BELIEFS AND APPROACHES TO DEATH AND DYING
IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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BELIEFS AND APPROACHES TO DEATH AND DYING
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about death and its relationship to religion in late seventeenth-century England. The primary argument is that while beliefs about death stemmed from the Reformation tradition, divergent religious reforms of Puritanism and Arminianism did not lead to differing approaches to death. People adapted religious ideas on general terms of Protestant Christianity and not specifically aligned with varying reform movements. This study links apologetics and sermons concerning spiritual death, physical death, and remedies for each to cultural practice through the lens of wills and graves to gauge religious influence. Readers are reminded of the origins of reformed thought, which is what seventeenth-century English theologians built their ideas upon. Religious debates of the day centered on the Puritan and Arminian divide, which contained significantly different ideas of soteriology, a key aspect of a good death in the English ars moriendi. Puritans and Arminians regarded each other as political and religious enemies, yet their theology and teachings reveal the same understanding to the end of life and afterlife. Interestingly, people approached death identifying their common faith as Christians, not divided into different religious groups. Individuals heeded preachers’ advice to recognize mortality and prepare for death in advance of the deathbed. Guidance from theologians emphasized hope and expectation of a blessed death through reliance on God and His promises.
This dissertation contributes to narrowing a gap in the scholarship on late seventeenth-century English history and is also a work in thanatology that assesses how humanity has dealt with death. This research especially considers wills as a primary source to evaluate how society faced mortality and Christian teachings shaped conventional thought. The evidence also reveals an increasing value placed on family. Finally, this dissertation is a reminder that assessing the personal topic of death and dying is a unique way to increase understanding of human nature as death is approached. This is a study of the humanities that deals with life’s meaning, mortality, identity and cultural change at one of the most crucial of the life cycles - death.
DEDICATION

For my dearly loved ones
Bettina, Ethan, Elena, Bobbie Marie and Gili
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Researching and writing this dissertation has been quite an undertaking. It is something I never really could have been prepared for and felt, frankly, enervated at many points along the way. The reason I was able to get through it has been largely due to the help and encouragement from many around me. While I take full responsibility for the product, it is from them that focus and ideas came. I am deeply grateful for each of them. In particular, I acknowledge the support and guidance of my faculty mentor Dr. Michael Graham. Dr. Graham offered words of encouragement at just the right times during particularly taxing moments in my graduate career. His expertise in things early modern and religious was ever-helpful and inspiring, while his gift of communication set a bar for which I hope to one day get even slightly close to. The direction, feedback and perspective Dr. Graham offered throughout this project were the direct reason for which it has been completed.

I am also thankful for the support of the broader committee that remained committed to this project. Dr. Constance Bouchard offered insightful guidance and was especially supportive throughout this process, for which I am very appreciative. Drs. Michael Levin and Matthew Crawford were encouraging and thorough in their feedback, which challenged me well and helped sharpen the narrative as it unfolded. Dr. Howard Ducharme offered early input that helped me critically think through what was really going on as people prepared for death.
This research was able to be completed in large part from the generous support of the Graduate Student Government Dissertation Grant Program funded by the Graduate School. The School’s funding enabled me to access much needed archives and kept the project moving forward at a good pace. The staff at the British Library and London Metropolitan Archives were most welcoming of a rain-soaked, unsure traveler and offered excellent tips to maximize my research time.

Family is a lot of things, and family saw me through this to the end. They acted interested in my endeavors even when they seemed a bit out there, like with my constant pondering over what early modern English interpretations of irresistible grace or freely accepted soteriological solutions were, whether or not they really impacted death, and what this all means to us now. My parents Paul and Natasha and Aunt Tamara, in particular, kept me on task as this unfolded, while their love was ever-present. They will never know how much it meant. My many other siblings, in-laws and friends gave support in just the right ways at just the right times. Finally, my dear love Bettina and amazing children Ethan, Elena, Bobbie Marie and Gili demonstrated unbelievable patience, exhibited selfless encouragement and offered never-ending smiles and pats on the back along the way. They have been my motivation and inspiration. Studying death has given me a good, regular reality check of how wonderful it is to live life with them. They are treasured and mean the world to me. I am ever thankful to God for blessing me with them.
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ABBREVIATIONS

Wills and Last Testaments

LMA - London Metropolitan Archives

Original wills and registers
Typical Examples:  DW/PA/05/1661/60 or DW/PC/5/1699/8
Manuscript Key:
    DW = Diocese of Westminster
    PA = Probate in the Archdeaconry Court
    PC = Probate in the Commissary Court
    5 = Series of Original Wills
    7 = Registers of Wills
    YYYYY = Year the will was proved
    ## = Manuscript number the set of year’s records
Examples:
DW/PA/05/1646 = Archdeaconry Court of Surrey, Original Will, Proved in 1646
DW/PC/05/1697 = Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the
    Archdeaconry of Surrey, Original Will, Proved in 1697

GL - Guildhall Library

Will registers, sources preceded by “MS”
    Commissary Court of London:  MS 9171 Series
    Peculiar Court of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s Cathedral:
        MS 25626 Series
    Archdeaconry Court of London:  MS 9051 Series

BL - British Library

Wills contained in various family and county records, sources preceded by “MS”
    Althorp Papers:  MS 75405
    Aston Papers:  MS 36902
    Blackeney Collection: MS 63094
    Jacobite & Other Letters:  MS 39923
    Oxedon Papers: MS 54332
    Suffolk County Records: MS 19190
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW, HISTORIOGRAPHY, BACKGROUND, AND OUTLINE
“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.” Ecclesiastes 7:2 (KJV)
Death is a deeply personal yet profoundly cultural topic. Approaching and dealing with death is enmeshed within culture and society. For instance, physical factors in the dying process, in terms of natural biology or the basic sciences, as well as public health dilemmas about managing health risks directly affect definitions of and approaches to death. Also, spiritual factors have played and continue to play a major role in shaping definitions of death as a process and existential state of being. While the former more directly shapes views of death today, the latter was more acutely operative in past societies, including early modern England.

This study evaluates beliefs and practices of death and dying among Puritans and Arminians in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, from the English Civil War era through the Glorious Revolution. It assesses preparatory rituals among one part of society - the propertied class - and highlights secular values of family and beliefs about death and the afterlife within a framework set by reformed theology.

The primary argument is that while Protestant theology shaped cultural beliefs and practices of death and dying to a degree, Puritan and Arminian theologies showed and produced no distinguishable difference in death rituals or practices even though beliefs about salvation varied significantly between them. While the institution of Protestant reforms early in the Reformation created a major shift in early modern European culture surrounding death and dying, the implementation of reforms from Puritan and Arminian rivals in the seventeenth century did not lead to diverging approaches to death. Rather, religion was applied on general terms to the degree it met

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1 The Civil War era marked the height of the Puritan and Arminian debate. The Act of Toleration instituted in 1689, a year after the Glorious Revolution, established freedom of worship to most Protestant nonconformists and largely ended the debate between Puritans and Arminians as a political battle for religious authorization.
people’s needs as they prepared for death. For instance, being saved from eternal damnation was of significant importance and widely expressed on general terms even though different definitions of how it was achieved were not reflected in the cultural evidence. Further, this dissertation shows that in spite of the deep opposition of these two rivals, Arminians and Puritans converged in terms of formal beliefs about death and the afterlife, except for the salvation process, and how to prepare for it. This is a surprising finding given the degree that Puritans and Arminians fought against each other religiously and politically.

There are aspects of the religious reforms that are unique to England; however, the systems of belief that developed there were not divorced from the broader developments taking place throughout Europe. A form of Christian humanism, based on what reformers saw as going back to the early Church, ignited the Reformation in

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2 This explanation of religion being adapted to meet people’s needs follows along with the work of Eamon Duffy. Duffy’s assessment of religion in late medieval and early modern England shows that religion was applied and integrated in society in ways people’s needs were met. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). Also see Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Marshall shows that beliefs in lingering spirits persisted in the early modern era despite being prohibited and preached against in formal theology, which is evidence that religion was applied to the degree it met people’s needs even if it did not necessarily align with formal theology. Also see Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Pettegree shows that sermons, although effective in teaching and persuading, were adapted as a response to what preachers observed people were doing, which did always not align with the formal instructions of preachers. The sense is that there was commitment to the general thrust of teachings (e.g. salvation, afterlife), which was contained in culture and rituals. Formal theology provided the language and parameters of rituals that were applied and adapted by the broader population.
Western Europe. The core of the reformers’ aims was to renovate and purify Christianity through a strictly Biblical theology and an ecclesiology modeled on what they believed had been the structure of the early Church. The reforms shifted authority away from the Catholic Church to Scripture alone, instituted a different ecclesiology and enforced a theology based on justification by faith. These perspectives would touch not only church doctrine, but also altered European culture itself as some societies became Protestant and a renewal of Catholicism took place.

The Reformation was important to death and dying because formal beliefs about death, salvation and the afterlife were intertwined in the religious changes. Attaining salvation through faith was an integral component to how one needed to be prepared for death. After death, Heaven was anticipated, but only for those who had been saved, while the idea of Purgatory was removed in reformed theology. Preachers taught along

3 A number of works in the historiography on the European Reformation have been influential in shaping my view of the period and movement. These are important to this study because they help explain the development and significance of the reformed movement and its implications politically and religiously. Religion shaped beliefs and practices in death and dying, so changes in those ideas directly impacted rituals and preparations for death. These works about the broader movement include: Euan Cameron, The European Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) – Cameron viewed the Reformation as a movement that took the merging of reform-minded theologians with political forces to create change. The combination of religion with politics led to enforcement of Protestantism for regions that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church; Diarmaid MacCulloch, The Reformation: A History (New York: Viking Press, 2004) – MacCulloch offer a wide-ranging survey about the broad movements of religion and politics. Owen Chadwick, The Reformation (London: Penguin Books, 1972) – This is a general, but useful survey of the Reformation that highlights the impact of the reform movements. Chadwick also reviews the Catholic reform that followed. Other important works are: Hans J. Hillerbrand, The Division of Christendom: Christianity in the Sixteenth Century (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Andrew Pettigree, ed., The Early Reformation in Europe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Andrew Pettigree, ed., The Reformation World (New York: Routledge, 2000) – offers an excellent array of perspectives from specialists in the field.

4 The Reformation had a wide-ranging impact. Christianity had religious hegemony at the time, but it is important to remember that there were non-Christians living in Europe. One example comes from Jews and their treatment during this period. See Mirian Bodian, “In the Cross-Currents of the Reformation: Crypto-Jewish Martyrs of the Inquisition 1570-1670.” Past and Present, no. 176 (2002): 66-104; Kenneth Stow, “The Papacy and the Jews: Catholic Reformation and Beyond.” Jewish History 6, no. 1-2 (1992): 157-79.
those lines to help people become ready for the end of life and prepare to experience bliss in the afterlife.

This study shows that theologians in the late seventeenth century instructed people to be dependent on God for reducing fear near death so one could achieve a good death, a continuation of the *ars moriendi* tradition that dated from the fifteenth century. The seventeenth-century view was that an ideal death was a blessed event for members of God’s church because Christians could depend on the promises of salvation and Heaven. In addition, the dying had the Christian community of believers around them to help ensure confidence and minimize fear as death approached. Both Puritan and Arminian theologians preached and taught this theme similarly.

There were deep divides in the English religious landscape, namely between the Puritans and Arminians, that fueled major strife and debate about Christianity, particularly about soteriological apologetics and understandings of God’s character. These soteriologies were important components to beliefs about death, relating specifically to how an individual was saved and insured passage into Heaven in the afterlife. Given how different these views were, I expected to find that teachings and advice literature about the best way to approach death would be equally different. Arminians in the late seventeenth century were associated with the Church of England and preferred an Episcopal-based ecclesiology, liturgy, and standardized rituals for religious expression. Puritans, however, were non-conformists who preferred a

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decentralized church structure linked by likeminded believers, individual interaction with Scripture in striving for godliness, and simple church services centered on the sermon.\(^6\) Their theology differed, notably in soteriology, with Arminians allowing a degree of free will and Puritans relying on Calvinistic predestination. Interestingly, even amid this deep divide, practices in preparation for death and how to manage it converged. Puritans and Arminians both emphasized future glory in Heaven and eventual resurrection and advocated calmness and confidence as death was approached.

This convergence is surprising because diverging worship patterns could plausibly lead to varying traditions in preparing for death and dealing with the dead. I was expecting to see teachings rooted in liturgy for Arminians and individual meditation for Puritans, or, at a minimum, language pointing those preparing for death to affirm their identity as a member of one group or the other, being at least tinged with their theological distinctions in terms of predestination or accepting grace freely. For example, the expectation was that if an individual was committed or groomed to be a staunch Arminian in life, then one would likely affirm that belief of free will or identity in wills or testimonials as they prepared to die. Puritans, conversely, would likely express assurance of election that was a product of God’s sovereignty. Surprisingly, language linked to these confessions was not evident. This dissertation shows that Puritans and Arminians of the late seventeenth century, who thought of each other as differently as Catholics and Protestants did a century earlier, were unified in how death and dying were

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understood. Also, teachings from both groups clearly focused on easing fear of death, coming to terms with mortality, assurance about the afterlife and advising for proper physical preparation (e.g., settling affairs) as criteria for a good death.

Through analysis of wills and last testaments, this dissertation shows that different theological points of view did not lead to varying approaches to the actual preparation to die. Although mainly from the propertied class, this is primary evidence that offers a solid and clear indication of individuals’ beliefs as testators prepared for death and expressed their faith in Protestant Christian terms as well as secular attachment to family. This is evidence that the influence of preachers was not as pervasive as we might think. Formal theology and religious teachings provided the framework for religious expression, but its application was on largely general terms when it came to deep theological issues. However, testaments show that preachers’ advice on preparing for death was taken up in society in other respects. For instance, testators expressed a clear acknowledgement of their mortality and desire to be ready for death at any moment, which is a message that directly aligns with religious teachings and shows that preachers’ practical instructions to prepare for death over life had been absorbed in the public in some respects.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Thanatology, or the study of death and dying, is a rather young field that began to take shape in the 1970s. But in its short tenure as a unique discipline in cultural studies, it has proven to be valuable for assessing human nature as well as for measuring the impact that aspects of society (e.g. beliefs, science, technology) have in shaping discourse and
mentality. Factors used to assess change in the understanding of death and dealing with dying range widely from the developments in biology and the economics of the funeral industry to the advances in medicine and beliefs about the afterlife. Death and dying is also a valuable field to evaluate religion and individual desire, including formal theology pertaining to death as well as individual approaches to dying, such as settling affairs, conveying burial preference, and expressing thoughts about the afterlife.

This fairly young historiography on the old subject of death has already produced an array of perspectives. For instance, the historiography includes the examination of Enlightenment changes, specifically as “dechristianization” efforts were instituted (state endorsed initiatives to remove religious imagery and influence in society).7 Another approach has been through the lens of state-sponsored funerals or, more broadly, the deaths of societal elites to see a reflection of building blocks to nationalism in the modern era.8 There has been more work done on the social and religious contexts of death and dying, especially in the modern era.9 For example, topics include the emergence and dependence on modern medicine, the use of demography for public health engineering,

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and the commercialization of death industries. Issues about grief and mourning, curative and palliative care, ethical dilemmas about life sustaining technology, philosophical ideas about life’s meanings, the rights of the dying, end-of-life care, and euthanasia are all themes looming in these modern studies. These issues cross disciplinary lines, and scholarship is increasingly being produced by physicians, humanists, psychologists, philosophers and religious experts alike. For example, the hospice movement is a twentieth century development implemented by healthcare professionals that was propelled by advocates of the rights of the dying.

A similar diversity of themes and analysis exist in the study of death and dying in early modern Europe. Instead of emphasizing biology and ethics, historians have focused more so on changes in politics and religion to gauge developments in death and dying. In regards to England, while earlier work saw the rise of individualism as the key factor in the reform of death and dying, more recent scholarship puts emphasis on theology and associated shifts in ritual and culture. Current works debate whether or not religious reforms were warranted or welcome in society, and find that over time Protestant reforms permanently altered cultural practice religiously and secularly as old traditions were replaced and the value of family was increasingly emphasized. The majority of this scholarship, in spite of its division, has been limited to the initial shift in the Reformation during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when reforms produced stark

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11 Examples of research into the hospice movement include: Burt, Kaufman, Webb, and Filene.
changes in society instead of the later part of the Reformation when reformers were split
over different types of reformed faith.¹²

The historiography to date has shown that changes in religion from the
Reformation had a major impact on rituals and approaches to death and dying. What was
once accepted in terms of beliefs, prayer, and burial was changed or outlawed. There has
not been a specific focus on the late seventeenth century when reformed tradition had
been entrenched for generations. This dissertation is novel in its subject of focus as it
analyzes the extent to which Puritan and Arminian beliefs led to divergent practices. By
the late seventeenth century, this dissertation will show, there was not much difference
among religious rivals in preparing for death and anticipating the afterlife because major
Protestant factions actually seemed to agree on how to prepare for it even if they
disagreed on how believers were saved. There was a major change in rituals as England
became Protestant, but as Protestantism divided, there was similarity among different
groups in terms of death and dying.

The elimination of the doctrine of Purgatory was a major factor of cultural change
in early modern England and its importance is reflected in the historiography. Purgatory
had been comfortably in place for over four or five centuries as official doctrine by the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹³ Funerals, masses, and other remembrance rituals

¹² Early work that emphasized individualism was Clare Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early
Modern England (London: Croom Helm, 1984); The following studies have assessed death and dying in
light of the Reformation - Eamon Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England,
1400-1580 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Peter Marshall, Beliefs and the Dead in
Reformation England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Two major works that provide a cursory
review into the seventeenth century are David Cressy, Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and
the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ralph A.
1998).
Press, 1984), 1-3; Binski, 24.
revolved around the idea of assisting the deceased’s soul. As reform minded ecclesiastics (and politicians) removed the option of the living helping the dead, significant changes occurred, but were clouded by the unclear stance and meaning of the reformers’ position on soul-sleep, which is the idea that the soul enters some state of rest and does not enter Heaven until the Last Day.\textsuperscript{14} It was different from Purgatory because it meant the soul did not need further purification nor could the soul receive intercession from those still alive.

The pioneer in this field is without doubt Philippe Ariès. He published his monumental work, \textit{L'Homme devant la mort} (Translated into English as \textit{The Hour of Our Death}), in 1977 (1981 in English), and introduced readers to the idea of a “tame death,” his point of reference in the study of death in Western Civilization over the past thousand years, from the Middle Ages through the present (ending in the 1970s). The tame death is a familiar acceptance of the end of life. The word “tame” is used by Ariès because it implies being warned and prepared to die, not necessarily that dying itself is a peaceful event, but that it is accepted.\textsuperscript{15} Ariès traced the relationship between man’s awareness of the self and death and argued that as the level or consciousness of his individuality changed, his attitude toward death slowly changed as well.\textsuperscript{16} In terms of the Reformation, which is a small part of his study, Ariès viewed it as a redefining moment that stirred up religion and caused the individual to be more aware of himself or herself separate from a communal sense. The Reformation, though, continued along the lines of the tradition of a tame death from the Middle Ages that would persist all the way up to modern times.

\textsuperscript{14} Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion, and the Family}, 308; Marshall, \textit{Beliefs and the Dead}, 225.
\textsuperscript{15} Ariès, 28.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 5, 28.
The fundamental elements of the tame death in Ariès’ view include the customs and attitudes of warning, acceptance, preparedness, an afterlife, the deathbed, and funeral. These provide familiarity of death to Ariès, which is what was made death “tame.” Even if any of these criteria were altered, emphasized, or ignored by the individual, Ariès believed that the goal of a tame death itself remained. The concept of a tame death was a constant over the medieval and early modern eras (it was in modern times that Ariès believed it was no longer an ideal as society denied death by leaning on modern medicine). His model embraced changes in religious beliefs, particularly prevalent in early modern Europe, and the ultimate decline of religious belief with a simultaneous increase on the reliance of medicine, and, most importantly for Ariès, individualism. Ariès believes that the rise of individualism, defined as a growing awareness of the self outside of communal identity, was the cause for the changes in death and dying.17

This thesis is not without its problems. In his efforts to cover a huge span of time, his arguments on the emergence of the self are weak. He tends to use just one or two examples to support overarching assertions, such as that the church and cemetery were separated because of a change in the “psychological climate” in society that enabled the assignment of a cemetery as a specialized place for burial without spiritual significance, as it had been for “a thousand years.”18 The sweeping nature of a statement such as this raises questions as to the validity of his arguments. While this is a not a problem of argument but of research, it opens the door for criticism. He also bases his analysis of medieval society on overly essentialized generalizations of communal ideas of salvation,

17 Ibid.  
18 Ibid., 320.
the afterlife, and identity as well as the ubiquity of fear and superstition in the face of a horrible death. Whether or not Ariès’ work is seen as good or bad, he deserves credit for propelling scholarship in death and dying. As a result of his pioneering work, the idea of individualism being a factor in death practices became a major point for subsequent historians to both grapple with and deviate from.

In terms of early modern England, one of the earliest scholarly works on death was Clare Gittings’ 1984 work *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*. Her argument follows Ariès’ thesis directly, that an emerging idea of the individual, an outgrowth of the Reformation, was a key factor causing change in death and dying. For example, with religious change came the idea that intercession after death was no longer related to the geography of graves. In late medieval times, placing graves close to church altars assisted the soul through the penitential cycle after death. This idea was removed in reformed theology and, culturally, the result of this change was that burial preference shifted to matters of family. People expressed desire to be interred next to loved ones who had already passed, which Gittings viewed as an example where individuals exercised preference of where to be buried. The increase of individualism in religion created a new opportunity for individual expression that did not exist before.

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20 It should be highlighted that medievalists have corrected Ariès’ misapprehensions. For example, Westerhof’s recent study of death in late medieval England effectively shows how contemporary ideas about death and dying contrasted with understandings of aristocratic ideals, both in the personal and communal sense. Westerhof argues against Ariès in the sense that she believes individualism was not on the rise, but that it was already prevalent and operative within class distinctions, in her case, among nobles. She points to the evidence of a fear of isolation from the social and religious community by individuals as what formulated perceptions about death and dying. This was based on an awareness of one’s position within society and the awareness of different conceptions of communal “normativity and alterity” (7). Westerhof points to the rising number of heart and viscera burials as evidence where individual preference, familial obligation and social status were linked together. Individuals chose to be buried, in whole or in part, in a place that was significant for them or their family. This shows that people in society expressed preference, but within the confines of their class distinctions (28-9, 140).
Reformed beliefs loosened the tie to Catholic traditions and afforded more individual preference as one prepared for death and remembered the dead. Gittings looks at funerals as becoming secular customs to benefit the living instead of the dead as they had in Catholicism.\(^{21}\) Highlights of royal and aristocratic funerals show a decline of magnificence by the late seventeenth century and a movement towards an expression of loss of a public persona - an individual.\(^{22}\)

Aside from Gittings, subsequent scholars have abandoned using death and dying to argue for or against individualism and instead are conducting analysis in relation to the religious change brought by the Reformation.\(^{23}\) In 1992, Eamon Duffy, a scholar of late medieval and early modern English history, published *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*. Duffy is a revisionist and argues that late medieval religion (including religious rituals to prepare for death and deal with the dead)

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\(^{21}\) Gittings, 151.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 151-5.

\(^{23}\) Our modern idea of meaning in life being attributed individually is a concept that was likely around since antiquity. See Kaspar von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-5 - The author reminds readers that individualism was not a new concept invented in the early modern era. He asserts that what was novel was the individual’s approach to religiosity compared to the late Middle Ages. Individualism as part of the social strata was not new. This concept stemmed from the influential work of Jacob Burckhardt, noted by the publication of *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* in 1860. Burckhardt characterized man as aware of themselves only in the context of communal categories and that modern self-awareness rose in the Renaissance – see Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860; reprint, London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 81-3. On the large subject of individualism see Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987, originally published by Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1972). Aaron Gurevich, *The Origins of European Individualism*, trans. Katherine Judelson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Another useful source about the ideal of the individual emerging in the early modern era is John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Closer to this study’s period of focus, there is clearly enough evidence from the medieval period to display individualism as part of our human behavior – see Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37-8. Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2008), 7.
met individuals’ needs, which was disrupted by reforms.\textsuperscript{24} He finds that personal memory was sought among the living (not communal salvation) and points to evidence such as the bede-roll, which had an eschatological significance, as affirming one’s unity in salvation with the community while perpetuating individual characteristics after death. “Bede” was a term for prayer in English that originated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The bede-roll, literally, was the list of names to be prayed for. Clergy or bedesman (one whose duty it was to pray for others) would regularly pray for those whose names were recorded.\textsuperscript{25}

For Duffy, the central issue is whether or not the religious changes from the Reformation were welcome in society. He uses death and dying as a theme to argue that the Reformation was a disruptive force that attacked a flourishing traditional religion that was not in need of reform since it met the needs of people. The story of religion in sixteenth-century England is retold by him as a systematic dismantling and destruction of a religion that was strong, vigorous, and loved by the majority of the people. Traditional religion, a phrase Duffy prefers to use instead of popular, is seen by the author as deeply entrenched and loved by English society. He believes it to be so deeply rooted that it would only be supplanted as a byproduct of fading memory generations into the Elizabethan settlement. Once reformed theology was instituted and enforced through the

\textsuperscript{24} Terming Duffy a “revisionist” pertains to his view of the Reformation as a religious movement in England, not specifically to the historiography of death and dying. Revisionism in this case relates to the reformed movement in English society that was established by the orthodox view initiated by the influential work of historian A. G. Dickens in \textit{The English Reformation}, an early work in this field - A. G. Dickens, \textit{The English Reformation} (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1964). Dickens asserts that Protestantism in England unfolded in a sense as if it was that kingdom’s destiny. He sees the presence of the Lollards in the late Middle Ages as evidence of a push for reform that was fulfilled by the embracing of reformed ideas and eventual association with the Protestant movement. Duffy is a revisionist because he argues that religion in late medieval Catholic England was largely embraced and loved by society (Lollardy was on the fringe in Duffy’s view).

\textsuperscript{25} Duffy, 337; \textit{Oxford English Dictionary}, s.v. “Bede.”
law (e.g. elimination of chantry houses and Purgatory as doctrine), society’s link to its Catholic past diminished over time. While my study focuses on beliefs a century after this, it demonstrates that what came from this settlement was deeply entrenched and was the basis for what was largely believed by those in the late seventeenth century. The issue within religion a century later was not whether or not people wanted Protestantism, it was over which type of Protestantism would be authorized – Puritan or Arminian.

Since Duffy, scholarship about death and dying in early modern England over the last twenty years has continued to assess the impact of the changes in religion on ritual in culture. David Cressy’s *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (1997) and Ralph Houlbrooke’s *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (1998) are two excellent analyses of ritual and religious change. Cressy and Houlbrooke provide a more in-depth review of the subject than Duffy did. They offer a thorough assessment of death in an era of religious change, whereas Duffy investigates the religious shifts of the Reformation and death and dying as one aspect of society he reviewed (as well as the liturgy, teachings, corporate worship and prayers). Cressy argues that in the early part of the Reformation funerary practices reflected the functional needs of society to execute appropriate forms of ritual and celebration of the life of the deceased. Meanwhile, Houlbrooke’s argument is that the Reformation, over its long duration, was decisively influential in transforming the rituals of death from public and religious events to more of a private matter that emphasized family, yet still within Protestant Christian discourse.

My study aligns with their approach. It assesses beliefs about death from Puritan and Arminian perspectives and relates them to the rituals of preparing for death and
dealing with the dead. This dissertation extends Cressy’s work chronologically, since he stops where my analysis begins. It analyzes in detail a portion of what Houlbrooke surveyed. In his almost 300 year period of analysis, Houlbrooke’s focus is more on the early part of the Reformation when religious changes were stark than on the era of institutionalized Protestantism with dissent and nonconformity among Puritans and Arminians. Cressy and Houlbrooke’s influential studies deserve to be briefly highlighted.

Cressy examines the social, cultural, and religious history of ceremonies and rituals associated with birth, marriage, and death. For death, this included religious orders for burial, theologian’s advice, funeral processions, and cemeteries. Cressy argues that rituals were a reflection of beliefs in English society; it was how people in society understood and tested their beliefs during major points along the life-cycle and ensured a common humanity.26 Rituals surrounding death acknowledged the departure of the soul and demonstrated a respect for humanity. Cressy shows that the changes in soteriology brought about by the Reformation changed the way people negotiated the demands of custom, authority, and religion. The nature of this change was away from Catholic conceptions of salvation to ideas of individual faith producing salvation outside of the penitential cycle. Like Gittings, he believes that the movement away from religious liturgy enabled rituals pertaining to death and dying to be more of a secular social activity. The living, deprived of the Catholic remedy of prayers for the dead, “harnessed the process of grief to the art of living and dying.”27 However, he does not interpret this change as Gittings does in terms of the rise of the individual. He believes that the

26 Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 476.
27 Ibid., 395.
customs and burial practices represent a complex society, in a conversation about religious and secular customs and not a representation of a linear progression from communal to individual or medieval to modern.\textsuperscript{28} Reformed religious ideas propelled new rituals, which were accepted and negotiated within society alongside managing issues of leaving family behind. Religious rituals, based on reformed theology, were a reflection of popular belief because they were embraced broadly as the means for expressing faith and coming to terms with death. I agree. Religion shaped approaches to death, but individuals cared for family they were thinking about leaving behind nearly as much as they cared about the destination of their soul after death.

Houlbrooke also approaches the history of attitudes toward death by way of the history of religious change. His period of analysis stretches from the late fifteenth to the mid eighteenth century – the period of the “long Reformation.”\textsuperscript{29} Over that period, Houlbrooke sees religion as a constant source of guidance for dying as well as offering direction for the bereaved couched in terms of God’s will. Thus, changes in religious doctrine produced a major shift in the culture of death. Reforms instituted new doctrine, ritual, and an emphasis on the family while preparing for death and remembering the dead. Reforms abolished intercessory rites and emphasis shifted to condolence and commemoration. In particular, Houlbrooke emphasizes the significance of eliminating Purgatory on popular culture. Purgatory was made official doctrine by Pope Innocent IV.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 379.
\textsuperscript{29} Nicholas Tyacke, ed., \textit{England’s Long Reformation: 1500-1800} (London: UCL Press, 1998). This excellent anthology assesses the longevity of the Reformation, termed “long Reformation,” through the eighteenth century, particularly as reformed ideas were contested and debated through the mid to late seventeenth century, then institutionalized outside of the government after the Toleration Act of 1689 into the next century.
in 1254, formalizing what was already in practice for many generations. By the late Middle Ages Purgatory was seen as a pretty terrible place (which Duffy also concedes), just as bad as Hell but only temporary. Ultimately, like Duffy, Houlbrooke believes that the Reformation was deeply disruptive to a system of personal eschatology that met the needs of its faithful. Yet, contrary to Duffy, Houlbrooke argues that the results of the reformers’ intrusion were eventually constructive by liberating people from the constraints of the medieval Catholic system that tied succeeding generations to intercession for the dead. Houlbrooke points out that the majority of people in the late Middle Ages were prepared for a long, yet indeterminate period of suffering in Purgatory, which drove pious bequests for helping souls, and put the rich at an advantage. This model put pressure on succeeding generations to perform masses and opened the door for the misuse of endowments. The Reformation changed this model and, instead, allowed for people’s energies to be spent towards ends for this world.

Aside from measuring the impact that belief systems had on society, recent scholarship has emphasized an increase of secular matters in death and dying, namely a growing reliance on the family during the Reformation. As people prepared to die, they sought to care for family after their death by bequeathing wealth, expressing affection, and creating memorials to publicly display familial bonds. This is confirmed in my analysis of wills. My study finds that there was affection for the nuclear family, which builds upon Houlbrooke’s argument.

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30 Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*.
32 Ibid., 382; Duffy, 302-3.
33 Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 382.
Peter Marshall recently takes an approach different than Cressy and Houlbrooke in *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (2002). Instead of looking at rituals related to preparing for death and religious change, he analyzes how the dead themselves were treated and understood in society during the Reformation through the early seventeenth century. In particular, he focuses on religion and politics, since that built up the social order of community and identity.\(^{34}\) Marshall is a post-revisionist because he believes that Protestantism shaped and influenced culture but did not obliterate England’s Catholic past.\(^{35}\) His proof is that reformers doctrinal mandates did not align completely with how the living remembered the dead. For example, there was reference to spirits and ghosts from the living, which Marshall viewed as the “compound of love, longing, and loathing” that likely propelled the feeling and desire of spirits even though preachers taught against apparitions.\(^{36}\) Doctrine only goes so far for Marshall because, in his view, religion was adapted to the extent it met people’s needs of security about the afterlife and comfort while approaching death. Because of this adaptation of religion in society, Marshall sees that culture changed slowly during the long Reformation. Prior to the break with Rome, the living and the dead were members of the same community, which was virtually destroyed doctrinally by the work of the reformers. The result was that often those who died while England was Catholic became labeled papists and heretics by those who converted to reformed ideas.\(^{37}\) He finds that links between the living and the dead persisted in the early decades of the Reformation, in terms of intercession and

\(^{34}\) Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, 3.

\(^{35}\) Where Duffy was a revisionist because he viewed the reformed movement as destructive of religion that society embraced, Marshall sees that religion was adapted to meet needs in death and remembering the dead throughout the Reformation, even amid stark changes in ritual which blended ideas from Catholicism during the early period of reform.

\(^{36}\) Marshall, 262-64.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 121.
interacting beyond the grave, even though prayer for souls departed was outlawed. Examples show that beliefs in lingering spirits and the urge for intercession continued. This is evidence for Marshall that “the teachings of the reformers were adapted and internalized in sometimes unforeseen ways, and in which the concerns of the people helped to shape and direct the priorities of reformers.” Even though a reformed message was instituted, Marshall reminds us that it was not uniformly believed and, in fact, sometimes ideas contrary to the reformer’s theology persisted, such as the case of interacting with the dead. The result was that theologians persevered in preaching and teaching their message and that over time Protestant conceptions of death and the afterlife prevailed.

Duffy, Cressy, Houlbrooke, and Marshall assess religious beliefs about death and dying in relation to traditions during the Reformation. Their emphasis is that reformed ideas, whether welcome or not, imposed new traditions that became engrained in culture over the long duration of the Reformation. My study follows along with this general pattern of religion correlated to tradition, although it does not take a stake in the debates about the imposition of Protestantism that revisionists (Duffy and Houlbrooke) present. That was not a question of the late seventeenth century. What was in question was what type of Protestantism would determine authorized ideas about salvation. Divergent soteriologies characterized religion in the late seventeenth century, yet, differing rituals related to death and dying did not emerge. This stands akin to Marshall’s argument

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38 Ibid., 311.
39 Revisionism largely deals with the change in England from Catholic to Protestant. Since that issue had largely been settled by the late seventeenth century this study does not intersect with the questions in that debate.
where religious teachings were adapted in ways that met needs of people in society.\textsuperscript{40} I find that approaches to death, as revealed in wills and last testaments, show that religion was adapted to meet people’s needs and did not align with strictly Puritan or Arminian identities. Instead, salvation was affirmed in broad terms. This follows the pattern that Cressy and Houlbrooke utilized where rituals served an expression of formal religion on broad terms.

Death and dying is not just about spirituality. There are secular aspects of preparing for the end of life that show us the value of family and unique aspects of women in particular. My study confirms what is being recognized in the historiography about family and gender. Religion was not the only thing on the mind of testators as they prepared for death. There was a clear focus on family and loved ones that were being left behind, which shows that secular issues mattered almost as much as religious ones. Approaching death is a moment when gender norms were suspended a little. For example, women extended their legal agency as testators and executrixes, a role not typically available in other matters of the court and were afforded more opportunity to express themselves in a public manner. Further, preachers often used the deaths of women as examples that others in society should follow, including men. This is interesting because women were highlighted for their spiritual fervor, readiness for the afterlife and calmness in the face of death, which elevated the female even within a patriarchal setting.

Houlbrooke touches on this theme of gender and death and discusses death as an opportunity to be less gendered on traditional terms in that women could display virtues

\textsuperscript{40} This also aligns with Duffy’s model of religion being adapted in ways that satisfied people, which did not necessarily align with formal theology.
typically ascribed to men, such as strength and control. Men could also display virtues associated typically with women by being more “emotional” and “submissive to God” than in life.\footnote{Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 185-86.} Lucinda M. Becker’s \textit{Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman}, published in 2003, is a major study specifically on this topic. Her book explores female agency within the culture of death and argues that the good death was defined in masculine terms, based on strength, determination, and pious public speech.\footnote{Becker, 1; The article from Elizabeth A. Hallam, “Turning the hourglass: gender relations at the deathbed in early modern Canterbury,” \textit{Mortality} 1, no. 1 (1996): 61-82 is also a reminder of the gendered aspects of death and dying. Hallam points out that women had a specific role as caregiver over dying individuals, but also had opportunity for expression and recognition in unique ways on their death-bed. This complements Becker’s study, and is also a good reminder that agency of females should not be overemphasized because it was a narrow aspect of society that was largely defined by masculine terms.} Yet, preparing for death for a woman provided an avenue for defining, enabling and elevating her in ways that were not often available in life. For example, women could publish wills, serve as executrixes, and make arrangement for the household’s affairs.

Becker’s analysis goes beyond the unrestraint of gendered virtues on the deathbed and identifies female agency in other dying and posthumous rituals. This included women having the opportunity for funeral arranging, planning commemorations such as monument design or writing epitaphs, and authoring literary legacies, which included autobiographies, poetry, wills and letters. Ultimately, Becker argues that even though women died under the discourse of male patriarchy, their experiences offered distinct forms of expression not typically available in life. My study builds on this viewpoint and confirms what Becker and Houbrooke have asserted that women had an opportunity for a unique agency in preparing for death. My analysis of wills and last testaments shows that women had legal agency, expressed their faith, identified their preferences in burial,
and sought to care for survivors. This reminds us that secular matters of family and unique aspects of female agency existed within the preparatory process for death.

Also important to the field’s historiography is a recent study on medicine that deserves mention. In *The Dying and the Doctors: The Medical Revolution in Seventeenth Century England*, Ian Mortimer describes the process by which society became medicalized, in the sense that individuals began to regularly seek professional medical help for sickness. Mortimer observes that this was a shift from a primarily palliative strategy of easing physical pain and providing comfort to a predominantly medical one, in which cures and therapies were sought from medical professionals. For example, by the last decades of the seventeenth century and into the early eighteenth, most dying people at all levels of society obtained some form of professional medical treatment or advice. This stands in stark contrast with a century earlier when palliative nursing care was all that most received. While Mortimer’s work focuses specifically on medicine, it complements this study in that it highlights a cultural change that was not independent of religious change. Society had become more dependent on medical strategies to address oncoming death, which meant that it also became less dependent on its previous coping mechanism for dealing with dying – religious faith. Mortimer admits that religion did not necessarily decline over the course of the century, which is something my study

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43 The article from Barbara J. Harris, “The Fabric of Piety: Aristocratic Women and Care of the Dead, 1450-1550,” *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 2 (Apr. 2009): 308-35 examines how aristocratic women expressed themselves through the construction of tombs and chantries in the late Middle Ages and early Reformation. Tombs and chapels were a means to affirm lineage and status, as well as a reflection of religious symbols. My study also shows how women expressed themselves on the religious terms of the seventeenth century.


46 Ibid., 204.
confirms, but that medicine became a supplement to prayer and dependence on God’s intervention when humans wanted healing and comfort.⁴⁷

My dissertation is not in conflict with the direction of these studies, however it is a noticeably distinct contribution because it brings focus on a period late into the Reformation that has not received due attention. It elucidates the Puritan and Arminian beliefs about death, salvation, and the afterlife, which has not been dealt with in the surveys thus far. My primary assumption it is that, first and foremost, religion continued to have influence over death and dying during the late seventeenth century. Even though the debate about Purgatory had waned among English Protestants, the focus on defining and explaining the afterlife to people was still prevalent and continued to shape the way people understood death. Secondly, I assume that broader culture and formal theology interacted with each other. My framework aligns with Houlbrooke and Cressy’s approach in this regard, which is that what became convention and ritual was shaped by theology, while not forgetting that the priorities of reformers often were centered on what the concerns of the people were. The religious structures defined formally the beliefs about death, dying, and the afterlife and society embraced them to the extent it met their needs. People applied theology to the extent it helped them approach death. Further, this was a period in which religious consensus was still in flux between Puritanism and Arminianism, which is a major factor not yet addressed in the historiography. Religion was by no means static, there was competition by Puritans and Arminians based on

religious and political motivations. In that light, I assess theological viewpoints and then appraise wills and last testaments and funerary traditions to show how they align with a broader religious discourse set in place by dominant and competing ideas of the day. I find that theology defined death and outlined salvation, which varied significantly between Puritans and Arminians, but that in cultural practice those differences do not appear. It mattered to die as a Protestant but not necessarily as a Puritan or Arminian.

The study of death and dying provides a unique opportunity to assess the impact of Puritan and Arminian views. These groups were the leading religious influences in England in the late seventeenth century and grappled for political and religious authority. In particular, after reading about the changes the Reformation brought to England, we might ask: what impact did religion have over the long run of the period of reform, particularly when the Puritans and Arminians struggled for authority in religion? The Puritans worshiped simply, and the Arminians more ritualistically and ceremonially, so I was curious if there had been a revival of the dichotomy reminiscent of the difference in worship between Protestants and Catholics in the early Reformation. We might also ask about the longevity of the reforms. Did religious zeal about defining death, explaining salvation and preparing people for the afterlife continue or impact conceptions of death? Were there notable differences in beliefs during the half century after the Civil War when religious settlement was still contested or were Protestants uniform in their views? Studies to date have not gone far enough to answer these questions, which are the focus of this dissertation.

In general, I sought to uncover the ideas on death and dying in the late Reformation, from the post-Civil War years through roughly the end of the century, and
link them to the dominant religious discourses of the day to gauge their influence. These became my parameters because it was right after a war in which religion played a major role, so religious fervor was high and Puritanism and Arminianism were prominent in culture, likely at their peak. Religious debate between these groups was intense, and evidence containing apologetics of their theology was plentiful. It is within this half century that I wanted to ascertain beliefs about death. The end of the century marks the close of this study, as it is shortly after the Glorious (Bloodless) Revolution of 1688 that ended the chances of Catholicism being re-established in England and led to the toleration of nonconformist Protestants with the passage of the Act of Toleration in 1689. The debate between Puritans and Arminians began to wane in the political and social spheres afterwards.48

METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

This dissertation is a reminder that theology and cultural practice are linked through rituals, ecclesiastical organization, and even political frameworks.49 Theology,

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48 Jonathan Israel, “The Dutch role in the Glorious Revolution,” in The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact, ed. Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 137-8; MacCulloch, Christianity, 794-8 – MacCulloch points out that after the Glorious Revolution and in the beginning of the eighteenth century there was an increase in skepticism as to whether there were definitive truths in specially privileged writings, such as regarding Christianity, as noted by the philosophy of David Hume. Other works assessing the Glorious Revolution include: Edward Vallance, The Glorious Revolution: 1688 and Britain’s Fight for Liberty (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008), 1-5; John Miller, The Glorious Revolution (London: Longman, 1983); Steven Pincus, 1688: The First Modern Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

49 Studies of the Reformation have explored the link between theology and culture as reform movements had a significant impact socially. Reformers’ theological ideals for Christianity merged with political powers, which spurred new religious movements and affected culture through the institution of new traditions, churches, and laws that forbade prior traditions. Some works that examine the Reformation include: von Greyerz, Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe – von Greyerz emphasizes that religious reform directly impacted popular culture and fragmented religiosity; Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (New York: Harper and Row, 1978). Burke’s influential work emphasized that
in this sense, means that preachers and theologians in the seventeenth century engaged in the formal study of Christianity, God’s relationship to those on Earth, and the ideas about its application through faith and action. Theology is formal, idealized religion and it often overlaps with popular views and the cultural application of theology. Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors of a community, or, more broadly, collective cognitions of a group or society. It is both a learned and shared knowledge created by a group of people through the way social realities are embraced, perceived, interpreted and responded to. Institutions in society, such as formal religion and family, both exhibit and reinforce the culture of a community. Cultural practice includes the rituals and expressions of religious faith utilized and embraced in society as death is approached and prepared for.

The first part of this study is an overview of the formal theology, including the origins of Reformation theology in England and the significance and outcome of the changes. The early part of Reformation provided the foundation on which English theologians would build in the next century as well as the platform for cultural expression popular culture in Europe involved shared meaning, attitudes, and values and the symbolic forms in which they are expressed, which were altered and reshaped during the Reformation; Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) – Pettegree assesses how reformers were able to create a cause for conversion in the Reformation. He finds that various methods of teaching the Protestant message, such as through the sermon, were integral to the success of the Reformation; In *The Stripping of the Altars*, Duffy emphasizes that the enforcement of reformed religious through law and authorization of religious practice were what changed culture, whether it was wanted or not. Other useful sources are James D. Tracy, *Europe’s Reformations, 1450-1650: Doctrine, Politics, and Community*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Little, 2006); Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996); Barry Reay, ed. *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).


51 Other institutions in the social sphere that exhibit and reinforce culture include educational systems, politics, architecture, social stratification, legislation and theory development – Hofstede, 11-12.
through ritual and practice. Next, the formal beliefs held by the two types of Protestants that dominated the political and religious landscape in seventeenth-century England, Puritan and Arminian, will be reviewed and the ways those beliefs were communicated and taught to the public, such as through funeral sermons, devotionals, and the duties of a pastor, will be analyzed. Finally, the cultural practice of death and dying, which are the broader rituals and approaches to death, will be elucidated by examining evidence indicating what people from the propertied class believed, how they prepared for death, and what was important in remembrance, which did not always pertain to religion. The family was valued as much as faith was in the cultural practice of death and dying.

Before proceeding, it is important to define the use of the term religion. In this study, religion refers to the beliefs and practices associated with the supernatural, in relation to the established forms of Christianity.52 It is, as anthropologist Clifford Geertz stated, a “cultural system.”53 It is, as Thomas Luckmann stated and Kaspar von Greyerz applied in Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800, “a stance toward the world, the legitimization of the natural and social orders…that transcend the individual with practical instructions on how to live and with personal obligations.”54 Religion, formally, is composed of the official symbols and language that shape its parameters, systematic theology, and its system is a process of interaction within social

structures, which translated into cultural practice.\textsuperscript{55} This definition is useful for my purposes as religion is related to a specific social context, specifically in a setting of competing ideas about Protestant Christianity between Puritan and Arminian in late seventeenth-century England. Further, formal religion played a major role in the daily lives of English people, and its systems of ritual and language were evident in culture. Thus, looking at evidence, such as sermons, treatises, or rituals, provides a view into how religion was idealized and expressed formally by preachers. This evidence also serves as an indicator for what was embraced on the surface in society.\textsuperscript{56} This includes examples such as orders of prayer and burial. Also, Puritan and Arminian partisans sought to legitimize their systems of belief and fought to prove their authority by arguing that they had a more authentic approach to Christianity than the other, which was intertwined in the political sphere as they competed for political authorization.

\textsuperscript{55} Geertz, 125.

\textsuperscript{56} In terms of theology linked to culture, Keith Thomas, \textit{The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) shows that sermons and teachings are linked to what people expressed in terms of faith and family as death was approached. This is helpful, as it demonstrates that theologians’ messages played a role in shaping cultural practice, which is something we see in this study from sermons and teachings of proper preparation for death. For example, people were taught by preachers how to mitigate fear of death, pray, and comfort those around them approaching death. Theology, intellectual ideas about God’s word to the Christian Church, was communicated by theologians on lay terms through sermons and teachings. Even though the majority were not literate at the time, the sermon served as a mouthpiece for these ideas and were influential as messages were adapted in ways people’s needs were met (1-2, 5). Pettigree, \textit{Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion}, also shows that Protestant messages were embodied by the public because culture changed to match what they preached about. The communication of the reformed message produced a converted and zealous group of followers that disavowed their Catholic past and committed to spreading reformed doctrine. It took the formulation of new ideas that were then printed, preached and embraced by enough people to cultivate a group identity. In \textit{The Birthpangs of Protestant England}, Collinson assesses changes in popular culture and shows that Protestantism’s implementation of music, drama, and imagery in churches alongside the sermon contributed to the creation of a distinctly Protestant culture (120-5). Collinson observed that modes of communication in the popular sphere, including the sermon and religious treatises, helped inculcate a Protestant identity. The result was conversion and commitment to new theologies. It is safe to conclude that beliefs, on at least a conventional level, were communicated and embodied among the majority through these means. Thus, studying sermons and treatises from influential theologians provides an accurate indicator of the message that people heard and applied to their lives.
In terms of methodology and approach, this study is mainly a social history of the preparatory process of death and an examination of the intellectual ideas of the theology pertaining to death and dying. Religious reforms of the Reformation played a role in shaping the attitudes and approaches to death. In terms of religion and the cultural approach to death, French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss stated, “the institutional system [religion] summarizes and provides a basis for the relationship between man and the universe, between society and the supernatural, and between the living and the dead.”\(^{57}\) Religion, for Lévi-Strauss, is the structure in which approaches to death within society are applied. Defining and assessing how religion is adapted and applied reveals how it met people’s needs and what it signified. Religious structuralism can impose rigidity to analysis so that individuals from the past and their words may be voiced only within the existence of a structure or completely determined by that structure.\(^{58}\) More simply, my approach is that the religious world-view can be observed from the messages in texts that seventeenth century authors left behind and these texts help to reconstruct the cultural system.\(^{59}\) This is by no means a flawless approach, as individual meaning and purpose underlying writings is difficult to assess, and there are varying reasons and motivations leading preachers to create sermons and testators to leave behind messages about themselves. The collective voices, however, do reveal a consistent message, expressed within Christian religious terms (structure), about the good death and how it was to be approached. Thus, examining evidence such as religious treatises, funeral

\(^{58}\) Marshall, 2-4 – the author also argues that too close of an alignment to social structuralism may overshadow the voices of those from the past. See also Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 3.  
\(^{59}\) Peter Marshall applied this methodology in *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*, 2-4; Also see Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 3 – the author also takes a methodological approach of examining social history in relation to religion.
sermons, wills and other funerary rituals reveal the attitudes and understanding about death.

My approach to historical analysis also follows that of Stephen Shapin and Simon Schaffer in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, published in 1985. The authors assess the sociology of scientific knowledge in seventeenth-century England using the debate between Thomas Hobbes and Robert Boyle in the 1650s and 1660s as their basis. They address knowledge production not just as an extant structure (as if predefined), but as a social and political process, of which rhetoric and language plays a major role. In essence, the basis for analysis is that social currents, a more fluid model, affect what is known and accepted in society. Shapin and Schaffer’s principle theoretical model is that what is accepted in society as knowledge comes after acceptance as a social philosophy. This approach applies to religion relative to death and dying in society as well. Instead of a debate about science, there was debate in religion over theological accuracy between Puritans and Arminians. Protestant Christianity was not static, rather it was contested and debated but did form the basis of religious knowledge. The two groups were influential among the public as they politicked, competed for ecclesiastical position, and expressed animosities against each other. Puritans and Arminians fought for acceptance of what they each saw as true religion through politics, and their language accentuated differences about salvation. People heard their theology and applied it to the extent it met their needs, which formed popularized religious knowledge.

