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**Unity in diversity : English puritans and the puritan reformation,
1603-1689**

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Chapter 4

Francis Rous (1580/81-1659)

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, we saw how John Downname promoted the precisianist strain within Puritanism. In this chapter, we will see how Francis Rous, who has been called “the first Puritan mystic,” articulated the more mystical side of Puritan spirituality. Rous’s life and work reflects how, among the Reformed of the period, the life of piety and communion with God was paramount and the chief concern of the Puritan Reformation. Rous is unique in that he pushed for a more mystical experience with the divine than many of his Reformed orthodox contemporaries would have done, while still retaining adherence to strict orthodoxy.¹ Thus, as a puritan mystic, Rous’s chief contributions lie in formulating mystical union and promoting contemplative-mystical piety that had both apophatic and cataphatic strands.² He also made contributions in addressing major social issues then

¹ F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 85. Stoeffler writes that among pietistic Puritans, Rous “was most unreservedly committed to mysticism.” Within the literature there is some confusion as to whether Rous should be classified as a “mainstream” or “radical” Puritan. Both Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Johannes van den Berg see Rous as a proponent of “radical” Puritanism, while Dewey D. Wallace identifies Rous as a “mainstream” Puritan. This confusion rests, in part, on the oft-times overlapping categories historians use to understand English Puritan religious phenomena. My own sense is that Rous exemplifies both aspects of “mainstream” and “radical” Puritanism, and so represents an incumbent trajectory concerning bridal mysticism within the confessional tradition that not only had the possibility to cross over confessional sensitivity, but would do so in the “prophets” of the English Revolution (e.g. TheaurauJohn Tany). Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (1947; repr. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Johannes van den Berg, “The English Puritan Francis Rous and the Influence of His Works in the Netherlands,” in his *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents: Essays on Early Modern Protestantism*, ed. Jan de Bruijn, Pieter Holtrop, and Ernestine van der Wall (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 26; Dewey D. Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 74. We will return again, briefly, to the issue of “orthodox” and “radical” Puritanism in Chapter 7.

² For historiographical questions on puritans as mystic, see Tom Schwanda, *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative Mystical Piety of Puritanism* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 1-34; Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714*, 51-86; Ariel Hessayon, “Gold Tried in the Fire”: *The Prophet TheaurauJohn Tany and the English Revolution* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 91-107; Mark Dever, *Richard Sibbes: Puritanism and Calvinism in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart Puritanism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000), 135-60; Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, ix-xxv, 1-19; Jerald C. Brauer, “Types of Puritan Piety,” *Church History* 56 (1987), 39-58; Brauer, “Puritan Mysticism and the Development of Liberalism,” *Church History* 19 (1950): 151-70; Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 278-87; Gordon S. Wakefield, “The Puritans,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, SJ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 437-444; Wakefield, “Mysticism and Its Puritan Types,” *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Vol. XCXI, 6th series, XXXV (1966): 34ff; James F. Maclear, “‘The Heart of New England Rent’: The Mystical Element in Early Puritan History,” *The Mississippi Historical Review* 42 (1956): 621-52.

Hessayon remarks that puritan mysticism, in essence, “embodied the tensions between two diametrically opposed paths to God:” the first through “justification, sanctification, and glorification;” and the second, through “purgation, illumination, and union.” Still, there was consonance in that the “puritan mystic...sought as much as his Catholic mystic counterpart an immediate, intimate union with God”

troubling Stuart Puritanism and similar to Downname's *Guide* sought to promote the Puritan Reformation through the published word.

Francis Rous was an influential statesman and devotional writer. He was known for being a "Puritan pamphleteer and critic of Arminianism" with ties to John Pym and Oliver Cromwell, two of the most powerful men in England in the mid-seventeenth century.³ He established his reputation with his *Testis Veritatis* and his many speeches before Parliament and "sat in every Parliament from 1625-1657."⁴ Rous was an active critic

(Hessayon, "Gold Tried in the Fire," 91). Brauer distinguishes between five types of Puritan piety (nomism, evangelicalism, rationalism, mysticism, and Spirit mysticism). Though Brauer does this to clarify different strains within Puritan spirituality, he does not adequately address the overlap between members of each type and overall his argument is unconvincing.

For more general introductions to mysticism in the medieval and early Reformation periods, see the work of Bernard McGinn, especially his *A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, 5 vols. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991-2012), and Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), which assesses both cataphatic and apophatic strains within mysticism.

³J. H. M. Salmon, "Precept, Example, and Truth: Degory Where and the *Ars Historica*," in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500-1800*, ed. Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 19; L. H. Roper and B. van Ruymbeke, eds., *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 195; Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 47; Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 51; Edward Watkin, *Poets & Mystics* (North Stratford: Ayer Publishing, 1953), 174.

To date, no full biography of Rous exists. Fragments can be found in the histories of Cornwall, Eton, and the House of Commons. See Colin Burrow, "Rous, Francis (1580/81-1659), Religious Writer and Politician," in *ODNB*; J. Sears McGee, "Rous, Francis (1579-1659)," in *Puritans and Puritanism in America: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia*, ed. Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster (New York: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 1:221-222; Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 25-42; Henry Charles Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College, 1440-1884* (London, 1889), 227-229; Wasey Sterry, *Annals of the King's College of Our Lady of Eton Beside Windsor* (London: Methuen & Co., 1898), 126-136; James Alexander Manning, *The Lives of the Speakers of the House of Commons, from the Time of King Edward III to Queen Victoria, Comprising the Biographies of Upwards of One Hundred Distinguished Persons, and Copious Details of the Parliamentary History of England, from the Most Authentic Documents* (London: George Willis, 1851), 328-331; George Clement Boase and William Prideaux Courtney, *Bibliotheca Cornubiensis: A Catalogue of the Writings, Both Manuscript and Printed, of Cornishmen, and of Works Relating to the County of Cornwall, Volume III* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1882), 1329; Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses: An Exact History of All the Writers and Bishops Who Have Had Their Education in the University of Oxford*, ed. Philip Bliss (London, 1817), 3:466-69. Little has been written about Rous's relationship with Pym and Cromwell. J. Sears McGee has recently argued that Rous was Pym's "politico-religious alter ego." J. Sears McGee, "A 'Carkass' of 'Mere Dead Paper': The Polemical Career of Francis Rous, Puritan MP," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 2009): 347.

Several portraits of Rous still exist: in the Provost's Lodge at Eaton College; a watercolor attributed to Thomas Athow at the National Portrait Gallery in London; a painting by an unknown artist housed at Pembroke College, University of Oxford; and Frederick Newenham's oil painting of Rous as Speaker of the House, which is in the Palace of Westminster.

⁴Salmon, "Precept, Example, and Truth," 19. For Rous, Arminianism was the "spawn of the papist," a perception that reflected the growing English consensus against Catholicism in the seventeenth century. Rous, *A Discovery of the Grounds both Natural and Politick of Arminianisme*. J. R. Jones commented, "Anti-popery was the strongest, most widespread and most persistent ideology in the life and thought of seventeenth-century Britain." Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1972), 75. On the clash between Roman and Protestant churches during the time of Rous and the politics of

of Charles I and questioned the latter's imposing of taxation.⁵ He was also a lay member of the Westminster Assembly, produced the widely used and Westminster-endorsed *Psalmes of David in English Meeter* (1643),⁶ and fought for toleration of dissident religious groups, except for Arminians and Roman Catholics.⁷ Though he served high positions within English society, shaped a generation of students, and wrote extensively on the hot topics of the day, he has more recently earned the reputation of being the first and greatest Puritan mystic.⁸ Indeed, Rous's most famous mystical work, *The Mystical Marriage* (1635), is a blend of both Reformed and medieval spirituality and has been the subject of several recent, though brief, studies.⁹ Yet, even with recent academic interest, Rous remains an obscure and little studied figure.¹⁰ What is especially lacking is Rous's ties to the earlier

Parliament, see Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Conrad Russell, *King James I/VI and His English Parliaments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 140-53; and Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)

⁵ John Coffey, "England's Exodus: The Civil War as a War of Deliverance," in *England's Wars of Religion, Revisited*, ed. Charles W.A. Prior and Glenn Burgess (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 258. Coffey cites Rous on the issue of "oppressive" taxation in the latter's speech before Parliament: "there hath not such a thing been done since Israell came from Egypt of Roome." For the political and cultural aura of 1630s-Stuart England, see Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders, eds., *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

⁶ David Mullan, "Westminster Catechisms," in *Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America*, ed. Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 579; Jordon, *Development of Religious Toleration in England*, II, 125; Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 284; Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 218; Amy M. E. Morris, *Popular Measures: Poetry and Church Order in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing Corp, 2005), 81. See also John Coffey, "European Multiconfessionalism and the English Toleration Controversy, 1640-1660," in *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World*, ed. Thomas Max Safley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 341-68.

⁷ It is in this sense that Sarah Barber calls Rous a "Parliamentary *de facto*ist," a term of those who fought for "liberty of conscience and an end to religious persecution." Barber, "Power in the English Caribbean: The Proprietorship of Lord Willoughby of Parham," in *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500-1750*, ed. L. H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke (Leiden: Brill, 2007); 195; Peter Elmer, *The Miraculous Conformist: Valentine Greatrakes the Body Politic, and the Politics of Healing in Restoration Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 98.

⁸ Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., uses the term "Calvinist mystic" to describe this brand of Puritanism. See Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 74-9. For Rous as mystic, see Stoeffler, *Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 85, 87; Jerald C. Brauer, "Puritan Mysticism and the Development of Liberalism," *Church History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1950): 152. For Puritan mysticism more generally, see Schwanda, *Soul Recreation*, 1-34; Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*; W. K. Fleming, *Mysticism in Christianity* (London, 1913), 213-30; Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1919), 235-335; and Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London, 1919), 428-500.

⁹ See, for example, Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 97-169; Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18-58; Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 25-42.

¹⁰ Prior to my ThM thesis ("Francis Rous (1580/81-1659) and the Mystical Element in English Puritanism," Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, 2008), the last major assessment of "one of the most unjustly neglected of seventeenth-century English prose writers" was Jerald C. Brauer's unpublished PhD thesis, "Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic 1579-1659: An Introduction to the Study of the Mystical Element in Puritanism" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1948); and K. J. Harper, "An Introduction to the Life and Works of Francis Rous, Puritan Divine and Parliamentarian, 1581-1659" (MA thesis, University of Wales College of

medieval mystics and his reliance, in particular, upon Pseudo-Dionysius, a favorite of Aquinas and the Reformed mystics, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas à Kempis, and John Tauler.¹¹ More attention needs to be given to Rous's mystical theology in its historical and intellectual contexts, and specifically as it attests to the plasticity of the Reformed *praxis pietatis*.¹² That Rous was both a writer of more deep or radical mysticism and flourished within a Reformed orthodox context should neither be ignored nor minimized; indeed, Rous's mysticism reflects both the flexibility of orthodox bounds at the time and the popularity of medieval mysticism within early modern English spirituality.¹³ However, "tracing influences among subsequent generations" of mystics, from the pre-Reformation (Catholic) through to the post-Reformation (Protestant), is tenuous and wrought with difficulty. This is especially the case with the "mystical marriage traditions" and how such narratives as that of Christ and his Bride were understood.¹⁴ More facets include Rous's model for education and notions of a utopian society.¹⁵ Both were integral parts of his mysticism.

In this chapter I will look at how Rous foraged the medieval mystical tradition while retaining his Reformed orthodox convictions. While his venture into mysticism was more thorough or deeper than many others in the Reformed community, in that he sometimes employs language not found in the Bible, he nonetheless adhered to a strict belief in the Bible, and "drew on all the resources of biblical language" to describe the Christian's marriage with Christ.¹⁶ We shall also note how Rous could believe in toleration

Cardiff, 1960). Stanley Stewart, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 26. In contrast, mystics John Saltmarsh and Peter Sterry have seen a resurgence of interest; see, for instance, Nicholas McDowell, "The Beauty of Holiness and the Poetics of Antinomianism: Richard Crashaw, John Saltmarsh, and the Language of Religious Radicalism in the 1640s," in *Varieties of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and David Finnegan (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 31-50; Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714*, 51-86.

¹¹ Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 267-71; See also Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992); Douglas J. Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 145. Various aspects of Reformed spirituality can be traced to Bernard's mysticism. See Arie de Reuver, *Sweet Communion: Trajectories of Spirituality from the Middle Ages through the Further Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 27-62. Overall, Aquinas's influence on English Protestant mysticism has been grossly neglected and deserves attention.

¹² That Rous was classically trained is suggestive of the texts that he was exposed to during his studies at Oxford and Leiden.

¹³ Of particular continuity is the "sensuous language" employed by Rous and other Puritan mystics. See Wallace, *Spirituality of the Later English Puritans*, xviii; William J. Wainwright, "Jonathan Edwards and His Puritan Predecessors" in *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, ed. Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 224-40.

¹⁴ Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing*, 14-15.

¹⁵ Mordechai Feingold, *History of Universities*, XVII, 2001-2002 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 27-29; Charles Webster, ed., *Samuel Hartlib and the Advancement of Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 61; James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 147. Rous was a patron of the educator Samuel Hartlib. Hartlib's *The True and Readie Way to Learne the Latin Tongue* (1654) was dedicated to Rous.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 58; Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing*, 84.

and yet vehemently oppose leniency for Arminians and Roman Catholics.¹⁷ That Rous was well received by his peers is evident not only in the favor he received in Parliament, and the formal approval of his devotional texts, but also in the reception of his Psalter by the Westminster Assembly.¹⁸ In order to assess Rous and discuss his contribution to Reformed spirituality, as well as place him in the greater narrative of the Puritan Reformation, we will first discuss, briefly, Rous's social contexts and then examine his writings within their historical context. Then we will turn to Rous's theology and pay close attention to his unities and diversities with the Reformed tradition. What will become evident is that even as Puritans differed in various emphases, such as the depths of mysticism, they nonetheless had a strong *sensus unitatis*, which shows a *unitas in diversitate* within Puritanism.

