“Newter”-ing the Nicodemite: Reception of John Calvin’s

Quatre sermons (1552) in Sixteenth-Century England

by

Kenneth Joseph Woo

The Divinity School
Duke University

Date: 12-10-2015

Approved:

G. Sujin Pak, Supervisor

Curtis W. Freeman

Thomas Robisheaux

Jon Balserak

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology
in the Divinity School of Duke University

2015
ABSTRACT

"Newter"-ing the Nicodemite: Reception of John Calvin's
Quatre sermons (1552) in Sixteenth-Century England

by

Kenneth Joseph Woo

The Divinity School
Duke University

Date: 12-10-2015

Approved:

G. Sujin Pak, Supervisor

Curtis W. Freeman

Thomas Robisheaux

Jon Balserak

An abstract of a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology
in the Divinity School of Duke University

2015
Abstract

This dissertation examines the publication history of a single work: John Calvin’s 1552 *Quatre sermons de M. Jehan Calvin traictans des matières fort utiles pour nostre temps, avec briefve exposition du Pseaume lxxxvii*. Overlooked for both its contribution to Calvin’s wider corpus and its surprising popularity in English translation, successive editions of *Quatre sermons* display how Calvin’s argument against the behavior of so-called “Nicodemites” was adapted to various purposes unrelated to refuting religious dissimulation. The present study contributes to research in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism by highlighting the fruitfulness of focusing on a discrete work and its reception. Borrowing a term (“Newter”) from John Field’s 1579 translation of *Quatre sermons*, this study’s title adumbrates its argument. English translators capitalized on the intrinsic malleability of a nameless and faceless opponent, the Nicodemite, and the adaptability of *Quatre sermons*’ genre as a collection of sermons to reshape—or, if you will, disfigure—both Calvin’s original foes and his case against them to advance various new agenda. Yet they were not the first to use the reformer’s sermons this way. They could have learned this from Calvin himself.

My examination of *Quatre sermons* opens by setting the work in the context of Calvin’s other writings and his political situation (Introduction, chapters one and two). Calvin’s unrelenting literary assault on French Nicodemism over three decades has long been recognized for its consistency and negativity. Yet scholars have tended to neglect how Calvin’s polemic against religious dissimulation could exhibit significant flexibility
according to the needs of his context. Whereas Calvin’s preface promises simply to revisit his previous argument against participation in the Mass, his approach to Nicodemism in *Quatre sermons* seems adapted to accomplish goals beyond decrying false worship, offering a carefully-crafted apology for Calvin’s pastoral authority directed at his political situation. Repeatedly emphasizing God’s purpose to bless his children through the ministry of a rightly-ordered church, *Quatre sermons* marks a shift in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite rhetoric away from purely negative critique, stressing instead God’s provision of spiritual nurture via political exile. Read in light of Calvin’s 1552 context, two audiences emerge: sermons ostensibly targeting believers in France who hid their faith also appear especially designed to silence Calvin’s foes in Geneva.

The remainder of the study examines the reception of *Quatre sermons* in the rapidly shifting religious and social contexts of Marian and Elizabethan England, where it appeared in more unique editions than any of Calvin’s writings besides the *Institutio* and the reformer’s 1542/45 Genevan Catechism. Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism has not been examined for its distinct contribution to the overall English reception of his thought. Five English versions of *Quatre sermons* appeared between 1553 and 1584—four of these under a Protestant queen, a situation quite different from the French context Calvin addressed. After situating Calvin’s position within the currents of Tudor Protestant anti-Nicodemism (chapter three), I place each of the five translations in its particular context, investigating prefaces, appendices, marginalia, and translation methods to discover how and why individuals used *Quatre sermons* (chapters four to six). Like Calvin in 1552,
those who brought *Quatre sermons* to English readers were not primarily concerned with
Nicodemism. Rather, the malleability of Calvin’s Nicodemite as polemical opponent and
the flexibility of *Quatre sermons* as a sequence of discrete, interrelated parts made it
popular with those eager to press Calvin into the service of a variety of diverse goals he
could not have imagined, including turning his anti-Nicodemism against fellow
members of the English church.
For Tisha Lea

τὸ μυστήριον τούτο μέγα ἐστίν
Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... iv

Abbreviations .................................................................................................................................... xii

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... xiv

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................................... 1

  1. Justification for this Study ........................................................................................................ 1

  2. Problem and Thesis .................................................................................................................. 8

  3. Outline of Chapters .................................................................................................................. 11

1. Revisiting Calvin’s Approach to Nicodemism: Preliminary Considerations ....................... 15

  1.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 15

  1.2 Historiography ........................................................................................................................ 15

  1.2.1 State of the Question: Assessing Calvin’s Approach to Nicodemism .................................. 15

  1.2.2 Advancing the Question: Reassessment and Reception ...................................................... 34

  1.3 Methodological Considerations .............................................................................................. 37

  1.3.1 Evaluating the Intended Consequences of Ideas ................................................................ 37

  1.3.2 Sources .................................................................................................................................. 39

  1.3.3 Ways of Reading ................................................................................................................. 41

  1.3.4 Brief Note on Terminology ................................................................................................. 45

  1.4 Overview of Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemite Corpus ...................................................................... 52

  1.4.1 Staying Relentlessly on Message ....................................................................................... 52

  1.4.2 Idolatry Inside and Out: Calvin’s Basic Position on Dissimulation .................................... 54
1.4.3 Unity and Diversity: Calvin’s Account of the Nicodemite Mindset.................. 65

1.5 Conclusion........................................................................................................................................ 69

2. Ecclesiology and Exile: *Quatre sermons* (1552) in its Original Context*.......................... 71

2.1 Reassessing the Flexibility of Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism....................................................... 71

2.2 *Quatre sermons* and the Turn to Exile in Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism ............................... 76

2.2.1 Calvin’s Preface .......................................................................................................................... 76

2.2.2 Calvin on Political Exile as the Pilgrim’s Embrace of Spiritual Exile .............................. 77

2.2.3 The House of God in Exile: Anticipating Calvin’s Ecclesiology in *Quatre sermons'*................................................................. 83

2.2.3.1 The Strasbourg Years and Calvin’s Ecclesiology ................................................................. 84

2.2.3.2 1543 *Institutio*: An Expanded Vision of the Church’s Form and Function 87

2.2.4 Exile as Spiritual Nurture: Calvin’s use of the Psalms in *Quatre sermons* .......... 93

2.2.5 Exile as Preferred Course: Calvin’s Arrangement of *Quatre sermons* ..................... 99

2.3 *Quatre Sermons* as an Apology for Calvin’s Ministry ....................................................... 103

2.3.1 The Conflicts in Geneva as Context for *Quatre sermons* ................................................. 103

2.3.2 Flexibility of Address: The Two Audiences of *Quatre sermons* ................................. 108

2.4 Conclusion........................................................................................................................................ 113

3. Religious Context: *Quatre sermons* and Sixteenth-Century English Anti-Nicodemism ........................................................................................................................................ 116

3.1 Fresh Translations, Changing Contexts ................................................................................. 116

3.2 Situating Marian and Elizabethan Anti-Nicodemism: English Traditions and Continental Sources ........................................................................................................................................ 117

3.3 Anti-Nicodemism and the Marian Exiles .............................................................................. 130
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Anti-Nicodemism in the Elizabethan Era</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Conclusion: Imagining a Flexible Foe</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The English Reception of Calvin and Quatre Sermons</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Baduel's Latin Translation</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Rowland Hall's 1561 Edition: Calvin as Model for English Preachers</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Robert Waldegrave’s 1581 Edition: In Defense of Protestant Martyrdom</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Anthony Munday’s 1584 Edition: Establishing a Protestant Pedigree</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Turning Calvin Against Fellow English Protestants</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Situating Horne’s Translation: Background and Context</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Career Reformer: Exile, Return and the Making of a Principled Conformist</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.1</td>
<td>From Fugitive to Bishop</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.2</td>
<td>The Zurich Letters</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>From “Rome” via Wesel: English Protestant Printing Under Mary I</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>Selective Silence: Horne’s Calculated Omissions of Calvin’s Content</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Horne’s Preface</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Horne’s Translation</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Horne’s Strategy</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>John Field (1579): &quot;Newter-ing&quot; the Nicodemite</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1 Situating Field’s Translation: Background and Context ........................................ 257
6.1.1 A Subtler Admonition: Uncovering John Field’s Anti-Nicodemism .............. 257
6.1.2 An Admonition to the Parliament (1572) ...................................................... 261
6.1.3 Field’s Translations and Prefaces c.1576-c.1583 ........................................... 266
6.1.4 John Field and the English Reception of Calvin ............................................. 275
6.2 Field’s Preface .................................................................................................... 277
6.3 Field’s Translation ............................................................................................. 282
6.4 Field’s Strategy .................................................................................................. 297
6.4.1 1579: Field’s Year of French Translation ....................................................... 299
6.4.2 The Papal Menace in Field’s Translation of de Mornay ................................. 300
6.4.3 Thirteene Sermons: “Merite Mongers” and the Disruption of Order .......... 303
6.4.4 Foure Sermons: Nicodemites as Moderates in the Elizabethan Church ....... 309
6.5 Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 315

Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 321
The Story of Quatre sermons in England ............................................................... 321
New Perspectives and Future Research on Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism ................. 330

Works Cited ........................................................................................................... 342
Biography ............................................................................................................... 371
Abbreviations


COR  *Ioannis Calvini opera omnia: Dueno recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata*. Geneva: Droz, 1992-


OL  Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation: Written During the Reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary: Chiefly from the Archives of Zurich. Translated and edited by Hastings Robinson. 2 vols. Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846-1847.


SC  Supplementa Calviniana: Sermons inédits. Edited by Erwin Mülhaupt et al. Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1936-


ZL  The Zurich Letters, Comprising the Correspondence of Several English Bishops and Others, With Some of the Helvetian Reformers, During the Early Part of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Translated and edited by Hastings Robinson. First and Second Series. Cambridge: Parker Society, 1842-1845.
Acknowledgements

Conventional wisdom might frown upon uprooting one’s self, spouse, and three young children from a fulfilling vocation, supportive community, and stable livelihood to spend the better part of one’s thirties in graduate school. This dissertation, then, is equal parts fool’s errand and labor of love. I take credit for the first—call it intrepidness or recklessness—while others have invested much to make it the latter. My debt is great.

Chief among my academic mentors is my supervisor, Sujin Pak. Her erudition, wise guidance, and accessibility despite heavy responsibilities as academic dean have rewarded my decision to study at Duke many times over. My committee has supported me well. I will treasure David Steinmetz’s helpful critiques and suggestions as I enjoyed warm hospitality at his kitchen table. It was with great sadness that I received news of his death just two weeks before my defense. I am grateful for Curtis Freeman’s kindness to bring his expertise to my committee on very short notice. Tom Robisheaux invited me to ask the questions that became this dissertation and taught me how to lead a seminar. For many years, Jon Balserak’s expertise, friendship, and availability from both sides of “the Pond” have been a reassurance. Others have given generously of their time and knowledge: Warren Smith, Frank James, Richard Muller, John Thompson, Doug Green, Doug Gropp, Megan Armstrong, Ward Holder, Meredith Riedel, and Beth Sheppard.

I am grateful for colleagues who have made graduate school a season of shared experiences, stimulating conversation, and (often enough) good beer: Justin Ashworth,
Katie Benjamin, Tanner Capps, Ben Dillon, Chauncey Handy, Wen Reagan, and Trish Ross. My students at Duke, the United Methodist Course of Study, and Redeemer Seminary have been a tangible, delightful reminder of why my studies matter. I especially appreciate the friendship of fellow pastors who listened well and asked searching questions that kept me cognizant of the ecclesial horizons of my studies: Ross Durham, Pedro Govantes, Josh Ham, Dan Kronstad, Alvin Lin, Allan Poole, and Jason Yung. Our friends at Blacknall Presbyterian Church and the Church of the Good Shepherd, especially our weekly “shepherding group,” have walked with our family through grad school (for two) and graduating from the season of having “young kids.”

I could not have finished this dissertation without the support of my family. From our siblings—Kara and Robb, Sean and Kathy, Kevin and Preethi—my parents-in-law, Larry and Nora, and especially my parents, Antony and Suzanna, I could count on love, patience, and generosity regardless of how I responded to the question, “How much longer?” My children deserve special thanks. Even though their lives bear the imprint of my decisions, Hannah, Ryan, and Graeme never once asked, “How long?” These kids inspire me daily—partly because they show no interest in my work but mostly because I am proud to be their dad. My greatest debt is to my wife. Seventeen years ago I wed my best friend, Tisha Springer. Her forgiving love and good humor through “all the surprises” is a constant, sweet reminder of God’s grace and kindness toward me—then, now, and every moment in between. I dedicate this work to her.
1. Introduction

1. Justification for this Study

The present study originated with the proverbial “deceptively simple” question: What is the significance of John Calvin’s 1552 *Quatre sermons*?\(^1\) The work was one of several Calvin published expressly against the behavior of French “Nicodemites,” evangelicals he believed were hiding their true convictions by participating in the Roman Mass to avoid persecution.\(^2\) *Quatre sermons* also was just one of many works by Calvin appearing in English translations throughout the final decades of the sixteenth century.\(^3\) Neither of these facts is difficult to discover or especially interesting. Moreover, with the continuing vitality of modern Calvin studies, the Genevan reformer does not lack attention from researchers pursuing any number of topics related to his life and thought.\(^4\) Among these, Calvin’s lifelong preoccupation with Nicodemism has already

---

\(^1\) *Quatre sermons de M. Jehan Calvin traictans des matières fort utiles pour nostre temps, avec briefve exposition du Pseaume lxxxvii* (Geneva: Robert Estienne, 1552); critical text: CO 8:369-452. Two modern English translations of *Quatre sermons* have appeared in recent years, both working from Calvin’s original French: *Come Out from Among Them: Anti-Nicodemite Writings of John Calvin*, trans. Seth Skolnitsky (Dallas: Protestant Heritage Press, 2001), 127-238; and *Faith Unfeigned*, trans. Robert White (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2010). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of primary sources throughout this dissertation are my own.

\(^2\) Although the French term, *les Nicodémites*, first appeared in Calvin’s writings, the reformer attributes this use of the biblical Nicodemus as a namesake to the dissemblers themselves, whom he goes on to charge with misappropriating the legacy of a righteous man (CO 6:608; 47:423-424). On the wider appearance of this concept in connection with the biblical Nicodemus in the early sixteenth century, as well as Calvin’s increasing dissatisfaction with its use, see Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 242-245.

between 1537 and 1562, Calvin railed against the alleged practices of clandestine French
evangelicals. He repeatedly rebuffed arguments for dissembling one’s beliefs that

---


4 One thinks, for example, of the recent 11th International Congress on Calvin Research that met in Zurich for, 24-28 August 2014; or the biennial Calvin Studies Society Colloquium that convened in Grand Rapids, Michigan earlier this year to examine themes related to “Semper Reformanda: Calvin, Worship and Reformed Traditions” (9-11 April 2015). These international gatherings of active Calvin scholars attest to the ongoing academic interest in the Genevan reformer, his context, and his influence.

5 In addition to Quatre sermons, the four additional works generally accepted as comprising Calvin’s published anti-Nicodemite corpus include: 1537’s Epistola de rebus hoc saeculo cognitu apprime necessariis (CO 5:233-312); 1543’s Petit traiçé, monstant que c’est que doit faire un homme fidèle congoissant la vérité de l’euvage quand il est entre les papistes. Avec une épistre du mesme argument (CO 6:537-588); 1544’s Excuse de Jehan Calvin, à Messieurs les Nicodémites, sur la complainte qu’ilz font de sa trop grand’rigueur (CO 6:589-614) and 1562’s Response à un certain Holandois, lequel sous ombre de faire les chrestiens tout spirituels, leur permet de polluer corps en toutes idolatries (CO 9:581–628). These five works were “canonized” as early as Ioannis Calvini Tractatus theologici omnes of 1576, where they are grouped together as the “third class” of the Reformer’s polemical tracts; Ioannis Calvini Tractatus theologici omnes: in unum volumen certis classibus congregati : quorum aliqui nec late nee gallicè prius editi fuerunt (Geneva: Petrum Santandreandum, 1576), 547-671. The versions of the Petit traiçé and Excuse reprinted in the 1576 anthology are from the 1545 Latin translation under the title De vitandus superstitionibus. In addition to this 1545 edition, the Petit traiçé and Excuse were reprinted in 1546, 1549, and 1550 with the written conseils of fellow Protestants and Calvin’s own concluding statements; see BC I:195-198. The “épistre” appended to 1543’s Petit traiçé was actually written in 1540 to unnamed
attempted to separate internal faith from external actions, calling on Nicodemites to come out from hiding and openly confess their faith by choosing from two options: flee or be willing to face hardship, harassment, and even death for their commitment to pure worship. David F. Wright has demonstrated that, across these writings, Calvin’s position on the issue at hand was theologically consistent and absolutely inflexible with his demands of Protestants tempted to dissimulate.7 Indeed, Calvin’s reply to Nicodemism—“No!”—is so clear to anyone reading the sources that no one has tried to argue otherwise. Is there anything more to say about Calvin’s approach to this topic?

The scholarship taking up Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic has focused on four main areas: 1.) the logic and particular theological emphases of Calvin’s position against Nicodemism; 2.) the nature and identity of Calvin’s polemical opponents; and, to a lesser degree, 3.) Calvin’s reasons for taking up this attack on Nicodemism; and 4.) the impact of Calvin’s ideas on others.8 While contributing important elements to our understanding of Calvin’s views, these studies generally share a common weakness. They treat Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism as monolithic in tone and content—a fixture in his thinking that varied little over time—so that one often speaks of “Calvin’s

---

7 “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” passim. See chapter one for more on Calvin’s position.

8 A detailed review and analysis of the historiography will follow in chapter one.
position” without further qualification with respect to the reformer’s changing circumstances over time. This has had the unfortunate effect of obscuring ways in which Calvin’s approach to religious dissimulation actually varied significantly as it was rethought and newly deployed to suit specific situations.

_Quatre sermons_ offers an outstanding example of how the reformer’s argument against Nicodemism was adapted creatively to accomplish goals beyond decrying false worship. Such a strategy is missed when Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings are simply treated _in toto_, rather than as discrete works designed to influence particular contexts. To be fair, previous scholarship devoted to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism has taken up important questions concerning the basic contours of Calvin’s position, including its relation to the views of his contemporaries. In this way, earlier studies have established an awareness of Nicodemism as an early modern phenomenon, as well as described

---

9 There are a handful of notable exceptions to this trend, such as Mirjam G. K. van Veen’s analysis of Calvin’s polemical exchange with Theodore Coornhert; _Verschooninghe, passim_; see also “Sursum Corda: Calvijns Polemiek Tegen Nicodemieten, in Het Bijzonder Tegen Coornhert,” _Nederlandsch archief voor kerkgeschiedenis_ 79:2 (1999): 170-203. Van Veen examines the particular strategy employed in a single anti-Nicodemite work, read against the background of Calvin’s broader polemic against dissimulation. Similarly, Olivier Millet’s analysis of changes between 1537’s _Epistolae duae_ and the _Petit traicté_ of 1543 suggests the fruitfulness of closely examining individual anti-Nicodemite works in context; _Calvin et la dynamique de la parole: étude de rhétorique réformée_ (Geneva, 1992), 809-828. Christoph Burger follows in the same vein, focusing his attention on the content and context of Calvin’s 1537 publication against Nicodemism; “Calvin comme maitre de ses amis dans la première de ses _Epistolae Duae_ (1537),” in _Calvin et ses contemporains: actes du colloque de Paris 1995_, ed. Olivier Millet (Geneva: Droz, 1998), 149-158.

Calvin’s understanding of religious dissimulation and his essential response to this problem. These efforts should be applauded. Indeed, it is only after the thorough consideration of such preliminary matters that new opportunities have arisen for research to take up more nuanced questions attending to contextual issues and variations within Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism. The present study contributes to this latter category, moving beyond Calvin’s hostility to religious dissimulation in order to examine how this enmity was expressed—and for what purposes—at a particular moment in the reformer’s career. In this 1552 work, emphases on ecclesiology and political exile appear for the first time in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings, converging to exhibit flexibility in his thinking on Nicodemism as a theological problem. Such fluidity seems to have emerged in response to pressures in his social context.11 This dissertation is the first study of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism to undertake a close contextual analysis of Quatre sermons, highlighting both its significance among the reformer’s other works on the topic and its uniqueness within Calvin’s entire literary corpus. These are the only sermons he personally prepared for publication. They also contain what is perhaps the strongest plea for exile found in any of his writings.12

11 See chapter two, where I take up this argument in detail.

12 In comparing Quatre sermons with Calvin’s sermons on the Book Job, Ariste Vigué notes the urgency, harshness, and forcefulness of Calvin’s tone compared with other instances of the reformer’s “oratory”: “<<Quatre Sermons>> sont donc une rude et forte expression de la pensée de Calvin, à un moment tragique de l’histoire de la Réforme”; “Les sermons de Calvin sur le livre de Job,” Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire du protestantisme français (1882): 471. Vigué’s point is well taken, including his awareness of Calvin’s sensitivity to the context of his preaching, but—though he acknowledges the unique circumstances of Quatre sermons as Calvin’s only self-edited sermons for publication—Vigué perhaps underestimates the amount of revision
Apart from Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic per se, a second area of research to which I hope to contribute is Calvin’s reception in English, particularly his emergence as a theological authority in Elizabethan England. While others have provided useful analyses of Calvin’s increasing popularity in English translation throughout the late 1500s, no one has examined Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism specifically for the distinctive place it occupied in the sixteenth-century English reception of his thought. Once again, the significance of Quatre sermons has thus far been under-appreciated. More unique sixteenth-century versions of this 1552 work were produced in English than any other of Calvin’s publications besides the Institutio and his 1542/45 Genevan Catechism. How was Calvin’s lifelong preoccupation with Nicodemism mediated to an English readership and why did it enjoy such popularity? A striking feature of these translations published between 1553 and 1584 is that they emerged in remarkably wide-ranging situations for English Protestantism, from persecution under Mary I to the consolidation that may have gone into the finished form of Quatre sermons to address Calvin’s 1552 concerns. See chapter two for a discussion of Calvin’s editorial decisions.


14 By unique editions I do not mean multiple reprints of the same text with slight variations, such as we find with seven reprints of two editions of Calvin’s sermons on the Decalogue, one translated by John Harmar, the other by Arthur Golding; see chapter four, n. 18. In chapter four I also discuss Calvin’s popularity in Elizabethan translations, including the significance of Quatre sermons among these works, many of which appeared in the 1570s and 1580s.
of reform in the Elizabethan settlement. Calvin’s Nicodemite should not even have existed in this latter context. Yet four out of five English translations of *Quatre sermons* were published in a Protestant regime to reach a broad readership within that society. The absence of Calvin’s French Nicodemite situation did not deter individuals from adapting *Quatre sermons* to the particular needs of Elizabethan England. Why not? By examining how Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism was presented as authoritative in such diverse—even unexpected—settings I demonstrate how the Genevan reformer’s theology was deployed both to unite and to divide English readers. As the first study to focus extensively on Calvin’s approach to religious dissimulation as a subset of

15 *Certaine homilies of m. Ioan Calvine conteining profitable and necessarie, admonitio for this time, with an apologie of Robert Horn* (Rome [Wesel?], 1553), STC 4392; *Four godlye sermons against the pollution of idolatries comforting men in persecutions, and teaching them what commodities thei shal find in Christes church, which were preached in French by the moste famous clarke Ihon Caluyne, and translated fyrest into Latine and afterward into Englishe by diuers godly learned men* (London: Rowland Hall, 1561), STC 4438; *Four sermons of Maister Iohn Caluin entreating of matters very profitable for our time, as may bee seene by the preface: with a briefe exposition of the lxxxvii. Psalme. Translated out of Frenche into Englishe by Iohn Fielde* (London: [Thomas Dawson for] Thomas Man, 1579), STC 4439; *A sermon of the famous and Godly learned man, master Iohn Caluine chief Minister and Pastour of Christs church at Geneua, containing an exhortation to suffer persecution for following Jesus Christe and his Gospel, upon this text following. Heb. 13. 13. Go ye out of the tents after Christe, bearing his rebuke* (London: [Robert Waldgrave for] Edward White, 1581), STC 4439.5; *Two godly and learned sermons, made by that famous and woorthy instrument in Gods church, M. Iohn Caluin. Which sermons were long since translated out of Latine into English, by M. Robert Horne late Byshop of Winchester, at what time he suffered exile from his country, for the testimony of a good conscience, as his apology in the beginning of the booke will witnes. And because these sermons haue long lyen hidden in silence, and many godly and religious persons, haue beene very desirous of them: at theyr earnest request they are nowe published by A.M* (London: [John Charlewood for] Henry Car, 1584), STC 4461.

16 Until very recently, no one had posed the question this way. Karl Gunther’s study, which locates the roots of theological controversies and calls for reform typically associated with Elizabethan puritanism far earlier in English Protestant thought, includes a helpful summary of Protestant attitudes toward dissimulation into the Elizabethan era; *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 98-129. Gunther’s analysis identifies themes such as past sins, future threats, and present compromise. Yet treatment of an undifferentiated “Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism” has certain limitations, including failing to detect nuances in how authors exploited Nicodemism that become apparent only when various translations of the same text are compared. See chapter six for the example of John Field’s translation of *Quatre sermons*. 7
sixteenth-century English translation, this dissertation contributes to research on Calvin’s influence by revealing how the anti-Nicodemite rhetoric of *Quatre sermons* both reflected and may even have contributed to wider interest in the reformer and his work.

To summarize, the present study expands our knowledge of Calvin’s response to Nicodemism by focusing on a discrete work and its reception. Such an approach to the topic illuminates questions and issues that would otherwise remain invisible apart from considering the origin, context, and reception of *Quatre sermons* as an independent publication versus treating the entirety of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite corpus as a whole.

2. Problem and Thesis

This dissertation seeks to account for the significance of *Quatre sermons* in terms of the publication’s origin, content, and popularity in translation. Three characteristics stand out immediately. These were 1.) the only sermons Calvin personally prepared for publication; 2.) the only anti-Nicodemite writings presented as sermons, as well as the only instance of Calvin presenting a single argument over the course of several interrelated sermons; and 3.) the only sermons of Calvin to be translated as frequently into English prior to 1600. What contributed to these expositions’ uniqueness on all three counts? A thorough analysis should take up two questions, both related to the decision to publish *Quatre sermons* in various contexts. First, what compelled Calvin to issue a

---

17 In chapter one I will further situate my approach in relation to other studies of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism.
fresh publication devoted to the problem of French Nicodemism in 1552, when he had already published two lengthy treatises on the same theme less than a decade earlier and, arguably, was already preoccupied with deep local tensions surrounding his ministry in Geneva? Secondly, why did this particular publication enjoy such popularity among English translators in the sixteenth century, especially when its anti-Nicodemite content ostensibly was irrelevant to an English situation so different from the one Calvin addressed in 1552? I contend that these questions are related insofar as unraveling the first informs our answer to the second. Not only did Calvin’s decision to publish a work on Nicodemism in 1552 provide a new source with which translators could work. The reformer’s decision to present his argument against religious dissimulation in the genre—again, unique among his writings—of a single argument carried out over four sermons both reflected the needs of Calvin’s immediate situation and directly influenced the collection’s popularity in other contexts for reasons Calvin never imagined.

In the following pages, I argue that both the topic and the form of Quatre sermons converged to make this particular publication especially useful to Calvin and his English translators in ways that it would not have been without this peculiar combination of anti-Nicodemite content and homiletic genre. In Calvin’s case, addressing a supposedly foreign problem via sermons preached in Geneva allowed him to craft a plea for his pastoral authority that addressed two audiences: Nicodemites in France and, more pressing at that time, his local critics and powerful enemies in Geneva. Across the channel, English polemicists made use of this unique publication in equally creative
ways, taking advantage of the adaptability it afforded for pressing Calvin into support of diverse purposes. Borrowing a term ("Newter") from John Field’s 1579 translation of *Quatre sermons*, my dissertation’s title adumbrates this next phase of its argument. English translators capitalized on the intrinsic malleability of a nameless and faceless opponent, the Nicodemite, and the adaptability of *Quatre sermons*’ format as a collection of sermons to reshape—or, if you will, disfigure—both Calvin’s original foes and his case against them to advance various new agenda. The “Nicodemite” was re-imagined to fit a variety of enemies, including fellow Protestants in the same English church. Moreover, among the various anti-Nicodemite writings of both English and Continental authors to choose from, *Quatre sermons* was uniquely elastic because of its form as a collection of sermons. Translators and publishers could rearrange, or even omit, Calvin’s material in ways that suggested no alterations to the reformer’s original text and intent. In the final analysis, I demonstrate that Calvin fashioned *Quatre sermons* with specific features to suit a particular situation in 1552, and that these very qualities made it especially attractive for use in other contexts. I also show that this unique combination of form and content reveals another trait Calvin and his translators shared: neither seemed especially interested in combatting religious dissimulation with their use of *Quatre sermons*. The Nicodemite, it appears, succeeded in remaining invisible, fading from view even under the harsh light of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite rhetoric.
3. Outline of Chapters

My analysis of Quatre sermons and its reception in sixteenth-century England proceeds as follows. Chapter one surveys the historiography of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, giving especial attention to how research has illuminated the difficulty of identifying the Nicodemite apart from the description of her enemies, as well as pointing out significant gaps in the literature that will be addressed by the current study. Next, I set forth my approach to reading Quatre sermons and its various English translations, establishing the methodological parameters that will be necessary for demonstrating the collection’s unique place in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic and broader corpus, and for explaining the publication’s popularity in England. Finally, in preparation for a more detailed investigation of Quatre sermons, the chapter provides an overview of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite corpus. I highlight recurring themes to demonstrate the profound consistency of Calvin’s thirty-year message attacking religious dissimulation. This will establish a suitable foil against which the unique features of Quatre sermons will be set in sharper relief and thus appear more clearly.

Chapter two argues that Quatre sermons represents a point of development within Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, demonstrating how factors in Calvin’s 1552 Genevan context contributed to the unique form and emphases of this publication. The chapter shows how Calvin’s Psalms exegesis and ecclesiology converge in a way unique in his anti-Nicodemite writings to produce an urgent plea for exile that is unparalleled in all his writings. The wider significance of Calvin’s decision to publish Quatre sermons
as a collection of sermons directed, as I argue, to his political situation becomes clear and sheds additional light on the work’s appeal to numerous English translators.

Chapter three provides a bridge between Calvin’s own use of *Quatre sermons* to influence his context and the various ways in which the publication was used by others to impact theirs. A survey of the development and contours of Protestant anti-Nicodemite polemics in Tudor England will demonstrate consistency with the arguments of Continental writers as well as features unique to the rapidly and dramatically shifting English religious situation. The chapter concludes with reflections on how the Nicodemite became a flexible motif in the hands of Marian and Elizabethan polemicists eager to press numerous agenda against a variety of foes. Some consideration will be given to how such a diverse portrayal of the Nicodemite both reflected and departed from elements already present in Calvin’s characterization of French believers who dissembled their faith to avoid persecution or discomfort.

Chapter four commences a close reading of translations of *Quatre sermons*. After a consideration of Claude Baduel’s 1553 Latin translation, which provided the basis for several other translations, the chapter takes up three of the five English editions of *Quatre sermons*: the ones published in 1561, 1581, and 1584. Together these translations exhibit how Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite work was deployed to portray a unified English church vis-à-vis a common enemy in Rome. These respective editions also reveal how those responsible for them used Calvin to advance different purposes, none of them having much to do with combatting religious dissimulation in England.
Chapter five presents the first of two lengthier analyses of English translations that explicitly bend Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic in *Quatre sermons* toward an attack on fellow Protestants in the Church of England. Robert Horne’s 1553 translation was produced to justify Horne’s flight from England under pressure from officials in Mary I’s regime. Horne invokes the Nicodemite as a negative foil to emphasize the relative virtue of his own sacrifice. Of special interest here is Horne’s careful omission of all Calvin’s material on exile, despite the fact that this theme was at the heart of Horne’s concerns. The chapter argues that Horne capitalized on *Quatre sermons*’ form as a collection of sermons to adapt Calvin’s original arrangement without appearing to do so, because Calvin’s account of exile stood in tension with Horne’s own.

Chapter six offers a detailed analysis of John Field’s 1579 edition, the only full translation of *Quatre sermons* that both includes Calvin’s preface and is based on Calvin’s French. Field, co-author of the infamous *Admonition to the Parliament* of 1572 and a known presbyterian, was in the midst of a publishing campaign designed to distance himself from more radical attachments and demonstrate his loyalty to church and crown. His translation of *Quatre sermons* fit nicely into this agenda, not simply because Field does not explicitly invoke the matters of church polity and liturgy that so clearly marked the incendiary *Admonition*. More interestingly, I argue, is how Field takes advantage of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite message and the collection’s homiletic form to repeat the *Admonition*’s scathing critique of moderates in the English church without
drawing attention to this strategy. Once again, Calvin’s 1552 decision to rework his anti-
Nicodemism into a unique form would have fateful consequences for its later reception.

Finally, a brief conclusion summarizes my argument and findings, as well as
demonstrates opportunities for future research in Calvin, Nicodemism, the Reformation in
England, and contemporary theological issues. Specifically, I highlight ways in which
my dissertation points to fruitful work yet to be done in Calvin’s biblical exegesis, the
discrete elements of his engagement with Nicodemism, how his polemic against
religious dissimulation has contributed to conflicting portrayals of Calvin in the broader
Reformed tradition, and how the contextual nature of his writings on Nicodemism must
condition their use today in places where Christians remain tempted to hide their faith.
1. Revisiting Calvin’s Approach to Nicodemism: Preliminary Considerations

1.1 Introduction

This chapter lays the groundwork for my analysis of *Quatre sermons* and its reception in English translation. This proceeds in three stages. First, I survey the literature on Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism to assess the state of research and set forth how the present study seeks to advance our understanding of this topic. Secondly, I clarify the approach to reading the texts upon which my analysis centers: Calvin’s 1552 publication and its five sixteenth-century English editions. Finally, I begin my analysis of *Quatre sermons* by setting forth recurring themes from Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic that will help to highlight the changes he introduced in 1552. Each of these components contributes to the argument, carried forth in chapters two through six, that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic was both adaptable and adapted in ways not appreciated in previous studies of the reformer’s writings on this subject.

1.2 Historiography

1.2.1 State of the Question: Assessing Calvin’s Approach to Nicodemism

The question of Calvin’s preoccupation with Nicodemism has received increasing attention from historians. Calvin’s position on religious dissimulation, and its reception by others, has featured prominently, for instance, as part of more complex studies devoted to the topics of iconoclasm, martyrdom, and the development of the
nascent French Reformed church. When one surveys the literature as a whole, two features stand out immediately. There is a broad consensus concerning the basic shape and central concerns of Calvin’s “anti-Nicodemite” corpus, a group of works that includes *Quatre sermons.* At the same time, there remains considerable debate, and a corresponding lack of clarity, over the attitudes and actions—even the identity—of the audiences both intended and reached by these writings. Coming to grips with the patterns into which these discussions have fallen reveals new questions. The following historiographical essay crystalizes a proposal for advancing research on Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism that involves reassessing its consistency and examining its concrete reception, as this is manifest over the publication history of a single work.

In recent years, scholars have contributed significantly to the persuasive case that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic possessed a stable theological core over many years. David Wright’s 2006 article surveys Calvin’s entire anti-Nicodemite corpus, and is

---


2 See Introduction, n. 6.

especially notable for its sensitivity to Calvin’s tone and relative intransigence compared with other Protestants taking up religious dissimulation, as well as to how Calvin’s situation may have contributed to his deep hostility toward Nicodemism. Wright examines Calvin’s “anti-Nicodemite dossier proper,” noting characteristics unique to each of the publications Calvin expressly devoted to the subject, from 1537’s *Epistolae duae* to 1562’s *Response à un certain Holandois*. The present study builds on Wright’s observation, which he leaves undeveloped, that *Quatre sermons* lays unmistakable emphasis on exile as the preferred course vis-à-vis martyrdom for would-be Nicodemites. Yet despite such attentiveness to variations between Calvin’s writings on

---

4 In response to criticism from French evangelicals, the *Petit traicté* (1543) and *Excuse … à Messieurs les Nicodémite* (1544) were republished in 1545 (Latin), 1546 (French) and 1549/50 (Latin) with the concurring opinions of Bucer, Philip Melanchthon, Heinrich Bullinger, and Peter Martyr Vermigli and the Zurich church as impressive support for Calvin’s position. Wright is the first to compare these *consilia* with Calvin’s own addendum to demonstrate Calvin’s terse inflexibility vis-à-vis his peers; “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 76-82.

5 Ibid., 74. For a list of published works generally agreed to comprise Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, see Introduction, n. 6. Eire’s catalogue of seven original works from 1536 to 1562 that constitute a discrete corpus of “Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemite Writings” demarcates this body of work in manner reflected in subsequent analyses; *War Against the Idols*, 240-250. See also Wulfert De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 120-126; van Veen, *Verschooninghe*, 35-62; and the recent English translation of Calvin’s works in Skolimsky trans., *Come Out From Among Them*. Eire’s list reflects his own narrowing of previous assessments of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite corpus that failed to distinguish Calvin’s handling of this problem from his approach to other groups such as so-called “Libertines” and skeptical humanists; “Reappraisal,” 49-51. For Nicodemism considered as a discrete phenomenon in Calvin’s thinking despite parallels to his views on Epicureanism and Stoicism, see below.

6 “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 74-75, 81, 84-85. Wright concedes the plausibility that Calvin may have been motivated in 1552 by a desire for the support of French immigrants in Geneva. My argument in chapter two provides a theological account of Calvin’s emphasis on exile and how this functions in *Quatre sermons* as a positive counterpoint to the negativity Wright has traced across Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism. That chapter also explores the probability that Calvin intended the publication not merely for a Nicodemite readership but also—even primarily—to address the church in Geneva. Also important is Wright’s observation that, beyond this more formal anti-Nicodemite “canon,” the topic never seemed to be far from Calvin’s mind, even while the reformer was focused on other subjects (73-74). For reasons that this might be so, see Max
Nicodemism, Wright’s central point remains the uniformity and diachronic consistency of Calvin’s basic position that attendance at the Mass is irredeemable idolatry. This intransigent vision, Wright argues, was already in place in Calvin’s 1536 letter to Nicholas Duchemin, published in 1537 as the first of the *Epistolae duae*, and remained unchanged throughout Calvin’s career, reflecting his concern for “the honor and glory due to God in purity of worship.”

Taken *in toto*, Wright finds the “consistent core to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism” in a theologically-grounded “passion for true worship.”

This emphasis on the unifying characteristics that define Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite corpus is also a distinguishing feature of Carlos Eire’s 1986 monograph *War Against the Idols*. Eire devotes a pair of chapters to, respectively, “Calvin’s Attack on Idolatry” and “Calvin Against the Nicodemites,” with the latter described as an Engammare, “Une certaine idée de la France chez Jean Calvin l’exilé,” *Bulletin de la société de l’histoire du protestantisme français: études, documents, chronique littéraire* (2009): 15–27.

7 Ibid., 90. Christoph Burger questions whether the letter was ever meant only for Duchemin, rather a wider circle of (former) “friends” all along; “Calvin comme maître,” 149-158. After a lengthy preamble to Duchemin, Calvin claims to have adapted this letter for a wider audience, going on to lay out his basic case against dissimulation (CO 5:243). On Calvin’s rhetorical strategy, see Millet, *Calvin et la dynamique*, 809-828.

8 Ibid. Wright concludes that, while Calvin seems to be the harshest critic of Nicodemism among sixteenth-century evangelicals, attempts to pinpoint the precise reasons behind his severe tone remain inconclusive. Wright lists several possibilities, including Calvin’s personal experience in 1536 as a covert evangelical in the court of Renée de Ferrara, as well as the reformer’s reading and use of Seneca and Tertullian. Ultimately, given a lack of textual evidence to substantiate a precise explanation for Calvin’s harsh rhetoric as early as 1536, Wright is content to leave its cause as “multi-factorial” (90). For others’ attempts to account for Calvin’s vitriolic intensity and its possible causes, see the discussion below of Frans Pieter van Stam, “The Group of Meaux as First Target of Farel and Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism,” *Bibliothèque d’humanisme et renaissance: travaux et documents* 68:2 (2006): 253-276. Although published in the same year, Wright’s article was a revision of a 1998 conference paper, and thus understandably does not account for van Stam’s work.
expression of the first.\footnote{War Against the Idols, 195-275.} Eire’s work is impressive for its detailed attention to the logic of Calvin’s opposition to Nicodemism as this flowed from the reformer’s criteria for pure worship, which in turn was grounded in a metaphysic that refused to separate internal devotion from external actions because both soul and body belong God.\footnote{Ibid. Calvin’s opposition to Nicodemism, according to Eire, is primarily about worship: “Calvin would never permit the act of worship to be considered subjectively, from the worshiper’s point of view. Body and spirit had to participate in offering to God a worship that was spiritual in nature … Nicodemism did not agree with Calvin’s interpretation of the nature of worship because it assumed that without inner consent there could be no idolatry. Calvin was struggling against an attitude … that separated interior belief from outward worship” (256-257). Eire distinguishes here between “dissimulation” and “simulation”—following Calvin’s own definition in 1543—with the former simply failure to disclose one’s commitments (“dissimulation se commet en cachant ce qu’on a dedans le cueur”), while the latter went a step further to pretend to be what one is not (“simulation est plus, c’est de faire semblant et feindre ce qui n’est point”; CO 6:546. The reformer identifies the behavior he addresses in 1543 as “simulation” at the Mass. Yet because Calvin’s specific attacks against “simulation” almost always include a rejection of “dissimulation” on the basis that God requires Christians to profess their faith openly—because true faith must be manifest as genuine confession—it is impossible to separate the two concepts. See, for example, Calvin’s rejection of dissimulation on these grounds in Epistolae duae: “Thus one must not satisfy oneself with cunning dissimulation [callida dissimulatione] … for true piety gives birth to true confession [vera enim pietas, veram confessionem]” (CO 5:244). For the purposes of the present study both simulation and dissimulation will be connoted by “religious dissimulation,” which will be used interchangeably with “Nicodemism.”} One of the strengths of Eire’s argument is that it complicates reductionist theories that attempt to portray Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism primarily as political opportunism.\footnote{See, for example, Eugénie Droz, “Calvin et les Nicodemites,” in Chemins de l’hérésie. textes et documents, 4 vols. (Geneva: Slatkine 1970-1976), I:131-171. I interact with Droz’s analysis below. The argument that Calvin’s political ambitions are the primary lens through which one should interpret his doctrinal statements has been made in Charmarie Jenkins Blaisdell, “Calvin’s Letters to Women: The Courting of Ladies in High Places,” Sixteenth Century Journal 13:3 (1982): 67-84.} Like Wright after him, Eire demonstrates that Calvin had profound theological reasons for opposing religious dissimulation. Eire goes on to describe how Calvin’s theology might have impacted social contexts.\footnote{See, for example, Eugénie Droz, “Calvin et les Nicodemites,” in Chemins de l’hérésie. textes et documents, 4 vols. (Geneva: Slatkine 1970-1976), I:131-171. I interact with Droz’s analysis below. The argument that Calvin’s political ambitions are the primary lens through which one should interpret his doctrinal statements has been made in Charmarie Jenkins Blaisdell, “Calvin’s Letters to Women: The Courting of Ladies in High Places,” Sixteenth Century Journal 13:3 (1982): 67-84.} Yet Eire does not give sufficient attention to how these
contexts may, in turn, have influenced the shape of Calvin’s theology, even producing the variations one finds between the reformer’s anti-Nicodemitic writings. Eire perhaps understates these factors in order to focus on his overarching Reformation-as-iconoclasm thesis, within which he treats Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism as a whole.

Another limitation of Eire’s work is that it relies primarily on Calvin’s Institutio, letters, and treatises, with just a few references to his biblical commentaries. Greater attention remains to be devoted to Calvin’s exegetical works as a source for understanding his anti-Nicodemitic theology, as well as how it was at times quite flexibly applied to the rapidly shifting circumstances of his day. In his lectures and sermons, Calvin often

---

12 War Against the Idols, 4-5, 276-310. Eire’s larger argument is that a Reformed theology of pure worship, epitomized in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemitic position, tended naturally toward iconoclastic behavior and subsequent political instability wherever such theology clashed with a Roman Catholic status quo.

13 In the course of his analysis Eire devotes some attention to “Calvin and the Question of Exile,” discussing how the reformer holds forth flight—to a place where one might worship freely according to God’s Word—as one of only two legitimate options for Nicodemites. On this theme, Eire recognizes that Calvin’s “opposition to compromise and his call to exile stem not only from his fear of the ‘contagion’ of idolatrty, but also from his ecclesiological doctrine”; War Against the Idols, 260-264. Eire observes that, for Calvin, God requires Christians to locate their “true ‘nationalism’” in the “‘true’ Christian church” defined by its liturgical purity (262). Although his examples come almost exclusively from Quatre sermons, Eire does not comment on the uniqueness of this publication for Calvin’s use of ecclesiological themes to support exile, nor does he account for why Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism took this form in 1552. David Wright is comparatively more sensitive to how Quatre sermons brings Calvin’s developing ecclesiology into his anti-Nicodemism, but does not explore this connection further; “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 83. My own analysis of Quatre sermons in chapter two examines more closely how Calvin argues there not only for pure worship, but connects this to church polity, spiritual nurture, and a deeply emotional reading of the Psalms.

14 Engaging with Eire’s larger argument is beyond the scope of this study.

15 Wright lists a handful of examples of explicit references to Nicodemism in Calvin’s biblical commentaries, including Ps 16:4 (CO 31:153); Jer 10:11 (CO 38:74); Hos 4:15 (CO 42:290); Jn 7:50 (CO 47:186-187) and 19:38 (CO 47:424) and Acts 21:26 (CO 48:486); “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 74. He further notes that there are also abundant allusions to Nicodemism in Calvin’s exegesis that remain to be studied. The present study contributes to this effort by examining Calvin’s Psalms exegesis in connection with religious dissimulation.
addressed his immediate context in ways different from his more formal writings.16 Chapter two argues that *Quatre sermons* united Calvin’s Old Testament exegesis and ecclesiology in a unique homiletic package designed to silence local opposition to his ministry—a strategy overlooked without greater attention to how genre and context converge to divulge important ways in which Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism could, at times, be both theologically consistent and yet not primarily about Nicodemism.

Peter Matheson’s helpful analysis of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism vis-à-vis the positions of other reformers further supports the monolithic impression of the Genevan reformer’s position as consistent and inflexible, even when he disagreed with men he respected—in this case, Calvin’s Strasbourg mentors Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito.17 Along with Capito, who may have had a hand in authoring the *Consilium Theologicum*, Bucer advocated a strategy that stressed “the ‘anonymous’ individual,

---


working from within the situation and exercising thus his God-given vocation” with the hope of bringing about gradual reform of the church from within.\textsuperscript{18} This gradual, “missionary” approach stands in contrast to the more “apocalyptic” position of Calvin, Viret, and Bullinger, who pressed the need for individuals to oppose Roman worship outwardly and disruptively, through exile or the risk of martyrdom.\textsuperscript{19} While it is uncertain if Bucer’s Consilium was a direct answer to Calvin’s 1537 Epistolae duae, the Consilium does indicate where Bucer stood in relation to Calvin’s published position.\textsuperscript{20} Calvin likewise never mentions the Consilium or its authors by name, yet interacts with its ideas more or less directly.\textsuperscript{21} While Matheson’s analysis of Calvin among his peers is


\textsuperscript{19} Matheson, “Martyrdom or Mission,” 157. Matheson is careful to stress that the more moderate position did not deny that the Mass is corrupt and idolatrous, but rather that those who held this view were more tolerant of these abuses for the sake of change over time. On the other hand, “for Bullinger and Calvin this was plain defiance of the commandments of God, and there was no room for so-called flexibility” (169).

\textsuperscript{20} The Consilium never mentions Calvin or any other opponent by name. Frans Pieter van Stam agrees with Pierre Fraenkel that Bucer’s “clear” opponent is Calvin; Van Stam, “Group of Meaux,” 273; cf. Fraenkel’s introduction to Consilium, BOL 4:xxiv (“Certes, c’est Calvin que Bucer y attaque”). On the other hand, Matheson contends, more convincingly, that the likely focus was Bullinger’s De Origine Erroris Libri Duo (1539), given the animosity between the two theologians at the time and the Consilium’s fittingness as an answer to Bullinger’s thesis; “Martyrdom or Mission,” 164-165. All the same, Matheson allows the strong probability that, regardless of its direct target, “the Consilium embodies the results of what must have been long and serious discussions with the young John Calvin,” who shared a garden Bucer (165); see also Augustijn, “Calvin in Strasbourg,” esp. 174-177. Van Stam curiously makes no mention of Matheson’s essay.

\textsuperscript{21} Calvin’s closest direct rebuttal comes in a pair of letters he wrote in 1540 and 1541 to unnamed recipients; see n. 92 below. The 1540 letter was subsequently published as a supplemental epistle to 1543’s Petit traicté (CO 6:579-588). Robert White has analyzed the 1541 letter for its remarkably moderate tone, presenting a translation of this letter as a window into Calvin’s disagreement with those among whom he was living at the time; “Calvin and the Nicodemite Controversy,” 282-296. For Johannes von Bekensteyn’s account of the original letter among others he had in his possession in 1543, see Alfred Hegler, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mystik in der Reformationszeit, Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte: Texte und Untersuchungen,
useful for situating the reformer’s position on a spectrum of evangelical responses to
religious dissimulation, its portrayal of Calvin does not devote much attention to variety
within his anti-Nicodemite corpus. Furthermore, emphasizing Calvin’s rigidity on the
question of religious dissimulation contributes to the general impression that his anti-
Nicodemite polemic was essentially a monolith that remained static over time.

This emphasis on Calvin’s inflexibility centers on the theological coherence of his
rejection of the Roman Mass and is reflected widely in the literature, where scholars
frequently glean from his writings on Nicodemism interchangeably to portray his
position, occasionally citing many writings without differentiating them, or choosing
one or two works to exemplify Calvin’s stance at all times. Even Eugénie Droz’s
analysis, which attributes less than pristine motives to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite agenda,
does not challenge the characterization that the reformer basically said the same thing
repeatedly concerning religious dissimulation: Don’t do it. Such scholarly consensus

Ergänzungsband bd. 1, ed. W. Köhler (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1906), 31-35. For more on the 1541 letter in the
wider context of Continental influences on the English Reformation, see chapter three below.

22 See, for example, Balserak, Establishing the Remnant, 52-63; Philip Benedict, Christ’s Churches Purely
Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 85-86; Bernard Cottret,
Calvin. biographie (France: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1995), 275-280; Droz, “Nicodémites,” 133-148; Eire, War
Against the Idols, 234-275; Gordon, Calvin, 189-195; Gregory, Salvation at Stake, 154-162; Shepardson, Burning
Zeal, 112-132; Van Veen, 22-62; and Zagorin, Ways of Lying, 63-82.

highlights the consistent theological core of Calvin’s tireless attack on Nicodemism. At the same time, such studies can obscure flexibility in Calvin’s approach to this problem.

When we come to the question of Calvin’s audience—both intended and actual—several possibilities have been suggested. Albert Autin’s pioneering study brought Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite into the modern scholarly discussion. Autin uses the reformer’s attacks on dissimulation as an index for analyzing the collective psyche of the early French Protestant movement, which Autin connects to the moderate, non-violent reformist sensibilities of leaders such as Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples and others gathered at Meaux under Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet. While one can imagine parallels between Nicodemism and the harmonious marriage of evangelical doctrine and Roman

24 One additional study on the consistency of Calvin’s position must also be mentioned for its affirmation of Calvin’s consistency while taking up a surprising exception. Loretta T. Johnson Burns has drawn attention to a fascinating episode in 1561 in which Calvin, responding to an inquiry from Theodore Beza, seems to allow for the possibility of a Catholic bishop openly embracing the Reformed faith while remaining in his ecclesiastical office; “The Politics of Conversion: John Calvin and the Bishop of Troyes,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 254 (1994): 809–822. The man in question is Antonio Caracciolo, Bishop of Troyes. Calvin does not refer to Caracciolo by name and addresses the issue via a hypothetical situation put forth by Beza. Weaving together a diverse collection of sources and suggesting that Calvin could have been influenced by a new political situation in France, Burns concludes that Calvin’s pragmatism “apparently reflecting the circumstances of 1561, stretch but do not break his doctrine” (820). Rather than making the more difficult claim that Calvin has forsaken his ironclad anti-Nicodemism that rejects any participation in Roman worship, Burns opts for the modest proposal that Calvin was only human and seized upon an opportunity as one of many who “struggled to establish a viable and organized Reformed church in France during the late sixteenth century, and as their views changed over time with experience” (821).

25 *La crise du nicodémisme*. An earlier, nineteenth century essay had sketched Calvin’s basic position on Nicodemism from 1536 through the *Quatre sermons* of 1552, anticipating the position of Autin and others, who would argue that Calvin’s antagonists were the Meaux circle of Briçonnet and Lefèvre d’Etaples; Henry Martyn Baird, “The Nicodemites of the Sixteenth Century,” *Methodist Review* 46 (1864): 436-454.

confession maintained by the Fabrist humanists, it is not certain that the Meaux group were the Nicodemites Calvin described, rather than members of the old church who had no problem embracing reformist ideas alongside traditional faith and practices. In the same vein, F. P. van Stam refers the sudden vitriol of Calvin’s and Farel’s abruptly appearing assault on religious dissimulation in 1536 to the latter’s falling out with the Meaux group, without claiming to account for all of Calvin’s Nicodemites targeted across his later works. Though he perhaps places too much emphasis on Farel’s sensitivity over being slighted by the Meaux group as the primary impetus for the French exiles’ severe attack on Nicodemites, van Stam’s analysis exemplifies how the study of contextual factors might illumine distinct aspects of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism in the case of individual works.

---


28 “Group of Meaux,” 254, 259-262, *et passim*. Noting the sudden vehemence with which anti-Nicodemite writings “burst onto the scene” in late 1536 from the pens of Calvin and Farel, van Stam’s inquiry sets out to locate “a possible trigger.” This he finds in the mutual influence of the two close friends upon one another’s reaction to their perception of the Meaux group as evangelical sympathizers who remained Catholic.

29 Nonetheless, van Stam’s assessment of textual evidence offers a plausible account of how the lifelong friends arrived at a jointly held intransigence against religious dissimulation. Van Stam also finds in Calvin’s 1536 correspondence roots of the reformer’s program for establishing a church outside Rome (263-64). For more on this theme, see Balserak, *Establishing the Remnant*, esp. 19-52.
A significant departure from Autin’s localized thesis regarding the identity of French Nicodemites is Carlo Ginzburg’s development of Delio Cantimori’s work on Italian Nicodemism. Ginzburg transcends the boundaries of national contexts to argue for Nicodemism as a unified, pan-European movement based not negatively in a reaction of fear, indifference, or unwillingness to divide the church, but upon a positive understanding of spirituality as an internal reality independent of external behavior.30 Despite the differing scope and details of their narratives, both Autin and Ginzburg attempt to define Nicodemism as a unified movement of social solidarity around shared theological or philosophical ideals. This approach, however, is deeply problematic.

Carlos Eire and, more recently, Perez Zagorin have demonstrated that the sources do not bear interpreting Nicodemism as a cohesive social movement, whether defined nationally or philosophically.31 If Eire has made Nicodemism more ambiguous

30 Cantimori, *Prospettive di storia ereticale italiana del Cinquecento* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1960), 51-66. Ginzburg traces this movement to a single theological work: Otto Brunfels’ 1527 *Pandectae veteris et novis testament; Il Nicodemismo*, xiv-xvii et passim. Ginzburg characterizes this treatise, which outlines guidance and a justification for religious simulation, as Brunfels’ response to the failed Peasants Revolt of 1525, and reads it as a subversion of organized religion that caught the attention of other spiritualist thinkers, including Lefèvre in France, and quickly became a unified movement of dissembling across Europe (85-124).

31 Eire, “Reappraisal,” 51-69; Zagorin, *Ways of Lying, passim*. Eire examines theological sources to show that Brunfels’ treatise is hardly unique. Others representing diverse perspectives also tried to justified dissembling, although the anti-Nicodemite polemic of Calvin and others might give the mistaken impression of a unified movement (67-68). On the contrary, according Eire, Nicodemism “could not have been the creation of one specific group of individuals … Various influences played a part in [its] development … but none, outside the fear for persecution can be considered central. … None of the evidence to date proves it to be otherwise.” Further, “Calvin himself attacked all dissemblers, regardless of their motivation, and openly admitted that he was addressing a varied crowd” (69). In 1544 Calvin named fear of other things before God as the main problem ultimately uniting all Nicodemites, whose consequent trifling with God’s truth to avoid suffering might be expressed in several categories of dissemblers: 1.) preachers afraid to challenge idolatry because they enjoy the benefits of their office; 2.) those who treat the gospel as a mere intellectual game; 3.) philosophers who fear danger; 4.) merchants and common people
and diverse a concept than had previously been understood, pointing out Calvin’s own concession of diversity among those he addressed, Zagorin multiplies exponentially the complex history of religious dissembling by showing how lying, which has always been a part of human existence, became a pan-confessional catalyst for changing the face of Western Europe throughout the increasingly pluralistic early modern era and beyond.\textsuperscript{32}

As helpful as these studies are for diversifying our understanding of who Calvin might have had in view when he wrote against Nicodemism, they do not bring us any closer to resolving the question. While Eire critiques the homogenizing tendencies of Autin and Ginzburg, his own reading of Nicodemism is in turn scrutinized by Francis Higman, who faults Eire for too readily following Calvin’s lead for establishing—and limiting—the category “Nicodemite,” especially in an early-Reformation context characterized by quite fluid confessional identity.\textsuperscript{33} Although he fails to cite either Eire who fear material loss and temporal discomfort (CO 6:597–602, 608-610). Reid has helpfully identified “les mignons de court,” listed under Calvin’s second category, as those associated with the Queen of Navarre, “Mignonne” being “Francis I’s pet name for Marguerite”; King’s Sister, 552.

\textsuperscript{32} Ways of Lying, 1. Arguing almost entirely from theological literature dating back to early Christianity, Zagorin contends that simulation and dissimulation were “as widespread as the world and as old as nature itself.” Moreover, the literature providing theological justification for dissembling—especially as a response to persecution—has a long history unique neither to the early modern era, nor even to Christianity. Finding condemnations of dissembling alongside justifications for dissembling in the literature of various Christian sects, as well as in Jewish and Muslim sources, Zagorin argues for the general pervasiveness of hiding one’s true beliefs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of which “Nicodemism” as traditionally conceived in relation to Calvin was simply one expression of a widespread tendency to dissimulate (passim, esp. 289-330).

\textsuperscript{33} “The Question of Nicodemism,” 165-170. Higman challenges Eire’s use of terms such as “Protestant” and “Protestant Community” as anachronistic categories for understanding group identity in the early-sixteenth-century. To support his broader conception of Nicodemism, which includes unabashedly evangelical Catholics, Higman provides a bibliography of primary sources that might fit his newly-expanded category, including works by Margurite de Navarre and Guillaume Farel.
or Higman, George Tavard stands in continuity with the latter, taking up a similar argument for expanding the concept of French Nicodemism beyond Calvin’s description of the phenomenon as a theological and social problem needing correction to include principled Roman Catholics with evangelical sympathies.\textsuperscript{34} Admiring as these calls are for redrawing the theoretical boundaries of French Nicodemism as a scholarly concept, they are less useful for the present study, which is interested precisely in Calvin’s understanding.\textsuperscript{35} Such attempts at redefinition risk distorting our grasp of a phenomenon—real or imagined—clearly defined by Calvin and others as a duplicitous exchange of one’s identity for another in order to mislead one’s community.\textsuperscript{36}

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{34} “Calvin and the Nicodemites,” in John Calvin and Roman Catholicism: Critique and Engagement, Then and Now, ed. Randall Zachman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 59–78.

\textsuperscript{35} These studies are helpful for alerting us to the complexities attached to employing a blanket term like “Nicodemite” for a discrete group of people who possessed wide and varied motives for their choices. However, while the question of whether deliberately evangelical Catholics should be considered Nicodemites is interesting to modern academics, it was of no concern to Calvin, who clearly had a narrower view of those who believed that their dissembling was wrong but persisted in it anyway. For more on this, see below. Thus a study of Nicodemism as it relates to Calvin’s theology should naturally try to reconstruct Calvin’s account of the phenomenon, whether or not this definition is adequate by today’s standards. Nevertheless, this discussion reminds us that a diverse range of perspectives on this issue existed in Calvin’s day, including those who dissembled out of fear, those who dissembled out of principled duty, and those who did not dissemble at all, but openly professed evangelical beliefs as content Catholics. Moreover, the question of an individual’s motives is itself a matter of perspective. For example, Calvin considered his friend Louis du Tillet to be in danger of Nicodemism, while du Tillet professed a full and open return to Rome. Any attempt to label du Tillet—whether as “Reformed,” “Nicodemite,” or “Catholic”—must be sensitive not only to what period of du Tillet’s life is in view, but also to the more complex matter of whose perspective, in an era when these categories were particularly fluid, will be allowed to adjudicate du Tillet’s status. On Calvin’s sense of betrayal over his (former) friend’s return to Rome, see Gordon, Calvin, 93-98.

\textsuperscript{36} On the similar views of Heinrich Bullinger and Pierre Viret, see Matheson, “Martyrdom or Mission,” 164-171. Bullinger, Vermigli, and Wolfgang Musculus are examined in chapter three, for their contributions to the English reception of Continental anti-Nicodemite theology. Though not directly engaging arguments like Higman’s and Tavard’s, others have called for a more careful limiting of “Nicodemism” to distinguish it from other early modern strategies for negotiating religious identity. In a useful local study, for instance, John Jeffries Martin demonstrates important differences between Nicodemites and Marranos—often viewed...
Yet, as clear as Calvin’s description of Nicodemite behavior might have been, the scholarship has revealed an impasse: the precise individuals, or even any neatly defined groups, Calvin had in view with these attacks on religious dissimulation cannot be identified with certainty. Members of the Meaux group and the Queen of Navarre are plausible candidates, at least for some of Calvin’s works. An individual like Antoine Fumée, who pushed back against Calvin for the reformer’s harshness on the subject, also could have fit the bill. Nikki Shepardson has argued for a general audience of French Reformed Christians, whose imaginations Calvin and Viret sought to discipline into a cohesive self-understanding via a rhetoric of martyrdom rooted in anti-Nicodemite arguments. On the subject of martyrdom, Brad Gregory contends that Protestants who

as Christian and Jewish expressions of the same phenomenon—arguing that Nicodemism involved a duplicitous exchange of identities, whereas Marranism was actually the self-conscious hybridization of various religious and cultural identities; “Marranos and Nicodemites in Sixteenth-Century Venice,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41:3 (2011), 577-599. See also the studies that examine the question of dissimulation beyond Christianity in early modern Europe collected in Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzig eds., *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

37 Van Stam, “Group of Meaux,” passim; Reid, *King’s Sister*, 553-560.

38 Wright, “Was Was Calvin So Severe,” 67; Gordon, *Calvin*, 190-191. Fumée wrote Calvin following the publication of the *Petit Traicté* to share the response of evangelicals Paris, who complained of Calvin’s harshness and questioned the reformer’s choice to flee danger (CO 11:645-646). After the *Excuse*, Fumée wrote again, insisting that Calvin seek the advice of fellow theologians—specifically Luther, Melanchthon, and Bucer—to obtain their thoughts on the appropriateness of political exile and necessity of leaving the Roman Church (CO 11:825-830). Calvin had written to Luther on the topic (CO 12:7-8), but via Melanchton (CO 12:9-12), who decided not to pass along the letter (CO 12:61). Still Calvin obtained others’ opinions for a 1545 reissue of the *Petit traicté* and *Excuse* that included conseils of Melanchton, Bucer, and Peter Martyr Vermigli, as well as Calvin’s brief “conseil et conclusion”; *Petite traicté, montrant que doit faire un fidele entre les papistes* (Geneva: Jean Girard, 1545). For an analysis of this work, see Wright, “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 75-82; also BC I:195-198 (45/9). See n. 4 above.

39 *Burning Zeal*, 112-132.
willingly chose death for their evangelical faith were the true “anti-Nicodemites,” whose response to Calvin’s words was obvious, even as the identities and reactions of actual Nicodemites largely remained a mystery apart from Calvin’s account of their views.\(^{40}\)

At the heart of various attempts to identify precisely Calvin’s Nicodemites and reconstruct their experience lies the problem of sources. In every case, the trail runs cold and one is left to conjecture. The weakness that plagues all the attempts to reveal the nature and identity of Calvin’s opponents is their inability to draw convincing conclusions about social phenomena from primarily theological sources. While Autin, Ginzburg, and Zagorin are to be commended for their careful attempts to reconstruct, respectively, a culture of fear or indifference, a culture of spirituality, or a culture of lying throughout part or all of early modern Europe from available sources, they must base their accounts on prescriptive works on religious dissimulation that have, at best, a questionable relation to actual people, events, and circumstances. In Zagorin’s case, this has led to an assertion about culture so vague that the particularities of localities and personalities—such as those surrounding Calvin and dissimulation in the French Religious Wars—are flattened in order to make the sweeping claim that “the Age of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation” might also be named “the Age of Dissimulation.”\(^{41}\) More limited examinations of individual works to link them to

\(^{40}\) *Salvation at Stake*, 154-155.

\(^{41}\) *Ways of Lying*, 330.
concrete people and circumstances are fruitful for suggesting possible targets and eliminating others with respect to Calvin’s intent. It is true that Calvin addresses Nicholas Duchemin and Gérard Roussel in *Epistolae duae*, and that Theodore Coornhert apparently is the *certain Holandois* of 1562. The reformer chides these men for their poor example to others facing temptation to compromise with idolatry. Yet those Calvin seeks to teach remain a mystery. Even in these cases of letters singling out bad role models, their situations were so different that it is impossible to extrapolate the contours of a single “Nicodemite profile” from the French Catholic priests and the Dutch spiritualist theologian. Furthermore, even if it were possible, in theory, to sketch out a monolithic portrait of the French Nicodemite Calvin intended for his polemic to influence, there would be no guarantees that this portrait matches up with real persons. With Calvin’s writings on this subject, therefore, we are dealing with exhibits in a theological debate.

Over against totalizing accounts of Nicodemism, Eire has argued that the problem Calvin addressed most likely involved various species of an “amorphous

---


43 To be fair, Calvin seems interested not so much in the particulars of each man’s situation as how this behavior (in the case of Duchemin and Roussel) or teaching (with Coornhert) might lead others to embrace idolatry through religious dissimulation. Despite the differences between each of these foes, Calvin accused them all of capitulating to pressure to conform to Roman ritual motivated by self-preservation, love of wealth, and fear of human power before a proper regard for God’s honor (CO 5:241-243, 282-284; 9:621-624). For Calvin, it was a clear case of Christians embracing or advocating for behaviors they knew to be wrong. This must be distinguished from how the accused, in each case, might have understood his own situation. See below for how this element of willful disobedience was a critical element in Calvin’s critique of all those he charged with the belonging to the company of Nicodemites.
phenomenon” embracing a range of diverse motives held by individuals across Europe, loosely united insofar as they practiced different strategies of dissembling to avoid persecution.\textsuperscript{44} Yet even this sensible conclusion remains more a matter of plausibility than of certainty. Again, Calvin’s own works indicate that the behavior he describes manifested in diverse ways as outward expressions of a common sensibility or attitude.\textsuperscript{45}

The problem, of course, is that, in the case of Nicodemism, such expression is intrinsically invisible. Apart from the attacks of her enemies or the apology of his friends, the successful Nicodemite evades detection, even under the scrutiny of the most meticulous historian.\textsuperscript{46} In the end, even tweaking one’s method of inquiry—whether by

\textsuperscript{44} “Reappraisal,” 69.

\textsuperscript{45} CO 6:597–602, 608–610; see n. 31 above.

\textsuperscript{46} See, among others, these excellent social histories of the French civil wars that have been produced in recent decades, which employ “religion” as a category to account for behavior: Philip Benedict, \textit{Rouen During the Wars of Religion} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Barbara B. Diefendorf, \textit{Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Mack P. Holt, \textit{The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Beyond an occasional passing mention of the fact that there may have been Protestants who lived as Catholics in appearance, Nicodemism gets no further attention despite the prevalence of such behavior in the complaints of contemporary enemies such as Calvin, Farel, and Viret; see, for example, Diefendorf, \textit{Beneath the Cross}, 121–22, 144. Some of this omission may be attributed to the methodological approach of such studies, which embrace a view of religion as socially enacted ritual—a theoretical framework that cannot account well for “religion” as an internal identity detached from, or even (as with Nicodemism) actively opposed to—one’s public performance of a community’s rites. See also Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence,” in \textit{Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 152-187. For an overview of the movement historical studies to consider religion as a cultural phenomenon—not simply a material one—with deep implications for understanding the formation of social boundaries, see Holt, “Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion,” \textit{French Historical Studies} 18:2 (1995): 524-555. See also the debate surrounding Holt’s analysis: Henry Heller, “Putting History Back into the Religious Wars: A Reply to Mack P. Holt,” \textit{French Historical Studies} 19:3 (1996): 853-861; Holt, “Religion, Historical Method, and Historical Forces: A Rejoinder,” \textit{French Historical Studies} 19:3 (1996): 863-873; and Susan Rosa and Dale Van Kley, “Religion and the Historical Discipline: A Reply to Mack Holt and Henry Heller,” \textit{French Historical Studies} 21:4 (1998): 611-629. The theoretical foundations for Holt’s sociological account of religion as a cultural phenomenon derive from Emile Durkheim’s 1912 essay on the \textit{Elementary Forms of Religious Life},
reconceiving “Nicodemism,” fixing one’s focus on a certain moment versus another, or looking at theological works that justify dissimulation rather than those condemn it—cannot resolve the lack of sources lying outside the theological debate over whether it is permissible to hide one’s faith. In the meantime, we await the discovery of the diaries of Nicodemites who succeeded in remaining hidden.

