational Records*, III.203—the twenty-third General Meeting (1660) twice records "as to gifts…as to gifts." The Puritan view of spiritual gifts is treated in J.I. Packer, ed., *Puritan Papers: Volume Four 1965–1967* (Philipsburg, NJ; P&R, 2004), 215–230.

[74] TTR, 3. Understand, then, that this meeting Collins references focused on encouraging the development of those gifted by Christ for teaching—a meeting urging pastors and churches to identify, invest in, test, and deploy these men within those congregations. It is difficult to conceive of a modern pastoral conference focused on pressing ministers to labor in developing elder candidates, much less lay preachers or GBs; yet that context of nontoleration, harassment, frequent ministerial incarceration, and general ecclesiastical uncertainty birthed this treatise.

[75] Some nuances may be observed at the level of individual congregations in their understanding of ruling elders as distinct from teaching elders, but a basic level of mutual understanding of those roles is relatively clear across the literature.

gift for edifying the church."[76] Those having "a promising gift for edifying the church" refers to GBs, discussed later in this chapter.

It is helpful to draft a representative sketch of Early Modern Protestant thought across several denominational lines in approaching this question. Denoting the "teacher" as a (sometimes) separate office or function from that of the minister appears early in Particular Baptist writings, such as the ca. 1640 "Kiffin Manuscript."[77] Along similar lines, Rowland Ward discusses the Westminster Assembly's handling of the question:

> On 14 November [1643] a report from the Scots' commissioners was introduced, and the following day Henderson addressed the Assembly on the Scottish contention that there were four offices warranted from the New Testament: pastors, teachers (or doctors), ruling elders and deacons. He was the first of the Scots' commissioners to speak in the Assembly. The Scots argued that the pastor and the doctor were separate offices. The latter was for teachers of theology and the Scots would have been happy to add catechists to their number. The Independents argued that every church should have both a pastor and a teacher, while Stephen Marshall and those English of Presbyterian leanings were not convinced that Scripture taught an office of teacher (doctor) distinct from that of pastor. However, on 21 November the matter was settled with agreement on six propositions:
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> 1. That there be different gifts, and different exercises, according to the difference of those gifts in the ministers.
> 2. Those different gifts may be in and exercised by one and the same minister.
> 3. Where there be several ministers in the same congregation, they may be designed to several employments [i.e., assigned to different tasks].
> 4. He that doth more excel in exposition, doctrine, and convincing them by application, and accordingly employed therein, may be called teacher or doctor.
> 5. A teacher or doctor is of excellent use in schools or universities.
> 6. Where there is but one minister in a particular congregation, he is to perform, so far as he is able, the whole work of the ministry.[78]

If placed beside the context of TTR, Robert Henderson's treatment of the office of

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[76] TTR, 3.

[77] The *Kiffen Manuscript* is transcribed in B. R. White, "Baptist Beginnings and the Kiffen Manuscript," in Baptist History and Heritage 2 (January 1967), 29–34. ("Kiffin" is sometimes also spelled "Kiffen.")

[78] Roland Ward, "Preface," in Chris Coldwell, ed. *The Grand Debate: The Reasons Presented by the Dissenting Brethren against Certain Propositions concerning Presbyterian Government* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2024), xxvii–xxviii. The Westminster Assembly followed John Calvin's (1508–1564) four–office view in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.1.v. For broader treatment, see Jihoon Jin, "John Calvin's theology of the four–fold office in his commentaries from 1540 to 1564 and its application to the church of Geneva in the sixteenth century" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2016).

"teacher or doctor" found in #4–5 nearly constitutes a sort of halfway house between the GB and the elder specifically tasked by the session with both training future elders and teaching the congregation.[79] The Reformed generally held the teacher-doctor as a distinct sort of teaching elder. He was not a preaching shepherd having charge over care of souls in the congregation, nor a ruling elder keeping due order and guarding sound doctrine, nor a deacon responsible for mercy ministry and serving the peace of the church; his was a fourth ordained-but-differentiated didactic office. Interestingly, the teacher-doctor was permitted to administer the sacraments in many cases. Intriguing comparisons may be drawn in placing this teaching-doctoral office alongside the GB's role and work as the Congregationalist and the Particular Baptist traditions comprehend it and Hercules Collins argues it.

The doctrine of the GB may perhaps thus be posited as an Independent development of this teaching office, though along more distinctly-demonstrable biblical lines, codified confessionally (1LC XLV; 2LC 26.8, 11). Development of the doctrine of the GB, then, stood with a foot squarely planted in both a Reformational theological-ecclesiological tradition and a Particular Baptist confessional heritage as an instance of something both "expressly set down, and necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture" (2LC 1.6). It also offers a fascinating glimpse at challenges the Particular Baptists faced as nonconformists legally barred from collegiate training and thus often substantially hindered in producing "doctors" in a formal sense.

Other seventeenth-century theologues tended to lump these gifts together a bit more. For example, Thomas Grantham (1634–1692), a leading General Baptist minister, wrote:

> The Divine Authority of the Office Episcopal, is clearly asserted by the Apostle, Act. 20. —*the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops or Overseers…* Some have laboured to make a difference between the Office of Bishops and Elders; but sith the Holy Scripture makes them rather one

[79] Robert Henderson. *The Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition: A History of the Doctoral Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 156–213.

> Office than two; we shall not concern our selves in the Controversie… So that Paul's Judgment is, that a Bishop and an Elder is all one…[80]

In 1681, Hanserd Knollys's (1599–1691) *The World that Now is; and the World that is to Come: Or the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ*[81] recognizes the offices of "Bishops, Pastors, Teachers, Presbyters, or Elders" in nearly-interchangeable fashion, calling them all "guides" and "overseers…who watch for their souls, as they must give an account." John Owen, highly influential for Particular Baptist ecclesiology and polity, similarly refused to draw a very hard line between pastors and teachers in *The True Nature of a Gospel-Church and its Government*:

> Of Pastoral Feeding there are two parts. (1.) *Teaching* or Instruction. (2.) *Rule* or Discipline. Unto these two Heads may all the Acts and Duties of a *Shepherd* toward his Flock be reduced .... [If] a *Teacher* is a distinct Officer in the Church, his office is *of the same kind with that of the Pastor* [emphasis Owen's], though distinguished from it as unto degrees, both materially and formally...[82]

Owen's summary captures Hercules's basic idea of a difference between pastors and teachers—no distinction lacking differentiation, but one possessing decided subtlety.[83] It seems

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[80] Thomas Grantham. *Christianismus Primitivus, or the Ancient Christian Religion In Its Nature, Certainty, Excellency, and Beauty, (Internal and External) particularly Considered, Asserted, and Vindicated, from The many Abuses which have Invaded that Sacred Profession, By Humane Innovation, or pretended Revelation, Comprehending likewise The General Duties of Mankind, in their respective Relations; And particularly, The Obedience of all Christians to Magistrates. And the Necessity of Christian Moderation about things Dispensible in Matters of Religion. With Divers Cases of Conscience Discussed and Resolved* (London: printed for Francis Smith, 1678), II.9.121.

[81] Hanserd Knollys, *The World that Now is; and the World that is to Come: Or the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ* (London: Tho. Snowden, 1681), 51–52. Of course, he also argues from the precedent of church history for a limited but definite elected leader for these leaders within a given town or region a few pages later (pp. 68–69), a position Collins directly opposes in his *Some Reasons for Separation* (1682), 14.

[82] Published posthumously. John Owen, *The True Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government* (London: Printed for Wm. Marshall, 1689); in William Goold, ed. *The Works of John Owen* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), XVI.48, 103–106.

[83] Hence James Renihans's observation that "The distinction between pastors and teachers was quite narrow, and few congregations were able to maintain and support both pastors and teachers in their assemblies with the result that they were frequently collapsed into one office." *For the Vindication of the Truth: A Brief Exposition of the First London Baptist Confession of Faith: Baptist Symbolics vol. 1* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2021), 144. Cf., though, W.T. Whitley (1861–1947) (contra?): "There was a strong tendency to have two pastors to a church… [though] the matter never seems to have been discussed." In *The Baptists of London 1612–1928: Their Fellowship, Their Expansion, with Notes on Their 850 Churches* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1928), 23.

that this distinction is much of what Collins envisions, given his evident deep appreciation for Owen's thought.[84] Collins mirrors Owen's quiet distinction between the "publick Teacher, preacher, or Instructor of Disciples in the Knowledg of God"[85] in opening his Dedicatory Letter by addressing (and delineating!) the categories of "Pastors and Teachers, and others who have a promising Gift for the edifying the Church"[86]; he also held that teachers should be active in the training up of future ministers and GBs.[87] This differentiation carried substantial weight in his defense of the doctrine and work of the GB.

TTR should also probably be considered as something of a development of the argument in *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated* (hereafter GMMV), which Collins signed in 1689 along with ten other leading Particular Baptist ministers.[88] GMMV provided a robust description and defense of a "regular ministry"—that is, the importance of lawfully called and ordained pastors—and their salaries.[89] As Renihan notes, "Apparently some argued that proper order called for something of a lay-ministry [as opposed to an ordained ministry], and it was necessary to refute that idea."[90]

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[84] TTR, 6. He quotes Owen at length six times, and cites him at least four more times in the eleven pages of his opening Dedication ("Letter to the Churches") in TTR; Collins further mentions that Owen repeats his concerns about "the decay of these Duties" of mutual exhortation and teaching, mentioning their decline in practice "over and over."

[85] TTR, 4.

[86] TTR, 3.

[87] TTR, 3.

[88] The other signatories of GMMV are Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffen, William Collins, John Harris, George Barret, Richard Adams, Benjamin Keach, Isaac Lamb, Edward Man, and Leonard Harrison. In Renihan, *Faith and Life*, 143–144.

[89] The minister's salary was uniformly defended by early Particular Baptist associations. A sampling of these defenses may be found in B.R. White, ed., *Association Records*, I.23, II.62–63 (question 1), II. 64 (question 3), II.74–75, *et passim*. Cf. Ivimey, *History of English Baptists*, II.483, 491–493, 517–519, 531, 553, 545–546; so too Keach, in his *Articles of Faith* (op. cit.), XXIX.

[90] Renihan, *Faith and Life*, 140.

Collins's TTR operates on the foundational principle that the risen Christ gives only good and necessary gifts to his church, and that their right exercise requires their right understanding. In other words, good fences make for good neighbors! Having signed GMMV some twelve years prior, TTR develops the doctrine to help show where those fence lines lie, that brothers might dwell together in unity (Ps. 133:1). For Collins, both elders and GBs are essential for the teaching ministry of the church to function biblically.

The Dedicatory Letter: May Only Ordained Officers Preach?

Collins introduces his discussion of this question by noting John Owen's observation on Heb. 5:12—the word translated "teachers" there:

> [I]s not anywhere used…but for a public teacher, preacher, or instructor of disciples in the knowledge of God. …. [it is] the word whereby the writers of the NT express 'rabbi,' which was the usual name of the public teachers of the Law among the Jews.[91]

His point is that the Scripture does not restrict the work of teaching to ordained elders.

Here his argument's foundation begins to take shape: "Every Church was then a Seminary, in which not only was provision made for the Preaching of the Gospel itself; but for the calling, gathering, and teaching of other Churches also."[92] The church, then, not only gathers for worship and watches over its membership for discipleship and care of souls, but is didactic and developmental by nature. One recalls here that more than thirty "one another" passages exist in the NT delineating each saint's duties to other saints—among others, these duties include exhorting (Heb. 3:13), counseling (Rom.15:13), and teaching (Col. 3:16) one another. The church is responsible for walking together in bearing burdens and helping the brethren, and—to Collins's point—for recognizing men's graces and testing men's gifts.

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[91] John Owen, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1668), as cited in TTR, 3–4.

[92] TRR, 3–4.

In TTR, "calling" involves the calling out to the work of teaching, as well as training, evaluating, affirming, and deploying of men gifted to teach. "Gathering" comprehends both planting churches, and installing and ordaining biblically-qualified officers into a faithful and lawful ministry. The Puritans often speak of a "regular" ministry here, meaning that which is regulated by and in accordance with the word of God, or an "ordinary" ministry, referring to that office as ordained by Christ and therefore both instituted and governed by his word. Verbiage of "regular" and "ordinary" can also encompass that which is weekly exercised (e.g., "Hercules was the regular preacher at Wapping for twenty-five years") and normative in nature, not apostolic and atypical for this stage of redemptive history. A "regular" ministry thus required organizing a congregation into a particularized church under godly shepherds. His language of "teaching" comprehends the weekly public preaching of these men entrusted with the gospel, as well as repeating the process of calling out, training, and entrusting more faithful men with the truth as it is in Jesus (Eph. 4:21) for its stewardship and proclamation.

Collins's conviction is that each aspect of these stages and steps is properly the provenance of the local congregation. This task requires some mechanism for men to test and grow in their gifts; hence, Owen's vibrant statement that "Every Church was then a Seminary"[93] concisely captures Collins's operative philosophy and distills his argument in TTR to its essence. As the ἐκκλησία is both doxological and didactic in nature, it carries the consequent duty of ministers "to endeavour [that] their Hearers and Members increase[e] in Knowledg, until they are able to instruct others according to their Calls and Opportunities."[94] After all, the Christians in Acts 8 "went up and down preaching the Word"[95]—accordingly, Hercules's inclusion of Owen's

[93] As quoted in TTR, 4.

[94] TTR, 5. This is Collins's summary of Owen's conclusion, rooted in 1 Tm. 1:5 and 3:2; 2 Tm. 2:24; and 3 Jn. 1:4.

conclusion that "It is the duty of the members to exhort, entreat, beseech, and comfort one another"[96] encompasses at some level both the private and public ministry of the word. Collins argues that this duty, which has been neglected, must be recovered.

He addresses a fear among ministers that "their Hearers should know too much."[97] Such fear is not rooted in love to their congregation's souls or Christ's honor, but in fear of man and self-interest. It is the culmination of "many corrupt lusts and affections [which] may prompt them hereunto, which are all resolved into self, with respect to profit and reputation."[98] Collins minces no words in locating that sinful pattern of man-fearing as a significant influence for Rome's wicked "commendation of blind obedience and ignorance."[99] His assertion that ministers have "no greater crown or cause of rejoicing" than when the congregation reaches the point "that their gifts and abilities may outstrip [his own], especially if they are accompanied with humility and holiness"[100] rings with rich overtones of pneumatology, sanctification, and hope.

Hercules calls a second witness: Nathaniel Hiller (fl. ca. 1700). Hiller's testimony of the unordained preacher is striking:

> A Church of Christ is not altogether destitute of the Means of Edification, even before they have chosen and ordain'd Officers among themselves. But by virtue of the Church-Relation the Brethren stand in towards [one] another, 'tis their Privilege to exercise and dispense the Word of God for mutual Edification. As every one (i. e. any one) hath received the Gift, 1 *Pet*. 4. 10, 11. *and* to minister the same to one another; and if called by the Church, to speak as the Oracles of God.[101]

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[95] TTR, 5.

[96] TTR, 5–6.

[97] TTR, 5.

[98] TTR, 5.

[99] TTR, 5.

[100] TTR, 5–6.

[101] Nathaniel Hiller, *A Discourse of the Species, Order, and Government of Christian Churches, and the Ordination of their Ministers*. Printed for Nath. Hiller (London, 1701), 62; as cited in TTR, 6–7. Note in Collins's

In other words, true churches have "the Means of Edification" within themselves by virtue of the Spirit's gifts and graces in the believers and the Bible—they are present within her membership, even if a church may lack a formal eldership. Proper stewardship of church membership, then, requires faithfulness with Scripture toward one another, including addressing one another with Scripture. The Bible does not restrain such ministry, but models and mandates it, such that the church has both ability and authority to call out the servants Christ has placed within her.

Teaching and instructing one another is consequently not "peculiar to Office; but the Privilege of all that God hath enabled, and Providence called to exercise": that is, all preachers are to preach *ex dono*, and some will also preach *ex officio*. So doing neither nullifies biblical ordination nor does it invalidate the elder's lawful office; there is no undercutting of the minister here. Rather, his role is established, strengthened, and helped by the Spirit's grace in giving fellow preachers to Christ's people.

Collins collects twelve verses ranging from Malachi to Jude, demonstrating that saints have practiced such things even before Christ's incarnation. He argues that the "primitive practice" (how he speaks of the NT-era church) was multifaceted—as regards public teaching. See Figure 5.1 on the next page:

excerpt from Hiller the basic Particular Baptist understanding that approbation (the act wherein a legitimate superior grants to a candidate the actual exercise of his ministry) is properly the purview of the church, not a bishop or diocese. This is a distinctly Protestant, Reformational, and Independent view of ordination and directly contra the Council of Trent (1545–1563).

Figure 5.1: Tracing the Biblical Practice of Unordained Preaching in TTR

They did not:	***They did:***
"Restrain the means of Edification, nor make Teaching and Instruction peculiar to Office."[102]	Make it "the Privilege of all that God hath enabled, and Providence called to exercise."
Regard the scriptural pattern of lay-preaching as "extraordinary" and thus inapplicable to the present age.	Own it as "the Doctrine and Practice in the setled and establish'd Churches."
	Hold it as "nothing contrary to any Divine Institution" in the NT era.
	View both its "Reason and Usefulness" as "continu[ing] fixed and permanent."
Deal in a disorderly manner with potential GBs.	Require them to be evaluated as "duly qualified with Ministerial Gifts of Learning and Utterance," thus necessitating observance of both a holy life and gifting of the Spirit.
	Expect that they have been "called by the Providence of God" personally.
	Expect that they "lawfully and warrantably" be "appointed by any Church and People of God to preach and teach" publicly.
Allow "any private Member [to] preach *ex dono*, or obtrude themselves without a Call, or preach ordinarily [that is, regularly]."	Require that preachers be "chosen…by the Church" and (if preaching regularly or long-term) be "ordained by the Church."[103]
Disregard GBs.	Allow that those vetted by due biblical process for the work "may lawfully and warrantably do it."
"Make void the use and necessity of setled and standing Officers in particular Churches."	Affirm a distinction between GBs and "a stated Ministry" consisting of "setled standing Officers, whose stated Work, Duty and Business is to teach and exhort, take care and feed those particular Churches to whom they are made Overseers, and to them, and amongst them [*ex officio*] to administer all the Ordinances of Christ."

[102] All quotations in this chart are from TTR, 7–8.

[103] For seventeenth century Particular Baptist churches, GBs were generally regarded as potential elders, formal elder candidates, or future-elders-in-training. In some cases, their role could simply be that of GB, not elder, but such was not considered as normative. The Dutch Reformed present a similar view in their exhorters.

A Foundation of Five Biblical Arguments

Hercules's arguments and counsels in TTR are framed by and expand upon the reasoning of the Congregationalist work *The Preacher sent: or, A vindication of the liberty of publick preaching, by some men not ordained*, which he summarizes as a demonstration of the biblical nature of unordained preaching. As they deeply influence his thought, I summarize them here; Collins saw this line of thought as providing a significant aspect of the biblical grounds for GBs. He organizes them under the headings of gospel order, gospel commands, gospel promise, gospel precedents, and gospel rules. His emphasis on the gospel here has nothing to do with the modern practice of prefixing the noun "gospel" to every imaginable act in life. Hercules instead underscores that this pattern is demonstrably biblical, congregationally normative, and properly pneumatological for the church's life together under the covenant of grace.

First, Scripture shows a "Gospel-order."[104] In what Collins terms the "Antecedaneousness of Election to Ordination,"[105] the congregation should elect their officers prior to ordination (citing 1 Tm. 3:1–2 and following along with Acts 6), having good faith that he is "gifted and qualified as Christ requireth Officers should be."[106] Choosing precedes charging: due process in electing prior to ordaining requires patience in hearing "an ordinary [regular and lawful] preaching" to assess giftedness, from which "it necessarily follows that some Men not ordained may preach."[107]

Second, the NT presents "Gospel Commands."[108] Such imperatives are rooted in Heb.

[104] TTR, 9.

[105] TTR, 9.

[106] TTR, 9.

[107] TTR, 9.

[108] TTR, 9.

10:25 and Heb. 3:13's "exhorting one another" language, and 1 Pet. 4:10–11's emphasis on "minister[ing] the same [Gift] one to another" and the repeated "any Man" who "speaks" or "ministers."[109] Hercules concludes that "this is to be done by every one who hath received the Gift."[110]

Third, the Bible presents a hopeful "Gospel-Promise"[111] of Matt. 25:29: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." They understood "having" to refer to one who, "if he uses, exerciseth, and improveth what Gifts he hath: To him shall be given, that is, he shall increase his Gifts, his Labour shall be followed with a divine blessing."[112] This work was not for every Christian—but "whosoever hath [the Talent of preaching Gifts], it is his Duty to improve in an orderly way."[113]

Fourth, much is gleaned from "Gospel-Precedents or Examples."[114] Apollos—mighty in the Scriptures—was probably a GB, not an ordained officebearer. He knew only John's baptism (Acts 18:24–28), which "spake nothing of the Ordination of Officers; neither is it likely that he had an extraordinary Call"[115] (e.g., as an apostle or first-generation elder) since the Scriptures say nothing of it.

> A Man may be Eloquent, and mighty in the Scriptures without extraordinary Gifts; and his being instructed by Aquila and Priscilla in the way of the Lord more perfectly, strongly argues that he was not extraordinarily gifted."[116]

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[109] TTR, 9.

[110] TTR, 10.

[111] TTR, 10.

[112] TTR, 10.

[113] TTR, 10.

[114] TTR, 10.

[115] TTR, 10.

[116] TTR, 11.

Next, consider the preaching of Acts 8:4—"they that were scattered" by persecution. The verse's indistinct language does not argue for having ordained men in view. Scripture records Christ's presence and blessing in it (Collins terms it a "Divine Allowance"[117]): "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed." Hercules emphasizes:

> [I]f we ask the Question, 'Who were all scatter'd abroad? The Answer must be, The Church at Jerusalem, and these went every where preaching. The Apostles who were the Chief Officers were not scattered; for it is said, They were all scatter'd abroad except the Apostles.[118]

Finally, the NT provides rich "Gospel-Rules about Prophesying"[119] in 1 Cor. 14:29, 31: "Here is an universal Liberty given to all the Prophets to exercise their Gifts publickly in a settled Church"—citing verses 23–24 to demonstrate their congregational context.[120] Prophesying "is not limited to that which is extraordinary."[121] He goes on to note the "Scripture-sense" in which some are called prophets "by way of resemblance…if they have a Gift of Scripture-Interpretation or Exposition"[122] since Scripture is a word of prophecy (2 Pet. 1:19). While not restricted to those ordained, Scripture does restrict preaching to men gifted for the work. Thus their prophesying will be a lawful word of exhortation, which "signifies a stirring up to Duty, and…beseeching, intreating and comforting."[123] It is in this manner that Paul tells Corinth to desire to prophesy: not necessarily in seeking an office, but "to desire a Gift from God to expound and interpret the Scripture to the Churches Edification."[124]

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[117] TTR, 11.

[118] TTR, 11.

[119] TTR, 11.

[120] TTR, 11–12.

[121] TTR, 12.

[122] TTR, 12.

[123] TTR, 12.

[124] TTR, 12.

Collins, citing Congregationalist concurrence[125] in this point with that of the Particular Baptists, concludes his Letter desiring that "Principle and Practice did better harmonize": he could not recall a non-university-trained pastor being installed in the past thirty years in London. Strong pneumatology underscores his concern: "such as have [not] had Human Learning" were thereby subject to a "great…slight…tho no way inferiour in Spiritual Gifts and Graces for the Churches Edification." He desires churches to train up and "call forth those from among themselves,"[126] both for necessity's sake and in view of life's brevity under God's providence.

The reasoning is forthright, biblical, and sound in methodology: God, though he has promised to give shepherds after his own heart (Jer. 3:15), works by means and in a fitting order. Thus pastors and churches should devote themselves to prayer, asking Christ to give gifts to his churches. Prospective teachers should be heard in their prayers before being heard in the pulpit: "that their Gifts might be discover'd, they ought first of all to be put upon Prayer, and then to see what Gifts they have for opening the Word of God."[127] For Hercules, men who cannot pray cannot preach; they must commune with God if they would lead others to know him by his word. Having been approved, men should be heard by other pastors (Collins suggests at least monthly meetings) for their training and help:

> [I]t is greatly desired, and would be a glorious Work, if all the Elders of the Churches in every City in England would not only be concern'd in their own particular Congregations for a future Ministry, but that the several Elders would set apart some time every Week for the instructing young Men, Members of Churches, inclin'd to Divine Studies…[128]

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[125] See *The Savoy Declaration of Faith*, "The Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in Them by Jesus Christ," paragraphs 7 and 13.

[126] TTR, 13.

[127] TTR, 13.

[128] So too in the Abingdon Association; their 1708 General Assembly encouraged churches to utilize opportunities for experienced ministers to instruct GBs and aspiring elders in sound doctrine and, presumably, in the

Note what he envisions: careful pastoral care for existing congregations which takes heed to the whole flock and concerns itself with their present and future spiritual condition. This requires churches working together in a shared effort based on common convictions. It should be done under the oversight of their respective sessions—church membership with its attendant duties and biblical processes would be required of candidates. These would be men with a desire and a capacity for the work of laboring in the Scriptures, with the humility and patience to seek out and submit themselves to the oversight and input of elders (their own and others), displaying a spiritual disposition toward serving the Lord's glory and his people's good.

TTR, Hercules summarizes in closing, "is not design'd for those who have no need of this Counsel, but for such as have."[129] The same humility and love he desires in others, he extends to them as he moves into his sermon.

A Sermon for the Improvement of Ministerial Gifts[130]

An Outline of Collins's Sermon

A Sermon for Improvement of Ministerial Gifts: 2 Tm. 2:15.

1. Introduction
    a. Nature of OT schools of the prophets and what he just argued in Dedicatory Letter should lead to considering these matters.
    b. Collins hopes to be of help to "those young Persons whose Hearts God hath inclin'd to the Ministry of the Word."[131]
    c. The text's background: Paul before his death exhorts Timothy to faithfulness, which calls all ministers to fulfill their ministry (Col. 4:17).

practice of preaching as well. Their proposed approach echoes Collins's desideratum and the Puritan prophesyings. See Larry Kreitzer, ed. *The Longworth Churchbook 1652–1708*, in Center for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications: Re–Sourcing Baptist History: Seventeenth Century Series, vol. 10 (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2020), 64–65. B.R. White adds that the ministers' prophesyings and conferences served "the improvement of the clergy's morale and for theological education." *The English Separatist Tradition*, 36.

[129] TTR, 14.

[130] Hereafter denoted as SIMG.

[131] TTR, 15.

2. The text introduced: 2 Tm. 2:15.
    a. The epistle's authorship, context, occasion, and scope.
    b. The text's division:
        i. An exhortation to study.
        ii. Study, to the end that one may be approved unto God.
        iii. The advantage gained: faithful workmen are delivered from shame, with honor and holy boldness gained.
3. Observations (five doctrines):
    a. Study is an ordinance of God.
    b. Scripture is the primary foundation of a minister's study.
    c. The aim of study is to please God and win men.
    d. Faithful study delivers one from shame, gaining honor and holy boldness.
    e. Unstudied preaching dishonors the Lord, mishandles the word, shames the preacher, and invites contempt of the gospel.
4. "Doct. That it is the Duty of every Gospel-Minister so to study as they may approve themselves to God; and so divide the Word of Truth that they may not be ashamed, but rather have the Honour that belongs to that calling."[132]
    a. Explanation: dividing the word rightly means every one must have his "due Portion"[133] to nourish his soul.
    b. Proposition: "That it's God alone by inspiration of his Holy Spirit can make Men able Ministers of the New Testament."[134]
    c. Description: five marks of "good Workmen."[135]
        i. They lay the one foundation of Christ alone.
        ii. They "build a good Structure upon this good Foundation" with faithful lives and faithful doctrine.
        iii. They structure the sermon carefully, sticking closely to the text being preached.
        iv. They handle Scripture rightly, using "proper ways and means to prove a Proposition by."[136]
            1. An example of proposition given and argued: "It is the Duty of every Man to love and praise God."[137]
                a. Argued from our creation, Ps. 95:7 and 100:3–4.
                b. As the great end of our creation, Prov. 16:4, Rev. 4:4.
                c. Argued from lesser to greater: creaturely duty to honor our Creator; we labor to preserve our bodies, thus much more our souls.

[132] TTR, 18. One thinks here of the *Directory of the Publique Worship of God*'s directive (p. 19) that preaching "should be so performed, that the workman need not be ashamed, but may save himself, and those that hear him."

[133] TTR, 18.

[134] TTR, 19.

[135] TTR, 20.

[136] TTR, 21.

[137] TTR, 21.

v. They work well and hard, without laziness, "with a Dependence on God for a Blessing."[138]

d. The Reasons of the Point:
   i. Our work is very great, so do it well, 2 Cor. 2:16.
   ii. We will give account of ourselves to God, Heb. 13:17, Acts 20:26–28, Matt. 25:23.

5. The Use and Application:
   a. By way of information.
      i. It is a minister's duty to study, and his sin to neglect it, Is. 56:10.
   b. God commands and works by the means of a minister's study, 2 Tm. 2:15, Ps. 1:2–3.[139]
   c. Caution: "Be cautioned against idleness in the great things of God and the concerns of immortal souls: the Lord hath often reproved idle shepherds."
   d. Consolation: God's blessing attends the effort, both now and eternally, 1 Thess. 5:13, 1 Tm. 5:17. "Let all faithful Labourers rejoice, you shall have Peace in your own Consciences, you will have Praise of the Churches, and all Saints; and, which is best
   e. of all, God's Approbation at last, "Well done good and faithful Servants."

SIMG: Its Importance, Method, and Didactic-Theological Perspective

The SIMG represents the only extant Hercules Collins sermon we may definitively identify as such. As such, it is extremely valuable for our understanding of his thought. While readily granting all due qualifiers that no Puritan preached precisely the way he published, their printed sermons can properly offer a true (if somewhat limited) sense of a man's pulpit "voice," so to speak. We shall approach it on those terms here.

Hercules's multifaceted SIMG intends biblical instruction, ministerial exhortation, expositional modeling, and methodological explanation. It is indeed biblical and theological exposition in classic Puritan fashion. He records a straightforward method, demonstrating how deeply he drank at the well of Early Modern Reformed theological treatises:

1. He demonstrates the biblical context and background of his text.
2. He transitions to introducing his text, giving its division.

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[138] In much the same vein, Piggott exhorted the younger "surviving Ministers" at Hercules's funeral:

> And you, my Brethren, that are younger, let me intreat you to apply your selves to close Study and constant Prayer, that you may shew your selves *Workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*. (In his *Eleven Sermons*, 238–239).

[139] Contra the mystics and Quakers of Collins's day.

3. He draws out the verse's principle doctrines, modeling reasoning from the text.
4. He deduces from them its primary doctrine or argument, and argues its propositions in demonstrating five descriptions of its picture of "good Workmen."
5. He applies his text, offering four primary uses with their attendant duties and responses; but his conclusion features brief explanation of his expositional method.

From here, Collins will transition into "Additional Directions and Instructions"—thirty-seven points expanding on his doctrine of becoming a faithful worker (treated in the next section).

Hercules sees his efforts in SIMG as following in the basic pattern of the "Schools of the Prophets."[140] He considers it necessary to help raise up these "Sons of the Prophets," given "the little Care that Churches take for a future Ministry." He argues it as likely that these Fathers, or "Seers" taught the "Sons of the Prophets" by setting them to hearing and considering:

> [T]heir Prophecies which they had from *Jehovah*, and open'd and explain'd the Law to them…exercising [them] in holy Studies, with a frequent reading of the Oracles of God, and meditating therein day and night, with Prayers to the Almighty…to make them the more fit for the Prophetick Revelation.[141]

Thus the preacher's primary task is to handle the Bible, to live in the Bible, to know the Bible, such that sermon comes demonstrably from the Bible and glorifies the God of the Bible in the preaching of his word. His primary "Doctrine"[142] or thesis reflects this conviction:

> Now I shall sum up all into one Doctrine. Doct. That it is the Duty of every Gospel-Minister so to study as they may approve themselves to God; and so divide the Word of Truth, that they may not be ashamed, but rather have the Honour that belongs to that calling.