61 Ibid., 14.
62 Ibid., 283-6.
This leads to another observation, which is that the majority of the population (laymen) assimilated formal Christian teachings only partially or superficially. For example, people, on general terms, expressed the attainment of salvation, but did not articulate alignment with the more complicated aspects of soteriology that separated Puritans and Arminians and were outlined in depth by theologians. Formal theology was not uniformly understood or applied by the population, rather, it was embraced to the extent it met people’s needs on a general level. In fact, beliefs are often blended with existent traditions, which shows that formal messages of theology are heard and applied or adapted on lay terms. This is demonstrated in this dissertation as laymen applied formal theology to will-making, an action of preparing for death. Wills contained messages of assured salvation and reliance on God’s providence, but expressions of faith did not go into more complicated aspects of soteriology, which shows that formal religion was applied to the extent people’s needs for assurance about the afterlife were met.

There are institutions in the background, or mechanisms of power, that are worth acknowledging in cultural history. In this case it pertains to religious authorities in

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63 Preachers’ theology and teachings were absorbed to a limited degree by the public. The uptake of the ideas were linked to those ideas but not an exact match. The work of Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, has effectively demonstrated that the religion practiced by the people did not directly link to formal Roman Catholic catechism in the fifteenth century. Susan Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 1997) – in this comparative study of Germany the author shows that reform efforts were limited and in response to reactions. Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, shows that the subject matter of sermons was chosen as a response to what preachers observed people doing, which did always not often line up with the formal instructions of preachers. The sense is that there was commitment to the general thrust of teachings (e.g. salvation, afterlife). Formal theology provided the language and parameters of rituals that were applied and adapted by the broader population.

64 An example of this is found in Reginald Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft* (London: 1665) – Scot was a sixteenth century writer on witchcraft. In this edition, a second “book,” by an unknown author, is appended to Scot’s “Discourse on Devils and Spirits.” The author writes about an “astral spirit,” which is defined as a “starry spirit” that is some sort of apparition. The author also argues that Plato “mistakes the soul with the astral spirit.” This offers an example of how some of the formal religious ideas, such as about the soul and separation of the living from the dead, might have been accepted, but mixed in with other beliefs, like that there were other types of spirits associated with individuals that interacted with the living; Peter Marshall analyzed ghosts and beliefs in lingering spirits in this regard in *Beliefs and the Dead*. 
Parliament and the monarchy, which authorized religion and influenced the public’s knowledge about death and the afterlife because of their power. My study focuses on identifying what Puritans and Arminians’ theology about death was, as it was that language that formed the basis of social structures that guided their faithful and carried influence because of the authority of the sources. The messages of Puritan and Arminian preachers had authority because of their influential positions ecclesiastically and in government as well as from being popular as preachers and writers in society. Their theology defined the expressions of religious knowledge, but society applied and adapted it to meet their needs. A view into culture through wills shows that there was acceptance of the religious definitions of the afterlife and how to prepare for death, however, the religious knowledge did not align with Puritanism or Arminianism exactly.

Prominent social theorists Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant have argued that knowledge is correlated closely with the mechanism of power and governance. See Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971); Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). This structuralism relates to religious knowledge in that what was known was closely associated with the religious confessions that held power, in late seventeenth century oscillating between Puritan and Arminian. Religion addressed death in terms of being peaceful, which sociologist Zohreh Bayatrizi reminds us was connected to the need to preserve order, a function of power. This is found in Zohreh Bayatrizi, “Counting the dead and regulating the living: early modern statistics and the formation of the sociological imagination (1662-1897),” The British Journal of Sociology 60, no. 3 (2009): 604, 609-10; A example of power relationships in an early modern European setting is found in David Warren Sabean, Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 22 – His ideas is that “evocations of obedience,” or Herrschaft, were active in all parts of society. Sabean viewed individuals and society as meeting their needs through a correlation with resources. Religiously, the implications are that rituals fulfill individual and community needs. For example, with communion, the service was defined and provided by the Church and the community, the groups of believers, would participate and apply it. Sabean’s theory of Herrschaft is complex. The author sees Herrschaft as an expression of power relationships from communal to personal levels relative to abstract structures which they correlate with. Power relationships were applied (e.g. religion, taxation, governance, law) and accepted in society through (1) questioning legitimacy, (2) necessity underlying benefits, and (3) imposed by some degree of violence. The basic principle underlying this theory is that people legitimized, through necessity of resource, satisfaction, or fulfillment of needs, what required obedience (22-24). The same principle can be applied relative to theological principles and guides being applied to the extent it met needs – there are structures of power that people, through agency, apply in a way their needs are fulfilled. While preparing to die was not a facet of religion heavily disciplined or managed through law enforcement after intercession for the dead and Purgatory were eliminated early in the Reformation, theologians outlined their message and provided guidance while the law prescribed burial and funerary practices, which together formed the parameters in which death was prepared for in relation to religion.
While this study will touch on many aspects of culture and religion, one overarching aim is to contribute to the understanding of beliefs and their relationship to cultural practices surrounding death in late Reformation England, which will help fill a gap in the scholarship on early modern England. Along the way, it will elucidate what Puritans and Arminians believed about death and dying by highlighting what theologians preached and taught to their faithful. Specifically, I examine topics pertaining to soteriology, eschatology, the afterlife, and the separation of the living and the dead. Understanding what was believed will help us become aware of the mentality of the dying and their survivors. Primary evidence includes theological treatises, funeral sermons, and manuals that contain information on prayers, testimonials, and advice to assist people to prepare for a good death.\footnote{Searches for sermons, treatises and other advice literature was conducted on Early English Books Online (EEBO) and the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) provided by the British Library from 1640 – 1700. Items were used that were listed from influential theologians (see next note) as well as others that dealt with the topic. A systematic survey of funeral sermons, particular evidence that taught about preparing for a good death, was conducted from available records in EEBO, published from 1640-1700. There were 161 distinct publications linked to those keywords from that period, from 86 unique contributors, which were used for analysis of theological teachings from these sermons.} Much of this primary data comes from leading theologians of the day, including Richard Baxter (1615-1691), John Bunyan (1628-1688), Henry Hammond (1605-1660), James Janeway (1636-1674), William Laud (1573-1645), Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), and John Owen (1616-1683). Brief descriptions of these theologians are provided in the appendix. I selected theologians
who were influential, based on the duties held in office or posts and the popularity of their writings.67

Next, I investigate wills and last testaments from the later seventeenth century to appraise beliefs in practice among testators by comparing them to what theologians taught. This includes a large sample of testators from London and the county of Surrey whose wills had been put through probate from the Civil War era through the end of the century. Wills are representative from each decade in the latter half of the seventeenth century, beginning in the 1640s through 1700. The number I selected (approximately 1,600) was large enough so language could be analyzed and patterns uncovered. This would not have been possible if a small sample was chosen, such as ten or twenty wills. The wills are from people who lived in and around London, which are stored in the London Metropolitan Archives, British Library, and Guildhall Library. I chose wills from people in this geographic area because the greater London area contained a large population (600,000 people estimated in the greater London area in 1700 compared to 200,000 in 1600) representing different religious views. London was a melting pot in

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67 These theologians were influential in the seventeenth century and beyond, evident by their publishing popularity, as well as through the legacy they have up even through today. They authored many publications that were printed, and often reprinted, throughout the seventeenth century. For example, a search of Early English Books Online showed the number of works published through 1700 linked to their names are: Baxter, 368; Bunyan, 134; Hammond, 168; Janeway, 34; Laud, 85 (many published after his death in 1645); Taylor, 184; and Owen 167. Further, these theologians’ works have been republished many times up through modern times, which reflects their legacy. For example, a search of academic library, public library and public book sale databases (e.g. University of Akron, Ohio Link, Cleveland Public Library, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Amazon, Barnes and Noble) shows many re-publications credited to these theologians. While the numbers are difficult to pinpoint, they show the longevity of their influence: Baxter, 280; Bunyan, over 1,500 (Pilgrim’s Progress has been adapted by other authors and/or republished over 1,700 times in the past century); Janeway, 38; Laud, 51; Taylor, His famous work Holy Dying has been republished 3 times in the last 20 years alone – and it was published multiple times over the second half of the seventeenth century; and Owen, 350; These historical figures are also mentioned in narratives about the Reformation in England and where shown to have influence politically and religiously. Their biographies were also reviewed on Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Sources also include: Nicholas Tyacke, Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds. The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); John Spurr, English Puritanism, 1603-1689 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988).
regards to its religious and political diversity, with a solid congregation of groups, including Puritans and Arminians. Further, London was also the city in which most English publishing occurred so it was a good place in which to review religious publications such as sermons and spiritual guides.\textsuperscript{68} This study also considers the link of funerary and burial traditions, as described in religious guides and treatises and observed on graves, to established systems of belief. In particular, assessing graves of some major religious figures shows a demonstration of faith as well as confirms their elevation in society. Through analysis of this evidence, I argue that theology was a major, but limited force in shaping the rituals and practice of death and dying, since religious distinctions, such as ideas of free will or election, did not carry-over into how death was prepared for. This shows that people’s needs were met through general aspects of Protestant Christianity, such as the assurance of the afterlife and hope of the Resurrection, as well as from caring for those left behind (secular matters) instead of worrying about the distinctions in the procurement of salvation. By the late seventeenth century, different conceptions of Protestant Christianity did not result in different approaches to death and dying.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ORIGINS OF ENGLISH PROTESTANTISM AND IDEAS OF PURITANISM AND ARMINIANISM

Since this dissertation assesses beliefs and approaches to death in the context of Puritanism and Arminianism in the late seventeenth century, it would be helpful to briefly define and highlight the origins of these religious movements. They began, in a sense, with England’s joining of the broader European reform movement in the mid to late sixteenth century since that established a break with Rome and the institution of reformed doctrines. While reforms unfolded politically and religiously over the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the concepts of Puritan and Arminian emerged in England.\(^69\)

The start of the English Reformation can be dated to the Act of Supremacy of 1534, which declared, “by authority of this present Parliament, that the king, our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, called Anglicans Ecclesia.”\(^70\) The king at the time was Henry VIII, and this act, fueled by a variety of political and personal motivations, led to a break with Rome and established the monarch as the ultimate authority of the Church in England. The immediate result of the break

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was the dissolution of the monasteries and the English Church assuming their wealth, the establishment of the king’s religious authority and preservation of it against opposition, and the implementation of a new religion.71

Other results of Henry’s break with Rome were that reformist literature gained popularity in England, the chantries were abolished by Parliament, and new prayer books were issued. King Henry had turned to servants whose Catholic faith was less orthodox than his to implement reforms (Henry was committed to Catholic doctrine, noted by his refutation of Luther’s ideas), including Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.72 Cranmer was a moderate reformer but instituted the foundation for English reformed theology that was distinct from Catholicism. For instance, early on after the split with Rome, Cranmer published the Ten Articles in 1536, which was a compromise of Catholic and reformed ideas of the time. They affirmed the sacraments of baptism, penance, and the mass, while omitting the others (confirmation, marriage, holy orders, and extreme unction).73 Even though the Articles were far from radical reform, the measures had a direct impact on people in society as the omitted sacraments had previously been part of daily life. They were revisions to pious practices but were distant from the reforms of Luther and other more radical reformers that emphasized justification by faith alone for salvation.74 Henry empowered Cranmer to have a new service book drawn up, which emerged as being influential throughout the Reformation, The Book of Common Prayer. It was eventually presented to Parliament in 1548 (published in 1549), a year after Henry had died.

71 Bernard, 68-72, 228-9.
72 Clayton Roberts and David Roberts, A History of England, Volume 1 (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 261-67. An indirect consequence of the split with Rome is that Protestant literature was no longer treated as heretical by law so its flow into the kingdom was no longer prohibited.
74 Bernard, 291-2.
England’s throne underwent two drastic changes from 1547-1558 as two very different reigns occupied the throne — the first staunchly Protestant, the other committed to Catholicism. Young Edward VI was the first and held the throne from 1547-1553. He was crowned at the age of nine at which time his uncle the Duke of Somerset (Edward Seymour) became Lord Protector. The triumph of Somerset allowed Cranmer to be less conservative in his religious reforms than he was required to be under Henry. Cranmer supported and agreed with religious reform taking place on the continent, but was patient and prayerful that his views could be put forth in God’s time. It was during Edward’s reign that Protestant reforms were deeply rooted and further separated England from its Catholic past. There was abolition of clerical celibacy and the mass and the requirement that services be in English was implemented. John Calvin, the influential continental reformer, had even sent advice advocating these reforms several times to Cranmer and Somerset, who each reportedly held him in high esteem.

Archbishop Cranmer, the chief architect of these major reforms, revised his prayer book accordingly and issued the second version in 1552. He received specific input on the book from Martin Bucer, who was another influential reformer from continental Europe. Bucer, based in Strasbourg, was known for his ecumenism and was exiled to England where he died in 1551. The themes that emerged in that edition of the prayer book were that everything without scriptural basis was to be omitted. The name of the mass was removed altogether and replaced with communion. Regarding communion, the wording included Zwinglian phrasing such as “Take and eate this, in remembraunce

77 Dickens, 200.
that Christ dyed for thee, and feede on him in thy hearte by faythe, with thankesgeving.” It established that the Lord’s Supper was for remembrance purposes and that transubstantiation of the bread and wine into flesh and blood did not take place. The Forty-Two Articles published in 1553 by Cranmer affirmed the removal of Purgatory, invocation of saints, and efficacy of good works in producing salvation.

These reforms during Edward’s reign also laid the framework for Calvinism in the Church of England, which would emerge as the dominant doctrine by Elizabeth’s reign. Calvinism was a school of thought in Reformed Christianity that was named after the French reformer John Calvin. It was heavily centered on the doctrine of predestination, which is the belief that God, in His sovereignty, appoints the eternal destiny of some to salvation through His grace and others to damnation.

Edward died in 1553 and his sister Mary I, a committed Catholic, eventually ascended to the throne. Mary quickly outlawed the Book of Common Prayer, restored the Latin rites of Catholicism, and went so far as to execute reformers. For example, John Rogers, a Bible translator, was burned in 1555. This change in religion did not, however, mean a Catholic revival. The result was sympathy and a growing sense of martyrdom among committed reformers, who were a significant part of the population at this point. Mary’s reign was short lived, as she died in 1558. The queen’s death also marked the end of Catholicism as a major force in the English church. Elizabeth I succeeded her and ended up ruling England for more than forty years. During her reign she brought settlement to the religious dilemma and established the nation as clearly

78 Book of Common Prayer (1552), Section XII.
81 Roberts, 281-2.
reformed with Calvinism defining its doctrine. For example, the next version of the Prayer Book issued in 1559 was based very closely on the 1552 edition issued during Edward’s reign.

During Elizabeth’s time on the throne, she grappled with the rise of the Puritans. The Puritans emerged shortly after Mary’s reign in the 1560s and 70s and were a zealous group of reformers who rallied around the cause of purging the church of all Roman practices. They damned papists and unbelievers and came to be called the godly “puritans” in popular culture. The name itself was somewhat derogatory as it characterized a group of Protestants seen as extremists as they sought strict religious discipline and simple ceremony in the English Church. The Puritans and the English Church at the time shared a common thread of Calvinism in theology; however, many Puritans wanted to rid the kingdom of the authority of bishops and introduce a Presbyterian-based church government as well as implement a strict definition of “godly living.” Regardless of this distinction, by the 1570s and 1580s England was a decisively Protestant kingdom that was aligned under Calvinism. One example of evidence of this is found in the publication of Bibles. From 1579 through the early seventeenth century, at least thirty-nine quarto editions of the Genevan Bible, which were all printed in England,

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83 Roberts, 282.
had a predestinarian catechism bound with them. These significantly outsold the officially-sanctioned Bishop’s Bible.\footnote{Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists, 2.}

Elizabeth took measures to suppress the Puritan movement, which gained momentum from preaching and holding conferences around the kingdom.\footnote{Dickens, 314-5.} One of her efforts, for example, was to choose anti-Puritan, high church Anglican John Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583, specifically to combat them. He took measures, such as enforcing conformity of clergy, to slow the movement.\footnote{Roberts, 294.} Even though there were varying ecclesiastic and political motivations, Calvinism was the common denominator in early reforms among Puritans and more moderate Protestants in the Church of England. In response to political pressures over conformity and authorization, the Puritans turned to Parliament for help in 1586-7 but did not achieve success.\footnote{Ibid.} This situation, however, did foreshadow the alignment of Parliament with Puritanism, as many members identified themselves as such, against the monarchy (that aligned with Arminianism), which was a factor in the Civil War in the seventeenth century. By the end of Elizabeth’s reign, she had settled the church into a distinctly Protestant Church of England, although it was remarkably a Puritan Church in terms of its spirituality.\footnote{Patrick Collinson, The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Changes in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London: MacMillan, 1988), 16-7; Dickens, 307; Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists, 7-8; MacCulloch, The Later Reformation in England, 70-73.}

The next two reigns saw tension build between the monarchy and Parliament over law and authority, which eventually led to Civil War in the 1640s. James came to power in 1603 and united the throne of Scotland with England. Scotland had a Presbyterian-based ecclesiology which contrasted with England’s Episcopal system. He continued
along the pathway of Protestantism established by Elizabeth, but his toleration of those who conformed to Protestantism and remained Catholic in private (Henry Howard – Earl of Northampton was one example) was met with much resistance as were his patronage and appointment of Richard Neile as Bishop of Durham who was an activist for Arminianism (anti-Calvinist doctrine) and his efforts to implement the episcopacy in Scotland. By the time Charles I ascended the throne after James died in 1625, tensions between the king and Parliament had grown. Common lawyers argued that Parliament was the highest court in the land and had authority to establish law, and that the king was below the law, which was not necessarily accepted by the monarchy.

One of the major issues between the king and Parliament was religion. There was criticism during both the reigns of James and Charles over toleration and nonconformity. For example, the House of Commons, in 1629, met and debated the promotion of Arminian clergyman Richard Montagu who preached anti-Calvinistic ideas. Three years earlier, leaders at Cambridge University had planned to use the platform of the commencement to argue against Montagu, but the plans were forcefully censored by orders from King Charles. This example typified a trend that emerged in the late 1620s and 30s of the toleration of nonconformist views and an alignment of the throne with the rise of Arminianism.

Arminianism stemmed from the beliefs of Jacobus Arminius, 1560-1609, a Dutch theologian who was skeptical of Calvinism and modified it. Arminius argued that grace is bestowed on all and salvation is freely available to those who accept it.

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92 Roberts, 340.
was universal, instead of inevitable divine election being the determinant for those who are saved in Calvinism. He stated that, “No one, except God, is able to bestow salvation; and nothing, except free will, is capable of receiving it.” This was a view about salvation being procured through free will from God, who made it available to everyone. Arminianism was a distinctly Protestant doctrine as it emphasized justification through faith alone, whereas salvation in Catholicism was the culmination of grace bestowed by God through the Church administering the penitential cycle. Arminianism, though, was still considered heretical by Calvinists in England. Calvinists viewed Arminianism as a distortion of the Gospel since salvation was produced in individuals only after it was accepted by choice. The Gospel, in Calvinist terms, was that salvation was procured at the moment of Christ’s sacrifice only on the elect. Those predestined would realize it during life. Arminianism, to Calvinists, limited God’s sovereignty and diminished the efficacy of grace, which was heretical. Calvinism, to Arminians, limited the intended reach of the Gospel, which inhibited the spread of the Church.

Charles had named Montagu as Bishop in 1632, even though the House of Commons had condemned him in 1625 for publishing “dangerous opinions of Arminius.” In fact, Montagu had made a pledge to Charles to defend him through the pen if Charles defended him with the sword. So with the appointment of Montagu, Charles I publically displayed his support for an Arminian in direct contrast with what Parliament condemned. Charles’ actions were, in actuality, Arminian activism. He appointed other bishops of Arminian persuasion throughout the 1620s and 30s, including Montaigne (1628), Harsnett (1628-31), and Neile (1632-40). Eventually, after

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96 Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 104-5, 194; Roberts, 352.
Archbishop Abbot of Canterbury died in 1633, Charles appointed William Laud, a very outspoken Arminian who that actively rejected Calvinist teachings.  

This religious divide over Puritanism and Arminianism was a major one and was a factor in starting the Civil War, which broke out in the 1640s. But many other factors contributed to the war, and they should not be diminished. For example, the country was facing a long-term financial problem, which, at its root was a debate about how and under what authority the government had to raise needed funds. There were issues about fixing the economy, maintaining liberty, and having representative government, as well as debates about ecclesiastical and theological authority. With religion, Charles shifted the Church significantly away from Calvinism, which had been in place since Elizabeth’s reign, and toward Arminianism. He and Laud together sought to restore the power of the bishops, which sparked a religious and political reaction, especially as Laud’s bishops sought to revive ritual, move the communion table to the end of churches, use stained-glass windows, require clerical dress, and institute kneeling at the altar for communion, which were rejected by Puritans. This style of worship in an Arminian belief structure came to be identified as Laudian Arminianism and characterized the Church of England through the last half of the century.

97 Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists, 70, 181, 247.
99 Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists, 245.
100 Roberts, 353; Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists, 245-6.
Laud’s views did not sit well with committed Calvinists, which included most of Parliament and Puritans in general. As Parliamentarians faced off with the monarchy over this issue, their religious rallying point was Calvinism, which was most notably championed by the Puritans.\footnote{On the eve of the civil war Puritans managed to offer, on average, sixty sermons a week in London from 46 unique Puritan clergy, which demonstrated that they were a formidable force in numbers and in spreading their message despite being suppressed by Laud and Charles; Roberts, 353-4.} Puritanism provided ideological justification of the superiority of biblical truth and conscience over temporal authority. Moderate Anglicans who were anti-clerical joined forces with the Puritans in the movement against the king. In a sense, Calvinistic Puritanism gave the Parliamentarians confidence that their cause was righteous.\footnote{Ibid.} After the king was executed in 1649, Oliver Cromwell, a heavy handed and strict Puritan, established control over the commonwealth as Lord Protector, which turned into a dictatorship during the Interregnum.

The monarchy was eventually restored in 1660 with Charles II assuming the throne. This long, drawn out battle was complex and multi-faceted over the century that passed from the initial split with Rome to the Restoration. This left in its wake in the late seventeenth century, a religious split between ideas of Puritanism, which had been a significant part of the English religious landscape for a long time, and Arminianism. Laudian Arminianism was more closely associated with the Church of England and Puritanism with the non-conformist factions that by then included Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, who were united by their Calvinism.\footnote{Davies, 19-37.} The result was not just that Puritans and Arminians contrasted in religious ideals, but that they regarded each other as bitter political enemies, and condemned each other as heretics and blasphemers of the gospel. From the Civil War through the last half of the seventeenth century,
Calvinistic Puritanism and Arminianism provide the main points of view in the religious make-up of England. Religious settlement was not easy, and remained in flux throughout the rest of the seventeenth century (and beyond) as Puritans and Arminians battled to determine authorized religious knowledge. The Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662 in an attempt to thwart dissent in religion. The Act prescribed public prayers and administration of sacraments and Episcopal ordination, which sought to reverse the Puritan course taken during the Interregnum. This example demonstrates how religion overlapped with politics, as well as how threats in competition for public acceptance were perceived by the crown.

From the Restoration until the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Laudian Arminianism was associated with the crown and the point of view of the Church of England while Puritanism was related to Parliamentarians. Arminianism was termed “High Church” or “Latitudinarian,” with the latter referring to a religious stance which sought to minimize doctrinal discord by emphasizing the role of nature and religious toleration, while both labels had a clear connotation of opposing Calvinistic soteriology. Calvinistic Puritanism continued to emphasize election along with total depravity as revealed in Scripture alone. Debates about religion persisted and took place in politics, universities (mainly Oxford and Cambridge), and among theologians. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was a union of English Parliamentarians with an invading army led by William of Orange, who was Dutch and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, technically a nonconformist in the eyes of the Church of England, to seize control of the

104 Ibid., 19.
105 Shapin and Schaffer, 284-6.
108 Ibid.
One of the outcomes was the passing of the Act of Toleration of 1689, which allowed freedom of worship to most Protestant nonconformists (it did not apply to Catholics or non-Trinitarians). This was seen as a long overdue recognition of the fact of religious pluralism among Protestants in the kingdom and largely eliminated the debate about Puritanism and Arminianism in the political arena.

In the period from after the Civil War through the Toleration Act, religious ideas were associated with identity within a particular religious persuasion, and that carried significance politically too. It shows the way the policies were laced with religion and politics simultaneously to advance what would be the dominant religious discourse. Since it mattered very much whether one was Puritan or Arminian, especially after the war, I expected to find the identities of each religious system to be evident in the teachings about death and dying since it was another facet of applied theology produced within heavily contested space for acceptance of religious belief.


John Spurr, “From Puritanism to Dissent, 1660-1700” in Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds. The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 244, 263

Shapin and Schaffer, 288-9, 300.
BACKGROUND TO DEATH AND DYING IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

English mortality rates were persistently unpredictable throughout this period. In terms of frequency, it has been estimated that most parishes dealt with death on a weekly basis, daily in some. Life expectancy at birth has been estimated at thirty-two in 1640 with only five percent reaching age sixty. Somewhere between one-fourth and one-third of children died before the age of fifteen; many did not survive their first year. Due to this statistic, some historians have argued that people naming their children after deceased brothers or sisters is evidence of parental detachment because of the high child death rate. Richard Houlbrooke recently challenged this view after he found in letters and diaries that there was a deep demonstration of attachment after the death of infants and young children. He convincingly argues that feelings of loss were commonplace. Dying took place in the home, death was often the theme of sermons, graveyards were part of the community, and the plague made its cycles throughout the era. Death was, quite literally, everywhere. For instance, one of the worst outbreaks of plague took place in London in 1665 and killed off more than 56,000 people in the city, more than any of the earlier epidemics. This was partly due to London’s population being much higher.

114 Anne Laurence, Women in England 1500-1760 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 34; According to Laurence, out of 6 or 7 births, it was not uncommon for only two to reach adulthood; Gittings, 7-15.
115 Gittings, 7-14 - Gittings argued for this in her study of death in early modern England. Her evidence was that names of deceased children were used again to name subsequently born kids, and indicated a detachment from the children that died. This is also argued by Philippe Ariès.
117 Gittings, 7-15.
than ever before. One study has estimated that approximately 660,000 people died in England and Wales from the plague from 1570-1670. The death rate ranged from 10% up to 30% in crowded areas such as Oxford, Bristol, or Exeter. The death rate from the plague and other diseases, including the “sweating sickness” (i.e. miliary fever), typhus, smallpox, and whooping-cough, periodically sprung up, contributing to unpredictable changes in the death rate and kept people fully aware of death.

Contained in this brief overview is the idea of an ill-timed death, such as from war, disease epidemics and children dying. Even their frequency did not normalize them in culture. While these fall outside the parameters of this study because they require in-depth research in and of themselves, it is important to acknowledge that these factors helped define an ideal death. In the late seventeenth century, theologians played a central role in defining an ideal death within the terms of religious discourse. An ideal death was one that could be prepared for. A child’s death, however, was not considered to be typical, but it was a common occurrence, and people sought to reconcile this with the divine order. Christian teachers taught that God’s grace was upon these little ones who had few days on earth. Their fate was thought to be Heaven, not Hell, which was reserved for those left without reconciliation to God.

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121 A clear example is found in Samuel Acton, Dying infants sav’d by grace proved and the blessed man with his blessedness described in a sermon preached near Namptwich in Cheshire at the burial of a deceased infant, July 25, 1695(London: 1699), 1-5.
The English Civil War provides another good example of untimely deaths, in this case from violence and disease. While estimates of soldiers deaths are around 85,000 (34,000 Parliamentary and 51,000 Royalist), about 190,000 people died from the compounded effect of war and disease in England. Spotted fever, typhoid, and diarrhea frequently followed combat areas and significantly increased the death toll. This accounts for a little less than 4% of the population at the time, but was devastating in some regions. In county of Devon, for example, the death rate rose by 55% from the effect of war and disease. In Banbury, there were 255 burials per annum between 1643-45 compared with 73 a year prior to the war.\textsuperscript{122} This created a number of issues. It raised questions about how soldiers should be prepared to die. Religiously, this potentially violent death produced a sort of passport to Heaven. A soldier’s death was stoic and heroic, and survivors remembered soldiers for those reasons. Comparatively, in an ideal civilian death, faith and care of family dominate preparatory rituals and dealing with the dead, while in a soldier’s death, dignity and honor compensated for the lack of preparation. Burial ritual in a civilian’s death showcases religion (sleeping until rising on the Last Day), while in a soldier’s death, formal burial usually did not happen. In fact, most bodies were never retrieved.\textsuperscript{123} This required a bit of reconciliation religiously by fitting within the idea of quasi-martyrdom that soldiers went to Heaven after dying in battle. The deaths of soldiers were exceptions to the picture of a good death theologians preached and taught to the public. This period of war and the spike in the death rate also likely tinged the outlook on death within the general public and may have been a reason why it was a frequent topic within sermons and treatises. Theologians and pastors likely

\textsuperscript{122} Carlton, 204, 210-11.  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 216-20.
sought to comfort and prepare their faithful to deal with what was happening around them and come to terms with their own fate after death.

OUTLINE

The history of death really boils down to an account of beliefs and practices about death. Whatever is believed about the process of dying and the afterlife is what shapes individual and collective mentalities. Thanatological topics in England, on seventeenth century terms, were largely based on Protestant Christian views. The Reformation was a tumultuous time that produced changes in Christianity and in the way many Europeans prepared for death and remembered the dead. These changes, including their origins and outcomes, will be assessed in the second chapter of this dissertation since seventeenth-century English theologians operated within that established tradition. English theologians and authorities’ views about soteriology, eschatology, preparation for death, and the afterlife sprouted from a field cultivated by early Reformation thought. Reformers renewed soteriological conceptions based on what they thought was present in the early Church from their readings of Scripture, while they also rejected the penitential system and view of the afterlife in Catholic tradition. This significantly affected rituals pertaining to death. The Catholic response will also be highlighted since lingering concerns of popish influence loomed as a foe in the English imagination. The Reformation led to the reaffirmation of Catholicism’s foundational tenets at Trent which, essentially from that point forward, has divided these major religious establishments.
The next part, chapters three and four, assesses theology and teachings about death and dying in late seventeenth century England. After the tumultuous first generation of reform, Protestantism was institutionalized but split into divergent schools of thought. By the late seventeenth century, England was pushed and pulled into directions of Arminianism and Calvinistic Puritan beliefs. These systems of belief, which were based heavily on foundational concepts from the first generation of reformers, outlined versions of salvation and Biblical parameters defining death and the afterlife as well as prescribed measures to alleviate the fear of death and properly prepare for one’s end of this life.

The last part, chapters five and six, assesses the cultural practices of preparing for death through the lens of wills and dealing with the dead, based on the graves and commemoration of theologians since pastors and religious leaders set the trends for which the faithful should follow. It mainly uses wills to appraise the degree to which systems of belief influenced the preparation and approach to death. Wills, even though they represent a limited proportion of society (i.e. those with enough wealth to actually need a legal document to oversee its distribution), are a useful source for getting a glimpse into culture. The preambles, in particular, are rich in religious language. They reveal the formation of Protestant ritual. The remaining parts of the will are helpful for assessing what and who was valued by the testator, which is evidence helpful not only for death and dying but also family and gender history. Graveyards and funeral traditions are other useful primary sources that I utilize to appraise what was emphasized in commemoration.
My contribution to the historiography concentrates on three major themes. First, this study heavily assesses theology of influential church figures. It analyzes intellectual ideas in the major forms of early modern English Protestantism as represented by Puritans and Arminians. Even though they taught drastically different ideas of embodying saving grace (a key component to dying well), their views of the afterlife were similar and their instructions to their faithful to prepare for a good death were synonymous. This is an important point since these groups are known more for their opposition to each other than anything else. Second, this is also a study of death and dying that adds to our understanding about beliefs and preparation for death. Along the way, we see that salvation was not the only important factor to the dying individual. Family mattered very much as testators sought to care for those left behind. Lastly, this is also a contribution to early modern English cultural and general Reformation history. Rituals related to death and dying reveal a relationship to religion, albeit a general one. It shows how identity as a Protestant Christian formed the parameter of group identity consistently throughout the last half of the seventeenth century. Interestingly testators did not seek to identify themselves down to the level of being Puritan or Arminian as they testified of faith when preparing for death.

The subject matter of death, damnation, salvation, eschatology, and issues of memory and remembrance seem to inevitably conjure up wonders, fears, and reflection about our own mortality. Constructively, this leads to deep questions about life’s meaning and maximizing a purposeful life while alive – really figuring out the point of it all. My hope is that by presenting beliefs about death in the past we might reflect on death in the present, not only to place it in our own modern cultural context but to
observe how it has been dealt with by those before us. In many ways death does not seem to change. It is a wonder that our understanding of it continues to though.

As this study contributes to our knowledge about death and dying in late seventeenth century England, along the way, the voices of some extraordinary theologians will be heard as well as the voices of people who did not do much else other than simply prepare to die. What they said meant something, and that should mean a lot to us. That just might help us see what the point of it all really is.
CHAPTER II

THEOLOGY AND DEATH IN THE EARLY REFORMATION TRADITION
This dissertation investigates beliefs about death in early-modern England, specifically, in the late seventeenth century when Reformation theologies had been institutionalized for some time. However, it is important to remember that ideas and systems of belief are not born in a vacuum. There are circumstances that help explain their origins. That stated, dominant systems of belief in the seventeenth century were rooted in the theologies introduced by reformers a century earlier. This chapter offers background of those relevant early Reformation beliefs. While this might seem like more background information than normal for a dissertation focusing on a period over a century later, I believe it is important to refresh our memories about the start of ideas that contributed to a distinctly Protestant approach to death and dying in England. The Reformation was, after all, a significant shift within Christianity as theological discourses emerged based on reformers’ interpretations of Scripture separated from traditional structures of church authority. These doctrines formed the basis for the split and reshaping of the Christian faith. They also impacted the way life was lived and how people approached death.

Reformers in the sixteenth century held to distinct tenets of Christianity that differed dramatically with Catholicism, particularly related to salvation, God’s Word, and ecclesiology. These were based on ideas of Christian humanism and were modeled on what the early Church and Church fathers such as Saint Augustine taught. Early reformers believed in justification by faith, which removed dependence on the Catholic Church for grace. Scripture alone became the single authority in the Church and ecclesiastically, reformers believed that the Church was made up of the invisible group of the elect, its membership known only to God. The concept of Purgatory and the ability to
intercede on behalf of the dead were eliminated doctrinally in reformed thought. The impact of these changes on culture, particularly regarding death and dying, were widespread. Many rituals were abolished that were associated with intercession for the dead (e.g. masses, prayers), while ideas of a simpler way to prepare for death and remember the dead were introduced.124

Thomas Cranmer, John Calvin, Martin Bucer, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Uldrich Zwingli, and John Knox were some of the major early reformers of the Reformation that formed the foundation of the evangelical movement that matured into two divergent forms in England over the next century. The emphasis of reformers was on God’s work and God’s promises expressed in ecclesiastical and theological forms distinct from Catholicism. The reformers took their views and reformed (rebelled against) the ecclesiastical structure of their regions, revised the sacraments, and changed the mass. It was a renaissance of the Church because it was based on going back to its earliest form as modeled in Scripture as the reformers interpreted it. Henry VIII instigated reform in England by usurping the authority claimed by Rome. The king never renounced the doctrines of the Roman Church, but opened up his kingdom to the doctrines of the reformers by removing Roman authority. Cranmer, in England specifically, implemented a moderate reform process influenced by Bucer that came to be based on Calvinistic principles as reforms progressed after Henry VIII’s death.

Where specifically did this place beliefs about death? The broad reform movement included the reform of ideas about death. The groundwork for this stems from the center of the reformers’ message – salvation. For Luther salvation was “the summary

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of the Christian doctrine” and Calvin termed it “the main hinge on which religion turns.”\textsuperscript{125} Cranmer, in commenting about the institution of the Church linked Christ with the “true doctrine of salvation” which sprang forth “faith and hope” in an eternal sense.\textsuperscript{126} Salvation accentuates the eschatological undertones of the Reformation because one needed to have worked out reconciliation with God if one was to spend eternity in Heaven. By the late Middle Ages, some reform minded theologians came to view salvation, as explained in Church teachings, as unattainable. Their version of reformed salvation emphasized a hope for believers to be saved in a way distinct from that in the penitential cycle and, instead, through justification by faith. The difference between the Catholic and reformed views was that in the latter assurance of salvation was realized at the moment of justification (when a person is made free from sin) in the present life, not left to be fulfilled at some point in the afterlife. It became a work of God saving man, by grace through faith, while in the medieval view it was God offering salvation through works inspired by grace.

LATE MIDDLE AGES

In the late Middle Ages death was a major event in the process of preparing for judgment; so, how the grave, wills and remembrances could assist the soul were important – these were physical means in which intercession was invoked or inspired on behalf of the deceased’s soul. Protestant culture shifted things away from the physical self – albeit through force; so living a godly, spiritual life as already saved was

\textsuperscript{125} Luther and Calvin are quoted in Euan Cameron. \textit{The European Reformation} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 121.

\textsuperscript{126} Thomas Cranmer, \textit{Defense of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament} (London: 1550), 5, n391.
encouraged by reformers and less importance was placed on physical works that could be done to assist the soul. Reformers emphasized an edifying death that was the death of a sanctified individual who cared little of his own passing and prepared for it throughout life.

The medieval characterization of death was certainly not all melancholy though, even if the artwork and other contemporary evidence contained such imagery. These images promoted chaste living and eternal perspective by reminding man of his own mortality, seeded from Adam, and the subsequent need to convert and be penitent. Images of Hell, death, judgment, and Purgatory reflected an anxiety of mortality to teach of the practical need for good works to help in the next life. In this setting, individuals sought to place themselves in the best place in the afterlife along the penitential cycle and remain in the identity of their social settings, such as their family or community.

The characteristics of medieval death in western Europe were heavily related to Christianity in terms of God as judge and the justification of the sinner in an eschatological perspective. After all, Christianity places the resolution of death, caused by sin, as a central component to its mission, salvation, so reconciliation with God could take place. Christ provided the sacrifice that made the resolution of sin a possibility.

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127 Examples of this imagery is found in Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), some examples are Hieronymus Bosch, *Death of a Miser*, c. 1510, 129; *Torments of Hell* from the Munich Psalter, c1200, 180; Hieronymus Bosch, *Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins*, early 16th century, 161; and Late 15th-century *Ars Moriendi* woodcut of the impatient death and the good death, 41.


129 Ibid., 308.

130 Westerhof, 7.

In this sense, the theology surrounding salvation and its place in the Church in the late Middle Ages are linked to the eschatology pertaining to the individual’s soul.

The medieval Church was the means of salvation. Its goal was, officially, to save souls. This involved two factors: human sin and the forgiveness of sin. Human sin is breaking the law of God and forgiveness is offered through the Church in the sacrament of penance. If, at death, the individual passes on without having an opportunity to perform the necessary penance for sin, it was atoned for after death, in Purgatory, which was a temporary place for purification. Therefore, to save souls from punishment, sacramental confession and works of satisfaction (penance) were the chief components in the religion of the late Middle Ages. The system assisted individuals in preparation for death, but left uncertain when sanctification was complete in the afterlife. Consequently, as the hours of death approached, alleviating the burden of judgment by stacking up merit on behalf of the dying became the main focus. The clergy often heard confession and administered the final sacraments, the Last Rites, when possible, to ensure absolution at death, which helped alleviate that weight. The Church also offered indulgences to help relieve that burden, which canceled penitential works imposed at confession.

Complementing the doctrine of salvation and justification within the Church, the theology included a system of working for the dead after they were dead. The medieval thought was that the soul was distinct from the body. The soul would eventually be reunited or re-birthed with the embodied person at the Resurrection. There were many views in this regard, which have been thoroughly assessed by Caroline Walker Bynum in

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132 Cameron, 79.
133 Ibid., 81-83.
134 Ibid., 82.
For example Bynum shows that these ranged from the immortal soul being a container and guarantee of what was meant as self and that it may have been able to exist eternally after the Resurrection by pairing to a part of the body, the whole corpse or nothing at all. By the late Middle Ages, though, the whole body was an important part of the equation of being ready for the Resurrection. It makes sense, then, that the burial process was considered to be a major part of the penitential process so body and soul could one day be reunited.

Regardless of these distinctions, the soul continued on in death and that the living should actively assist the dead person’s soul. So, places of burial, shrines, tombs, and other permanent emblems of remembrance served as helpful factors in the broad scheme of salvation since body and soul were inextricably linked. For instance, if the body was entombed in a holy place then the soul could receive assistance in its location in the afterlife and it was also important that the body itself was preserved in waiting for the Resurrection.

The idea of intercession for the dead was a key component of Catholic belief. Prayer to saints for intervention on behalf of the dead was based on the capacity of the saints to break the boundaries between the living and the dead. The idea for intercession could only be valid if the dead were not immediately entered into a state of permanence, otherwise efforts from the living to help the dead would not have an impact on the soul’s progression in the afterlife. There is reference to interceding for the dead so they might receive atonement in the Apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees 12:42-46, which is

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136 Ibid., 1-6, 318-20.
137 Binski, 24-25.
a book in the Catholic Bible (Protestants later disputed it as being non-canonical).\textsuperscript{138} Jacques Le Goff, in his seminal work \textit{The Birth of Purgatory}, dated the formal defining of the middle place to the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{139} Le Goff recognizes that the idea of the soul residing somewhere between death and the Last Judgment existed long prior, likely since antiquity. His main point is that by twelfth century the word linguistically became a noun – \textit{purgatorium} and was formalized in doctrine as such.\textsuperscript{140} Carlos Eire argues, and I agree, that Purgatory was not originally based on formal doctrine, but was paired to ideas about forgiveness in the afterlife with a desire to connect with the dead as its basis.\textsuperscript{141}

Thus, salvation was finished in Purgatory. This doctrine made Christian intercession for the dead more tangible since it was detailed in doctrine.\textsuperscript{142} Basically, those Christians not in mortal sin, which would lead to eternal damnation, but rather in forgivable sin, which required cleansing, would enter Purgatory, an unpleasant place, but not as unpleasant as Hell. It was the place penance would be completed after death. Through intercession by prayers from the living the duration spent in Purgatory could be shortened and access into Heaven accelerated. Furthermore, a living believer could build up a sort of credit system in advance to shorten his or her own stay in Purgatory.\textsuperscript{143} This fit well into the indulgence system, a process where the Church issued remissions for punishment or purgatorial atonement. Sin and punishment were evaluated on a scale, and once fixed by the Church, a price was assigned and indulgences were issued to benefit the dead.

\textsuperscript{138} 2 Maccabees 12: 42-4.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 3, 362.
\textsuperscript{141} Carlos Eire, \textit{A Very Brief History of Eternity} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 109-110.
\textsuperscript{143} Binski, 25.
Wills were a legal means in which the deceased could guarantee future assistance for their souls. So wills served not just as legal documents to settle estates, but were also religious documents to help settle the soul. Late medieval wills frequently requested liturgies, alms giving to the poor, funeral processions, memorials and masses on behalf of the deceased.\textsuperscript{144} It was another way to prepare for death and the afterlife by requesting pious acts, on record, that would assist the soul in Purgatory.

By the late Middle Ages the churchyard cemetery had become sacred ground. Churches had relics and those that contained the remains of a saint were especially valuable to the nearby cemetery. In burial it was important for the dead to gain proximity to the holy bodies because they could mysteriously transmit protection and deliverance in death.\textsuperscript{145} People believed, as Saint Julian of Norwich from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries did, that the prayers of the living were more effective when said near the tombs of the martyrs. She said, “The proximity of the \textit{memoriae} of the martyrs is so advantageous to the deceased that if one commends to their patronage someone who had been buried in their vicinity, the effect of the prayer is increased.”\textsuperscript{146} Physical proximity to the saints was helpful and inspired intercession.

Within this culture, we should be mindful that individuals longed for assurance and closure, both physical and spiritual. It is hard to overlook that fear and anxiety were stressed within the picture of the deathbed, but that is probably a typical reaction to approaching death at any point in time. This may explain why the hope in the good death, the \textit{ars moriendi}, was a peaceful scene at the deathbed with loved ones around and an assurance that Heaven was victorious.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 33-34.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 41-2.
The traditional Church’s plan for salvation and preparing for the afterlife was ubiquitous in many senses, although those ideas were not altogether unchallenged. There were attempts at reform well before the Reformation began, namely by the English Lollards and Bohemian Hussites in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Their efforts not only challenged the Church’s dogma, they also brought into question beliefs about death. For example, the place of burial became of little concern to these early reformers in terms of its relationship to spirituality. They believed it made no difference at all where one buried the dead, whether the land was sacred or profane. This concept in and of itself was considered heresy during their times. Also, they held to the idea that the earthly Church had no correlation with the heavenly in terms of the predestined elect, a view held particularly strongly by John Wycliffe, thus spatial restrictions, like location of burial, held no meaning either.147

They did not reach the point of challenging belief in Purgatory or intercession between the living for the dead. The notable change, be it minor in scope, was in the relationship between the physical and the dead. The eventual heretics introduced a teaching that it was not through the physical that the eventual destination of the soul after death could be altered, but only through the spiritual. However, the early reformers held to the standard elements of medieval orthodoxy otherwise. For example, at the Council of Constance, Jan Hus revealed his attitude toward Wycliffe and offered clues on his belief of the afterlife. He stated:

I, however, not wishing to pass a temerarious judgment, hope that he [Wycliffe] is of the number of those saved. If he is in heaven, may the glorious Lord, who placed him there, be praised; if he is in purgatory, may the merciful Lord free him

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147 Anne Hudson, Introduction to Selections From English Wycliffite Writings (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 4-5.
soon; if he in hell, may he, in accordance with God’s just judgment, remain there until its eternal consumation.\textsuperscript{148}

Hus had his hopes, but believed that even Wycliffe was subject to God’s selection and might dwell in any location in the afterlife. He shared faith not just in Purgatory, but also in the masses, prayers, fasts, and almsgiving as aids for the souls. He emphasized the sacrament of penance and encouraged properly administered indulgences to assist in the process.\textsuperscript{149}

**REFORMATION IDEAS**

In the sixteenth century, a major movement took place that changed beliefs about death, including how one prepared for it, what the geography of the afterlife looked like, and how the dead would be remembered. These religious ideas remained influential through the seventeenth century (and beyond), so uncovering the foundational aspects of the Reformation is important to understanding what theologians and secular authorities were basing their views on over a century later in England. The fundamental principles of the reform message were to restore the place of Scripture alone, preach a redefined message of salvation and institute a new ecclesiology. The ideas from Thomas Cranmer and John Calvin, in particular, provide a good sample of early reformed thought in England. Cranmer, after all, set in motion the early reformed theologies in England, which legitimized the reformed Church and gave authority to the Book of Common Prayer. His Book helped make reform efficacious, as it was required for preachers to use.


\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 62.
Even those who were opposed to a prescribed prayer book, because it was related in format to Catholic catechisms, came to use it because rituals would not have been effective if preachers got things wrong. Further, since English theology came to settle on Calvinism, it is also helpful to identify Calvin’s views directly in this section.

The reformers did not find Biblical salvation within the medieval Catholic penitential and sacramental systems. John Calvin captured reformed thought when he said:

The whole may be thus summed up: Christ given to us by the kindness of God is apprehended and possessed by faith. …that it is entirely by the intervention of Christ’s righteousness that we obtain justification before God.  

The 1549 edition of the Book of Common Prayer stated:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath lefte power to his Churche to absolve all sinners, which truely repent and beleve in hym: of his great mercy forgeve thee thyne offences: and by his autoritie committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy synnes, in the name of the father, and of the sonne, and of the holy gost. Amen.

Firste, I learne to beleve in God the fath er, who hath made me and all the worlde. Secondely, in God the sonne who ha th redeemed me and all mankinde. Thirdly, in god the holy goste, who sanctifyeth me and all the electe people of god.

This position was in disagreement with the merit system of the Catholic Church. The reformed position put procurement of salvation on faith in Christ. At that point Cranmer necessitated repentance through the Church and belief in Christ as criteria to obtain mercy. This was established in the early religious guidelines after Henry’s break with Rome in the Ten Articles of 1536. Henry was against Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone, so it makes sense that Cranmer specified what was essential for salvation

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150 Haigh, English Reformations, 289.
152 Book of Common Prayer (1549), Section VII and IX.
153 Documents of the English Reformation, ed. G. Bray (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 1994), 162-74; Necessitated only baptism and penance, through confession, as requirements to achieve salvation.
included the English Church in the absolution process. That doctrine evolved into a reformed position of faith alone after Henry’s death though, especially as Calvin and Bucer continued to influence Cranmer. Bucer, for instance, spent time in England from 1549-51 upon the invitation by Cranmer while he was in exile from Strasbourg after losing support from officials for his reforms. He would die in England as well.\footnote{\textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography}, s.v. “Martin Bucer.”} The 1559 edition of the Prayer Book shows the progression and influence from the continental reformers. It stated:

\begin{quote}
The almighty Lord; whiche is a moste strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earthe, and under the earthe doe bowe and obey, be now; and evermore thy defence, and make the knowe and fele, that there is no other name under heaven geven to man, in whome, and through whom thou mayest receyve healthe and salvacion, but onely the name of oure Lorde Jesus Christe.\footnote{\textit{Book of Common Prayer} (1559), Section XVII.}
\end{quote}

It was clearly presented here that salvation came only through Jesus Christ, not through the Church or works. It is a much more visibly reformed statement about salvation than what was written in the previous two decades. Other evangelical theologians purveyed a similar message. For example, Lancelot Ridley (d. 1576), a Church of England clergyman and theological writer who was favored by Cranmer, wrote about the sufficiency of faith in Christ alone for salvation.\footnote{\textit{Oxford Dictionary of English Biography}, s.v. “Lancelot Ridley.”} He wrote in 1548 that “true doctrine, as a sufficient doctrine, [to bring] salvation by Christ alone, without helpe of the Angelles, of the lawe, or of any other thyng.”\footnote{Lancelot Ridley, \textit{An Exposition in English upon the Epistle of St. Paul, to the Colossians} (1548), 13.} By the 1570’s, John More (d. 1619), a Puritan pastor, summarized this early English position on salvation. In \textit{A Brief and Necessary Catechism or Instruction} (1577), he wrote: “By the Ten Commandments I see my miserable estate, that I deserve death, damnation, and the curse of God, which must
be paid because God is just…I should not doubt but inwardly to be a partaker of Christ himself, with all his benefits, his ransom, righteousness and holiness to be mine, that in him and through him I shall have life everlasting.”158 This captures the theme of sinfulness being associated with death and justification by Christ assuring salvation through faith (“inwardly a partaker”).