This lack of sources should not be surprising. It is intrinsic to the phenomenon in question, namely a hidden identity that becomes something different once revealed. Yet this does not mean that engagement with the character of Calvin’s Nicodemite has reached a stalemate. Instead, the irresolvable scholarly quest for the historical Nicodemite suggests that, rather than fixating on sources we lack, perhaps it is time to ask different questions of the sources we possess. Specifically, the ability to map Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic onto a spectrum of possible targets points to the flexibility of this theme for attacking a diverse range of enemies. One area that has yet to be examined sufficiently is how this openness to various interpretations functioned to make Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic flexible in ways that have eluded scholarship that has largely taken for granted Calvin’s consistent message against compromise with Roman worship. It is true that, in some cases, a certain individual or group may have been the reformer’s express target when he wrote against Nicodemism. It is also possible

---

trans. Joseph W. Swain (New York: Free Press, 1965). Engaging the methodological implications of recent trends in the social history of religion for research on Nicodemism is beyond the scope the present work. They are mentioned here simply to point out the various challenges—both methodological and source-related—for research into the identities and practices of actual Nicodemites in the sixteenth century.
that Calvin at times had less than a fully-formed and precise notion of his mark. After all, he does not name names. Nor could he have. Notwithstanding the reformer’s confident allegations, the identities of actual Nicodemites were in fact a mystery to Calvin as well. Consequently, the question arises as to whether flexibility, given the hiddenness intrinsic to Nicodemism, is reflected in Calvin’s use of this theme, so that his invective pointed at no dissemblers in particular, or even to none at all. This latter possibility is my point of departure in assessing Calvin’s approach in Quatre sermons.

1.2.2 Advancing the Question: Reassessment and Reception

The foregoing survey of the literature on Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic has revealed broad consensus and significant disagreement. Regardless of what scholars believe to be the intended target of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, there is general agreement that the reformer’s approach to this problem followed a stable course that varied little over time. Calvin was uniformly negative across his corpus of “standard” anti-Nicodemite publications, rejecting any participation in the Mass as capitulation to false worship with a harsh intransigence that has been attributed especially, if not exclusively, to his zeal for true worship. At the same time, scholars have not reached any consensus about the precise identity of the Nicodemites who come under such persistent attack from Calvin for nearly thirty years. Whether imagined to be a unified

---

47 See below for a brief survey of these themes across his anti-Nicodemite works.
movement of shared theological sensibilities that favored dissimulation, various
individuals with whom Calvin’s quibbled at different points, or a loosely defined
category that embraced any persons who hid their faith to avoid persecution, Calvin’s
Nicodemites are flexibly portrayed across the scholarly examination of their situation.
Despite attempts to bring them forth, the Nicodemites of Calvin’s polemic have
succeeded in remaining hidden: the subject of debate, redefinition, and reinvention.

This account of the state of the question on Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism also points
to an opportunity. While some have avoided the mistake of simply assuming that
Calvin’s consistent message presupposed a consistent audience or single target, no one
has yet reversed the flow, so to speak, and permitted the ambiguity of Calvin’s audience
to inform—even to revise—our assumptions about Calvin’s approach to the problem.
What if Calvin’s approach to a diversely-imagined problem was more flexible than once
thought? Put another way, what can be said about the inconsistency of Calvin’s anti-
Nicodemite polemic? The present study pursues this line of inquiry, bringing together
patterns that have emerged in the study of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism to put fresh
questions to old sources. It should be clear by now that I stand indebted to those who
have pursued Calvin on Nicodemism, even if my approach differs from theirs. If not for
the painstaking efforts of others to provide a basic account of early modern Nicodemism
as a historical concept and assess the main contours of Calvin’s perception of this
phenomenon as a problem, studies like the present one would not have the freedom to
ask the questions it raises. It is only after a sound foundational understanding of
Calvin’s consistent position on the issue has been established that attention can now be devoted to uncovering areas of possible inconsistency and flexibility.

In that regard, this dissertation is concerned with revisiting the question of consistency in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic by refocusing the question of the reformer’s Nicodemites. Specifically, it will contend that the ambiguity surrounding this issue is not a scholarly impasse. While the diverse possibilities identified by others highlights the difficulty of mapping Calvin’s literary assault on religious dissimulation to concrete targets, this is not the only fruitful use of such data. The interchangeable nature of Calvin’s audience is also a fitting lens for discovering how his approach to Nicodemism might have been adapted to achieve specific goals—goals that only become apparent when one considers how Calvin might be using the ambiguity of his audience to his advantage. The present work will argue that this is the case in Quatre sermons, where the portrayal of Nicodemism as a real—but indeterminate and non-specific—threat enabled Calvin to tailor a presentation that reaches beyond Nicodemism in ways that would not have been possible had he named names and concretized his targets.

This project is a reassessment, bringing two dominant patterns in research on Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism into conversation to complicate assumptions about its monolithic nature. Just as the stark clarity of Calvin’s polemical stance against dissimulation can mistakenly suggest a uniform Nicodemite profile, the scholarly impression that Calvin kept saying the same thing can obscure real variety.
The present work is also a study of reception, an area that has not gotten much attention in relation to Calvin’s approach to dissimulation beyond observations about the attractiveness of his position. Such discussions assume its uniformity.\textsuperscript{48} This study will argue from the opposite direction. \textit{Quatre sermons}, the most popular of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings in English translation, seemed to enjoy such welcome reception for the very features that it made it different—that is, inconsistent with Calvin’s other anti-Nicodemite writings because of how he adapted his theological polemic to suit his needs in 1552. Part of this difference lay in how Calvin leveraged the ambiguity of his audience to target multiple groups simultaneously. This flexibility of address, in turn, contributed to why Calvin was so easily adapted to a very different English situation. By reassessing the consistency of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism and relating this to its reception, I hope to deepen our wider understanding of this persistent theme in the reformer’s thinking.

\textbf{1.3 Methodological Considerations}

\textbf{1.3.1 Evaluating the Intended Consequences of Ideas}

The above historiography of Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism helps situate the present study and its methodology in relation to the work of others on this topic. This dissertation revises assumptions about Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, demonstrating its flexibility in Calvin’s own thought and its use across very different contexts to

\textsuperscript{48} See chapters three and four for an overview of how Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism has been examined with respect to its reception in England.
articulate societal boundaries in ways that have escaped the notice of those who have focused on Calvin’s consistent theological rejection of idolatry. Given the nature of the published polemical sources engaged in the investigation below of how Calvin’s “Nicodemite” — a theologically-defined entity — was invoked and implemented in English ecclesiastical controversies, the present study will proceed in the mode of the history of ideas. This is not an account of actual Nicodemites in France or England, but an analysis of how others described religious dissimulation. At the same time, those who wrote against Nicodemism did not confine their concerns to any rarefied plane of ideas. These authors portrayed imminent threats to the well-being of concrete societal realities. Nicodemites might have been invisible, but they were described as a real danger. A theology of anti-Nicodemism intrinsically makes constant reference to wider cultural contexts that must be taken into account as well. Since the central texts under consideration were produced specifically to sway popular opinion and impact social situations, it will be important to set these documents within the specific historical circumstances out of which they emerged and into which they were addressed. The main interest here, though, will be to show how the ideas presented by various authors were intended to engage the imagination and influence the subsequent decisions of their targeted audiences. Whether or not these attempts ultimately were successful in

\[49\] My approach to examining authorial intention in the history of ideas is influenced by the methodological reflections of Quentin Skinner, especially on the fallacies of anachronism, mistaken accounts of influence, and the assumption that a work’s intended illocutionary force has nothing to do with its meaning; see, for example, the essays “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas” and “Motives, Intentions, and
modifying the perceptions and practices they sought to change is an entirely different set of questions beyond the scope of this study. Yet it is only when we consider these potential audiences and the stakes involved in changing social realities that a key finding of this study emerges: Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic was frequently used in ways that had little to do with Nicodemism at all. Instead, it functioned as an instrument for demarcating one’s membership or loyalty in relation to a group or a cause, often as part of a larger attempt to curry favor in the eyes of others.

1.3.2 Sources

It is necessary to make several comments regarding the limitations and scope of how the present work both selects and engages its sources. This is a historical examination of prescriptive material and its reception in additional prescriptive works. The primary concern is to illuminate—with reference to the social and political contexts in which *Quatre sermons* and its various English translations emerged—the purposes that drove Calvin and those who deployed his writings to produce a work on Nicodemism:

Interpretation,” in *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57-89, 90-102. Specifically, I try to set each text within a particular social context to illuminate its linguistic meaning, limit questions of influence to the actual decision to to take up and re-present another’s text (in the case of Calvin’s translators), and proceed with the understanding that “to understand a text must at least be to understand both the intention to be understood and the intention that this intention be understood, which the text as intended act of communication must have embodied” (“Meaning and Understanding,” 86). While there are certain fallacies of authorial intent that presume to uncover unspoken motives external to a text as a basis for establishing its meaning, there remain ways in which grasping “the nature and range of illocutionary acts that the writer may have been performing in writing a particular way” is “equivalent to understanding what the writer may have meant by writing in that particular way” (“Motives,” 100). In reading *Quatre sermons* and its translations, I am interested in this level of meaning, rooted in the text but, at the same time, considering how the text, as written, could have been understood and thus might also have been meant to be understood.
Why did they publish *Quatre sermons* when they did, in the form that they chose? Our knowledge of Calvin’s Nicodemites comes primarily through Calvin’s description of certain problem attitudes and their associated behaviors. Similarly, those who used Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism later to attack diverse foes in their respective new contexts furnished their own descriptions of these enemies. In every case, then, we are dealing with peril as a matter of perspective.

With this in mind, the present study does not pretend to be a detailed exploration of the threats against which these writers, translators, editors, and publishers engaged their efforts. Rather, it focuses on the ways in which such dangers were narrated to the public and what this suggests to us about the ones telling the story. This qualification is especially important when dealing with a phenomenon like Nicodemism, where a lack of written sources and the invisibility of persons who could have created such sources is intrinsic to the enterprise. The precise nature and identity of the Nicodemite portrayed by Calvin or John Field—or even her actual existence—is not the point of this analysis. Our questions will not center on whether or not those who produced editions of *Quatre sermons* accurately described the situations they addressed. That kind of investigation would require the reconstruction of complex social structures and events based on archival records or other contemporary descriptive sources. Such is the bedrock of social history, exemplified by so many excellent local studies produced in

recent decades. This dissertation, however, will focus on ideas as they are presented in polemical texts, giving attention to how individuals sought to use persuasion to impact their contexts, without making firm claims about the success (or failure) of these various strategies. Such an approach is not without precedent in the recent historiography of early modern Europe. To put it succinctly, this project will focus on interpreting texts with sufficient reference to their historical contexts, rather than seeking to illuminate historical contexts thoroughly by way of texts. My intent here is not to divorce texts from contexts, but to identify limits regarding my emphases, sources, and conclusions.

1.3.3 Ways of Reading

Two fundamental considerations will ground the interpretation of various editions of Quatre sermons: 1.) Any apparent rhetorical strategy designed to persuade specific audiences to think and act in certain ways; and 2.) Whether and how such strategies relate to the problem of Nicodemism, the prima facie topic of each one of these publications. This approach may seem designed unfairly to turn up tensions where none exist by reading against the grain of anti-Nicodemite works, applying a hermeneutic of suspicion to expose their true intent. Not so! The question of what, exactly, these works have to do with Nicodemism emerges naturally in the context of Elizabethan England,

---

51 See n. 46.

where the Nicodemite Calvin envisioned should not have existed. Even in Calvin’s own situation, the fact that he had already published extensively on the topic and made no claims to add anything novel in 1552 prompts one to ask why he would devote a new publication to Nicodemism—even one that included the only sermons he personally prepared for the press. In order to answer such questions about how various parties, including Calvin, sought to frame and reframe his anti-Nicodemite argument in particular instances, three areas of consideration anchor our analysis. First, the focus is on the prescriptive texts themselves—*Quatre sermons* and its various English translations—to determine each publication’s argument and how both the ideas presented and the form in which they appeared contributed to making that text’s case to prospective readers. This involves attending to prefaces and appendices, as well as to how these elements relate to Calvin’s sermons—the ostensible centerpiece of all the publications. In some cases, questions emerge regarding apparent tensions between an author’s or translator’s preface and the publication that follows. The analysis below tries to account for these in order to provide a coherent reading of a particular text in terms of its own internal consistency, exploring how each part relates to the whole of a presentation designed to influence others’ opinions. Questions about intended audience come under scrutiny, especially as the situation of French believers tempted to dissemble their faith—the apparent focus of all Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings—fades from view not only in the various translations. It seems to disappear even in Calvin’s own decisions regarding the structure and content of *Quatre sermons* in 1552.
The second major area that must be examined is the background and situation of the individuals responsible for these publications. In the case of Calvin, Robert Horne, John Field, and Anthony Munday, biographical material is relatively easy to come by. This is also true of Claude Baduel, whose Latin translation is considered in chapter four. For the anonymous translations of 1561 and 1581, the work of contextualization is more difficult. Here one must rely primarily on internal clues that illuminate the translators’ priorities and intentions. Thankfully, Rowland Hall supplies a publisher’s preface in 1561 and enough is known about the puritan printer Robert Waldegrave to link the 1581 translation to its publisher’s theological affinities. In every case, every effort is made not simply to relate the strategy of each work to an individual in a generic way, but more specifically to consider why the publication of *Quatre sermons* would have been useful to him at the time that it appeared. Accounting for such factors in a publication’s immediate context is critical for understanding ways in which anti-Nicodemite rhetoric was deployed that would be missed apart from this kind of synchronic analysis of how *Quatre sermons* was used to respond to specific historical pressures. Calvin’s 1552 political struggles in Geneva, Horne’s 1553 journey into exile, and Field’s clandestine presbyterianism of 1579, to cite a few examples, were not inconsequential to how each arranged and presented the material that became his version of *Quatre sermons*. The reconstruction of individuals’ backgrounds, circumstances, and particular concerns at a point in time supplies contextual cues for interpreting the texts under consideration.
The third factor that figures prominently in our reading of sources is relevant primarily for the translations of *Quatre sermons*, not so much for Calvin’s original. Each translation must be situated in the context of *Quatre sermons*’ overall publication history. This involves accounting for a text’s specific relation to the versions that came before it. Questions around the reception of Calvin’s French or Baduel’s Latin emerge as we analyze English translators’ respective approaches to rendering Calvin’s material for their audiences, including their decisions about which source to use and the consequences of this choice. Another issue that must be considered is whether and how earlier English translations appeared in, or seemed to influence, subsequent translations.

The ways in which translators and editors articulated their relation to Calvin and other English translations sheds light on how they understood the theological tradition they self-consciously inhabited with their own contribution. Examining each text in relation to others that share a publication lineage will reveal how *Quatre sermons* was adapted—in some cases re-adapted from earlier translations—as well as what remained unchanged from one translation to the next. A further benefit of contextualizing various translations vis-à-vis the others is the ability to observe patterns in Calvin’s emergence as a theological authority in England through the ongoing conversation around his ideas documented in successive editions of a single work. Such comparative reading is critical for reaching conclusions about why certain features of Calvin’s work were quite malleable, and thus understandably attractive to those introducing it to new contexts.
1.3.4 Brief Note on Terminology

In the interest of precision with terms that appear frequently in pages below, the following working definitions are provided for “Nicodemite,” “puritan,” “moderate,” and “radical.” Each of these is capable of connoting a wide range of possibilities. With “puritan,” for instance, an entire literature has developed around its appropriateness and usage in a particular context. This section is not intended as an entry into the ongoing debates surrounding the terms in question, but simply an indication of how persons, positions, and phenomena will be distinguished from one another below.

By “Nicodemite,” this study deliberately follows Calvin’s characterization of committed evangelicals who outwardly dissemble their faith for various reasons despite knowing that this is not faithful to their religious commitments. The nuances of this definition are important, as Calvin does not characterize everyone he accuses of going along with religious ceremony for the sake of avoiding hardship or persecution as “Nicodemites.” To make another distinction, Alexandra Walsham’s work on the nature...

---

of “Church Papists” illuminates a brand of Nicodemism whereby committed Catholics “played Protestant” to blend in to the mainstream of Elizabethan and Jacobean religion.\textsuperscript{55} Similarly, John Martin and Perez Zagorin have studied the phenomenon of religious dissimulation across confessional boundaries in local communities, as a recurring pattern of life throughout early modern Europe.\textsuperscript{56} As noted above, scholars such as Higman and Tavard have called for broadening the definition to include Catholics with evangelical sympathies who nevertheless remained comfortable and un-conflicted with staying in the Roman Church, specifically criticizing scholarship that relies too heavily on Calvin to define the parameters of Nicodemism.\textsuperscript{57} Such critique, while useful for broadening investigation into the nature and extent of religious dissimulation in general, actually reinforces the decision to limit the definition of “Nicodemite” here. As an examination of sources anchored in the Calvin’s theology, it is important to let the Genevan reformer’s usage guide our sense of his meaning. The logic underlying Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, which is also reflected in the translations, depends on the dynamic interplay of genuine faith and faulty obedience. Calvin’s Nicodemite was a fellow convinced evangelical who, for various unacceptable reasons,

\textsuperscript{54} See the distinction between Nicodemites, Epicureans, and Stoics described below.

\textsuperscript{55} Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999).

\textsuperscript{56} See nn. 32 and 36 above.

\textsuperscript{57} See nn. 34-35 above.
remained unwilling to follow through on the demands of his or her commitment to God by making a clean break with idolatrous practices.

Given the necessity to employ the terms “puritan,” “moderate,” and “radical” frequently in chapters four through six, it is important to define the use of such terms with respect to the English contexts that will be examined. “Puritans” refers to those in the Elizabethan church who, despite various positions on a range of theological and political issues, shared a common concern for the church as the community of “the godly” tasked especially with carrying out its purposes through the ministry of the preached Word. This description owes much to the important work of Patrick Collinson and Peter Lake, who distinguished between “puritanism” as an attitudinal tendency that comprehended a variety of doctrinal opinions, including the possibility of genuinely reformed episcopacy, and “presbyterianism” as a more specific conviction regarding ecclesiastical polity. Their work has enabled us to speak of a definite presbyterian faction within the Elizabethan church that played a leading role among “puritans,” but

---

Collinson, *Elizabethan Protestant Movement*, 101-108 et passim; idem., *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Lake’s work has been instrumental in demonstrating the existence of a puritan self-awareness—including the ability to identify others of the same disposition—that defies reduction to a set of views on polity or level of comfort with the “establishment.” Moderate puritanism emerges in Lake’s analysis as a phenomenon that was durable and diverse, united above all in the commitment to identifying and separating the godly from the ungodly (a communal logic), and a deep conviction in the Spirit’s work through the preached word. By understanding the puritan mindset more broadly than any single outward expression of it, Lake explains why those of diverse views on church polity and conformity could nevertheless be received with goodwill by other “godly” as one of their own and distinct from non-puritans who held similar theological views.
did not exhaustively define the movement: “While all presbyterians were puritans, not all puritans were presbyterians.”59 For the purposes of this study, “puritan” be used in this maximalist sense that includes both presbyterians like John Field, who rejected the status quo of episcopal prelacy and worship according to the Prayer Book, and others like Robert Horne and Robert Dudley who were more content with the church’s outward form. Such individuals have generally been associated with the “puritan” disposition Lake describes, with its emphasis on the church’s proselytizing mission rooted in the Spirit working through preaching to separate the godly from the ungodly, while operating quite happily within the established order.60 It should be noted that this characterization of Elizabethan puritanism is limited to an era that predates the controversies over Arminianism and the revolutionary crises of the seventeenth century, as well as was the public demise of the presbyterian movement led by men such as Field, Thomas Wilcox, Thomas Cartwright (d.1603) and Walter Travers (d.1635) in the 1590s.61 Thus, it is a time-limited definition.

An important benefit of such usage is the ability to designate a genuine “puritan” perspective within the broader context of conformity and commitment to Reformed


theology in the Elizabethan church discerned by Nicholas Tyacke. A second benefit is that one can define a “moderate” in the Elizabethan church in ways more nuanced than a binary contrast with “puritan”—as the opposite side of an ecclesiastical coin. As Lake has demonstrated so well, there were indeed “moderate puritans.” For the purposes of this study, “moderate” will include all evangelicals within the church of England—puritan and non-puritan—who were comfortable with the status quo reflected in the church’s hierarchy and practices. The moderates were conformist, but for a variety of reasons. This was the profile Field singled out for attack in his translation of Quatre sermons. Field and his fellow presbyterians were not, by definition, “conformists” like Bishop Horne, erstwhile Marian exile and fellow translator of Quatre sermons. Yet the complexity of Elizabethan Protestantism permits counting Horne, as Collinson does, among “progressives” who, despite sharing doctrinal affinities and even sympathizing with non-conformists, remained content within the established ecclesiastical order. Thus Horne is counted below among the “moderates” against whom Field’s polemic was aimed. Field recognized these individuals to share his doctrinal commitments.

---


63 Moderate Puritans, passim.

64 See chapter six below.

65 Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 61.

66 See chapter five for an examination of Horne’s struggles with the status quo of vestments and prelacy, but principled commitment to these realities for the sake of preserving true religion in England.
Their problem, however, was a lack of zeal to carry such convictions to their proper external realization in the church. Conformity included progressives like Bishop Horne and Archbishop Edmund Grindal (d. 1583). Such men sympathized with puritan ideals and often declined to prosecute non-conformists. But the wider community of conformists also included conservatives like Bishop John Whitgift, far more aggressive in asserting uniformity.\(^67\) In chapters five and six, the term “moderate” refers quite loosely to fellow Protestants—both puritan and non-puritan—who shared a committed Protestantism over and against Rome, but for various reasons disagreed with the demands of the presbyterians, whose insistence on replacing the church’s established government with a new one locates them, for the purposes of this study, on the more extreme wing of the Elizabethan puritan spectrum.

That said, these most progressive members of the Church of England must be further distinguished from those whom even they considered “radical.” As with the terms “puritan” and “moderate,” the use of “radical” is very much determined by perspective and subject to further nuance in terms of degree. John Field, for example, would have been considered “radical” by moderates who viewed presbyterianism as both a threat to church’s unity and a challenge to the crown’s authority. As described below, these were precisely the concerns behind John Whitgift’s focused prosecution of

\(^{67}\) On Whitgift’s campaigns against the presbyterians, see Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 13-66.
presbyterian leaders and Anthony Munday’s anti-puritan campaigns. In these disagreements, boundaries emerge between the church’s moderates and the sorts of puritans they saw as dangerous. However, “radical” will not be used here to describe Elizabethan puritans vis-à-vis moderates. Rather, just as Calvin’s definition of “Nicodemite” governs our use of that term, John Field’s portrayal of his enemies will inform our use of the term “radical.” Field described such individuals as holding views that went beyond reforming the church, moving instead toward repudiating the very idea of a national church. Invoking the danger of such “heretics,” “sects,” and “libertines,” as Field describes them, was critical to the rhetorical strategy in his translation of *Quatre sermons*. As much as the presbyterian faction in the Elizabethan church sought the kind of root and branch reform set forth in 1572’s *Admonition to the Parliament*, their vision nevertheless remained a unified Church of England (albeit one without bishops). In order to differentiate reform movements from the danger—recognized by both moderates and puritans of varying degrees—of those whose commitments threatened the church’s authority and stability from the outside, “radical” will be reserved for the latter. Admittedly, this could apply to a variety of threats, real or imagined. These included Joan Bocher (d. 1550), whom evangelicals portrayed as a false

---

68 See chapters four and six.
69 See chapter six.
70 See chapter six.
martyr for her views on the Trinity, to the existence in England of groups such as the Family of Love, to any belief or practice one considered “libertine.” What such broad use of “radical” loses in precision, it gains in elucidating the logic of Field’s approach, wherein he portrays the threat of radicalism in similarly vague terms. “Radical” in this context designates that flexible space to the “ecclesiastical left” of Elizabethan puritans, where even the most reform-minded individuals in the church pointed to suggest that there were yet others, so to speak, more unsettling and dangerous that they were.

To summarize, in the pages that follow: 1.) Nicodemites were evangelicals who played Roman Catholic; 2.) Puritans viewed the church as the community of the godly; 3.) Moderates in the Church of England (including some puritans) were content with the status quo in liturgical and ecclesiastical order; and 4.) Radicals comprised a category of various groups whose beliefs and practices identified them, especially in the eyes of their foes, as outside the Christian church and a serious threat to its order and survival.

1.4 Overview of Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemite Corpus

1.4.1 Staying Relentlessly on Message

The purpose of this section is simply to affirm what others have observed about the consistency and intransigence of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic over nearly thirty years. This serves to contextualize the argument appearing in chapter two about the

---

71 For more on how each of these “threats” were portrayed by evangelicals, see chapters four and six.
uniqueness of Quatre sermons. By setting Quatre sermons against the backdrop of Calvin’s overall position on religious dissimulation, the particular ways in which this 1552 work both bears a family resemblance to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite corpus and introduces new themes becomes more apparent. Calvin’s basic problem with Nicodemism was that it amounted to idolatry, giving to another reverence belonging to God alone. The underlying message uniting all of his anti-Nicodemite writings was a call to flee this practice of false worship. One could simply refuse to participate in the Mass, which might bring persecution and even death, or choose exile as Calvin himself did when he left his homeland in 1534. Calvin’s opinion did not change. So much is evident from even a surface reading of his several “anti-Nicodemite” works from 1537 to 1562.\textsuperscript{72} 

Scholars agree that Calvin permitted only two possibilities for would be Nicodemites. What is usually overlooked, however, is how Calvin weighed these options relative to one another. The next chapter argues that exile emerged unambiguously as the duty for Calvin’s Nicodemites in 1552, but in a way that remained theologically consistent with Calvin’s approach to religious dissimulation considered as a whole. This clear accent on flight was accomplished by introducing innovations from Calvin’s ecclesiology. Exile was portrayed as a positive alternative to martyrdom: seeking God’s kind provision of spiritual nurture in the church’s pure worship was juxtaposed to the bare admonition to flee idolatry. Martyrdom remained valid, but exile

\textsuperscript{72} See Introduction, n.6.
became the more attractive course. Chapter two takes up the case for *Quatre sermons* as Calvin’s shift away from a uniformly negative anti-idolatry polemic, as well as why this was important for the reformer in 1552. The remainder of the present chapter lays the groundwork for this analysis of *Quatre sermons* in its original context by sketching core elements in Calvin’s basic anti-Nicodemite position, showing how these themes appeared across all his works published expressly to address religious dissimulation.

1.4.2 Idolatry Inside and Out: Calvin’s Basic Position on Dissimulation

The assertion that Nicodemism is idolatry sits at the heart of Calvin’s critique of religious dissimulation. This remained unchanged over time and across all his anti-Nicodemite writings. The logic of Calvin’s argument hinges on two ideas that appear whenever he addresses the topic of Nicodemism: 1.) the Roman Mass is an idolatrous practice that is incompatible with pure worship; and 2.) pure worship demands consistency and integrity between internal faith and external actions. On the first point, Calvin wrote extensively about the Mass as a profane counterfeit of Christ’s Supper when conceived as a priestly sacrifice offered to God, arguing for the diabolic origin of Rome’s practice.73 The anti-Nicodemite writings take this position as their point of

---

departure. Regarding the second aspect of Calvin’s connection of idolatry with
Nicodemism, the importance of integrating faith and practice is, in some ways, as old as
biblical admonitions that worship requires genuine devotion. Yet Calvin says more.

As Eire has examined in detail, Calvin developed a theory of sacral actions from
key biblical texts that insisted that such external gestures were never neutral, but always
rendered devotion to an object. Eire’s account does justice to Calvin’s theory that all
reverential acts have spiritual import, which the reformer derives primarily from his
exegesis of 1 Cor 10. Calvin repeatedly argues that all worship not proceeding
according to God’s commands is rendered to the devil, establishing a recurring element
in his case that any participation in the Mass was an act of idolatrous worship, because
in doing so one “divided [his] worship between God and the devil, keeping the soul for
one and the body for the other” — a balancing act that, for Calvin, was equally forbidden

74 See, for example, Is 29:13: “Because these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their
lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote”
(NRSV); cf. Matt 15:8 and Mk 7:6.

75 War Against the Idols, 197-233; also “True Piety,” 231-233; and idem., “John Calvin, Accidental
Anthropologist,” in John Calvin and Roman Catholicism, ed. by Randall Zachman (Grand Rapids: Baker
Academic, 2008), 145-163.

76 See, for example, CO 6:548-559 (“Car puis qu’il n’advoue point tel service: ilz le font plustost au Diable,”
549); also Commentary on 1 Cor 10 (1546; CO 49:451-471). Yet Eire’s portrayal of Calvin’s position on
idolatry as unique because of its basis entirely in human invention does not fully appreciate the reformer’s
understanding of semen religionis in humanity as God’s self-disclosure—an element of imago dei—such that
false religion is always a perverted response to such revelation, rather than purely a human invention; see
“Accidental Anthropologist,” 145-163. For how Calvin develops his thinking on semen religionis as this sets
humanity apart from “the beasts” and establishes the dynamic for both true and false worship, see Inst. 1.3-4
(CO 2:36-41). Again, this section is not intended to be an extensive engagement with others’ account of
Calvin’s theory of worship. Rather, the purpose here is to demonstrate how, as others have pointed out, the
basic theme of anti-idolatry unites all of Calvin’s writing against Nicodemism as a common thread.
and impossible.\textsuperscript{77} This argument regarding idolatry became, in turn, support for Calvin’s further insistence that one’s mere presence at the Mass was disobedient to God and destructive to one’s neighbor. It is not surprising that others have found this emphasis on pure worship to be \textit{sine qua non} of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, such that the reformer’s campaign against dissimulation can be reduced to rejection of idolatry.\textsuperscript{78} John Leith has called Calvin’s entire theological enterprise an expression of the reformer’s concern for pure worship defined as rendering proper honor to God.\textsuperscript{79} Indeed, the move to identify Nicodemism with idolatry runs through all of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings. The following brief survey illustrates this stable theological core of Calvin’s position over thirty years. This summary sketch informs the argument in chapter two for how \textit{Quatre sermons} built upon but also uniquely adapted Calvin’s basic approach.

The \textit{Epistolae duae} of 1537, Calvin’s first anti-Nicodemite publication, already contained Calvin’s entire anti-idolatry polemic, singling out the Mass as a false worship and developing a theory of integrating faith and action wherein one leads to the other.\textsuperscript{80} Although addressed to two former friends, Nicholas Duchemin and Gerard Roussel, who had forsaken reform to take up ecclesiastical offices in the Roman Church, it is clear

\textsuperscript{77} CO 6:595.

\textsuperscript{78} Eire, \textit{War Against the Idols}, 271-275; also Wright, “Why Was Calvin so Severe,” 89-90; and Kang, “Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemite Theology,” 256-288.

\textsuperscript{79} “Calvin’s theology was a mighty polemic against idolatry”; “Calvin’s Polemic,” 123.

\textsuperscript{80} CO 5:233-312. See also the recent critical edition of \textit{Epistolae duae}, with introductory essays by editors Erik de Boer and Frans Pieter van Stam in 2009; COR 4.4.
that Calvin intended this publication to function as “open letters” to instruct readers on the dangers of idolatry and the impossibility of guiltless participation in Roman worship.\textsuperscript{81} The controlling presupposition of Calvin’s complaint is that “true devotion leads to true confession.”\textsuperscript{82} The problem with Nicodemism is that outward conformity to idolatrous ritual compromises the integrity of one’s Christian profession.\textsuperscript{83} This is the point Calvin wants to get across in his critical assessment of his addressees’ apparent dissimulation for the sake of personal gain, lured by prestige and power.\textsuperscript{84}

In a fixture that runs through his anti-Nicodemite writings, Calvin singles out the Mass as an abomination that bears no real resemblance to the Lord’s Supper. It is antithetical to the true sacrament, burying and subverting God’s intent.\textsuperscript{85} Simply to be present at this sacrilege is to approve of a diabolic conspiracy in which a sacrament meant to remember Christ’s sacrifice is turned into a new sacrifice that threatens to

\textsuperscript{81} On these letters, see BC I:40-43 (37/1); Burger, “Calvin comme maître,” 149-150; Droz, “Nicodémites,” 133-140; Eire, \textit{War Against the Idols}, 240-241; Millet, \textit{Calvin et la dynamique}, 479-504; Calvin declares his intent to reach a public audience via ostensibly personal correspondence: “I thought it would neither be in vain, nor without some fruitfulness, if I accommodated my work to teach at the same time the many who live among the same error” (CO 5:243). On Calvin’s rhetorical strategy, which would change over the next decade as he embraced the bolder genre of direct address to “Nicodemites” via dedicated treatises, see Millet, \textit{Calvin et la dynamique}, 809-828. Also, COR 4.4:xx-xxvi. Calvin identifies his first addressee by the initials “N. S.,” whereas Roussel is simply “an old friend, now a prelate” (“veteri amico, nunc Praesuli”); CO 5:239, 279.

\textsuperscript{82} “Vera enim pietas, veram confessionem parit” (CO 5:244).

\textsuperscript{83} CO 5:251.

\textsuperscript{84} “Undertaking the sin of external idolatry for the favor of man is worse than any kind of death” (CO 5:247). Remember, we are dealing here with motives Calvin has attributed to his friends. He assumes that they willingly dissimulate their faith to hide evangelical convictions in order to acquire ecclesiastical privileges.

\textsuperscript{85} Regarding the Mass: “there is nothing more greatly opposed to the Supper” (CO 5:257-259).
make the cross of Christ superfluous. Furthermore, the bread is believed to assume divinity and thus worshipped as a blatant idol—a counterfeit stand-in for the one true God: “It is clear that this god, which the silly priest holds up while circling about his altar is not from heaven ... but of the sort that comes from the bakery.” The only possible response for a believer in this situation is not merely refusal to perform the idolatrous gestures of the Mass, but to flee its very presence: “Come out from among them!” Calvin argues from both the Old and New Testaments to make the case that bodily gestures of reverence toward idols misdirect that which belongs to God alone. Not only does such fellowship with idols amount to a rejection of God, it also displays a lack of concern for one’s neighbor by giving the appearance of sanctioning idolatrous practice, thereby leading others into the same. Calvin argues from 1 Cor 10 that Mass is the “Table of Demons,” mutually exclusive of the “Table of Christ.” Loyalty to God requires active rejection of this abomination, whether in the form of flight or resistance at the cost of one’s life, which is not worth such an affront to God’s glory.

86 CO 5:257-266.
87 CO 5:258.
88 CO 5:247. Calvin references 2 Cor 6:17—Paul’s summary of Is 52:11—where God instructs his people to flee completely the ways of the Gentiles (“viis gentium in to tum fugiendis”).
89 CO 5:245-250.
90 CO 5:242-250, 273.
91 CO 5:259-250, 277.
Prior to his next publication of anti-Nicodemite material in 1543, Calvin wrote a pair of letters dealing with the issue of religious dissimulation to unnamed friends in 1540 and 1541. Once more, the Mass is singled out as a defective practice that transgresses the boundaries of benign error, becoming a stratagem of Satan intended to destroy the church. In 1540, Calvin argues again from Rom 10:9 and 1 Cor 6:20 to assert that one’s faith commitments must be manifest outwardly and that both body and soul belong to God. Purity of worship consists in fidelity to God’s commands in both faith and action. In this relatively early work, Calvin concedes that portions of the Mass—specifically certain prayers and liturgical elements—retain pure doctrine. Yet he seriously doubts the wisdom of remaining only for parts of the service free of blatantly idolatrous gestures. The same argument against being present at the Mass appears again in Calvin’s 1541 letter. Here, the reformer’s main targets were those who argued that love of neighbor demands patience with the progress of reform, such that one is willing to abide illicit elements in worship while waiting on others to reach a fuller understanding of correct doctrine. Calvin insists that such patience must not be

---

92 The 1540 letter was published in 1543 with the Petit traicté, as a supplement to that larger treatise (CO 6:579-588). For the 1541 letter, see White, “An Overlooked Text,” 282-296.

93 CO 6:581-582.

94 CO 6:580-581.

95 CO 6:586. By the time he writes Quatre sermons Calvin is not willing to concede this point, insisting that all rituals associated with the Mass are hopelessly corrupt, even Roman baptism (CO 8:429).
extended when idolatry is present, only flight or open rejection. In making his argument, he reverses his opponents’ alleged argument for deferring to the delicate consciences of one’s weaker brethren. Over against this view, Calvin claims that love of neighbor, in the case of Nicodemism, requires not staying but leaving: make a clear break with false worship, lest you lead others to sin by appearing to endorse participation in idolatry.97

The Petit traicté of 1543 was Calvin’s second public entry into the controversy over the legitimacy of religious dissimulation.98 Once again, Calvin insists on the incompatibility of the Mass and the Lord’s Supper. If there is any similarity between them, he writes, “day is no longer different from night.”99 Rom 10 and 1 Cor 6 are brought in to make the same case Calvin had made in his 1540 letter, namely that 1.) Christ requires public profession of one’s faith; 2.) both mind and body belong to God; and 3.) rendering reverential acts toward a created thing detracts from God’s honor.100 Calvin appeals again to 1 Cor 10 to argue that worship that does not proceed according to God’s direction is, in fact, devotion rendered to Satan, a participation in “the cup of

---

96 White, “An Overlooked Text,” 289-296. White discusses the possibility the Bucer and Capito were the unnamed targets of Calvin’s critique. See also Matheson, “Martyrdom or Mission,” 164-171; Wright, “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 69. It is true that Calvin’s tone is much more moderate than in his other anti-Nicodemite writings, conceding that those whose position he abhors still warranted his deep respect.


98 CO 6:537-588.

99 “le iour n’est pas plus contraire à la nuict” (CO 6:554). This excerpt is part of a larger argument concerning the Mass as an irredeemable corruption of the Supper, and the subsequent corruption of all aspects of life through association with the idolatrous nature of Roman rituals (CO 6:556-565).

100 CO 6:544-547.
demons.”  

Similarly, Calvin once more rejects the argument that dissimulation at the Mass can be construed as loving one’s neighbor. He leverages all this logic toward a pointed conclusion: We must not trifle with God’s honor. When faced with compulsion to attend the Mass, the options available to the faithful are clear: flee, risk prison, or be willing to die. Calvin speaks of self-imposed exile as perhaps the best course in 1543, although this theme does not dominate the treatise as it would in Quatre sermons.

Finally, Calvin grants that his instruction to would-be Nicodemites is not easy, referring them to God’s care, that they should seek God for strength to honor the Lord well.

Calvin followed up the Petit traicté in 1544 with his Excuse … à Messieurs les Nicodémites, the first treatise ostensibly written as a response to those who took issue with Calvin’s teaching on religious dissimulation. While the reformer does not name his opponents directly, he sketches what he understood to be their arguments for remaining hidden while at the Mass. It is here that Calvin first uses the term

---

101 CO 6:547-551; cf. 1 Cor 10:18-22. Calvin argues that good intentions mean little, citing Old Testament examples of zealous worship in God’s name deemed idolatrous for not conforming to God’s law (Num 21; 2 Ki 18:4; Ex 32; 1 Ki 12:28). Idolatrous actions are idolatry, even if “committed as a ruse” (“qu’elle ne se commette que par feintise, est tousiours desplaisante à Dieu”; CO 6:551).

102 CO 6:563-564.

103 CO 6:570-571.

104 “There is no doubt that each one should pack his baggage in order to start on the path [to exile]” (CO 6:572).

105 CO 6:572-578.

106 CO 6:589-614.
“Nicodémites” — which he attributes to the dissemblers own self-description — and acknowledges that there are diverse types of individuals within this category.\textsuperscript{107} Despite their various circumstances, all Nicodemites share an important characteristic, which is essential for understanding the logic of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic. They are “self-justifiers” who must be distinguished from others who genuinely struggle concerning the appropriateness of participating in the Mass.\textsuperscript{108} In short, Nicodemites dissimulate despite knowing better, because the gospel has become for them a matter of convenience — something to be compromised if faithfulness to God’s commands became too difficult or too dangerous.\textsuperscript{109} This unflattering portrayal supports Calvin’s rejection of his foes’ alleged use of the biblical Nicodemus as a namesake. He accuses them of misusing the name of a righteous man.\textsuperscript{110} Their apparent self-deception also informs Calvin’s “answer” (excuse) to his opponents’ objections to his teaching. Since they willfully embrace error, Calvin’s teaching office requires him to present a biblical case against them for their own good.\textsuperscript{111} Calvin rejects complaints that he has chosen the

\textsuperscript{107} CO 6:597–602, 608-610. See n. 31 above. For more on the origin of the term “Nicodemite,” its various meanings in the early sixteenth century, and Calvin’s own increasing dissatisfaction with the label, see Eire, \textit{War Against the Idols}, 242-244.

\textsuperscript{108} “I address myself solely to those who, in order to justify themselves, look for every possible trickery and mock the reproofs they have received … to the blaspheming of God” (CO 6:595-596).

\textsuperscript{109} They will abandon the gospel immediately when it ceases “to sing them a pleasing song” (“quand il ne leur chante pas chanson plaisante, ilz sont quasi prestz de tout renoncer incontinent”); CO 6:601.

\textsuperscript{110} CO 6:608-610.

\textsuperscript{111} “Mon office est, de prendre peine et desirer que la doctrine que i’annonce, soit en salut à tous” (CO 6:602).
safety of exile, insisting that he would be willing to suffer and die should obedience require this. Yet, in keeping with his own example, exile was a valid option alongside resistance and possible martyrdom for those tempted to dissemble. The reformer concludes by restating his standard biblical case against Nicodemism as idolatry, complaining that his teaching is not hard, so much as his opponents’ hearts resistant.

Besides a short appendix to the concurring *conseils* of various reformers that appeared in the 1545 reissue of the *Petit traicté* and *Excuse*, the other standard anti-Nicodemite writing that must be mentioned besides *Quatre sermons* is 1562’s *Response à un certain Holandois*, Calvin’s reply to the theology of Theodore Coornhert (d. 1590).

Again responding to personal attack, the reformer rejects the argument that Christians are free from external observances, arguing that God requires the outward, visible expression of faith in pure worship, the external rituals of which are not indifferent.

The reformer then recapitulates his case that outward worship flows from internal devotion, both of which belong to God. Because his opponent here was not Rome, but

---

112 CO 6:602-607.
113 CO 6:608-614.
114 CO 9:581-628. On Calvin’s 1545 restatement of his position that the Mass is idolatry, the mere presence at which is forbidden to faithful Christians, see Wright, “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 75-82. See above, n. 38. On the Dirk Coornhert as the Holandois in question and the literary exchange that prompted Calvin’s 1562 *Response*, see Eire, *War*, 249n64. For an analysis of Calvin’s *Response* as a refutation of Coornhert’s *Apology for Roman Idolatry* (published posthumously in 1633) see van Veen, *Verschooninghe*, 124-246. For more on Coornhert, see the recent collection of essays in J. Gruppelaar, Jürgen Pieters, and Ruben Buys, eds., *‘Un certain Holandois’: Coornhert en de vragen van zijn tijd* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014).
a spiritualist who denied the necessity of any ordinances in worship, Calvin adds a section distinguishing lawful practices from ones that are merely human inventions, or no longer binding on Christians. Next, Calvin capitalizes on another opportunity to rehearse his argument from Rom 10 and 1 Cor 6-10 that first appeared in 1537, which prohibited divorcing internal and external dimensions of worship. Against the Dutchman’s insistence that God cares only for the heart, Calvin counters that Christians must keep themselves pure in both body and spirit, because both belong to God.

While his sparring partners may have changed over thirty years, Calvin remained relentlessly on message in rejecting any bifurcation of internal and external dimensions of worship such that one was valued to the exclusion of the other. God demands purity in both. In the case of the lawful ordinances such as preaching, prayers, and the sacraments, this requires diligence and heartfelt embrace of such practices in the rightly-ordered church—an important theme at the heart of Quatre sermons. On the other hand, in the case of the idolatrous Mass, fidelity to God precludes even being present.

---

116 CO 9:596-597.

117 CO 9:603-604. “This idiot always envelops himself in his error of confusing all ceremonies under those that had been given only to the Jews” (604). For more on Coornhert’s views and an analysis of Calvin’s reply, see van Vreem, Verschooninghe, 150-160; also idem., “Sursum Corda,” 170-202.

118 CO 6:610-614. Calvin’s position on the impossibility of separating purity in faith from purity in action seems also opposed to the more flexible understanding of Luther, who urged patience with the existence of prohibited elements in worship, including the Mass, in the context of awaiting gradual reform through the teaching of God’s Word; see “Eight Sermons at Wittenberg, 1522,” LW 51:69-100; WA 10.3:1-64.
1.4.3 Unity and Diversity: Calvin’s Account of the Nicodemite Mindset

In order to highlight another aspect of consistency in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, it would be helpful to consider how his account of Nicodemism permitted him to address diverse and changing audiences with the same critique in a variety of works. Briefly sketching Calvin’s understanding of Nicodemism vis-à-vis distinct, but similar, comments he makes against two other groups—“Epicureans” and “Stoics”—will provide a more precise sense of the “mindset” that distinguished Nicodemism as a discrete phenomenon in Calvin’s opinion, and informed the reformer’s approach to the issue as an urgent pastoral problem involving believers who persisted in wrongdoing.

With Nicodemism, Calvin acknowledged a phenomenon that was at once diverse and fundamentally homogenous. The reformer summarizes four categories of “Nicodemites” in his 1544 *Excuse à messieurs les Nicodémites.* Despite their differences, these individuals share a common concern to preserve their goods and avoid suffering, in both cases trumping their fear of God. Conforming to Roman worship was a means of achieving such self-protection. On the surface, Calvin’s treatment of varieties of Nicodemites resembles his attacks on so-called “Epicureans” and “Stoics” elsewhere.

The second group of Nicodemites in Calvin’s 1544 list, the “delicate protonotaries” (*les 119* CO 6:597-602. See above, n. 38.


65
prothonotaires delicatz), were offended by the severity of Calvin’s tone. These accused Calvin of envying their comfort and privilege, being “quite content to have the gospel” so long as it did not interfere with their “merry conversing and flirting with the ladies.”\(^{121}\) This alleged willingness to conform to the gospel insofar as it supported their pursuit of pleasure suggests Calvin’s description of so-called “Epicureans.”\(^{122}\) However, whereas Calvin identifies contemporary Epicureans—some of whom he explicitly names in *De scandalis* (1550)—with an emerging skeptical humanism that mocked the gospel and rejected God’s truth in exchange for a practical atheism, he does not attribute this same mindset to his Nicodemites.\(^{123}\) Although his Nicodemite appears to have some Epicurean-like tendencies, Calvin does not, in any place I have found, describe Nicodemites as “skeptics” or “Epicureans.” He never suggests that Nicodemites reject the gospel—only that they fail to live by its requirements. In fact, Calvin expressly distinguishes his four classes of Nicodemites in 1544 from “Epicureans (namely all those who despise God),” about whom “I am not concerned to speak here.”\(^{124}\)

\(^{121}\) CO 6:598-599.

\(^{122}\) See, for example, Calvin’s critique of Epicurean metaphysical beliefs that led to the ethical assertion that “the greatest good is pleasure”; Commentary on Acts 17:28 (1552-1554; CO 48:406); see Partee, *Philosophy*, 104.

\(^{123}\) See CO 8:43-47. Calvin names Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (d. 1535) and François Rabelais (d. 1553), among others, as those who think they can reject the gospel with impunity, “pouring forth the venom of their impiety so that the world is filled with atheism” (45). On Calvin’s engagement with Agrippa, including his deliberate distinction between Agrippa and the Nicodemites, see also Josef Boahtec, *Budé et Calvin* (Graz: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1950), 162-165.

\(^{124}\) CO 6:602.
Regarding Stoics, one might hear notes of Calvin’s critique of such individuals in his description of the third group of Nicodemites parsed in 1544. These “turn Christianity partway into a philosophy … waiting without seeming to do anything, to see if there will be some good reformation.” On the basis of their “Platonic ideas” they “excuse most of the foolish superstitions of the Papacy as things which cannot be avoided.” These Christians are “almost entirely people of letters,” but their great learning does not help them avoid making the mistake of a quasi-fatalism: “they simply refer [the problem] to God in secret to solve it … as if they had no duty in the matter.” Calvin’s rejection of the Stoic teaching on fate, which “understands necessity to derive from a perpetual series of related and implied causes that are contained in nature,” rather than from God’s free providence, does not seem to fit the problem he sees in this class of Nicodemites. These dissemblers are aware that God can change their circumstances, yet they still fall into a kind of Stoic-like resignation to the situation. Calvin directly addresses this tendency elsewhere, insisting that God’s providence does not negate human responsibility or the need for active prudence in all our affairs. Rather than accusing these Nicodemites of denying God’s providence, Calvin insinuates

125 CO 6:600.

126 Ibid.

127 Inst. 1.16.8 (CO 2:151). See the discussion in Partee, Calvin, 115-125.

128 Inst. 1.17.3-5 (CO 2:156-158).
that their reading of philosophy has resulted in a misunderstanding of divine
providence and the ongoing duty of believers to work actively toward challenging
idolatry around them. As with the prior category of Nicodemites, there is no impression
here that Calvin considers these believers to be outside the fold of evangelical
commitment. Despite displaying Stoic-like tendencies in their errors, Calvin does not
believe that such individuals have fallen into a wholesale Stoic denial of divine
providence. As with the label “Epicurean,” Calvin never used the expression “Stoic” to
describe Nicodemites in any of his polemical works.

To summarize, while the varieties of Nicodemites Calvin calls out for correction
in 1544 are alleged to possess Epicurean-like or Stoic-like characteristics, they must be
distinguished from those whom Calvin had in mind when he used these terms
elsewhere. The pleasure seeking of one group and passive resignation of the other are
defects which, in this case, existed in genuine believers who allowed the fear of human
power to keep them from consistently honoring God as he requires. This portrait of a
committed Christian who dissembles her faith despite knowing better is critical for the
rhetorical thrust of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic. He consistently attacked
individuals whom he accused of making bad choices against their better judgment. A
fixture across his writings on religious dissimulation was the insistence that
Nicodemites must boldly embrace in action what they already took to be true by faith.
Calvin’s argument for open confession, even if this required martyrdom or exile,
presupposed that the Nicodemites he critiqued had something to confess. Yet within this
larger group of disobedient believers were distinct tendencies that could be likened to various species of more serious unbelief. Some Nicodemites were described by Calvin as Stoic-like, while others bore more of a resemblance to his description of Epicureans. Such diversity within Calvin’s account of Nicodemism is significant. It points to how different shades of error could manifest themselves under the same strategy of dissembling at the Mass—a problem the reformer himself acknowledged to be diverse even as its participants remained invisible. Unified in a common root defect (fear of human power before fear of God) and expressed in a shared strategy (hiding in the midst of idolatry), Nicodemism, as Calvin saw it, nevertheless comprehended a varied spectrum of particular tendencies and secondary motivations. Thus the same argument could apply to any number of possible targets in Calvin’s context. It was a multivalent message insofar as its audience could be variously conceived. Such flexibility of address was a feature of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism that served his purposes especially well in 1552, anticipating the ways English translators would use his polemic between 1553 and 1584.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established important parameters for the analysis of primary texts to follow in chapters two through six. First, I have surveyed the historiography of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism to situate the present work’s contribution as a project involving two key elements: 1.) the reassessment of scholarly consensus on the consistency of Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism; and 2.) focused attention to the
reception of Calvin’s thought on this subject in the context of the English Reformation.

Secondly, I have set forth the selective use of sources, consideration of contexts, guiding questions, and key definitions that inform my analysis of how various messages were intended and received within the publication history of a single work, namely *Quatre sermons* and its sixteenth-century English translations. These methodological constraints enable me to demonstrate how the same prescriptive work was deployed, and then repeatedly redeployed, to accomplish a wide array of purposes in very different situations. Finally, my summary of Calvin’s recurring argument against Nicodemism as a species of idolatry has demonstrated the stable core of the reformer’s approach to religious dissimulation, which varied little over time. Acknowledging such consistency is the first step toward appreciating the ways in which Calvin broke significantly from these familiar, established patterns in his anti-Nicodemite rhetoric, exhibiting flexibility in his approach to the issue that has not been sufficiently appreciated. *Quatre sermons* is an outstanding example of such variation. We turn now to this unique 1552 publication.
2. Ecclesiology and Exile: *Quatre sermons* (1552) in its Original Context*

2.1 Reassessing the Flexibility of Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism

John Calvin’s *Quatre sermons ... traictans des matières fort utiles pour nostre temps, avec briefe exposition du Pseaume LXXXVII* appeared in 1552 from the Geneva press of Robert Estienne as, ostensibly, just one more entry in the reformer’s decades-long war on French Nicodemism.¹ Against the backdrop of Calvin’s consistent rejection of Nicodemite behavior, *Quatre sermons* exhibits how the reformer’s argument against dissimulation was adapted creatively to accomplish goals beyond decrying false worship. In this work, new emphases on ecclesiology and political exile converge to demonstrate the flexibility of Calvin’s thinking on Nicodemism as a theological problem, especially how this fluidity emerged in response to pressures in his social context. Containing the only sermons Calvin personally prepared for publication, *Quatre sermons* draws together, in ways previously not combined in his writings, the reformer’s exegesis of the Psalms and doctrine of the church. The result is the strongest plea in all Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite works for exile as the duty of evangelicals facing persecution

---

* A version of this chapter has been published as “The House of God in Exile: Reassessing John Calvin’s Approach to Nicodemism in *Quatre sermons* (1552),” *Church History and Religious Culture* 95:2/3 (2015): 222-244.

¹ CO: 8:369-452.
for their beliefs. Whatever difficulties they might encounter in exile, this solace remains: “Yes, we are nevertheless in the house of God.” This message was especially relevant to Calvin in 1552 for speaking directly to various groups he was concerned to address, but also—perhaps more importantly—for framing their views of Calvin and his authority.

It is not new to suggest that Calvin had ulterior motives for attacking French Nicodemism. Eugénie Droz has argued that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings were in fact a veiled campaign to stimulate the migration of sympathetic French refugees to Geneva in order to foster support for his policies over against those who opposed him.

---


3 “Si sommes-nous toutesfois en la maison de Dieu” (CO 8:439).

4 Droz, “Nicodémites,” 155-157. Indeed, Calvin responded to this same accusation in Quatre Sermons (CO 8:419-424). He was still answering the charge in 1555, writing to the church in Poitiers to dispute the claims of a certain de la Vau, adisciple of Sebastian Castellio: “Pour vous picquer et attirer a sa, cordelle, il specifie que nous navons auldre regard, ny estude, sinon dattirer tout le monde a Geneve. Voire comme si en cela nous y avions grand profict et advantaige” (CO 15:443). Wright has complicated Droz’ analysis by pointing to how Calvin’s consistent antagonism toward dissimulation originated prior to Calvin’s troubles in Geneva; “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 83.
At the same time, Heiko Oberman has demonstrated that the themes of displacement, pilgrimage, and nurture—all of which emerge so prominently in Calvin’s call to exile in *Quatre sermons*—have profound roots in Calvin’s own experience, pervading the reformer’s thinking as a whole. Thus while allowing that Calvin may at times have used his rhetoric against religious dissimulation to achieve political ends, it is difficult to imagine that his anti-Nicodemism was invented merely to serve such purposes apart from sincere and deeply held theological commitments. Previous studies of Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism have tended to highlight the remarkable consistency of his negative outlook over thirty years while neglecting how Calvin’s harsh intransigence was diversely expressed to suit specific situations. This failure to appreciate the reformer’s anti-Nicodemite polemic more fully in its discrete parts has left his flexible strategy over time largely unnoticed. Written ostensibly to address a French problem—

---

5 John Calvin and the Reformation of the Refugees (Geneva, 2009), 21-49, *et passim*. Oberman argues for situating the whole of Calvin’s theology, especially his ecclesiology and doctrine of predestination, within a deeper appreciation for how Calvin’s thinking was shaped by his own experience of fear, persecution, and displacement as a fugitive and lifelong exile, who sought through his teaching to comfort those he understood to share a similar experience across Europe. He takes to task the distortion of Calvin’s theology that occurs when it is detached from its original contexts of European evangelicals’ suffering and wandering after the example Christ, who was himself “an exile or a fugitive”—deep influences from which Calvin’s thinking derived much of its lasting appeal: “The fast-food of the neo-Calvinist Geneva-burger could not have met the needs to Calvin’s contemporaries and fellow-trekkers nor could it have provided the power for Calvin’s movement to survive to our own day” (47, 67). For a slightly different perspective that nevertheless points to how Calvin’s experience as an exile from his beloved homeland permeates his theological writings, see Max Engammare, “Une certaine idée de la France,” 15–27; also Ewald Rieser *Calvin-Franzose, Genfer oder Fremdling?: Untersuchung zum Problem der Heimatliebe bei Calvin* (Zürich, 1968).

6 See chapter one.
the evangelical living in a hostile Catholic community who dissembles his or her faith despite knowing better—little consideration has been given to how Calvin may have intended these writings to impact circumstances closer to Geneva. Droz’s analysis is exceptional in its sensitivity to how Calvin had aspirations for Geneva via his focus on France. Yet her treatment of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism as a monolith overlooks how Calvin may have intended certain writings to address a Genevan audience directly.

---

7 See chapter one for Calvin’s portrayal of the Nicodemite as a disobedient evangelical.

8 Droz does note that Calvin has a word in his preface for French refugees in Geneva who take their freedom to worship for granted, and for those abroad who mock Christians who have chosen exile rather than dissemble their faith; “Nicodémites,” 162. This observation comes in the midst of a larger argument for how Calvin coordinated with others to encourage Italian immigration to Geneva, including how the 1553 Italian anthology of his anti-Nicodemite writings, published in Geneva by Jean Crespin, and including Quatre sermons, was designed for this purpose; ibid., 156-165. For the Italian edition, Del fuggir le superstioni che repugnano a la vera e sincera confession della fede, see BC I:474-476 (53/3). While I appreciate Droz’ sensitivity to Calvin’s audience awareness, her insistence on Calvin’s persistent foreign focus to address domestic concerns misses important ways in which Quatre sermons seems primarily addressed directly to a domestic audience. This latter point is the argument I develop in this chapter. It is also worth noting two additional studies that have addressed the audience awareness Calvin displays in Quatre sermons. L. F. Schulze has examined sermon one, on Ps 16.4, as an example of the “topicality of Calvin’s preaching” and the reformer’s use of preaching the address the concrete situation of Protestants living in Roman countries; “Preaching as topical communication: The case of Calvin,” In die Skriflig 32(2) 1998:115-126. Schulze’s study is useful for reminding us that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism was not merely a broadside against Roman Catholicism, but also pastoral address to troubled Protestants, giving attention to how Calvin used the sermon to connect with these individuals on an existential level. Perhaps more useful is Rodolphe Peter’s discussion of the unique forcefulness of Calvin’s voice in these expositions, including how the reformer addresses idolatry in France as well as impressing upon Genevans their privilege of serving God freely; “Geneve dans la prédication de Calvin” in Calvinus ecclesiae genevensis custos, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Frankfurt: Peter Lang), 24-26. In his analysis, Peter notes the historian’s preference for “l’ipsissima vox de Calvin recueillie par Raguenier à une remise en ordre ultérieure, futelle da la main même de l’auteur” (25). While both Schulze’s and Peter’s studies focus on Quatre sermons as a means of recovering aspects of the reformer’s preaching from 1549, the present study takes up the question of how Calvin intended to use the 1552 republication of these sermons in se, as a vehicle to address specific pressures and audiences that year. This chapter presents my analysis of Calvin’s editorial decisions in 1552.
The present chapter contends that Calvin approached Nicodemism in 1552 by reaching beyond the Nicodemite controversy with a theological message directed at his political situation. A single argument unfolding over four sermons, *Quatre sermons* makes a case for exile that seems designed to address Nicodemites in France, but especially to silence opposition in Geneva. It is a work of persuasion that was meant to sway popular opinion in favor of Calvin and his fellow ministers at a time when their standing was especially threatened by powerful foes. Calvin’s adaptable approach to Nicodemism and rhetorical skill in *Quatre sermons* will become apparent as the work is considered first as a case for exile rooted in ecclesiological elements appearing for the first time in his anti-Nicodemite writings, and secondly as an apology for Calvin’s preaching ministry in Geneva that hinges on this same theology of the church in exile.

---

9 This is not to suggest that the themes taken up in *Quatre sermons* would not have been useful to address at other times. If, as is likely, the sources behind this 1552 publication are sermons preached in 1549, Calvin’s call for patience and gratitude toward a church and ministry comprised of native Genevans and religious refugees could have functioned in that earlier setting as an attempt to address discontent already emerging in response to rapidly increasing immigration; see below, n. 79; also Peter, “Geneve dans la prédication,” 24-26. However, given the uncertainty concerning the precise dating and content of sources behind *Quatre sermons* (see below, n. 93), the present study will focus on the strategic significance of Calvin’s decision to publish the material as it appeared in 1552, which is the only remaining “original” form of these sermons currently available to us. On the publication history of *Quatre sermons* as an example of Calvin’s reluctance to have his sermons published and unwillingness, in this case, to let publishers work from stenographers’ notes, see Jean François Gilmont, “Protestant Reformations and Reading,” in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 235-236.
2.2 Quatre sermons and the Turn to Exile in Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism

2.2.1 Calvin’s Preface

Calvin’s preface to Quatre sermons is both characteristically tidy and deceptively simple. The reformer complains that people will not let him alone, being ignorant or stubborn with respect to what he already had written against Nicodemism in “two quite ample treatises.” Thus he “thought it beneficial to review and simplify in order” a sermon preached earlier on the same topic. 10 Then follows three expositions treating implications of the first sermon’s rejection of the “abominations of the Papists.” Sermon two urges “steadfastness” in the face of opposition. The third extols “liberty … to be in a well-ordered and governed church.” The fourth focuses on the “privilege” of worship in such a church, worth “all the trials … Satan might bring.” 11 This fairly straightforward preface belies the strong argument to come in favor of exile and Calvin’s own pastoral authority based on the reformer’s understanding of God’s intended design for the church’s ministry. Specifically, Calvin uses the Psalms and sequences Quatre sermons to maximize the rhetorical force behind its account of political exile as the path to God’s spiritual provision in the church. Exile, mentioned in passing as “the best thing to do” in

10 “i’ay pensé qu’il seroit expedient de reveoir et reduire en ordre” (CO 8:373-374). On complaints from France see Eire, War Against the Idols, 254; Wright, “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 67; and De Greef, Writings of John Calvin, 123-124.

11 CO 8:373-374. The four sermons are based, respectively, on Ps 16:4; Heb 13:13; Ps 27:4; and Ps 27:8.
1543, dominates the stage in 1552. In this work, the sustained call to exile as duty and vision of the church that supports this call represent a new development in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, not having appeared in earlier treatises on the topic.12

2.2.2 Calvin on Political Exile as the Pilgrim’s Embrace of Spiritual Exile

*Quatre sermons* places Calvin within the Christian tradition’s longstanding reflection on flight in the face of hardship and persecution. The resurgence of religious violence across a newly divided Christianity prompted fresh consideration of ancient sources on the question of the legitimacy of self-imposed political exile.13 Calvin’s case

12 In 1543’s *Petit traicté* Calvin states that leaving one’s homeland for pure worship in “the assembly of Christians” is “in my view the best thing to do” (CO 6:576). David Wright and Carlos Eire have noted how Calvin has already stressed exile in his earlier anti-Nicodemite writings, as well as how ecclesiology anchors his case for flight in *Quatre sermons*; Wright, “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” 83-86; Eire, *War Against the Idol*, 260-264. Eire’s discussion of Calvin’s position on exile as the alternative to compromise draws almost entirely from *Quatre sermons* without pointing out the concentrated attention to the theme of exile in this particular work; see chapter one, n. 13. What has not been examined this far is how ecclesiology functions here as an emblem of God’s kind provision—a positive counterbalance to the harsh negative tone of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism as polemic against idolatry. This characterization of political exile as a means to spiritual nurture—at once heightening and assuaging the hard realities of believers’ present pilgrimage through this life—is a distinctive feature of Calvin’s position on flight from persecution, emerging within the theological framework of God’s design for his church. The reformer’s case for exile is intensified by how he uses the Psalms and arranges this collection to persuade evangelicals facing persecution that flight, not religious dissimulation, will better serve their deepest interests. The result is the most vigorous case for exile in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings, vividly evoking David’s hunger for nurture found only in a “well ordered and well governed church”—an example that Calvin insists should be followed by believers in every age.

for flight stands out for its positive use of ecclesiology to characterize political exile as proper alignment to the realities of spiritual exile and God’s design for the church. It also must be read as self-vindication, the unapologetic teaching of a refugee pastor who had already chosen the path he prescribes for others. Whereas Tertullian famously appealed to divine providence to exclude any possibility of lawful flight from persecution, because “what comes from God is good,” Jonathan Wright has demonstrated that sixteenth-century Protestants, such as Martin Luther and Peter Martyr Vermigli, took divine providence no less seriously when following the likes of Athanasius and Augustine to argue for flight as both God’s accommodation to human frailty and God’s plan to preserve individuals for special vocations. Calvin embraced both emphases, articulating his own decision to flee as a hardship necessitated by

---

14 On the influence of Calvin’s refugee status on his writings see, for example, Engammare, “Une certaine idée,” 15-18. Living almost his entire adult life as a political refugee from his native France, Calvin’s thinking on the topic of exile cannot easily be separated from autobiographical considerations.

15 De Fuga in Persecutione, 4:1, in Disciplinary, Moral, and Ascetical Works, trans. Edwin A. Quain (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 282. “We must not flee in time of persecution. For, if persecution comes from God, we cannot run from it, precisely because God is its cause. And this for two reasons: we may not, and, we cannot. We may not, because what comes from God is good.” Tertullian goes on to interpret Jesus’ command in Matt 10:23 (see n. 2 above) as a temporary provision limited to the Apostles, for the sake of preaching the gospel to the “lost sheep of Israel” prior to commencing the apostolic church’s broader mission to the nations (286-289). See Wright “Marian Exiles,” 222-238; also Vermigli, The common places of the most famous and renowned divine Doctor Peter Martyr divided into four principal parts: with a large addition of many theological and necessary discourses, some never extant before. Translated and partlie gathered by Anthonie Marten, one of the sewers of hir Maiesties most honourable chamber (London: Henry Denham and Henry Middleton, 1583), III.12.21-22. For Luther, see “Whether One May Flee from A Deadly Plague, 1527” (LW 43:113–138); and “To the Evangelicals Exiled From Oschatz, 1533,” in Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Vancouver: Regent College, 2003), 221-222.
obedience to divine calling, while also holding out exile as an option for others to whom God had not given strength under persecution to confess their faith openly.

Quatre sermons interprets political exile as a means by which God brings his people into greater awareness of their spiritual exile as pilgrims, mere sojourners in the present world. This reflects themes developed in Calvin’s other writings, where exile is never portrayed as an easy path. For this reason Calvin made no apologies for his own decision to leave France, narrating his choice in terms of the suffering intrinsic to obeying God.16 In the same vein, he consistently identified political exile as a hardship Christians must endure with other afflictions in a fallen world.17 In contrast to

---

16 See, for example, Calvin’s somewhat immodest protestation in 1539 against Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto’s charge that the reformers were motivated by personal gain. Calvin claims that he chose the more difficult path by leaving France, where the road to eminence would have been easy for him (“Neque vero gloriarbor, fuisse mihi in illa facilem ad honores obtinendos viam”; CO 5:389). Likewise, in the preface to his 1557 Psalms commentary Calvin reflects at length on the benefit of David’s example for the church’s comfort in the midst of affliction, including Calvin’s own hardships since leaving his homeland as part of God’s greater plan for him: “ainsi Dieu de mes petis et bas commencemens m’a avancé iusqu’à m’appeler à ceste charge tant honorable de ministre et prescheur de l’Evangile” (CO 31:22). See below for more on Calvin’s identification with David to support his case for exile in Quatre sermons. In 1544, Calvin answered objections to that fact that he issued his harsh teaching from a position of ease by defending his sense of purpose as a preacher in the tradition of the apostles, who required faithful patience from churches they themselves had fled due to danger: “que chacun d’eux exhortoit souvent à patience et constance une Eglise, dont il s’en estoit fuy pour le danger” (CO 6:607). Lest he should still be perceived as a coward, Calvin insists that he actually has exposed himself to danger several times and is prepared to die should God require this.