In formulating this primary "Doctrine," Collins uses intentionally broad, encompassing language. He ultimately refers to "every Gospel-Minister" in the context of having reasoned from "a Minister" (Doct. 2) to "Men" (Doct. 3) to "Those that study"[143] (Doct. 4) to "All Persons

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[140] TTR, 15.

[141] Note too the consistently high view of Scripture which Collins lays as his foundation: "…their Prophecies which they had from Jehovah…" So too in his opening note: "The Penman of this Epistle your see was the Apostle *Paul*, he was the Writer, but the Spirit the Inditer" (TTR, 16).

[142] TTR, 18.

[143] TTR, 18.

who will undertake to preach…[and to take] the Cause of God in their hands" (Doct. 5). In other words, consistent with his defense of unordained preaching, he does not limit his instruction only to those men holding the office of an ordained elder. Rather, he builds on his defense of the GB preaching in his instructional sermon, assuming that he has largely proven his point in the introductory letter.

Over two decades of training brothers who had not enjoyed the advantage of formal studies[144] surfaces when observing how he "narrates" his method throughout the sermon for his reader. Even while providing a model sermon, he never loses sight that he is producing a training manual for men like himself. He has thought through his approach carefully, seeing to it that his learners have a pattern to imitate as well as biblical precepts to internalize and implement.

An excellent example of this experience showing itself may be observed in Collins's transitions in SIMG. While they narrate his reader smoothly from one portion of the sermon to the next, they are also thoroughly instructional in scope. Consider from the Introduction: "The Scripture which I shall *lay for the Foundation of my Discourse* [emphasis mine], is 2 Tm. ii. 15."[145] In drawing out his doctrines from the text: "We shall now *raise some observations*, which are expressed and implied in the words."[146] In introducing his thesis or "Doctrine": "Now I shall sum up all into one Doctrine."[147] He states his thesis, then pivots the transition smoothly into

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[144] One remembers here that TTR "is not design'd for those who have no need of this Counsel, but for such as have," 14. It contextualizes Piggott's (1670–1713) remark to the "surviving Ministers" in his funeral sermon for Collins:

> O pity, pity the rising Generation of Young Ministers : Pray for them, advise them, and do all you can to help them in their Work, before you leave them : Be an Example to them, that when you are gather'd to your Fathers, we may stand up and plead for your God and Ours.

From "A Sermon at the Funeral of Mr. Hercules Collins," in John Piggott, *Eleven Sermons*, 238.

[145] TTR, 15–16.

[146] TTR, 17.

[147] TTR, 18.

explaining his next steps (indirectly teaching readers some of the basic steps of how to write a sermon):

> In speaking to the Proposition I shall use this Method. 1*st*. I shall explain the Point. 2*dly*. Lay down one Proposition. 3*dly*. Shew who are good Workmen. 4*thly*. Give the Reasons why they should so study. 5*thly*. Improve the Doctrine.[148]

Collins continues this basic pattern of double-dipping didactic transitions throughout the SIMG. In exposition: "III. We shall labour to shew you who are good Workmen."[149] In argumentation: "IV. The Reasons of the Point, in which I shall be very brief."[150] In application: "This affords us a Use of Caution."[151] SIMG's narrating approach trains the consciences of those seeking a cogent biblical understanding of the biblical duty of hard study in preparing to preach —preachers and churchmen alike. Seeing "there are too few painful Labourers," he aims to reduce the number of "Loiterers concern'd in this glorious Imployment,"[152] by aiding those seeking guidance in faithfully crafting their own sermons. He presses upon the consciences of preachers their duty to meditate carefully upon and study hard in the Scriptures,[153] while warning against sinful presumption.

His experience training GBs further presents itself in the quietly robust pneumatology and bibliology informing his exhortations in Use 2:

> This Doctrine refutes the Opinion of those that think it unlawful to study to declare God's Mind, and will contemptuously speak against it, *as if we were to preach by Inspiration, as the Prophets and Apostles of old did* [emphasis mine].

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[148] TTR, 18.

[149] TTR, 20.

[150] TTR, 22.

[151] TTR, 24.

[152] TTR, 24.

[153] Nuttall make the point here that, for many of their hearers, "…correctness, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit's assistance, counted far more than education." In *The Holy Spirit*, 83.

Hercules carefully but clearly differentiates the Spirit's office in the breathing-out work of biblical inscripturation through the pens of the apostles and prophets (properly, inscripturation is as aspect of the doctrine of biblical inspiration) with the modern "prophet's" work in preaching the Bible. One of these things is not like the other, Collins insists. The Spirit attends them differently: inspiration is the process by which the Spirit brought forth the Word, inscripturating is its committal to writing, whereby it is accredited and affirmed in its consequent canonization; this canon must now form the ground and bound the content of Christian proclamation.

This "Inspiration" of the inscripturated Word, however, differs categorically from any "Inspiration" normative to this era of redemptive history.[154] Now, Collins distinguishes, we must receive insight from studying the written Text dependent on the Spirit's work of illumination, and seek to hold forth to our hearers what we gleaned from its pages—but our "Inspiration" must be neither conflated nor equated with that of "the Prophets and Apostles of old."[155] "Inspiration" as some men claimed to possess (in Collins's day and ours) ultimately elevates man's thoughts above "God's Mind," serving an egocentric mysticism instead of the God of the Bible. Collins sharply warns prospective preachers against such error.[156]

This conviction held consistent in his thought, from his first assertions in *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680). Though he was defending congregational singing as an ordained element of biblical worship under the RPW, Collins's pneumatology is in lockstep with his understanding of

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[154] TTR, 24.

[155] TTR, 24.

[156] TTR, 24. So too when he makes the statement that "That it's God alone by inspiration of his Holy Spirit can make Men able Ministers of the New Testament" (TTR, 19). Collins does not here equate preaching with direct revelation; he is not falling into Quakerism! Note his context of arguing for the plain sense of the text as comprising the minister's discourse. Rather, his language carefully underscores the minister's dependence upon the God-breathed Scriptures and the gifting and enabling of God the Spirit, and the foundational necessity of the minister's conversion. "Inspiration" for Collins is pneumatological gifting to understand and expound the Scriptures—he is arguing *ex dono.*

inspiration and sheds light on his position in TTR. Note his careful distinction between the pneumatologically-superintended inspiration of the biblical writers noted above and the aid of the Spirit today:

> All Prayer or Preaching, that doth not correspond with sacred Writ, *notwithstanding any pretence of an extraordinary Inspiration* [emphasis mine], I am to explode out of God's Worship. …Prayer and Preaching must correspond with the sacred Record…we count them the best Prayers and Sermons, that are fullest of Scripture, so those Hyms that are founded on the sacred Scriptures, *can no more be denied to be of the Spirit, than a Man's Preaching or Prayer, which is full of the Word of God* [emphasis mine]. Preaching must correspond with the sacred Record…[and] we count them the best…Sermons, that are fullest of Scripture…[157]

In other words, "inspired" preaching, praying, or singing will be that which is most shaped by and stuffed with the words, themes, and thought patterns of the Bible. "Inspiration" in this sense is what has come to be called "unction" today, the experiential dimension of the Spirit's help to bring God's Word before his people powerfully and effectually in preaching. An undergirding but robust pneumatology and bibliology runs throughout TTR.

TTR's simple clarity in its explicit and consequential theological categories thus well-serves its readers, many of whom would also have lacked university training like Hercules. As demonstrated in our example from Use 2, Collins has woven multiple layers of doctrinal instruction and interpretive safeguards into the book. His practical-but-precise theological attentiveness becomes even clearer in his "Additional Directions and Instructions," especially #21–#36. SIMG presents a faithful, workmanlike pastoral theology in miniature—bounded canonically, reasoned textually, consistent confessionally, located ecclesially, and informed by the theological encyclopedia with a stout subtlety.

TTR's unassuming, thoughtful accessibility in its method affords it a surprising dexterity as a how-to manual (in part) for those requiring its aid. Collins's multi-pronged approach in

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[157] Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism*, "Appendix on Singing," 84. This excerpt is part of his answer to Objection #12.

SIMG is ingenious: it defends his position biblically while demonstrating it apologetically. It serves as a unifying point for those submissive to the plain sense of Scripture, and as a calming point for those who had grown heated in the lengthy debates concerning lay preaching and due preparations prior to preaching. It quietly helps legitimize the maligned Nonconformists as lawfully ordered in their polity and firmly anchored within the Reformation and Puritan heritage of the Congregationalists. It also separates the Particular Baptists from the schismatics and heretics of the era as it repeatedly presses home the duty of handling Scripture faithfully.

We observed Collins's five-tiered methodology at the beginning of this section. The intentional, uncluttered biblical clarity of his approach and reasoning stand in sharp contrast to the sectarians, mystics, and high-church formalists of seventeenth century England. Ever the shepherd, he aims to point his learners to safe pastures and solid ground, not to score points with the rhetorical or stylistic heavyweights of his day. Why? He knows the weight and accounting of souls.

To that end, he models an uncomplicated, readily-reproducible method. He speaks with a brevity atypical for the era and a clarity befitting the gospel's urgency. Collins's reasoning is demonstrably drawn from and anchored to the Scriptures; a sermon such as this is no place to advance novelties, but to defend verities. His Puritan instincts are well-evidenced in this Scripture-focused simplicity—Collins is to be classified as a "plain preacher," as William Perkins termed it: "It is a by-word among us: 'It was a very plain sermon.' And I say again, *the plainer, the better*."[158] He even packages it neatly in a step-by-step format!

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[158] William Perkins, *Commentary on Galatians*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, eds. Paul Smalley, Joel Beeke, and Derek Thomas (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), II.148. The "plainness" of Perkins's exposition is helpfully discussed in the same volume, xxii–xxiv; much the same could be said concerning Collins. See too Joel Beeke, *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 152–157. On Puritan preaching, see Van Dixhoorn, *God's Ambassadors*, op. cit.; Morgan, *Puritan Spirituality* (op. cit.), 7–23; F.R. Webber (1887–1963), *A History of Preaching in Britian and America, Including the Biographies of Many Princes of the Pulpit and the*

"Further Helps": Collins, on Collins

Hercules's "Further helps by way of Direction and Instruction to those that are inclin'd to the Ministration of the Gospel"[159] requires careful attention. This section, not properly part of the SIMG, transitions his reader to the thirty-seven points of "Additional Directions and Instructions." Though quite brief, it is more than just filler material, and he does not simply repeat himself here—rather, Collins comments on and explains his preaching method, a unique and relatively rare literary and theological approach in the seventeenth century. This again displays his operative pastoral theology: Hercules is a helper, not merely a homiletician. TTR transitions in this section from defensive to didactic in its focus and scope.

An Outline of "Further Helps"

He offers six points for the preacher to remember, providing abbreviated counsel for each point. It should be considered as seven points (Collins combines the points a bit awkwardly); I outline it here accordingly for clarity, dividing his #6 into #6 and #7:

1. "Consider my whole Method in speaking."[160] He includes the Penman, Time, Occasion, and Scope of the book being preached.
2. "Consider how your Text coheres and depends upon what goes before it," but do not waste time here.
3. "Make an exact division of your Text, if your Text calls you to it, for that will be profitable in the helping of you to Matter."

Men who influenced them (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1952), I.195–270; John Broadus (1827–1895), *Lectures in the History of Preaching* (New York, NY: A.C. Armstrong, 1907), 206–219; Edwin Dargan (1852–1930), *A History of Preaching: Vol. 2, from the Close of the Reformation to the End of the Nineteenth Century 1572–1900* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1970), 136–185; J.I. Packer (1926–2020), *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 163–178, 277–290; Hughes Oliphant Old (1933–2016), *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, vol. 4: The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 251–329 (though Old consistently misreads Puritan preaching on sanctification as also being *sola fide*); Horton Davies (1916–2005), *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603–1690* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), II.161–184. Davies is no fan of Puritan sermons: "These learned Puritan preachers were in their and our own sense of the term 'painful' preachers; they took pains and they gave pain to all but the most diligent and devoted of their persuasion" (p. 173).

[159] TTR, 25–26.

[160] TTR, 25.

4. "Explain any difficult Terms," but do not waste time here.
5. "Raise as many Doctrines as the Text will allow," applying each, "but insist most on the chief Scope of the place."
6. "Prove [your Doctrine] from the Word of God":
    a. Be focused: use "two or three Scriptures at most."
    b. Be clear: "then lay down the Reasons and Arguments of the Point."
    c. Hercules uses his treatment of "what a good Workman is" (II.4.c) to illustrate the preacher's methodological options for making application ("Uses") from a given text.
    d. "Proofs," "Points," and "Propositions" serve as related-but-distinct terms.
7. Counsels on applications. (I group his counsels together here for easier comprehension; Collins splits them up).
    a. Counsels on applications:
        i. "What Use you make, let it be always natural from the Doctrine."
        ii. "Draw as many Inferences from it as it will bear."[161]
        iii. "Inferences are generally very divine things."
        iv. "All Doctrines will not afford the same Uses."
        v. "Consider which of all these [nine possible Uses], or any other Uses, will be most naturally handled from your Doctrine."
    b. He then notes nine possible "Uses":
        i. "Information,
        ii. Caution,
        iii. Trial and Examination,
        iv. Refutation,
        v. Instruction,
        vi. Reprehension,
        vii. Exhortation, with its Motives and Directions,
        viii. Admiration, and
        ix. Consolation."[162]

"Further Helps": Collins's Homiletical Instruction

In sum, Hercules says: "Notice that I did these things, and how, and then be sure to do them in your sermon." Using his own material as an example—"Consider my whole Method in speaking,"[163] he instructs his reader—the preacher must pay careful attention to key aspects of crafting a sermon.

[161] Note the interpretive principle of listening carefully to one's text, here applied theologically in drawing out or "Rais[ing] as many Doctrines as the Text will allow" (#5) and experientially in "Draw[ing] as many Inferences from it as it will bear" (#8.a.ii). Hence his injunction: "…what Use you make, let it be always Natural from the Doctrine" (TTR, 26). For Collins, doctrine and use are intimate and inseparable; his view of and approach to the Scriptures is thoroughly Puritan in nature.

[162] TTR, 26.

[163] TTR, 25.

He should not neglect the prolegomena of his text (#1). Contextual considerations, with the argument of the book, pericope, and passage under consideration, must all be comprehended and communicated concisely but appropriately (#2). How a text may be broken down into its parts will benefit both the preacher and the congregation in both clarity of thought and strengthening his exposition (#3). Difficulties of verbiage should be addressed simply and briefly (#4). The preacher's job is proclamation by teaching through the text, which means instruction about and careful application of the various points of theology found within a passage—to give the whole counsel of God therein, without losing sight of its main point (#5). To that end, Scripture should be treated as its own best apologist and expositor, and the preacher's arguments must be built only upon its clearest statements of them; he references his own material as an example here (#6). Finally, he offers guidance on "Uses"[164] (#7).

Collins's #5 initially sounds very different from William Ames in *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, #31. Ames asserts:

> Not all the doctrines which may be drawn out of the text are to be propounded or all the uses set forth but only those are to be selected which the circumstance of place, time, and person suggest as most necessary—and of these especially those which make for the stirring up or strengthening of the spirit of devotion.[165]

For Ames, a faithful sermon need not raise every possible doctrinal point the preacher sees in a passage, nor its every potential application—it is enough to speak to those which seem best for the moment, and especially if they serve Christian devotion. Hercules appreciates Ames, building a fair percentage of TTR on principles gleaned from Ames's work—but is unafraid to develop further what he sees as best in Ames[166] (e.g., he is not contradicting Ames in #5).

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[164] Ames defines a use as "a theological principle deduced from a doctrine which shows the use, goodness, of end of it"; see his *Marrow of Theology*, 193 (#34).

[165] Ames, *Marrow of Theology*, 192–193 (#31).

[166] Along those lines, if one does not take SIMG as Collins's only extant sermon, his developments of Amesian homiletics could perhaps be seen as an argument for viewing *Counsel for the Living* as another Collinsian

Thus he emphasizes here the interpretive principle of reasoning carefully from the text in application. The preacher must listen carefully to his passage, making theological applications by drawing out or "Rais[ing] as many Doctrines as the Text will allow" (#5) with experiential applications by "Draw[ing] as many Inferences from it as it will bear" (#7.a.ii). Hence his injunction: "…what Use you make, let it be always Natural from the Doctrine."[167] #36 in his "Additional Directions and Instructions" is emphatic: "We may raise as many Doctrines from a Scripture as it will truly bear; and all Doctrines and Inferences that are natural from any Text are the purest Divinity."[168] Doctrine and use are inseparable friends.

His "Proofs," "Points," and "Propositions" in #6 serve as related-but-distinct terms.[169] A proof is the Scripture passage from which a point should be deduced. The point is one's textual exposition of a proof, drawn out after "making an exact Division of it" (e.g., a basic exegesis). A proposition encompasses the specific doctrine raised from a Scriptural text, crafted upon having done the exposition of a point, and leading naturally to its Uses (treated below). He concisely weaves in the distinct aspects of a faithful hermeneutical and homiletical process.

The heart of a teacher gifted by grace and "zealously bent to promote the Interest of the Lord Redeemer"[170] beat within Hercules Collins, and it shines forth brightly in his SIMG.

"Additional Directions and Instructions": The Counsels of an Experienced Shepherd

Collins now shifts from providing commentary on his model sermon and method, to

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sermon, arguing from its departure from Ames in its heavy use of the biblical languages. I am not persuaded by this line of argument at present, but a valid case might be made.

[167] TTR, 26.

[168] TTR, 47. He does bear sermon length in mind, though! See TTR, 34.

[169] TTR, 26–27.

[170] Piggott, "A Funeral Sermon," op. cit., 239.

giving thirty-seven broad points of counsel for preachers (hereafter ADI). Approaching ADI can initially feel a bit like trying to wrap one's head around the structure of Proverbs! His counsel focuses on three major concerns:

1. Heart concerns—preparing the *man* who preaches (#1–2, #8b–9),[171]
2. Practical concerns—navigating the *mechanics* of preaching (#3–8a, #10–20, #37), and
3. Interpretive concerns—rightly handling the *matter* preached (#21–36) in theological exposition.

Accordingly, I summarize each point and group them into thematic headings (*italicized* below) for a more helpful engagement. Sequentially, ADI is organized into these clusters:

#1–3, Experiential confidence in Scripture.
#4–7, Reliance upon Scripture, not gimmicks.
#8–9, Diligence in Scripture and in seeking God.
#10–13, Mindfulness of hearers in manner and matter.
#14–17, Spiritual considerations: the sufficiency of Scripture.
#18–20, Labor for careful theological exposition.
#21–26, Explain the text by the whole counsel of God.
#27–30, Use plain speech, suitable to the text.
#31–35, Five hermeneutical considerations.
#36, Drawing out doctrines from a text.
#37, Worthwhile books for ministers.

An Outline of "Additional Directions and Instructions"

I have outlined ADI below, inserting the thematic headings into the outline for better comprehension of Collins's thought:

#1–3, Experiential confidence in Scripture.

1. Scripture is its own best expositor.[172]
2. Give yourself to reading Scripture "above all," praying for a wise, understanding heart; and "also beg for great humility."

[171] Unquestionably, the Puritans concerned themselves with the heart, especially in preaching—but also in hearing the preached Word. See, for example, Jeremiah Burroughs's (1599–1646) excellent *Gospel Worship, or, The Right Manner of Sanctifying the Name of God in general. And Particularly these 3 Great ordinances 1. Hearing the Word 2. Receiving the Lords supper 3. Prayer. By Jeremiah Burroughs Gospel Preacher to Two of the Greatest Congregations in England, Stepney and Cripplegate* (London: 1648); his chapters 3, 8–9 address how one sanctifies the name of God in preparing for and hearing the Word of God.

[172] The Reformation's fundamental interpretive principle is *Scriptura Scripturae interpres* ("Scripture interprets Scripture"), a pillar resting on the foundation of *sola Scriptura.*

i. Two things make us humble: knowledge of God and of ourselves.[173]
ii. "Three things make a Preacher, Meditation, Temptation and Prayer."[174]
iii. God hears prayer and helps the humble petitioner.

3. Let all preaching be done "according to the Analogy of Faith."[175]

#4–7, Reliance upon Scripture, not gimmicks.

4. Speak plainly, "to the understanding of the meanest subject," not using rhetorical flourishes.
5. Guard against repetition and empty, embellishing words; prepare enough material to use your gift well.
6. Speak naturally: not too slow or too fast.
7. Let your manner and clothing[176] "in a Pulpit be grave and sober…no indecent Behaviour, nor uncomely Garb," lest you wound the consciences of God's people.
    i. Speak loud enough to be heard (Is. 58:1, Jn. 7:37, Acts 2:14).
    ii. Speak naturally, not with affectation, lest "sound doctrine…be open to contempt."

#8–9, Diligence in Scripture and in seeking God.

8. Prepare the sermon before Saturday, so you can use Saturday to meditate on it and preach with profit and joy.
9. Prepare yourself:
    i. Pray for utterance.
    ii. Keep a good conscience.
    iii. Examine yourself (Lev. 4:11, 13).

#10–13, Mindfulness of hearers in manner and matter.

10. Do not let your sentences, pauses, or expositional points be too long.
11. Reason from God's word, unless it is necessary to reason from men's testimony to "convince the Conscience."

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[173] Collins applies John Calvin's (1509–1564) famous opening line from *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* to the heart of the preacher: "Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." In Henry Beveridge, transl., *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Peabody, MA: Hendricksen, 2008), I.1.

[174] As Martin Luther (1483–1546) counseled his students. See "Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings" in *Luther's Works*, eds. L. Spitz and H. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 34.285. Given Collins's publication of TTR shortly before his death and John Piggot's reference to Luther's three marks of a theologian from Ps. 119 in Collins's funeral sermon as consistently characterizing Hercules's life, one wonders if Piggott had read TTR.

[175] With the "analogy of faith" (*analogia fidei*), the operative principle is *Scriptura Scripturae interpres*—thus plain texts are preferred texts.

[176] Collins speaks of "bow-preachers," meaning someone who is a dandy—all fashion and presentation, but having no substance in preaching; cf. Ivimey, *History of English Baptists*, II.495–496.

12. Do not spend too long reviewing previous sermonic material, unless "the Matter be extraordinary weighty, and some may desire the whole Sermon to be preached over again…" (Acts 13:42).
13. Vary your subject matter to cover the whole counsel of God: "Tho it is our Duty to preach Christ crucified the Object of a justifying Faith, yet this must not be done in the neglect of preaching up other Duties."

#14–17, Spiritual considerations: the sufficiency of Scripture.

14. Preach in humility and holy dependence upon God's word, so that God alone is exalted.
15. "Get your Hearts sincerely affected" with what you have plainly seen in Scripture.
16. Know the whole counsel of God, do not depart quickly from it, and do not preach contrary to it.
17. Use figures of speech and illustrations concisely.

#18–20, Labor for careful theological exposition.

18. Take every opportunity your text affords to speak of God's attributes: "nothing is known less than God is known."
19. When explaining a word, do so in its immediate textual and broader theological contexts, showing God's character by it.
20. Labor as thoroughly as possible in writing sermons, but preach "depending on God for further assistance." Where feasible, preach without notes.

#21–26, Explain the text by the whole counsel of God.

21. Handle anthropomorphic and analogical language properly—do not make Scripture out to say something God does not say.
22. Be careful to handle Scripture according to the analogy of faith, not overburdening the particulars of a text.
23. Explain matters relating to the hypostatic union "with all clearness imaginable, because knowledge of it is so necessary to Man's Salvation."
24. Approach future-fulfillment biblical statements in the certainty of God's promise.
25. Interpret figurative language (anthropomorphism, personification, etc.) with great care.
26. Regard all Scripture as "equally authentick" and having "the same Authority" as the words of Christ, for "they spake by the Spirit of Christ."

#27–30, Use plain speech, suitable to the text.

27. Sometimes obscurities are clarified within a verse; read carefully and patiently, not seizing upon mystical interpretations.
28. Preach with clarity and aim for understanding.
29. Handle allegorical passages faithfully, not fancifully; Scripture generally interprets its own figures of speech.
30. Emphasize what a text emphasizes, "or else the design of that Passage is not answer'd."

#31–35, Five hermeneutical considerations.

31. Recognize when the part stands for the whole, or the whole for the part.
32. "The Holy Ghost sometimes puts the Cause of a thing for the Effect."
33. In wrath, God remembers mercy; interpret conditional threats and statements accordingly.
34. Scripture uses hyperbole to stir the affections—help hearers see and sense such employments.
35. NT prophets and prophecy differ from OT, now largely consisting in expounding Scripture and exhorting saints.

#36, Drawing out doctrines from a text.

36. Note any doctrines naturally arising from a text, according to their own emphasis there, with proper application. (Collins then provides an example by demonstrating eight points of doctrine from Col. 1:12).

#37, Worthwhile books for ministers.

37. Recommended books to serve preaching, particularly indices and a commonplace book.

Continuity and Emphasis in ADI

In ADI, Hercules revisits a theme in the following points—though he does usually approach his encores from a different angle. This table briefly demonstrates something of the consistency and thoughtfulness of his pastoral theology.

FIGURE 5.2: Continuity and Emphasis in ADI

Initial Statement:	***Emphasized:***
#2, On the knowledge of God.	#18.
#2, On humility.	#14, #20 (preach with dependence upon God).
#3, Analogy of Faith.	#11, #22.
#4, Speak plainly.	#21, Especially in matters of anthropomorphic and analogical language; and #23, when handling Christology.
#7, Meditate on the sermon on Saturday.	#15, So that your "Heart [is] sincerely affected" with what you have seen in Scripture; cp. #2, #9.
#10, Speak naturally.	#6, #7.
#13, Vary subject matter.	See SIMG, III.g.[177]

[177] TTR, 37.

Amesian Influence and Collinsian Developments

Collins frequently utilizes material from William Ames's *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* in TTR. Correspondence between the two books occurs primarily in Collins's "Further Helps" (specifically as he treats Uses, under what I classified as Point #7 above) and in his "Additional Directions and Instructions." The featured portion of Ames's *Marrow* is his chapter XXXV, "Ordinary Ministers and Their Office in Preaching." In it, Ames offers seventy points of instruction regarding ordinary (as opposed to extraordinary or apostolic) gospel ministry and its exercise in faithful preaching. This table demonstrates the major places where Collins depends on Ames in composing these sections of TTR.[178]

In some cases, Collins summarizes and abridges Ames, often simplifying the point (once again we are confronted with Nonconformity's educational barriers). In other cases, he builds on Ames's point, further developing it for his own audience. Collins's theological prowess becomes evident in those cases. While we would require careful footnoting of every source today, he is not plagiarizing by the standards of his day; rather, these portions, set in their own historical context, should be viewed as exercises in pastoral theological synthesis.[179] On this matter, see Figure 5.3 (on the next page):

[178] There may be other instances, but these stand out as primary points of emphasis. It should also be noted that Ames was willing to permit occasional preaching by unordained laymen; see his *CONSCIENCE with THE POWER and CASES THEREOF. Divided into V. Bookes. Written by the Godly and Learned, WILLIAM AMES, Doctor, and Professor of Divinity, in the famous University of Franeker in Frieland. TRANSLATED OUT OF THE LATINE into English, for more publique benefit* (Leyden and London, 1639), IV.25.l.1. The prefatory note "To the Reader" by Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) and Philip Nye (1595–1672) deals similarly; see John Cotton (1585–1652), *THE KEYES Of the Kingdom of HEAVEN, AND Power thereof, according to the VVORD of GOD. BY That Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. IOHN COTTON, Teacher of the Church at Boston in New-England, Tending to reconcile some present differences about DISCIPLINE* (London, 1644).

[179] One thinks of C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) or A.W. Pink's (1886–1952) particular giftedness in theological synthesis; Collins is comparable in this method, if practicing it on a lesser scale.

FIGURE 5.3: Similarities in Uses in Collins and Ames:
"Further Helps" and "Ordinary Ministers"

Collins—"Further Helps"—Uses:	*Ames—"Ordinary Ministers":*
#1, Information.	#38, Information.
#4, Refutation.	#39, Reformation (arguable, but probable).
#5, Instruction.	#42, Instruction.
#6, Reprehension.	#43, Correction (probable).
#7, Exhortation.	#50, Exhortation.
#9, Consolation.	#49, Consolation.

I have summarized Collins's thirty-seven points in his "Additional Directions" earlier in this chapter, and have summarized William Ames's seventy points in "Ordinary Ministers" in Appendix Twelve. I reference my summaries in a table for simplicity and brevity. Most of these cited instances quickly become thematically plainer when placed side-by-side; see Figure 5.4:

FIGURE 5.4: Similarities in Emphasis in Collins and Ames:
ADI and "Ordinary Ministers"

Collins—ADI:	*Ames—"Ordinary Ministers":*
#1, Scripture is its own best expositor.	#27, Seek proofs from clearer portions of Scripture.
#2, Give yourself to reading Scripture "above all."	#16, "No one is fit for ministry who is not greatly concerned with the Holy Scripture."
#2, Pray for a wise, understanding heart. (HC develops this one).	#10 (would be understood in the second part).[180]
#2, "Beg for great humility."	#54, "The doing of all these things must have in it no show of human wisdom or mixture of carnal affections."
#3, #11, #22, Preach according to the Analogy of Faith.	#15 (implicit in not straying from Scripture), #19, #22, #27.
#4, Speak plainly so the whole congregation may comprehend and be edified.	#14, The duty to help each hearer comprehend, according to "status and age"; #27, "the treatment must be adapted to the profit of the hearers."
#4, Shun rhetorical flourishes.	#56, Disservice is done when hearers are acclimated to "human [rhetorical] flourishes."

[180] Note that Ames's #68–70 also concern prayer, though he focuses on prayer in the context of preaching; Collins's point in #2 is preparatory prayer.

#5, Guard against repetition and empty, embellishing words.	#65–66, "Naked simplicity of words" shows the Spirit's power in preaching.
#6, Speak naturally (not too slow or fast).	#60–61, Speech should be spiritual with natural, familiar, clear pronunciation "fit[ting] the matter."
#7, Do not present yourself indecently in manner or dress, or speak with affectation, lest "sound doctrine…be open to contempt."	#66, "In proportion as affectation appears, effectiveness and authority are lost."
#8, Prepare the sermon before Saturday so you can meditate on what you saw in the Scriptures.	#32, Careless [e.g., unconsidered] and scattered preaching is sinful and "ruins" hearers.
#10, Do not let your sentence, pause, or point be too long.	#62, The first offensive pulpit voice is speaking too slowly.
#11, Use "Human Testimonies" only when necessary to "convince the Conscience."	#55, Using "human testimonies" or stories is for "rare occasions" (and Latin, Greek, and Hebrew should not be used in preaching).
#11, Reason from God's word; #16, Do not stray from Scripture.	#56, "The purity, perfection, and majesty of the word of God is violated when it is said to need the admixture of human words."
#12, Do not take too long reviewing previous sermonic material.	#58, "Unnecessary and farfetched preambles… ought not to be used"; #59, Introductions should announce or apply the text.
#20, Preach "depending upon God for further assistance" (note his pneumatological focus).	#54, The work of preaching with all its parts "should manifest itself throughout as the demonstration of the Spirit," not "human wisdom."

Under the threefold organization structure for ADI proposed above (heart, practical, and interpretive concerns), Collins's emphases quickly emerge and a fitting manner of engaging ADI becomes clear. Thematically, ADI demonstrates his concerns as experiential, practical, biblical, and ecclesiastical, interests entirely consistent with his focus in SIMG and "Further Helps." We note once more his obvious concern for those preachers who lacked the benefit of formal study, whether elders or GBs. One senses his urgency in these directives: God's glory is too precious, God's truth too great, and God's mercy too needful to risk its mishandling. *Fides ex auditu*; thus he writes.

He depends most heavily on Ames in ADI's first twenty points of counsel; one traces

Amesian influence even while noting Collinsian developments. The final seventeen points of ADI are of Hercules's own composition. Having demonstrated Ames's impact, we now turn attention to ADI's content.

