

**Worship in Eighteenth-Century
Anglicanism and Methodism**

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“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”:

Contributions of Welsh and English Calvinists to Worship in Eighteenth-Century England

Ted A. Campbell*

*Arglwydd, arwain trwy'r anialwch
Fy bererin gwael ei wedd¹*

Introduction

The words of Williams Pantycelyn's best-known hymn call our attention to a theme echoed time and again in Calvinistic worship in the eighteenth century, namely, the theme of spiritual pilgrimage, often elaborated as a “mapping” or “topography” of the Christian life. Pantycelyn's own English version of this hymn is:

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim, through this barren land:
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow'ful hand.²

It is this theme of spiritual pilgrimage and its creative expression in eighteenth century Calvinistic worship in England and Wales that I wish to explore in this article.

Wesleyan scholars will undoubtedly be familiar with the Wesleys' expressions of the “way of salvation,” either in the three-fold pattern of prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace (now canonized in *The United Methodist Hymnal* of 1989), or in any of a number of more elaborate forms throughout John and Charles Wesley's works; another example would be John Wesley's sermon entitled “The Scripture Way of Salvation.” Scholars of Charles Wesley's hymns, in particular, will be aware of the fact that hundreds of the Wesley hymns deal with one aspect or another of the spiritual pilgrimage, and many of the early collections of hymns, including the 1780 *A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People Called Methodists*, were organized in such a way as to express the progress of the religious life. In this article, then, we have to examine a parallel phenomenon among English and Welsh Calvinists of the eighteenth century.

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¹Hymn by William Williams Pantycelyn, in N. Cynhafal Jones, ed., *Gweithiau William Williams Pantycelyn*, 2 vols. (Treffynon: P. M. Evans, 1887, and Newport: W. Jones, 1891) 2:134; cited in Glyn Tegai Hughes, *Williams Pantycelyn* (Writers of Wales series; Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), p. 94; cf. *Welsh and English Hymns and Anthems of the Welsh National Gymnaf Ganu Association, Inc.* (Franklin, PA: Seneca Printing, 1991), no. 40.

²In Jones, ed., 2:444; cited in Hughes, p. 94.

But English and Welsh Calvinism in the eighteenth century was a many-splendored thing, for by the beginning of the eighteenth century Calvinists were spread through a number of religious denominations. The old Puritan dream of reforming the Church of England according to a Genevan model had by then definitively failed, the "Ejected Ministers" of 1662 and their successors had long since reconciled themselves to being Presbyterian or Congregationalist or Baptist pastors, and so far as we know, by the beginning of the eighteenth century only a handful of Anglican clergymen maintained the Calvinistic theology that they thought was enshrined in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion and the Homilies of their Church, The Act of Toleration of 1689, an Act which can be said to have created the modern idea of a religious denomination, had allowed for the public worship of "Dissenting" Protestants, under certain specified conditions.

But the Calvinistic status of the Dissenting churches in England and Wales was contested at the beginning of the eighteenth century, for although one of the stipulations of the Act of Toleration was that Dissenters were required to subscribe to the "doctrinal part" of the Thirty-Nine Articles (and traditional Calvinists had no problem with this), there were strong parties in each of the Dissenting denominations who had shirked all or part of the Reformed tradition. "General" Baptists had rejected the doctrine of predestination, and Socinian or Neo-Arian parties within Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches (and within the ranks of the General Baptists) had rejected their Reformed inheritance even more vehemently.

By the end of the 1730s, though, Calvinism in England and Wales was undergoing a notable revival both within the national Church and the Dissenting denominations, and this revival would lead by the end of the eighteenth century to (a) the coalescence of a vigorous Calvinistic Evangelical party within the Church of England, (b) the rise of Evangelical Calvinism within the older Dissenting denominations (but not until late in the century), and (c) the formation of new denominations with an explicitly Calvinistic doctrinal basis, such as the chapels registered by the Countess of Huntingdon in the 1770s, or the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists (whose Church is now known in English as the "Presbyterian Church of Wales"). When we speak of eighteenth-century English and Welsh Calvinism, then, we refer to this broad spectrum of religious life, within both the national Church and within the Dissenting denominations.

Inherited patterns of worship varied immensely within these different traditions of Reformed faith. Anglican Calvinists were committed to the Book of Common Prayer and however much they might scruple about the signing in baptism or the ring in the marriage ceremony, their commitment to the Prayer Book remained a constant throughout the eighteenth century. The Dissenting churches, by contrast, had rejected the Prayer Book in favor of worship patterns based on Continental (and Scottish) examples. Across this range of liturgical patterns, then, we might expect to find no consistency to the liturgical contributions of the Calvinistic groups in the eighteenth century.

But despite the diversity of their formal patterns of worship, there were certain consistent motifs and themes that marked Calvinistic worship across the denominations. The central motif of the spiritual pilgrimage, inherited from the “Pietistic” or “Evangelical” Puritans of the seventeenth century, was expressed consistently in hymns and sermons of the eighteenth century Calvinists. Moreover, the Evangelical Revival inspired the rise of some new forms of worship in addition to the inherited patterns of the Church of England and the Dissenting denominations. Many of these new patterns also expressed the motif of believer’s journey from allurements of sin in this world to the joys of the heavenly home. This article will proceed, then, by examining, first, the background of eighteenth century developments in the topography of salvation as understood by seventeenth-century pietistic Puritanism. The article will then proceed to examine the theme of spiritual pilgrimage as expressed in eighteenth-century English and Welsh Calvinist sermons and hymns, and then will take up understandings of the topography of salvation as expressed in special occasions of public worship among English and Welsh Calvinists of the eighteenth century.