17 See the expanded catalogue of afflictions in La Forme Des Prieres et Chantz Ecclésiastiques of 1547: “pestes, ou guerre, ou famine: les personnes battues de povreté, ou prison, ou maladie, ou bannissement, ou autre calamité de corps, ou affliction d’esprit” (CO 6:177). See also the 1559 Institutio on exile, listed among the various and numerous miseries Christians ought to expect without doubting God’s providence behind these trials; 4.8.7, 11; 4.9.1; (CO 2: 519-520, 522-524). In 1549 Calvin commends the ministers of the church at Montbéliard who had chosen exile and poverty rather than dissimulate their faith. Calvin eases their consciences from fears that they deserted their congregation by affirming their faithfulness to their pastoral charge and freedom to leave, while also acknowledging the difficulties of that choice and their current situation (CO 13:155-157).
persecution and martyrdom, Calvin granted that exile often is God’s merciful alternative to these more difficult options. Whether in pursuit of a loftier vocation, as in Calvin’s case, or to escape violence, flight was lawful for those with no duty requiring them to stay where they would face persecution. Only dissimulation is ruled out categorically.

Another recurring theme in Calvin’s theology of exile that emerges in *Quatre sermons* is that, however much political exile can be a choice, the believer’s spiritual exile is unavoidable. Christians are “strangers” and “exiles” “not because they were banished from their native land and dispersed among diverse regions, but because the children of God, in whatever land they might be, are but visitors in the world.”

In a letter to an Italian lady in 1553, Calvin weighs the relative merits of exile versus persecution, concluding that both are difficult (CO 14:739-742). Yet God has provided exile as the less demanding option for those unable to endure the “threats and terrors of Christ’s enemies” (“minae et terrores hostium Christi”). Calvin advises, “quia pro tua prudentia vides quam misera sit istic tua servitus, voluntarium exsilium subire mavis, quam in illis sordibus, quae te contaminant, manere defixa.” He insists that the woman’s own conscience would agree that her present situation is untenable and that she should flee: “te conscientiae inquietudo ad quaerendum remedium assidue sollicitet.”

In *Quatre sermons* Calvin argues that exile can be valid even when dividing marriages (CO 8:429-431). Perhaps to assuage the consciences of those contemplating flight, he rejects unlawful divorce, but defends situations in which a husband may go into exile before his wife (to show her the way) or a wife may leave her husband (because God has set her free from an abusive marriage). Similarly, he affirms that a believer fulfills her duty to her prince by praying for him from exile. Generally careful to maintain societal stability and avoid chaos, Calvin’s endorsement of such disruptive behavior in the name of pure worship reveals the importance of this issue for him.

Commentary on 1 Peter (1551; CO 55:242). Calvin builds on this distinction between this world and the next, adding that a result of “fleshy desires” (“carnis desideria”) is that “with our minds we live in the world without realizing that heaven is our country” (“mente in mundo residemus, nec cogitamus coelum esse patriam”).

---

18 In a letter to an Italian lady in 1553, Calvin weighs the relative merits of exile versus persecution, concluding that both are difficult (CO 14:739-742). Yet God has provided exile as the less demanding option for those unable to endure the “threats and terrors of Christ’s enemies” (“minae et terrores hostium Christi”). Calvin advises, “quia pro tua prudentia vides quam misera sit istic tua servitus, voluntarium exsilium subire mavis, quam in illis sordibus, quae te contaminant, manere defixa.” He insists that the woman’s own conscience would agree that her present situation is untenable and that she should flee: “te conscientiae inquietudo ad quaerendum remedium assidue sollicitet.”

19 In *Quatre sermons* Calvin argues that exile can be valid even when dividing marriages (CO 8:429-431). Perhaps to assuage the consciences of those contemplating flight, he rejects unlawful divorce, but defends situations in which a husband may go into exile before his wife (to show her the way) or a wife may leave her husband (because God has set her free from an abusive marriage). Similarly, he affirms that a believer fulfills her duty to her prince by praying for him from exile. Generally careful to maintain societal stability and avoid chaos, Calvin’s endorsement of such disruptive behavior in the name of pure worship reveals the importance of this issue for him.

20 Commentary on 1 Peter (1551; CO 55:242). Calvin builds on this distinction between this world and the next, adding that a result of “fleshy desires” (“carnis desideria”) is that “with our minds we live in the world without realizing that heaven is our country” (“mente in mundo residemus, nec cogitamus coelum esse patriam”).
understanding of the present life as a pilgrimage characterized by movement toward one’s heavenly home. Political exile is but one symptom of the church’s spiritual exile in a world characterized by sin’s corruption and hostility toward God. Only through “death we are recalled from exile to dwell in the fatherland, the heavenly fatherland.”

Suffering becomes a reminder of the present deficient state of things, sharpening the pilgrim’s hope for future glory. Yet God is not absent in his people’s afflictions. These he “turns into happiness for us.” Often the blessings of suffering come not from the removal of trials. God also uses hardship to wean believers’ desires from the corruptible things of this world toward the incorruptible goods of their true spiritual home.

Calvin describes pilgrimage in terms of stark contrasts: “If heaven is our homeland, what else is the earth but our place of exile? If departure from the world is entry into life, what else is the world but a sepulcher? And what else is it for us to remain in life but to be immersed in death?” (Inst. 3.9.4); cf. CO 2:526: “Nam si coelom patria est, quid aliud terra quam exsilium? Si migratio e mundo est in vitam ingressus, quid aliud mundus quam sepul erum? in ipso manere, quid aliud quam in morte demersum esse?”

Inst. 3.9.5; cf. CO 2:527: “per mortem ab exsilio nos revocari, ut patriam, et coelestem patriam incolamus.”

Inst. 3.8.7 (CO 2:519). Similarly, “Whether poverty or exile, or prison, or insult, or disease, or bereavement, or anything like them torture us, we must think that none of these things happens except by the will and providence of God, that he does nothing except with a well-ordered justice” (Inst. 3.8.11); cf. CO 2:522: “Sive paupertas, sive exsilium, sive carcer, sive contumelia, sive morbus, sive orbitas, seu quid aliud simile nos cruciat, cogitandum nihil istorum accidere nisi nutu ac providentia Dei; porro ipsum nihil nisi iustissimo ordine agere.”

CO 2:523: “Ne aviditate nimia fluxis et caducis divitiis inhient, aut in iis quas posbident acquiescant, nunc exsilio, nunc sterilitate terrae, nunc incendio, nunc aliis modis ad inopiam eos redigit, aut certe in mediocritate continet.”
This same logic of blessing through trials energizes Calvin’s plea for exile in *Quatre sermons*. On the one hand, Calvin denies that any place God’s worship is profaned can ever be “home” to believers. At the same time, he acknowledges that even where pure worship in a rightly-ordered congregation exists, sin’s effects are manifest in the church’s imperfections. Political exile cannot resolve spiritual exile. Even while “God’s kingdom is to be found everywhere,” including where false worship holds sway, “the children of God, in whatever land they might be, are but visitors in the world.” *Quatre sermons* reflects this tension, exhorting believers to leave a place that is no true home for a situation that remains, essentially, no true home. But then what is the payoff? For Calvin, political exile is a blessing for two reasons. First, separation from one’s goods, family, and former social standing, are afflictions God uses to exacerbate believers’ sense of perpetual homelessness in this world. Secondly, as the choice to seek God’s gifts in the rightly-ordered church, political exile embodies Christians’ recognition that their heavenly father has not abandoned them in their time of spiritual exile. In the church’s ministry God reveals himself as if “heaven itself is open to us.” There God attests that believers belong to his house, despite what their eyes might tell them, even

---

25 CO 8:419: “ie di toutesfois que le pais où le service de Dieu est aboli et la religion anneantie, merite bien d’estre tenu pour estrange et profane.”

26 CO 8:439-440, 444.

though they seem to be “the greatest possible outcasts according to the world.” Political exile becomes the embrace of spiritual exile, whereby God’s pilgrim people confess their need for God’s care in a world that offers no lasting comfort, and correspondingly have their appetites directed toward their true home in the “house of God.”

2.2.3 The House of God in Exile: Anticipating Calvin’s Ecclesiology in *Quatre sermons*

Calvin’s vision for the ministry of rightly-ordered church as locus of spiritual nurture for God’s pilgrim people played a central role in the message of *Quatre sermons*. Yet such an “ecclesiology of nurture” did not appear there first and thus cannot be said to have been innovated for this anti-Nicodemite publication. Thus it will be useful to sketch briefly how Calvin developed elsewhere this critical idea of the church’s form and polity as essential to carrying out its mission before he applied it to Nicodemism in 1552. Specifically, we will consider the influence of the reformer’s sojourn in Strasbourg from 1538-1541 and his 1543 *Institutio*, where Calvin’s doctrine of the church underwent considerable expansion with themes he continued to develop throughout the 1540s.

---

28 CO 8:414, 439: “Car Dieu se declare si privement à nous en l'ordre de l'Eglise, que les cieulx nous sont (par maniere de dire) ouverts.”
2.2.3.1 The Strasbourg Years and Calvin's Ecclesiology

The Strasbourg sojourn was a formative time for the young reformer, nestled between stints in Geneva at a relatively early point in his career.29 Calvin’s ecclesiology was among the areas of thought impacted by his experiences in Strasbourg. Calvin benefited from exposure to Martin Bucer’s thinking on church polity and Bucer’s struggles to implement his desired system of church discipline throughout the city, as well as from his own service as pastor to Strasbourg’s French refugee congregation.30 After first taking Calvin in, Bucer carefully mentored his younger colleague.31 While some have attempted to reconstruct precisely the ways in which Calvin might have borrowed from Bucer’s ecclesiology, or vice versa, David Steinmetz has rightly observed

29 For a biographical account, see Gordon, Calvin, 82-102; also Augustijn, “Calvin in Strasbourg,” 166-177. Augustijn develops several themes to argue that the Strasbourg years mark a time of development in Calvin’s theology not always acknowledged by those who want to stress the consistency of his thought over time. These include 1.) Geneva as the theological and political successor of Strasbourg as mediator of both Lutheran and Reformed confessional groups; 2.) Calvin’s exposure to the German Reformation in Strasbourg; 3.)  his expanded views of church office and ministry; and 4.) Bucer’s profound influence.


31 Drawing on a number of key secondary sources, but relying mostly on Calvin’s own letters, Gordon paints a deeply human portrait of Calvin’s Strasbourg years, accenting Bucer’s pivotal role: “[Calvin’s] stay in Strasbourg involved a long and profound meditation on the nature of the Christian calling and ministry under the tutelage of Bucer and his colleagues, Wolfgang Capito and Johannes Sturm. Calvin was put in charge of a congregation and invited to teach in the Strasbourg Academy. In fact, Calvin was not really needed in Strasbourg. Bucer took him under his wing to teach him how to be a pastor, but his purpose was ultimately missionary: Calvin was to return to Geneva to resume his work”; Calvin, 86.
that it is difficult to settle definitively such questions of theological influence. In any case, it cannot be denied that Calvin’s theology of the visible church’s origin, form, and relationship to society would come to bear remarkable similarities to Bucer’s. Echoes of the German reformer’s thoughts on the nature and offices of Christian ministry in his 1538 clerical manual *Von der waren Seelsorge (On True Pastoral Care)*, for example, might be perceived in Calvin’s discussion of the church’s fourfold office in his 1541 draft ecclesiastical ordinances for Geneva and subsequent expansion of this topic in the 1543 *Institutio*. Here one begins to see a more careful exposition of how God has appointed a

32 *Calvin in Context*, 89. For arguments regarding Bucer’s direct influence on Calvin’s ecclesiology, see Greschat, *Martin Bucer*, 129-162; also the elaborate, if speculative, reconstruction in Augustijn, “Calvin in Strasbourg,” esp. 174-177. Alexandre Ganoczy provides examples from the 1536 *Institutes* that strongly suggest that Calvin’s thinking, particularly on election, was already influenced by reading Bucer prior to the Genevan’s arrival in Strasbourg; *The Young Calvin*, trans. David Foxgrover and Wade Provo (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 158-168.


particular order in the church for the nurture of his people via the preaching of the gospel. Questions of Bucer’s direct influence aside, it is beyond controversy that Calvin’s thinking on the church, largely focused on its basis in invisible election in the 1536 *Institutio*, took a turn during the Strasbourg years toward a deeper interest the church’s proper visible form, making strides toward the “fuller vision of the Church as an institutional body” set forth in 1543.35

It has also been argued that another factor influencing the direction in which Calvin’s theology of the church developed in the early 1540s was his changing views on possibility of reconciliation with Rome.36 Calvin’s affection for Bucer lasted the remainder of both men’s lives despite Calvin’s difficulties with this “father figure” over Bucer’s willingness to compromise with Rome during the religious colloquies of 1540-1541.37 This had a significant impact on Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, which he would eventually develop in conscious opposition to Bucer’s early position in *Consilium Theologicum Privatum Conscriptum* (1540).38 Citing Calvin’s impatience with displays of

35 Gordon, Calvin, 98.


38 Matheson, “Martydom or Mission,” 158. For a discussion of Bucer’s *Consilium* and Calvin’s position vis-à-vis this document, see chapter one above. As I noted there, Calvin’s 1540 and 1541 letters to unnamed friends, letters are notable not only for their recapitulation of his basic position on the Nicodemite question, which had not changed since 1536/37, but also for how he couches the same argument in far more respectful language toward those with whom he disagrees. He obviously has a high regard for them, yet can pinpoint where their views differ: “I must part company with a number of learned men, for whom I have a sincere,
Protestant compromise during the 1541 Regensburg colloquy, White observes that “the same polemical note is found in some of the extensive additions made to the third edition of the *Institutio* (1543). In particular the new material on true and false church (Inst. 4.2) and on church laws and constitutions (Inst. 4.10) offers a clear rebuttal of the positions taken by Bucer and the mediators.” Thus both positive and negative experiences during the Strasbourg years likely contributed to Calvin’s ecclesiology such that *Quatre sermons*’ robust vision of the true church, rightly-ordered and locus of God’s spiritual nurture, reflected elements present in Calvin’s thinking for more than a decade.

### 2.2.3.2 1543 *Institutio*: An Expanded Vision of the Church’s Form and Function

Calvin’s Strasbourg experience left an indelible mark on the 1543 *Institutio*, which appeared two years after his return to Geneva. Comparing successive editions of the *Institutio*, Jon Balserak has discerned a shift in Calvin’s ecclesiology in 1539-1543 filial regard, who rank among the tolerable rites the parish Mass and other similar ceremonies” (from the 1541 letter; White “An Overlooked Text,” 291. This careful balance of genuine affection and careful critique reveals the character of Calvin’s relationship with his Strasbourg mentors.

39 “An Overlooked Text,” 288n.18. For Calvin’s account of the Regensburg colloquies, see CO 5:513-684. On the stages of development of Calvin’s *Institutio*, see, among others, Neuser, “Development of the Institutes,” 33-54; and Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 118-132. Muller argues for the influence of Melanchthon’s *Loci Communes*—which reflect the Wittenberg reformer’s exegesis of Romans—on Calvin’s 1537-1538 catechisms and, from there, the organization and overall goal of the *Institutio* from 1539 forward. Muller also considers Calvin’s role as a theological instructor in Strasbourg to be a major influence on his re-conceptualizing the *Institutio* as a theological guide, meant all along to be read alongside his biblical commentaries, for training ministerial candidates in 1539. Within this broader “Melanchthonian” and exegetical reorganization, the 1543 edition adds a significant amount of new material related specifically to the nature and ministry of the visible church. See below for more on this.
toward a “two church theory,” juxtaposing the faithful remnant of God’s people with a body that has apostatized but continues to claim the title “church” illegitimately.\(^\text{40}\) In addition to this basic distinction between true and false church, Calvin also puts forth, over this same period, a rich positive vision of the faithful remnant.\(^\text{41}\) The 1543 *Institutio* presents a robust alternative to the illegitimate church in its elaborate portrayal of the church’s proper function and form. Central to this vision is how God provides in the church the means necessary to safeguard and proclaim the gospel, apart from which there can be no church at all. Calvin’s expanded vision of the church begins with its core function, namely to sanctify believers. He goes on to discuss church government only as it relates to this broader task, articulating how the single ministry of the Word is carried out in several discrete offices essential for the ongoing spiritual vitality of God’s

\(^{40}\) *Establishing the Remnant*, 19-64. Balserak presents this two church model, developed particularly in the 1539 and 1543 additions to the *Institutio*, as a hermeneutical key to Calvin’s interpretation of the Minor Prophets in light of his own times. In Calvin’s context the Roman Church and the nascent French Reformed church mirror, respectively, the “two churches” in the OT prophet’s day: idolatrous Israel versus the faithful remnant. These two churches exist in the world side-by-side, indeed even one within the other. Balserak sees in Calvin’s polemic against Rome a concern to provide theological justification for separation without schism: Calvin saw himself as preserving, not breaking, the true church (28-41). According to Balserak, a key feature of Calvin’s case against Rome is the Roman Church’s likeness to the apostasy of ancient Israel and Judah in the time of the prophets, although Calvin argues that Rome is worse in obligating its members to participate in idolatrous practices and to accept Rome as the only true church (38). Neuser has examined these changes from the 1539 *Institutio* and connects Calvin’s presence at the failed 1540/41 colloquies with Rome with the reformer’s concern to address the topic of schism within a deeply polemical ecclesiology in 1543; “Development of the Institutes,” 44-45. See also Benjamin C. Milner, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 1–2.

\(^{41}\) Neuser observes that much of the robust ecclesiology found in Book IV of the 1559 *Institutio* was introduced in 1543, including Calvin’s doctrine of the four offices and his elaboration of church order in general, which could very likely reflect the reformer’s experiences in the ecclesial life of Strasbourg and Geneva; “Development of the Institutes,” 46–47.
people. This material on church polity introduced in 1543 would become 4.3.1-3 of the 1559 *Institutio*. The following passage from this section shows the nexus of polity and nurture in Calvin’s thought:

Through the ministers to whom [God] has entrusted this [preaching] office and has conferred the grace to carry it out, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the church; and he shows himself as though present by manifesting the power of his Spirit in this his institution, that it be not vain or idle. Thus the renewal of the saints is accomplished; thus the body of Christ is built up [Eph 4:12]; thus “we grow up in every way into him who is the Head” [Eph 4:15] and grow together among ourselves; thus are we all brought into the unity of Christ, if prophecy flourishes among us, if we receive the apostles, if we do not refuse the doctrine administered to us.

---

42 In his description of the 1543 additions, including the material on the fourfold ministry of the Word, Neuser places Calvin’s expanded ecclesiology under the heading, “The Sanctification of the Congregation”; “Development of the Institutes,” 46. See also, McKee, *Elders and the Plural Ministry*, 159-165.

43 My dating of various portions of the *Institutio* is based on the marginal apparatus in OS:III-V.

44 *Inst.* 4.3.2; cf. CO 2:778: “per ministros, quibus officium hoc mandavit et muneris obeundi gratiam contulit, sua dona dispensat ac distribuit ecclesiae, seque adeo ipsum praesentem quodammodo exhibet, spiritus suis virtutem in sua hac institutione exserendo, ne inanis sit vel otiosa. Sic instauratio sanctorum peragitur; sic aedificatur corpus Christi; sic adolescimus per omnia in eum qui est caput, et inter nos coalescimus; sic redigimur omnes in unitatem Christi, si prophetia inter nos viget, si apostolos recipimus, si doctrinam nobis administratam non aspernamur.”

This view of the church as nurturer is further elaborated in the 1559 *Institutio* with sections on the church as “mother” who gathers believers in all ages via her preaching office: “The church is built up solely by outward preaching, and the saints are held together by one bond only: that with common accord, through learning and advancement, they keep the church order established by God. It was especially to this end that … in ancient times under the law all believers were commanded to assemble at the sanctuary” (*Inst.* 4.1.5); cf. CO 2:751: “ecclesiam non aliter aedificari quam externa praedicatione, nec alio vinculo inter se retineri sanctos, nisi dum uno consenso discetido et proficiendo ordinem ecclesiae a Deo praescritum colunt. In hunc praecipue finem … iussi sunt olim fideles sub lege confuere ad sanctuarium.”

In this same place Calvin describes the church thus assembled under the preaching ministry in strikingly sacramental language: “All those who spurn the spiritual food, divinely extended to them through the hand of the church, deserve to perish in famine and hunger … As if it were not in God’s power somehow to come down to us, in order to be near us, yet without changing place or confining us to earthly means; but rather by these to bear us up as if in chariots to his heavenly glory, a glory that fills all things with its
Sanctification occurs corporately, “in this his institution,” by means of a human ministry given to distribute God’s gifts to the congregation, primarily through preaching. Calvin so closely links the church’s ability to carry out its God-given function to its proper order and worship that the church’s existence as the true church depends on its polity:

> Whoever, therefore, either is trying to abolish this order of which we speak and this kind of government, or discounts it as not necessary, is striving for the undoing or rather the ruin and destruction of the church. For neither the light and heat of the sun, nor food and drink, are so necessary to nourish and sustain the present life as the Apostolic and pastoral office is necessary to preserve the church on earth.”

The connection between church government and Christian nurture is not, of course, original to Calvin, who was simply following the logic of Eph 4:11–14. There Calvin finds the Apostle Paul unveiling God’s design for a ministry of the word “to equip the saints” and “for building up the body of Christ,” and becomes an exegetical foundation for Calvin’s ecclesiology from the 1540s forward. Ephesians 4 provides a biblical anchor for his argument in the *Institutio* that the true church is found where a

---

immeasurableness and even surpasses the heavens in height” (*Inst. 4.1.5*); cf. CO 2:750-751: “quicunque spirituali animae cibum divinitus sibi per manus ecclesiae porrectum respuunt ... Quasi vero non sit in Dei potestate, ut nobis propinquus sit, quodammodo ad nos descendere, et tamen neque mutare locum, neque nos affigere terrenis medis; sed potius vehiculis quibusdam nos sursum efferre ad coelestem suam gloriam, quae sua immensitate omnia repleet, tum vero coelos altitudine superat.”

*Inst. 4.3.2; cf. CO 2:778: “Ecclesiae ergo dissipationem, vel ruinam potius et exitium molitur quisquis ordinem hunc de quo disputamus, et hoc genus regiminis vel abolere studet, vel quasi minus necessarium elevat. Neque enim vel solis lumen ac calor, vel cibus ac potus tam sunt praeuenti vitae fovendae ac sustinendae necessaria, quam est conservandae in terris ecclesiae apostolicum ac pastorale munus.” This section first appeared in 1543.

*Eph 4:12* (NRSV).
proper polity is established to convey sound doctrine for the benefit of God’s people.\footnote{\label{fn:polity}Though the Ephesians commentary appeared 1548, even when commenting on 1 Cor in 1546 Calvin acknowledges the importance of Eph 4:11-14 for his ecclesiology and promises to treat that passage more fully “if the Lord might allow me to get that far” (Commentary on 1 Cor 12:28; CO 49:506).}

Thus it is not surprising that ideas from the sections on church office first appearing in the 1543 \textit{Institutio}, where they were presented with frequent reference to Eph 4:11-14, have a prominent place in Calvin’s 1548 commentary on the same biblical text. The commentary’s logic should be familiar by now. God intends to use the church, ordered around its preaching ministry, as his principal means of sanctifying believers:

> If the edification of the church proceeds from Christ alone, he has surely a right to prescribe in what manner it shall be edified. But Paul expressly states that, according to the command of Christ, no real union or perfection is attained, but by the outward preaching. We must allow ourselves to be ruled and taught by men. … The church is the common mother of all the godly, which bears, nourishes, and brings up children to God, kings and peasants alike; and this is done by the ministry. Those who neglect or despise this order choose to be wiser than Christ.\footnote{\label{fn:church_office}CTS Eph 4:12; cf. CO 51:199: “Nam si ecclesiae aedificatio a solo Christo est: ipsius etiam sane est praescribere quam aedificandi rationem esse velit. Paulus autem aperte hic testatur, non alio modo, secundum Christi praescriptum, rite coagmentari nos et perfici, quam per externam praedicationem, dum per homines patimur nos regi ac doceri … ecclesia communis est piorum ontium mater, quae tam reges quam plebeios gignit in Domino, nutrit et gubernat: quod fit ministerio. Proinde supra Christum sapere volunt, qui hunc ordinem vel negligunt, vel contemnunt.” Throughout this chapter I use the abbreviation CTS indicate where I have quoted directly from the English translation of Calvin’s commentaries produced by the Calvin Translation Society (1844-1856), rather than providing my own translation from.}

Perhaps addressing questions that have arisen since the 1543 \textit{Institutio}, Calvin asserts in 1548 that this function of the church as mediator of salvation through its ministry of the
Word is not something to be argued, but merely to be accepted as God’s chosen method of nurture.\textsuperscript{49} God uses seemingly frail means to gather, nourish, and guard his people throughout their pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{50} These external means are specific. They are prescribed by God, making the church’s proper form essential for carrying out its function: “Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists.”\textsuperscript{51}

To summarize, the passages added to the \textit{Institutio} in 1543 anticipate Calvin’s exegesis of Eph 4 just a few years later, converging to offer a robust account of the church in terms of its unique function and visible form. In 1552 it would be deployed in a different polemical context: against Nicodemism. \textit{Quatre sermons} goes beyond stressing the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{49} “The present inquiry is not what the power of God can accomplish, but what is the will of God and the appointment of Christ. In employing human instruments for accomplishing their salvation, God has conferred on men no ordinary favor. Nor can any exercise be found better adapted to promote unity than to gather around the common doctrine—the standard of our General” (CTS Eph 4:12); cf. CO 51:199: “Non negamus quidem posse nos sola Dei virtute perfici citra hominum administrum: sed hic quid Deo placuerit, quid statuerit Christus, non quae sit Dei potentia, disputamus. Ista porro con vulgaris erga homines Dei est dignatio, quod ad perficiendam eorum salutem utitur hominum opera. Et optimum est fovendae unitatis exercitium, quod ad communem doctrinam, quasi ad ducis vexillum, aggregamur.”

\textsuperscript{50} Calvin insists that perpetual necessity of proper polity for Christian nurture is not something Christians ever outgrow in this life: “The use of the ministry is not temporal, like that of a school for children, but constant, so long as we remain in the world” (CTS Eph 4:13); cf. CO 51:200: “usum ministerii non esse temporelam, sicuti paedagogiae ciuspiam: sed perpetuum quamdui in mundo versamur.”

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Inst.} 4.1.9; CO 2:753–54. For Calvin, the church’s proper form necessarily includes the correct accounting of its offices—of which four (pastor, teacher, elder, and deacon) were perpetual and necessary at all times—as well as God’s ongoing provision of gifted individuals who are duly called and ordained to these offices. See, for example, \textit{Inst.} 4.3.1, 4–9 (CO 2:777, 779-783); also Commentary on Eph 4:11 (1548; CO 51:196-197).
importance of public worship in a rightly-ordered church. Calvin insists on this practice as an indispensable element of the Christian life, making his case by turning to David.

2.2.4 Exile as Spiritual Nurture: Calvin’s use of the Psalms in *Quatre sermons*

Having sketched the logic of exile Calvin brings into his anti-Nicodemite polemic for the first time in *Quatre sermons* with an ecclesiology of nurture in the rightly-ordered church, I will demonstrate how this account of exile is augmented by the reformer’s use of the Psalms here. Recent studies of Calvin’s Psalms exegesis have focused nearly exclusively on the 1557 commentary. These have examined Calvin’s sensitivity to the Old Testament’s original context and reluctance to press anything he believed to be an illegitimate “prophetic” or Christological interpretation, his use of David as an exemplar of true faith for God’s people in all times, and his recurring concern for how the Psalms set forth the practices of pure worship over against superstition and idolatry.52

52See, among others, Wulfert de Greef, “Calvin as Commentator on the Psalms,” in *Calvin and the Bible*, ed. Donald McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 85-106; G. Sujin Pak, *The Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates Over the Messianic Psalms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010); Barbara Pitkin, “Imitation of David: David as a Paradigm for Faith in Calvin’s Exegesis of the Psalms,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24.4 (1993): 843-863; and Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin’s Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007). Pak has found Calvin’s reading of Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 45, 72, 110 and 118 to reflect the reformer’s sensitivity to David’s “Protestant piety” that includes “proper practices of true worship” encompassing “not only public praise of God but also preaching the gospel, the exercise of prayer, fleeing superstitions and idolatry, cleaving to the society of the righteous, and preserving the true religion of God”; *Judaizing Calvin*, 87-91. Calvin’s comments on Ps 16, in particular, leverage David’s example “to call Christians to flee the ‘profane superstitions’ of the Roman church”; ibid., 91. The first of the *Quatre sermons*, based on Ps 16:4, reflects this emphasis on flight from idolatry as its central theme. Pitkin examines Calvin’s use of David as an exemplar of true faith for sixteenth-century Christians, the theology of the covenant that legitimizes such a move for Calvin, and how his tendency to present David’s experience as nearly identical to that of New Testament believers can flatten distinctions between eras of redemptive history Calvin makes elsewhere. Although Calvin granted to David a prophetic awareness that grasped God’s purposes in
Anticipating the approach to reading the Psalter Calvin outlines in 1557, *Quatre sermons* reflects the reformer’s belief that the Psalms teach in a descriptive mode, displaying the thoughts and prayers of God’s people—especially David as model for Christian piety.\(^{53}\)

Calvin’s portrayal of David centers on two images. Sermon one presents David as a guardian of pure worship, sermons three and four as a hungry pilgrim longing for spiritual food. David’s first appearance introduces Calvin’s typical case against the Mass. Psalm 16:4 is David’s “solemn vow”: “I will not join at all in their sacrifices of

redemptive history as they would be fulfilled in Christ, he more often depicted David struggling to make sense of providence from deep in the mire of confusing historical circumstances. Pitkin suggests that Calvin’s preference for a “historical” rather than a “prophetic” interpretation of particular Psalms is motivated by a pastoral desire to situate David in concrete circumstances that parallel the reformer’s own context, minimizing differences between David and sixteenth-century Christians; “Imitation of David,” 857-863. In *Quatre sermons* Calvin highlights both David’s similarity and dissimilarity vis-à-vis Christians. For general themes in Calvin’s Old Testament exegesis see David L. Puckett, *John Calvin’s Exegesis of the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995).

\(^{53}\) In 1557 Calvin affectionately dubbed the Psalms “an anatomy of all the parts of the soul” (“ἀνατοµὴν omnium animae partium”; CO 31:15). Highlighting the uniqueness of the Psalter as biblical teaching in a descriptive rather than prescriptive, Calvin foregrounds the Psalms’ value as examples of actual prayers, useful for instruction about how God’s people should approach him in any age: “In sum, all that can encourage us regarding prayer to God is taught us in this book” (“atque adeo quidquid ad nos animandos facere potest, ubi orandus est Deus, in hoc libro monstratur”; CO 31:17). Calvin takes David as the principal author of the Psalms and views identifying with David’s example as one of the keys for properly understanding the Psalter. In a rare autobiographical mode, the reformer describes how such an experiential connection with David through the Psalms has been a boon in own life and struggles (CO 31:15-16, 19-36). See also James L. Mays, “Calvin’s Commentary on the Psalms: The Preface as Introduction,” in *John Calvin and the Church*, ed. Timothy George (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 195-204; and James A. De Jong, “‘An Anatomy of All Parts of the Soul’: Insights into Calvin’s Spirituality from his Psalms Commentary,” in *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor: Calvin as Confessor of Holy Scripture*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 1-14. With Christians, David is a fellow beneficiary of God’s covenant blessings. It remains an open question how much the Nicodemite controversy shaped Calvin’s later Psalms exegesis, where we find him repeating key polemical elements of the spirituality developed in his 1552 portrayal of David as the anti-Nicodemite. Calvin did not begin writing the 1557 commentary until 1553; T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin’s Old Testament Commentaries* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1986), 29-31.
blood, and their names will not pass my lips.”

Taking aim at logic he attributes to Nicodemite arguments, Calvin argues that David repudiates both internal assent and external participation in ritual idolatry, remaining pure in body and soul. The rest of the sermon rehearses the case against dissimulation published a decade earlier. David is the guardian of true worship, the anti-Nicodemite who fears God above all.

After thus introducing the theme of fleeing idolatry, Calvin’s second use of David dominates the latter half of Quatre sermons, pressing readers to seek pure and free worship in a “Christian Church.” While it may seem counterintuitive to eschew New

---

54 CO 8:377-378. Scriptural quotations have been translated directly from Calvin’s French.

55 “As to the worship of God, he professes to keep himself in purity of body as well as of soul”; “Il proteste donc de se maintenir en pureté de corps comme d’ame quant au service de Dieu” (CO 8:380). For Calvin, internal devotion and external acts of worship are distinct but inseparable, with the body infallibly expressing the state of one’s heart, so that “when there is true integrity [of heart], the body will never go against this” (“quand il y a vraye integrité, le corps ne tirera point au rebours”; CO 8:381). See Calvin’s discussion of idolatry in Inst. 1.10-12 (CO 2:72-89); also Eire, War Against the Idols, 195-233. For more on this close connection between idolatry and Calvin’s account of Nicodemism, see chapter one.

56 Cf. CO 6:537-588, 589-614. Again, see chapter one for an overview of Calvin’s position. Key themes repeated here include the inseparability of body and spirit in worship, the idea that any compromise with respect to worship is a turning away from God that constitutes idolatry, that the Mass is incompatible with the Lord’s Supper and even of satanic origin, and that one’s mere presence in other Catholic rituals—including baptism—inevitably has a polluting effect that makes it impossible to keep one’s faith pure. This discussion takes up the remaining thirteen of the first sermon’s sixteen printed columns in Calvini Opera.

57 CO 8:388-392.


95
Testament texts that speak more directly to the ecclesiological themes he treats, Calvin’s use of the Old Testament has benefits.\textsuperscript{59} Chief among these is the ability to employ David’s experience, while he is deprived of worship in God’s temple, to sharpen the urgency of Calvin’s appeal. Whereas David made an appearance at the beginning of Calvin’s sermon on Ps 16:4, only to be set aside in the course of an extended reflection on idolatry and suffering, Israel’s king returns in Calvin’s extended case for exile. David figures prominently on nearly every page of sermons three and four. Invoking the spiritual exile motif described above, Calvin insists that all God’s people experience the present life as wayfarers on a journey toward “God’s heavenly kingdom.”\textsuperscript{60} Thankfully, God offers help for pilgrims bogged down by their infirmities and sin: “the topmost of which are here named by David as the order and polity that God has established in his

Calvin’s text of Ps 27:4 reads: “One thing I ask from God, and that I need: That I might live in the house of the Lord all of my life, in order to see the beauty of the Lord and to consider well his temple” (“J’ay demande une chose à Dieu, et la requerray, c’est d’habiter en la maison du Seigneur tout le temps de ma vie, à fin de veoir la beaulté du Seigneur et de bien regarder son Temple”); Ps 27:8: “My heart says concerning you, ‘Seek my face.’ I will seek your face, Lord” (“Mon cuer a dict de toy: Cerchez ma face. le cercheray ta face, Seigneur”).

\textsuperscript{59} For example, Eph 4 and 1 Cor 12. See above for a discussion of these texts in connection with Calvin’s ecclesiology.

\textsuperscript{60} “nous aspirions au royaume celeste de Dieu” (CO 8:409-410). Calvin further describes pilgrimage as an active effort “to go to God” (“[the pilgrim’s] principal desir soit d’aller à Dieu”).

96
Thus emerges the basic storyline unfolding over two sermons: God sustains his people in exile via the church’s polity and order—a design David grasped well. Calvin’s hermeneutic stresses both David’s similarity and difference vis-à-vis the reformer’s contemporaries. In common with all God’s people, David is a fellow pilgrim in need of nurture that God conveys through external means that are not indifferent. Yet he is also a prophet who enjoyed special intimacy with God. If even the great

---

61 “desquels les principaulx sont y ci nommez par David, asçavoir, l’ordre et police que Dieu a establie en son Eglise,” (CO 8:409-410). Calvin sees this as God’s answer to “foolish and fickle desires” – “earthly affections,” united in “distracting us from God,” such that his people “amuse themselves with earthly things in the world.”

62 De Greef has noted how Calvin’s reading of the entire Psalter is conditioned by his understanding that therein one finds timeless principles governing God’s dealings with his people in all times and places, as well as how the reformer’s reflections on specific Psalms, such as Ps 24, spell out his understanding of the tabernacle and temple as external means ordained by God to convey spiritual benefit; “Calvin as Commentator,” 105-106.

63 See Pitkin, “Imitation,” 859-863. Pitkin notes the tension created by Calvin’s understanding of the distinction between the Old and New Testament administrations of God’s covenant, on the one hand, and the reformer’s interest in portraying David’s experience as equivalent to that of New Testament Christians. She points out that Calvin often minimizes David’s prophetic role as a self-aware type of Christ, who often spoke knowingly of future new covenant realities, in order to facilitate a more immediate connection between David and Christians, whom Calvin presents as equally mired in the opacity of historical circumstances vis-à-vis God’s promises. Rather than stressing David’s privileged status as a prophet who beheld Christ with divinely-revealed clarity, which would actually connect him with Christians more readily as one who saw Christ as they did, Calvin prefers to remain on the common ground of shared experience in historical contingency without the benefit of such prophetic vision. Pitkin makes a compelling case from the instances of Calvin’s exegesis she examines in the 1557 Psalms commentary. In Quatre sermons, however, Calvin’s exposition of Ps 27 as a plea for exile relies just as much on David’s status as Old Testament prophet as it does on David’s identity as a fellow pilgrim in common with all God’s children. Calvin will stress one element or the other depending on which is most useful to the point he is making.

64 CO 8:413.

65 CO 8:409-414. To his hearers’ embarrassment, Calvin stresses David’s appreciation of his need for God’s grace, despite possessing only the shadows of the old covenant: They see more, yet seem to understand less.
David was reduced to desperation for the blessings of God’s assembly, how much more should ordinary believers hunger, and how shameful if they do not. Calvin also leverages a deeply emotional appeal. Taking their cue from David’s despair when deprived of worship in a rightly-ordered church, Christians should stop at nothing to attain this. Repeating the theme of political exile as the embrace of spiritual exile, Calvin grants that fleeing false worship is no escape from the ubiquity of sin and the world’s corruption. Yet it is possible to find real medicine and healing despite spiritual exile. Political displacement brings one closer to genuine spiritual hunger and God’s provision for this need. The disruptive potential of this plea emerges in the assertion that neither patriotism nor marriage should keep God’s people from pursuing his fatherly provision, even if this means scratching fresh wells in the desert with their own nails—an allusion to Ps 84, where biblical pilgrims are said to make a spring in the Valley of Baca.

This argument for exile also brings a tonal shift to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, turning from a strictly negative attack on idolatry towards the real benefits for those who seek God’s face. Frequently Calvin speaks of “the entire order of the church” as “the mirror in which Christ should be seen,” where God “takes on something of a face”

---

66 CO 8:419-424. The reformer further insinuates that those who hesitate when faced with exile could be bought at the right price: “If they were offered six times their goods in a foreign country, they would offer no great resistance over leaving immediately to gain possession of it” (“si on leur presentoit six fois autant de biens qu’ils ont en pais estrange, qu’ils ne feroyent as grande difficulté pour s’en aller tantost mettre en possession”; CO 8:428).

67 CO 8:428-436. See n. 19 above.
for his people. The church and its ministry, wherein the gospel is deposited, comprise
the “ladder” God has provided for us to ascend to his presence. Reproducing the
ecclesiology developed throughout the 1540s linking church polity and sanctification,
Calvin refers to “temple” and “church” interchangeably, noting how David grasped
God’s intention as a “kind Father” to nurture his “children” in all ages through the
regular ministry of preaching and sacraments. This ministry was the “one thing” David
sought to the point of heart-sickness. David’s role as spokesman for an ecclesiology that
locates the church by its function, centered on its proclamation of God’s Word, results in
a vivid apology for exile unparalleled in all of Calvin’s writings for its emotional appeal.

2.2.5 Exile as Preferred Course: Calvin’s Arrangement of Quatre sermons

This exhortation to exile is strengthened significantly by the overall arrangement
of Quatre sermons. Calvin’s preface directs his audience’s interpretation of his message.
The reader does not hold in her hands a haphazard anthology. It is a coherent argument

---

68 CO 8:411-413, 418, 426-427.
69 “The necessity to be taught by sermons, to be confirmed by the sacraments, and trained in public prayers
and confession of faith, we share with the ancient fathers”; “la nécessité d’estre enseignez pàr les sermons,
d’estre confermez par les Sacremens, exercez aux prieres publiques et confession de foy, nous est commune
avec les Peres anciens” (CO 8:413). God has provided in the temple the “external order by which the faithful
are guided.” It is “a matchless privilege and benefit to be in the church of God, and thus to be participants in
the means this kind Father has given to his children in order that they approach him”; “c’est un bien et
privilege inestimable d’estre en l’Eglise de Dieu, pour estre participants des moyens que ce bon Pere a
donnez à ses enfans pour approcher de luy” (CO 8:410). To despise God’s provision is to tempt God,
“thinking to be able to fly without wings”; cuidans povoir voler sans ailes (CO 8:413).
meant to be read as a whole. The first words readers of Quatre sermons encounter are, as it were, operating instructions from the author: “When you understand why and to what end I have chosen to publish these sermons, and when you are informed of the argument that they contain, you will know so much better how to profit from them and apply them to the use for which I have intended them.” This careful arrangement complicates the sense of effortlessness Calvin conveys in claiming he simply cleaned up a few sermons to retread old ground on Nicodemism. Another difficulty with Calvin’s account is that this is not what he actually does. Instead, he presents a cumulative argument that clearly focuses attention on exile to the exclusion of other options.

Employing the shorthand “idolatry,” “martyrdom,” “church,” and “exile” to summarize the respective thematic content of Calvin’s four sermons facilitates an analysis of how the sermons’ arrangement impacts their collective argument, which Calvin characterizes as an outworking of the first sermon’s rejection of idolatry.

Maintaining this logic does not preclude other sequences besides the one Calvin has chosen. Following sermon one with sermon three, for example, would meet the problem of false worship with the immediate counterpoint of pure worship in the rightly-ordered church. “Exile” (sermon four) and resistance unto “martyrdom” (sermon two) could

70 “Quand vous entendrez pourquoy et à quelle fin i’ay voulu publier ces sermons-ci, et que vous serez advertis de l’argument qu’ils contiennent, vous en sçaurez tant mieux faire vostre proufit, et les applicquer à tel usage que ie les ay destinez” (CO 8:374).
then follow in either order as equal options for Nicodemites. Alternatively, he could have kept the natural thematic link between sermons three and four and ended with “martyrdom” (sermon two) as the ultimate price of one’s loyalty to God. This would stress resistance, as some have observed in Calvin’s later attitude toward France.\(^71\) It was not until 1555 that Calvin’s power in Geneva was consolidated to the extent that he could focus wholeheartedly on evangelizing France, which involved sending missionary pastors out of Geneva to help establish the French Reformed church rather than encouraging evangelicals to leave France.\(^72\) In 1552 Calvin quickly treats resistance, in sermon two, before proceeding with his two-sermon argument for exile from Ps 27. This seems to make exile the preferred course, not least because it presents the harder option first, only to set it aside completely. As a response to idolatry, Calvin’s would-be Nicodemites are initially told that they should be willing to die, and then (perhaps) encouraged by the fact that they do not have to. Both options require sacrifice. However, taken as a whole, the emphasis in *Quatre sermons* falls on the less difficult course.

Without contradicting his teaching on the viability of martyrdom, Calvin minimizes this option by locating it in the development of his case, rather than as its climax. This latter

---


distinction belongs to exile. That Calvin was sensitive to being perceived by his contemporaries as favoring exile for personal gain is clear from his taking time to address such charges directly. Unsurprisingly, he emphatically denies such motives.\(^3\)

The problem remains that the rhetorical flow of these four sermons runs in the opposite direction of Calvin’s stated intent. Rather than a deductive argument that begins with idolatry and reasons down to specific implications, the arrangement of these sermons seems ideally suited to emphasize the collection’s conclusion: Pilgrims starving in the wilderness of idolatry must stop at nothing to get pure spiritual nourishment in a rightly-ordered church. This strong turn in his anti-Nicodemite polemic toward political exile as the path to spiritual nurture accentuates French Nicodemites’ duty to leave France by stressing the benefits of exile. But the same message also addresses another group, namely Genevan Christians—many of whom had already chosen exile. When this second audience is considered, the shift in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism to favor exile in *Quatre sermons* seems anything but arbitrary, appearing instead to be a carefully designed appeal to the Genevan church in support of Calvin’s pastoral authority.

\(^3\)CO 8:419-424. Interestingly, the reformer apparently did not consider the risk of being misunderstood worth rearranging the sermons to soften the collection’s clear emphasis on exile when read as a whole.
2.3 Quatre Sermons as an Apology for Calvin’s Ministry

2.3.1 The Conflicts in Geneva as Context for Quatre sermons

The remainder of this chapter argues for reading Quatre sermons as a defense of Calvin’s pulpit ministry targeted simultaneously at two audiences: the ostensible French Nicodemite audience of all his anti-Nicodemite works, and a hybrid Genevan audience of natives and refugees. To this latter group Calvin’s exhortation to seek God’s provision in exile functions as a pointed reminder: the church order God intends for your benefit is already among you. Calvin had crucial reasons to address local concerns in the early 1550s, when his position and influence were under constant challenge by vigorous and powerful enemies. An awareness of these circumstances surrounding the publication of Quatre sermons sheds light on how the collection functioned as a work of political persuasion, a skillfully woven response to discontent with Calvin and his ministry.

Calvin had a public relations problem on his hands. Others have admirably reconstructed Calvin’s situation in Geneva prior to his decisive victory over the hostile faction led by Ami Perrin (d. 1561) in 1555.\textsuperscript{74} Growing resentment toward the city’s ministers, stemming from episodes such as the controversy over baptismal names and public clashes with powerful families of Geneva’s ruling elite, put Calvin on the

defensive among his neighbors. The perceived harshness and personal vindictiveness with which Calvin handled cases such as the 1546 trial of Pierre Ameaux for blasphemy and the 1551 dismissal of Jerome Bolsec from Geneva, over Calvin’s doctrine predestination, won enemies and alienated friends. Still a year prior to the execution of Michael Servetus in Geneva and the outbreak of fresh conflicts over the authority to excommunicate, Calvin’s situation in 1552 was far from secure. Although Calvin had succeeded for the most part in establishing a unified, supportive Company of Pastors

---

75 See, among others, William G. Naphy, “Baptisms, Church Riots and Social Unrest in Calvin’s Geneva” Sixteenth Century Journal 26:1 (1995): 87–97; and Karen E. Spierling, Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536-1564 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), esp. 140-152. Naphy’s examination of archival records helpfully illuminates formerly neglected episodes in the baptismal names controversy between 1546, when the policy of rejecting traditional names was enacted, and 1552, when Calvin reports a riot led by Philibert Berthelier (see below, n. 77) over this issue. On Calvin’s clashes with the influential Favre clan, see Monter, Geneva, 75.

76 On the Ameaux case, see Monter, Geneva, 74-75; Naphy, Consolidation, 94-96. While Ameaux’s humiliating public sentence was for blasphemy and not for criticizing Calvin, it is easy to conflate the two offenses, given the Petit Conseil’s initial requirement that he simply ask Calvin for pardon and the latter’s insistence that this in itself was insufficient punishment given Ameaux’ affront to his ministry: “C’est sans doute Calvin qui avait été l’inspirateur de project de sentence le plus rigoureux. Il voulait imprimer le stigmata d’un opprobre public sur le front de l’home qui avait attaqué son ministère”; Amédée Roget, Histoire du peuple de Genève depuis la Réforme jusqu’à l’Escalade, vol. 2 (Geneva: J. Jullien, 1873), 214. The fact that this conflict set Calvin, the Frenchman, directly at odds with a notable Genevan citizen, exacerbated growing anti-foreign sentiment, such that “popular reaction, especially in Ameaux’s neighbourhood, St. Gervais, was fierce”; Naphy, Consolidation, 95. On the Bolsec episode and Calvin’s resulting breach with Berne as well as differences with Heinrich Bullinger and the Zurich theologians, see Gordon, Calvin, 204-211.

77 On the Servetus affair, see Roland H. Bainton, Hunted Heretic: The Life and Death of Michael Servetus, 1511-1553 (Beacon Press, 1960); also Gordon, Calvin, 217-232. Philibert Berthelier’s appeal to the Petit Conseil after his excommunication by the Consistory renewed debates over the Consistory’s authority that hardened divisions between the magistrates and ministers; Naphy, Consolidation, 184-186; also Christian Grosse, L’excommunication de Philibert Berthelier: histoire d’un conflit d’identité aux premiers temps de la Réforme Genevoise, 1547-1553 (Geneva: Société d’histoire et d’archéologie de Genève, 1995).
and gathering sympathetic elders on the Consistory—a solid ecclesiastical foothold—Geneva’s political hierarchy remained dominated by a powerful faction opposed to Calvin. They were wary of the growing French refugee presence, of which Calvin himself was the most prominent reminder. Naphy argues that this swell of wealthy French refugees within Geneva’s social elite in the late 1540s and early 1550s created an opportunity for Calvin and his supporters to achieve political gains. The city’s pulpits became the pastors’ front lines for changing the political situation “by the slow means of persuasion and indoctrination.” The existence of institutions such as the Bourse française both suggests and obscures the disruptive impact of large numbers of exiled French seeking refuge in Geneva. Exile was a destabilizing force in early modern societies, creating cultural fissures and divergent loyalties that invited hostility toward outsiders.

78 Naphy, Consolidation, 223-224. It should be added, as further indication of the tumultuous power struggle in 1552 Geneva and its uncertain outcome at the time, that the Perrinists moved in 1553 to retake the Consistory and influence its composition (176-180); see also Gordon, Calvin, 212.

79 Consolidation, 121-139, 223-232; cf. Monter, Geneva, 82.

80 Naphy, Consolidation, 224. For more on the role of preaching and liturgy used to enforce reform, see Thomas A. Lambert, “Preaching, Praying, and Policing the Reform in Sixteenth-Century Geneva” (PhD diss, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998), esp. 222-392. Lambert’s work is a useful study of practices, particularly preaching services and prayer, and so understandably does not take up Quatre sermons as a publication. My argument here is that Calvin’s use of Quatre sermons displays his resourcefulness in exploiting the sermon to achieve certain goals, using—in this case—the opportunity to restate his concerns in the written form of a published collection.

81 Jeannine E. Olson, Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the Bourse Française (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1989), 182-183, et passim. The establishment of this diaconal fund for French religious refugees attests the economic burden outsiders represented to the local economy, but also “dissipated at least some of the hostility that native Genevans felt toward the influx of foreigners” (183).
such as Calvin, as much as it presented opportunities for him to leverage influence.\textsuperscript{82}

Presenting itself as an anti-Nicodemite work targeting France, \emph{Quatre sermons} fits quite neatly into this domestic political agenda as an exhibit in favor of Calvin’s significance before the court of public opinion.

Calvin’s concern for his Genevan context becomes clear from the direct comments addressing his congregation throughout \emph{Quatre sermons}. These appear according to a certain logic. Sermon one is framed with reflections on the relevance of anti-Nicodemite material for those enjoying freedom that might be lost at any point.\textsuperscript{83} Sermon two has just one reference: to the case of an unnamed Protestant martyr who once lived in Geneva.\textsuperscript{84} The bulk of Calvin’s direct address to the Genevan situation occurs in sermons three and four. He sharply rebukes his hearers for their lack of zeal and discontent with the church, linking these defects: “What is the reason that we take so little fruit from sermons and the sacraments, if not that we hardly apply our attention to what is said and done there?”\textsuperscript{85} Calvin then further parses his congregation into two


\textsuperscript{83} CO 8:378, 392.

\textsuperscript{84} CO 8:407-408.

\textsuperscript{85} “Car qui est cause que nous rapportons si peu de fruit des sermons et des Sacremens, sinon
groups. Native Genevans fail to appreciate that God has established his church among them. Exiles in the congregation act entitled, as if they have done God a favor by coming to Geneva. Concerning the latter, “it would have been better that they broke their necks than ever set foot in this church, where they conduct themselves so badly.” Despite such harsh words, Calvin pleads for patience with each other’s faults. This theme governs the conclusion of sermon four. To the disillusioned, Calvin offers this prescription “revealed to us by David: Seek the face of God.” Thus the climactic appeal of the reformer’s two-sermon sequence urging exile speaks directly to those who had already chosen it, yet remained disappointed with what they have found in Calvin’s Geneva congregation: Be comforted that “we are nevertheless in God’s house.” Calvin’s concluding exposition of Ps 87 drives home the central lesson that God’s promises to the church are not thwarted despite appearances to the contrary.

que nous n’applicquons guere nostre estude à ce qui s’y dit et s’y faict?” (CO 8:421).

86 “il vauldroit mieux s’estre rompu le col, que d’avoir iamais mis le pied en ceste Eglise pour s’y porter si mal” (CO 8:422).

87 CO 8:422-423.

88 CO 8:431.

89 “Si sommes-nous toutesfois en la maison de Dieu” (CO 8:439). Calvin complains, “One hears nothing besides such grumbling” (“on n’oira autre chose que ces murmures”; CO 8:440).

90 CO 8:441-452. A copy of this text was sent to Edward VI of England in July of 1552 (CO 14:341-343).
Calvin’s expressed concern for the Genevans raises questions. On the one hand, his concession of faults within the Genevan church appears to weaken his polemic. Why openly and repeatedly acknowledge problems in the model you hold forth to Nicodemites? Yet this seems worth the risk if we allow that Calvin intended a binary audience for *Quatre sermons*. The commentary on Ps 87 is literally Calvin’s last word here. The decision to end with such an appeal to trust in God’s promise over the church’s appearance suggests Calvin’s goals for the book as a whole. As much as he wanted to convince one group to leave the spiritual desert of Catholic lands for greener pastures of places like Geneva, Calvin also must respond to present complaints that even his own congregation fell short of the ideal he held forth over against Rome.91

2.3.2 Flexibility of Address: The Two Audiences of *Quatre sermons*

The rhetorical power of *Quatre sermons* as a defense of Calvin’s authority in multiple contexts arises from its genre as sermons once preached for Geneva, now

---

91 Despite Calvin’s insistence that purity of worship is possible in the rightly-ordered church, *Quatre sermons* consistently rejects a pure-church ecclesiology that denies the existence of both elect and non-elect members within the true visible church. For Calvin’s thinking on the visible church as a body that contains “many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance,” see, for example, *Inst.* 1.1.7-9 (CO 2:752-754). A pure ministry of preaching and sacraments becomes the objective mark of the true church, rather than the quality of its members—the latter being both difficult to discern and discouraging to behold. See François Wendel, *Calvin: sources et évolution de sa pensée religieuse* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950); English Translation: *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Labyrinth Press, 1963), 297-298. *Quatre sermons* similarly distinguishes the church’s purity of form and function from the behavior of its members. While not directly addressing Anabaptist opponents or other open advocates of pure-church doctrine, *Quatre sermons* displays the usefulness of Calvin’s mixed-church ecclesiology for a different purpose: The defense of his ministry against critics struggling with what they see in Geneva.
redeployed for those abroad. Given Calvin’s general reluctance to publish his sermons, it is initially surprising that he took the pains to edit the material that became Quatre sermons and retained their homiletical form, including specific references to his congregation and its Geneva context. This raises the question of what was gained by

---

92 Technically a polemical work, Quatre sermons also is an example of biblical exegesis and homiletics that stands at the intersection of these genres, blurring distinctions as one listens in, so to speak, on Calvin addressing his own congregation. The 1576 edition of Calvini Tractatus theologici omnes includes Claude Baduel’s 1553 Latin translation of Quatre sermons with Calvin’s other anti-Nicodemite writings as a subset of his polemical treatises.

93 See BC I:465 (52/9). On Calvin’s reluctance to publish his sermons, see Gilmont, Calvin and the Printed Book, 74-80. Possible reasons include the difference between his more verbose spoken style and the economy of expression to which he aspired in his writing, the fact that sermons delivered in particular contexts would not have universal applicability, and the potential for mistakes owing to the limited time Calvin often had to prepare his lectures and sermons. It appears that Calvin was open to publishing sermons that he could prepare adequately for this purpose. But the reformer’s consistent opinion seems to have been that “the sermon was not a literary genre to be entrusted to printers.” This reluctance to publish must be distinguished from the work of stenographers to preserve Calvin’s sermons in written form regardless of whether or not they would eventually appear in print. Calvin’s Exposition sur l’epistre de saint Judas (1542) likely began its life as sermons, which later were adapted by Calvin into commentary form for publication; ibid., 76; also BC I:109-110 (42/3). Volumes of the reformer’s sermons had not yet become as common in 1552, owing largely to Calvin’s reluctance to publish his sermons and the uneven quality of Calvin’s stenographers prior to Denis Raguenier’s acclaimed tenure in that post beginning in 1549. The only known publication of Calvin’s sermons prior to Quatre sermons is 1546’s Deux sermons faitz en la villa de Geneve, l’un le 4 nov. 1545, le second le mercredy suyvant (Geneva: Jean Girard). Jean Cousin is named as the stenographer of this pair of sermons; Gilmont, Printed Book, 74. Sadly, no manuscripts of the material behind Quatre sermons survive. The fact that Calvin is known to have preached regularly through the Psalms on Sunday mornings and from Hebrews in the evenings during the summer of 1549 suggests that Quatre sermons originated in that period; BC I:465; also de Greef, Writings, 94. In any case, the evidence currently available leaves us only with Calvin’s final published versions and no textual antecedents with which to compare them, whether in the form of transcripts or the reformer’s own notes. That Calvin completely fabricated Quatre sermons for the purpose of publication is unlikely given that he is known to have preached from Psalms and Hebrews in 1549; see Mülhaupt’s introduction in SC 7:xxxix. There certainly would have been some present in Geneva to contest Calvin’s claim that he revised old material if this was a blatant lie. Given Calvin’s insistence on carefully revising his sermons before they would be fit for publication, as well as his general aversion to printing them, it would not be surprising if the original sermons were heavily modified to produce what we have in Quatre sermons. T. H. L. Parker suggests that each sermon was compiled from multiple sources “into a literary style”; Calvin’s Preaching, 61. See also, James Thomas Ford, “Preaching in the Reformed Tradition,” in Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 79.
addressing French Nicodemites—Calvin’s stated purpose—indirectly, via sermons preached to believers in Geneva? The resulting text serves to de-particularize the focal target of his argument and accomplishes three things. First, the sharpness of his rebuke is mitigated somewhat because it can always be interpreted by a reader indirectly, as words intended for someone else. The French Nicodemite overhears Calvin addressing his congregation. Likewise, the Genevan reader follows Calvin’s preface and sees a work meant for a foreign controversy. Secondly, this ambiguity with respect to audience produces a flexibility of address, so that both audiences could conceivably hear Calvin speaking directly to them. Finally, Quatre sermons’ genre as sermons carried other advantages for its author. Calvin wrote from Geneva as an office-bearer at the heart of the church polity God ordained specifically to bless his people. As sermons, this publication embodies God’s quintessential means of provision, namely preaching. Without saying so directly, Quatre sermons cautions readers to take for granted neither the rightly-ordered church nor its appointed ministers. Both are God’s gift.

Whereas the urgency of Calvin’s message is invoked quite openly, his authority as a messenger is more implied by the content and form of Quatre sermons. Calvin’s portrayal of the visible church emerges from the distinction between true and false

---

94 Calvin used literary genre creatively to achieve a desired rhetorical effect in other places. Olivier Millet has noted Calvin’s growing confidence as his polemical attacks moved away from the genre of open letters, wherein his true targets were addressed obliquely, toward more directly confrontational treatises; Calvin et la dynamique, 809-828; see chapter one, n. 81.
worship introduced in sermon one. His insistence that a specific form of polity is essential to true worship hints strongly that the contrast extends beyond worship and may include the difference between two churches, only one of which is legitimate. The possibility of pure preaching and sacraments in a Roman parish is not ruled out categorically, but Calvin’s addition of polity to his definition of pure worship effectively rejects Rome’s claims to reflect God’s design. Far from the ideal church, it has become the vehicle of papal tyranny and the cruelties of Antichrist. By couching his ecclesiological case for exile in such oppositional terms, Calvin seems to press a difference between two churches. Considered in view of his comments in the Institutio distinguishing the true church from the false, Calvin’s case for exile in Quatre sermons becomes a call to join the true church, apart from which pure worship and nurture as God intends cannot be found. Calvin’s authority rests on the urgency of the topic he addresses, buttressing the plea for exile toward which he builds, but especially on his

95 CO 8:378.

96 See “A Comparison of the False and the True Church” in Inst. 4.2.1-12 (CO 2:767-776). Most of this section was written by 1543; cf. OS 5:30-42. Thus Calvin likely already had this distinction in mind when he produced Quatre sermons. It is interesting that, in the Institutio, Calvin grants the possibility of true baptism within the Roman Church as God’s generous provision of covenant signs despite the church’s apostasy. Yet he rejects Roman baptism in Quatre sermons as hopelessly corrupted by association with the Mass (CO 8:429). It could just be that Calvin was inconsistent on this topic and favored a sharper dichotomy in the context of his anti-Nicodemite polemic, especially with the priorities he seems to have here in Quatre sermons. Examining this tension in Calvin’s position on Roman baptism is beyond the scope of this study.
place within the polity of the church for which he argues.\textsuperscript{97} Everything he claims about God’s promise and blessing on the ministry of the rightly-ordered church also applies to Calvin’s role as pastor and doctor in that church.\textsuperscript{98} Naysayers oppose “the Spirit of God,” whose word Calvin simply declares.\textsuperscript{99} It is in Calvin’s own ministry that God’s children in exile find “heaven itself is open to us,” and receive the comfort that, despite the pangs of displacement, they belong to “the house of God” and are heading home.\textsuperscript{100}

I have now shown the ease with which the reformer’s fellow Frenchmen and neighbors in Geneva could draw different conclusions from the same message in 1552. To the one, Calvin’s decision to leave France and plea for them to do the same were presented as divinely appointed necessities. To the second group, Calvin’s ministry in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{97} For Calvin, the true church’s right form is essential for carrying out its function (CO 2:753-754). This form includes the correct accounting of church offices—of which four are perpetual and necessary at all times—and the existence of individuals duly called and ordained to these offices (CO 2:777, 779-783; CO 51:196-197). See above.
\item \textsuperscript{99} CO 8:435.
\item \textsuperscript{100} CO 8:414, 439.
\end{itemize}
their midst, despite its imperfections obvious to many observers, remained a divinely ordained blessing. In both cases, Quatre sermons offered itself as much as a case against Nicodemism as one for Calvin’s authority to address Christians in diverse settings.

2.4 Conclusion

The obvious weakness of the foregoing analysis is that Calvin made no claims that Quatre sermons was designed to favor exile and bolster his own authority, even explicitly denying the former charge. While I cannot prove these two points conclusively, I think I have presented good reasons to believe Calvin chose to address two audiences in sermons revised and presented to achieve certain effects. He was too careful a rhetorician for us to deny him credit in this regard. The question of Calvin’s motives remains impossible to resolve, though he certainly would have benefited from a wave of sympathetic refugees, who in fact were already coming to Geneva. Calvin’s situation in Geneva also would have profited from a strong word in favor of his ministry in 1552. Given his embattled position in the city, it would seem foolish not to press every means at his disposal to strengthen his standing. At the very least, it is hard to imagine that Calvin would devote time to editing and publishing a new work on French Nicodemism without considering its impact on his immediate local situation. His silence on this possibility is not surprising. Drawing attention to this implicit argument for personal authority arguably would have undermined that effort.
Secondly, any political motive assigned to Quatre sermons must be qualified by the fact that the theology of exile, ecclesiology, and spiritual nurture laid out in this work is consistent with what Calvin presented in a variety of publications over several decades. This was not an instance of dogma invented solely for pragmatic purposes. Nothing suggests that Calvin did not sincerely embrace the theology he sets forth, even if it was deployed to create certain outcomes. Instead, I have demonstrated Calvin’s skill in adapting his approach to Nicodemism to concrete situations in ways previously underappreciated, showing how he formulated a new approach to Nicodemism by pressing new emphases without contradicting his prior polemic against false worship.

Calvin’s move in 1552 to a more robustly positive vision of God’s provision for hungry pilgrims both remained in step with his developing thinking on ecclesiology and bent his anti-Nicodemite rhetoric toward addressing the needs of the moment. Indeed, the reformer’s continuing engagement with Nicodemism would never again reach the same urgent pitch concerning exile that dominates the latter half of Quatre sermons.101

101 Calvin certainly did not cease addressing the problem, nor did he relax his attitude to become any more tolerant of religious dissimulation; Wright “Why Was Calvin So Severe,” passim. The 1557 Psalms commentary repeats the connection of Pss 16 and 27 with Nicodemism and ecclesiology, without taking either Psalm to be concerned with these themes exclusively (CO 31:153, 273-274). A decade after Quatre sermons, Calvin devoted another work to the topic of dissimulation: 1562’s Response à .. Holandois. Nicodemism also surfaces across Calvin’s biblical lectures and commentaries. Yet none of these instances contain the same intense plea for exile made in 1552. There are many possible reasons for this shift away from exile. For example, the looming likelihood of war in France and the consolidation of Calvin’s local position likely converged to impact his approach to Nicodemism after 1555 (see above, nn. 74-75). It is beyond the scope of this study to engage the immense complexities of such changes.
Finally, *Quatre sermons* would go on to have a fascinating life beyond Calvin’s Geneva, including appearing in five different English versions between 1553 and 1584. The unique content and form of *Quatre sermons* appealed to English translators who turned Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism against a variety of foes, including fellow Protestants in the English church. This reveals that Calvin’s emphases were not lost in translation. Yet the implications drawn were beyond what Calvin could have imagined, proving again the adaptability of his anti-Nicodemism—this time in the hands of his admirers.

The remainder of this dissertation takes up the argument that Calvin’s decision to publish his anti-Nicodemite polemic in the form it took in 1552 had a direct impact upon its popularity in English translation. The very features the reformer employed to adapt his publication to reach beyond the Nicodemite controversy in 1552—its sermonic form and case for exile based on ecclesial polity—contributed to the flexibility *Quatre sermons* provided English translators to do the same in contexts far removed from Calvin’s Geneva.

---

102 See Introduction, n. 15.
3. Religious Context: *Quatre sermons* and Sixteenth-Century English Anti-Nicodemism

3.1 *Fresh Translations, Changing Contexts*

Picking up the publication history of *Quatre sermons* in 1553, one year after its initial appearance in French, turns up three new editions in three different languages. Jean Crespin in Geneva published Italian and Latin translations from Calvin’s French. Calvin commissioned the Latin translation directly, enlisting the services of Claude Baduel, a French refugee in Geneva whose work was recommended by Theodore Beza. Robert Horne’s translation, based on Baduel’s Latin, was the first of five English editions, the only other translations of *Quatre sermons* to appear in the sixteenth century.

This chapter will introduce the story of *Quatre sermons*’ life in English, spanning the three decades following its initial publication in 1552. If the situation in Geneva to which Calvin originally addressed *Quatre sermons* was unstable and uncertain, the English context into which various translators presented Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite call to exile was no less volatile. In fact, it was arguably a good deal more so. The advent of first a

1 BC I:474-476 (53/3) and BC I:477-479 (53/4), respectively. The Italian version, by an anonymous translator, omits the Exposition of Psalm 87 and was bound with Calvin’s other anti-Nicodemite writings, under the title *Del fuggir le superstitioni che repugnano a la vera e sincera confession della fede*. On the possibility that Calvin had a hand in producing this translation for the purpose of encouraging immigration from Italy, see Droz, “Nicodémites,” 156-165; cf. chapter two, n. 8.


3 BC 53/1 (I:469-471). I take up an extensive analysis of Horne’s translation in chapter five.
Catholic queen, then a Protestant one in fairly rapid succession had a significant impact on England’s deeply hierarchical society and peculiarly structured national church. Intense changes destabilized questions of personal and national religious identity that could cost one’s life depending where one landed. To assess what English translators of *Quatre sermons* hoped to achieve requires first situating the question of Nicodemism within the broader categories of Marian and Elizabethan Protestant propaganda. English evangelical anti-Nicodemism in the sixteenth century both appropriated Continental sources and reflected distinctively English concerns. Coming to grips with these religious contexts will provide the basis for analyzing each of the five English translations of *Quatre sermons* appearing between 1553 and 1584. The present chapter argues that distinctive characteristics of Marian anti-Nicodemite rhetoric anticipated the ways in which writers portrayed Nicodemism during the Protestant regime of Queen Mary’s sister. This analysis situates the reception of *Quatre sermons*, showing how Calvin’s writings were not the first to take up these themes in English. Furthermore, examining these broader currents of English anti-Nicodemism reveals how Calvin’s decisions about the genre and format of *Quatre sermons* may explain the popularity of this anti-Nicodemite publication among the reformer’s English translators.