A Notable Contribution: Tracing Perkins, Ames, and Collins in ADI

It is a fascinating exercise to attempt to trace the downstream influence of a theologian over the course of his work's transmission. This brief cross-corpora comparison of Puritan homiletical writings records points of concurrence, continuity, and development, demonstrating a later effect within Hercules Collins's TTR. This comparison bridges approximately ninety-five years from William Perkins's *The arte of prophesying* (1607) to William Ames's *Medulla Theologiae* (1623; English translation as *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, 1638) to Collins's TRR (1702). Undoubtedly specialists in Perkinsian and Amesian thought might observe further influence in Collins's work, but these points are reasonably demonstrable.

Though only directly citing him twice, Collins clearly draws consistently from Perkins's thought throughout ADI, echoing his advice regarding commonplace books,[181] hermeneutics, and preaching practice. One notable instance meriting careful consideration is Collins's treatment of "Uses," or making faithful, logical applications from the text being preached.

Placing Perkins's seven categories of hearers[182] alongside Collins's uses in TTR provides visual comparison and contrast, while enabling observation of something of a middleman in

[181] See Matthew Payne and Stephen Yuille, eds. *The Labors of a Godly and Learned Divine, William Perkins: Including Previously Unpublished Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2023), 73–74.

[182] William Perkins, *The arte of prophecying, or, A treatise concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of preaching first written in Latine by Master William Perkins ; and now faithfully translated into English (for that it containeth many worthie things fit for the knowledge of men of all degrees) by Thomas Tuke* (London: By Felix Kyngston for E.E. and are to be sold in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Swan, 1607), 99–122.

Ames's directions in his chapter on "Ordinary Ministers."[183] Hercules offers at least nine potential "Uses" in III.I.i–ix.[184] See Figure 5.5:

FIGURE 5.5: Tracing Collinsian Developments from Perkins and Ames

Perkins's Category of Hearer	***Ames's Direction***	***Collins's Use***
#1, Unbelievers who are both ignorant and unteachable; they must be prepared to receive the word.	#38, Information: proving of some truth.	#1, Information.
#2, Unbelievers who are teachable, yet ignorant; they should be instructed by a catechism.		#2, Caution.
#3, Unbelievers with knowledge, but who are unhumbled.		#3, Trial and Examination.
#4, Unbelievers who are humbled.	#39(?), Reformation: refutation of some error.	#4, Refutation.
#5, Believers.	#42, Instruction: setting forth of the life which ought to be followed.	#5, Instruction.
#6, Fallen [that is, backslidden or overtaken] believers.	#43(?), Correction: condemnation of the life which ought to be shunned.[185]	#6, Reprehension [that is, rebuke].
#7, "A mingled [that is, a mixed—some lost, others regenerate] people."		#7, Exhortation, with its Motives and Directions.
		#8, Admiration.
	#48, #49 (both addressing consolation).	#9, Consolation.

Several points of overlap may readily be observed. These overlaps, coupled with his clear

[183] Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, 190–196.

[184] TTR, 32.

[185] There is much common ground here.

references to *The Arte of Prophecying* throughout TTR, argue the conclusion that Collins's "Uses" or applications should be considered as both dependent upon, and further development of, Perkins's seven categories of hearers.

To Perkins's categories of hearers, we might tentatively apply the following "Uses" Collins develops in light of his counsels in TTR (in Figure 5.6):

FIGURE 5.6: Applying Collinsian Uses to Perkinsian Categories

Perkins's Category	***Collins's Use***
Category #1	could receive Uses #1–4, #6.
Category #2	could receive Uses #1–5, #7 (some).
Category #3	could receive Uses #2–4, #7, and perhaps #6.
Category #4	could receive Uses #1–3, #5, #7.
Category #5	could receive Uses #1–5, #7–9.
Category #6	could receive Uses #2–5, #8–9.
Category #7	could receive whichever Uses are deemed as best suited (primarily law and gospel).

Hercules is keenly aware of Perkins's categories—intended as aids to the preacher in understanding his hearers and making application to their souls most effectively—and their role in the actual application of the proclaimed Scriptures to the hearer's life, conscience, and soul. Consider the two points of bookending advice he gives preachers in III.H and III.J:

> H. Whatever use is made, "let it be always natural from the Doctrine, and draw as many Inferences from it as it will bear; for they are generally very divine things."
> J. Preachers "must consider which of all these, or any other Uses, will be most naturally handled from your Doctrine."

Each element of III.H and III.J bridges the distance from Perkinsian categories to Collinsian uses. Perkins certainly argues for close application in *The Arte of Prophecying*, and provides his reader with a chapter of examples of potential "Uses" (primarily distinguishing between mental and practical).[186] Consistent with Hercules's years as a bi-vocational minister and with his intended readers of TTR, Collins's TTR should be seen as popularizing, periodically

[186] Particularly in chapter 7, "Of the waies how to use and applie doctrines."

abridging, simplifying, synthesizing, and gently developing selected aspects of Perkinsian and Amesian thought (specifically in this section). He thereby makes a faithful homiletical method more accessible to non-university-trained elders or GBs, especially those in Particular Baptist circles. Collins thus moves "from preaching to meddling," from homiletics to casuistry. In classical Puritan fashion, his preaching becomes biblical counsel which aims at the cure of souls —to sustain the weary with a word (Is. 50:4).

TTR should therefore be regarded "in the spirit of Perkins"[187] not merely for its continuity with, but as a positive homiletical and casuistical contribution to post-Reformation, Puritan, and Particular Baptist pastoral theology.

The Aim of Collins's ADI

The aim of ADI is faithful and biblical preaching in the most holistic sense. Hercules's deep spiritual and practical concern for a truly converted gospel ministry[188] is evident; he insists that the preacher must be a man of substantial Christian experience and maturity (#1). Such godly comprehension will express itself in "beg[ging God] for great Humility; [for] Pride and Conceit have overthrown many a young Preacher."[189] Applying Calvin's dual knowledge, every preacher must know God and himself; applying Luther's triad, preachers must be men of prayer, familiar with enduring temptation, and given to meditating on the Scriptures (#2). Therefore, studying for sermons must be no mere academic or ecclesiastical exercise, but a work deeply dependent upon and undertaken in fellowship with the Holy Spirit:

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[187] Weaver further characterizes the relationship between the two as being that "Perkins outlined his types of application based on the characteristics of the hearers, but Collins' list of 'uses' was based upon the content of the doctrine." See *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist* (Ph.D diss., SBTS), 120. He is correct in his conclusion, recognizing the contrast and seeing some level of relationship between the two, though not speaking to Collins as positively building upon and developing Perkinsian categories theologically.

[188] TTR, 52.

[189] TTR, 27.

> "It hath been known by Experience, that sometimes a whole day hath been spent in Study and little done; tho at other times (blessed be God) when we have been under Gales of the Spirit, we have done more in two hours."[190]

Saturday should be spent "digesting your Discourses, and treasuring them up in your Memory"[191]—in other words, meditating on the truths and doctrines of the Scriptures to be preached. A "Happiness…generally doth attend a good Consideration of what we deliver"[192] (#8b). This is consistent with what Collins held in *An Orthodox Catechism*; he answers an objection to singing a pre-written song (a "set Form") by appealing to the duty of preparing for preaching:

> *Obj*. If any hath a special spiritual Gift of singing in the Church, it may be lawful, but we cannot allow of set Forms.
>
> *Ans*. Every Man that preaches profitably, hath a set Form in his Head and Heart, how he will deliver his message; & yet that Man may be said to preach by the assistance of the Spirit. Also 'tis lawful for a Man to consider what he wants before he goes to God by Prayer. For Order is necessary in Prayer, as well as in Preaching, as Christ hath directed us, *Mat*. 6. in that Form of Prayer; and yet, not withstanding this Consideration and Order in his mind, he may be said to pray with the Spirit's assistance. So in like manner it is as lawful to compose a Hymn, grounded on the Word of God, in a set Form, and deliver it to the People, either by strength of memory, or as written, as well as deliver a Sermon in a set Form by Notes, or by strength of memory, which is alike grounded on the Word of God. Planning for preaching does not omit the Spirit's assistance.[193]

Begging God for great humility (#2) is met with "Beg[ging] of God…for utterance"[194] (#9), and the happiness of that hard study (#8b) is met with the "holy Boldness…of a good

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[190] TTR, 31.

[191] TTR, 31. Collins's observation calls to mind Thomas Shepard's (1605–1649) insistence that "God will curse that man's labours who goes idly up and down all the week, and then goes into his study on a Saturday afternoon. God knows that we have not too much time to pray in and weep in, and get our hearts into a fit frame for the duties of the Sabbath." In Benjamin Brook (1776–1848), *The Lives of the Puritans: Containing a Biographical Account of those Divines who Distinguished Themselves in the Cause of Religious Liberty, from the Reformation under Queen Elizabeth, to the Act of Uniformity in 1662* (London, 1813; repr. Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994), III.104–105.

[192] TTR, 31.

[193] Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism*, "Appendix on Singing," 82.

[194] TTR, 31.

Conscience, for a guilty Conscience will make a Man hold down his Head, and weaken holy Boldness, and so take off the Life of his preaching"[195] (#9). Such diligence serves the preacher by keeping a clear conscience. He knows he has both lived and labored faithfully, doing his best as unto the Lord; he knows he has studied strenuously, seeking to deal with his text on its own terms; and he knows he has been with the risen Christ in the process. What more could be desired before entering the pulpit?! Preparing the preacher experientially is of critical importance.

Collins's practical concerns focus on the mechanics of preaching, ranging from advice on sermon delivery (#3–7, #10, #17, #19) in practicalities and hermeneutics (#3, #15–#16), to diligence in study (#8a, #20), to selecting texts reflective of the whole counsel of God as would naturally concern an elder or GB preaching over the long term in a particular church (#13). Showing Reformational convictions contra Rome and those in the COE who sought a Romish ministry, the Bible's sufficiency and authority is to be modeled by the preacher (#11): "Human Testimonies are not to be brought to *prove* Divine things"[196] (emphasis mine). They may "better convince the Conscience of the Hearer," provide illustration, or offer common points of reference as aids in understanding; but they cannot sustain the final weight of the argument. Scripture alone can carry that load (#14–17).

Similarly demonstrating his Reformed instincts, the analogy of faith (*analogia fidei*) is a necessity that preachers must grasp and employ (#3, #16, #19, #22).[197] The analogy of faith may be defined as:

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[195] TTR, 31.

[196] TTR, 32.

[197] On this head, see Andrew Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

> [T]he general sense of the meaning of Scripture, constructed from the clear or unambiguous loci, as the basis for interpreting unclear or ambiguous texts…distinct from the more basic 'analogy of Scripture' (*analogia Scipturae*), the analogy of faith presupposes a sense of the theological meaning of Scripture.[198]

In other words, *Scriptura Scripturae interpres*—plain texts are preferred texts, sufficient to explain less-clear passages. The Reformed doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is drawn directly from *analogia fidei* and *anaolgia Scripturae*. These closely-related principles stand in sharp contrast to Rome's hermeneutical appeals to Church and Tradition as primary, sufficient, and authoritative in defining doctrine. Collins returns to this central conviction repeatedly in TTR.

Preaching should be theological, for doctrine helps people to know their God: "nothing is known less than God is known, and yet nothing more necessary to be known than God's Nature, Perfections, and Attributes, because that works Faith and great Reverence in the Object"[199] (#18). That said, sermons should be well-prepared[200] so as to engage hearers, and ought not last overly long: "it is better to leave the People longing than loathing."[201] Edification is a central aim of preaching (#16), along with "preach[ing] Christ crucified the Object of a justifying Faith"[202] (#13) and "other Duties" such as "Repentance…Mortification…Obedience to the Commands of God, and all Divine Virtues."[203] The whole counsel preached must shape the whole of Christian

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[198] Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, 1985), 33.

[199] TTR, 36.

[200] Some GBs apparently claimed that their spiritual gifting was extemporaneous preaching and praying; Richard Baxter (1615–1691) opposed this practice strenuously. Nuttall holds Baxter as "representative of much Puritan preaching: 'Never…did I ever learn and say without the Book, the words of one Prayer, or one Sermon, since I preach't.'" In *The Holy Spirit*, 81. Per TTR and his OC (see fn. 204), Hercules would have opposed it as well.

[201] TTR, 34.

[202] TTR, 33.

[203] TTR, 33.

practice.

We note in #20 Collins's quiet pneumatology which has characterized his defense of the GB's preaching as lawful: here, the Spirit who gifts the preacher for service and aids him in his study will help him in his sermon.

> Write your Sermons in your Study, and think it not enough to write your bare Heads [e.g., merely to note points or construct a minimal outline], but make some Enlargement upon every Head, with the Scripture added that proves it, *and yet have your dependance on God for further Enlargement in publick*…we should labour in Study, as if we should have no immediate Assistance in the Pulpit, and yet when we have done all, *to go about our Work depending upon God for further Assistance* [emphasis mine].[204]

Proclamation, Hercules insists, is deeply pneumatological in nature; thus also his insistence upon "begging God" for humility (#2) and utterance (#9). The Spirit's sword must never be wielded independent of the Spirit's gracious influences.

Finally, Hercules deals with interpretive concerns—rightly handling the textual material to be preached (#21–36). He has substantially engaged the analogy of faith, and now addresses hermeneutical and theological matters as the framework and fruit of its application. This final section of ADI is of his own composition. A shepherd's deep concern for the faithful care and feeding of Christ's sheep leaps off the page as Collins concisely summarizes the most critical

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[204] TTR, 36–37. Collins saw intentional spiritual dependence and hard study as close friends. In *An Orthodox Catechism*, his "Appendix on Singing" (pg. 82) answers a series of objections to singing. Hercules draws close parallels from preparing sermons and preparing for prayer to preparing for singing, arguing that preparing for faithful preaching is "by the assistance of the Spirit" and demonstrating early convictions regarding preaching which he maintained throughout his ministry; in other words, planning for preaching does not omit the Spirit's assistance:

> *Obj*. If any hath a special spiritual Gift of singing in the Church, it may be lawful, but we cannot allow of set Forms. [Some of his objectors opposed composed hymnody].
>
> *Ans*. Every Man that preaches profitably, hath a set Form in his Head and Heart, how he will deliver his message; & *yet that Man may be said to preach by the assistance of the Spirit* [emphasis mine]. Also 'tis lawful for a Man to consider what he wants before he goes to God by Prayer. For Order is necessary in Prayer, as well as in Preaching, as Christ hath directed us, Mat. 6. in that Form of Prayer; and yet, not withstanding this Consideration and Order in his mind, he may be said to pray with the Spirit's assistance. So in like manner it is as lawful to compose a Hymn, grounded on the Word of God, in a set Form, and deliver it to the People, either by strength of memory, or as written, as well as deliver a Sermon in a set Form by Notes, or by strength of memory, which is alike grounded on the Word of God.

points of biblical interpretation for men lacking formal study; this portion of TTR reads a bit like a Puritan version of D.A. Carson's *Exegetical Fallacies*!

Anthropomorphic and analogical language in Scripture (#21, #25), such as handling divine repentance when preaching, are opportunities to "open and display the Mind of God in it, to take Persons off from any mean and low thoughts of God."[205] Divine condescension in Scripture's figurative language often serves as a means to showcase God's attributes and constancy (#21). Collins's treatment of divine repentance excels in its brevity and clarity.

Theological reading of Scripture is necessary (#22), especially regarding Christology (#23): "things of this nature must be explain'd with all the clearness imaginable, because the knowledge of it is so necessary to Man's Salvation."[206] Collins holds all Scripture as "equally authentick,"[207] on par with the words of Christ, for the biblical writers "spake by the Spirit of Christ" just as Noah "preached by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ"[208] (#26). Context is king in interpretation (#27), and future-fulfillment statements should be read with an eye to the certainties of God's promises (#24). In the same way, allegorical texts such as Sarah and Hagar (Gal. 4:22–25) and the Song of Solomon should be interpreted with theological categories, particularly covenant theology and its evangelistic application, for a faithful handling (#29).

Preachers must learn to recognize and emphasize what Scripture does, even to the point of ensuring it is "express'd emphatically, and with a rais'd Affection…[for] where the Holy Ghost lays down any Word with an Accent, we must so express it in our Teaching"[209] (#30).

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[205] TTR, 37. So too #25: "Here must be great care take to open and shew the Mind of God in such places" (TTR, 40). Cf. Michael Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys, and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage* (Peterborough, Canada: H&E, 2019), 146.

[206] TTR, 39.

[207] TTR, 41.

[208] TTR, 41.

Such an approach does not constitute a self-promoting affectation[210] (contra #4–7), but a true exposition. Examples follow suit, helping preachers navigate without shipwreck such perpetual interpretive "hotspots" as synecdoche (#31), causal inversion (#32), conditional language (#33), hyperbole (#34), discerning the relationship between the OT and NT, thereby interpreting common verbiage accurately "in the Scripture-sense"[211] (#35), and the preacher's unique work of "rais[ing] as many Doctrines from a Scripture as it will truly bear; [for] all Doctrines and Inferences that are natural from any Text are the purest Divinity" (#36, with a sample of eight doctrines raised from one verse, just for good measure!) [212] These points all collectively reveal a remarkable literary facility and theological dexterity for a man who spent years of his ministry as a bi-vocational pastor under persecution.

Hercules concludes ADI with recommendations of trustworthy books (#37)[213]—a veritable "who's who" of Reformational and Puritan classics (several of which he had led the Wapping church to purchase for their GBs).[214] He shows a surprising breadth of reading beyond the commentaries and doctrinal treatises: works of philosophy (both Plutarch and Seneca), Pliny's *Natural History*, books on cosmology, logic, and rhetoric, and Latin and English dictionaries all make the cut. "What Books you buy, get the best Tables to them you can, which

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[209] TTR, 44.

[210] Cf. Ames's #66, below; similarly, the Particular Baptists in London held that it was shameful for pastors to dress in an overly fashionable manner. Cf. *Narrative of the General Assembly of 1689*, 24–25.

[211] TTR, 47.

[212] TTR, 47. This #36 is the first of two.

[213] This #36 is the second one.

[214] See Weaver, *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist*, 204–207. In 1691, GBs John Chaplin and Valentine Lindsey received theological books from the church; in 1692, GBs Hall, Gander, Humphreys, Mills, and Baldwin received theological books as well. Given the average income in London and average cost of books then, presenting them these volumes represented a substantial investment into these men and their ministry of the Word; it was an immense honor and spoke much concerning the church's love and hopes for them, as well their trust in their pastor's leadership.

may be used in some respects as a Common-place Book."[215] "Tables" were essentially what we now call indices; Collins is telling his readers to buy an index, annotate it, mark it up, and make it a tool for doing good work.

Following Perkins,[216] the common-place book would serve preachers as a theological file-folder where one could copy down quotes excerpted from books, biblical and theological insights, and ideas for sermons on particular texts or themes in a catalogued, organized manner for ready future reference. Practical to the last, Collins helped his readers plan a proper stewardship of the precious truths they would mine out of the Scriptures—for the good of their churches and the glory of their King.

An Additional Word to the Churches

Lest TTR be misunderstood as only a defense of lay preaching or merely a hermeneutical and homiletical manual for preachers, Hercules again addresses the churches in his final section before concluding, offering ten[217] points of counsel to them concerning preachers and preaching

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[215] TTR, 50. An example of a "Table" is found at the end of Woodall and Petto's Frederick Woodal and Samuel Petto, *A VINDICATION OF THE PREACHER SENT, OR A VVarrant for publick Preaching without Ordination.* Wherein is further discovered. I. That some Gifted men unordained, are Gospel Preachers. 2. That Officers sustain not a relation (as Officers) to the Universal Church ; and other weighty questions concerning Election and Ordination , are opened and cleared. *In answer to two books*. I. *Vindiciae Ministrii Evangelici Revindicare I or the Preacher (* pretendly *)* Sent, sent back again. By Dr. *Colling* of *Norwich*. 2. *Quo warranto*, or a Moderate enquiry into the warrantableness of the Preaching of gifted and unordained persons. By Mr. *Pool*, at the desire and appointment of the Provincial Assembly of London. WITH A Reply to the exceptions of Mr. *Hudson* and Dr. *Collings* against the Epistle to the Preacher Sent (London, 1659), P4 (the pages would be pp. 215–217, but the pages at this point are unnumbered).

[216] *The arte of prophesying* (London, 1607), 29–30; repr., *The Works of William Perkins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), X.302–303. Something of an example of what Perkins and Collins envision may be found in English philosopher John Locke's (1632–1704) *A Common-place Book to the Holy Bible : or, the Scriptures sufficiency Practically Demonstrated. Wherein Whatsoever is contain'd in SCRIPTURE, Respecting Doctrine, Worship, or Manners, is reduced to its Proper Head: Weighty cases Resolved, Truths Confirmed, difficult Texts Illustrated, and Explained by others more plain* (London, 1697).

[217] In the original, there are two points printed as #36 in ADI (pp. 47, 49), and two points printed #2 in "An Additional Word" (pp. 50, 52). As I corrected the second #36 as #37, so too I am correcting the numbering here; thus I have numbered second #2 as #3, #3 as #4, etc.

in his "Additional Word to the Churches."

An Outline of "An Additional Word"

1. Know and esteem the necessity of a gospel ministry as from God.
2. The minister's several titles in Scripture speak to the nature and necessity of their work.
3. Be careful to secure a converted, biblically-knowledgeable, spiritually-experienced pastor.
4. Take great care to choose biblically-qualified pastors (fifteen qualifications given).
5. Pray that God will raise up faithful pastors.
6. Give your pastors the honor which God affords their office.
7. Praise God for faithful pastors and do not "sin them away."
8. Be careful to maintain biblical views and practice of ordination.
9. Do not neglect laying on hands in ordination; it is of great theological significance.
10. Care for the bodies and families of those who watch for your souls; do not tempt them or their families to despair or bitterness by withholding a living wage.
11. Conclusion:
    a. Collins has tried to stir churches to "duties [they] are oblig'd unto."
    b. They should be willing to "lay down [their] Lives for the Brethren, especially when it hath a tendency to strengthen their Faith, and help them forward to Heaven."

The Pastoral Theology of "An Additional Word"

The gospel ministry—Collins has ordained elders in view here—is a "necessity" which churches should "let…lie with weight upon your Hearts." "It is *the Holy Ghost that maketh them Overseers*," thus "that which God hath instituted and appointed in his Church ought to be accounted necessary, and therefore a Gospel Ministry ought to be so esteemed."[218] Collins also argues from the necessity of ordinances in the church's worship, establishing a calm but clear distinction between the elder and the GB (#1).[219] The nature of a minister's titles in Scripture

[218] TTR, 50. William Screven gave similar counsel to his Charleston, SC congregation as he neared the end of his ministry in "An Ornament for Church Members" (published posthumously, 1721, though no extant copies are known): "…supply yourselves with an able and faithful minister. Be sure you take care that the person be orthodox in faith, and of blameless life, and does own the confession of faith put forth by our brethren in London in 1689." Qtd. in Tom Nettles, "Influence of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith on Baptists in America," in *Baptist History Celebration ~ 2007: A Symposium on Our History, Theology, and Hymnody* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2008), 101.

[219] Knollys concurred in *The shining of a flaming-fire in Zion. Or, A clear answer unto 13. exceptions, against the grounds of new baptism; (so called) in Mr. Saltmarsh his book; intituled, The smoke in the temple, p. 15, &c. Which exceptions, were tendered by him to all believers, to shew them, how little they have attained; and that there is a more glorious fulnesse to be revealed. Also, a postscript; wherein (to the like end) some queries are*

emphasizes the role's necessity and the pastor's duty. Christian churches should take "a special care for a standing Ministry in the Church," for all false religions have their "Persons separated to uphold a false Worship; and shall not the Church of God have their Ministers to uphold a true Worship?"[220] (#2).

For just this reason, churches need to take great care to call a converted and experienced men as their pastors (#3—this section is the *second* #2), those mature in Christ and mighty in the Scriptures:

> They must be Men zealous for the Glory of God, sensible of the Interest of Souls, exemplary to the Flock, able to speak experimentally of the Ways of God, of the Devices of Satan and the Deceit of Lust, and the Issues and Events of Temptations, and to understand the Consolations of the holy Spirit.[221]

Such character will come through plainly in their teaching and lives: they will be shown as men whom "the Holy Ghost has made Ministers" because they will "have the *Thummin* of Integrity… [and] the *Urim* of Knowledge."[222] Such will make for pastors after God's own heart (#4), men consistent with Scriptural qualifications; Collins's exposition of the fifteen requirements of a pastor from 1 Tm. 3 should be read carefully by every congregation, session, and ministerial search committee.[223] Earnest prayer that God raise up more ministers should be a

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propounded unto believers. / By Hanserd Knollys, a minister, and a witnesse of Jesus Christ. (London, 1645), 9, holding that:

> [It is not] meet, for any Brother to baptize, or to administer other Ordinances; unless he have received such Gifts of the Spirit, as fitteth, or enableth him to preach the Gospel. And those gifts being first tried by, and known to the Church, such a Brother is chosen, and appointed thereunto by the Suffrage of the Church.

Note that Collins's and Knollys's position constitutes a distinction from that of 1LC XLI (both 1644 and 1646).

[220] TTR, 50–51. As to a special "standing" ministry, cf. "A Regular Ministry in the Church Asserted" (attributed to Keach) in the 1681/1689 book *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated* (repr. in James Renihan, *Faith and Life*, 150–155).

[221] TTR, 52–53.

[222] TTR, 53.

sincere focus for churches (#5), and those pastors should be "Give[n] that Honour and Respect… that God allows; God counts it an honourable place."[224] Shepherds must deal honorably with their people as well (#6).

God is due the praise of lips and lives when he gives faithful ministers: "*Be careful that you do not sin them away, and the Gospel together* [emphasis mine]; provoke not God to send a famine of the Word and remove the Gospel."[225] Prayer is the proper response for thankful hearts and needy days, particularly "if we find the Womb of Conversion shut up." A snapshot of Collins's doctrine of prayer emerges: as ministers are to beg of God for great humility and his assistance in preaching, so churches are to "Beg for greater degrees of his holy Spirit to be pour'd upon your Ministers, that God would give them a double Portion"[226] (#7).

Given his focus on GBs, he is careful to note that "that blessed Ordinance of Ordination, and calling to Office those who are fit for it"[227] (here he builds on his exposition of 1 Tm. 3) must be maintained and not lost (#8). Part of the laborer being worthy of his hire is the qualified, tested, and approved man being duly put into office as an elder: "Some have been Probationers all their Days," while other "Churches have imploy'd Persons in Preaching and adminstring Ordinances ten or twenty years, tho fitly qualified, and yet never call'd them to Office."[228]

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[223] TTR, 53–56.

[224] TTR, 57.

[225] TTR, 57.

[226] TTR, 58.

[227] TTR, 58. As noted in the Petty France letter (1656), there is a "great advantage to the Churches to which an Ordained and obliged Ministerie naturally tends." See White, *Association Records*, III.172; cf. Ivimey, *History of English Baptists*, II.483, 493–494. Similarly, cf. the case of the letter by an unknown author (Mr. MicBrach?) in Albert Peel, ed. *The Part of a Register, being a Calendar of Manuscripts under that Title Intended for Publication by the Puritans about 1593, and now in Dr. Williams's Library, London* (Cambridge University Press, 1915), I.301 [#180] and II.69–70 [#202–3, "Letter of Inquiry"]. See also Richard Greaves, "The Ordination Controversy and the Spirit of Reform in Puritan England" in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* XXI.3 (July 1970): 225–241.

[228] TTR, 58. One thinks here of Keach's statement in *The articles of the faith of the Church of Christ, or*

Collins never intends by TTR "to destroy a Gospel-Ordinance, *viz.* a solemn Ordination to Office."[229] Collins's pneumatology holds that as the Spirit makes men pastors, gifts and graces come from the ascended Christ; it serves the orderly worship of the church. "The inward Call doth enable him to act in that Station [of eldership], the outward Call doth enable him to act regularly [that is, in a lawful and biblically-regulated manner]."[230]

Ordination by the laying on of hands, therefore, must be "ever retain[ed] and never part[ed] with"[231] (#9). Some in Collins's day held LOH as unnecessary or unbiblical.[232] Given his defense of the practice for newly-baptized believers in his OC, he is reasoning from the lesser (there) to the greater (here). Ordination in this manner is for deacons and elders alike, per the scriptural pattern: "I judg it sinful for any who desire the Office of a Minister to refuse it, and Scandalous in any Church wilfully to turn it aside."[233] Collins traces the biblical argument for LOH pertaining to those "set apart to Ecclesiastical Service…[having] Office-Power confer'd

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Congregation meeting at Horsely-down (London, 1697), XXV: "…such Churches as have not Officers so ordained, are disorderly, there being something still wanting." In the same paragraph, he names lawful officers as elders and deacons. So too the 1596 Separatist document prepared under Henry Ainsworth (1571–1622), *A True Confession*, art. 29. The 1689 General Assembly declared that failure to ordain qualified men was a great evil and neglect of duty in many of their churches; see their *Narrative of the Proceedings*, 13 (Q. #3, #5). A non-Baptist example of the practice Collins names is found in Collinson's description of the donative cure in *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 339. His treatment of the election, calling, and ordination of ministers is relevant to this discussion and fascinating in itself, 335–345.

[229] TTR, 58.

[230] TTR, 58.

[231] TTR, 59. Calvin held the same view of confirmation, though obviously in his paedobaptist context; much common ground exists in his framing of its practice, however. The key sentence: "I warmly approve such laying on of hands, which is simply done as a form of blessing, and wish that it were today restored to pure use." In his *Institutes*, IV.xix.4.

[232] Nuttall notes that LOH was not always practiced in seventeenth-century Congregationalist ordinations; see *Visible Saints*, 87–94 (pp. 92–94 provide engaging further discussion of LOH). He notes elsewhere that this omission was also an issue amongst some eighteenth-century Particular Baptists; see his "The Baptist Churches and Their Ministers in the 1790's Rippons's Baptist Annual Register," Baptist Quarterly 30.8 (October 1984), 385.

[233] TTR, 59.

upon"[234] its recipients: Joshua, the Levites, the apostles, and the NT officebearers were not "guilty of Will-worship"[235] in this matter. He concludes that the practice abides as normative.

Finally, Collins charges the churches to pay their pastors (#10): "Be exhorted that as your Ministers take care of your Souls, you would take care of their Bodies and Families: The same Shepherd that watches over the Flock, is clothed and fed by the Flock."[236] He argues this duty as a divine command "not to be disputed, but obey'd: You would have your Pastors obey God's Command in feeding your Souls, and will you not have respect to God's Command in feeding their Bodies?"[237]

Paying the minister is a principle of general equity, a point of the honor of a church, and a practice inviting the blessing of God for obedience. A reasonable wage is a matter of love to the minister's family and of genuinely caring for their souls:

> Moreover, you know not what Temptations a Man and his Family, his Wife and Children may be under, in the neglect of your Duty; it may cause the Children to have hard thoughts of the Ways and People of God, and set them against the Truth if great care not be taken. Lay them not under Temptation by suffering them to run into Debt, that will be no Honour to you, nor Comfort to him…Perhaps he may have Abilities to get the things of the World as well as others, and so might lay up for his Children; but his Hands being bound, and his Time taken up in better things, it is a pity the Children of Ministers should be slighted [by his poor salary], when their Father lays out his Time and Strength for the good of the Congregation.[238]

Hercules concludes his "Repairs" to Christ's Temple asking that the churches deal from the heart with their ministers, in view of Christ's so dealing with them: "Surely we ought to lay

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[234] TTR, 60.

[235] TTR, 60; he repeats the statement, 61.

[236] TTR, 61.

[237] TTR, 61–62.