The early reformed idea of Christ’s act of sacrifice alone producing salvation was emphasized and aligned with the doctrine of predestination. Within predestination, which Calvin is most noted for, but many of the major reformers adhered to, assurance rests in faith since election precedes faith and is the cause of faith in the order of salvation. This is the doctrine of “double predestination.” Further on that topic Calvin wrote that:

The covenant of life is not preached equally to all, and among those to whom it is preached, does not always meet with the same reception. This diversity displays the unsearchable depth of the divine judgment and is without doubt subordinate to God’s purpose of eternal election. (III, XXI, 202) By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death. (III, XXI, 206) But as the Lord seals his elect by calling and justification, so by excluding the reprobate either from the knowledge of his name or the sanctification of his Spirit, he by these marks in a manner discloses the judgment which awaits them. (III, XXI, 211) Because God of his mere good pleasure electing some passes by others, they raise a please against him. But if the fact is certain, what can they gain by quarrelling with God? (III, XXII, 213)159

Calvin established the idea that God, through His grace, effected salvation in some, which meant it was not effected in others – a double predestination. Calvin and others felt this should induce a sense of wonder within believers. This is because, for Calvin,

predestination had to be considered in its context as a mystery of God, or of divine revelation.\textsuperscript{160} It is only by the good pleasure of God, through His grace, that election was offered and no works, past or future, were taken into account.\textsuperscript{161} The elect are those who are able to respond to the Gospel, yet that ultimate knowledge is not for man to know, it is a mystery of God. This means that predestination must be recognized to lie in the inscrutable judgment of God. Yet inarguably, either free will or predestination places salvation as an act of God to redeem a depraved man, which occurs only through an individual’s faith in God and His promises. This stood in stark contrast to the penitential cycle in Catholicism. The reformers were also outspoken that Catholicism prevented Christians from coming to know this doctrine. Bucer, for example, in a treatise published in English in 1535 wrote of the “wickedness in masses,” how people were led “contrary to Christ” by “wicked presumptions” and in another text translated from De Regno Christi (final draft created in 1550) and published after his death in 1557 called the Catholic Church the “antichrist” that had “overflowed the Church of Christ” that prevented people from accessing the Scripture.\textsuperscript{162} He used strong language to condemn what he saw in Catholicism as an impediment in the Christian faith.

The important concept introduced by the early reformers was that sanctification, or being made holy, was not a factor contingent in the outcome in death; it was a natural response to becoming justified, of having sin’s debt or punishment resolved. Most notably, it removed the need for clerical absolution and the entire doctrine of Purgatory as well as revised the process of being justified and entering in union with God as being

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 203.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{162} Martin Bucer, A treatise declaryng [and] shewig dyuers causes take[n] out of the holy scriptur[es] of the sente[n]ces of holy faders. (1535), 4-5; Martin Bucer, A treatise, how by the Worde of God, Christian mens ought to be distributed, (1557), 5.
sealed in life. This was the first step in changing the view on death. The perceived process of salvation changed, eliminating the need for regular purification, both before and after death. Purgatory itself even disappeared.

Expectations about how death would be experienced were affected by the message of the Reformation. Certainly the political implications that the reformed theology brought had a certain degree of influence on this change. As countries became Protestant, new traditions were introduced and enforced as previous customs and rituals were rejected and outlawed. For example, the dissolution of chantries in England through royal law from 1545 to 1547 was an obvious outcome of the Reformation. In one respect, new laws prohibited old practice that was not in line with reformed views, specifically those dealing with intercession for the dead and burial practice. In another respect, on a personal level, reformed theology encouraged a shift in belief that included disregarding certain medieval dogma, such as the cycle involving the afterlife, intercession for the dead, and the doctrine of Purgatory.

PREPARATION

Preparedness was a component of a good death, both in the spiritual and physical senses. To be prepared for death, reformers taught of lifelong contemplation about sin, rightful judgment and the power of salvation. The idea was that impressing the image of Christ into the individual’s daily life would build up confidence about the assurance of salvation (spiritual) and ease fear as the deathbed approached (physical).
Calvin taught that the key for preparedness is in Christian living such that all actions should point to the future life. The Genevan said, “We must realize that our minds never genuinely long for future joy until they have learned to make little of this present life.” Calvin encouraged his followers to spurn the present and reach out to the future. The key was to live the Christian life in preparation of the resurrected life by embracing self-denial and a disciplined life as well as avoiding wealth and earthly ambition. Calvin reminded Christians to even remember that loved ones, family and friends are all fleeting so not to be dependent on them. Continual reminders were found in sickness and death. It is important to note that this is a view in keeping with medieval thought as well. Reminders of death and the cult of the dead were ubiquitous, but not in the morbid sense, rather, the imagery and emphasis meant to spur reflection and preparation throughout life. The Reformation’s predecessors emphasized a pragmatic sense of the value of life in the context of using this world to prepare for the next. Thus what was emphasized by champions of the Reformation was not new for the individual; rather it was made unique since it was taught in the guise of their movements. That alone, though, did change what was emphasized in the Christian life.

Self-denial for Calvin was an important necessity of the Christian life, noted by his devotion of significant portions of the *Institutes* (1559) to this topic (The *Institutes* was first published in Latin in 1536, but the most definitive – expanded and revised – version was completed in 1559). It meant bearing the cross in life by living as an

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164 Duffy, 302-3.
imitation of Christ. In fact, Calvin’s discussion on self-denial was the immediate context for his meditation on the future life. He states:

Whatever be the kind of tribulation with which we are afflicted, we should always consider the end of it to be, that we may be trained to despise the present, and thereby stimulated to aspire to the future life.

Self-denial required two things. One, that man abandoned his own will and, two, that he devoted himself entirely to the service of God. The eschatological relationship was that Christian hope was the driving force for following Christ’s example. In large respects this was aiming for a goal impossible to achieve. This is why Calvin’s doctrine of predestination is key because it would not matter whether or not one measured up in achievement.

Preparatory measures needed to also take place near the time of death, such as when a person was sick and death was imminent. The 1559 Book of Common Prayer contained a section on preparation for death in this context. This was written with the person in mind that was already on the death bed. It states:

Then shal the minister examine whether he be in charitie, with all the worlde: exhortyng hym to forgive from the botome of his hart, al persons that have offended hym, and if he have offended other, to aske them forgivevenesse; And wher he hathe done injury or wrong to any man, that he make amendes to the uttermost of his power. And if he have not afore disposed his goodes, let him the make his wil. (But men must be oft admonished that they set an order for their temporrall goodes and landes,when they be in health.) And also declare his debtes, what hee oweth, and what is owyng unto him, for discharging of his conscience, and quietenes ofhis executours. The minister may not forget, nor omitte to move the sicke person (and that most earnestly) to liberalitie lowarde the poore.

166 Calvin, Institutes - Book III, Ch 9, ed. Beveridge, 25.
167 Ibid., 6-7.
168 Book of Common Prayer (1559), Section XVII.
To “discharge his conscience” a person was to settle his affairs. This was an instruction for pastors to follow as they ministered to someone on the death bed. One should give to charity, forgive people, and ask for forgiveness. The point was that there would be no debt of money or lingering offense, which would enable calmness and a more confident and clear conscience at that sensitive time.

SEPARATION OF THE LIVING AND DEAD

The early reformed thought was that the soul was separated from the living and was beyond intercession. Already by 1552 the Prayer book excluded extreme unction and the chantries had already been abolished, so it was clear from an English theological point of view that intercession was no longer an option. John Calvin’s theology surrounding the immortality of the soul made clear that there is separation of the soul from the living at death. Calvin stated:

> 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? …If to be freed from the body is to be released into perfect freedom, what else is the body but a prison? If to enjoy the presence of God is the summit of happiness, is not to be without this, misery? …Therefore, if the earthly life be compared with the heavenly, it is doubtless to be at once despised and trampled under foot.”

Like all Christians, Calvin also held to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. He believed that the soul is a direct creation of God, since the soul was not immortal by its own accord. Therefore, because God created it, it is reliant on His will. The soul’s immortality was significant to Calvin; he referred to it when communicating his views on

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life and death, and also for refuting opposing positions. In fact, his tract entitled *Psychopannychia* (1534) was devoted to this topic.\(^{170}\) Psychopannychism was the doctrine that souls of the righteous slept in expectation of the Resurrection where they would awake. This was associated with Luther in early Reformation England and the broader Anabaptist movement.\(^{171}\) Calvin specifically wrote his treatise against the position of the Anabaptists who held to the doctrine of soul-sleep. This is where Calvin first expressed his view of the dichotomy of body and soul and established his position of the soul’s union with Christ at death, which, consequently, solidified his opposition to Catholic teaching.

For Calvin, the soul was created not to die, but to live in fellowship with God. Aside from this factor, which is relatively basic, Calvin’s view on the preeminence of the soul is complex. On one hand, he explained that the soul is ingrained in creation. But on the other hand, he emphasized that the soul is at the same time rooted in redemption. Created life is originally in Adam, but the life shared with Christ, which happens through redemption, is far superior to the first. Therefore, the soul can be both created and redeemed in its immortality simultaneously for Calvin. Or conversely, it can be both created and not redeemed depending on its election. This was how Calvin viewed the character of the soul.

THE AFTERLIFE

Early in the English Reformation it was clearly established that the afterlife contained Heaven and Hell with no middle place, or Purgatory. This was accomplished in England simply with the Chantries Acts of 1545 and 1547, which denounced the doctrines of Purgatory and masses for the dead, as well as confiscated the endowments that were set up for prayers for souls.172 After death, Christians went directly to either “heaven’s glory” or “hell’s horror.”173 This was acting out of the divine will of election or damnation, which was based on Calvinistic orthodoxy.174

A frequently cited passage in early Reformation England is St. Augustine’s evocation of Heaven as a place of youth without age, health without sickness, knowledge without ignorance, and security without fear.175 This not only provides us with evidence of what Heaven was imagined to be, it also shows the nature of reformed thought to be one of going back to early orthodoxy, in this case from the Church father Augustine. These ideas of Heaven and Hell are found in many of the ballads and chapbooks popular throughout the reformation.176

In terms of what actually happens to the soul after death, it took some time before a consensus emerged among the early reformers, particularly regarding the soul’s destination. Calvin believed that when, in death, the soul passes from this life to the next, it does so while remaining in union with Christ. He believed that the soul could only die

174 Marshall, 194-5.
175 Examples are found in: J. Preston, *A Sermon preached at the Funerall of Mr. Iosiah Reynel* (1615); W. Ford, *A Sermon preached at Constantinople, in the Vines of Perah, at the Funerall of the Vertuous and Admired Lady Anne Glover* (1616), 57; Link to Augustine observed by Peter Marshall, 190.

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a spiritual death. Since God created it, its existence would remain unchanged. So after death believers would be in a state of alertness with Christ, actively praising Him while waiting for the resurrection. The post-mortem soul would be experiencing happy anticipation, or, as William Perkins, a late sixteenth-century Calvinist, explained that the soul in Heaven would “partly magnifie the Name of God [waiting] for the consummation of the kingdome of glorie, and full felicitie.” The alternative concept of soul-sleep implied a disruption of the believers’ union with Christ, since it was associated with the soul being inactive, or sleeping, between Heaven and Earth until being reawakened on resurrection day. Yet, the terminology is heavily contained in Scripture, with many references to those who “sleep,” “slept” or were at “rest.”

As mentioned earlier, Calvin’s *Psychopannychia* (1534) was written in opposition to this theology (mostly held by Anabaptists). In it Calvin established that for the reasons of creation and redemption in the immortal soul, soul-sleep could not make sense since it would imply disruption to redemption after death. Under this same pretense, Purgatory does not exist in Calvin’s view either. He terms it, simply, “fiction.” The image of sleep was commonly evoked to depict death though, particularly in the Edwardian era, in the sense that the scriptural imagery of sleep referred to the body only, and that the soul was actively awake in Heaven.

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180 J. Vernon, *The Hunting of Purgatory to Death* (1561); Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 308; Marshall, 225.
LAST JUDGEMENT

Once the soul reached union with Christ, it would face judgment, on the well-known Last Day. Reformers stressed pardon from judgment through Christ and advocated focusing on that knowledge to ease fears about judgment. For example, the 1559 Book of Common Prayer stated:

Christ is rysen from the dead, and become the fyrst frutes of them that slept. For by a man came deth, and by a man came the resurreccion of the dead. For as by Adam al die, even so by Christ shal al be made alive, but every manne in his owne order. The fyrtse is Christe, then they that are Christes at his comming. We mekely besech the (O Father) to rayse us from the death of sinne unto the lyfe of righteousnes, that when we shall depart thys lyfe, we may rest in hym, as our hope is thys oure brother doeth, and that at the generall resurrection in the laste daye, we maye be founde acceptable in thy syghte.181

Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer established that through Christ came the resurrection of the dead, which afforded opportunity to overcome man’s nature of death through Adam and experience righteousness. By the time of the Last Day, at the general resurrection, the hope was to be found acceptable and favorably judged because of the righteousness already imputed for the Christian.

Calvin stressed the bigger picture of the resurrection. He agreed that the death and resurrection of Christ was the act that assured favorable judgment on the Last Day, but he also emphasized it was the point in which the entire world was restored. In his Commentary on John 13:31 (1553) Calvin stated:

For in the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theatre, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross, in which there was a wonderful change of things – the condemnation of all men was manifested, sin blotted out, salvation restored to men; in short, the whole world was renewed and all things restored to order.182

181 Book of Common Prayer (1559), Section XIX.  
The renovation of the world was already complete in Jesus Christ, which was also something medieval Christianity taught. The difference, though, between this reformed view and the traditional teachings, was that for the individual, this restoration was realized at justification, not deferred into Purgatory. Believers were sanctified over their lifetime (not justified) and then they would ultimately be glorified completely after the resurrection. The 1559 Book of Common Prayer echoed Calvin’s confidence in this regard. It stated:

I knowe that my redeemer lyveth, and that I shal rise out of the earth in the last daye, and shal be covered agayne with my skinne, and shall se God in my flesh: yea, and I my selfe shall beholde hym, not with other, but with the same eyes.\textsuperscript{183}

In 1600 William Perkins similarly affirmed that “soules being once in heaven, remaine there till the last day of judgement” until full happiness and glory occurred when “body and soul” were united.\textsuperscript{184} Perkins explained that Christian souls would be in Heaven and that after judgment would experience the fullness of their glory and relationship with God. It was not even a question of whether or not one could be judged unfavorably.

In looking ahead at the physical resurrection of the body, there was confidence and expectation that the body and soul would reunite. The soul would be in Heaven, as protestants such as Perkins affirmed, waiting for reunification with their bodies so full glorification could occur. Cranmer was confident that the body of the individual would rise and commune with God because of Christ’s resurrection. The idea of the events at the resurrection demonstrates continuity with the view held since late antiquity about the resurrection of the body and the reunification with the soul on the Last Day.\textsuperscript{185}

\textsuperscript{183} Book of Common Prayer (1559), XIX.
\textsuperscript{184} William Perkins, \textit{A Golden Chaine} (Cambridge: 1600), 142.
\textsuperscript{185} Bynum, 1-6.
Calvin’s eschatology did not rest singularly in the individual’s immortality and dealings with the soul. It was also directly tied to Jesus Christ and eternity in Heaven. Calvin believed that because of Christ’s resurrection from the dead that there was hope that the world, and even the individual, would continue. In the *Commentary on Romans* (1539), Calvin wrote:

> From hope comes the swiftness of the sun, the moon, and all the stars in their constant course, the continued obedience of the earth in producing its fruits, the unwearied motion of the air, and the ready power of the water to flow. God has given to each its proper task, and has not simply given a precise command to do His will, but has at the same time inwardly implanted the hope of renewal.186

Hope was it for Calvin. Christian hope of future renewal was the key doctrine in which a person could place confidence. This would become the dominant view of the major reformers.

At this point, it is useful to take an inventory of the theological shift between late medieval doctrine and reformed interpretation. This helps put the differences between the two periods in plain view. The following table summarizes these points:

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186 John Calvin, “Commentary on Romans 8:20,” in *Commentary on Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999); also referenced in Holwerda, 156.
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<td>Justifier, merciful, grace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body &amp; Soul</td>
<td>Two distinct substances created by God</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Death</td>
<td>A proper physical death and last hours are vital to the outcome in the after-life; represents the &quot;last chance&quot;</td>
<td>Throughout life, i.e. self-denial, embodied principles of Christ</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Reliance on the Church; Purgatory length unknown - determined by God; Accumulate merit to assist</td>
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<td>Movement to next cycle of purification</td>
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<td>Exists; Further purification for the soul</td>
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<td>Victory over death (sin)</td>
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<td>Completed through Christ; Realized at justification</td>
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<td>Heaven</td>
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<td>Ultimate glorified state; Realized at justification</td>
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</table>

Table 1. Comparison of Medieval and Reformed Theology

These changes in theology were translated into the removal of intercession for the dead, the elimination of Purgatory, the implementation of a heavily emphasized Scriptural model of salvation (although up for interpretation), the promotion of the soul’s immediate union with Christ and the idea that the soul was rooted in both redemption and creation. Spiritually, individuals were given an option to view and approach death in a way that did
not exist in Catholicism. On one hand, the individual had no choice but to move into that
direction relative to custom and tradition, especially as new laws (e.g. Chantries Acts
1545-7) and doctrines forbade old practices (e.g. Prayer Book). On the other hand
though, the individual was exposed to beliefs about death in a way different than his or
her prior generation. Culturally, this did not happen simply by some sort of a flip of a
switch, rather, it was a progressive devaluation of old attitudes in favor of the new faith
over decades and even centuries.

The changes of the attitudes and customs surrounding death in early-modern
culture were not as quick to take hold as the theological and ecclesiastical split between
the Protestant and Catholics. Perhaps this happened because to some extent the reformers
retained the imagery of death and judgment from the late Middle Ages, or, people in the
broader culture simply continued to hold onto familiar traditions because it met their
needs.¹⁸⁷ Since death was an everyday reality, the reformers maintained that it was still
good to retain reminders of it, as they were sobering and good for the soul. Yet,
significant changes in culture followed, particularly from a variety of traditions being
halted outright, either by ecclesiastical or temporal law, and then replaced by reformed
practice.

The Reformation swept away the cult of the saints, the doctrine of Purgatory, and
intercession for the dead. In Protestant countries this meant instant enforcement of
ecclesiastical law containing the new doctrine. For example, as we have observed in
England from 1547-9 the chantries, endowments set up by wills that were used for
prayers and Masses for the dead, were suppressed completely. This meant that over

¹⁸⁷ Duffy, 4.
2,500 dependent institutions ceased receiving funds, including collegiate foundations, hospitals, and the Church.\textsuperscript{188} Also, in Leipzig, the city passed an ordinance in 1536 prohibiting burials within the city, which affected the operation of many churchyards.\textsuperscript{189} Instead, cemeteries were set-up outside the city. Chapels often followed with the migration to rural areas, but, it is important to note the devaluation taking place of the cemetery’s significance – the grounds seem to become less hallowed than before. The idea of burial playing a role in the afterlife was eliminated, so location no longer remained an issue. Two main factors motivated this exodus. First, the valuable land near churches was instead used to expand ministries and, second, health concerns surrounding the decomposition of corpses also motivated the relocation of the cemetery. What is germane to this study is that neither reason dealt with the theology about death. The fact that non-religious reasons drove a geographical shift shows less value being placed on traditional burial, which had been previously based on religious belief. Practically, these changes upset the revenue streams of guilds and churches that had been set up for burials and intercession for the dead. The economy of death and sin had been eliminated. Aside from elucidating changes in law, these examples mark a concrete and sharp movement in the practice and customs surrounding death that altered the way of life for the ordinary person. The traditions of their forefathers were abandoned and new ones were implemented. There were real, tangible changes to daily life that impacted individuals.

Once the penitential cycle was replaced, the role of warning of death on the deathbed to spur intercession lost the place it had held in medieval Catholicism. There was simplification of the burial and funerary process. They were stripped of previous

\textsuperscript{188} Binski, 122.
\textsuperscript{189} Koslofsky, 62-3.
customs, particularly of the mass and prayers for the dead. The focus shifted toward remembrance of the life lived and to propel meditation on salvation for the mourners. It became an evangelical moment for reformers, centered on the message of the funeral sermon. This did not become central to the funeral in the early days of the Reformation, rather, it was not until the mid to late sixteenth century that it developed, first in Germany, and then eventually to other Protestant regions, including England, by the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{190} The lingering question that should be briefly addressed is what the impact on death and dying was among those that retained or renewed loyalty to Catholicism.

\textbf{CATHOLIC REFORMATION}

Operating parallel to and, in many respects, in opposition to the Protestants were the Catholic reformers. The Catholic Reformation is most noted for the Council of Trent, which, after a series of postponements, began meeting in 1545. Its chief concerns were to answer the questions of doctrine and discipline that had been brought to light by evangelicals, both Protestant and Catholic. In the earliest sessions, the Council established its Catholic theological doctrine to counter reformers’ positions. In response to justification by faith, the authorities at Trent established that faith alone was not sufficient; it must be accompanied with hope and love as grace enters into a cooperation with works to produce salvation.\textsuperscript{191} They termed Luther’s \textit{sola fide} as a faith that is

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 108.
“alone and dead.” Faith, for sixteenth-century Catholic theologians, became the start of human salvation, the foundation and root of justification, which was completed through participation in the sacraments and obedience to the directions and laws as established and administered by the Church. Ultimately, the rewards as promised in Scripture from God’s grace and mercy were thought not to be “given to the idle” but to those who earned merit through good works. A key point is that the leaders at Trent reinforced the same penitential cycle that was in place in medieval Catholicism. The authorities of Trent also declared that within the mass there existed a true propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which was materially effective when given.

The disciplinary decrees of Trent made a sweeping impact. The office of the indulgence seller, which had been abused, was altogether abolished. Virtually all the corruptions of the Catholic priesthood were addressed, from the immorality of the priests to the licensing of the preaching functions. The clergy were required to properly preach. Bishops were given power over their dioceses and the Council of Trent removed many of the exemptions that had previously made the office and work of a bishop ineffective. A key to this success was legislation requiring residence of bishops in their localities.

The Catholic Reformation produced no significant doctrinal differences with medieval Christendom. However, there were clarifications; it elucidated relatively ambiguous doctrines. The difference it made, which is considerable, was that the corruption and abuses were virtually all abolished. Reform came through mandatory

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193 Ibid., 549.
194 Ibid., 653.
195 Chadwick, 278.
education that promoted proper training and emphasized a sense of moral obligation among clerics.

Salvation, which was central to the preparation for death and remembrance of the dead, was left as it was established before the Reformation, embedded in the penitential cycle. This meant that God still held his place as ultimate judge and would not allow exit from Purgatory until appropriate penance had been achieved. Scholars have observed that the locations of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory remained very much a part of society’s topography, almost just as cities were. In fact, the evidence shows that in regions heavily Catholic, such as Spain, Purgatory loomed large in the culture’s mentality (in contrast to what Ariès argued). It seems that the Spanish were eager for Heaven, but hoped for the stint in Purgatory to be brief. It was never a question of whether or not one’s soul would end up in the middle place. The journey to Purgatory was part of the natural progression through the passage of death in the life cycle. It can be characterized as optimism combined with caution or joy paired to concern. Wills, in particular, are evidence of this expectation. For instance, an overwhelming majority of testators in Spain requested masses to assist in their progression through Purgatory, whether it was the Madrilenos, Misa Rezada, Misa Cantada, Misa de Requiem, Novenario, Nueve Fiestas, or some other preferred Mass. Interestingly, the evidence shows that the number of masses was actually increasing over the latter part of the sixteenth century, which indicates that it may have been sort of the “golden age” of Purgatory in the minds

197 Ibid., 15.
198 Ibid., 73, 172, 196-7.
of the dying in Spain.\textsuperscript{199} This reveals that there was an overwhelming confidence in the power of the mass to assist the soul, but also that there was a real anxiety about the hereafter, specifically that there was a fear of punishment.\textsuperscript{200}

Catholic reformers stressed an embodied philosophy of Christ, of embracing grace as taught by the Church. Salvation was realized, ultimately, to the extent that it was earned through merit. The change affecting death and dying from the Catholic reforms was that the Church gained back its credibility for fulfilling its spiritual obligations. This restored, in some senses, a different confidence in the Catholic death, at least in that the individual depended on the Church to fulfill its duties. Catholics reinforced their eschatological tradition and theology, but signs of Protestant influence appeared. For example, the \textit{ars moriendi} of the late Middle Ages was retained, but had been combined with a renaissance focus on the art of living with a Tridentine reinterpretation of dying and emphasized the freedom of the will, the power of the sacraments, and the intercessory role of the Church and saints.\textsuperscript{201} There was clearly a distinct emphasis on preparing for death throughout life. Erasmus’ \textit{Praeparatione ad mortem} (1534) and Alejo de Venegas, \textit{The Agony of Crossing Over at Death} (1537) are examples advocating such an art of living.\textsuperscript{202}

The Catholic Reformation restored not only the Church, but also the confidence its members had in the institution. The Fathers of Trent affirmed the Church’s theological positions as being the same as they had been before the Reformation, which were very different from Protestants. God retained the role as judge, yet His grace was

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Ibid., 172-6.}
\footnote{Ibid., 191.}
\footnote{Ibid., 25-6.}
\footnote{Ibid., 25.}
\end{footnotes}
emphasized more even though it was taught that grace was only attained to the extent that it was earned. By being adamant that intercession for the dead was necessary, the Church retained the idea that the soul needed assistance, which could be provided with the mass, burial in consecrated ground, etc. Culturally, we see that there was no denial of these doctrines. Actually, it seems that the Catholic Reformation may have produced a curious combination of anxiety about Purgatory and confidence of eventual salvation among their faithful through reminders of the mass’s efficacy.

SUMMARY

It may seem that this section of the narrative has wound its way far from the focal point of this analysis. In case you forgot, it is late seventeenth century England. Not to worry. This has not been a tangent sprouted uncontrolled. It has been a purposeful tilling of the soil that will show that English theologians and authorities’ views about soteriology, eschatology, preparation for death and geography of the afterlife sprouted from a field fertilized by early Reformation thought. Cultural expressions and new rituals were rooted in what was established in this first part of the Reformation. Innovation and applications were certainly culturally applied in distinctly late seventeenth century English contexts, but the base and models were already in place from a century earlier.

Another reason so much space was given to highlighting the transition from late medieval beliefs about death to those of major reformers is to emphasize the significance of this change. Quite simply, the Reformation changed very much in Western Europe. Reforms were implemented based on early Christian models, humanism, and the use of
Scripture alone as an authoritative religious text. It caused a choice of Protestantism, usually paired with some country-wide consolidation of theological application, or a staunch (re)commitment to Catholicism that also changed religious practice. Either way, it directly led to the disruption of the Holy Roman Empire as countries departed from ties to Catholicism, increased religious awareness and the implementation many forms of religious expression, especially surrounding the grave, which differed from preceding generations.

Reformed theology created a cultural shift of notable importance surrounding the end of things. It abolished established Catholic ritual, even in a cleansed form. It replaced it with a system based solely on divine grace as reformers saw it. Theologically, when the reformers redefined salvation, the foundation for altering eschatology was essentially created. Salvation was secured at the moment of justification. This point alone had significant implications for the practice of death. It departed from the doctrine of works combining with grace to eventually lead to salvation.

Reformed eschatology changed the way life was lived and how people died, sometimes as quickly as it took to enforce a new law, or it happened through the changing of culture over time, whether over a generation or decades. The doctrines of intercession for the dead and Purgatory were eliminated. Death, in the reformed view, marked the point the soul was made perfect and entered in union with Christ. Naturally, the culture surrounding death in Protestant countries changed. Practices and traditions were realigned with newly instituted eschatological doctrine.203 Funerals became an opportunity to evangelize and commemorate a life lived instead of a ritual helpful to

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203 Tankard, 265-6.
position the soul in the afterlife. Cemeteries became places of indifference, at least in the context of their value to eternity. Burials were simplified and, like the funeral, were stripped of all the adorning rituals. Most notably, a devaluation of the previous attitudes towards death began to take place. The Catholic Reformation did not parallel the theological reform in Protestantism. For that reason, neither did eschatology even though Catholic reformers encouraged a lifelong meditation on mortality and reliance on the efficacy of the Church’s model.

The purpose of this section has been to highlight the origins and significance of this situation as well as inform readers of some of the fundamental shifts in belief. It would be these beliefs that formed the basis from which English Protestantism was institutionalized and the practice of death became, in many ways, ritualized. From this point, it is appropriate to look at what theologians in mid to late seventeenth century England were writing, teaching and guiding their faithful on in this regard.
CHAPTER III

BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND
“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

1 Corinthians 15:26 (KJV)
Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for thou art not soe,
For, those whom thou think’st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.
From rest and sleepe, which buy thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
And better than they stroake; why swell’st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die. \(^{204}\)

John Donne
Death be not proud

This divine poem from seventeenth-century literary great John Donne reflects contemporary beliefs about death. Death was powerful, it was not welcome and would take individuals away anytime and through any means. People had souls, eternal souls, and one day, the hope was that in life after life people would witness death being conquered – “death, thou shalt die.” Even though Donne does not mention God or evoke Scripture, the points of his verse are steeped in Christian doctrine. He reflects on mortality, which is presented as a foe that is feared even though at the end of the poem salvation occurs. Death took everyone away, even the “best men” soon would go.

Donne’s main point is that death, even though “some have called thee mighty and dreadful,” was actually conquered. His verse is optimistic about death. Death would pass away and the dead would be alive eternally. Donne confirms the hope that one will “wake eternally” and that “death shall be no more,” which is a reference to a Christian dying physically then awakening in Heaven spiritually to see that death has been conquered. Let us turn our focus on these beliefs.

This chapter focuses on theology about death in late seventeenth-century England and shows that parts of doctrine relative to death converged between competing religious persuasions even though they were deeply divided about how it was overcome. Puritans and Arminians held to divergent ideas of salvation, but agreed on the need to be saved and what the afterlife was like for the believer. This chapter surveys theologies from leading religious figures that were influential in the Puritan and Arminian movements over the last half of the seventeenth century. These include Puritans Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Bunyan, and Arminians William Laud, Henry Hammond and Jeremy Taylor.205 The primary sources of evidence in this chapter are sermons and treatises from these figures about death as a spiritual and physical phenomenon that could be prepared for. These theologians agreed on the concepts of what death was and that it served as a gateway to an afterlife spent either with God for the saved or separated from

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205 These theologians were influential in the seventeenth century and beyond, evident by their publishing popularity, as well as through the legacy they have up even through today. Taylor, in particular, is noted for his famous work on death and dying, titled *Holy Dying*. It has been republished 3 times in the last 20 years alone and was published multiple times over the second half of the seventeenth century. These theologians are highlighted in narratives about the Reformation in England for their influence politically and religiously. Their biographies were also reviewed on *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Sources also include: Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds. *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988); Andrew Thomson, *John Owen: Prince of the Puritans* (Tain: Christian Focus, 2004); Kevin Belmonte, *John Bunyan* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010); Reginald Askew, *Muskets and Altars: Jeremy Taylor and the Last of the Anglicans* (Woonsocket: Mowbray, 1999).
Him for the damned. There was significant disagreement over soteriological underpinnings. Puritans held to divine election while Arminians taught of free acceptance of grace, but the theologies converge relative to the afterlife and separation of the soul from the living. The purpose of both Puritan and Arminian theology was very practical; they assessed how one could be blessed, even at the moments near death.

In order to understand ideas about death, both theology (the subject of this chapter) and what was taught to the public (the subject of the next chapter) are important to assess. Both theology and education can be analyzed from the same type of primary sources, sermons and treatises. This literature shows us how theologians defined beliefs about death and salvation and instructed the actions and attitudes people should take to prepare for a good death. The theology concerning death addresses the problems of spiritual death, physical death, and the remedies for each, such as how sin was resolved spiritually and fear mitigated physically. Specific topics in this doctrinal domain that will be analyzed include soteriology, eschatology, the afterlife, and the separation of the living and the dead. The next chapter also examines funeral sermons, treatises, testimonials, and practical instructional guides for dying and remembering the dead to understand how preachers suggested theology be applied. The evidence shows that these beliefs and teachings are continuations of theological discourse established a century earlier by European religious reformers. However, it is important to remember that the seventeenth-century churchmen were teaching and preaching in the context of their very unique environment – it was not a Protestant Catholic divide but one split by Puritans and Arminians. In all this we see that preachers used death itself as a subject by which to teach, prepare and guide their listeners and readers. Death appears in this literature as if
it had been mastered, the dead and dying are prototypes of proper deaths, and theological lessons relate to the meaning, purpose and divine order within this climactic cycle of life.

Remember that two understandings of death permeated Christian thought. The first is rooted in Paul’s interpretation of Jesus’ significance, which saw the voluntary sacrifice of God the Son as making reconciliation of sin possible and salvation attainable. The second is the physical mortality faced by all humans. The first directly affected the second. Death would have been largely meaningless in early modern Christian England if the soul had no destiny, and it was at death that the physical body ceased to exist and the soul departed to its residence in the afterlife.\(^{206}\)

DEATH DEFINED – PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

In the late seventeenth century, theologians of both Arminian and Puritan persuasions defined death similarly on both physical and spiritual terms. Death was a biological occurrence. Breathing ceased and the heart stopped beating, which led to the decay of the body. Death, spiritually, was a state of separation from God. It was a temporary division bridgeable through salvation, but there was potential for permanent separation after physical death if one was not saved. The reason death existed, spiritually or physically, was because of sin. The hope embedded in seventeenth-century Christian thought was that being would exist in Heaven instead of Hell through salvation, which was the goal of Christianity.\(^{207}\) Confronting death, on physical or spiritual terms, had an impact on emotions, which, typically, resulted in fear and sorrow. Physical and spiritual

\(^{206}\) Cressy, 379.

\(^{207}\) Marshall, 6.
death caused emotional consternation. So, as theologians defined what death was, it was often paired to exhortations for handing the emotional aspects of death and dying.

According to the book of Genesis, death, along with suffering in life, was the unavoidable punishment of all mankind for Adam and Eve’s disobedience to God. Given that mankind was seen by churchmen in the seventeenth century as descended from these first human creations (Genesis 3:20 terms Eve the “mother of all living”), sin corrupted the reproductive seed and left all humans depraved. This meant that spiritual death, which Adam and Eve first experienced in their separation from God, was the same death to be suffered by their offspring. Spiritual death is separation from God because of depravity. Physical death was linked to spiritual because it was the passage of the soul into the afterlife. The problem of sin, if left unresolved in life, could leave the soul permanently “[sleeping] in death,” a fear William Laud once voiced. Laud was pointing out that the separation from God, spiritually, needed to be resolved while a person was alive. If one did not become saved, then one entered the afterlife as permanently separated from God. Sin and how it was handled was the determining factor in the outcome and status of the soul.

In terms of biological death, William Dyer, a seventeenth century churchman, preached that “in our present Estate we have Being, Life, Sense, and Reason; and in Death, we shall have (at the most) only Being, and is not that very grievous to consider, that we should be reduced to no better a condition, than a piece of Earth, or a Stone?” Dyer’s quote captured the split between the conception of death on biological and spiritual terms. While alive, one’s existential essence contained abilities, like breathing
and thinking for example, that ceased at death. Beyond the grave one continued to exist, and have “being,” as Dyer termed it, but without characteristics that could effect change on the soul. Being physically dead was equated with being simply like a piece of “stone.” John Bunyan author of Pilgrim’s Progress, was a notable non-conformist Christian writer also believed that death was the end to physical life. Richard Baxter specifically detailed what death does to the body:

Today our parts are all in order, and busie about their several tasks, our Hearts are moving, our Lungs are breathing, our Stomacks are digesting, our Blood and Spirits by assimilation making more: and tomorrow death takes off the poise, and all stands still, or draws the pins, and all the frame doth fall to pieces. We shall breath no more; nor speak, nor think, nor walk no more: Our pulse will beat no more: Our eyes shall see the light no more: Our ears shall hear the voice of man, delightful sounds and melody, no more: we shall taste no more our meat or drink: Our appetite be gone: Our strength is gone: Our natural warmth is turned into an earthly cold: Our comeliness and beauty is turned into a ghastly loathsome deformity: Our white and red doth soon turn into horrid blackness: Our tender flesh has lost its feeling and is become a senseless lump, that feeleth not…nor how it is used, that must be hidden in the earth, lest it annoy the living: that quickly turns to loathsome putrefaction, and after that to common earth. Were all the once-comely bodies that now are rotting in one Church-yeard uncovered, and here presented to your view the light would tell you more effectually than my works do, what an Enemy Death is to our Nature.

It is no wonder there was fear about what death brought. This detailed and somewhat graphic description of what death brought intended to spur reflection on the reality of biological death. It was presented within a treatise that reviewed all the aspects of how death was an enemy, in this instance an enemy of natural life. Death made earth out of what was once flesh. Things experienced and functioning while alive, nature as Baxter termed it, including characteristics such as breathing, blood-flow, speaking and even

feeling, were halted and followed by the deterioration of what was once living. Physical death brought a gruesome end to life.

While biological death was one point of emphasis, theologians were concerned with spiritual death. It was in the spiritual realm where damnation or eternal glory hung in the balance, so clarifying the implications of being spiritually dead and resolving that problem were important. Bunyan, in a treatise titled *The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment* (1665), outlined his “considerations,” as he termed them, about spiritual death. They are:

1. Dead in sin - Those who are spiritually dead are those that have not experienced regeneration from the work of Christ.
2. Death and unbelief - People who physically die after being exposed to the gospel but reject it are considered “twice dead,” since they were born dead in sin and physically died in that sin.
3. Eternal death - Bunyan asserts that, “this is the death that those are in, and swallowed up of, that go out of this world Godless, Christless, and graceless; dying in sin, and so under the curse of the dreadful God…are fallen into the gulf and jaws of eternal death and misery, in the fire that never shall be quenched.” Eternal death (Hell) placed an individual in a permanent state of punishment. This was the worst state to be in.

Spiritually, one was dead if there was no justification for sin, which was something that occurred while someone was still living. Those that did not experience justification

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213 Ibid., 7.
214 Bunyan, *The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment*, 2-8
215 Ibid.
through faith and died in their “unbelief,” would suffer eternal death (permanent separation from God).

Theologians were also concerned with the implications of physical and spiritual death in an emotional sense. An outcome of death was fear and misery, adversaries to living life according to God’s will. Those adjectives were often equated with what death wrought. In *A Treatise of Death, The Last Enemy to be Destroyed* (1672), Richard Baxter stated:

> Death is become an enemy to our souls, by being first the enemy of our nature: The interest of our bodies works much on our souls, much more the interest of the whole.\(^{216}\)

The understanding in seventeenth-century England was that death existed as a punishment for sin.\(^{217}\) It was an enemy to the soul because death separated it from God, and as death attacked the body, it detracted the individual’s attention away from God. Death was frequently presented as an adversary in this sense. The Anglican statesman, moderate Arminian and clergyman Jeremy Taylor eloquently characterized death as “the curse, and the sting of death, that is, misery, sorrow, fear, diminution, defect, anguish, dishonor, and whatsoever is miserable and afflictive in nature, that is death. Death is not an action, but a whole state and condition; and this was first brought in upon us by the offence of one man.”\(^{218}\) For Taylor, death was the root cause of the sting in life. Death reflected the depraved state of man that was a heritage of Adam, the first man on Earth. Death was the reason that despair and fear about dying existed. In a sense, according to Taylor, the reason people had fear at death was because death existed.

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217 Ibid., 41.
Emotionally, death was a source of sorrow since it caused pain and separation. For example, death deprived the love of spouses from the separation it caused. Individuals feared the division it would bring. There is evidence that people fretted over separation in wills and last testaments. Testators frequently expressed concern about being separated, love they had for their spouse and worry about leaving a husband or wife behind.

Continuing along with Baxter’s “enemy” theme, death was an enemy to the soul because of the fear it caused. This was a hindrance to accessing or receiving benefits of divine grace because fear of death could cause individuals to lose focus on God’s plan or waver on dependence of the Holy Spirit. Baxter was concerned that believers would not be joyful and instead have a distorted image of God, which would hinder faith. It was an adversary in these senses because the pain and separation created by death caused individuals to have fear, doubt and sorrow.

Theologically, defining death overlapped the physical, spiritual and emotional domains for both Puritans and Arminians. What happened to the body when it died directly affected the whole man, as it had implications about the soul’s destination and, on Earth, sparked emotional response of fear and horror. Death, thus, was a villain, an enemy that needed to be conquered. These negative aspects of death may sound unconventional to some degree since death was also viewed as the gateway to spend eternity with God. Along that line, theologians also specified the ways in which the fear

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220 MS 9171/31/p2-3; MS 9171/39; MS 25626/7/p10 – these are examples from testaments where love is expressed; Dw/pc/o5/1684/9; Dw/pc/5/1693/20 – these are examples from testaments of bequeathing wealth to a spouse after death; Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 157.
of death can be mitigated alongside the doctrine of how death as a spiritual reality could be overcome through salvation. This is where significant difference between Puritans and Arminians existed.

OVERCOMING DEATH - SOTERIOLOGY

While the understanding of physical death and its spiritual implications seem fairly grim as reflected by language of coldness, putrefaction, ending, sorrow, and separation, overcoming death offered hope. In theology, death conquered death. The death of Christ offered individuals salvation from the eternal death of damnation. Christ’s death was a sacrifice that atoned for sin, justified believers and united members of the Church with God in Heaven. Theologians thought that faith would help one to rise above the concerns that the fear of death created. The antidote to the fear of death was salvation.

Theologians often co-opted medical and curative language in their discourse (e.g. antidote), which was likely influenced from the increasing medicalization within English society. Although, these ideas were grounded in Scripture where concepts of spiritual and emotional curing originated, such as about being saved from death, comforted from pain, and calmed when fearful. It was possible that the negative influence of death could be alleviated. Baxter detailed how the negative influences of death were mitigated spiritually and produced hope. He wrote:

From the Enmity of Death, we may be directed which way to bend our eares: and seeing where our difficulty most lyeth, we may see which way our most diligent

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preparations must be turned. Death cannot be prevented, but the malignant influence of it on our souls may be much abated. If you let it work without an Antidote, it will make you live like unbelieving worldlings. It will deter your hearts from Heaven, and dull your love to God himself, and make your meditations of him, and of your Everlasting Rest, to be seldom, and ungrateful to you, and it will make you say, Its good to be here; and have sweeter thoughts of this present life, than of your inheritance: It will rob you of much of your heavenly delights, and fill you with lavish fears of Death, and subject you unto bondage all your lives, and make you dye with agony and horrore, so that your lives and deaths will be dishonourable to your holy faith, and to your Lord.\textsuperscript{223}

Faith in what salvation brings, and the hope of what is to come is the remedy for the fear of death and the “malignant influence” it can have. Baxter worried that the fear of death could drive unbelief. He implied that mitigating the negative influence of death needs to be worked on throughout life since dwelling on the reality of dying might instigate fear, which would shift priorities or cause questioning of the divine order to the point of being like unbelievers. His “antidote” is faith that salvation brings an “inheritance” that will be obtained in Heaven and hope of that delight in eternity with God. Faith was the remedy for the fear of death. Keeping faith on what God would deliver one from (sin and damnation) and riches promised in Heaven would negate negativity and fear.

Baxter’s idea relates to the idea of stoicism at death, which is a concept from antiquity that confidence and control over emotion be displayed as one approached the end of life.\textsuperscript{224} Stoicism existed in early modern English thought as well, identified, in particular, in political literature that emphasized compromise along common ground, or

\textsuperscript{223} Baxter, \textit{Two Treatises}, 71.
\textsuperscript{224} Stoicism as a philosophy arose in the Hellenistic period, which held that emotions came from false judgments, so that one who attained intellectual and moral perfection would not experience them. Also see Tad Brenna, \textit{The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); A. A. Long, \textit{Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); J. M. Rist, \textit{Stoic Philosophy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Plato, \textit{Plato’s Phaedo} (New York: Classic Books International, 2010). This work contains an account of Socrates death that was written by Plato. Socrates’ death can be viewed as an even earlier (from the Classical period) example of stoicism, which demonstrated confidence and assurance as death was faced – Socrates did not waver in his emotions, judgment or views as his time to die approached.
the “middle way.” There was emphasis on individual ideals as well, such as emotional control, which applies to death and dying. This influence existed, in part, due to the revival of classical ideas in Europe during the Renaissance and early Reformation periods. For religious reformers the pattern was applied to renewing ideas from the early church. The conception in the seventeenth century of a stoic death suggests a link to the early reformed approach to death where stoicism, in a renewal of the classical idea, was emphasized.

Since death was a product of sin, it is helpful to more fully understand the basis of this belief. This view was grounded on interpretations of Scripture. The following pages explore Scripture passages commonly evoked by theologians in seventeenth-century England.

Resolution of the problem of sin is a major purpose of Christianity. We observed that debates about God’s interactions with man on this account led to deep divides in the early Reformation. In the broadest sense resolving sin comes in the form of a soteriological solution outlined in the Gospel texts, which, in a nutshell, highlighted the saving act of Jesus Christ. In seventeenth-century England this was believed to be God coming as man (Christ) to Earth to live and die as the end-all sacrifice for man’s sin.

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225 See Andrew Shifflett, *Stoicism, Politics and Literature in the Age of Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). This recent study examines the rhetorical and philosophical bases of English neostoicism in the early modern era, emphasizing in particular the political rhetoric of a “middle path” (2-3). Pertaining to death and dying, Shifflett observes there was emphasis in literature on inward retreating, privacy and emotional control (4-7).

This act of atonement, offered to mankind by God’s grace, reconciles sinful man to Himself. Since the fall of man (from Genesis), God has promised to redeem sinful humanity. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of that promise and that faith alone was what procured salvation. These ideas were based heavily on scriptural interpretation and established theological discourse set in place by early reformers. *Sola scriptura* was woven into English Protestantism, so it makes sense that Scripture was frequently evoked. It was the discursive language for early modern theologians.

Seventeenth-century beliefs were heavily based on the Pauline teachings that offered this interpretation of salvation. For instance, the idea of God’s promise of a savior is reinforced in the first chapter of Romans. Further into that letter, specifically chapter 6, verses 4 to 11, Paul explains the relationship of death and salvation. That passage states:

> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (KJV)

By being linked to Christ, a believer is linked to his death, specifically being “buried with him by baptism into death.” Since Christ’s death was the mechanism by which sin is overcome, then it is also overcome for the believer because of that link. Paul encourages

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227 Rom. 1:2-4 (KJV).
believers to take account of their salvation since they were dead to sin, because of Christ’s death, and “alive unto God.”

Also, Paul defined the gospel as “the righteousness of God” being effected in those that have faith.\textsuperscript{228} A believer that was linked to God through Christ’s death was made righteous, or dead unto sin. Paul specified that God predestined those who would be members of His Church and express faith in Christ. It is a righteousness initiated by God before the creation of the world for those He chose to be holy and blameless in His sight, and fulfilled by God through Christ.\textsuperscript{229} Thus, it is an effort wholly of God’s doing, not of a human attempt, which results in salvation (human righteousness) for the elect.\textsuperscript{230} Protestants took this doctrine to mean deliverance from the punishment, power, and nature of sin. In other words, God’s plan of salvation delivered humanity from death.

This idea about the victory of salvation over death can be expanded into three tiers. First, justification (humankind’s sinful nature being made or accounted just) relieved punishment and, second, sin’s power over man was dissolved, or at least lessened, through sanctification (being made holy). Finally, the sinful nature would be replaced by a glorified one in the afterlife. The first two (justification and sanctification) are realized in life on earth, while glorification is the ultimate future hope brought to fruition sometime in the next life.\textsuperscript{231}

Interpretations of salvation were not uniform in early modern England. Puritans and Arminians, in particular, diverged in their views of how, when and to whom saving grace was procured. Thus, even though the gospel was seen as the foundation for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{228} Rom. 1:17 (KJV).
\item \textsuperscript{229} Eph. 1:4 (KJV); Gal. 4:4-5 (KJV).
\item \textsuperscript{230} Romans 10:4 (KJV).
\item \textsuperscript{231} Romans 5:1, Romans 8:24-25; Philippians 3:20-21 (KJV).
\end{itemize}
Christianity, the bickering over the finer points of its understanding and application was significant. These differences were the source of dissent that claimed their roots as being from reformers in the early days of the Reformation.\textsuperscript{232} By the late seventeenth century in England the theological camps had become grounded and split into two main Protestant schools of thought: Calvinistic Puritanism and Arminianism.

These divergent camps of Protestants unified in their stance against Catholicism, even if they had trouble coexisting. Taylor, for example, clearly stressed his disagreement with extreme unction, death-bed confessions, priestly absolution and prayers for the dead in the beginning portions of his work on holy dying.\textsuperscript{233} John Owen, a Puritan divine, even made a point to create a proof in one of his sermons that Purgatory could not exist within the framework of life after death as outlined in Scripture.\textsuperscript{234}

The general sense among Protestants by the mid to late seventeenth century is that the division between them and Catholics was so deep it was beyond the point of reconciliation. Apologetics arguing against Catholics do come up though, which means Protestant theologians believed Catholicism to be an opponent. For example, Richard Baxter summarizes this sentiment in a treatise he wrote about death. He stated:

To the [Papists] I shall say nothing here, because I cannot expect they should read it and consider it: and because we are so far disagreed in our Principles that we cannot treat with them on those rational terms as we may do with the rest of the inhabitants of the world, whether Christians, Infidels or Heathens. As long as they build their faith and salvation on this supposition that the eyes, and taste and feeling of all the found men in the world, are deceived in judging of Bread and Wine; and as long as they deny the certain experience of true believers (telling us that we are void of Charity and unjustified because we are not of their Church) and as long as they fly from the judgment and Tradition of the ancient and present Church (unless their small part may be taken for the whole, or the major Vote;)

\textsuperscript{233} Taylor, 5.
\textsuperscript{234} John Owen, \textit{The Laboring Saints Dismission to Rest} (London: 1652), 22.
and as long as they reject our appeal to the holy Scriptures: I know not well what we can say to them which we can expect they should regard, any more than musick is regarded by the deaf, or light by the blind, or argument by the distracted. If they had the moderation and charity impartially to peruse our writings, I durst confidently promise the recovery of multitudes of them... 235

It is clear that Baxter felt that the divide was unbridgeable. Even historians who stressed the vibrant and, quite possibly, socially preferred traditional Catholic religion that came under attack by a minority of Protestant reformers in the mid sixteenth century admit that, by late in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, England found itself knowing nothing but Protestantism as a result of incremental generational change. By the seventeenth century, the majority of the English believed everything from the Pope being the Antichrist to the mass being nothing more than a farce. 236

The main debate between Puritans and Arminians revolved around the idea of election, which is the idea in Calvinism that not all have salvation available to them, just those members of the elect group designated by God. Arminianism, which stood in stark contrast to Calvinism on this point, originated from the life and work of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, 1560-1609, (Latinized name of Jakob Harmenszoon) during the latter part of the sixteenth and early years of the seventeenth century. 237 Arminius came to disagree with Calvinism and changed certain parts of it. He argued that grace is conferred on all and salvation is freely available, instead of inevitable election determining the saved. He believed that “sufficient grace is conferred on, or rather is offered to, the Elect and Non-Elect...because it is offered to unbelievers,

235 Baxter, Two Treatises, 9-10.
236 Duffy, 593; Marshall, 310-11.
whether they will afterwards believe or not believe.” 238 The ultimate choice for salvation, thought Arminius, was made by the individual, which applied to anyone. Through an individual choosing, by free will, to accept grace, salvation was acquired. A noteworthy publication that reflected the main tenets of Arminianism was the *Five Articles of the Remonstrance* published in 1610 (Remonstrants was the name given to Dutch dissenters that stood against Calvinism). The articles had five points, which are summarized as follows:

1. God chose to save through Jesus Christ those who through the grace of the Holy Spirit would believe in him. Predestination is conditional on the faith of individuals, not absolute.

2. Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins for all, but only believers partake in it. Atonement is universal.