### 3.2 Situating Marian and Elizabethan Anti-Nicodemism: English Traditions and Continental Sources

The hardline approach to dissimulation contained in *Quatre sermons* would have been familiar to English readers. Andrew Pettegree has observed that anti-Nicodemite
rhetoric in England was never a simply matter of importing a Continental debate: “for
[English reformers] were struggling here not only against natural human instincts, but
against a tradition of dissembling associated with Lollardy.”

Diarmaid MacCulloch has examined English Protestant theology’s affinities with Lollardy, and Alec Ryrie has
described how Lollard ideals converged with the ambiguity of Henrican religion to
create a veritable culture of recantation and dissimulation among English evangelicals
under Henry VIII. At the same time, Karl Gunther’s recent reassessment of early
English Protestantism complicates attempts to find a tidy theological consensus on
dissimulating, revealing instead a continuous stream of evangelical responses hostile to
dissimulation beginning under Henry VIII. This pattern stretched into the Elizabethan
period alongside a tradition of pragmatic recantation and dissimulating inherited from
Lollardy. Even William Tyndale’s commonly cited statements in favor of hiding one’s
faith under certain circumstances must be set within his wider, if not entirely consistent,

---


of deception pervading the culture of early English Protestantism see, among others, Anne Hudson, The
passim; Susan Wabuda, “Equivocation and Recantation During the English Reformation: The ‘Subtle
Protestantism, 97-98.

6 Reformation Unbound, 100-113. Gunther’s study is especially useful for tracing the expansion and
development of a more robust, outward, and hostile rejection of dissimulation that nevertheless began quite
early, with writers such as William Turner, George Joye, and Miles Coverdale.
views that included denunciations of dissimulation in the face of persecution. As Miles Coverdale wrote in 1541: “in confessing the true faith and believe of Christ, thy hart mouth and dede go together ... That god maye have theprayse, and thy neighbore be edified in all thy conversacion.” This statement—published in the reign of Henry VIII—did not appear in a dedicated anti-Nicodemite work. Yet it reflects the logic of anti-Nicodemism appearing in original English works and translated publications in the sixteenth century: Duty to God and neighbor forbids any division of faith and actions.

English anti-Nicodemism embraced this position—which permits no compromise on the question of true and open confession—in ways that reflect both the reception of Continental thinkers and the peculiarities of the English situation. For example, this hard rejection of any flexibility on participation, even mere presence, at the Mass is a major theme woven throughout the Marian exiles’ prolific English-language polemical works, although the debate over what we can say about the prevalence of actual Nicodemites among Marian Protestants remains unresolved. Additional elements

---

7 Ibid., 101-102; see Tyndale, An exposition vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Mathew (1533; STC 24440), 28v, 48v-r; cf. idem., The obediēce of a Christen man (1528; STC 24446). The tradition of English Protestant anti-Nicodemite polemic should be distinguished from the separate, but in many ways similar, concerns surrounding Catholic conformity under Elizabeth I. On this latter phenomenon, see Walsham, Church Papists.

8 A confutacion of that treatise, which one Iohn Standish made agaynst the protestacion of D. Barnes in the yeare. M.D.XL (Zurich, 1541; STC 5888), n6v; quoted in Gunther, Reformation Unbound, 101.

9 Pettegree estimates “as many as two thirds” of such works deal with the problem of Nicodemism; Marian Protestantism, 88. He bases this calculation on the list compiled in Edward J. Baskerville, A Chronological Bibliography of Propaganda and Polemic, Published in English Between 1553 and 1558 From the Death of Edward VI to the Death of Mary I (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1979). There remains disagreement over whether such vocal opposition to Nicodemism in the Marian period reflects a widespread rejection of dissimulation by English evangelicals, or merely the outspoken opinion of those who had chosen exile while
frequently repeated in Marian exiles’ rhetoric against Nicodemism include 1.) an emphasis on open resistance—rather than exile—and how such behavior might hasten England’s deliverance from apostasy; and 2.) dissembling depicted as a Roman defect and a strategy embraced by England’s present oppressors, who allegedly bade time as Nicodemites under Edward VI.10 Thus English anti-Nicodemism during the 1550s exhibited continuity with examples such as Coverdale and earlier writings on the topic, while also reflecting England’s abrupt political and religious changes. Quatre sermons was variously translated into Marian and Elizabethan contexts that witnessed the emergence of anti-Nicodemite perspectives incorporating Continental views with an eye toward English concerns. Its enemies portrayed Nicodemism as a diverse problem originating from a common error: substituting lesser affections for a proper love of God. This basic characterization of the Nicodemite was already present in Calvin’s anti-

the vast majority of Protestants—including a future queen and her closest advisors—chose to remain hidden in England. On the position that Marian evangelicals were of an anti-Nicodemite consensus, see Thomas S. Freeman, “Over Their Dead Bodies: Concepts of Martyrdom in Late-Medieval and Early-Modern England,” in Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, C.1400-1700, ed. Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas F. Mayer (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 18-19. On the latter view, which sees Nicodemism as the de facto mode of Marian Protestants, see Pettegree, Marian Protestantism, 86-117. While Freeman’s position can be faulted for an over-reliance on prescriptive sources to reconstruct the evangelical mindset as a whole, neither argument can be conclusive owing to the lack of documentary evidence intrinsic to Nicodemism’s hiddenness (see chapter one for a discussion of this topic). We will never know for certain how many English actually hid their faith during the era of Marian persecutions or, for that matter, in any other era. In any case, attacking dissimulation as a pet cause across Protestant polemical works, which portray it as capitulation to fear of human power and an affront to both God and neighbor. See below for my examination of the sources. A useful overview of the Protestant press and the pressures to which it responded across the period which saw the English translations of Quatre sermons, see William Calderwood, “The Elizabethan Protestant Press: A Study of the Printing and Publishing of Protestant Religious Literature in English, Excluding Bible and Liturgies, 1558-1603” (PhD diss., University of London, 1977), 55-89.

10 See below for an examination of the sources to demonstrate the prevalence of such themes.
Nicodemite polemic. In England, it provided writers and translators with a flexible motif with which to label and decry a wide and diverse spectrum of possible foes.

Before turning to the original Marian and Elizabethan sources, it is useful to survey examples of Continental anti-Nicodemite polemic available to English readers prior to the accession of Queen Mary, as well as the several examples that appeared during her reign. Alec Ryrie has observed that, while occurring in parallel with English debates over dissimulation and the Lollard tradition, the Nicodemite controversy raging among Continental authors in the 1540s was virtually ignored in England at that time. The first appearance of the Continental Nicodemite controversy in English translation was a pair of letters by Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin, published together with a preface by an anonymous author in 1544. While it is uncertain whether this publication ever reached England in the 1540s, its contents adumbrate the central concerns found in the veritable explosion of fresh English anti-Nicodemite polemic in the Marian period.

---

11 See chapter one.

12 Gospel and Henry VIII, 84-85.

13 Two epistles one of Henry Bullynger, wyth the consent of all the lernyd men of the Churche of Tigury: another of Ihon Caluyn, cheffe preacher of the church of Geneue: whether it be lawfull for a Chrysten man to communycate or be pertaker of the masse of the Papysts, wythout offendyng God and hys neyghboure, or not (Antwerp [?]: M. Crom [?], 1544; STC 4079.5). On the background to these letters written in 1541, along with a new translation of Calvin’s, see White, “An Overlooked Text,” 283-296.

14 Ryrie notes that Two epistles seems never to have reached England during that decade; Gospel and Henry VIII, 85. He also claims, incorrectly, that the work was the only English translation of anti-Nicodemite works in the 1540s, having neglected the 1548 translation of Calvin’s Petit Traicté under the title The Mynde of the Godly and Excellent Lerned Man M. Ihon Caluyne What a Faithfull Man, Whiche is Instructe in the Worde of God, Ought to Do, Dwellinge Amongst the Papistes (Ipswich: John Oswen, 1548; STC 4435, 4435.3, 4435.5, 4435.7).
After commending Bullinger and Calvin on the topic of whether a Christian can ever lawfully participate in the Mass, the “Prologe unto the Christen Reader” presents its own argument against this possibility. The anonymous author squarely identifies the Mass as idolatry, anticipating the positions of Bullinger and Calvin concerning religious ceremonies: “what so ever lawe or Cermonye / the church hath made or set by / & the same not expressed in the worde of God / it ovvght not to be alowed / folowed / nor kept.” 

Worship practices not explicitly appointed in Scripture are forbidden, being human inventions that contradict the pure worship of God according to divine command, regardless of how such “ceremonyes haue a gloryous shyne of holynes.” Such matters related to divine worship are never left to Christian liberty as things indifferent (adiaphora), but rather must be parsed according to the strict logic that whatever is not expressly commanded by God is false worship. The Mass, in particular, is singled out as an example of human innovation corrupting the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood, such that it becomes an act of “ydolatrye by worshyhping the bread.”

The author goes on to address Christian participation in the Mass with an emphatic prohibition. Citing 1 Cor 6-10, he argues that “to eate of the sacryfyce” is to be

---

15 Two epystles, n. pag.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
“pertakers of the altare” of idolatry.\textsuperscript{18} Attending the Mass is detrimental to one’s neighbor because this affirms evil. The only lawful response is open confession of one’s evangelical faith expressed outwardly in rejecting the Mass. On this last point, there is no mention of flight or political exile as a means of refusing idolatry. Rather, the emphasis falls on open resistance that might well lead to persecution. The author encourages readers to trust God in the face of suffering—that God might blind their enemies or win their favor. Even if this obedience led to one’s death, such would be to join “many holy Prophetes, Apostles & martyrs / whose hope and trust was onely in the resurrectyō.”\textsuperscript{19} Finally, the author introduces Bullinger and Calvin, commending their arguments to follow as support for the prologue’s admonitions concerning the Mass.

In their respective letters, the reformers of Zurich and Geneva construct similar arguments to arrive at the same conclusion, namely that it is never permissible for a true believer to be present when the Mass is celebrated. Bullinger’s letter, dated 18 February 1541, addresses a recent controversy among German Reformed congregations. A certain epistle teaching that Christians may attend the Mass had circulated with the support of some ministers. Writing on behalf of his colleagues Leo Jud, Casper Megander, Erasmus Fabricus, Conrad Pellican, and Theodore Bibliander, Bullinger presents his letter as the Swiss Reformed churches’ consensus, referring readers seeking a lengthier treatment of

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
Nicodemism to his *De origine erroris.* After commending the diversity of worship practices and urging charity in matters indifferent, Bullinger places the Mass outside this domain of Christian liberty, echoing the anonymous prologue’s sentiment that the Mass is an idolatrous corruption of the Lord’s Supper. He cites Jerome to argue that *adiaphora* pertains only to things that are not intrinsically good or evil, claiming the support of Cyprian to show that adding anything to Christ’s institution of the Supper is “wycked ādishonoryth God,” being introduced by “the made brayne of man.” The only permissible response to idolatry is total separation. Bullinger offers the biblical example of Elijah’s challenge to Israel, when the nation was divided between worship of Baal and Yahweh: “how longe halt ye on both sydes?” (1 Ki 18). Arguing against mere outward participation in the Mass, Bullinger invokes Origen’s rejection of the “Helchesaytes,” who argued that it was possible to “beleue in th e herte and secretlye to confesse God” regardless of one’s external actions. Simply to be present “establysseth all the erroures of the masse.” Speaking directly to the controversial German letter, Bullinger counters with the only proper response to the Mass: “that the truth should be playnlye confessyd

---

20 Ibid. *De origine erroris libri duo* (Zurich, 1539). This 1539 publication was a reworking and expansion of two earlier works: *De origine erroris in negocio eucharistiae* (Zurich, 1528) and *De origine erroris, in divorum ac simulachrorum cultu* (Basel, 1529).

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid. The reference to Origen’s homily on Ps 82 cites Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* 6.38.

23 Ibid.
Calvin, writing to an unnamed friend, presents a similar argument against any possibility of lawful participation or presence at the Mass. Just as Bullinger presented the Swiss consensus against an opinion gaining popularity in the churches, Calvin offers his position in contrast to the views of men he deeply respects. Indeed, these were men the “the whole church hath worthelye in high estimacyon.” Also in a manner reminiscent of his Zurich counterpart, Calvin begins by laying out a generous view of adiaphora in questionable practices. Even those ceremonies that degenerate from the “purenesse of the gospell” or “which thorow abuse are swarued from there trueth” can be kept, provided that they have not “fallen into manifest ydolatrye.” Granting that it would be better to abolish or clearly reform such unsanctioned activities in worship, Calvin concedes that there is “no offense to God in obseruyinge it,” so long as one avoids superstition and “it proceedeth not to ungodlynesse.” The Mass, of course, does

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid. This uncharacteristic reticence of Calvin to name his polemical opponents has been taken as a signal that he has in mind the views of Strasbourg theologians Wolfgang Capito and, especially, his mentor Martin Bucer, who for a time seems to have held the position on lawful dissimulation Calvin rejects here. See White, “An Overlooked Text,” 285-289; also Matheson, “Martyrdom or Mission,” 154-172. I discuss this letter and this possibility regarding the targets of Calvin’s critique in chapter one.

26 Ibid. Calvin gives the example of candles at the Lord’s Table, a ceremony he claims was abrogated with the coming of Christ.

27 Ibid. Calvin’s latitude on liturgical elements here raises the question of whether he would have gone along with the position of John Field and Thomas Wilcox in An Admonition to the Parliament (1572), where these Elizabethan presbyterians argue for root and branch reform of prelacy and the Prayer Book. See chapter six.
not qualify as a version the Lord’s Supper with elements in need of simple amendment. No, “the masse verely is an ydoll set vp in the temple of God.” On this point, Calvin disagrees with those “I els esteme as fathers.” Whereas these other men concur that the mass is “utterly stayned & polluted,” they remain convinced of its relation to the Lord’s Supper, teaching that one may lawfully participate in the Mass if a purer Eucharist is unavailable. Calvin rules this out emphatically, citing the Apostle Paul’s teaching in 1 Cor 10 that participation in sacrifices to idols makes one “a partaker of the cuppe of devells.” Furthermore, even if one claimed to participate in the Mass only externally and without superstition, Calvin objects that this would give a “very euyll ensample” for others, who would be confirmed in their error. The remainder of Calvin’s letter takes up a lengthy case against the position that a true church exists where God’s covenant signs remain. In an argument that parallels additions to the 1543 *Institutio* concerning distinctions between the true and false church, Calvin grants that, although Rome retains baptism and other efficacious signs of God’s covenant, these remain as emblems of God’s mercy despite the fact that “the congregacyons of the papystrye” have forsaken the true mark of the church, namely obedience to Christ’s command given in his Word.

---

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid. See chapter one for the recurrence of this particular argument from 1 Cor 10 throughout Calvin’s writings against Nicodemism.

31 Ibid. For an analysis of this material in the 1543 *Institutio*, see Balserak, *Establishing the Remnant*, 19-50. For the connections between these expansions and the polemical ecclesiology of *Quatre sermons*, see chapter two.
Fidelity to God’s command consists “in two partes / in the confession of the tōge / and in the holy observauaces.” Calvin ends by calling on believers to pray earnestly that God would provide liberty to worship and profess and their faith by rejecting the Mass as idolatry. Calvin describes being “constrayned to serue strange goddes” as a “scourge of the lorde,” to which the faithful ought to respond with humility and repentance, that God might show mercy. From the characterization of the Mass as irredeemable idolatry beyond acceptable expressions of Christian liberty, to the rejection of any innocent participation or presence at the Mass, to the requirement of open confession unto death and the notion that the absence of true worship is a sign of God’s discipline, the emphases laid in Two epystles anticipate the core anti-Nicodemite themes that would be replayed in English publications throughout the second half of the sixteenth century.

Other English translations of Continental anti-Nicodemite writings share Calvin’s basic perspective, ruling out any possibility of godly participation in the Mass and forbidding the Christian’s mere presence there. The main Continental writings advancing this hard line before English readers were Wolfgang Musculus’s The Temporysour and Peter Martyr Vermigli’s Treatise on the Cohabitacyon of the Faithfull with

As noted above, Calvin adopts a narrower position in Quatre sermons, urging parents to reject Roman baptism as corrupt.

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
the Vnfaithful, both published during the reign of Mary I in 1555, and Pierre Viret’s
Concerning the holy supper of Jesus Christ, and the masse of the Romish Church (1579) and An
Epistle to the Faithfull (1582). The same basic repudiation of any conformity with “false
religion” characterizes these evangelical polemical works, appearing in various genres
emphasizing a variety of presenting issues. Musculus’s Temporysour is pressed to admit
that attendance at the Mass is no different that keeping company with the ungodly, with
“adulterers and thieves.” Both scenarios implicate the conformist in sin and have the
effect of emboldening and confirming open sinners in their disobedience toward God.

Vermigli allows limited social interaction in situations of free worship between believers
who are “learned and strong” and “idolaters” for the purpose of winning the latter to
faith in a context of friendship. However, the Italian categorically rules out any kind of
participation in idolatrous worship as “poyson,” “unclean religion” that necessary
defiles all present. Viret similarly rejects the possibility of any guiltless presence at the

34 Vermigli, A treatise of the cohabitacyon of the faithfull with the vnfaithfull Whereunto is added. A sermon made of the confessing of Christe and his gospell, and of the denyinge of the same (Strasbourg: W. Rihel, 1555; STC 24673.5); Musculus, The temporysour (that is to saye: the observer of tyme, or he that chaungeth with the tyme.) Compiled in Latyn by the excellent clarke Wolfangus Musculus, and traslated into Frenche by M. Vallerain Pullain. And out of Frenche into Ingleshe by R.P. ([Wesel?] 1555; STC 18312); Viret, The principal points which are at this daye in controversie, concerning the holly supper and of the masse (London: C. Barker, 1579; STC 24782); idem., An epistle to the faithfull necessary for all the children of God: especially in these dangerous dayes Written by Maister Peter Viret in french, and englishe by F.H. Esquier (London: T. Dawson, 1582; STC 24779).


36 Musculus, Temporysour, n.pag.

37 Vermigli, Cohabitacyon, 4r-v, 9v, 15v.
Mass. Such would be incompatible with faithfulness toward God and love of neighbor.\textsuperscript{38}

From a variety of Continental sources, then, English readers encountered essential agreement on the question of believers’ outward involvement in false worship. Blameless external participation is impossible. Mere attendance at idolatrous rituals at once implicates a person in false worship and communicates consent to the idolatry of others. Across all of these writings, there is no flexibility or compromise on this point.

This introductory section has demonstrated that, in contrast to the practices of religious dissimulation in times of persecution that characterized the Lollard tradition, a strong chorus of Continental voices joined other English writers to assert an absolute rejection of Nicodemism. Despite any influence Lollardy had on English Protestant theology, the former’s flexibility on the question of open confession was unacceptable to the Continental writers whose positions were reflected in the prevailing sensibilities of vocal Marian and Elizabethan polemicists.\textsuperscript{39} English writers and translators favored a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item “But how can it be lawfull for vs to offend the faythfull, and to nourish and establish the faithfull in the error of idolatrie for feare of troubling and offending the infidels; whome we cannot in better sorte offend, then in cherishing and confirming them in their superstitions and abuses”; An epistle to the faithfull, n. pag. For Viret’s position, see Matheson, “Martyrdom or Mission,” 154-165; Pettegree, Marian Protestantism, 90-94.
\item The debate over the strength and influence of Lollardy under Henry VIII and its relation to the embrace of reform continues. For the traditional view that the English Reformation emerged from the revival of Lollardy through connections with Continental reformatons, see Arthur G. Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959); and John F. Davis, Heresy and Reformation in the South East of England 1520-1559 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1983). More recent studies downplaying the significance and power of Lollardy on the eve of the English Reformation, as well as Lollard contributions to the shape of English Protestantism, include Richard Rex, The Lollards (New York: Palgrave, 2002); and Christopher Haigh, English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society Under the Tudors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 25-39. The truth is probably somewhere in between and, unfortunately, difficult to resolve owing to the clandestine, overlapping, and geographically diverse nature of Lollardy and early evangelical networks; see Ryrie, Gospel and Henry VIII, 223-247.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
severe anti-Nicodemism that preferred death to mere attendance at the Mass, presenting
the public with the unanimous conclusions of Bullinger, Calvin, Musculus, Vermigli,
and Viret on these matters. As I will now demonstrate, English anti-Nicodemism in the
Marian and Elizabethan eras not only reflected the contributions of such Continental
authors. It also took on characteristics peculiar to the rapidly shifting political and
ecclesiastical situation in England. Arguments against Nicodemism were deployed by
English writers to attack a variety of different enemies, including fellow Protestants who
worshipped according to the practices of an ostensibly reformed Church of England.
The following survey of anti-Nicodemism propagated by Marian exiles and Elizabethan
Protestants will provide further context for examining how *Quatre sermons* was adapted
by translators to suit their specific needs in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

3.3 Anti-Nicodemism and the Marian Exiles

While we will never know for certain the extent of evangelical dissimulation in
Marian England, there is no doubt that those who left for the Continent sounded a
consistent message to those who remained behind. The writings exiles targeted to a
broad English readership from 1553 to 1558 reveal a steady preoccupation with
Nicodemism. Not every work published in English, whether from the Continent or by
underground English presses, addressed dissimulation explicitly. Yet this theme recurs
unambiguously as Marian exiles repeatedly exhorted their readers to patience and
perseverance in openly confessing evangelical faith in the face of hostility and persecution.40 Others have examined the dominance and, in many ways, hardening of anti-Nicodemite rhetoric as a focus for Protestant writers of Marian period, including how such theology would become enshrined in publications such as Foxe’s Acts and Monuments and impact conceptions of English national identity for centuries.41 Karl Gunther has identified both a continuation and intensification of anti-Nicodemite themes—including perseverance in affliction as proof of one’s election, care not to scandalize weaker believers, mere presence at the Mass as pollution, and open confrontation with idolatry as a Christian duty—from the reign of King Edward VI into that of his sister Queen Mary I.42 As noted above, Gunther’s research complicates notions that a culture of dissimulation without dissent existed at any time in Tudor England. There was always insistence on open confession of one’s faith as a matter of principle. At the same time, because many of the early sources Gunther cites are not properly anti-Nicodemite works, it is hard to press them too heavily into service to prove the existence of a formal anti-Nicodemism in the early English Reformation. The insistence on integrating outward confession and inward commitment, for example, was

40 Pettegree, Marian Protestantism, 6, 88-93. My analysis in this section is based upon an examination of the 114 Protestant polemical works in English published from 1553–1558 identified in Baskerville.

41 Freeman, “Dead Bodies,” 17-20; Gunther, Reformation Unbound, 111; see also Catharine Davies, A Religion of the Word: The Defence of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 232-33.

42 Reformation Unbound, 99-112.
a common theme outside of anti-Nicodemite writings and throughout Scripture, especially with specific reference to hypocrisy. Yet, as in the case of Coverdale noted above, the pervasive insistence on integrating faith and action contributed to a religious climate in which anti-Nicodemite sentiments were not foreign, and were even familiar.

When we come to the Marian period, a situation like the one addressed by Continental anti-Nicodemite writers emerges. While scholars have identified the prevalence of anti-Nicodemite themes among the English language works of Marian exiles, two characteristics of Marian anti-Nicodemism remain underappreciated for their contribution to the continuing appeal of the Nicodemite as a polemical target well into the reign of Elizabeth I. First, while there are significant examples of anti-Nicodemite arguments used by exiles to justify one’s decision to flee England—such as the personal apologies John Bale and Robert Horne—the Marian exiles’ overwhelming stress is not on flight, but rather the need for open confession and perseverance in affliction. Secondly, by juxtaposing the present boldness of England’s Catholic regime with its leaders’ alleged cowardly dissimulation under Edward VI, Marian polemicists textured their negative portrayal of Nicodemism as a spiritual defect rooted first in the strategies of

---

43 See, for instance, biblical passages such as Is 29:13; Jer 12:2; Matt 15:8; and Mk 7:6.

44 See n. 9 above.

45 Jonathan Wright has focused on illuminating the logic of such Marian exile justifications for flight, including how exiles made it clear that they were following a unique course given by God; “Marian Exiles,” 220-243. Wright does not take up the fact that the vast majority of exile writings on Nicodemism focused not on exile, but instead on conveying the message that obedience required open resistance to Roman worship.
Rome and, behind this, in the plans of the Devil himself. Both this stress on ostentatious confession and the characterization of Nicodemism as a quintessentially Roman Catholic practice may have contributed to the usefulness of anti-Nicodemite themes to support anti-Catholic rhetoric and to the resilience of such arguments in Protestant England. For example, this focus on open confession as the best defense against Catholicism is present in Elizabethan translators’ use of Quatre sermons to link Protestant dissimulation to the threat of Roman insurgence. An examination of the sources reveals this preference for open confession versus exile, as well as dissimulation portrayed as a Catholic defect.

As noted in the previous section, English anti-Nicodemism generally reflected the positions published by Continental Reformed theologians such as Calvin, Bullinger, Vermigli, and Viret. At the beginning of the Marian period, the only Continental anti-Nicodémite writings available in English were pair of letters by Bullinger and Calvin published in 1544 (reprinted in 1548) and a 1548 translation of Calvin’s 1543 Petit traité.\(^46\) Besides Horne’s translation of 1552 Quatre sermons, two other anti-Nicodemite translations appeared during the reign of Mary I, both in 1555: Wolfgang Musculus’ The Temporysour and Peter Martyr Vermigli’s Treatise on the Cohabitacyon of the Faithfull with the Vnfaithful.\(^47\) Original works published by the exiles reflected the positions of these Continental sources, presenting English readers with a consistent message on their duty

\(^{46}\) See nn. 13-14 above.

\(^{47}\) See n. 34 above.
in the face of compulsory Roman worship. Neither participation nor presence at the Mass was permitted of believers, who not only risked corruption via association with idolatry but ultimately would face divine judgment for sin against God and neighbor.

This notion of God’s wrath as more terrible than any persecution or hardship one might face for openly rejecting the Mass is the theme occurring most frequently across Marian exile polemic against dissimulation. Writers portrayed the Nicodemite mindset as one governed, above all, by fear of humanity rather than fear of God. Justifying his own exile, John Bale identifies Nicodemism with idolatry and adultery as expressions of God’s judgment against those whose hearts have become darkened by “cōtemning Gods truthe,” such that their behavior becomes compulsive and their condemnation certain:

“Lete him ý is wicked … become more wicked / and he that is filthie / become more

48 A notable exception to this consensus across publications was the position of Sir John Cheke in De ecclesia (1554-1555), which called for patient conformity in the face of idolatrous ritual out of concern for the weaker in faith. See John McDiarmid, “Sir John Cheke’s De ecclesia and the Dilemma of Marian Protestants,” unpublished paper presented at the New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Sarasota, FL (12 March 2004). I am most grateful to Professor McDiarmid for providing a copy of his paper and permission to cite his work. There are similarities between Cheke’s argument and the one likely held by Martin Bucer in the early 1540s; see Matheson, “Martyrdom,” passim. While it is useful to note these disagreements between English writers on the question of Nicodemism, the works most clearly intended as propaganda to sway popular opinion—namely, the ones appearing in English—uniformly reject such compromise positions.

49 This is, in fact, the argument adumbrated in the subtitle of the Two Epistles of Bullinger and Calvin published in 1544: whether it be lawfull for a Chrysten man to communicaty or be pertaker of the masse of the Papysts, wythout offendying God and hys neighboure, or not. On this rejection of patience with idolatry for the sake of love of neighbor, see the discussion earlier in this chapter and in chapter one.

50 On this account of the basic defect at the heart of Calvin’s description of Nicodemism as a diverse phenomenon, see chapter one (cf. CO 6:597-602).
filthy / that his damnacion maye be the depar / & his sorowes extremer."

In the same vein, “J.T.” defends the decision of many to flee England by stressing the impossibility of purely loving “the Lorde thy God withall thy harte, soule, & mynd, & withall thy power,” while participating in the Mass, comparing this to a married woman giving her body to “another man” while protesting to her husband that “yet I reserued my hart wholy to you.”

Other exiles, such as John Knox, refute the Nicodemite presumption that one has evaded danger merely by avoiding persecution and hardship in this life:

> Consider deare brethren, that howe muche more dolorous, it is to be tormented in hel, then to suffre trouble in earth: to be deprivèd of heauenlye ioye, than to be robbed of transitory riches, to fal in the hādes of the liuing God, than to abyde mans vaine and vn certain displeasure: So much more fearful and daungerous it is to obey Idolatry, or (dissembling to consent to that abhominacion, then avoiding the same) to suffre what incōueniēces may follow therupō by mās tiranny. O be not like to Esaw, ý sold & lost his birthright for a mes [of] potage.

51. The Vocacyon of Iohā Bale to the Bishiprick of Ossorie in Irelāde His Persecuciōs in ý Same, & Finall Delyueraunce (Rome [Wesel?): [J. Lambrecht for Hugh Singleton?], 1553; STC 1307), 21r. Bale’s apology for exile bears the same publisher’s imprint as Robert Horne’s of the same year, which is examined below in chapter five. On Bale’s apology for exile, see Baskerville, Bibliography, 16.

52. An Apologie or Defence Agaynst the Calumnacion of Certayne Men Which Preferring Wylfull Wyll and Carnal Reason Before the Playn Trueth of Gods Gospel, (Do Sclaundre Those Men, Which for the Better Seruinge of God With a More Pure Conscience, According to His Holy Word) Haue Abandoned Theyr Liuinges and Vocacion, Abydinge as Exyles in Poore Estate Oute of Theyr Natyue Coūtrye (Wesel [?): Hugh Singleton [?], 1555; STC 23619), n. pag. Calvin makes a similar argument in Quatre sermons (CO 8:385-386). J. T. further identifies dissembling one’s faith as failing God’s trial for proving his elect, “as gold is tried in ý fur nurse,” admitting that he had once devoted himself to “cōforming myselfe to ý impietie of this time,” before rejecting dissimulation as incompatible with God’s command (n. pag.).

Later Marian exile writings echo this juxtaposition of temporal affliction versus God’s eternal judgment. An anonymous author warns those who would hide their faith, “professing outwardly that which in their hartes they knowe to be false … bicause they wolde preserue their substāce,” that such disagreement of “the hart and outwarde senses” leads others to sin and is abhorrent to God, who “hatest all those that work iniquitie a shalt destroie al those that speaks lies.” Christopher Goodman cautions those who “thīning therby to escape present daūgers, runne headlong to their owne destructiō, thīking therby to escape the feareful voice of the Lorde, fall in to the pit.”

Taking a slightly different angle on the same theme, “R. P.” argues in 1557 that for the French port city Calais, then under English control, to follow quietly after the example of the Marian regime (“thy mother Englād”) might avoid charges of rebellion against the crown, but would court “thyne emynēt destructiō” in “indurate rebelliō” against God.

Thus, in accord with the Continental Reformed theologians who had weighed in on the

---

54 An Answer to a Certain Godly Mannes Lettres Desiring His Frendes Iudgement, Whether it be Laufull for a Christian Man to be Present At the Popishe Masse, and Other Supersticious Churche Seruice (Strasbourg [?]: 1557; STC 658), n. pag. This work is also notable for its reference to Augustine’s ethic of veracity — “that for no cause men maie lye or dissemble” — to rule out Nicodemism on the basis that God forbids all lying (n. pag.) For Augustine’s position that to hide the truth willingly is always a lie and that all lying is forbidden, see De mendacio (c. 395), caput 3-5, 42. ET: Philip Schaff ed., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, v. 3, trans. H. Browne (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887), 457-477. For Augustine’s position within early modern accounts of dissimulation, see Zagorin, Ways of Lying, 19-25. In my research on Calvin’s position, I had expected to find reference to Augustine’s veracity ethic with respect to Nicodemism, but the Genevan reformer never attacks dissimulation from this angle.

55 How Superior Powers Oght to be Obeyd of Their Subiects and Wherin They May Lawfully By Gods Worde be Disobeyed and Resisted. Wherin Also is Declared the Cause of All This Present Miserie in England, and the Onely Way to Remedy the Same (Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1558; STC 12020), 82.

56 An Admonition to the Towne of Callays (Wesel [?]: 1557), n. pag.
Nicodemite controversy throughout the 1530s and 1540s via their translated works, English polemicists of the 1550s rejected the possibility of keeping oneself pure in spirit while maintaining any kind of presence at the Mass. The danger of association with idolatrous practices extends beyond a guilty conscience. God’s wrath will come to those who dare to deny God’s truth and lead others to do the same.

By and large, writers presenting this case to the public chose to flee England but do not prescribe the same path for others, who are instead urged to reject dissimulation in place or face God’s wrath. Thus despite the basic similarities between Continental Reformed polemic against dissimulation and the development of English anti-Nicodemism in the Marian era, differences can be discerned. One area of divergence is the relative emphasis on martyrdom versus exile as options for would-be Nicodemites. Both are presented consistently as lawful alternatives to hiding one’s faith, but context often determines which receives the greater emphasis. This question was central to my analysis of Calvin’s *Quatre sermons* in its original setting. The Genevan reformer’s clear preference for exile in that publication departed from his typical pattern of holding out resistance and flight as roughly equal options. When one turns to examine the impact of the Marian persecutions on Protestant anti-Nicodemite rhetoric produced in English from 1553 to 1558, the weight shifts toward the other option. In these works, the emphasis falls unmistakably on resistance in place. The irony, of course, is that those

---

57 See chapter two.
calling for others to follow a path that could result in martyrdom had already rejected this for themselves. 58 This was certainly an instance, in most cases, of “Do as I say, not as I do.”

There are several possible reasons for this disconnect between advice given and advice taken, all of which are related to context. One possibility is that this stress on rejecting idolatry without a strong call to exile simply reflects the general balance the exile writers found when they read authors such as Bullinger, Calvin, Vermigli and Viret. This was, after all, Calvin’s emphasis prior to Quatre sermons and one of the reasons for complaints against him out of France, as one whose actions did not seem to match his prescription for others. The basic argument stressing resistance in the face of idolatry was also already known to English readers in the only anti-Nicodemite writings available to them in translation before 1553. So it could be that the exiles sought to build on a case already familiar to their audience. However, this does not account for the fact that, in some cases, those writing from Continent seemingly went out of their way to de-emphasize flight from England as the course others should follow. I argue below that Robert Horne took this approach in his translation of Quatre sermons. 59 The question of individual calling became important for authors like Horne, who used print to justify their own decision to flee. Yet such apologies for exile make up only a small fraction of

58 This was, of course, the critique of those accusing Calvin of being too harsh on dissimulation from the safety of Geneva, a charge he repeatedly tried to answer in his publications; see, for instance, CO 6:607.

59 See chapter five.
the copious literature addressing the theme of Nicodemism in England. More often, writers acknowledged their location on the Continent while urging their readers to remain steadfast and embrace the possibility of persecution and violence in England. As one examines the sources, this disconnect seems anything but arbitrary. Rather, it reflects a coherent theological account of England’s restoration to true religion. This path must involve repentance and suffering in response to God’s judgment. The notion that open resistance will lead to the Marian regime’s eventual conversion, and subsequently divert God’s wrath from the land, recurs throughout Marian exile polemic against dissimulation. It emerges as the preferred theological basis for minimizing flight as an option as well as a sincere expression of the Marian exile writers’ hopes for England.

Turning again to the sources, we see that this case for patience and perseverance in resisting Roman worship in England is made in over nearly fifty works across three main genres: 1.) excuses for exile from those who chose to flee; 2.) direct appeals and instructions to the faithful for how they ought to conduct themselves in England; and 3.) martyrrological accounts of fellow English who paid the ultimate price for remaining steadfastly committed to pure worship in the face of persecution.60 Several selections from these works illustrates the consistency with which English evangelicals were taught to trust God and embrace suffering as the route God has provided for their own salvation and England’s eventual deliverance from apostasy. The 1553 apologies for

60 As its point of departure, my analysis relies on the list of titles compiled in Baskerville, 34-87.
exile of John Bale and Robert Horne, cited above and examined below, hold forth open confession and resistance as the duty of those they left behind as opposed to the kind of flight into which the authors were compelled. The following year, an anonymous letter “from a banished minister of Jesus Christ unto the faithful flock in England” neatly summarized many exiles’ position on how those in England should view their situation, employing a martial theme from beginning to end to exhort believers to be “worthy souldiours, considering the worthines of our Captaine, whom we serue.” The author holds up Christ’s own suffering as an example for the faithful: “holding fast the ploughe of our profession” after the one “vnder whose banner we haue promised to fight,” who “beaten down, [was] not put to flight: but by suffering hath subdued al his enemies.” Likewise, “we his members my folowe the same race, if we will inherit his kingdome.” In case there is any confusion: “The straight pathe, and narrow way vnto eternall lyfe” involves the church boldly following after its Lord in facing down the enemies of God, even to the point of death. In a preface to his 1555 translation of Zwingli, Thomas

61 The Vocacyon of Iohā Bale; Certaine homilies of m. Ioan Calvine; see n. 51 for Bale. Chapter five is devoted to an examination of Horne’s translation of Quatre sermons.

62 A Letter Sent From a Banished Minister of Iesus Christ Vnto the Faithfull Christian Flocke in England, Most Necessary and Cōfortable to Al Such, as be Burthened With Persecucion or Heauinesse of Mynde for the Gospel and Testimonye of Iesu (Roane [London?]: Michael Wood [John Day?], 1554; STC 10016), n.pag. While it is not clear whether this letter originated on the Continent, or even from an exile writer, the author’s persona as “banished minister” both identifies with and exemplifies the position on resistance that characterizes works by known Marian exiles.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid. “For duryng the time of this lyfe, Christe promiseth vs nothing … yet in the time of oure aduersitye, yf we ernestly call vpon him, he wil suerly awake, and helpe vs: not only in rebuking the windes, and sees
Cotsford admonishes fellow English Protestants that, lest they willfully forsake Christ, no option remains but open confession of their faith when summoned before the magistrate. Robert Pownall equates such commitment with true Christianity, being “sprynkled & salted with tribulation … that [the Christian] be persecuted & beare his crosse” — a kind of faith exemplified in the published martyrrological accounts of Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, and Hugh Latimer, whose stories of perseverance emphasize their refusal to dissimulate their convictions. A number of works hold forth hope that God will yet spare England, rescinding the judgment its recent descent into idolatry and dissimulation has incurred. However, this condition remains: God’s people must repent and work toward the conversion of England before its “vnrecoverable destruction.”

our ennimies, but also bringing vs to a quiet harbour, eu'en the kingdome of his father, purchased for vs thorough his blouddde” (n. pag.).

65 The accompt rekenynge and confession of the faith of Huldrik Zwinglius byshop of Zuryk the chief towne of Heluetia sent vnto Charles the fyte noue Emperoure of Rome, holdynge a counsel wyth the moost noble princes, estates and learned men of Germany assembled together at Ausburgh. 1530. in the moneth of Iuly. Translated out of latyn by Thomas Cotsforde (Geneva, 1555; STC 26140), n. pag.

66 Robert Pownell, A moste pythye and excellent epistell to anymate all trew Christians vnto the crosse of Chryste, translated out of fryche into ynglyshe by Robert Pownoll (Wesel [?], 1556; STC 10432), n. pag.; Thomas Cranmer, The copy of certain lettres sent to the Queene, and also to doctour Martin and doctour Storey, by the most reverende father in God, Thomas Cranmer Archebishop of Cantorburge from prison in Oxeforde: who (after long and most grousous strait emprisoning and cruelly handling) most constauntly and willingly suffred martirdome ther, for the true testimonie of Christ (Emden[?], 1556; STC 5999); Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer, Certein godly, learned, and comfortable conferences, betwene the two reverende fathers, and holy martyrs of Criste, D. Nicolas Rydley late Bisshoppe of London, and M. Hughe Latimer, sometyme Bisshoppe of Worcester, during the tyme of their emprisonmentes (Emden[?], 1556; STC 21047.3, 21047.7).

67 Bartholomew Traheron, A vwarning to England to repente and to tvrne to god from idolatrie and poperie by the terrible exemple of Calece, giuen the 7. of March. Anno. D. 1558. By Benthalmai Outis (1558; STC 24174), n.pag.; Preface by William Whittingham, The forme of prayers and ministration of the sacramentes, &c. used in the Englishe Congregation at Geneua and approved, by the famous and godly learned man, Iohn Caluin (Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1556; STC 16561), 5; Anonymous, The lamentacion of England (1557; STC 10014), 19; R. P., Callays, n. pag.
Finally, the Marian exile insistence on constancy and open confession for English Protestants included a feature reflecting the historical circumstances of England’s abrupt political and religious changes. Dissembling was not merely stigmatized as an expression of fear of lesser powers before God and complicity in overt idolatry. It was further portrayed as a quintessentially Roman defect. Specifically, dissimulation was a strategy embraced by England’s present oppressors, who lay in wait as Nicodemites under Edward VI. John Knox, for example, speaks of those who now follow the Marian regime’s religious policies as having hidden these Catholic commitments by posing as evangelicals: “in the time of their profession they were not of vs, but very dissemblers and hypocrites.” He goes on to single out Queen Mary as the Nicodemite par excellence, whose true colors have been revealed to the treachery of all but the Pope, “to the great shame and dishonoure of her noble father.” 68 William Turner speaks of the clergy who serve the new regime as “newtralles and manpleasers of late,” who are “now the latin sacrificers,” providing such “spirituall drinke” as cannot be nourishing but rather leads to the “sycknesses” of God’s people. 69 An anonymous pamphleteer refutes Rome on the grounds of its own claim that the church’s outward form is intrinsic to its existence. He

68 A faythfull admonition made by Iohn Knox, vnto the professours of Gods truthe in England whereby thou mayest learne howe God wyll have his Churche exercised with troubles, and how he defendeth it in the same (Kalykow [Emden?], 1554; STC 15069), 9-10, 54.

69 A nevv booke of spirituall physik for dyuerse diseases of the nobilitie and gentlemen of Englande, made by William Turner doctor of Physik (Rome [Emden?], 1555; STC 1555), 58r.
cites the Roman Church’s hiddenness under Edward VI as proof either of its falseness as a church or of its members’ faithlessness, living as dissemblers untrue to their own ecclesiastical convictions. In 1557 another writer connects this alleged Catholic strategy with family resemblance to the “Deuil and his worldings / to dissemble and hyde all things … dissimulatciō is not newe nor yester daie spronge out of the Hill and stone: but the papistes haue of lōg tyme e-braced it ād in kīg Edwardes daies practiced it / hauing this general rule / which I wolde not that ye or any honest mā should folowe.”

To summarize, the reign of Mary I kept the problem of English Nicodemism in the public imagination, even as evangelical Nicodemites succeeded in remaining hidden from public view. The intensification of intolerance toward dissembling at the Mass can be explained, in part, by the situation of rapid change and persecution. Writers in exile attacked fellow evangelicals who chose to remain hidden at home for a variety of ignoble reasons. The need to justify one’s own choice to flee, coupled with a theological conviction that open confession would bring a stay in God’s judgment toward English ingratitude for the gospel, created powerful impetus for the voluminous treatment of religious dissimulation issuing from a steady flow of works published on the Continent and from underground English presses. The sudden change from Edward VI’s to Mary

---

70 A trewe mirrour or glase wherin we maye beholde the wofull state of thys our realme of Englaende set forth in a dialogue or communicacion betwene Eusebius and Theophilus (1556; STC 21777), n. pag.

71 Answer to a Certain Godly Mannes Lettres, n. pag. See n. 54 for full citation.

72 See chapter five for a discussion of English Protestant printing under Mary I.
I’s reformations provided the occasion for an important expansion of anti-Nicodemite rhetoric to connect Catholic sympathies under Mary with alleged Nicodemite behavior under Edward. This indicates a certain flexibility in the English Protestant conception of Nicodemism. Its definition did not depend on the condition of external conformity to idolatrous ritual, which was generally the situation into which Calvin and other Continental writers targeted their anti-Nicodemite writings. Nicodemites could exist in an ostensibly Protestant church that was rightly reformed, as Edward’s was portrayed. Thus, instead of defining the Nicodemite with reference to pressures from an external context of idolatry, English writers emphasized the internal motive and disposition that preceded capitulation to such pressures. The Nicodemite was someone whose fear of persecution or material loss resulted in a broader willingness to compromise their internal commitments by conforming to changing external demands of various kinds. Alternatively, writers often characterized Nicodemites as those whose commitments were flexible or, at the very least, weakly held. This depiction provided the foundation for the persistence of anti-Nicodemism into the Elizabethan era. Whereas Calvin’s Nicodemite was an evangelical who blended into Roman practice despite knowing better, the Elizabethan Nicodemite came to look more like anyone who conformed to dominant religious practices out of a love of privilege and concern to avoid discomfort. This included both Catholics who played evangelical or Protestants who lacked requisite
zeal, as was the case with those John Field attacked in his 1579 translation of *Quatre sermons*. Having more in common with Calvin’s Epicureans, perhaps, than the Genevan reformer’s Nicodemites, the way Elizabethan evangelicals described their fellow churchmen using the language and motifs of anti-Nicodemism exhibited the flexibility of this category in the hands of sixteenth-century English polemicists.\(^{73}\)

### 3.4 Anti-Nicodemism in the Elizabethan Era

The Elizabethan context in which four of our five English translations of *Quatre sermons* emerged witnessed the continued publication of dedicated anti-Nicodemite works as well as the appearance of this theme in works not expressly focused on religious dissimulation.\(^ {74}\) Across a range of genres, Protestant writers warned of the dangers of dissembling, both to the nation and to the dissemblers themselves. Beyond the now standard declamation that God requires integrity of belief and action, several other motifs punctuate the diverse portrayal of dissimulation as a problem in the Elizabethan church. These include renewed emphasis on hypocrisy as an affront to God, the threat of (now) covert papism, and the characterization of religious indifference as a symptom of idolatry.\(^ {75}\) Such embellishments added to anti-Nicodemite rhetoric inherited

---

\(^{73}\) On parallels between Calvin’s Nicodemites and his portrayal of Epicureans and Stoics, see chapter one. For Field’s conflation of various categories to depict his enemies as Nicodemites, see chapter six.

\(^{74}\) Gunther, *Reformation Unbound*, 112-113.

\(^{75}\) Ibid., 116-130. Gunther catalogs Elizabethan Protestant anti-Nicodemism in terms of its focus on past, present, and future threats. His analysis of how various groups articulated the present danger of Nicodemism is very helpful for illustrating the flexibility with which anti-Nicodemite rhetoric was applied variously to attack the Protestant social elite, non-separating evangelicals, and anyone who did not exhibit
from earlier writers enabled their warnings to be heard in a new context of Protestant state and church. The Nicodemite was a malleable polemical foe. In the absence of overt compulsion to attend the Mass required greater attention to internal motivations in order to forge connections between the past and present problem of dissimulation.

Elizabethan polemicists developed in reverse the basic anti-Nicodemite logic that faithful confession must follow from genuine piety, insisting that one’s confession is not faithful unless it arises from true piety. This line of argumentation reflects the newly perceived problem of false brethren who nevertheless appear to be one of the faithful in a context supposedly purged of idolatrous practice. In one sense, the problem of hypocrites among the faithful was nothing new. Scripture teaches that God rejects those who honor him with their lips only (Is 29:13; cf. Matt 15:8, Mk 7:6) and that the community of God’s people will be a mixed assembly of “wheat” and “weeds” growing together until God shall separate them (Matt 13; cf. Matt 3, Lk 3). Augustine’s conflict with the Donatists centered on this question of a mixed church, generally settling the issue for Western Christianity in favor accepting the presence of the faithful and—to varying degrees—the unfaithful in the visible church, until this basic assumption was

the quality of “constant confession.” See also Walsham, Church Papists, 100-119. The following builds on the analyses of Gunther and Walsham by examining a different set of sources, demonstrating the widespread presence of these themes across various genres in the polemical literature of the day.

For Calvin’s understanding of the relationship between internal piety and external expressions in the context of his anti-Nicodemite polemic, see Eire, “True Piety Begets True Confession”: Calvin’s Attack on Idolatry,” in John Calvin and the Church, ed. Timothy George (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990) 247-276.
again challenged by Anabaptist ecclesiology in the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{77} Elizabethan polemicists recognized the inevitability of hypocrisy as a given condition in the English church, while also writing against its dangers. This created a tension between receiving and rejecting the status quo. Anti-Nicodemite arguments were used to sharpen critique of those whose acts of godliness belied an alleged faithlessness that threatened the church’s wellbeing and courted divine discipline. In a series of sermons on Haggai and Obadiah, James Pilkington acknowledges that “So hays there ben from the beginning in the house and children of one father, both good and euill, bothe carnall and spiri|tuall, where the one hays persecuted the other: as there is nowe in the outwarde churche of Christ, and company of them yt call them selues Christians, bothe trewe people and faithfull.”\textsuperscript{78} The Protestant martyr John Hooper supplies a nuanced perspective, both insisting on the necessity of open confession and giving Nicodemites the benefit of the doubt as those who capitulated to the temptation of self love, but who nevertheless will be forgiven if they repent.\textsuperscript{79} The necessity of open confession in contexts of idolatry continued to be


\textsuperscript{78} Aggeus and Abdias prophetes the one corrected, the other newly added, and both at large declared (London: William Seres, 1562; STC 19927).

\textsuperscript{79} Hooper’s letters were collected and published in Miles Coverdale, Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters of such true saintes and holy martyrs of God, as in the late bloodye persecution here within this realme, gane their lyues for the defence of Christes holy gospel written in the tyme of their affliction and cruell imprysonment (London: John Day, 1564; STC 5886), 127, 139, 160-161.
stressed well into Elizabethan period in translations of Continental works such as those by Calvin and his Genevan associate, Michel Cop. Cop rejects the argument that internal purity is possible behind external unrighteousness, insisting that genuine piety must be seen outwardly, and castigates French Nicodemites for scorning the admonitions of teachers sent by God. 80 A 1557 translation of Bullinger’s sermons teaches English readers to expect the presence of “hypocrites and dissemblers hanging on the ecclesiastical bodies,” who are “called members of the body, and are said to be of ye church.” 81 The inherent danger of such tares among the wheat is the subtext of William Wilkinson’s attack on the Family of God sect, whose apparent strategy of dissimulation resulted in the presence of heretics blending imperceptibly among the faithful. 82 Similarly,

80 A godly and learned exposition vppon the Prouerbes of Solomon: written in French by Maister Michael Cope, minister of the woorde of God, at Geneva: and translated into English, by M.O (London: Thomas Dawson, 1580; STC 5723), 19v, 286r-v, 301r-v. See also “An Epistle of M. Ihon Caluin, containyng diuers necessarie poinctes of knowledge tendyng to constancie in the truthe in the tyme of affliction: written to a Freend. Caluin. N.S.D. To certayne controuersies of godly Bretheren” in The comentaries of M. Iohn Caluin vpon the first Epistle of Sainct Ihon, and vpon the Epistle of Iude wherein accordyng to the truthe of the woordes of the holie Ghost, he most excellently openeth and cleareth the poinct of true iustification with God, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, by the effects that he bryngeth forthe in the regeneration. Translated into Englishe by W.H. (London: John Kingston, 1580; STC 4404), n. pag.

81 Fiftie godlie and learned sermons diuided into fiue decades, conteyning the chiefe and principall pointes of Christian religion, written in three severall tomes or sections, by Henrie Bullinger minister of the churche of Tigure in Swicelande. Whereto is adiouned a triple or three-folde table verie fruitefull and necessarie. Translated out of Latine into English by H.I. student in diuinitie (London: [Henry Middleton for] Ralphe Newberrie, 1577; STC 4056), 818.

82 A confutation of certaine articles deliuered vnto the Familye of Loue with the exposition of Theophilus, a supposed elder in the sayd Familye vpon the same articles. By William Wilkinson Maister of Artes and student of diuinitie. Hereunto are prefixed by the right reuervnd Father in God I.Y. Byshop of Roches ter, certaine notes collected out of their Gospell, and aanswered by the Fam. By the author, a description of the tyme, places, authors, and manner of spreading the same: of their liues, and wrestyng of Scriptures: with notes in the end how to know an hereticke (London: John Day, 1579; STC 25665), 61-63. For more on the Family of God and its presence in Protestant polemics, see chapter six.
Pilkington’s posthumously published expositions on Nehemiah warn against “Infidels and hypocrites” who “haue a delite to thrust them-selues in among Gods people, pretending a loue vnto them, where in deede it is for no good will, but to learne their secret counsels and purposes, that by such meanes they maie betraie them when occasion serueth.” Among the many works that strike at the perceived problem of outward religion that lacks a sound foundation in genuine piety, John Bate decries the “sinneful & basterdlie loue” arising out of “the hollownesse of their hearts”—a problem that, according to Henry Smith, threatens to “deceive the harts of simple.”

The second common manifestation of the Nicodemite motif in Protestant polemical literature of the Elizabethan era is the portrayal of covert Catholicism as a grave threat. Alexandra Walsham has produced significant work on the complex identity of “church papists” as a diverse category of individuals maligned by Protestant and recusant Catholic polemicists alike. Walsham’s study is the best work on this topic, examining efforts by Catholics to deal with conformity to Protestant worship through

---

83 A godlie exposition vpon certeine chapters of Nehemiah, written by that worthie byshop and faithfull pastor of the Church of Durham Master James Pilkington. And now newly published. In the latter end, because the author could not finish that treatise of oppression which he had begonne, there is added that for a supplie, which of late was published by Robert Some, D. in Diuinitie (Cambridge: Thomas Thomas, 1585; STC 19929), 36v.

84 Bate, The portraiture of hypocrisie, lively and pithilie pictured in her colours wherein you may view the vgiest and most prodigious monster that England hath brede (London: Robert Robinson, 1589; STC 1579), n. pag.; Smith, The lawyers question The answere to the lawyers question. The censure of Christ vpon the answere (London: J. Danter, 1595; STC 22679), n. pag.

85 Church Papists, 5-49, et passim.
sources that detail happenings “on the ground,” rather than simply accepting descriptions of the “church papist” in prescriptive writing by Catholic clergy, nuancing our understanding of both “the Protestant nation” and the “Catholic community” by drawing attention to a subgroup often neglected in portrayals of these categories. For the purposes of the present study, which focuses on anti-Nicodemism as an evangelical phenomenon, I limit my focus to crypto-Catholics portrayed in Protestant works.

Recognizing that their characterization at the hands of evangelical writers does not necessarily get us any closer to the actual identities or various reasons of those who identified with the old religion but chose to conform to the practices of Elizabethan Protestantism, a brief account of this polemical strategy helps illuminate how anti-Nicodemite rhetoric was employed in a new context where ostensibly pure outward practice hid inward idolatry, rather than the other way around. Unsurprisingly, Protestant works depict the presence of closeted Catholics among the faithful in a profoundly negative light. Most often, the attack on hidden papists is part of a larger argument that targets fellow Protestants perceived as having a role in creating or permitting conditions under which covert papism has gone unchecked. In this way, Elizabethan Protestant use of anti-Nicodemite rhetoric to attack the Catholic Nicodemite frequently served the purpose of criticizing fellow evangelicals. John Field’s 1579 translation of Calvin’s *Quatre sermons*, examined below, takes precisely this approach.\(^{86}\)

\(^{86}\) See chapter six.
Whereas Michel Cop had clearly distinguished “Nicodemitans,” “Papistes,” and “intemistes or newters” in his French reformation context, these categories tended to be conflated in original English works written for a situation in which evangelicals were in power and others forced to dissemble their beliefs. In 1593, John Napier dedicated his exposition of Revelation to King James VI of Scotland, with the admonition to purge his nation and court of “all suspicion of Papists, and Atheists or Newtrals … the number [of which] shall greatly increase in these latter days.” Although Napier does not explicitly characterize Scottish Catholicism as a hidden threat, the warning that the King must attend even to suspected papism implies so much. Also notable is Napier’s easy association of papists with “Atheists or Newtrals,” the same labels John Field uses to characterize the English Nicodemite as an apparent evangelical who lacked doctrinal zeal and tolerated heresy. This reflects the general direction Elizabethan Protestant polemics took throughout the late sixteenth century in depicting hidden dangers to the church, wherein “statute protestants” and “church papists” were denounced in the same

---

87 Cop, Proverbes of Solomon, 62v. “Furthermore, seeing that the pathes of the righteous shineth, it followeth that the false Nicodemitans doe not walke therein: for they which walke in the day, desire not to be hid. Much lesse then doe the Papistes walke therein, and these wretched intermistes or newters, which reiect the pure woorde, which is the Sonne that doeth shewe vs vs this path, and doeth guid vs therin. And seeing that the word is our guide, it is not enough that it be preached vnto vs, but also we must follow it, to be directed right thereby: as in the night, they which desire to holde the right way, will follow the light going before.”

88 A plaine discouery of the whole Reuelation of Saint Iohn set downe in two treatises: the one searching and prouing the true interpretation thereof: the other applying the same paraphrastically and historically to the text. Set forth by Iohn Napeir L. of Marchistoun younger. Whereunto are annexed certaine oracles of Sibylla, agreeing with the Reuelation and other places of Scripture (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1593; STC 18354), n. pag.

89 See chapter six.
breath as exhibiting a common trait: blending into the external life and liturgy of the
curch while embracing attitudes and beliefs subversive to the church and, ultimately,
to the nation’s wellbeing. This shift toward the invisible threat of various groups whom
writers accused of “playing evangelical” is perceptible as early as the 1560s. Employing
logic that anticipates Field’s use of Calvin, Thomas Norton attacks the “English Papist”
as a “special traytor to the realme,” outwardly protesting their loyalty to the Queen
while secretly plotting her demise and remaining loyal to Rome. Andrew Pettegree
describes Norton as a strong partisan of Calvin’s writings who ignored anti-
Nicodemism. This is not entirely accurate. As seen here, despite neither translating
Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite works nor directly addressing the problem of Nicodemism as
Calvin and the Continental Protestants understood it, Norton nevertheless provides
detailed analysis of religious dissimulation by Catholics who feared repercussion for
practicing their faith under Elizabeth I. These “wolves” among the sheep

for the tyme dissemble theyr zele, holdyng them contented
with glorious and false shewe of policie to persuaide a certaine
traitorous temper and perilous neutralitie (if they repent not their
error and change not their Religion) they hate her, they watch
theyr tymes, they transferre the prayses of her good gouernement to
those that neuer deserued it, they be redy to vndermine her estate
while she lyueth, as they did with her brother, and to defame and

See Walsham, Church Papists, 100-19.

A warning agaynst the dangerous practises of papistes and specially the parteners of the late rebellion. Gathered out
of the common feare and speche of good subiectes. Sene and allowed (London: John Day, 1569; STC 18685.7), n. pag.

Marian Protestantism, 109.
In the course of his argument Norton lays equal blame for this threat on those who enable such undercover Catholics to “continue still unpunished … by whose default so dangerous wolues remain in the flocke.” Norton’s analysis of the problem facing the English church makes two important moves that illuminate the developing shape of Elizabethan Protestant anti-Nicodemism. First, it recognizes that this Nicodemite in their midst—the one who plays with religion for the sake of evading persecution—has shifted his confessional identity according to a new context. As opposed to the Marian Nicodemite, an evangelical who played Catholic, Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism often dealt with a hidden Catholic foe, with the idolatry in question internal rather than external. Secondly, Norton’s narrative of the problem in terms of both explicitly seditious elements and those who contribute to these by enabling such threats reveals the strategy Protestant polemicists employed to turned anti-Nicodemite rhetoric against fellow Protestants. While they might not have been as obviously intent on hiding their intentions as the church papists, these evangelicals shared a similar internal defect. The readiness with which the hated papists compromised their conviction in order to blend undetected among the evangelical “flock” paralleled the inconstancy of evangelicals who, despite knowing better, were either tempted by Catholicism or had no resolve to fight it. Here emerges a pattern for continuing to target misguided evangelicals.

93 A warning against the dangerous practises, n. pag.
This link between covert papists and lukewarm evangelicals is the focus of a third stream of anti-Nicodemite critique apparent in the Elizabethan polemical publications, namely the depiction of religious indifference as a symptom of underlying idolatry. Portrayed variously as the love of wealth, striving after self-preservation at all costs, or improper attachment to the praise of others, the common denominator of this defect is a willingness to reverence other things before God. This, in effect, amounts to exchanging worship of the creator for devotion to creaturely goods and benefits. Such idolatrous commitments manifest themselves as indifference to religious faith and practice, concerns that should be of primary importance to the faithful but have become secondary to securing wealth, prestige, and safety at all costs—even if this means embracing practices or tolerating doctrine contrary to scriptural teaching. The basic problem was already named by Continental Protestants writers, who chided their fellow evangelicals for permitting fear of human power to compromise their commitment to pure worship. However, absent the compulsory participation at the Mass against which Continental and Marian era anti-Nicodemism railed, the Elizabethan use of anti-Nicodemite arguments focused more on the internal motive that gave rise to Nicodemite behavior in any given religious context. When devotion to God’s ways comes into conflict with one’s worship of lesser “gods,” the Elizabethan Nicodemite defaults to her
true commitments, blending in with the status quo while courting divine displeasure as one of those who honor God with their lips, while their hearts remain far from him.94

Examples abound of those who drew attention to this danger of idolatry hidden within the Elizabethan church. Once again, a handful of illustrations must suffice to demonstrate the flavor of the polemical context in which Nicodemism was being reimagined as a threat to Protestant England. Coverdale’s publication of John Hooper’s letters invokes the example of the anti-Nicodemite who paid the ultimate price for his faithfulness. Reflecting the rhetoric of Continental writers, Hooper’s admonition to a former evangelical grants that this individual has not in fact forsaken the true faith, and thus calls on him to repent of capitulating to the temptation to join with the Catholics out of self-love and fear of loss.95 In another letter ascribed to Bishop Hooper, the “Christian congregation” is warned against Nicodemite behavior, which both confirms the papists in their idolatry and causes the “weaker sort” of Christian to stumble by granting license to what God rejects.96 Thomas Norton’s wide-ranging assault on English Catholics not only highlights the problem of church papists, as discussed above. He also names the phenomenon of individuals who will shift their faith whatever the context,

94 See Is 29:13; Matt 15:8; Mk 7:6.
95 Holy martyrs, 138.
96 Ibid., 157-161. The ascription of this letter, which also was published anonymously on 1553, is disputed. For the possibility that this might be the work of Robert Horne, who published his translation of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings the same year, see chapter five.
even courting the favor of Catholics “eyther for multitude, for welth, for foreine alliances, or for hatred to the Queene and her gouernement.” These “yelders and halters” play with fire. Norton warns that fiction will become truth, as such Nicodemites actually become the part they play: “they slide by degrees from hypocrites to plane apostates, which are in deede the most desperate kinde of Papistes.” The link between Nicodemism and Catholicism similarly is made by Lewis Evans, who identifies in both evangelical and Catholic Nicodemism pretensions to godliness with the same intrinsic motive: a desire to please others by conforming one’s outward actions to others’ expectations in order to win their praise.

Rudolf Gwalther’s sermons on Acts—first published in Latin in 1557—condemn those who, by their willingness to embrace whatever external actions will avoid suffering, scorn the sacrifice martyrs paid with their lives for rejecting such compromise: “Surely it were better they were altogether key colde, since they wyll not be whot. But bicause they are but warme.” Neither hot nor cold, this “warmth” Gwalther echoes from Rev 3 became the quintessential mark of the English evangelical Nicodemite as portrayed by his or her polemical opponents in the

---

97 A warning against the dangerous practises, n. pag.
98 Ibid.
100 An hundred, threescore and fiftene homelyes or sermons, vppon the Actes of the Apostles, written by Saint Luke: made by Radulpe Gualthere Tigurine, and translated out of Latine into our tongue, for the commoditie of the Englishe reader. Seene and allowed, according to the Queenes Maiesties iniunctions (London: Henry Denham, 1572; STC 25013). 87.
Elizabethan church. This person was neither the overt Catholic whose external actions were patently idolatrous, nor the church papist or traditional Protestant Nicodemite who dissimulated to avoid persecution in a confessional context opposed to their own. In common with these other groups, both idolatry and dissembling marked this threat frequently presented in the anti-Nicodemite arguments adapted to an Elizabethan context. However, this new idolatry was primarily internal—a willingness to serve whatever agenda might lead to one’s material advantage or personal esteem before others. The resulting dissimulation was but a manifestation of this internal idolatry: a bare conformity to any environment without zeal for the principles their actions seemed to affirm. Arthur Dent preached against this tendency in a sermon published in 1582, contrasting the zeal of the godly with those “which are alwayes as is the companie, that is godly emongst the Godly: A Protestant emongest Protestantes: wicked amongst the wicked, a Papist emongest Papistes, a worldling emongest worldlinges, and a Swearer emongest Swearers, a Weathercocke that turneth with euery wynde.”

While Dent describes this problematic behavior and explains it in terms of lack of zeal for God’s Word, John Udall adds the positive description of where this zeal is directed instead:

> We seeke how to serue God and Mammon too: we labour to become religious in shewe, and couetous in deede: We desire to come to Christ by night with Nicodemus, for feare of worldly losses, we seeke to crie Lord, Lord, but we haue no care to do the works of the Lord. We make a shewe of godlinesse, but we denye the power

---

101 A sermon of repentance a very godly and profitable sermon preached at Lee in Essex (London: John Harison, 1582; STC 6649.7), n. pag.
thereof: we wish to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus in his kingdom, but we are loth to drinke of his cup.”

The Elizabethan Nicodemite makes a show of godliness, but only insofar as this does not obstruct his more fundamental service of Mammon.

As noted above, the argument that hypocrites existed among the faithful, blending into the true service of God while their hearts were far from him, is as old as Scripture. Elizabethan writers innovated on this concept by combining it with anti-Nicodemite and anti-Catholic arguments, resulting in rhetoric that invoked a recent problem as a continuing threat. They drew on a wealth of polemical resources and pointed to concrete examples of Roman oppression and Nicodemite failures, especially in the persecutions and martyrdoms of the not-too-distant Marian period. The dangers of such idolatrous commitments were real, the consequences deadly. Thus polemicists raised an alarm that was at the same time urgent and wide reaching. England was on the precipice of collapse back into oppression by God’s enemies. Yet the unfaithfulness speeding the nation along this course was not the open display of idolatrous practices. Rather, it was the hidden absence of zeal—at once undetectable to human eyes and keenly apparent to God who sees the heart. For polemicists wielding the rhetoric of

---

102 Peters fall Two sermons vpon the historie of Peters denying Christ. Wherin we may see the causes of mans falling from God, and the manner how, both of the wicked thorough incredulitie, and of the godly by infirmitie: and also the way that God hath set dowe in his worde to rise againe. By Iohn Vdall, preacher of the word of God at Kingston vpon Temmes (London: John Windes, 1584), A.iiij.v. For more on Udall’s contribution to Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism, see Gunther, Reformation Unbound, 125-130.
Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism, this created an opportunity to present Nicodemism as a credible threat that could take on various forms—as diverse as one’s foes could appear both outside and within the church.

3.5 Conclusion: Imagining a Flexible Foe

The foregoing examination of Marian and Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism reveals an elasticity in the characterization of the Nicodemite that reflects elements of Calvin’s own description of this faceless—and intrinsically traceless—individual. In every case, writers insisted that the community of God’s faithful was under great threat from the inside. Variously portrayed as those who would cowardly dissemble their evangelical beliefs in order to avoid persecution under a Catholic regime, or as those who blended into a Protestant church only so long as it was convenient, all English Nicodemites provoked a similar danger. God would not tolerate such idolatry, whether in the form of external ritual or internal commitment to lesser goods before God. In a Marian context, Nicodemites were complicit in the nation’s idolatry and an obstacle to England’s return to the pure and free worship of God. They were negatively portrayed as those who embraced a quintessentially Roman strategy of deception, against which the faithful should assert their commitment to God by openly resisting the Mass. With the accession of a Protestant queen, arguments against Nicodemism in the English church were adapted to address the internal motives of those who otherwise blended into the faithful congregation. Whether harboring Catholic commitments or a tolerance of heretics in their midst, Elizabethan Nicodemites, like Calvin’s, were attacked for maintaining a
disconnect between internal and external religion. Elizabethan polemicists, also in a manner evoking Calvin, insisted that true worship requires purity in both faith and actions. The difference, of course, was that the idolatry of late sixteenth-century English Nicodemites consisted not in their external participation in a Protestant worship, but in their alleged malleability to any context. While differing in emphasis, the shape of this critique reflects elements already present in Calvin’s characterization of Nicodemism as a diverse phenomenon united by a similar motive of self-preservation. In the absence of a situation marked by the overt idolatry of the Mass, English writers focused anti-Nicodemite arguments on the question of motive: This was a problem involving idolatry conceived of as internal disposition. Idolatry was still central. This explains why anti-Nicodemite sources, such as Calvin’s works on this theme, continued to have life in a cultural situation so far removed from their original contexts.