Background: The Topography of Salvation in Seventeenth-Century Pietistic Puritanism

The motif of spiritual pilgrimage was the common inheritance of all eighteenth-century English and Welsh Calvinists from their forebears in the Puritan movement of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Developed at first by such theologians as William Perkins and William Ames as an understanding of the out-working of predestination, pietistic Puritans consistently outlined the stages of the Christian life following Romans 8:30 and a tradition of Calvinistic exegesis, in four or five discernible “degrees” or stages. For William Perkins, these stages were:

“effectual calling,”
justification,
sanctification, and
glorification.³

To these four stages, William Ames added a fifth, “adoption,” between justification and sanctification.⁴

³The four “degrees” are specifically outlined in William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine, or The Description of Theologie, Containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation, according to God’s Word* (Second edition; Cambridge: John Legate, 1597) on pages 138, 145, 149 [mis-labeled as “145”], and 168; on these stages, more broadly, cf. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism, Or, The Way to the New Jerusalem as Set Forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570–1643* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938, pp. 86–92.

⁴The five stages are given in William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, translated by John Dykstra (Eusden; The United Church Press, 1968); Reprint edition (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1983), pp. 157–174.

The first stage, “effectual calling” (also described as “conversion” by Ames), was described by Puritan teachers as that event in which men and women are brought to repentance and faith by means of the proclamation of the law and the gospel.⁵ Both Perkins and Ames defined “justification” in characteristically Reformed language as the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer, and the believer’s being “accounted” righteous before God on the basis of faith alone and for the sake of Christ.⁶ They understood “sanctification” to denote the Christian’s continuing death to sin (“mortification”) and growth in life to Christ (“vivification”).⁷ “Glorification” they explained as the completion of the Christian’s likeness to Christ, which begins at death and is consummated at the time of the final judgment.⁸

Puritan teachers stressed the possibility that human beings can know of their election to eternal life, although they differed in their placement of this doctrine within their schemes. In his discussion of effectual calling, William Perkins distinguished several degrees of Christian faith. “The highest degree of faith,” he wrote, “is *plerophoria*, a full assurance, which is not onely certaine and true, but also a full *perswasion* of the heart. . . .”⁹ In the concluding chapter of *A Golden Chaine*, Perkins again returned to the question of the knowledge of election, and maintained that believers may know of their election both by “the Testimonie of Gods Spirit” and by the works of sanctification.¹⁰ Where Perkins had but briefly discussed “adoption” as denoting the privileges bestowed by God on believers,¹¹ Ames developed the topic into a fifth section in his account of the order of salvation, interposed between “justification” and “sanctification.”¹² Here Ames claimed that one of the principal benefits of adoption is “the witness of the Spirit which is given to believers” or the “assurance of salvation.”¹³

The exposition of the order of salvation comprehending effectual calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification, that Perkins and Ames had analyzed (see Chart), was popularized by Puritan preachers and spiritual writers, who produced biographies of saintly Christians whose lives illustrated the way of salvation. It was also popularized in the widespread practice of keeping diaries or

⁵Perkins, pp. 138–145; Ames, pp. 157–160.

⁶Perkins, p. 145; Ames, p. 162.

⁷Perkins, pp. 149–167; Ames, p. 162.

⁸Perkins, pp. 168ff; Ames, pp. 171–174.

⁹Perkins, p. 144; italics as in text.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 210. On the intent of Perkins’s *Golden Chaine* in dealing with the question of knowledge of election, cf. Richard A. Muller, “Perkins’ *A Golden Chaine*: Predestinarian System or Schematized *Ordo Salutis*?” (*Sixteenth Century Journal* IX:1 [1978]), pp. 69–81. The theme was obviously central to Perkins: another of his works bears the title “A Treatise Tending unto a Declaration, Whether a Man be in the Estate of Damnation, or in the Estate of Grace” (London: John Porter, 1597).

¹¹Perkins, *Golden Chaine*, p. 148.

¹²Ames, pp. 164–167

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 167.

journals recounting one’s own spiritual experience. What the Puritan diaries accomplished was to make concrete the idealized order of salvation that Perkins, Ames, and others had described. Moreover, they served as a means of making clear the affections experienced by particular women and men as they traversed the order of salvation. Perhaps the crowning literary accomplishments of the Puritan topography of the way of salvation were John Bunyan’s own autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, and then his well known account of *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World, to That Which Is to Come*.

This enterprise of mapping out the geography of salvation undertaken by pietistic Puritans lay in the background of the activities of English and Welsh Calvinists in the eighteenth century. As we shall see, the patterns laid down by Perkins and Ames and elaborated by other Puritans were well known and studied in the eighteenth century, and many of the distinctive contributions of eighteenth-century Calvinists can be understood as creative expressions of this theological and practical enterprise.