[238] TTR, 63. #10 should be read in conjunction with the (properly anonymous) document *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated*, of which Hercules was a signatory; transcribed in James Renihan, *Faith and Life*, 139–205. The 1689 General Assembly held that churches should even merge if necessary in order to pay their pastors properly—it was their holy duty to provide for them; see their *Narrative of the Proceedings*, 13 (Q. #1–#2; also implicit in the first part of #3).

down our Lives for the Brethren, especially when it hath a tendency to strengthen their Faith, and help them forward to Heaven."[239]

Collins and Controversy

Hercules Collins was no stranger to controversy. While this may seem an odd subject to raise in our present discussion, it immediately relates: of seven substantial disputes in which Collins engaged publicly or in print, two involved GBs (#2 and #7). Consider these instances of controversial engagements:

1. 1680, publishing in his *An Orthodox Catechism* the debated positions of laying hands upon the newly baptized, employing the language of "seals" (though qualified consistent with a credobaptist understanding) when describing the nature of the sacraments, and defending the congregational singing of hymns in worship.
2. 1684, the disagreement with his Wapping congregation over a GB administering the Lord's Supper; this disagreement occurred during Collins's imprisonment.
3. 1690, the Thomas Minge affair: a church member who accused Collins of "Lording it over the Church" was eventually withdrawn from and excommunicated, the whole congregation expressing their support of the pastor.[240]
4. 1689, *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated* (Collins was a signatory).
5. 1697, *A Just Vindication of Mr. William Collins, and of several other Elders and Ministers, from the unjust Reflections of Mr. Isaac Marlow* (Collins was the first signatory and its probable author).[241]
6. His several baptismal treatises, particularly *The Sandy Foundation of Infant-baptism Shaken*, and the subsequent dispute in print.
7. 1702, his history of and concern for training ministers and GBs, as evidenced in publishing TTR's defense of unordained preaching (a controversial position in seventeenth-century England).

Though Collins was unafraid to contend for truth, he refused to do so with a contentious spirit. During his imprisonment in the infamous Newgate gaol (1683–1684), his congregation desired to observe the Lord's Supper. Collins advised against it. The WCB records him

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[239] TTR, 64.

[240] MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists*, 356; Kevan, *London's Oldest Baptist Church*, 64–65.

[241] Weaver notes that "Although no author is given on the title page…Hercules Collins' name was first on the list of signatories…" in *Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist*, 27n96. In the seventeenth century, this practice generally denoted a work's primary author, even if others contributed to the effort.

explaining to them that "itt was the Privilege & duty of an Elder onely" to officiate the sacrament lawfully. The congregation disagreed and "Chose a Preaching Bro' to Administer to us That Solemne Ordinance of ye Lds Supper." The "Preaching Bro[ther]" who led them in observing the ordinance was a GB from their church.[242] While the practice was irregular and atypical, it was not considered invalid within broader Particular Baptist circles.

Though Collins was unsuccessful in convincing his congregation of the impropriety of a non-elder administering the Supper, he did not allow their disagreement to harm their relationship and did not bring it up again.[243] Witness the testimony of the WCB:

> When by Y^{e} Providence of God our Pastour Hercules Collins : was Taken from us ; and committed Prissoner to Newgate : Upon ye Oxford Act : wee ye Church of Chrt: for ye Upholding ye worship of Chrt as weell as for our owne Comfort : & Unity—(seeing ye Shepherd Smitten and fearing the Sheep should Scatter) meetteing att Bro^{r} Roofes; Chose a Preaching Bro' to Administer to us That Solemne Ordinance of ye Lds Supper; which our Pastour heareing of : and not Aproveing : said itt was the Privilege & duty of an Elder onely : But after much Reasoning on both hands : and our Pastour being Released and Sett att Liberty : and Sugesting y^{t} then ye Major part of ye Congregation : was of his Judgm : and oppinion : butt promised : y^{t} if itt appeared otherwise att our next Chu : Meetteing : (hee haveing done all hee could to persuade & bring ye Chu : over to his Judgm^{t} : Therefore to ye Ende; our Communion : might not bee disturbed or broaken : but maintayned) hee would give place to ye Chur : practise and not Reprove them; when againe they should providentially be found in itt : Persueant to wch a Chu : Meeting was called & holden att Mr. Edgeons Sept[ember] ye 1684 where it was againe maintayned Ratified and Confirmed : by ye deliberate Aprobation & Authority of ye Chu : that it is lawfull for a Bro^{r} whome ye Chu shall Judge Able to Oppen ye Nature of ye Ordinance; (Tho hee bee nott calld to ye office of an Elder) To Adminster the L^{ds} Supper.

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[242] Cf. B.R. White, *Associational Records*, I.23–24. In some cases, counsel was given that a GB's presence among a people desiring to constitute as a church was of sufficient validity to organize formally and begin to function fully—including sacraments—though the GB was handling those functions on a temporary basis while the church sought a pastor. Collins and his congregation had a difference of conviction, but it did not represent a difference meriting a dispute or dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Some precedent for the congregation's thought may perhaps be found in 2LC 28.2's language that "These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called…"—language quite similar to 26.11's "approved and called by the church" (speaking of GBs). 28.2 goes on to cite 1 Cor. 4:1 and to specify that "those qualified and thereunto called" will exercise their ministry "according to the commission of Christ," speaking to an orderliness and due course of their exercise.

[243] Some Particular Baptist churches did not find this practice as objectionable as Collins did. Knowing the context of the Wapping church and the congregation's acquiescence after Collins's death, one does wonder: was TTR intended to offer a discreet final point of hortative guidance toward the end of his life? This question, however, is entirely speculative; it is plain that Collins guarded himself against an argumentative spirit, acted in love toward his people, and did not reference the incident in TTR or the rest of his corpus.

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WILLIAM HAWKINS
JOHN HAYES
G. RICHARDSON
JO OVERING
THOMAS MILLS
JONATHAN MARTIN
JOSIAH ROGERSON
BEN : GANDAR
ROBERT ROLPH
SAM^{L} PHILLIPS
JOHN GARDNER.[244]

Shortly after Collins's death in 1702, however, elder Richard Adams (d. 1718) was invited to visit the freshly-bereaved congregation to lead them at the Lord's Table.

Some have questioned Collins's manner of engaging controversy, particularly noting charges of pride and imposing his will upon the congregation.[245] These accusations, however, appear to originate solely with disgruntled, disenfranchised, or disciplined congregants. His demeanor in the Lord's Supper matter speaks quite differently than their rankled testimonies, presenting a man longsuffering, patient, and irenic. That was certainly a situation which could have provoked irritation from Hercules, but instead we see a graciousness which is both imitable and remarkable. Kevan's summary seems the most fitting assessment of the extant record: "Indeed, he seems to have possessed a wonderful charm and a blend within him of all that is strongest, bravest and kindest."[246]

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[244] Transcribed from the *Wapping Church Book*. The entry is simply dated "Sept ye 1684," and is found between several entries which are all dated "Sept ye 19th 1684." The record appears to have been added at the same time as these others. Cf. MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists*, 356; Haykin, *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands: Recovering Sacrament in the Baptist Tradition* (Bellingham, WA: Lexington Press, 2022), 88–89.

[245] MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptists*, 318; Haykin, *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands*., 89n85.

[246] Kevan, *London's Oldest Baptist Church*, 68; he also provides a transcription of the GB disagreement.

Broader Considerations in the Doctrine of the Gifted Brother

A Forgotten Doctrine?

We noted at the beginning of this chapter that TTR has been largely forgotten by Baptist historians. In similar fashion, the doctrine of the GB held forth in TTR's pages seems to have been forgotten by Baptist theologians. Amongst seventeenth-century Particular Baptist writers I am presently aware of only Robert Purnell who treats this doctrine; his treatment[247] is indirect, brief, and more concerned with defending lay preaching than with establishing the doctrine and role of the GB. Glancing at the major Calvinistic Baptist theological writers of the eighteenth through twenty-first centuries offers some downstream context as we zero in on the seventeenth century.

John Gill (1697–1771) touches on it for less than four sentences in his *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*.[248] Neither Benjamin Beddome's (1717–1795) *Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism* nor J.P. Boyce's (1827–1888) *Abstract of Systematic Theology* reference the doctrine of the GB.[249] In 1858, John Leadley Dagg's (1794–1884) *Manual of Church Order* seems to hint at the doctrine to some degree:

> A knowledge of gospel truth, an aptness to teach, and a heart moved by the desire to glorify God in the salvation of souls, are the evidences of a divine call to the work of the ministry. *All these qualifications may exist, in a measure, in ordinary Christians; and a proportionate obligation accompanies them, to use them in the Redeemer's service. No church, no minister of the gospel, can, under a proper influence, forbid the exercise of these gifts, where they exist* [emphasis mine].[250]

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[247] *A Little Cabinet* (London, 1657), 209–211.

[248] John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: Or A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (1767/1770; repr., Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1984), 863, 866.

[249] See Benjamin Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism* (1776; repr., Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006) and James Petigru Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (1887; repr., Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2006).

[250] Dagg was the first Southern Baptist writing theologian. In his *Manual of Church Order* (1858; repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1990), 247.

John Stock (1817–1884) argues for "Teachers" as an "extraordinary class"[251] contemporaneous with but distinct from the apostles, though now no longer extant. He offers a single sentence to the advocacy of unordained preaching: "[I]f there be other persons in the community competent to edify their brethren, the bishop and the members should avail themselves of the services of such helpers, be they deacons or not."[252]

A.H. Strong (1836–1921) seems similarly unaware of—or unconcerned with—the GB, offering only a sentence on unordained preaching in his *Systematic Theology*: "Licensure simply commends a man to the churches as fitted to preach."[253]

In our day, Albert Martin's *Pastoral Theology* presents three paragraphs; they note that the congregation should evaluate a man before he begins his seminary work, and he leaves some room for preaching by non-elders.[254] James Renihan's expositions of 1LC and 2LC engage the doctrine insightfully, if concisely; it may be best summarized in his statement that "When men met [the biblical] qualifications, they were permitted to carry out a public ministry with three purposes: edification, exhortation, and comfort."[255] Denoting these limitations of their role is simplifying and clarifying.

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[251] Stock, *A Handbook of Revealed Theology* (London, 1861); repr. *A Handbook of Revealed Theology by the Rev. John Stock, LL.D., with a prefatory recommendation by the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon, to which is added a Memorial Sketch of John Stock* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 2013), 395.

[252] Stock, *A Handbook of Revealed Theology* (Sprinkle, 2013), 414.

[253] Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium Designed for the Use of Theological Students* (1886; repr., Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1958), 919. This is the basic view most Baptists hold today.

[254] Albert N. Martin, *Pastoral Theology: The Man of God: His Calling and Godly Life* (Montville, NJ: Trinity Pulpit Press, 2018), I.153–154, 163.

[255] Quoted from Renihan, *For the Vindication of the Truth: A Brief Exposition of the First London Baptist Confession of Faith: Baptist Symbolics vol. 1* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2021), 176; see 175–180 (though noting the clarifying context of 165–170) in this volume for his treatment of the GB; and *To the Judicious and Impartial Reader: An Exposition of the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith: Baptist Symbolics vol. 2* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2022), 506–507. Material in his treatment of 2LC is adapted in part from his *Edification and Beauty*, 107–114.

Our historical flyover thus does not posit the doctrine as unknown—it was simply assumed in the churches, noted in the confessions, and left undeveloped in the literature.[256] The GB was not forgotten in seventeenth century, however, nor was the practice of lay preaching limited to the Calvinistic Baptists—though his contemporaries within General Baptist circles leave us no more on the doctrine than did the Particulars. For example, the 1660 General Baptist *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith* (also called *The Standard Confession* or *London Confession*) notes that it is "Subscribed by many Elders, Deacons, and *Brethren*" (emphasis mine)—that is, GBs.[257] Note in its description the high degree of concurrence with Collins's understanding in TTR:

> That such who first orderly come into, and are brought up in the school of Christ's church, and waiting there, come to degrees of Christianity, rightly qualified, and considerably gifted by God's Spirit, ought to exercise their gifts not only in the church, but also (as occasion serves) to preach to the world (they being approved by the church so to do) Acts ii. 22, 23, 24; Acts ii. 19, 20; and that among such some are to be chosen by the church, and ordained…[whom] we own as ministers of the gospel.[258]

In sum, an obedient Christian who has become a church member, having grown in the Lord ("come to degrees of Christianity"), affirmed by the congregation as possessing requisite graces and gifts ("rightly qualified"), should preach regularly in the church as requested[259] and

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[256] For example, even Edward Hiscox's (1814–1901) gently Calvinistic and widely influential *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1890) omits any mention of the doctrine.

[257] *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith: Set forth by many of us, who are (falsely) called ANA-BAPTISTS, to inform all Men (in these days of scandal and reproach) of our innocent Belief and Practise; for which we are not only resolved to suffer Persecution, to the loss of our Good, but also Life it self, rather that to decline the same* (London, 1660), title page. The author is unknown; see discussion in William Lumpkin (1916–1997), *Baptist Confessions of Faith, second revised edition* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011), 202. It bears mention that GBs were acknowledged as "Subscribi[ng]" the Confession, a term generally denoting signatories of a published document. Recognition on the title page speaks to their role's honorable nature.

[258] Cf. *The Standard Confession*, Article V, as Edward Bean Underhill (1813–1901) records it in his edited *Confessions of Faith and Other Public Documents, Illustrative of the History of the Baptist Churches of England in the 17th Century* (London: The Hanserd Knollys Society, 1854), 110. The article continues with a strong emphasis on the necessity of a converted ministry, not merely one "brought up in the schools of human learning."

[259] In *An Orthodox Catechism* ("Appendix on Singing," arg. 1), 76, Collins holds that "preaching, or teaching doctrinally…belongeth [properly] to the Officers, or occasionally, to a gifted Brother."

could be approved to evangelize as well. This role might be an end in itself, or might serve as proving grounds for eldership.

The Doctrine of the Gifted Brother in the Wider Seventeenth-Century Context

In 1678, Thomas Grantham's (1634–1692) treatment of the ministry of deacons echoes the same foundational argument for unordained preaching—the mutual ground from which Collins's doctrine of the GB sprang: "…a Liberty in ministring the Word in the Churches is allowed a person upon the account of the Gifts of God received, though not ordained to any Office."[260] Grantham repeatedly references "gifted men," generally holding elders in view by that nomenclature. When he speaks of "gifted persons" or "ordinary prophets,"[261] he generally intends GBs, who "were not Ministers of particular Churches."[262]

Grantham explains that a "Liberty in Minstring the Word…is allowed Persons upon the account of the Gifts of God received, though not ordained to any Office"[263]—in other words, GBs serve *ex dono*. While possessing this "Liberty," they lack "Authority as Ministers" to "perform Ordinarily [that is, according to the ordinance of Christ]…the Service of Prayer with Laying on of hands."[264]

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[260] Thomas Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, II.9.126. The language of a "preaching disciple" (1LC XLV) or "preaching brother" (*Wapping Church Book*, entry noted as "Sept ye 1684"—apparently September 19, 1684, based on its location in the book) should also be noted here; it speaks to the same role.

[261] For example, see Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, II.8.1.2. Cf. White, *Association Records*, I.11–12:

> [T]here are, for the further edifying of the church, ordinary prophets, who, though they be not such as wait on the ministry, or are wholly given up to it as yet, are such as being gifted, may speak, as they be permitted, or desired, to edification, exhortation, and comfort. 1 Tim 4:15; 1 Cor 14.3, 29f.

[262] Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, IV, Treatise V, Argument 3, 157.

[263] Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, II.9.viii.

[264] Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, II.3.7.1.

He did not believe that a GB must first serve as a deacon *en route* to eldership; he speaks approvingly of "Lay-men chosen to be Presbyters and Bishops, without being promoted gradually through inferiour Orders…that Custome did continue long in the Church."[265] But for those so qualified and recognized, church asking a "gifted Disciple" to officiate the Lord's Table should first "elect him their Pastor" rather than acting unrighteously in their request: "The lawful Administrator is certainly the Pastor of the Church."[266]

Grantham's primary note concerning GBs is that "God hath…provided a Liberty in the Church for the modest exercise of the Gifts of his Spirit, that the Church may be edified." He echoes the General Baptist *Standard Confession* in maintaining their liberty to evangelize by preaching. He specifies, however, the liberty's exercise as properly utilized in a missionary context.[267] Grantham's influence and desire for fellowship with the Particular Baptists gave him a voice in the wider conversation concerning GBs and thus should be acknowledged in comprehending the broader historical and theological context of TTR's argument.

Lay preaching possessed an expansive precedent,[268] and the GB (or "messenger"[269]) entered Early Modern Protestant thought as the Puritans observed unordained preaching in the NT. The Congregationalists were among the first to incorporate it into their polity. Preceding and

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[265] Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, II.9.ii; the position is quite contra both COE and Rome.

[266] Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, II.7.VIII.1. Recall here that 1LC XLI permits lay administration of the sacraments in certain instances.

[267] Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, IV, Treatise V, Argument 4, 161. By contrast, in the nineteenth century J.L. Dagg holds them as properly used in *established* churches (*Manual of Church Order*, 247). To be fair, Dagg is not discussing a missions setting, so it is unsurprising to note this omission.

[268] For example, John Foxe's (1516/17–1587) famous *Book of Martyrs* presents the ministry of "lay preachers whose work took the place of those [ministers] who had fled or apostatized." See B.R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 15.

[269] Recorded in the South Wales Baptist Association's notes on their fourth General Meeting, July 14–15, 1653. See B.R. White, *Association Records*, I.6, *et passim*. The designation is liberally sprinkled throughout the seventeenth century Particular Baptist corpus.

followed closely by the 1677 2LC, their 1658 *Savoy Declaration of Faith* (hereafter SDF) directly differs from both the 1646 WCF and the 1571 *Thirty-Nine Articles* in this question of lay preaching. Its appendix "The Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in Them by Jesus Christ" (instrumental for 2LC 26's verbiage) describes those who were set apart by the congregation for the work of preaching and teaching, though not necessarily for eldership:

> 13. Although it be incumbent on the pastors and teachers of the churches to be instant in preaching the Word, by way of office; *yet the work of preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Ghost for it, and approved (being by lawful ways and means in the providence of God called thereunto) may publicly, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that they give themselves up thereunto* [emphasis mine].[270]

In other words, SDF Congregationalists confessed the church's right and duty to choose those who would teach the Scriptures publicly (paragraph 7) and recognized the congregation's role in recognizing, approving, and calling teachers to that work—whether in a formally-ordained capacity or not (paragraph 13). Paragraph 13 represents a distinct break from WCF and the 1644 *Directory of the Publique Worship of God*[271] in this question. Duly recognized teachers were to "give themselves up thereunto," thereby heeding the voice of the church as the voice of the ascended Christ who gave them to his bride as a gift (Eph. 4:8), by his Spirit's grace. Note also a quiet distinction maintained in paragraph 13 between the ordained officers and the unordained lay preachers (GBs).

2LC 26.8 similarly presents the two basic categories of those comprising the church as officers and members, and 2LC 26.11 likewise charges ordained ministers "to be instant in

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[270] As found in James Dennison, *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, 1600–1693* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), IV.491. The authors of SDF were influenced by the 1648 colonial New England Congregationalist *Cambridge Platform*, an American response to Presbyterian criticisms of Congregationalist polity. One recalls also the 1656 *Somerset Confession*, XXXI, which affirms the congregation's role in choosing, approving, and ordaining her ministers.

[271] This study has not attempted to compare *The Directory of the Publique Worship of God* to TTR, but their respective themes, emphases, and verbiage share much in common and should be set beside one another at some point. I would be surprised if a fair bit of DPW influence is not evident in TTR via such a study.

preaching the word" while retaining familiar categories of gifting, vetting, calling, and duty:

> [Y}et the work of preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them [that is, ministers or elders] but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.

So too 1LC XLV:

> That also such to whom God hath given gifts, being tryed in the Church, may and ought by the appointment of the Congregation to prophesie, according to the proportion of faith, and so teach publickly the Word of God for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the Church.[272]

Some in Particular Baptist history have used the language of "office" for the GB's role,[273] though it was not seen formally or confessionally as an office (2LC 26.8–9 delineates offices). Fulfilling the role was considered as a particular affirmation of possessing the gift to open the Scriptures in an orderly, biblically-regulated manner, as frequently as one may be called upon by the church to exercise it.

These unordained-but-congregationally-appointed men therefore operated in a direct support role for the minister's public labors, but would not exercise authority alongside him in ruling. Or, as Hercules views them in TTR, they may be undergoing prayerful congregational evaluation in their growth and development toward future office-bearing as elders. One recalls the examples[274] of prominent men such as Nehemiah Coxe (d. 1688), William Screven (ca. 1629–1713), or the pre-heretical Thomas Collier; each one began his ministry as a Particular

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[272] As recorded in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 156.

[273] For example, see B.R. White, *Associational Records*, I.11.

[274] For an account of Nehemiah Coxe's life and role as a gifted brother, see James Renihan, "An Excellent and Judicious Divine: Nehemiah Coxe" in in Nehemiah Coxe and John Owen (Ronald Miller, James Renihan, and Francisco Orozco, eds.), *Covenant Theology From Adam to Christ* (Owensboro, KY: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2005), 7–24; for William Screven, see Terry Crisope, "William Screven, 1629–1713" in Terry Wolever (1957–2020), ed. *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular–Regular Baptists in America* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2006), I.204–226, and Robert Baker, Paul Craven, and Marshall Blalock, *History of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina 1682–2007* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2007), 53. Thomas Collier authored the 1656 *Somerset Confession*; see Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 184, 186; Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals,* 96.

Baptist GB.

Gifted Brothers in Particular Baptist History: The Witness of Selected Associational Records

Associational records present one of the few (and richest) sources in the seventeenth century Particular Baptist corpus to help fill in the details and contours toward something of a rough sketch of the GB which Collins would have had in mind as he wrote TTR. For this section, I have synthesized B.R White's edited *Associational Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660*, Larry Kreitzer's edited *The Longworth Churchbook 1652–1708*, and A.D. Gillette's edited *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association (1708–1807).*[275] Perhaps in seeing something of what Hercules envisions in TTR, we may help churches recover what seems like a forgotten doctrine.

The high view of the GB traced in TTR reveals Collins's even higher view of eldership and ecclesiology. 1LC XLV and 2LC 26.11 thus come into much sharper focus as to their import and consequence in Particular Baptist history and their genuine contribution to the Reformed confessional tradition as regards the doctrine of the GB. TTR's historical-theological significance and quiet influence become much clearer as well. Apart from TTR and those two sentences in 1LC and 2LC, these associational documents offer the primary glimpse of the doctrine of the GB available to us. It is to their fascinating collective description we now turn.

For these associations, GBs were considered as "ordinary prophets,"[276] a designation

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[275] A.D. Gillette (1807–1882), ed. *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A.D. 1707, to A.D. 1807; Being the first One Hundred Years of Its Existence* (repr. Atlas, MI: Baptist Book Trust, n.d.).

[276] On this point, cf. Collins, TTR, 12. Arguing that all of 1 Cor. 14:29 and 31's "prophets" had "a liberty of prophesying," he explains that:

> We do not say that "All" had reference to every Member of the Church of Corinth, as if all the People of the Church might prophesy whether they had the Gift or no; but 'tis granted only to them who had that Gift: The word Prophesying is not limited to that which is extraordinary.

contrasted with the "extraordinary prophets" of the biblical era. In Philadelphia, they could also be called "ministers" (in the sense of servants, not denoting clergy) or "teachers."[277] These men could be prospective elders, or not.[278] In some cases, they might be candidates for diaconal service,[279] but they were more often directed towards gospel ministry,[280] and specific steps taken with that end in view.[281] They were sometimes regarded as officers[282] or referred to as helpers[283] of the church, publicly approved by the congregation as per Scriptural precedent. Their gifts as lay-preachers, the Abingdon Association held, were to be hoped for, sought out, stirred up, and recognized,[284] and it is with precisely this blessing and longing that Hercules greets his readers in TTR.

Congregational suffrage mattered greatly in such instances, for the Bible approves only elders and GBs to teach in the church.[285] In exigent cases—for instance, lacking any elders—

He goes on to argue that the exposition of these "ordinary prophets" would consist in exhortation (1 Cor. 14:3) issuing in edification. (The original has the word "All" in parentheses, presumably for emphasis; I substituted quotation marks here for more immediate clarity to the reader).

[277] For "ministers," see Gillette, *Minutes of PBA*, 30; for "teachers," ibid., 51.

[278] White, *Associational Records*, I.11.

[279] White, *Associational Records*, III.143–144.

[280] White, *Associational Records*, I.24.

[281] White, *Associational Records*, III.199.

[282] White, *Associational Records*, I.12. This language still seems to hold those ordained to eldership as distinctively higher officers.

[283] For example, Howell Watkins was identified as an "occasional Helper in the Church" (White, *Associational Records*, I.15), speaking to his fulfilling at least the *role* of a GB. This record does not specify whether he held the official GB designation, but the "helper" nomenclature seems to affirm the *function* of several seventeenth-century men, irrespective of the *formality*.

[284] White, *Associational Records*, III.203. Five years later in 1707, the Philadelphia Baptist Association considered that such men should be "known [by the Association] to be a person gifted"; see Gillette, *Minutes of the PBA*, 4.

[285] White, *Associational Records*, I.28. Hence their general care in testing gifts outside of the context of gathered worship.

lawfully-appointed GBs were sometimes permitted to administer the sacraments to the congregation.[286] The church remained under obligation to secure a pastor, and this practice with the GB was to be viewed as exceptional, not normative. Their reasoning: if Christ gave one the authority to preach, he also gave him authority to baptize, though not necessarily authority to rule[287] (precluding any long-term operation in this manner). The GB might potentially be one who could develop into an elder over time, should the proper gift be recognized; therefore these designations did not always maintain inviolably as such. Lines could get blurred.

GBs would be recognized by the congregation and set apart unto the work by the laying on of hands,[288] though this practice differed from the LOH practiced by Hercules Collins and Benjamin Keach upon newly-baptized believers, and this particular form of LOH did not constitute an ordination. Collins seems to have something of this distinction in mind when he argues for the necessity of "ever maintaining and upholding" of regular ordination with LOH in TTR,[289] particularly given the strange reasoning of some who decried LOH. The GB's installation followed a period, generally determined by the elders, consisting of "trial" of the man's gifts and graces; its duration would vary according to each candidate's case. Elias Keach's

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[286] White, *Associational Records*, I.23–24. This position, however, was atypical; as seen previously, Collins opposed the practice at Wapping in 1684. In 1729, the Philadelphia Association refused to permit it. See Gillette, *Minutes of PBA,* 30. John Stock (1817–1884) argues contra:

> We have the New Testament precedent for the administration of ordinances by a deacon, and why need we scruple to follow such an example? It is time that we gave up some of our *priestly* notions on such topics. Clearly the Churches have a right to request one of their own number to preside at the Lord's table if God has deprived them of the services of a regular pastor.
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> In *A Handbook of Revealed Theology* (London, 1861); repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 2013, 414.

[287] White, *Associational Records*, I.24. This mindset perhaps echoes that noted in the (so–called?) Kiffin Manuscript: "Mr Blunt Baptized Mr. Blacklock yet was a Teacher amongst them." In Thomas Crosby (1683–1751), *History of the English Baptists* (London, 1738–1740), I.101–102.

[288] White, *Associational Records*, I.24. This matter of laying on of hands did not constitute ordination, though it did constitute a setting apart unto the role and subsequent installation into it.

[289] TTR, 58–59.

(1666–1701) successor in Philadelphia, John Watts, installed four GBs in 1692; upon his death in 1702, they led the church for nearly four years until two of them were ordained as elders in 1706.[290] The "trial" was considered properly done before the church, not the world[291]—but once a GB was recognized and approved, he had liberty to exercise his gift before the church even when lost men were present. 1 Cor. 14:23–24, 26, 31 anchored this privilege.[292]

To conduct a proper "trial," unordained preaching was necessarily required[293]—posing a key distinctive for Particular Baptist practice as opposed to Presbyterian polity. This distinctive serves to locate the Particular Baptists (to some degree) as birthed from Congregationalist Puritanism. These roots are reflected in TTR's utilization of the Congregationalist book *The Preacher Sent*[294] (1658)—a vigorous and carefully-reasoned defense of lay preaching.

That a potential GB be a fit man, "in some measure qualified," was non-negotiable; thus careful evaluation of both his life and his doctrine was necessary prior to installation. In other words, measuring his graces was required alongside testing his gifts.[295] Potential GBs must be

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[290] Gillette, *Minutes of PBA*, 11.

[291] White, *Associational Records*, I.27. When a potential GB was identified, the churches would often hold special meetings specifically for the purpose of evaluating the man's gifts. The *Wapping Church Book* regularly records such meetings, as do many others of their contemporaries. In 1723, this was also the practice in Philadelphia before allowing men to "exercise their gifts in a mixed multitude" (Gillette, *Minutes of PBA*, 27).

[292] White, *Associational Records*, II.67.

[293] To this point, Collins wrote in his *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England*, 15–16:

> Does a man deserve a benefice if he is not capable to preach? Is such a man capable to cure souls or take care of them, who is not able in some measure, to divide God's Word aright? Do not the Diocesan Bishops have a great account to give when they set such men, not capable to preach the Gospel, to watch over souls (Canon 46)?

Spurgeon concurred: "[A] man must not consider that he is called to preach until he has proved that he can speak." See *Lectures to My Students* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), 27.

[294] See Appendix Thirteen.

[295] "The churches…expect those who are to be their pastors to be equipped with 'gifts and graces,' and to be recognizably so equipped; they expect themselves, equally, to have the gift of discernment." Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, 86.

examined, for "we have found the evil of neglecting a true and previous Scrutiny in those affairs."[296] Aspirants were to be employed "in the [practice] of such of the [functions] of elders and deacons as may be performed by such gif[ted] brothers not yet in office." These efforts were to be undertaken with an eye toward "the settling of them in those offices."[297]

GBs were not to go abroad to appoint meetings in the world.[298] Rather, their ministry was restricted to and authorized to function within a specific church, unless otherwise directed. This could be to support the elders in the work of church discipline,[299] but was primarily focused on teaching. GBs did not set the terms for their own ministry[300]; they were wholly intended to serve at that church's pleasure:

> [A] brother soe adjudged of by the church ought wholy to be at its disposing. First, because that all those gifted are the church's, I. Cor. 3.22; 12.28; Eph 4.11f. Secondly, because if one brother goe forth at his owne will, then another and soe a third, and by that meanes the church may be wholy neglected. Thirdly, because, if such a brother miscarry in his ministerie, it would be charged uppon the church, and soe it would prove very dishonourable to the church and truth of Christ. Fourthly, because, in such a disorderly going out, he cannot expect the prayers of the church for the Spirite of God to accompany him, Col. 4.3; Eph 6.18f. and wee judg that if any brother shall persist in such disorderly practice after admonition that it is the church's duty to deale with him as an offender.[301]

However, they could be sent by their home church to edify another congregation if deemed "seasonable," like Barnabas in Acts 11:22.[302] When sent in this manner to preach, it was proper

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[296] Gillette, *Minutes of PBA*, 27.

[297] B.R. White, *Associational Records*, III.143–144.

[298] White, *Associational Records*, I.7. A notable exception to this norm (demonstrated elsewhere in this chapter) was in missionary or church planting settings, where GBs could be afforded more latitude while faithful churches were being established.

[299] White, *Associational Records*, I.34 (Question #2).

[300] Gillette, *Minutes of PBA*, 52.

[301] B.R. White, *Associational Records*, I.34.

[302] B.R. White, *Associational Records*, I.21. In 1654, the Fenstanton church agreed: "…it shall not be lawful for any person to make it their sole business to go from place to place to preach, except they be sent by the congregation." In E.B. Underhill, ed. *Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644–1720* (London: The Hanserd Knollys Society, 1854), 98.

at minimum to pay their expenses.[303]

The desire and need for GBs to serve in this manner was to be made known to other churches in the Association, especially those congregations in close proximity who would most likely be able to help.[304] For example, in 1658 the "Newberie" (Newberry) church requested of the Abingdon Baptist Association that some GBs come preach to their congregation.[305] In a similar instance, as Hercules Collins's predecessor John Spilsbury (1593–ca. 1668) sought to bring his church into the Abingdon Association, he desired "to partake of the Benefit of the Gifts which God hath given you for Counsel, Advice, and brotherly Assistance."[306] Note associational benefits in view first (as would be reflected in 2LC 26.15 just a few decades later), but also the mutual assistance of sharing "Gifts"—and GBs, by extension.