This combination of an invisible foe whose motives could be variously envisioned and portrayed provided English polemicists with a convenient trope to press vigorously against opponents in the church. Such plasticity in portraying Nicodemism is evident across the works surveyed above, which attribute outward dissimulation of one’s faith (or lukewarm commitment) to various reasons that all relate in some way to a failure to honor God above his creatures. The response is the same attack on idolatry we

---

103 CO 6:597–602, 608–610. On the flexibility intrinsic to Calvin’s own description of Nicodemism, including its similarity to his account of Epicureanism and Stoicism, see chapter one.
find in the anti-Nicodemism of Calvin and Continental Reformed writers, but adapted in a manner that increasingly associated the problem with internal dispositions and attachments invisible to all others except God and, of course, those bringing the charge of Nicodemism against fellow believers! This strategy appears in translations of *Quatre sermons*. While not sharing Calvin’s French reformation context, English translators portrayed the problem of religious dissimulation in ways that parallel Calvin’s account of Nicodemism as a phenomenon involving diverse errors united in a common idolatry wherein the love of lesser goods is substituted for fear of God. This enabled Robert Horne and John Field to police their chosen boundaries of faithfulness within the evangelical community. Their editions of *Quatre sermons* fall into the patterns of Marian and Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism described in this chapter, albeit adapted to each man’s situation. Yet not all translators of *Quatre sermons* made use of the Nicodemite motif. Others seem to have been attracted to Calvin’s publication for reasons not reducible to, nor even necessarily concerned with, the utility of religious dissimulation as a polemical trope. In the end, each of the five English translations of *Quatre sermons*, whether or not it emphasized Nicodemism, tailored Calvin’s argument to specific concerns in ways facilitated—in some cases, made possible—by the unique form of *Quatre sermons*. 
4. Quatre sermons in England: The Translations of 1561, 1581, and 1584

4.1 The English Reception of Calvin and Quatre Sermons

Transitioning now to an analysis of each of the five English translations of Quatre sermons, it is important to situate them within the wider context of Calvin’s growing popularity in England throughout the late sixteenth century and, specifically, interest in his anti-Nicodemite writings. After considering Calvin’s growing presence in Elizabethan print culture, the present chapter examines how three translations—of 1561, 1581, and 1584—reflected this burgeoning English enthusiasm for the Genevan reformer’s writings. Specifically, I show that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings were adapted by the translators in question to address different concerns, and that none of these had much to do with religious dissimulation. I contend that both the content and the form of Quatre sermons were attractive to translators who made of use of Calvin’s publication in ways that provide a fitting contrast for analyzing the translations of Robert Horne (1553) and John Field (1579). These latter translations stand out because they explicitly bent Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism to attacking fellow English Protestants. Chapters five and six analyze Horne and Field more fully.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the emergence of Calvin and his Genevan successors as theological authorities in Elizabethan England was gradual and
by no means dominant at first. The reasons for Geneva’s displacement of Zurich as the theological center of gravity for England’s reception of Continental Reformed thought are complex, but Geneva’s—especially Calvin’s—dominance by the close of the century is beyond dispute. As Francis Higman has noted, “the ninety-one known editions of Calvin translations into English [prior to 1600] constitute a higher total than all the other languages put together.” Andrew Pettegree has provided data on Calvin’s clear predominance from the 1580s over other Continental theologians, citing published works gifted by wills executed at Cambridge, as well as how editions of the Genevan reformer’s writings dwarfed those by both other Continental and English authors by the end of the century. In the universities, C. M. Dent has demonstrated the consolidation of a Calvinist hegemony at Oxford the by 1590s, although “for the first two decades of the reign, Oxford men viewed Zurich as a centre of reform at least as

---


2 “Calvin’s Works in Translation,” 87. See also BC I-III. William Calderwood notes that “The numerous editions and abridgements of the Institutes and Calvin’s other works undoubtedly contributed to the increase and establishment of Calvinism in England. In the Elizabethan period alone, 22 books of his sermons were published, 12 commentaries on various books of the Bible, 17 editions of his Catechism, 60 editions of the Geneva Bible, and seven works on various topics, excluding the Institutes and abridgements. It is little wonder that Calvin surpassed Bullinger in popularity by the end of the period and that his Institutes superseded Bullinger’s Decades as the accepted manual of the clergy and the textbook used by students of divinity in Oxford and Cambridge”; “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 153.

significant as Geneva.”⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch notes that “in Cambridge the triumph of Calvinism was never unchallenged, but it was powerful enough.”⁵ While Calvin’s international stature may have received a considerable boost following his high profile role in the Servetus affair of 1553, it would still be some time before the leadership of the English church would pass from those maintaining deep personal connections—dating from the Marian exile—with Zurich-based theologians such as Bullinger and Gwalther.⁶

As for possible reasons behind Calvin’s enduring appeal in England, his translators during the swell of his popularity in England from the 1570s forward represented members of both the “Elizabethan establishment and the emerging radical opposition.”⁷ This widespread embrace across the church’s factions validates the notion of a broad “Calvinist consensus” in the Elizabethan church and might constitute what Pettegree calls “the secret of Calvin’s success” in print.⁸ If there was an engine driving this growth of Calvin’s stature as a theological authority, it could very well have been the concern of puritans or “forward Protestants” to press their agenda for ecclesiastical

---

⁴ Elizabethan Oxford, 74.

⁵ Later Reformation, 61.

⁶ MacCulloch, “Continent,” 8-14. MacCulloch decries the intrinsic misnomer, “Early Elizabethan Calvinism,” noting that Calvin simply did not have significant influence in England or the requisite presence in print to wield such influence until the 1570s (8-9). On the Servetus Affair, see Roland H. Bainton, Hunted Heretic (Boston, 1960); also Gordon, Calvin, 217-232; and Chapter Two above. Zurich’s under-appreciated role deep into the Elizabethan regime is taken up extensively in Euler, Couriers, passim.


⁸ Ibid., 273.
and liturgical reform by attaching their arguments to Calvin translations in prefaces designed to portray the reformer as a sympathetic authority in support of their cause.9

Apart from this more explicit exploitation of Calvin’s standing as a theological leader to advance polemical goals, there also was wide appreciation for his general teaching within the Church of England and a concern to make this available directly to the public.10 The swell of English translations of Calvin’s sermons can perhaps be explained by the convergence of two factors: the relative abundance of published Latin and French source editions and the translators’ desire to educate both clergy and common people with examples of Protestant teaching from the Continent.11 Sermons, biblical commentaries, and lectures on biblical books constitute roughly two thirds of Calvin’s

9 Higman, “Translation,” 97-99. For more on this strategy, see chapter six; also Calderwood, “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 147.

10 Higman, “Translation,” 96-97. Concerning the general doctrinal consensus between various factions—both conforming and non-conforming—within the Elizabethan and early Jacobean church, see Tyacke, 119–143. Peter Lake nuances this “Calvinist consensus” in Elizabethan religion, arguing for the existence of a definite “puritan worldview” embraced by a diverse subset contained within the Church of England’s general conformity and broad “Calvinism”; Moderate Puritans, passim. See also idem., “Calvinism and the English Church,” 35-57.

11 Higman, “Translation,” 87-99. On the publication of Calvin’s sermons, see De Greef, Writings, 108-114; also Parker, Calvin’s Preaching, 65-75. On the sheer abundance of Calvin’s prolific exegetical writings vis-à-vis any other European author in print during this period, see Calderwood, “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 161. Calderwood notes that Calvin published more biblical commentaries and books of sermons than Luther, Beza, Bullinger, Gwalther, Heimningsen, and Marlorat combined. In addition, his analysis of the 118 authors who had five or more Elizabethan publications reveals that “Of the twenty-three English authors, fourteen were Puritans. Only Calvin surpassed all of the Puritans in popularity, while three Puritans were more popular than Beza and six more than Bullinger” (321). On the broader popularity of printed biblical exegesis as a pedagogical tool in the English Reformation, see I. M. Green, Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113-114. Green notes, “To judge from sales and probate records, more readers may have encountered Calvin’s writing through his commentaries and sermons (and his catechism) than the systematic theology of the Institutes for which he is better known today.”
works appearing in sixteenth-century English editions, with most of these works of biblical interpretation appearing in the 1570s and 1580s. In any case, the several translations of *Quatre sermons* appear as part of this publishing surge reflecting the English appetite for Calvin’s teaching. Indeed, Rowland Hall, editor and publisher of the 1561 translation, specifically introduces the sermons exclusively in terms of their worthiness as a general example of sound biblical teaching sorely needed in England.

Of further interest to this study is the fact that *Quatre sermons*, a work expressly devoted to addressing Nicodemism as a problem in Calvin’s original context, enjoyed unsurpassed popularity among English translators. This raises questions about the wider reception of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings published for an English audience and how *Quatre sermons* fits into this new context. The fact is that this series of interrelated sermons attacking religious dissimulation was the most frequently translated of all Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings. 1543’s *Petit traicté* and the short 1544 letter on participation at the Mass were the only anti-Nicodemite works translated

---

12 See the detailed catalogue of Calvin’s published writings in BC I-III. Besides Latin and French, English was, by far, the most popular language in which Calvin’s biblical expositions appeared in print.

Besides *Quatre sermons*. Both of these translations appeared prior to Mary I.\(^{14}\) Beyond Calvin’s corpus, *Quatre sermons* was translated more often than any other Continental work treating Nicodemism. Musculus’ *The Temporysour* appeared in two 1555 editions with the same preface and again in a new edition of 1584. Bullinger’s letter on Nicodemism was printed with Calvin’s in 1544 and 1548.\(^{15}\) English translators and publishers were content to have only one anti-Nicodemite translation each from Vermigli and Viret.\(^{16}\) An anti-Nicodemite work by the Lutheran Johann Wigand, *De neutralibus et mediis, grossly Inglished*, appeared in editions of 1562 and 1591.\(^{17}\) Thus *Quatre sermons* was the single most popular anti-Nicodemite work by any Continental author translated into English, according the number of unique editions that appeared

\(^{14}\) *The mynde of the godly and excellent lerned man M. Jhon Caluyne* (1548; STC 4435.3,5,7); *Two epystles* (1544; STC 4079.5; 1548 Reprint: STC 4080). For these works, see chapter three.

\(^{15}\) Musculus, *The temporisour* (1555; STC 18312); idem., *The temporysour (that is to saye: the obseruer of tyme, or hee that chaungeth with the tyme.) Compyled in Latyn by the excellent clarke Wolfangus Musculus, and trâslated into Frenche by M. Vallerain Pullain. And out of Frenche into Inglishe by R.P.* (1555; STC 18313); idem., *The temporisour that is to say: the obseruer of time, or hee that changeth with the time. Compyled in Latin, by the excellent clarke, Wolfgang Musculus, and translated into French, by Maister Valleran Pulleyn. And out of French into Engli* (1555; STC 18314). For Bullinger, see n. 14. See chapter three for discussion of these works.

\(^{16}\) Vermigli, *Cohabitacyon* (1555; STC 24673.5); Viret, *An epistle to the faithfull* (1582; STC 24779). See chapter three.

\(^{17}\) *De neutralibus et mediis, grossly Englished, Jacke of both sydes A godly and a necessarie catholike admonition, touching those that be neutres, holding those that be neutres, holding upon no certayne religion nor doctrine and such as holde with both partes or rather of no parte, very necessary to staye & stablysh Gods place in the true catholike faith against thys present wicked world* (London: R. Harrison, 1562; STC 25612, 25652.5); *De neutralibus & medijs, grossly Englished, Jacke of both sides a godly and a necessarie catholike admonition, touching those that be neuters, holding upon no certaine religion, nor doctrine, and such as hold with both partes, or rather of no part: very necessary to stay and stabylsh Gods elect in the true catholike faith against this present wicked world* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1591; STC 25613).
throughout the sixteenth century. It might be thought that such popularity was due simply to the work’s genre as sermons, given the demand for Calvin’s biblical teaching sketched above. Yet, among all Calvin’s sermons, regardless of topic or biblical text, *Quatre sermons* was the most frequently translated into English prior to 1600. In fact, a further glance at *Bibliotheca Calviniana* and the *Short Title Catalogue* reveals that, besides the thirteen full or partial editions of the *Institutio*, seventeen editions containing the same 1556 English translation of Calvin’s 1542/45 Genevan Catechism, seven reprints of two unique editions of Calvin’s sermons on the Decalogue, and five reprints of the same edition of the Job sermons, no other work by Calvin was published in the sixteenth century as often in as *Quatre sermons*. This suggests that there likely were factors beyond its than genre that drew translators to this work. Certainly the growing appetite for biblical exegesis is reflected in the popularity of *Quatre sermons*. But it also seems that

---

18 Five editions of Calvin’s 1563 sermons on Job were published in the sixteenth century, but all were reprints of Arthur Golding’s 1574 translation (STC 4445; 4446a; 4447.5; 4447.5). Additionally, seven editions of Calvin’s 1557 *Sermons sur les dix commandemens de la loy* appeared between 1579 and 1583. However, four were variations of the same translation of John Harmar, published by Thomas Dawson for various venders (STC 4452; 4454; 4455; 4456.5), and the remaining three were similarly variations of Arthur Golding’s translation, all appearing in 1583 (STC 4442; 4443; 4443.5). Hence, despite its popularity as a reprint, only two unique editions of this work were presented to English audiences.

19 Thomas Norton’s 1561 translation of the 1559 *Institutio* was reprinted six times (1562, 1574, 1578, 1582, 1587, 1599). The second edition contained a new preface from the translator (STC 4416), and the sixth edition includes marginal notes of unknown origin, which are reprinted in the seventh edition (STC 4422; 4423); see BC III:479 (87/2). Edmund Bunny’s 1576 Latin abridgement was published in Edward May’s translation of 1580 (STC 4426.8). Christopher Fetherstone’s translation of Guillaume Delaune’s 1583 summary was published in 1585, with reprints appearing in 1586 and 1587 (STC 4429; 4430; 4431). Johannes Piscator’s Latin abridgement, which was published in London in 1595 (STC 4372.5), was published in Henry Holland’s translation of 1596 (STC 4374). For various reprints of *The catechisme or manner to teache children the christsian religion*, see STC 4380-4387. See n. 18 above for the sermons on Job and the Decalogue, respectively.
translators were interested in Calvin’s topic and its implications for England. But why?
Why were Calvin’s sermons on Nicodemism—the only sermons he personally edited for 
publication, and on a topic seemingly irrelevant to Protestant England—surprisingly 
popular in English? Other sermons collections existed. What was the singular appeal of 
this somewhat idiosyncratic text among Calvin’s opera, namely his anti-Nicodemite ecclesiological plea for exile from the Psalms? The remainder of this study examines the five English translations of Quatre sermons in an attempt to answer this question.

The reception history of Quatre sermons in sixteenth-century England suggests that Calvin’s decision to publish this work in the genre he chose had unintended consequences. Quatre sermons is an important case study in Calvin’s growing stature in Elizabethan England. It is a work that both reflected and perhaps also contributed to widespread appreciation for the reformer as a theological authority. What will become apparent below is that it was neither the collection’s homiletical form nor its anti-Nicodemite emphasis alone that made it so appealing. It was both. The flexibility of the Nicodemite as a motif for characterizing one’s foes in polemical exchange was augmented by Calvin’s decision to present this useful polemical content as four distinct but interrelated sermons. The result was an even more versatile package, easily adapted by those who wanted to stress, in some cases, all of what Calvin wrote or, in other cases,
to focus on just a portion of the whole. Calvin could not have imagined that his four-sermon argument against Nicodemism, published in this unique form to address problems he faced in 1552 Geneva, would create such an opportunity for translators. The present study reveals how English polemicists used the flexibility Calvin’s publication afforded for pressing the reformer into support of their specific, yet diverse, purposes.

4.2 Baduel’s Latin Translation

Before moving to an examination of the various sixteenth-century English translations of Quatre sermons, it is worthwhile to consider first the Latin translation published in 1553. Besides forming the basis for the English translations, the 1552 French and 1553 Latin editions of Quatre sermons were the only two Calvin clearly had a hand in producing. As noted above, Calvin himself prepared the French text for publication. Claude Baduel (d. 1561) produced the Latin translation at Calvin’s request, after Calvin decided against burdening an overworked Theodore Beza with this task. Emerging

---

20 On only a handful of occasions were Calvin’s sermons excerpted from larger works and published in isolation, rather than as translations of complete publications. These include the curious case of four sermons from King Hezekiah’s song in Is 38 (STC 4450) and two sermons on 2 Tim 1 (STC 4462) appearing in English translation in 1560, years before the French editions of those sermon series were published from 1561-1563; see BC III: 771, 776-777 (60/11; 60/13). One other occurrence, which does not exactly qualify as an excerpt of a longer publication, is a trio of sermons from Pss 46 and 48 published in 1562 and translated by William Warde, likely from Denis Raguenier’s transcripts (STC 4458). On this latter work, see BC III:961-963 (62/24); also the edited manuscript sources in SC 7:40-56.

21 On the possibility that Calvin had a role in coordinating the Italian edition, also published in Geneva in 1553, see chapter two, n. 8. The very existence of the Latin translation commissioned by the author so soon after the French suggests both that Calvin aspired to a broad readership for Quatre sermons and had specific, targeted purposes for the original edition of 1552.

22 See chapter two. Again, these were the only sermons Calvin himself prepared for the press.
from the press of Jean Crespin, Baduel’s preface states his goal of reaching a broad audience “to whom the French language is unknown.” A comparison of Baduel’s translation and Calvin’s original reveals a high degree of correspondence, although there were some notable changes. On the whole, the few liberties that Baduel does take with Calvin’s French suggest an enthusiastic follower eager to accent what he believed to be the author’s intent, rather than a critical eye looking to correct Calvin or advance an alternative agenda. The following overview of Baduel’s translation assesses the nature and frequency of his divergence from Calvin’s original, considers how these changes might have contributed to a broader appeal for *Quatre sermons*, and concludes with some observations regarding the implications of choosing one version—French or Latin—versus the other as the basis for subsequent translations of *Quatre sermons*.

In 1552 Baduel, a well-known French humanist scholar and founding rector of the Academy in Nîmes, had recently arrived in Geneva, where he eventually would serve as a professor in the Genevan Academy before his death in 1561. Calvin expressed his confidence in Baduel as a translator alongside his pleasure in freeing up

---


24 “quibus lingua gallica ignota esset” (CO 8:XXVI).

Beza for more important occupations. This glimpse of Baduel’s reputation as a gifted linguist, if not a significant theologian, is confirmed by an examination of his finished translation. The Latin follows Calvin’s original closely, but not exactly. As a general rule, Baduel uses equivalent expressions rather than relying on cognates and wooden imitation of word order to convey the sense of Calvin’s French. Such freedom and confidence in adapting phrases and syntax suggests Baduel’s skill in both languages. That he approached this project with great affinity for Calvin’s cause, not simply as a disinterested contractor, is evident from Baduel’s short preface to his translation.

Speaking first of God’s eternal provision for his church, Baduel explains how this was exemplified in Luther’s recovery of the gospel that sets consciences free from false teaching and superstition. Then he portrays the work of Farel, Calvin, and Viret collectively as a necessary extension of Luther’s reformation. These men call people, now convinced of Luther’s breakthrough, away from the outward idolatry with which some continued to be involved. This outward manifestation of pure worship in the properly ordered church is both a sign of God’s kindness and a threat to the Pope, who is perfectly content for evangelical religion to remain “hidden.” Baduel commends *Quatre sermons* to both those within and those deprived of a properly reformed church.

---

26 CO 14:401 (cited in BC I:479).

27 CO 8:XXV-XXVII.

28 Ibid., XXVI.
adding that it is especially useful to press the stubborn who persist in rejecting God’s clear teaching on the outward form of true religion.\textsuperscript{29} Having situated \textit{Quatre sermons} within the narrative of God’s provision for his church through reform, Baduel concludes by accenting the current urgency of translating this most valuable work out of French.\textsuperscript{30}

Throughout the four sermons one finds considerable expansions of Calvin’s original, mostly through the piling on of descriptive words to accent a point. In some places, Baduel will rework the French and state the same thought with the syntax rearranged to retain smoother Latin. Some additions are clearly for the sake of emphasis and color, as if Baduel is getting carried away with enthusiasm for Calvin’s position or antipathy toward Calvin’s opponents. Occasionally a word or two is omitted. In no case is Calvin’s meaning substantially changed. Several examples push more into extensive expansion to the point of adding commentary to the text, but not in a way that distorts Calvin’s sense. The easiest explanation for such fidelity in translation is that Calvin commissioned this translation and Baduel took the job for income. The latter likely worked under the assumption that Calvin would check his work. So it is not surprising that he renders a faithful translation—fairly, if not slavishly, literal—of Calvin’s French.

Baduel follows his translator’s preface with a translation of Calvin’s original French preface. Sermon one contains several examples of the kinds of variations

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
common to this translation. Calvin’s teaching that “David’s example is a general rule for all the children of God” is rendered “the example of the most excellent king and prophet David should be a general rule to all God’s children for right and pious living.” This is an addition, to be sure, but one plainly keeping with Calvin’s views. Further on, Calvin commends David for “saying that he will never involve himself in the ceremonies [of idolators],” which Baduel translates as David’s “promising constantly that he will never dwell in the midst of their ceremonies.” Once again the difference is slight, but the addition is real. Similarly, where Calvin criticizes secret communion as that which is administered by “a monk who gives it to [communicants] not as a Christian pastor, but in the profession of a papal priest,” Baduel translates this as “a minister, who for the most part—for the most effective deceit and dissimulation—is from the order of the fathers. That is, he is called from the monks, not to perform this duty as Christian pastor but after the profession of a papal priest.” Here we see Baduel explicating what he considers a motive implied by Calvin’s critique of such practices. Yet even such an interpretative rendering does not seem intended to correct Calvin, so much as to put a sharper point

31 CO 8:379; Latin: Claude Baduel and John Calvin, Joannis Calvini homiliae quatuor, grauem atque his temporibus admodum opportunam et utilem admonitionem atque exhortationem continentem, quemadmodum ex Ipsa praefatione perspici poterit breuis item explanatio Psalmi lxxxvii ab eodem authore latine scripta e. Gallico ipsius authoris sermone in latinum à Claudio Baduello conversae (Genevae: Joannis Crispini, 1553), 17 (hereafter Baduel, 17; emphasis added). To facilitate comparing the French and Latin texts, I have furnished my own translations of each to accent key points of similarity and difference, usually by way of italicized text.

32 CO 8:380; Baduel, 19 (emphasis added).

33 CO 8:387; Baduel, 41 (emphasis added).
on the Genevan reformer’s invective. Similarly, Baduel’s “Calvin” concludes sermon one
with a recapitulation of the audience’s situation absent from the original:

**French:**
Meanwhile, for our part,
let us not forget that upon which
I touched at the beginning …

**Latin:**
Meanwhile, lest we, who enjoy
peace and tranquility by the great
and singular kindness of God,
forget what I touched on initially…³⁴

A few select examples will demonstrate that Baduel’s translation of sermon two
continues in the same vein, offering elaborations that underscore Calvin’s message by
way of repetition or extrapolation of related themes. This includes relatively minor
changes, such as when Calvin opens his sermon with the observation that any
submission to suffering is in vain unless “we are well assured concerning the cause for
which we are fighting.”³⁵ In keeping with his practice elsewhere, Baduel elaborates upon
“our just, and true, and worthy cause, for which we subject ourselves to combat.”³⁶ Further
on, Baduel colors Calvin’s complaint against his audience’s lack of zeal for the gospel
with layers of descriptions not present in the French:

**French:**
It is a most strange thing that
brightness of God’s light shines
today as fully as it ever has,
yet it is a pity that there is so little

**Latin:**
But oh what a plain and ignoble
miserable thing, that while the
light of God that has risen shines
on these times with such brightness,

³⁴ CO 8:392; Baduel, 56 (emphasis added).
³⁵ CO 8:393.
³⁶ Baduel, 57 (emphasis added).
zeal. So much worse if we don’t feel the embarrassment of shame…

there is found such little zeal, study, and love. In these things so much greater is our misery, that we are not overwhelmed by shame ingratitude, disgrace, and modesty.  

Beyond adding weight to Calvin’s sentiments, Baduel’s translation exhibits both the translator’s zeal for the message he brings and his confidence with French and Latin, conveying ideas from one language to another with a certain freeness of expression that nevertheless remains faithful to the original meaning. In a slightly more theological interpretation, Baduel translates Calvin’s assertion that sufferings after Christ’s example are “marks by which God recognizes us and confesses us as his own” as follows: “but these marks and ornaments God recognizes and receives us for his servants as well as the elect.” This translation exemplifies Baduel’s comfort with supplying more precise wording for Calvin’s thoughts. It is hard to imagine that Calvin would disagree with identifying God’s people as “his servants and elect” (suis servis atque electis), but these are not the words he used. The remainder of sermon two contains similar rephrasing, elaboration, and additions. Also notable is the abundance of doublets, as in the above quote, where Calvin’s French employs only a single term. It is unclear whether this

37 CO 8:395; Baduel, 62 (emphasis added).

38 CO 8:398; Baduel, 71 (emphasis added).
pattern suggests Baduel’s fondness for this literary device or his enthusiastic support of Calvin’s argument for martyrdom in sermon two as the case moves toward its climax.  

More significant changes appear in the translation of sermon three, which sets forth Calvin’s positive ecclesiology of the rightly-ordered church as God’s provision for his people. While Baduel does not correct or contract Calvin’s French, the places in his translation where he expands upon the original tend to cluster around Calvin’s repeated insistence that the church’s polity and public worship are an essential means of nurture for Christians. This gives the impression of a more fully developed ecclesiological discussion than actually appears in the French. For example, Baduel puts a point on Calvin’s characterization of David’s longing for exile by stressing various elements of Calvin’s deliberate development of a certain ecclesiology as God’s provision in exile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We should take hold of those things God has ordained, the chief among which are named here by David, namely, the order and polity God has established in his church, that we might be taught by his word, all praise him with one accord, call on him in prayer, and use the sacraments as helps in this regard.</td>
<td>We should take up these things and the way of life God has set before us, out of which the chief and surest of which David has named here: the order, polity, and structure in which the church consists — in which we are taught and established in God’s Word, praise and call on him with mind and heart, and use the sacraments, being helped in the whole of piety and [God’s] worship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also in this respect that David

Indeed, in prayer and testimony,

---

39 It is probably a little of both. Other translators exhibit similar patterns. See chapter six.
declares his highest desire is
to dwell in the temple of God.

David hopes in nothing else—that
out of all he sees and the desires that
afflict him in exile, this was highest
and greatest: that he might dwell in
God’s temple.

By the word “temple” he means the
freedom to worship God purely
with the faithful, to confess of his
faith, to pray, and to participate
in the sacraments.

By the name “temple” he means
the ease and freedom to worship
God purely and piously with the
faithful, to make confession of his
faith, to share in that which was
greatest of all his comforts and joys—
the sacraments—which in the temple
were established rightly and
legitimately.40

Baduel’s expansive translation is not unfaithful to Calvin’s meaning, as it certainly
reflects themes present throughout Quatre sermons. At the same time, it is clear that
Baduel has chosen to highlight the church’s structure as locus of salvation, comfort in
exile, and faithful obedience in ways that are consistent with Calvin’s argument but
absent from Calvin’s original text here. In light of this emphasis on nurture it is slightly
unexpected that, on the next page, Baduel changes Calvin’s designation of God as “kind
Father” (bon pere), who provides for his children in the church, to simply “God.”41 The
church-as-nurture motif returns emphatically, however, when Calvin’s observation that
“God expressly returns his children to the bosom of the church” becomes, in Baduel’s
translation, “God clearly and openly returns his children to the “bosom and lap of the

40 CO 8:410; Baduel, 105-106 (emphasis added).
41 CO 8:410; Baduel, 107.
Church [their] mother and nurse” (sinum ac gremium Ecclesiae matris nutricisque). Likewise, the shepherd metaphor in Calvin’s account of David’s “most precious” desire as “to be in the flock of the faithful in order to attain the supreme blessing” receives this accent from Baduel: “that [David] might be like a sheep, that he might dwell in the flock of the faithful and graze most pleasantly, in order that he might be led to the supreme blessing.”

Even with such embellishments, Baduel does not depart from a persistent focus on Calvin’s own rhetorical emphasis here, namely to spur a love for the rightly-ordered church that leads his hearers to further action. Calvin speaks of David’s ardor for the temple and exhorts his readers “to be doubly moved and enflamed in his regard.”

Baduel fills this out: “we today have much greater, just, and powerful necessity that we be enflamed with zeal, love, and desire for God’s house.” Once again, Baduel adds words, and ardor, to Calvin’s French without necessarily altering Calvin’s basic message.

The translation of sermon four displays patterns similar to those present in the first three expositions. One of several places where Baduel provides clarification of Calvin’s meaning for his Latin readers occurs when Calvin complains that contemporary Christians fail to follow David’s example in zeal and action: “It is a great shame that

42 CO 8:413; Baduel, 115 (emphasis added).
43 CO 8:415; Baduel, 120 (emphasis added).
44 CO 8:414.
45 Baduel, 117 (emphasis added).
those who call themselves Christians so badly practice one or the other [i.e., zeal or action].”

46 Baduel explicates this point, helping readers track with Calvin’s thought by recapitulating the reformer’s earlier points: “It is the greatest shame that those who call themselves Christians neither cultivate zeal of spirit or pious emotion, nor subsequently exercise their duty in life.”

47 In a rare instance, Baduel’s translation includes an obvious error where Calvin requires no correction, referring to David as “Daniel” (Daniele) when the latter is neither in Calvin’s French nor remotely related to the discourse in question.

48 This seems to be a mistake on Baduel’s part, or a publisher’s misprint. Other changes in keeping with Baduel’s approach to translation include his elaboration of Calvin’s “we may lose the means of serving God as before,” which reads in translation, “the freedom and ease of worshipping God as before might be completely snatched from us.”

49 Likewise, after discussing the piety of God’s people exemplified in Ps 84, Calvin notes simply that “such great ardor should be in the children of God, that nothing stop them from coming to worship him.”

50 Baduel again takes advantage of a convenient opportunity to recapitulate Calvin’s previous points in detail: “The ardor of God’s children should

46 CO 8:428.
47 Baduel, 154 (emphasis added).
48 CO 8:432; Baduel, 163.
49 CO 8:436; Baduel, 179 (emphasis added).
50 CO 8:434.
aspire to both God’s purpose and the memorable example of the pious, which is worthy of imitation.”\(^5\)

In the final analysis, all these alterations amount to fairly minor changes.

Another interesting comparison emerges in Baduel’s translation of Calvin’s brief Exposition of Psalm 87 appended to the original publication of Quatre sermons. Whereas changes to the four sermons generally involved expanding the originals in ways that suggest emphasis or enthusiasm, Baduel’s translation of the Exposition is notable for shortening lengthier sections of Calvin’s exegetical discussion. A few of the familiar enlargements remain. For example, in a manner similar to his approach to the sermons, Baduel adds several short phrases to Calvin’s summary of the Psalm’s argument, including the following explanation of why God allows the wicked to prosper:

**French:**

It often happens that God treats such [wicked] people according to their desires, as if to fatten their appetites until the right time for their punishment to come.

**Latin:**

Truly it often happens that God fattens them with all kinds of good things so that he will exact punishment on them justly and at the right time for their ingratitude.\(^5\)

Further on in this introductory section, we see the first of Baduel’s selective omissions:

**French:**

In brief, the dignity of that one [church] might be for a time hidden under the cross of Christ. All the same, one can judge that

**Latin:**

Thus under the cross of Christ [its] honor was indeed hidden thus far, but [the church’s] dignity is spiritual.\(^5\)

---

\(^5\) Baduel, 173 (emphasis added).

\(^5\) CO 8:441; Baduel, 191 (emphasis added).

\(^5\) CO 8:444; Baduel, 195 (emphasis added).
[the church’s] entire dignity was spiritual, and this is not able to be seen by eyes of flesh.

Two more significant contractions occur in the course of Calvin’s discussion of various possible interpretations he goes on to reject. Baduel paraphrases Calvin’s summary of views concerning the referent of the pronoun at the start of v. 1—“His foundations are in the holy mountains”—supplying a gloss of Calvin’s exegesis that makes the reformer’s point in fewer words.54 Baduel’s translation rules out the possibility that “his” could refer to anything but God himself “since the relative [pronoun] is masculine.” Calvin’s original essentially argues the same point but never mentions the pronoun’s gender. Calvin’s exegesis hinges on the assertion that v. 2 supplies the subject to which v. 1 refers. It is unclear if Baduel’s summary of Calvin simply intends to make clear what he thinks Calvin implies or if he considers himself to supply insight missing from Calvin’s handling of the Hebrew here. In any case, the thrust of Calvin’s reading has been preserved, namely that God ultimately is in view.

Another instance where Baduel changes Calvin’s original into a different, shorter statement of the same point is when he supplies the technical term “double synecdoche” where Calvin explains that the Psalmist in v. 2 is “taking a part for the whole.”55 Finally, Calvin takes up various Jewish and Christian interpretations of v. 4 that attempt to

54 CO 8:444-445; Baduel, 196.

55 CO 8:446; Baduel, 198.
reduce God’s promise of blessing here to, respectively, the Jewish nation or the Christian church. Baduel’s translation adds insults to Calvin’s dismissal of the Jewish reading, but also omits all the positive, complimentary observations the reformer makes en route to rejecting the Christian interpretation.\textsuperscript{56} These changes to Calvin’s Exposition of Psalm 87 do not alter the basic meaning of the original composition. Yet they mark a shift in Baduel’s approach to translation insofar as they break the pattern of careful adherence to Calvin’s French except for the occasional repetition or expansion for emphasis and clarification. In contracting or reformulating Calvin’s ideas in several places, Baduel displays more of his editorial hand. In the end, however, one finds no alterations that suggest a desire to subvert Calvin. All the changes seem designed to clarify what the translator takes to be the author’s intended point.

To conclude, the nature of Baduel’s expansions displays his unambiguous enthusiasm for Calvin’s message, especially the Genevan reformer’s ecclesiological argument for exile from the Psalms. Even the more significant contractions of Calvin’s exegesis in the appendix on Ps 87 remain “on message” with the overall design of \textit{Quatre sermons}. On the whole, the most theologically significant additions center on highlighting Calvin’s presentation of the church as locus for nurture in exile. This confirms that Calvin’s original emphases are not lost on his readers. Baduel elucidates in greater detail the call for sermons, sacraments, and open confession in the public

\textsuperscript{56} CO 8:447-448; Baduel, 200-201.
worship of God’s people under a biblical church government. This is the very vision upon which Calvin’s urgent case for exile depends. That Calvin likely was aware of Baduel’s work, having commissioned it, lends further support to the idea that Calvin intended for *Quatre sermons* to lay stress on precisely such matters of ecclesiastical polity as God’s design for Christian nurture.\(^{57}\) The obvious implication of this for English translators is that those relying on the Latin as a source text would possess an already-embellished account of Calvin’s ecclesiological case for exile in *Quatre sermons*. Interestingly, the translator who ostensibly stood to benefit most from an emphasis on the church’s form—the presbyterian John Field—produced his version from Calvin’s French.\(^{58}\) Before taking up Field’s translation, however, it is helpful to consider how others presented all or part of *Quatre sermons* to English readers from 1553 to 1584.

### 4.3 Rowland Hall’s 1561 Edition: Calvin as Model for English Preachers

Less than a decade following the appearance of Robert Horne’s partial translation of 1553, which will be examined below in chapter five, the first full English edition of *Quatre sermons* appeared in 1561 from the London press of Rowland Hall.\(^{59}\) Like Horne’s work before it, *Four godly sermons* is based on Baduel’s Latin translation of Calvin’s

---

\(^{57}\) This argument for Calvin’s emphases in *Quatre sermons* is developed in chapter two.

\(^{58}\) See chapter six.

\(^{59}\) *Four godlye sermons*; see n. 13 above. I say “full” insofar as this translation includes all four sermons and the Exposition of Psalm 87. As I discuss below, the 1561 edition omits Calvin’s original preface.
original. The title attributes the translation to “divers godly learned men,” one of whom we know to be Robert Horne, whose published versions of sermons one and two are reprinted here. Others responsible for the present translation are not named. Neither is Nicodemite controversy that had given rise to Calvin’s original publication. Yet it is not as if those responsible for this 1561 translation were insensitive to the nuances of Calvin’s argument. The full title of the work adumbrates the sermons’ contents, which speak “agaynst the pollution of idolatries, comforting men in persecutions, and teachying them what commodities thei shal find in Christes Church.” Yet, beyond this descriptive title, no further mention is made of Calvin’s purposes for publishing Quatre sermons, nor is Calvin’s preface reprinted. Nicodemism, it seems, was not the point here. Rather, the goal of this translation appears to have been to present Calvin generically as an example of sound preaching needful for the English church. An examination of the publisher’s preface and subsequent translation demonstrates the attractiveness of Quatre sermons as sermons for achieving this goal, even apart from the work’s focus on religious dissimulation, which does not receive any special emphasis in this 1561 translation.

Rowland Hall’s tidy preface “To the Reader” runs less than two pages and essentially makes a single point: Here is an example of the kind of good preaching England needs. Hall conveys this message by supplying three reasons, “that moueth me

---

60 Four godlye sermons, n. pag. On the use of Horne’s translation, see BC II:814-817 (61/12).

61 Four godlye sermons, n. pag.
to print these sermons.” I.D First, Hall attests the “worthiness of the matter set forth in these sermons,” summarizing Calvin’s description of his work from the reformer’s original preface. Again, Calvin’s preface is not reprinted and the original references to the Nicodemite controversy are omitted entirely. This decontextualization of Calvin’s original publication serves what appears to be Hall’s ostensible purpose here, namely to hold up Calvin as an outstanding example of skilled preaching for any context, especially for England. This becomes clear when Hall supplies his remaining two reasons for printing Four godlye sermons: 1.) “the plainness and simplicity” of Calvin’s teaching “in al his sermons to the people”; and 2.) “the reuerent handling of the scriptures” displayed in Calvin’s preaching. I.D Hall contrasts effusive praise of Calvin, “the faithful seruant of god and the apostle of our time,” with implied critique of the state of preaching in England. Calvin’s sermons “seme nothyng else but the swete licour of the scriptures and liuely word of god set forth before our eyes in Christalline vessels.” I.D Calvin’s words in this translation are a beacon “whereby our english nacion may se & judge what power the word of god hath of it self, whē it is most naked & bare and bond of that painted sheathe that men would put vpon it.” I.D There is no anti-

Ibid., A.ii.

Ibid.

Four godlye sermons, n.pag.

Four godlye sermons, A.ii.
Nicodemite agenda here. Calvin’s entire preaching ministry is lauded. *Quatre sermons* is but a representative part. The publisher’s goal is merely to highlight the importance of quality sermons and inspire gratitude for the same: “God grant vs grace thankfully to receyue God’s good gyftes in this and all other thynges offered vnto vs.”

The translations that follow reinforce the purposes set forth in the preface. There is little deviation from Baduel’s Latin, except changes in word order or an occasional substitution of idioms necessary to make the text translate smoothly into English. Baduel’s fondness for elaboration, clarification, and doublets is retained in the English translators’ work. The mistaken reference to “Daniel” in sermon four, discussed above, is corrected in this English translation. In terms of variations between Horne’s translation and that of the anonymous translator(s), Horne relied more on simple English cognates in his rendering of Baduel. On the whole, the English translation is more verbose than Calvin’s original because it follows Baduel’s expansive version. This 1561 English translation does not introduce ideas beyond those already present in the Latin. Thus far, it appears that the 1561 edition offers a straightforward presentation of that “abundance which god hath geuē to [Calvin] in these our times.”

---

66 *Four godlye sermons*, n. pag.

67 *Four godlye sermons*, n. pag; cf. CO 8:432; Baduel, 163. See n. 46 above.

68 See chapter five.

69 *Four godlye sermons*, n. pag.
such as the translation, in sermon three, of “sciens haereditate Dei aeterna se privare” as “willingly deprive himself of the eternall inheritance of the kingdom of God” are infrequent and bear little impact on the source text’s meaning.  

Where Baduel supplies “synecdoche” in the Exposition of Psalm 87, the English defines this technical term with a marginal note: “Synecdoche is a figure wherin the part is takē for the whole.”

A more significant change, however, occurs further in sermon three, where the English translation completely omits a section—found in both the French and Latin—on God’s freedom to work apart from ordinary means. In the course of stressing the necessity of attending to the external means by which God nourishes his people in the regular worship of a the rightly-ordered church, Calvin entertains this objection:

It is necessary for those who understand themselves to be mere humans to submit to the ordinary polity that God has ordained for all his own. It is true that the grace of God is not at all contained, nor the power of his Spirit enclosed, either in the sacraments or in any external things, so that he is not able to do whatever he wants, whenever he pleases, without means. But here we are treating the perpetual order that he has set in his Church, not what he does extraordinarily as in the case of miracles.

This entire section is omitted from the 1561 English edition. Why was such a significant theological point hidden from the view of English readers? It is possible that

---

70 Baduel, 104; *Four godlye sermons* n.pag. (emphasis added).


72 CO 8:413-414; cf. Baduel 116-117.
those who produced this discussion wanted to avoid the topic of God’s absolute freedom versus God’s use of means. More likely, though, is the possibility that there were those in England who, like the problematic individuals Calvin addressed in Geneva, sought to minimize the importance of participating in God’s means of grace in the regular ministry of the church. This explanation has the benefit of consistency with the publisher’s preface, wherein Hall so clearly states his desire that the English come to treasure God’s gift of plain and reverent preaching. It seems that the translators, and perhaps also the publisher, thought it best to eliminate any risk that those who might dispute the value of hearing sermons might gain support from Calvin’s description of their error—even if this description comes in the course of Calvin’s rejecting that view.

In conclusion, this 1561 translation of Quatre sermons exemplifies Calvin’s growing popularity as a theological authority in Elizabethan England. Whether this publication was instrumental to, or merely reflected, Calvin’s rise in stature is impossible to determine. Whatever the case, it presents the reformer not in the service of a narrowly polemical theological agenda, but as part of a broadly issued call for teaching that is “unadorned” and “reverent.” Four godly sermons appeared fairly early in the Elizabethan regime. This perhaps explains the absence of any clear intra-Protestant division in its preface or translation of Calvin’s sermons.73 Three years into a new

73 For the use of Quatre sermons in the context of intra-Protestant conflict in the English church, see chapters five and six on the translations of, respectively, Robert Horne and John Field.
Protestant regime, the stress here is upon the need for solid, basic biblical teaching from the pulpit. This was conceivably a critique of the recent status quo, namely the state of preaching in Catholic England—a situation still fresh in the national memory. As such, it was a cause virtually every English Protestant could get behind, except perhaps those who thought sermons or attendance at worship were unnecessary for one’s flourishing. This might have been the motivation behind omitting Calvin’s concession that God could work apart from the church’s external ministry. Besides such a move to rebut those who questioned the necessity of the visible church, this 1561 translation suggests no divisions or contentions among those committed to the church’s public ministry in England. The fact that Quatre sermons contains pointed teaching on liturgical purity and the necessity of proper polity receives no special emphasis here. The publisher actually draws attention away from these particularities of content, focusing instead on how the sermons are but a taste of the clarity and edification present throughout Calvin’s preaching ministry. This is further proof that the appeal of Quatre sermons in this case had little to do with its anti-Nicodemite message. Rather, its genre as four sermons with additional biblical commentary attracted those who brought this series to print. For this was precisely what they sought: an example of biblical exposition from a rising star who was most worthy of emulation by English preachers.
4.4 Robert Waldegrave’s 1581 Edition: In Defense of Protestant Martyrdom

If those who produced the 1561 translation of *Quatre sermons* were drawn to Calvin’s publication principally for its genre as a collection of sermons, without much consideration of the topic upon which Calvin focused, the 1581 translation exemplifies the opposite concern. Appearing in a year when six of the eight editions of Calvin’s work published across Europe were biblical commentaries, lectures, or sermons in English, *A Sermon of the famous and Godly learned man, master Iohn Caluine* emerged from the London press of Robert Waldegrave, the puritan printer whose shop would later publish the “Martin Marprelate” tracts and eventually be censored by the regime. The work capitalized on the theme of martyrdom, Calvin’s topic in sermon two, while also benefiting from the overall format of *Quatre sermons*. An anonymous translation of just one sermon from Calvin’s original series, the inclusion of an incendiary poem condemning papal religion punctuated the sharp anti-Catholic rhetoric of *A Sermon*. The result is a pamphlet obviously designed as an anti-Roman propaganda piece. Gilmont has suggested that the “I. P.” who signed the poem is “without a doubt” responsible for

the original portions of the translation. In a manner evocative of Robert Horne’s translation, this 1581 edition adapts Calvin’s message to suit a specific polemical goal by clipping and contracting Calvin’s original without appearing to do so. In this translation and the accompanying poem the reformer’s 1552 sermon on Heb 13:13 becomes part of a two-part attack on Roman persecution of Protestants across Europe. This illustrates the flexibility with which Quatre sermons could serve various agenda in England, contributing to its unparalleled popularity among translators and publishers.

The translation follows directly after the title page with no preface introducing the work’s contents. It is distinctive among English versions of Quatre sermons for its brevity and use of copious margin notes to guide the reader. Gilmont has observed that the translation from line 18 of p. B.iii.r is that of John Field, published in 1579 and examined below in chapter six. The only prior English translation of this sermon was Robert Horne’s in 1553, which was included in Hall’s 1561 edition, and from which this 1581 version is clearly distinct. Not only is this translation the shortest of the English editions of Quatre sermons on account of its including just one sermon. One also notices immediately that the fondness for doublets evident in Horne, and especially in Field, is absent from the newly translated material of 1581, which renders Calvin’s French with a

75 BC III:355 (81/7).

76 For Horne’s use of this strategy, see chapter five below.

77 BC III:355 (81/7).
precise economy of expression. The result is a literal translation that takes very few liberties with its source. One example of the rare decision to employ a more colorful expression than Calvin’s occurs where Calvin writes that, before the great Judge in heaven, all will bear such “such reproach as will very well completely ruin us.”78 Here the translation has “there wil be found sufficient cause to cast us downe altogether to the pit of hell.”79 There are no instances where the 1581 translation adds or subtracts significantly from Calvin’s French. This is not to say that there are no editorial embellishments at all. The thirty-eight-page translation includes forty-five marginal notes that amount to a running synopsis of Calvin’s argument. None of the marginalia provide additional content or correct anything in Calvin. Each comment functions merely as a summary of the main text. Still, it should be noted that the comments, taken collectively, constitute an interpretive grid for reading Calvin. They follow a certain logic that focuses on setting out a case for true versus false martyrdom, insisting that the former is something God uses to highlight both his own glory and the Christian’s dignity.80 It is true that this argument, in all its parts, was already present in Calvin’s sermon. Yet the marginal notes have the effect of crystallizing the case for true martyrdom so that readers will not miss it. True martyrdom arises from true faith in

78 CO 8:395.
79 A sermon, n. pag.
80 A sermon, n. pag.
God’s true word, such that those who willingly suffer persecution for their convictions are able to act in ways contrary to natural human temerity. The important distinction upon which the case highlighted in the margins rests can be summed up in two notes on the second page: 1.) “A good cause maketh a martyr,” whereas 2.) “stubbornnes in opinion besides the word, is frense.” Put another way, the worthiness of one’s cause determines whether one’s death ought to be considered martyrdom. The rest of the notes repeatedly highlight Calvin’s teaching that true martyrs are both part of God’s design and the special beneficiaries of God’s care. Their fate was not arbitrary and their cause will be vindicated despite the world’s scorn. A woodcut of the Annunciation follows the translation, visually extending the theme of God revealing Christ through the faithful “announcement” that is true Christian martyrdom. Why this emphasis on Protestant martyrdom in Protestant England? The poem that concludes the work helps answer this question, augmenting the marginalia to make a coherent point about martyrdom and correct false teaching allegedly propagated by Roman Catholics. The likely target of this response is a rash of English language Catholic polemical works appearing in conjunction with Jesuit mission of Robert Parsons and Edmund Campion, including the controversy surrounding the latter’s execution in London on 1 December

---

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.
1581. William Allen, in particular, took up the theme of Catholic martyrdom in the same year as I.P.’s translation of Calvin. In his apology for Catholic seminaries, Allen portrays the plight of Catholics who died for their faith—both throughout history and more recently at the hands of Protestants across Europe—as martyrs whose glory ought to strengthen the Jesuit mission to England. Such characterization of “Priests and Catholikes” as true martyrs—“persecuted,” “tormented,” “massakred”—who stood for the gospel in the face of heretics such as “Arians” and “the Caluinistes in France Holland, and Zeland” seems to have provoked I.P.’s reflections on true martyrdom and concluding poem as a fitting response. When taken as a whole, I. P.’s work was at once

83 See, for instance, Robert Parsons, A Brief Discours Contayning Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to Goe to Church. Written By a Learned and Vertuous Man, to a Friend of His in England. And Dedicated By I.h. To the Queenes Most Excellent Maistie (Douai: John Lyon, 1580; STC 19394); William Allen, An Apologie and True Declaration of the Institution and Endeuers of the Tvvo English Colleges, the One in Rome, the Other Novv Resident in Rhemes Against Certaine Sinister Informations Givn Vp Against the Same. (Rheims: Jean de Foigny, 1581; STC 369); and Thomas Alfield, A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preiestes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Whersuto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons (London: Stephen Verstegan, 1582; STC 537). For these John Field’s response to these works, see chapter six. Brad Gregroy discusses the polemical responses of Catholics on martyrdom in Elizabethan England; Salvation at Stake, 276-297. For Campion, see Michael A. R. Graves, ‘Campion, Edmund [St Edmund Campion] (1540–1581)’ DNB; online ed., http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4539 (accessed July 5, 2015). Also, E. E. Reynolds, Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580–1 (London: Sheed & Ward, 1980); and T. M. McCoog ed., The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits (Woodridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1996).


85 Ibid., 108. It is also possible that I. P. had in mind to respond to John Rastell’s 1567 association of Joan of Kent with mainstream Protestantism; see below, n. 94. The difficulty with precisely identifying I. P.’s target is that we do not have a record of when, exactly, this edition of Quatre sermons appeared in 1581. A search through the Arber’s transcript of Registers of the Company of Stationers of London turns up no license for this work issued, to either Robert Walgrave or to Walgrave’s sponsor Edward White, between 1579 and 1582; Edward Arber, ed. A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London; 1554-1640, A. D. (Volume 2. London:Privately Printed, 1875). The present study takes A sermon to be a response to the general English Catholic writings on the topic of martyrdom, whether attacking Protestant “martyrs” or
a defense of contemporary Protestants who faced persecution across Europe and a rebuttal of claims that Catholics, such as Campion, were worthy of such honor as was reserved for true martyrs. This demonstrates the versatility of Quatre sermons as a work that could be adapted to new purposes beyond the concerns of Calvin’s original context.

The four-page poem in question, running twenty quatrains in a strict ABAB rhyme scheme, is entitled “An answere to the slaunders of the papistes against Christs syllie flock, appointed to the slaughter through fire.” Its content addresses two major concerns. As the title indicates, the poem is primarily an answer to false accusations. But is also an admonition to the “noble men of famous England”—that they not find themselves complicit in the Roman persecution of God’s people. Calvin’s sermon was adapted not to address Nicodemism, but rather to elucidate the topic of martyrdom. I. P.’s poem answers an alleged Catholic slander: “lively hope they call, / falsely desperation.” The poet seeks to clear Protestants who died for their faith of the false charge that they died in vain by insisting that those who died for maintaining evangelical doctrine against Catholic persecutors were in fact true martyrs. Herein lies the usefulness of Calvin’s sermon on Heb 13. “Christs syllie flock”—the true people of defending Catholic ones. It remains possible that this translation was an ad hoc response to Catholic rhetoric within the intense polemical exchange surrounding Campion’s execution in 1581.

86 A sermon, n. pag.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
God—are known for adhering steadfastly to God’s truth even when this seems utterly foolish to the world, a point Calvin inspects upon.89 Such doctrinal fidelity and consistency eschews the behavior of those who “turn as wether cocks … that gospell we professe” and like “chaungelings turne a weene.”90 Here the Nicodemite is referenced, although Nicodemism is not I. P.’s primary target. Rather he invokes the Nicodemite’s apparent doctrinal equivocation as a springboard for attacking committed Roman Catholics. Theological changelings should be counted with “Catholique men” because the quintessential characteristic of such “papistes,” according to I. P., is that they confuse truth for a lie and “condemn what is right.”91 As a result they “spet their poison” “against Christes martyrs,” while unwittingly serving God’s greater purpose in his people’s suffering, which is “to see Gods worde so faythfully, / through fire to be borne.”92 The Nicodemite, like the Catholic, suffers from the same failure to embrace the truth in both faith and action. Whereas Calvin used martyrdom across his anti-Nicodemite works as an element within a larger case against religious dissimulation, I. P. switches these around, adapting Nicodemism to argue a position on martyrdom.

89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
There is another side to I. P.’s defense of Protestant martyrdom. True martyrs are constant in their faith, but not all who follow their beliefs unto death are true martyrs. The poet’s recurring comparison is that Protestants being mocked as foolish in death are in fact Christ’s true followers, whereas the Catholics who persecute them in Christ’s name are actually God’s enemies. To advance this argument, the poet must distance his martyrs from those whom both he and Catholics can agree are false martyrs. I. P.’s “papists” wrongly appeal to the case of “Ione of Kent and heretike: “For help they in doe call, / Who in her heresy did stick, / and died therewithall.” Catholic polemicists cited Joan Bocher (d. 1550) as an example of false martyrdom, portraying her as a Protestant heretic who died justly for blasphemous views denying Christ’s incarnation. Such was precisely the kind of attack I. P. seems intent to answer here, taking special care to distance true evangelical martyrs from Joan. This approach reflects the similar strategy taken by Protestants as diverse as John Knox and John Jewel, who refer to Bocher in their writings as, respectively, an “idolator” and, more bluntly still, as “that filth.”

---


94 Examples of English Catholics’ association of Joan with mainstream Protestantism include, among others, John Rastell, A briefe sheev of the false vvoares packt together in the named, Apology of the Churche of England (Louvain: Ioannem Foulerrum, 1567; STC 20725), 2r. Rastell, identifying Joan of Kent as a Protestant, compares Joan with Michael Servetus to make the point that “death for a religion does not make a martyr.”

95 John Knox, An answer to a great number of blasphemous cauillations written by an Anabaptist, and adversarie to Gods eternal predestination (Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1560; STC 15060), 214; John Jewel, A defence of the Apologie of the Churche of Englande (London: Henry Wykes, 1567; STC 14600.5), 29.
thus heaping scorn on Joan, I. P. joins a chorus of condemnation asserting the diabolic origins of Joan’s doctrine: “Who knoweth not the prince of Hell / to have his servantes stout, / As well as the sincere gospell,/ professors round about.”96 The logic, again, is that simply to die for one’s beliefs is not enough to become a true martyr. A reader would recall the marginal summaries of Calvin’s teaching that seem to lie behind this answer to Catholic critiques of Protestant martyrdom: “A good cause maketh a martyr,” whereas “stubbornnes in opinion besides the word, is frensie.” The poem closes with a final warning for English readers, who must not to be swayed by the slander in question, lest they find themselves inviting God’s judgment for persecuting the “guiltless.”97

This 1581 translation demonstrates how Quatre sermons was adapted to produce what amounts to a treatise on martyrdom published to contradict Roman Catholic attempts to associate evangelical doctrine with heresy. By making this case, A sermon also pre-emptively argues against the interpretation of Edmund Campion’s impending death, near the end of that same year, as a legitimate martyrdom. That martyrdom was only a part of Calvin’s original argument in 1552, receiving far less emphasis than the reformer’s more central concerns of ecclesiology and exile, is not at all clear from this 1581 translation. Indeed, this seems to have been deliberately obscured. Similarly, the fact that the sermon presented was first published in a work attacking Nicodemism is

*A sermon, n. pag.

Ibid.

199
entirely hidden from view. The 1581 reader encounters sermon two of Quatre sermons as a standalone exposition of Heb 13:3 on the theme of martyrdom—as if this was Calvin’s original intent all along—newly translated and exhibited as an authority to support the concerns set forth in the poetic “answere to the slaunders.” Certainly this work was not unique in its concern to vindicate Protestant martyrs vis-à-vis both Rome and other genuine heretics. However, it is the only English publication to translate a work of Calvin’s for this purpose. That the text chosen came from a longer publication that deals specifically with martyrdom only in passing further illustrates the flexibility with which Quatre sermons could be adapted to serve purposes beyond anything in Calvin’s purview. In this case, its unique genre as a collection of interrelated sermons treating Nicodemism facilitated the English translator’s decision to isolate a useful part of Calvin’s argument without appearing to alter Calvin’s original work at all. Robert Horne’s 1553 translation, examined below, follows a similar strategy to bring Calvin’s authoritative voice to bear on a different set of issues. While martyrdom was a constant theme throughout Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings as a fixture in his rejection of religious dissimulation, Quatre sermons stands alone in providing this teaching in such a readily extractable unit: a complete sermon that perfectly complemented the concluding poem to address the needs of the moment—in this case the public polemical controversy surrounding a high profile Jesuit mission to England and execution of one of its leaders.
4.5 Anthony Munday’s 1584 Edition: Establishing a Protestant Pedigree

The final translation to be examined in this chapter is 1584’s *Two godly and learned sermons*, edited and brought to press by the English translator and playwright Anthony Munday (d. 1633). It stands as an example of how Calvin’s work was adapted to promote the personal advancement of an individual’s career. Produced fairly early in Munday’s career, this edition of *Quatre sermons* is a reissue of Robert Horne’s 1553 translation. Munday readily acknowledges this fact, stating in the title that “these sermons haue long lyen hidden in silence, and many godly and religious persons, haue beene very desirous of them.” This claim raises questions, not least because the English readership has had continuous access to this material for thirty years in the translations of 1561, 1579, and 1581, as well as via the ongoing availability of Horne’s own 1553 version. Why, then, risk redundancy with a new version—particularly if it was not especially novel, containing no freshly translated material? A closer look at this work will shed some light on that question. Not only did Munday supply a short preface as

---

98 *Two godly and learned sermons, made by that famous and woorthy instrument in Gods church, M. Iohn Caluin. Which sermons were long since translated out of Latine into English, by M. Robert Horne late Byshop of Winchester, at what time he suffered exile from his country, for the testimony of a good conscience, as his apology in the beginning of the booke will witnes. And because these sermons haue long lyen hidden in silence, and many godly and religious persons, haue beene very desirous of them: at theyr earnest request they are nowe published by A.M* (London, 1584; STC 4461). For Munday’s life and career, see “Munday, Anthony (bap. 1560, d. 1633),” David M. Bergeron, DNB, online ed., http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19531 (accessed July 28, 2015); also Julia C. Turner, *Anthony Mundy: An Elizabethan Man of Letters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928).

99 *Two godly and learned sermons*, n. pag.
editor. His work on the volume also included adding marginal notes not appearing in Horne’s original preface and translation. These embellishments, which do in fact constitute new material, suggest that the editor’s goal went beyond simply supplying a text for the edification of an eager public. Nor does it seem to have been an attempt to advance the agenda of one faction within the English church over against another. Pressing a puritan agenda at court, for example, by appealing to the sympathetic Robert Dudley—Earl of Leicester, and Munday’s dedicatee—would have been a plausible motive given John Whitgift’s recent installation at Canterbury and the consequent renewed pressure on presbyterians in the church.\footnote{On these events in context, see chapter six.} John Field, for example, used his translation of *Quatre sermons* to advance the puritan cause and attack moderates in the church.\footnote{See chapter six.} This same strategy, however, would have been unlikely for Munday. The playwright was an establishment man, known for both his anti-Catholic stance and opposition to puritan agitation in the English church.\footnote{Munday, for example, is the “Master Munday” singled out for scorn in 1589’s *The Just Censure and Reproof of Martin Junior*, one of the infamous Martin Marprelate tracts. Munday had been active in pursuing those behind the tracts. Here, an imaginary Whitgift questions “Master Munday’s” loyalty: “Ah thou Judas, thou that hast already betrayed the papists, I think meanest to betray us also; *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*, 172.} An examination of Munday’s mode of presentation and specific emphases will demonstrate his desire to court Leicester’s favor for more personal reasons. A rising star in the Elizabethan establishment in the late-1580s and 1590s for his service to church and crown, Munday’s
outspoken anti-Catholicism in the early 1580s, which included the publication of a series of “virulently anti-Catholic” tracts and testimony against Edmund Campion and other English priests, could very well have served the need to distance himself from a past that included spending time at Rome as an apparent convert to Catholicism.103 This 1584 translation seems to have supported this same purpose of establishing Munday’s public credentials as a staunch Protestant loyal to the establishment, qualities that soon would be rewarded.104 Julia Turner agrees that Munday “shrewdly selected [Elizabeth’s] favorite Leicester as patron” of this translation, further noting that “the bare titles” of Calvin’s sermons—“an exhortation to suffer persecution” and “the popish Mass is the greatest heresie, blasphemie, and Idolatrie, that ever was in the Church”—“would be enough to convince any one of the editor’s orthodoxy.”105 While Turner offers no additional comment, the present analysis builds on her basic observation by explaining how Munday’s opportunism extends beyond merely using Leicester’s name to include a

103 Bergeron, “Munday, Anthony,” in DNB, online ed. For more on Munday’s Italian sojourn, see Turner, Munday, 18-50. Munday himself tried to rebrand his years in Rome as time spent spying on English Catholics on behalf of the crown in The English Romayne lyfe Discovering: the liues of the Englishmen at Roome: the orders of the English seminariie: the dissention betweene the Englishmen and the VVelshmen: the banishing of the Englishmen out of Roome: the Popes sending for them againe: a reporte of many of the paltrie reliques in Roome: ther vautes vnder the grounde: their holy pilgrimages: and a number other matters, worthy to be read and regarded of euery one. There vnto is added, the cruell tiranny, vsed on an English man at Roome, his Christian suffering, and notable martirdome, for the Gospell of Iesus Christe, in anno. 1581. VVritten by A.M. sometime the Popes scholler in the seminarie among them. Seene and allovved (London: John Charlewoode, 1582; STC 18272). The irony of course, is that the same Munday who uses Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite work to acquit himself of crypto-Catholicism portrays himself in this other work in ways that meet Calvin’s criteria for a Nicodemite.

104 Turner, Munday, 51-93.

105 Ibid., 74-75.
carefully constructed association with Leicester, Horne, and Calvin as cobelligerents against a common foe, shrewdly invoking such Protestant stalwarts to make his case.

Munday’s strategy shines through his preface, which sets forth his reasons for publishing these sermons. The playwright is not at all shy about stating explicitly that the Earl of Leicester’s name is useful to the present publication: “this little Booked could not demand a Patron more fit … so much lesse shall the enemie boast of his wickednesse, when he seeth stampt in the forehead of this little Booke, the noble name of him, who is and euer hath beene a refuge to the Godly.”\^106 Indeed, despite a passing reference to unnamed “zealous persons” alleged to have requested these sermons reprinted, Munday’s principal concern in this short, two-page preface is to heap praise upon Leicester as valiant enemy of God’s enemies, defender of God’s people, and “a certaine freend to all godly and virtues exercises.”\^107 Calvin, for his part, is not named explicitly, but simply invoked as the “Author” who “himselfe is known to have tasted” of “the malicious caviles of the enemies of Gods trueth”—the same enemies, of course, against whom Dudley is singled out as refuge and defender.\^108 Robert Horne is similarly aligned with Dudley: “As for the reverend Father that took first the paynes to translate

\^106 Two godly and learned sermons, A.iii.
\^107 Ibid.
\^108 Ibid.
[the sermons], I doubt not but he was well knowne to your honor.” Dudley certainly would have known Horne as the late Bishop of Winchester. Munday makes Horne’s position in the church explicit in the translation’s title. Yet it is not Horne’s ecclesiastical office that is singled out for recognition. Instead, Munday highlights the original context of Horne’s work, published when Horne was far from the ecclesiastical prominence he would attain under Elizabeth, “at what time [Horne] suffered exile from his Country, for the testimony of a good conscience.” Like Calvin, Horne suffered at the hands of God’s enemies. Who, exactly, were these enemies Munday wanted to bring into focus?

Munday’s own eager identification with the moderate establishment of the Elizabethan church rules out the possibility that he sought Leicester’s stamp of approval to shelter puritan sympathies. While Robert Dudley was known to harbor affinity with progressives, Munday did not share them. It also seems unlikely that Munday approached Leicester in an attempt to turn his patron against puritan or non-conforming interests, which Dudley himself would not have recognized as “enemies” of God’s truth.

109 Ibid.

110 Two godly and learned sermons, n.pag.

Rather, it makes more sense that Munday appealed to Leicester’s favor against a common enemy—in this case one they also shared with both Calvin and Horne. The natural candidate is the Roman Church singled out for attack in Horne’s 1553 preface and in Calvin’s sermons, both of which are included here immediately after Munday’s dedicatory letter to Dudley. This also makes sense given Munday’s concern to distance himself from Rome in the early 1580s. Thus emerges the design and irony behind expressing his “affection” for Leicester with what Munday calls “this small gift.”

If this publication was Munday’s small gift to Dudley, the greater gift was granted Munday, who could ostentatiously claim Protestant pillars Leicester, Horne, and Calvin as references to commend his anti-Catholicism. By the time we reach the preface’s end, the reading public who allegedly demanded the publication of this work has vanished. We are left only with Munday, who signs his full name as one of those who, it now seems, has sought refuge from his foes under the protective name of Robert Dudley.

The case I have made for this publication as Munday’s intentional effort to attach himself with a staunch Protestant “brand” is further supported by his decision to stamp his preface with the “Bear and the Ragged Staff” crest, under the heading “The glory of the Honourable, is the feare of God.” Dudley was known to have adopted this seal—the traditional emblem of the Earls of Warwick—frequently signing documents with

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}}\]

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}}\]
it. Gilmont suggests that this particular insignia is misleading because contains details never appearing in Dudley’s actual seal. Whether this was a true replica of Dudley’s signature is beside the point. Munday, as editor, clearly included the Bear and Staff to ingratiate himself with his patron and identify his work with the Protestant religious connotations of Leicester’s name. This anti-Catholic association is further reflected in modifications Munday makes to Horne’s original translation via copious margin notes.

In one sense, Horne’s greatest utility to Munday is simply “showing up”—thus permitting Munday to associate himself with a Marian exile who suffered persecution firsthand from English Catholics. Yet there also is a clearly selective logic to where the marginalia appear, demarcating centers of emphasis. Besides annotations identifying quotations or discussions of particular biblical texts, a full thirty-two of the sixty-eight margin annotations appearing over 142 pages occur in Horne’s forty-eight-page preface. Also notable is that thirty of these notes are dedicated to explicating Horne’s focused biblical and theological attack on Catholic faith and practice. While this comprises a significant portion of his preface, Horne’s detailed refutation of the gospel according to the “papists” was actually the minor part of a larger argument in his 1553 preface.

---


115 BC III:441 (84/7).

116 See chapter five.
Horne’s main concern was to describe the stacked proceedings against him, warn of a wider Catholic conspiracy, and acquit himself in the face of appearing to have deserted his pastoral charge. These autobiographical details, which make up over half of Horne’s preface, receive just one marginal précis from Munday: “A note of the Author, to the noble men.”\textsuperscript{117} Munday seems instead most concerned to draw readers’ attention to Horne’s generic argument against the Roman Church through summary annotations such as “Why the Papists call the Gospell the new learning,” “The church of Antichrist the continual enemy to the Gospell,” and “The Papists would rayle against Christe himselfe if they durst: but because thei dare not, they revile his word.”\textsuperscript{118} None of these ideas is foreign to Horne’s text. In this respect, the notes are a tidy summary of the main body. Yet by clustering around a single section Horne’s original publication—indeed, just one portion of Horne’s preface—Munday’s 1584 marginalia have the effect of assigning this relatively short section of Horne’s edition a disproportionate emphasis and inflated importance. It is not clear whether this concentration of annotations reveals Munday’s intent to influence readers’ interpretation to focus on Horne’s anti-Catholicism, or merely reflects Munday’s own enthusiasm for this theme. Whatever the case may be, Munday’s placement of editorial comments clearly indicates what ideas he thought were most important in Horne’s 1553 publication. Read in light of Munday’s

\textsuperscript{117} Two godly and learned sermons, n.pag.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
editor’s preface, the Roman Church and its abuses emerge in this translation as the enemy against which Munday unambiguously positions himself as ally of Calvin, Horne, and Robert Dudley.

To summarize, this account of Anthony Munday’s 1584 publication of Quatre sermons displays how Calvin’s original work, now twice-received via a Latin edition and Horne’s first English edition, was put to new use in a way that acknowledged its publication history and served a purpose quite different than Calvin originally intended. Ostensibly brought to press for members the public desirous of these sermons, several signs intimate that this was far from Munday’s most pressing concern. First, these particular sermons were already readily available in numerous editions, being the most frequently translated and published of Calvin’s sermons in English. Secondly, Munday’s preface and accompanying illustration suggest his strong desire to associate himself with Calvin, Horne, and Leicester as, respectively, the author, translator, and patron of these sermons. Finally, Munday’s editorial additions to Horne’s translation, in the form of marginal notes centering on Horne’s most explicit anti-Catholic rhetoric, point to what Munday thought was most important to highlight in linking himself with this publication. Taken in consideration of what we know to be Munday’s personal campaign to repudiate ties to Catholicism in the 1580s, Quatre sermons materializes as an exhibit in support of this case. Little effort was required to present another’s translation, especially when compared to the substantial benefit of a quick, easy way to linking one’s allegiances with three undisputed Protestant leaders at a moment when such loyalties
were in question. With a ready translation from which to produce marginal notes, Munday did not even need to know French. Like the other translations examined above, the 1584 edition of *Quatre sermons* makes no special effort to emphasize Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite content. Rather it was the convenience of the collection’s genre as a collection of sermons—in this case, sermons already adapted once—that made *Quatre sermons* so easily malleable to support a new cause. Here Munday could also capitalize on how Horne first translated and appended his own anti-Catholic preface to *Quatre sermons*, invoking the latter’s status a Marian exile and member of the Elizabethan ecclesiastical establishment until his death in 1579. The goal was for readers to see “Munday” and think “Leicester, Horne, and Calvin.”