The Topography of Salvation in Calvinistic Worship: The Theme of Spiritual Pilgrimage in Sermons and Hymns

We now turn to consider how the theme of spiritual pilgrimage came to expression in English and Welsh Calvinism in the eighteenth century. In this section, I shall consider the expression of this theme in conventional public worship (whether Anglican or Dissenting worship). Here, then, we must consider how the theme of spiritual pilgrimage was expressed in Calvinistic preaching and in the most stunning innovation in eighteenth-century British worship, the introduction of the hymn. I should note that in an article with as broad a scope as this one, I am only able to examine a couple of particular instances of each, which we might think of as probes or core samples or soundings which are only able to suggest the deeper and richer wealth of materials that will remain unexposed.

The *sermons* of eighteenth-century Welsh and English Calvinists very often follow the pattern laid out by Perkins and Ames in explicating the way of salvation as consisting of vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. This can be seen very obviously in a sample sermon from one of the earliest leaders of the Evangelical Revival, George Whitefield, a sermon on I Corinthians 1:30, entitled “Christ the Believer’s Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption” (a title that will sound rather familiar to those who have studied John Wesley’s sermons). In this sermon Whitefield expounds four points (wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption) as links in “the believer’s golden chain of privileges.”¹⁴ The image of the “golden chain” is an important clue in itself, for William Perkins’s classic treatise laying out the way of salvation

¹⁴George Whitefield, sermon on “Christ the Believer’s Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption,” in *Select Sermons of George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. 106.

was entitled *A Golden Chaine*. What is “wisdom”? Whitefield asks, and replies that it is the knowledge of self in the light of God, knowledge of our creatureliness and our inability to save ourselves.¹⁵ It is, in short, the first point in the Puritan topography of salvation, that repentance that was the sign of “vocation” or “effectual calling.” Similarly, “righteousness” denotes our justification before God (the second point in the Puritan topography),¹⁶ and “sanctification” (the very term for the third point in the Puritan topography), denotes “a total renovation of the whole man.”¹⁷ Finally, “redemption” denotes “not only a complete deliverance from all evil, but also a full enjoyment of all good both in body and in soul.”¹⁸ In other words, “redemption” denotes what the Puritan topography had referred to as “glorification,” our final enjoyment of God in the life to come (see Chart).

The same pattern can be seen, though not exactly in the same order, in a much later sample, a series of five sermons by John Newton, delivered to his parish church of Olney in the 1770s. This sermon series was based on Matthew 11:28–29 and included addresses on “Labouring and Heavy-Laden Sinners Described” (on vocation and repentance), “Of Coming to Christ” (on justification), “The Present and Future Rest of Believers in Christ” (on glorification), and then “Of the Yoke of Christ” and “The Service of Christ Easy and Pleasant to His People” (both of which are on the process of sanctification; see Chart).¹⁹ Elsewhere Newton could call upon the image of the Christian life as a race, comprising all of the points of the spiritual topography, with glorification as the goal of the race. Others of his sermons deal with specific aspects of the way of salvation, such as the topic of assurance.²⁰

Newton’s sermons on Matthew 11:28–29 preached at Olney reveal one interesting fact about the place that this preaching had in Anglican Evangelical worship. Whitefield we may perhaps excuse, because he was never installed or invested as the incumbent of a parish, and his sermons appear to be entirely topical and composed to suit the occasion. But Newton was a parish priest: he represents those late eighteenth-century Calvinist Evangelicals who rejected itineracy and chose to remain within the Church of England. And yet for all their professions of affection for the Book of Common Prayer (not feigned, I think), a series of five sermons preached in a parish church expositing only two verses of scripture must indicate that Newton, and certainly other Evangelical Anglicans,

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 2:1 (pp. 98–100).

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 2:2 (pp. 100–101).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 2:3 (pp. 101–104; quotation is on p. 101).

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 2:4 (pp. 106–111; quotation is on p. 107).

¹⁹John Newton, *Letters and Sermons, with a Review of Ecclesiastical History* (6 volumes; Philadelphia: printed by William Young, 1795; although the separate title page of volume 4 has the date 1796), 4:188–241. The sermon on glorification precedes the ones on sanctification simply because “rest” is spoken of in verse 28 and the sermons on sanctification are based on verse 29.

²⁰*Ibid.*, sermon no. XX, “Of the Assurance of Faith” (pp. 323–340).

felt a certain degree of freedom in regard to the Prayer Book lectionary. I have a hunch that further research will corroborate my suspicion that the Evangelical preaching of the “way of salvation” had a way of displacing both the older Reformed practice of expositing the scriptures as a *lectio continua* and the Anglican use of the Prayer-Book lectionary; it appears to have given rise to the practice of topical preaching.

In addition to sermons organized around the Reformed understanding of the way of salvation, or focused on specific milestones in the spiritual pilgrimage, the introduction of *hymnody* into Anglican and Dissenting churches in England and Wales provided another avenue for the emotive expression of the spiritual pilgrimage. With the introduction of the hymn, Watts, Doddridge, and others had already introduced a bold approach to God utilizing first-person narrative that contrasted with the third-person objectivity of conventional psalmody, prayers and liturgies.²¹ The hymn emerged as a favored vehicle for the Evangelical expression of the spiritual pilgrimage as seen from the heart of the pilgrim.