3. Fallen man is depraved and needs to be born again in order to do good.

4. The grace of God is a necessary condition to precede, awake, follow and cooperate with man. But it does not act irresistibly.

5. Believers are enabled by grace to persevere through life and resist sin but can possibly become devoid of grace. 239

These Five Articles contrasted with the five points of Calvinism, which were total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. The Arminian points asserted that election was conditional upon faith in Jesus Christ, who had died for all in the world. The articles do agree with Calvinists in

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239 Lane, 184 (These points are not a direct quote from Lane, rather, it is a summary compiled by the author).
that man is totally depraved and cannot save himself, but contends that grace is not irresistible, it is accepted freely.

Arminianism was embraced in England as well. It was picked up by the General Baptist movement and was also adopted by leading Anglicans such as William Laud, Jeremy Taylor and Henry Hammond. They were influential theologians and active in affairs of the state.

Soteriology in classical Arminianism, opposite to Calvinism, taught that redemption was universal – that God made the sacrifice of Christ available for every single person in the world through His grace and man had the free will to have faith or not, thus accepting or rejecting the gift of God. It taught that the individual played an active part in salvation. There was also the Saumur (school in France) position, which slightly modified Arminianism and was embraced by popular Puritan (yes Puritan) theologian Richard Baxter. This view held that Christ died for all people and that God was free to give salvation to all men on the condition that they believe in him, with those believers then constituting the elect and attaining security in their salvation after conversion. This view is that grace is hypothetically universal, but effectual within the elect only.

The difference between Arminianism and this modified form of Calvinism rests in absolute security of the latter.\textsuperscript{240} Absolute security meant that once salvation was procured it was permanent. Salvation could not be lost. Classical Arminianism held that just as one chose to accept grace one could reject it afterwards and lose salvation. Regardless, the Arminian view asserted the universality of atonement and the condition

relative to its dispensation to men. For example, the English Arminian Churchman William Dyer urged the listeners of his sermons to “open the door” in their hearts to faith. In one sermon he stated:

O that you would open the door of your hearts to the Lord JESUS, (who stands knocking at them) that he may come in …that you may be able to stand in the day of his wrath, when others shall cry to the rocks and the Mountains that fall on them.²⁴¹

It was up to the individual to execute their duty to accept God’s offer to salvation and have faith that God would honor that effort. As typical of many Arminian sermons, Dyer continued by cautioning his followers to have sincerity in their faith to be sure of their salvation.²⁴² His stated:

There is a marvelous willingness in the heart of God and Christ, to save and receive poor lost sinners. The hearts of poor sinners are barr’d and bolted against the Lord Jesus…It is the duty and great concernment of all men wherever, to hear God’s voice, and to open the door…That whoever will but hear Christ’s Voice, and open the door, he will save. ²⁴³

In another portion of his sermon he summarized, “so when the Soul is thus brought to see its misery, and humbles itself thoroughly, withal is willing to embrace what means soever represents so much as a possibility of saving it; then God shews his mercy to refresh it, according to that ----- and Christ comfortably invited such a poor sinners….to expect Salvation from the eternal God, the sting [of death] before spoken of being taken away.”²⁴⁴ Dyer believed that people would choose salvation once their need for it was understood. The idea was that once man came to terms with depravity, and saw the pain it caused, there would be recognition of the value of God’s mercy and the benefits of salvation.

²⁴¹ Dyer, 2-3, 63.
²⁴² Ibid.
²⁴³ Ibid., 2-3.
²⁴⁴ Ibid., 146-7.
Conversely, just as man can choose salvation, damnation is equally an option. Or, rather, eternal separation from God is the consequence of not choosing to open the door. Dyer emphasized the following:

O let Jesus Christ into your hearts; for if you shut the door against Christ, he will shut the door against you. …the door of salvation will be shut against you, if you shut the door of your hearts against Christ. He that made you, will not save you; and he that formed you, will shew you no favour.245

Works by the Arminian champion William Laud were published posthumously throughout the latter half of the century and urged readers to choose to have faith in order to avoid the “ghostly and bodily dangers” that lay ahead in the afterlife.246 He was warning those that were not saved that they would suffer torments in Hell. Laud died in 1645, but new editions of his works were published under his name in every decade through the end of the century.247 In one devotional Laud stated:

O Lord by thy mercy I am risen out of my grave where I might have slept in death, but that thou preserve’st me. Make it I beseech thee, a resurrection to grace in this life, and to glory in the life to come; through Jesus Christ, who merited both for us…Give me that grace, that I may keep it holy unto thee, through Jesus Christ, Amen.248

Laud reminded readers to call on God’s grace, available through Jesus Christ, in order to have salvation over permanent death. Here is another exhortation and prayer Laud details in his devotional manual that exemplifies English Arminianism:

Grant I beseech thee, most mercifull Father, that I, which for my evil deeds am worthily punished, may, by the comfort of thy grace, be mercifully relieved, through Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour, Amen… Be not wrath [sic] with me, O Lord, but spare me, and have mercy upon me; for thou wilt be merciful unto thy Creature… Shew thy marvelous loving kindeness, thou that art the Saviour of them that put their trust in thee.249

245 Ibid., 34-5.
247 Based on a search for works authored by Laud in Early English Books Online.
248 Ibid., 16-17.
249 Ibid., 35, 39, 47.
These devotions and prayers for God’s recognition of man’s call to Him capture the Arminian hope for mercy to be saved.

Generally, the Arminian view was that grace was available to all and it was up to the individual to choose to have faith, the only prerequisite to salvation, and then the punishment of Hell would be avoided. In contrast to this outlook were the Calvinistic Puritans, who held to a much different soteriological persuasion. Yet, they both claimed to rely on God’s power for salvation.

In *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, Calvinist John Owen questioned the extent and nature of redemption. Essentially, the work was a polemic against Arminianism and a proof for election and limited atonement. The heart of his soteriological argument, constructed from a series of proofs, was that salvation is fully effected in specific, undeserving persons solely through the death of Christ and is not a “gift freely available for anyone who chooses.”

Owen stated:

The nature of the covenant of grace, which was established, ratified, and confirmed in and by the death of Christ …this covenant was not made universally with all, but particularly only with some, and therefore those alone were intended in the benefits of the death of Christ. …But thus, as is apparent, it is not with all; for “all men have not faith,” – it is “of the elect of God:” therefore, it is not made with all, nor is the compass thereof to be extended beyond the remnant that are according to election.

Owen, as was typical of most Puritans, argued against the idea that God loves all alike and offered Christ as a sacrifice for everyone, which took aim at the heart of Arminianism. God’s grace, according to Calvinist thought, was destroyed by making it

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251 Ibid., 124-5.
universal. The death of Christ was meant to procure the death of death for His Church, of which not everyone was a member. If the actual death of death is left unfulfilled until a curious bystander decides to tap into it, as was possible in the Arminian view, then, the implication was that Christ did not fully overcome death. To even hint at the idea that Christ’s work was not solely sufficient was a blasphemy of the work of the gospel to most Puritans. By the Arminian pattern of logic (as viewed by Puritans) the doctrine of universal redemption did not exalt God’s grace or Christ’s merit, rather it cheapened and depreciated it.252 Their thought was that men brought glory to themselves, rather than God, by, in a sense, saving themselves. In fact, just the idea that man could have the power to accept or not accept God diminished God’s authority, which was an impossibility for Puritans.

252 Ibid., 31.
Owen provided a table of antithesis between the two doctrines, which was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universalists (Arminians)</th>
<th>Scriptural Redemption (Puritans)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Christ died for all and everyone, elect and reprobate.</td>
<td>Christ died for the elect only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Most of them for whom Christ died are damned.</td>
<td>All those for whom Christ died are certainly saved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Christ, by his death, purchased not any saving grace for them for whom he died.</td>
<td>Christ by his death purchased all saving grace for them for whom he died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Christ took no care for the greatest part of them for whom he died, that ever they should hear one word of his death.</td>
<td>Christ sends the means and reveals the way of life to all them for whom he died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Christ, in his death, did not ratify nor confirm a covenant of grace with any federates, but only procured by his death that God might, if he would, enter into a new covenant with whom he would, and upon what conditions he pleased.</td>
<td>The new covenant of grace was confirmed to all the elect in the blood of Jesus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Christ might have died, and yet no one be saved</td>
<td>Christ, by his death, purchased, upon covenant and compact, and assured peculiar people, the pleasure of the Lord prospering to the end in his hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Christ had no intention to redeem his church, any more than the wicked seed of the serpent.</td>
<td>Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Christ died not for the infidelity of any.</td>
<td>Christ died for the infidelity of the elect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. John Owen’s Table of Antithesis Between Universalists and Scriptural Redemption

This table captures the key differences between the two doctrines, as viewed from the Puritan perspective.

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253 Ibid., 302-3.
Calvinists also thought that Arminianism led to a questioning of the doctrine of man’s depravity. The question was that if man is truly dead in sin (the whole reason salvation is necessary), then how could any inclination exist to “choose” God? The answer, for Puritans, was that no choice could exist because man was fully depraved. If a desire to choose faith emerged then, for Puritans, it meant that man was not fully depraved, which could not be so because that was out of line with Scripture. In his discussion on the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, John Bunyan affirmed this logic of Calvinists. He believed that there would be a “non-conversion” in the hearts of the wicked; essentially, confirming the idea that some were predestined for salvation and some not. This is an expression of the doctrine of double predestination that Calvin had developed in the early part of the Reformation.

Calvin had established the idea that God, through His grace, effected salvation in some, which meant it was not effected in others; some were predestined for election, others for damnation – a double predestination. Salvation was expressed to humanity through a covenant made with the body of believers. Owen provided a good synopsis of this complex doctrine when he wrote:

Christ did not die for any upon condition, if they do believe; but he died for all God’s elect, that they should believe, and believing have eternal life. Faith itself is among the principal effects and fruits of the death of Christ...It is nowhere in scripture, nor can it reasonably be affirmed, that if we believe, Christ died for us, as though our believing should make that to be which otherwise was not, the act create the object; but Christ died for us that we might believe. Salvation, indeed, is bestowed conditionally; but faith, which is the condition, is absolutely procured.

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254 Ibid., 38.
256 Owen, *Death of Death*, 123.
Puritans also stressed the idea of God’s covenant made with his people, who were those that had been and would be the recipients of free grace. Since “all people” are not included in the covenant, it must apply only to the “elect of God.” It was in this idea that the Puritan hope existed. The idea that the blood of Jesus was shed and his intercession continued on behalf of the elect, there should exist comfort, consolation, assurance, peace and joy in life and while facing death.

Henry Hammond, writing a general defense in 1648 against the critics of Arminianism, clarified his position on universal, or general, redemption. Hammond responded to criticisms from Puritans that the gospel was made available to the damned, which Puritans thought impossible. Hammond believed that Christ did not “redeem all mankind, [rather it is an] error by [Puritans] abominated” and that it should be acknowledged as such, since it is impossible that the “damned shall be saved.” He wrote that redemption through Christ was available to “all who are dead in Adam,” or all mankind, and “yet that whole number of the impenitent, unbelieving, reprobate world shall never be saved by him.” Further, he stated, “the great benefits of Christ’s Death, which I affirm to be general, are given upon condition, not absolutely as God’s love to the world, and, the effect of giving his Son, is not designed, that all absolutely, but that all, conditionally, i.e. whosoever believeth in him… and that they which do not perform that condition (as God knows a great multitude doe not) shall never be saved by his death.” For Hammond, Christ’s sacrifice was made available generally, or universally, to mankind, but he clarifies that it did not effect salvation in all mankind, rather, it was

257 The idea of God’s covenant is mentioned in Mat. 26:28.
258 Owen, Death of Death, 309.
259 Henry Hammond, A brief vindication of three passages in the practical catechism, 1648, 3.
260 Ibid., 3-5.
conditionally procured upon those who believed. This universal availability also did not mean that Christ’s death was in vain, as Puritans charged, because it was made available to some who would choose not to accept it and be damned in judgment. The worth of Christ’s death was that it made possible the procurement of salvation to believers.

Hammond was certain that salvation was available to all people because it is a demonstration of God’s love. He stated that Christ’s sacrifice is “an effect or expression of his [God’s] love to the world, which it would not be, if he did not give him for the world, whom he is said to love, but (to prevent all distinctions concerning the notion of the world), as if it signified, only the elect.” In fact, for Hammond, it would be wrong to limit God’s love to “only the elect.” The elect, for Hammond, was a reference to those that accepted salvation and comprised the Church. This is a clear defense against Calvinism, which narrowly defined salvation as being effected, and only available, in the elect in a predetermined way.

Faith is the criterion through which salvation is procured upon the individual in the Arminian view. Where Puritans stressed faith being propelled through irresistible grace and not an action of human beings, for Arminians faith was an act or effort by the individual. For example, Hammond wrote that “the faithful actions or acts of faith…were the only things by which we are justified; [those] acts of faith are the only cause.” It took the exertion of will to believe and express faith. Further, he wrote that, “a condition is a qualification of [that] required to make him capable [to be saved], and so a condition of justification is no more then [sic] that without which a man cannot be justified, and that is the direct affirmation of St. James – faithful actions, or acts of

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261 Ibid., 4-5
262 Ibid., 7.
faith.” According to Hammond’s Arminian view, the act of faith by an individual was what instigated the change of man’s condition to that of justified and enabled salvation. So, the Arminian apologetics were that Christ’s sacrifice was generally, or universally available, but that this does not mean Christ died for the damned, potentially in vain because redemption was not universally effected in all as Puritans charged. Rather, Christ’s saving grace was available to all because of God’s love, but it would only procure salvation among those who acted on faith and were justified by it.

In summary, the two main approaches to salvation in England diverged considerably. While they were formulated on the Reformation principles of *sola scriptura*, faith alone, and a distinctly Protestant picture of the need for resolving sin to procure salvation, their different emphases on the actual process of becoming saved were significantly far from each other. The Arminian school of thought called for the individual to freely accept God’s grace through faith in order to attain salvation. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Calvinistic Puritans believed that a proper understanding of the gospel was of the complete procurement of redemption in the elect only, which produced faith in the members of the true, invisible Church according to God’s covenant and a credit to His sovereignty.

**AFTERLIFE**

It is important to build upon beliefs about salvation and review the conceptions of the afterlife and the expected events that would unfold in the outer-worldly realm, since

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263 Ibid., 8-9.
those would occur differently for the saved and the damned. Puritans and Arminians converge in this regard. The saved would be united with God in Heaven and the damned confined to Hell in eternal separation from God. There was difference in the timing of when salvation was procured and the destination in the afterlife decided. For Arminians it was linked to a person’s decision to have faith and accept grace during life, while for Puritans it was predetermined by God even before a person was born. After death, though, there was no opportunity for intercession in either religious view. These concepts were based on the early reforms that shifted beliefs away from Purgatory and onto the model of Heaven and Hell being the only destinations in the life after death. I did not expect that the differences in the Puritan and Arminian views on how to attain salvation would necessarily lead to diverging conceptions of the structure and events of the afterlife. What is interesting, though, is that there is common ground, something these groups are not known for. This commonality, as will be observed in the next chapter about teachings, solidified even further as the faithful were taught about preparing for death. Both Puritans and Arminians focused on the good death – the hope of future glory, and not on the differences in salvation. Heaven was characterized as a place for believers, but Puritans did not specify that it was reserved for them alone and Arminians excluded, and vice versa, although that was implied as each group thought of themselves as the only true believers. Since beliefs about the structure of the afterlife were an important part of death and dying, it is helpful to highlight how it was similarly characterized by Puritan and Arminian theologians in late seventeenth-century England.

Salvation, as we have reviewed, was the crux of Christian theology because the Scriptures stated that existence did not end with physical death. Physical death was
merely the door into the next world, and depending on one’s status in the eyes of God, there would be an entrance into one of two eternal states, as understood in the seventeenth century.

The first was Heaven, the place reserved for believers. Janeway believed it was a location where people would experience “a sensible renovation of their natures…a lively sense of the pardon of all [sins], and a peace with God, a being lifted above fears….and the spirit sealing up the soul to the day of redemption and filling it with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” In a similar tone Laud also exclaimed, “O how amiable are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hosts! My soul hath a desire and a longing to enter into the Courts of thee, O Lord. … receive me into Glory. For whom have I in Heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire, in comparison of thee. O Lord, preserve me in those longings towards thee.” There was a clear sense of hope for Heaven. Owen emphasized that “the meanest enjoyment in heaven is to be preferred before the richest on earth, even then when the Kingdome of Christ shall come in most beauty and glory.” Heaven was a place to be sought after. It was imagined to be a place of pure serenity, experienced free of all guilt, and a culmination of the faith endured while alive.

The alternative, Hell, was characterized by Laud as being filled with weeping, torment, and severe cruelty. It was a place in the afterlife associated with infinite punishment, never to be quenched, and necessary for justice because of sin. Baxter explained that this was all organized long ago. He stated, that Hell contained “fire, the everlasting fire, is also now of a long time prepared” in order to facilitate “the heavy

266 Owen, *Laboring*, 17.
weights of God’s curse.”269 It existed as a “place of torment which the Lord to eternitie reserves for the punishment and torment of all ungodly men and women.”270 It was a place where God’s wrath would be taken out on the wicked, “tearing them to pieces” like a lion.271 The sins of the wicked were not under the cover of Christ, which meant that justice could only be meted to the individual after life, since reconciliation of sin took place in life only for the elect.

Christopher Love wrote about Hell as a place for eternal punishment in a treatise entitled *Hells Terror, or, A treatise of the torments of the damned as a preservative against security* (1653). He believed that man’s mortality, often emphasized during times of sickness or when on the deathbed, brought about reflection and regret over sins committed in life. This “terror of conscience,” for Love, was a reminder that some sort of punishment was due for sinful living, and that it would come in the afterlife through condemnation.272 Hell was a place, then, entered after death for eternity as an eternal banishment.273 There would be endless wrath and torments – described by Scripture with the actionable verbs of “weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.”274 This evidence is not only similar between Puritans and Arminians, it also shows continuity with the late Middle Ages regarding how the image and view of Hell was used to spur people into reflection on mortality and contrition over sin.275

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271 Dyer, 48-50.
273 Anonymous, *Death’s Universal Summons* (Dublin: 1650) 8.
275 Duffy, 307-8; Westerhof, 7; Binski, 9.
ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology, from both an individual and apocalyptic perspective, was also uniformly accepted among Puritans and Arminians. The common belief was that the soul of the Christian would be perfected in holiness immediately after death, but the fullness of their glory would not be complete until the body and soul were reunited at the Last Day, the day of God’s judgment on all of humanity and the close of history. This was often referred to simply as the “Resurrection.” It was synonymous theologically with the Last Day, the day of Christ’s final conquest of death through the Resurrection. John Owen defined it as “the end of the days, that is when time shall be no more, when a period shall be put to the days of the World: called the last day, the great day, the day of Judgement; that is the season of the accomplishment of this promise, the day where in God will judge the world, by the man whom he hath ordained.”

John Bunyan wrote a thorough exposition on this topic titled The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment, published in 1665. It was a treatise first intended to be a sermon that was then was expanded into a book. Bunyan’s motivation, other than general expounding on doctrinal issues, was to offer a scriptural proof on the topic against the views of “ranters” and some “quakers” who had called into question ideas about the resurrection. The ranters, for example, denied that there would be a resurrection of the wicked. Bunyan affirmed the doctrine of a literal resurrection of the dead, “both of the just and unjust; even of the bodies of both, from the graves where they are, or shall be, at

276 Houlbrooke, Death, Religion and the Family, 41; For a description about the resurrection and the body see 1 Cor. 15.
277 Baxter, Two Treatises, 4, 39.
278 Owen, Laboring Saints, 11.
the approach of that day."\textsuperscript{279} In this view, the dead are those that have “departed this life, that have body and soul separated each from the other.” So the resurrection, Bunyan believed, would be a resurrection of the body out of the grave. This is based on Daniel 12:2 (KJV), which says, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.”\textsuperscript{280}

The resurrection, then, would be both of believers and sinners (those separated from God) with a literal rising of their bodies in order to face a final judgment. The reunion with their bodies was both mystical and logical, Bunyan argued, because it was in the body that the afflictions of life were born. Since sin was experienced in the mortal body, it made sense to Bunyan that the soul would be reunited with its body when it came time for judgment. It is mystical because the body, at least for believers, would be in a glorious state. Regarding the resurrected person’s disposition, the individual would be of self-same nature and the manner of the process would be awe-inspiring beyond human comprehension. Bunyan nicely summarized that “bodies are sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.”\textsuperscript{281} The resurrection would be a supernatural experience difficult to imagine other than through terms opposite to the human experience.

Judgment is an integral component of the Last Day. There would be a judgment of the just. The whole body of the elect would give an account of all things they have done, whether good or bad. God “will destroy all their bad, with the purity of his word though the saints receive by faith the forgiveness of sins in this life, and so are passed from death to life; yet again, Christ Jesus, and God his Father, will have every one of

\textsuperscript{279} Bunyan, \textit{Resurrection}, 4.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., 4-8.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., Section 4 (based on 1 Corinthians 15).
these sins reckoned up again, and brought fresh upon the stage in the day of judgment, that they may see and be sensible for ever, what grace and mercy hath laid hold upon them." The end of the judgment process for the elect would be to receive reward. It will be recompense proportionate to their labors and endurance of the Christian life.\textsuperscript{283}

The unjust would also be judged. Their bodies would also rise on that day too. In their case they would rise in order to go through judgment and receive due, permanent punishment. The resurrection of the wicked would be in dishonor. Bunyan described that scene:

God will judge the [wicked] at the last day; he will open before them, how they have degenerated and gone back from the principles of nature in which he created them. Also how they have slighted all the instructions that he hath given them, even by the obedience, fruitfulness, wisdom, labor, fear, and love of the creatures; and he will tell them, that as to their judgment, they themselves have decided it, both by their cutting down that which was fruitless, and by the withdrawing of their hearts from those things which to them were unprofitable. As men deal with weeds, and rotten wood: so will God deal with sinners in the day of judgment.\textsuperscript{284}

The final judgment of the wicked was due because they never had the saving work of conversion passed upon them.

The Last Judgment in seventeenth century English Puritan views was seen as a time where double predestination would be on display. Bunyan describes the scene of the last judgment, where the:

Whole body of the elect, by the nature of conversion in their hearts, shall witness a non-conversion in the hearts of the wicked; and as the ungodly shall fall under the conviction of this cloud of witnesses: so, to increase their conviction, there will also be opened before them all the labors of the godly, both ministers and others, and the pains that they have taken to save, if it had been possible, these damned wretches.\textsuperscript{285}

\textsuperscript{282} Ibid., Section 5.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., Section 6.
\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., Section 9.
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid., Section 10.
The damned would be given opportunity to see the godly as a benchmark for which to compare themselves against and be convinced of their sinfulness. Even though the Puritan point of view was intertwined with predestination, it did not lead to difference with Arminians because they anticipated the same events. From the Arminian perspective, there would also be a separation of the saved from the damned through judgment. For example, Laud outlined that after death man would receive a “sentence either of punishment or reward,” then, “at the end of the world, where a finall sentence shall be pronounced on all, never altering their estate, by easing the paine of the one, or ending the glory of the other.” This was not a display of God’s election, but rather a congregation of the elect comprised of the collective converts separated from the sinful, those that did not respond to God’s offer of salvation through grace. God would “shew his power and majestie” and the rewards and punishments of the godly and wicked would be made public. The scene was the same in either a Puritan or Arminian perspective.

In summary, the Last Judgment was described by both Puritans and Arminians as a future, dramatic display of sinful nature intersecting with grace. Man was naturally depraved and had a need for punishment and justice. That sinful nature was changed with conversion, but only for some. For those unconverted their original nature would be the source of eternal death. Then, the story goes, after the just and unjust were judged, the world would come to an end. It was pictured to be the close of history, where, for the righteous, death would never be feared again.

The cultural image of the Last Day loomed over English Protestants in the late seventeenth-century. Dyer, for instance, reminded believers that in the End Times, God

286 Laud, Last Advice, 6-7.
287 Ibid., 7.
will have His day of punishment, which will be an awesome display of His righteousness and leave no one untouched. These future events should spur reflection of one’s self and his/her standing in front of God, specifically as a call to repent and live according to the principles in Scripture in order to be prepared. On this note, Dyer stated:

Examine yourselves, and try your faith, examine your faith, whether it be true; your knowledge, whether it be sanctified; your hope, whether it be purified; your love, whether it be sincere; your evidences; whether they be found; your hearts, whether they be gracious; your desires, whether they be holy; your ends, whether they be right; and your conversations, whether they be heavenly, that you may be able to stand in the day of wrath, in the day of Death, and in the day of Judgment.

In order to be prepared for the “day of Death” one must be prepared on Christian terms, including faith, knowledge, motivation and interactions with others. Once faith is assured, which led to salvation for both Puritans and Arminians, then one could be confident that judgment will be favorable on that Last Day.

STATE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AFTER DEATH

There was some question about the state of the soul after death until that Last Day. There is also similarity between Puritan and Arminian theology in this regard. Baxter, for instance, specified that “the body lyeth under the penal effects of sin, till the Resurrection. And it is penal to the soul to be in a state of separation from the Body, though it be a state of glory that its in with Christ: For it is deprived of the fullness of glory, which it shall attain at the Resurrection, when the whole man shall be perfected

\[288\] Dyer, 60-67.
\[289\] Ibid., 63.
and glorified together.” Baxter believed that the soul would not experience a completely glorified state until after the Resurrection. The soul would be united with Christ in Heaven after death and experience glory, but that glory would be made complete after it went through judgment and was reunited with a form of the body.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646) and the subsequent 1689 *Baptist Confession of Faith*, both Puritan works (but produced in widely different political situations), with the only difference in content being that the latter included Scripture references, succinctly affirmed the beliefs about the state of man after death and the resurrection of the dead. They stated:

The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption, but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, have an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being made perfect in holiness...waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

Aside from affirming the existence of two locations for the soul to occupy, these confessions asserted that there would be a resurrection of the dead, and clarified that Hell starts at death for the non-elect. They emphasize the totality of glory the saved soul experiences instead of being penalized until the reunification with the body, which is something Baxter stressed. The reunification would be when the souls of both the just and unjust were raised, paired with something that resembled their old bodies, faced final judgment and finally experienced full glory or remained in permanent agony. There would be a call to judgment while in a state of glory or separation from God. The same

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291 There were differences between the two confessions, such as in regard to adult and infant baptism; however the content about death and the afterlife was the same.
292 *The Baptist Confession of Faith* (1689), Ch. 31; *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646), Ch. 32.
scheme was contained in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, which held that “when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him [God], as our hope is this our brother doth; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in their sight.” The soul would not die or be in some sort of limbo state, but would be actively present in Heaven or Hell. For those in Heaven it would be a time of “rest” as full glory awaited the reunion with their body at the resurrection. Jeremy Taylor described this introductory state in paradise as “a region of rest, of comfort, and holy expectations.” It was a place where one would “rest in the bosom of the Lord, till the mansions be prepared where we shall sing and feast eternally.” This idea of respite in death was based on passages from Scripture, one being from Daniel, which stated, “But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

Theologically, this idea of rest had two major implications for English Protestants. First, the living were the only ones capable of working for God, so once they were dismissed to “rest” (died) they would not be capable of work any longer nor have to battle sin. Secondly, this passage was also important to Protestants because it refuted Catholicism’s conception of the afterlife. If the soul is at rest, then, it cannot be in Purgatory because if Purgatory existed, as Catholics believed, then there would be no rest, but torment and suffering in some form.

In general, the full benefits of salvation would not be realized until after the resurrection. The resurrection was the involuntary judgment of all souls, already dead or

293 Book of Common Prayer (1662), Part 22.
294 Houlbrooke, Death, Religion and the Family, 41.
295 Taylor, 156.
296 Dan. 12:13 (KJV).
297 Owen, Dismission to Rest, 19-22.
298 Ibid., 22.
still living, which would mark the end of time. Bunyan described it as the “final conclusion upon good and bad,” which would be the last reckoning of both the just and unjust.\textsuperscript{299} William Dyer wrote a treatise on this subject in 1669, exhorting his readers to remember that this last day would be a demonstration of God’s wrath, a day of terror, distress, contempt, and destruction for the wicked.\textsuperscript{300} It would be a day of astonishment and surprise that deeply humbled many.\textsuperscript{301} The expectation was to come face to face with God as He handed out eternal sentencing in a final demonstration of His power over sin.

This chapter has surveyed the major points of theology relative to death and shown that while Puritans and Arminians conceived of varying soteriologies, they agreed on the remainder of theology pertaining to death and the afterlife, which is linked directly to the early reforms that eliminated Purgatory and intercession for the dead. Views about the problem of sin, geography of the afterlife, status of the soul and conception of the End Times were the same for both religious groups. Both Puritans and Arminians asserted that sin caused spiritual death, which was separation from God. The prospects of dying and being separated from God created fear. That fear could be mitigated by focusing on the prospects of salvation. How salvation was procured varied significantly between Puritans and Arminians, the former based on predestination in a Calvinistic sense and the latter on accepting grace through free will. Puritans and Arminians agreed on what the afterlife would look like. Those that were part of the Church would enter glory and anticipate the resurrection.

\textsuperscript{299} Bunyan, preface.
\textsuperscript{300} Dyer, 49-50.
For the saved, of whichever persuasion, a hope existed about what began after death.\textsuperscript{302} For those that struggled with having assurance of their place in the afterlife, the deathbed offered no respite, just anxiety and fear. The latter group seemed to be of major concern for theologians, at least judging from the many sermons and works produced that exhorted believers toward proper preparation for death and entry into the afterlife. Interestingly, there is a similar message among all English Protestants, despite their divisions, in their advice for proper dying and for survivors to comfort and lead those nearing passage into the next life. The concerns about coming to terms with mortality, easing fear and hoping to enter Heaven were more important than questioning election or ensuring the right choices were made to accept salvation. These teachings about preparing to die will be examined next.

\textsuperscript{302} Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, “The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England.” \textit{The Sixteenth Century Journal} 20, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 259, 275; Wunderli and Broce observed in literature and speeches that optimism and hope characterized the moments near death to nearly all people. This parallels the message in theology that hope of salvation was similar across religious dividing lines.
CHAPTER IV

TEACHINGS ABOUT THE GOOD DEATH IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND
Figure 1. Cover Illustration from: *Death's Uncontrollable Summons* (1685)
The above woodcut is from an anonymous broadside ballad published in 1685 titled “Death’s Uncontrollable Summons, or The Mortality of Mankind.” It is a dialog between a young man and death. The picture itself communicates what English people may have imagined death to be like – ready to strike whether or not one was ready. It is an illustration to a dialog in which the character of death, who appears grim, gray and pale, comes to take away a young man, someone who was not ready for life to end. While we do not know the precise reach of the publication from this anonymous author, we know it was printed for P. Brooksby located at the sign of the Golden-Ball in West Smithfield Golden Harp and Ball near the Bare-Tavern in Pye Corner.303 Brooksby published a number of these broadside ballads throughout the last half of the seventeenth century. Broadsides were a common, inexpensive form of printed material in England at this time (often retailed for a penny). Over 400,000 were reportedly sold in England at the height of their popularity.304 They were single sheets of cheap paper printed on one side that often contained a woodcut illustration. Ballads far predated the written word, being an oral phenomenon that contained a narrative sung to a tune that had a self-contained story. Broadside ballads varied from these traditional ballads by being written down and over time took on common topics, such as love, politics, religion, and general struggles of life.305 In this ballad’s story the youth engages death in a dialog and offers excuses of why he should not die. He states that it is unfair to die since he had not lived a

long life, would not be able to enjoy his worldly wealth, and would leave behind his true love. By the end of the song the young man laments the loss of his life and warns readers that “death ends all.” This ballad is a lesson on the brevity of life, how vanity passes away and that relationships are fleeting in the face of death. These are themes that reflect popular beliefs to some degree, showing how they were represented in what was then popular media. This chapter will focus what English men and women were taught about death and the afterlife, primarily through funeral sermons and treatises. It is a general overview of how preachers and theologians instructed their followers to think about death, particularly on how a good death was to be obtained. The instructions for death and dying were similar from Puritans and Arminians, which stands in contrast to the important differences in soteriology discussed in the last chapter.

We will observe that teachings explained the ideal good death and advised on how to ease the fears of the dying to, in a sense, help tame death. Dying people were instructed to leave a testimony of their faith to the living. Funeral practices were to be kept simple and short. The focal point of the ritual was taught to be for the survivor’s benefit, so grief could run its proper course. Simplicity was advocated by preachers so that practices remained distant from Catholic traditions. Ceremonies often contained a funeral sermon, which was preached on behalf of survivors to familiarize them with death and encourage reflection on mortality. All these messages were aimed at survivors to better prepare them to approach death.

Funeral sermons, treatises and guides were teachings that played a role in transmitting reformers’ messages to the public. Throughout the Reformation in general,

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teaching through the means of sermons and writings were common and effective mechanisms that swayed public support toward religious movements. Addressing these issues is a dissertation in and of itself, particularly as factors of politics, religious conviction, and popular opinion intersected with emerging forms of communication (print). We know that new religious ideas contributed to a shift in culture and politics in society, so it is important to grasp the formal doctrine and apologetics religious leaders wrote. That was the purpose of the last chapter. In this chapter, the focus is on what was taught to the public by those religious leaders. Divines not only spent considerable time developing and defending points of their faith, they also preached and taught these ideas to the public. Their instructions were written so that the reader or listener would apply

307 Over 5,000 sermons were published from 1640-1700 according to the English Short Title Catalogue, which shows it was frequent type of publication. This represents approximately 5% of all publications in ESTC from that period.

308 Literature that assesses the intersection of religious ideas and popular culture include: von Greyerz, Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800; Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe; Pettegree, Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion; Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars; Tracy, Europe’s Reformations, 1450-1650; Doctrine, Politics, and Community; Thompson, Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation; Reay, ed. Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England. Print played a major role in disseminating ideas and the emergence of a publishing system was a mechanism in which ideas were spread and controlled in society. It was common in the early modern era for sermons to be printed. Specific works on this topic include Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) – Green’s study demonstrates that religious works were published and diversified to match readerships in demand; Elizabeth Eisenstein, The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); David McKitterick, Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order: 1450-1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), McKitterick assesses print in western Europe and shows that it was increasingly familiarized in society as technology advanced and the publication process became formalized. Adrian Johns, The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), the author evaluates the nature of the book in early modern England and shows that it played a pivotal role in empowering the populous in terms of political messages during the Civil War. Johns establishes the model that ideas were disseminated through popular literature and effective in communicating messages, which applied to religious ideas as well. Roger Chartier, The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the 14th and 18th Centuries (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) – publishing works not only impacted communities of readers, it shows that authors sought to increase their influence and gain acceptance of their ideas, which, in part propelled the publication of sermons; Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., A History of Reading in the West (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999). This anthology provides insight in the early modern period as print expanded into popular markets through vernacular printing, which was especially important for the spread of religious ideas during the Reformation, particularly through the printing of sermons and religious treatises.
them to daily life, have their emotions appealed to and make practical the application of systematic beliefs. Andrew Pettegree shows that these methods of teaching were integral components to the success of the Reformation in terms of converting the majority to be passionately committed to the reformed movement.\footnote{Andrew Pettegree, \textit{Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion} (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2005).} The sermon, especially, played a very important role in disseminating information, as the majority of people attended churches and reach of the messages were extended through print. Messages balanced biblical exposition with emotional engagement with an audience, trying to apply concepts with clarity. Sermons repeated complex ideas and those concepts were frequently broken down in numbered lists to aid in memory. Sermons were common and they were a distinct beacon and inspiration to people, becoming the bedrock for the communication of religious messages.\footnote{Pettegree, 10, 25, 39; Todd 50, 370 – This is a comparative study from Scotland that shows the same pattern of the sermon playing a significant role in propelling the reformed movement. Todd argued that the sermon and print propelled a dramatic shift in culture as changed baptism, marriage, burial, education, and general doctrine down to the kirk (church) level. Preachers, in particular, demonstrated success in their profession – they touched on emotions and taught in such a way to aid memory through practical and repetitious explanations; Thomas, \textit{The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England}, 1-5 – Thomas shows that sermons and teachings are linked to what people expressed in terms of faith as death was approached. Collinson, \textit{The Birthpangs of Protestant England}, 120-5, Collinson shows that Protestantism’s implementation of music, drama and imagery in churches alongside the sermon led the formation of a distinctly Protestant culture; Susan Karant-Nunn, \textit{The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany} (London: Routledge, 1997), 183-5 – This comparative study from Germany shows that rituals such as marriage, communion and burials became ingrained in society through institutionalization and acceptance by people in society, and sermons directly contributed; James Thomas Ford, “Preaching in the Reformed Tradition,” in Larissa Taylor, ed., \textit{Preachers and the People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period} (Leiden, 2001), 65-91.}

This chapter assesses teachings about death and preparing to die through the lens of funeral sermons and advice literature about preparing for death published by
influential clergy the late seventeenth century. Interestingly, Arminians and Puritans show no difference in their instructions to the dying. One would suppose that since salvation was an important factor to work out to best prepare for death, then when teaching people to approach the end of life varying soteriological positions and their differences would be accentuated. For instance, when exhorting believers in sermons or offering examples of prayers to be modeled, Calvinists would stress that people affirm reliance on God’s sovereignty completely and Arminians that one needed to affirm faith if salvation was to be effected. For Arminians, since salvation was not absolutely assured, I was expecting to see emphasis on making one’s decision to accept grace surface in the literature. Preparing for death, after all, was the last time one had the opportunity to accept salvation. However, the evidence does not demonstrate this. Teachings are not tinged with overt Arminian or Puritan language, rather, there is similarity in language between both. For example, Edmund Calamy (1600-1666), a Puritan who intensely opposed Arminianism, offered examples of specific prayers to be

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311 Searches for funeral sermons and other advice literature was conducted on Early English Books Online from 1640 – 1700. A systematic survey of funeral sermons showed that there were 161 distinct publications linked to those keywords from that period, from 86 unique contributors. The average published per author was two. There were instances of 3 or 4 publications by one author, which shows a potentially higher degree of popularity or interest from that author. That included works from Richard Baxter (3), Christopher Love (13), William Laud (4), Jeremy Taylor (6), as well as other theologians such as William Bates (6) and Nathaniel Hardy (3). Approximately 20% of sermons originated from the influential theologians assessed in chapter three, who also published many theological treatises. These theologians were influential in the seventeenth century and beyond, evident by their publishing popularity, as well as through the legacy they have up even through today. Their influence is noted from their many publications that were printed, and often reprinted, throughout the seventeenth century. For example, a search of Early English Books Online showed the number of works published through 1700 linked to these author’s names are: Baxter, 368; Bunyan, 134; Hammond, 168; Janeway, 34; Laud, 85 (many published after his death in 1645); Taylor, 184; and Owen 167. Further, these theologians’ works have been republished many times up through modern times, which reflects their legacy. Taylor’s famous work Holy Dying has been republished 3 times in the last 20 years alone – it was published multiple times over the second half of the seventeenth century. These theologians are also mentioned in narratives about the Reformation in England and where shown to have influence politically and religiously. Their biographies were also reviewed on Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Sources also include: Nicholas Tyacke, Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700; Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds. The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700; John Spurr, English Puritanism, 1603-1689.
said when preparing to die. He specified that one should “pray for himself that God receive his spirit, and pray for his persecutors.” Arminian William Laud likewise gave the example “Lord receive my soul.” Both Calamy and Laud looked forward to what was coming in the afterlife. Salvation was not the issue. There was not language referring to being part of the elect or a plea to obtain grace.

The reason that there was not difference among Puritans and Arminians in their ideas for preparedness was most likely because of their similar conception of the afterlife. The soul, most agreed, either went to Heaven or Hell and would rest (or be separated from God) there until the final judgment. Since salvation would have been worked out in the land of the living, or even before that according to Calvinists, with no opportunity for intercession after death for those not saved, then there was little room for debate. While Puritan and Arminian soteriological stances were significantly different, their view on the soul after death was the same.

The theologies of leading religious figures focused on establishing that the line between the living and the dead could not be crossed in any way by survivors. The majority of effort spent by preachers and teachers focused on communicating that the time while alive should be utilized to benefit and position the soul in the best possible place for its residence in the afterlife.

The motivation behind the preaching and teaching of Puritans and Arminians certainly varied. For Arminians, who believed that salvation was available through choice, the urgent message was to work out their conversion by accepting grace, which would have been evidenced by human works and Christian living. Calvinists thought that

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313 Edmund Calamy, The Saints Rest: or Their Happy Sleep in Death (London: 1651), 3.
314 Laud, The Last Advice of William Laud, 8.
God had already ordained a place in Heaven for his saints, so the time on earth was not to be spent worrying about something out of reach, but in grateful service to God, evidenced by works and Christian living. The evidence of works and Christian living were synonymous for both. These frameworks from both groups taught that putting confidence in God’s promises would produce peace and acceptance of death, even if they were developed from unconnected bases of salvation.

It is also interesting that the fear of death was alleviated in a similar fashion. It would seem that varying soteriological positions could produce different messages for the mitigation of fear (assuming different conceptions of salvation carried varying forms of fear at death related to assurance of election or security of salvation), but, surprisingly, they did not. Fear of death was a natural phenomenon that was overcome, or, at least minimized, by reliance on God and through the edification of survivors assisting the dying. These ideas were similarly held by Puritans and Arminians.

The lack of difference is not because theology lacked meaningful practical components or that practices in their regard were so entrenched beyond persuasion that they were operating ideally already. Rather, this was likely the case because Puritans and Arminians saw the fear of death and need for edification at the sensitive time when death was approached as the same problem. Salvation was expected to have been worked out, and the main lesson was that confidence in the face of death was possible.

Both Puritans and Arminians treated salvation as something already achieved. The focus was how to prepare for a good death by easing fear. It was not a fear over whether or not one was saved, but fear of the unknown, leaving this world behind and dealing with the physical pains that occurred while dying. The other theme was on
survivors. Their role was purely to guide and encourage the dying through a major change in their life cycle as they moved from the present to the afterlife. In the Directory for the Public Worship of God, which replaced the Book of Common Prayer from 1645-1662, ministers were instructed to confer with the dying about the estates of their souls and help them overcome the attacks of Satan, which came in the form of doubt and anxiety.\textsuperscript{315} As the funeral was conducted and grieving took place, the focus was on living out God’s will, not working out salvation, so survivors could be prepared for a good death. This was the message contained in funeral sermons, guides and testimonials. This pedagogical theme of a good death will be examined next.

**TEACHINGS ABOUT THE GOOD DEATH: IDEALIZED DYING**

Churchmen, first and foremost, wanted their parishioners to experience a good death and taught them with specificity how it should be achieved. They wanted them to be blessed when facing death just as one was blessed in life.\textsuperscript{316} One of the most recognized works in this genre of English *Ars Moriendi* is Jeremy Taylor’s *Rules and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651).\textsuperscript{317} *Ars Moriendi* means “The Art of Dying,” and refers to a body of Christian literature providing guidance to the dying and those tending to

\textsuperscript{315} *A Directory for the Public Worship of God* (London: 1644), 31.
\textsuperscript{316} Samuel Acton, *Dying infants sav’d by grace proved and the blessd man with his blessedness described in a sermon preached near Namptwich in Cheshire at the burial of a deceased infant, July 25, 1695* (London:1699), 1.
them. It came from fifteenth century Latin texts that offered advice on how to have a good death. The literature referenced macabre horrors, but reflected on living life well so one could be prepared for death. It became popular and was translated in many European languages.\textsuperscript{318} The original long version was composed in 1415 by an anonymous Dominican friar spurred by the Council of Constance (1414-18), and had over 100 editions by 1500. It advocated living well by following Christian principles, such as embodying humbleness, having faith, and avoiding temptation as well as relying on Christ and others near death so dying could be a good experience. A short version was published in the mid fifteenth century and contained eleven woodcut illustrations, five showing temptations (unbelief, pride, impatience, avarice, despair) with five corresponding remedies (faith, humility, patience, charity, hope) so the dying could resist them, and the last was an image of entering Heaven.\textsuperscript{319} The *Ars Moriendi* tradition remained strong in early modern Catholicism, noted by the examples of *Treatise on Preparation for Death* (1534) by Erasmus and *The Art of Dying Well* (1619) by Robert Bellarmine.\textsuperscript{320}

*Ars Moriendi* literature was republished in England, under the title *Crafte and Knowledge For To Dye Well*, throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and spurred


\textsuperscript{320} Erasmus, Treatise on Preparation for Death (1534); Robert Bellarmine, The Art of Dying Well (1619); Carlos Eire, From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth Century Spain, 24-29.
other works of literature in this same genre throughout the early modern era. These works did not fade because of the Reformation; rather they endured and expanded as the English Church embraced reformed ideas. Sermon literature, particularly funeral sermons, regularly reiterated points of the *Ars Moriendi*. Advocating Christian living in preparation for death remained intact as the principle message, but shifted away from a Catholic basis to a reformed position. Some works from this genre produced specifically in England include *Sick Man’s Salve* (1561) by Thomas Becon, *A Treatise Containing the Nature, Differences, and Kindes of Death: As Also the Right Manner of Dying Well* (1595) by William Perkins and *Disce Moi* (1600) by Christopher Sutton, but Taylor’s *The Rules and Exercise of Holy Dying* has stood out as a significant contribution to this literary tradition.

Taylor was a seventeenth-century Arminian clergyman who found his patronage initially from William Laud, but maintained a strong commitment to toleration and application of moral philosophy over a zealous theology or ecclesiology. The point of his eloquent presentation of practical, useful theology was to offer guidance in the preparation for dying and the performance of death. The full title of his influential work is: *Holy Dying: In which are described the means and instruments of preparing ourselves and others respectively for a blessed death: and the remedies against the evils*

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323 Wunderli and Broce, 267.
326 Cressy, 390.
and temptations proper to the state of sickness: together with prayers and acts of virtue to be used by sick and dying persons, or by others standing in their attendance. To which are added rules for the visitation of the sick and offices proper for that ministry.\(^{327}\) It is a work that thoroughly explains the process, as Taylor saw it, for experiencing a death tamed from fear and for survivors to help manage the situation towards that end. This important piece of literature will be analyzed next, and then comparisons will be made to Puritan messages about the good death.

This passage from Taylor captures the theme of his guidance:

> [...one] must consider that all those discourses he hath heard concerning patience and resignation, and conformity to Christ’s sufferings, and the melancholy lectures of the cross, must all of them now be reduced to practice, and pass from an ineffective contemplation to such an exercise as will really try whether we were true disciples of the cross, or only believed the doctrines of religion when we were at ease, and that they never passed through the ear to the heart... But every man should consider God does nothing in vain; that he would not to no purpose send us preachers...and lend us books, and provide sermons, and make examples, and promise his Spirit, and describe the blessedness of holy sufferings, and prepare us with daily alarms, if he did not really purpose to order our affairs so that we should need all this, and use it all.\(^{328}\)

A good death, Taylor explained, was to be accomplished over time, not just on the deathbed. Guidance is a necessity. He encouraged readers to regularly apply spiritual lessons in order to be confident when death approached. Taylor is justifying why people needed teachings, sermons, and advice from preachers (like him) to guide them. People were to be reminded daily of the eternal scope of life (that life extended beyond the time on Earth) so they could make becoming familiar with mortality and God’s will an effective exercise in their present life. Exercise is practice, and practice leads to preparation. Along those lines, Taylor exhorted, “He that would die well must always


\(^{328}\) Ibid., 76.
look for death, every day knocking at the gates of the grave; and then the gates of the grave shall never prevail upon him to do him mischief.” 329 The idea is that one reflects on death regularly over life so it is not surprising when it comes and that it spurs good living (on the terms of God’s will).

First, an individual must remember the vanity and shortness of life. One should “reckon from the sprightfulness of youth, and the fair cheeks and full eyes of childhood, from the vigorousness and strong flexure of the joints of five-and-twenty, to the hollowness and dead paleness, to the loathsomeness and horror, of a three days’ burial, and we shall perceive the distance to be very great.” 330 This is meant to conjure stark imagery. Taylor reminded readers not to place value on physical things because they will pass away. The physical difference Taylor observed between young and lively (youth) and dead and horrible (recently deceased) is great. Taylor advocated that while alive people proactively narrow that gap in their imagination to help come to terms with death, meaning that while they are young they recognize that they too will one day be like that fresh corpse he wrote about. He believed that without this reflection a person would not be prepared near the time of death. To achieve that end Taylor’s exercises were to follow specific principles, which are:

- Avoid riches, especially ill gotten riches.

- Do not continue to extend thoughts or “let [hopes] wander towards future and far-distant events and accidental contingencies.” This is a sort of carpe diem philosophy – live today, it is what you have.

- Live humbly and avoid extravagance.

329 Ibid., 29.
330 Ibid., 13.
• Remember that true rest comes in a different life. “Since we stay not here, being people of a day’s abode, and our age is like that of a fly and contemporary with a gourd, we must look somewhere else for an abiding city, a place in another country to fix our house in, whose walls and foundation is God, where we must find rest, or else be restless for ever.” 331

Taylor intended these practical exercises (exercises were to actively: avoid, think, live and remember) to help an individual focus and balance their view of themselves. One would need to apply the principles of selflessness, humbleness and contentment within the present life if one was to be prepared for death. The result was that death would become “present” for Taylor. He believed that an individual would “quench the hearts of lust, or the desires of money, or the greedy passionate affections of this world” by, in a way, dying to them in the present. 332 One would lead a good, temperate life because it was part of a Christian’s duty to die to a sinful nature.

Much in the art of dying well also involved how one lives. Taylor urged proactive piety and daily reflection on things spiritual. The goal was to help the individual curb carefree living (associated with sin) in order to make the death-bed experience unfold more smoothly. Taylor explained that it would be hard to review life on the death-bed and confess sin since it was a time emotions ran high and clear thinking was difficult. Trying to rectify sins would only add stress. Regular reflection in life would take away guilt of sin and lead to a calm, comfortable death. 333 In summary, according to Taylor, what one should do throughout life to overcome fear of death was:

• Despise things of the world, rather, be of the mindset of not minding losing them (money, strength, beauty).

331 Ibid., 14-17; This is not a direct quote, the summaries are adapted by the author; The fourth bullet point is based on Hebrews 13:14.
332 Ibid., 29.
333 Ibid., 31-34.
• Live as a good and “valiant Christian,” which means strongly following the commands in Scripture.

• “Make no excuses to make the desires of life seem reasonable.” Focus should be on heaven and spirituality instead of accumulating wealth and satisfying personal wants.

• Remember it is not a sin to have fear, but focus on the boldness and confidence one can have in the face of death. Confidence was possible and important because it takes into account the assurance of salvation.  

Taylor advocated composure at the time of death so individuals could enjoy the blessings of that event. Death was the passageway to Heaven. Taylor encouraged focus to remain on that goal and to not let fear detract from it.

Nathaniel Hardy (1618-1670) was another Arminian who exhorted believers to have a similar approach to death as Taylor’s plan, which he explained in a funeral sermon published in 1654. Hardy preached that attaining a peaceful end to life was something God ordained. He stated that “we desire to have peace at the end [then one should] live quietly, he should live justly…if you would dye peaceably, live uprightly.” This message was similar to Taylor’s. Dying well was linked to living well. It involved following principles of humbleness, justice and uprightness throughout life. The idea was that adhering to Christian principles throughout life would result in a peaceful end to life.