4.2 Social Contexts

Francis Rous was born into a Puritan family at Dittisham in Devon, Cornwall, in 1580/81. He studied at Broadgates Hall in Oxford (B.A., 1597), Leiden University (1599), and the Middle Temple in London (admitted 1601). He was the son of Sir Anthony Rous of Hilton, in the parish of St. Dominick, and his first wife, Elizabeth.¹⁹

While much has been written on the theological education at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge during this time, relatively little exists on Leiden University and its role in educating the sons of "disaffected Englishmen."²⁰ Indeed, such well-known

¹⁷ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 50-51; Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 127. Both Clarke and Worden quote Rous's utopian dreams. The former cites Rous in 1623 looking forward to the time "wherein every man shall bee seated in his right place, even according to true, reall, and inward excellence;" and the latter cites Rous in 1648, pleading, "let true Christians seriously consider that union in Christ their head is a stronger root of love and unity than lesser differences can be of division." Cf. Rous, *The Balm of Love* (London, 1648), 10.

¹⁸ Old, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture*, 47; Hannibal Hamil, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 51; Miller Patrick, *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* (London, 1949), 79-104.

¹⁹ Rous's father would later marry the widow of Alexander Pym; her son, John Pym, came to live with the Rous's at Hilton, and thus began a close relationship that would foster throughout dual Parliamentary careers. Conrad Russell suggests that John Pym should be known as "John Rous," because of his closeness to the Rous's. Conrad Russell, "Pym, John (1584-1643)," *ODNB*; J. H. M. Salmon, "Precept, Example, and Truth: Degory Wheare and the *Ars Historica*," in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500-1800*, ed. Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11-36; J. Sears McGee, "John Pym," in *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603-1689*, ed. Ronald H. Fritze and William B. Robison (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 440-41; Russell, *Unrevolutionary England*, 149; Cressy, *England on Edge*, 285. For more information on the Rous household, see Anne Duffin, *Faction and Faith: Politics and Religion of the Cornish Gentry Before the Civil War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 47-53.

²⁰ Hill writes, "No one, I believe, has so far properly investigated the extent to which Englishmen dissatisfied with Oxford and Cambridge sent their sons to Leiden University, or what Leiden's influence on English thought was." Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 251-2. This neglect is somewhat ameliorated in Daniela Proglor, *English Students at Leiden University, 1575-1650: "Advancing Your Abilities in Learning and Bettering Your Understanding of the World and State Affairs"* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), which is a re-assessment of the 831 English students who studied at Leiden between 1575-1650; and Ole Peter Grell, "The Attraction of

theologians and writers as Thomas Cartwright, William Ames, Theodore Haak, John Dury, William Bridge, and Thomas Browne all attended Leiden, as did Arminius and Vorstius.²¹ During the seventeenth century, Leiden was a haven for those pursuing a wide variety of theological and other interests: 825 Englishmen matriculated between 1575 and 1659, and 300 of those were from 1642-1651.²² While the Netherlands was a “safe haven” for disgruntled Englishmen during times of censorship at home, ironically, it was equally open to the royalists during the English Revolution. While the subject of Rous’s studies at Leiden are not known, other than generally being the “liberal arts,” it would seem that while a student at Leiden, Rous was introduced to the continental mystics, which, possibly, explains the absence of the English mystics within his writings.²³ Further, in 1702, the publisher of his *Academia Coelestis* states, “the ancient Writers and Doctors...were not despised by him” but rather “advanced [him] into an Higher University.”²⁴

Leiden University for English Students of Medicine and Theology, 1590-1642,” in *The Great Emporium: The Lowe Countries as a Cultural Crossroads in the Renaissance and Eighteenth Century*, ed. C. C. Barfoot and Richard Todd (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 83-104. Grell states that English students were drawn to Leiden because of its renowned international reputation in the field of theology, in particular, as well as its diversity and quality of education, though since foreign degrees could not easily be “incorporated either at Oxford or Cambridge...the number of English Theology students at Leiden remained fairly modest and constant throughout the period” (91).

Keith L. Sprunger states that English students travelling to the Netherlands for education “went as first choice to Leiden University,” and then “occasionally to Franeker University.” Springer, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 8; see also Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower*, 125-155, for the thriving, though sometime clandestine, “Puritan printing” book trade at Leiden. Indeed, Leiden had “gained a world reputation” for its production standards and multifarious bookshops (125). See also, more generally, Theodore H. Lunsingh Scheurleer and G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes, eds., *Leiden University in the Seventeenth Century: An Exchange of Learning* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

Timothy George relates the story of how “Ralph Winwood, English Ambassador of King James I at the Hague...protested the action at [Leiden] in allowing the disaffected Englishmen to settle there.” George, *John Robinson and the English Separatist Tradition* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2005), 88-9. Ironically, during the English Revolution, when Charles II was in exile, an edition of his father’s writings, *Reliquiae Sacrae Carolinae* (1651), were published in The Hague by the royalist printer Samuel Browne, suggesting tolerance at Leiden went both ways.

For religious controversy at Oxford, see Nicholas Tyacke, ed., *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume IV: Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1-24, 569-620; for Cambridge, see G. R. Evans, *The University of Cambridge: A New History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 185-254; James Heywood and Thomas Wright, eds., *Cambridge University Transaction During the Puritan Controversies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (1854; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²¹ The Scottish delegate to the Westminster Assembly, Robert Baillie, records how he encouraged Rous and the House of Commons to encourage Haak in the work of translating the Dutch annotations of the Bible. The work was ultimately published in 1657. Hill, *Intellectual Origins*, 95, 251-2; David Laing, ed., *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie* (Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Ogle, 1842), 3:231.

²² Hill, *Intellectual Origins*, 252. Hill comments that Cartwright was offered the chair of divinity at Leiden University in 1580. Dorothy Gardiner comments on the radical mood at Leiden in *The Oxinden Letters, 1607-42*, edited by Dorothy Gardiner (London, 1933), 33. Cited in Hill, *Intellectual Origins*, 252. On the controversy between the orthodox Reformed and the Cartesians among Leiden’s faculty, see Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 25-34.

²³ F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 86-7.

²⁴ Francis Rous, *Academia Coelestis* (London, 1702), Sig. A3.

Rous had entered the Middle Temple in London to study for law, “until a storme from heaven chased mee away to the studie of Eternitie, wherein I have found so much comfort and assistance from above.”²⁵ The precise circumstances surrounding Rous’s conversion, likely in 1601,²⁶ are not known; presumably his religious experience came from reading the medieval mystics, which would explain his lifelong admiration for them. Jacobus Koelman, a Dutch theologian and translator of two of Rous’s more mystical writings, notes that Rous “in a specific way had been taught by God, though...according to our common usage he was not a theologian, as in his youth he had only studied Law...[he prepared himself] to have a heart above all [for] the work of the Soul.” Rous elsewhere describes “how the Lord had touched and driven him to these Studies.”²⁷ This deep mystical experience would characterize his work from then on.²⁸

In his *Athenae Oxonienses*, Anthony Wood (1632-95) wrote that some place Rous as a minister in Saltash; more recent scholarship, however, has brought this into question and it seems unlikely that Rous was ever ordained.²⁹ This is substantiated in that Rous was an MP at the Westminster Assembly, and had no role in the ordination of ministers.³⁰

Throughout the 1620s, Rous spent considerable time in solitude writing books that brought him fame as a devotional writer. During this time he also seems to have delved further into mystical theology and the writings of the scholastics. Two of his more popular works at this time were his *Diseases of the Time Attended by Their Remedies* (1622), a sharp attack on corrupt clergy, and an “antidote” for social malevolence, and his *Oyl of Scorpions* (1623), a Puritan-Jeremiad of “staunch providentialism,” in which he addresses such varied topics as drunkenness and the theater.³¹

Rous served in the early Caroline Parliaments, in 1626 for Truro and in 1628-29 for Tregon; his career in politics, which began in 1625, would last until his death in 1659 (in 1657 he was made a lord by Cromwell). He had an active career in politics and tried to fuse

²⁵ Francis Rous, “Epistle Dedicatory,” in *The Arte of Happiness* (1619), sig. A3. See also Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*, 267; Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 26.

²⁶ Brauer infers this date, and I think correctly, in that this was when Rous left Middle Temple and “retired to his father’s estate in Cornwell.” Brauer, “Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic,” 51.

²⁷ Francis Rous, *Het Binnenste van Godts Koninkrijk* (Amsterdam, 1678), f. 2. Quoted in Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 26. The two books reprinted in Dutch in 1678 were *The Mystical Marriage* and *The Heavenly Academie*. See Martin Brecht, ed., *Geschichte Des Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 77.

²⁸ Brauer, “Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic,” 50-51.

²⁹ Cp. Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 466; with Old, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture*, 47.

³⁰ McGee, “Rous, Francis (1579-1659),” 221; Chad van Dixhoorn, ed., *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 114.

³¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 215-80; Martin Wiggins, *Drama and the Transfer of Power in Renaissance England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 93-96, 100, 110-12; *Commons Debates 1628*, IV, 320-21; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 139; Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 284; Russell, *Unrevolutionary England*, 205-31; Joseph A. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 102-7. While Puritans generally criticized the theatre and plays, as Rous did, this was not true of all of them; thus characterizations of Puritans as “anti-theater” needs to be nuanced. Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 21-22; Martin Butler, *Theater and Crisis, 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 84-5, 88. Cf. Colin Rise, *Ungodly Delights: Puritan Opposition to the Theatre, 1576-1633* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1997); Peter Lake, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

governing the Commonwealth with his mystical religion, with varying degrees of success.³² Theologically he was a Puritan and ecclesiologically he began as a Presbyterian and ended up among the Independents, possibly due to an association made with Jeremiah Burroughs.³³ Rous was well connected throughout his career, being, as said, stepbrother to John Pym and a lay chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and though he was generally a proponent of toleration, which was an essential component of his vision for mystical union, he loathed Arminianism for being “a Trojan horse” in the English Church, which, he thought, would usher in a new age of Roman Catholicism.³⁴ Thus Rous, along with Pym, spent much time combating Arminian clergy and dogmas then circulating the Church of England.³⁵ Like Pym, Rous believed that the restoration of the papacy in England would overthrow political liberty and religious truth. He spent considerable time fencing the press and engaging in public debate in Parliament.³⁶

While Rous was accepted among the Reformed orthodox, the Royalists derided him and called him “the illiterate Jew of Eton,” presumably because of his informal theological education, and “Proteus,” for his many diverse writings.³⁷

Throughout the 1620s, Rous believed that popery was gaining ground in England and, along with Pym and William Prynne, pressed the House of Commons to oppose the “Arminian assault” on the Church of England; he feared the reintroduction of ignorance among the laity, destruction of the public conscious, and rise of superstition.³⁸

When Rous wrote his *Testis Veritatis* on the topics of predestination, free will, justification and perseverance, he identified with “the godly” in their struggle to reform the English Church. He criticized those who stood with Arminius for political reasons and argued that no one can have friendship with God unless he believes as the godly do and is counted among their society.³⁹ Though Rous did not have an ecclesiastical living, he identified with those ministers who were troubled by the way certain clergy sought to

³² Longfellow calls Rous “a vocal politician and reformer.” Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England*, 47.

³³ Most historians put Rous as an Independent in 1649 because of his *The Lawfulness of Obeying the Present Government*. See, for instance, Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Vol. 3: Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 271; and Salmon, “Precept, Example, and Truth,” 19.

³⁴ L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 74; Clarke, *Politics, Religion and the Song of Songs in Seventeenth-Century England*, 51.

³⁵ Typical of Puritan providentialism, Rous saw plagues and harvest failures as divine punishments for sins, and even Arminianism. See, for instance, Rous’s speech before the House of Commons in *Debates 1628: Volume IV: 28 May-26 June 1628*, ed. Mary Keeler Frearer and Maija Jansson Cole and William B. Bidwell (Rochester: Yale University, 1978), 320-1; Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 284; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 139.

³⁶ Towers, *Control of Religious Printing in Early Stuart England*, 183.

³⁷ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses: An Exact History of all the Writers and Bishops Who Have Had Their Education in the Most Famous and Ancient University in Oxford* (London, 1692), 147. On defamation in the early modern period, see Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Jane Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³⁸ Marc L. Schwartz, “Some Thoughts on the Development of a Lay Religious Consciousness in Pre-Civil-War England,” in *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 173-4.

³⁹ Rous, *Testis Veritatis*, 95-6.

advance themselves for political ends and ultimately challenge the “Calvinist line.” He thus used his wealth and influence to provide livings and protection for Puritan clergy.⁴⁰

In the Long Parliament, Rous helped lead the drive against the Laudian bishops. His fellow members of Parliament appointed him Provost of Eton College in 1643 and made him one of the lay members of the Westminster Assembly, doubtless in recognition of his talent as a religious writer and amateur theologian, which he had displayed in a series of published works that begun with his *Meditations of Instructions* in 1616.⁴¹ His *Testis Veritatis* (1626) defended the popular Reformed doctrine of double predestination against the accused Arminian Richard Montagu (a protégé of William Laud), and his *Catholick Charity* (1641) defended Protestants against the charge of uncharitableness made by the Catholic polemicist Edward Knott’s *Charity Mistaken*.⁴² Meshed between these two controversies was a debate in the House of Commons (led by Rous) on the sermons of Roger Manwaring. Manwaring was one of Charles I’s chaplains who had preached two controversial sermons in *Religion and Allegiance* in 1627.⁴³ Joshua Scodel comments, “In 1628 the parliamentary leader John Pym had reported to an alarmed Parliament that Manwaring had asserted that the king had absolute power and that subjects had to submit to illegal commands against their conscience.”⁴⁴ In essence, this was Manwaring’s attempt to secure favor and preferment before the King. Parliament, however, prompted by Rous, was furious and had Manwaring, who was branded an Arminian, imprisoned, suspended, and his books burned; in addition, he had to pay £1,000 for preaching “seditious” sermons;⁴⁵ Charles I initially upheld the sentence, but soon after restored Manwaring to the ministry, made him a royal chaplain, and granted him preferment.⁴⁶ Rous’s role in the other controversies mentioned can be highlighted as follows:

⁴⁰ Kevin P. Laam, “Borrowed Heaven: Early Modern Devotion and the Art of Happiness” (PhD thesis, University of Southern California, 2006), 83-4.