Now I should not quarrel with The Charles Wesley Society in granting the laurel wreath of hymn-writers, within the English-speaking world of the eighteenth century, to their own patron. But within the rather distinct world of that most ancient of European languages, the Welsh tongue, the laurel would have to go to William Williams of Pantycelyn (1717–1791), whom I take as an early sample of eighteenth-century Evangelical hymnody. In the words of a contemporary Welsh interpreter, Glyn Tegai Hughes, “Pantycelyn was, incomparably, the folk poet of the Welsh.”²² I would like the members of The Charles Wesley Society to know him better, and to know something of his contribution to the hymn as an expression of spiritual pilgrimage. Unfortunately, my own understanding of Welsh is so rudimentary that I must rely on his English verse (though it is considerable in itself), and on pre-packaged gobbets of his Welsh verse.

Because he is not as well known as English hymnodists, I will preface my comments on Pantycelyn with a brief biographical note. William Williams of Pantycelyn was the son of a Dissenting family in western Wales, and was educated at a Dissenting academy. Converted while hearing the preaching of Howell Harris at Talgarth in 1737 or 1738, Williams decided to seek Anglican ordination and was in fact ordained deacon in 1740. He became curate of two small parishes in Wales, but the parishioners complained of his absence from their parishes, and based on their complaints the Bishop refused to ordain him priest. The reason for his absence was that by the early 1740s Pantycelyn had already begun to follow Harris and Daniel Rowland and others in itinerant preaching, teaching, and in his case the prolific writing of Welsh and English verse. For the remainder of his

²¹Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 99–100.

²²Glyn Tegai Hughes, *Williams Pantycelyn* (Writers of Wales series; Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), p. 1.

long life (he died in the same year as John Wesley), Williams lived on farming and on an inheritance he had from his wife's family.²³

Williams Pantycelyn was an experimenter in verse. He wrote two, long Welsh epics, one a universal narrative of human salvation entitled *A Prospect of the Kingdom of Christ* (1756) and then an account of the spiritual pilgrimage of an individual Christian entitled *The Life and Death of Theomemphus, from His Birth to the Grave* (1781). He tried his hand at other long poems, and wrote funeral elegies to commemorate the lives of Evangelical saints after the fashion of Samuel Clark and other English Puritan biographers. He also wrote prose works, including pamphlets and theological treatises, and a lengthy attack on Sandemanianism entitled *The Crocodile of Egypt's River Seen on Mount Zion* (1767). But it was above all his collections of hymns (862 of them in all) that made Pantycelyn the great bard of the Evangelical principality of Wales.

Just as Pantycelyn's epic poems offered an overview or "prospect" of the universal history of redemption and of the salvation of the human individual, so the shorter hymns offered more focused prospects of the progress of the human soul towards God. In this great project, the motif of pilgrimage became the controlling metaphor for Williams's hymns. Glyn Tegai Hughes has identified at least fifty of Williams's hymns that explicate the pilgrimage metaphor, and in one collection three hymns actually begin with the words *Pererin wyf*. . . ("I am a pilgrim . . .").²⁴ Given the consistency of this theme, it is not surprising that Pantycelyn's best-known hymn should be "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah / Pilgrim, through this barren land" Moreover, Pantycelyn's hymns exploit the image of Israel's wandering in the desert towards the land of promise as a metaphor for the Christian's wandering in this world toward the heavenly home. A collection of Williams's English hymns entitled *Gloria in Excelsis* (1772) has a number of poems developing this theme, including the following (complete) example:

I trace a mournful dreary Ground,
 Like the Arabian Sand,
 Scorched, and weary, I long to see
 The happy promis'd Land.

No living Streams of Peace and Joy,
 No fruitful Tree of Life,
 But Thorns and Briars here breed
 Immortal Hate and Strife.

Th' Egyptian Stream, curs'd in our Fall,
 Now turned to Blood I find,
 That raise our Passions to a Flame
 And fluctuate the Mind.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 2–5.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 92–94.

And here we travel Day by Day
Yet with unwearied Feet,
Refresh'd and strengthen'd by thy Grace
T' encounter all we meet.

Jesus stand by, thy mighty Arm
Can break each Passage thro',
And level each triumphant Arch
Erected by the Foe.

Stand in the front, thou glorious King;
When savage Beasts do roam,
Guide us thro' every winding Maze,
To thy eternal Home.

Lighten our Path in darkest Night
With that illustrious Ray,
The fiery Pillar in the Dark,
The glorious Cloud by Day.

Strengthen my Faith and languid Hope,
And chace my Fears away:
Give me a Glimpse, in dreary Wilds,
Of everlasting Day.²⁵

The metaphor of pilgrimage from Egypt through the desert to the Promised Land became a very elaborate metaphor indeed for Williams, who often juxtaposed or confused Palestinian and Welsh geography together.²⁶ It is in this sense that “topography” or “mapping” becomes a very appropriate description of Williams’s enterprise in offering through his hymns a chart to guide believers on their own pilgrimage to the land of rest promised in the gospel:

Salvation is my happy Rest,
Salvation is my Home;
And let Salvation be engrav'd
Upon my silent Tomb.²⁷

Although Pantycelyn’s hymns in *Gloria in Excelsis* reflect the theme of spiritual pilgrimage, they are not laid out in a recognizable schema to express the way of salvation. A topography of salvation that is laid out in such a schema can be seen in a later sample of eighteenth-century English Evangelical hymnody, perhaps in fact the best-known of English-language hymn collections, John Newton’s and William Cowper’s *Olney Hymns* (1779), the collection in which

²⁵William Williams, *Gloria in Excelsis: Or, Hymns of Praise to God and the Lamb* (Carmarthen: Printed for the author, by John Ross, 1772), hymn no. 4, p. 54.