Taylor also delved into what the death-bed should be like for the dying. When one is in “sickness” (near death), one “should pray, avoid sinning [cursing God, adultery] if it is likely death could suddenly appear,” so one could “at least go to God with

334 Ibid., 68-69. These points are a paraphrase of Taylor; direct quotes from Taylor are noted as such.
335 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. “Nathaniel Hardy;” Hardy was a follower of Henry Hammond, the notable English Arminian theologian.
336 Nathaniel Hardy, A Divine Prospective: Representing the Just Mans Peaceful End (London: 1654), 17.
innocence and fair deportment of thy person in the last scene of thy life." Depending on the severity of sickness, one should use the last moment to ensure that affairs are in order, calmness is obtained, and the advice of physicians followed regarding physical status. Above all, a Christian should pray, to pray specifically and frequently for mercy, grace, comfort, strength, and to affirm faith (fundamentals such as God the Father, Christ is son, Holy Ghost). The individual was also to recite key Scriptures for comfort and focus.

One of Taylor’s prayer examples was:

O most just and merciful Lord God, who hast sent evil desires, sorrow, and fear, trouble and uneasiness, briers, and thorns, and planted them in our houses, and round about our dwellings, to keep sin from our souls, or to drive it thence; I humbly beg of thee that this my sickness may serve the ends of the spirit, and be a messenger of spiritual life, an instrument of reducing me to more religious and sober courses. I say, O Lord, that I am unready and unprepared in my accounts, having thrown away great portions of my time in vanity, and set myself hugely back in the accounts of eternity, and I had need live my life over gain, and live it better; but thy counsels are in the great deep, and thy footsteps in the water; and I know not what thou wilt determine of me. If I die I throw myself into the arms of the holy Jesus, whom I love above all things, and if I perish I know I have deserved it; but thou wilt not reject him that loves thee. But if I recover, I will live, by thy grace and help, to do the work of God, and passionately pursue my interest of heaven, and serve thee in the labour of love with the charities of a holy zeal, and the diligence of a firm and humble obedience. Lord, I will swell in thy temple and in they service; religion shall be my employment, and alms shall be my recreation, and patience shall be my rest, and to do they will shall be my meat and drink, and to live shall be Christ, and then to die shall be gain. ‘o spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen.’ ‘Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.’ Amen.

This was an example of a prayer a sick person could say if hoping for more time to live in order to resolve sin. This is a prayer recognizing transgressions and unpreparedness, and also acknowledges God’s will and punishment due to the individual. The prayer is hoping for recovery so there is time to make amends and live in obedience to God.

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337 Taylor, 74.
338 Ibid., 102.
Taylor anticipated that individuals may be, while they are dying, remorseful over their failures to properly prepare. He outlined how they might express contrition, lean on Christ for forgiveness and reform the way they lived in case of recovery. Here is another example of a prayer:

O Almighty God, thou art the great judge of all the world, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies, the father of men and angels; thou lovest not that a sinner should perish, but delightest in our conversion and salvation, and hast, in our Lord Jesus Christ, established the covenant of repentance, and promised pardon to all them that confess their sins and forsake them; O my God, be thou pleased to work in my what thou hast commanded should be in me. Lord, I am a dry tree, who neither have brought forth fruit unto thee and unto holiness, nor have wept out salutary tears, the instrument of life and restitution, but have behaved myself like an unconcerned person in the ruins and breaches of my soul: but, O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee in a barren and thirsty land where no water is. Lord, give me the grace of tears and pungent sorrow; let my heart be as a land of rivers of waters, and my head a fountain of tears; turn my sin into repentance, and let my repentance proceed to pardon and refreshment. …O Lord, I renounce all affection to sin, and would not buy my health nor redeem my life with doing any thing against the laws of my God, but would rather die than offend thee. O dearest Saviour, have pity upon thy servant; let me, by thy sentence, be doomed to perpetual penance during the abode of this life; let every sigh be the expression of a repentance and every groan an accent of spiritual life, and every stroke of my disease a punishment of my sin and an instrument of pardon; that, at my return to the land of innocence and pleasure, I may eat of the votive sacrifice of the supper of the Lamb, that was, from the beginning of the world, slain for the sins of every sorrowful and returning sinner. O grant the sorrow here and joy hereafter, through Jesus Christ, who is our hope, the resurrection of the dead, the justifier of a sinner, and the glory of all faithful souls. Amen. 339

In this example there is a proclamation of God’s divinity, Christ’s saving grace, personal repentance, a reliance on God’s promises, a rejection of sin and a looking forward to the “joy hereafter” in Heaven. The idea was that these would be prayers to affirm faith and spiritually prepare the individual so there would be boldness in the face of death, or, at least, alleviate the fear of death.

339 Ibid., 191-3.
In *Holy Dying* Taylor also offered instructions for assistants, to those who would attend to the dying on the deathbed or near death. Taylor offered very specific instructions of who needed to be tended to, including scenarios when the sick (dying) are beyond reason, likely in a coma or demented state, but may be able to hear prayers, and to those that are gravely ill but are of right mind and able to converse. He even detailed instructions on how to handle those who were excommunicated and cases of when or when not to give communion. The person assisting the dying toward a good death was to be a support, advocate and intercessor. Edification was to take place through encouraging contrition, reconciliation of sin and confession of everything in memory. The assistant was also to encourage prayer and specifically pray for the dying individual. Here is an example of a prayer Taylor offered to lead the dying man in: “bemired with sins and naked of good deeds, I that am the meat of worms cry vehemently in spirit; cast not me a wretch away from thy face; place me not on the left hand, who with thy hands didst fashion me; but give me rest unto my soul, for thy great mercy’s sake, O Lord.” This is a prayer that acknowledged mortality, confessed sinful nature and pleaded for mercy so that the soul could be united with God in Heaven. Those assisting the dying were to be similar as a counselor. They were to lead the dying through “spiritual remedies” to mitigate fear of death and instill confidence, such as resisting or abstaining from sin as well as encourage fasting, prayer, requesting forgiveness, restitution of wrongs, or acts of virtue to negate crimes.

Assistants to the dying also needed to act as surrogate theologians (if pastors were not available). They were to teach of God’s plan and how it related to the individual at

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340 Ibid., 123.
341 Ibid., 144.
the moments near death. The lessons were to offer “some degree of comfort, or greater
degree of hope” in cases where people were worried about whether or not their sins were
really forgiven. 342 Finally, those tending to the dying were to view the deathbed as a
reminder of God’s providence from the standpoint of a witness. Taylor advocated that
they “lay [their] hands upon [their] mouth, and adore the mysteries of the divine wisdom
and providence, and pray to God to give the dying man rest and pardon, and to ourselves
grace to live well, and the blessings of a holy and a happy death.” 343 They were there to
comfort and guide and at the same time recognize that God was at work within the
situation.

Puritans also conveyed a similar message about the good death. In a devotional
on remembering death, Edward Pearse, a late seventeenth century Puritan theologian,
declared, “To walk with God here on earth, while we live; and to be ready to live with
God for ever in Heaven, when we come to die, is the Great Work we have to do, the
Great Concern we have in mind…” 344 Many other Puritans taught that regular prayer,
reflection on life’s vanity, focusing on the glory of Heaven, and being generous and
repentant helped achieve that idealized end. The moderate Puritan Richard Baxter
exhorted believers to “make reflections and preparation your daily care,” which would
“groundedly and methodically cure these fears [of death].” 345 He taught that one should
be sure of his or her conversion and live out a chaste, holy Christian life so there would
be mental and physical preparedness for death. Death, and its “malignant influence” on

342 Ibid., 133-34.
343 Ibid., 141.
Dewey Wallace (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 220.
345 Baxter, Two Treatises, 71-73.
the soul, would be abated through this formula for proper preparation. The fear of death and the pain it caused was malignant and needed to be cured. The strict Calvinist John Owen echoed these sentiments. The best possible preparation, he believed, was to fulfill God’s will while the opportunity existed, since men’s days were few and their “dismission” to rest was divinely appointed. Owen stated that “you have your season, and you have but your season, neither can you lye down in peace until you have some persuasion that your works as well as your life is at an end.” He encouraged believers to benchmark themselves against other believers and be diligent in work for God because that is the only way to produce meaning in life and attain true rest in death. Working for God throughout life was the best preparation for death in Owen’s view.

In A Token for Children (1672) Puritan nonconformist preacher James Janeway stressed the importance of following the examples set by others already passed away that provided testimony of the reliance on God. Janeway pointed to an example of a child that died young yet remained confident of going to see God. His idea was that walking the path toward death the same way others had, in a way tapping into the wisdom of their experiences (even of a young person), would provide comfort and victory over fear at the end of life.

Some works from Baxter deserve special attention as they are comparable to Taylor’s writings about the good death. One is his Treatise of Death (1672), which included an outline of ten directives to produce a good death. The directives are (quoted from Baxter and listed in summarized form):

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346 Ibid., 74-103.
347 Owen, Dismission to Rest, 11-12, 14-15, 17.
348 Ibid., 14.
1. Make sure that conversion is found (Perhaps this was more critical for the “Saumur” Baxter than more classical Puritans).

2. Live by faith in Christ the Conqueror.

3. Live also by faith in the heavenly glory to come.

4. Labor to increase and exercise Divine Love.

5. Keep conscience clear, or if it be wounded, presently seek the cure. In case someone feels they had done wrong (or been wronged), then that should be made right so not to create consternation.

6. Redeem and improve your precious time.

7. Crucify the flesh, and die to the world.

8. Conform to God in the hatred of sin, and love of holiness; and especially in the point of justice.

9. Consider the restlessness, and troubles of this life, and of the manifold evils that end at Death.

10. Resign personal wills entirely to the will of God, and acquiesce in it [sic] for safety, felicity and rest. 350

These ten directives advocated confirming faith so there is confidence about conversion through being justified by Christ. Being ready for death took preparation throughout life. Baxter also encouraged one to have faith that God loved the individual and remember the promise of Heaven, which would bring rest and relief as the troubles of the world were left behind. He advocated that time while alive be spent making amends and living in obedience to spiritual instruction from Scripture.

Baxter also addressed the topic in “Directions for a Safe and Comfortable Death,” which was a section of The Poor Mans Family Book. In it, he outlined how peace could be obtained during health and near the actual time of death (when “sick”) through

350 Baxter, Two Treatises, 74-102. These are directly quoted from Baxter and presented in summarized form.
following certain principles, such as reaffirming faith, resting in the knowledge of divine purpose, and resisting temptations that would otherwise cause faith to waver. To achieve that end Baxter gave directions to attain and preserve spiritual and emotional comfort, since the time approaching death was when it is particularly needed. After preparation, then, Baxter stated, believers could “confidently deliver up” their souls. His “considerations,” as he termed them, include remembering that mercy can come in the form of sickness. Baxter pointed out that while sudden death may be a mercy, it is equally a mercy to endure sickness, even if painful, since it helps conquer a natural unwillingness to die. He encouraged readers to consider that there is a divine order to life and death and being “sick” was a reminder of what God ordained. Baxter outlined very specific reflections and principles a believer should conjure in their minds and follow while they are on or nearly approaching the death-bed in order to overcome the fear of death. Some of these are as follows (in abridged form):

- Be convinced of personal depravity and the magnitude of salvation. “Renew your repentance.”

- Believe in God, salvation, future glory.

- Reflect on God’s work in your life while you were alive.

- Be penitent and reflect on God’s mercy.

- Be confident in committing your soul into God’s promises.

- Settle affairs so they would not “distract or discompose you” near death -- creates a peace of mind.  

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352 Ibid., 360-423.
These instructions are very similar to what others, whether Puritan or Arminian, outlined. There are certainly faint overtones of free will and election in the language communicating soteriology comparatively. For example original sin and divine sovereignty being the only source of salvation comes through in Baxter’s work, while leaning on God to attain salvation characterizes Taylor’s emphasis. These differences are minor because the crux of the teachings is the same. When it came to following commands in Scripture for Christian living, the messages were synonymous from Puritans and Arminians. Both advocated piety for the sake of obedience, as works and actions were not issues that had any effect on salvation. Salvation was dependent on faith, even if they disagreed about the freedom of the will that chose salvation or were predestined for election. Nonetheless, the aspects of Christian living were similarly conceived of by Puritans and Arminians as they encouraged the faithful to adhere to them until death. The prescription of principles to follow, prayers to say and ideas to reflect on are clearly similar in all the works. There was a common message about a good death coming from a life-long perspective of mortality, spiritual readiness, and when on the death-bed meditating and praying to focus on God and being comforted from fear.

IDEALIZED GOOD DEATH: EXAMPLES OF INFLUENTIAL THEOLOGIANS

The deaths of prominent theologians were recorded by their followers. The accounts idealize aspects of the deaths followers wanted to emphasize, which provides an opportunity to see how the good death was imagined in seventeenth-century England. In particular, the message that stands out is that theologians’ faith and commitment to
enduring the Christian life produced confidence as they approached death while at the same time there was no regret about what happened in life. Physically, even though the dying suffered pain or sickness, the focus on a blissful afterlife allowed for a peaceful end of life.

One notable example is the death of prominent theologian William Laud. Laud hoped for Heaven and a blissful afterlife, which was reflected in the recorded moments of his final minutes of life as he faced execution. His death was emphasized as peaceful and tame because of his spiritual assurance, regardless of what was to happen to him physically. The former archbishop of Canterbury held to apostolic succession and stood in opposition to Puritanism, a stance which contributed to the conflict of the Civil War. Theologically he was known for his staunch Arminianism and commitment to the High Church, which set the tone for Arminianism in the Church of England after the Restoration through the end of the century. As with most notable theologians, his words and actions (as perceived by his supporters) likely served as a model for followers, or, were at least written by his followers to serve as such.

Even though Laud did not live into the later part of the seventeenth century, many of his works, including an account of his death, were published in the decades after his execution for treason on 10 January 1645. His final sermon, speech and prayers spoken right before his beheading were printed shortly after his death and reprinted again at the Restoration in 1660. This was produced based on how a hired printer heard him. Laud had personally requested that the printer John Hinde record his words and “not let any

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353 According to the British Library’s English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) Laud’s funeral sermon, The Last Advice of William Laud. (London, 1644), which contained an account of his death, was published 3 times by 1700.
wrong be done him by any phrase in false copies.”

The work was then published by “Peter Cole, at the sign of the Printing Press in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange, over against Pope s- head-alley.” While we cannot confidently believe every word was recorded verbatim because they were filtered, we get a good picture of how supporters likely interpreted his beliefs and approach to death. More important, we can tell what his supporters wanted to remember and accentuate, which likely served as a model for them to follow.

First, Laud stated, “I hope that God is bringing me to the Land of Promise, for that was the way by which of old he led his people” Laud began with emphasizing the hope he had to go to Heaven since he was a believer. He followed this up with comparing himself with saints of the past. He did use the opportunity to defend the king, ask God to spare London, and warn listeners of God’s justice. However the main theme of this final statement and prayer is his readiness for the afterlife. So while we see language affirming his loyalty to England, aversion to popish superstition, and innocence of the charge of treason, he weaves the point of his statements back to being “forgiven first of God, and then of every man, whether I have offended him or no.”

Laud desired affirmation of being part of the Church, which is presumably a response to charges against him:

The last particular for I am not willing to be tedious, I shall hasten to go out of this miserable world, is my self, and I beseech you, as many as are within hearing, observe me; I was born and baptized in the bosom of the Church of England, as it stands yet established by Law, in that Profession I have ever since

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354 Laud, *The Last Advice of William Laud.* (London, 1644), 1; Laud specifies that he hired John Hinde for recording purposes.
355 Ibid.
356 Ibid., 2.
357 Ibid., 3.
358 Ibid., 7.
lived, and in that profession of the Protestant Religion here established I come now to die … I desire it may be remembred, I have alwayes lived in the Protestant Religion established in England, and in that I come now to die. 359

In Laud’s final prayer, he stated:

O eternal God and merciful Father, look down upon me in mercy, in the riches and fullness of all thy mercys look upon me, but not till thou hast nailed my sins to the Cross of Christ; look upon me, but not till thou has bathed me in the bloud of Christ, or till I have hid my self in the wounds of Christ, that so the punishment that is due to my sins may passe away and go over me. 360

Laud sought God’s mercy. That idea, of God being able to satisfy punishment of sin through Christ, was important to Laud. He also added that the “word [of assurance] is the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that alone.” 361

Laud then came to the end of his sermon, speech and prayers, and proclaimed his last words prior to the ax being swung, which was the often evoked phrase “Lord receive my soul.” 362 These are fitting words to capture Laud’s beliefs, hope, and comfort in a succinct phrase. He wanted to peacefully accept his own death, tie up loose ends and gain acceptance in the eyes of God. In this case it was relative to his status in the eyes of

359 Ibid., 5-6.
360 Ibid., 7.
361 Ibid., 8.
362 Ibid., 8; These last words compare with other theologians that were executed, including those from early in the Reformation. An example is found in John Foxe Actes and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorables, happening in the Church with an vniversall history of the same (London: 1583), 1,770 (in book 11) where Foxe reported the executions of Bishops Ridley and Latimer during the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary. The book is also known as Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and had four editions (1563, 1570, 1576 and 1583). It was reprinted four times in the last half of the seventeenth century (according to EEBO), which shows there was a degree of interest in that time period too. Foxe’s report of the final moments of Ridley and Latimer’s lives was: “Then brought they a fagot kindled with fire, and layd the same downe at D. Ridleys feete. To whome Maister Latymer spake in this manner: Be of good comfort maister Ridley, and play the man: wee shall this day light such a candle by Gods grace in England, as (I trust) shall neuer be put out. And so the fire being geuen vnto them, when D. Ridley saw the fire flaming vp toward hym, he cryed with a wonderfull lowd voice: In manus tuas Domine, commendo spiritum meum, Domine recipe spiritum meum and after repeated this latter part often in English: Lord, Lord receyue my spirit. M. Latymer crying as vehemently on the other side: O Father of Heauen receyue my soule: who receyued the flame as it were embrasing of it.” These final words compare to what Laud proclaimed at his execution as well, even though the religious situation was different. The words and actions reported by followers (whether of Laud, Latimer or Ridley), emphasize the desire of God receiving their soul and confidence shown during execution.

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the Church of England, the people, and, most importantly to him, before God. Laud wanted assurance of what was to come in the afterlife, which was the hope that God would extend mercy. The confidence in Laud’s approach to death was recorded as the writer perceived things, but this reveals the characteristics idealized by his followers as Laud faced death.

A comparative testimonial of John Bunyan’s death offers a glimpse into how death was modeled from a Puritan perspective. Bunyan’s death in 1688 is recounted within the 1692 edition of his own work (inserted by his followers), specifically the popular autobiography chronicling Bunyan’s spiritual progression titled *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners: In A Faithful account of the Life and Death of John Bunyan.*[^363] It was first published in 1666, expanded upon in another edition in 1680, and then published again six more times before 1700.[^364] In the 1692 edition the narrative is continued by an anonymous author, likely a follower of Bunyan who oversaw the publication, and added the description of Bunyan’s death. As with Laud’s case, we can see what was pictured as ideal in the case of a notable religious figure’s death. According to the account, Bunyan reportedly caught “a violent fever” while returning back to London from travels and being “overtaken with excessive rains” and within ten days died. Bunyan reportedly bore the sickness with “much constancy and patience.”[^365]

The report went on to state that:

> [Bunyan] expressed himself as if he desired nothing more than to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, in that case esteeming death as gain, and life only a tedious felicity expected; and finding his vital strength decay, having settled his mind and

[^364]: This was obtained through a search in *Early English Books Online* on all publications of Bunyan’s *Grace Abounding.*
affairs, as well as the shortness of his time, and the violence of his disease would admit, with a constant and Christian patience, he resigned his soul into the hands of his most merciful Redeemer, following his pilgrim from the City of Destruction to the New Jerusalem...He died at the house of one Mr. Straddocks, a grocer, at the Star on Snowlhill, in the parish of St. Sepulchre London, on the 12th of August 1688, and in the 60 year of his age, after ten days sickness; and was buried...where he sleeps to the morning of the resurrection, in hopes of a glorious rising to an incorruptible immortality of joy and happiness.366

This testimonial of Bunyan’s death, as with Laud’s, is likely predisposed toward what the author wanted to emphasize as good and ideal in the Puritan reformer’s death. While we cannot rely on the text as an accurate account because of that, we can still see it as representative of how Bunyan’s followers viewed and remembered his death. It shows another peaceful, idealized death that was calm, firm footed on faith and affirmed God’s design for salvation and eventual resurrection, where Bunyan sleeps “in hopes of a glorious rising.” Bunyan was reported to be confident, prepared, cognizant of the reality of his impending death, and dependent on “his most merciful Redeemer” to receive his soul with surety.367 This could plausibly be credited as a by-product of his Calvinism. However, Laud was equally reliant on his redeemer for salvation and placed his faith in future hope and the glory of Heaven too.

The differences between these Puritan and Arminian examples were non-existent. This evidence further shows the similarity between the Puritan and Arminian conceptions of a good death. It was one that was aware of God’s purpose and confident of destination in the afterlife so that the dying could be certain and emotionally at peace even if physical pains and sicknesses were severe and distracting near the moments of death. The good death was one that was a testimony of the dying person’s faith to survivors.

366 Ibid., 190-1.
367 Ibid., 191.
TEACHINGS TO MAKE DEATH FAMILIAR:
USING THE DEAD TO TEACH THE LIVING

Another theme in teachings was that death should be familiar in a physical and spiritual sense. The message was that physically, one should remember mortality and spiritually, the hope of Heaven should ease concerns about dying. Both Puritan and Arminian preachers used the occasion of funerals specifically to preach and publish about these themes. The focus of funeral sermons was on the survivors so that death would be more recognizable to them. Survivors were to grieve and express sorrow and the recently departed served as a reminder to the living of the reality of dying. Along with recognizing the death’s inevitability, the lessons were that there was hope in the afterlife and assurance of God’s control. The dead person, who was the reason there was a funeral occasion, became the subject by which to teach survivors. Elements of the way the recently departed approached death, such as being confident, prayerful, or hopeful, were emphasized by preachers in sermons and linked to reminders of religious promises about Heaven. The main point of sermons was that death should be familiar to survivors, which would help them alleviate sorrow and be more prepared on their eventual end of life journey. As with the idealized good death, this theme was similarly presented by both Puritans and Arminians. These elements will be analyzed utilizing examples from both religious groups.

The Puritan Baxter, in a funeral sermon preached to people in the city of Worcester, quite directly declared what the point of the message was. He stated, “I thought it meet to direct in first to your hands, and to take this opportunity, plainly and seriously to exhort you in some matters that your present and everlasting peace is much
concerned in.”\textsuperscript{368} He went on to remind his grieving listeners that “it is God’s Prerogative over all his Creatures, to dispose of them how, and when he will.” God, in his sovereignty, appointed everyone’s time to die. Further, Baxter’s used it as a lesson on salvation’s benefits, teaching that even though “death’s sting is terrible,” the impact of that sting is taken away through resolving the problem of sin.\textsuperscript{369} The message was the same when preached by an Arminian. For example, Isaac Basire, an Arminian Church of England clergyman stated that his objective was to remind listeners of the brevity of life to be prepared for death. He preached that “with what our living faces seem to be now, to what all our dead faces shall be, must be then (God knows how soon).”\textsuperscript{370} The message was that death was the inevitable end of all people, and God had foreknowledge of that event, which was his appointed time – it “must be then.”

The dying process of the recently departed served as an example for congregants to follow (or not) in funeral sermons. The dead were simply remembered in sermons to the extent they assisted the living through lesson or example. Sermons contained a sort of public announcement or testimonial of how a good death was demonstrated. William Bates (1625-1699), a Puritan, specified in a funeral sermon that the objective was to communicate and observe through the deceased person’s life “wisdom, the true spiritual wisdom that directs us to our last and blessed end.”\textsuperscript{371} Basire, an Arminian, similarly stated that the deceased “speaketh out mortality to us all, so many funerals, so many

\textsuperscript{368} Baxter, \textit{Two Treatises}, 1.
\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 110-111.
\textsuperscript{370} Isaac Basire, \textit{The Dead Mans Real Speech: A Funeral Sermon Preached on Hebr. XI. 4} (London: 1673), 2.
warning pieces to us all to prepare for our last and greatest issue.”372 The individual who recently died was in the funeral sermon as the subject by which to prepare the living for death.

In another interesting example the Puritan Baxter’s funeral sermon focused on “some imitable passages” of a recently deceased woman’s life as an example for others to follow in preparation for their own deaths.373 Interestingly, he chose a woman to emphasize exemplary character, spirituality and, presumably, an approach to death which could be imitated. The fact that it is a woman elevated is interesting because preachers seem to be saying that if women could demonstrate exemplary character and confidence at death then so could men. Baxter was not alone. The model was not unusual. Approximately 20% of the funeral sermons available in *Early English Books Online* for the last half of the seventeenth century were about women.374 From that same period about 25% of the sermons were about clergy that had passed away, and the remaining number were either generic sermons about dying, such as templates for clergy to use, or were about other men. It is remarkable that nearly the same number of sermons about women’s deaths were published as about clergy who had died. This shows an interest in highlighting the death of a woman just about as often as a preacher as a way to teach

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372 Basire, 2-3.
373 Baxter, *Two Treatises*, 150-1. The funeral was for a woman by the name of Elizabeth Baker, wife of Joseph Baker, who was part of Baxter’s congregation.
374 32 of 161 funeral sermons as identified by keywords in *Early English Books Online* from 1640 – 1700 were about women. About 25%, or 40 were about clergy that died. There were a few generic sermons that could serve as templates, while the remainder had to do with men in society that passed away. Some examples for funeral sermons about women include: Henry Godman, *A Funeral Sermon Preached at Deptford June 3, 1688 Upon the Occasion of the Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Kilbury* (London: 1688); Edward Reynolds, *Mary Magdalens Love to Christ: Opened in a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mistris Elizabeth Thomason* (London:1659); Philip Lamb, *A Funeral Sermon After the Interment of Mrs. Sarah Lye* (London: 1679); Joseph Hill, *The Providence of God in Sudden Death Ordinary and Extraordinary Vindicated and Improved in a Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Mary Reye* (1685); Robert Franklin, *Death in Triumph Over the Most Desirable Ones as Presented in a Funeral Sermon at the Solemn Interment of a Dearly Beloved Wife, Mrs. Mary Parry* (London: 1683).
listeners and readers about their examples. Preachers gave voice, almost a sort of public announcement, of the dying person’s sentiments and spiritual soundness.\(^{375}\) In these instances of women as the subject, the same pattern of the sermons exists where the recently departed was elevated for her character as death was approached and the lesson was directed to the living to be prepared for their own death and entry into the afterlife.

Baxter elevated Elizabeth Baker’s death as one leading to “saints everlasting rest.” Baxter credits many things for her successful death, from her preparation to character in life. He specifically highlights her self-denial, meekness, humility, constancy and diligence in doing her part of the family duties as the main principles of her holiness, which also drove her family to God. Mrs. Baker also read Scripture for “use and practice,” which, to Baxter, enabled her to serve as a spiritual guide and admonisher to her family.\(^{376}\) These character traits, presented as devotion to the principles and application of Scripture, Baxter proposed as the key for a proper death.

Baxter also recounted the actual moment of her death. He specifically preached:

At last came that death to summon her soul away to Christ, for which she had seriously been preparing, and which she oft called a dark entry to her Fathers Palace. After the death of her Children, when she seemed to be somewhat repaired after her last delivery, a violent Convulsion suddenly surprised her, which in a few dayes brought her to her end. Her understanding, by the fits, being as last debilitated, she finding it somewhat hard to speak sensibly, excused it, and said, [I shall ere long speak another language] which were the last words which she spake with a tongue of flesh, and lying speechless eighteen hours after, she departed August 17. 1659. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea faith the spirit that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”\(^{377}\)

\(^{375}\) Elizabeth A. Hallam, “Turning the hourglass: gender relations at the deathbed in early modern Canterbury,” Mortality 1, no. 1 (1996), 74-5 – testimonials of the dying individual’s gestures and words on the deathbed were a sort of public announcement.

\(^{376}\) Baxter, Two Treatises, 151.

\(^{377}\) Ibid., 156.
Mrs. Baker was a model of a good death to Baxter. He credited her living well as the reason she had a good death. And it was because of her close relationship with Christ that she was able to have peace on the deathbed, even though she had a fitful end, marked by a convulsion that put her into a semi-vegetative state, lying in bed and barely able to speak. Even though there were problematic aspects to her physical death, such as the “violent convulsion,” the “darkness” she was experiencing, and becoming “debilitated,” they did not end up leading to death lacking in good character. Baxter sought to familiarize his faithful with what the scene at death was like and used the opportunity to stress what it took to have a good death. There were also many sermons from Arminians with women and men as the subjects that contained the same messages.

John Kettlewell (1653-95), an Arminian Church of England clergyman and theological writer, presented a sermon in 1688 about Lord and Lady Digby. In that sermon he elevated both the husband and wife in similar manners. Their lives, he claimed, “have more power and efficacy [deceased] than examples of saints living” since they were lessons on how to live so people might “imitate their actions [and] virtues.” For Lady Digby, specifically, Kettlewell specified that the “righteous has hope in death…hope makes death a desirable thing; it is a privilege to the believers.” He praised Lady Digby’s faith and used it as an example of hope living believers should have as they approached death. The example about Digby shows how character traits of

378 Some examples of sermons that follow this pattern of highlighting the character and reliance on God by a woman as she faced death from other Puritan preachers include: Daniel Burgess, A Funeral Sermon Preached Upon the Death of Mrs. Sarah Bull (London: 1694); Daniel Burgess, The Way to Peace: A Funeral Sermon on Job 22:21, Preached Upon the Decease of the Right Honourable Elizabeth, Countess of Ranalagh (London: 1695); Richard Baxter, A True Believer’s Choice and Pleasure Instanced in the Exemplary Life of Mrs. Mary Coxe, the Late Wife of Doctor Thomas Coxe, Preached at her Funeral (London: 1680).
380 Ibid., 3-4.
women approaching death were elevated, such as faithfulness to God, diligence in service, and peace as death was faced.\textsuperscript{381} Doctrinally, Kettlewell’s sermon was an affirmation of God’s will, in terms of “divine prospective,” or the “providence of God” behind a person’s appointed time to die, as well as God’s involvement in the dying individual’s life, such as by bestowing grace so the person could enter Heaven as well as have physical sufferings alleviated.\textsuperscript{382}

Another theme in familiarizing people about death was to teach about its relevance, specifically to explain why it was something believers needed to endure. Again, this is a topic similarly presented by Puritans and Arminians. The main point is that God, in His providence, appointed a time for believers to die and, by design, respite occurred in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{383} After death, and after living a life of obedience, believers would be dismissed to rest in death. This was the message of a funeral sermon preached in 1651 by Puritan divine John Owen in honor of Henry Ireton, Lord Deputy of Ireland and Oliver Cromwell’s son-in-law. The message of rest for God’s laboring saints was emphasized. This sermon was preached to the high end of society, to those that were related to or privileged to operate within political circles. Owen was a popular theologian though and his followers were likely exposed to the prints of his sermon. Owen

\textsuperscript{381} Peter Samways, \textit{The Wise and Faithful Steward} (London: 1657); Edward Reynolds, \textit{Mary Magdalens Love to Christ: Opened in a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mistris Elizabeth Thomason} (London:1659); Samways and Reynolds are Arminian clergy, according to the \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography}.

\textsuperscript{382} Philip Lamb, \textit{A Funeral Sermon After the Interment of Mrs. Sarah Lye} (London: 1679); Nathaniel Hardy, \textit{A Divine Prospective: Representing the Just Man’s Peaceful End} (London: 1654); Joseph Hill, \textit{The Providence of God in Sudden Death Ordinary and Extraordinary Vindicated and Improved in a Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Mary Reye} (1685); Robert Franklin, \textit{Death in Triumph Over the Most Desirable Ones as Presented in a Funeral Sermon at the Solemn Interment of a Dearly Beloved Wife, Mrs. Mary Parry} (London: 1683).

\textsuperscript{383} Hill, \textit{The Providence of God} – this is an Arminian preacher who emphasized that divine providence is behind a person’s time to die; Christopher Love, \textit{The Natural Mans Case Stated...Whereunto is Annexed the Saints Triumph Over Death} (London: 1652) – Love, a Puritan, specified the divine order in life and death.
celebrated Ireton’s life, but used the occasion to preach about what Daniel 12:13 said about death. The verse states, “But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in the lot at the end of the days.” The verse is communicating that the dead would be in a state of rest until the end of time. Owen pointed out that the gifts of God shone in this deceased saint as he stated, “[Ireton] ever counted in his wisdom to look after the name of God and the testification of his will.”

384 The link is made to Daniel’s life to emphasize the point of proper dismissal from the work of God to rest.

Owen’s lesson was that “rest” is a fitting term to describe death when life is full of Godly traits such as wisdom, love and righteousness.385 And of course God’s sovereignty is at work in this plan. Edmund Calamy (1600-66), an exiled Huguenot pastor living in England, in a funeral sermon compared rest in death to sleep since it was common to all people and in sleep one is free of cares.386 Calamy, similarly to Owen, emphasized that sleeping a “happy death” came as a result of working hard for Christ, living humbly and avoiding too much pleasure during life.387

Owen emphasized that “there is an appointed season when the Saints of the most eminent abilities in the most usefull Employments shall receive their dismission.”388 He thought Ireton’s life was properly lived due to his sacrifice and commitment to the will of God. He highlighted this not to perform a “ceremonie” to simply honor Ireton’s memory, but to commit listeners (and readers) to God so they are prepared for their eternal

384 Owen, Dismission to Rest, 6-7.
385 Ibid.
386 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. “Edmund Calamy;” Edmund Calamy, The Saints Rest: Or Their Happy Sleep in Death (London:1651), 7; It is estimated that 40-50,000 French Huguenots came to Britain in the later seventeenth century, most of which settled in London – See Harding, 100.
387 Calamy, The Saints Rest, 4-13, 16-18.
388 Owen, Dismission to Rest, 9.
condition by following Ireton’s example. His hope was that survivors would think about “rest” in death as being set in God’s appointed time and a reward to faithful living, something they should be familiar with as it was their destiny as well.

A similar message was presented by Arminian John Kettlewell in his funeral sermons about Lord and Lady Digby. In it he established that “He who has led a Godly Life…it is the only sure ground of hope for dying persons. He must have lived holily, who would dye happily.” Kettlewell preached that living godly was the key for dying well. Throughout the sermon he praised the deceased individual’s “virtue and goodness…talents, and [having] attained a maturity in goodness. Her [Lady Digby] piety was great towards Almighty God.” He went on to emphasize that she controlled her desires, was humble, and looked forward to Heaven. Kettlewell built up his point to show that this led to preparation, and then to reprieve in the afterlife when God “sent [His] summons…[and] call’d her in to come before him.” A person who lived a life as a Christian would experience rest in the next life, which was appointed by God.

The same message is presented by Arminian Nathaniel Hardy in a funeral sermon in 1654. Hardy emphasized that perfecting faith over life, specifically working to be “perfect towards God, [and] towards Men” by striving for piety, justice and obedience to God’s law, was key for receiving reward of rest. He stated that “the particular blessing of peace, which ever accompanies the upright Mans end.”

389 Ibid., 224.
391 Ibid., 17-8.
392 Ibid., 20-2.
393 Ibid., 31.
394 Hardy, A Divine Prospective, 8.
395 Ibid., 15.
The message was the same in either an Arminian or Puritan point of view as clergy familiarized their faithful with death. People that recently died were the subjects to showcase what it took to receive peace and rest at death, which was a blessing from God and a product of His divine ordination. The key message was to live a life embodying the principles of inward renewal based on Christianity, a familiar topic of the *ars moriendi*. Theologians taught about being familiar with “rest” as an aspect of God’s design. Their goal was to familiarize the faithful with God’s plan and emphasize respite in death as a reward for a lifetime of enduring the Christian life.

Pastors, both Arminian and Puritan, sought to help listeners and readers prepare for death by increasing knowledge about these topics as well as to instill confidence about what will happen in the afterlife. The teaching objectives were to live life as a preparatory action for death and to be cognizant of the divine purpose in death, specifically about the promises of rewards and rest for believers. Preachers sought to familiarize the faithful about death through funeral sermons, specifically about physical mortality as well as spiritual destiny that would bring reprieve and reward for commitment to God.

**TEACHINGS ABOUT DEALING WITH THE DEAD:**

**GRIEVING AND MEMORY TO HELP PREPARE FOR DEATH**

Another theme in teachings and funeral sermons was the behavior of survivors when dealing with the dead. Since intervention and assistance to the soul recently passed was not an option, the instructions for how to mourn publicly and privately focused on
the emotions and beliefs of survivors. The idea, from both Puritan and Arminian perspectives, was that it was natural and right to mourn and weep over someone who recently died. The moments after death were to be a joyous occasion since the recently departed resided in Heaven, but the tone of that joy was bittersweet because death created permanent separation. Taylor, for example, stated:

Solemn and appointed mournings are good expressions of our dearness to the departed soul, and of his worth, and our value of him; and it hath its praise in nature, and in manners, and in public customes; but the praise of it is not in the Gospel, that is, it hath no direct and proper uses in religion...for if the dead did die in the Lord, then there is joy to him.\(^{396}\)

There is importance in the expression of loss by survivors. It highlighted the worth of the deceased individual, which was particularly valuable if it was in light of his or her faith. However, mourning was encouraged to be tempered. The idea that the dead person was now experiencing “joy” in the afterlife was a reason to not dwell on the sorrow of separation. Fellow Arminian Nathaniel Hardy (1618-70) preached a similar message:

Let not then his children or allies grieve beyond measure, because not without hope: let them not spend too many teares in vaine upon his grave, but rather let them, and all we who know him, esteem his memory blessed, and though we can no longer mark him going before us, or behold him conversing among us, yet let us still remember him, and that so, as to resemble him: let us to imitate those graces which here he practiced, that we many come to last be with him, in that glory whereof he is now posseth [sic] forever.\(^{397}\)

Hardy’s message was the same as Taylor’s. Grieving was expected. The question was not that tears would or should be shed. The advice was that mourning be tempered. Memories of the deceased should not invoke sorrow, rather they were to spur reflection on the imitable aspects of the person’s life that had passed.

\(^{396}\) Taylor, 149.  
\(^{397}\) Hardy, *A Divine Prospective*, 30.
There is also a reminder of the hope of the afterlife, as Taylor also stated. Remembering that the individual resided in “glory” would help lessen the severity of grief, as well as the hope that there would be reunion in Heaven. Theologians taught their listeners and readers that the departed were experiencing relief and joy in Heaven (their bodies were in a new state in glory) to provide solace and, over time, decrease the severity of grief. The Arminian Isaac Basire succinctly reminded that there was “joyful meaning of the state of glory” that the deceased were experiencing in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{398} Even in the case where the dead were not Christians, which was a just cause for deep sorrow initially because of eternal separation, reason and logic were to enable survivors to recognize that the dead were beyond reach. Thus a drawn out period of mourning would not helpful or beneficial to the survivor.\textsuperscript{399}

The Puritan point of view was the same. John Owen acknowledged that one would need to weep “a while,” but that after burial and completion of the funeral, there should be a bottoming out of grief and instead a dwelling on the idea that the dead are comforted and resting in the afterlife, assuming he or she was a Christian. Owen expected that survivors’ recognition that believers were enjoying the “better things” God had in store for them would offer consolation and healing from separation.\textsuperscript{400} Immoderate and unreasonable grief was ill-placed and indecent. To avoid negative aspects of grieving, such as excessive morning and overwhelming feelings of loss, one should be thankful for the divine order over life and through reflection produce inward

\textsuperscript{398} Basire, 13.
\textsuperscript{399} Taylor, 149-50.
\textsuperscript{400} Owen, Dismisson to Rest, 18-19.
change to shift from grief to acceptance.\textsuperscript{401} One’s behavior would demonstrate visible sorrow and tears but would be mild mannered and controlled.

The Puritan Samuel Annesley (1620-99) echoed Owen’s message. Annesley was a nonconformist minister who associated with Baxter and Owen on religious issues, such as the idea of toleration and religious authority.\textsuperscript{402} In a 1692 funeral sermon, Annesley reminded his audience that the deceased person was “now in glory.”\textsuperscript{403} This was to be a comfort to survivors, specifically that the dead individual was experiencing a blissful afterlife in Heaven. Remembering that, according to Annesley, should “render his memory [precious]” and not provoke sorrow.\textsuperscript{404} Similarly, Puritan Robert Franklin (1603-84) specified in a funeral sermon that “loss [of the individual] was much lamented, but the grief of dear relations was much allayed by the strong desire and comfortable hopes of the deceased being with Christ.”\textsuperscript{405} Mourning was accepted and acknowledged as a reaction to dealing with the loss of an individual. Grieving, though, would be alleviated by dwelling on the state of the individual in the afterlife, specifically that he or she was in Heaven with Christ.

Preachers taught that the emotion of grief was a reminder that Heaven, and not earth, was one’s perfect state because that would be the place no sorrow was experienced. Directions about grieving from seventeenth-century theologians are rather interesting in this regard. They link emotion with Biblical teaching about a blissful eternity. Feelings of mourning produced healing from loss and should shift focus toward things eternal and

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\textsuperscript{401} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{402} Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. “Samuel Annesley.”
\textsuperscript{403} Samuel Annesley, The Life and Funeral Sermon of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Brand (London: 1692), 3.
\textsuperscript{404} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{405} Robert Franklin, Death in Triumph (London: 1683), 1.
\end{flushright}
remind of personal mortality. Guidance from both Arminians and Puritans were synonymous regarding grieving.

In terms of interment, teachings from preachers emphasized simplicity, respect for the dead and the use of the funeral process to teach the living about mortality and their place in the afterlife by both Arminian and Puritan perspectives. Taylor, for instance, stated that “it is good that the body be kept veiled and secret, and not exposed to curious eyes or the dishonours wrought by the changes of death discerned and stared upon by impertinent persons.”\textsuperscript{406} This was for the sake of the dignity of the individual recently passed, so not to distort the memory of what one was like while alive with the grotesqueness decay wrought. Taylor further encouraged a swift burial process where interment was aligned with “the manner of the country, and the laws of the place and the dignity of the person.”\textsuperscript{407} This followed the same pattern reformers had advocated a century earlier, of quick and simple burials that allotted time for grieving for the benefit of the survivor. This pattern reveals that the emotions of the survivors and memory of the deceased meant more than the corpse itself.

Additional directions regarding the funeral and burial process excluded acts of “superstition” or vain expense. The funeral ceremony could not contain Catholic practice where rituals, such as prayers or masses for the soul, if practiced would impact the soul of the dead.\textsuperscript{408} Owen, for example, cautioned not to fall into belief of Purgatory or

\textsuperscript{406} Taylor, 152.
\textsuperscript{407} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{408} This is in line with the Order for the Burial of the Dead in the Book of Common Prayer (1662), Part 26, which outlines the burial ceremony as a simple process of congregating in the church for Scripture reading and then proceeding to the graveyard for burial. In the last part of the ceremony, those collected together by the grave are reminded that the recently deceased individual, although “depart[ed] this life [is at [rest in him],” which is a reference to being in heaven and not in need of intercession.
“superstition,” such as by hoping to affect the placement of the dead in the afterlife or through thinking they could interact with the dead in some mystical manner.409

Along these lines Taylor reminded readers that survivors served “decency and fame” with funerals and burials, but nothing else. He cogently stated:

Dead persons have religion passed upon them, and a solemn reverence; and if we think a ghost beholds us, it may be we have upon us the impressions likely to be made by love, and fear, and religion. However, we are sure that God sees us, and the world sees us; and if it be matter of duty towards our dead, God will exact it; if it be matter of kindness, the world will: and as religion is the band of that, so fame and reputation are the endearment of this.410

According to Taylor, when a spirit or remnant of the recently departed was felt by an individual, it was the result of imagination.

There was a distinct honor to be given to the Christian dead. Burial was typically in a churchyard or holy ground, which were fields sown with “seeds of the resurrection” because Christian bodies were interred there until the Last Day.411 Burial was an act of reverence for the dead, and a reminder to the living about mortality and eternal issues. Teachings followed along these lines. They affirmed doctrine and encouraged practice in simple, reflective form.

SUMMARY

In summary, the good death was an ideal that preachers taught about. A good death was something to be achieved over a lifetime of preparation. The dead themselves were used by preachers as a subject by which to advocate for preparation and familiarize

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409 Owen, Dismission to Rest, 22.
410 Taylor, 156.
411 Ibid., 153.
people with mortality. The subject of proper grieving was another topic by which to teach about imminent death and being ready for it. Loved ones and clergy were to serve as attendants for the dying. Their role was strictly one of edification. Contemporary teachings held to the separation of the living and the dead with the soul being permanently positioned in Heaven or Hell, so there was no opportunity for assistance once the body breathed its last. Purgatory, once embedded in the deepest recesses of Christian belief, was a distant memory at this point in England.\textsuperscript{412} The “third place” in the afterlife had offered some hope to survivors in the Catholic tradition to assist their loved ones in life beyond the grave through a protracted progression to Heaven.\textsuperscript{413} Now, with the destinations down to two and the time available for aid clearly limited, pastors and family took seriously their job of educating and encouraging dying persons towards a good death. Arminians felt this was an issue of salvation while Calvinists were concerned about one’s standing in front of God and the potential for rewards that could be bestowed in the afterlife. The distinction of why it was motivated did not come through within the teachings. The practical instructions to approach death were the same from either theological viewpoint.

In the seventeenth century, the job of guiding the dying toward a good death was mandated by God. Jeremy Taylor nicely summarized this idea:

God, who hath made no new covenant with dying persons distinct from the covenant of the living, had also appointed no distinct sacraments for them, no other manner of usages but such as are common to all the spiritual necessities of living and healthful persons…God hath appointed his servants to minister to the necessities, and eternally to bless, and prudently to guide, and wisely to judge, concerning souls.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{412} Le Goff, \textit{The Birth of Purgatory}, 356.
\textsuperscript{413} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{414} Taylor, 115.
The dying, as encouraged by Taylor, were to focus on the promises of God, have prayers said with them by clergy and family, and settle their affairs while time still allowed.

The point of all this was two-fold. First, it was to ease the fears of the dying so a good death would not be hindered. Secondly, and possibly just as important, was that the dying were to leave a testimony of their faith to the living. Funeral practices were kept simple and succinct, a legacy from the early Reformation where “popish superstition” was removed from ritual. The focus at the funeral was to be on the memory and testimony of the recently departed for the survivor’s benefit. The deceased individual appeared in funeral sermons to serve as a reminder of mortality and testimony of faithfulness to God – both exhortations for survivors to reflect upon in their own lives. Preachers emphasized that survivors should reflect on the life lived and the faith demonstrated all the way unto death by the recently deceased. Puritan and Arminian pastors similarly took advantage of the opportunity to point mourners in the direction of the dead, not only toward remembering their eventual entry into the grave, but towards faithful and holy living that would reap rewards in the next life. Teachings were optimistic and hopeful about death fulfilling a promise of salvation.415 Both Puritans and Arminians emphasized God’s promises, hoped for eternal bliss, and contemplated the joy being experienced by saints (believers) already in Heaven so that the fear of death could be minimized or overshadowed and a good death obtained.

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415 Also observed in teachings from sermons by Wunderli and Broce, 275.
CHAPTER V

WILLS AND LAST TESTAMENTS: APPROACHING DEATH – PROPER PREPARATION AND HOPEFUL EXPECTATION
In the name of god a men I Alice Ryman in the conti of serri spenster being in perfect helth both of bodi and mind out of the sense of mortality do ordaine this my last will and testament in manner an forme following forst I resigne my souel into the hands of all mighty god not doubting but by the merits death an intercesion of Jesus Christ it shall be eternally saved my body i commit to the grond to be interred with that decency wich shall sem good to my executor not doubting bot that at the last day it shalt be reunified with my souel and therwith injoy a kingdom wich god prepared for me As for thos worldly wealth wich god has givin me I dispose it as followeth I giv an bequeath to my cosen William Ryman ten pounds to my cosen Mary Williams ten pounds to my cosen Elisabeth Terland ten pounds to my cosen Hennery Wiatt ten pounds to my cosen frances berges ten pounds and my bed and all that belongs to it to my cosen Tommas Wiatt ten pounds to my cosen Bennedectay Wiatt ten pounds to my Berother Homfris to sons if the[y] be a liaf ten shellings a pes to my cosen Charles Hind forty shellengs to Blanch Williams teu shellengs to mis Redman ten shellengs to Mr Edmard Rogers ten shellings to my Henery Rogers and his wif ten shellengs a pes to bi them rings to twenty por wimen to shellings a pes my detes and leges and funarel and all discorged my will is that my legeses may be pad as for as the monni can be got pad in all thes things Being dischargd wot is left than ded belong to me i giv wolly to my cosen frances wiatt wedow. Wom i mack my houlle excetrex in wettnes ther of i hav set my hand on set may the eight day in the yer of our lord god on thousand six hondred and eighty one

Alice Ryman

416 DW/PC/05/1688/25
In the name of God amen. Alice Ryman, in the custody of Jeremi Spencer, being in perfect health, both of body and mind, and free from the sense of mortality, doth make this present will and testament in manner and form following first to be signed by me to the hands of all my heirs and executors appointed by the will of Alice Ryman. It shall be my will and testament and devise and bequeath unto my body to the ground to be interred with all decent manner shall be good to my executors and bequeathed for the benefit of my soul and shall be provided for. As for the worldly wealth which God hath given me in this present, I give and bequeath to my dear William Ryman ten pounds, to my sister Mary Williams ten pounds, to my sister Elizabeth Jervis ten pounds, to my sister Hannah Jervis ten pounds, to my sister Frances Bower ten pounds, and my bed and all that belongs to it to my sister Thomas Whitt ten pounds, to my sister Elizabeth Hulme ten pounds to my brother John to the sum of one hundred pounds. I give to my sister Charles Hind forty shillings, to my sister Blanche Williston forty shillings, to my sister Hannah Rogers and her children ten shillings apiece, to my sister Hannah and all my sisters and all the rest of my executors, I give all my books and all the rest of my worldly goods. And it is my will and testament that all the rest of my personal estate shall be disposed of by my executors. I give ten pounds to my daughter Mary the eight day in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and eighty one.

 Alice Ryman

Elizabeth Symmes
Richard Tourneill

John Holland
Surrogates.
An issue for scholars grappling with thanatology is to assess the extent to which doctrines shaped the culture of death, specifically what people did to express what they accepted as true and how that related to beliefs taught in society. Plenty of cultural evidence surfaces in an assortment of ways. Rituals, one of the most obvious, were prescribed enactments of belief such as prepared prayers or ceremonies. Seventeenth-century English Protestantism formed conventions of custom and accepted language of expression, which are also a type of ritual. We can get a good feel for beliefs in practice on a popular level by looking through the lens of the language people chose to put in wills and last testaments. There is some variation in the language of this personal document which shows that testators chose to use it to express beliefs and demonstrates influence of and commitment to Protestant Christian teachings, but just a general level and not specific to Puritan or Arminian viewpoints.