⁴¹ In 1660, another lay theologian, Robert Boyle, was offered the provostship of Eton College on the condition that he be ordained. Boyle denied the provostship believing his religious writings had more weight coming from a layperson. See “Robert Boyle,” in Herbert Jaumann, *Handbuch Gelehrtenkultur der Frühen Neuzeit: Band 1: Bio-bibliographisches Repertorium* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 125-26.

⁴² The full title reads *Charity Mistaken, with the Want Whereof Catholickes Are Vniustly Charged: for Affirming, as They Do with Grief, that Protestancy Vnrepented Destroys Salvation* (1630). “Edward Knott” was a pseudonym for “Matthew Wilson.” McGee cites the author as Sir Toby Matthew. See J. Sears McGee, “Francis Rous and the ‘Scabby or Itchy Children’: The Problem of Toleration in 1645,” *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (2004): 401-23.

⁴³ N. H. Keeble, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Writing the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 42; Jürgen Overhoff, *Hobbes’s Theory of Will: Ideological Reasons and Historical Circumstances* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 105.

⁴⁴ Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Johnson to Wordsworth* (New York: Cornell University, 1991), 152. See also James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, eds., *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973-1983), 2:198 (n. 2).

⁴⁵ Though Manwaring was not an Arminian in theology, he was branded as such because of his support for the royal court. For example, in 1628, Henry Burton accused the Arminians of arguing that kings are partakers of God’s omnipotence, thus reflecting the fact that “Arminianism” was a politically charged term in the 1620-30s. Burton, *Israel’s Fast* (1628), as cited in Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 158.

⁴⁶ Michael B. Young, *Charles I* (New York: Palgrave, 1997), 62-65; Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 151-2; W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 289-90; Louis Edward Ingelhart, ed., *Press and Speech Freedoms in the World, from Antiquity until*

(1) The Montagu affair began when an anti-Calvinist tract, *Appello Caesarem*, offended the Parliament. Few issues were as hotly contested in the late 1620s as that of theology, and by this time the House of Commons consisted mostly of Calvinists. A large number of its members were lawyers and country gentlemen, among the most conservative in England.⁴⁷ This growing “Calvinist consensus” drew fire from Arminian clergy and Roman Catholic recusants. The Catholic John Heigham wrote *The Gag of the Reformed Gospel* (1623), which had attacked the doctrines of the Church of England on the grounds that it was chiefly Reformed. Richard Montagu, bishop of Norwich, answered this accusation with his *A Gag for the New Gospel? No. A New Gag for an Old Goose* (1624). In this tract, Montagu tried to show that Catholic doctrine was closer to that of the Church of England than its detractors had depicted. Anthony Milton states that the work’s significance is seen in that it exposed “the theological weaknesses in the alliance between Calvinist conformists and Puritans,” which, to date, had solidified the church.⁴⁸

Though *A Gag for the New Gospel?* was written to refute Catholic charges and defend Protestantism, “the text was surprisingly sympathetic to Catholic doctrine.” It did not “condemn the Pope as a ‘man of sin’” (a near universal tenet within English Protestantism since Henry VIII), and seemed to support a more Catholic view of the Lord’s Supper. Further, Montagu argued that “holy pictures and images served a useful purpose in the church,” perhaps echoing Peter Martyr Vermigli, as did the signing of the cross, which was offensive to Calvinist iconoclasts.⁴⁹ What caused so much scandal and irritation was the fact that, according to Montagu, the difference between Rome and the Church of England was “*de minimis*.” Calvinists in Parliament, including Rous, had grown accustomed to distancing themselves from Roman Catholic theologians, and, as Muller points out, while the Reformed preferred medieval Catholics for their metaphysics, they were hesitant to quote contemporary apologists for Rome.⁵⁰ Montagu’s book not only roused the chagrin of Parliament, who saw the threats as “Catholic-inspired,” but also international Protestants who feared the work improperly “distinguishes the Church of England from other Reformed churches of Europe,” and in so doing compromised its *sensus unitatis*.⁵¹ In Parliament, Rous and other Calvinist MP’s were prepared to fight for the English Church, as it was then constituted, by showing that there was little in common with the Roman hierarchy, and that English Protestants had long distanced themselves from the papacy and its dogmas.

1998 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 47. For Rous’s speech against Manwaring, see Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, 585.

⁴⁷ J. W. Allen, *English Political Thought, 1603-1660, Vol. 1: 1603-1644* (London: Methuen, 1938), 161-5; Dorothy Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 28.

⁴⁸ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 49; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 353-76.

⁴⁹ Dorothy Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 31.

⁵⁰ Richard A. Muller, *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 37.

⁵¹ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 49; Simon L. Adams, “The Protestant Cause: Religious Alliance in the West European Calvinist Communities as a Political Issue in England, 1585-1630,” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1973), 12.

Parliament accused Montagu of endorsing both Arminianism and Catholicism and thus publishing a seditious text.⁵² But Montagu had favor with King James I and was allowed to publicly defend himself. The king further appointed Francis White, dean of Carlisle and member of Durham House, a group of churchmen who were largely Arminian and anti-Calvinist, to preside over Montagu's defense. The king was also alleged to have said in reference to *A Gag for the New Gospel?*, "If that is to be a Papist, so am I a Papist," thus expressing his affinity towards more controversial doctrines and sending a clear message to the Calvinist consensus.⁵³

Montagu's defense was published as *Appello Caesarem* (1625). Throughout the book, Montagu claims the backing of King James and of the English Church for opposition to the Reformed doctrines of predestination and perseverance and supports the doctrine of free will. He denounced the deliberations of the Synod of Dort as being of no significance to the English.⁵⁴ This attitude was offensive to the godly, even though the Canons of Dort had never been officially ratified in England.⁵⁵ Thus a major controversy ensued with Arminianism being a focal point within Parliament until its dissolution in 1629.⁵⁶

In *Appello Caesarem*, Montagu wrote, "I am not, nor would be accounted willingly Arminian, Calvinist or Lutheran, names of division, but a Christian."⁵⁷ He then discusses the more contested points between Calvinists and Arminians, as the fall of man, the nature of sin, justification and predestination. He argues that it is better to rely on Bible study rather than on the counsel of theologians who seek political preferment. Montagu questions whether the Church of England ever had a clear doctrine of predestination and denies the absolute decree of predestination. Further, he argues that true faith may ultimately be lost in an attack on the Reformed doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.⁵⁸ Throughout Montagu claims that the English Church is a moderating force that has not rendered sweeping judgments about the mind of God. He thus rejects any speculative doctrine and claims to be in complete accord with the historic English Church.⁵⁹ He denies that Dortian theology has any place in the Church of England ("the Synod of Dort is not my Rule"), though he does reject condign merit (*meritum ex condigno*) as false and presumptuous.⁶⁰ Due to the Montagu affair, the 1625 Parliament saw an attempt to adopt the Canons of Dort into a Parliamentary statute and a committee that included John Pym was appointed to investigate the claims of *Appello Caesarem*. On July 7, 1625, this committee declared the book "a factious and seditious book," deploring the

⁵² Conrad Russell, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 223-4.

⁵³ Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honor: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 8; Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 49-50; J. W. Allen, *English Political Thought, 1603-1660, Vol. 1: 1603-1644* (London: Methuen & Co., 1938), 162-3.

⁵⁴ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 50.

⁵⁵ Anthony Milton, ed., *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), xlix, 381.

⁵⁶ Richard Montagu, *Appello Caesarem. A Just Appeale from Two Unjust Informers* (London, 1625). See also Stella Lambert, "Richard Montagu, Arminianism and Censorship," *Past and Present* 124 (1989): 36-68.

⁵⁷ Montagu, *Appello Caesarem*, 10.

⁵⁸ Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 165-66.

⁵⁹ Montagu, *Appello Caesarem*, 55-74.

⁶⁰ Montagu, *Appello Caesarem*, 105-8, 200-05.

slighting of the Synod of Dort, and officially declared Arminianism to be a major threat to the English Church.⁶¹

In 1626, Rous, who had taken part in the debates in the House of Commons as MP for Truro, took it on himself to respond to Montagu with his *Testis Veritatis*, a short defense of the Calvinism or the “Reformedness” of King James I. By this time, Rous had already shown support for the Calvinist consensus and their social concerns with his “religiously-motivated” *Diseases of the Time Attended by Their Remedies* (1622), a book which, as Elizabeth Clarke observes, was “committed to godly Protestantism at home and the support of the international Protestant cause abroad.”⁶²

Testis Veritatis had two overt aims: first, to show how theologically erroneous Arminianism was; and second, to set forth the political dangers associated with such doctrines. He likened the entrance of Arminianism to that of “a flying fish.” Though Rous portrays King James as adhering to the Reformed doctrines of predestination, free will, and the certainty of salvation, he does so by associating the King with the historic doctrines of the Church of England and the Catholic Church. He quotes an array of sources to show the eclectic nature of the Reformed church, including King James’s declaration against Vorstius (1612), James’s *A Meditation Upon the Lord’s Prayer* (1619), the Irish Articles (no. 15), the Conference at Hampton Court, the Articles of the Church of England (no. 17), John Rogers, John Field, Vincentius Lirinensis, Augustine, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Athanasius, Hillary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Jerome, Beza, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, George Cassander, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Bradwardine and Antonio del Corro, in an eclectic exposition on predestination.⁶³ Rous says that Beza double predestination, as outlined in his commentary on Romans 9, is nothing more than a reiteration of Augustine.⁶⁴ Whether or not this categorization of Augustine holds true has been debated among historians. Frank A. James III has cautioned against seeing a full double predestination in Augustine’s theology, though he admits that Augustine did not “lend himself” to easy classification.⁶⁵

By publishing *Testis Veritatis*, Rous sought to remove any doubt that Arminianism might be an acceptable alternative within the English Church or that it could be consistent with catholicity, which Arminius and his followers had argued, or that King James preferred the Remonstrants.⁶⁶ Consistent with Rous’s depictions before Parliament,

⁶¹ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 50; Russell, *Unrevolutionary England*, 233.

⁶² Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 50.

⁶³ Francis Rous, *Testis Veritatis: The Doctrine of King James, Our Late Sovereign of Famous Memory, of the Church of England, of the Catholic Church, Plainly Showed to Be One in the Points of Predestination, Free Will, and Certainty of Salvation* (London, 1626); White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*, 232.

⁶⁴ Rous, *Testis Veritatis*, 15.

⁶⁵ Frank A. James III, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination: The Augustinian Inheritance of an Italian Reformer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 102-3. Both Jaroslav Pelikan and Bernhard Lohse have suggested that Augustine believed in double predestination. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of Catholic Tradition, 100-600* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 297; and Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, trans. Ernest Stoeffler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1966), 116.

⁶⁶ More recent academic attention has been given to the question of whether Arminius should be identified as “Reformed.” In short, was he a pioneer who enriched the Reformed tradition and infused it with new life, or was he a heretic who founded a new tradition that was a full-scale assault on Reformed theology? Stanglin provides a cautious approach to the subject and sees Arminius moving away from Reformed orthodoxy. See Keith D. Stanglin, “Arminius and Arminianism: An Overview of Current Research,”

Arminianism was portrayed as a move towards popery and had profound theological, political, social, and cultural ramifications.⁶⁷

While Rous prefers the use of “Catholic” to “Calvinist” throughout *Testis Veritatis*, Peter White mistakenly infers that Rous was moving more towards the Establishment and away from the Calvinist consensus. As Tyacke has clarified, for Rous, the two terms were synonymous.⁶⁸ Further, Rous showed, through direct quotation, that as late as 1619 King James had publicly supported the doctrines of election and absolute reprobation.⁶⁹

However persuasive *Testis Veritatis* might have been to contemporaries, it does seem that King James’s professed Calvinism was more a political balancing act than a genuine confession of faith, as political historians are apt to point out.⁷⁰ While it is uncertain to what extent King James had embraced the Reformed faith, James’s son, King Charles I, had little regard for Calvinism and appointed Montagu as one of his chaplains, much to the dismay of Reformed clergy. Parliament sought to prosecute Montagu for heresy and schism, but Charles I dismissed them and eventually dissolved Parliament over many religious and political disputes. However, when the King later reconvened Parliament, sensing the shifting times and seeking favor, he banned *Appello Caesarem* and said that it was the cause of sedition within the church. Copies of the book were to be handed over to authorities or individuals would be prosecuted.⁷¹

Rous’s involvement in the Montagu affair reveals several things about how Arminianism and Catholicism were perceived in the early Stuart era. First, it highlights the disparity between “the godly” as sustainers of the “old” Reformed religion, and Arminians as the true “innovators” of a new and seditious doctrine. Second, it depicts English fears of foreign oppression; Rous had conjectured that Montagu’s *Appello Caesarem* was the product of a Spanish plot to reintroduce Catholicism into England. Whether these fears were justified or not, for Rous, who epitomizes the political endeavors of many Puritans, the issue of doctrinal indifference or of placating royal whim was much more than keeping the peace; it was, in affect, an overturning of social order.