²⁶Hughes, p. 96.

²⁷Williams, *Gloria in Excelsis*, hymn no. 1, stanza 4, p. 3.

“Amazing Grace” first appeared. Book III of the *Olney Hymns* is entitled, “On the Progress and Changes of the Spiritual Life.” The headings in this section follow the traditional Calvinist understanding of the way of salvation, although elaborated at points. These headings are as follows:

- I. Solemn Addresses to Sinners
- II. Seeking, Pleading, Hoping
- III. Conflict
- IV. Comfort
- V. Dedication and Surrender
- VI. Cautions
- VII. Praise
- VIII. Short Hymns²⁸

With the exception of the last section of “Short Hymns,” I believe that we can see the Puritan *ordo salutis* comprising effectual calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification in these divisions and above all in the hymns within them. The first three divisions (“Solemn Addresses to Sinners,” “Seeking, Pleading, Hoping,” and “Conflict” deal with the state of “sinners” before conversion to Christ. The next two divisions deal with conversion itself, *viz.*, “Comfort” and “Dedication and Surrender.” The “Cautions” are directed towards believers and so comprise at least a part of the believer’s sanctification, and “Praise” is the manner in which the believer on earth appropriates the glories of heaven to come, or, in other words, anticipates our glorification (see Chart).

In Newton’s and Cowper’s hymns, as those of Williams Pantycelyn, the theme of spiritual pilgrimage is prominent. The familiar verse attributed to Cowper:

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.²⁹

contains within it a reference to the metaphor of the escape from Egypt. Other hymns in the collection explicate the Exodus, understanding it as a type for the Christian’s pilgrimage, or describe such subjects as “The Benighted Traveler” or “The Pilgrim’s Song.”³⁰

With respect to the proportion of material in this section of the *Olney Hymns*, I have noted above that the collection has three discrete sections which describe the state of believers before their conversion. Moreover, the last of these three

²⁸John Newton, *Olney Hymns in Three Books* (Philadelphia: printed by William Young, 1792), headings are given on p. 251.

²⁹*Ibid.*, Book III, section III, “Conflict,” hymn XV, “Light Shining out of Darkness,” v. 1, p. 267; cf. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, p. 235.

³⁰*Ibid.*, Book III, section III, “Conflict,” hymns xxxiii (pp. 283–284) and xliii (pp. 292–293).

sections, entitled "Conflict," is clearly the longest of any of the sections in this part of the collection. The hymns in the "Conflict" section deal with the unbeliever's struggle with God that leads up to faith and assurance, so that they might be compared to the theme of Charles Wesley's "Wrestling Jacob."

Other Calvinist hymn-writers could be mentioned, We should not pass without remembering Augustus Toplady (1740–1778), Calvinist and anti-Wesleyan, and "Rock of Ages" (1775). But let us note that the cumulative effect of sermons and hymns focusing on the way of salvation would have been substantial, making the subject-matter of conventional worship, whether Anglican or Dissenting, whether itinerant or parochial, the quest of the spiritual pilgrimage. By the eighteenth century the spiritual pilgrimage had become a central focus of Welsh and English Calvinistic worship, with the elaborate and passionate imagery of hymns complementing the rational and scriptural exposition of the spiritual quest in the regular round of preaching.

The Topography of Salvation in Calvinistic Worship: The Spiritual Pilgrimage as Expressed in Special Occasions of Public Worship

Both sermons and hymns expressed the Calvinistic fascination with the topography or mapping of the spiritual pilgrimage. But sermons and hymns functioned within the parameters of conventional worship, whether of Dissenters or Anglicans. In addition to their conventional forms of worship, English and Welsh Calvinists began to develop in the eighteenth century some distinctive forms of worship, forms in which again the spiritual pilgrimage could be not only expressed but also enacted.

First among these must be the unique manner in which British Calvinists (here I intend to include Scotland as well) celebrated the *eucharist*. Although the eucharist in itself was obviously part of the conventional worship of both Anglicans and the Dissenting churches, the manner in which British Calvinists celebrated eucharist from the 1600s marks an important innovation that would have a lasting effect on Evangelical Christianity. From the seventeenth century the custom among Reformed churches had been to celebrate quarterly eucharists, with elaborate preparation in the weeks before. It has become rather well known in the last decade that in Scotland and Northern Ireland, occasions for celebrating Holy Communion had become large-scale communal events, involving visiting clergy and laity from parishes or churches in a whole region, and sometimes held out-of-doors because of the size of congregations.³¹ Now one might think that this custom would have affected Scots Presbyterians and perhaps Welsh and

³¹Cf. Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); and Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *The Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625–1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

English Dissenters, but not Anglicans. There is evidence, though, that among Calvinistic Anglicans the same patterns prevailed.