This chapter assesses wills and last testaments from the last half of the seventeenth century. These were written by testators in London and the county of Surrey and overlapped with the time that the Puritan and Arminian theologians assessed in the previous chapters were actively preaching and publishing. This chapter provides background to the production of a will and outlines the details of wills used in this study, specifically about the testators and types of wills from the late seventeenth century. It then assesses language to identify beliefs and values of testators in the preamble and body of wills. This chapter shows that there was conventional language affirming faith, salvation and Heaven present in wills, which is a pattern that is a legacy of the early Reformation. We also see that testators used wills to confirm their spirituality and dependence on the divine for a blissful afterlife. In this sense, testators expressed clear
and confident understanding of the personal implications of soteriological and eschatological ideas. Further, testators also had taken up the idea that death could strike at any moment, which shows a clear connection with the messages taught by preachers about mortality and preparation. However, this evidence demonstrates a disconnection between formal theology and popular practice. There is virtually no evidence of Arminian or Puritan variations about beliefs among testators, which shows that the actual practice of approaching death was not couched in those identities.

Testators appeared confident they were saved, but did not express concern about how it was achieved. This reveals a disjunct between the formalities about theology and the average testator’s beliefs. Most likely, people preparing wills did not understand or place a value on such religious distinctions about salvation. It is plausible that the limits of the theologians’ influence on individuals had been reached. Testators embraced preacher’s message about salvation, but did not acknowledge the value of free-will or election in determining being saved. People simply cared that they were saved. While soteriological differences were accentuated in the politics between Puritans and Arminians, those differences did not translate into varying practices and expressions of faith by individuals as death was prepared for. There also may have been similarities because ideas and instructions about the end of life and the afterlife converged between these two schools of thought, even if their soteriologies were drastically different. Wills also reveal some expected findings, particularly that there is little (if any) mention of residual Catholic practice. This affirms that Protestantism on general terms controlled religious discourse in the late seventeenth century, although varying Protestant views did not divide identities as death approached.
Aside from religion, these primary sources confirm a priority to care for the nuclear family by directing bequests to children and spouses, while being expressed with affection. Wills also reveal that women frequently served as testators and executrices, which shows that females had a unique legal agency extended in matters of death and estate management that was not typically afforded them in other areas of life. Preparation for death was the acting out of religious instruction, while at the same time wills show that things in the secular world, like caring for family and being buried next to a loved one, mattered almost as much as issues of faith. Family and gender are general aspects of society that are important to highlight as they complemented religion in culture as death was approached.

BACKGROUND TO WILLS: A SOURCE OF EVIDENCE

Claire Cross’s helpful study of wills from 1540-1640 that originated in Leeds and Hull demonstrate that they are useful sources to identify trends in belief.\(^{417}\) Her work reveals a movement over the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century to a more committed form of Protestantism in place of Catholicism. She convincingly argues that confessions of faith found in wills can be treated with a degree of authenticity of belief, particularly when paired with other evidence (i.e. theology, literature, etc.).\(^{418}\) Her argument was that wills reflect faith because they matched and followed along with the transforming culture of the Reformation and were often written by testators themselves.

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\(^{418}\) Ibid., 50-51.
and not always simply by will-makers following a fixed format. Social pressure was a real factor, but wills were very private and important documents so it is likely testators expressed their own thoughts. Dan Beaver came to a similar conclusion about wills in his study about death and ritual in early modern northern Goucestershire. Beaver defined the act of making a will as a “definition of the person” and as an “expression of the symbolic significance of death.”\textsuperscript{419} Wills are evidence that reflect individual preference and, when paired to rituals of burial and funeral customs, Beaver finds that society was largely committed to entering a Christian afterlife equally shared by all believers.\textsuperscript{420} Thus, a look at the wills from the late seventeenth century can also serve as a reliable illustration of the approach to death for this study. We need to remember that the context is different in the late seventeenth century. The major choice between Catholic and Protestant had been settled, and now Puritans and Arminians competed within Protestantism. Wills show that beliefs followed broad Protestant lines (established in the early Reformation), but did not show a distinction between Puritan and Arminian views.

It is important to remember the personal aspects of a will. The very act of making a will is an acknowledgment of the fact that life will end. It provides an opportunity for an individual to make a formal statement legally, whether it be about the disposal of property and other worldly goods or statements of faith. The idea that wills are evidence of personal belief, or a practice of faith, is nothing new. Ariës, in his foundational work, made the broad observation that wills were viewed as religious documents. As people prepared for the end of their lives wills were used to confess sin and seek atonement through bequests. Priests oversaw the process, which usually took place on the death-

\textsuperscript{419} Dan Beaver, “‘Sown in Dishonour, Raised in Glory’: Death, Ritual and Social Organization in Northern Gloucestershire” in \textit{Social History} 17, no. 3 (Oct. 1992), 392-3.
\textsuperscript{420} Ibid., 418.
bed. Ariès’ sweeping conclusion is that by the time of the Reformation the duty of writing the will shifted to a scribe or notary, and the individual religiosity of the will decreased because it became all about wealth distribution.\textsuperscript{421} This conclusion is not entirely true. While it may be tempting to make that observation because more space was given in wills to bequeathing wealth, religiosity did not necessarily decrease, it shifted. When looking at wills closely, it is clear that individual beliefs remained an important component of the legal document in the preamble.\textsuperscript{422}

There are two major issues relative to wills. One is function, specifically did the religiosity of the will change because the purpose of bequeathing wealth was also emphasized? It appears that wealth distribution was added to the function of the will during the Reformation, but that religious belief still remained important. The other issue is about authorship, which was related to whether or not the use of a scribe or notary impacted the religiosity of the will. The use of a professional will writer formalized the writing process but it did not dilute the religious significance of the will altogether. Statements of faith continued to be important components to testators. First of all, the disposition of the soul was not a necessary component to legalize the will.\textsuperscript{423} Secondly, while a scribe may have prepared the initial document, the finished product had to be read aloud to the testator in the presence of witnesses. If the preamble, where religious sentiments were expressed, did not reflect the testator’s beliefs there was opportunity for correction, or, at the least, what was written was likely not in opposition to what the testator’s beliefs were.\textsuperscript{424}

\textsuperscript{421} Ariès, 188-90.
\textsuperscript{422} Beaver, 392 – Beaver also emphasizes the personal nature of wills.
\textsuperscript{423} Ibid., 396-7.
\textsuperscript{424} Ibid.
Most extant studies using wills have taken the approach to measure cultural change as a result of the Reformation, and have looked primarily at a before and after picture of belief as captured in wills.\textsuperscript{425} There has been less will analysis for the latter part of the Reformation. This chapter helps fill that gap by focusing specifically on the late seventeenth century in order to understand the relationship between testators and religion. In the major, recent studies focusing on thanatological issues in the Reformation context, Ralph Houlbrouke and Peter Marshall have used wills to assess beliefs as death was approached. Houlbrouke, in particular, finds them of notable use in his study about attitudes toward death during a period of time with religious change.\textsuperscript{426} Reformed ideas were a key for change as they moved the culture of death away from identity with the community to that of the family on secular terms. References to parishes decreased while mentions of spouses and children increased. Wills were a useful tool for him to appraise that change. This same pattern existed in the late seventeenth century.

BACKGROUND TO STUDY

An in-depth survey and analysis of wills in the latter half of the seventeenth century demonstrates that Protestantism was still on the minds of people. While it seems obvious that it was important, it is interesting that the tone of religiosity did not sway towards Puritanism or Arminianism. A large number of last testaments were reviewed (approximately 1,600) in this study from the Archdeaconry Court of Surrey,

\textsuperscript{425} For example, see the work of Ariès, Duffy, Cross, and J.J. Scarisbrick, \textit{The Reformation and the English People} (London: Blackwell, 1984).
\textsuperscript{426} Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 81.
Archdeaconry Court of London, Commissary Court of London, Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey, Peculiar Court of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s Cathedral, as well as some family records. These were from areas in the greater London area where Puritan and Arminian congregations existed. These records are available in the London Metropolitan Archives, Guildhall Library, and British Library. Records were chosen in order that the last half of the seventeenth-century would be represented, thus, samples were taken from the decades starting in the late 1640’s and 50’s all the way through the 1690’s. This assured adequate distribution of records and illustration of testaments throughout the half century. It is safe to say that in general these testators were at least nominally Protestant, but whether they were Puritans or Arminians, it is difficult to know. Also, in terms of socio-economic status, the wills represent those with generally more wealth than most (enough equity that legal assistance was sought for distribution).

We will observe that wills are generally presented in a fairly predictable pattern of two parts – an introduction and body. This pattern came as a result of the work of early reformers, whose efforts led to a shift away from religious commitments on Catholic terms to an increased emphasis in bequeathing wealth and putting final affairs put in order. A review of the language used allows us to identify beliefs of testators. Preambles of wills included a dedication to God and statements of gratitude for salvation. The main body of the will largely dealt with secular matters, mostly about the distribution of wealth to family or, occasionally, friends. Interestingly, wills not only show no religious preference in terms of Puritan or Arminian, there is no variation in their pattern over the half century. This shows that there was little impact of outside factors such as war,
disease epidemics, or political changes on how death was approached. For example, just after the Civil War there was not unique language that would link testators to different sides in the war, or after the plague outbreaks in the 1660’s, there is not a change in the time of preparation before death or unique language that would show that testators were worried about untimely deaths from disease.

WILLS: STRUCTURE, LAYOUT AND AUTHORSHIP

Let us step back for a moment and think about a will more generally. The production of a will can be a solemn and sober action due to the nature of what it is. It involves recognition of one’s mortality mixed with statements detailing final wishes about what will be left behind. A last will and testament is a preparation for death. This primary source is an individualized record that can offer clues into how death was approached, what death meant, and how the afterlife was envisioned for a constituent of (wealthy) individuals in the population.427

Wills were overwhelmingly written instead of spoken. When oral wills existed, they typically happened at the death-bed but these were not common by the late seventeenth century.428 Spoken wills followed a process of having them written down to

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427 Wills and Last Testaments were part of the preparatory process for death. They documented the dying person’s wishes for the disposal of their worldly goods and property after death. The preamble in wills were spiritually focused and reveal what testator’s anticipated after death. Beaver, 392-3; Houlbrooke, Death, Religion and the Family, 80-1; Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans, “Wills as an Historical Source,” in When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England, eds. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard’s Head Press, 2000), 38-40.

428 8% of my sample of 1,593 wills contained wills produced on the death-bed that were orally produced and documented by the will-writer; Early in the Reformation, the 1549 Book of Common Prayer specified in the section “The Order for the Visitation of the Sick” that “menne must be ofte admonisted that they sette an ordre for theyr temporall goodes and lands, whan they be in health.” This was confirmed again in
document the dying person’s wishes (‘memorandum’ will). In terms of written wills, scribes or notaries penned a testator’s statements and bequests, however, a small contingent of wills were produced from the hand of the testator himself.

The making of a last will and testament has its own history. A testament was a disposal of personal property and had originated under the jurisdiction of the Church courts, while a last will was a separate legal document concerning real property (e.g. land or real-estate) and fell outside the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts in the late Middle Ages. It should be noted that the distinction was not often observed, at least well into the early-modern period, and the term “last will and testament” became convention for representing a single document.

It is important to highlight those who made wills so that we can better understand the meaning embedded in the language of wills, as well as what portion of society was represented by last testaments. Wills typically originated from people in a later stage of life, likely having a distinct recognition of their own mortality (frequently from getting sick, old age or both), which spurred the desire to properly prepare for death by getting important affairs in order. Some testators also wanted to be prepared, even if they were not sick. They produced a will because death might be a “surprise,” and

the 1559 Book of Common Prayer – This advocated for writing wills will in good health and not on the death-bed early in the Reformation; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 82-3.


430 Henry Swinburne (d. 1623), *A Briefe Treatise of Testaments and Last Willes* (London: 1590), 11 – Swinburne, a lawyer, wrote that a “last wil is a lawful disposing” of worldly goods and a testament was a form of the last will perfected by appointing an executor. There is a small distinction between last will and testament and one can see how the two would blend as their definitions overlapped. Tom Arkell, “The Probate Process,” in *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, eds. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard’s Head Press, 2000), 7; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 81; Michael Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England: From the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the End of the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1963), 11-12, 176, 231-3.

431 These are some of many examples available that specify testator’s recognition of being sick or of old age: Dw/pc/5/1694/11; Dw/pc/5/1694/31; Dw/pc/05/1684/19; Dw/pc/05/1679/23; MS 9051/9/p58; MS 9171/30/p9; MS 9171/31/p12.
acknowledged life’s “uncertainty” and “transitory” nature.\textsuperscript{432} This demonstrates a link to the message preachers taught of being prepared to die at any moment and coming to terms with mortality.

The actual writing of the will was often completed by a scrivener or lawyer. It is incorrect to presume undue influence by these writers of wills as somehow diluting or changing the personal beliefs of the testator. There is evidence of only a single formula (set of language used as a template for a will) created in 1657 and none prior. Templates would not be commonly used for at least another century.\textsuperscript{433} Most scholars agree that wills are a reflection of personal belief because they are a legal statement of the testator that involved the individual in the preparation and approval process.\textsuperscript{434}

We should remember that the writing of a will was only moved up a single level from the testator to the will writer.\textsuperscript{435} The chance of an individual’s beliefs not being represented correctly in the will is slim and the likelihood of the testator being unaware of what was written in such a personal document is equally distant.\textsuperscript{436} Logically, one can conclude that testators likely cared that proclamations of faith and bequests of their soul actually represented what they felt. This is also validated because the number of

\textsuperscript{432} Dw/pc/5/1697/5; Dw/pc/05/1684/7; MS9051/9/p98.
\textsuperscript{434} There preamble section of the will was a debated as a source of evidence in the 1970’s. See Margaret Spufford, “The scribes of villagers’ wills in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their influence,” in \textit{Local Population Studies} 7 (Autumn 1971): 28-43; R. Richardson, “Wills and will-makers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: some Lancashire evidence,” in \textit{Local Population Studies} 9 (1972): 33-42; Capp, “Will Formularies”; Nesta Evans, “Testators, literacy, education and religious belief,” \textit{Local Population Studies} 25 (Autumn 1980): 42-51; Margaret Spufford, “Will Formularies,” in \textit{Local Population Studies} 19 (Autumn 1977): 35-6. The debate was oversimplified as whether or not wills represented personal belief when these scholars did not question individual belief expressed in wills as they assessed the writing in wills relative to formularies. Taking of side of skepticism recently is Peter Marshall, 80-1, but most other recent scholars, such as Duffy, Houlbrooke, Cross and Beaver, affirmed their reliance on wills as a source of evidence representing beliefs.
\textsuperscript{435} Cross also made this observation, see pages 48-9; Beaver, 396.
\textsuperscript{436} Duffy, 510-16; Susan Brigden, \textit{London and the Reformation} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 386; Beaver, 396-7; Cross and Houlbrooke are also reliant on wills and argue that they are representative of individual agency.
exceptions or slight variations in language in wills is revealing of testators’ preference, which is also along similar religious lines. Testators even occasionally wrote their own wills. In those cases religious language can be more safely attributed to the testator’s beliefs. Thus, wills can be reliably used as voices for belief expressed within acceptable language among a portion of society. Wills, although reliable sources, should still be handled carefully due to the way they were written and for who is represented, since it is the wealthy part of society.

The task, or duty, of making a last will and testament fell onto the shoulders, most often, of people with wealth and property. People without wealth generally did not make a will, at least in the records reviewed in this study. Thus, wills do not represent direct proof of the preparation for death by the population at large, rather, they are representative of those with property. Those who had little to distribute after death likely did not need formal, probated documentation to see that their last wishes were carried out. The spoken word was likely enough to communicate and set in motion final desires in those cases, which, unfortunately for us moderns, is not something analyzable. Further, we know that popular belief contained a widespread commitment to religion.\(^\text{437}\)

There were varying levels, from very concentrated and enthusiastic to rather nominal, just as we will observe in wills.\(^\text{438}\)

Also, everyone who could make a will did not necessarily have one made or leave one which has survived. Further, there is evidence of some resistance to making wills for fear of it expediting death, or even diminishing the value of the individual while he or she


\(^{438}\) Ibid.
was still alive. Some studies have estimated the degree to which those in society who were able to make wills actually followed through. These estimates, as with many population studies from a time that record keeping was less organized than we are used to today, widely range. For example, one of the lower estimates from the late medieval period suggests that approximately eighteen percent of the adult inhabitants registered wills, while others argue that 50 or even 70 percent of adults did (varying county and parish records account for the wide range). Males dominated these estimates, however, approximately five percent of women completed wills by the 1620’s. By the late seventeenth century it appears that the number of women writing wills was increasing. Amy Louise Erickson found that anywhere from 19 to 25% of wills originated from women by the latter half of the seventeenth century. Of those, over 80% were comprised of wills from widows. This aligns with the fact that married women had less legal autonomy while their husbands were alive. In terms of total population, although difficult to pinpoint, Erickson assesses that anywhere from 4 to 11 % of women that could have made a will did. This compares to the range of 24 to 33% of males in the same period.

WILLS DURING THE EARLY REFORMATION

The Church played a major role in the development of last wills and testaments. In the Middle Ages, theologians taught that a Christian’s preparation for death assisted

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441 Erickson, 204; Beaver, 394 – the author confirms what Erickson observed and found that approximately 24% of wills were by women, almost exclusively from non-married ones.
the soul through the penitential cycle. A last will and testament was a means by which one could commit him/herself to God and detail charitable acts and religious donations, a final act of merit thought important to the soul’s purification.\textsuperscript{442} Priests, ostensibly, played a significant role in encouraging the creation and execution of wills since the act carried so much weight on the scale of judgment for the soul in the afterlife.

Early in the English Reformation, the 1549 \textit{Book of Common Prayer}, in the section of “The Order for the Visitacion of the Sicke, and the Communion of the Same,” stated, “And if he [sicke person] have not afore disposed his goodes, let him then make his will. (But men must be oft admonished that they set an ordre for their temporall goodees and landes whan they be in helth.) And also to declare his debtes, what he oweth, and what is owing to him: for discharging of his conscience and quietnesse of his executours.”\textsuperscript{443} This was a shift away from last testaments being written at the deathbed which had been more common in the late Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{444} As clergy adapted to the change they steered their faithful away from deathbed bequests through preaching, teaching and counseling. Reformed belief held that the last will no longer brought benefit to the soul and that sounder judgment existed during times of good health, so preparation for death was to happen well in advance of dying. These same instructions were operative the next century, affirmed in the 1662 \textit{Book of Common Prayer}. There were slight, insignificant updates to the language, but the same message was upheld. It stated, “And if he [sick person] have not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his Will, and to declare his debts, what he oweth, and what is owing

\textsuperscript{443} Book of Common Prayer (1549), Section IX.
\textsuperscript{444} Coppel, 37-8; Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 82-3.
unto him; for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors. But men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health.”

Will-making experienced a decline after the initial wave of change brought by the Reformation, which makes sense since the administration of last rites and the documentation of final wishes of the dying ceased to be a task for the clergy. This is one of the material effects of the Reformation on the preparation for death, that churches no longer participated in the legal process. This pattern was entrenched during Edward VI’s reign when all links to intercession of the soul were eliminated in official doctrine. In 1547 the doctrine of Purgatory was condemned and the government dissolved guilds and chantries while seizing all revenues devoted to support the prayers for the dead. By 1549 masses for the dead were abolished. These changes to the ritual and practice of preparing for death and the afterlife did not reverse during the brief restoration of Catholicism under Mary. Regarding wills, the result of the changes brought about during the early policy and doctrinal shifts of the Reformation were that the close link between the will and the death-bed was loosened.

A statute in 1540 stipulated that all wills that pertained to land needed to be in writing, which was further tightened in the Act of Frauds of 1677 by requiring three credible witnesses and a signature of the testator or his/her authorized legal representation in order to validate the will. The Act did not specify what needed to be contained, such as language in a preamble. Wills were occasionally revised (updated), especially in the later part of the seventeenth century when the majority of them were written prior to

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445 Book of Common Prayer (1662).
447 Ibid., 88.
an individual’s death. It was the last version that was upheld by the courts. Revisions typically dealt with matters of property distribution, usually for reasons to update who recipients were and what they were to receive. The preambles and statements of faith were not often the focus of change in updates.448

After the initial wave of reform in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, wills changed, as one would expect, to align with ecclesiastical and legislative developments. The explanation for this is fairly logical. One would not want to bequest wealth to an outlawed institution (Catholic Church) if the government would sweep away the funds and, more or less, nullify the intent of the will. The Catholic clerical workforce had also been put out of commission by the mid sixteenth century, so if testators wished outlawed traditions be performed on their behalf, such as a mass for the dead, no authorized staff existed to carry out that task.449 There is evidence that some individuals still requested prayers for their souls after the doctrine of Purgatory was repudiated, however that did not persist in the long run, particularly by the late seventeenth century.450 In fact, it has been shown that there was no evidence of post-mortem intercession in 97% of wills already by Edward’s reign.451 Prior to the Reformation it was common to see testators bequeath their souls to “God Almighty, St. Mary and to all the saints in heaven,” which were all descriptors associated with Catholicism.452 Funds

448 Ibid.
449 Marshall, 101 – During the early Reformation Catholic clergy had been dismissed from duty and there was not authorization to perform masses on behalf of the dead.
450 Houblrooke, Death, Religion and the Family, 122.
451 Ibid., 101.
452 Cross, 45.
were left for masses to assist their souls after death and the intercession of Mary was often invoked.  

Changes to wills began under Henry VIII’s reign, although a more stark line was drawn with wills after the accession of Edward VI. There was a consignment of souls simply to “Almighty God” and hardly any mention of St. Mary. Even during the change back to Catholicism under Mary Tudor, there was not a widespread revival of old traditions for preparing for death or requesting assistance after death in last testaments.

In general, studies of the early Reformation have shown that by the Elizabethan era, at least by the 1580’s or 1590’s, the establishment of Protestantism as a norm had become quite entrenched. This was not in the form simply of convention, but of religious zeal, a clear, firm commitment to the tenets of Protestantism. This was likely a result of the encouragement and enforcement of popular piety through preaching, teaching and church discipline. The making of wills paralleled this pattern and demonstrated language linked to Protestantism.

The preamble was the part of the will typically containing statements of faith, making it most relevant for appraisal of individual religiosity and its relationship to preparation for death. Broadly, it contained a commitment of the soul to God and the corpse to the earth. The body of the will dealt with material distribution. There were many pious bequests in the body early on in the Reformation. Pious bequests were requests to have funds directed to religious institutions. This was likely a carryover from the pre-Reformation tradition of bequeathing wealth as a tool to assist the soul in the

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453 Ibid.
454 Ibid.
455 Wrightson and Levine, 155-6; Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, introduction.
456 Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 120 (example of study of wills from the early Reformation (n = 2,500)).
penitential system even though the meaning prescribed to the charity was recalibrated. By the seventeenth century pious bequests became virtually non-existent, certainly more the exception than the rule. Material distribution became a largely secular and familial affair. Division of wealth among survivors, mostly in the nuclear family, was the main point of the body of the will.

LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WILLS:
TESTATORS, WILL WRITING AND LITERACY

Prior to delving into an analysis of preamble content, it is helpful to answer the question of who was actually writing down wills at the end of the seventeenth century since it was not usually the author (testator). This also offers insight into the literacy of testators. For the most part the act of writing down the will was completed by scriveners or lawyers. Lay will writing did exist, although it was not common.

Following is a table assessing testator signatures from original wills produced in the Archdeaconry Court of Surrey and Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey (a large sample was selected, n = 538, from all the wills examined). This offers a clue into literacy of testators, and, thus, the likelihood they were able to read their wills. These are categories created by the author after analysis of the sources. Explanations and samples of the categories are provided on the following pages. Testators that provided marks or nice signatures are obvious to the viewer, but those that scribbled their name are more problematic in analysis. This category was included to
show that a portion of the testators potentially could sign their names, which may indicate a degree of literacy.

### Original Wills

*Archdeaconry Court of Surrey & Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey*

**Testator Signature on Wills (n = 538)** *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript ID</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Scribbles</th>
<th>Nice Signature</th>
<th>Will Likely in Testator's Handwriting</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW/PA/05/1646/1-50; 1646/51-60; 1647/1-20; 1648/1-46; 1649/1-19</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW/PA/05/1660/1-20; 1661/1-59; 1661/60-124</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW/PC/05/1679/1-93; 1680/1-68; 1681/1-81</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note, these data are based on when signatures were present on wills - in other cases, such as Memorandum, no signatures were obtained*

**Table 3. Testator Signature on Wills**

Wills that appeared to be written by testators themselves were less than 5%. These were identified on wills which the handwriting of the text matched with the handwriting on the signature. This evidence shows that a portion of testators put specific testaments of faith in their wills by their own hand.
Here is an example of what a last testament written from a testator’s own hand looked like:

![Image of a last will and testament written by a testator's own hand]

**Figure 3. Last Will and Testament in Testator’s Own Writing**

95% of the wills in this sample were written by a scrivener or lawyer and signed by the testator. Those signatures are interesting in and of themselves because they serve as

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457 DW/PA/05/1648/11.
indicators about the literacy of the testators. Signatures can be broken down into the following categories:

Nice Signature: Testator showed good penmanship and ability to formally sign.

Here are some examples:

Figure 4. Testators – Nice Signatures (Manuscript identification noted)

a. Dw/pc/5/1692/28

b. DW/PC/05/1692/32

c. DW/PC/05/1684/2 (female)

d. DW/PC/05/1661/65
Scribble: Testator made a valiant effort to sign their name to the will. There is a string of letters, some distinguishable, put together to form what resembles their name. However, it is clear that there was a struggle to write. It is quite possible this was due to old age or being physically sick which could have inhibited the ability to write (e.g. suffered from a stroke). While we cannot definitively conclude that these individuals are semi-literate, it does separate these testators from those in the first category to some degree. It brings into question whether their literacy matched those who could easily write and sign. Here are some examples:

**Figure 5. Testators – Scribble Signatures (Manuscript identification noted)**

a. DW/PC/05/1679/78

![Image](image1)

b. DW/PC/05/1680/13

![Image](image2)

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458 Nesta Evans, “Testators, literacy, education and religious belief,” *Local Population Studies* 25 (Autumn 1980): 45 – Evans also observed that “squiggles” as signatures in wills demonstrates an attempt at writing, which means that these people may have been less illiterate than those who could make nothing more than a mark.
Mark: In these cases testators either put a seemingly meaningless marking in place of a name, used an “X” instead of a signature, or were able to write a single letter, usually representing their family name, as their signature. Most often in these cases the scrivener or lawyer wrote out the testator’s name near the mark and explicitly stated that the mark represented the testator. Here are some examples:
Figure 6. Testators – Marks as Signatures (Manuscript identification noted)

a. DW/PC/05/1686/43

b. DW/PC/05/1686/30 – EXAMPLE “E”

c. DW/PC/05/1692/4
Assuming that the ability to sign one’s name is associated with literacy, then most testators at this point in time were illiterate based on the data in table 3. This is a safe assumption. It appears that a condition for being taught to write was that a sufficient competency of reading was achieved first. It is important to add the disclaimer about the problematic aspects of this evidence. Being able to read and being able to write are not the same. It is possible that one achieved the ability to read, and not write. Further, it

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is possible one was taught to sign one’s name even if reading or writing were never achieved. Also, the fact that a testator used a mark or initials as a signature does not necessarily mean the individual was illiterate. The work of Wrightson and Levine regarding the population of Terling has highlighted that in some cases individuals made a mark on a will, but in other legal records clearly used a legible signature. Nonetheless, most testators (76% based on table 3) either used a mark or mustered up a scribble for a signature which is good evidence that in general, the majority likely did not know how to read or write. If a nice signature is a good indicator of literacy, then we do see that there was a modest increase in the ability to read and write over the latter half of the seventeenth century (14% in the late 1640’s to 25% in the 1680’s), however, the number of wills actually written in a testator’s own handwriting actually decreased over these decades from 8% to 2% based on the data in table 3.

One could argue that an illiterate testator was unaware of the content in a will since he or she may not have been able to read it. This pertains more to the formalities, statements in the preamble, and legal jargon instead of the actual distribution of wealth. However, there was review of those details as the will was read before the “sign-off” took place by the testator and his or her witnesses. This is based on the fact that the will represented the testator’s wishes and approval of what was stated on the will was required, as well as needed to be affirmed by witnesses. Thus, in this light, understanding literacy rates are not critical to this argument. Making too firm of a distinction between literate and illiterate or assuming illiteracy bred ignorance of preambles would be a mistake. The illiterate likely could hear, and had full opportunity

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460 Wrightson and Levine, 147-8.
461 Beaver, 396-7.
to extend agency, particularly when it came to creating and authorizing a last testament as it was read in front of witnesses. Further there was not a legal requirement to include such language in the preamble, and, that paired to the variety of language used furthers the idea that testators had a choice about what was said in the will. They may not have originated the preamble from scratch, but the language used had to be acceptable to both the testator and will-writer. Thus, we can assess the messages from this ritual of preparation as an indicator of popular religious belief among testators.

I argue that wills are evidence of popular piety despite the limits of the sources. First, testators reliably knew what the contents of a will were and had the option to include or exclude content (some even wrote it themselves). Second, given the personal nature of the will it is reasonable that care was extended in reviewing the contents before wills were processed. Third, there is variation in language which is evidence of choices made by the testator about content. Fourth, there was not a requirement that making a statement of faith and a bequest about the soul be included in the will, and only a handful of testators chose to leave that out.462 Testators frequently left their “souls to the almighty God alone,” their redeemer, maker, or savior. Wills were very much declarations of faith. They generally expressed a hope of forgiveness, salvation and Heaven and frequently mentioned Christ’s merits, death, and intercession.463 Preambles contained a consistent reliance on the Christian hope of eternal life to follow this mortal one. In that vein, there were frequent references to salvation, everlasting life, the kingdom of Heaven, joining saints, encountering glory with Jesus, and hope of the

462 The majority of testators in my sample elected to have a preamble with expressions of faith included, only 7% elected to exclude this - see table 4.
463 Wunderli and Broce, 275 – The authors observe that the moments near death were characterized by optimism and hope, a general reliance on salvation. This aligns with the pattern of language in wills.
resurrection. There was a concern with the destination of their soul, which was a pattern that found its origin in the early Reformation after intercessory measures to help with soul were stripped away.\textsuperscript{464}

The overwhelming Christian sentiment in wills speaks to a societal recognition of God’s hand upon the dying. This aligns with teachings by pastors that death was part of God’s design that led to the entry into Heaven for believers. This was a point emphasized in funeral sermons as preachers sought to familiarize survivors with mortality. In the backdrop was the debate among theologians, particularly about God’s plan of salvation. However, it appears that when one’s estate in death moved into the picture (as documented in wills), the idea that salvation was widely accessible emerged and there was not a sway towards Puritanism or Arminianism. Peter Marshall speculates that this might be a sign of a decline of Hell since the concepts of God’s mercy and justice were not neatly reconciled by the dying.\textsuperscript{465} That conclusion is a stretch. Testators believed they were saved, and, at death one looked forward to Heaven. Plus, seeking assurance about Heaven could mean that the fear of Hell was still prevalent. People wanted to avoid it. Regardless, it is apparent that testators relied on the divine in death and credited God as the originator, sustainer and deliverer of their souls as the afterlife began to narrow in mortal focus.

\textsuperscript{464} Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 124; Marshall, 228; Evans, 48-50. A similar pattern is described of a shift away from Catholic conceptions of the afterlife and salvation to reformed ideas of faith alone and direct entry into heaven during the Reformation.

\textsuperscript{465} Marshall, 201-2.
UNRELIGIOUS WILLS

Another question worth exploring is the degree to which wills had no religious sentiments or proclamations. Since people chose what to put in wills to a reasonable extent, it is interesting to assess the ones that left out all references to religion. The following table assesses wills and reports those which had no preamble, which meant there was no reference to things spiritual in the last testament. It separates those that were memoranda since those were produced under special circumstances, likely at the death-bed of the testator, and were intended to quickly sort out issues related to material wealth distribution.

466 See manuscript MS 25626/6/p50 archived at the Guildhall Library for an example of a preamble with no religious language.
## Preamble Absent Summary

**Will Review 1644-1700**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Court</th>
<th>Total Wills</th>
<th>No Preamble - Direct to Wealth Distribution *</th>
<th>Memorandum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of London 1644-65; 1660-64</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3 2.8%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeaconry Court of Surrey 1646, 1648-9</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>6 4.1%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeaconry Court of Surrey 1660-1</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>11 4.5%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peculiar Court of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral 1660-72; 1672-83</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>12 6.0%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeaconry Court of London 1666-75</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6 5.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeaconry Court of London 1675-80</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5 4.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1679-81</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>20 8.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1684-6; 1688</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>7 4.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1691-2</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13 19.4%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1693-4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4 6.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1695-6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9 16.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1697-8</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3 5.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of the Bishop of Winchester in the Archdeaconry of Surrey 1699-1700</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7 14.9%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1,593</td>
<td>106 6.7%</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Common alternative openings when preamble forgone, frequently direct to wealth distribution:

"Bee it known unto all men"
"Know all men"
"Bee it known that"

Table 4. Wills without preambles.
A number of conclusions can be derived from the above data in table 4. First, conventional preambles were overwhelmingly present – 85% of wills in this review of approximately 1,600 contained, to some degree, an acknowledgement of God and/or His work in the testator’s life. Interestingly, only 7% seemed to specifically forgo convention and used their will and last testament only for distributing worldly wealth.\textsuperscript{467} We cannot know the exact reasons testators made the decision to avoid such language, but it is likely that they either viewed it as unnecessary for the function of a will, were not aware that it was skipped (although that is doubtful as these were signed or marked), or simply did not believe in what conventional seventeenth-century Christianity taught.

Wills in memorandum form deserve special attention. These were oral, or nuncupative, last testaments that were witnessed by two persons, then were recorded by the scrivener or lawyer. These were validated specifically by the probate as such in order that the dying person’s last wishes would be carried out. Nuncupative wills in memorandum were typically recorded on the death-bed by the dying individual.\textsuperscript{468} One might presume that special commemoration of the soul or a last request for God’s forgiveness would be requested, however it rarely took place, at least based on what was written down. The following table offers some further clues into memorandum wills.

\textsuperscript{467} MS 25626/6/p13; MS 25626/6/p50; MS 25626/7/p7; These manuscripts are some examples. About 7% of wills from the period of analysis did not contain a preamble. In the 1690’s, there were three instances where the percentage was higher than average (19.4%, 16.1 %, 14.9%), but these appear to be outliers and not a definitive change in the trend as other years in the 1680’s and 90’s contained low percentages (4.7%, 6.7%, 5.7%).

\textsuperscript{468} Arkell, 10; Goose and Evans, 47-8; Coppel, 38-9; Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 88-9, 107-8; Also see the British National Archives useful website for information: \url{http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/wills.asp} Internet; accessed 1 July 2011.
### Table 5. Wills without preambles and memorandum details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript ID</th>
<th>Total Wills</th>
<th>No Preamble - Direct to Wealth Distribution *</th>
<th>Memorandum</th>
<th>In Memorandum - Sound Mind Declaration</th>
<th>In Memorandum - Soul Commemoration, Etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Court of London</td>
<td>MS 9171/31 1644-46; MS 1660-64</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peculiar Court of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s Cathedral</td>
<td>MS 25626/6 1660-72; MS 25626/7 1672-83</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeaconry Court of London</td>
<td>MS 9051/9 1666-75</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeaconry Court of London</td>
<td>MS 9051/10 1675-80</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Common alternative openings when preamble forgone, frequently direct to wealth distribution:
  "Bee it known unto all men"
  "Know all men"
  "Bee it known that"
Approximately 7% of the wills in table 5 were in memorandum form. Interestingly, none of the cases contained references to the dying person’s faith, commemoration of one’s soul to God, or other religious acknowledgements. In fact, in review of all 1,593 wills 8%, or 132, were in memorandum form (see table 4). Only one single memoranda will (less than 1%) contained an acknowledgement of God. The subset of memoranda in table 5 show that testators were mindful to declare they were of sound mind at the time the will was recited. This indicates that there was importance on handling temporal affairs and ensuring that proper, legally enforceable records were created to execute the will. It also shows that the will was not used for religious expression while the dying individual was on the deathbed. This is significant because the dying person did not turn to wills in their last moments to affirm beliefs. This would have been a time to expect people to be more religious, however, expressing faith did not comingle with legal issues at that crucial time of their lives.

In terms of wealth distribution in wills without religious language, it was family or occasionally friends that dominated the beneficiary list. Charitable giving was a rare feature in the late seventeenth century. There was just an occasional bequest to a church or ecclesiastical organization. This was not a new development. Charity had been removed from wills in the early Reformation when Protestant laws and traditions were instituted. Once the option to bequeath for intercession, such as to prepay masses or prayers, was removed, then the need to give wealth for that reason went away. This did not mean that giving in the spirit of helping others or supporting ecclesiastical institutions was altogether removed, rather, giving for those reasons was encouraged throughout life,
not after death through a will.\textsuperscript{469} Charity, such as poor relief, had also become a
government function.\textsuperscript{470} These likely served as reasons why testators no longer felt a
need to bequest charitably.

There are a few testators who continued to prescribe instructions for charitable
contributions in their wills.\textsuperscript{471} In a couple of cases testators bequeathed something to the
Church among a long list of distribution, although this was certainly an exception.\textsuperscript{472}
One good example of charity is found in the 1648 will of Joseph Stonehill, a yeoman,
who wrote, “In thankfull remembrance of God’s blessins towards me I give and bequeath
tenne shillings to the poore of Frimley to be distributed to the most needful the next
Lords day after my decease.”\textsuperscript{473} He intended it to serve as a testimony of God’s blessings
upon him, which cannot be interpreted as a means for assisting his own soul, at least in
the soteriological sense, even if it did provide him comfort or satisfaction derived from
doing a good deed as one of his last wishes.

Culturally, wills in late seventeenth-century England show that the connection
between the death-bed and declaring one’s last testament was not as strong as it had been
prior to and in the early Reformation. Less than one in ten waited to formalize their final
wishes until the moment death was near (using the data about memorandum wills), to the
point they would likely not get out of bed again. The focus in those wills was on secular
issues, specifically for distributing wealth and not to document or proclaim faith.

\textsuperscript{469} Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 133.
\textsuperscript{470} Ibid., 130.
\textsuperscript{471} Some examples of charitable contributions are: Dw/pa/05/1661/21; MS 9051/10/p8. These were rare
and came up infrequently in the analysis of wills (less than1% of the time).
\textsuperscript{472} Dw/pa/05/1648/35; Dw/pa/05/1648/39.
\textsuperscript{473} Dw/pa/05/1648/39.
THE PREAMBLE

Religious expressions were embedded in the preamble by the testator. The preamble took up a third to a half of the content of a will, which indicates importance of acknowledging God’s Almighty power, Christ’s merits, and the hope of Heaven to the testator. However, from this evidence it can be argued that the language had become ritualized and through near standardization was detached from individual meaning or expression. While it is tempting to conclude that temporal matters meant something more at the end of life than did the dying person’s destination in the afterlife, the consistent references to faith and commemoration to God remind us that faith still mattered, even if conventional language was used for expression. Testators likely knew the language was there and had a choice to keep it in or modify it, which was demonstrated by the variation in the language and occasional omission of sections. This is a testimony of the influence preachers had since preparation for death was taken seriously and was couched in religious terms. Interestingly, though, the language was not clearly Puritan or Arminian when references to salvation appeared. This shows that the influence of reformers did not dictate how death was approached. People expressed their faith and were assured of their salvation, but did not articulate the more complicated aspects of soteriology. The commitment to God, whether in hope for forgiveness or assurance of received grace, continued to stand out and show that people prepared for death within the parameters set by the major systems of belief, from either point of view. Let us more closely examine the preamble.

The preamble followed a fairly standard form. There was typically a title phrase of “In the name of God Amen” followed by a proclamation of the testator’s name,
occasionally a listing of his/her status, the reason for writing the will, the date, a royal acknowledgment, a statement of health, and a spiritual acknowledgment. The spiritual acknowledgment often committed the soul to God, mentioned forgiveness in some capacity, looked forward to the afterlife or Last Day, and mentioned burial preference. Detailing entombment usually signified the end of the preamble, which was followed by the second, or last part, of the will where worldly goods were distributed. The closing was typically filled with legalities, but there was the occasional mention of God and a call to His mercy at the end of the will. Here are a few examples of typical preambles. This one is from Mary Bedford, written in 1694:

“In the name of God Amen. I Mary Bedford of the parish of St. Olave in the county of surrey. Widowe being sick and indisposed in body but of a sound and perfect minde and memory praise be therefore given to Almighty God. Doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament. In manner and form following that is to say, first, and principally, I commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God hoping through the merrits of my savior Jesus Christ to have the forgiveness of all my sins and to inherrit everlasting life and my body I commit to the Earth to be decently interred at discretion of whome I have left in trust.”

Christopher Soaks, a citizen of London, wrote the following in his 1662 last testament:

“[I am in ] reasonable health of body, but of a good sound and perfect mind and memory praised be to God therefore. Considering with my self this transitory Estate of this Mortall Life I knowing nothing to be more certain than death and nothing more uncertain that thie time there of too madde and ordaine this my present testament declaring therein my last will …in manner and form following, that is to say: First and most principally I comend my soule into the hands of Almighty God my creator that gave it me …and through the most precious meritts death and passion of Christ Jesus my only Saviour and Redeemer to have free pardon and forgiveness of all my sinnis And to be makde partaker [of] happiness in His kindome of heaven. My body I committ to this Earth from whence it came in hope of a joyfull Resurrection”

Some are even more concise, such as that of Eleanor Gurnoy’s in 1693, which states:

474 Dw/pc/5/1694/7.
475 MS 9171/31/p183.
Examples of preambles in this standard form are numerous. Detailing further examples will not be constructive, rather, closely analyzing the conventional language to uncover the array of variation in different components, taking note of trends, as well as exceptions, will help us understand the intent and likely meaning of these words to testators.

“In the name of God Amen” was by far the most common introductory phrase in the majority of wills. There was no competition with dedications to the Virgin and Saints at this point, which had disappeared well before the end of the sixteenth century. A dedication to God alone was a tradition firmly in place. Remember that the likelihood that individuals cared about the words that appeared on the document that would represent them after death is high. We can be confident that someone might have actually cared if their will started with “In the name of God Amen” instead of no introductory phrase or with a more generic secular one.

This is comparable to the ritual of marriage. The ceremony transformed two singles into a single pair. Matrimony in early modern England involved various actions and declarations that led the couple into a new union. These nuptials were carefully prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. For example, during the handfasting portion of the ceremony, the man was instructed to say aloud “I, N. take thee N. to be my wedded

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476 Dw/pc/5/1693/8.
477 Numerous examples of the standard preamble - Dw/pc/o5/1684/8; Dw/pc/o5/1684/9; Dw/pc/05/1684/41; Dw/pc/05/1679/13; Dw/pc/05/1646/54; Dw/pc/05/1646/57; Dw/pc/05/1649/5; MS 9051/9/p1; MS 9051/9/p33; MS 9051/9/p93; MS 9051/10/p413-414; MS 9171/30/p1-2; MS 9171/31/p2-3; MS 9171/31/p25; MS 9171/31/p30; MS 25626/6/p38; MS 25626/7/p10; MS 25626/7/p270; BL MS 19198, f 66, 69-72, 81; BL MS 19190, f 11; These examples are just some of many.
wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God’s holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.”479 The woman was then to follow with the same statement. This was conventional language uttered as part of a nearly standardized ritual. Does that signify its meaning is somehow lessened than if it were completely original? In the author’s view, that is doubtful. Even though marriage was in many ways a social process, it had very private, personal dimensions.480 The word, and actions, in this ritual likely carried a sense of meaning for the individual going through the solemnization ceremony. Expressing and acting out ritual produced something that was very meaningful to individuals. A couple entering the marriage ceremony used conventional language to create a new and irreversible union. It is words such as “consent,” “witness,” “giving and pledging” and “declarations” that produced marriage.481

In terms of wills, we see some use of an alternate phrase or no opening infrequently in wills prepared not on the death-bed. Even though it is a small amount, it strengthens the argument that conventional phrasing was the language of choice.482 So while language and form was customary, or conventional, it was an attestation individually at a very reflective time in life, while one looked ahead to death, frequently sick and frail, many times not, but contemplative nonetheless. The prospect that testators

481 Cressy, 341.
482 Dw/pa/05/1661/19; Dw/pa/05/1661/21; Dw/pa/05/1664/86; Dw/pc/05/1679/28; Dw/pc/05/1679/91; These are some examples of no opening in wills prepared not on the deathbed (memorandum form).
purposely included statements of faith is very plausible, particularly since law held no
direct sway over the matter (law just required a will exist for wealth distribution).
Further, preambles comprised anywhere from one-third to one-half of the text of the will,
which is dedicating a substantial portion of space, on a very important document, for
expressions of faith to prepare for death.

The typical introduction also included a statement of identity, specifically the
name and status of the testator. One example is “Robert Davye of Bisley, yeoman, being
aged weak and infirm.” 483 Then, there was usually some sort of royal acknowledgment
laced into the dating of the will, such as the following examples:

- “…in the twelfth yeare of the reigne of our Soverigne Lord Charles by the
  Grace of God King of England Scotland FFrance and Ireland Defender of the
  ffaith I Michaell Benet…”
- “in the fifth year of the reigne of our gracious souvraigne Lord and Lady King
  William and Mary”
- “Soverign Lord Charles, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland,
  France and Ireland, Defender of the faith.” 484

These royal acknowledgements were a common heading consistently throughout the last
half of the century (except for the Interregnum, when no sovereign was on the throne). 485

It was customary to date legal documents with a reference to the reign at the time.

Next, there was usually a declaration of the testator’s health, particularly
highlighting the fact that the will was produced while in “good health,” “good sound and
perfect mind and memory” or “good mind and perfect memory” as well as clarifying that

483 Dw/pc/5/1694/11.
484 MS 9171/31/p2-3; Dw/pc/5/1694/11; Dw/pc/05/1684/14.
485 There are many examples of “defender of the faith” and royal acknowledgements; One example is
Dw/pc/05/1685/13.
the testator was “aged,” “weake,” “sick,” “ill,” or “infirm in body.” Mental health (i.e. “sound mind”) was critical to record one’s wishes and distribute wealth accordingly as well as ensure the validity of the will. Physical health was less important, although testimony of each was frequent. Joanna Gudgeo stated in her Memorandum will in 1666 that she was “taken sick… but of sound minde and perfect memory having a serious intent to settle and dispose of her estate did make and ordaine her last will and testament.”

Thomas Bittington stated in his memorandum will in 1667 that he, “being of perfect minde and memorie and have a full intent and purpose to make and declare this last will and testament.” In these cases sound mind and perfect memory were related. The adjective “perfect” was associated with being sane and sound. More specifically, it meant having all the essential characteristics, elements or qualities, and not being deficient, in this case related to memory. Testators made it clear that their wills were completed while their thinking was unclouded. Occasionally testators make it a point to thank God for their health, such as in this example: “being of good and perfect mind and memorie I heartily thancke almighty God.”

This language is important for a couple major reasons. First, this shows us that testators wrote wills well before death in case of “a surprise and sudden death.” They were a preparatory tool for death. Testators acknowledged their mortality. Secondly, as observed earlier, the Reformation created a movement away from death-bed testaments. This affirms that wills were written at a time while the testator was in “sound mind” and

486 Oxedon Papers. BL MS 54332, f 134-135.; Dw/pc/5/1694/11; Dw/pc/5/1694/31; Dw/pc/05/1684/19; Dw/pc/05/1679/23; MS 9051/9/p58; MS 9171/30/p9; MS 9171/31/p12; These are some of many examples available.
487 MS 9051/9/p67.
488 MS 9051/9/p114.
489 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “Perfect.”
490 Dw/pc/5/1693/25.
491 Jacobite and Other Letters, BL MS 39923.
made decisions to distribute wealth.\textsuperscript{492} This evidence of rationality also supports the thought that testators chose to create and implement their wills, which is linked to the idea that the document represents their beliefs.

The average amount of time between when a testator wrote a will and when it was put through probate after the testator’s death was slightly less than two years from the late 1640’s through the end of the century. Over 70% prepared wills before two years passed from initial writing to probate.\textsuperscript{493} Testators, however, most frequently prepared their wills less than a year before they died. This occurred 35% of the time.\textsuperscript{494} Most wills were prepared when testators were of “sound mind,” but were showing signs of poor health. Failing health likely drove the preparation process. The overall average is higher than a year because approximately one-third of testators prepared their wills two or more years in advance.\textsuperscript{495} Failing physical health was likely less of a factor driving preparation for those testators. In fact, there are a number of cases where last testaments were prepared anywhere from six to thirteen years in advance of death. Interestingly, there is no variation from the late 1640’s to the 1660’s compared to the 1680’s and 90’s. There was not a notable variation in the percentage of wills prepared in memorandum form throughout the half century either. This means that factors such as the Civil War and disease that followed battles in the mid century or the plague and fire in London in the mid 1660’s did not have an effect on the making of wills, in terms either of the time completed in advance of death or the proportion that were prepared on the deathbed.

\textsuperscript{492} BL MS 19198, f 66, 73; An analysis of the before and after the Reformation handling of good works is found in Houlbrooke, \textit{Death, Religion and the Family}, 135.
\textsuperscript{493} A sample of one hundred wills was selected from my total set and analyzed from time of writing to time of probate (occurred after death). The average was 1.73 years, approximately 2 years.
\textsuperscript{494} The mode was less than one year in the sample set described above. This meant that the will was written and put through probate within a year.
\textsuperscript{495} 30\% of this sample (described above) had at least a two year gap from when a will was written to time of probate.
itself. These events were factors that likely impacted the view of death culturally, but among the population in a position to prepare wills it did not have much bearing on when they decided to actually write one.

The religious dedication comes next in the preamble. Typical language stated something such as, “First, I commend my soule unto Almighty God hoping asuredly through [the] merit of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to give pardon and forgiveness of all my sins and transgressions,” “I commend my soul into the Almighty hands of God hoping through his merits…,” “[ I ] commit my soul into the merciful hands of almighty God my maker and hoping through the merits of Jesus Christ” or “first I bequeath my sole into the hande of alimighty god my maker, hoping that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only savior and redeemer to receive free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins.” 496 Sometimes there was a mention of “praying that I shall receive full pardon and remission of all my sins.” 497

In general, this part of the preamble can be divided into three fairly predictable sections. First, there is a commending of the soul to “Alimghty God.” Usual statements were “first and principally I commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God,” or “comitt my soule into the hands of Almighty God my most mercifull ffather.” 498

Following, there was a statement of reliance on Jesus Christ for salvation. Testators frequently wrote a variation of the following: “hoping through the merits, death and passion of my Savior Jesus Christ, to have full and free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins,” “assuredly trusting and believing [in the] infinite merritts of Jesus Christ my blessed Saviour and Redeemer to have and obtaine a free pardon and remission of all my

496 Dw/pc/5/1694/31; Dw/pa/05/1661/17; BL MS 19198, f 73; BL MS 19190, f 11.
497 Dw/pc/5/1694/11.
498 Dw/pc/5/1695/2; MS 9051/9/p93.
sins,” or “believing in the full pardon and forgiveness of all my sines through the merit of Jesus Christ my onely savior and redeemer, with whom I hope to reigne eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven.” The wording about the merits, death and/or passion of Christ repeated frequently and testators clarified the identity and status of Jesus Christ as God’s Son and affirmed his status as Redeemer or Savior. These phrases were common, and often were pointed and succinct, such as “his beloved sonne Christ Jesus my onlie Saviour.” Lastly, there was a hope of Heaven, usually specifying “to inherit everlasting life” or “to be [given] everlasting life.”