(2) Edward Knott’s short work, *Charity Mistaken*, appeared in 1630, arguing that men could not be saved outside the Roman Church, thus urging Protestants to be reconciled to the true faith. Rous wrote his long, heavily annotated rejoinder, *Catholick*

in *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe: Jacobus Arminius, 1559/60-1609*, ed. Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, Keith D. Stanglin, and Marijke Tolsma (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3-24; and Keith D. Stanglin and Thomas H. McCall, *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 189-210.

⁶⁷ Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, 341.

⁶⁸ Cp. White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*, 232, with Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 166.

⁶⁹ Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 166; Ivo Kamps, *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 160.

⁷⁰ Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, 260-92; Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule*, 174 (n. 15). There is sufficient textual evidence that King James played both sides of the political fence: to the more English Arminian bishops, he was sympathetic and compassionate; to the Calvinists he was the Reformed champion of Protestantism.

⁷¹ Auchter, *Literary and Dramatic Censorship*, 32; Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 51-2. See also Nicholas Tyacke, “Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter Revolution,” in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England*, ed. Margo Todd (New York: Routledge, 1995), 53-70; Kenneth Fincham, *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (New York: Macmillan, 1993); Leo F. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509-1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 168-9.

Charitie, soon after, but was prevented from publishing it during the 1630s by Laudian authorities.⁷² His manuscript circulated in Puritan circles, however, and was read by Pym and others.⁷³ Finally, when Parliament intervened, the manuscript was published in 1641 and approved for the press by John Hansley.⁷⁴ Knott's tract, however, did not go unchallenged in the 1630s. The Puritan provost of Queen's College, Oxford, Christopher Potter, wrote *Want of Charity Justly Charged* (1633), contesting Knott's claim for Rome and yet followed Beza who had believed that Roman Catholics could still be saved. Potter was likely able to get his response into print in 1633 because of his standing at a major university, having earned a Doctorate of Divinity (D.D.), and because of his status as chaplain to Charles I.

Knott responded to Potter's work with *Mercy and Truth; Or, Charity Maintain'd by Catholiques* (1634) to show comprehensively that salvation could not be found within more than one church and that Protestants were in a dangerous state of damnation. Potter seems to have enlisted the renowned debater William Chillingworth to enter the dispute; thus Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants* (1638) became an epoch-making defense of English Protestantism and was reprinted well into the nineteenth century.⁷⁵ Rous's *Catholick Charitie* was one of the last of the Reformed tracts on the Knott-Potter debate. Knott wrote at least two more books, *Infidelity Unmasked* (1652) and *Protestancy Condemned* (1654), both published after both Potter's and Chillingworth's death. Jean Daillé, a noted French-Reformed theologian, responded to *Infidelity Unmasked* with his *An Apologie for the Reformed Churches* (1653).⁷⁶

In 1640, Rous told Parliament that the prerogative taxes of the 1630s were so oppressive that "there hath not such a thing been done since Israell came from the Egypt

⁷² One of Rous's main arguments in *Catholick Charity* is that the testimonies of the Fathers refute Roman Catholicism, much in the same vein as Andrew Willet's *Synopsis Papismi* (see his Chapter 6). See also Stefania Tutino, *Law and Conscience: Catholicism in Early Modern England, 1570-1625* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 93-103; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 10-30.

⁷³ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 51-2. Rous begins his work with these words, "The Spouse of Christ Jesus, when she shines in Love, she is amiable in Beauty, precious in the eye of her Husband, powerful with God her Father, prosperous in her own spiritual health and vigour, and prepared for her consummate marriage in celestial glory."

⁷⁴ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, sig. A4-5; Rous, *Catholick Charitie: Complaining and Maintaining That Rome is Uncharitable to Sundry Eminent parts of the Catholick Church, and Especially to Protestants, and is Therefore Uncatholick* (London, 1641), sig. A2.

⁷⁵ Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution*, 63-84, esp. 71-73. Chillingworth tried to balance religious toleration with political obedience, but he eventually chose to support obedience over toleration, especially in the case of Arminianism. Gary Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 145-48, 166-67. Patrick Collinson cites Chillingworth for holding the patent to the phrase, "Religion of Protestants," which the former used as the title of his *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (1982).

⁷⁶ For Daillé, see Jean Daillé (Son), *Abrege de la vie de Mr. Daillé*, which was printed with Jean Daillé (Father), *Les deux derniers sermons de Mr. Daillé* (Geneva, 1671); Eugene Haag, *La France Protestante* (Geneva: J. Cherbuliez, 1846-59), 4:180-86; Eugene Haag and Emile Haag, *La France Protestante* (Paris: Sandoz et Fichbacher, 1877-1888), 5:23-38; and Alexander Vinet, *Histoire de la Predication Parmi Les Reformes de France Au Dix-Septieme Siecle* (Paris: Chez les editeurs, rue de Rivoli, 1860). Cited in Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 4: The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 414 (fn. 14).

of Roome.”⁷⁷ He implied that while the Reformation had been England’s Exodus, the Personal Rule (1629-40) had taken the nation back to Egyptian bondage. Parliamentarians worried about ecclesiastical and political slavery; and the Puritan clergy accused the Caroline bishops of binding consciences by enforcing conformity to their ceremonies. This climate fostered distrust of the monarchy, and paved the way to revolution.⁷⁸

In 1643, Rous’s fellow members of the Long Parliament made him Provost of Eton College in recognition of his many academic labors; he served there for the rest of his life and promoted a form of classical education infused with his mysticism, such as those he outlined in *The Heavnelie Academie*, which concedes to the importance of “natural lamps” but places highest importance on a divine and heavenly light.⁷⁹ As with other mainstream Puritans, such as Downname, Rous emphasized preference for experimental knowledge above speculative; the desire for knowledge, as John Morgan aptly noted, was “the necessity for a lively expression of one’s faith.”⁸⁰ Still, there was a place for learning; and human knowledge was a necessary step towards the higher, more heavenly academy.⁸¹ Kevin Sharpe wrote that for seventeenth-century religionists, “God’s act in creating the world was perceived as an act of love.” Rous wrote, “love itself is a likeness of him who is love.”⁸² Godly learning, education, and the spiritual life were thus interwoven within Rous’s notion of *praxis pietatis*, and served as yet another unifying factor among English Puritans.

In 1645 an anonymous treatise, *The Ancient Bounds, or Liberty of Conscience Tenderly Stated*, was published in favor of tolerating more “tender consciences” in the church settlement then being negotiated.⁸³ *The Ancient Bounds* was attributed to Rous, and there is little reason to dispute this, though it was probably a collaborative effort of the Independents, with some assistance from Joshua Sprigge, a preacher of “vigorous enthusiasm for the parliamentary cause.”⁸⁴ The Independents opposed the Presbyterian

⁷⁷ *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640*, 148.

⁷⁸ See John Coffey, “England’s Exodus: The Civil War as a War of Deliverance,” in *England’s Wars of Religion, Revisited*, ed. Charles W. A. Prior and Glenn Burgess (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 253-80.

⁷⁹ William J. Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart: A Prolegomenon to a Critique of Passional Reason* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 9; M. Greengrass, “Samuel Hartlib and the Commonwealth of Learning,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 4: 1557-1695*, edited by John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 304-22.

⁸⁰ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, 59.

⁸¹ On the importance of human learning among the Puritans, see Morgan, *Godly Learning*, 220-244; Stoeffler, *Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 85-7.

⁸² Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 109; Rous, *Heavnelie Academie*, 115.

⁸³ For excellent explorations into Rous’s notions of freedom and obligation to government, see Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume III: Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 271, 287-307; John M. Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 45-6, 51-6; and Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution* (Humanities Press, 1966), 67ff.

⁸⁴ J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing, 1516-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 254; Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution*, 186. On the authorship of *The Ancient Bounds*, see J. Sears McGee, “Francis Rous and ‘Scabby or Itchy Children’: The Problem of Toleration in 1645,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67 (2002): 401-22. McGee argues convincingly that Rous was the main author but that Sprigge was also involved. In contrast, in 1953, based on stylistic

drive towards doctrinal and ecclesiastical uniformity, instead wishing for a freer “association between congregations of like-minded believers.” They could “embarrass the Presbyterians” by using the same arguments that Presbyterians had used in combatting the conformist edicts of the Established Church.⁸⁵

In *The Ancient Bounds*, Rous and Sprigge argue for a “limited liberty of conscience, guaranteed and policed by the magistrate.” Mortimer states that the authors “began from the assumption that every society has a basic knowledge of God and of the manner in which he ought to be worshipped. From the light of nature itself all peoples knew that polytheism and idolatry were wrong; even without a specific revelation they knew the duties contained in the first table of the Decalogue.” Thus, “the prohibition on images of the deity was seen as universally valid, just like the prohibitions on murder, theft and adultery in the first table of second table; the magistrate could therefore take action against the Catholics when they violated this commandment. For in every society, the magistrate’s duty is to ensure that its members keep every one of the Ten Commandments,” but, as Mortimer continues, “did not need to go any further in the government of the church; indeed, the he ought not to impose disputable opinions in worship or doctrine. All he needed to do was to ensure that the provisions of the Decalogue were kept by outlawing all blasphemous, idolatrous and scandalous opinions and this would, Rous [and Sprigge] assumed, mean that he protected all good Protestants.” The noted Independent Jeremiah Burroughes made similar points in his *Irenicum, to the Lovers of Truth and Peace* (1646).

Though certain remarks within Robert Baillie’s letters have moved scholars to place Rous among the Presbyterians,⁸⁶ in 1649, Baillie, a good friend of Rous, wrote that “Mr. Rous...hes complied with the Sectaries, and is a member of their republick.”⁸⁷ Further, the argument of the *Ancient Bounds*, with its advocacy of the toleration sought by the Dissenting Brethren, shows that he at least “leaned towards” Independency or had changed his views over the years.⁸⁸ Still, Blair Warden has called Rous one of the more tolerant Presbyterians who sought leniency for Christopher Love in 1651.⁸⁹ Whether Rous was a Presbyterian or an Independent, ultimately, for the purposes of our study, does not matter. What matters is his insistence on tolerating the more radical groups within the English Revolution, which were prime for persecution by rigidly minded Presbyterians like Thomas Edwards. Indeed, Rous’s sermon preached before the House of Commons in the 1620s on religious toleration had not only been well received but was in hot demand.⁹⁰

analysis, Barbara Kiefer argued that Sprigge was sole author. See Barbara Kiefer, “The Authorship of ‘Ancient Bounds,’” *Church History* 22 (1953): 192-6.

⁸⁵ Martin Dzelzainis, “Ideas in Conflict: Political and Religious Thought During the English Revolution,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 41-2.

⁸⁶ Blair Worden calls Rous a “religious Presbyterian,” but adds that “despite his Presbyterianism Rous...was of a tolerant disposition.” Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 127.

⁸⁷ King, *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, 97.

⁸⁸ Marchamont Nedham, *The Cases of the Commonwealth of England Stated*, ed. Philip A. Knachel (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), xxvii.

⁸⁹ Blair Warden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-53* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 127.

⁹⁰ Chris R. Kyle, *Theater of State: Parliament and Political Culture in Early Stuart England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 105.

The anonymous pamphlet *The Lawfulness of Obeying the Present Government* appeared on April 25, 1649, and sought to establish the Rump regime as the true governing body within England, and as such, its dictates should be heeded “so long as its commands were lawful.”⁹¹ Conal Condren calls the tract “an elegantly structured casuistic exercise, moving from theological axioms to the present situation, concluding with a resolution to the problem of renegeing on *The Solemn League*.”⁹² Rous’s goal in writing the tract was to solidify Parliament’s power to govern the Commonwealth in wake of the collapse of the monarchy; though some might think the change unlawful, it may nonetheless be “lawfully obeyed,” based on Romans 13.⁹³ Soon after the tract’s publication, Rous’s authorship became known. Though Rous had many critics who challenged his interpretation of Romans 13, chiefly on the grounds that the Pauline injunction commanded obedience to a “lawfully constituted” authority, echoing Charles I’s own dismissal of Parliament’s power during his trial, there were equally those who supported the new government and believed that a new era of prosperity had finally come.⁹⁴

Rous was active in the new regime. He was a member of Cromwell’s council of state, and was nominated as one of Cromwell’s Triers. His role as Speaker of the House in the Barebones Parliament (1653) has been well documented. Indeed, he was “remarkable for his learning and piety, as well as for being re-elected month by month.”⁹⁵ His close affinity to Cromwell suggests a possible leaning towards Independency.⁹⁶ Though part of Cromwell’s inner circle throughout the interregnum, Rous retired after Richard Cromwell took power in 1657, likely because of his age and declining health. Rous’s absence in the politics of the new regime is, according to Jason Peacey, one of the many factors that precipitated the end of the Protectorate.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers*, 199 (fn. 201); Fritze, *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England*, 179-81, 199; McGee, “Rous, Francis,” 222.

⁹² Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 300.

⁹³ Rous, *The Lawfulness of Obeying the Present Government* (London, 1649). Cited in Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England*, 300.

⁹⁴ Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 300-05; Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Vol. 2: Hobbes and Civil Science*, 271, 291-6.

⁹⁵ Stephen K. Robert, “The House of Commons, 1640-1660,” in *A Short History of Parliament*, ed. Clive Jones (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 113; Leora Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions: Everyday Life and Politics in Britain, North America, and France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 72-79; Paul Seaward, ed., *Speakers and the Speakership* (Malden: Wiley, 2010), 76-77; James Holstun, *Ehud’s Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2000), 274.

⁹⁶ Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Vol. 2: Hobbes and Civil Science*, 271; J. H. M. Salmon, *Ideas and Contexts in France and England from the Renaissance to the Romantics* (Variorum, 2000); N. H. Keeble, *The Cambridge Companion to the Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 42.