Consider the following account, written down by Howell Harris, of a eucharist in Daniel Rowland's Anglican parish church at Llangeitho:

I was last Sunday at the Ordinance with Brother Rowlands where I saw, felt, and heard such things as I cant send on Paper any idea of. . . . Such Crying out and Heart Breaking Groans, Silent Weeping and Holy Joy, and shouts of Rejoicing I never saw. Their Amens and Crying Glory in the Highest &c would inflame your soul was you there. Tis very common when he preaches for Scores to fall down by the Power of the Word, pierced and wounded or overcom'd by the Love of God and Sights of the Beauty and Excellency of Jesus, and lie on the Ground.³²

It is clear from this account that the communion (or "Ordinance," in Harris's terms) attracted a considerable crowd, and that other Evangelical leaders such as Harris himself were present. In accounts of Harris's career based on his own diaries, such large sacramental occasions were not uncommon. Similarly, Horton Davies points out that under the leadership of George Whitefield, William Grimshaw, Samuel Walker and others (including non-Calvinist John Wesley), very large communion services, sometimes extending over a period of days, were held in England as well—some of them so large that they had to be held outdoors.³³

Now a fact that is particularly interesting with respect to the subject of this article is that in these large eucharistic gatherings there had developed a pattern of preaching to prepare persons for the sacrament, beginning with the preaching of repentance, proceeding to describe justification and regeneration, sanctification and concluding with the communion itself as the outward sign of unity in Christ and of the glorification which is to come. The communion and its preparation thus served as an extended dramatization of the *ordo salutis*, and gave ample opportunity for preaching on the various themes relating to the various stages of the Christian's spiritual pilgrimage.³⁴

The importance of these large-scale communions should not be missed. There is growing evidence from such contemporary scholars as Leigh Eric Schmidt and Marilyn Westerkamp that North American frontier camp meetings grew directly from the tradition of Scots-Irish communions. I would suggest that we could expand this connection to say that in British Christianity—and I think particularly in Calvinistic circles—in the eighteenth century a number of forms of large-scale eucharistic events were held, not only in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but in England and Wales as well.

It has been observed in the past, for example, when the Wesley Hymns subcommittee of the United Methodist Hymnal Committee met in Princeton in 1987, that eucharistic hymns and Evangelical "invitation" hymns are often inter-

³²Letter of Howell Harris, cited in Derec Llwyd Morgan, *The Great Awakening in Wales*, trans. by Dyfnallt Morgan (London: Epworth Press, 1988), p. 23.

³³Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, pp. 223–224.

³⁴Westerkamp, pp. 29–34; Schmidt, pp. 69–114.

changeable in their references to our approach to the altar. In the case of the 1987 Committee, this issue was raised with respect to the very un-Calvinist Charles Wesley Hymn, “Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast,” and a decision was made to include one different version of the same hymn in the section on “Prevenient Grace” and “Invitation” (hymn no. 339), and another version of the same hymn in the section on the eucharist (hymn no. 617). What I want to suggest here is that the similarities between eucharistic and invitational hymns may be no coincidence at all: historically, I think, we may argue that the tradition of large-scale Evangelical meetings actually grew from eucharistic practice, however obscured these origins may be in the later development of Evangelicalism.

I have focused on the eucharist in this discussion of “special occasions for public worship,” but I want to make it clear that of course the eucharist itself was not exceptional; rather it was the *manner* of its celebration that was exceptional and gave rise, I believe, to mass Evangelical gatherings. I associate this with the growth of Calvinistic or Reformed tradition in Britain, because the large nature of Reformed quarterly sacramental meetings (as contrasted with Anglican parish eucharists) seems to have lain in the background of these exceptional practices, however much their practices might have been paralleled by large eucharistic meetings (or love feasts) sponsored by the Wesleys. There are two other instances of exceptional or innovative forms of worship in eighteenth-century Evangelical Calvinist circles that also relate to the believer’s spiritual pilgrimage. These are the use of *experience meetings*, and the practice of covenant making and covenant renewal.

The *experience meeting* (to use the Welsh term) was a natural outgrowth of the enterprise of charting the topography of the spiritual life, and in particular an outgrowth of the practices of keeping personal diaries or journals and writing autobiographies centered around the process leading up to conversion. In the seventeenth century, Puritan believers used their diaries when a Reformed Pastor called to inquire about the state of their soul.³⁵ Eventually, however, the popularity of spiritual biographies as illustrations of the spiritual pilgrimage demanded a public forum in which believers’ narratives of salvation could be told. These public forms of spiritual testimony were recorded by the eighteenth-century Scots Presbyterian pastor John Gillies, who collected stories of revivals from all over the world, including stories of revivals in North America, Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales, including accounts of Pietistic activities on the European continent. His *Historical Collections relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel* (1754) included accounts of testimonial meetings,³⁶ and it is worth noting, I think, that John Wesley first instituted a “day of solemn thanksgiving for

³⁵Haller, pp. 95–99.

³⁶John Gillies, *Historical Collections relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel, and Eminent Instruments Employed in Promoting It*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754).

the numberless spiritual blessings which we have received" on 7 July 1755, only a few days after his first notice of reading Gillies, and explicitly after the examples he had read in Gillies.³⁷

In the Welsh Revival (or, "Awakening," as the Welsh prefer to say) the "experience meeting" was the central instrument by which the movement was organized at the local level (prior to the organizing of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, which was not until the 1820s). Williams Pantycelyn wrote a short treatise explaining the testimony meetings.³⁸ In fact, it is clear from his instructions that the Welsh experience meetings were grounded in the earlier Religious Societies organized and explained at length by Anthony Horneck and then by Josiah Woodward, the same general pattern from which the Wesleyan societies and later class meetings developed.³⁹ But the focus of the Welsh societies, as the name "experience meeting" or "experience society" suggests, was more on the sharing of spiritual experiences than on the quest for accountability and discipline. In this respect, they resemble more the Wesleyan "select bands" than the Wesleyan class meetings.