The phrasing in the third section of the preamble is noteworthy because it emerged during the tense time of the Puritan and Arminian divide where the status and meaning of God the Father, and God the Son were debated among theologians, especially over soteriological stances that had direct bearing on death. The Father’s sovereignty was stressed by Puritans in the doctrine of election and grace being made available through the Son was stressed by Arminians. It is clear that this also stood out against the Socinian stance that had challenged the Church’s belief in the Trinity. Socinians had rejected the divinity of Jesus, the theology about the extent of God’s knowledge, which formed the basis of early English Unitarianism.

It is clear from the language in this section that testators believed in God, Jesus, salvation and hope of everlasting life, with no clear leanings toward Puritan or Arminian ideas. Testators were general about their statements of faith in a Protestant sense. There was clear acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty, Jesus’ role as savior, and the procurement of salvation which resulted in everlasting life. These principles apply to

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499 Dw/pc/5/1695/2; MS 9051/9/p93; BL MS 54332, f 149-151.
500 MS 9051/9/p43.
501 Dw/pc/5/1695/2; MS 9051/9/p93.
either Puritans or Arminians. There was no language clearly associated with election, freely choosing grace, or linking the testator to the group identity of these divergent and rival religious groups. This shows that there was separation between formal theology and popular practice among testators. People did not express the intricacies linked to competing soteriologies, rather, they were confident of what mattered to them, which was being saved regardless of how it happened. This shows that the influence of formal theologies was applied to the point it met people’s needs.

BODY OF THE WILL: BEQUEATHING, FAMILY AND GENDER

When it came to the section of bequeathing wealth, religious sentiment was largely absent. It is clear that this portion of the will was for specifying terms for distributing worldly goods, and that distribution in and of itself was not a mechanism to assist one’s soul. This follows the pattern set in place in the early Reformation, when reformers rejected all forms of soul-assistance in the afterlife on grounds of being anti-Christian, useless and idolatrous. Instead, bequeathing wealth was an opportunity to add order to the death process. So although the intention of reformers a century earlier was that individuals could approach death with a clearer mind to focus on God, the evolution of will-making was a by-product of focusing on survivors, mainly closely loved family and their well-being after a testator’s death. However, some testators used this part of the will as a public affirmation of their thankfulness or an opportunity to credit God as being responsible for blessing them with wealth.
For example, Marie Graunt of London wrote in her 1662 will the following, “And Concerning [my] worldly estate as God hath blessed me with all in this life, and made me a disposer of, I give, will and bequeath the same in forme following…” 502 Another testator from Southwark wrote in her 1694 will about the disposal of “temporall goods as it has pleased Almighty God to bless me with or bestowe upon me. I give and dispose therof as followeth…” 503 There is also the occasional example where worldly wealth could have also been spiritually significant to the testator, which we observe when testators bequeathed bibles to specific recipients. 504 In late seventeenth-century England this would have been God’s word and not much else (not too many other physical materials would have been welcome or counted as spiritually valuable).

The body of the will also offers insight into gender and family. This is important because it shows a unique agency extended by women as well as highlighting what was valued by testators. Family mattered just about as much as issues of faith did. First, we observe that women frequently appear as testators, although almost always as widows (80% of the time according to a recent study by Erickson). 505 Most often we are able to tell that female testators survived their husbands through self-categorization of their marital status on the will itself, although occasionally it is difficult to tell if they are widowed or simply unmarried through their descriptors within their bequests. 506 This offers insight, to some degree, into the agency of females. It reveals that legal recognition and property ownership were common among this female population group.

502 MS 25626/6/p38.
503 Dw/pc/5/1694/7.
504 Dw/pc/05/1680/57; This is an example of testator Alicia Thatcher bequeathing her bible.
505 Many cases of widows – almost all wills that were produced by women; Dw/pc/5/1693/16; Dw/pc/5/1697/5; Dw/pc/5/1679/41; Dw/pc/05/1681/21; Dw/pc/05/1647/19; MS 9051/9/p93; MS 9051/10/p89; MS 25626/7/p285; Erickson, 204; Beaver, 394; Hallam, 65.
506 Dw/pc/05/1685/3 - Anne Bennett of Kingston in the County of Surrey; it is unclear if she is a widow; Dw/pc/05/1686/13/1-2 – In Elizabeth Christmas’s will there is no intro or religious references.
able to will their wealth. Widows likely dominate female will-making because women in
general did not own property until their husbands passed away. Also, the most common
early modern executors were actually executrixes. Female executrixes ranged from 46 to
96% throughout the early modern era, and were increasing overall by the late seventeenth
century, with approximately two-thirds being named sole executrix in that period.507
These details about female testators and executrixes serve as reminders that women
exerted agency in terms of property and law, which was not common during life while
married or as maids.508

Next, we see that the nuclear family and spousal relationships were the focus in
the body of the will. Testators usually sought to ensure that immediate family was cared
for materially after their death. Within the distribution of wealth there is a consistent
affection expressed for spouses (mostly men about their wives). Lastly, and most central
to the theme of this research, there does not appear to be a distinction along gender lines
in terms of expressions of faith. Religious practice, in terms of preparing for death, was
similar among men and women.

All testators, of either gender, appear committed to the convention of praising
God, trusting in salvation and looking forward to Heaven, and seem concerned about
caring for survivors post-mortem. In one sense, this is quite notable, as women became,
to some degree, more masculine, and males more feminine. Women posthumously, at
least, took on the role of care giver, while men became more expressive with affectivity.
These are operative contradictions to the dominant gender discourse of the day. Men

507 Erickson, 156, 158.
508 Hallam, 61-4, 81 – the author reminds us that the agency of women, while it existed, should not be
overstated; when wills were contested in the courts females were at a disadvantage in representation since
men exercised control.
were commonly the head of the household, provider for the home and did not necessarily have a reputation for expressing love to their spouses or family.\textsuperscript{509}

It is common to see widows as testators in the late seventeenth century and it is clear that some wills were penned and signed by widows themselves, instead of containing only marks or scribbles.\textsuperscript{510} This means that women did have opportunity, at least those in the population group positioned to distribute wealth (quite significant amounts of wealth in some cases), to express agency in a similar manner as men. This finding confirms the arguments of Alan MacFarlane in the \textit{Origins of English Individualism}, which stress women’s legal agency. MacFarlane observes that there were highly developed property rights of women as individuals in England in this era.\textsuperscript{511} In terms of death and dying, this indicates that preparation for life’s end afforded opportunity to women that did not exist in life.\textsuperscript{512}

The above point should not be misunderstood. Even though wills show opportunity being afforded to females in the preparatory process for death, wills were not absent of gendered language. Rather, wills included words accepted as norms for males and females, such as, husbands, fathers, yeomen, spinsters, wives and mothers. Wills, in many respects, affirm our understanding of what the nuclear family was in the late


\textsuperscript{510} Dw/pc/05/1684/2 – The will of Jane Betterworth in her own handwriting.


\textsuperscript{512} MS 25626/6/p102 – The will from Joan White from London is an example of a lengthy will that includes a lot of wealth to bequeath.
seventeenth century, and how familial relations were valued. For example, there is repetitive language of affection, particularly about spouses. Usually husbands refer to their spouse as “loving wife,” “deare wife,” “dear and loving wife” or “dearly loved wife.” For example, Matthew Adland in 1680 bequeathed “to my loving wife Jane” his bed, furniture, silver cups, spoons as well as specified that his “loving wife Jane whom I make and ordayne full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.” In this case, which is typical, it is clear that his wife was described as “loving,” and we can deduce that she was a valued part of the marriage relationship based on her treatment and legal authority extended after death. In general, these are words of affection, endearment and trust. They demonstrate a bond present in the marriage relationship, one that is confirmed by the common extension of confidence and reliance shown to wives as business partners (at least after death) as they were frequently entrusted with the estate and lingering financial matters.

The distribution of wealth also indicates reliance on the nuclear family. In terms of financial gifting, the absence of an option to fund the intervention for the dead directly benefited the surviving family members of the testator. In the majority of cases, bequests were made to children and spouses. Husbands and fathers specified amounts to wives and children. In cases where the husband had outlived the wife, there were efforts made to care for children, with legal rights to wealth and land transferred to

513 Dw/pc/05/1684/14; Dw/pc/05/1680/4; Dw/pc/05/1680/9; Dw/pc/05/1680/10; Dw/pc/05/1680/22; Dw/pa/05/1648/28; MS 9051/9/p34; MS 9051/9/p35; MS 9051/9/p80; MS 9051/10/p34; MS 9171/31/p2-3; MS 9171/39; MS 25626/7/p10 – these are examples where love is expressed.

514 Dw/pc/05/1680/2.

515 Erickson, 157; See also Houlbrooke, *The English Family* which also emphasizes affection within the marriage relationship.

516 An example of wealth distributed to family is found in the *Althorp Papers*, BL MS 75405.

517 Some examples can be found in Dw/pc/05/1684/35; Dw/pa/05/1648/2; MS 9051/9/p173; BL MS 54332; *Blackeney Collection*, BL MS 63094, f 1-14.
daughters.\textsuperscript{518} Widows outlined what children and grandchildren should receive.\textsuperscript{519} In one case a widow testator named Joanna Lucas wrote in her will “…and as touching as my worldly goodes are [I] doe thereof give and bequeath unto my two daughters Elizabeth Mercer and Joanna Smith to each of them ten shillings and to [each] one of their children five pence a piece.” Also, in this case the testator’s youngest daughter was named executrix.\textsuperscript{520} Occasionally there is expansion to extended family, such as cousins.\textsuperscript{521} In the instance where children were anticipating passing away before their parents (not common), wealth was bequeathed to their mother and father.\textsuperscript{522} In general, details were made for long term execution of wills to ensure income helped sustain surviving family members.

In another case Elizabeth Harris from Middlesex wrote in her 1667 will that “[I] doo make my last will in manner following, I give my soule to God who gave it hopeing for acceptance through Jesus Christ and my body to the Earth to bee decently buried at the discretion of my executrix. And for my worldly goods I dispose of them as followeth, that is today I give all my esate to my too daughters Mary and Elizabeth after the payment of my debts and funeral charges.”\textsuperscript{523} She goes on to request that her uncle and cousin take care of the education of her daughters. There is an obvious concern for the financial wellbeing and education of her children. In cases where wealth was distributed to friends or other non-family, it was likely due to testators having no

\textsuperscript{518} Dw/pc/05/1681/4 - Henry Broewell’s will includes land and income from rents bequeathed to daughters.
\textsuperscript{519} Examples are numerous, some include: Dw/pc/o5/1684/9; Dw/pc/5/1693/20; Dw/pc/5/1693/16.
\textsuperscript{520} Dw/pa/05/1647/8.
\textsuperscript{521} Dw/pc/o5/1684/7.
\textsuperscript{522} Dw/pc/05/1684/54.
\textsuperscript{523} MS 9051/10/p357.
remaining family still alive. The notable point about marriage and family is that property rights frequently crossed gender divides throughout the last half of the seventeenth century and issues of caring for the immediate family were the priority for testators.

Since a spouse used the will to care for his/her surviving partner, then it would not be unreasonable that conditions be placed on the will contingent on potential remarriage. Surprisingly, evidence of that seems very rare. Ralph Houlbrooke’s study found no evidence of such cases, Wrightson and Levine allude to it being infrequent and Erickson finds it to be quite uncommon, where less than 10% of bequests have stipulations or limitations added relative to widowhood. In this study, there were only two cases of stipulations written alongside bequests. First, there was the will of Richard Skelton of Brockham, written in 1693, and it stated that “[I] “bequeath unto my wife so long as shee liveth and keepeth her selfe a widow the full [and] exact summe of five pounds of lawfull money of England to be paid every yeare by my son Jasper.” The other example is from 1648. In it the testator Joseph Stonehill, a yeoman, puts a condition on the will to ensure that his wife’s potential remarriage does not interfere with his son’s inheritance. While Stonehill does not specifically revoke support for his spouse, he removes her from managing the funds. These cases are noteworthy, even if they are rare exceptions. It demonstrates that testators did think about the future of their marriage partner, and may have not been likely to extend support or would modify their plans for the funds if the spouse found a new mate. This confirms in cultural practice what Stephen Collins argued

524 MS 9171/31/p34.
525 Wrightson and Levine, 97; Houlbrooke, Death, Religion and the Family; Erickson, 166.
526 Dw/pc/5/1693/25.
527 Dw/pa/05/1648/39.
about social attitudes to remarriage of widows. In English literature discussing widowhood and women’s roles in society from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, Collins finds an attitude towards remarriage as a kind of “lawful adultery.”

Widows were praised for remaining widows and discouraged from remarriage. It makes sense, then, that this is largely absent from wills, as the presumption of remarriage was likely not there. For those that did consider it though, restrictions were placed on the widow’s finances.

The dilemma about future remarriage reflects a narrow reality. Widows, at least those who had enough wealth that a will was necessitated, were the least likely to remarry. Actually, fewer widows than widowers remarried and that figure continued to drop by the late seventeenth century. Poor widows remained poor with little or no official mechanisms for obtaining wealth available, so that was why the female population was likely to pursue remarriage. More lone women than lone men headed households or lived alone, particularly by the late seventeenth century. This was likely due to the constrictions of coverture, which would force widows to turn over their wealth to the control of their new husband, should they remarry. Propertied women had less economic incentive to remarry after being widowed. In some ways death may have upset common thinking about gender roles in a patriarchal society.

These issues of family, wealth distribution and potential remarriage are not directly linked to issues of religion and faith. However, this shows what mattered to

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529 Ibid., 34.
530 Erickson, 196.
531 Ibid., 195.
532 Ibid.
individuals as they prepared for death, which were not just issues surrounding their salvation. First, getting one’s affairs in order was important. This was part of the preparatory process that preachers advocated though, so there is some link to religion in one sense. Second, the nuclear family was clearly valued by individuals. Caring for surviving family members after one’s death mattered just about as much as expressing faith and anticipating the afterlife. This shows that individuals acted in a way that met their needs as they prepared for death, in this case focusing on secular, familial matters of security just as much as expressing their faith in salvation and hope of Heaven.

BODY OF THE WILL: BURIAL, FUNERALS AND BEYOND

Interment instructions in wills also reveal familial bonds. Burial requests often specified being located next to a spouse or transferred authority to a loved one to decide. For example, one testator expressed desire to be buried near family members. In another example Temperance Dye, a spinster, wrote that her “desire is to be buried in mothers grave…” In 1675 Dorothy Sulls of London specified that she wanted to be buried by her “deare husband.” Another testator asks for “decent burial” without a specific location, but made it a point to leave it up to the discretion of immediate family members.

533 Dw/pc/05/1680/1.
534 Dw/pc/05/1679/26.
535 MS 9051/10/p8.
536 Dw/pc/05/1684/19.
Wealth was also bequeathed to have debts resolved and burial and funeral sermons prepaid. For example, Henry Bacocke wrote in 1660, “I give to Mary my wife, whom I make my sole executor to see my will performed and to pay my debt and to see my body brought to the ground.” This was a result of the prescription for a proper death instilled in the late sixteenth century. Settling affairs, particularly the resolution of debts, was a criterion for living out a responsible Christian life that early reformers advocated. In this light, funds were often specified to be set aside to cover the cost of interment and the funeral sermon. Following, this leads to the theme of burial in wills.

Burial instructions were frequently mentioned in wills. Testators often specified that they be “Christian” and/or “decent.” This meant preference to be interred in an accepted graveyard with the process overseen by testators’ clergy. Graveyards were no longer considered holy ground, as that tradition was dissolved in the early reformation. Instead, social acceptance created a “decent” burial, which meant that the body was buried according to accepted standards. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term “decent” had been in use since the mid sixteenth century and meant becoming, suitable, appropriate or proper to the circumstances or special requirements of the case, and a secondary definition specifies appropriateness regarding dignity. The Westminster Directory for Public Worship of God, adopted by Parliament in 1645, specified that burials were not to resemble any of the previous “superstitions” that existed such as kneeling or praying with the purpose of intercession. A decent burial,

537 Dw/pc/05/1684/14; BL MS 19198, f 78-79.
538 MS 25626/6/p53.
539 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “Decent.”
therefore, referred to interment that was appropriate or proper with the dignity of the deceased in mind out of respect, not for intercession.

In the late seventeenth century a decent burial would have typically been within churchyards, which were accepted locations to inter a corpse.\footnote{Harding, \textit{The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670}, 48-68.} Even memorandum wills occasionally stipulated that funds be used for burial.\footnote{MS 9171/31/p186.} Most generically, last testaments frequently contained the phrasing, “my body to be buried in Christian burial at the discretion of my executor,” “my body I comitt to the earth to be decently buried in Christianlike manner, att the discretion of my wife and executrix,” or used the simple phrase “decent Christian burial.”\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1684/35; Dw/pc/05/1684/7; Dw/pa/05/1646/54; MS 9051/9/p80; MS 9051/9/p103 Dw/pc/05/1686/1; Dw/pc/5/1697/11; Dw/pc/5/1684/1; BL MS 19198 f 1, 73; BL MS 19190, f 11; BL MS 54332, f 134-135.} Some testators left no indication that their burial should be “Christian” and simply wrote “my body I commit to the Earth” or “my body to the Earth to be decently buried.”\footnote{MS 9171/31/p183; MS 9051/10/p413-414; MS 25626/6/p38.} However, many of these phrases were appended with “from where it came” or some similar variation, which is recognition of the divine order in human creation where God created man from “dust” and death initiates a return to “dust” (Genesis 3:19 states “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: \textit{for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”}).\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1686/2; Dw/pc/05/1686/7.} Many also generically prescribed a “decent burial,” or of being buried “decently in the churchyard.”\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1686/2; Dw/pc/05/1679/70; Dw/pa/05/1647/13; MS 9051/9/p35.} These requests commonly specified the exact churchyard, burial ground, or location next to a family member that they wished to be interred.\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1686/7.} In one such case Thomas Allen, from Southwark in the county of Surrey, wrote in his will in 1680 the following, “And, my body commit to the ground to bee
decently buried within the parish Churchyeard of St. George the Martyr neere the place where Mary Allen my late wife was buryed.”\(^{548}\) This shows his desire for a civil burial and interment near his deceased wife within a preferred churchyard.

There is also some attention paid to funeral plans in wills, although such instruction is more the exception than the norm. When it does appear it is usually in the context of covering costs commingled with burial expenses. Occasionally though, testators wandered away from the standard custom and offered more specific instructions. For example, Mary Bysh in the county of Surrey requested that “to him that shall [prepare] my ffunrall sermon fforty shillings.”\(^{549}\) In another case a spinster specified details of her funeral sermon to be preached at her burial in her 1679 will, requesting “a Christian like burial that is to say a sermon the ext to be in the 48 salm the 14 vers…”\(^{550}\)

Here we see the specific passage in Psalms requested be used as the sermon text. The message preached to survivors was important to the testator. The verse itself states, “For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death (KJV).” The testator wanted those attending her funeral to hear that verse and be reminded that God was the guide throughout all of life even leading a person up through the end. It was a message of assurance of the faithfulness of God.

Another interesting aspect of testators’ attention to burial is the eschatological beliefs they reflect. Testators often placed their statements regarding burial alongside phrases about the Last Day, Heaven, or eternal glory.\(^{551}\) The following excerpts from wills offer examples of typical language used:

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\(^{548}\) Dw/pc/05/1680/1.  
\(^{549}\) Dw/pa/05/1660/2.  
\(^{550}\) Dw/pc/05/1679/26.  
\(^{551}\) MS 9171/31/p30.
* Marie Graunt of London, 1662 “…and to be made partaker of eternal happiness in the Kingdome of Heaven, My Body I committ to the Earth from where it came, in hope of a joyfull Resurrection”552

* Henry Browne from Middlesex wrote in 1677, “My body to the ground from whence it came in hope of a glorious Resurrection and to bee decently buried in Christian buriall at the discretion of my executrix.”553

* Edward Gearning from Middlesex wrote in 1675 that he was “trusting...[for] a joyfull ressurecction att the last day and my body to bee buryed in decent manner according to the discretion of my executrix”554

* Elizabeth Chevall from Southwark wrote in 1667 that “by the [sanctification] of God, His holy Ghost this my mortall bodie who I comitt to the Earth …and [my] soul admitted into everlasting salvation at that great Day when the spirit shall be made perfect”555

What we learn about testators from these directives and declarations, at least with language patterns, was that they followed closely with beliefs about the afterlife. The basic theology of English Protestantism held to the concept that death was part of the normal order of life and served as a portal into life after death. There was death (and burial), then entry into the afterlife, which was individual eschatology on late seventeenth century Christian terms. There is not a specific mention of “rising from the grave” in the Last Day, in those exact words, but it alludes to a hope of the physical reconstruction of the body. It is clearly implied that the grave was the holding place in hope of the Resurrection, which was the message taught by preachers about the afterlife.

One can see that contemporary arts and literature confirm this cultural understanding of the body and soul relative to the resurrection. For example, in literature this pairs well to a divine poem John Donne wrote titled “This is my playes last scene,” which stated, “and gluttonous death, will instantly unjoynt My body, and soule,

552 MS 25626/6/p38.
553 MS 9051/10/p413-414.
554 MS9051/10/p34.
555 Dw/pc/05/1684/11.
and I shall sleepe a space, but my ‘ever-waking part shall see that face.’

Donne is alluding to nature of the body and soul, that God has created them, and that while separated at death, it will only be a sleep in that state for a “space,” implying resurrection. Even amid staged anatomy dissection, which was the presentation of human bodies for medical exploration on the playhouse stage, Hillary Nunn observes a link to religious doctrine.

Actors’ bodies were offered up so the audience might peer into their flesh and examine the inner reaches to judge true nature. Nunn argues that the body was used to demonstrate the connection of humans to their physical environment and each other, a common existence within the divine order. This linked to the concepts of common destiny, which was famously written about by Donne in that “No man is an island,” all people were linked together.

Displaying anatomy was a way the physical body demonstrated corporeal existence, which was distinct from the soul that had left the body behind after death. The body, generally, was linked to sin and not until the resurrection and after final judgment would its nature fully change after it rose from the grave. This cultural evidence pairs well with the slightly ambiguous doctrine of soul-sleep, of the soul being separated from the body and in a state of waiting until body and soul were one day reunified.

While eschatological overtones may point to an ambiguous understanding among testators about the End Times, it is clear that the belief that the soul and body were separated at death was well understood by those writing wills. No hints of intercession

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558 Ibid., 30.
after death existed, rather, it was primarily about proper (decent) burial and responsible planning for covering funeral costs. This followed along with classical Protestantism’s distaste of “superstitious” burial in consecrated ground or funerary rituals that may have resembled popery and, instead, reflected their preference for a plain, basic burial.

While we see no mention of intercession after death, there is a sense of believing in God’s plan in death, specifically about the natural aspect of dying and its close link to the Last Day. This links to the message in preachers’ teachings about the divine ordination in death and being familiar with mortality. It was important for burials to be “Christian,” and the geography of the grave was mapped out by testators according to where loved ones were interred and preferred churchyards. This was not a sacred geography of gravesites, rather, it was out of community and respect for the dead to be buried around their churches. Thus, while we often see a generic prescription for proper burial and instruction to have costs covered in wills, we also see that preparing for interment was embedded in and reflective of the broader Christian teachings. It mattered to be buried in a Christian manner, within a churchyard, to be prepared and hope for the Resurrection.

WILLS: GAUGE OF POPULAR BELIEFS

Testators do not reveal whether or not they were influenced by Puritan or Arminian beliefs, although there are rare instances with slight overtones that may be attributable to one group or the other. For example, Thomas Goode, an elder in the parish of Southwark, wrote in his will in 1693 that “First and Principally, I commit my
soul into the hands of Almighty God my maker and creator not doubting but assuredly believing through the merits of Jesus Christ my only saviour and redeemer to [bestow] full and free pardon and forgivenes of all my sinns and to inherit everlasting life.\textsuperscript{560} There is a possibility of Puritan influence because of the way assurance is expressed, but it is not a strong representation. The following preamble from Richard Skelton of Brockham also shows potential Puritan influence in the language. It states:

\begin{quote}
In the Name of God Amen…In the parish of East Betchworth in the county of surrey, being of good and perfect mind and memorie I heartily thancke almighty God, therefor doe on this present twenty six day of July in the yeare of our Lord [1693] make and ordeyne this my present and Last will and testament, in writing, in manner and forme following. That is to say, ffirst, I commend my soule into the hands of Almighty God, assuredly trusting and believing that by the merit, death, and passion of my savior Jesus Christ, to receave and obtaine ffree pardon and remission of all my sinns and to be made [perfect] in the kingdom of heaven prepared for mee and all the elect of God. And my body to bee committed to [the] Earth to be decently buried.\textsuperscript{561}
\end{quote}

In this preamble Mr. Skelton makes it a point to emphasize his assurance as well as that Heaven was prepared for God’s elect, which are both points entrenched in the Calvinistic tradition. The reason I believe this to be only potentially Puritan, however, is that the term “elect” does not automatically signal Calvinism, even if it closely associated with it. Arminians also believed in the elect. The elect were comprised of those who accepted grace and achieved salvation. Assurance and election, though, are not as closely associated with the doctrine based on free-will. Nonetheless, the link is weak, which means that testators did not give priority to language clearly associated with different religious points of view.

Puritan or Arminian, it is tough to tell. It is easy to see, though, that testators clearly had hope in soteriological understandings on a general level. There was typically

\textsuperscript{560} Dw/pc/5/1693/9.
\textsuperscript{561} Dw/pc/5/1693/25.
a statement of reliance in the merits alone of Jesus Christ, specifically his passion and
death, and a steadfast hope to be saved and enter Heaven. For example, Ann
Symbourogh stated in her will in 1684 that she was “hoping that through [the]
meritourious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to receive
free pardon and forgiveness of all my sinnes” (underline added for emphasis).\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1684/14; Dw/pa/05/1660/18.}
Francisci Preston wrote in 1686 that “my soul I give into the hands of Almighty God as a
most merciful father and Creator assuredly hoping through the merits of my blessed
savior and redeemer to obtain a pardon and remission of all my sins and an inheritance in
his everlasting kingdom” (underline added for emphasis).\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1686/33.}
One more interesting example is from William Adshed from Middlesex, which stated, “[I am] wholly
submitting my soule to his blessed will, And humbly with hearty sorrow for my sinnes,
commending my soule into the hands of my most gracious God, trusting for salvation by
and through the meritts of the death and passion of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”\footnote{MS 25626/6/p1.}
These may very well be Ariminian testaments because there is expression of hope and
trust of salvation to come, which is different from the Calvinistic assurance of salvation
already received. Again, this is not a strong link. In the unique preamble of Mr. Adshed,
he expressed contrition over his sins and affirmed, with confidence, that he trusted in his
salvation made possible through the acts of Jesus Christ. Some testators emphasized
more succinctly that their hope was in the hands of Almighty God alone.\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1684/42; Dw/pc/05/1686/16.}
It is difficult to read into these statements as definitive evidence of Puritans
faithfully proclaiming their assurance in soteriological certainty or Arminian believers

\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1684/14; Dw/pa/05/1660/18.}
\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1684/35.}
\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1686/33.}
\footnote{MS 25626/6/p1.}
\footnote{Dw/pc/05/1684/42; Dw/pc/05/1686/16.}
using their wills as a final prayer to evoke the intervention of Christ on their behalf.\textsuperscript{567} However, there is a weak tension in wills. It is a tension between hope and assurance, which one may suppose is evidence of the push and pull of Calvinistic based conceptions of predestination and Arminian ideas of free will. On one hand testators seem clear that Christ’s merits have already saved them – “trusting to be saved” – and their hope is to enter Heaven and experience new glory.\textsuperscript{568} Testators frequently stated their hope in assurance, a realization or completion of the work God has done to save them. The hope is that God will accept their souls in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{569} The issue of salvation does not seem to be in question. On the other hand, there seems to be a concern about whether or not Christ’s sacrifice has worked out issues of sin for an individual. We occasionally see testators expressing hope that God will accept their souls and that the resurrection of Jesus Christ will hopefully produce salvation.\textsuperscript{570}

While there is a mild tension over hope and assurance, there is consistency among testators about things to come in the afterlife, whether a “joyful” or “glorious” resurrection or, simply, an eternity in Heaven.\textsuperscript{571} This is interesting evidence linking formal theology to broader culture. First, we see quite clearly an affirmation of the resurrection in the End Times by testators. This refers to the rising up, a resurrection, of all the believers over time at the Last Day as described in the book of Revelation, and, as

\textsuperscript{567} Puritanism and Arminianism were prevalent in the greater London area, which is the region these wills were taken from and testators lived. London was home a variety of confessions. Since the Puritan and Arminian debate was active in politics that is another reason in which both confessions were prevalent in the area. Harding, The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670, 191, 222 - Harding confirms that there was strong commitment to Arminianism and Puritanism in the greater London area. There were vocal congregations supporting Laudian rituals as well as Puritan resistance. Also see: Burke, “Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London,” 33-4, 53-4; Capp, “Popular Literature,” 218-223; Reay, “Popular Religion,” 117-9.
\textsuperscript{568} Dw/pc/05/1680/58.
\textsuperscript{569} Dw/pc/05/1660/4.
\textsuperscript{570} Dw/pc/05/1648/35.
\textsuperscript{571} Dw/pc/05/1680/16; Dw/pc/05/1648/28.
we have already observed, this was closely linked to burial prescriptions as well.
Secondly, there is a cultural understanding among testators, or almost an expectation, that Heaven awaited the individual after death. Salvation was expected. Testators hoped for “everlasting life” or “everlasting happiness.”572 This also compares to the reported statements made by theologians as they faced death, such as that of Laud or Bunyan where they hoped for heaven, the “Land of Promise,” and an experience of “incorruptible immortality of joy and happiness” at the resurrection.573 It is safe to say that testators’ hopes, almost in the sense of eagerness, were focused on gaining access to a life outside the physical world, entered through the door of death, and to be spent with God in a blissful eternity. There was a reliance and application of theology, but on a general level, about the afterlife by testators in this regard.

Wills and last testaments also served as opportunities to express recognition of one’s mortality – the “uncertainty of life and the certainty of death.”574 This almost goes without saying since the very production of a will was spurred by the recognition of one’s imminent death, however close the end may really have been. Since death was inevitable, writing a will was the sensible thing to do.575 Many testators took the opportunity to incorporate these reflections in their wills. For example, Susanna Conley, a Surrey widow, wrote in 1697 that she wrote her will because she was “considering the uncertainty and frailty of transitory life.”576 In another instance, John Banifour wrote in 1684 that he was writing his will because of “not knowing how soone the sudden surprise

572 Dw/pc/05/1679/1; MS 9051/9/p103.
574 Dw/pc/05/1686/33; Dw/pa/05/1660/18; Dw/pc/05/1680/9; MS 9051/9/p4; MS 9051/10/p34; MS 25626/7/p270.
575 Dw/pa/05/1648/28.
576 Dw/pc/5/1697/5.
of Death may soar upon me.” This was not only an opportunity to publicly acknowledge one’s mortality, it was also an occasion for a testator to testify to God’s sovereignty and responsibility for the order of life and death. For example, phrases such as “knowing the uncertainty of [this] life and that it is appointed for all men to dye,” “when it shall please God to take [me] out of this world” or simply the “uncertainty of this transitory life” are good examples that attest to this belief. Testators believed that God ended life in His appointed time, and that life was ephemeral. Death was a passage necessary to go through in order to enter an eternal state. This demonstrates a link to the teachings from preachers about being familiar with mortality and ready for death. Moreover, this was a consistently in wills throughout the late seventeenth century, so, it does not appear that outside factors impacting religion, such as the Interregnum or Restoration, were linked to testaments. People made similar statements of faith in the middle of the century under Puritan dictatorship as decades later when Laudian Arminianism characterized the national Church.

These points about recognizing and coming to terms with mortality were directly tied to teachings about the good death even though the understandings of theology were on a general level. Pastors advocated being ready for death to strike at any time, while at the same time to acknowledge God’s design and timing involved in when life was supposed to end. The language in wills shows testator’s agreed with this conception and heeded the warning to be ready to die at any moment.

577 Dw/pc/o5/1684/7.
578 MS 9051/9/p80; MS 9051/9/p98; MS 25626/6/p40; MS 25626/7/p278-9.
579 The samples in this section were from the 1640s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. Similar language appeared in all the decades.
EXCEPTIONAL LANGUAGE IN WILLS

There are occasional preambles that fall outside the common pattern. Some that came up a handful of times evoked the Holy Ghost. These included phrases such as “by the [sanctification] of God, His holy Ghost,” “In the name of God the father and of the sonne and of the holy ghost Amen,” “In the name of the father, the sonne, and the holy ghost three [and] one God to whome all honor and glory, now and forevermore Amen,” and “In the holy name of God the Ffather Sonne and Holy Ghost my most gracious God and loving father Saviour and Sanctifyer.” These examples were all from Surrey or, more specifically, testators in London, and were put through probate in 1644, 1648, 1667, and 1684, so it is doubtful that they were limited to a specific will makers influence or time period since they were spread over a wide range of decades. While these sound like they may have had Catholic influence since they are reminiscent of wills produced a century earlier, there is nothing especially distinctive other than the mentioning of the Holy Ghost that would lead us to believe that Catholic believers were using wills to reveal their preference over Protestantism. Further, most Protestants were themselves Trinitarian as well, so it is plausible that it was simply testator preference or that some testators wanted to make it clear that they were not Socinians. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude the degree to which testators may have been Catholic. It is difficult to assess why so few writers made it a point to highlight the Spirit, other than it may simply reflect the degree to which the Holy Ghost was not emphasized in teachings during the late seventeenth century in England.

580 Dw/pc/05/1684/11; Dw/pa/05/1648/19; MS 9051/9/p111; MS 9171/30/p9-10.
There are also wills that did not open with any mention of God, beliefs or things spiritual, and were non memorandum wills produced on the deathbed. These simply began with phrases such as “Know all men,” “Be it known unto all men,” “Bee it remembered,” or even just skipped an introductory phrase altogether and used the will only for distributing wealth. It is not warranted to conclude that these testators were irreligious since they may not have felt that wills were necessary to convey messages of their faith. It is interesting, however, to observe that there was a rather small constituent that did not feel that a last testament was needed for a spiritual testimonial at all. It certainly can be taken as an early sign of wills being removed as a tool to express beliefs, which is something that eventually became as the norm, not the exception, by the mid to late eighteenth century.

SUMMARY

Wills and last testaments from the late seventeenth century are a very instructive body of primary sources for assessing beliefs and values among testators. There is a rich amount of cultural evidence embedded in these highly personal statements of faith and directives for doling out left over wealth. They show, almost overwhelmingly, that society was not just focused on faith and the afterlife, people were also sentimental and concerned for the well-being of loved ones left behind. We observed that women were given a unique opportunity to extend agency over accumulated wealth in the familial and societal spheres, which was one not typically granted to them in life, particularly as

581 Dw/pc/05/1684/12; Dw/pc/05/1685/1; MS 9051/10/p419-20; MS 25626/6/p50; MS 25626/7/p8.
wedded wives. Further, women frequently served as executrixes, which is more evidence of unique legal agency for women not usual in other areas of life. We also learned that the preparation for death was a stage in life that, to a large degree, equalized traditionally polar tendencies between men and women. Women were able to care for families as providers, a role, in life, usually reserved for men. Men, conversely, were expressive of their love for their wives, children and other close friends.

This glimpse into the wills of the late seventeenth century has demonstrated that there was a framework of expressing beliefs throughout the time period, which was a legacy of the early days of the English Reformation and, quite interestingly, was not tinged by the Puritan and Arminian divide. It also shows that what theologians formally believed and taught about death was embraced by testators as they prepared to die, but only to a limited degree on general terms of Protestant Christianity. For example, people clearly acknowledged their mortality, and wanted to be ready to go at any moment. This is a directly linked to the messages about readiness to experience a good death. They wanted their earthly affairs in order and, spiritually, they expected salvation. Further, people were excited to enter Heaven and anticipated the resurrection on the Last Day. The differences in formal theology about free-will and election in salvation did not translate into varying expressions about being saved by testators. This gap demonstrates that people’s needs were met by coming to terms with mortality, resolving the idea of dying in terms of a divine plan, and anticipating Heaven in the afterlife. Most saw themselves as saved, and it was not an issue as death was approached. This explains the link to theology only on a general level. Further, as death was prepared for, secular issues of caring for surviving family members mattered much to testators. Even though
this preparatory act was encouraged by preachers, it shows us that earthly matters were important as life’s end approached.

Even though wills were increasingly utilized as secular instruments for property distribution and caring for family, the religious aspects that appeared (which were at least a third of the text) clearly matched popular Protestant theology, but not Puritan and Arminian distinctions. Testators included spiritual items in their wills, which, it is safe to presume, were their own wishes. They testified of clear soteriological and eschatological understandings, specifically of God’s sovereignty, of Him being the originator, designer, giver and taker of life, and acknowledged the work of Christ for salvation as well as expressed hope of Heaven. The soul’s departure from earth was understood, which was most notably documented by the clear leaving behind of material possessions for loved ones left alive. As one would expect, by the mid to late seventeenth century it is hard to find a will that contained blatant mention of Catholic practice. Also, it is most interesting that there seemed to be virtually no overtly Calvinistic terminology revolving around the idea of election or obvious Arminian proclamations of choosing salvation. The soteriological overtones extant in wills emphasize the merits of Christ alone and trust in the hope of salvation, which applies to either Arminian or Calvinist systems of belief. One can only deduce that this is due to linguistic convention, the similar common denominator of hope in each doctrinal structure or that people did not grasp the distinctions in the viewpoints. Further, this shows that the influence of pastors did not extend into soteriological distinctions in popular beliefs, rather, testators held to the major tenets of Protestantism and not the finer points of Puritanism and Arminianism. It meant much that individuals’ identity near the time of death was Christian, but it did not matter
if it was of a Puritan or Arminian persuasion. Testators desired and prepared for a good death, which came in the form of a general hope for Heaven, readiness to leave the world at any moment, caring for loved ones left behind and anticipating the resurrection.
CHAPTER VI

FUNERALS AND BURIALS
Figure 7. John Bunyan’s Grave – Image #1

Photograph by the author.
Funerals and burial traditions are other good sources of evidence to examine beliefs and significance of death and dying in culture. They are rituals and ceremonies intended to honor the dead. Rituals gave meaning and structure to approaching and dealing with death, demonstrating how religious ideas were applied (or not). This chapter reviews these rituals of the funerary process and highlights their relationship to religion. It also looks at the graves and epitaphs of notable religious figures, such as Bunyan, Owen, Laud and Taylor, to evaluate the message and legacy from these theologians’ graves and commemorations. Since they were influential in life, their burials and markers provided an example to others and showed how supporters elevated them in death. There was some difference in burial location, some being inside churches and others in graveyards, however, the purpose of burial and commemoration of these theologians was similar. The messages in these commemorations were ways in which their theological stances were memorialized. Their significance as religious thinkers was elevated and the memory of their service commemorated within their religious communities.

Broadly, the funerary and burial process confirms a connection to formal theology, although it is a general one. Theology did not dictate cultural practices. Rituals confirmed an anticipation of Heaven in the afterlife and a separation of living from the dead, which are linked to early Reformation ideas and religious teachings. As there was emphasis on comfort of survivors, teachings from preachers evoked reminders of mortality so the living could prepare for death. As with wills, individual wishes in burials show that secular and familial affairs were important to people approaching death, which was demonstrated in the selection of burial location next to spouses and expression
of love. Markers show that role and status were important for immortalizing identity and memory. Churchyards and other burial grounds reminded communities what they had in common, which in almost all cases affirmed Protestant identity and did not vary between Arminians and Puritans.\textsuperscript{583} Theology did not dictate the entire funeral and burial process though. We see that traditions of burial in the churchyard and bell tolling persisted and were adapted to Protestant guise over the course of the Reformation, even though some preachers challenged the traditions altogether. This shows that traditions met the needs of people even if they did not completely align with formal theological instruction.

BURIAL RITUALS

The order of the burial of the dead changed dramatically with the 1549 prayer book, which emphasized the idea that the soul went immediately to its reward in Heaven and had no need for intervention. The order of service stated that the soul would escape the “gates of hell, and paynes of eternall derkenesse” and instead “dwel in the region of highte, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the place where is no wepyng, sorowe, nor heavinesse” and await for the “generall resurrection.”\textsuperscript{584} The Edwardian and Elizabethan prayer books were clear in the assertion that the souls of the elect lived immediately with God. They stated:

\begin{quote}
O Lorde, with whome dooe lyve the spirites of them that be dead: and in whome the soules of them that bee elected, after they be delivered from the burden of the fleshe, be in joy and felicitie… but that he, escaping the gates of hell and paynes
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{583} Cynthia Wall, \textit{The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) – Wall argues that after the fire of 1666, London was forced to reconceptualize some of its burials spaces, which opened the door up for some burial grounds to be detached from churches.

\textsuperscript{584} Book of Common Prayer (1549, 1559), Section X.
of eternall derkenesse: may ever dwel in the region of highte, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the place where is no wepyng, sorowe, nor heavinesse.  

These same orders were affirmed in the 1662 prayer book as well. The Book of Common Prayer simply instructed readers to rejoice about the deliverance of persons who left behind the miseries of this sinful world and resided in Heaven. It was likely understood that there was a waiting period, possibly some sort of “soul sleep,” until the Last Day when the Resurrection would occur, but the individual would not be aware of it, like being asleep, nor would that impact their entry directly into Heaven. There was confidence that the body would be reunited with the soul at some point and at the Last Day be judged then spend eternity with God. The 1662 prayer book ordered these words to be spoken at the beginning of the funeral procession:

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.
I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

The person, in their own flesh, was expected to one day be in the presence of God. One would, with their own eyes, have opportunity to physically view God.

Reform did not end there. Protestant activists, namely Puritan nonconformists, persistently argued against what they saw as a persistence of “popish” influenced tradition in funerals and burials. This went on from the time of the Elizabethan settlement through the seventeenth century. They argued against unreformed burial customs in funerals and burials. Puritans advocated burial without either singing or reading, or even any ceremony of praying or preaching. Some extremists even argued

585 Ibid.
586 Book of Common Prayer (1662).
that members of the elect could, and should, rightfully bury the dead without the involvement of a minister, since it was only a function of the minister because it had been so during the times of “popery.”\textsuperscript{587} For example, early separatist and Puritan Henry Barrow polemicized in the 1590’s that “where learned you to bury in your hallowed churches and churchyards, as though you had not fields and grounds to bury in? Where did the Church of England learn such things as ritual words and action, if not of the pope”?\textsuperscript{588} While he suggested that burial should not be in churchyards most continued to take place in those designated areas. One important point here is that preachers continued to look for Catholic influences to preach against, even if people practiced a tradition that did not carry a direct link to Roman Catholic doctrine. Another important point is that the tradition of burials persisted in similar form throughout the Reformation, even though reformers took aim at the tradition itself.

In general, Calvinists advocated simplicity, quiet reflection in funerals and deemphasized the importance of hallowed ground altogether.\textsuperscript{589} We see in the Westminster Directory for Public Worship of God (1645) statements that show the authorized Church’s preference was to keep funerals and burials simple and reiterated that intercession was not possible. It stated:

\textsuperscript{587} Cressy., 404.  
\textsuperscript{588} Henry Barrow, \textit{The Writings of Henry Barrow 1590-91}, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966), 82; Also quoted in Cressy, 404.  
And because the customes of kneeling down, and praying by, or towards the dead Corps, and other such usages, in the place where it lies, before it be carried to Buriall, are Superstitious: and for that, praying reading, and singing both in going to, and at the Grave, have been grosly abused, are no way beneficiall to the dead, and have proved many ways hurtfull to the living, therefore let all such things be laid aside.  

The Directory recommended that meditations were important for remembrance and reflection purposes only. However, the opportunities to implement such practice were largely limited until the breakdown of many customs during the Revolution in the 1640’s and 50’s. We know that in the revolutionary period significant discretion was given to parties to bury the dead as they wished. This happened because enforcement of uniform traditions lapsed. Radicals had opportunity to bury as they wished and conservatives could continue with traditional forms.

In one interesting example the minister and iconoclast Richard Culmer refused to conduct graveside services. Culmer was a Puritan idealist minister who became notorious after he broke images and stained-glass windows in Canterbury Cathedral, and, interestingly was reported to have relieved himself inside the church for fear of the crowd outside that was ready to attack him. He believed he was not “chaplain to the worms, to say grace to them before they go to dinner and feed on the dead corpse.” Culmer believed that any service in the churchyard was not worthwhile because it resembled Catholicism. Along those lines he was reported by his son to believe that, “it were well if all ministerial speaking at the grave were prohibited, to take away all appearance of evil, for by such officiating of the minister there is hardening of popish, ignorant and

591 Ibid., 73-4.
592 Cressy, 404.
593 Ibid., 416.
595 Richard Culmer, A Parish Looking-Glasse for Persecutors of Ministers (London 1657), 17.
superstitious peoples.” However, Culmer was an outlier. Most families continued to use their parish burying grounds and elements of tradition in funeral services (sermon, procession, prayer) throughout the last half of the seventeenth century. Traditional, and maybe more importantly, predictable, religious practice likely brought comfort. This suggests that the main aspects of the reform movement were upheld by people, but that the reforms did not dictate experience. Rather, they were adapted and applied in ways people’s needs were met.

Both before and after the revolutionary period, the Church of England had remained adamant that burial required the service of the minister. Thus, in the last half of the seventeenth century, the majority of funerals and burials were overseen by a local pastor. It appears that irregular burials, following ideas like Culmer advocated with no clerical assistance, were likely rare.

The Act of Uniformity in the Restoration (1662) outlawed lay burial, private interment and improvised ceremony. However radical dissenters, Quakers, Jews and Catholics continued to implement their own burial practices. It is important not to forget these minorities, even if they were small in number. They did not necessarily comply with thana-cultural standards and displayed dissent through irregular burials by not following Church guidance, interring bodies outside established ceremonies and conducting funeral services without clergy. Some examples from the latter seventeenth century come from citations made by Church authorities, which are:

- Matthew Haines of Burnham “refused to bury his child” in the proper place

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596 Ibid.
597 Cressy, 417.
598 Harding, 100.
- William Natkins buried his “child contrary to the forms of the Church of England, without a minister”

- Edward Andrew of Olney buried his wife in “private ground” 599

There was also a group of Anabaptists and Quakers that were excommunicated for refusing to pay their parish rates or bury at the church and were charged with “not burying their dead according to the rites of the Church of England.”600 These examples of disorder were not worse than the earlier periods in the Reformation. They do show sectarian preference, a subcultural strength and commitment to preferred religious (or irreligious) practice regardless of the view at the top.

Burials and funerals according to accepted standards was not the only tradition to persist throughout the Reformation. Bell tolling did too. It was the “solemn bell [that] does sadly call.”601 In the early sixteenth century before the Reformation, the bell rang when a person was dying then was signaled again when the person was dead and yet again during their burial to create awareness and intercession (prayer) from those that heard. Bell tolling continued in the late seventeenth century and was not a tradition associated to Puritans or Arminians, but rather all people. It demonstrated respect for the dying, a “sick man’s passing bell,” and dead, and also alerted the community and summoned people to the bedside or grave.602 John Dunton, an Anglican minister from Huntingdonshire and pastor in Buckinghamshire, believed that the bell ring should be

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599 *Episcopal Visitation Book of the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1662* (Buckinghamshire Record Society; Aylesbury, 1947), 4, 56, 77; Also cited in Cressy, 418.

600 Cressy., 418-9.


602 Ibid., title page.
given at funerals since they were “very decent and proper for such a solemn occasion.”603 Further, the ringing would “abundantly furnish us with meditations in this kind, and be still constantly putting of us in mind of our departed friend.”604 The actual ringing of the bell needed to be timed well so not to be misinterpreted as a matter of joy rather than of sorrow.605 In Catholic tradition bells helped in sanctification because they would spur prayer for soul of the dying or already deceased. In the Reformation bell tolling continued, despite Puritan opposition because of bell-ringing being associated with evoking intercession. The tradition persisted on secular terms.606 It was associated specifically with awareness for the public and was disassociated with the belief that the dead could receive benefits from the living spurred by tolling.

A well-known meditation by John Donne reflects the association with the bell toll and death in culture. A portion of it is as follows:

Perchance hee for whom this Bell tolls, may be so ill, as that he knows not it tolls for him; And perchance I may thinke my selfe so much better than I am, as that they who are about mee, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for mee, and I know not that… and when she [the church] buries a man, that action concernes me.

As therefore the Bell that rings to a Sermon, calls not upon the Preacher onely, but upon the Congregation to come; so this Bell calls us all: but how much more mee, who am brought so neere the doore by this sicknesse.

No man is an Iland, intire of it self; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod be washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well if a Manor of thy friends of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

603 Dunton, 4; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. “John Dunton.” (entry for minister John Dunton’s son, a bookseller).
604 Ibid., 7.
605 Ibid., 23.
606 Harding, 202-5.
If by this consideration of anothers danger, I take mine owne into contemplation, and so secure my selfe, by making my recourse to my God, who is our onely securitie.

Based on this text, bell tolling caught the attention of the narrator and was a lesson about not only death, but of life too. It rang for the sick person ready to die and rang to get the attention of the “preacher” and “congregation” too. The bell was a reminder of common humanity. The phrase “no man is an iland, intire of it self; every peece of the continent” refers to the idea that no man is unconnected; all are part of the whole. The lesson its ringing created was that one day it will ring for you too, so do not ask who it might be ringing for, because it very well could be “thee.” Donne, considering these ideas, advocated that people put their faith in God for refuge and security at death. The bell should be a reminder of this.

After the Restoration, the Church of England affirmed that tolling when someone was dying and on the occasion of burial should continue. Dissenters, not surprisingly, disagreed and often protested, but the official stance was that “tolling of a passing bell for any that are dying” was to admonish the living that they might “meditate of their own death and to commend the other’s weak condition to the mercy of God.”

After tolling, the body was buried. The time between the moment of death and burial was usually no more than two or three days. Anytime people died of something infectious or their bodies were badly soiled, they were buried even more quickly. Those who were rich may have been embalmed or sheathed in lead to mitigate the smell of decomposition. Most corpses went through “winding,” a process of being wrapped in shrouds. After an individual died, his or her attendants would prepare the body by

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608 Cressy, 425; This was stated by Bishop Humphrey Henchman of London in 1664.
wrapping it in a “winding sheet” and then affix the corpse within the coffin.\textsuperscript{609} The process of “watching” continued through the seventeenth century as well. This was the process of sitting up all night in the company of the dead body, although the burning of candles had long past. Watching was a time of intimate attendance of family before burial. Its practical benefit was to safeguard the corpse from tampering, likely in the case of theft of valuables on the body.\textsuperscript{610}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{crumms_of_comfort.png}
\caption{Figure 8. \textit{Crumms Of Comfort} by Michael Spark (1652).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{609} Dunton, 77; Harding, 185-6.
\textsuperscript{610} Cressy, 427-9.
This title page from a published pamphlet in 1652 titled *Crumms of comfort, or Grones of the Spirit*, shows contemporary imagery reflecting the process from prayer to burial. The pictures are of a man and woman in prayer to God, likely in preparation for death. The next set of images in the middle of the page show a male overlooking a corpse on the left side and a woman peering over a dead body on the right, with the central bottom image being a body wrapped in a “winding sheete,” in a coffin – “times last legacy.”