While a GB did not possess liberty to pastor a congregation over the long haul—as Collins notes in TTR, no "private Member [may] preach *ex dono*, or obtrude themselves without a Call, or preach ordinarily, and in a fixed stated way, if he be not chosen and ordained by the Church"[307]—his presence was regarded as constituting sufficient ministry personnel to begin a church.[308] Elders were much to be desired, however, and that church's ministry was regarded as

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[303] White, *Associational Records*, I.24.

[304] White, *Associational Records*, III.130.

[305] White, *Associational Records*, III.186.

[306] White, *Associational Records*, III.131.

[307] TTR, 7–8. Similarly, the 1654 Fenstanton church held that, while "it shall be lawful for any person to improve their gifts in the presence of the congregation," it would "be lawful only for such as are approved by the congregation, to preach publicky to the world." Underhill, *Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham*, 98.

[308] Nuttall (*Visible Saints*, 85) observes here that:

> [A]lthough normally the first important action taken by a church after its 'embodying' is to secure a pastor, yet the church exists before it has a pastor; and it can continue to exist, if only for a time, yet for a considerable time, without a pastor. We are thus at the opposite pole from John Henry Newman's (1801–1890) assertion, 'A Sacerdotal order is historically the essence of the Church.'

deficient until their installation.[309] Elders and deacons were the norm for lawful and biblically-regulated church government and discipline[310]; GBs were thus secondary supportive servants. That said, in the absence of elders, GBs were to be provided for and paid for their work (not merely reimbursed) when possible.[311] From Acts 13:1, the Petty France church concluded that GBs may ordain if no elder or evangelist (that is, a church planter) could be present.[312]

The wisdom of restricting the lay-preacher GBs to ministry within their local church, or only as sent out by it and directly under its authority, is illustrated in the case of an unbaptized, unaffiliated, unordained man "having a Gift," whose preaching was drawing a substantial hearing. The West Country Particular Baptist Association, having been asked for counsel and help, urged that he be heard and approached only with great caution. Summarizing their judgment, this man was:

1. Acting in self-rule, and thus not subject to Christ's rule;
2. Walking disorderly because he had not been orderly received;
3. Acting contrary to biblical rule, which was offensive to orderly Christians;
4. In danger of introducing disorder into the churches;
5. Potentially hindering himself and others from obeying the gospel;
6. Serving to lower the esteem of Scripture in the sight of others;
7. Laying the church open to unsoundness and the errors of men who stand out of the truth;
8. Laying the church open to further errors, both congregationally and individually.[313]

Not all GBs were deemed qualified; the process could conclude without ordination—and perhaps even removal from the role of GB. The Philadelphia Association faced what seems was a

[309] B.R. White, *Associational Records*, II.67. Cited Scriptures here: Acts 11:21ff and 14:21ff; Tit. 1:5; 2 Tm. 2:2.

[310] White, *Associational Records*, II.100. History records, however, that Nehemiah Coxe's (d. 1688) tenure as a GB (1671–1675) in John Bunyan's (1628–1688) Bedford church included him exercising a prominent role in the discipline of at least two members. See James Renihan, "An Excellent and Judicious Divine: Nehemiah Coxe" in Reformed Baptist Theological Review 4:2 (July 2007), 66–67.

[311] White, *Associational Records*, II.67.

[312] White, *Associational Records*, III.171. Nuttall similarly notes that, a century-and-a-half later, "Occasionally a gifted brother is mentioned as taking part" in an ordination; see "The Baptist Churches and Their Ministers in the 1790's Rippons's Baptist Annual Register," Baptist Quarterly 30.8 (October 1984), 385.

[313] White, *Associational Records*, II.67–68.

similarly troubling case, concluding that approving such a man for ordination would invite further trouble by sowing schism and discontent:

> It is an indication of a heavy, self-willed, obstinate, and ungovernable temper in any gifted brother to refuse to exercise his gifts as the church shall be inclined to call him; and a specimen sufficient to foreshow what may be expected from such a one if preferred. It is therefore running an imprudent risk, to ordain to office in the church of God men such fluctuating temper, who, if in any wise offended, will behave strangely, and leave the assemblings of the church, and frequent other assemblies. Though they may have some fine endowments, yet they can hardly be deemed faithful men.[314]

Perhaps the clearest summary, though, is found in this entry in the *Longworth Churchbook*:

> And whereas it was proposed to our Consideration by ye Church of Abingdon, whether it be not ye Concernment of those Churches in This day, wherein ye Labourers amongst us are but few, to forward and Incourage such persons as are likely to be usefull in the work of ye Ministry. We do agree that it doth highly concern them so to do, and we Judge it necessary for that end that ye Churches should take care at fit opportunities to make trial of such persons as may be supposed to have any Considerable abilities for that service, and to forward & encourage such by calling them to frequent exercises at private Meetings, and to take care if occasion be that some able person or persons they may be Instructed in ye way of ye Lord more perfectly.[315]

Many of these elements stitched together above and noted in TTR are woven into the cloth of these few sentences. Prayer for God to send out laborers, advising the Association of GBs (or potential GBs), evaluating gifts and graces by testing them in the context of their local church, guarding the witness of the congregation in the process, and seeing to it that aspirants receive instruction from "some able person or persons" all feature in this small-but-instructive paragraph. Thus our rough-drawn outline has been filled in with at least some of the finer details comprising a clearer sketch.

Conclusion

Hercules Collins contributed a substantial work to the Particular Baptist cause in *The Temple Repair'd*. In it, he presents a robust defense for unordained preaching; homiletical,

[314] Gillette, *Minutes of PBA*, 52.

[315] Kreitzer, *The Longworth Churchbook*, 64–65.

practical, and interpretive guidance for the preacher; and specific counsel to churches concerning the right receiving of those servants of the Word given by Christ. Wisdom gleaned from decades of diligent labor in training gifted brothers and raising up servants of Christ lies codified therein for the benefit of Christ's bride, and TTR also features the only extant Collins sermon. It is thus a work of exceeding value for understanding a broader view of Particular Baptist ecclesiology, especially in terms of how they approached the GB and the eldership. Ivimey's words come to mind: "The faithfulness of the ministers deserves notice…unaffected by reproaches cast on them for attempting to provide for a learned and useful ministry, they steadily pursued their object."[316] Hercules was certainly an example of persevering diligently in the care of souls, and—just as he counsels in TTR—he actively sought to make provision for a future ministry himself.

Yet TTR is more than a manual for preaching or a defense of GBs; it is the capstone of Collins's theology. If his OC shows him teaching the flock through doctrinal foundation, and TES shows him tending the wounded through pastoral counsel, then TTR shows him training the next generation of shepherds to carry forth the ministry of the gospel he so loved. Here Hercules reveals the full breadth of his pastoral vision: a faithful church, grounded in sound doctrine, guarded through wise pastoral care, and guided by men formed by Scripture, prayer, and the Spirit's sovereign gifting. In this way, TTR completes the triad of Collins's pastoral theology and displays its integrated character—catechetical, experiential, ministerial.

The Temple Repair'd hearkens back to that time when every church was indeed a seminary, considering it carefully and reasoning from its examples and exhortations alike. It calls the church today to her prayer closet, asking the Lord of the harvest to send out workers—and to her lectern, that those workers might be men rightly trained, mighty in the Scriptures, zealous for their Great Shepherd, and faithful servants of his lambs.

[316] Ivimey, *History of English Baptists*, II.547.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Hercules Collins (1646/1647–1702) has long stood at the margins of Baptist memory: a name invoked but not examined, a citation repeated but not retrieved. In short, he has been acknowledged, but not understood. Collins appears in footnotes, confessional histories, discussions of catechesis, and debates over Baptist identity—yet almost nobody has read him. Fewer still have considered him as a pastor-theologian in his own right. He has been, in the truest sense, the man everybody names, but nobody knows. Despite his significance, no sustained study of Collins's pastoral theology has ever been undertaken, leaving a substantial gap in both Baptist historiography and Puritan studies.

This thesis has sought to change that. By placing Collins's life and pastoral theology in its historical, doctrinal, and ecclesiological context, and by examining three of his most significant works—*An Orthodox Catechism* (1680), *The English Spira* (1693), and *The Temple Repair'd* (1702)—this study has argued that Collins is not merely a minor Puritan nor a peripheral Particular Baptist. Rather, he has emerged as a confessionally Reformed and Puritan pastor-theologian whose pastoral theology is deeply coherent, biblically grounded, experientially wise, ecclesiologically ordered, and urgently needed today.

What emerges from Collins's corpus is a pastoral theology which can be described in three words: teaching, tending, and training. These categories are not arbitrary, but the very categories Scripture uses to describe the shepherd's calling. Nowhere is that calling more clearly articulated than Ezek. 34's canonical critique of false shepherds and canonical promise of the

true Shepherd of the sheep.

Ezek. 34 provides the biblical grammar for understanding Collins's ministry. The Lord condemns Israel's shepherds for failing to feed the flock, ruling with harshness, scattering the sheep, neglecting the weak, refusing to bind up the injured, and allowing the flock to become prey (vv. 1–10). In contrast with their sinful, selfish ways, God himself promises to shepherd his people through "one shepherd, my servant David" (v. 23), who will feed, gather, heal, and protect them.

Collins's pastoral theology is nothing less than a seventeenth-century embodiment of this biblical vision. He shows himself to be a shepherd who feeds, binds up, and trains others to shepherd. His pastoral theology is no set of abstracted, ethereal principles; it is a lived, embodied, Christ-centered ministry reflecting the heart of the Chief Shepherd.

Teaching: Feeding the Flock with *An Orthodox Catechism*

The first notable dimension of Collins's pastoral theology is his commitment to teaching —to feeding the flock with sound doctrine. *An Orthodox Catechism* is the clearest expression of this early commitment. Collins's decision to revise the *Heidelberg Catechism* was not an act of literary ambition, but pastoral love. He believed that the people of God must be nourished by "the pattern of sound words" (2 Tm. 1:13), and that catechesis was indispensable to that end.

His editorial method reveals a pastor who knew sound theology was soul nourishment. His retention of the ecumenical creeds demonstrates a defined Reformational catholicity; his strengthening of the Scriptural proofs evinces a concern for Reformational doctrinal clarity. Additions of questions on credobaptism, the laying on of hands, congregational singing, church discipline, the moral law, and prayer confirm his strong Reformational convictionality, while restructuring the catechism for pedagogical simplicity highlights an applied Reformational

creativity. His explicit anchoring of every doctrine in sacred Scripture illustrates a tethered Reformational comprehension of truth. His entire corpus fleshes out what his OC concisely articulates—a pastoral theology rooted in Scripture and confession—and his life's story demonstrates why such doctrinal stability is critically necessary in persecution contexts.

Collins's catholicity merits specific mention. His OC retains the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds; his TTR draws freely from Ames, Perkins, Petto, and Owen; his *The Scribe Instructed* cites Thomas Brooks and even a (careful!) selection from a Roman Catholic[1] author. His prison writings name saints across Protestant denominational lines with affection. These instances reflect no eclecticism or Early Modern proto-ecumenism; they certainly do not operate in any sort of an atheological or doctrinally-minimalistic manner. Rather, this is the biblical catholicity of a man who loved Christ—a man who could pray with the psalmist, "Do I not love them that love you?" (Ps. 139:21), confessing with him that "the saints in the land" were "the excellent ones in whom…all [his] delight" could be found (Ps. 16:3).

In all this, Collins stands as the antithesis of the false shepherds of Ezek. 34. Where they starved the flock, he fed them; where they withheld truth, he supplied it; where they neglected catechesis, he revived it. His OC is not simply a doctrinal statement, but a loving act of pastoral nourishment—a means by which he sought to anchor his people in the truth and guard them from falling prey to the wolves of error.

Tending: Binding up the Wounded in *The English Spira*

The second dimension of Collins's pastoral theology is his commitment to tending—that is, binding up the wounded, strengthening the weak, and comforting the afflicted. *The English Spira* reveals Hercules as a pastor who understood the complexities of the human soul and the

[1] Broken clocks are still right twice per day, after all.

power of Scripture to make it whole. His work is not merely reactive, but reflective of the broader Puritan tradition.

That matters because John Child's despair was fundamentally theological. Child weaponized Scripture against himself, interpreted providence through the lens of reprobation, and concluded that he had out-sinned the mercy of God. Collins met him with a pastoral hermeneutic shaped by the gospel. He answered despair with biblical promises, not platitudes; he confronted doctrinal distortion with theological precision and clarity; he applied Scripture personally and with experiential wisdom, not professional distance. Collins refused to concede ground that grace had claimed, even when Child insisted upon his own damnation. He faithfully modeled the Puritan art of casuistry—an art nearly lost in contemporary pastoral practice—demonstrating a diligent Reformational counselor's discernment and concern, and the enduring patience of a caring friend.

Here again Ezek. 34 provides the interpretive key. The Lord rebukes false shepherds: "The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought" (v. 4). Collins's ministry to Child is a living contrast to that indictment. He labors hard to strengthen, heal, and bind up Child's wounded soul with the balm of Christ's gospel.

His pastoral theology is both doctrinally precise and experientially wise. It is Reformed and Puritan casuistry at its best: Scripture applied to the soul *in extremis*, with tenderness, courage, and biblical and theological depth.

Training: Equipping Shepherds for the Next Generation in *The Temple Repair'd*

The third dimension of Collins's pastoral theology is his commitment to training—to equipping the next generation of gospel heralds and shepherds. *The Temple Repair'd* is his

manifesto for ministerial formation. It reveals a pastor who, echoing Owen, believed that every church should be a seminary, where gifted men are identified, trained, and deployed for the good of Christ's sheep and the glory of Christ's name. In a day when the Clarendon Code barred university training for Nonconformists, this conviction was not a matter of convenience—but of necessity.

Likewise, his doctrine of the gifted brother is not pragmatism. It is biblically-grounded, practically-applied exegesis to ensure that Christ's flock would not starve for lack of faithful preaching. His instructions for hermeneutics and homiletics demonstrate a pastor who understood that faithful preaching is both an art and a stewardship. His several counsels to churches reveal a shepherd who held that biblical ecclesial order is essential to true ecclesial health.

In all this, Collins demonstrates a Reformational church-vision: a congregation of visible saints, governed by Christ's Word, ordered by his commands, and nourished by his ordinances. He also demonstrates a Reformational courage: he defends the role of the GB in a contested seventeenth-century environment, stands firm on ordination, and insists on the necessity of a gospel ministry even under persecution.

Ezek. 34 once more provides the biblical frame: God promises to shepherd his people through "one shepherd, my servant David" (v. 23) and to set over them shepherds who will feed them (Jer. 23:4). Collins's vision in TTR reflects this eschatological pattern: Christ is the chief Shepherd, who tasks his church with raising up under-shepherds after his own heart.

The Integrated Pastoral Theology of Hercules Collins

Taken together, then, Collins's teaching, tending, and training reveal a pastoral theology marked by ten Reformational characteristics:

1. Reformational catholicity—a love for the whole church and the whole tradition.
2. Reformational convictionality—a willingness to stand for truth, even when costly.
3. Reformational courage—a readiness to suffer for conscience's sake.
4. Reformational clarity—a singleminded focus on the glory of God in the redemption of souls.
5. Reformational creativity—innovative fidelity under persecution.
6. Reformational comprehension—a full-orbed grasp of biblical Reformed theology.
7. Reformational counseling—experiential biblical wisdom applied to wounded consciences.
8. Reformational church-vision—a robust confessors' ecclesiology of visible saints.
9. Reformational confession—a public, doctrinally-rich witness to Scripture's truth.
10. Reformational concern for God's glory—a life ordered toward Christ in all things.

These ten marks are not incidental; they are the fabric of Collins's pastoral theology. They reveal a minister whose labors were shaped by Scripture, forged in suffering, anchored in Christ, and poured out for the good of the church. In this, he stands squarely within the Puritan pastor-theologian tradition of Perkins, Ames, Flavel, Owen, Poole, and Goodwin—men whose theology was formed for the pulpit, the conscience, and the cure of souls. The Puritans aimed at a practical theology, not a bare lived experience—one who had "well tried" (Ps. 119:140) the Scriptures and proven their truth in his daily practice. Collins embodies this impulse of doctrine for life.

Collins's pastoral theology must be viewed through a literary lens as well. While he was certainly not merely an author for the sake of publication, he made a rare literary contribution in both volume (if Bunyan is not reckoned a Particular Baptist, then Collins is the second-most-prolific of the seventeenth century, behind Keach) and in content. Most pastors of his day did not publish catechisms beyond their own congregations, print a counseling record, or write a commentary on their homiletical methods, but he did all three. These instances demonstrate a man who is far more than an editor or collaborator. They are the marks of a careful, creative mind—one deeply concerned for the wellbeing of Christ's church.

Collins's pastoral theology must also be read through the lens of his suffering. His imprisonments under the Clarendon Code, his endurance of persecution, and his willingness to

shepherd from a cell shaped not only his ecclesial courage but his hermeneutic of care. His tenderness toward wounded consciences, his experiential wisdom in TES, and his insistence on raising up preachers in TTR all emerge from a man who had learned to interpret providence from the underside. Suffering did not embitter Hercules; it tempered him. It produced in him a pastor's sympathy, a theologian's sobriety, and a shepherd's resolve. His theology was not wrought in the study alone, but in the crucible of affliction—and it is precisely this cruciform hermeneutic which renders his pastoral theology so compelling today.

Collins as Pastoral Exemplar for Today

Hercules's pastoral theology is both historically interesting and ministerially needful. In an age marked by doctrinal confusion, theological disinterest, ecclesial instability, ministerial burnout, and the erosion of catechesis, Collins offers a model of eldership that is both ancient and urgently contemporary. He presents to us the reflective pastor, one whose theology is anchored in Scripture and expressed in confession and catechesis. He shows us the conviction-driven shepherd, standing firm on how Scripture presents baptism, worship, discipline, and ecclesial order. He embodies the experiential minister—one "not a novice" (1 Tm. 3:6, KJV), who knows how to bind up the broken-hearted and comfort the despairing. He illustrates the training pastor, patiently investing in the next generation of shepherds. For our comfort-obsessed age, he models the suffering pastor—one whose imprisonments and trials deepen rather than diminish his ministry. In this, Hercules stands firmly within the Puritan pastor-theologian ideal, a tradition in which doctrine, devotion, and pastoral care are inseparably joined.

In Collins, we observe a shepherd who exemplifies the things Ezek. 34 demands and the NT commends. He is a pastor whose theology is lived, whose doctrine is applied, whose preaching touches people because it reflects reality. His ecclesiology is robust and his heart is

fixed on Jesus. In our gauzy, hazy day for faith and practice, we do not need merely descriptive pastoral theology; we need a prescriptive one. Hercules helps us here, and we should consider such a shepherd—to learn how he considers Christ.

Implications for Baptist Studies and Pastoral Theology

This study is a first-pass trip through Collins's pastoral theology. As such, it suggests that Collins's ministry yields several implications for ongoing scholarly reflection and contemporary pastoral practice. Here is a set of constructive trajectories for Baptist life:

1. Pastoral counseling and care. Collins's casuistry provides a model for biblical counseling—addressing wounded consciences of believers with biblical compassion and doctrinal precision. His approach demonstrates how experiential wisdom and theological clarity should coexist in the cure of souls.
2. Preaching and teaching. His instinctive, tight integration of doctrine and devotion offers a pattern for sermons which both instruct the mind theologically and nurture the heart practically. Hercules's homiletic reminds pastors that preaching is an act of shepherding, not merely exposition.
3. Church discipline and governance. Collins's ecclesial order provides a biblical framework for maintaining purity, peace, and pastoral accountability within the local church. His emphasis on the moral law, the keys, and congregational responsibility remains instructive.
4. Ministerial formation. His training of GBs offers an excellent paradigm for equipping seminarians and young pastors. Collins's conviction (drawn from Owen) that every church should function as a seminary challenges many modern assumptions about ministerial preparation.
5. Spiritual formation. Hercule's devotion to Christ, evident piety, and cruciform hermeneutic each encourage elders to pursue deeper communion with God and greater dependence upon his Spirit. Collins models a spirituality in which suffering clarifies rather than clouds the pastoral vocation.
6. Historical-theological reflection. Collins's place within the Puritan tradition invites ministers to recover the historical roots of Reformed and baptistic pastoral theology. His work demonstrates that Baptist identity has always included a robustly confessional and pastorally rich theological vision.

These implications are not exhaustive, but they represent a beginning. Collins's long-forgotten pastoral theology offers a treasure of wisdom for Baptist studies and for the church's ongoing work of "shepherding the flock of God" (1 Pet. 5:2).

This thesis represents the first sustained scholarly treatment of Collins's pastoral theology. No previous study has offered a comparative analysis of *An Orthodox Catechism* in

relation to the Heidelberg at this level; none has examined Collins's pastoral casuistry within *The English Spira*; none has explored his homiletical method or applied ecclesiology seen in the doctrine of the gifted brother in *The Temple Repair'd*; and no work in Baptist history has developed the doctrine of the gifted brother to this extent since Collins himself articulated it. In these respects, respectfully and humbly, this study makes several original contributions to Baptist historical theology, Puritan studies, and the retrieval of Early Modern pastoral theology.

Future Research

This thesis's effort toward retrieving Collins's pastoral theology opens a wide field for further scholarly work. Multiple avenues for future research stand available for researchers interested in Early Modern Baptist studies, Puritanism, and the history of pastoral theology.

1. A full critical edition of Collins's *Works*[2] remains a foundational scholarly need. His writings have not been republished since 1702, and their inaccessibility has hindered historical and theological engagement.
2. A monograph on his pastoral theology—a comprehensive study integrating his catechetical, homiletical, polemical, and devotional writings would significantly advance Baptist and Puritan scholarship.
3. Comparative studies within Particular Baptist contexts—Collins's views on providence, catechesis, covenant theology, prison writings, counseling, and preaching invite comparison with contemporaries such as Kiffin, Keach, Piggott, and the broader JLJ-Wapping tradition. His prolific literary output requires further research as well.
4. Further comparative studies on the JLJ-Wapping tradition's ecclesiological and theological continuity with later Particular Baptist congregations[3] would help illuminate the development of Baptist identity in London.
5. Comparative studies with Spilsbury, Norcott, and Collins, especially on baptismal writings, covenant theology, symbolics, and sacramental views in the Wapping context.
6. Comparative studies within Puritanism—Collins's pastoral method, casuistry, and ecclesiology merit close comparisons with Baptist and paedobaptist Puritan figures such as Perkins, Ames, Flavel, Baxter, Poole, and Goodwin.
7. Comparative studies on Collins's use of sources in his writings—his engagement with Reformed, Puritan, and even select Roman Catholic authors requires deeper analysis of his theological method and catholicity.

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[2] My co-editor and I are presently working to rectify this omission with a semi-critical, annotated edition. The absence of Collins's *Works* is keenly felt, making the retrieval undertaken in this thesis all the more necessary.

[3] Particularly in light of Sherman's recent work on the *Wapping Church Book.*

8. Further research on the doctrine of the GB within Early Modern Baptist life. Outside of this thesis, his treatment of the GB remains almost entirely unexplored in Baptist historiography. Its exegetical basis, ecclesial implications, and historical reception deserve sustained scholarly attention.
9. Comparative work between Collins's casuistry/pastoral care in *The English Spira* with other records of Puritan soul-care would greatly enrich our understanding of Early Modern pastoral theology.
10. Comparative studies of *The English Spira* specifically, in relation to other records of Puritan soul-care would be instructive and helpful; I intend here a more literary approach.
11. Particular Baptist homiletical studies would be helped by comparative analytical work between *The Temple Repair'd* and other works within the tradition.
12. Further exploration of Particular Baptist views on sacramental sealing—Collins's nuanced use of "seal" language in *An Orthodox Catechism* invites further study of sacramental theology amongst the seventeenth-century Baptists.
13. Although the modern category of "political theology" is frequently misused today, Collins's doctrine of church and state—particularly his use of the moral law, and ecclesial and individual expectations of the lesser and greater magistrate—should be explored carefully toward retrieving the historical, confessional Particular Baptist view of political engagement in light of a Baptist ecclesiology.

Together, these areas represent a substantial research agenda for scholars interested in Early Modern dissent, Reformed pastoral theology, and the development of Baptist identity. The retrieval of Collins's pastoral theology is only the beginning; the field is now open for broader, deeper, and more comprehensive engagement.

A Final Word

Hercules Collins has long been a name without a face, a citation without a voice, a reference without a retrieval: the man everybody names, but nobody knows. Yet behind the name stands a shepherd—faithful, courageous, tender, doctrinally precise, experientially wise, and relentlessly Christ-centered. He is a pastor who fed the sheep, bound up the wounded, and trained others to do the same. He is, in every meaningful sense, a shepherd after God's own heart.

In recovering Collins, we recover not merely a historical figure, but a confessionally Reformed pastoral vision—a vision shaped by Scripture, forged in suffering, anchored in Christ,

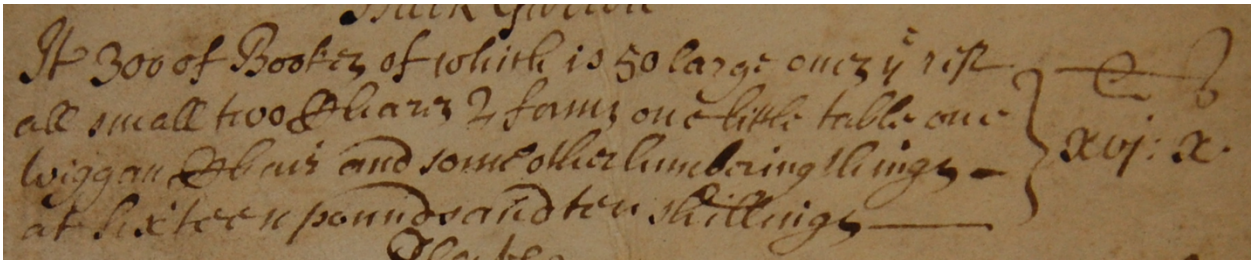
and directed toward the good of the church. It is a vision the contemporary church desperately needs. And it is a vision that, by God's grace, will continue to strengthen shepherds and sheep alike until the Chief Shepherd appears, and we receive the unfading crown of his glory.

APPENDIX ONE:
A PROBATE INVENTORY RECORD OF HERCULES COLLINS'S BOOKS[4]

This photo is of a probate inventory list from Hercules Collins's home following his death on October 4, 1702. Under the heading "Back Garrett," it records "300 of books of which is 50 large ones & rest all small books." Its presence reflects Collin's autodidactic tendencies and echoes his concern for his church's gifted brothers to have sufficient resources for proper study and proclamation of the Scriptures.

As such, it is deeply indicative of his operative pastoral theology.

Figure A1: The Written Probate Inventory Record



[4] Probate Inventory of Hercules Collins. Originally accessed at The London Metropolitan Archives: TLA, DL/C/B/030/MS09174/028/024, dated 24 October 1702. Photo credit: Samuel Renihan, from his unpublished lecture notes for HT45 "Historical Origins of Baptist Covenant Theology" (a course taught at Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, Owensboro, KY, 2018); used gratefully and by permission.

APPENDIX TWO:
THE NUMBERS AND PROPOSED HEADINGS OF *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM*[5]

As noted in Chapter 3, Collins curiously omits numbers altogether and most of the Lord's Day headings from his OC. There has not been a standardized numbering system for the entire OC (thus hindering serious comparative study), nor has there been an attempt to reconstruct the headings and thereby make plain the internal architecture of OC. This appendix formalizes both.

Of misery under sin (OC #1–10)

1. Q. What is thy only comfort in Life and Death?
2. Q. How many things: are necessary for thee to know, that thou injoying his comfort mayst live and dye happily?
3. Q. Whence knowest thou thy misery?
4. Q. What doth the Law of God require of us?
5. Q. Art thou able to keep all these things perfectly?
6. Q. Did God then make man so wicked and perverse?
7. Q. Whence then ariseth the wickedness of Mans nature?
8. Q. Are we so corrupt that we are not at all apt to do well, and are prone to all vice?
9. Q. Doth not God then Injury to Man who in the Law requireth that of him which he [is][6] not able to perform?
10. Q. Doth God leave this stubbornness and falling away of Man unpunished?

[5] The text is from *An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of the Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and the Gospel. Published for preventing the Canker and Poison of heresy and error, by H. Collins* (London: 1680). Original orthography has been retained.

[6] The scanned 1680 edition of *An Orthodox Catechism* has the "i" in "is" partially visible as the page bends into the center binding of the book block; the scan cuts it off.

Of mercy to sinners (OC #11–21)

11. Q. Is not God therefore merciful?

12. Q. Seeing then by the just Judgment of God we are subject both to temporal and eternal Punishments, is there yet any way or means remaining whereby we may be delivered from these Punishments, and be reconciled to God?

13. Q. Are we able to satisfy by our selves?

14. Q. Is there any creature in Heaven or in Earth, which is only a creature, able to satisfy for us?

15. Q. What manner of Mediator then, and Deliverer must we seek for?

16. Q. Wherefore is it necessary that he be very Man, and that perfectly just too?

17. Q. Why must he also be very God?

18. Q. And who is that Mediator which is together both very God, and a very perfectly just Man?

19. Q. Whence knowest thou this?

20. Q. Is then Salvation restored by Christ to all men who perished in Adam?

21. Q. What is Faith?

Of the Apostles Creed (OC #22–24)

22. Q. What are those things which are necessary for a Christian man to believe?

23. Q. Into how many parts is this Creed divided?

24. Q. Seeing there to but one only substance of God, why namest thou those three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

Of God the Father (OC #25–27)

25. Q. What believest thou when thou sayest, I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth?

26. Q. What is the Providence of God?

27. Q. What doth this knowledg of the Creation and Providence of God profit us?

Of God the Son (OC #28–51)

28. Q. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, a Saviour?

29. Q. Do they then believe in the only Saviour Jesus, who seek for happiness and safety of the Saints, or of themselves, or elsewhere?

30. Q. Why is he called Christ, that is, anointed?

31. Q. But why art thou called a Christian?

32. Q. For what cause is Christ called the only begotten Son of God, when we also are the Sons of God?

33. Q. Wherefore callest thou him our Lord?

34. Q. What believest thou when thou sayest, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary?

35. Q. What profit takest thou by Christ's holy Conception and Nativity?

36. Q. What believest thou when thou sayest he suffered?

37. Q. For what cause should he suffer under Pilate, as being his Judg?

38. Q. But is there any more in it, that he was fastened to the Cross, than if he had suffered any other kind of death?

39. Q. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself unto death?

40. Q. To what end was he buried also?

41. Q. But since that Christ died for us, why must we also die?

42. Q. What other commodity receive we by the Death of Christ?

43. Q. Why is there added, he descended into Hell?[7]

44. Q. What doth the Resurrection of Christ Profit us?

45. Q. How understand you that he ascended into Heaven?

[7] On this question, see Samuel Renihan, *Crux, Mors, Inferi: A Primer and Reader on Christ's Descent* (Columbia, SC: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2021), 119.

46. Q. Is not Christ with us then until the end of the World, as he (d) hath promised?

47. Q. Are not by this means the two natures in Christ pulled asunder, if his Humanity be not wheresoever his Divinity is?

48. Q. What Fruit doth the Ascension of Christ into Heaven bring unto us?

49. Q. Why is it further said, he sitteth at the Right-Hand of God?

50. Q. What profit is this Glory of our Head Christ unto us?

51. Q. What comfort hast thou by the coming of Christ again to judge the quick and the dead?

Of God the Spirit (OC #52–64)

52. Q. What believest thou concerning the Holy Ghost?

53. Q. What believest thou concerning the Holy and Catholick Church of Christ?

54. Q. What mean those words, The Communion of Saints?

55. Q. What believest thou concerning Remission of Sins?

56. Q. What Comfort hast thou by the Resurrection of the Flesh?

57. Q. What Comfort taken thou of the Article of everlasting Life?

58. Q. But when thou believest all these things, what profit redoundeth thence unto thee?

59. Q. How art thou righteous before God?

60. Q. Why affirmest thou that thou art made Righteous by Faith only?

61. Q. Why cannot our good Works be Righteousness, or some part of Righteousness before God?

62. Q. How is it that our good Works merit nothing, seeing God promiseth that he will give a Reward for them both in this Life, and in the Life to come?