A third distinct contribution of Calvinistic Evangelicals is one traditionally claimed for John Wesley, and that is the public celebration of *covenant making and covenant renewal*. Calvinists of all the British nationalities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries engaged in the making of personal covenants as a complement to the practice of journaling. Journaling recorded one's past struggles: covenanting gave the individual a concrete account of goals to be sought. Once an individual had made a covenant, the practice of journaling reinforced the covenant by keeping an account of the individual's progress toward her or his stated goals. In Scotland, personal covenanting was often encouraged in the preaching during communion gatherings, and individuals would offer their own covenants to God as they approached the table for communion.⁴⁰ John Gillies, whose *Historical Collections* we have noted above, included accounts of these covenanting occasions and through his work the custom became very widely known from the 1750s. But English Puritans had also engaged in the practice of covenant making and covenant renewal. In particular, Richard Alleine, one of the Ejected Ministers of 1662, wrote a series of volumes entitled *Vindiciae Pietatis* ("A Vindication of Piety"), the fourth part of which was entitled *Heaven Opened*:

³⁷John Wesley, *Journal* for June 24, 1755, and July 7, 1755 (in W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *Journals and Diaries*. [Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988] 4:20). Wesley, it might be noted, had actually contributed a good deal to Gillies's work, and it is clear that he had been reading the book for at least a week before (cf. Ward and Heitzenrater 4:18, n. 65).

³⁸William Williams of Pantycelyn, *Templum Experientiae Apertum: Neu Ddrws y Society Profiad wedi ei Agor o Led y Pen* (Aberhonddu: E. Evans, 1777); English translation by Mrs. Lloyd-Jones, as *The Experience Meeting: An Introduction to the Welsh Societies of the Evangelical Awakening* (Bridgend: Evangelical Movement of Wales, 1973).

³⁹Hughes, pp. 67–70.

⁴⁰Schmidt, pp. 71, 75, 129, 135–137, and 252, note 48.

Or, A Brief and Plain Discovery of the Riches of Gods Covenant of Grace (1699). Within this treatise, Alleine included “An Exhortation to Sinners, with Directions for their Entering into Covenant.”⁴¹ Alleine’s treatise makes it clear that although Puritan covenanting was in a sense “personal,” it was an act that was to be encouraged in communal gatherings where just such an exhortation as he gave could be delivered. Moreover, Alleine prescribed “A Form of Words expressing mans Covenanting with God,” a liturgical form for the covenant prayer, the concluding words of which are:

O dreadful Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; thou art now become my Covenant-friend, and I through thine infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant servant, *Amen*. So be it. And the Covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.⁴²

These words may strike Wesleyans as being familiar. But although it has been recognized that John Wesley’s covenant service was based at least in part on Alleine (though sometimes falsely attributed to Joseph Alleine’s *Alarm to the Unconverted*), what has not been widely recognized is that the first instance of Wesley’s own practice of the covenant service occurred only a month after his first notice of reading in John Gillies’s *Historical Collections*, on 6 August 1755. On this occasion Wesley suggested “another means of increasing serious religion, which had been frequently practised by our forefathers, and attended with eminent blessing, namely, the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart and with all our soul.” After explaining the custom to the people, Wesley and the Methodists observed the first covenant-renewal ceremony on Monday 11 August 1755 at “the French Church in Spitalfields, using here the words of Richard Alleine.”⁴³

Although it is barely possible that Wesley’s reference to the covenant renewal as having been “frequently practiced by our forefathers” could refer to Richard Alleine, the fact is that Alleine’s work is theological and liturgical, but gives no instances of the practice of covenant renewal. Given that Wesley was reading Gillies at this very time, it seems to me most probable that his inspiration for the covenant renewal came both from Alleine’s theological explication of the process and from Gillies’s descriptions of actual covenant renewals. I was pleased to find that the Heitzenrater and Ward edition of Wesley’s *Journal* on these dates credits both the Gillies accounts and Richard Alleine as the two sources of the Wesleyan practice of covenant renewal. Through Gillies, though, the broader history of Reformed covenanting had come down to John Wesley.

These three practices—large-scale communions extended over a period of days accompanied by the preaching of the way of salvation, the use of “experience meetings” as a way of sharing personal narratives of the way of salvation,

⁴¹Richard Alleine, *Heaven Opened: Or, A Brief and Plain Discovery of the Riches of Gods Covenant of Grace; Being the Third Part of the Vindiciae Pietatis* (Boston: Bartholomew Green and John Allen for Elkanah Pembroke, 1699), chapter 19, pp. 315ff.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 338–342; quotation is on pp. 341–342.

⁴³John Wesley’s *Journal* for August 6 and 8, 1755 (in Ward and Heitzenrater, 4:23 and note 82).

and the practice of covenant making and covenant renewal—indicate the emergence of creative expressions of Calvinistic Evangelicalism in public worship. These innovative forms of worship were described by such chroniclers as John Gillies, widely read, and widely imitated throughout the British isles and the British colonies in the eighteenth century. There were undoubtedly other creative expressions of public worship (for example, night-long vigils and occasions for hymn singing), but I call attention to these three to show how the theme of spiritual pilgrimage influenced more creative expressions of public worship in addition to the more conventional forms of worship among Anglicans and Dissenters.