There was frequently a procession from the funeral to the burial site. These marches would increase in size and ceremony based on the background of the deceased, typically tied to their wealth or lineage. For instance, when royalty were to be interred many honorable persons, from within and outside the kingdom, and commoners would gather to walk at the funeral in honor of the dead. Processes for royalty were likely much more elaborate and ceremonial than those of commoners, however looking at an example can show us how the ceremony itself was used as an outlet for grief. In a poem about Queen Mary’s funeral procession in 1694, Richard Steele describes the procession as he witnessed it. Steele was a writer and politician who likely published this poem at his own expense, while he was serving in the Life Guards in the army. Here is a portion of how he viewed the procession:

From distant homes the Pitying Nations come,
A Mourning World t’ attend her to her Tomb:
The Poor, Her First and Deepest Mourner’s are,
First in Her Thoughts, and Earliest in Her care;
All hand in hand with common Friendly Woe,

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612 Dunton, 150; Harding, 206, 248-53.
614 Harding, 248-51 – The size and grandeur of the procession was a mark of status, the tradition was much less elaborate or not followed for commoners. It was a ritual usually associated with notable figures in civic funerals.

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In Poverty, our Native State, they go
...The next assembly dissipates our Fears,
The Stately Mourning Throng of British Peers
...To close the Pomp the Fair Attendant Maids,
Appear true Angels dress’d like fancy’d Shades;
Their Grief imparts t’unpitied Lover’s ease,
Sadly they Charm, and dismal they Please:
Their clouded Beauties speak Man’s gawdy strife,
The glittering Miseries of Human Life.
...But now the Pomp to th’sacred Abbey’s led,
The Wide Capacious Palace of the Dead.  

A royal’s funeral procession must have been full of pomp and public mourning. It was choreographed to honor, while at the same time corporately express grief. All processions were surely not as elaborate as what Steele observed, but the principles of public demonstration and articulation of grief that were reflected in literature, such as that by Donne, were contained in this ritual. It was a controlled process of simultaneous honoring and grieving of the deceased.

GRAVES

In terms of actual interment, prior to the Reformation sanctity was helped through the arrangement of burials. Being buried in the churchyard, or even inside the church, assisted the dead in the penitential cycle. The souls of those in close proximity to the altar or parish relic received special assistance. The Reformation dismissed this idea since there was no spiritual advantage attached to being buried in hallowed ground or in churches. Graveyards were still maintained by churches through the seventeenth century, but they would begin to be replaced by cemeteries, or secular, landscaped memorial

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616 Steele, 2, 3 6, 7.
parks, in the mid to late eighteenth century. Churchyards were predicated on a community of Christian believers. Burials took place in churchyards for reasons of hygiene (interring bodies properly to control disease) and by Protestant (not Catholic) standards. There was a fear of infection from corpses, thought to come from the stenches that arose from them or by having dead bodies in the midst of the living. It would not be until the eighteenth century that cemeteries emerged and began replacing churchyards to alleviate overcrowding and demand for burial space.

Burials in the seventeenth century also mattered for the secular reasons of vanity and social status, which is a continuation from the late Middle Ages. The reasons were of one’s status in the community or in the context of loving relations with family or friends. A premium was placed on memorial masonry since it demonstrated one’s position in the world to posterity. This is affirmed in requests in wills that show preference for burial location, particularly about burial alongside family members’ graves. Future generations would be able to witness a deceased person’s family relations as preserved in death, as well as social status. In the analysis of wills, we also observed that burial preferences filled a social, not a spiritual need as testators specified burial location for family and community reasons and not spiritual ones. Wills mainly

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620 Laqueur, 187-91.
621 Harding, 117; Harris, “The Fabric of Piety: Aristocratic Women and Care of the Dead, 1450-1550,” 308-35 – this study shows that aristocratic women utilized tombs and chantries to affirm lineage and status, in addition to express religion in the late Middle Ages to the early Reformation.
622 Cressy, 461.
623 Examples include: Dw/pc/05/1680/1; Dw/pc/05/1679/26; MS 9051/10/p8; Dw/pc/05/1684/19.
reflect the marriage bond, of the affection between husband and wife and not a post-death need for intervention to help the soul.

Below is a picture of Bunhill Fields, a graveyard containing the remains of many late seventeenth-century Englishmen, including some notable Puritan divines, as it stands today.\textsuperscript{624}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Bunhill Fields.\textsuperscript{625}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{624} Harding, 99, 117 – Bunhill Fields was opened in the late seventeenth century and became a site where many dissenters were interred, including Puritans.
\textsuperscript{625} Photograph by the author.
Many of the markers are from the dead in the eighteenth century, however, the style was set in place during the late seventeenth. It is a graveyard of simple stones, with a smattering of sarcophagi holding the remains of socially notable individuals, who whether for wealth, religious, political, artistic or other reasons held clout in the public sphere.

During the Reformation, grave markers served as a reminder of mortality and commemorated the life lived of the deceased. However, individual graves for commoners were not routine before the eighteenth century. Gravestones had been utilized more for the gentry and notable figures in society, including prominent theologians. Regardless of spiritual significance, markers served as a way to memorialize status and reputation. Markers were designed for posterity while at the same time reflected contemporary values, such as religious prominence, achievement, community and social standing.\footnote{Burial of commoners were in the same cemeteries and churchyards as notables, however markings and epitaphs were not regular – see Harding, 58, 62, 96-7.} Epitaphs in the late seventeenth century intended to evoke remembrance of accomplishments in life and reflection by the living on their own mortality.

The tomb and epitaph of Puritan John Owen displays some of these traits. Here is a photo of Owen’s grave as it is today:
Owen’s grave is a simple sarcophagus. It was a fairly plain box like tomb with little ornate decoration. This is reflective of the simple burial Owen’s contemporary Puritans advocated. Yet, it is interesting that Owen was given a prominently sized grave while most others had small markers identifying their burial sites.

The epitaph in honor of Owen stated:

“John Owen, born in Oxfordshire, son of a distinguished theologian, was himself a more distinguished one, who must be counted among the most distinguished of this age. Furnished with the recognised resources of humane learning in uncommon measure, he put them all, as a well-ordered array of handmaids, at the service of theology, which he served himself. His theology was polemical, practical, and what is called casuistical, and it cannot be said that any one of these was peculiarly his rather than another. In polemical theology, with more than herculean strength, he strangled three poisonous serpents, the Arminian, the Socinian, and the Roman. In practical theology, he laid out before others the whole of the activity of the Holy Spirit, which he had first experienced in his own heart, according to the rule of the Word. And, leaving other things aside, he cultivated, and realised in practice, the blissful communion with God of which he wrote; a traveller on earth who grasped God like one in heaven. In casuistry, he

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Photograph by the author.
was valued as an oracle to be consulted on every complex matter. A scribe instructed in every way for the kingdom of God, this pure lamp of gospel truth shone forth on many in private, on more from the pulpit, and on all in his printed works, pointing everyone to the same goal. And in this shining forth he gradually, as he and others recognized, squandered his strength till it was gone. His holy soul, longing to enjoy God more, left the shattered ruins of his once-handsome body, full of permanent weaknesses, attacked by frequent diseases, worn out most of all by hard work, and no longer a fit instrument for serving God, on a day rendered dreadful for many by earthly powers but now made happy for him through the power of God, August 25, 1683. He was 67.628

His epitaph (written by his followers) is elaborate. It is clear that Owen’s contemporaries thought highly of his theological and political prowess by permanently commemorating his divine tendencies and theological polemics. Interestingly, the epitaph was written in Latin, which shows that the message was not intended to reach commoners, but was a way his accomplishments, standing in society and theological points of view were commemorated by his peers.

The epitaph makes clear affirmation of his Calvinism and spirituality in manner and form so the reader would take it as an ideal. It is a model to be followed (in this case likely for theologians and not commoners since it was written in Latin) since his faith, actions and values are credited as being led by the Spirit, based on Scripture and in communion with God. The epitaph is in and of itself a theological instructive. It affirmed Owen’s Trinitarianism, heavily accentuated his commitment to the Gospel and affirmed belief that his soul was in union with God in Heaven. He was to be remembered for standing against his theological enemies, or the “poisonous serpents” of Arminians, Socinians and Catholics. Soteriology, eschatology, Christian living and even sola scriptura shine through in Owen’s commemoration. The epitaph points readers to the gospel, as Owen understood it, as the undercurrent for what drove the reformer. His

beliefs and daily life were highlighted as a “lamp of gospel truth.” Even his weak and infirm body at the end of life was emphasized, which was a way to accentuate the hard battle Owen fought – his persistence through the Christian life. This shows that the function of the grave and grave markers were to commemorate and honor the life of the person interred there and at the same time draw attention to spiritual lessons. The readers in this case though would have been Owen’s peers and not the average person, which is evidence more so of Owen’s elevation in society rather than the reach of the message on the epitaph. Regardless, this language pertaining to the endurance in the Christian life is reflective of Owen’s eternal neighbor of mortal remains, and lifelong friend, John Bunyan the author of Pilgrim’s Progress, a spiritual allegory about the endurance of the Christian and his journey to the “celestial city.”

Here is an image of Bunyan’s grave today (which has undergone recent renovation):
Bunyan’s epitaph is brief. It simply states, “John Bunyan, Author of the Pilgrim’s Progress, ob. 31st Aug. 1688, [Age] 60.” The monument itself is impressive. It is adorned on each side with an image of a toiling pilgrim, a further reference to the famous tale Bunyan authored.

629 Photograph by the author.
This monument is a commemoration and honoring of the work and impact of a prominent theologian. Image #3 alludes to *Pilgrim’s Progress* as it shows a man with a burden on his back while toiling in a forward motion. The grave itself is located within a part of the cemetery where one passing by would take notice. It is near the center of the yard and along the main path that goes through the middle of it. Bunyan’s survivors clearly wanted his memory to endure, which was partially ensured by giving the grave prominence and emphasizing his message in a permanent manner.

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630 Photograph by the author.
Here is another non-conformist’s grave, that of Thomas Rosewell:

Figure 13. Thomas Rosewell’s Grave – Image #1. 631

631 Photograph by the author.
Rosewell ministered in Somerset and Wiltshire until he was convicted of nonconformity in 1662. He was known for his involvement in a famous court case. He had been brought to trial for treason after preaching that popery was linked to England’s monarchs.

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632 Photograph by the author.
The trial was sensationalized and Rosewell was pardoned by Charles II after major protests. Rosewell reportedly died from a chill he received after attending the funeral of Richard Baxter a few months earlier. His original grave marker (see Thomas Rosewell’s Grave – Image #2 on preceding page) is simple in design, yet thorough in its narrative (much like Owen’s), evoking the memory of his trial and how that was a testimony of his faith in Christ.

These grave markers of Puritan divines reflect their status in society as important religious figures, tell the story of their relationship to God and highlight their theological prowess and ministerial accomplishments. Interestingly, their subjects were described in almost saint like fashion. Of course there is absolutely no indication of belief in the social elevation of the dead in the land beyond the living, but that does not mean they were not esteemed by the living as their lives were commemorated and accomplishments accentuated. This aligns with nonconformist theology, which commemorates the elect and emphasizes their lives lived as examples to follow.

Prominent Arminian theologians followed a similar burial pattern in that they were simple, resided within their communities, and strategically placed so memory would be evoked among future generations. One noticeable difference is that Arminian tombs were often inside the churches or chapels in which the ministers were associated with, whereas the Puritan examples were in standalone cemeteries. This likely had to do the Puritan preference to keep all things outside of the church sanctuary to align with

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simplicity in worship while Arminians were more elaborate and inclusive of objects inside their churches.⁶³⁴

In terms of the Arminian theologian interments, William Laud, for example, was reburied (after his execution) under the chapel altar at St John’s College at Oxford. Laud had donated the original organ and altar railings in the chapel.⁶³⁵ His grave was placed within a prominent location in the church he was part of, which was central within the building. As with the Puritan examples, this demonstrated that Laud’s followers elevated the theologian and religious leader after his death. This exemplified respect and social honor, while it did not insinuate connections with the living from the beyond the grave or evoke special measures by the living on behalf of Laud. The main point was to extend dignity to Laud among a community of believers he was instrumental in working with, while at the same time promote the endurance of his memory.

Jeremy Taylor was laid to rest at Dromore Cathedral in Ireland after his death on 13 August 1667. He was buried in the vault in the chancel of the church. This was a church he was responsible for building, and he wrote in his will that it was his wish to be interred there.⁶³⁶ As with Laud, Taylor was laid to rest in the central part of the church itself, in a church he was materially involved with. Taylor’s burial signified importance of religious community and elevated his stature as an influential theologian. This was similar to what was observed with Laud as well as Puritan theologians.


⁶³⁵ St. John’s College Website: http://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/2334/History.html Accessed 26 August 2011.

Thomas Grantham was another Arminian minister who was interred within the vicinity of a church he founded. Grantham died in 1692 and was buried in the middle aisle of St. Stephen’s Church in Norwich. Congregations from the churches these Arminian divines were responsible for building, literally and spiritually, thought it important enough to lay their bodies to rest within their physical church buildings. This was major sign of respect and honor through a final act of commemoration. As with Puritans, Arminian divines were buried to commemorate membership in their community of believers. They were influential and elevated within their churches socially, so their interment locations were central for those reasons. There were no hints of connecting the deceased with the living or evoking intercession for the dead, rather, the commemoration was for social reasons entirely within the religious community.

The interment of Puritan and Arminian theologians occurred for similar reasons, even if some took place inside churches and others in standalone cemeteries. Their followers buried them within the area or church of the congregations they served or were responsible for forming. They were memorialized and commemorated in such a way that remembrance among their followers would be evoked and deeds celebrated. Their graves were centrally located to be among their communities and churches. Their markers and epitaphs had clear association of their accomplishments, which was associated with their identities as Puritan or Arminian. The actual interment as a ritual reflected the social standing they attained within those religious groups. Their lives were celebrated and

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used to extend their legacy among each various community. This was the decent burial for Puritan and Arminian divines of the late seventeenth century.

SUMMARY

Ritual was important in late seventeenth-century England for expression in the face of death and entering the afterlife. It gave meaning and structure to one of the most crucial occurrences in the life cycle. Funerals and burials offered expression to some degree. While the majority followed suit with customs, acts deviating from those norms reveal that individual wishes were important when it came to following through with deeply held beliefs or managing the final affairs of love ones recently passed. Grave markers show that role and status were important for immortalizing identity and memory, and not necessarily on religious terms. Graves reminded communities what they had in common, which in almost all cases affirmed Protestant identity. On general terms, the funerary and burial process was not strongly linked to formal Protestant theology. Changes in ritual had taken place in the early Reformation, which remained in place through the seventeenth century. On the surface, burial rituals demonstrate an anticipation of Heaven in the afterlife and a separation of living from the dead, which are linked to religious ideas. However, these traditions show that secular and familial affairs were highly important to people and is evidence that religion did not dictate the entire approach to death. Further, the traditions of burial in the churchyard and bell tolling, items that were termed “superstitious” by reformers, persisted over the course of the

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638 Commoners did not have the same treatment; their burials were often anonymous or in the periphery of cemeteries – See Harding, 62, 118.
Reformation. This shows that religious practices that existed prior to the Reformation were adapted and reconciled to Protestant ideas. The survival of rituals shows continuity within the course of the Reformation, one that affirmed that importance of individuals socially, despite the challenges of the religious basis.639 Traditions that met the needs of people endured regardless of formal theology. In terms of graves, churchyards affirmed Protestant identity and the community of believers and did not vary in function or design between Arminians and Puritans. The graves of influential preachers show that their theological stances were memorialized, elevated and commemorated, while Arminians made use of burial inside church buildings and Puritans in graveyards. This promoted their memory and validated the importance they had in their followers’ eyes, as well as accentuated their teachings to survivors in an enduring manner. As in other aspects of approaching death, there was largely no major variation between the two religious points of view in the purpose of rituals.

Overall, this glimpse into burials and graves has shown that rituals were aligned to religious ideas, but only on general terms. The ceremonies had been reinterpreted and redefined in the early Reformation and little changed through the seventeenth century. Rituals reflect a consensus about death being a gateway to an afterlife in Heaven in anticipation for the resurrection. They reveal that the values of people dealing with death included secular matters of family, specifically of commemorating the marriage bond. So, while religious ideas were important and intertwined with rituals, they did not overly influence how death was dealt with. They served the needs of the living to grieve and commemorate the life of the one that had passed away.

639 Harding, 274.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION
This dissertation has covered a lot of ideas about death in late seventeenth-century England, from why it was thought to exist (sin) and how it could be overcome (salvation) to thoughts about making the best of it when approaching the passage from this life to the next. It has surveyed the birth of reformed Protestantism’s plan of salvation, a new way of dying and the institution of a geography of the afterlife different from Catholicism. It has also delved into the underbelly of the soteriological debate between the Puritans and Arminians in the late part of the Reformation and found, interestingly, that they guided their faithful down similar paths to prepare for death. This is surprising, as these religious rivals are commemorated more for their battles against each other rather than what they had in common. While the early Reformation produced a stark contrast with late medieval Catholicism, noted by varying beliefs and practices, the debates over religion in the late Reformation did not lead to disparate religious practices relative to preparing for death. This was an indication that the influence of reforms and theological ideals was not pervasive, rather, religion was applied on a general level in ways that people’s needs were met.

The good death in the art of dying, or *Ars Moriendi* as defined by late seventeenth-century English theologians, aimed for assurance of salvation, being prepared to die and coming to terms with mortality by following specific exercises throughout life. This prescription sought to tame death by helping minimize fear and anxiety so one was able to die confidently. Topics dealing with death and dying, on seventeenth-century terms, were overwhelmingly expressed in ideals of achieving a good death.
This study has also peered deeply into the remnants of evidence left from people preparing to die through the lens of wills and last testaments. Their collective voice shows that the practice of death and dying was shaped by Protestant theology, on general terms, in a way meaningful to the individual. Even though expression of faith was on largely conventional terms and through prescribed ritual, we can confidently conclude that people’s thoughts and actions were based on real demonstrations of faith. There was variation in language, choices made to include (or not) religious statements, and individually written wills by literate testators. These are all indicators that choices were made at the time of writing a will relative to what religious statements were made. Interestingly, those expressions of faith were not couched in terms of Puritan or Arminian, nor did they vary throughout the period even when the political situation of religion changed. Further, religious faith was not the only thing on their minds as they looked at death. Their surviving family members mattered much, and people sought to care for them even after death. These practices involving preparing for death were impacted by the Reformation, the broader religious reform movement happening in Europe.

In general, the Reformation was a tumultuous time that produced many reforms in Christian doctrine based on humanism and models of the early Church. It changed the way many Europeans lived, approached death and remembered the dead. These changes were what formed the basis for cultural expressions and new rituals and laws about dying and memorializing the dead. In the sixteenth century, Protestantism produced a new soteriological emphasis, while it rejected the penitential system, and redefined the
geography of the afterlife, which significantly affected the understanding and practice of death.

There are aspects of the religious reforms that are distinctly English such as the orders in the Book of Common Prayer, emphasis on the proper handling of emotions, decent burials and factors of Puritans and Laudian Arminianism overlapping with the dominant discourse about death; however, the systems of belief came from the broader developments in Europe. For example, in early modern Germany there are many similarities to what transpired in England. Purgatory was abolished early in the Reformation and rituals adjusted to accommodate Protestantism in Lutheran fashion, such as the funeral sermon being conducted on behalf of survivors instead of the dead person’s soul. Germany experienced perhaps an early loosening of the link between church and cemetery as changes in theology eliminated the need for burial in holy places to accommodate the soul. Burial grounds instead were created to stand alone outside of the spaces in and around churches for remembrance and sanitary reasons more than intercession.640 Similar conceptions of the afterlife existed, and burials took place with expectation of rising again at the resurrection just as in England. A new type of ritual did emerge in Germany by the late seventeenth century called the Beisetzung, which was that the funeral, at least among many Lutherans, took place in the evening or at night and included participation from the family and clergy. They were private, nighttime death observances that focused on family more than the Church. This was unique in Germany, where nocturnal burial previously signified burial in disgrace and dishonor and that ceremony shifted to one of distinction.641

640 Koslofsky, 54-9.
641 Ibid., 133-6, 141.
In other areas of Europe we also see that major Protestant discourse did not vary significantly from England, rather, distinctions appeared based on the unique circumstances of various societies as with the *Beisetzung* in Germany. The factors that determined differences dealt with local application of religion as it mixed with existing traditions. For instance, in Scotland, beliefs and practices largely paralleled England, but, as the order of burials were reformed the preferences of some in the community contrasted and blended to create a unique compromise of reformed doctrine and cultural practice. For instance, the Scottish reformed kirk rejected the idea of sacred burial sites (like in England) as the basis of being superstitious and prohibited burials in the walls of the kirk. Space had traditionally been reserved in the kirk for religious burial, but the reformers ordered interment to be done simply outside the church. Lay elites were not happy with the situation (there were areas often reserved for family burials over generations) and pushed for a compromise on the issue. The result was the construction of burial aisles where lairds and nobles were able to continue to express symbolic solidarity in a long-held tradition combined with reformed ideas. In part, popular recognition of the church as a holy place led to the continued desire for burial there. This is an example of reformed theology being adapted to the distinct needs and preferences of lay elites in Scotland.

In early modern France there was a unique dilemma of burial ritual between Huguenots and Catholics. Huguenots strove to prevent burials in their graveyards of


\[\text{643} \text{ Ibid., 168-9.}\]

\[\text{644} \text{ Andrew Spicer, “‘Rest of their bones’: fear of death and Reformed burial,” in Fear in Early Modern Society, eds., William Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 170-2.}\]
Catholics so they would not be “polluted” by Romanist rituals, and Catholics, conversely, sought to obstruct Huguenot burials in their cemeteries so they would not “pollute” consecrated ground.\textsuperscript{645} This dispute was not easily resolved and resulted in bitter debate and further separation of the two religious groups during the Reformation.\textsuperscript{646} In regions that remained Catholic, the beliefs and practices stood in the most contrast with what we observed in England. In Spain, for instance, Purgatory remained part of what was pictured in the afterlife since theology remained Catholic, so society did not question its existence, and, hoped for a brief stint there in route to Heaven.\textsuperscript{647} The retention of Purgatory reinforced reliance and belief in the mass to assist the soul in the progress through the afterlife. The Catholic beliefs and practices remained as different from Protestantism late in the Reformation as it had been in the early years, which is, logically, due to the fact that the doctrine remained equally separated.

An outcome of the Reformation was the splitting apart of the beliefs and mentalities toward death in Catholic and Protestant areas. For Protestant regions, reformed ideas blended with unique cultural circumstances, but, overall, major theological discourse was similar. Thus, while we have observed aspects of death and dying unique to England, they are not distant from aspects contained in the broader movement of Protestantism throughout Europe.

In England, reformers removed the doctrine of intercession for the dead and the idea of Purgatory in their theology. Instead, death, in a reformed sense, marked the passage of some souls to perfection and union with Christ. Practices and traditions


\textsuperscript{646} Ibid., 148.

\textsuperscript{647} Eire, \textit{From Madrid to Purgatory}, 12, 172-6.
changed to align with this newly instituted doctrine and law. Funerals became evangelical and commemorative instead of an action to help position the soul in the afterlife. The sermon was the centerpiece to the funeral that offered preachers an opportunity to use the recently dead as a testimony for the living to prepare for a good death. They reminded the living of mortality and reconciled death to the divine order. Cemeteries became places of indifference, on theological terms. Graveyards did not carry significance for spiritual reasons, such as being able to assist the soul in the afterlife. They did continue to exist in and around churches but for social reasons. Burials were simplified. No formal ceremony was involved in the procession and interment process (except for social elites). Also, a devaluation of the previous attitudes towards death began to take place. Warning no longer necessitated a good death and the concept of readiness was introduced to everyday life in a new way. The Catholic Reformation affirmed disagreement with the theological reforms in Protestantism and held to the traditional eschatology. This was relevant to England because late seventeenth-century reformers continued to evoke Catholics as enemies to their understanding of Christianity.

While Protestantism popularized in the Reformation was influential, by the late seventeenth century, the power of religious reforms did not exert as much influence over identity as people prepared for the end of life. This is likely because all the major reforming that needed to happen had already taken place and people applied religion on general terms in ways that their needs were met. There were stark changes in the first generations of reform with the elimination of Purgatory, disavowal of intercession for the dead and replacement of the penitential system with a new conception of soteriology.
These changes led to the creation and enforcement of laws prohibiting old traditions while new forms of convention replaced what had existed. As the Reformation progressed and matured, theologians’ debates turned to refining their apologetics within factions of Protestantism instead of forming new movements or breaking away from structures in place for centuries, such as with the Roman Catholic Church. The reach of these later reforms did not have as strong an impact on the culture of death and dying as the early ones in terms of the identity individuals sought to affirm as they prepared for life’s end.

By the late seventeenth century, people did not emphasize the finer degree of reform pinned on ideas of free-will or predestined election when it came time to face death. This is an interesting finding, especially since the divide between the Puritans and Arminians was significant as they vied for religious authority in England. The two groups fueled much debate about Christianity, particularly about varying soteriological apologetics and understandings of God’s character, which led to varying forms of worship, one more individual the other more liturgical. It was so hotly debated that each side accused the other of being heretics and blasphemers. Puritans and Arminians of the late seventeenth century thought of each other as differently as Catholics and Protestants did a century earlier. This was also a very political fight which contributed to the Civil War and remained in flux after the Restoration. This makes it all the more fascinating that their ideas about death and how to manage it converged. Despite the separation, their followers understood death similarly. While their division was deep enough to cause war, it was not deep enough to create varying religious beliefs and identities at one of the most crucial parts of the life cycle.
One reason for this similarity is that Arminian and Puritan doctrines relative to
death converged. Their soteriology was different, but the definitions of death, sin, and
what the afterlife was like was similar. Leading religious thinkers such as Richard
Baxter, John Owen, John Bunyan, William Laud, and Jeremy Taylor agreed on the
concepts of what death was, that it was a result of sin spiritually and served as a physical
gateway to an afterlife spent either with God for the saved or separated from Him for the
damned. The dying, whichever persuasion they came from, were taught by preachers to
enjoy a hope in what would begin at death. It was largely accepted that at death the soul
was beyond the reach of the living and enjoyed union with God. Within this model the
soul “slept” and would rise again during the resurrection on the Last Day when its entry
into Heaven was finalized after judgment. Since this happened outside of time the soul
would not be aware of “sleep,” and so entry into Heaven would feel immediate. There
was encouragement of proper preparation for death and entry into the afterlife. This was
a similar message among all English Protestants, despite their divisions, in their advice
for proper dying and for survivors to comfort and lead those nearing passage into the next
life.

Divine thinkers not only spent considerable time developing and defending points
of their faith, they also preached and taught these ideas to their parishioners, which also
reached the public through print. Doctrinal differences were virtually non-existent as the
faithful were instructed on how to prepare for a good death through sermons,
instructional guides and testimonials. One would presume that varying soteriological
positions might lead to different instructions for preparing for death if salvation was
emphasized, but, surprisingly, they did not. Teachings consistently revolved around
taming the fear of death. This appeared as a natural phenomenon that needed to be fought and defeated throughout life. A confident death was possible, in a stoic sense, as emotions were tempered and focus on God retained. Survivors were to guide and encourage the dying as they transitioned from the present to the afterlife. They would serve as attendants, meeting the dying person’s needs, guiding them through emotional struggles, and seeing that their confidence was maintained as the moment of death neared. This needed tending to because Arminians felt this was an issue of salvation while Calvinists were concerned about one’s standing in front of God, but the directions for edifying and supporting were similar in either case.

One of the most celebrated works of edification in this genre of English Ars Moriendi is Jeremy Taylor’s Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying (1651). Taylor and others sought to lessen the dread and trepidation about dying. This required practice, prayer, and leaning on God throughout life to obtain the good death. The dying person was also to leave an example of their faith to survivors, all the more reason he or she was encouraged to hold it together at death. After death, survivors were to minimize overly emotional scenes to keep composure, celebrate the life of the recently passed, and reflect on their own mortality. Funerals were to be kept simple and free of Catholic tradition. The sermon was central to the process as a mechanism to evangelize the audience, remind survivors of their mortality and celebrate the faith of the deceased. They were preached so survivors could reflect on the life lived and the faith demonstrated by the recently deceased. Pastors took advantage of the opportunity to point mourners in the direction of the dead, not only toward their entry into the grave, but towards faithful and

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holy living that would reap rewards in the next life. Interestingly, women were frequently the subject by which the living were taught about the good death. Their character was elevated as an instruction to listeners and readers, including men, to properly and confidently approach death without fear.

A view into cultural practice through the lens of last wills and testaments reveals a correlation between theology and cultural expression, but on a general level. Wills, even though they represent a limited proportion of society (e.g. those with wealth), serve as a source for getting a glimpse into the broader culture. The preambles are rich in religious language and reveal the expression of Protestant ritual. The remaining body of the will shows what was valued by testators as they approached death, which mostly pertained to secular matters of family.

A conventional framework of language drove articulation of faith and hope in wills. Even though it was convention, it is safe to see this as a reflection of individual belief as some wrote their own wills or varying content was selected. Further, the source was a very personal document and it was likely testators were in agreement with the content before executing the will. In large measure, testators used wills to confirm their spirituality and dependence on the divine for a blissful afterlife. These were important factors to have worked out before death in order to help assure a good death. Testators expressed clear understanding of the personal implications of soteriological and eschatological ideas, specifically of God’s sovereignty as the originator, designer, giver and taker of life, and acknowledged the work of Christ for salvation as well as expressed hope of Heaven. The soul’s departure from earth was understood and expected as being part of God’s plan.
The language about soteriology extant in wills emphasized the merits of Christ alone and trust in the hope of salvation, which applies to either Puritan or Arminian theology. There may have been consistency about expressing beliefs since ideas and instructions about the end of life and the afterlife converged between these two schools of thought, even if soteriological underpinnings were drastically different. Wills also confirm some expected findings, particularly that there was no mention of blatant Catholic practice. This affirms that Protestantism dominated the discourse, but that it was not necessarily Puritanism or Arminianism that mattered when one approached death. Dominant systems of belief determined convention and show that the faith and eschatology outlined and preached by theologians had been embodied by the public in a broad, general sense. Also, the preparation for death (i.e. preparing a will) was the acting out of preachers’ instructions. This shows that the message preachers taught about being familiar with mortality and ready to die at any moment was taken up by people.

Apart from religion, wills and last testaments reveal a priority to care for the nuclear family as one approached death. Bequests were frequently directed to children and spouses and were expressed with affection. They show, almost overwhelmingly, that people were sentimental and concerned for the well-being of loved ones left behind. In terms of gender, women had a unique opportunity to extend agency over accumulated wealth in the familial and societal spheres, one not typically granted to them in life, particularly as wedded wives. Further, females frequently served as executrixes, which also demonstrates their unique legal agency in a time when it was very limited in society. Also, preparation for death was largely equalized between genders. Women were able to
care for families as providers, a role, in life, usually reserved for men. Men, conversely, were expressive of their love for their wives, children and other close friends.

Burials and funerals are other important rituals that gave meaning and structure to one of the most crucial occurrences in the life cycle. Burial markers show that role and status socially were important for immortalizing identity and memory. Graveyards not only reinforced social structures, they also reminded communities about what they had in common, which in a general sense affirmed Protestant identity. These practices in dealing with the dead relate to wills and last testaments as final wishes were associated with broader religious discourse too, but in large part cultural evidence just shows a general link to religion as varying religious identities were not emphasized and secular matters were equally important near the time of death.

This dissertation has been a reminder that theory and practice are linked. Theology (theory) and religion (practice), in this case, are correlated but separate. Theology is academic in many ways. It is written about, discussed among scholars, and taught by experts to a lay audience. In this narrative the theologians’ audience was comprised of the membership of their churches and broader readers who were interested in their work. The theologians were divided up into two major rival movements and wrote and preached much against each other. The study of cultural practice in the same period shows us that people did not absorb all that the experts espoused, although there was a correlation with theology to a limited degree. Ritual was a means for understanding and expression by people in late seventeenth-century England that affirmed Protestant identity. Ritual and preparatory measures show that religion was applied by testators and that the major tenets of Christianity were understood, specifically
the concepts of God relative to man, the soul, sin and achieving salvation. However, the religion of the people was not overly concerned with election or free offers of accepting atonement when it came to mortality. This study shows that issues common to humanity at the time, of wanting to be saved and being confident about dealing with death and entering the afterlife, trumped the differences Calvinists and Arminians emphasized in life. This reveals the limits these reform movements likely had as people applied ideas in ways their needs for security and understanding about the afterlife were met.

The history of death ends up being an account of the beliefs about death. Death brings an end while it also creates a beginning. Why life ends and what death starts is a matter of belief. Figuring out beliefs has been the point of this study. It started with the birth of reformed ideas and shifted to the theologies and teachings of major religious thinkers in late seventeenth-century England. Next, a sense of what some people actually believed provided a gauge of whether or not those theologies were embraced by the public. It is clear through this analysis that death was understood on Christian terms, but these were on a general level adapted in a way people were confident of salvation and secure about the afterlife. There was a hope expressed that flowed from the faith of people as they prepared for death.

The good death for English people in post-revolutionary England can be characterized as a simple, familiar death. It was idealized as one necessitating proper preparation. This was accomplished by coming to terms with one’s mortality through a lifetime of reflection and active recognition to make death recognizable. The idea was to not be caught off guard when death did approach. It was not a matter of when one died; one was to be ready to go anytime. Salvation was the key, if not the pinnacle, ingredient
necessary for ideal dying. Being saved was to be worked out with confidence, probably at a time early in life when death seemed distant. Some people chose saving grace, others recognized God’s bestowment of irresistible grace, but most simply testified to the reconciliation of sin qualifying them for favorable judgment. Affairs were to be settled so earthly and spiritual burdens were eased. Over time a sense of readiness or anticipation for the afterlife in union with God in Heaven would come into better focus. Spiritual affairs were not the only thing a dying person needed to settle. The dying preferred that their family was taken care of after they were gone and debts were cleared up. Affection between spouses was commonly expressed. Testators also made it a point to tell the world in an official manner (legally) that they knew God, were saved and ready for eternity. It was almost as common for women just as men to have legal recognition of their wills or status as executrixes honored in the courts. As death neared, often recognized as the body began to fail yet the mind remained still sound enough to understand what was happening, dependence on God increased through prayers to ease fears. Clergy and loved ones would step in and offer focused, purposeful encouragement to assist the dying as they transitioned to the after-life. These measures helped keep death tame.

There would be no intercession for people after they died, only using the memory of those already passed to spur the living to work out their relationship with God and be ready to face mortality. The funeral offered a convenient place to formalize this message with a sermon. People in the community knew it was time to gather if they heard the bell ringing, which meant the body had been prepared for burial and the officiating pastor was ready to administer the final rituals and sermon. Congregants listened to the sermon
while they publically mourned, but were careful not to let emotions get the best of them. Then they would gather and follow in procession to the graveyard, where familiar names from their community laid in rest until the Judgment Day, while prominent interment locations were reserved for influential theologians and pastors. The body would be interred, usually near a spouse, another family member or within the graveyard comprised of the community of believers. The dying individual often made it a point to let the world know where they wanted to lay in rest. This was the decent burial that followed a good death.

The approach to death in late seventeenth-century England was optimistic. It was based on the belief expecting blessing and a process leading to that blessing. It was intertwined with beliefs of dependency on God’s promises, His church (the community of believers) and the ordained design to life and the afterlife. Along the way was a process of dependency on assistance and practice to ensure one properly approached death. Through dependency on God, individuals came to know that the “last enemy to be destroyed” was death. In the end death died. And in the end death was good.
APPENDIX

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECT SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH THEOLOGIANS

This appendix provides short biographical descriptions of some influential theologians from the mid to late seventeenth century in England. These individuals held influential posts and/or gained significant popularity as they preached and wrote about their ideas about faith. Their views about Christianity were instrumental in the Puritan and Arminian movements politically and religiously, and they often reflected on death and dying in their work. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* provided useful, insightful details about these preachers and their influence. Helpful biographies are noted within the descriptions.

Baxter, Richard (1615–1691)

Baxter was an influential Puritan minister and religious writer. He was known for his commitment to ideals of toleration and unity above sectarian desires. Baxter's puritanism was moderate as he valued order, tradition, toleration and authority, even if it meant compromise on styles of worship and ecclesiastical structure. He also distanced himself from the more radical parts of the nonconformist movement (e.g., Anabaptists and Quakers).
Through extensive reading and encountering Presbyterians and other nonconformists in his youth, Baxter became committed to the dissenting movement early in his life. By the Civil War, Baxter’s theology was of a Puritan character, but he also held to ideas of toleration and found no scriptural basis to oppose conformists’ desire for liturgical worship patterns, even though he disagreed with the episcopacy. His stance, though, was taken as opposition to the policy of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, because of his Puritan commitment, which solidified during the war as Baxter advocated removal of Laud’s ecclesiastical tyranny. Baxter even served as a chaplain in the New Model Army during the war.

Baxter was milder with his Calvinism than some of his contemporaries, namely John Owen (whom he often interacted with). Baxter argued for a process of justification involving human cooperation with grace, which Owen specifically argued was a retreat from predestinarian orthodoxy. Baxter, however, maintained this position throughout his life. He was also a prolific evangelistic preacher, which increased his popularity throughout the country.

Baxter’s national reputation also grew significantly in the 1650s while he was active in the Worcestershire Voluntary Association of Ministers, a movement that had members from throughout the country that mixed independent and Episcopalian preachers with Puritans, although about half would conform at the Restoration. The association sought common ground among their confessions, which Baxter was proud of. It combined his commitment to pastoral service and unity among Christians, even if their sects differed on some theological bases.
Baxter was involved in politics throughout most of his lifetime. He did not favor the rule that Cromwell’s reign turned into, nor did he approve when the episcopacy was reinstated at the Restoration. He was appointed chaplain (along with other Presbyterians) to the reinstated king in 1660, and was offered a bishopric of Hereford, although he declined on the grounds it would inhibit the promotion of church unity. Throughout this time Baxter was committed to unity among competing sects and tried to negotiate toward that end, but did not waver from his Puritanism as a theological base.

Baxter was briefly imprisoned in 1669 for violating the Five Mile Act of 1665 (law furthering conformity, preachers could not live within 5 miles of a parish they were expelled from), which affirmed his status as a nonconformist after the Restoration. In 1672 Charles II's declaration of indulgence was issued and Baxter was able to apply for a license to preach. Surprisingly, he was granted a license as “a Nonconforming Minister” and was authorized to preach, which was the first time he was legally allowed to in public since 1662. Baxter died in 1691 after months of declining health and was buried, next to his wife, in Christ Church Greyfriars.

Baxter was known for his unique commitment to unity despite his Puritanism. He authored more than 130 books (the exact figure depends upon how works were published/forms counted – there are over 350 unique instances of links to Baxter’s name as author keyword in Early English Books Online) and wrote over 1,200 letters that have survived. The majority of his published works were theological treatises and, interestingly, Baxter was the first author of a string of best-sellers in British literary history. Of his many works, a few that stand out are The Saints Everlasting Rest (1650)
Bunyan, John (bap. 1628 - 1688)

Bunyan was a non-conforming Puritan preacher and writer, most famous for authoring Pilgrim’s Progress. As a teen, Bunyan either enlisted or was recruited into the New Model Army, which exposed him to the military imagery he often evoked in writings as well as various religious views, mainly of Presbyterian and Baptist ideas – Calvinistic Puritan conceptions that characterized Oliver Cromwell’s mission.

Bunyan experienced a spiritual renewal in the late 1650s after struggling with depression, and, after affirming his faith he began preaching in 1655 even without formal ordination. Bunyan’s messages initially targeted those he felt misled Christians, specifically the Quakers and Ranters, and then took aim at professional clergy and the wealthy. The preacher’s conviction was that the Calvinist tradition should be adhered to, as he stressed God’s covenant propelling salvation in an evangelical manner.

Bunyan worked in a time of much religious persecution and endured much himself. This came in part because he denounced just about all non-puritan Protestants, such as latitudinarians, Quakers, Socinians, Arminians, libertines, and Anglicans in general. Bunyan’s preaching caused controversy, furthered by the reason he did not have formal ordination and from the fact that he gained popularity. This led to his arrest
in 1658 for preaching without a license, but he was not imprisoned until 1660 after arrest again for continuing to preach and he remained jailed until January 1672. During this time Bunyan wrote many of his theological works and likely conceived the idea for *Pilgrim's Progress* that would be first published in 1678.

*Pilgrim's Progress* is one of the most popular books ever written. Bunyan drew on his military days to creatively express struggle and spiritual warfare in one’s life as a Christian. The Christian in the allegorical story is a pilgrim and warrior, who endured the Christian life and journeyed from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City (Heaven).

After release from prison, Bunyan was appointed as pastor of St. John’s church in Bedford (congregation of dissenters). He would be imprisoned again in 1675 briefly, after Charles II, pressured by Parliament, rescinded the declaration that authorized preaching of nonconformists. After his release on a bond in 1677, the result of an appeal by Puritan John Owen from London, Bunyan was elevated to important religious posts. King James II offered him a job to oversee the royal interest in Bedford, which he declined because of the existing persecution of other nonconformists. In 1688 he became chaplain to the Lord Mayor of London, the same year he died from fever. He was buried in the center of Bunhill Fields, and many other Puritan nonconformists were interred near his grave.

Bunyan’s influence was significant. He often preached in London and many other parts of the kingdom, drawing large crowds any time he did. His popularity fueled demand for his written works – for example, *The Pilgrim's Progress* reached its eleventh edition already by the year of his death (ten years after it was first published). It was the seventeenth century’s most popular work of fiction.
Hammond, Henry (1605–1660)

Hammond was an influential Arminian Church of England clergyman and theologian. He was born in Chertsey in Surrey and educated at Eton College and Oxford. He gained a reputation as a theologian and meticulous preacher early in his career. Hammond was nominated to the Westminster assembly of divines in 1642, but declined because of his Episcopal devotion. In 1644/5 Hammond published *A Practical Catechism* (at first anonymously), which is a theological exposition that clearly established his Arminianism and aligned his views with William Laud. He asserted that Christ died for all mankind and that Christians should continue the practice of confession, which clearly positioned himself against Calvinists.

Hammond became a royalist cleric, which propelled his status in the kingdom. Charles I had been impacted by *A Practical Catechism* and credited the theologian with being a great orator. The king requested that Hammond be one of his chaplains after he was detained in 1647 and Hammond faithfully fulfilled that duty. During these years Hammond defended the Church of England, Arminianism and the episcopacy, which spurred criticism from opponents. One of those was the independent John Owen, a staunch Puritan, who wrote treatises directly against Hammond’s Episcopalian views (for example see *A Vindication and An Answer* (1654)).

Hammond’s health failed in the last few years of his life and after an attack of stones, he died in April 1660, ironically on the day that Parliament voted to restore the monarchy. His legacy was as an apologist of the Church of England on Arminian terms,
of which his theology served as the foundation upon its restoration after the Interregnum. His idea that God’s covenant with man was offered to all but conditional on acceptance and subsequent morality was the foundation for the Church of England throughout the rest of the seventeenth century, which was a very Laudian based theology.


Janeway, James (1636–1674)

Janeway was a nonconformist minister and an influential Puritan preacher in London who was well respected among his peer group. He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and was ordained a deacon at Oxford in 1661. Janeway was ejected from the Church after the Act of Uniformity of 1662.

Janeway was an active preacher as a nonconformist minister in London in the mid 1660’s, and was licensed as a Presbyterian in 1672 following Charles II’s declaration of indulgence. Richard Baxter specifically commented on how well known Janeway had become in London. Colleagues and followers (such as preachers Nathaniel Vincent and John Ryther) commended Janeway’s Puritan strictness and commitment to that Calvinistic tradition.

One of Janeway’s more famous works was *Saints Incouragement to Diligence in Christ’s Service* (1674). The book, which had a preface written by Baxter, exhorts sinners to change their ways, tend to their spirituality and meditate on God’s divinity to live life properly and aligned with God’s providence so one would be prepared to enter the
afterlife. This devotional, as well as many other of Janeway’s works, had multiple editions during the late seventeenth century, which were often prompted to be published by fellow Puritans (including Baxter).


Laud, William (1573–1645)

Laud was the Archbishop of Canterbury and a very influential Church of England clergyman and theologian. He was an Arminian and his commitment to free-will characterized the Church of England throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, well beyond his death in 1645.

Laud was born in Reading in 1573 and educated at Oxford. It was at Oxford and during his early career as a clergyman where he developed anti-Calvinist views, began embracing Arminian ideas and battled being branded a papist (something he endured throughout his life). There is no evidence, however, that shows Laud was seriously linked to Rome or even considered converting. He was a tough defender of the Church of England’s Episcopal system, which, along with his opposition to Puritanism led to his execution during the Civil War. Laud was not deeply committed to Arminianism early in his career and was more so interested in defending the importance of the Church as an institutional structure and advocated conformity in this regard. It was this stance, along with the Puritan opposition to that ecclesiology that led to his activism against Calvinism and then to a zealous commitment to Arminianism.
Laud attained many influential posts in the Church. He became a royal chaplain in 1611 and secured the presidency of St John's, all the while he continued to regularly preach. He quickly rose in the ranks and eventually was appointed to the highest ecclesiastical position, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1633. During this time, Laud became increasingly hostile to Presbyterian influences, and associated them as opposition to the crown. It would be Laud’s support of the anti-Calvinist and Arminian Richard Montagu (whom Parliament condemned) that solidified his religious stance opposing Puritanism. Further, Laud closely associated the monarchy with the well-being of the Church of England. He took attacks on Arminianism as attacks on the established English Church and increasingly defended it politically and religiously. Thus, Puritan nonconformists were Laud's target, and conformity with his idea of Church doctrine was the essence of his ecclesiastical policy. He enforced conformity with Arminian theology, divine service and worship to preserve and protect the way he thought the Church of England should operate. These religious views had political implications since Calvinist ideas in Puritanism were taken as subversive of English ecclesiology, which was intertwined with the monarchy. Laud was eventually impeached for high treason by the Commons in 1640 and eventually executed in 1645.

Laud’s legacy was far-reaching. Throughout the last half of the century (and beyond) the Church of England after the restoration was associated with Laudian Arminianism, and was pinned against ideas of Calvinistic Puritanism. The events that surrounded his life and death became symbolic of the divergence in the English religious landscape.
Owen, John (1616–1683)

Owen was an influential Puritan theologian and independent, nonconformist minister whose influence extended into politics. He was educated and ordained at Oxford and served as a chaplain there from 1637 to 1642. He moved to London when the Civil War broke out. Shortly thereafter, he published his first book, *Theomachia ... or, A Display of Arminianism* (1643), which was a polemic against Arminianism and affirmed his Calvinist doctrines by attacking the idea of free will as being an idol. He also married in 1643 to Mary Rooke and had ten children, and all but one died as children or infants.

During the war years Owen was troubled by the spread of Arminianism and continued to attack it through preaching and writing. He became intertwined with politics after ministering to Parliamentary troops, which was where he met Henry Ireton and other senior officials in the army (Owen would eventually preach Ireton’s funeral sermon). He attended the execution of Charles I and viewed it as an example of God’s judgment and preached a sermon to that end to the Commons. Oliver Cromwell heard his sermon and shortly afterwards appointed Owen as chaplain to the Irish expeditionary force, as well as had him accompany troops to Scotland. Owen preached to the Rump Parliament in 1650 affirming their fight against Catholics and non-Puritans and was invited to regularly preach to them subsequently.
Owen returned to London in 1651 and was also appointed dean of Christ Church, Oxford. His duties continued to expand throughout the 1650s, including counseling the government about clergy in Ireland, selection as vice-chancellor of Oxford, appointment to a committee handling licensing translations of the Bible and general advising to the Cromwellian regime. During these years Owen continued to directly attack Arminianism, specifically singling out Henry Hammond over issues of the episcopacy and Calvinism.

Owen maintained a commitment to being an independent after the Restoration and his connections to high officials throughout the government kept him protected. He continued to play a role in politics and advocated for toleration of those that did not conform to the Church of England. At one point he worked with Richard Baxter in the late 1660s to advocate for the rights of Presbyterians and independents, although Owen was critical of Baxter’s moderate approach to Calvinism. The two worked together again in 1679 when persecution of nonconforming ministers had increased and they petitioned for Parliament to form and address the issue.

Owen remained committed to functions of ministry even though he was ambitious in politicking and writing. He frequently preached and encouraged preachers throughout the kingdom and in American colonies, which demonstrated his influence reached far outside London. Owen continued to preach against the monarchy the rest of his life, frequently warning of divine judgment on the country because of the Church’s persecution and errant commitment to Arminianism.

Owen died in 1683 after months of failing health. He was buried in Bunhill Fields (same graveyard that Bunyan was eventually interred) and a number of gentry and
nobles attended his funeral. Owen’s reputation was significant. Aside from his frequent writing and preaching, Owen’s sermons to Parliament, closeness to Oliver Cromwell, and academic posts reflected his status in society. He was acknowledged as the head of religious independents among his peers, labeled as the prince of the Puritans and was even given the nickname of England’s Calvin by Newcastle Congregationalist Ambrose Barnes. Owen’s legacy was as a leading proponent of Calvinism in late seventeenth-century England.


Taylor, Jeremy (*bap. 1613 - 1667*)

Taylor was an Arminian Church of England clergyman that gained fame for his eloquent and poetic style of writings, particularly from his work *Holy Dying*. Taylor gained the attention of Archbishop William Laud in the early 1630’s as a young, quick witted preacher. Laud helped Taylor gain admission to a fellowship at All Souls and then an appointment as his chaplain and chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles I.

Since Taylor was committed to the Church of England and Arminianism, dissenters and nonconformists were suspect of his theology and political loyalties, particularly during the Civil War and Interregnum. He was briefly imprisoned in 1645 and then eventually allowed to relocate to Wales, where he continued his work as a chaplain and writing theology. Taylor positioned himself as favoring religious toleration, but along Protestant terms as he taught against Roman Catholicism. Taylor traveled back
and forth to London many times and engaged and supported Anglicans throughout his career.

After the Restoration, Taylor was appointed as the bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland. By this point he had gained reputation as a well-respected devotional writer and one who suffered for the Anglican and royalist cause (on Arminian terms). His devotion to toleration likely did not suit the English Church based in London since the political battle between Puritans and Arminians was intense and was a factor in his appointment to Ireland where the situation was less stable with the English based Protestant leadership in place over a mainly Roman Catholic population.

Taylor’s legacy stemmed from his literary achievements, namely from *Holy Dying*, which was a popular devotional for preparing for death and influential for its literary prose. The work had nineteen editions by 1695, and was one of the best sellers of the century. His success came directly from his unique and ornate prose, which was even described as Ciceronian, as it used extended similes to evoke emotional effects. Theologically, he was a clearly an Arminian, advocated for the episcopacy and did not hold a firm stance on the idea of original sin. He believed that humans had a complete free will and advocated that Christians confess sins committed over life to resolve the consequence of sin, as it was that sin (not inherent depravity) that caused separation from God. Even though these were theological issues pinning him against Calvinists, this did not detract from the popularity of his devotional literature.

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