63. Q. But doth not this Doctrine make Men careless and profain?

64. Q. Seeing then that only Faith maketh us Partakers of Christ and his Benefits, whence doth it proceed?

Of the sacraments (OC #65–67)

65. Q. What are the Sacraments?

66. Q. Do not then both the Word and Sacraments tend to that End, as to lead our Faith unto the Sacrifice of Christ finished on the Cross as the only ground of our Salvation?

67. Q. How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in the new Testament?

Of baptism (OC #68–78)

68. Q. What is Baptism?

69. Q. Who are the proper Subjects of this Ordinance?

70. Q. Are no Infants to be baptized?

71. Q. Doeth the Scripture any where expressly forbid the Baptizing of Infants?

72. Q. May not the Infant Seed of Believers under the Gospel be baptized as well as the Infant Seed of Abraham under the Law was circumcised?

73. Q. Seeing the Infants of Believers are in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents, as some say, why may not they be baptized under the Gospel, as well as Abrahams Infant Seed was circumcised under the Law?

74. Q. How art thou admonished and assured in Baptism, that thou art Partaker of the only Sacrifice of Christ?

75. Q. What is it to be washed with the Blood and Spirit of Christ?

76. Q. Where doth Christ promise us that he will as certainly wash us with his Blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the Water of Baptism?

77. Q. Is then the outward Baptism of Water the washing away of Sins?

78. Q. Why then doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of the New–birth, and forgiveness of Sins?

Of the laying on of hands upon the baptized (#79–82)

79. Q. What Principle of Christ's Doctrine in the holy Scripture followeth Baptism in order?

80. Q. What is the form and end of the Ordinance?

81. Q. Is it the Duty of every Christian to be under this Practice?

82. Q. Did not the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit follow upon laying on of Hands in the Apostles time?

Of the Lord's supper (OC #83–91)

83. Q. How art thou in the Lords Supper admonished and warranted that thou art Partaker of that only Sacrifice of Christ offered on the Cross, and of all his Benefits?

84. Q. What is it to eat the Body of Christ?

85. Q. Where hath Christ promised that he will as certainly give his Body and Blood so to be eaten and drunken, as they eat this Bread broken, and drink this Cup?

86. Q. Are then the Bread and Wine made the very Body and Blood of Christ?

87. Q. Why then doth Christ call Bread his Body, and the Cup his Blood, or the new Testament in his Blood; and St. Paul calleth Bread and Wine the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ?

88. Q. What Difference is there between the Supper of the Lord, and the Popish Mass?

89. Q. Who are to come unto the Table of the Lord?

90. Q. Are they also to be admitted to the Lords Supper who in Confession and Life declare themselves to be Infidels, profane, and ungodly?

91. Q. How ought this Ordinance of the Lords Supper to be closed?

Of the keys (OC #92–94)

92. Q. You told us but now, that those who in Confession and Life declare themselves to be Infidels, profane and ungodly, should by the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven be driven from this Supper: what are the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven?

93. Q. How is the Kingdom of Heaven opened and shut by preaching of the Gospel?

94. Q. How is the Kingdom of Heaven opened and shut by Ecclesiastical Discipline?

Of Christian thankfulness (OC #95–96)

95. Q. Whereas we are delivered from all our Sins and Miseries without any Merit of ours, by the Mercy of God, only for Christs sake; for what cause are we to do good Works?

96. Q. Cannot they then be saved which be unthankful, and remain still careless in their Sins, and are not converted from their Wickedness to God?

Of Christian conversion (OC #97–99)

97. Q. Of what Parts consisteth the Conversion of Man unto God?

98. Q. What is the mortifying of the old Man?

99. Q. What is the quickning of the new Man?

Of God's law (OC #100–137)

100. Q. What are good Works?

101. Q. Which is the Law of God?

102. Q. How are these Commandments divided?

103. Q. What is the Preface to the ten Commandments?

104. Q. What learn we from this Preface?

105. Q. Do these things belong unto us?

106. Q. What is the first Commandment?

107. Q. What doth God require in the first Commandment?

108. Q. What is idolatry?

109. Q. What is the second Commandment?

110. Q. What doth this second Commandment require?

111. Q. May there then at all any Images or Resemblances of things be made?

112. Q. But may not Images be tolerated in Churches, which may serve for Books unto

the common People?

113. Q. What is the third Commandment?

114. Q. What doth God decree in the third Commandment?

115. Q. Is it then so grievous a Sin by swearing, or banning, to take be Name of God in vain, as that God is also angry with them who in as much as in them lieth do not forbid or hinder it?

116. Q. May a Man swear religiously and lawfully, by the Name of God?

117. Q. Is it lawful to swear by Saints, or other Creatures?

118. Q. What is the fourth Commandment?

119. Q. What are we taught by the fourth Commandment?

120. Q. What is the fifth Commandment?

121. Q. What doth God enjoin us in the fifth Commandment?

122. Q. What is the sixth Commandment?

123. Q. What doth God exact in the sixth Commandment?

124. Q. But this Commandment seems to forbid Murther only?

125. Q. Is it enough then that we kill no Man, in such sort as hath been said?

126. Q. What is the seventh Commandment?

127. Q. What is the meaning of the seventh Commandment?

128. Q. Forbiddeth God nothing else in this Commandment but actual Adultery, and such kinds of uncleanness?

129. Q. What is the eighth Commandment?

130. Q. What doth God forbid in the eighth Commandment?

131. Q. What are those things which God here commandeth?

132. Q. What is the ninth Commandment?

133. Q. What doth the ninth Commandment exact?

134. Q. What is the tenth Commandment?

135. Q What doth the tenth Commandment forbid?

136. Q. But can they who are converted to God, perfectly observe, and keep these Commandments?

137. Q. Why will God then have his Law to be so exactly and severely preached seeing there is no Man in this life able to keep it?

Of prayer (OC #138–152)

138. Q. Wherefore is Prayer necessary for Christians?

139. Q. What is required unto that Prayer which shall please God, and be heard of him?

140. Q. What are those things which he commandeth us to ask of him?

141. Q. What Prayer is that?

142. Q. Are Christians tied to this very Form of Prayer?

143. Q Why doth Christ teach us to call God our Father?

144. Q. Why is that added, which art in Heaven?

145. Q. What is the first Petition?

146. Q. What is the second Petition?

147. Q. What is the third Petition?

148. Q. What is the fourth Petition?

149. Q. What is the fifth Petition?

150. Q. What is the sixth Petition?

151. Q. How concludest thou this Prayer?

152. Q. What meaneth this Particle, Amen?

Concluding Matter:

- The Nicene Creed
- The Athanasian Creed
- An Appendix Concerning the Ordinance of Singing

APPENDIX THREE:
A SUMMARY OUTLINE OF
"AN APPENDIX CONCERNING THE ORDINANCE OF SINGING"

Summary: Collins presents seven arguments for viewing congregational singing as an ordinance of Christ for his public worship, answers five objections, and provides eleven points of pastoral instruction and exhortation toward its practice.

Seven Arguments for Congregational Singing as an Ordinance of Christ for Public Worship

1. It is the command of God "as a publick Duty" to the whole church, "universally to all"[1] (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), thus distinguished from preaching or teaching.
2. Singing is a "Moral Duty" which is "often link'd with that Moral Duty, which is universally obliging and perpetually binding, namely, Prayer" (Jam. 5:13; Acts 16:25). Prayer and praise from the heart are often and rightly expressed in "hymn[ing] God."[2]
3. Singing's practice is "further confirmed by Scripture Pattern."[3] Collins provides eight biblical examples and two instances from church history:
    a. Christ and the apostles sang, Matt. 26:30.
    b. Godly princes sang, 2 Chron. 29:30 and 20:21–22.
    c. Godly governors sang, Neh. 7:1; Exod. 15.
    d. The apostles and NT churches sang, 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.
    e. Common people sang, Num. 21:17; Ps. 149:1–2.
    f. Men and women both sang, Exod. 15:21; Jdg. 5:1.
    g. Early Christians sang (citing Tertullian).
    h. The Fathers sang (citing Basil, Augustine, Ambrose, and Athanasius).
    i. The saints will sing in eternity, Ps. 100; Is. 52:7–8.
4. He considers the character of singing as presented in Scripture—it is the:
    a. "Musick of Nature, and shall not the Saints sing?"
    b. "Musick of Ordinances" (citing examples of God's grace to saints in church history and Scripture).
    c. "Musick of Angels" throughout Scripture.
    d. "Musick of Saints" in eternity: "Shall we not begin that Work on Earth, which will be continued in Glory?"[4]
5. Singing is:

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[1] OC, "Appendix," 76.

[2] OC, "Appendix," 76.

[3] OC, "Appendix," 77–78.

[4] OC, "Appendix," 78.

a. Historical in practice. Saints have sung "in the greatest Numbers," "in the greatest Straits," and "in the greatest Deliverances" of the Bible.
b. Eschatological in nature: "So shall the Gospel-Church sing after a better manner, when it is out of the Wilderness, and led into the Celestial Canaan, Revelation 5:9, 10, 11, 12."[5]

6. The duty of singing has been of such "constant Observation" that it "hath been performed in all places":
    a. The wilderness (Exod. 15),
    b. The Tabernacle (Ps. 27: 4, 6),
    c. The Temple (2 Chron. 20:30),
    d. The camp (2 Chron. 20:20–21),
    e. A private room (Matt. 26:30),
    f. In prison (Acts 16:25), and
    g. "[I]n publick Assemblies" (1 Cor. 14:5; Eph. 5; Col. 3).[6]
7. The ordinance:
    a. Has obvious divine blessing: it "hath been crowned" with God's "own glorious appearance," "eminent Miracles," and "eminent Victories."
    b. Its benefits also bear consideration: "Admonition and Teaching," "it can sweeten a Prison," "it can prepare the Soul for suffering; so Christ sings before he dies," and "it enlivens and exhilarates the Soul in trouble."[7]

Answering Five Objections to Congregational Singing

1. An objection: "How can a serious Christian sing, when there is a mixt multitude?"[8]
    a. The same way "we may pray and hear with them." Singing can be used to convict sinners, just like praying and preaching.
    b. "Prayer and Praises are natural Duties, as well as part of instituted Worship." …. "Praise is the natural Duty of all, the proper Duty of Saints, the perfect Act of Angels."[9]
2. A question: "But what may be the right Mode and Way of Singing?"
    a. "To sing, is not only meant the inward Frame of the Heart, but also of the voice."
    b. "Silent speakings, and inward rejoicings" constitute no admonishment.
    c. Scripture distinguishes between "Melody in the heart" and "the outward Act."
    d. Scripture also distinguishes singing from reading, praying, and speaking; it uses "a modulation of the Tongue…and so 'tis a Musical speaking."[10]

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[5] OC, "Appendix," 78–79.

[6] OC, "Appendix," 79.

[7] OC, "Appendix," 79–80.

[8] Collins means here, singing with non-Christians.

[9] OC, "Appendix," 80.

[10] OC, "Appendix," 80–81.

3. An objection: "If Singing be with the Voice, why not with Lute, Harp, Organs, and other Instruments?"[11]
    a. In the NT "the Voice and Heart are only God's instruments."
    b. Instruments were OT types; "when the Substance came, the Shadow ceased."
4. An objection: "special spiritual Gift[s] of singing in the Church" may be permissible, but "set Forms"—meaning, composed hymns—are not.
    a. Preaching uses a plan—a "set Form in his Head and Heart." So does prayer. The lawfulness of forms in these ordinances demonstrates the lawfulness of forms as expressed in composed hymns.
    b. Claiming an "extraordinary Gift to sing in the Church, is the ready way to weaken the Authority of the Scripture"; it "pretend[s] to…new Revelations."
    c. It encourages hypocrisy; men will compose the hymn beforehand and claim to be "immediately inspired."
    d. "God never made any such Promise of giving an extraordinary Gift of Singing," though he has of prayer, supplication, and preaching. He also has not "instructed [saints] to seek for it" or "to wait on it."
    e. Jesus would not require something in his worship that most of his churches need, but lack the ability to do; he supplies what he requires. "As God ordinarily giveth every Christian a Spirit of Prayer, so he also hath ordinarily given them a Gift to sing Praises to God." Our lack of skill is due to "want of use."
    f. What about 1 Cor. 14:26? Extraordinary gifts have ceased, but "the Duty remains still in the Church, as a standing Ordinance, as well as Prayer and Preaching."[12]
5. An objection: Should we sing psalms, or our own hymns (assuming they are biblical)?
    a. Metered psalms are permissible, but we are "at our liberty to compose other parts or portions of God's Word to that end; provided our Hymns are founded directly on God's Word, these very Hymns may be called the Word of God, or spiritual Hymns."
    b. All must be "performed according to the Analogy of Faith…as Prayer and Preaching must correspond with the sacred Record, so must Singing."[13]

Eleven Points of Positive Instruction and Exhortation Concerning Singing

1. "But how must we sing?" Collins offers eleven points of positive pastoral instruction. A particular fittingness accompanies how he shapes each exhortation musically. For example, #9 (letter i, below) continues: "'Tis Jehovah [who] is the great Harmonist, who must put every Heart in Tune, scrue [turn] up every Peg of Affection, and train every String of Meditation." Collins had the heart of a worshiper who delighted in God.
    a. With understanding, 1 Cor. 14:15.
    b. With zeal and affection, for love is the fulfilling of the law.
    c. With grace, Col. 3:16.
    d. With spiritual joy, 2 Sam. 6:13.

[11] OC, "Appendix," 81–82.

[12] OC, "Appendix," 81–83.

[13] OC, "Appendix," 83–84.

e. With faith, Heb. 4:2.
f. With "excited Grace, not only with Grace habitual, but excited and actual," 1 Tm. 4:14; Ps. 57:8.[14]
g. In the Spirit, 1 Cor. 14:15–16—meaning, with his help, using his words: "they are called spiritual Songs, in point of their Original…this Wind must fill our Organs before we can make any musick."
h. With "great care to keep our hearts while about this Work" so as not to displease God by hypocrisy.
i. "Neglect not preparatory Prayer for Singing, as well as other Duties."
j. In Christ. "If we are not in Christ [in going about this work], we are certainly out of tune."
k. Meditating on the glorious praise which will fill eternity. Collins's imagery is beautiful and brilliantly executed in its biblical and theological breadth: "Let us sometimes raise our Hearts into holy Contemplations, let us think of the musick of the Bride-Chamber, there shall be no crackt Strings, displeasing Sounds, harsh Voices, nothing to abate our Melody; there shall be no Willows to hang our Harps upon, Psa. 137.2. In the Bride-Chamber, there shall be no sorrow to interfere. When we sing the Song of the Lamb, there shall be no Grief to jar our Harmony: for which Day let us all pray."

[14] "Habitual grace" is a development of the category of habitual faith. Habitual faith refers to the capacity of fallen men to have and exercise faith; see Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, s.v. *habitus fidei* and *habitus gratiae* (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, 1985), 134. Collins's application of the concept to grace, then, rejects Romanist conceptions of infused grace; he focuses in a doxological sense. As image-bearers are the only potential recipients of grace, we must see that our worship expresses that we have indeed received it—that grace is not merely potential, but possessed by the worshiper. He intends by his verbiage that we must see that our hearts are stirred up and prepared to praise—the grace of faith must be appropriated and exercised, not treated as distant or potential, if we would render true praise to God when singing. It should be "excited and actual"—a grace experientially "fanned into flame" (2 Tm. 1:6), so to speak—a vigorous and living praise.

APPENDIX FOUR:
ADDED QUESTIONS AND MAJOR EDITS
COMPRISING *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM*'S UNIQUENESS

Scripture Citations

As discussed above, Collins makes multiple revisions to which biblical passages are employed, but retains most of its biblical proofs.

Sacraments as Seals

- Retains language of sacraments as "sacred signes and seals" of HC #66.
- This is OC #65.
- The questions and answers are virtually identical.

Credobaptism

- Inserts six questions introducing credobaptism between HC #68–69.
- These are OC questions #68–73:

74. What is Baptism?
75. Who are the proper Subjects of this Ordinance?
76. Are no Infants to be baptized?
77. Doth the Scripture any where expressly forbid the Baptizing of Infants?
78. May not the Infant Seed of Believers under the Gospel be baptized as well as the Infant Seed of Abraham under the Law was circumcised?
79. Seeing the Infants of Believers are in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents, as some Say, why may not they be baptized under the Gospel, as well as Abrahams Infant Seed was circumcised under the Law?

The Laying on of Hands

- Inserts four questions concerning the laying on of hands after baptism between HC #73–75.
- Omits HC #74 ("Are infants also to be baptized?")
- These are OC questions #79–82:

83. What principle of Christ's doctrine in the Holy Scripture followeth baptism in order?
84. What is the form and end of this ordinance?
85. Is it the duty of every Christian to be under this practice?
86. Did not the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit follow upon layin on of hands in the Apostles time?

Congregational Singing

- Inserts one question on singing following the Lord's Table between HC #82–83.
- This is OC #91:

92. How ought this ordinance of the Lord's Supper be closed?

Church Discipline

- Edits the question of OC #92 by adding a thirty-four-word prefatory summary.
- Retains the entirety of HC #83 (both its question and answer) verbatim.
- I have italicized the HC's question to make clear where Collins's prefatory appendage concludes:

92. You told us but now, that those who in Confession and Life declare themselves to be Infidels, profane and ungodly, should by the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven be driven from this Supper: *what are the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*?

- Edits OC #94 rather extensively.
- This is his first notable adjustment of one of HC's answers:

94. How is the Kingdom of Heaven opened and shut by Ecclesiastical Discipline?

The Ten Commandments

- The question for OC #101 is identical to its equivalent in HC #92:

101. Which is the law of God?

- HC #92 gives Exod. 20:1–17 in full.
- Collins's answer to OC #101 is in summary form: "The Decalogue, or ten commandments."
- Relocates each Commandment's recitation to the beginning of its treatment.
- Next, inserts three questions concerning the preface to the Ten Commandments between HC #93–94.
- These are OC questions #103–105:

80. What is the Preface to the ten commandments?
81. What learn we from this preface?
82. Do these things belong unto us?

- In relocating each Commandment, Collins adds OC #106, #109, #113, #118, #120, #122, #126, #129, #132, and #134.
- All follow the pattern of #106 in asking "What is the (first, second, third, etc.) Commandment?"
- OC #119 ("What are we taught by the fourth commandment?") constitutes a substantial change from its counterpart in HC #103 in both question and answer.

The Form of the Lord's Prayer

142. Are Christians tied to this very form of prayer?

- OC #142 is the final addition to the catechism proper.
- Represents a pastoral expansion of the HC's treatment of the Lord's Prayer.

An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing

- Concludes the OC.
- Expands his argument from singing post-Table to defending it as an ordained element of regular public worship.

Comparing these changes in a chart offers a ready comparative study by visualizing the changes, thereby more efficiently grasping his theological method in its editorial context:

FIGURE A4:
ADDED QUESTIONS AND MAJOR EDITS COMPRISING *AN ORTHODOX CATECHISM*'S UNIQUENESS

OC	***HC***
1. Sacraments as seals.	
#65 (Retains HC's language of "seals" and modifies its doctrine of sealing of the sacraments)	#66 (What are the sacraments?)
2. Baptism.	
	#68 (How many sacraments did Christ institute in the NT?)
#68–73 (adds questions on believer's baptism; OC #70 modifies HC #74)	
	#69 (How does baptism remind and assure you of Christ's sacrifice benefiting you personally?)
3. Concluding baptism by the laying on of hands.	
	#73 (Why does the Holy Spirit call baptism the water of rebirth and washing away of sins?)
#79–82 (adds laying on of hands)	(deletes HC #74: Are infants to be baptized?)
	#75 (How does the Supper remind and assure you of sharing in Christ's sacrifice and all his benefits?)
4. Concluding the Supper by singing.	
	#82 (Should scandalous sinners be admitted to the Supper?)
#91 (adds closing Lord's Supper with a hymn)	
	#83 (What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?)

OC	*HC*
5. Church discipline.	
	#84 (How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by preaching the gospel?)
#94 (How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by ecclesiastical discipline?—a substantial change from HC #85)	#85 (How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by ecclesiastical discipline?)
	#86 (Being delivered by God for Christ's sake alone, why are we to do good works?)
6. Treatment of the Ten Commandments.	
	#93 (How are these commandments divided?)
#103–105 (adds treatment of the Preface to the Ten Commandments)	
#106 (adds What is the First Commandment?)	
#109 (adds What is the Second Commandment?)	
#113 (adds What is the Third Commandment?)	
#118 (adds What is the Fourth Commandment?)	
#119 (What are we taught by the Fourth Commandment?—a substantial change from HC #103)	
#120 (adds What is the Fifth Commandment?)	
#122 (adds What is the Sixth Commandment?)	
#126 (adds What is the Seventh Commandment?)	
#129 (adds What is the Eight Commandment?)	
#132 (adds What is the Ninth Commandment?)	
#134 (adds What is the Tenth Commandment?)	
	#115 (Why will God have his law preached so exactly and severely?)
7. The form of the Lord's Prayer.	
	#129 (Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer; end of HC)
#142 (adds Lord's Prayer as a form)	
8. Appendix concerning singing.	
Adds "An Appendix concerning the Ordinance of Singing"	

APPENDIX FIVE:
WAPPING CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Nathan Sherman notes:

> The WCB only includes four entries from 1683, all occurring in April–May, and the first 1684 entry occurs in August.
>
> The frequency of the [member] meetings varied, from as few as three meetings in both 1682 and 1683 (the height of the Tory revenge) to as many as twenty-six and twenty-four meetings in 1703 and 1704, respectively (the years of Hercules Collins's death and the search for his successor).[1]

These numbers matter because they help us contextualize and ascertain more specifics about the duration of Hercules Collins's imprisonment. The *Wapping Church Book* is recorded in Collins's hand during his tenure as pastor. The low number of entries and meetings reflect both his strong influence as the church's leader and the vacuum left in his absence; they also reflect the effect of heightened persecution.

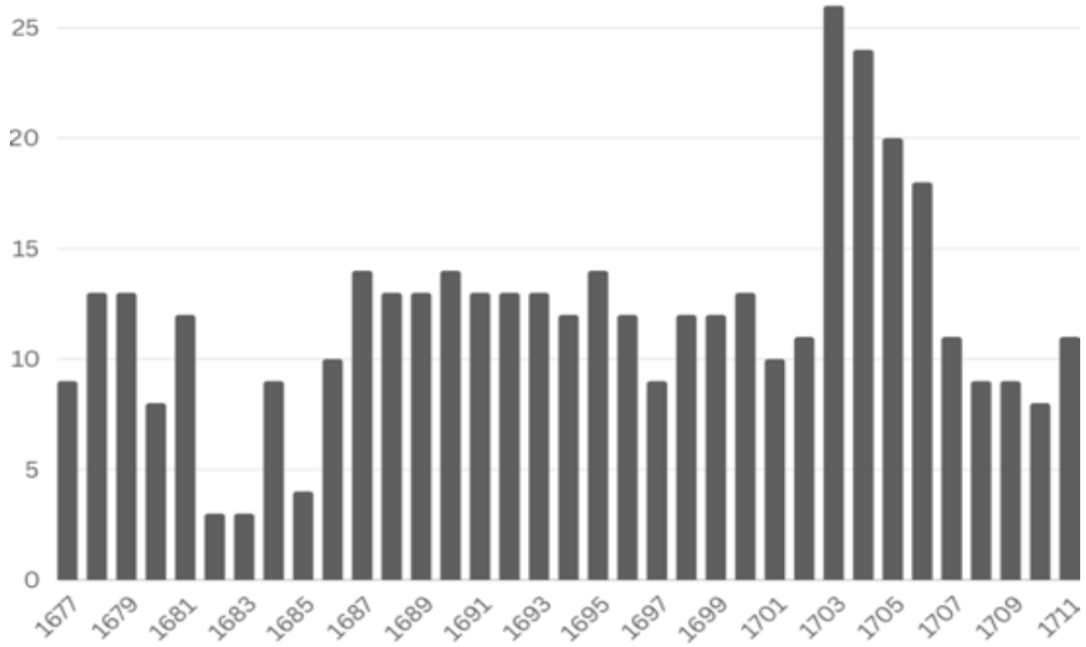

Figure 4 – Number of Wapping Congregational Meetings (1677–1711)

[1] Nathan Sherman, *The Wapping Baptists: A People, Their Pastors, and Their Church Records (1677–1712)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2026), 21, 35; the "Figure 4" verbiage is his. This graph is found on Sherman's p. 36.

APPENDIX SIX:
PRIMARY BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES OF JOHN CHILD

Details of John Child's life are not much known, though he is somewhat regularly referenced in the broader Particular Baptist writings of the seventeenth century. It is useful to have access to some of the primary biographical summaries in considering his case and getting a "sense" of the man, in order better to assess Hercules Collins's handling of his troubles and develop a more complete picture of Collins's applied pastoral theology.

"*A brief Account of the Life of Mr.* John Child," in *The English Spira* (1693):

> HE was born at Bedford, about the year 1638; and, when he was grown up, put Apprentice to an Handicraft Trade, which when he came of age he followed for some time: afterwards he betook himself to another Calling, and removed to Newport-Pagnel, where he lived divers years, married twice, and by his last Wife (of honest Parentage, and good Report) he had several Children; after his second Marriage, in appearance he increased in his Estate. About five years since, he removed to London, and in October last he ended his days by hanging himself in a House he had taken the last Spring in Brick-lane near Spittlefields.
>
> He was endued with a competent measure of natural Parts, and vivacity of Spirit. In his youth he applied himself to the reading and study of the Scriptures, and attained to a greater knowledge in matters of Religion, than many of his Equals in years and Education. In his Opinion and Practice he was for the Baptism of Believers, and consorted with some of us, who are called Anabaptists, for about twenty years; and for divers years, at seasons, exercised himself in Preaching. He was observed for some years before his dreadful Fall, to be very remiss in Religious Exercises; and in his ordinary Conversation, to frequent other Company than he had done in former times.
>
> He was of a very haughty Spirit, and peremptory in asserting his Opinions. He sought to exalt himself above what became either his Profession or Attainments. All which, when the Hand of God was heavy upon him for his open sins, he freely acknowledged with severe Charges against himself for his Pride and Hypocrisie…[2]

Dictionary of National Biography (1887):

> CHILD, JOHN (1638?–1684), baptist preacher, born at Bedford about 1638, was apprenticed to a handicraft; after a while he adopted another calling, and removed to Newport Pagnel, Buckinghamshire, where he lived for some years, married twice, had several children, and increased in wealth. He held 'the baptism of believers,' joining himself to the baptists, or, as they

[2] Hercules Collins, with T. Plant, B. Dennis, and B. Keach. *The English Spira: Being A Fearful Example of an Apostate, Who had been a Preacher many Years, and then Apostatized from his Religion; Miserably Hanged himself, October the 13th. 1684. Giving an Account of his Dispair, and Divers Conferences had with him, by several Ministers and others of his Friends. Together with his Answere; and Papers Written by his own Hand. Left Attested by Mr. T. Plant, Mr. H. Collings, Mr. B. Dennis, Mr. B. Keach*. (London: Printed for Tho. Fabian, 1693), 8–9.

were then generally called, 'anabaptists,' and for some years was in the habit of preaching occasionally. About 1679 he removed to London. Fear of persecution and anxiety to better his position led him in 1682 to publish 'A Second Argument for a more Full and Firm Union amongst all good Protestants,' in which he argued against dissent from the church of England and 'slandered his brethren.' He appears to have published an earlier book of the same character, but neither of his pamphlets has been discovered by the writer of this notice. The idea that he had acted the part of a traitor preyed upon his mind. He fell into religious mania, and hanged himself in his house on the night of 3 Oct. 1684. A broadside was published the same year on the subject of his death, and after the declaration of indulgence and the subsequent increase in strength of the dissenting interest, pamphlets on Child's 'fearful estate' obtained a large circulation.

['A Warning from God to all Apostates . . . wherein the fearful states of Francis Spira and John Child are compared,' broadside, 1684. 'The Mischief of Persecution exemplified by a true Narrative of Mr. John Child,' 1688; the writers, Thomas Plant and Benjamin Dennis, ministers, add a postscript to the effect that this book had been written before, but could not be published until the king, 'to his immortal honour' put forth the Declaration of Indulgence. 'A Relation of the Fearful Estate of Francis Spira . . .as also . . . of Mr. John Child,' 1715, 1718, 1734 12mo, 1770 24mo; the preface to the reader is signed B. H. (Benjamin Harris, printer?); the first part is a reprint of 'A Relation of the Fearful Estate of Francis Spira,' 1640, with preface signed N. B. (Nathaniel Bacon), and dated 5 April 1638.][3]

W.T. Whitley, *The Baptists of London* (1928):

(24). CITY.
John Child flourished in Bucks 1646–69, an intimate friend of Keach. He came to town on the invitation of Plant (see 14). but was not invited to (5). About 1676 he settled with a small church in *Gracechurch street*, conceivably (3a) [perhaps "An offshoot of Spilsbury's work" (p. 104), though Whitley is uncertain], but perhaps new. In the persecution, he conformed, 1682, but killed himself for shame. Followed by C.M. du Veil…[4]

C.E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism 1660–1688* (1968):

Not all were strong enough to hold firm during the worst persecutions. In 1684 died an ex–Baptist, John Child. This man was well-to-do, had some ability, and for a time was a Baptist preacher in Buckinghamshire. A little before the last persecution of Dissenters he moved to London, and the persecution being very severe, he not only conformed, but wrote a book attacking the Nonconformists, especially the Baptists, entitled "A Second Argument, for a more Full and Firm Union amongst all Good Protestants." Then his conscience troubled him, and he began to believe that he was eternally lost for his apostacy, and on October 13th, 1684, he hanged himself.[5]

B.R. White, in *Records of the Abingdon Association* (1971):

John Child. It seems probable that this was the John Childe whose withdrawal from 'Bunyan

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[3] William Hunt (1842–1931), s.v. "Child, John (1638?–1684)," in Leslie Stephen, ed. *Dictionary of National Biography 1885–1900* (New York: Macmillan and Co.; London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1887), X.242–243.

[4] W.T. Whitley, *The Baptists of London 1612–1928. Their fellowship, their expansion, with notes on the 850 churches* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1928), 104, 117. As White notes and I discuss above, part of the seeming "guesswork" is that Child does not appear to have "settled with a…church" as their pastor.

[5] C.E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660–1688* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 129.

Meeting' occupied space in their records intermittently from October 1658 until October 1659 when all other events tended to be eclipsed by their pastor's last illness. While the 'Bunyan' record does not mention baptism, a very touchy subject with them at the time, it is clear that Child was not going to join the Quakers but that he linked up with 'Mr. Harris congregation' avoiding those he had been recommended to meet such as Simpson, Jessey and Rogers. This could have been Edward Harrison's congregation—cf. 'Mr Hars', *T.B.H.S.*, VI. S. In 1673 Bunyan wrote, 'I had not set pen to paper about this controversy, had we been let alone at quiet in our Christian communion. But being assaulted for more than sixteen years, wherein the brethren of the baptized way, as they had their opportunity, have sought to break us in pieces, merely because we are not, in their way, all baptized first: I could not, I durst not, forbear to do a little, if it might be, to settle the brethren, and to arm them against the attempts, which also of late they begin to revive upon us'. *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. G. Offor, London 1853, II. 616f. Here is clear evidence that, in the 1650's, there was considerable tension in Bedfordshire over believer's baptism and close communion. See note 118 above for another indication of possible conflict. Child had been born in Bedford c.1638. From c.1659 he had spent 'about twenty years' among the Baptists. He was active as a teacher at Newport Pagnell in 1669, *O.R.*, II. 838, wrote against the Quakers, Whitley 27–676, and then conformed to the Church of England c.1682 and brought out a sharply critical attack on his former friends. Having come to London to pursue his trade as a 'slopseller' (cheap, readymade coats, cloaks, etc.), near 'Ratcliffe-cross', he was overcome with remorse at his apostasy and, in spite of conference with Baptist leaders in the city, committed suicide in 1684. See Thomas Plant and Benjamin Dennis, *The mischief of persecution exemplified*, London 1688. W.T. Whitley, *The Baptists of London*, op. cit., 117 has more information but this appears to be guesswork.[6]

Jonathan Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach* (2013):

Both Keach and [James] Jones shared a close relationship with John Child (1638–1684), the Baptist preacher, sometime Fifth Monarchist, and longtime friend of Keach's who hanged himself after suffering from immense despair following his decision to conform to the Church of England.[7]

[6] B.R. White, ed. *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1971), III.198, 215. Note, the footnote concerning John Child on p. 198 is #121, but the entry (provided here) to which it refers is #122 on p. 215.