⁹⁷ John Peacey, “The Protector Humbled: Richard Cromwell and the Constitution,” in *The Cromwellian Protectorate*, ed. Patrick Little (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 35. There is some debate on Rous’s influence on Cromwell and the events of the interregnum. Though Peacey mentions Rous as one of lesser influence, the council met several times a week, and Rous was no doubt among those who were “prodigiously energetic.” Nancy L. Matthews, *William Sheppard, Cromwell’s Law Reformer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 35-6.

Joseph Glanvill was chaplain to Rous from 1658 until his death.⁹⁸ Rous had a younger brother, Arthur, a clergyman sent to the New World.⁹⁹ Rous died at Acton in 1659 and was buried in the college chapel at Eton. He outlived his wife, Philippa, who had died on December 20, 1657,¹⁰⁰ but left behind two sons, one being disinherited due to an illicit marriage, and the other, a Francis Rous, Jr., author of the oft-printed *Archaeologiae Atticae* (1637).¹⁰¹ A contemporary newspaper, “Mercurius Politicus,” printed on January 27, 1658/9, recounts in vivid detail Rous’s funeral procession:

Monday the 24th being the day appointed for the interment of the corpse of the Right Hon. Francis Lord Rouse, it was performed in this manner. The lords of his Highness privy council met at his house at Acton, as also divers of the commissioners of the admiralty, and of the officers of the army, with many other persons of honor and quality. His Highness was also pleased to send several of his gentlemen in coaches with six horses to be present at the solemnity; three heralds likewise or officers at arms gave their attendance. The corpse was placed in a carriage covered with a pall of black velvet, adorned with escutcheons, and drawn with six horses in mourning furniture. The lords of the council followed it, and the rest in their order, towards Eaton college by Windsor, where the deceased lord, having been provost, desired he might be interred. The corpse being arrived there, it was received by the learned society of that college with much sorrow for the loss of so excellent a governor, and the young scholars had prepared copies of verses to express their duty and bear their part of sorrow upon this sad occasion. The body being taken off the carriage, was born towards the college chapel, four lords and gentlemen holding up each corner of the pall, and the whole company following it to the grave.

Following the interment, a sermon was preached by John Oxenbridge, a fellow of Eton College, Puritan preacher, and missionary to Bermuda, but it does not seem to have been printed.¹⁰² The paper concludes that Rous “needs no monument besides his own

⁹⁸ Glanvill would later become chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles II after the Restoration. See Rhodri Lewis, “Of ‘Origenian Platonisme’: Joseph Glanvill on the Pre-Existence of Souls,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69 (2006): 277; Martin I. J. Griffin, Jr., *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 25.

⁹⁹ Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 101.

¹⁰⁰ A marble memorial was affixed to the Parish Church of St. Mary in Acton in 1657, in memory of Philippa Rous, which bore the family crest and a short inscription.

¹⁰¹ Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 304; George Clement Boase and William Prideaux Courtney, eds., *Bibliotheca Cornubiensis: A Catalogue of the Writings, both Manuscript and Printed of Cornishmen, and of Works Relating to the County of Cornwall with Biographical Memoranda and Copious Literary References* (London, 1878), 2:601; Francis Rous’s will, dated March 18, 1657.

¹⁰² Oxenbridge was a nonconformist divine who, upon being ejected, made several visits to Bermuda to advance the Puritan Reformation. He also seems to have been the source of inspiration for some of Andrew Marvell’s poems. Christopher Hill, *Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England*, 162; Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, ed., *The English Literatures of America, 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 544; Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 158-9.

printed works to convey his name to posterity.” Rous was active in charity, frequently gave to the poor, which many “with tears will tell you,” and appointed three fellowships at Pembroke College, Oxford, for his posterity or others deemed worthy. In 1661, the provost of Eton Nicholas Monck removed “the standard and escutcheons from his grave,” in an apparent Royalist act of defiance.¹⁰³

Rous’s social contexts show his close affinity with Stuart politics and active career in Parliament. They reveal his mystical vision for the Commonwealth and his hatred of doctrinal indifference. Rous was a hero of the Calvinist cause and a foe to anything Arminian. With Pym and Prynne, he became associated with the more conservative wing in Parliament and was a prominent voice in Stuart Puritanism. While Peter White has suggested that the Church of England in the pre-Civil War era was highly fractured and consisted of an eclectic group of Remonstrants, the life of Rous and his belief in the historicity of his Reformed convictions within the English Church confirm Tyacke’s contention that there was indeed an earlier “broad consensus” of Calvinism in the Tudor/Stuart Church.¹⁰⁴ Further evidence of this lies in Rous’s many speeches before Parliament where he was a vocal advocate for prosecuting and responding to the rising tide of Arminianism within the Commonwealth, and especially within the church hierarchy. In 1626, Rous cautioned Parliament that Arminianism was nothing more than “popery in a new dress;” and then, by the 1640s, Rous had worsened his outlook by stating that Arminianism was “worse than popery.” That Rous, a known advocate for religious toleration among Protestants, was so derisive of Remonstrants further shows how religion and politics were so interwoven during this time. Stuart Puritans saw doctrinal indifference as the chief danger facing the realm, and fought to oppose it wherever possible.¹⁰⁵

4.3 Rous’s Writings in Historical Context

Though Rous was not a trained theologian (his academic studies were for a career in law), he had a profound religious experience, which, as with Luther and Calvin before him, put him on the path to study theology and become a writer of devotional texts. Following his religious conversion, Rous did not pursue formal theological studies but chose rather to read as widely as he could the writings of the mystics, church fathers, and to some extent the scholastics. Thus, like Baxter and Bunyan, he was mostly self-taught in matters of theology and biblical exposition. While we do not have record of Rous’s library, the numerous quotations in his writings provide a window into the types of books he had become acquainted with, and consistent with Puritan attitudes towards learning, Rous shows remarkable awareness of Roman Catholic writers and theologians, such as Thomas

¹⁰³ Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London, Volume 2*, 2nd ed. (London, 1830), 3-5. Upon Monck’s appointment as provost in 1660/61, most Puritan fellows resigned from the college or were deprived of their living.

¹⁰⁴ Gary W. Jenkins, *John Jewel and the English National Church: The Dilemmas of an Erastian Reformer* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 236-41.

¹⁰⁵ Francis Rous in *Commons Debates for 1629*, ed. Wallace Notestein and Francis Relf (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1921), 12-13, 24.

Bradwardine and Thomas Aquinas. He was also familiar with the Spanish mystics and other continental thinkers that expanded on the *mystica theologia*.

So far, we have seen how Rous had a prominent career in Parliament and was engaged in several religious controversies surrounding the monarchy and the threat of Arminianism. Throughout his career, Rous, who expressed a “profound conviction” before his peers in Parliament and monopolized on past Romish plots, became a much-admired author of theological works.¹⁰⁶ These writings were not only popular in the Netherlands and in English-speaking British colonies but they made their way into numerous Norwegian collections.¹⁰⁷ Both Jacobus Koelman and Gottfried Arnold recommended the *Interiora Regni Dei*, though in Koelman’s Dutch edition *The Great Oracle* was left out, being deemed unnecessary to the greater work.¹⁰⁸ Throughout his writings, Rous communicates the dangers of corrupt religion, the need for theological education, and the urgency of mystical union and fellowship with the Holy Spirit. It is his preoccupation with union and the Holy Spirit that has earned him the name of “Puritan mystic” and brought him to the attention of mystics both in England and in the Continent.¹⁰⁹ Ian Green has associated Rous with a variant stream within early modern devotion, alongside some of the New Model Army chaplains, Seekers, Ranters, and early Quakers.¹¹⁰

For convenience, Rous’s religious writings may be divided into his major and minor works: his major works include *Testis Veritatis* (1626), *The Mystical Marriage* (1631), *The Heavenly Academie* (1638), *Catholick Charitie* (1641), *The Psalmes of David in English Meeter* (1643), *The Ancient Bounds* (1645), and *Mella Patrum* (1650); his minor works include his *Meditations of Instrvction* (1616), *The Arte of Happiness* (1619), *Diseases of the Time* (1622), *The Oyl of Scorpions* (1623), *The Only Remedy* (1627), *The Balme of Love* (1648), and *The Great Oracle* (1655).¹¹¹ His other published prose, such as his many speeches before

¹⁰⁶ Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 134; Nicholas D. Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity: A Quarrel of the Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 93 (fn. 116).

¹⁰⁷ Gina Dahl, *Book Collections of Clerics in Norway, 1650-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 109, 132, 161, 176, 187, 214. Several of Rous’s works are also found in the Countess of Bridgewater’s London Library. Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 79, 269, 271-2, 279. While Van den Berg affirms that Rous had a strong following in the Netherlands, Willem op’t Hof points out that the writings of William Perkins were most popular with twenty-nine titles eclipsing all others taken together. Further, both Rous and Perkins seem to have had some influence on Witsius. Op’t Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Netherlands, 1589-1622* (Rotterdam: Lindenberg, 1987), 634, 636-37, 640, 645; Keith L. Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printing in the Netherlands, 1600-1640* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 174.

¹⁰⁸ Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 38, esp. 35-42; Volker Keding, *Theologia Experimentalis: Die Erfahrungstheologie Beim Späten Gottfried Arnold* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000), 57-8. See also Peter Damrau, *The Reception of English Puritan Literature in Germany* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2006), 59-70.

¹⁰⁹ Mystics on the Continent, such as Pierre Poiret, recommended many of Rous’s works; cf. Poiret’s endorsement of Rous’s *Interiora Regni Dei* in Pierre Poiret, *Theologiae Pacificae itemque Mysticae ac hujus Auctorum Idea Brevior* (Amsterdam, 1702), 286.

¹¹⁰ Ian Green, “Varieties of Domestic Devotion in Early Modern English Protestantism,” in *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 24-25.

¹¹¹ *Testis Veritatis* was reprinted without Rous’s “To the Reader” in 1633 as *The Trvth of Three Things*.

Parliament, his first composed work (a sonnet), and his essays on obeying the government, may be classified as either miscellaneous or political.¹¹²

Two collected editions of Rous's work were published in the seventeenth century: first, in 1655 and 1674, a Latin compilation of Rous's three most mystical works (*The Heavenly Academy*, *The Great Oracle*, and *The Mystical Marriage*) was issued as *Interiora Regni Dei* (as the title suggests, this edition contains the core of Rous's mystical teachings and focuses on the interior life of believers). Second, in 1657, *Treatises and Meditations* was printed, reprinting the English equivalent of the Latin collection and adding six of Rous's major and minor works.¹¹³

In order to assess Rous's contributions to Reformed spirituality and his relation to Reformed orthodoxy, we will examine, in some detail, Rous's teachings in *Interiora Regni Dei*.¹¹⁴ Before we assess Rous's *Interiora Regni Dei*, we will first briefly survey his early work and minor writings.

(1) Rous's first appearance in print was a "Spenserian" sonnet, *Thvle, or Vertues Historie* (1596-8), which was prefaced to Charles FitzGeffry's laudation of Sir Francis Drake, *Sir Francis Drake, His Honorable Lifes Commendation, and His Tragicall Deathes Lamentation* (1596). Both FitzGeffry and Drake were close friends of the Rous family.¹¹⁵ However, the main corpus of Rous's written work seems to have been composed throughout his fifties (c. 1620-1630s) when England was cast into political, religious, and cultural unrest. Thus, an eighteen-year gap separated Rous's first poetic work and his subsequent religious writings; presumably, during this time he was occupied with his theological studies and preparing for a long career in Parliament. It is likely that Rous influenced his younger stepbrother's path to a Parliamentary career. Threats of Arminianism and Roman Catholicism likely prompted Rous to pick up the pen in the 1610s; indeed, England was then caught up in a whirlstorm of competing ideologies, all vying for the formation of an English religious national identity. While there were significant threads of Calvinism within the English Church of the early-mid seventeenth century, among whom Rous would count himself, there were dissidents throughout the Commonwealth and domestic and foreign political threats preoccupied the public Protestant conscious.¹¹⁶ It is little wonder that Arminianism and Roman Catholicism dominated Rous's earlier polemics.¹¹⁷

¹¹² For a full account of Rous's writings, see Bibliography.

¹¹³ A German translation of *Treatises and Meditations* (*Das Innerliche des Reiches Gottes*) appeared in 1682. Keding, *Theologia Experimentalis*, 57.

¹¹⁴ I concur with Rufus Jones that the three texts contained in the Latin collection are representative of Rous's mysticism. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*, 268.

¹¹⁵ The Puritan FitzGeffry preached the funeral sermon of Rous's father, Anthony. FitzGeffry praised Rous' father "for the fair and just execution of his public duties" and faithful attendance to worship services. Duffin, *Faction & Faith*, 48; Martin Dzelzainis, "Ideas in Conflict: Political and Religious Thought During the English Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. N. H. Keeble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 42.

¹¹⁶ See Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 7-76; and Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 389-98.

¹¹⁷ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 51-2.