**4.6 Conclusion**

Set against the backdrop of Marian and Elizabethan Protestant anti-Nicodemism, the three translations of *Quatre sermons* examined in this chapter are striking for their variety as well as for an astonishing feature they held in common: None of them focused on the topic of Nicodemism. This sheds light on an important aspect of the reception of *Quatre sermons* in sixteenth-century England. The Nicodemite might have been a flexible foe, capable of being reimagined according to her enemies’ priorities because of her intrinsic invisibility. But Calvin’s 1552 attack on religious dissimulation was cast in a similarly flexible package, capable of being remolded to suit a variety of strategic purposes. The translators and editors of the 1561, 1581, and 1584 English versions demonstrate this nimbleness and adaptability. In 1561 Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic
was presented as an example of sound doctrinal preaching over against those who questioned the necessity of attending sermons and other “churchly” means of edification. 1581 witnessed a portion of Calvin’s argument isolated and fashioned into a tidy vindication of Protestant martyrdom in answer to Catholic claims that evangelicals who died for their beliefs did so in vain as fanatics and heretics, as well as rebut the reverse propaganda for Catholics as true martyrs. Finally, Anthony Munday’s 1584 publication of sermons one and two seems clearly designed to bolster the editor’s own personal credentials a committed Protestant and loyal Englishman on the authority of Calvin and the reformer’s English admirers. None of these versions reprint Calvin’s preface, yet each one was comprised of only complete sermons and never mere excerpts. This reveals how translators deliberately adapted features of Calvin’s unique form. They could present self-contained sermons without reference to Calvin’s description of how he intended them to function together as a single argument against Nicodemism.\textsuperscript{119} That none of these versions made any special reference to Calvin’s original topic of religious dissimulation requires that we expand our list of reasons why Quatre sermons might have appealed to English translators beyond factors related to its topic. In the case of the editions examined in this chapter, I have argued that the attraction was not so much the work’s focus on Nicodemism, but primarily its genre as sermons and the opportunity this literary form presented to enlist Calvin as an authority to support various agenda.

\textsuperscript{119} The significance of this arrangement in Calvin’s original context is central to my argument in chapter two.
These agenda are revealed in the short prefaces or, in the case of the 1561 edition, appendices attached to the Calvin translation, as well as in the marginal annotations that provide additional clues to translators’ and editors’ interests. As I have demonstrated above, each of these translations seems to have been produced in support of a “broad” Protestantism with deep loyalty to the Elizabethan church and government. Munday is an obvious example of one who courted favor with the regime in opposition to its Catholic enemies and puritan critics. Likewise, Rowland Hall and his anonymous translators, as well as the more overtly incendiary I. P., bring no obvious critique of the queen or the ecclesiastical hierarchy over which she sat. There is also no indication that those who produced the translations treated in this chapter in any sense ran afoul of church or crown. Thus they stand as examples of the wide appeal Calvin enjoyed among English Protestants, demonstrating what others have observed about the Genevan reformer’s popularity across the spectrum of theological affinities and loyalties in Elizabethan Protestantism. Lastly, it is telling that those who pressed no criticism of the status quo in the Church of England would embrace Quatre sermons, with its attention to the importance of bringing the church’s polity and liturgy in line with God’s design.

---

120 Robert Waldegrave, the publisher of the 1561 translation that accompanies I. P.’s poem, was a puritan who would later clash with the crown. However, there is no indication that he had any hand in translating Calvin’s sermon, which, in this 1561 case, was used in a broadly anti-Catholic attack that supported English Protestantism as a whole without any specific reference to various factions in the church.

121 Pettegree, “La Réception Du Calvinisme,” 273-274.
and draw no attention to these elements of Calvin’s argument. Why would they be tempted by an opportunity to critique a church with which they had no quibble? They were not tempted. Rather they likely took Calvin’s critique of Rome to include no implicit rebuke of English ecclesiological structure and practices, being instead drawn to highlight other elements of Calvin’s teaching and the opportunity to use his name.

This attraction is also evident in the two translations of *Quatre sermons* that remain to be examined in this study: Robert Horne’s 1553 and John Field’s 1579 editions. Like the three versions already considered, Horne’s and Field’s also demonstrate the adaptability of Calvin’s decision to publish his anti-Nicodemite polemic as a collection of sermons in 1552. Field’s is the only one of the five sixteenth-century English versions of *Quatre sermons* to include Calvin’s preface, whereas Horne’s omission of Calvin’s introduction suggests the same concern exhibited by others to decontextualize Calvin’s text in order to better adapt it to a new situation. What is perhaps most interesting, though, is the fact that Horne and Field not only display sensitivity to Calvin’s genre, but also make inventive use of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism. Unlike the other translations examined, these remaining two lay explicit emphasis on Calvin’s argument against religious dissimulation. They do so in lengthy prefaces that dwarf those included with the other translations and exhibit creativity in pressing the Nicodemite’s usefulness as a flexibly conceived foe to suit each translator’s cause. A final significant feature of Horne’s and Field’s translations is that they were unambiguously signed by individuals who, again in contrast with the others responsible for translations of *Quatre sermons*,
harbored deep disagreements with both church and crown in England when their translations appeared. Their skillful adaptations of *Quatre sermons* to maximize both the publication’s form and content to criticize fellow believers within the English church are important examples in the reception history of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, and of *Quatre sermons* in particular.

If the translations examined above adapted Calvin to the English context by using the Genevan reformer to establish solidarity among English Protestant against a common foe in Rome, the remaining translations embraced a more divisive approach to demarcate boundaries between groups of evangelicals within the English church. Horne and Field bend Calvin in directions both anti-Catholic and, in contrast to the others, unambiguously anti-Protestant. It is to these remaining translations we now turn.
5. Robert Horne (1553): An Individual Apology for Exile

5.1 Turning Calvin Against Fellow English Protestants

Turning now to the two remaining English translations of *Quatre Sermons*, which contain the lengthiest prefaces and were separated by twenty-six years, what emerges is an apparent study in contrasts. Beyond a common papal enemy and shared regard for Calvin as a theological authority, the translators, their situations, and their goals seem as if they could not be more different. The translations of Robert Horne (1553) and John Field (1579) demonstrate the variety with which Calvin’s argument against Nicodemism was deployed in a shifting English context.¹ The first, based on Claude Baduel’s Latin, appeared early in Mary I’s reign and includes Horne’s account of his decision to flee England. Conversely, Field’s translation from Calvin’s French was produced well into Elizabeth I’s monarchy. Comparing these works’ prefaces, translation methods, and selectivity regarding source material demonstrates the dexterity with which Calvin’s anti-Catholic rhetoric was further adapted beyond decrying participation in the Roman Mass and was, in fact, turned against fellow members of the Church of England.

Despite the deep dissimilarities between Geneva in 1552, Marian England in 1553, and the so-called Elizabethan “settlement” in 1579, the logic of Calvin’s anti-

¹ *Certaine homilies of m. Ioan Calvine conteining profitable and necessarie, admonitio for this time, with an apologie of Robert Horn* (Rome [Wesel?], 1553), STC 4392; *Foure sermons of Maister Iohn Caluin entreating of matters very profitable for our time, as may bee seene by the preface: with a briefe exposition of the lxxxvii. Psalme. Translated out of Frenche into Englishe by Iohn Fielde* (London, 1579), STC 4439.
Nicodemism proved remarkably versatile. Not all of the particular emphases Calvin made when advancing his case for exile in 1552 were equally attractive or useful to English translators, as is clear from their choice to highlight, alter, or omit certain parts of Calvin’s original. At the heart of their respective strategies, however, was a concern to advance their own position as both more pious and patriotic than that of their opponents. While Horne and Field would find themselves on various sides of the Elizabethan church’s factional divisions, Calvin’s Nicodemites became a common enemy—not because they had the same individuals in mind, but because Nicodemism provided a coherent, flexible, and thus very useful concept for evoking a wide range of foes whose identity could be reimagined according to context. A hidden enemy, by definition, could not challenge how they were characterized by arguing back. Such flexibility allowed Horne and Field to use Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism as a common cause to advance different agenda at various points in the English reformation. This chapter examines Horne’s translation with an analysis of Field’s to follow in the next chapter. What becomes evident as we examine their creative approaches to turning Calvin’s assault on religious dissimulation against fellow English Protestants is that neither deployed Calvin’s position without significantly altering the reformer’s message, while both translators capitalized on the unique genre of Quatre sermons to advance their goals.

5.2 Situating Horne’s Translation: Background and Context

Robert Horne’s Certaine homilies, the earliest English translation of Quatre sermons, appeared just one year after Calvin’s original and quick on the heels of the Latin
It is interesting on several levels, including as an early example of Protestant polemic under Mary I, as a contribution to the English reception of Continental anti-Nicodemism, and as a snapshot in the unfolding story of Calvin’s growing theological influence in England. Its primary significance for Horne was as an individual apology for his decision to flee England for Zurich in the face of pressure from the crown. So much is clear from the lengthy preface Horne supplies to his translation. What is easy to overlook, however, is the subtle way in which Horne adapts Calvin’s sermons to his advantage by providing faithful translations of sermons one and two, while omitting Calvin’s preface, third and fourth sermons, and appendix on Ps 87. At first it seems counterintuitive that Horne, a rising star in the Edwardian

2 Certaine homilies of m. Ioan Calvine conteining profitable and necessarie, admonitio for this time, with an apologie of Robert Horn (Rome [Wesel?], 1553), STC 4392).

church who would later become Bishop of Winchester under Elizabeth, chose to follow his preface’s strong defense of his own exile with a translation that leaves out the very portions of *Quatre sermons* in which Calvin explicitly and forcefully argues for exile. Perhaps Horne intended to translate all four sermons but, for reasons not available to us, decided to stop after just two. While this remains possible, the following analysis of Horne’s work argues for a different scenario. When read in light of Horne’s preface, Calvin’s third and fourth sermons would have undermined Horne’s careful defense of his own flight from England. Specifically, Calvin’s case for exile stresses its benefits while Horne’s personal apology relies heavily on the notion that he has chosen the more difficult path vis-à-vis those who hid their faith to remain in England. Horne used Nicodemism as a foil to accent the relative virtue of his own reluctant decision to leave home, a strategy Jonathan Wright has attributed to Marian exiles who wished compare themselves to Protestant martyrs despite choosing flight over death. Horne must minimize Calvin’s reasons for exile in order to present his own more convincingly as a sort of quasi-martyrdom: a sort of living death more fitting for faithful disciples than the cowardly denial of Christ Nicodemites have chosen. While the advantages of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite rhetoric for Horne’s cause are clear, this was not the primary benefit

---

4 See chapter two for *Quatre sermons* as a case for exile and apology for Calvin’s ministry.

5 “Marian Exiles,” 220-223, 238-243. For Calvin’s account of political exile, see chapter two.
conveyed by *Quatre sermons*. I make the case in this chapter that Horne especially
exploited *Quatre sermons*’ format as a sermon collection in order to maximize its utility.

To facilitate this analysis, the following section sets Horne’s translation within
the wider contexts of his life and career, the English publishing scene in 1553, and the
polemical climate surrounding the appearance of *Certaine homilies*. This allows me to
make preliminary observations about Horne’s goals and methods, before turning in the
subsequent section to a more detailed consideration of his 1553 publication’s content.

### 5.2.1 Career Reformer: Exile, Return and the Making of a Principled
Conformist

#### 5.2.1.1 From Fugitive to Bishop

Robert Horne was born in the northwest of England around 1515. After taking
degrees at St. John’s College, Cambridge (BA 1537; MA 1540; BTh 1546), where he also
was a fellow, Horne was licensed to preach in 1547 and took up the rectorship of All
Hallows in London in 1550. While details concerning Horne’s early life in Cumberland
are not well known, his ecclesiastical career spanning the reigns of three Tudor
monarchs is fairly well documented in letters, diaries, and church records both in
England and on the Continent, where Horne joined other Marian refugees in exile from
1553 to 1559.\(^6\) A rising star in the Edwardian church, Horne was appointed dean of

\(^6\) See Ralph Houlbrooke, “Horne, Robert (1513x15-1579),” in DNB, online ed.,
http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13792 (accessed July 1, 2015); also Christina Hallowell Garrett, *The
Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (1938; Reprint: Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2010), 188-90. Horne supplies much of the information available to us regarding events
Durham in 1551 “against the will of the chapter.”  This led to complaints, such as one from the Duke of Northumberland against “this pevishe Dean,” requiring the intervention of Sir William Cecil on Horne’s behalf.  Summoned to London soon after the accession of Mary I, Horne was a no show, fleeing after news reached him of rigged judicial proceedings being prepared.  Christina Garrett includes Horne in her account of the calculated Protestant migration from England early in Mary I’s reign as part of an organized conspiracy coordinated by William Cecil to prepare and consolidate Protestant leadership in anticipation of an eventual reformed resurgence.

Andrew Pettegree has pointed out serious flaws in Garrett’s methods, sources, and assumptions, though her census of exiles remains valuable.  In Horne’s case, his exile, eventual return to England and long tenure as Bishop of Winchester, beginning in 1560, form an

leading to his 1553 flight from England in the autobiographical preface to his Calvin translation; Horne and Calvin, Certaine Homilies, n. pag.

7 Garrett, Marian Exiles, 188.


9 Horne and Calvin, Certaine Homilies, n. pag. I will examine Horne’s apology in detail below.

10 Marian Exiles, 1-30.

11 Marian Protestantism, 4. See also Dent, Protestant Reformers, 15. It is true that many of these exiled English clergymen returned to prominent careers in the Elizabethan church, but so did many who never left. While we cannot discount the possibility of a coordinated plot underlying and uniting individual exile narratives like Horne’s, a lack of textual evidence makes Garrett’s thesis seem more like a tidy scheme imposed with the benefit of knowing of how things turned out after Queen Mary I’s timely, but still unexpected, death.
important postscript to his 1553 translation, which prefigures themes in Horne’s ecclesiastical career. Particularly, the same anti-Catholicism behind Horne’s flight from England in 1553 also led to disagreements with other Protestants, including John Field.

While direct contact between Horne and John Field was limited, their contrasting loyalties and strategies within the Elizabethan settlement of religion might be discerned in their respective approaches to Lawrence Humphrey (d. 1590), a man of staunch reformed conviction appointed to the presidency of Magdalen College, Oxford in 1561. C. M. Dent has demonstrated the significance of Humphrey’s tenure within Magdalen’s overall contribution to the tradition of Protestantism at Oxford. On the one hand, Humphrey, a fellow Marian exile, and then-Bishop Horne would find themselves at odds over the question of clerical vestments, which the former openly rejected. Despite his impatience with such resistance, Horne tolerated Humphrey’s dissent and permitted

---

12 Protestant Reformers, 17-46.

13 Ibid., 34-41. Like Horne, Humphrey chose exile to the Continent during the Mary I’s reign, when Field was just a boy. Despite imbibing in common the Swiss reformers’ theology of church and worship, Horne and Humphrey would find themselves at odds when reunited under the Elizabethan settlement, where Humphrey asserted his freedom to reject conformity within the university and Horne was the bishop charged with maintaining conformity in a district that included Oxford. The ensuing controversy would find Horne enjoying the support of not only the crown, but also the Zurich reformers Rudolf Gwalther (d. 1586) and Heinrich Bullinger (d. 1575), who counseled moderation regarding the requirement of cope and surplice. See below for an analysis of letters from Zurich during this conflict. On the broader history of English debates over the requirement of clerical vestments, which had roots in John Hooper’s (d. 1555) rejection of the cope and surplice under King Edward VI in 1550, and the subsequent revival of this dispute in the Elizabethan Vestarian Controversy of the 1560s, see John Henry Primus, The Vestments Controversy: An Historical Study of the Earliest Tensions in the Church of England in the Reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960), 3-34, 87-106. Horne’s exchanges with Bullinger and the Zurichers came at the height of this latter conflict, with the non-conformist protest of 1566; ibid., 107-148. See also Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England. 5 vols. (1961-1975; Reprint: Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996), I:44-48.
him to keep his position at Oxford, which was within Horne’s jurisdiction. Yet, this same Humphrey would find himself at odds with Field and other puritans who found the Oxford don’s refusal to pursue reform apart from the magistrate too tepid for their tastes. Too progressive for Horne’s tastes, while too moderate for Field’s, Humphrey’s views on church polity and liturgy reveal how two translators coming from opposite sides on such matters could still deploy Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite sermons to suit their various goals as, respectively, principled conformist versus committed presbyterian. To further contextualize Horne’s 1553 edition of Quatre sermons, it is useful to examine his correspondence with Zurich leaders during his years as a bishop, which reveal a staunch resistance to Rome virtually identical to the views that first drove him into exile.

5.2.1.2 The Zurich Letters

Received by his Continental hosts as a leader among the English exiles, Horne’s experience within the refugee communities was marked by disputes with colleagues and subordinates concerning church polity and liturgical purity. On the one hand, this is

---

14 Dent, Protestant Reformers, 17-46. Humphrey never conceded his position on vestments and other liturgical accretions, yet was never removed. Bishop Horne remained a loyal representative of the establishment but held deep sympathies with the non-conforming cause. This is clear from his letters to Zurich, which I examine below, as well as from his dedication to dismantling the old religion throughout his district and half-hearted opposition to non-conformity.

15 Ibid., 43-46. Horne’s anti-Romanism never faltered, even if it came under criticism from quarters less patient with the pace of religious change. His tolerant disagreement toward Humphrey stands in stark juxtaposition to Field’s estrangement from Humphrey despite common ties to more progressive reformist circles.

16 DNB; also Euler, Couriers of the Gospel, 98-99; and Garrett, Marian Exiles, 10, 188-190. After a short stay in Strasbourg, where he met Peter Martyr, Horne continued to Zurich in 1554 and on to Frankfurt by 1556. The
unsurprising given the aggressive nature of his preface to the translation of *Quatre sermons*. There he gives his reasons for leaving England by taking shots at both the Catholic regime and fellow English Protestants. At the same time, Horne’s identification upon his return with the moderate majority within the English church, who valued consensus among reformed Protestants, presents a contrast to the tenacious theological polemics underlying the reasons for exile. This requires some explanation.

Did youthful idealism simply give way to the benefits of a privileged position within the Elizabethan ecclesiastical establishment? Perhaps. Yet it is possible to find deep consistency beneath Horne’s apparent transformation from fugitive to bishop. He certainly was not the only Marian exile to return as a leader in the English church. An analysis of Horne’s correspondence with church leaders in Zurich both during and after

pro-presbyterian treatise *A brief discours of the troubles begonne at Franckford* (1574) eagerly pointed to controversies in 1554-1554 over the use of the Prayer Book among the Frankfurt exiles to refute claims that disputes over conformity were of recent origin in the church; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 153-154. Though Horne’s direct role in controversy dividing the Frankfurt exile congregation is unclear, he was present in the city and later emerged as a supporter of Richard Cox and the pro-Prayer Book faction against John Knox’s opposition group, displaying loyalties that anticipated his future ecclesiastical career. On this controversy, see Gunther, *Reformation Unbound*, 158-188.

Other former exiles attaining prominence as bishops included James Pilkington (Durham), John Parkhurst (Norwich), John Jewel (Salisbury), and Edmund Grindal, made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1576. Davies offers this comprehensive, unflattering account of the newly made bishops: “The third and saddest obstacle [to puritan reforms in the church] was the tendency of youthful reformers to become middle-aged conservatives, to lose their own fire as they basked in the rays of court preferment. The Elizabethan bishops, from Jewel to Parkhurst, from Alymer to Horne, soon developed a fatty degeneration of the conscience as they became religious servants charged with creating a religiously compliant people for their sovereign. Only the stoutest hearts resisted the blandishments of the balmy breezes of flattery and the sunshine of promotion”; *Worship and Theology in England*, I:46. As will be demonstrated below from the sources, Davies blanket assessment is not correct, at least in the case of Robert Horne, whose principled conformity was consistent with the same anti-Catholic, reformist impulse that first motivated him to leave England in 1553.
his exile reveals one who drank deeply of his Swiss hosts’ austere theology of the church and worship—especially the positions of Bullinger and Gwalther—and never deviated from commitments to ecclesiastical and liturgical purity that first drove him into exile.\textsuperscript{18}

Rather than embrace moderation as a compromise, Horne’s letters reveal an objection to English non-conformity that served a far more urgent goal in his eyes: the eradication of a Catholic menace from England once for all. Thus Horne’s moderation was a conscious, offensive strategy in keeping with his theological convictions, rather than a reluctant betrayal of the same. Three recurring themes in Horne’s letters provide a framework for understanding his position: 1.) his staunch anti-Catholicism; 2.) his commitment to Zurich; and 3.) his principled moderation as clergyman in the Church of England.

Horne embraced a constant struggle against what he believed to be an ever-present Catholic menace. Not only was Horne’s anti-Catholicism the stated reason for him to leave England while other reform-minded individuals, including a future queen, remained hidden during Mary I’s Catholic regime.\textsuperscript{19} It was also prominent in his justification for staying the course of moderate reform under Elizabeth I, while other Protestants of the “hotter sort” were more willing to oppose the queen in the name of

\textsuperscript{18} On Zurich’s influence on England via returning exiles, see Euler, \textit{Carriers of the Gospel}.

\textsuperscript{19} Pettigree suggests that “to a very large extent the Elizabethan Settlement was a Nicodemite Reformation,” arguing that it would not have succeeded if not for the large number of sympathizers already in England; \textit{Marian Protestantism}, 106. See chapter three for the inherent difficulty of proving such a sweeping claim.
Thus Horne’s consistent opposition to Catholicism was a fixture in his thinking that, at times, also created points of divergence with other Protestants despite their common commitment to breaking Rome’s hold on England. Besides his own account of fleeing an unjust situation, Horne’s concern to rid the English nation of vestiges of Catholicism is evident in correspondence throughout the late 1500s. In a series of letters from Frankfurt in 1556, Horne expresses his gratitude to the Zurich reformers Johannes Wolf (d. 1572) and Heinrich Bullinger, as well as to the city magistrates, for their hospitality toward English refugees. In describing the plight of these “miserable exiles for the sake of true religion,” Horne expresses his dismay over what he sees as deteriorating conditions in England with no end in sight under the Marian regime. The prognosis is grim. Writing to Bullinger in September, Horne singles out the increase of Protestant martyrs under Mary I and the recantations of former Protestants as reasons to “expect no good news from England,” where “all thing seem to be growing worse and worse.” Decrying “the ferocity of the queen … and the other papists,” which cannot “restrain itself, satiated with domestic blood, without moreover crossing the sea” to pursue English Protestants in the Netherlands, Horne laments the

20 Collinson quotes Percival Wilburn’s now famous 1581 description of a “puritan” to illustrate the difficulties with applying such a term to a complex, diverse movement; *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 27.

21 Horne to Wolfius, 2 February 1556; Horne and Richard Chambers to the Senate of Zurich, 3 February 1556; Horne and Chambers to Bullinger, 3 February 1556; OL 1:125-135.

22 Horne and Chambers to Bullinger, 19 September 1556 (OL 1:132).
capitulation of fellow Protestants under such pressure as proof that “it is vain to place our confidence in man.”

Moving to Horne’s tenure as Bishop of Winchester, his sense of the situation in England reflects what Carol Wiener has discerned to be a subtext of anxiety beneath the overall celebration of Protestantism’s return and reestablishment. Despite a belief that God’s providence stood behind the accession of Elizabeth I and recent reforms in the English church, a nagging sense that a Catholicism not yet wholly eradicated presented a constant threat—poised to reverse the social and ecclesiastical order—continued to trouble many, including Bishop Horne. In a 1563 letter to Bullinger highlighting the progress of doctrinal and ecclesiastical reform under Queen Elizabeth, Horne expresses concern to guard the English people against “those inveterate errors which are still circulated by the papists in secret.” The bishop writes to Gwalther in 1565 of the “intestine treachery of the papists” lurking within the church. Nearly a decade later, the sense of papal threat still existed in England, although Horne reassures Bullinger

---

23 Ibid., 1:132-133.


26 Horne to Gwalther, 17 July 1565 (ZL 1:142).
that, in the face of wars in France after the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacres, papists in England “are daily restrained by severe laws.” Potent enemies require strong fetters.

A second characteristic of Horne’s consistent theological outlook is the influence of Zurich. This dates to his earliest days in exile, when he spent nearly two years as a grateful guest of the city’s leaders before leaving to pastor Frankfurt’s English church. Horne’s admiration for the Zurich reformers extended beyond simply exchanging pleasantries to keep the door open for a future return. Bishop Horne not only sought guidance on the legitimacy of certain liturgical practices. He also took pains to portray solidarity between Zurich and the Elizabethan reforms, stressing theological consensus between the two churches, with England and Zurich embracing the “same ecclesiastical doctrine.”

The frequent correspondence undoubtedly owed some to Bullinger’s interest in English affairs, to which Horne responded with reports on England and Scotland, and even information from France and Belgium. Yet Horne also seemed very concerned for his reputation with the Zurichers, overstating similarities between English and Swiss

---

27 Horne to Bullinger, 10 January 1573 (ZL 1:277).

28 DNB; see also OL 1:125-134. Although Horne met Calvin when the Genevan reformer traveled to Frankfurt in 1556 to intervene in the controversy surrounding the leadership of Valerand Poullain in the Walloon church, Zurich, not Geneva, was the preferred source of counsel for Horne over the course of his career; Pettegree, Marian Protestantism, 75; also Euler, Couriers of the Gospel, 98-106.


30 Horne to Bullinger, 13 December 1563 (ZL 1:135).

31 Horne to Bullinger, 8 August 1571 (ZL 1:245-254).
church polity and responding to questions from Bullinger by insisting that he had no part in compelling English non-conformists to violate their consciences as a precondition for remaining in the church.\textsuperscript{32} Perhaps most significant regarding the Zurich connection, however, is how Horne’s position toward non-conformity essentially mirrored the advice he received from Bullinger.\textsuperscript{33} The Zurich theologian both supported the non-conformists’ zeal for dispensing with all vestiges of papal ceremony from English worship and called for patience with the pace of reform under Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{34} Bullinger counsels Horne not to rock the boat, so to speak, in his office as bishop, but rather to be shrewd in a less than ideal situation.\textsuperscript{35} Specifically, Bullinger insists that protecting church offices from papists and “Lutherans” is preferable to vacating these over disputes concerning vestments.\textsuperscript{36} The only condition this 1565 letter stipulates is that retaining copes and surplices be combined with teaching that denies superstitious belief in connection with such practices, and that allowances be made for those wishing to

\textsuperscript{32} Grindal and Horne to Bullinger and Gwalther, 6 February 1567 (ZL 1:178-181).

\textsuperscript{33} On Bullinger’s moderate position on vestments in his correspondence with English clerics in the 1560s, see Primus, \textit{Vestments}, 125-133. Primus notes, “Bullinger’s position was, then, almost precisely that of the returned exiles who had accepted bishoprics and had conformed to the demands of office, but who lived in constant hope for better times of advanced reforms. … By 1566 Bullinger no doubt saw how serious, in terms of possible schism, the controversy had become, and was mainly interested in toning down the uncompromising attitudes of both parties in the dispute” (129).

\textsuperscript{34} Bullinger to Horne, 3 November 1565 (ZL 1:341-344); Bullinger and Gwalther to Grindal and Horne, 6 September 1566 (ZL 1:357-358).

\textsuperscript{35} Bullinger to Horne, 3 November 1565 (ZL 1:341-344).

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
voice their disagreement.\textsuperscript{37} Bullinger clearly grasps the strategic importance of teaching and urging, but not upsetting, the “most serene queen and illustrious nobles” of England, lest important ground be lost to both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism.\textsuperscript{38}

Bullinger’s advice is reflected in a third unwavering characteristic of Horne’s theology and ministry: an unapologetic and principled commitment to moderation in the controversies of his day over church polity and liturgy. It is on this point that one finds the convergence of his anti-Catholicism and the influence of Zurich in Horne’s support for the Elizabethan reforms as the best defense against Rome and other threats to the establishment of reform in England. Despite his reservations about wearing the cope and surplice, Horne prefers conformity to leaving the church, “lest our enemies should take possession of the places deserted by ourselves.”\textsuperscript{39} In the same 1565 letter to Gwalther, Horne states his suspicion that the Vestiarian Controversy was in fact engineered by Catholics to bring divisions among Protestants.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, it is not surprising that, despite sympathy toward voices calling for more radical reforms, Horne disagreed

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 1:343-344.


\textsuperscript{39} Horne to Gwalther, 17 July 1565 (ZL 1:142).

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. Horne continues this line of thought two years later when he and Grindal write to Bullinger and Gwalther of the same conflict, which has not abated, fearing that “the papists,” fueled by the hope of regaining the English church, “will lay hold of this controversy to send forth and vomit their most pestilent poison against the gospel”; Grindal and Horne to Bullinger and Gwalther, 6 February 1567 (ZL 1:177).
with a non-conforming strategy bent on challenging the law and potentially splitting the church over polity, liturgy, and vestments. The cost of such drastic measures was too much for the bishops to countenance: “[If we abdicated] we should have a papistical, or at least a Lutherano-papistical ministry, or none at all.” Their rejection of the well-intentioned, but “inconsiderate advice of our brethren,” was a deliberate choice to protect English Protestantism. By 1571, Horne’s weariness of persistent dissent over the queen’s vestments policy is evident when he chastises those who are “accessory to the wretched shipwreck of our church, and are doubtless retarding not a little the free progress of the gospel.” In 1576, Horne continued to harbor disappointment that the English church “will not entirely recovery from popery.” Even so, this queen and her policies were, in Horne’s view, God’s gracious provision. Elizabeth “always abominated popery from her infancy, so also she will never admit Lutheranism, which is a great disturber of christianity.” Nearly twenty years into Elizabeth’s reign, Bishop Horne remained steadfast in his support of the queen despite a preference for deeper reform.

Returning to the subject of Horne’s 1553 translation of Quatre sermons, it will be demonstrated below that there is a consistency in his theological position that remains

41 Ibid.
42 Horne to Bullinger, 8 August 1571 (ZL 1:249).
43 Horne to Gwalther, 10 August 1578 (ZL 1:320).
44 Ibid., 1:321.
unchanged between that work and his later opposition to non-conformity as a bishop. Horne’s correspondence with the Zurich theologians reveals that he was a committed moderate for the sake of protecting the church against needless divisions that would create an opportunity for its enemies to regain influence over English religion. Despite his harsh words toward more divisive brethren, Bishop Horne generally took no direct action against non-conformists, whom he saw as co-belligerents in an international Reformed cause against Catholicism.²⁵ Yet Horne was not beyond disrupting the status quo for the sake of attacking what he perceived to be the true enemy. This much is clear from a pair of letters exchanged with church leaders on Guernsey, who sought Horne’s intervention against the Catholic teachings of Elias Bonamy.²⁶ From the time he left England in 1553, to his return in 1559 and death in 1579, Horne never wavered in his desire to act against what he considered the church’s real enemies. This understanding of England’s true enemies must guide our reading of Horne’s 1553 translation of Calvin.

---

²⁵ Dent, Protestant Reformers, 25-28. Consider Horne’s concern to stress doctrinal unity with Zurich, endeavoring to unite factions within the English church around a common cause against Catholics, Lutherans, and eventually Anabaptists in England; Horne to Bullinger, 10 January 1572 (ZL 1:277).

²⁶ Nicholas Bernius to Horne, 13 December 1575 (ZL 2:264-268); Horne to [Certain Brethren], 16 January 1577, ZL 1:321-323). In his reply to Bernius and the others, Bishop Horne calls for swift, decisive action to snatch “the stupid herd” from “the claws of the lion, before they are torn in pieces by his teeth.”
5.2.2 From “Rome” via Wesel: English Protestant Printing Under Mary I

Very briefly, it is important to set Horne’s translation in the context of English publishing in 1553. After a spike in the production of Protestant literature in England during the Edwardian regime, the accession of Mary once again saw the outsourcing of English materials to Continental presses.47 This shift in the centers of publication cannot account for all the writings designed to influence English popular opinion, as Thomas Freeman has demonstrated in his study of methods and networks for circulating written manuscripts in the Marian period.48 Yet the ability of print to reach a wide, public audience was seized upon by the Marian exiles as a vehicle for Protestant propaganda.49 A notable exception to the migration of English Protestant printing to more hospitable locations were underground presses in the vicinity of London, such as the one bearing the imprint of a certain “Michael Wood” of “Roane” (Rouen).50 Such fabricated


49 Culling his data primarily from the Short Title Catalogue, Baskerville identifies 114 Protestant polemical works in English published from 1553–58 (8). For a discussion of the intentional publishing strategy pursued by Marian exiles in both Latin and English, with specific aims for works in both languages that included, respectively, vindicating Edwardian reform to a Continental audience (Latin) and comforting those in England (English) see Pettegree, Marian Protestantism, 23-32.

publication details, however, were employed not only by outlawed print shops in England. A series of Protestant polemical works ostensibly issued in 1553 from “Rome, before the castle of S. Angel, at the sign of S. Peter,” was almost certainly the work of Joos Lambrect in Wesel, collaborating with the exiled English printer Hugh Singleton.\textsuperscript{51}

Horne’s translation of Calvin’s \textit{Quatre sermons} appeared as a title in this “Rome” collection. As such, it fits neatly within the swelling tide of critical backlash against the regime appearing in English and ostensibly designed for a broad reach among segments of society for whom Latin was inaccessible. Baskerville’s catalogue situates Horne’s translation among a veritable tidal wave of anti-Catholic literature in English from 1553-1558, demonstrating how it was hardly unique in that context.\textsuperscript{52} Even its specific form as an attack on Nicodemism joins a chorus of similar writing by Marian exiles decrying the same defect among their English brethren who remained comfortably hidden at home.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{5.2.3 Selective Silence: Horne’s Calculated Omissions of Calvin’s Content}

Given its similarity to so many other works of the period, Horne’s translation is not particularly interesting if considered merely as an assault on the crown and an


\textsuperscript{52} Baskerville, 34-87.

\textsuperscript{53} Pettegree estimates that “as many as two-thirds” of the original Marian exile writings “addressed themselves to this problem: calling brethren in England to a more faithful witness and defending their own conduct in going abroad”; \textit{Marian Protestantism}, 88.
apology for one’s own decision to flee vis-à-vis the spinelessness of religious dissemblers who, it was argued, valued life and leisure better than the glory of God.54 Horne’s entry into this discussion corresponds well to the patterns found in similar apologies for exile.55 What stands out, however, is his subtle use of Calvin to serve his rhetorical goals. Horne’s decision to invoke the Genevan reformer to support his decision to flee gives his case the backing of an emerging theological authority on the Continent, though Calvin’s thought was not yet in vogue with English Protestants.56 While Horne would come to have a closer acquaintance with the Zurich theologians who hosted him during his exile, perhaps Calvin’s recently published work carried the attraction of bringing a new work to an English audience, especially one that acquainted a new readership with a now decades-old Continental debate on Nicodemism? Upon closer examination, neither of these factors seem to have been what made Quatre sermons most appealing to Horne. Instead, Horne’s use of Calvin in 1553 to justify his decision to flee that year for Zurich is interesting as much for what Horne says as for what he leaves

54 Jonathan Wright has written on the logic of Marian anti-Nicodemite polemic and how the exiles largely succeeded in willing the public relations war to the extent that they came to be celebrated along with martyrs for refusing to hide their commitment to God; “Marian Exiles,” 238-243. Wright argues that the argument for exile more often than not involved making a positive case that one had no choice but to flee as an expression of concern for God’s glory and confidence in God’s providence, and the demands these realities placed on one’s conscience (227-238). For the emergence of conscience as a factor in early modern defenses of both conformity and non-conformity, see idem., “The World’s Worst Worm: Conscience and Conformity During the English Reformation,” Sixteenth Century Journal 30:1 (1999): 113-133.

55 See chapter three.

unsaid. Horne includes only the first two sermons, omitting Calvin’s preface, Exposition of Psalm 87, and, most notably, the two concluding sermons that deal most explicitly with exile. Why would Horne lean on Calvin to support his own exile, only to neglect what appear to be the elements in Calvin’s argument most helpful to Horne’s situation? Two reasons stand out. First, Calvin’s case for exile, which presented this option so positively as alternative to martyrdom, undercut Horne’s portrayal of his own flight as a difficulty into which he was compelled as a matter of obedience to God. Secondly, Calvin’s decision to offer his anti-Nicodemite polemic in the form of four interrelated sermons permitted Horne to omit the portions that were less useful to him without appearing to alter Calvin’s original. This benefit, I contend, was the chief appeal of Quatre sermons, making Calvin’s work appealing to Horne nearly two decades before the Genevan reformer’s publications became more widely popular with publishers and readers well into the Elizabethan era. It was more about convenience than about Calvin.

5.3 Horne’s Preface

Horne’s lengthy preface to Certaine Homilies, running thirty-six pages in the original, capitalizes on Calvin’s theme by invoking Nicodemism as a foil to defend Horne’s reputation. It is a carefully constructed rhetorical piece that establishes Horne’s authority to address believers in England and defends his decision to flee to the continent shortly after the accession of Queen Mary. This basic argument is couched within an overall attack on Catholic error and persecution that advances a conspiracy theory. Details of Horne’s own story frame his preface, appearing before and after a
biblical case linking the “papistes” to the Pharisees, heretics, false teachers, and antichrist. While the specific circumstances of Horne’s case are unique, he narrates them in a manner that conforms to recurring patterns in descriptions of exile under Mary I as a matter of divine command and providence.\textsuperscript{57} Indeed, many were welcomed into the leadership of the Elizabethan church, with political exile coming to be “perceived as one of the founding experiences of a distinctively English Protestant Church.”\textsuperscript{58} The effectiveness of Horne’s apology in this regard is attested by his long and distinguished career in the episcopate upon his return to England. In 1553, however, Horne’s goal was to mitigate potential criticism of his choice to flee, highlighting the inevitability of such a course and, consequently, the ongoing validity of his pastoral authority \textit{in absentia}.

The preface’s structure is fairly straightforward. Horne begins and ends by detailing his circumstances and describing his decision to leave England. This personal account brackets a full seventeen pages—nearly half the preface—devoted to a biblical and theological case against the “proūd papistes,” who are like “ravening wolves” descended from “their old aūcetours ý pharises.”\textsuperscript{59} Alternating between personal

\textsuperscript{57} Horne emphasizes the legitimacy of exile in the face of persecution, a concern not to desert one’s ministerial charge, surprising circumstances, and the author’s compulsion into exile; see also Bale, \textit{Vocacyon}, \textit{passim}; for an analysis of these patterns, see Wright, “Marian Exiles,” 227-243.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 240-243. Wright notes the role played by John Foxe’s martyrology in perpetuating the narrative. There were, of course dissenting voices. John Field rejected comparing exiles-turned-bishops to martyrs, of whom the former, according to Field, were not worthy (243). For Field’s translation of \textit{Quatre Sermons}, see chapter six.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Certaine Homilies}, n. pag.
narrative and theological invective, Horne tells the story of hopelessly rigged justice and Catholic conspiracy. His choice to flee emerges as both unanticipated and unavoidable.

These themes of injustice, surprise, and providence figure prominently in the preface’s opening pages. After briefly describing the death of Edward VI as divine discipline for “oure unhtākfulness” and likening the imposition of Mary I’s order for the church to “Baals altares reared up,” Horne launches into an extended declaration of his personal integrity and clear conscience regarding faithfulness to God’s Word and all civil laws. He also uses this occasion to touch upon Calvin’s central theme, denying any dissimulation in his preaching ministry, founded on a sincere examination of the “holye scriptures / and the testimonye of the aunciente fathers.”

Hiding his convictions was never an option. This is the first place Horne invokes Nicodemism as a foil to assert his virtue: his preaching ministry involved simply making manifest the things of God. Imagine Horne’s surprise, then, when summoned to London fully expecting to be commended as a “good and obedient subiect,” he is instead accused of treason. Horne recounts the testimony of Stephen Gardiner and Cuthbert Tunstall in terms fine-tuned to emphasize its absurdity. The men advance charges so outlandish that the accused

---

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
cannot help but laugh out loud. Indeed, Horne’s retelling of these events seems tailored to provoke a similar reaction from readers. First, he was charged with preaching, which technically was not illegal. Horne was further accused of unspecified “materes towchig the queens highnes,” as well as for being a Scot. Without a trial, Horne was given an ultimatum to “undoo ý i had doon / or ells” his possessions would be seized and he would be imprisoned in the Tower. Horne protested that not only was he innocent of royal insubordination, but he is not even Scottish! Sensing that he could not possibly evade imprisonment on trumped up—indeed, even farcical—charges brought by powerful foes, Horne decided to flee. Whether things happened exactly as Horne describes is uncertain, but he has provided a portrait of the kind of gross injustice that essentially forced his hand. Thus begins Horne’s extended apology for his exile, which, it soon becomes clear to the reader, is his main purpose for writing this lengthy preface.

Horne’s reasons for flight relate directly to his account of his antagonists, portrayed here as a threat to all of England. The anti-Catholic polemic taking up seventeen pages at the center of the preface can stand on its own as a biblical and theological case against the Roman worship being imposed on England. In this context,

---

62 Ibid. These accusers are not named, simply referred to as the “lord chanceloure” and “good olde father of Duresme,” both of whom “plaid thre partes” well in the kangaroo court Horne describes. Tunstall, 78 at the time, had been removed as Bishop of Durham under Edward VI. Mary I would reinstate him in 1554.

63 Ibid.

64 See chapter four for Anthony Munday’s selective focus on this section of Horne’s preface in the former’s 1584 edition of Quatre sermons.
it is presented to support Horne’s decision to flee, introduced as an answer to those who would slanderously call him and other exiles “carnal and fleshly gospellours.” Then follows a lengthy reversal of that charge, turning accusations of immorality and novelty back on to the Roman Church. Horne’s first move is to identify his own cause and actions with Christ’s, linking his enemies with Christ’s enemies. Like their Lord, Horne and his fellow exiles are slandered by false witnesses. Horne then answers what he believes to be two specific implications behind the charge of carnality: 1.) that they teach justification faith alone, thus promoting licentious behavior; and 2.) that they marry. Horne owns both accusations, citing Scripture and tradition to vindicate evangelical preaching of justification by faith alone and clerical marriage. He reverses the accusation by arguing that, far from being guiltless, his Catholic accusers are the true “carnal gospellours”—people pleasers and position seekers. Horne points to the exiles’ harsh treatment by civil authorities as proof that they do not enjoy the world’s acceptance. On the contrary, his enemies have forsaken God’s truth to secure power, and have attempted to hide this by charging Protestants with their own faults. Horne likens himself and his colleagues to Paul, characterizing his opponents as the false teachers Paul faced in Galatia and Thessalonica. English Catholics were the real hypocrites,

65 Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
standing in a long tradition of heretics who charge Christ’s followers with novelty while they reject Christ’s teaching in favor of human innovation. Horne closes this section by citing St. Augustine and St. Peter against his accusers, who lay claim to such authorities despite rejecting their example of holding fast to God’s truth against false teaching. 68

On the surface, Horne’s tidy theological vindication of evangelical preaching and practice against the Catholic accusations is unremarkable for his context. Protestants claimed continuity with Christ and his Word and sought to expose Rome as purveyors of innovations and human practices in place of the God’s truth. 69 What gives Horne’s anti-Catholic invective additional power within his preface is how he deploys it to support a larger agenda. Horne’s experience in London was not a one-off event: he portrays it as the expression of a papal conspiracy gripping England, tightening its hold via the persecution of the godly and the spread of false teaching. Horne leverages this allegation of coordinated evil to prove to his readers that he had no choice but to leave England, as well as to urge vigilance and faithfulness from those he has left behind.

Developing this notion of an inescapable Catholic conspiracy legitimizes both Horne’s flight and his ongoing authority to address his readers as their faithful pastor, who has not abandoned them. Accordingly, he thickens this account of Roman

68 Ibid.

69 See the account of Calvin’s argument against the Roman Mass throughout his anti-Nicodemite polemic in chapters one and two, and the discussion of Marian exile works in chapter three.

240
subterfuge by concluding his preface on a note of urgent warning. Horne claims that, just as Paul and Silas were judged by a court of their enemies, he and his colleagues are the victims of a coordinated strategy to displace learned men who could dissent to the queen’s impositions. Raising the alarm further, Horne discloses a shadowy plot to exterminate nobles who opposed reinstating Catholic priests and elevating of English clergy to their former dominance over the laity, claiming that the “papists” seek to eliminate Horne because he knows too much and thus threatened their scheme to rule England from Rome. The import of this account is clear enough: Horne was as good as dead.

Thankfully, Dean Horne had another option—one that he could not refuse. Throughout the personal narrative portions of the preface, the conspiracy theory described above is carefully interwoven with Horne’s reasons for leaving. Above all, Horne invokes an awareness of divine providence that imbues his exile with a sense of purpose beyond crass self-preservation. Stacked justice meant that imprisonment was certain and death likely. Observing that other preachers already imprisoned were of no use to their congregations, Horne saw his opportunity to escape as God’s intervention: a special calling to be obeyed despite its potential risks to his reputation. He writes, “I

70 Certaine Homilies, n. pag. Here Horne ties the narrative back into the account of his trial from the opening pages, warning that this strategy of using false witnesses was by no means unique to his case. If there remains any doubt, Horne wants his readers to understand that has exposed nothing less than a foreign plot to undermine English sovereignty. Hence the irony, Horne goes on to say, of questioning his nationality, when those bringing such charges were the true traitors to the crown.
committed myself in to the guiding of the lorde,” who “had delivered me... out of ý mouth of the lyon.”71 God’s plan did not stop with Horne’s escape. He was appointed a “watchman over the house of Israel” to “hunte thos wild swyne” and “gather to geter ... the lorde’s shepe” on the Continent.72 Horne’s enemies might have summoned him to London, but the Lord called him leave England—a difficult task, for sure, “which thing I shall not cease to do / by the ayd of Gods most holy spirit.”73 Thus Rome’s conspiracy served greater God’s purpose. Having chosen the difficult path of exile, in this case, meant submitting to the divine will and enjoying God’s approval—a key theme across Marian exile apologies for flight.74 Another recurring motif was denying that one was the hireling who left God’s flock at first sight of trouble (Jn 10).75 This appears on Horne’s very first page, where he explicitly denies abandoning his charge. His entire preface arguably makes a single point about his leaving: This was God’s plan all along.

Not a word is wasted in a tightly structured case combining autobiography, theological polemic, and pastoral admonition to identify and portray a growing papal

71 Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Wright, “Marian Exiles,” 227-38; Baskerville, 16-18. Baskerville points out similarities between Horne’s apology for flight and John Bale’s 1553 Vocacyon of Iohan Bale, noting how these two works establish patterns and literary motifs that occur later exile narratives motivated “by the need, immediate or foreseen, to defend themselves before the court of opinion of their fellow Protestant Englishmen who had stayed at home” (17). See chapter three for more on Bale’s apology for exile.
menace as the determined enemy of both Horne and his God, and also all of England.\textsuperscript{76} But how does Calvin fit into Horne’s argument? The preface, it seems, was not written for Calvin, but Calvin an appendix to support the preface. Calvin is not even mentioned until the very last page, and only in connection with how the reformer’s sermons should be read to support Horne’s account and as encouragement for readers to be faithful in Horne’s absence. Compelled to leave, Horne commends Calvin for teaching on “how you ought to behave yourselves.”\textsuperscript{77} Above all, Horne wanted readers to believe his story and applaud his noble sacrifice. Insofar as Horne was concerned also to bolster his readers’ resolve against false worship, Calvin’s polemic against idolatry was especially suited to this goal. Yet more can be said about Horne’s use of Calvin—a matter to which we shall return after an examination of Horne’s translation of Baduel’s Latin text.

5.4 Horne’s Translation

Horne’s translation of sermons one and two of Quatre sermons, based on Claude Baduel’s Latin version of the same year, follows its source closely. Thus it lacks both Calvin’s brevity and signs of an overt editorializing agenda. The result is a literal translation with only the occasional departure from Baduel. The consistency of Horne’s approach suggests that any changes to the Latin were deliberate. Most of these

\textsuperscript{76} In Horne’s rhetoric one can already see the tension between a strong belief in God’s sovereignty and an ever-present Catholic menace that Wiener would identify later across all levels of Elizabethan and Jacobean society; “The Beleaguered Isle,” 27-62.

\textsuperscript{77} Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
differences are minor, with little impact on the text’s meaning. One or two changes are more significant and may indicate attempts to adapt Calvin to an English audience.

Horne’s translation of sermon one includes a few inconsequential differences from the Latin. The Englishman corrects an erroneous biblical citation that appeared in Calvin’s original and remained unchanged in Baduel. Horne locates the story of “Sidrach, Misach, and abdenago” in “the third chapt. of Daniel,” while Calvin and Baduel misattribute the narrative to Dan 2.78 Another minor divergence from the Latin is Horne’s use of “high mass” as an equivalent for “parish mass,” employing both terms interchangeably to translate “missa parochialis.” Several minor additions to the Latin do not alter the sense of Baduel’s translation. In one place, Horne adds “whorish” to describe the kind of “idolatrie” that is the “parish or high mass.” In another, the English translation supplies a rationale for Nicodemites’ claim not to deny Christ’s death and resurrection, but rather “to worship it in their minde.”79 Such additions simply add emphasis or clarify the original. In the same vein, Horne has Calvin rejecting the Mass as contrary to “Christes rule,” where the Latin (“regulam magistri”) follows the French in not specifically naming Christ, though he is certainly the “Master” or “Teacher” implied.

The paucity of minor differences between Horne’s English and Baduel’s Latin versions of sermon one highlights the handful of arguably more significant changes. The

78 *Certaine Homilies*, n. pag.
79 Ibid. This phrase exists in neither the Latin or French versions.
first of these occurs where Calvin criticizes those who think that a customized Mass, omitting offensive elements and possibly even conducted in secret, is a suitable substitute for the Lord’s Supper. According to Calvin, such persons err because their real goal is to evade persecution or ridicule by causing others to mistake their custom Mass for the full Roman rite. Another reason Calvin rejects this practice is that the friar from whom they receive the sacrament offers it “non pas comme Pasteur Chrestien, mais en qualité de prebstre Papal.”80 The Latin similarly indicates that this individual administers the sacrament “non tanquam pastor Christianus.”81 Horne omits the word “pastor,” stating simply that the celebrant in question “doth not that office as a christian, but as a prest of ý popish ,pfession”82 The impact of this omission may seem slight, but it suggests a sharper divide than that simply between Roman priests and lawful pastors. Horne presses the contrast to imply that Roman clergy cannot be genuine Christians.

Another subtle, but significant, alteration is Horne’s omission of the first person pronoun from Calvin’s initial reference to those in his congregation who believe that his argument to flee idolatry is superfluous “to us, who have, by God’s grace, our churches purged from papal infection and idolatry.”83 Where the Latin follows Calvin’s French,

80 CO 8:387.
81 Baduel, 41.
82 Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
83 “quant à nous, qui avons, par la grace de Dieu, nos Eglises purgées desinfections et idolatries de la Papaulté” (CO 8:377).

245
Horne’s translation creates the impression of distance by referring generically to those “whos churches ar thorowly pourged frō the filthines / and idolatries of the papisme.” The change is perhaps inconsequential, as Horne goes on to translate the remainder of the paragraph—in which Calvin presses his hearers to be grateful for their peace and freedom, ever prepared for the return of papal tyranny—in lockstep with Baduel, who follows the French quite literally here. De-particularizing Calvin’s comments to make them refer to a generic situation of a fully reformed church elsewhere might have served the purpose of making the text more relatable to Horne’s English audience, which was newly subject to a resurgent Catholicism under Queen Mary I. Yet, if this were Horne’s intent, it is curious that he does not eliminate first person pronouns from this entire section, but only from Calvin’s first reference to his congregation. A possible explanation is that Calvin’s address to the situation in Geneva is long enough that such emendations would involve significant distortion, threatening to detach this section from the flow of the Calvin’s thought so much that it would become incomprehensible. Perhaps Horne began determined to revise Calvin’s language so that no English reader could confuse his or her own Marian church with one “thorowly pourged frō … filthines,” but realized that it would not be tenable to change every inclusive reference. Whatever the case, Horne’s otherwise careful and faithful rendering of the Latin throughout this section

84 Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
draws attention to the fact that he departs from Baduel, if only for a moment, just where Calvin begins to address his hearers as members of a church purely reformed.

Horne’s translation of sermon two continues in the same pattern as his work on sermon one. Here one finds even fewer differences between the Latin and English, none of which significantly impacts the meaning of the original. Where the Latin refers to the “tricks and deceits of Satan” (“fraudes ac illusiones Satanae”), Horne has “of the devil.”85 The minor difference, perhaps a stylistic preference, is only worth mentioning because Horne uses “Satan” in every other place for the Latin “satanas.” Similarly, personal preference for a particular expression seems to explain Horne’s variously omitting and supplying “Christ” at different points in his text.86 In every instance, Baduel’s Latin clearly refers to Jesus Christ and Horne’s decision to make this more or less explicit at times does not impact Calvin’s meaning. Horne’s choice of “yet it is only in his hand to apoint lyfe or death” to render “eius tamen solius sit de nostra vita vel retinenda vel amittenda constituere” is likewise unremarkable, noted here simply because it is one of the rare occasions that Horne’s translation is less woodenly literal.87

Thus a close examination of Horne’s 1553 translation of Quatre Sermons reveals very few deviations from his Latin source. Apart from the change in pronoun at the

85 Baduel, 61; Horne, Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
86 Baduel, 77, 80, 84; Horne, Certaine Homilies, n. pag.
87 Baduel, 96-97; Horne, Certaine Homilies, n. pag. (emphasis added).
beginning of sermon one, which may or may not be significant as a means of de-
particularizing Calvin’s audience, nothing here seems especially interesting from a
translation standpoint. Horne seems to have made good on his promise to transmit
Calvin to an English audience. This otherwise unremarkable translation raises another
question, though, when the goals of Horne’s lengthy preface are reexamined in light of
how he chose to follow it up: While he might not have altered Calvin’s sermons, why
did Horne include only two of Calvin’s original four? Turning now to this question, I
contend that the exiled minister’s mostly straightforward translation was actually put to
deliberate use in ways that are not immediately obvious.

5.5 Horne’s Strategy

Given Horne’s interest in defending his decision leave for the Continent, it is
curious that he does not seem to make the best use of Quatre sermons for this purpose. As
I argued in chapter two, Calvin’s arrangement of his material accents the believer’s duty
choose exile by building toward the strong appeal for this route in sermons three and
four. The first two sermons rehearse Calvin’s standard case against the Mass and call to
open confession of one’s faith, even if this results in martyrdom. The third and fourth
sermons are an extended plea for evangelicals to seek pure worship in a rightly-ordered
church, couched in an emotionally evocative reading of the Psalms. Quatre sermons
becomes a case for preferring exile only because the final two sermons are included as
Calvin’s rhetorical climax. Without these sermons, Quatre sermons would merely be a
repetition of Calvin’s long-standing argument against Nicodemism as idolatry, adding
little to his earlier publications on this topic. Thus the very material that seemingly would best support Horne’s case for exile is omitted entirely. On the one hand, this could simply have been a decision made out of necessity, to save time in the midst of a tumultuous flight from England. Yet, if that were the case, why not translate only sermons three and four—the ones on exile—rather than the first two? Moreover, Calvin’s original preface, included in the Latin translation, states that Quatre sermons is meant to be read as a unified whole, a single argument against dissimulation carried out over four sermons. Given such clear reading instructions, Horne’s disruption of this arrangement by excluding both Calvin’s preface and the reformer’s final two sermons appears to have been deliberate. But, again, why omit all the material containing Calvin’s teaching on exile as a duty, given Horne’s anxiety to stress his own duty to flee?

The answer, it seems, is that Horne was a careful reader of Calvin. He grasped the logic of Calvin’s rhetorical arrangement of Quatre sermons well enough to adapt it most favorably to his own use. The Genevan reformer’s positive portrayal of exile as God’s invitation to nourishment via the church’s public ministry would detract from Horne’s account of his exile as a great hardship into which he was compelled. If Horne’s goal were to diminish the perception that he abandoned his flock for greener pastures, so to speak, Calvin’s effusive depiction of God meeting spiritual pilgrims’ needs through exile would have made an embarrassing counterpoint. Horne’s personal apology relies

88 CO 8:474. See chapter two for an analysis of this rhetorical arrangement, unique among Calvin’s writings.
on portraying exile not as the movement toward many benefits, as Calvin argues, but rather as a surprise affliction imposed upon a pastor reluctant to leave his flock for any reason short of divine compulsion. To include Calvin’s full appeal would mean instead that Horne chose the easier course, the very impression Horne was so keen to deny.

For Horne’s purposes, then, Calvin’s first and second sermons strike just the right notes. Here idolatry is the focus, compromise rejected, and resistance demanded. Horne’s resistance takes one form; his readers’ might take another. Calvin’s sermons do double duty in providing a concise, convenient means of justifying Horne’s decision and encouraging English Protestants in the choices they faced. Indeed, Horne expressly portrays his efforts to produce this translation of Calvin’s sermons as an exercise of his pastoral duties in absentia, making provision so that those in England can learn from the teaching “of y great learned and godly man” to follow Christ “strōgly and not faint.”

The emphasis is clearly on their staying in place. It is not for them to follow Horne’s unique, divinely appointed course. They have their own duty; Horne has his.

Calvin’s argument also buttresses Horne’s negative portrayal of the English Nicodemite as a silent foil to accent the virtue of his flight. Horne opens his preface by insisting that dissimulation is incompatible with God’s Word, immediately invoking Nicodemism as a negative example he has repudiated, at great cost, and now calls on

89 *Certaine Homilies*, n. pag.

90 Although certainly implied as a lawful option, Calvin’s first two sermons do not mention exile.
others to reject as well. Horne closes his introduction on this same theme, with the hope that he and his readers will meet again in the eschatological worship of God’s saints, “i ý mides of ý faithful côgregation.”

Whether obedience to God required that one leave England (as in Horne’s case) or stay and resist the Catholic conspiracy (Horne’s prescription for his readers), both courses were preferable to the Nicodemite’s cowardice.

In sum, Quatre sermons provided Horne with a convenient way to enlist Calvin for his cause in 1553. As an argument against Nicodemism, Horne could offer a new work to English readers portraying the craven dissembler as a counter example, but especially as a foil for repairing Horne’s reputation. As a collection of sermons, they were easily adapted to suit this same public relations agenda. Just as Calvin was able to press the sermonic genre of Quatre sermons to his advantage in addressing at least two distinct audiences in 1552, the publication’s final form also presented Calvin’s English translators with opportunities for tailoring Calvin’s work to their own contexts. One could present all of Calvin’s original, or just some parts, without giving the appearance of an incomplete translation. In this case Horne could excise Calvin’s favorable treatment of exile while not seeming to alter Calvin’s arrangement at all. That Horne

---

91 Ibid.

92 Here I will simply mention the tantalizing possibility that an anonymous, original English anti-Nicodemite publication appearing in the same year as Horne’s translation could have been Horne’s work. See Whether Christian faith maye be kept secret in the heart, without confession thereof openly to the world as occasion shal serve. Also what hurt cometh by them that hath received the Gospell, to be present at Masse unto the simple and
was not the only English translator of *Quatre sermons* to adapt Calvin’s material via omission underscores how the collection’s genre was amenable to being used this way.³

³ See chapter four. “I. P.” did this in 1581 by presenting readers with only Calvin’s second sermon, which focuses on the topic of martyrdom from Heb 13:13.
5.7 Conclusion

When Dean Robert Horne of Durham published his translation of *Quatre sermons* and accompanying preface he could not have known that, just six years later, he would return to a newly Protestant England and begin a long career as Bishop of Winchester. It is not surprising, then, that this 1553 work reflects the specific concerns of that earlier context, spelled out so clearly in his lengthy polemical introduction. Horne’s most pressing concern is the reason he gives for writing: he wants his English audience to understand his decision to leave. It was not an abandonment of duty, but rather the embrace of a newly realized mission in the face of a Catholic conspiracy that threatened them all. In making this case, Horne summons Calvin as a witness, whose stinging polemic against idolatry and compromise fortify Horne’s argument for his chosen path and are meant to encourage his readers to stay the course in theirs. Further, this brings into view the English Nicodemite, whose presence—real or imagined—represented the kind of faithlessness both Horne and his audience must seek to avoid. Here we see the Continental controversy surrounding Nicodemism deployed in Marian England to encourage civil disobedience in the name of faithfulness to God. Horne’s translation takes few liberties with his Latin source, because what he needs from *Quatre sermons* is precisely what he finds in Calvin’s rigid position calling for open resistance to the Mass.

However, there were other reasons that *Quatre sermons* was attractive to Horne. Even though Calvin’s work provided Horne with a fine opportunity to lean on an internationally recognized authority on Nicodemism, the fact remains that the Genevan
reformer was not exactly at the height of his popularity among English Protestants. That would come nearly three decades later. What else could have attracted Horne to *Quatre sermons*? In some ways, Calvin’s usefulness to Horne had less to do with what Horne found in Calvin than with how much Calvin one finds in Horne. By omitting Calvin’s original preface and final two sermons, Horne removed every part of *Quatre sermons* that deals directly with exile, a theme that was central to Horne’s main concern. While Horne took few liberties with the portions he chose to translate, it seems that he was highly selective—even misleading—in presenting Calvin’s work as a pair of sermons. Possible reasons for this become clear when one considers how Calvin’s depiction of exile as the path of greatest personal gain could subvert Horne’s efforts to deny that he left England for a better situation. Containing Calvin’s argument broken down into interrelated, yet ultimately discrete parts, *Quatre sermons* facilitated hiding the elements that did not fit his message. Horne benefited from the promise of introducing new readers to a recent work from the Continent, but especially from *Quatre sermons*’ uniquely adaptable form.

Finally, I have demonstrated how Horne’s 1553 translation of *Quatre sermons* also anticipates characteristics of his later tenure in the Church of England. Calvin’s case for exile pressed his anti-Catholicism toward an argument for faithfulness that extended beyond rejecting the Mass to include embracing a particular form of worship and church government.94 This move toward aligning ecclesial purity with external order was a

---

94 See chapter two for the content of sermons three and four, which present readers with the necessity of attending to public worship in a rightly-ordered church as God’s design for the nurture of his people.
position Horne rejected after 1559—which is evident from the Zurich letters examined—even as he was content simply to neglect it in 1553. This points to other elements of Horne’s translation of Quatre sermons that sets his use of Calvin apart from other English translators’. On the one hand, Horne’s message differs from that of the 1561, 1581, and 1584 translations examined in the previous chapter, insofar as Horne goes beyond an attack on Catholicism and turns Calvin’s case attacking dissimulation against Protestant Nicodemites in the English church. On the other hand, Horne’s use of Nicodemism still envisions a context similar to Calvin’s, namely that of evangelicals dissimulating in a Catholic environment. This differs from John Field’s approach, which turns Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite rhetoric against fellow Protestants in an ostensibly reformed church. While it might be possible to argue that Horne was simply working within his context and addressing the church he left for exile, his position upon his return did not change from the views expressed in 1553. He remained vehemently anti-Catholic, even as he was grateful for the new Elizabethan church order, and hopeful for its flourishing. Not everyone shared the bishop’s optimism, of course. Calvin’s argument for the necessity of proper church polity as essential to God’s design for the church’s function and fruitfulness adumbrated the basic logic upon which Horne’s fellow English clergy agitated for further reform. An example of such discontent is found in the writings of
John Field, minister of London. Our analysis now turns to Field’s 1579 translation of

*Quatre Sermons*, the longest of the sixteenth-century English editions.
6. John Field (1579): "Newter-ing" the Nicodemite

6.1 Situating Field’s Translation: Background and Context

6.1.1 A Subtler Admonition: Uncovering John Field’s Anti-Nicodemism

Over a quarter century later, John Field’s (d. 1588) translation of *Quatre sermons* was published in London in 1579.¹ Notable for various reasons, the present chapter focuses on how this work fit into Field’s prolific propaganda campaign throughout the 1570s and 1580s. Since *Quatre sermons* contained Calvin’s most explicit plea for proper church polity in all his anti-Nicodemite writings, one might expect Field—imprisoned in 1572 as co-author of the notorious anti-episcopal *Admonition to the Parliament*—to seize a chance to highlight this theme in his translation.² He does, but subtly and indirectly.

This chapter argues that Field had good reason to hide his presbyterian agenda in 1579,

---

¹ *Foure sermons of Maister Iohn Caluin entretaining of matters very profitable for our time, as may bee seene by the preface: with a briefe exposition of the LXXXVII. Psalme. Translated out of Frenche into Englishe by Iohn Fielde* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1579; STC 4439). One additional edition of *Quatre sermons* appeared between Horne’s and Field’s: *Foure godlye sermons* published by Rowland Hall in 1561. See chapter four for a discussion of Hall’s publication.

yet could not resist adapting Calvin to take yet another shot at moderates in the English church. This strategy becomes clear against the backdrop of Field’s other literary activity and illustrates, yet again, the consequences of Calvin’s decision to publish his anti-Nicodemism in the particular genre and format that he chose to employ in 1552.

Patrick Collinson’s characterization of John Field as the organizational mastermind behind a would-be presbyterian revolution in the Elizabethan church provides the most complete portrait of this intriguing figure whose ultimately failed cause belies his intense literary activity and skill as a propagandist throughout the 1570s and 1580s. Educated at Oxford (BA 1564; MA 1567), Field was ordained into the priesthood by Bishop Edmund Grindal in 1566 at the age of twenty-one. An associate of the martyrrologist John Foxe, Field eschewed Foxe’s moderate views on the Elizabethan settlement. By 1568 Field was settled in London as curate of the neighborhood parish of St. Giles Cripplegate. More importantly, along with his younger college Thomas Wilcox (d. 1608), Field became a leader of the underground presbyterian movement centered in London, comprised mostly of former Marian exiles and younger clergy. These men

---

gathered in assemblies styled after Continental Reformed classes, embracing the shared goal of completely renovating English ecclesiastical polity, discipline, and worship.\(^4\)

Several contextual factors help situate Field and his translation of *Quatre sermons* within Elizabethan Protestantism, a complex social and ecclesial entity characterized broadly by a general anti-Catholicism and self-conscious embrace of Reformed doctrine under the overall assertion of royal supremacy.\(^5\) First, any discussion of Field’s place in the ecclesiastical controversies of his time must consider his role as co-author, with Wilcox, of the 1572 *Admonition to Parliament*, “the first popular manifesto of English

\(^4\) Collinson, *Godly People*, 336; Idem., *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 84-91, 131-145. For a fascinating examination of the staying power, on a popular level, of the theology and structures put in place by these English presbyterians even after the ostensible dismantling of the movement by official suppression in the 1590s, see Polly Ha, *English Presbyterianism, 1590-1640* (Stanford University Press, 2010). Ha’s study, while beyond the scope of this project, establishes important continuities between the non-separatist Elizabethan presbyterian movement led by Field and his contemporaries, which ostensibly dissolved with the prosecutions following the late 1580s Marprelate Controversy, and the presbyterians emerging during the English Civil War. Ha argues convincingly that the theology and practices of English presbyterianism, as well as its popular support, were neither dead nor dormant during the intervening years.

\(^5\) The vast literature on the nature and aims of the Elizabethan settlement has often clarified the existence of more questions than it has provided definitive answers. Attempts to explain her ecclesiastical policies as a *via media* borne out of concessions to theological interests more “Protestant” or “Catholic” than her own break apart on the inscrutability of her own religious convictions. On the former, see J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, 51-84; also idem., “The Elizabethan Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity,” *English Historical Review* (1950): 304-332. The latter position, arguing for Elizabeth’s Protestantism vis-à-vis fear of Catholic backlash as the key to her religious policy, is taken up by Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 54-58; also idem., *English Reformations*, 241-242. More recently, scholars have portrayed the Elizabethan religious settlement not as a forced hand, but rather as the political will of a somewhat idiosyncratic evangelical who embraced both Reformed doctrine and traditional structures and customs seemingly without contradiction in her mind. See, for example, Alec Ryrie’s assessment that the queen was “conviction Protestant of sorts” whose personal preferences for doctrine and practices were in fact reflected in the laws enacted within a year of her accession; *Age of Reformation*, 195-201. Elizabeth’s handling of the presbyterian agitations, the background to our examination of Field’s Calvin translation, reveals a monarch equally energetic in opposing both “papists” and “puritans” when they threatened the royal supremacy. In this context she emerges as both unapologetically Protestant and, especially, assertively the queen.
presbyterianism,” which would fuel nearly two decades of open hostility between the presbyterian cause and John Whitgift, ending with the latter’s final victory through official judicial proceedings in the early 1590s. Secondly, throughout the 1570s and 1580s Field undertook an extensive literary campaign to advance presbyterianism through a steady stream of publications and the collection of a “register” of puritan documents. Finally, situating Field in the larger phenomenon of Calvin’s reception in England, particularly the patterns and popularity of English translations of the reformer’s work in the 1570s, will facilitate a deeper understanding of how Field’s translations contribute to the presentation of Calvin’s thought to an English readership.