[7] Jonathan Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)* (Oxford: Regents Park College, 2013), 22.

APPENDIX SEVEN:
A TRANSCRIPTION OF "*THE EFFECT OF SEVERAL CONFERENCES BETWEEN MR.* CHILD*, AND MR.* H. C"

The following transcribes the portion in *The English Spira* which records the first portion of the only extant account of Hercules Collins's pastoral counseling. While the long "s" is modernized and primary source pagination has been omitted for clarity of reading, seventeenth-century orthography—including line spacing—has been otherwise retained and reproduced exactly.[8] The only exception to the line spacing is a single line added between each account to distinguish them for the ease of the reader, though these single lines are absent in the original. These "Conferences" represent meetings #1–4 between Collins and Child.

(*No date provided for their first Conference*).

Mr. *C*. I am come, Mr. *Child*, with a design to serve your Soul, if it lye in my power.

Mr. *Child*. God hath for several Years past, been rending and tearing me in my Estate, cursing and blasting all I have put my hand to, and prospered me in nothing, (and, in much horror, clapping his hands to his Heart, said,) Here it is, and I shall die.

Mr. *C*. I am informed your Trouble arises from the publishing [of][9] a Book, entituled, *The Second Argument for a more firm Union amongst Protestants*. What part of that Book troubles you most?

Mr. *Child*. (Taking up the Book in his hand, began to read where he saith, the greatest Number of Dissenters do hold Principles dangerously heretical, and most abominably abusing the mo[st] holy and blessed God, *& c*. but before he could end that Par[a]graph, being under extreme agony of mind, and weeping bitter] put the Book from him, and [s]pake to this effect, *viz*.) I have repr[e]sented those of *Calvin's* Principles beyond whatever they conceive strained their Opinions beyond their Intentions, and drawn suc[h] Consequences as never were in their minds, and, striking his brea[st] with much anguish, said, These Words lye close; I shall never

[8] Hercules Collins, with T. Plant, B. Dennis, and B. Keach. *The English Spira: Being A Fearful Example of an Apostate, Who had been a Preacher many Years, and then Apostatized from his Religion; Miserably Hanged himself, October the 13th. 1684. Giving an Account of his Dispair, and Divers Conferences had with him, by several Ministers and others of his Friends. Together with his Answere; and Papers Written by his own Hand. Left Attested by Mr. T. Plant, Mr. H. Collings, Mr. B. Dennis, Mr. B. Keach*. (London: Printed for Tho. Fabian, 1693), 18–22.

[9] [Bracketed] words are generally in the gutter of the book, where scans cannot always show them clearly. In these cases, I have usually completed a word where it is obvious (e.g., "mo[st]" in Child's second response), or supplied the word according to context (e.g., "[of]" in Collins's second response).

g[et] over this; I writ[10] in prejudice against them, calling them a villano[us] body of People, which was unjust.

Mr. *C*. said, Are you not heartily sorrowful for writing this?

Mr. *Child*. Oh that I could repent; I cannot repent.

Mr. *C*. If it were now to do, would you do it again? the be[tter] part of repentance is to turn from evil.

Mr. *Child*. I know there is in Repentance three things; *Confession*, *Contrition*, and *Restitution*.

Mr. *C*. We are not capable of making God restitution, he pa[r]dons and justifies for his own Name's sake, and Christ's sake; bu[t] restitution is to be made to our Neighbour; and if you are sensible God hath been dishonoured, and his People wronged in tha[t] Book, your next work is to make restitution in like manner, by [a] publick Recantation.

Mr. *Child*. This is the opinion of some others also, and I think it ought to be done; (and walking about the Room, with great horror of soul, said,) I have been guilty of many Evils: I have for several years lived a very ungodly Life, neglected Family-duty, Closet-duty, Publick-duty in the Church of God: I have been greatly guilty of Pride, endeavouring to run every man down in dispute; I have made this World my God, and been guilty of that Idolatry, *Eph*. 5. 1 have not been a little guilty of Hypocrisie: I have endeavoured by all ways and means to shake the Cross of Christ from off my shoulders; and I fear I have been guilty of Blasphemy: I have wronged many a poor Soul by writing as I have done; I have wished myself in their condition, and would have given many Thousands of Pounds, (had I had it) to have been in as good a condition as some of them I writ against: I have discoursed you, and Mr. *B*. and *J*. and have thought to run down your Opinion by a Spirit of Insolency and Pride, but the Judgments of God have followed me; he hath rent and torn me for these things, and now I shall die, I am struck with death.

Mr. *C*. Suppose you should die to Night, (as we know not how it may be with any of us) can you contentedly sink into the Abyss of Misery, without striving for Salvation? would you not run to Christ? Strive to take hold of him and his purchased blessedness.

Mr. *Child*, (with a very grim countenance said,) I shall go to Hell; I am broken in judgment; when I think to Pray, either I have a flushing in my face, as if I were in a flame, or I am dumb and cannot speak, or else I fall asleep upon my knees; all the signs of one whom God hath left forsaken and hardened.

Mr. C. If God should impute to you the righteousness of Christ, would it be of any advantage to you?

Mr. *Child*. If God would be so gracious, as to impute Christ's righteousness to me, it would make me a happy man.

Mr. *C*. Did you do what you did, in writing that Book, against the light of your Conscience, or motions of the Spirit?

Mr. *Child*. I think I did not formally sin against the light of my Conscience and Spirit of God; yet what I did, was mixt with malice, with this cheat[11] in my heart, It may be it may do them good. The Night before the Book was published, I had some reluctancy and gripes of Conscience.

Mr. *C*. Why did you not call them in before they were published?

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[10] That is, he wrote.

[11] That is, I made peace with this wrong by convincing myself that I was doing them some good.

Mr. *Child*. I fell ill upon it, and found myself more and more entangled and ensnared; one door was opened and another door was opened to my ruin, as if I were a man designed for damnation.

After some reasonings about Baptism, Conformity, and the Troubles which Nonconformists were under, (he said,) I have abundance of carnal fleshly Reasonings, I am under the power of unbelief and distrust; for these are my Arguings in me, Should I stick to the Church of *England*, then those I have written against, would account me the greatest Hypocrite in the world, to make so much ado about despair, for what I have done against them; Should I leave the Church of *England*, and stick to the Dissenters, and with full purpose of heart cleave to the Lord, then, if ever I am taken in a Meeting, they will have no mercy on me, and triumph, [“]This is the Man who made his Recantation,[”] and then ruin me to all intents and purposes, and I cannot bear the thoughts of a Cross, nor a Prison.

Mr. *C*. Two things are essentially necessary to the peace of your Soul, with all speed to publish your Recantation, and set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it.

Mr. *Child*. What an astonishing consideration is it for a man to die in this condition I am in; To be under horror for writing such things, and yet have no power to renounce it; for should I do so, I should be quickly ruined in my Estate; I had a fancy the other morning, that the Sheriffs and their Officers were coming to seize all that I had; and about a week since I had that word, *Can thine heart endure, or thy hands be strong, in the day I will contend with thee*?[12] I think I am now able to satisfie any *Atheist* in the world, that there is a God; for I find the Arrows of the Almighty sticking in me, and he runneth upon me as a Lyon. I thought, [Oh] that I could go and fall at the feet of those I have wronged, and beg their forgiveness, and wished often, Oh that I could repent! O that God would wash me in the fountain of his Son's blood! O that I had faith, that I could believe!

Mr. *H. C*. (Taking leave of Mr. *Child*,) Can you not desire my Prayers?

Mr. *Child*. This is a hard Question; (and, after a little pause, taking Mr. C. by the hand, said,) for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, pray for me at night, if there be any mercy yet left, that I may yet lye in the way of mercy.

Aug. 21. 1684.[13]

Mr. *C*. (Finding the Troubles of Mr. Child still continuing and increasing,) What do you think would give you relief?

Mr. *Child*. If I were in Heaven, it could not relieve me; for there I should behold the face of a holy God, holy Saints and Angels, (as now I behold the face of good men upon Earth) with shame and confusion of face.

Mr. *C*. If God would take you into his favour, that would relieve you.

Mr. *Child*. His wrath is come upon me to the uttermost.

Mr. *C*. To despair, reflects upon the Soveraignty of God’s grace.

Mr. *Child*. For those whose day of grace is not gone, God will multiply to pardon, but it is too late for me, my day is gone.

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[12] Ezek. 22:14.

[13] The date is printed in margin.

Mr. *C*. Did not you write a Book before the second Argument?

Mr. *Child*. I did.

Mr. *C*. Did not a Gentleman write some Animadversions upon it, by way of Answer in a Manuscript.[15]

Mr. *Child*. He did.

Mr. *C*. Was it a sufficient Answer.

Mr. *Child*. It was rationally answered.

Mr. *C*. Yet you printed this Book afterward.

Mr. *Child*. I did.

After some time of calm reasoning, Mr. *Child* began to be again in a great horror, and spake to the effect following.

Mr. *Child*. I am one of the greatest Hypocrites that ever lived upon the Earth, and shall be so accounted ; God hath done his will, and will do his will upon me. *The wicked shall fall into mischief, and the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; He that faith he shall have peace, and walketh in the imagination of his evil heart, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousie shall smoke against that man*. Oh he thunders upon me! should God let out the fence of my sins on me, (as he will) I should houl like a Dog, roar like a Lyon, bellow like an Ox, mine inward parts would melt within me, as the brass melts in the flaming furnace; I shall lye lower than *Judas*, lower than *Judas*, I have finned worse than *Judas*.

Mr. *C*. You make application of the Curses in the Book of God, but not of the Promises; Consider *Isai*. 55. *Psal*. 34.5.

Mr. *Child*. Promises are Bread for Children; They lookt on him, and were lightned; I look unto him, and am darkned; he knows, that I have committed such wickedness as never hath been done.

Mr. *C*. Do you not sometimes find an inclination to Pray?

Mr. *Child*. Seldom or never; onely about an hour before you came, I went about it, but the end was dismal: That day you were here with Mr. *W*. I attempted it three times, but could do nothing.

Mr. *C*. Shall I pray for you?

Mr. *Child*. No, no; tis too late: neither Men not Angels can relieve me.

Mr. *C*. *Job* faith, *Tho' he slay me, yet will trust in him*.

Mr. *Child*. About two months since, I thought I had comfort and relief from thence, but now I cannot trust in him; God saith he will deal in a singular manner with me here on Earth, and in Hell also.

Afterwards quoted against himself those Expressions, Heb.10.26. *For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received and acknowledged that truth, there remeins no more sacrifice for fin.* 2 Pet. 2.20, 21, 22. *For if after they have escaped from the filthiness of the world, through the*

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[14] The date is printed in margin.

[15] Collins refers here to James Jones's (d. 1685) *Modesty and Faithfulness in Opposition to Envy and Rashness: Or, an Answer to a Malitious Pamphlet, Called, A Second Argument for a More Full Union Amongst Protestants; Wherein the Nonconformists Taking the Sacrament After the Manner of the Church of England, is Justified, &c. in which Pamphlet the Church of England and the Clergy, as also the Protestant–Dissenters, are Abominably Abused. the Demonstration Whereof is Humbly Presented to the Consideration of the Conforming and Nonconforming Protestants. / by James Jones, a Protestant–Dissenter, and Citizen of London* (London, 1683).

acknowledging of the Lord and the Saviour Jesus Christ, are yet tangled again therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning; For it had been better for them, not to have acknowledged the way of righteousness, than after they have acknowledged it, to turn from the holy commandment given unto them: But it is come unto them according to the true proverb; The dog is returned to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed, to the wallowing in the mire.

And Mr. *Child* said, When I am faint and low, I now take somewhat to refresh me, but in Hell there is no refreshment, not a drop of water to cool my tongue. I wonder that my Head (tho' it do not ake) doth not burst asunder; it is filled with dismal Cogitations.

Sept. 13. 1684. **[Date is in margin].**

Mr. *C*. with one Mr. *R*. gave Mr. *Child* another visit, and Mr. *R*. put him upon saying the Lord's Prayer.

Mr. *Child*. I have thought of that, but I dare not fay it, for these Reasons: I*st*, I cannot call God, Father. 2*dly*, I cannot fay, *Thy Will be done*. 3*ly*, 1 cannot say, Forgive me my Trespasses as I forgive them that trespass against me.—— All that I have is curst to me; 1 cannot give God thanks for what I eat and drink.

Mr. *C*. Have you a desire to be saved ?

Mr. *Child*. Yes, upon my own terms, and not according to God's.

It was then askt Mr. *Child*, what those terms were? but he would make no answer; so we parted.

APPENDIX EIGHT:
TRANSCRIPTION OF "*SOME PASSAGES BETWEEN MR.* JOHN CHILD *AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS, COLLECTED BY MR.* H. C."

The following transcribes the portion in *The English Spira* which records the second portion of the only extant account of Hercules Collins's pastoral counseling. While the long "s" is modernized and primary source pagination has been omitted for clarity of reading, seventeenth-century orthography—including line spacing, and in this case, the critical left margin alignment—has been otherwise retained and reproduced exactly.[1] These "Passages" represent meetings #5–7 between Collins and Child.

Mr. *Child.* (with Mr. *R.*)
I Had a turn in my Spirit the last week, as a result of that warm discourse I had with you and Mr. *H.C.* concerning the eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God, but it is now gone again.

Mr. *R*. Implore again the Throne of Grace.

Mr. *Child*. I regard iniquity in my heart, and God will not hear my Prayer. (And said to another) If God should send an Angel from heaven to inform him, he should not believe it.

Mr. *Child* (to Mr. *W.*) I cannot pray.

Mr. *W.* How can you, so long as you have a Lye in your right hand? Retract what you have done publickly, or else you cannot expect to have an heart to pray.

Mr. *Child*. (To Mrs. *M*.) How deplorable a thing is this, that I who have preached so much of the Glory of another World, should now be deprived of it all!—You will as surely see me damned, as you now see me stand here.

Mrs. *M.* Have you no intermission?—Do such thoughts always attend you.

Mr. *Child*. I have intermission sometimes.

Mrs. *M.* Do you think God cannot save you?

Mr. *Child.* Yes, he can; or else I might desire to be in Hell immediately.

Mrs. *M.* Do you think God will not save you?

Mr. *Child*. I cannot believe that he will.

Mrs. *M.* What is the cause of all this trouble?

Mr. *Child*. That cursed Book.

Being at one Mr. *C*.'s, in discourse concerning *Francis Spira*, Mr. *Child* said, I am an hundred times greater sinner than *Spira*, a thousand times ten thousand times, yea, a hundred thousand times a greater sinner than he.

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[1] Hercules Collins, with T. Plant, B. Dennis, and B. Keach. *The English Spira: Being A Fearful Example of an Apostate, Who had been a Preacher many Years, and then Apostatized from his Religion; Miserably Hanged himself, October the 13th. 1684. Giving an Account of his Dispair, and Divers Conferences had with him, by several Ministers and others of his Friends. Together with his Answere; and Papers Written by his own Hand. Left Attested by Mr. T. Plant, Mr. H. Collings, Mr. B. Dennis, Mr. B. Keach*. (London: Printed for Tho. Fabian, 1693), 28–29.

Mr. *C.* Do you love me?

Mr. *Child*. I love you. (And taking Mr.*C.* by the hand,said)I conjure thee by the eternal God, that thou would take care of my Wife and Children : I would give ten thousand worlds for a God, and often—Oh, what an ungodly Family have I ! Husband cannot pray, Wife cannot pray, Children cannot pray, Servants cannot pray ; while others are serving their God, we do nothing.

APPENDIX NINE:
COMPARATIVE PASTORAL RESPONSES IN THE SPIRA AND CHILD EPISODES

John Child's comforters and counselors are much more consistently and conscientiously Protestant in their efforts to remind him of the gospel than those of Francis Spira, and much more Christ-centered in their exhortations. They seem to apply the means of grace and the promises of the gospel much more directly (given the extant records) than Spira's do. That said, there are points of overlap and distinction in the literature which are here presented for comparison; this material is more helpfully assessed in a side-by-side format than in prosaic contrast.

FIGURE A9:
COMPARATIVE PASTORAL RESPONSES IN THE SPIRA AND CHILD EPISODES

Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Spira	***Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Child***
1. Medical.	
Physicians attempted physical remedies: "They sent for three Physitians of most note…they indeavoured to reform [his condition] by Purgation…but all their skill effected nothing."[1]	They urged him to seek medical help: "I advised him to consult some Physician about his health."[2]
2. Visits by friends.	
People visited him regularly: "Secundus, Curio, Gibaldus…Gelous…Scotus, all daily visitors of Spira."[3]	People visited him regularly: "[M]any godly persons went to visit him."[4]
3. Visits by ministers.	
Ministers visited him: "Sir, here is Doctor Gribauldus, a godly and	Ministers visited him repeatedly: "[M]any of his Brethren whom he had

[1] Nathaniel Bacon. *A Relation of the Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira, in the year 1548.* London, 1649 (hereafter FE), 23–24.

[2] TES, 12.

[3] FE, 79.

[4] TES, 13.

faithfull friend of yours, come to see you."[5] "[S]undry Ministers [came] to pray with him."[6]	offended…came to visit him…"[7]
Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Spira	***Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Child***
4. Reading and reasoning from Scripture.	
Ministers and friends read Scripture to him: "They…read unto him the passion of Christ."[8]	They reasoned from Scripture with him: "I used many Arguments to perswade him to rely on the mercy of God thro' Christ, mentioning that passage of the Prophet David, *Forgive me my sin, for it is great*…" "Mr. *C*[ollins]. You make application of the Curses in the Book of God, but not of the Promises ; Consider *Isai.* 55. *Psal.* 34. 5." "Consider *2 King.* 7. 4."[9]
5. Urging a public repentance, specifically by retraction of his writing.	
	They urged him to retract his book publicly: "*Mr.* K[each]. I think it necessary that you retract what you have written in that Book, for…nothing short of it will be a demonstration of the sincerity of your heart [or] proof of the truth of your repentance." "*Mr.* C[ollins]. Two things are essentially necessary to the peace of your Soul, with all speed to publish your Recantation, and [to] set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it."[10]
6. Pointing him to grace.	
	Friends and ministers pointed him to the nature of grace: "I laid before him…the freeness and riches of

[5] FE, 30.

[6] *SAD AND Lamentable NEWS*, 2.

[7] TES, 3.

[8] FE, 30.

[9] TES, 12, 21, 23. One ought not assume that Child's visitors did not read Scripture with him; that action simply is not recorded, but is entirely consistent with handling this sort of case.

[10] TES, 12, 20.

	Gods grace."[11]
Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Spira	***Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Child***
7. Expressing willingness to forgive him.	
	Friends communicated willingness to forgive him: "…his Brethren whom he had offended, were ready with open Arms and Hearts to receive him, and forgive any wrongs he had done unto them."[12]
8. Reminding of God's mercy.	
They presented examples of God's mercy: "Consider…the example of Peter…[and] the thief…"[13]	They urged him to consider biblical examples of God's mercy: "[H]e endeavoured with the utmost of his ability to comfort him, by shewing the greatness of Gods mercy to true penitent persons, together with the infinite worth and value of Christ's Bloud…" "Consider the greatness of David's sin…Manasseh…Peter…"[14]
9. Attempting prayer—with and for him.	
They urged him to pray, and prayed with him: "*Vergerius*…desired him to pray with him the Lords Prayer." "The next day he prayed with them in the Latine tongue, and that with excellent affection…" "*Vergerius* amongst the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him: *Spira* hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed."[15]	They prayed with him (or attempted to): "With some Reluctancy he granted me liberty to pray with him…" "*Mr.* K[each]. *Shall I and two or three more, such as you shall best approve of, come and spend some time in Prayer to the Lord for you?* — To which he gave no answer, tho' much prest to it."[16]
10. Reminding of God's power and the Devil's ruin.	
They rebuked his despair, urging him to resist Satan:	They pointed him to the power of God:

[11] TES, 10.

[12]TES, 18.

[13] FE, 31.

[14] TES, 11, 15.

[15] FE, 46, 53, 76.

[16] TES, 10, 13

"Sir, this is but an illusion of the divil, who doth what he can to vexe you."[17]	"*Company.* You…know not what God may do for you."
	"*Mr*. P. …speaking…concerning Redemption and Forgiveness thro' Faith in the precious Bloud of Christ, and exhorting him to trust to it."[18]
Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Spira	***Attempts to Comfort/Counsel Child***
11. Reminding of God's mercy and sovereignty amidst sorrows.	
They urged him not to interpret his case as unique: "Your estate…is not so strange as you make it."[19]	They urged him to go to God to see if he would forgive and receive him: "*Submit therefore to Mercy upon a probability; upon a perhaps God may forgive*."[20]
12. Attempting to offer the sacraments for healing.	
They attempted sacramental comfort: "Shall we try the efficacie of the Sacraments?"[21]	
13. Encouraged him to go to church and to be around Christians.	
	They urged him to attend preaching and the means of grace: "*Company*. You would do well to use the means of Grace, and frequent the Society of Gods People…"[22]

[17] FE, 31.

[18] TES, 23, 30.

[19] FE, 39.

[20] TES, 15.

[21] Note that this sacramental attempt comes from a Roman priest who is visiting Spira; the idea is clearly rooted in papist doctrine. He intends it as an act of obedience to the Church, a means of restoring him to grace, and a remedy for his spiritual despair (FE, 60–61):

> A Bishop being there present, said to Spira; brother, God hath put vertue into the word and Sacraments; and we have used the one meanes, and find not that effect which we desire; shall we try the efficacie of the Sacraments? surely if you take it, as a true Christian ought to receive the body and bloud of Christ, it will prove a soveraign medicine for your sick soul.

Spira's response is poignant and telling:

> *This I cannot do* (answered he;) for they that have no right to the Promises, have no right to the Seales : *the Eucharist was appointed onely for believers : if we have not faith, we eate and drink Judgment to our selves*, I Cor. 11. 33 *; I received it about a moneth* [month] *since, but I did not well in so doing ; for I took it by constraint, and so* I *took it to my deeper Condemnation*.

[22] TES, 23. The *Company*'s admonition to Child calls to mind James Jones's reply to Child. Reflecting on Jn. 5:1–5, he notes that the invalid put himself in the path of grace: "Though he was not able of himself to go into the Pool, he lay in the way of a Cure." His point is that Child ought to do the same thing by attending upon faithful preaching in true (dissenting) churches. James Jones, *Modesty and Faithfulness in Opposition to Envy and Rashness: Or, an Answer to a Malitious Pamphlet, Called, A Second Argument for a More Full Union Amongst Protestants; Wherein the Nonconformists Taking the Sacrament After the Manner of the Church of England, is Justified, &c. in which Pamphlet the Church of England and the Clergy, as also the Protestant-Dissenters, are Abominably Abused. the Demonstration Whereof is Humbly Presented to the Consideration of the Conforming and Nonconforming Protestants. / by James Jones, a Protestant-Dissenter, and Citizen of London* (London, 1683), 11.

APPENDIX TEN:
HOW MANY MEETINGS DID COLLINS AND CHILD HAVE?

Steve Weaver notes in his dissertation that "Collins met with Child on at least three separate occasions, and each time he urged him to repent by recanting his former publication and throw himself upon the mercies of Christ."[1] He further notes: "A dialogue between Mr. Child and a Mr. C. is recorded in *The English Spira*, 18–22. In this dialogue, a previous meeting between Collins and Child is referenced. In *The English Spira*, 28–30, a third meeting between Child and Collins, along with others, is recorded as 'collected by Mr. H.C."[2]

A closer look, however, reveals more than initially meets the eye. TES shows a minimum of five meetings between Collins and Child, and allows for the possibility of as many as seven. It is difficult to argue a sixth meeting here definitively—seventeenth century printing and editorial practices are consistent in their inconsistency—but it seems almost inescapable. A seventh meeting is an option observed as highly likely, though we cannot be not conclusive. This appendix assesses the extant textual data in TES. Note that this textual data is identical in *The Mischief of Persecution Exemplified* (London, 1688), attributed to Thomas Plant and Benjamin Dennis, as previously discussed.

In Favor of Only Five Meetings

1. The formatting of the "Passages" which Hercules "Collected"—the dialogue lines are generally indented. (While this portion runs from pp. 28–30, p. 28 presents the specific lines under consideration here). The formatting of the page is the strongest contextual argument for five meetings—Child has several exchanges back-and-forth with his visitors, and when "Mr. *C*." speaks (only one line of "Mr. *C*"s" is recorded), his question to Child is indented in a manner thoroughly and contextually consistent with the other visitor's dialogue.

2. The silence of Hercules in that exchange, up to the point that it is noted that the meeting is happening "at one Mr. *C.*'s" house approximately two-thirds of the way through this section.

[1] G. Stephen Weaver, Jr. "Hercules Collins: Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 37.

[2] Weaver, "Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist" (Ph.D diss.), 37n156.

"Mr. *C*." does not speak until it is noted that the meeting is at his house.

3. The orthographic conventions and publisher's pattern in much of TES, where a line is generally left blank to distinguish between various exchanges. For example, an exchange of letters between "Mr. [*J.*]*J*." and Child (pp. 13–18) is distinguished both by salutations and farewells, and a blank line between the letters. Such a blank line also occurs on p. 29.

Contra Five Meetings, Arguing for Six

1. The specific orthographic pattern of Hercules's contributions argue for a sixth meeting.
    a. His first through fourth meetings with Child (pp. 18–22) omit blank lines altogether. Instead, Collins's meetings are simply denoted by including their dates in the margins.
    b. Strengthening that point, inconsistency in blank lines occurs in Child's edited "Recantation of his Paper, written with his own Hand" (pp. 33–38).
    c. Strengthening that point, Child's "further Account…with his own Hand" (pp. 39–41) has no blank lines, consistent with Collins's format. Note that this is the portion specifically stated as given to Hercules by Child's wife.
    d. So too "Another Paper written as a Postscript to the former," also in Child's hand (pp. 41–42)—there are no blank lines. This is another portion which logically appears was edited by Collins.

2. Child's remark to "Mr. *R.*" argues for a sixth meeting. At the beginning of this first "Collected Passage" (p. 28), Child remarks to "Mr. *R*." that "I Had a turn in my Spirit last week, as a result of that warm discourse I had with you and Mr. *H.C.* concerning the eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God, but it is now gone again." Collins is referenced in respect to this previous meeting "last week," though no date is given. Child's remark constitutes all the information we have about that unspecified "last week" meeting, but it argues strongly for an additional unrecorded meeting. The Holy Spirit did not see fit to preserve the details of Paul's "severe letter" (2 Corinthians 2:3–4 and 7:8); TES similarly preserves no specifics of this unrecorded meeting. Consider the timeline based on the text of TES:
    a. The fourth meeting (September 13, 1684) indeed features Child, "Mr. *R.,*" and "Mr. *C*." (p. 22); it is the last of the four "Conferences" in Hercules's specified initial portion (pp. 18–22).
    b. From Collins's record, he presents that fourth meeting (p. 22) as brief and unprofitable. "Mr. *R*." there urges Child to say the Lord's Prayer. Child argues against doing so for several reasons: he cannot call God his Father; he does not desire God's will be done; he cannot ask or offer forgiveness; he "cannot give God thanks for what I eat and drink" for "All that I have is curst to me." He then tells "Mr. *C*." (Collins) that he desires to be saved only "upon my own terms, and not according to God's." As he "would make no answer" as to what those terms were—meaning, it appears he simply stopped talking—"we parted."
    c. This fourth meeting account (p. 22) makes no reference to the "eminency and soveraignty of the grace of God" which "turn[ed his] Spirit the last week" as a result of their "warm discourse" which Child references in his initial remark to "Mr. *R.*" on p. 28. It appears, then, that the "warm discourse" meeting Child refers to another unrecorded fifth meeting between that fourth meeting on p. 22 and this one occurring on p. 28.
    d. Therefore however one concludes regarding whether the "Passage Collected" on the

bottom half of p. 28 should or should not be divided due to a blank line or lack thereof—as the meeting on p. 28 occurs "Being at one Mr. *C.*'s," and "Mr. *C.*" speaks directly to Child in it, it seems strongly conclusive that this (p. 28) gathering constitutes a sixth meeting.

3. If this sixth meeting constitutes the final meeting, then Collins is referenced by Child at its start and speaks at its conclusion; perhaps he is quiet for a good portion of the meeting. As it is at Collins's home, he may have had to step out of the meeting for a moment to attend to hosting matters, or as a good host he may have been courteously permitting his guests to speak before he did, thus addressing his relative silence during most of the account.

Contra Six, Arguing for Seven

1. Considered stylistically.
    a. Collins's first (p. 18), second (p. 20), third (p. 21), and fourth (p. 22) meetings with Child begin with dialogue, as does his sixth (as argued above; p. 28).
    b. His fourth meeting (p. 22), however, begins with a contextual reference: "Mr. *C.* with one Mr. *R.* gave Mr. *Child* another visit."
    c. The record of the conversation with "Mr. *R.*" (being joined in it by "Mr. *W.*" and "Mrs. *M.*") on p. 28 is interrupted, however; the scene then seems to move to another location due to the immediate statement of "Being at one Mr. *C.*'s, in discourse concerning *Francis Spira*."
    d. This editorial and stylistic pattern—of the narrative being abruptly interrupted—is also seen in the sudden conclusion of the second meeting, and immediate introduction of the third; readers are introduced to #3 in mid-conversation (p. 21).

2. Considered in content and context.
    a. While still indented identically and not separated by a blank line, these facts alone are not sufficient to combine the records into one meeting.
    b. It seems to be a different meeting in both location and conversation: "Mr. *C.*" is now hosting Child. In the sixth meeting (p. 28, just above), however, no location is given —as with the unrecorded fifth meeting.
    c. In participants in the conversation: only "Mr. *C.*" and Child participate in this exchange.
    d. In content of the conversation: Child "tak[es] Mr. *C.* by the hand," charging him "that thou take care of my Wife and Children." The moment is much more personal in nature than previous meetings; the tone turns pointed and desperate, marking a distinction from the previous portion. This snapshot—for that is indeed all this brief exchange permits us to term it—is still much more in keeping with Collins's first and second meetings with Child than with the group interaction just above the snapshot.

Based on the evidence above, I conclude that Collins has at least seven interviews with Child for counseling. I recognize, however, that others may read the textual data differently than I have.

APPENDIX ELEVEN:
A SUMMARY OUTLINE OF *THE TEMPLE REPAIR'D*

Hercules Collins organizes *The Temple Repair'd* in five basic movements (outlined below):

I. Dedication (A Letter to the Churches).
II. Introduction: A Sermon for Improvement of Ministerial Gifts, on 2 Tm. 2:15.
III. Some Further Helps by way of Direction and Instructions (explaining and expanding upon his work in the previous sermon).[3]
IV. Additional Directions and Instructions (thirty-seven[4] points of instruction to preachers about preaching).
V. An Additional Word to the Churches (ten[5] points of counsel to churches about preachers and preaching).