In these occasions, the spiritual pilgrimage could be not only expounded and understood, it could be *acted out* in the dramatic progression of sermons on a eucharistic occasion, or in the living testimonies of Welsh experience meetings, or in the personal or corporate resolutions incorporated into an act of covenanting. The extended communion occasion, the experience meeting, and the celebration of covenant renewal thus took on a sacramental quality among Evangelicals, as outward and visible signs of the inward working of the Spirit, which was the consistent subject of Evangelical homiletics and hymnody.

Conclusion

I have tried to show how in preaching and hymnody, and in innovative forms of public worship, eighteenth-century English and Welsh Calvinists consistently explored the territories of the way of salvation, building upon the work of seventeenth-century Puritanism. I have described these various expressions of the spiritual pilgrimage in the title of this article with the rather weak term “*Contributions of Welsh and English Calvinists*,” but now let me suggest that there may be more than simply a group of sundry “contributions” involved in this. I have an intuition that the exploration of the topography of salvation actually gets at the very heart of eighteenth century Calvinistic Evangelicalism in England and in the principality of Wales. There is not sufficient evidence here to *demonstrate* such a broader claim, but the core samples or soundings of the greater depths that I have examined in preparation for this article suggest a very consistent thematic in the varied and creative expressions of the believer’s journey “from this world to the next,” and the identification of this theme as lying at the heart of eighteenth-century Evangelical Calvinism is not inconsistent with the findings of other contemporary interpreters of this form of religious life.⁴⁴

At a number of points I have indicated similarities or parallels with the activities of the Wesleys. John Wesley’s sermons and Charles Wesley’s hymns consistently expound their understandings of the “way of salvation.” They themselves on occasion joined in large eucharistic celebrations, but to my knowledge this was most often when they were with other clergy such as William Grimshaw.

⁴⁴For example, the work of Hughes cited above.

John Wesley utilized a version of the "experience meeting" in both his general service of thanksgiving for spiritual blessing, and in the more regularized agenda of the select bands. As I have noted above, he called upon the resources of John Gillies and of Richard Alleine in making the covenanting service available to his Methodist people. But these parallels are given not to suggest that John Wesley "basically" got his cues from the Calvinists; rather, I think they point to something like a "mutual [or dependent] co-arising" (*pratitya samutpada*, to use a characteristically Buddhist term) of religious sentiment and changes in public worship grounded in the changes in religious sentiment, that I and others call a move to a "religion of the heart."⁴⁵

But the point should not be missed that the "religion of the heart" was not a uniformly individualistic matter, for it came to public and corporate expression in European Catholic circles, in the rise of Hasidism among European Jews, and in a variety of Protestant cultures. In eighteenth-century Evangelicalism something like "Evangelical sacramentals" were emerging in extended eucharistic celebrations, in experience meetings, in covenant making and covenant renewal, and in other expressions of piety (such as itinerant preaching). This is a point that needs to be emphasized not only in Wesleyan studies, but in the history of Evangelicalism more broadly, for the Victorian Evangelicals' reaction against sacramentalism (especially, I think, in the wake of the Oxford Movement) has often concealed the intricate ways in which Evangelical piety developed from sacramental piety, and contributed in its own ways to the emergence of new forms of public worship which would be found to be "means of grace."

Finally, I want to call attention to the importance of *theology*, and in particular the importance of the underlying Puritan theology of the out-working of election in the *ordo salutis*, for the worship activities described above. It seems to have become almost a commonplace these days to describe seventeenth-century Calvinism and eighteenth-century Evangelicalism using the language of "drama": Harry Stout's biography of George Whitefield, entitled *The Divine Dramatist*, depicts Whitefield strangely stripped of his own cultural and theological inheritance and described in the context of later (especially North American) Evangelical histrionics.⁴⁶ Perhaps Horton Davies exaggerated the importance of theology in shaping worship, but in describing Evangelical worship as drama, we should not become so preoccupied with stage instructions and gestures that we lose sight of the *content* of the drama. For eighteenth-century Welsh and English Calvinists, the *content* of the drama was the out-working of election in the stages by which believers passed through this world in the pilgrimage to their heavenly resting place.

⁴⁵The subject of my study of *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

⁴⁶Harry Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991).

Chart

Perkins and Ames	Whitefield, "Christ, the Believer's . . ."	Newton, sermons preached at Olney . . .	Newton, <i>Olney Hymns</i>
Effectual Calling (or Vocation)	"Wisdom" (Self-Knowledge)	Sermon no. IX, "Labouring and Heavy-Laden Sinners Described"	I. Solemn Addresses to Sinners II. Seeking, Pleading, Hoping III. Conflict
Justification (Assurance [Ames])	"Righteousness"	Sermon no. X, "Of Coming to Christ"	IV. Comfort V. Dedication and Surrender
Sanctification	"Sanctification"	Sermon no. XII, "Of the Yoke of Christ"; and sermon no. XIII, "The Service of Christ Easy and Pleasant to His People"	VI. Cautions
Glorification	"Redemption"	Sermon no. XI, "The Present and Future Rest of Believers in Christ"	VII. Praise