(2) Rous spent much time in solitude prior to his first religious publication, *Meditations of Instrvction, Of Exhortation, Of Reprofe* (1616). Even in this early work there is evidence of patristic and medieval reliance. In the dedicatory to the “Sonnes of the most High,” Rous writes of the many divers “sparks of holy fire” which the Holy Spirit has “baptized with fire” and which Rous has “gathered together by their united heate.” His goal, other than the glory of God, is to spark “a flame where there is none” and to increase it in those who have grown cold in their devotion. Only God’s blessing can grant it.¹¹⁸ Throughout Rous’s 87 *Meditations* we see such diverse topics as the new birth, ambition, inward baptism, Christian progress, covetousness, divisions and schism, true friends, heaven, spiritual idolatry and images, kingdom of Satan, true knowledge of self, loving God, presumption, providence, the pope, the name “Puritan,” resurrection, and meddling with worldly things. The book closes with the quote, “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, euen so, come Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:17), and an alphabetical index. Of particular interest to this study are Rous’s thoughts on “Puritan” and the pope. For Rous, “Puritan” and “Puritanism” are English terms denoting scrupulosity and are used to deride honest men for their Christian religion; thus, the term still retains a derogatory nature in 1616; and for the pope and his supremacy, Rous marvels that any in “this broad day light” of Protestantism should stumble as to the pope’s true status and fallibility as a usurper.¹¹⁹

Rous’s *Meditations* reflect his concerns with the state of the English church and the many corruptions facing it. Though Rous does address a wide variety of churchly issues, one the more predominant themes throughout his *Meditations* is an avid anti-popery; in fact, Rous later laments that so much time was spent on this: “It is a pittie we haue so wholly taken vp our minds with the controuersies, betweene vs & the Pope, that wee haue much neglected the more immediate controuersie between vs & the diuell,”¹²⁰ and yet the text is ordered in such a way as to present itself as a kind of casuistic manual. Though less exhaustive and not as well organized as Perkins’s *Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (1606) or some of the other more popular casuistry manuals, as Gouge’s later *Domestic Duties* (1634), Rous’s *Meditations* are no less part of the growing early seventeenth-century instructional genre. The *Meditations* were expanded into 113 meditations for the 1657 collection *Treatises and Meditations* and added were topical headings.¹²¹

Rous was aware of the need for instructive treatises and concludes his *Meditations* with a plea for educated ministers to do the same: “Be it therefore the precious worthy labour of some *Bezaleel* or *Aholiab*, some one whose heart God hath touched and inlightened, to lighten and kindle manhy of the yet-dim-shining lamps which are in the house of God...Let them breake abroad the commandments of God into their seuerall branches of things forbidden, and commanded...”¹²² Rous concludes the Meditation with a warning: “But if the spirituall lawyers shall not be so diligent to search, and set forth Cases of Conscience, as the secular Lawyers are to publish Cases of transitorie and temporall right, let them expect to haue a chiefe part in that curse of Christ: Woe be to you Lawyers,

¹¹⁸ Rous, *Meditations of Instrvction*, sig. A2.

¹¹⁹ Rous, *Meditations of Instrvction*, 259-74, 345-414.

¹²⁰ Rous, *Meditations of Instrvction*, 456-7.

¹²¹ See Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 487-608.

¹²² Rous, *Meditations of Instrvctions*, 459-60.

for ye withhold the key of knowledge, ye either enter not your selues, or you do not helpe those that would, to enter."¹²³

(3) Rous's *Arte of Happiness* (1619) presents his view of how a Christian is to attain "true happiness" in this life. Throughout there are tones reminiscent of the medieval mystics, and yet Rous remains grounded in more "mainstream" Reformed spirituality, noting that such heavenly joy comes from election, justification, regeneration, and perseverance.¹²⁴ With more mystic overtones, Rous writes, "the very substance of the Spirit in us, is a kinde of heavenly oyl, which makes glad, not so much the face as the very heart of Man. It has a taste and relish of the Deity, and therefore above all other, this is the true oyl of gladness. The heart anointed herewith, as it finds a light to guide it, and a virtue moving it to good, and freeing it from the slavery of sin, so also feeleth in itself a blessed Rest, and heavenly Sabbath, a joy glorious and unspeakable, an harmony with God, which passeth all understanding."¹²⁵ Somewhat akin to Richard Rogers's popular *Seven Treatises*, the *Arte* shows the extent to which the theme of happiness enabled questions of personal piety, and was used to promote both the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*, much in the same way that Downname and Robert Bolton wrote of the active Christian life as the fruit of meditation. Further, LaFountain correctly observes that Puritans, such as Rous, drew upon Aristotle's notion of *εὐπραξία* in which godly living is equated with "a work of art" by the divine hand; says LaFountain, "Its practitioners are called artists, right artist, and artificers. These Puritan artists are, at the same time, said to be living images, lively images, living paintings, right images, pictures of God, pictures of Christ, true images, true portraits, and even divine landscapes."¹²⁶ This is clearly another instance of what Margo Todd has called "Christian humanism" within "the Puritan social order" in that Puritans, though reforming their own vision for society, were not originators but heirs to a complex intellectual tradition, which incorporated various aspects of the arts and humanism.¹²⁷

(4) Rous's *Diseases of the Time* (1622) condemns the Catholic Church for differing from the Protestant by preventing its people from learning the truths of God.¹²⁸ Woven throughout are various social ills and theological topics; for instance, Rous begins this work questioning those who love to publish books simply to advance their own reputation. He criticizes those who rely on natural wisdom, preferring the handmaid before the mistress (philosophy before divinity). He attacks the hierarchy of the Roman church and includes a section called "Aphorisms of Predestination."¹²⁹

Remarkable in *Diseases of the Time* is a threefold division of kinds of religion in the Romish church: First, there is what Rous calls *religio curialis* or the religion of the court

¹²³ Rous, *Meditations of Instrvctions*, 462; the reference is to Luke 11:52.

¹²⁴ Cp. Clegg, *Press Censorship in Caroline England*, 57-8, with Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 27-8.

¹²⁵ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 35. Quoted in Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 27.

¹²⁶ Jason David LaFountain, "The Puritan Art World" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013), 6.

¹²⁷ Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1-21, 53-95; Laam, "Borrowed Heaven," 83-7; Peltonen, *Classical Humanism*, 241.

¹²⁸ Marc L. Schwarz, "Some Thoughts on the Development of a Lay Religious Consciousness in Pre-Civil-War England," in *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 173-4.

¹²⁹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 93-214.

whereby the hierarchy in the Church sets forth its false interpretations, counsels, and excommunications. Second, there is a *religio theologorum* or religion of the divines, which is taught for the “saving of souls.” For Rous, there are three degrees to this kind of religion: the first is *crassa doctrina* or the “less refined doctrine” that was common before Luther and which includes the doctrine of merits, condignity, predestination *ex praevisis operibus*, and worshipping images, among others; the second degree is *doctrina limata* or the “more refined doctrines” which were hatched by the Bible’s “genuine interpretation,” confirmed by the “light of the Word,” and which come near to that of the Reformed; the third degree is the *doctrina spiritus aut conscientia* or the “doctrine of the Spirit” or “conscience” which are taught by the Spirit of God and enforced by the “light of their own conscience” to admit their own worthlessness and praise God’s mercy in Christ. Here Rous lists the work of Bernard, Thomas a Kempis, and others like-minded mystics who were sanctified and taught by the Spirit. Noteworthy, Rous refers to Stephen Gardiner and Bellarmine who, at the close of their works, express their reliance on God. Indeed, Rous states that there is a “special place” among God’s elect for those theologians who are among the *ecclesia electorum*. The third and last kind of religion is the *doctrina idiotarum* or the doctrine that is taught to the laity to reinforce their ignorance by teaching a mindless reciting of confessions, penance, the creeds and Ave-Maria, and worshipping images, among others.¹³⁰ Also worth noting is Rous’s use of “Children of the Light” to refer to “spiritual Christians,” a term later adopted by Quakers.¹³¹

(5) Rous’s *Oyl of Scorpions* (1623) argues that divine judgments cast upon nations are for the purpose of bringing a people to repentance; indeed, such providential plagues, storms, and fires are sent to remedy such ills as swearing, blasphemy, drunkenness, deceit, backsliding, and idolatry. Similar to Thomas Vincent’s *God’s Terrible Voice in the City* (1667), Rous’s *Oyl* seeks to remedy social ills by calling to attention past or present judgments.¹³²

(6) *The Only Remedy* (1627) continues Rous’s efforts to reform the nation by again drawing parallels between sin and punishment, the “only remedy” being “a sure and sound repentance.” It is a work that combines anti-popery with an attempt prevent those pursuing godly living from being styled as a “Puritan.”¹³³ Indeed, name-calling is but one of many tactics the devil uses to disparage the godly: “for in the Devils language, a Saint is a Puritan.” Rous adds, “Wherefore know, that for some good work, he calls thee Puritan, understand, that in this language he calleth thee Saint: wherefore let this turn to thee for a testimonial, that even thy enemies being judges, thou art such a one as is truly honourable here on earth, and shall eternally be honoured hereafter in heaven.”¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 140-43.

¹³¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 134. Cf. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 42.

¹³² For recent studies of Puritan providentialism, see Michael P. Winship, *Seers of God: Puritan Providentialism in the Restoration and Early Enlightenment* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 74-137; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Bercovitch, ed., *The American Puritan Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 45-55.

¹³³ S. Mutchow Towers, *Control of Religious Printing in Early Stuart England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 183.

¹³⁴ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 318; Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft*, 109.

(7) Rous's *The Balme of Love* (1648), finally, is a short continuance of *The Mystical Marriage* aimed at healing divisions among the people of God. As the fuller title suggests, it was written and published to address ongoing divisions among the godly within the Calvinist-Puritan circle. Rous had hoped that his *Mystical Marriage* would have ameliorated divisions among the godly. This further confirms his optimism for a utopian Christian society and agenda for a Puritan Reformation. In *Balme of Love*, consistent with a mystical emphasis on love, Rous argues that Christians should love each other, especially those who are of other nationalities. Rous writes, "And is not the internall unity of the Spirit a greater band of love and peace than difference in small matters or externals, be of hatred, division, and mutual destruction?" Such divisions among true Christians, says Rous, is a "breaking of the covenant" and a "tearing of the Body of Christ."¹³⁵ George Yule states that Rous "favored toleration" and that the *Balme* advocated this, but Van den Berg questions this interpretation by stating that Rous's concept of toleration was confined to those of "lesser differences" within his own Reformed sphere.¹³⁶ In my view, both are correct: Rous did "favor toleration" for dissidents, but excluded those who were too far from his utopian Puritan Reformation, and therefore posed a threat to its realization.

We will now examine the three works of *Interiora Regni Dei*, which will provide a better perspective on Rous's *mystica theologia*.

4.3.1 *The Heavenly Academie* (1638, 1656; Latin 1655, 1674)

Johannes van den Berg calls Rous's *The Heavenly Academie* his "most interesting" because it was "written for young people who were studying [for a career in divinity] and because of this...[is] provided with lengthy quotations and references."¹³⁷ It is the text in which Rous most clearly outlines his paradigm for the ascent of knowledge, from its "lower" rudiments to its higher, more mystical and celestial form. Van den Berg calls attention to the motto on the title page, which provides the central message of the *Academie*, quoted from Augustine: "*Cathedram in Coelo habet, qui corda docet*" ("He who teaches hearts has his chair in heaven").¹³⁸ This coincides with the title, which equates the "highest teaching" with "the teaching of the heart."¹³⁹ Christ is "the Teacher of those Teachers," his instruction being heavenly and perfect. Christians have an "advantage over

¹³⁵ Rous, *The Balme of Love: To Heale Divisions, and the Wounds Made by Them, and to Make the Body of Christ Whole and Entire For Its Own Beauty, Strength, and Safety, Partly Presented in a Former Discourse, When It Might Have Prevented, and Now After Many Evils For Want of Prevention Re-Enforced in a Second* (London, 1648).

¹³⁶ Cp. George Yule, "Presbyterians and Independents: Some Comments," *Past and Present* 47 (1970): 131, with Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 33 (fn. 38). Worden also criticizes Yule's position that "Rous [had] a tolerant disposition for a commitment to the principle of religious toleration: Rous does not, in *The Balm of Love*, 'advocate toleration.'" Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, 127 (fn. 4).

¹³⁷ Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 30.

¹³⁸ The quote from Augustine is from *In Epistolam Joannis Tractatus III* in Augustine, *Opera Omnia, Tom. III* (Paris, 1837), 2515.

¹³⁹ Rous, *The Heavenly Academie; Or, the Highest School Where Alone is That Highest Teaching, the Teaching of the Heart* (London, 1638), title page. There is a 1702 edition which uses the Latin title *Academia Coelestis*, and is touted as a "third edition, revised and compared with the Latin."

all other people” because, in the end, they are taught heart-religion.¹⁴⁰ But Rous is careful not to disparage the “lower Academies,” as though they were of little or no use; indeed, throughout *Heavenlie Academie* he reiterates the importance of “lower learning” because it provides a necessary foundation for higher, more celestial attainments. Further, Rous himself was educated in the finest British and Dutch schools, and valued their contribution to his godly pursuits. In an “Advertisement to the Reader,” prefixed to a 1702 reprint of *Academie*, the publisher states that Rous’s work was written several years before the English Revolution, and, consequently, before the rise of the Quakers who believed in the “more vivid Operations of the Internal Light of Souls.” It further states that the *Academie* was not written for their defense or that of “any Party or Society whatever,” but only for the “Service of the *Church of Christ* in Generall, and more especially of all Teachers and Ministers.”¹⁴¹

The *Academie* is divided into ten chapters and includes a preface in which Rous expresses his desire to give witness to what he himself had experienced.¹⁴² His desire is to glorify God for the grace he received “and because I desire also that others may have the like grace, that God also from others may have the like glory.”¹⁴³ The purpose of Rous’s testimony was to move his readers to graduate “from the grammar school of ordinary piety to the celestial university.” Just as students moved from junior to senior academies, so too must Christians matriculate to the “heavenly academy,” where they can gain “a divine, spiritual, and heavenly knowledge.”