---

6 Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 395-467; Lake, Anglicans and Puritans, 13-88. Lake’s study helpfully complicates reductionist accounts the Elizabethan religious controversies that conflate puritanism with presbyterianism, setting up a false dichotomy between conformists and puritans that was basically about church government. He argues that there were various theological convictions underlying conformist responses to presbyterianism, revealing both divisions within English Calvinism and the strategies of those, like Richard Hooker, who used arguments for conformity to challenge the formal doctrinal consensus of the church’s Calvinist hegemony. For an excellent revisionist account of Hooker’s place vis-à-vis Calvinism and the Reformed tradition, see W. Bradford Littlejohn, “The Search for a Reformed Hooker: Some Modest Proposals,” Reformation and Renaissance Review 16:1 (2014): 68–82. Littlejohn argues for reassessing how scholarship has employed the terms “Reformed” and “irenic” in relation to Hooker, calling for a reading of Hooker’s Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity within the broader context of Continental Reformed theology. Hooker’s main publications appeared some years after the last sixteenth-century English translation of Quatre sermons, placing them beyond the scope of the present study. It might be fruitful future project to examine his writings in light of anti-Nicodemite rhetoric.

7 Collinson, Godly People, 353-355; Pearson, Thomas Cartwright, 61. Pearson’s study of Cartwright remains an extremely useful guide to the movements and activities of John Field in relation to his elder colleague. Collinson relies heavily on Pearson in his reconstruction of Field’s career as a propagandist.

6.1.2 An Admonition to the Parliament (1572)

In 1570 Thomas Cartwright, a young Cambridge theologian, delivered a series of lectures on the Acts of the Apostles that spelled out a prescription for an embattled church requiring nothing less than the recovery of a primitive polity consisting of only two offices—pastors and deacons—ordered according to congregations and local presbyteries. While we do not possess the full text of his lectures, they attracted sufficient opposition to gain Cartwright expulsion from his position as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, which he left for exile to Geneva.9 The emergence of Cartwright’s public sentiments against episcopacy in the context of renewed English anti-Catholicism at all levels of society suggests that “presbyterian doctrine and its implementation was in part a response to the pressures of the Counter-Reformation.”10 Among those calling Field’s Calvin translation in relation to Horne’s, which appeared at the beginning of the Marian period, when Zurich, not Geneva, had a greater role in the English reception of Continental Reformed thought. For the general reception of Calvin in England see chapters four and five.

9 Pearson, Thomas Cartwright, 27-47.

10 Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 111-113. Several key events in the early 1570s help frame the burgeoning agitation for presbyterianism as the de facto polity the Church of England. The failed Revolt of the Northern Earls of 1569, the so-called 1571 “Ridolfi Plot,” and the queen’s excommunication in 1570 as a heretic by Pope Pius V, who declared Elizabeth deposed as criminal and counterfeit monarch (pretensa Anglia regina), contribute to the impression that “Elizabeth I was a woman in danger”; Haigh, Elizabeth I, 177-187; see G. R. Elton, The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 423-425. All the same, the pope’s formal absolving of English Catholics’ duty to obey their queen hardened the conflict between English Protestantism and the menace feared to exist both around and within England, inviting puritan writers to raise the alarm against Catholic infiltration and lay the blame for England’s vulnerability on its failure to complete the reform of its church; Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 111; Ryrie, Age of Reformation, 247-48; also Wiener, “The Beleaguered Isle,” 27-30. The second, expanded edition of Foxe’s Book of Martyrs enjoyed the support of the crown as the centerpiece of its own propaganda efforts against Catholicism. Foxxe himself was not inclined to challenge Elizabethan church order; The first volume of the ecclesiastical history containing the actes and monumentes of thynge passed in euery kynges tyme in this realme, especially in the Church of England principally to be noted : with a full discourse of such
for a complete overhaul of ecclesiastical polity as the means of safeguarding church and society were the authors of *An Admonition to the Parliament* in 1572. The basis for a decade of polemical exchange between Cartwright and John Whitgift, leading to the latter’s eventual promotion to Archbishop of Canterbury as the queen’s darling, the original *Admonition* was an attempt by Field and Wilcox to make the principles outlined in Cartwright’s Cambridge lectures more widely accessible to the general public. Field took credit for the *Admonition*’s more acerbic instances of satire, which come mostly in the second part, a rebuttal of “popish abuses” remaining in the Church of England. Answering those who contended that nothing in the current Prayer Book was unscriptural, Field provides numerous examples of how “this boke is an unperfecte booke, culled & picked out of that popishe dunghil, the Masse booke full of all abhominations.” These examples include mocking descriptions of the current liturgy, persecutions, horrible troubles, the sufferynge of martyrs, and other thinges incident, touchyng aswel the sayd Church of England as also Scotland, and all other foreine nations, from the primitiue tyme till the reigne of K. Henry VIII (London: John Day, 1570; STC 11223). See Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation*, 247-49; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 121.


14 Ibid., 21.
emphasizing its excess, disorder, and lack of edification: “they toss the Psalms in most places like tennis balls,” and “when Jesus is named, then of goth the cappe, and downe goth the knees, with such a scraping on the ground, that they cannot hear a good while after.”

According to Field and Wilcox, the problem with moderates, who maintained that the Prayer Book reflects biblical teaching, is that they operate on the faulty principle that whatever is not expressly forbidden by Scripture is permissible in worship. Only practices God has explicitly commanded in Scripture are permitted in his church, such that God’s people should always be concerned about “bringing and placing in Gods church those things only, which the Lord himself in his word commandeth.”

Three of the Admonition’s recurring themes are of particular interest to this study. The first, as already noted, is the fundamental incompatibility of the Church of England with scriptural teaching on lawful worship practices. This provides the basis for a call to

---

15 Ibid., 29.

16 Ibid., 21.

17 Ibid., 8. It is worthwhile to compare how this position on things indifferent (adiaphora) in worship seems more narrow not only than the one held by Luther, who counseled patience even with the presence of the Mass in worship, but even that of Zurich and Geneva. English readers had translations of letters by Bullinger and Calvin forbidding attendance at the Mass but urging flexibility apart from the gross sacrilege of the Roman rite; Two epistles one of Henry Bullenger (1544; STC 4079.5); see chapter three for a discussion of these letters. For Luther, see “Eight Sermons at Wittenberg, 1522,” LW 51:69-100; WA 10.3:1-64. Although Calvin made polity an essential aspect of the true church’s existence and function in Quatre sermons and spent considerable time detailing his own presbyterial view of the fourfold office from his reading of Scripture (see chapter two for a discussion), he never goes so far as to insist that a single expression of polity—including his own—should be imposed on the church de jure divino; see Paul D. L. Avis, The Church in the Theology of the Reformers (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 114-115. Pettegree also points out that Calvin himself was actually quite moderate on questions of diversity with respect to the external form of the true church, never insisting on total conformity to a single polity; La Réception du Calvinisme,” 261-263.
further reform, which must go beyond merely rejecting popish ceremonies and include the positive embrace of only those forms of worship and church polity commanded by God. Wilcox and Field take care to distinguish the queen, who receives the benefit of the doubt, from the “Lordly Lordes” and church officials who hold the English church captive. Such token restraint cannot mask the treatise’s extreme demands, as the call for reform extends to the very heart of the church’s structure, prescribing a complete reorganization at all levels. Hence a second recurring theme of the Admonition is the abolition of the episcopate, whose clerics have turned their attention away from the proper administration of preaching, sacraments, and discipline in order to pursue personal glory, ease, and prestige. Wilcox’s preamble delineates how preaching and the sacraments—the outward marks of the church—have been defaced by prelacy, requiring a return to the “primitive church” in its “ancient puritie & simplicitie.” In earlier times, the church’s ministry and governance centered on three offices to which men were elected by individual congregations: ministers, elders, and deacons. Not only was the present polity unbiblical, it has led to abuses such as monetizing excommunication—inevitable when this is entrusted to a single bishop and not reserved as a last resort in

---

18 Puritan Manifestoes, 1-37.

19 The irony here, of course, is that the queen, not the bishops or the Lords of parliament, was most directly responsible for impeding of puritan-friendly legislation in 1571; see n. 11 above.

20 Puritan Manifestoes, 11-19.

21 Ibid.
cases of church discipline. The objection that a church might maintain true doctrine apart from proper polity is rejected, lest “our wordes and works be devorsed” and Christ not be honored by reigning through a true ministry. It was not new to criticize episcopal polity and clerical benefices in favor of a presbyterial polity similar, yet not identical, to that of Continental Reformed churches. However, this argument was framed in the Admonition with renewed energy as the subject of great urgency given the perceived Catholic threats to the church. A third recurring theme capitalized on this sense of danger by promising worse if the course of reform set forth was not put into practice. This threat cut with two edges. The first reflects an interplay between fear of the church’s enemies and a commitment to divine sovereignty. To be sure, punishment for neglecting faithful reform of the church will come from its enemies. But ultimately God will respond to the church’s unfaithfulness by delivering the church to its foes. The

---

22 Ibid., 12-18.

23 Ibid., 37. On the logic of rejecting the possibility doctrinal reform without a renovation of praxis, which was a fixture in the Elizabethan presbyterian case against conformity, see Lake, Anglicans and Puritans, 25-26.

24 Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 101-121. See Calvin’s extensive vision for a fourfold office of pastors, elders, doctors, and deacons as the biblical teaching and primitive practice, over and against the abuses of the Roman prelacy in Inst. 4:3-4. While non-separating presbyterians, like Field and Wilcox, looked to theorists like Calvin for the basic principles of their church polity, their vision was always adapted to England’s unique situation of Royal Supremacy. On the more general question of how Continental Reformed theology took on a distinctive flavor in England owing to that nation’s peculiar combination of church and state, and its manner of reform, see Collinson, “England and International Calvinism,” 197-223. For a perspective that questions Collinson’s British exceptionalism by pointing out that Reformed faith outside of England was not a uniform monolith, and that the “Geneva ideal” never existed anywhere—not even in Geneva—without distinctive adaptation to local circumstances and culture, see Pettegree, “La Réception du Calvinisme,” 261-263. See also Benedict, Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed, 230-254.


265
Admonition warns of God’s retribution for failing to “altogether remove the whole Antichrist, both head, body and branch.”26 Piecemeal reform was no reform at all. The second danger to the church was embodied by the authors themselves. They threaten that, so long as the “memorie of Egypt styl amongst us” remains in superstitious and unlawful practices, they will not hesitate to suffer—even to die—defending God’s truth.27 It is no surprise that Field and Wilcox were denied their appeal for a hearing with the queen, being instead apprehended and sentenced to a year in Newgate Prison.28

The Admonition’s promise of a fight with no possibility of compromise gave rise to the “Admonition Controversy,” a public exchange between Cartwright and Whitgift in various “replies” and “replies to replies.”29 For the purposes of the present study, the Admonition was an early registry of concerns that resurface in Field’s 1579 translation of Quatre sermons, though not in ways one might expect given his open bellicosity in 1572.

6.1.3 Field’s Translations and Prefaces c.1576-c.1583

The literary war between the London presbyterians and their opponents resulting from the Admonition displayed Field’s skill as a propagandist and his

---

26 Puritan Manifestoes, 18-19.

27 Ibid., 35-36.

28 Collinson, Godly People, 340; Pearson, Thomas Cartwright, 61-62. During their imprisonment, the duo was permitted to receive visitors and grew in popular stature as leaders of the presbyterian cause.

29 Lake, Anglicans and Puritans, 13-66; McGinn, Admonition Controversy, 49-109; Pearson, Thomas Cartwright, 122-166.
uncompromising position on matters of doctrine and practice. Field’s whereabouts following his release from prison in 1573 until his emergence in London in 1577 remain something of a mystery. From 1576 until the end of his life, Field’s literary persona was characterized by both the confidence and the anxiety many puritans felt with the appointment of Archbishop Grindal in 1575, Grindal’s suspension in 1577, and the successive appointments of conservative bishops openly hostile to puritan sensibilities.

30 Collinson, Godly People, 336-337, 347-355. Field’s activity as the principal behind-the-scenes organizer of the presbyterian movement was recognized and set out in detail by Richard Bancroft in two tracts published after Field’s death from notes scandalizing the puritan movement originally prepared for the regime’s response to the “Marprelate Controversy” of 1588-1589; see Bancroft, survey of the pretended holy discipline; and idem, Daengerous Positions. Also Collinson, Elizabeth Puritan Movement, 423; and William Pierce, An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts: A Chapter in the Evolution of Religious and Civil Liberty in England (London: A. Constable, 1908), 249-50. Field is further credited with being the chief collector and editor of a compendium of manuscripts, spanning the years 1565-89, intended eventually to be published as a history of the puritan movement, account of their sufferings and apologia for their cause; Collinson, Godly People, 353-355. A small portion of these 257 documents was published in 1593 by a foreign press as A part of a register, with Albert Peel providing the invaluable service in 1915 of calendaring and annotating the register as a whole, which remains in manuscript form; A Parte of a Register, contayninge sondrie memorable Matters (Middleburgh: Schilders[?], 1593); A Seconde Parte 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, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915).

31 Collinson, Godly People, 347. See also Peel, Seconde Parte of a Register, I:105.

32 Haigh, Elizabeth I, 51-53; Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 191-209. Grindal, a former Marian exile, clashed with the queen and was suspended over his refusal to suppress “prophesyings” meetings in 1577. Collinson cites the appointments of Edmund Freke (Norwich, 1575), John Aylmer (London, 1576), John Piers (Rochester, 1576), and John Whitgift (Worcester, 1577) as examples of new bishops “glad to adopt as their own the queen’s view that the status quo must be strictly and eagerly maintained against both papists and puritans,” and whose appointments both “led to a rift between the episcopate and the protestant nobility and gentry” and suggest that “the queen was now taking a more direct interest in bishop-making” (201). Collinson has pinpointed this episode, which left the English church without an effective clerical head for six years, as marking a clear shift away from “monarchical republicanism” toward a more authoritarian approach to governance by the crown; “The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I,” Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 69:2 (1987): 394-424; also the examination of Collinson’s “monarchical republic” thesis by various scholars in John F. McDiarmid, ed. The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).
When Cartwright’s chief literary antagonist, John Whitgift, ascended to Canterbury upon Grindal’s death in 1583, this effectively ended a period of relative calm between factions in the church dating back to the moderate progressivism of Grindal’s early years. Open hostilities broke out again between conformists and advocates for presbyterianism. Field’s prominence as a leader in the fight against subscription after 1583 stands in stark contrast with his more circumspect public tone throughout the decade immediately following the Admonition. Upon closer inspection, however, the Englishman’s publications during this period reveal that he did not set aside his ideals. Field displayed much skill in adapting to the various pressures he faced, all while advancing the same platform he was imprisoned for presenting so audaciously in 1572.

Between 1576 and 1583 ten new works appeared with Field named as the author, translator, or scholar supplying a preface. More often than not, these were produced to

---

33 The suspension of Grindal, sympathizer to the reform cause whose advent to Canterbury in many ways legitimized their position in church, contributed to new concerns among religious reformers to influence the direction of church and court, over against the more conservative forces that would eventually prevail in the queen’s new ecclesiastical appointments. On the complex domestic and international factors surrounding the Grindal affair, which converged to exacerbate anxieties among those who were more reform-minded, see Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 198-200; also Christopher W. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 124-126. See also, Calderwood, “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 87-89.


35 On Field’s open written challenges to Whitgift’s subscription policies and his involvement in efforts to establish presbyterian assemblies within the Church of England, both of which were causes that occupied Field’s energies until his death in 1588, see Collinson, *Godly People*, 356-370.

address specific circumstances. For example, Field marked the occasion of Edward Dering’s death in 1576 with a collection of the London puritan minister’s lectures.37 Provocative works by Catholics, such as Robert Parson’s Reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to church (1580) and William Allen’s 1581 Apologie for English Catholic seminaries, received almost immediate, harsh responses from Field.38 Field’s translation of Caspar


37 Dering, Xxvii. Lectures.

38 Parsons, A Brief Discours; Allen, An Apologie and True Declaration. See chapter four, n. 83. In his Caveat for Parsons Hovvlet, Field addresses Parson’s charge that he was deliberately inciting violence against Catholics. Refusing to back down, Field explains in his “Epistle Dedicatorie” to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, that
Olevian’s sermons on the Apostles’ Creed begins with a reply to Allen. Field takes particular offense to Allen’s claim that the English seminaries abroad are dedicated to producing priests devoted to “preaching, teaching, catechising, and ministring the sacraements” and are commanded “not to moue any sedition,” objecting that the sine qua non of Roman priesthood is not teaching, but supporting the Mass as sacrifice. Further, Roman Catholicism is intrinsically seditious in confusing spiritual and temporal authority, usurping the latter without license in its claims of papal supremacy. Field’s reference to the 1580 London earthquake in a preface to Theodore Beza’s teaching on the sacraments provides another example of the translator’s sensitivity in using context to his advantage. Dated two weeks after the earthquake, Field’s preface warns not to accept naturalistic explanations for the earthquake, God’s punishment for the “murthers … whordomes, incest, and Sodomitry most beastly and outrageous” common in a nation ungrateful for the gospel. The English came “before God lyke hypocrites” rather than as he was not seeking violence for its own sake but simply stressing the duty of those in power to defend the truth with all necessary measures; Caueat for Parsons Hovvlet, n.pag.

39 In his preface, Field hardly mentions the text he brings to his readers, despite its distinction as the only sixteenth-century English version of the great Heidelberg theologian’s works. Addressing Ambrose Dudley (d.1590), Robert’s brother and Earl of Warwick, Field juxtaposes God’s true church with Rome’s “synagogue, whorish and disobedient,” warning against Allen’s misleading and flattering words toward the queen and her kingdom, which reflect the Catholic proclivity to “couer their poison with hony” and to “kisse and kill togeather”; Olevian, Exposition of the Symbole of the Apostles, 6, 9, 12.

40 Ibid., 12-13, 20-23. At one point Field apologizes for the length of his preface, which has “passed the boundes of an epistle” due to the “shamelesse” provocations of “these creaking papsists” (23).
“instructed and true humbled Christians.” Finally, a tragedy at a bear-baiting show in London, which claimed several lives on 13 January 1583, prompted a call for stricter Sabbath observance. Field laments that “Theaters should be full, and churches emptie.”

This sampling of works bearing Field’s name is characteristic of his public tone from 1576 to 1583. One finds a far less extreme voice than the one threatening martyrdom in 1572. This is not to say that Field did not continue to appeal for reform through these writings. Rather, he backed off directly attacking English prelacy, focusing instead on strict public morality and the threat of seditious Catholicism. This strategy had the advantage of pre-empting opposition from bishops, who could hardly afford to appear pro-Catholic. Funneling his polemic into a virulent anti-Catholicism allowed Field to keep in step with prevailing popular sentiment by ostentatiously claiming his loyalty to queen and country. By juxtaposing insincere Catholic “flattery” like Allen’s to actual Catholic expressions of rebellion, Field stressed Catholics’ willingness to “adventure not onely their bodies, goodes and lands, but euen their soules,” to “have her Maiesties life.” Regularly parading events of the past decade

41 Beza, Other Parte of Christian Questions, n.pag. The earthquake, which originated not directly in the city but in London’s vicinity, occurred on 16 April 1580. Field’s prefatory epistle, and dedicated to Catherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, is dated 1 May of the same year.

42 A Godly Exhortation, 2v.


44 Mornay, A Notable Treatise of the Church, n.pag. In his preface, Field cites examples of seditious behavior, including the papal bulls pronouncing the queen’s excommunication and illegitimacy to rule, slanderous
before the public in connection with current events permitted Field to stress the urgency of a present menace within English society: pro-Catholic sentiment that threatened “not only the Church of God amongst vs … [but also] this flourishing common weale, and her Majesties most royall person, crowne and dignitie.” 45 This persistent theme of loyalty to God, to Elizabeth I, and to the Church of England framed everything Field wrote in his prefaces and treatises during this period. Anti-Catholicism provided a common cause between Field and his readers. No one could risk appearing disloyal to, as it were, God and country. Hence Field exhibited great confidence in calling on those with influence to enforce conformity upon recusing Catholics, who had once been more likely to “goe to Church, & shew their conformitie,” whereas now they simply opt out and act with “impunitie, for that they haue beene winked at, fauored, and spared.” 46 Field’s 1582 preface to Oliver Pigg’s treatise on suffering from 1 Pet 4, published to commemorate the 1580 earthquake, rejects celebrating Catholics executed for treason as martyrs: they did not die for a righteous cause; their “persecution” was actually God’s punishment. 47

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.; also Caueat for Parsons Hovvlet, n.pag. See also Walsham, Church Papists, 73-76.

47 Pigg, A Comfortable Treatise n.pag. On this theme in “I. P.”’s 1581 translation of Quatre sermons, see chapter four.
Field’s anti-Catholic rhetoric played to the masses and reflected the *status quo*.

Yet, true to his reformist pedigree, Field’s positioning himself within the mainstream of popular sentiment did not curtail his interest in changing the way things were. The examples above illustrate both Field’s concern with moral laxity as a symptom of England’s ingratitude for the gospel and his boldness to use his prefaces to call on members of the nobility with puritan sympathies to use their influence to effect change.

At the same time, apart from an occasional reference to the need for restoring the “Lord’s discipline” to the church so that Rome’s “spreading poyson be retsrained,” one finds nothing like the *Admonition’s* explicit call for upending the ecclesiastical *status quo* as the means of avoiding God’s judgment. Field treads lightly on the topics of prelacy and liturgy, even coming across as a voice for conformity vis-à-vis recusant Catholics. Dire warnings of God’s judgment and the accompanying calls for greater humility, gratitude, and zeal for “sound doctrine” and “God’s truth” remain far shy of insisting that such faithfulness is incompatible with bishops, a point that would become more explicit in presbyterian polemic following the subscription crisis of 1583/84. This certainly should not be taken as a sign that Field had changed his views on prelacy or

---

48 Wiener has demonstrated a similar anxiety over and hatred toward Catholicism in publications arising from all corners of society, not merely the “small cliques of special interest groups” one would expect, such as puritans or the presbyterians among them; “The Beleaguered Isle,” 29 et passim.


the Prayer Book, nor that he simply mellowed over time. Collinson notes that Field’s “new respectability” belies the fact that “the works which appeared under his own name probably represent the least part of his propagandist activity” during the years in question.\textsuperscript{51} The \textit{Admonition} reappeared in a new edition in 1578 and Field “had a hand in most, if not all, of the many tracts printed by Robert Waldegrave, the puritan printer \textit{par excellence}, which are of the nature of presbyterian party manifestoes,” including an explicit attack on the institution of the diocesan bishop taken from a letter by Theodore Beza in 1580.\textsuperscript{52} The disconnect between Field’s anonymous publishing activities and the works that bore his name suggests that Field’s public image was a deliberate attempt to appear less extreme and, correspondingly, less dangerous than the enemies to which he repeatedly draws attention in his prefaces, translations, and tracts. This was a shrewd approach in the wake of Grindal’s suspension and the uncertainty this created for puritan sympathies at court, in the church, and in society at large. Field repeatedly linked his name and the movement he represented with the anti-Catholic mainstream of English public opinion. This significantly diminished his public profile as one who

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 351-352.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 352-353; This latter work was reprinted in 1585 as \textit{The Judgement of a Most Reuerend and Learned Man From Beyond the Seas Concerning a Threefold Order of Bishops,With a Declaration of Certaine Other Waightie Points, Concerning the Discipline and Gouernement of the Church.} (London: Robert Waldegrave, 1585; STC 2021). See also Calderwood, “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 88.}
threatened disorder or subversion through ecclesiastical upheaval. Field’s oft-repeated insistence that he simply sought the church’s peace could push his recent imprisonment for inciting divisiveness in the church further back into the recesses of public memory. This seems to have been the point. The present chapter demonstrates that Field’s 1579 translation of Quatre sermons served a particular function in this public relations campaign, carefully calculated to rehabilitate the image of an erstwhile extremist. Field sought to portray his party as the most loyal to Elizabeth I, her kingdom, and the church over which the queen sat, over against foes she, Field, and all England had in common.

6.1.4 John Field and the English Reception of Calvin

Field produced two translations of Calvin, both of which appeared in 1579. In addition to translating Quatre sermons, Field introduced an English readership to Calvin’s Treze sermons de l’élection gratuity de Dieu of 1560. This places Field’s publishing campaign within the well-documented swell in the Genevan reformer’s popularity in print, such that editions of his works would surpass the total of all other Continental

53 Field was well aware that “the Admonitioners and their supporters are being charged with heresy, Donatism, Anabaptism, etc.”; Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright*, 61. Hence it is no mere coincidence that he brought the same charges against other groups, suggesting that these were the true threats. See below.

54 Indeed, Field goes so far, via his preface to Leicester, as to dedicates his 1579 translation of De Mornay to “the Church of England,” calling on Leicester on the latter to take up an official campaign against English Catholics for the sake of the Church; Mornay, *A Notable Treatise of the Church*, n. pag.

55 Geneva: Antoine Cercia. The original work was the second half of a publication also containing Traité de la prédestination eternelle and the Traité de la providence; see BC II:773-775 (60/12).
reformers combined.\textsuperscript{56} Although the majority of these Calvin translations were produced by “forward Protestants” like Field, whose presbyterian movement was in full swing in the 1570s, it is significant to note that Calvin’s translators included those committed to the establishment, such as the prolific Arthur Golding, quite happy both to embrace a Calvinist identity and to conform to the Elizabethan settlement.\textsuperscript{57} Such was the “Calvinist consensus” within the English church, wherein a range of perspectives existed concerning what it meant to claim the Genevan reformer as a theological authority and forebear, with key differences emerging on which of Calvin’s teachings were central, how doctrine related to practice, and how these issues converged to define one’s conception of the Christian community and its boundaries.\textsuperscript{58} Peter Lake has examined the strength, limitations, and diversity of the “Calvinist hegemony” in an Elizabethan church united by formal doctrinal commitment, yet harboring widely

\textsuperscript{56} Pettegree, “La Réception Du Calvinisme,” 270; also Higman, “Calvin’s Works in Translation,” 87-88. For the popularity of Calvin in England beginning in the 1570s, see chapter four. This section will not repeat the fuller treatment of the English reception of Calvin presented there.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. 97; Pettegree, “La Réception Du Calvinisme,” 274. On the division of English publishers according to conservative or progressive faction in the church, Green notes, “In the late sixteenth century, staunch supporters of the established church like Whitgift, Bancroft, Saravia, and others tended to go to a publisher like Christopher Barker, John Wolfe, or Henry Bynneman rather than Thomas Man, Thomas Woodcock, and Lucas Harrison, who specialized in the publication of works by ‘godly’ authors such as Edward Dering, John Field, George Gifford, Eusebius Paget, William Perkins, Henry Smith, and many others”; \textit{Print and Protestantism}, 20. See also Calderwood, ‘Elizabethan Protestant Press’, 211-212, 216, 221, 223.

divergent views concerning the nature and implications of this Calvinistic identity.\textsuperscript{59} Field’s use of Calvin’s sermons in 1579—both the thirteen on election and the four on Nicodemism—converged to present English readers with a definite portrait of Calvin and his teaching that related these to the English church’s identity. In this regard, Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic was employed to serve two distinct, but interrelated goals, namely to influence readers’ perception of 1.) Calvin and 2.) Calvin’s present translator. This will become clear as we examine Field’s \textit{Foure Sermons} in detail and consider its message in light of the translator’s activities and ambitions in 1579.

\textbf{6.2 Field’s Preface}

Field’s “Epistle Dedicatorie” is addressed to Henry Hastings, Third Earl of Huntingdon. It comprises a tightly presented seven pages in the original. Field anticipates readers’ questions by immediately naming and addressing the odd decision to translate an anti-Nicodemite work during a time when “God in mercy hath geuen vs peace, and set vs at libertie from that Romish yoke.” Field readily grants that “the Argumentes whereof bee not fitt e and agreeable … to these times.”\textsuperscript{60} The remainder of

\textsuperscript{59} “Calvinism and the English Church,” 35-47. Lake’s basic distinction between “creedal” and “experimental” predestinarians helps situate Field’s profile as one of the latter. See also Wallace, \textit{Puritans and Predestination}, 36-55. Wallace notes Field’s insistence, following the exiles Robert Crowley and John Knox, that predestination be published and preached as an essential doctrine of the faith (44).

\textsuperscript{60} Field and Calvin, \textit{Foure Sermons of Maister Iohn Calvin, Entreating of Matters Very Profitable for Out Time, as May Bee Seene By the Preface: With a Briefe Exposition of the Lxxvii. Psalme. Translated Out of Frenche Into Englishe By Iohn Field}, 2r. While initially disarming, Field’s apparent concession that his translation is irrelevant is followed immediately by an argument to the contrary. This actually functions as an implicit criticism of his readers, whose initial assumptions about Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism might be taken as proof that they continue in comfortable denial of the threat present among them. Field’s opening echoes Calvin’s
the preface is an argument to the contrary, as Field portrays Nicodemism as a present threat to England. He characterizes the Nicodemite mindset as an indifference to religion that will incur divine judgment. Field does not name the 1572 *Admonition to Parliament*. Yet it is not difficult to see the concerns of that earlier work driving his critique of English religion here. Just as Horne had in 1553, Field raises the alarm against Catholic domination of England. He presents this threat as a foregone conclusion: the faithful should expect to endure persecution that will result in many martyrs. The target of Field’s preface, however, is a subset of the Church of England, which he parses into two groups. The group bound for testing and trials is God’s faithful remnant. The other, upon whom Field fixes his harsh eye, will be exposed with God’s enemies in a coming judgment that they are responsible for inviting. These are the “Newters which haue made a couenant wth their owns heartes … to be of all religions.” He juxtaposes such “Infidelles” to “true Christians” who would die before bowing “the Knee too Baal.”

Whereas Horne’s foes were openly in positions of power in Marian England, Field must find a way to communicate danger and impending disaster despite the opening address to his Geneva congregation in sermon one. Gunther notes this resonance as well, but fails to appreciate how Field is actually using this framing device quite differently than Calvin, who never turns his anti-Nicodemite argument against his congregation by accusing them of dissembling their faith or lacking true conviction; *Reformation Unbound*, 114. Field’s ability to recycle Calvin’s opening to *Quatre sermons* for an English context further demonstrates how *Quatre sermons* could have functioned as a work addressing a Genevan audience in 1552, not simply a French one. See my argument for this in chapter two.

---

61 Ibid., 3v. Calderwood’s brief examination of *Foure Sermons* notes that this preface, “infused with the spirit of the Book of Martyrs,” was Field’s criticism of “compatriots” for “religious indifference”; “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 325-326.
apparent blessings of peace for English Protestants. Hence he takes care not to alienate his readers. He acknowledges, in the opening lines of his preface, that they indeed live in a time when God has caused “the beames of his glorious Gospel to spread far and wide, to the great comfort of many, and his owne everlasting glory.”62 Within two pages, however, Field exposes the false security of this sunny landscape, lamenting the true state of English religion, which has been marked “these twenty and odde yeeres” by being “too ful” of those who “have no conscience nor care of any religion” and “have not learned to make any difference of religion.”63 This indifference, neglect, and lack of conviction becomes the hallmark of Field’s English Nicodemite who, despite being situated in a markedly different setting, shares with Calvin’s opponents a willingness to abandon Christ at a moment’s notice “so that they may liue at ease.”64 Field seamlessly moves from conceding his readers’ impressions of England’s glorious revival to raising a clarion alarm concerning the hidden but deadly threat beneath the surface: those in their midst who, when they realize that the Lord does not promise “ease, wealth, honour … and favour of men,” will come to Christ only by night—“like Nicodemus”—or even crucify him along with the “proud Scribes and Pharisees.”65 This cancer among the

62 Ibid., 2r.

63 Ibid., 2r-v.

64 Ibid., 2v. Field was not alone among Elizabethan Protestants in invoking the Nicodemite trope; see Gunther, Reformation Unbound, 98-129. Yet he was the only one to use a translation of Calvin to engage this topic. For my analysis of Elizabethan and Marian anti-Nicodemite sources, see chapter three.

65 Foure Sermons, 2v-3r.
godly, Field protests, is the reason that his fresh translation of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings is timely and necessary. Field exposes this threat to prepare England for the travails ahead. He acknowledges prior English translations of *Quatre sermons*, but denies being aware of these until “I had almost finished.” This is an astonishing claim, which a reader must take in light of Field’s concern to justify his work. One doubts Field’s claim to ignorance. In any case, his source is Calvin’s original French, which Field insists is sufficiently different from the Latin source used by others to warrant a new version.

Having identified the presence of this Nicodemite menace—re-conceptualized as those within a Protestant church who lack zeal—Field devotes the rest of his preface to envisioning the bloody consequences of this threat. The prognosis is as grim as is it is inevitable. Just as “there is no sommer but bringeth a Winter,” the church at peace must always prepare for a time when, “euen to the powering forth of our blood,” it must “striue for the truth of our God, yea too death it selfe.” This cyclical view of history—the “order of nature”—injects a fatalistic note to the imagined Catholic takeover of England, when the “cold starued Papistes” come “out of their holes” to “kil and persecute the children of God.” The time is coming when peace and prosperity will

66 Ibid., 3r.

67 For a comparison of Calvin’s original and Baduel’s Latin translation of 1553, see chapter three.

68 Ibid., 4r.

69 Ibid., 3r-4r.
give way to the true “happinesse” of martyrdom, bringing “the fructifying and multiplying seed” that is the blood of God’s true “sonnes of liberty.” The faithful would do well to be ready. Calvin’s sermons will “prepare vs against the time to come,” as a reminder that even the cruelties exacted by God’s enemies are but God’s means “to correct vs with the fire of aduersitie, that we may be purged frō our foule corruption.”

As with Horne’s preface twenty-six years earlier, Field portrays England as walking a fine line between divine providence and the ever-present threat of papal oppression. Only, in Horne’s case, that threat was clearly manifest, embodied in the Catholic monarchy’s restructuring of the church’s polity and worship. With Field, there seems to be only the anticipation of a future turn for the worse and the exhortation that his readers steel themselves for this coming disaster. Or does Field mean to say more?

While this vision of dramatic brutality and oppression in the days ahead threatens to overshadow other themes, one should not miss the point that Field raises frequently in this preface: this grim will future result from tolerating an evil presently in their midst. The Nicodemites, who “bende them selues too serue all times,” loyal to “the Gospell or the Masse, Turkcisme or Christianisme” depending on whichever demands less of them, are the corruption at the heart of English religion that God will strike with

70 Ibid., 4r.

71 Ibid., 3r. See Heb 12 for the theme of God’s fatherly discipline. See see chapter three for persecution portrayed in Tudor polemical works as a means of God’s punishment and route to God’s favor.
bloody judgment in order to purify his people. Who were these dangerous, but invisible, “Newters”? We will never know for sure. They remain faceless and nameless apart from the unflattering, ultimately non-traceable, labels given by Field and others. Yet a strong candidate emerges when one examines *Foure sermons* vis-à-vis his other publications, especially the French translations Field produced that same year.

### 6.3 Field’s Translation

Of the five English translations of *Quatre sermons* produced in the sixteenth century, Field’s is the most complete, including all four sermons as well as Calvin’s preface and concluding Exposition of Psalm 87. Field’s work is also unique as the only sixteenth-century translation of *Quatre sermons* in a vernacular language produced directly from Calvin’s French. As for fidelity to his source, Field’s rendering is fairly wooden, sticking close to the Geneva reformer’s word choice and syntax. Field relies heavily on simple cognates throughout, suggesting either a concern to appear scrupulously literal or, perhaps more likely, a lack of time. By Field’s own admission concerning his other French translations, his approach is “to be plaine & simple, keeping my self to mine Auĉthour, both in wordes and meaning, so farre foorth as the propriety of the tongue woulde suffer me,” adopting such a literal and simple approach both for the benefit of “the vnlearned” and because he is “not ignorant vvhat an hard thing it is

---

72 Ibid., 2v.

73 On the intrinsic invisibility of Nicodemites, see chapter one.
to translate well.” At the same time, there is enough playfulness in the form of minor additions and embellishments to mark it as the product of the translator’s own mind, if not exactly “adventurous,” as Francis Higman has described another of Field’s translations. As with Horne’s translation two decades earlier, the points where Field clearly diverges from Calvin furnish the most fruitful basis for analysis. In what follows, I demonstrate how Field’s translation presents a coherent message in conjunction with his preface and the other collection of Calvin’s sermons Field produced that same year.

From beginning to end, Field generally is content to let Calvin speak for himself. One is hard-pressed to find many examples of a heavy interpretive or editorializing hand, whether in correcting Calvin or putting words, as it were, into Calvin’s mouth in the form of new ideas. At the same time, Field frequently takes what he believes to be Calvin’s intent and adds a word or two by way of emphasis. These pervasive doublets rarely alter Calvin’s meaning. In some cases, slight changes are introduced to render colloquialisms into equivalent English expressions. In a few examples, Field’s additions bend concepts present only by implication in Calvin toward more explicitly addressing the English situation, better serving Field’s polemical concerns in that context.

74 Mornay, A Notable Treatise of the Church, n.pag.

75 “Calvin’s Works in Translation,” 94.
Francis Higman credits Field with producing “the best schoolboy howler” in all English translations of Calvin.\textsuperscript{76} Thus it is unsurprising that here, in Field’s work on \textit{Quatre sermons}, there are several instances where he simply gets the French wrong, although whether out of carelessness or linguistic incompetence is not entirely clear. Two examples will suffice. The first is from sermon one, where Calvin critiques the practice of secret Masses modified to remove elements offensive to evangelicals:

\begin{verbatim}
Mesmes ils le doibvent desia sentir, et ie m’en rapporte aux poinctes et picqueures qu’ils en ont en leurs consciences. Yea they ought already to feele thē, and I reporte me to the prickes & stingings they have in their consciences.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{verbatim}

Next, in the first half of sermon two, Calvin inveighs against those who reject Christ by thinking themselves unworthy of suffering for the gospel after Christ’s example:

\begin{verbatim}
Nostre sensualité ne peut yci mordre; mais tant y a que ce sont les vrayes armoiries de la noblesse des cieulx. Our voluptuousnesse is here biten and can perceiue nothing: for these are the true armes of heavenly nobility [i.e., prisons, banishments, etc.].\textsuperscript{78}
\end{verbatim}

There are only a handful of places where Field either overtly corrects Calvin or feels the need to intrude with an obvious editorial comment. He corrects the biblical reference for sermon one, changes Calvin’s quotation of Is 60:8 in sermon three and the

\textsuperscript{76} “Calvin’s Works in Translation,” 94. The example is from Field’s translation of \textit{Treze Sermons}.\

\textsuperscript{77} CO 8:387; Fielde and Calvin, \textit{Foure Sermons}, 8v (emphasis added).\

\textsuperscript{78} CO 8:398; Fielde and Calvin, \textit{Foure Sermons}, 18r (emphasis added).
reformer’s comments on Ps 87:1, and adds two marginal notes toward the end of sermons two and three, respectively. The original edition of Quatre Sermons misattributes the sermon text, “Je ne communiqueray point à lemurs sacrifices de sang, et lemurs noms ne passeront point par ma bouche,” to the third (“le troiseme”) verse of Ps 16, a mistaken reference that Horne and other translators repeat. Field’s translation indicates that the sermon is from the “4 verse of the 16 Psalme.”

A more significant change occurs in sermon three, where Calvin writes that Isaiah “says in chapter 60” that “Christians” are like doves who fly back to their windows. Field demurs, altering “Christians” in Calvin’s theological interpretation to the more generic “children of God.”

In the same vein, in his Exposition of Psalm 87 Calvin rejects interpretations that identify the holy hills described as God’s “foundations” with “the church or the Temple.” Field’s translation eliminates Calvin’s reference to the church as equivalent to the Temple. These changes may indicate Field’s discomfort with Calvin’s readiness to identify the contemporary church with Israel’s experience in the latter’s reading of the Old Testament, although this hermeneutical approach abounds throughout Quatre sermons and Field makes no effort to correct it elsewhere. Calvin’s reference to a young

---

79 CO 8:377-378; Foure Sermons, 1r.
80 CO 8:413; Foure Sermons, 38r.
82 On Calvin’s approach to the Old Testament, and his use of David here, see chapter two.
man from Geneva who was subsequently martyred at Tournai (“Tournay”) invites geographical assistance from Field in the form of a marginal comment: “This is called also Dornick.” Then, where Calvin favorably compares soldiers who endure hardship and risk their lives to fulfill their duty, having “but served Satan,” to those Christians who refuse even to be inconvenienced for the cause of Christ, Field feels the need to insert the only marginal clarification in his translation: “This is to bee understood of evil & wicked soouldiers, that haue not the fear of GOD before their eyes.” Calvin, of course, does not mean to suggest that all military service is opposed to God’s design. Yet his emphasis here on soldiers’ loyalty to immoral causes could be mistaken to mean that all military commitments are satanic. This is precisely the misunderstanding Field wants to avoid. Thus the Englishman’s marginal commentary should be understood as making clear the broader implications of Calvin’s thought supported elsewhere in the Genevan reformer’s thinking, rather than as a correction or modification of Calvin’s position.

Similarly, we find numerous additions of words or phrases that Field supplies in order to provide a smoother translation, identify a colloquial saying, or add a point of

83 CO 8:407; Foure Sermons, 30v.

84 CO 8:436; Foure Sermons, 48v.

85 See, for example, Inst. 4.20.10-12, where Calvin lays out the necessity of the civil magistrate to conduct war in certain circumstances and the lawfulness of military service as a necessity by God’s design.
emphasis. In sermon one, for example, Field expands upon Calvin’s somewhat more
elegant original in order to help his readers track with Calvin’s train of thought:

En l’instance qu’ils font du mot,
une seul passage suffit pour
les redarguer.  

But the objection that they make,
taking occasion of one woorde,
one place only shall be sufficient
to reprooue them.86

To Calvin’s exhortation that the faithful “moan night and day” ("gems nuict et iour")
Field adds “with David,” tightening the connection Calvin has drawn between David
and believers in every age.87 Calvin’s description of David’s predicament, facing
temptations that might well have caused him to “lose his mind” (“esgarer son esprit”)
warrants an explanatory comment from Field: David’s temptations “might well haue
shaken his mind, and haue caused him to stray from God.”88 In other places, adding a simple
“as the common saying is,” or a parenthetical “as they say,” flags colloquialisms that
might not be familiar to Field’s readers, such as Calvin’s likening his opponent’s false
sense of security in their arguments to seeking refuge under a wet sack.89 To drive the
point home, Calvin’s complaint against ancient Babylonian rituals as “a stench” (“une
puantise”) becomes, in Field’s words, “a moste vile and filthie sauour.”90 This latter

86 CO 8:380; Foure Sermons, 3v (emphasis added).
87 CO 8:420; Foure Sermons, 35v.
88 CO 8:425-426; Foure Sermons, 38v (emphasis added).
89 “se couvrir d’un sac mouillé” (CO 8:377); Foure Sermons, 1v, 3v.
90 CO 8:384; Foure Sermons, 7r.
example illustrates the translator’s tendency to multiply adjectives where fewer could have conveyed Calvin’s meaning just as well, but perhaps not Field’s enthusiastic assent.

Other examples of such minor additions appear in the remaining sermons. While Calvin’s martyrs will face fires lighted “to burn” (“brusler”) them, the same fires are meant to “to broile and burne” in Field’s eyes.91 The “midst of death” (“milieu de la mort”), from which God has power to retrieve the faithful, becomes to English readers “the mouth and middest of death.”92 Earthly attachments described by Calvin as preoccupation with a “material building” are defined with greater architectural detail as a “matieriall building of wood & stone.”93 The desk-bound Roman clergy whom Calvin excoriates as “office philosophers” (“philosophes de cabinets”) who forsake their teaching and pastoral responsibilities, receive new bruises with Field’s treatment, which adds zealous commentary, transforming these priests into “corner creeping and caskate philosophers.”94 Those who “disagree more explicitly still” (se desgoustent encores plus expressement) with Calvin’s call to exile, citing imperfections that might exist when they arrive at a rightly-ordered church, Field casts in an even more unsavory light as those who, in fact, “vomite out the filth and disease of their stomack.”95

---

91 CO 8:397; *Foure Sermons*, 17r (emphasis added).

92 CO 8:406; *Foure Sermons*, 30v (emphasis added).

93 CO 8:409-410; *Foure Sermons*, 35v (emphasis added). Field perhaps refers to 1 Cor 3:12.

94 CO 8:412; *Foure Sermons*, 36v.

95 CO 8:432; *Foure Sermons*, 44r.
Several of Field’s translation decisions are perhaps more clearly theologically motivated. At any rate, they bend Calvin’s original in ways that guide readers toward certain implications. Field’s decision to translate “subterfuges” and “des petites cautelles” as, respectively, “new starting holes” and “certain starting holes and subtle shifts” reflects common usage of his day, but textures Calvin’s portrayal of the Nicodemite’s futile dissembling by explicitly evoking the quality of a hunted animal seeking to evade capture. This unflattering image of the desperate Nicodemite is augmented on several occasions to emphasize his hypocrisy and cowardice:

C’est une vraie espece d’idolatrie quand on commet act exterier repugnant au vray service de Dieu, encore que ce ne soit que par feintise.

This is a true kind of Idolatrie, when any outward act is done that is contrary to the true service of God, although that it be done colourably and through hypocrisy.

Nous sommes si lasches de renouncer obliquement nostre Chrestienté.

Through cowardise and fayntnesse of stomake wee crookedly renounce our Christian profession.

Similarly, Calvin’s negative assessment of human desire in sermon three acquires a more active dimension in Field’s choice of imagery:

Il y a un point auquel tous s’accordent et sont conformes, c’est de s’amuser yci-bas au monde.

There is one thing wherein all agree and jumpe togetheer, and that is too bee occupied here beneth in the

---

96 CO 8:373-374, 377-378; Foure Sermons, n.pag., 1r. For “starting hole” as description for a place of refuge see, for example, Shakespeare’s Henry IV: “What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst / thou now find out to hide thee from this open and / apparent shame?” (2.4.251-253).

97 CO 8:380-381; Foure Sermons, 3v-4r (emphasis added).
Field’s hearty agreement with Calvin regarding the tendencies of the sinful mind might explain his zealous over-translation of Calvin’s definition of purity a few lines later:

\[
\begin{align*}
pource qu’il s’en fault beaucoup qu’il y ait une telle pureté en nous & \quad \text{because we are so farre from hauing a minde that is pure and voyde from all affections...}^{99} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The greed and love of comfort that characterize Calvin’s Nicodemites, who care not about pure worship but fret if their income fails to carry them through “to the end of the year” (“iusques au bout de l’an »), takes on the more anxious impatience of those whose “reuenew come not in, at the ende of the yeere or at the quarter day.”\(^{100}\) Elsewhere, Field embellishes the gravity of mere participation in Roman worship as well as accents the believer’s responsibility not merely to flee, but also actively to fight this affront to God:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dieu quicte toute alliance aux idolatres ils se vont comme emmatriculer, et font semblant d’estre un membre du corps.} & \quad \text{God denieth all covenant and fellowship with idolaters they go as it were to be matriculated and incorporated amongst them, and faigne themselves to be members of the same body.} \\
\text{Ceulx qui cerchant vrayement et en pureté de cueur de posseder Dieu pour leur heritage, n’auront nulle accointance aux idoles, avec lesquels il ha un tel divorce,} & \quad \text{They which seek truly and in purity of heart to possesse God for their heritage, will have no fellowship with Idolles, with they have such a divorce,}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{98}\) CO 8:409-410; Foure Sermons, 34v (emphasis added).

\(^{99}\) Ibid.

\(^{100}\) CO 8:416; Foure Sermons, 25v (emphasis added).
qu’il veut que tous les siens
leur facent guerre mortelle.

Il est bon que nous soyons
premunis d’heure, à fin
qu’en quelque tentations que
nous soyons assaillis, nous
ne declinions point de la pure
parolle de Dieu.

that hee will that all those that are
his, should proclaime & make
continual and deadly war against
them.

It is good that wee be always
aforehande and in a readinesse, to the
ende that in what so ever place we
come, or with what temptation so
ever we be assaulted, we neuer
swarue from the pure word of
God.\textsuperscript{101}

In sermon two, Field supplies more blatant commentary on Calvin’s description of the
Holy Spirit’s help for individuals called to confess Christ under threat of persecution:

l’office du sainct Esprit n’est pas
seulement de nousfortifier à estre hardis
de nous et vaillans, mais aussi
donner prudence et discretion
pour nous sçavoir bien guider selon
qu’il sera expedient.

the office of the holy Ghost is not
only to strengthen vs to be
bold & vailant: but also to geue vnto
vs wisedome and discretion to know
how it becommeth us to rule &
govern our selves in so great and hard a
matter.\textsuperscript{102}

Along the same lines, where Calvin comments on the significance of persecution as the
means by which God “reveals those who are his” (“descouvre quels sont les siens”),
Field adds the element of fatherly discipline, so that “god discouereth and trieth who are
his.”\textsuperscript{103} Likewise, Field draws out Calvin’s use of David as both a contrast to the
Nicodemite and exemplar for believers in terms that highlight David’s significance:

\textsuperscript{101} CO 8:377-379, 388; \textit{Foure Sermons}, 1v, 2v, 3r, 9r (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{102} CO 8:405; \textit{Foure Sermons}, 23v (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{103} CO 8:404; \textit{Foure Sermons}, 23r (emphasis added).
While none of these subtle additions distorts Calvin’s meaning in a way that is unfaithful to the reformer’s case against Nicodemism, they are evidence that Field read Calvin with sensitivity to implications he is keen to accent for English readers. The goal for those deprived of worship in the rightly-ordered church carries a Christological dimension with Field’s reference to Jn 10, which is arguably more explicit than Calvin’s:

\[
\text{qu’ils ne pourchassent tousiours d’estre amenez au troupeau.}
\]

God’s fatherly beneficence, a favorite theme of Calvin’s, is evoked more deliberately in Field’s translation at the end of sermon four:

\[
\text{Dieu les a choisis de sa maison et qu’il les y retient.}
\]

\[
\text{God hath chosen them too be of his, house and that hee entertaineth them there as his children.}^{106}
\]

To summarize, Field’s translation at times supplies words or phrases that amount to a theological interpretation of Calvin’s text, accenting certain themes and contributing to

\[^{104}\text{CO 8:379; Foure Sermons, 2r. (emphasis added).}^{105}\text{CO 8:420; Foure Sermons, 35v (emphasis added).}^{106}\text{CO 8:439; Foure Sermons, 44r. (emphasis added).}\]
the unified message that Nicodemite participation in the Mass is a matter of cowardly hypocrisy, covenant infidelity toward God, and incorporation into an idolatrous community. This problem requires an urgent and sustained response from all believers. God invites his people everywhere to seek the shelter of Christ’s fold in a well-ordered church, where they can experience the blessings of being counted as one of God’s own. Put this way, all of the concerns Field emphasizes for his readers are already present in Calvin’s original *Quatre sermons*, either explicitly or by natural implication.

As one might expect, Field expands Calvin’s invective against intellectuals and clergy whose confidence in learning or titles leads them to reject the teaching of Scripture, a subject with natural connections to English polemic against bishops. Field’s changes, however, are minimal. The “furry hooded” lawyers who upheld the *status quo* in France are further equipped, in Field’s translation, with “badges” that reveal their tendency while “highly esteeming them selues to deceiue them selues.” Calvin assesses them together with the “abbots, priors, deacons, and archdeacons,” as mockers of God, to which Field supplies an inclusive, summary description: “these trifling Spendthriftes, Iesters and Praters.”\(^{107}\) It remains somewhat surprising, however, that an opportunity to take additional jibes at ecclesiastical hierarchy is passed over without further insult. Similarly, Calvin’s frequent references to God’s particular design for the church’s external order could easily have been embellished to suit pro-presbyterian (or at least

\(^{107}\) CO 8:390-391; *Foure Sermons*, 12v, 3r.
anti-episcopal) polemic. Yet these either are translated with no additions or supplemented with one or two words of little theological consequence.¹⁰⁸

Field’s translation of the Exposition of Psalm 87 keeps to the same pattern. One notable change occurs where Calvin describes the church as rich in the Spirit while “she is naked and poor with regard to the goods of this world.” Field cannot resist a theological translation, commending nakedness and poverty “concerning the mucke of the worlde.”¹⁰⁹ Another curious alteration comes further on, when Calvin’s considers those who will understand “mountains” in Ps 87:1 as a reference to Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, which, are “two peaks next to one another, like two horns”—an interpretation he commends but ultimately does not favor.¹¹⁰ It is unclear whether Field is motivated by a similar disagreement with such a reading, or with Calvin for even mentioning it, but he alters it to read simply that Zion and Moriah “butted either upon other.”¹¹¹ This is one of the very few omissions that Field makes in his entire translation.

Calvin’s commentary on Ps 87 focuses on God’s faithfulness to the church and urges believers to be patient with imperfections, scandals, and persecutions as they

---

¹⁰⁸ For example, God’s “external guidance” (“conducite externe”) by which “he wants to lead” (“il les veult conduire”) his people is rendered as “the outward order and governance” whereby God desires “to gouerne and to leade them”; CO 8:413, 418; Foure Sermons, 38r, 34r (emphasis added). Field’s translation essentially conveys Calvin’s meaning with more words, adding nothing especially new or “English” to the original.

¹⁰⁹ CO 8:444; Foure Sermons, 51v (emphasis added).

¹¹⁰ CO 8:446.

¹¹¹ Foure Sermons, 55r.
await the church’s future glory, the “crown of glory that is prepared for it from above.”¹¹² As argued above, closing the collection on this exhortation to patience with the church’s suffering and faults, even where its proper order and ministry are intact, was useful for Calvin in 1552.¹¹³ But what message would this have communicated in England in 1579? On the one hand, it could be taken as encouragement for those, like Field, who longed for yet unrealized changes in the English church toward (in their eyes) greater fidelity to God’s design. God’s promise was not negated by their disappointing situation. But it might also be read as a tacit rebuke of the puritan impulse for further reform, especially as embraced by those as impatient as Field. Should these believers, like Calvin’s Genevan congregation, be more patient in the absence of the more thorough reform they sought? The possibility that the Exposition of Psalm 87 could be read this way by those opposed to the presbyterian cause makes its inclusion interesting. Field easily could have omitted the commentary, just as Horne was selective in 1553. But Field did not, opting instead to include all of what Calvin published in 1552, without substantial alterations. What, then, did Field hope to accomplish here?

In the end, this overview of Field’s translation appears to raise more questions than it answers. As one might expect, even a fairly literal and wooden translation will bear certain marks of the translator’s perspective. In this case, such evidence of Field’s

¹¹² “la couronne de gloire qui luy est apprestee là hault” (CO 8:443-444).

¹¹³ See chapter two.
editorial judgment is limited, with rare exception, to emphasizing or drawing out the theological implications of themes already present elsewhere in *Quatre sermons*. These include Nicodemites’ active culpability in idolatry, and God’s faithfulness as a father whose kindness is present even in hardship that is always intended to bring his ungrateful children to a deeper experience of his blessings. Thus Field brings a new edition of *Quatre sermons* to English readers that appears to contain little that is new. Despite its claim to novelty as the first English translation based on Calvin’s French, the differences with the other full English edition (1561) are minimal, owing to how closely Baduel’s Latin followed Calvin and the 1561 translator(s) followed Baduel.\(^{114}\) Again, this raises the question of intent. Why would Field produce another full translation of *Quatre sermons* so similar in content to one already available to readers for nearly twenty years?

To end the investigation here would leave us with nothing unexpected or particularly interesting. Given Field’s situation and what is known of how he actively used printing to advance his cause in the 1570s and 1580s, it would have been surprising for him not to have similar goals behind his translation of *Quatre sermons*. The question, however, becomes just how *Quatre sermons* fit into Field’s plans as an opportunity to advance his cause—a puzzle that grows knottier when one considers how this faithful translation of Calvin seems like a missed opportunity. After all, Calvin’s insistence on the church’s visible form according to God’s design is at the heart of his anti-Nicodemite

\(^ {114}\) See chapter four for Baduel’s translation.
rhetoric in *Quatre sermons* in a way that did not appear in his other writings on this topic.\(^\text{115}\) It seems like a major oversight that Field, who was engaged in a mission in 1579 to bring the English church into what he and others considered a more biblical polity, would neither mention this emphasis of Calvin’s nor somehow inject elements in his translation to highlight Calvin’s teaching, if not to turn it directly toward advancing the presbyterian cause. Yet one looks in vain for this kind of doctoring. Why leave off such a tantalizing opportunity to bring Calvin directly into the debate concerning polity and liturgy in the English church? Perhaps a direct attack on prelacy was not Field’s main purpose here. If not, what was? How did Field’s efforts to bring forth a full translation of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite *Quatre sermons* fit into his wider publishing campaign in 1579?

### 6.4 Field’s Strategy

John Whitgift’s elevation to Canterbury in 1583 would again provoke Field’s vocal resistance to subscription. But 1579 required a different strategy. Field pressed his credentials as champion of the *status quo*. This can be observed across the publications that bore his name that year. All three were French translations: Philippe De Mornay’s *Treatise on the Church*, Calvin’s *Thirteen Sermons Treating Free Election*, and Calvin’s *Foure Sermons*.\(^\text{116}\) These works, from what we might call Field’s “year of French translation,”

---

\(^{115}\) See chapter two.

\(^{116}\) Original works: De Mornay, *Traité de l’Église* (1578); Calvin, *Treze sermons traïans d l’election gratuite* (1560); idem., *Quatre sermons* (1552).
are notable for their prefaces that each focus on a different foe, with *Foure Sermons* serving as a climax. Here themes from the previous two works converge with Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism to produce a scathing, if veiled, attack on moderates in the church.\(^{117}\)

Field’s case unfolds as follows. The preface to de Mornay’s treatise against papal supremacy serves as a lengthy diatribe against the “papists,” calling on the Earl of Leicester to increase efforts against Catholics in England.\(^{118}\) Field’s next preface, to Calvin’s *Treze Sermons*, focuses on the threat of various “sects,” including Anabaptists, “Libertines,” and, especially, the Family of Love, which we will revisit below. Field sets Calvin’s doctrine of election over and against their diverse “heretical” teachings. Despite their differences, such groups share with Rome an improper estimation of human ability before God.\(^{119}\) Even more alarming, by defecting from God’s Word, all of these groups make “a mash & hotchpotch of the ciuill and ecclesiasticall state, and so iumble them togethier.”\(^{120}\) Here, then, are the real threats to England, far more seditious than Field’s presbyterians. The most serious charge, however, must wait for the end. This is the

\(^{117}\) On the sequence of these three French translations, see Arber ed., *Transcript of the Registers*, 156r, 157v, 163. Christopher Barker received his license for de Mornay’s *Notable Treatise*, on 20 January 1579. Thomas Man and Tobie Cooke received a license to publish “*Trefiže sermons de Monsieur J. CALUIN*” on 18 March 1579. “*Iiji sermons of CALVIN*” was licensed to Man on 4 September 1579.

\(^{118}\) *A Notable Treatise*, n. pag.

\(^{119}\) *Thirteene Sermons*, n. pag.

\(^{120}\) Ibid.
theme of Field’s preface to his translation of Quatre sermons, the last of the three French translations of 1579, which focuses his hostility on his most insidiously portrayed foes.

6.4.1 1579: Field’s Year of French Translation

A clue connecting these three translations is a link between the two editions of Calvin. This appears opposite the title page of Foure sermons as the “answere to a Libel”:

before they were born, or before they had done either good or evil too shewe that it is neither of the willer nor of the runner, but of his mercy, that his elect are saved. Such premisses are woorthie such a conclusion as he maketh, let vs drawe near vnto God, and consent vnto him, and he wil draw neere vnto vs. As though the firste approaching were not, that he shoulde seeke vs out, whilst that we are farre from him. It is true that God oftentimes vseth this speech, Return vnto me, & I will come vnto you: but this is to shewe what is our dutie and not what our power is. Praise be unto God.121

Owing to a combination of its brevity, placement, and subject matter, the “answere” is easy to miss. Gilmont, for example, makes no mention of its existence in his generally meticulous account of unique characteristics in Calvin’s published works.122 The publication details—“Imprinted at London by Thomas Dawson dwelling at the three Cranes in the Vinetree”—form a nice bookend opposite the colophon at the conclusion of the Exposition of Psalm 87, where the same information closes the collection. There is one key difference, however. Whereas the closing colophon indicates that Dawson produced the work for “Thomas Man,” the same publisher listed on Foure Sermons’ title

121 Foure Sermons, n.pag.
122 BC III:288-290 (79/2).
page, the publication information under the “answere to a Libel” adds the name “Tobie Cooke.” Dawson printed Calvin’s *Thirteene Sermons* earlier that same year for both Man and Cooke. Thirteene Sermons and the “answere to a Libel” appended to the beginning of *Foure sermons* are the only places these two names appear together as publishers of Field’s work. This only superficially links the two publications. The connection is clearer with the subject of the “answere,” which directly addresses an objection to the teaching on election treated in the earlier work. Yet, the nexus between the two translations runs even deeper than this single comment inserted to continue an argument. It also is strengthened by shared and mutually reinforcing themes appearing in both prefaces.

### 6.4.2 The Papal Menace in Field’s Translation of de Mornay

The argument Field makes in his two Calvin translations began earlier, in his preface to de Mornay’s *Notable Treatise of the Church*. This work is a case for the true church over against Roman claims of papal supremacy. The relevance of such matters is obvious for French Reformed believers seeking to justify their existence as a separate church. The publication of this work for an English audience also carried benefits for Field by accenting the anti-Catholic sentiment of his preface to *Quatre sermons* and developing more fully elements of Calvin’s ecclesiology in those sermons. In this regard, Field might well have been using de Mornay to speak to questions of church polity and

---

order arising from *Quatre sermons*, rather than risk reverting to a more extreme position in his own voice. At the same time, de Mornay’s treatise deals less with particulars of church organization than with the basic Protestant insistence that Scripture, not the pope, is the highest authority in the church, and that the one infallible mark of the “pure church” is sound doctrine. Rome has abandoned its claim to be a true church and instead has become the “communion of Antichrist,” requiring believers to leave the Roman Church and establish the church according to the teaching of Scripture.124 Although de Mornay wrote for a French context, none of his points would have been especially controversial in England, where the church had already been established apart from Rome and the prevailing national sentiment was consistent with de Mornay’s anti-Catholic rhetoric. This is reflected in the boldness with which Field addresses Dudley in his preface, calling on him to redouble his efforts against popery in England, lest he find himself responsible for the resurgence of such enemies of God and the queen.125 Apart from a passing mention of the fact that God requires, and the “Church of

---

124 *A Notable Treatise*, n.pag. Near the end of his long treatise, after a lengthy case refuting Rome’s claim for primacy among bishops, de Mornay concludes that bishops, ministers, and elders were equivalent offices in the early church. Not bishops *per se*, but the elevation of the bishop is singled out as a human invention that has “led men to perdition.” De Mornay asserts that “the first Bishops of the Christian Church were but elders: and our first ministers were elders: & the elders by the institution of the Apsostles, had authoritie to lay on their hades according to which ours also were ordained.” His primary reason for attacking prelacy is that Rome will not recognize the lawful ordination and ecclesiastical standing of Reformed ministers and elders. Despite questioning the primacy of bishops, de Mornay adds that this is an “order we do not altogether disalowe, if it be rightly observe.” De Mornay’s attack on ecclesiastical hierarchy was governed by a concern to elevate the standing of ministers and elders. That Field would translate and publish unchanged such a statement, which could possibly be taken as favorable toward bishops or English church polity, suggests, as I argue, that the presbyterian had other motives for using de Mornay’s treatise in 1579.

125 Ibid.
England craues,” that God’s “ministerie be mainteyned,” Field does not explicitly attack prelacy, focusing instead—just as de Mornay does—on a harsh polemic against Rome.126

As with his translation of Quatre sermons, one might ask whether Field has missed an opportunity here more forcefully to revisit the themes laid out in the Admonition, capitalizing on the topic of the external form of the church. However, when considered in light of his context and the advantage of appearing more moderate in public view, Field’s approach makes perfect sense. Toward the end of his preface to de Mornay, Field mentions other threats that he has deliberately chosen not to address here: “Of Arians I woulde not willingly write any thing, nor of the other Heretikes (I meane) Anabaptists, Libertines, (which are in deed at this day al shrouded & fostered vnder than name of the familie of loue) but that I know al these heresies do mischeuously increase amongst vs.”127 It is precisely these “Heretikes” that Field chose to take on more directly in his preface to Calvin’s Treze Sermons on election, linking the two works. In his preface to Thirteene Sermons, Field brings a case against such radical sects that rivals the intense rhetoric used against Rome in his translation of de Mornay. Taken as a whole, a coherent message to readers begins to unfold across Field’s French translations of 1579. Along with all who were loyal to the queen, Field opposed the real threats to England: Rome, on the one side, and dangerous heretical groups, to the other.

126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
6.4.3 Thirteene Sermons: “Merite Mongers” and the Disruption of Order

Across his two Calvin translations, Field makes this case: the most committed Englishman is the most committed Calvinist. On the surface, this line of argumentation is unremarkable given the doctrinal consensus that characterized the church. What is more interesting is how Field used the Nicodemite as a foil to drive home his point that the brand of zealous Calvinism he prescribed was the surest means of keeping church and society from descending into chaos. Christopher Carter has provided an insightful analysis of the intense hostility in print, particularly from puritan quarters, toward the antinomian, underground Family of Love sect between c.1578 and c.1581. These followers of the Dutch spiritualist theologian Hendrik Niclaes (d. 1580), whose teachings spread throughout England in the 1560s, embraced a form of perfectionism and a tendency to dissimulate their beliefs that deeply unsettled Protestants and Catholics alike. Their presence in society as a threat is reflected in Field’s prefaces, where he names the Family several times. The Family had the dubious distinction of being the

128 See chapter one and section 6.4.1, above.


130 Ibid., 17-48.

131 Field’s references to the threat of Family of Love outside of Foure Sermons: Calvin, Thirteene Sermons (1579), n. pag. (x2); Field, Caueat for Parsons Hovvlet (1581), n. pag. (x2); De Mornay, A notable treatise (1579), n. pag. (x1); Pigg, A comfortable treatise upon (1582), n. pag (x1). For more on the movement’s history in England, see Marsh, Family of Love, passim. That its detractors included both Catholics such as the Jesuit Robert Parsons, Field’s antagonist in 1580, and Protestants of all stripes, “with differing levels of enthusiasm,” highlights the general anxiety over the Family’s existence.
only sect explicitly condemned by Elizabethan royal decree, in 1580. Yet in reality it seems never to have been quite as insidious or powerful as its enemies portrayed. But the fervor surrounding the “Familist Treat” perpetuated by vocal opponents such as John Rogers and William Wilkinson was real, as was its sudden subsiding when conservatives prevailed under Whitgift and turned attention back toward the threat of non-conformity posed by presbyterians like Field. Field’s Calvin translations appeared during the period of anti-Familist propaganda, tapping into a wider sense of alarm.

Although he does not engage Field’s contributions, Carter’s study of the puritan attack on Familism identifies recurring themes in this hostile rhetoric that are helpful for situating Field’s Calvin translations among similar works. These themes include the authority of Scripture and God’s predestination versus good works as the ground of

---


133 John Rogers, The Displaying of an Horrible Sect of Grosse and Wicked Heretiques, Naming Themselfes the Familie of Loue With the Lives of Their Authorises, and What Doctrine They Teach in Corners. Newely Set Forth By I.r. (London: [By Henry Middleton] for George Bishop, 1578; STC 21181.5); idem., An Answere Vnto a Wicked & Infamous Libel Made By Christopher Vitel, One of the Chiefe English Elders of the Pretended Family of Loue: Maintaining Their Doctrine, & Carpingly Answeringe to Certaine Pointes of a Boke Called the Displaing of the Fam. / Aunswered By I. Rogers (London: John Daye, 1579; STC 21180); William Wilkinson, A Confutation of Certaine Articles Deliuered Vnto the Familie of Loue With the Exposition of Theophilus, a Supposed Elder in the Sayd Familye Vpon the Same Articles. By William Wilkinson Maister of Artes and Student of Diuinitty. Hereunto Are Prefixed By the Right Reuerend Father in God I.y. Byshop of Rochester, Certaine Notes Collected Out of Their Gospell, and Aunswered By the Fam. By the Author, a Description of the Tyme, Places, Authors, and Manner of Spreading the Same: Of Their Liues, and Wrestying of Scriptures: With Notes in the End How to Know an Heretique. (London: John Daye, 1579; STC 25665). For more on the publishing campaign against the Family of Love in the 1570s and 1580s, see Calderwood, “Elizabethan Protestant Press,” 77-87. For the shift of attention away from the Family due to political changes in the late-1580s and 1590s, see Carter, “Family of Love,” 659-672.