I. *An Outline of the Dedicatory Letter*

1. Dedication (A Letter to the Churches): encouragement to make provision for a future ministry.
2. Threefold aim for writing:
    a. Churches need to be stirred up to see and employ the gifts Christ has given.
    b. Pastors and teachers have a duty to attend to this matter.
    c. Church members should give attention here as well.
3. Two key observations from John Owen:
    a. "Churches are the schools of Christ" where he trains his servants.
    b. Ministers have a duty to instruct their people unto maturity.
4. Four further considerations from John Owen and Nathaniel Hiller:
    a. Faithful ministers rejoice when their hearers surpass their own abilities.
    b. Members have the duty to "exhort, entreat, beseech, and comfort" one another.
    c. "These duties are now generally lost among us."
    d. Church members have a particular duty to one another in exercising their gifts unto mutual edification.
5. Biblical grounds for his argument:
    a. Twelve verses showing duties of instruction, counsel, and edification to one another within the congregation.
    b. Teaching not restricted to those holding office (*ex officio*), but to be received *ex dono* from GBs having lawful biblical and congregational approval.
    c. GBs in no way invalidate or minimize the necessity and blessing of an ordained ministry.

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[3] Collins provides six points, though it should be numbered at seven points; I split his #6 into #6 and #7 here.

[4] While numbered at thirty-six points, the final two points are each printed as #36 for a total of thirty-seven points; I have inserted thematic headings to aid in comprehension of Collins's thought.

[5] While numbered at nine points, as with as the previous footnote, two points are printed as #2.

6. May only ordained officebearers preach? A controversy, meriting five considerations from *The Preacher Sent*:
    a. Election precedes ordination of church officers, meaning churches must have time and sufficient opportunity to assess a potential officebearer's giftedness.
    b. The NT commands exhorting one another (Heb. 3:13 and 10:25), and ministering and speaking to one another (1 Pet. 4:10–11).
    c. The NT promises blessing to the one who uses his gift (Matt. 25:29) and does not neglect it; not restricted to preaching, but certainly including it.
    d. The NT gives examples of unordained preaching:
        i. Apollos, Acts 18:24–28.
        ii. The scattered and persecuted church (laymen, not the apostles), Acts 8:1, 4 and 11:19–21.
    e. The NT gives rules concerning prophesying, 1 Cor. 14. "All may prophesy" means *all who have the gift of teaching or preaching*. Congregationalists have been inconsistent in aligning "their principle and practice" here.
7. The duty's necessity calls for nurturing the gift, not neglecting it.
    a. What if God took away most of the ministers?
    b. Churches must pray and set themselves to this work of cultivating Christ's gifts.

II. *An Outline of "A Sermon for the Improvement of Ministerial Gifts"*

1. Introduction
    a. Nature of OT schools of the prophets and what he just argued in Dedicatory Letter should lead to considering these matters.
    b. Collins hopes to be of help to "those young Persons whose Hearts God hath inclin'd to the Ministry of the Word."[6]
    c. The text's background: Paul before his death exhorts Timothy to faithfulness, which calls all ministers to fulfill their ministry (Col. 4:17).
2. The text introduced: 2 Tm. 2:15.
    a. The epistle's authorship, context, occasion, and scope.
    b. The text's division:
        i. An exhortation to study.
        ii. Study, to the end that one may be approved unto God.
        iii. The advantage gained: faithful workmen are delivered from shame, with honor and holy boldness gained.
3. Observations (five doctrines):
    a. Study is an ordinance of God.
    b. Scripture is the primary foundation of a minister's study.
    c. The aim of study is to please God and win men.
    d. Faithful study delivers one from shame, gaining honor and holy boldness.
    e. Unstudied preaching dishonors the Lord, mishandles the word, shames the preacher, and invites contempt of the gospel.
4. "Doct. That it is the Duty of every Gospel-Minister so to study as they may approve themselves to God; and so divide the Word of Truth that they may not be ashamed,

[6] TTR, 15.

but rather have the Honour that belongs to that calling."[7]

a. Explanation: dividing the word rightly means every one must have his "due Portion"[8] to nourish his soul.
b. Proposition: "That it's God alone by inspiration of his Holy Spirit can make Men able Ministers of the New Testament."[9]
c. Description: five marks of "good Workmen."[10]
    i. They lay the one foundation of Christ alone.
    ii. They "build a good Structure upon this good Foundation" with faithful lives and faithful doctrine.
    iii. They structure the sermon carefully, sticking closely to the text being preached.
    iv. They handle Scripture rightly, using "proper ways and means to prove a Proposition by."[11]
        1. An example of proposition given and argued: "It is the Duty of every Man to love and praise God."[12]
            a. Argued from our creation, Ps. 95:7 and 100:3–4.
            b. As the great end of our creation, Prov. 16:4, Rev. 4:4.
            c. Argued from lesser to greater: creaturely duty to honor our Creator; we labor to preserve our bodies, thus much more our souls.
    v. They work well and hard, without laziness, "with a Dependence on God for a Blessing."[13]
d. The Reasons of the Point:
    i. Our work is very great, so do it well, 2 Cor. 2:16.
    ii. We will give account of ourselves to God, Heb.13:17, Acts 20:26–28, Matt. 25:23.

5. The Use and Application:
    a. Information: it is a minister's duty to study, and his sin to neglect it, Is. 56:10.
    b. Refutation: God commands and works by the means of a minister's study, 2 Tm. 2:15, Ps. 1:2–3.
    c. Caution: "Be cautioned against idleness in the great things of God and the concerns of immortal souls: the Lord hath often reproved idle shepherds."[14]

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[7] TTR, 18.

[8] TTR, 18.

[9] TTR, 19.

[10] TTR, 20.

[11] TTR, 21.

[12] TTR, 21.

[13] TTR, 22.

[14] TTR 24.

d. Consolation: God's blessing attends the effort, both now and eternally, 1 Thess. 5:13, 1 Tm. 5:17. "Let all faithful Labourers rejoice, you shall have Peace in your own Consciences, you will have Praise of the Churches, and all Saints; and, which is best of all, God's Approbation at last, 'Well done good and faithful Servants.'"[15]

III. *An Outline of "Further Helps"*

1. "Consider my whole Method in speaking."[16] He includes the Penman, Time, Occasion, and Scope of the book being preached.
2. "Consider how your Text coheres and depends upon what goes before it,"[17] but do not waste time here.
3. "Make an exact division of your Text, if your Text calls you to it, for that will be profitable in the helping of you to Matter."[18]
4. "Explain any difficult Terms,"[19] but do not waste time here.
5. "Raise as many Doctrines as the Text will allow," applying each, "but insist most on the chief Scope of the place."[20]
6. "Prove [your Doctrine] from the Word of God"[21]:
   a. Be focused: use "two or three Scriptures at most."[22]
   b. Be clear: "then lay down the Reasons and Arguments of the Point."
   c. Hercules uses his treatment of "what a good Workman is" (II.4.c) to illustrate the preacher's methodological options for making application ("Uses") from a given text.
   d. "Proofs," "Points," and "Propositions"[23] serve as related-but-distinct terms.
7. Counsels on applications. (I group his counsels together here for easier comprehension; Collins splits them up).
   a. Counsels on applications:
      i. "What Use you make, let it be always natural from the Doctrine."[24]
      ii. "Draw as many Inferences from it as it will bear."[25]

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[15] TTR, 25.

[16] TTR, 25.

[17] TTR, 25.

[18] TTR, 25.

[19] TTR, 25.

[20] TTR, 25.

[21] TTR, 25.

[22] TTR, 25.

[23] TTR, 25–26.

[24] TTR, 26.

[25] TTR, 26.

iii. "Inferences are generally very divine things."[26]
iv. "All Doctrines will not afford the same Uses."[27]
v. "Consider which of all these [nine possible Uses], or any other Uses, will be most naturally handled from your Doctrine."[28]

b. He then notes nine possible "Uses"[29]:
i. "Information,
ii. Caution,
iii. Trial and Examination,
iv. Refutation,
v. Instruction,
vi. Reprehension,
vii. Exhortation, with its Motives and Directions,
viii. Admiration, and
ix. Consolation."[30]

IV. *An Outline of "Additional Directions and Instructions"*

#1–3, Experiential confidence in Scripture.

1. Scripture is its own best expositor.
2. Give yourself to reading Scripture "above all," praying for a wise, understanding heart; and "also beg for great humility."[31]
    i. Two things make us humble: knowledge of God and of ourselves.
    ii. "Three things make a Preacher, Meditation, Temptation and Prayer."[32]
    iii. God hears prayer and helps the humble petitioner.
3. Let all preaching be done "according to the Analogy of Faith."[33]

#4–7, Reliance upon Scripture, not gimmicks.

4. Speak plainly, "to the understanding of the meanest subject,"[34] not using rhetorical flourishes.
5. Guard against repetition and empty, embellishing words; prepare enough material to use your gift well.

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[26] TTR, 26.

[27] TTR, 26.

[28] TTR, 26.

[29] TTR, 26.

[30] TTR, 26.

[31] TTR, 26.

[32] TTR, 27.

[33] TTR, 27.

[34] TTR, 28.

6. Speak naturally: not too slow or too fast.
7. Let your manner and clothing "in a Pulpit be grave and sober…no indecent Behaviour, nor uncomely Garb,"[35] lest you wound the consciences of God's people.
    i. Speak loud enough to be heard (Is. 58:1, Jn. 7:37, Acts 2:14).
    ii. Speak naturally, not with affectation, lest "sound doctrine…be open to contempt."[36]

#8–9, Diligence in Scripture and in seeking God.

8. Prepare the sermon before Saturday, so you can use Saturday to meditate on it and preach with profit and joy.
9. Prepare yourself:
    i. Pray for utterance.
    ii. Keep a good conscience.
    iii. Examine yourself (Lev. 4:11, 13).

#10–13, Mindfulness of hearers in manner and matter.

10. Do not let your sentences, pauses, or expositional points be too long.
11. Reason from God's word, unless it is necessary to reason from men's testimony to "convince the Conscience."[37]
12. Do not spend too long reviewing previous sermonic material, unless "the Matter be extraordinary weighty, and some may desire the whole Sermon to be preached over again… (Acts 13:42)."[38]
13. Vary your subject matter to cover the whole counsel of God: "Tho it is our Duty to preach Christ crucified the Object of a justifying Faith, yet this must not be done in the neglect of preaching up other Duties."[39]

#14–17, Spiritual considerations: the sufficiency of Scripture.

14. Preach in humility and holy dependence upon God's word, so that God alone is exalted.
15. "Get your Hearts sincerely affected"[40] with what you have plainly seen in Scripture.
16. Know the whole counsel of God, do not depart quickly from it, and do not preach contrary to it.
17. Use figures of speech and illustrations concisely.

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[35] TTR, 29.

[36] TTR, 30.

[37] TTR, 32.

[38] TTR, 33.

[39] TTR, 33.

[40] TTR, 34.

#18–20, Labor for careful theological exposition.

18. Take every opportunity your text affords to speak of God's attributes: "nothing is known less than God is known."[41]
19. When explaining a word, do so in its immediate textual and broader theological contexts, showing God's character by it.
20. Labor as thoroughly as possible in writing sermons, but preach "depending on God for further Enlargement in publick."[42] Where feasible, preach without notes.

#21–26, Explain the text by the whole counsel of God.

21. Handle anthropomorphic and analogical language properly—do not make Scripture out to say something God does not say.
22. Be careful to handle Scripture according to the analogy of faith, not overburdening the particulars of a text.
23. Explain matters relating to the hypostatic union "with all clearness imaginable, because knowledge of it is so necessary to Man's Salvation."[43]
24. Approach future-fulfillment biblical statements in the certainty of God's promise.
25. Interpret figurative language (anthropomorphism, personification, etc.) with great care.
26. Regard all Scripture as "equally authentick" and having "the same Authority" as the words of Christ, for "they spake by the Spirit of Christ."[44]

#27–30, Use plain speech, suitable to the text.

27. Sometimes obscurities are clarified within a verse; read carefully and patiently, not seizing upon mystical interpretations.
28. Preach with clarity and aim for understanding.
29. Handle allegorical passages faithfully, not fancifully; Scripture generally interprets its own figures of speech.
30. Emphasize what a text emphasizes, "or else the design of that Passage is not answer'd."[45]

#31–35, Five hermeneutical considerations.

31. Recognize when the part stands for the whole, or the whole for the part.
32. "The Holy Ghost sometimes puts the Cause of a thing for the Effect."[46]
33. In wrath, God remembers mercy; interpret conditional threats and statements accordingly.
34. Scripture uses hyperbole to stir the affections—help hearers see and sense such

[41] TTR, 36.

[42] TTR, 36.

[43] TTR, 39.

[44] TTR, 41.

[45] TTR, 44.

[46] TTR, 45.

employments.

35. NT prophets and prophecy differ from OT, now largely consisting in expounding Scripture and exhorting saints.

#36, Drawing out doctrines from a text.[47]

36. Note any doctrines naturally arising from a text, according to their own emphasis there, with proper application. Collins then provides an example by demonstrating eight sorts of doctrines drawn from Col. 1:12:
    a. Doct. 1 ("from the Subject"). "That it is a matter of wonder that such are made meet for Glory!"
    b. Doct. 2 ("from the State of Man by Nature"). "Man by Nature is altogether unmeet for Heaven."
    c. Doct. 3 ("from Man's Impotency"). "No Man can make himself meet for the eternal Inheritance."
    d. Doct. 4 ("from the Efficient, Author, and Worker of this Meetness"). "It is God alone who can make Men meet for an eternal Inheritance."
    e. Doct. 5 ("from the Place or Name"). "That there is an inheritance prepar'd for the People of God."
    f. Doctr 6 ("from the Act, which is made meet"). "None shall enjoy Heavenly Bliss, but those who are first made meet for it."
    g. Doct. 7 ("from the Adjunct, *saints in light*"). "The souls of believers, in their separate state, are as in an Inheritance in Light).
    h. Doct. 8 ("from the Duty and Obligation of the Subject to the Object"). "It is the Duty of all who are made meet for Heaven, to give Thanks to the Father."

#37, Worthwhile books for ministers.

37. Recommended books to serve preaching, particularly indices and a commonplace book.

V. *An Outline of "An Additional Word"*

1. Know and esteem the necessity of a gospel ministry as from God.
2. The minister's several titles in Scripture speak to the nature and necessity of their work.
3. Be careful to secure a converted, biblically knowledgeable, spiritually experienced pastor.
4. Take great care to choose biblically-qualified pastors (fifteen Scriptural qualifications given).
5. Pray that God will raise up faithful pastors and "Labourers."[48]
6. Give your pastors the honor which God affords their office.
7. Praise God for faithful pastors and do not "sin them away."[49]

[47] TTR, 48–49.

[48] TTR, 56.

8. Be careful to maintain biblical views and practice of ordination; it is a Christian ordinance.
9. Do not neglect laying on hands in ordination; it is required, and of great theological significance.
10. Care for the bodies and families of those who watch for your souls; do not tempt them or their families to despair or bitterness by withholding a living wage.
11. Conclusion:
    a. Collins has tried to stir churches to "duties [they] are oblig'd unto."[50]
    b. They should be willing to "lay down [their] Lives for the Brethren, especially when it hath a tendency to strengthen their Faith, and help them forward to Heaven."[51]

[49] TTR, 57.

[50] TTR, 63.

[51] TTR, 64.

APPENDIX TWELVE:
WILLIAM AMES'S "ORDINARY MINISTERS AND THEIR OFFICE IN PREACHING" IN SUMMARY FORM

Ames is significantly influential for Hercules Collins in both content and style in TTR. Having summarized Collins's thirty–seven points of counsel for preachers in TTR, it is helpful to place them alongside summaries of Ames's seventy points of counsel for preachers from his 1638 work *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (I.XXXV).[52]

1. Ordinary ministry receives all direction from the will of God in Scripture and the ordinary means of grace.
2. They are "ordinary" because they are according to the order God established.
3. So too as extraordinary ministers gave the will or word of God as a fixed rule; thus, the regulative principle of worship.
4. Regular ministers depend on, succeed, and perform the same essential office as extraordinary ministers.
5. The right to this ministry is accorded by men; thus its calling is indirect.
6. Authority to minister is directly commanded by God, though appointing ministers is done by the church.
7. No church can confer ministerial gifts, nor prescribe to God who gets them, but only choose qualified ministers; mere calling does not make a man suitable for office.
8. Ordinary calling thus requires examination first, 1 Tm. 3:10.
9. "The purpose of ordinary minsters is to preserve, propagate, and renew the church through regular means."
10. Two parts: 1) ministers must do for the people in the name of God, and 2) must do for God in the name of the people.
11. "Preaching of the word is of utmost importance" and always has been so.
12. Duty of an ordinary preacher: to set forth the will of God from the word for edification, 1 Tm. 1:5.
13. Earnest zeal for the church's edification requires a man first to teach himself, Ezra 7:10, Rom. 2:21.
14. This duty is to be performed for each individual hearer according to status and age, Tit. 2–3, 2 Pet. 1:12, 1 Thess. 2:11, Acts 20:20.
15. The minister's aim of edification is to be before him singly, so he does not argue unprofitably or stray from Scripture, 1 Tm. 1:6, 6:20, 2 Tm. 2:14, Tit. 1:9, 2:8.
16. No one is fit for ministry who is not greatly concerned with Scripture beyond ordinary Christians—one mighty in the Scriptures, not merely notes and commentaries, Acts 18:24.
17. Setting forth the will of God fruitfully unto edification requires 1) stating the contents of the text plainly and 2) applying to consciences of hearers as seems fitting, 1 Tm. 6:17.

[52] The base text consulted for and cited from in this summary is William Ames (John Eusden, ed.), *The Marrow of Theology* (repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 190–196.

18. Starting preaching from one text, but leaving it untreated—even if relevant themes are addressed—imposes upon hearers.
19. Explain the text, then indicate the good from it: doctrines and proofs, then applications, 2 Tm. 3:16.
20. Inverting this order makes it hard to reproduce what was said from the text, thus hindering spiritual profit and family discipleship.
21. Doctrine: a theological principle, either in the express words of Scripture or directly drawn from them.
22. Doctrine must first be discovered, then discussed.
23. Discovery: by logical analysis, using rhetoric and grammar.
24. Analysis: observe the scope or purpose of a text, and its argument's logic.
25. Confirmation: for unclear or doubtful parts of analysis—"Manifest parts, clear in themselves, neither require nor permit needless interpretation."
26. Discussion of a doctrine consists partly in proofs, partly in illustration; "It is foolish to go to any length to confirm what all acknowledge."
27. Seek proofs from clearer portions of Scripture, adding reasons where needed; but adapt treatment to the profit of hearers.
28. Illustrations may be drawn from anywhere, but contrasting or comparing themes is most important.
29. Once explored, each doctrine should immediately be applied to its use, unless some special reason recommends against it.
30. "They sin, who stick to naked finding and explaining of truth, while neglecting use and practice."
31. Not all doctrines which may be drawn out of a text, or all the uses, are to be set forth—only those which seem presently necessary, and especially those strengthening devotion.
32. Careless and scattered preaching is sinful and ruins hearers.
33. Doctrine and use ought to have clear, logical order between them.
34. Use: a theological principle deduced from a doctrine which shows its application, goodness, or end.
35. If unclear, explain the logic of the deduction, using proof or illustration as needed.
36. Use lies in either judgment or practice, 2 Tm. 3:16.
37. In judgment: provide information, aimed at reformation of the mind.
38. Information: proving of some truth.
39. Reformation: refutation of some error.
40. Every truth should be taught on occasion, but every error need not come up for refutation—this troubles and offends.
41. Direction, needed in practice of life, consists of instruction and correction.
42. Instruction: setting forth of the life which ought to be followed.
43. Correction: condemnation of the life which ought to be shunned.
44. Having declared true doctrine, go on to application (which is very similar to, and often synonymous with, uses).
45. To apply a doctrine to its use means to sharpen and make specially relevant some general truth with such effect as to pierce minds and stir godly affections.
46. Men are to be pricked to the quick, that they may feel the piercing searching of Scripture; thus preaching ought not be dead, but alive and affective, 1 Cor. 15:45.
47. Application: either or consolation of an oppressed mind, or exhortation and admonition to

one failing to follow good and flee evil.

48. Consolation: application of some point that removes or mitigates grief and oppressive fear.
49. In consolation: indications given to men's consciences assure them of comforts; troubles of a pious mind should be dispelled and refuted.
50. Exhortation: application of a point which begets, quickens, and excites some inward virtue, or furthers the exercise of it.
51. In exhorting to virtue: show the means which lead to begetting that virtue in us, from Scripture.
52. Admonition: application of a point to correct some viciousness.
53. In admonition or exhortation against vices: remedies may be found from passages most likely to be effective against them.
54. The doing of all these must have no display of human wisdom, but the wisdom and word of Scripture, 1 Cor. 1:17, 2:1, 3:12, 4, 13.
55. Human testimonies and stories ought not be used normally; and words or sentences of Latin, Greek, or Hebrew should never be used in preaching.
56. The purity, perfection, and majesty of Scripture is violated when it is said to need the admixture of human words; so too disservice is done to hearers in acclimating them to human [that is, rhetorical] flourishes.
57. Paul's citations of heathen poets offer no support to those who cite human authors in preaching; the result is only a prideful show of learning.
58. Needless, farfetched preambles and oratories ought not be used; nor should ministers waste time on digressions or excurses—these are spiritually unprofitable.
59. Introductions should announce or apply the text.
60. Speech and actions should be completely spiritual, flowing from the very heart.
61. Pronunciation should be natural, familiar, clear, distinct, and suited to the matter of the sermon so it is understood and the affections are moved, Galatians 4:20.
62. The first offensive voice in preaching: heavy, slow, singing,[53] drowsy, hard to understand.
63. The second offensive voice in preaching: hasty, swift, overwhelming, hard to understand.
64. Speech, pronunciation, and gestures which would be ridiculed in a court, senate, or [legal] forum should be avoided in preaching.
65. The Spirit's power more clearly appears in naked simplicity[54] of speech, than in elegant lustrous words, 2 Cor. 11:6; but this does not preclude natural unaffected forcefulness and directness of speech.
66. In proportion as affectation appears, effectiveness and authority are lost.
67. The sum of the matter: allow nothing which does not contribute to spiritual edification; omit nothing by which that end may be reached.
68. A worthy supplement: prayer before and after preaching.
69. Prayer before preaching should be general, desiring to stir minds to seek to know and obey God by his word.
70. Prayer after preaching should be grateful, and turn the sermon's points into petitions.

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[53] That is, in a "sing-song" manner, lilting and thus easily ignored, despised, or causing drowsiness.

[54] As opposed to the naked finding of words in #30. Ames's point in #30 and #65: faithful preaching should be plain argumentation from the text, with pointed application of the text, in accessible language aimed to do the hearer good—not simply make the preacher look good.

APPENDIX THIRTEEN:
TUSSLES IN THE TITLES REDUX:
SELECTIVELY SKETCHING THE RECEPTION OF *THE PREACHER SENT*

When Hercules Collins wrote *The Temple Repair'd* (1702), he simply contributed the next installment to a long precedent of Reformed debate concerning the validity of unordained preaching. I note in chapter 5 something of the reception history of the concept of lay preaching, both legally and literarily; the specific reception of *The Preacher sent* is worth briefly noting here as well, since it serves as Collins's initial jumping–off point for *The Temple Repair'd*. The titles again tell quite the story.

The initial work which Collins found so helpful was *The Preacher sent: OR, A VINDICATION Of the Liberty of PUBLICK PREACHING, By some men not Ordained. In Answer to two Books:* I. *Jus Divinum Ministerii Euangelici*. By the Provincial Assembly of LONDON. 2. *Vinidiciae Ministerii Euangelici.* By Mr. John Collings of Norwich (1658/1657).[55] *The Preacher sent* is a clear, vigorous, and substantive expositional work (359 pages, fifteen chapters). It was answered by a frightened and feisty Matthew Poole's (1624–1679) *Quo Warranto ; OR, A Moderate Enquiry INTO THE WARRANTABLENESSE OF THE PREACHING OF GIFTED AND UNORDAINED persons. Where also some other Questions are Discussed: VIZ. Concerning MINISTERIAL Relation, ELECTION, ORDINATION. BEING A VINDICATION of the late Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici,* So far as concerns those Points ; From the Exceptions of Mr. *John Martin*, Mr. *Sam Petto*, M^r. *Frederick Woodal* : Ministers in *Suffolk*, in their late Book, Intituled THE PREACHER SENT.[56] The headings he notes of ordination,

[55] John Martin (1595–1659), Samuel Petto (ca. 1624–1711), and Frederick Woodal (b. 1614), *The Preacher sent: OR, A VINDICATION Of the Liberty of PUBLICK PREACHING, By some men not Ordained. In Answer to two Books:* I. *Jus Divinum Ministerii Euangelici*. By the Provincial Assembly of LONDON. 2. *Vinidiciae Ministerii Euangelici.* By Mr. John Collings of Norwich (London, 1658/1657). The printed date is marked through on the title page, with a "7" (handwritten in old script) obviously replacing the "8."

election, and ministerial relation Poole addresses in his 163 pages are all specific points which *The Preacher sent* covers.

John Collinges (1624–1691) of Norwich responded to *The Preacher sent* with the rather irritated 134–page book *VINDICIAE MINISTERII EVANGELICI REVINDICATAE* : OR THE PREACHER (pretendedly) Sent, Sent back again, TO Bring a better Account *Who* Sent Him, and learn his ERRAND : By way of REPLY, To a late BOOK (in the Defence of Gifted Brethrens Preaching) Published by Mr. *John Martin* of *Edgfield* in *Norfolk*, Mr. *Samuel Petto* of *Sandcroft* in *Suffolk*, Mr. *Frederick Woodale*i of *Woodbridge* in *Suffolk :* So far as any thing in their Book pretends to Answer a Book published, 1651. Called *Vindiciae Ministerii Evangelici* ; WITH A Reply also to the Epistle prefixed to the said BOOK, called, The Preacher Sent.[57] Collinges accuses his interlocutors of arguing that every Christian has the right to preach, even women—a proposition they do not advance.

His book was answered in 213 pages by Woodal and Petto in *A VINDICATION OF THE PREACHER SENT, OR A VVarrant for publick Preaching wihtou Ordination.* Wherein is further discovered. I. That some Gifted men unordained, are Gospel Preachers. 2. That Officers sustain not a relation (as Officers) to the Universal Church ; and other weighty questions concerning Election and Ordination , are opened and cleared. *In answer to two books*. I. *Vindiciae Ministrii*

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[56] Matthew Poole, *Quo Warranto ; OR, A Moderate Enquiry INTO THE WARRANTABLENESSE OF THE PREACHING OF GIFTED AND UNORDAINED persons. Where also some other Questions are Discussed: VIZ. Concerning MINISTERIAL Relation, ELECTIONS, ORDINATION. BEING A VINDICATION of the late Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici,* So far as concerns those Points ; From the Exceptions of Mr. *John Martin*, Mr. *Sam. Petto*, M^r. *Frederick Woodal* : Ministers in *Suffolk*, in their late Book, Intituled THE PREACHER SENT (London, 1658).

[57] John Collinges, *VINDICIAE MINISTERII EVANGELICI REVINDICATAE* : OR THE PREACHER (pretendedly) Sent, Sent back again, TO Bring a better Account *Who* Sent Him, and learn his ERRAND : By way of REPLY, To a late BOOK (in the Defence of Gifted Brethrens Preaching) Published by Mr. *John Martin* of *Edgfield* in *Norfolk*, Mr. *Samuel Petto* of *Sandcroft* in *Suffolk*, Mr. *Frederick Woodale*i of *Woodbridge* in *Suffolk :* So far as any thing in their Book pretends to Answer a Book published, 1651. Called *Vindiciae Ministerii Evangelici* ; WITH A Reply also to the Epistle prefixed to the said BOOK, called, The Preacher Sent (London, 1658).

Evangelici Revindicare I or the Preacher (pretendly *)* Sent, sent back again. By Dr. *Colling* of *Norwich*. 2. *Quo warranto*, or a Moderate enquiry into the warrantableness of the Preaching of gifted and unordained persons. By Mr. *Pool*, at the desire and appointment of the Provincial Assembly of London. WITH A Reply to the exceptions of Mr. *Hudson* and Dr. *Collings* against the Epistle to the Preacher Sent[58] (1659), which constitutes nearly a point–by–point reply to Collinges's "return to sender."

In the seventeenth century, there was never a question of where one stood! These tussles in the titles are not simply entertaining to trace—they form something of the provenance and backstory of Collins's *The Temple Repair'd* (1702) and further inform the often-controversial context in which the Particular Baptists of his day operated.

[58] Frederick Woodal and Samuel Petto, *A VINDICATION OF THE PREACHER SENT, OR A VVarrant for publick Preaching without Ordination.* Wherein is further discovered. I. That some Gifted men unordained, are Gospel Preachers. 2. That Officers sustain not a relation (as Officers) to the Universal Church ; and other weighty questions concerning Election and Ordination , are opened and cleared. *In answer to two books*. I. *Vindiciae Ministrii Evangelici Revindicare I or the Preacher (* pretendly *)* Sent, sent back again. By Dr. *Colling* of *Norwich*. 2. *Quo warranto*, or a Moderate enquiry into the warrantableness of the Preaching of gifted and unordained persons. By Mr. *Pool*, at the desire and appointment of the Provincial Assembly of London. WITH A Reply to the exceptions of Mr. *Hudson* and Dr. *Collings* against the Epistle to the Preacher Sent (London, 1659).

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ABSTRACT

THE PASTORAL THEOLOGY OF HERCULES COLLINS

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This thesis argues that the writings of Hercules Collins (1646/1647–1702) reveal a distinctly confessional, Puritan, and Baptist pastoral theology in which teaching, tending, and training are integrated as one coherent ministerial vision. Collins emerges not merely as an orthodox Reformed theologian but as a working pastor whose doctrinal commitments are consistently harnessed to the care, cure, and cultivation of souls.

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, situates it within the current state of Collins studies, and explains the methodological commitment to historical-theological retrieval through a close reading of primary sources. Chapter 2 provides a biographical and contextual sketch of Collins, locating him within Early Modern English Puritanism and Particular Baptist life, and arguing that he may be taken as a representative pastoral voice among the Calvinistic Baptists.

Chapter 3 examines *An Orthodox Catechism* as Collins's catechetical expression of pastoral theology, highlighting his applied confessionalism, his use and revision of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and his distinctive emphases on credobaptism, the moral law, worship, and the contested ordinances of laying on of hands and congregational singing. Chapter 4 analyzes *The English Spira* and Collins's counseling of John Child (1638?–1684), tracing his casuistical instincts, doctrinal framework, and pastoral method in ministering to a despairing, self-condemned "English Spira."

Chapter 5 studies *The Temple Repair'd* as Collins's mature statement on preaching and the training of ministers and gifted brothers, arguing that he envisioned every church as a seminary in which Christ's gifts are recognized, tested, and deployed for the edification of the body. Chapter 6 concludes by synthesizing Collins's teaching, tending, and training into an integrated pastoral theology and commending his work as a rich, underutilized resource for contemporary Baptist studies and pastoral practice.

The thesis is the first sustained scholarly treatment of Hercules Collins's pastoral theology in Baptist history, thus recovering a neglected strand of Baptist pastoral identity. It makes several distinct contributions:

1. First integrated analysis of *An Orthodox Catechism* alongside the *Heidelberg Catechism*, showing Collins as a creative pastoral editor rather than a mere borrower.
2. First pastoral-theological reading of *An Orthodox Catechism*, situating it within catechesis, conscience care, and congregational formation.
3. First treatment of Collins's pastoral counseling, especially his casuistry, diagnostic categories, and method of comforting afflicted consciences.

4. First pastoral-theological study of John Child (1638?–1684), reframing his despair and death as a pastoral tragedy rather than merely a doctrinal failure.
5. First focused analysis of *The English Spira* as a work of pastoral care, not simply a cautionary narrative.
6. First in-depth study of *The Temple Repair'd* as Collins's mature theology of preaching and ministerial training.
7. First sustained treatment of the doctrine of the "gifted brother" in Baptist history since Collins himself.

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books & Edited Volumes

Coeditor, *The Works of Hercules Collins* (forthcoming, H&E)
Contracted Assistant Editor, *The Works of John Flavel* (forthcoming, The Banner of Truth)
Guided Tours in the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession (forthcoming, 2026)
Analytical Outlines of Particular Baptist Confessions of Faith (Monergism.com, 2025)
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Introductions & Chapters

Biographical Introduction to Hercules Collins's *An Orthodox Catechism* (forthcoming, Particular Baptist Heritage Books)
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