Further, for Rous, there are three schools for divinity students: the first is the lower school in which students learn how to read and write, and becomes familiar with basic concepts that are retained throughout life (grammar school); the second is the place where students advance to higher subjects and greater degrees of knowledge (university), and the third is the highest form of learning, which Rous tells us, “I have evidently seen and felt, that Men are Taught of God” (celestial academy). This highest place of learning is where Christians are taught by God’s Spirit, having “quenched their own natural lamps, that they might get them kindled above by the Father of Lights.”¹⁴⁴

Reflecting on Rous’s contribution to godly learning, Morgan opines, “Francis Rous made it clear that, while reason might see the shadows, it could not perceive the Forms.” Thus, “Puritans sought a new equilibrium...that would recognize the different areas of expertise for reason and faith, and would confine reason to the status of an ‘aid’ in the achievement and propagation of belief.”¹⁴⁵ For Morgan, Richard Sibbes is characteristic of this mindset, when he chides the “Schoolmen” for relying too much on Plato in their quest to understand the mysteries of godliness “with their Logick onely, and strong wits...to speake of Grace, of the Gospel of justification; they spake of it, and distinguished in a meere metaphysicall and carnall manner.”¹⁴⁶ However, Rous nowhere offers similar criticisms. Instead, he elucidates that “the greatest Doctor on earth” cannot “in picture and

¹⁴⁰ Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 30.

¹⁴¹ Rous, *Academia Coelestis* (London, 1702), Sig. A2-3.

¹⁴² Stoeffler, *Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 85.

¹⁴³ Rous, *Heavenlie Academie*, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Rous, *Heavenlie Academie*, 14; the reference is to James 1:17.

¹⁴⁵ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, 50.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Sibbes, *The Fovntaine Opened; Or, The Myserie of Godlinesse Revealed* (London, 1638), 20-1. Cited partially in Morgan, *Godly Learning*, 50.

representation” convey those divine things, which “no man can see but by tasting; and by tasting it may be seen.”¹⁴⁷

This divine ravishment, for Rous, moves the teacher to teach others; moreover, learning in this highest academy is a process: “And it is a good ambition, not to stint [and] stop our selves in the lower Academie, but to ascend by it to the higher.”¹⁴⁸ Were one to persevere, the reward would be immense: “There drops and dewes of grace, by which you are now taught, shall bring you to the sight and fruition of the Teacher himself, who is an ever-flowing Fountaine, and boundless ocean of light, wisdom, grace, and glorie.” Thus, being overwhelmed with divine goodness, “the most glorious Sun-lgiht and influence of Gods presence, irradiating and overflowing thee, and so more than fully teaching thee, shall drowne the Star-light of this teaching, which you receivedst here below.” But, unlike Sibbes, who could possibly be read as vilifying the “lower academy,” or perhaps its over-reliance on logic, Rous states that Christians will “magnifie this lesser teaching, because it hath brought thee to this great and glorious Teacher, whose light shall give thee the sight of the highest wisdom; whose presence shall ebriate thee with the fullnesse of joy, whose right hand shall give thee the pleasures of eternitie.”¹⁴⁹ Dewey Wallace, Jr., states, “The climax of heavenly blessedness would be the *beatific vision*, a term Puritans used in common with medieval theologians.”¹⁵⁰

In his *Academie*, Rous outlines familiar steps among mystics; that is, the moving of the soul from basic rudiments to more personal and intimate union with God. While Rous mimics some of the teachings of the mystics in this regard, and often writes of union in deeply mystical terms, in contrast, he is careful to uphold the Bible, or “external Word,” as the academy “in which we hear the voice of Christ.”¹⁵¹ Throughout the text, Rous advocates, “the climbing of the mystical ladder” through four general steps: (1) desiring God; (2) denying human wisdom; (3) conforming to God; and (4) conversing with God continually. This theme of “conversing with God” is further developed in the *Mystical Marriage* (see below).¹⁵²

The *Academie* is unique among Rous’s greater corpus in that, aside from his *Catholick Charity*, it is the most heavily annotated and source-cited piece and shows Rous’s liking for continental thought. Whereas the *Mystical Marriage* contains numerous references to the Song of Solomon and other biblical passages in the margins, the *Academie* quotes in Latin (with the number of occurrences in brackets): Dionysius the Areopagite (4); Irenaeus (1); Clement of Alexandria (1); Justin Martyr (2); Tertullian (3); Origen (2); Firmilian (1); Cyprian (1); Ambrose (1); Basil (2); Gregory Naziansen (2); Gregory of Nyssa (1); Chrysostom (2); Augustine (7); Primasius (1); Anselm (2); Rupert of Deutz (1); Bernard of Clairvaux (1); Richard of St. Victor (3); Aquinas (3); Jean Gerson (2); Thomas à Kempis (4); Henry Harphius (1); Savonarola (4); Luther (1); and Gabriel Vasquez

¹⁴⁷ Rous, *The Heavenly Academie*, 38-9.

¹⁴⁸ Rous, *Heavenly Academie*, 157.

¹⁴⁹ Rous, *Heavenly Academie*, 187-9.

¹⁵⁰ Wallace, “Glorification,” in *Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America*, 405.

¹⁵¹ John Barber, *The Road to Eden: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Palo Alto: Academia Press, 2008), 330.

¹⁵² Stoeffler, *Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 86.

(1).¹⁵³ Rous's sources show heavy influence from the continent and especially from the early and medieval church, in an eclectic medley of source citing.

Rous's cultivating of these sources likely began when he undertook translating his lengthier work, *Mella Patrum*, a budget-conscious collection of patristic quotations he translated into Latin. From this short list, we can see how Rous favored Augustine, Savonarola, and Pseudo-Dionysius and especially Dionysius's *De Mystica Theologia*; in fact, Rous's readings of Aquinas are solely from Aquinas's commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius. Rous's readings of Gerson, another favorite, are chiefly from the latter's glosses on *De Mystica Theologia*.¹⁵⁴ Though some of these texts had made it into English translation by mid-seventeenth century, such as à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*, most remained in either Greek or Latin texts. Rous's ability to forage books for such source citing shows his skill in Greek and Latin; indeed, Rous seemed to favor whenever possible Latin texts, even when English equivalents were available. His fluency in Greek and Latin further brings into question royalist derision of his character and talents.

Rous had studied "very closely" the mystics of former centuries. He quoted standard mystical texts "at random" and was well acquainted with their contents and concepts. More than any of the other Puritan mystics (such as Peter Sterry, Walter Cradock, or Henry Venn) Rous's brand of mysticism more closely reflects the spirituality of Bernard of Clairvaux, with its heavy emphasis on mystical union; and while digging into the deeper waters of the mystics, Rous still retained more mainstream notions of being taught by the Spirit and of being united to Christ than many of his contemporaries did, as Jacob Boehme. Stoeffler surmises what saved Rous from being among the enthusiasts was his "Puritan Biblicism" or grounding in God's Word. Even when at his most mystical, Rous believed he was merely interpreting the Bible.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ The Latin translation, *Academia Coelestis*, more clearly references the quotes within the main text. Noticeably absent is Calvin. On the historical question of the reception of Calvin's ideas in later Reformed theology, see Carl R. Trueman, "The Reception of Calvin: Historical Considerations," *Church History and Religious Culture* 91:1-2 (2011): 19-27. Trueman correctly sees the reception issue as needing to be understood within a communal context, both synchronic and diachronic, and cautions against anachronistic criteria intruding into the historical task. There was a complex relationship between the theological work of the Reformers and that of later generations, and it should be noted that the absence of direct citation does not necessarily imply the absence of Calvin's influence, nor does citation imply direct causation. Rather, one must assess the context of an individual's thought and in the way in which the reading of Calvin or any influential thinker might have impacted the way a particular writer reads a biblical text or interprets doctrine. In the case of Rous, Augustine seems to be more influential than Calvin, though, arguably, Calvin had some influence contextually and communally. Further, the use of Augustine among early modern authors was quite flexible, and it could be argued that there were "Augustinianisms" that were derived either directly from Augustine or indirectly from the broader intellectual tradition to which they belonged. See Arnoud S. Q. Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe, 1500-1620* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 95-114.

¹⁵⁴ Like Lombard's *Sentences*, the rather short *De Mystica Theologia* was a heavily glossed text in the late Middle Ages. See James McEvoy, ed., *Mystical Theology: The Glosses by Thomas Gallus and the Commentary of Robert Grosseteste on De Mystica Theologia* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003).

¹⁵⁵ Stoeffler, *Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 86-7.

4.3.2 *The Great Oracle* (1641; 1656; Latin, 1655, 1674)

This short piece was published in English in 1641 and then in 1656 as part of *Treatises and Meditations*.¹⁵⁶ The Latin edition appeared in 1655. Though printed as part of *Interiora Regni Dei*, the work is not overtly mystical in that there is no elaborate discussion of union or spiritual marriage, and for this reason it was left out of the Dutch edition. *The Great Oracle* does, however, complement the other two works printed in this collection in that it shows Rous's covenant theology and reliance on the Bible. It argues that salvation is not dependent on "free will," but only on God's "special" and "efficacious" grace. Here Rous writes of "God's plot of glory," in language reminiscent of Thomas Shepard's *Autobiography*.¹⁵⁷ Rous begins his work, stating, "God is the end of himself, in all his ways, works and Counsels; [n]either is there any end worthy of God, but God."¹⁵⁸ This language of God as humanity's *summum bonum* is common within Puritan devotional texts, is found in Perkins, Ames, Greenham, Gouge, the Westminster catechisms, and numerous others, and provides an attitude, which formed the basis for the active and contemplative life.¹⁵⁹

Rous next proceeds to recount the history of God's plot upon mankind and man's beginnings in the Garden of Eden and redemption through Christ. Though Adam was created with "free will," there was joined to his estate a "covenant of works" in which, "Life and Death, a tree of Life, and a tree of death; a tree of standing, and a tree of Falling" was set before him.¹⁶⁰ Adam, who had both "free will" and "free-will grace," did not fall into "a single sin" but into "a state of bondage under sin." Human love is turned away from the Creator to the creature; it is from God's infinite goodness that a way of restoration is given to humanity. God thus sets out "to make good his own Plot" and fights "the self-sufficiency of fallen mankind," which Rous divides into "philosophers," "justitiary Jews," and "philosophizing Judaizing Christians." Here Rous cites Cicero, Seneca, Exodus, Romans, Pelagius, Faustus, and Cassian. Rous then discusses the Incarnation in which humanity was united to divinity, and the New Covenant given to the Son, in which God promised that Eve's seed would "break the Serpents Head." This promise, says Rous, is "even the brief and sum of the new Covenant of grace given to man upon the breach and forfeiture of the old Covenant of works; broken and forfeited by Free-will attended with general grace: the grace of the old Covenant."¹⁶¹

Rous praises God's wisdom and chastises those who value "human wisdom." He cites Pierre Charron's revised preface to *De la sagesse* (1601) as an example of this folly, where Charron justifies his decision to omit a discussion of "divine wisdom" on the

¹⁵⁶ Bradford F. Swan, *Gregory Dexter of London and New England, 1610-1700* (New York: Printing House of Leo Hart, 1949), 22.

¹⁵⁷ Michael McGiffert, ed., *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 3. Shepard refers to "God's great plot" of reformation and redemption, thus identifying God's providence in working all aspects of life for his divine purpose.

¹⁵⁸ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 651.

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, Anne Bradstreet's poem in Robert D. Richardson, Jr., "The Puritan Poetry of Anne Bradstreet," in *American Puritan Imagination: Essays in Revolution*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 110.

¹⁶⁰ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 652-53.

¹⁶¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 656-57.

grounds that it is different from human wisdom, and best treated elsewhere.¹⁶² The rest of the book details the insufficiency of free will and the need for efficacious grace. He concludes *Great Oracle* with direct quotes, respectively, from Augustine, Luther, and Paolo Sarpi's immensely popular *History of the Council of Trent* (1619), on grace, bondage of the will, and predestination.¹⁶³

4.3.3 *The Mystical Marriage, Or, Experimental Discoveries of the Heavenly Marriage between a Soul and Her Savior* (1631, 1635, 1653-56; Latin, 1655, 1674)

Mystical union was a common theme among seventeenth-century mystics and Puritans, such as Peter Sterry, who drew extensively on the imagery of the Song of Songs and wrote a paraphrase of it, and Richard Sibbes, whose *Bowels Opened* (1639), representative of precisianism, reflects a more ecclesiastical reading of the text.¹⁶⁴ This union between Christ and the church, or Christ and the believer, was seen as the highest blessing a Christian could experience in this life, even being more important than their justification.¹⁶⁵ For Rous, the theme dominated his writings but was most articulately expressed in his slim allegory, *The Mystical Marriage*, which is "the apotheosis of Reformed thinking on the Song of Songs."¹⁶⁶ Both Elizabeth Clarke and Erica Longfellow have commented on Rous's integration of mystical union in his political reforms. It is also telling that Frederick Newenham's painting of Rous as Speaker of the House (1653) depicts Rous, wearing a broad-brimmed black hat and gold-braided black gown, resting his right

¹⁶² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 658; cf. Maryanne Cline Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 224-25. Charron states that human wisdom is that "integrity, a beautiful and noble composition of the entire man, in his insides, his outsides, his thoughts, his words, his actions, and all his movements; in the excellence and perfection of man as man." Cited in Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, 224.

¹⁶³ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 678-79. Sarpi's work is notorious because it arose during a Venetian crisis in 1606, in which the Pope commanded all Venetians to not celebrate the Mass due to jurisdictional disputes. Sarpi, a Venetian, was enlisted by the state to lead "a propaganda effort to defend the Venetian case against the papacy," which he did, but which ultimately led to his appearance before the Spanish Inquisition and excommunication. Matthew Vester, "Paolo Sarpi and Early Stuart Debates over the Papal Antichrist," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. Karl A. Kottman (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 53.

¹⁶⁴ Erica Longfellow makes the distinction between "ecclesiastical" and "personal" readings of the Song of Songs within the Reformed tradition. The former focuses on Christ being betrothed to the institutional church, whereas the latter focuses more on personal and intimate union. Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England*, 47; Gordon S. Wakefield, "The Puritans," in *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainright, and Edward Yarnold (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 444; and Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 67.