134 Field’s critique of the Family in the course of his attack on catholic recusancy in 1581’s Caucat for Parsons Hovellt has been noted by Marsh; The Family of Love, 110. Besides this example and one from his preface to Pigg in 1582, the only other instances in which Field mentions the Family of Love by name occur in the prefaces to his 1579 French translations.
salvation, within an overall strategy that appears “to have been calculated to help the reformers in their struggles against the conservatives by demonstrating the laxity of the conservative faction in dealing with eminent danger, while separating the reforming puritans from the true radicals.” This is a fair description of Field’s approach. One is immediately struck with Field’s effusive praise of Calvin, heralded as “the rarest of instruments whō god hath raised vp in these last tymes to giue light amidst our great ignorance,” a “singular instrument of God,” whose virtue derives directly from his commitment to the authority of Scripture. While some prefer the “stinking puddles they haue digged vnto them selves,” so that “the word of God must be drawn in and out by them as they thinke good,” Calvin stood with confidence upon that Word “which is the true instrüçtor, hauing bin set down by men as writers, yet by the holy ghost as the true inditer ... plainly written to remain to all the sonnes of God as gods sufficient & perpetual Testamēt.” Indeed, the reformer’s courage to proclaim Scripture’s sufficiency against Rome’s claims of authority “is the principall cause that Caluine and such notable men are so yll liked, and with such violence condemned amongst

---

135 “The Family of Love,” 663-670. Although Carter does not treat Field, his analysis of puritan attacks on the Family rings true to what I have found in Field’s publications. Field’s uniqueness is not so much in capitalizing on anti-Familism fears, but rather in how he uses Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism in his approach.

136 Thirteene Sermons, n.pag. Higman notes Field’s “ebullient” praise of Calvin in this preface, which stands out as “lavish” even among Field’s puritan contemporaries; “Calvin’s Works in Translation,” 98.

137 Thirteene Sermons, n.pag.
them.” Further down, Field’s praise of Calvin becomes even more precise. Scripture, as “Christes sceptre,” must “bruse” and “preuayle” over all “heretiques” who oppose God’s truth. This was the weapon Calvin wielded so well, such that the enemies of Christ—here listed as “Arians, other some Anabaptists, and Seruetsians, Daudians and Syluansists, Pelagians, & Frewilmen, Libertines and of the Familie of Loue”—“cannot abide such men as good Caluin was, because he rubbed them on the gawle, and brake even the skull (as I may say) of their hereticall corruptions.” But Field is not content simply to credit Calvin with a generic commitment to sound doctrine. Rather, the doctrine of “euerlasting predestination and election of God,” exemplifies Calvin’s commitment to biblical authority and is the principal teaching against which such heretical sects “bark so like Dogges.” Thus it was precisely Calvin’s biblical teaching on election that caused him to be hated by these “merite mongers, who howsoever they differ in some particular markes, yet are birdes of one and the same fether.” By including all of Calvin’s diverse enemies—from Rome to Servetus to the Family of Love—under the common heading “merite mongers,” Field effectively defines Calvin’s doctrinal purity in terms of the reformer’s teaching on election. Predestination becomes

138 Ibid., n.pag.
139 Ibid., n. pag.
140 Ibid., n.pag.
141 Ibid., n.pag.
the litmus test of fidelity to God’s Word. Consequently, those who reject predestination are neither Calvinists nor faithful to Christ’s teaching. In his preface to *Thirteene Sermons*, Field imbues election with a level of importance Calvin never claimed, placing it at the heart of biblical teaching:

> The euerlasting predestination of God, the most comforteable doctrine that can be, being the foundation of all the rest, where it is wisely taught according to the worde, and learned within that sober compass that it is prescribed.¹⁴²

This sentiment is echoed several times over the next two pages: “this doctrine of Gods eternal elecution and Predestination is most comfortable,” and, again, “this doctrine is a most comfortable doctrine, necessary to be knowen, too bee published and preached to the people.”¹⁴³ The consequences of ignoring the main theme of Calvin’s sermons on Jacob and Esau are grave indeed. Such would be to give the upper hand to "open Papistes, counterfeite professours or manifest heritiques," a catchall description of Christ’s enemies, who threaten England in two ways. They “employsen the Church” with their false teaching, which leads to the result that they "make a mash & hotchpotch of the ciuill and ecclesiasticall state, and so iumble them togither."¹⁴⁴ To those familiar with

---

¹⁴² Ibid., n.pag. (emphasis added). Wallace notes Field’s promotion of predestination in this preface, as well as how Field appears to bring no critique of the Church of England on this issue here; *Puritans and Predestination*, 40-41. this is consistent with Field’s strategy to remain circumspect with his public critique at this time.

¹⁴³ Ibid., n.pag.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, n.pag.
Field’s rhetoric, this latter accusation is one that he brings forth regularly as proof of the Roman Church’s inherently seditious character, with its claims for papal supremacy inevitably leading to the usurping of civil authority. In this preface to Thirteene Sermons, Field applies the same attack to “heretical sects,” including but not limited to Family of Love. The logic here is that rejecting biblical authority leads to false doctrine, which in turn will result in the kind of social and political instability everyone feared.

Although he capitalizes on anti-Familist fervor with his attack, it is clear that Field is painting with a broader brush. He deliberately colors every other defective, and thereby dangerous, theological position with the same generic label: They are “merite mongers.” Rome, on Field’s right (so to speak), and the Anabaptists and “sects” on his left, all share, in Field’s words, “Pelagian” optimism toward human ability. Calvin becomes the standard for doctrinal soundness and, by extension, the best defense for church and state against the instability that has its roots in defective theology. To be a loyal Englishman is to be a committed Calvinist, which Field has defined in rigidly predestinarian terms. Hence Field shrewdly tapped into the Familist Threat in 1579 as a means of locating his own faction upon the safe ground of the church’s Calvinist doctrinal commitments, outside of which the real dangers lurk. While prelacy and the ostensibly intra-Calvinist concerns reflected in the Admonition and the ensuing controversy around it do not figure overtly in Field’s discussion of Calvin here, neither

---

See, for example, De Mornay, A Notable Treatise (1579), n.pag.; Field, Caueat for Parsons Hovvlet (1581), n.pag.; Olevian, Exposition of the Symbole of the Apostles, 6, 9, 12.
are they completely absent. Field’s portrayal of ecclesial and societal soundness in terms of a Calvinism that calls for zealous commitment to specific doctrines brings indirect criticism against a group not explicitly named: those lacking the requisite zeal to prevent the church’s enemies from spreading false teaching within its confines. Such “weak Calvinists” might be cast as disloyal to church and state. They might have no outward quibble with sound doctrine, but they lack evidence of zeal. This is in fact the criticism Field drives home with his use of Nicodemism in his companion translation of Calvin.

6.4.4 Foure Sermons: Nicodemites as Moderates in the Elizabethan Church

Now it is possible to see how Field’s final work of 1579 could have functioned in relation to the others, as well as to arrive at a more precise understanding of the “Newter” he singles out for attack here. Again, textual and thematic links between Field’s French translations of 1579 suggest a cumulative case. Field’s entire preface to de Mornay conveyed a vicious attack on Rome, declaring his intent to treat the problem of radical “sects” elsewhere. These very groups become the focus of his first Calvin translation, which is in turn referenced in Foure Sermons, Field’s final translation. If, as I suggest, Field intended these treatises to be read together, he has now mapped the church’s enemies on extremes both more conservative and more radical than his own non-separating presbyterians. These foes are seditious and disruptive, whereas Field occupies a sensible middle ground, loyal to both church and crown. Field makes this case without drawing attention to the Admonition or any continuing controversy over it.
He raises no criticism of the Prayer Book or conformity—at least not explicitly. He thus minimizes the fact that deep disagreements continue to exist within the English church on questions of polity and liturgy. He focuses instead on shared threats outside the church: Rome and the diverse radical sects. This was intentional. Outside of public view, Field was active in the presbyterian underground. But to everyone who would take up and read his books, Field seemed a good team player, loyal to England’s God, monarch, and institutions: He was no radical, his cause no threat. This cautious message befit a man once jailed for sedition and whose license to preach was recently reissued.

Field’s preface to *Foure sermons* continued this strategy of sticking to mainstream concerns, but with an important shift. Both “papists” and “sects” reemerge as dangers, but only to bring a third target into view: The Nicodemite. Likened to “Newters” or “Atheistes,” Nicodemites’ lack of zeal for God’s truth expressed in toleration of false teaching created an opportunity for the “cold starued papists” and “Libertines” to overthrow church and society. Like Calvin’s Nicodemite, these “Newters” blend imperceptibly into the church’s mainstream, creating conditions ideal for the flourishing of more explicit threats. They have chosen to tolerate doctrinal error and indifference, “bend[ing] them selues too serue all times,” embracing “the Gospell or the Masse,

---

147 Ibid.
148 *Foure Sermons*, 2r–4v.
Turkcisme or Christianisme,” depending on what maximized personal gain. The message is clear. God’s faithful can expect persecution because they harbor among them those who refuse to “stand fast too God’s euerlasting trueth.” Even the “Papistes,” subterranean vermin with “cākred harts” who will bring the sword against true believers, are but instruments in God’s hands to punish the church for such doctrinal indifference. They will emerge from their holes wondering “what warmeth hath drawē thē out.” Rampant Nicodemism will have created the ideal climate for this Roman resurgence. The papists merely bring the sentence the Newters’ crimes have incurred. Calvin’s sermons are presented to prepare the faithful for martyrdom and expose the Nicodemite weakness of conviction among them. This tolerant mindset is the disease for which divine intervention in a resurgent, violent Roman Catholicism will be the cure.

Field has thus accommodated Calvin’s French Nicodemite to his own situation by portraying an English church member who will accept heresy rather than sacrifice privilege. But who were these Newters Field had in mind? Is it even possible to identify targets defined primarily by internal motives imperceptible to the eyes? There are clues.

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid., 3r.
152 Ibid., 5r.
153 Ibid., 4v-5r.
Field describes a hidden foe distinct from recusant Catholics and clandestine sects, both of which he also names in this preface and locates outside the church. The enemy in question occupies the same middle ground Field has claimed for his own cause. The difference is that they lack zeal for God’s truth, being willing to tolerate doctrinal error for the sake of convenience and ease, rather than embrace the hard course of genuine devotion. These are the ones who refuse to “stand fast” for truth, whom Field accuses of being “indifferent for all religions.”¹⁵⁴ Perhaps Field has in mind a group like Calvin’s Epicureans, whom the reformer accused of such practical atheism.¹⁵⁵ Yet several factors speak against this possibility. First, Calvin himself frequently named Epicureanism when associating it with atheism; Field does not. Secondly, Calvin never conflates the categories of Nicodemism and Epicureanism the way Field interchanges Nicodemism with atheism here. Finally, that Field did not actually consider such “atheists” outside the Christian community is clear from the way he invokes God’s fatherly discipline as a response to their lack of zeal and calls on Newters to repent, amend their ways, and thus help the church avert otherwise certain disaster at the hands of Rome and the sects. This notion of measurable zeal creates the key distinction between Field and his Nicodemites.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 2r, 4v.

¹⁵⁵ See chapter one.
It remains possible that Field had in mind skeptics like Agrippa and Rabelais, whom Calvin called infidels for openly mocking the gospel. But this sort of derisive unbelief is not part of Field’s description of his Newter, and he never attacks such Continental thinkers anywhere else in his writings. There appears to be a more likely candidate for his insults here. Field has employed Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic to issue a scathing, but veiled, attack on moderates in the English church. These are the same enemies who got the full brunt of his explicit, sarcastic assault in the *Admonition* six years earlier. Field’s sentiments have not changed, but his approach has acquired greater nuance. He cannot risk an open assault on prelacy and conformity at a time when this would mean further antagonizing the queen. Nicodemism provided the perfect guise for scandalizing fellow churchmen without appearing to disrupt the church in the process.

*Foure Sermons* builds on Field’s previous two translations by attacking a third group. These are neither the papists nor the sects, but in many ways the worst of all. The church’s known enemies poison and corrupt it out of their genuine commitment to false teaching. The Newters, however, bring the church’s ruin through a lack of commitment. Here another connection emerges between Field’s 1579 translations of Calvin. The preface to *Thirteene Sermons* supplies the antidote to both papal and radical heresies: an unfeigned commitment to biblical authority exemplified in Calvin’s adherence to the doctrine of predestination despite its unpopularity. When we come to *Foure Sermons,*

---

156 See chapter one.
Field’s prior account of doctrinal zeal supplies a definition of what is lacking in those he singles out for criticism as Nicodemites. But it is also a challenge. Despite presenting the coming judgment as a foregone conclusion, Field calls on all true Christians to act: Will they have the courage to “striue for the truth of our God, yea too death it selfe”? For the faithful, this means steeling themselves for the coming days martyrdom. For those who “bende themselves to serve all times,” this is a call to repent. Rather than waiting on whichever course seems easiest or most lucrative, allowing the church’s enemies to destroy it from within and without, will these individuals take up the challenge of guarding the truth and preserving the church? It is interesting that Field used similar logic in his preface to de Mornay, where he pressed Robert Dudley to act forcefully against Catholics. In light of the current preface, Field was essentially warning the Earle of Leicester not to be complicit in crimes perpetrated by Newters in the church. Field’s prefaces basically ask, “Will you have courage to act upon your doctrine if it costs you?”

Field’s insistence that doctrinal commitment requires decisive action echoes his rejection of the similar argument, first repudiated in the Admonition, that it is possible to have doctrinal purity and retain liturgical compromises. Likewise, Field connects the Newter’s indifference and the persecution of fellow believers in ways that echo the invocation of martyrdom that closes the Admonition. Although couched in a more

\footnotesize

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid., 4r.]
\item[Puritan Manifestoes, 35-36]
\end{itemize}}
respectable package, the attack on the Newter in 1579 follows precisely the same logic as the attack on bishops and moderates in 1572, moving from improper motives to deadly compromise. Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, with its rigorous dissection of a faceless foe, gave Field a means of continuing his assault on perennial adversaries without appearing to be a radical disruptor of the peace. Field claims to add nothing to Calvin’s sermons: “[I] will say nothing in their commendation, they are able and of sufficient age to speake for themselues.” While his translation seems to deliver on exactly that promise, upon closer inspection, *Foure sermons* actually set out to accomplish more than Field cared to admit. It was the *Admonition* stepping out in new clothes, bringing the same challenge to those in the church but situating its author in a different light. Field has exchanged the language of “bishops” and “Lordy Lordes” for the less traceable “Newters” and “Atheistes.” The radical who landed in prison for demanding change has reemerged as a spokesman for the establishment, warning the church of its enemies and unafraid to meet that danger. Field brings no list of demands to threaten the church’s unity. Yet, just as it was with the Nicodemite Field condemns, things are not always what they seem.

### 6.5 Conclusion

I have demonstrated how John Field’s 1579 translation of *Quatre sermons* displayed his sensitivity to the nuances of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite argument and skill

---

159 Ibid., 4v.
in adapting it to an unlikely situation. Exploiting Calvin’s characterization of the Nicodemite as one whose self-interest trumps devotion to God, Field untethers this figure from Calvin’s original French Catholic context and places him within the ostensibly Protestant Church of England. By echoing similarities between Calvin’s Genevan situation and his own, Field can at once both affirm God’s goodness to “set vs at libertie from that Romish yoke” and acknowledge the universal problem of religious indifference, which threatens any society, even in the fairest circumstances. This provides a narrative framework for Field’s lengthy critique of those who threaten England’s ecclesiastical and societal wellbeing by permitting its heretical enemies, defined as a resurgent Catholicism and growing number of radical sects, to gain the upper hand and erase the blessings of England’s reformation. The solution involves greater zeal from the committed and deeper intolerance of those who lack commitment. The graphic consequences of ignoring Field’s warning include England’s reversion to papal tyranny, resuming the flow of martyrs’ blood as God’s people pay the ultimate price for devotion. Field redeployes Calvin’s direct address to his Geneva congregation for a very different purpose. Instead of treating Nicodemism as a temptation for those who might find themselves facing persecution in the future, as Calvin does, Field applies Calvin’s words to England’s present circumstances. He accuses members of a church in peaceful times of hastening the eventual bloodshed of God’s people through

---

160 *Foure Sermons, 2r.*
their willingness to compromise their doctrine. Field charges his Newters of atheism in a way that Calvin never accuses Nicodemites, but Field nonetheless sees his foes in ways that parallel Calvin’s Nicodemite: as those who can yet respond to a call to repent.\textsuperscript{161}

Yet there are also important differences. Calvin, for all his declaring against the Nicodemites who rejected his teaching, never directed his anti-Nicodemite arguments toward members of his own congregation. Indeed, Calvin went out of his way to stress unity amidst differences and defects within the church.\textsuperscript{162} Field departs from Calvin in this regard, portraying a Nicodemite menace that exists within an ostensibly reformed church. To do this, Field must remove Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic from a context where dissimulation is necessitated by compulsion to outward idolatry, and reimagine idolatry a defective inward commitment despite external purity.\textsuperscript{163} Field has constructed a precarious scenario in which any seemingly faithful Protestant could defect at anytime, with hardship, inconvenience, and deprivation being catalysts for revealing one’s heart.

While Rome and a variety sects are the “merite mongers” whose doctrinal errors promote the kind of confusion that will disrupt society, neither of these groups are singled out as the immediate target of Field’s preface to \textit{Foure sermons}. Here his invective falls on those who hear his warnings about such merit mongers and do nothing about it.

\textsuperscript{161} See chapter one for Calvin’s portrayal of the Nicodemite.

\textsuperscript{162} See chapter two.

\textsuperscript{163} See chapter three for the prevalence of such logic among Elizabethan anti-Nicodemite sources.
By their indifference they “tread vnder their feet the blood of all Martyres, and account them but for fooles.” These are harsh words, but in some respects no more so than the Admonition’s critique of moderates as martyr-makers in 1572. Field has thus couched an otherwise familiar argument for further reform in an uncoventional package, employing elements made available in both Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite theology and its 1552 form.

Collinson has remarked on Field’s skill as a propagandist. The preface to his translation of Quatre sermons is an excellent example of Field’s ability to press his agenda creatively. The basic narrative of dire warning concerning God’s judgment for an unfinished reformation is really no different than that which appeared in the 1572 Admonition to Parliament and the rhetoric that would characterize later presbyterian polemic during Whitgift’s campaigns for full conformity. Of course, the bishops of those earlier and later works do not appear explicitly in 1579. Instead, Field pinpoints what he perceives to be the disposition at the heart of institutional prelacy and attacks this with no less severity than he had in the Admonition, arguably more. Thus his apparent restraint in passing over passages in Calvin’s sermons that might have been used to advance a particular polity was really no restraint at all. Field had a different purpose, which would have been compromised with too obvious an attack on prelacy.

164 Ibid, 4v-5r.
165 Collinson, Godly People, 370. “[Field] was one of the most brilliant revolutionaries in an age of revolution.”
166 Lake, Anglicans and Puritans, 79.
The Nicodemite provided Field with the perfect vehicle for an indirect attack on perennial opponents within the church. Dangerous insofar as their very existence in a community abetted religious compromise and invited God’s judgment, Nicodemites were also faceless and invisible. Field could speak freely against this group without fear of reprisal. Indeed, to speak against Field’s argument would be to appear less committed to orthodoxy, more open Catholicism and sectarianism, and, ultimately, less concerned about English sovereignty and stability. No one wanted to do this. In terms of a positive case for his own standing, Field’s use of Calvin’s Nicodemite in the English situation permitted him to distance himself from the church’s enemies on both the Roman and radical extremes, as well as from those sitting perhaps too comfortably in the middle.

Field’s Calvinism became, by his own accounting, the true center that held the key to England’s ecclesiastical and societal wholeness. In part, this is because the brand of Calvinism Field set forth in his prefaces to the Calvin translations of 1579 is an activist commitment to proper doctrine, even down to the unpopular and difficult teachings of Scripture. This is not a theological identity open to shifting with the prevailing winds of power and sentiment, because it does not answer to the pressures of self-preservation and comfort that tempted Field’s English Nicodemite. In the end, Field portrayed his position as the only one standing upon what God has commanded and, consequently, against what God opposes. According to the narrative he brought to the English public across three publications in 1579, Field had planted himself on the only sure ground upon which England could hope to find security in the face of countless deadly enemies.
That Field could make this case for further reform without the usual recourse to bishops and the Prayer Book is a credit both to his ingenuity and to the flexibility of the Nicodemite as a polemical motif. It also points to similarities between Field, Horne, and Calvin. Each relied on a deeply negative portrayal of the Nicodemite to advance a different argument in quite diverse settings. And each used Nicodemism to police boundaries between levels of evangelical commitment. Like Horne before him, Field used Calvin’s Nicodemism to delineate divisions within the English church. Field also benefited from the unique way the reformer addressed French Nicodemism in 1552 to speak to issues unrelated to Calvin’s original problem. In this he was not alone. It was the approach taken by all of Calvin’s translators examined above. Like Field’s Newter, Quatre sermons in England conformed seamlessly to the demands of each new context.
Conclusion

The Story of Quatre sermons in England

They keep their heart for God (at least as they say so) but they have no difficulty abandoning their bodies to profound and harmful things. … Can God be pleased with such a mixture? Can the one who said that every knee shall bow before him and every tongue confess his name suffer anyone to kneel before idols?

I also want to let them know that it is great ingratitude on their part, that they use the words they take up: ‘Since Calvin acts so brave, why he not come here, in order to see how he will fare?’

My doctrine is not hard, but it is the hardness of their hearts that leads them to find it so. — Excuse … à Messieurs les Nicodémites (1544)

These complaints, published in 1544, capture the essence of Calvin’s relentless engagement with Nicodemism over nearly thirty years. It was a worship problem, rooted in the idolatry that results in failure to honor God with one’s actions as well as one’s heart. It was, at least for Calvin, predominantly a French problem, addressed with writings presented mostly in the vernacular and ostensibly to believers remaining in the homeland Calvin had left behind for a life in exile. It was also a public relations problem, reflecting at various points Calvin’s sensitivity to being misunderstood and

________

1 “Ilz retienent bien le cueur à Dieu, pour le moins comme ilz disent: ‘mais ilz ne font point difficulté d’abandonner leurs corps à choses profanes et meschantes. Le vous prie, Dieu se peut il contenter d’un tel meslinge? Celuy qui a dit que tout genoil se ploira devant lui, et que toute langue confessera son nom, souffrira-il qu’on s’agenoille devant les idoles?

ie les veux bien aussi avertir, que c’est une grande ingratideté à eux, d’user des propos qu’ilzient. Puis que Calvin faict tant du vaillant: que ne vient il icy, pour voir comment il s’y portera?

ma doctrine n’est pas dure: mais c’est la dureté de leur cœur, qui la leur faict trouver telle’’ (CO 6:594, 606-07, 610).
malignantly by those he, in turn, accused of more egregious sins. The recurrence of these durable themes across the Genevan reformer’s writings on religious dissimulation exhibits a profound consistency, even harshness, that has rightly been observed by those who have examined his anti-Nicodemite polemic. Yet circumstances surrounding this portrait invite a closer look. One example is English translators’ singling out just one of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings for repeated use in a Protestant religious context.

The foregoing chapters have sought to account for the surpassing popularity of Quatre sermons in English translation. I have argued that this was a direct consequence of the work’s exceptional adaptability as an instance of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic presented as four interrelated sermons, the only example of this literary format among the reformer’s many publications. It was neither Calvin’s rhetoric against religious dissimulation per se nor his unique choice of genre alone that appealed to English translators. It was both elements, together, that contributed to the peculiar circumstance that this work decrying evangelical Nicodemism amid French Roman Catholicism would be published and republished in defiantly Protestant Elizabethan England. In making this argument, I have demonstrated the relationship between two areas not yet adequately considered by scholars. First, I examined the character of Quatre sermons as an example of development and diversity within Calvin’s overall anti-Nicodemite polemic. It indeed was about worship, France, and Calvin’s reputation, but it was all these things in ways not previously appreciated by those taking for granted the uniformity of such emphases. Secondly, I have given reasons for why, amid the overall
proliferation of Calvin’s publications in late sixteenth-century England, this easily overlooked collection of sermons—on a seemingly irrelevant topic—became the most frequently translated work of all, with the exception of only the reformer’s *Institutio*. The influence of context upon Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism in 1552 resulted in a work especially adaptable to suit other contexts. Translations of *Quatre sermons* were used to delineate communal boundaries in ways that both united and divided English Protestantism in the late 1500s. By way of summary, my argument proceeded as follows.

The story of *Quatre sermons* in England began with chapter one, where I provided an overview of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite position as a consistent polemic against idolatry that appeared across all of his writings on this subject. This look at Calvin’s consistency was designed to ground the subsequent analysis of Calvin’s unique take on Nicodemism in 1552. In chapter one I also argued that Calvin’s attack on Nicodemism displayed parallels to his critique of other problems such as Epicureanism and Stoicism, yet remained distinct insofar as the reformer consistently portrayed Nicodemites as committed believers who acted contrary to their internal faith commitments. Yet such similarities with various more serious species of unbelief point to variety within the Nicodemite profile that help establish Nicodemism as an intrinsically flexible category.

In chapter two I examined *Quatre sermons* as it originally appeared in Calvin’s Geneva of 1552, and argued that it was not primarily about Nicodemism. Taking a cue from Calvin’s own admission that he had already published extensively on the topic at hand, my analysis proceeded to examine why he would produce yet another new work
on religious dissimulation, especially one that involved considerable effort in selecting, revising, and arranging sermons for the press—something he had not done before, was reluctant to do in general, and would never do again. Reading the finished product against the backdrop of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic as a whole, in light of his other writings from the preceding decade, and within the context of the reformer’s immediate political situation in 1552 brought to light several subtle features of Quatre sermons. As an argument against Nicodemism, it built upon Calvin’s existing—almost exclusively negative—rhetoric against any participation in the Roman Mass as idolatry, by introducing a robust counterweight in the form of an emotionally-charged reading from the Psalms that set forth the positive spiritual benefits of God’s provision for his children in the worship of a rightly-ordered church. To make his case, Calvin brought into his anti-Nicodemite polemic for the first time ecclesiology developed in his 1543 Institutio and other writings, relating the church’s external form to its function for nurturing God’s pilgrim people through its ministry of word and sacrament. The sequencing of Quatre sermons has the effect of channeling its collective flow toward the ecclesiological case for exile contained in the final two sermons. I argued that this was intentional, but not necessarily solely to encourage French believers to leave home. Calvin’s decision to retain the sermonic genre that he was so reluctant to set in writing, including keeping particularized references to his affairs in Geneva, meant that the case he presented for God’s blessings through the church and its ministry could be read as direct address to either French Nicodemites or the mixed audience of native Genevans
and refugees in that city. The fact that this ecclesiological basis for persuasion carried strong implications for Calvin’s own authority and the necessity of his ministry when these were especially threatened supports my contention that Calvin meant to address his local situation with this appeal. Perhaps this was even his principal intent. Read in this light, questions about the identity of Calvin’s Nicodemites—unresolved in the scholarship and diverse by his own account—fall off to the side, with the problem of religious dissimulation having become a foil to serve Calvin’s personal apology here.

The remainder of this dissertation took up the story of how, regardless of how one might interpret his intent, Calvin’s decision to adapt his anti-Nicodemite polemic to his situation in 1552 by expressing it in the unique (for him) format of four interrelated sermons profoundly influenced the publication history of Quatre sermons. Chapter three served, in a sense, to demythologize my presentation of Quatre sermons, or at least to temper my claims concerning its uniqueness among English Protestant publications. Nicodemite bashing was common among Tudor Protestants. Everyone, it seems, was doing it. My survey of anti-Nicodemite polemical works and similar themes appearing in translations and original writings by Marian exiles and Elizabethan evangelicals both corroborated the findings of others and identified additional ways in which arguments against religious dissimulation were kept central during the Marian persecutions, taking on characteristics that reflected England’s particular situation. Among these was the easy association of Nicodemism with Edwardian Catholics, accused of masking corrupt, idolatrous devotion beneath an impeccable exterior. This anticipated the malleability of
the Nicodemite motif among Elizabethan polemicists, who used it to target any number of internal defects as idolatry despite outward conformity to worship presumably reformed according to Scripture. Trading on the same issue of one’s failure to integrate faith and practice, Elizabethan Protestant anti-Nicodemism inverted the problem as it existed in a Continental or Marian framework, where claims of inward piety met external idolatry. The various translations of Quatre sermons fit nicely into the wider context of Marian and Elizabethan anti-Nicodemism. This seeming lack of originality makes the publication’s popularity even more perplexing, lending weight to my claim that it was more than its theme, and in fact both its content and its adaptability that converged to make the work appealing to those who took advantage of these elements.

Chapter four situated the translations of Quatre sermons among the growing English demand for Calvin’s publications, especially his biblical exegesis, toward the end of the sixteenth century. In some respects, various editions of Quatre sermons simply reflected this wider trend of English appreciation for the Genevan reformer and for published sermons. Yet their singular popularity among many English translations of Calvin draws attention to how Quatre sermons, with its unique combination of content and message, may have contributed to this trend. I first compared Calvin’s original French with Claude Baduel’s Latin translation of 1553, the source text for all but one of the English editions. Then, for the sake of analysis, I divided the English translations into two groups. The first are those translations that make no reference to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite content, even seeming to minimize or possibly obscure it. These employed
Quatre sermons to convey messages stressing the solidarity of English Protestantism as a unified community facing out toward a Catholic threat. The anonymous translation published by Rowland Hall in 1561 omits Calvin’s preface and Exposition of Psalm 87, while presenting the author as an example of the “unadorned” biblical preaching desperately needed in English pulpits. The translation of “I.P.” published in 1581 by Robert Waldegrave presents sermon two of Quatre sermons in isolation, incorporating Calvin’s reflections on martyrdom into a larger case vindicating evangelical martyrdom and denying the premise that Catholics or heretics who face execution can rightly be considered martyrs. Calvin’s original use of this sermon as an element building toward a case for political exile is hidden from view entirely. Anthony Munday’s 1584 reissue of Robert Horne’s translation, complete with Munday’s own preface and revealing marginal commentary, is a study in calculated self-promotion. Munday shrewdly associates himself with the anti-Catholic reputations of Calvin, Horne, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, to clear himself of suspicions raised by questionable past associations with Rome. My analysis of these translations demonstrated ways in which Calvin’s reputation profited various individuals who had a different reason for using Quatre sermons, but also how Calvin’s homiletical genre was useful to them as well. I argued that both someone wanting to find a model for preaching and a polemicist looking for a short work on martyrdom from a respected source could equally find what they needed in the Genevan reformer’s Quatre sermons. Calvin’s preface invoking his specific concerns with Nicodemism could be omitted, as could the sermons that were
not needed, without any loss to one’s argument or the appearance of having altered one’s source. In Munday’s case, his nearer source was Robert Horne’s own incorporation of Calvin to press an anti-Catholic agenda thirty years earlier. Calvin’s anti-Catholicism was useful apart from his harsh critique of Protestant Nicodemites. *Quatre sermons* provided flexibility for English translators and editors to have one without the other.

Yet the ability to excise or ignore Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite content was not as useful for everyone, which helps account for the appeal of *Quatre sermons* among a second group of translations. These not only took advantage of Calvin’s decision to present his rejection of religious dissimulation over four sermons, but capitalized on the Nicodemism trope in order to criticize fellow Protestants in the English church, policing boundaries between the more or less godly within the wider community. In chapter five I examined how Robert Horne utilized *Quatre sermons* to defend his decision to flee England against charges of cowardice for abandoning his pastoral position. Horne’s lengthy preface invoked the Nicodemite as a foil against which he could present his own position in a positive light, as one who openly confessed Christ by following God’s call to exile rather than dissembling like many (it was assumed) who stayed behind. They were the real cowards. I argued that Horne chose to omit Calvin’s preface and final two sermons because these presented a positive account of exile at odds with the of exile-as-hardship message more beneficial to Horne. Calvin’s decision to engage readers with a multi-sermon case for exile both created challenges for Horne and provided a way to overcome them: He could omit the material on exile without seeming to have done so.
Chapter six took up the longest translation, which, for several reasons, also displayed the most complex use of Calvin. I argued that Field’s translation should be read in view of his other signed writings from 1576 to 1583, and especially alongside his other French translations of 1579. This reveals its function as the climax of a veiled invective against the same moderates in the English church he had attacked explicitly and viciously in the Admonition to the Parliament of 1572. My analysis revealed how Field built a cumulative case in 1579 over three prefaces to French translations, each linked to the next and singling out a different enemy. His Foure sermons appeared last and laid the most blame for England’s current and future problems at the feet of Nicodemites whose orthodox doctrinal commitment blended seamlessly into the English church. Yet these fellow Protestants harbored a lack of doctrinal zeal expressed in tolerance toward the subversive beliefs of Rome and various heretical sects. Field used Calvin’s sermonic form to raise the specter of peril in seemingly peaceful times, adapting the reformer’s admonitions to his Genevan congregation. The Englishman further exploited the Nicodemite trope to attack those within the church by maligning their motives without identifying them outwardly. This permitted Field to attack moderates without openly critiquing prelacy or the Prayer Book—thus sidestepping the disruptive polemic of the Admonition that landed Field in prison and that, for obvious political reasons, he was keen to avoid in his recent publications. I argued that Quatre sermons provided Field with both a flexible form and the flexible motif of a nameless, faceless foe he could adapt to attack perennial enemies within the church without seeming to do so. I also pointed
out how Field’s use of the Nicodemite motif differed from Calvin’s insofar as Field identified Nicodemism as a present threat in an ostensibly reformed church in times of peace and prosperity for the gospel and applied his polemic to fellow members of said church, neither of which Calvin ever did. The translation history of Quatre sermons displays both the adaptability of Calvin’s unique 1552 polemical work against religious dissimulation, but also the intrinsic malleability of the Nicodemite as a polemical trope—able to include any number of potential targets. This combination of form and content, I contend, not only made Quatre sermons especially suited to Calvin’s purposes in 1552, but also explains its popularity with English translators who pressed Calvin into a range of agenda that variously stressed unity and divisions among English Protestants.

New Perspectives and Future Research on Calvin’s Anti-Nicodemism

Beyond its uniqueness as a study of Quatre sermons as a discrete portion to Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, the primary contribution of the present work is as a model for a kind of reception study in the history of ideas that illuminates the manifold uses of one theological work to address vastly different contexts over a fairly short period of time. It joins other research on The Reception of Continental Reformation in Britain, which is also the title of a recent collection of essays on this theme.² My study

² Polly Ha and Patrick Collinson eds., The Reception of Continental Reformation in Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). In addition to the examples of reception study represented in the various essays, see the discussion of reception as a methodological development emerging in twentieth-century literary studies, but only late in coming to Reformation research (xv-xxv).
differs from other work on the British reception of Continental reform insofar as it is the
only research to take up the particular topic of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism, as well as the
question of how this was received via the history of one publication. In many respects,
*Quatre sermons* is ideal subject for such an analysis. Its unique combination of content
and form was very much tailored to suit concerns particular to Calvin’s original
situation, making its repeated use in the shifting contexts of the English reformations—
all quite removed from Calvin’s Geneva—especially conducive to tracing contrasts and
continuities across the publication history of a single work. Beginning with the French
and Latin versions, the story of *Quatre sermons* in English permitted me to look closely at
seven unique editions of the same text appearing over a thirty-two-year span. Setting
these texts within their particular social and religious contexts has illuminated
significant variation between presentations of what was essentially the same core
material from Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic, translated with little deviation from
Calvin’s French original. The differences emerged when one considered how Calvin’s
ideas were repackaged with prefaces, woodcuts, marginalia, and selective omissions,
resulting in reinterpretations of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism for fresh audiences, each
emphasizing the unique and diverse priorities of those presenting Calvin’s ideas. By
thus approaching the question of Calvin’s reception in England, I encountered several
surprises and negotiated potential pitfalls.

Among the unexpected discoveries in my research was that English editions of
*Quatre sermons* were not at all unique in treating the theme of evangelical religious
dissimulation in the Elizabethan era, despite how Protestant Nicodemism does not seem to fit that context well. Karl Gunther’s analysis of Tudor evangelical anti-Nicodemism in *Reformation Unbound*—published in 2014 as I was researching Marian and Elizabethan polemical sources—confirmed trends that emerged in my reading and helped further relativize the English reception of *Quatre sermons*, leading me to focus more clearly on the features of this work that made it truly distinct among anti-Nicodemite writings appearing in English. Significantly, these were anti-Nicodemite sermons by Calvin, unique as such in his published corpus as well as in the English reception of Continental anti-Nicodemite writings. This fact helped guide my questions back toward what made these sermons notable among the Genevan reformer’s writings, as further background for assessing the popularity of *Quatre sermons* with English translators and publishers. A second surprise in my research was that English translators modified Calvin’s French so minimally. While I did not necessarily expect gross distortion, I certainly assumed that Calvin’s treatment of proper polity as essential to the church’s function would receive greater accent in the hands of Englishmen, who could bend such arguments to suit their contemporary ecclesiastical conflicts more directly. That such was not the case led me to revisit the sources to investigate why not. This informed further questions I brought to the context and other features of these publications, in each case to best account for the finished product. Here, the methodological constraint of focusing on reception via

---

3 *Reformation Unbound*, 98-129.
published translations was especially helpful for limiting what could otherwise have been a tedious and potentially inexhaustible reconstruction of each new social and political context. Not that such investigations would not be fruitful, of course, but they seem best suited for a separate project. Sticking to the text, as it were, kept my attention on questions of context that seemed most important for making sense of how each version of *Quatre sermons* revealed unique goals in relation to the other translations, specifically in terms of how Calvin was variously framed for prospective readers. This limited approach to reception was useful for crystalizing distinctive features of each work, for distinguishing between groups of translations, and for suggesting how the reception of *Quatre sermons* highlights elements in Calvin’s original that could reward closer investigation—particularly how decisions suited to his Genevan context would impact the attractiveness and deployment of his anti-Nicodemite polemic in England.

I conclude with several observations concerning the significance of specific findings and possibilities for future research. First, I have demonstrated the fruitfulness of focusing on diversity within Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism. Despite its stable core of polemic against idolatry and refusal to concede any possibility of lawful participation in the Mass, Calvin’s attack on dissimulation could actually vary considerably according to context. Not only did the reformer have various polemical targets in view, as in the case of his critique of former friends in *Epistolae duae* of 1537 or refutation of Coornhert’s views in 1564. He also used his case against Nicodemism for various purposes. In 1552, it seems as if Calvin’s approach to Nicodemism was deployed to achieve goals beyond
decrying false worship and, very likely, was not even primarily concerned with this theme. This finding revises the common impression that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic was a monolithic entity that varied little over time, such that its expression at various points throughout the reformer’s career was essentially the same and his writings on the topic interchangeable for those seeking to represent Calvin’s complete anti-Nicodemite “position.” My analysis of Quatre sermons has revealed genuine development within Calvin’s method of addressing Nicodemism expressed in his positive ecclesiological case for exile. While not inconsistent with his theological arguments against dissimulation taken as a whole, inserting this strong appeal for nurture in the rightly-ordered church shifted the emphasis of his overall case and impacted its later reception by others. I have attempted to demonstrate that Calvin adapted his argument in this way to influence his readers, but also succeeded to do just this in ways he did not intend or imagine. I hope that these findings will encourage future work in Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic to consider more closely how its discrete parts might have been designed to achieve diverse goals both related and unrelated to Nicodemism.

Secondly, my dissertation has demonstrated the significance of Calvin’s exegesis of the Psalms for his anti-Nicodemite argument in Quatre sermons. I focused here on Calvin’s ability to leverage David’s experience to assert the importance of the church’s proper form to its intended function and press an emotional appeal upon his audiences by presenting David as the quintessential anti-Nicodemite. Calvin’s 1557 commentary
on the Psalms briefly relates Pss 16 and 27 to the topic of dissimulation, with nothing of the energetic and exclusive focus on fleeing idolatry for spiritual nurture one finds in *Quatre sermons*. On the one hand, this is a case study of the different emphases Calvin takes up in his sermons versus his commentaries, perhaps as a function of genre and the utility of each form as appropriate to its context. Yet Calvin’s use of the Psalms in *Quatre sermons* also reveals variety in the biblical sources he relied on to support his approach to Nicodemism, beyond the recurring texts from 1 Cor. It also suggests the prevalence of this theme in his thinking as he read through Scripture and taught from its various parts. Max Engammare has observed how often Calvin’s mind seems reflexively to turn toward France in his writings, and David Wright has noted the current lack of a comprehensive study of Nicodemism as a theme occurring in the reformer’s biblical exegesis.¹ I hope that my exposition of Calvin’s counterintuitive use of the Psalms to argue for a New Testament ecclesiology in *Quatre sermons* will encourage new research on religious dissimulation across Calvin’s biblical interpretation, perhaps also as this is considered in relation to the thought of his contemporaries and the exegetical tradition.

Thirdly, I have demonstrated the flexibility of the Nicodemite as a motif for portraying one’s enemies by revealing the variety of such portrayals across the publication history of a single anti-Nicodemite work. I have also revealed how, beginning with Calvin’s own use of the Nicodemite in 1552, not a single edition of

---

Quatre sermons examined above was primarily concerned with attacking the kind of dissimulation usually associated with Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic. Everyone put this theme to use in service of a different agenda or to target a different enemy. Calvin’s argument against dissimulation at the Mass was employed to attack evangelicals in Catholic France, in Catholic England, and, in Field’s case, within the established church in Protestant England. Calvin’s own concession in 1544 that various types of dissemblers fell prey to the same temptation to hide their commitments in the context of idolatrous worship anticipated the possibility that his argument could be used by those with various targets in view, even in contexts different than Calvin’s own. What Calvin likely did not have in mind was how the same attack on French Nicodemites was deployed to question the motives of English Protestants who worshipped alongside their accusers. Building on the work of others on evangelical anti-Nicodemism in Elizabethan England, my study confirms the multivalence of Nicodemism as a polemical trope in the writings of its enemies.\(^5\) This not only expands possibilities in research on the nature and situation of actual Nicodemites. It also draws attention back to the fact that Nicodemism was perhaps often a matter of perception that went no further than the imagination of a particular anti-Nicodemite writer. With Field’s critique of moderates, for example, Robert Horne’s principled conformity proves that Field’s description of moderates as lacking doctrinal zeal was not accurate. But this is not important for understanding

\(^5\) Gunther, *Reformation Unbound*, 104-118.
Field’s goals. I hope that my study also stimulates further research into how writers across England, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere might have used Nicodemism as a rhetorical device deployed beyond actual instances of idolatrous worship, rather than simply seeking to identify the Nicodemites attacked in various early modern European sources. How was dissimulation used as a motif to address any number of specific concerns in a manner that benefited from invoking a foe that could not be traced and, just as importantly, could not argue back?

Fourthly, my study has uncovered several important facets to Calvin’s reception as a theological authority in the history of the Reformation in England. Although it is impossible to determine definitively whether the multiple translations of Quatre sermons contributed to or merely reflected Calvin’s growing influence in England of the late 1500s, I have shown how the unique features of this work’s content and form converged to make it especially popular among the explosion of English language writings holding forth the Genevan reformer as an authoritative figure. While I have contributed to our understanding of why particular authors, translators, and publishers found what they needed in an anti-Nicodemite work from 1552, more work remains to be done on the significance of Calvin’s position on religious dissimulation for how those who read him in Reformation and post-Reformation England appraised his theology as a whole. This raises further questions about the influence of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism on the diverse, sometimes conflicting, ways he was embraced by various factions among English Calvinists. My analysis of Horne and Field has divulged how men on opposite sides of
the Elizabethan Vestiarian Controversy were able to use Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism—
Horne in ways similar to Calvin’s original attack on evangelicals conforming to Roman
worship, Field in a manner quite different from Calvin’s approach. This points to areas
of further investigation that must pick up where the present work leaves off. I have
shown how Field portrayed a more reducibly predestinarian Calvin as a litmus test for
doctrinal orthodoxy and presented Calvin’s Quatre sermons, with its explicit insistence
on the necessity of proper church organization to pure worship, as part of an implicit
attack on those who had accepted the status quo of Elizabethan church polity and
worship. How did Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism influence the reception of his ecclesiology
into the seventeenth century? Richard Hooker, whose publications began appearing a
decade after the last early modern English translation of Quatre sermons, dismissed the
notion that Calvin’s Genevan church order was founded on a pristine, committed theory
of jure divino presbyterianism, rather than merely accommodating the circumstances the
reformer inherited when he arrived in 1536.6 Though Calvin never argues for jure divino
presbyterianism, I have shown how Calvin’s political pressures put a sharp point on his
call for proper church government as essential to the nurturing function of the true
church. Mapping this anti-Nicodemite argument for exile onto the presbyterian polity
Calvin develops elsewhere could easily have contributed to the impression that he was

Hooker’s Lawes first appeared in 1593. For Hooker’s main point concerning Calvin’s presbyterianism, see
Littlejohn, “Richard Hooker,” 77-78; also Harro Höpfl, The Christian Polity of John Calvin (Cambridge: 
Cambridge University Press, 1982), esp. 128-151.

338
more insistent on the necessity of presbyterianism to the church’s existence than perhaps he was. I hope my examination of how Calvin adapted his ecclesiology to suit his anti-Nicodemite polemic will resource further studies of how this theme factored into the perception of the reformer’s position among, for example, English non-conformists, Scottish presbyterians, and their foes leading to the outbreak of the English Civil War.

Another aspect of Calvin’s reception in the English Reformation to which I have brought greater understanding is the shape of Calvin’s contribution for meeting the English appetite for printed sermons. While I have limited my study to the original intent of translators and publishers in their immediate context, others have examined published works in terms of their apparent demand by the reading public. I. M. Green, for example, has analyzed a sample of over 700 “best-sellers” and “steady sellers” published in England between 1530 and 1700, each one appearing in at least five editions within thirty years, concluding that over 100 of these can be classified under “sermons.”

Whereas *Quatre sermons* was never a best-seller according to this algorithm—only Horne’s 1553 edition was ever reprinted, and this thirty-one years later—an awareness of the work’s appearance in five unique editions in the midst of an early modern sermon boom provides further insight into how publishers and translators might have approached this collection. They were capitalizing on the nation’s reading habits. While

---

7 *Print and Protestantism*, 168-238. “The sermon is often described as the most important and characteristic form of communication for Protestants, in that many Protestant thinkers (usually themselves good preachers) ascribed to the sermon a key role, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in bringing the faithful to salvation” (194). On the printing and reading of sermons, see also Herr, *Elizabethan Sermon*, 67-109.
the numbers do not support a claim that the anti-Nicodemite Calvin portrayed in these translations was the one readers most desired, they do permit a different conclusion. At least in the sixteenth century, the most popular author (Calvin), in his most popular genre (exegesis), was mediated to English readers on a limited range of themes, with anti-Nicodemism a recurring one. That Calvin’s most frequently translated work were sermons on dissimulation is further encouragement to pursue additional research on Calvin’s anti-Nicodemism as a distinctive element influencing the popular perception of the reformer, including arenas beyond the ecclesiastical debates of the theological elite.

Finally, I add a comment on the contemporary ecclesial significance of my research. This dissertation has demonstrated the deeply contextual nature of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings, revealing that there was significant diversity of intended meaning even within Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite corpus. The ways in which the reformer’s approach to Nicodemism was put to use in England within several the decades following his death further illustrate the profound impact of context upon the interpretation of what religious dissimulation meant and how it should be addressed. In at least one case, I have shown that English translators applied Calvin’s argument to a new situation in ways that the reformer never pressed his critique against Nicodemites in France. Thus, while examining Calvin’s arguments rejecting the possibility of separating internal devotion from external idolatry in the context of Roman worship

---

8 On Calvin in sixteenth-century English translation, see chapters four and six.
might be fruitful for resourcing reflection on similar situations today, we must be
cautious not to assume too easy a parallel between what the reformer might have meant
in his context and how his theology addresses ours. One example of the current use of
Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic to speak to contemporary questions is the work of the
Presbyterian Church in America’s recent study committee on “Insider Movements”
comprised of clandestine Christian communities living and worshiping in Islamic
contexts. An analysis of this American denomination’s recommendations regarding the
actions of Christians living among Muslims is beyond the scope of the present work.
However, I hope my study will encourage those working on projects like the one in
question to consider the contextual complexities involved in retrieving Calvin’s
approach to fellow early modern Western Europeans participating in the Roman Mass
for a contemporary situation with religious, social, ethnic, and political dimensions that
bear only a superficial resemblance to Calvin’s own. To invoke Calvin as an authority as
if he spoke directly to the challenges of twenty-first century Christians living in
Indonesia, Morocco, or Syria would be to make the same categorical mistakes that one
would in order to insist that the reformer’s critique of Nicodemism was meant to rebuke
moderates within the Elizabethan church.

---

9 http://www.pcaac.org/2013/07/report-of-the-pca-ga-ad-interim-committee-on-insider-movements-part-
two/ (accessed 1 October 2015); see also the committee’s citation, on page 2255 of its report, of David W.
Hall, “Calvin and an Earlier “Insider Movement”: It’s Deja Vu All Over Again,”
(accessed 21 February 2013).
Works Cited

I. Primary Sources

French, Latin, and Sixteenth-Century English Editions of Quatre sermons in chronological order:


Joannis Calvini homiliae quatuor, grauem atque his temporibus admodum opportunam et vtilem admonitionem atque exhortationem continentes, quemadmodum ex Ipso praefatione perspici poterit breuis item explanatio Psalmi lxxxvii ab eodem authore latine scripta e. Gallico ipsius authoris sermones in latinum à Claudio Baduello convertae. Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1553.

Certaine homilies of M. Ioan Calvine conteining profitable and necessarie admonitio for this time, with an apologie of Robert Horn. Rome [Wesel?], 1553 (STC 4392).

Foure godlye sermons agaynst the pollution of idolatries comforting men in persecutions, and teachyng them what commodities thei shal find in Christes church, which were preached in French by the moste famous clarke Ihon Caluyn, and translated fyrst into Latine and afterward into Englishe by diuers godly learned men. London: Rowland Hall, 1561 (STC 4438).


A sermon of the famous and Godly learned man, master Iohn Caluine chiefe Minister and Pastour of Christs church at Geneua, conteining an exhortation to suffer persecution for followinge Iesus Christe and his Gospell, vpon this text following. Heb. 13. 13. Go ye out of the tents after Christe, bearing his rebuke. London: [Robert Waldgrave for] Edward White, 1581 (STC 4439.5).

Two godly and learned sermons, made by that famous and woorthy instrument in Gods church, M. Iohn Caluin. Which sermons were long since translated out of Latine into English, by M. Robert Horne late Byshop of Winchester, at what time he suffered exile from his country, for the testimony of a good conscience, as his apology in the beginning of the booke will witnes. And because these sermons have long lyen hidden in silence, and many godly
and religious persons, haue beene very desirous of them: at theyr earnest request they are nowe published by A.M. London: [John Charlewood for] Henry Car, 1584 (STC 4461).

Other Primary Sources

Alfield, Thomas. *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wheruto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons.* London: Stephen Verstegan, 1582. (STC 537)

Allen, William. *An Apologie and True Declaration of the Institution and Endeouers of the Tvvo English Colleges, the One in Rome, the Other Novv Resident in Rhemes Against Certaine Sinister Informations Giuen Vp Against the Same.* Rheims: Jean de Foigny, 1581 (STC 369).

Anonymous. Whether Christian faith maye be kept secret in the heart, without confession thereof openly to the world as occasion shal serve. Also what hurt cometh by them that hath received the Gospell, to be present at Masse unto the simple and unlearned. Roane [London?], 1553 (STC 5160.3).


Anonymous. *A trewe mirrour or glase wherin we maye beholde the wofull state of thys our realme of Englande set forth in a dialogue or communicacion betwene Eusebius and Theophilus.* [Wesel?]: [H. Singleton?], 1556 (STC 21777).


Anonymous. *An Answer to a Certain Godly Mannes Lettres Desiring His Frendes Iudgement, Whether it be Laufull for a Christian Man to be Present At the Popishe Masse, and Othe Supersticious Churche Seruice.* Strasbou [?]: 1557 (STC 658).


Bale, John. *The Vocacyon of Iohā Bale to the Bishiprick of Ossorie in Irelāde His Persecucīōs in ſ

Bate, John. The portraiture of hypocrisie, litely and pithilie pictured in her colours wherein you may view the vgliest and most prodigious monster that England hath brede. London: Robert Robinson, 1589 (STC 1579).


____________. The Iudgement of a Most Reuerend and Learned Man From Beyond the Seas Concerning a Threefold Order of Bishops,With a Declaration of Certaine Other Waightie Points, Concerning the Discipline and Gouernement of the Church. London: Robert Waldegrave, 1585 (STC 2021).


____________. Fiftie godlie and learned sermons diuided into fiue decades, conteyning the chiefe and principall pointes of Christian religion, written in three seuerall tomes or sections, by Henrie Bullinger minister of the churche of Tigure in Swicerlande. Whereunto is adioyned a triple or three-folde table verie fruitefull and necessarie. Translated out of Latine into English by H.I. student in diuinitie. London: [Henry Middleton for] Ralphe Newberrie, 1577 (STC 4056).

Bullinger, Heinrich and John Calvin. Two epystles one of Henry Bullynger, wyth the consent
of all the lernyd men of the Churche of Tigury: another of Ihon Caluyn, cheffe preacher of
the church of Geneue: whether it be lawfull for a Chrysten man to communycate or be
pertaker of the masse of the Papysts, wythout offendyng God and hys neyghboure, or not.
Antwerp [?]: M. Crom [?], 1544 (STC 4079.5).

Calvin, John. Epistolae duae (1537) in Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia. Series IV: Scripta
didactica et polemica. Volume 4. Edited by Erik de Boer and Frans Pieter van

Calvin, John. Epistolae duae de rebus hoc saeculo cognitu apprime necessariis (1537). Pages
233-312 in Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vol. 5.

pertinentes. In Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vol. 11.

Calvin, John. Projet d’ordannances ecclésiastiques, septembre et octobre 1541. Pages 15-25 in
Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vol. 10a.

Calvin, John. Petit traicté, monstrant que c’est que doit faire un homme fidèle congnoissant la
vérité de l’evangilequand il est entre les papistes. Avec une épistre du mesme argument

Calvin, John. Excuse de Iehan Calvin, à Messieurs les Nicodémites, sur la complaincte qu’ilz

Calvin, John. Petite traicté, monstrant que doit faire un fidele entre les papistes, Avec une
epistre du mesme argument. Ensemble l’excuse faicte sur cela aux Nicodemites. Par M. J.
Calvin. Geneva: Jean Girard, 1545. [Contains conseils of P. Melanchthon, M. Bucer,
and P. M. Vermigli.]

Calvin, John. Thesauri epistolici Calviniani. Vol. 3: Epistolae ad annos 1545-1548

Calvin, John. La Forme Des Prieres et Chantz Ecclésiastiques aved la maniere d’administrer les

345
sacraments et consacrer le mariage selon la coutume de l'église ancienne (1547). Pages 161-224 in Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vol. 6.

___________. The Mynde of the Godly and Excellent Lerned Man M. Ihon Caluyne What a Faithfull Man, Whiche is Instructe in the Worde of God, Ought to Do, Dwellinge Amongst the Papistes. Ipswich: John Oswen, 1548 (STC 4435, 4435.3, 4435.5, 4435.7).


___________. De scandalis quibus hodie plerique absterrentur, nonnulli etiam alientantur a pura evangelii doctrina (1550). Pages 5-84 in Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vol. 8.

___________. Commentarius in epistolas catholicas (1551). In Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vols. 55 and 56.


___________. The forme of prayers and ministration of the sacramentes, &c. used in the Englishe Congregation at Geneua and approved, by the famous and godly learned man, John Caluin. Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1556 (STC 16561).

___________. In librum psalmorum commentarius (1557). In Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vols. 31 and 32.

___________. Institutio christianae religionis in libros quatuor nunc primum digesta certisque distincta captibus ad aptissimam methodum aucta etiam tam magna accessione ut propemodum opus novum haberi possit (1559). In Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia, vol. 2.

___________. Institutio christianae religionis 1559: Quibus accessionibus per singulas editiones ab anno 1536 usque ad annum 1559 locupletata sit, apparatu critico oculis


__________. An Epistle of M. Ihon Caluin, containyng diuers necessarie poinctes of knowledge tendyng to constancie in the truthe in the tyme of affliction: written to a Freend. Caluin. N.S.D. To certaine controuersies of godly Bretheren” in The commentaries of M. John Caluin vpon the first Epistle of Saint Ihon, and vpon the Epistle of Iude wherein accordyng to the truthe of the woordes of the holie Ghost, he most excellently openeth and cleareth the poinct of true iustification with God, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, by the effects that he bryngeth forthe in the regeneration. Translated into Englishe by W.H. (London: John Kingston, 1580 (STC 4404).


Coverdale, Miles. A confutacion of that treatise, which one Iohn Standish made agaynst the protestacion of D. Barnes in the yeare. M.D.XL. Zurich: C. Froschauer, 1541 (STC 5888).

__________. Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters of such true saintes and holy martyrs of God, as in the late bloodye persecution here within this realme, gauie their lyues for the defence of Christes holy gospel written in the tyme of their affliction and cruell

Cranmer, Thomas. The copy of certain lettres sent to the Quene, and also to doctour Martin and doctour Storye, by the most reuerende father in God, Thomas Cranmer Archebishop of Cantorburye from prison in Oxeforde: who (after long and most grefwous strayt emprisoning and cruell handlelyng) most constauntly and willingly suffred martirdome ther, for the true testimonie of Christ. Emden[?], 1556 (STC 5999).


_________. A Godly Exhortation, By Occasion of the Lat©e Iudgement of God, Shewed At Parris-Garden, the Thirteenth Day of Ianuarie Where Were Assembled By Estimation; About a Thousand Persons, Whereof Some Were Slaine; & of That Number, At the Least, as is Crediblie Reported, the Thirde Person Maimed and Hurt. Giuen to All Estates for Their Instruction, Concerning the Keeping of the Sabboth Day. By John Field Minister of the Word of God. London: [Robert Waldegrave for] Henry Carre, 1583 (STC 10845).


Foxe, John. The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history contaynyng the actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realm, especially in the Church of England principally to be noted : with a full discourse of such persecutions, horrible troubles, the sufferynge of martyrs, and other things incident, touchyng aswel the sayd
Church of England as also Scotland, and all other foreine nations, from the primitiue tyme till the reigne of K. Henry VIII. London: John Day, 1570 (STC 11223).

Goodman, Christopher. How Superior Powers Oght to be Obeyd of Their Subiects and Wherin They May Lawfully By Gods Worde be Disobeyed and Resisted. Wherin Also is Declared the Cause of All This Present Miserie in England, and the Onely Way to Remedy the Same. Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1558 (STC 12020).


________. An answer to a great nomber of blasphemous cauillations written by an Anabaptist, and aduersarie to Gods eternal predestination. Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1560 (STC 15060).

de L’Espine, Jean. An Excellent Treatise of Christian Righteousnes, Written First in the French Tongue By M.I. De L’Espine, and Translated Into English By I. Feilde for the Comforte of Afflicted Consciences, Verie Necessarie and Profitable to be Reade of All Christians, as Well for Establishing Them in the True Doctrine of Justification, as Also for Enabling


Munday, Anthony. *The English Romayne lyfe Discovering: the liues of the Englishmen at Roome: the orders of the English seminarie: the dissention betweene the Englishmen and the VVelshmen: the banishing of the Englishmen out of Roome: the Popes sending for them againe: a reporte of many of the paltrie reliques in Roome: ther vautes under the grounde: their holy pilgrimations: and a number other matters, worthy to be read and regarded of every one. There vnto is added, the cruell tiranny, vsed on an English man at Roome, his Christian suffering, and notable martirdome, for the Gospell of Iesus Christe, in anno 1581. VVritten by A.M. sometime the Popes scholler in the seminarie among them. Seene and allovved*. London: John Charleoode, 1582 (STC 18272).

Musculus, Wolfgang. *The temporisour (that is to saye: the observer of tyme, or he that chaungeth with the tyme.) Compyleth in Latyn by the excellent clarke Wolfangus Musculus, and traslated into Frenche by M. Vallerain Pullain. And out of Frenche into Inglishe by R.P. [Wesel?] 1555 (STC 18312, 18313).

_________. The temporisour that is to say: the observer of time, or hee that changeth with the time. Compyled in Latin, by the excellent clarke, Wolfgang Musculus, and translated into
Edinburgh: Thomas Vautroullier, 1584; STC 18314.

Napier, John. A plaine discovery of the whole Revelation of Saint Iohn set downe in two 
treatises: the one searching and prouing the true interpretation thereof: the other applying 
the same paraphrastically and historically to the text. Set foorth by John Napeir L. of 
Marchistoun younger. Whereunto are annexed certaine oracles of Sibylla, agreeing with 
the Revelation and other places of Scripture. Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1593 
(STC 18354).

Norton, Thomas. A warning agaynst the dangerous practises of papistes and specially the 
parteners of the late rebellion. Gathered out of the common feare and speche of good 

Olevian, Caspar. An Exposition of the Symbole of the Apostles, or Rather of the Articles of Faith 
in Which the Chiefe Points of the Everlasting and Free Covenant Betweene God and the 
Faithfull is Briefly and Plainly Handled. Gathered Out of the Catechising Sermons of 
Gasper Oleuvian Treuir, and Now Translated Out of the Latine Tongue Into the English 
for the Benefite of Christ His Church. By Iohn Fielde. London: [H. Middleton for] 
Thomas Man and Tobie Smith, 1581 (STC 18807).

Parsons, Robert. A Brief Discours Contayning Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to 
Goe to Church. Written By a Learned and Vertuous Man, to a Friend of His in England. 
And Dedicated By I.h. To the Queenes Most Excellent Maiestie. Douai: John Lyon, 1580; 
STC 19394.

Pigg, Oliver. A Comfortable Treatise Vpon the Latter Part of the Fourth Chapiter of the First 
Epistle of Saint Peter, From the Twelfe Verse to the Ende. By O. Pigge. London: [Robert 
Waldegrave for] John Harison the yonger and Thomas Man, 1582 (STC 1582).

Pilkington, James. Aggeus and Abdias prophetes the one corrected, the other newly 
added, and both at large declared. London: William Seres, 1562 (STC 19927).

_________. A godlie exposition vpon certeine chapters of Nehemiah, written by that worthie 
byshop and faithfull pastor of the Church of Durham Master James Pilkington. And now 
newly published. In the latter end, because the author could not finish that treatise of 
oppression which he had begunne, there is added that for a supplie, which of late was 
published by Robert Some, D. in Diuinitie. Cambridge: Thomas Thomas, 1585 (STC 
19929).

Pownell, Robert. A moste pythyge and excellent epistell to anymate all trew Christians vnto the
crosse of Chryste, translated out of ffrêche into ynglisyhe by Robert Pownoll. Wesel [?], 1556 (STC 10432).


Ridley, Nicholas and Hugh Latimer, Certein godly, learned, and comfortable conferences, betwene the two reuerende fathers, and holy martyrs of Christe, D. Nicolas Rydley late Bisshoppe of London, and M. Hughe Latimer, sometyme Bisshop of Worcester, during the tyme of their emprisonmentes. Emden [?], 1556 (STC 21047.3, 21047.7).

Rogers, John. The Displaying of an Horrible Secte of Grosse and Wicked Heretiques, Naming Themselues the Familie of Loue With the Liues of Their Authours, and What Doctrine They Teach in Corners. Newely Set Foorth By I.r. London: [By Henry Middleton] for George Bishop, 1578 (STC 21181.5).

________. An Answere Vnto a Wicked & Infamous Libel Made By Christopher Vitel, One of the Chiefe English Elders of the Pretended Familye of Loue: Maintaining Their Doctrine, & Carpingly Answeringe to Certaine Pointes of a Boke Called the Displaing of the Fam. / Aunswered By I. Rogers. London: John Daye, 1579 (STC 21180).

Smith, Henry. The lavviers question The answere to the lawiers question. The censure of Christ upon the answere. London: J. Danter, 1595 (STC 22679).


Traheron, Bartholomew. A vwarning to England to repente and to tvrne to god from idolatrie and poperie by the terrible exemple of Calece, giuen the 7. of March. Anno D. 1558. By Benthalmai Outis. [Wesel?: P.A. de Zuttere?], 1558 (STC 24174).


Udall, John. *Peters fall Two sermons vpon the historie of Peters denying Christ. Wherin we may see the causes of mans falling from God, and the manner how, both of the wicked thorough incredulitie, and of the godly by infirmitie: and also the way that God hath set downe in his worde to rise againe. By John Vdall, preacher of the word of God at Kingston vpon Temmes. London: John Windes, 1584 (STC 24503).

Vermigli, Peter Martyr. *A treatise of the cohabitacyon of the faithfull with the vnfaithfull Whereunto is added. A sermon made of the confessing of Christe and his gospell, and of the denyinge of the same. [Strasbour?: W. Rihel?], 1555 (STC 24673.5).

Viret, Pierre. *The principal points which are at this daye in controuersie, concerning the holly supper and of the masse/ London: C. Barker, 1579 (STC 24782)

Wigand, John. *De neutralibus et mediis, grossly Inglished, Jacke of both sydes A godly and a necessary catholike admonition, touching those that be neutres, holding those that be neutres, holding vpon no certayne religion nor doctrine and such as holde with both partes or rather of no parte, very necessary to staye & stablysh Gods place in the true catholicke faith against thys present wicked world. London: R. Harrison, 1562 (STC 25612, 25652.5).

**********. *De neutralibus & medijs, grosly Englished, iacke of both sides a godly and a necessarie catholike admonition, touching those that be neuters, holding vpon no certaine religion, nor doctrine, and such as hold with both partes, or rather of no part: very necessary to stay and stablish Gods elect in the true catholicke faith against this present wicked world. London: Thomas Dawson, 1591 (STC 25613).
Wilkinson, William *A confutation of certaine articles deliuere\^d vnto the Familye of Loue with the exposition of Theophilus, a supposed elder in the sayd Familye vpon the same articles. By William Wilkinson Maister of Artes and student of diuin\textdegree y. Hereunto are prefixed by the right reuerend Father in God I.Y. Byshop of Rochester, certaine notes collected out of their Gospell, and aunswered by the Fam. By the author, a description of the tyme, places, authors, and manner of spreading the same: of their liues, and wrestyng of Scriptures: with notes in the end how to know an heretique.* London: John Day, 1579 (STC 25665).


II. Secondary Sources


Balserak, Jon. “‘There Will Always Be Prophets’ Deuteronomy 18:14–22 and Calvin’s


__________. A suruay of the pretended holy discipline. Contayning the begininges, successe, parts, proceedings, authority, and doctrine of it: with some of the manifold, and materiall repugnances, varieties and uncertaineties, in that behalfe. London: John Wolfe, 1593.


Burger, Christoph. “Calvin comme maître de ses amis dans la première de ses Epistolae Duae (1537).” Pages 149-158 in Calvin et ses contemporains: actes du colloque de Paris


Mentzer, Raymond A. “Calvin and France.” Pages 78-87 in *The Calvin Handbook*. 

364


__________. *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559-1581*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1953.


Primus, John Henry. *The Vestments Controversy: An Historical Study of the Earliest*
Tensions in the Church of England in the Reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth. Kampen: J.
H. Kok, 1960.

Puckett, David L. John Calvin’s Exegesis of the Old Testament. Louisville: Westminster


1980.

Rieser, Ewald. Calvin-Franzose, Genfer oder Fremdling?: Untersuchung zum Problem

Robinson, Hastings ed. The Zurich Letters, Comprising the Correspondence of Several
English Bishops and Others, With Some of the Helvetian Reformers, During the Early
Part of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. First and Second Series. Cambridge: Parker
Society, 1842-1845.

__________. Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation: Written During the Reigns
of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary: Chiefly from the Archives of
Zurich. Translated by Hastings Robinson. 2 vols. Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846-
1847.

Roget, Amédée. Histoire du peuple de Genève depuis la Réforme jusqu’à l’Escalade. 7

Rosa, Susan and Dale van Kley, “Religion and the Historical Discipline: A Reply to


__________. The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stuart Realms 1485-1603. London:

Schulze, L. F. “Preaching as topical communication: The case of Calvin.” In die Skrftig


Walsham, Alexandra. *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in*


Biography

Kenneth Joseph Woo was born on November 5, 1975 in Fairview Park, Ohio to Antony and Suzanna Woo. He graduated in 1993 from Stuyvesant High School (New York, NY), and received the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from the College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA) in 1996, as well as the Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia, PA) in 2004. Kenneth is the author of the following articles: “Suffering as a Mark of the Church in Martin Luther’s Exegesis of 1 Peter,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 77:3/4 (2013): 307–325; and “The House of God in Exile: Reassessing John Calvin’s Approach to Nicodemism in Quatre sermons (1552),” *Church History and Religious Culture*, 95:2/3 (2015): 222-244. Kenneth received the 2003 Leslie W. Sloat Prize for Greek Exegesis and the 2011-2012 Edwin L. Jones Graduate Fellowship from Westminster Theological Seminary. From 2010 to 2014, he held a Th.D. fellowship at Duke University Divinity School, where he also was the 2014-2015 doctoral fellow with the Religion in North Carolina Grant Project in the Divinity School Library.