¹⁶⁵ Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 483-4. It is in this sense that mystics refer to "unitive" theology, in that, as the highest part of theology, it unites the believer with Christ and other fellow believers. Rous, *Academia Coelestis* (1702), Sig. A5.

¹⁶⁶ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 52; Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England*, 47-50.

hand on a ceremonial mace, which represents his authority in Parliament, and a book in his left hand which reads on its top edge "Mysticall Marriage."¹⁶⁷

The Mystical Marriage was published several times in the seventeenth century and a Latin edition appeared in 1655.¹⁶⁸ Why Rous translated this work into Latin is open to conjecture. Given that Latin was the language of academic theology, it is possible that this translation was made in order to advance Rous's concept of *mystica theologia* and *experimentalis* among theologians. Clarke has stated that there were strong political overtones to *Mystical Marriage* which suggest an inherent anti-Catholic and anti-Arminian nature.¹⁶⁹ But she also sees uniting characteristics in the work, which was meant to bring the Reformed together and heal divisions among them. This reading of Rous's text is consistent with his other works and with the political atmosphere of the 1630s.¹⁷⁰ Rous was a longtime advocate of *sensus unitatis* among the Reformed, and conceived of a utopian society where all true Christians were in harmony, being in mystical union with Christ and communion with one another. Rous, of course, was not the first or only one to conceive mystical union as a ground for *sensus unitatis*. In 1647, Joseph Hall published his *Christ Mystical*, which used the doctrine equally as grounds for ecclesiastical unity.¹⁷¹

There are nine chapters in *Mystical Marriage*, and Rous provides four reasons for his work, which is fit for "all times and seasons," in his short preface. First, it is suitable to the present time, there being many divisions and laxity among Christians. "For our Communion with Christ is a fastening of the soul to a mighty and impregnable Rock, that makes her steadfast even against the gates of hell." Second, "it presents to the view of the world some bunches of Grapes brought from the land of promise, to shew that this Land is not a meer imagination, but some have seen it, and brought away parcels, pledges, and earnest of it." Thus, mystical union "is a place where love passes human love, peace passes understanding, and where there is joy unspeakable and glorious." Third, this mystic marriage affects the Christian's whole experience, moving "the will and affections...it warms and draws them..." Here Rous envisions a kind of mystical knowledge which can come only through experience: "And that as by a borrowed sight men are provoked to come to tasting, so by their own tasting, they may come to a sight of their own, which only tasting can teach them." This inner nourishing and tasting causes Christians to "eternally be satisfied." Finally, the fourth reason is to inspire others to "bring forth more boxes of this precious ointment" into the world, and to write of "that mystical love which droppeth down from the Head of Christ Jesus, into the souls of the Saints, living here below."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Frederick Newenham, "Francis Rous," oil painting. Collection: Palace of Westminster (WOA 2690).

¹⁶⁸ Belden C. Lane erroneously states that Rous's *Mystical Marriage* began as a sermon. Rather, it began as a private manuscript published for the edification of "the Bride the Lambs wife." Cp. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty*, 100, with Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 83-4.

¹⁶⁹ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 52-3.

¹⁷⁰ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 54-5.

¹⁷¹ Joseph Hall, *Christ's Mystical; Or, the Blessed Union of Christ and His Members* (London, 1647), 113-48. It is noteworthy that John Downname gave his *imprimatur* to this work.

¹⁷² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 683-4.

There are three unique characteristics of Rous's *Mystical Marriage*. First, Rous advances what may be called a more *personal* reading of the Song of Songs.¹⁷³ In contrast to Sibbes's more ecclesiastical reading where the Song shows Christ's union with the church, Rous sees intimate and even erotic union between the believer and Christ. Thus, he more freely employs sensual language: "Looke on him so, that thou maist lust after him, for here it is a sinne not to looke that thou maist lust, and not to lust having looked."¹⁷⁴ Further, the soul experiences a kind of romantic, if not erotic, surrender to Christ.¹⁷⁵

Second, in contrast to other, more cautious Reformed treatises on the subject, Rous sees spiritual marriage as a reality in this life and not merely of betrothal.¹⁷⁶ Thus, the believing soul, for Rous, is *already* married to Christ. Rous writes, "Let it be the main endeavvour of a soul married to Christ, to keep her self still in that point wherein she may keep him; and so keep him that she may still say, and feel what she sayes, 'My wel-beloved is mine, and I am my wel-beloveds.'" Those married to Christ must be active in their communion and often look to heaven: "Let her often go out of the body, yea out of the world by heavenly contemplations; and treading on the top of the earth with the bottom of her feet, stretch herself up, to look over the world, into that upper world, where her treasure, her joy, her beloved dwelleth."¹⁷⁷

Third, Rous speaks of various signs and marks of *true* "heavenly visitations." These marks are seen through the use of human reason and heavenly light; thus, the believer first experiences or witnesses "a Light not fitted for the eye, but the soul." This light must agree with the word, the Bible; thus Rous distinguishes himself from those prophets of the English Revolution who abandoned the Bible as the guiding interpretive framework for experiential divinity. He did not see *experientia* as a higher authority than the Word of God. The second mark is an intense joy, which comes from Christ's divine visits. The third mark is holiness: "For when Christ visits the Soul, as he doth clarifie her with light, and ravish her with joy, so he doth beautifie her with holiness."¹⁷⁸

In sum, Rous sees Christian union with Christ mainly in terms of happiness, joy, and fruition. While there are times when the Christian is sad or depressed (when Christ is absent), the prevailing emotional state is that of bliss and pleasure, which works in love. With Downname, Rous did not see the Christian life as one of morbid introspection, or navel-gazing piety, which only looked inward, and not outward to Christ. Though he used language reminiscent of medieval mystics, and drew heavily from their writings, his "classical Christian-mysticism" is seen in his metaphors of the Christian's vision of God,

¹⁷³ Intriguingly, while the English edition, in its subtitle, refers to marriage "between a Soul and her Savior," thus intimating "personal" union, the Latin text has "*Quo Junguntur Christius et Ecclesia*." Other than this slight difference in wording the two texts appear to be the same.

¹⁷⁴ Rous, *Mystical Marriage*, 13, 25. Philip C. Almond suggests that, for Rous, lust and sexuality were intertwined and that Rous, possibly being influenced by Jacob Bohme, believed that the Fall was caused by sexuality. Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 162. For Augustine's view that sexual desire or "lust" was the result of the Fall, see David G. Hunter, "Augustine on the Body," in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 358-61. It is equally possible that Rous was influenced by Augustine.

¹⁷⁵ Clarke, *Politics, Religion, and the Song of Songs*, 55.

¹⁷⁶ In Sibbes's *Bowels Opened*, for instance, there is only passing reference to marriage. Sibbes, *Bowels Opened*, 47-54, 470.

¹⁷⁷ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 726.

¹⁷⁸ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 720-26.

the overpowering sense of light, and mystical union which ravishes “the imagination, the intellect, and the will.”¹⁷⁹

So far we have seen how Rous was active in Parliament, and how he opposed Arminianism and Roman Catholicism. We have seen how he was involved in many of the religious controversies in Caroline England and how in his writings he sought to advance the Calvinist cause with his own vision of mystical union in the Commonwealth. We will now turn to Rous’s theology so that we can better see Rous’s harmony with the Reformed tradition, and his various points of unity with Downname and Crisp.

4.4 Rous’s Theology in Historical Context

Though Rous was not a “trained” theologian, he must have been exposed to some extent to theological studies at Oxford and Leiden, the latter of which he graduated as a “*studiosus artium liberalium*.”¹⁸⁰ Like Richard Baxter, Rous’s theological education came primarily through private reading and reflection, church attendance, dialogue with Calvinist brethren, and polemics.¹⁸¹ Through these studies he gained an uncommon awareness of the Catholic mystical tradition.¹⁸² Remarkable is his awareness of Aquinas and Lombard, among others, dogmatists most commonly found in the footnotes of Protestant scholastics and academically trained theologians.¹⁸³ Even though Rous did not have a “formal” theological education, he nonetheless showed an awareness of the major themes within Reformed theology, a testament to the “rise of the laity in Evangelical Protestantism.”¹⁸⁴ For convenience, Rous can be classified as a lay affectionate theologian who sought to advance what he called “experimental knowledge” of divine things; that is, that one’s religiosity would affect “all religious obedience, actions, and virtues.” Brauer states that this type of piety “was the source for the way one worshipped, for the style and content of one’s actions—both private and public, and it was the fundamental experience that one sought to explore through rational categories...[piety] was the root of everything for the Puritan.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Brauer, “Types of Puritan Piety,” 53.

¹⁸⁰ Van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, 26.

¹⁸¹ See “Of Reading Books” (Meditation No. 71) in Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 560. For Baxter, the greater part of theological education should consist of a thorough acquaintance with “as many affectionate practical English writers” that one “can get their hands on.” Simon J. G. Burton, *The Hallowing of Logic: The Trinitarian Method of Richard Baxter’s Methodus Theologiae* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 36.

¹⁸² Howard L. Rice, *Reformed Spirituality: An Introduction for Believers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 14, 66; Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 406.

¹⁸³ Luca Baschera, “Aristotle and Scholasticism,” in *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, and Frank A. James III (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 140; Jordan J. Ballor, *Covenant, Causality, and Law: A Study in the Theology of Wolfgang Musculus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 215.

¹⁸⁴ See Carl R. Trueman, “Reformers, Puritans and Evangelicals: The Lay Connection,” in *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, ed. Deryck W. Lovegrove (New York: Routledge, 2002), 17-35.

¹⁸⁵ Brauer, “Types of Puritan Piety,” 39; Wainwright, “Jonathan Edwards and His Puritan Predecessors,” 228; Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 74. Wallace correctly sees Rous as a mainstream Puritan alongside Ames and Owen. For the practice of prayer among the laity, see Alec Ryrie, *Being*

In order to assess Rous's unity and continuity with the Reformed tradition and with Downname and Crisp we will now turn to Rous's teachings on the loci previously examined with Downname. In short, we will examine Rous's ideas in context on (a) Doctrine of God and Humanity; (b) Predestination and Assurance; (c) Covenant of Works and Grace; (d) Justification and Sanctification; and (c) The Christian Life and Piety. Though we will see similarities with Downname, we will put off a more thorough comparison until Chapter 6.

4.4.1 *Doctrine of God and Humanity*

With Downname, Rous believed in the classical formulation of the Triune God who exists in three Persons and who is responsible for the salvation of humanity.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, Rous's reliance on Augustine is suggested in that he quotes him more than any other authority.¹⁸⁷ Though Calvin's influence is evident in Rous's understanding of God the Creator, there are no direct references to him. Augustine's influence is seen in that Rous often speaks of God as light.¹⁸⁸ It in the Second Part of *The Art of Happiness* that Rous gives his most extensive account of God.¹⁸⁹ Here he writes that God is a Spirit of the highest excellence, wisdom, and power. God is the most excellent being because he is the most pure, again echoing Augustine. He is a "glorious, single, uncompounded Essence" which is the cause, fountain, and Father of all spirits; all other beings borrow their being from him.¹⁹⁰ God is thus *causa sui*; he is the "fountain" and "beginning" from which everything flows. The Creator is his own end in his creation, and does all things for himself. Man's happiness rests in the existence of a Creator, without which eternal bliss would be impossible. He is not a God one can see with human eyes, however; the purer the essence is, the more invisible it is to a "gross and carnal light."¹⁹¹ Further, "this glorious and eternal

Protestant in Reformation Britain (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 99-258; Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie, eds., *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2012); and Christopher Haigh, *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1-16, 218-28.

¹⁸⁶ Brauer, "Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic," 51-98.

¹⁸⁷ In 1939, Perry Miller proposed that Augustine had more influence on the "Puritan mind" than John Calvin. Thus, Miller sees the prominence of "Augustinian piety" within Puritanism. While it is plausible to call Puritans "Augustinian" in that they were heirs to a complex variegated tradition bequeathed through the Reformation, some caution needs to be exercised. Even in the case of Rous, where Augustine is frequently cited, one cannot infer direct causation, but only possible influence. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 4-5. James Calvin Davis and Charles Matthewes refer to the "Augustinian legacy" within Puritanism. Davis and Matthewes, "Saving Grace and Moral Saving: Thrift in Puritan Theology," in *Thrift and Thriving in America: Capitalism and Moral Order from the Puritans to the Present*, ed. Joshua J. Yates and James Davison Hunter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89ff.

¹⁸⁸ Rous, *Mystical Marriage*, 44-46; *Treatises and Meditations*, 495, 499-500; Lewis Ayres and Michel R. Barnes, "God," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 384-90.

¹⁸⁹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 15-19.

¹⁹⁰ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 15. See also Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 577, where God is said to be "the cause of all under-causes and effects."

¹⁹¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 15-16.

Spirit” reveals himself in three Persons, whose “print and impression” is to be found on every creature, there being an “absolute necessity” that all three should coincide in creation. Rous distinguishes between the three Persons of the “timeless” Trinity in this way: the first or God the Father is the great and infinite mind or understanding which begets a great wisdom, thought or word; even the first and radical light, the almighty begetter of the second light; the second or God the Son is the begotten and second light, even the wisdom and conceivment of the mind or understanding; an image and issue thereof; the third or God the Holy Ghost is the virtue and power which breaths or flows down from the Godhead, whereby God loves and enjoys himself and puts in execution whatsoever he will have done for himself.¹⁹² The rest of the *Art of Happiness* deals with the redemption of humanity and the devotional practices which bring about a state of happiness and contentment, such as prayer, humility, and meditation.¹⁹³

Elsewhere Rous reaffirms that the Trinity alone, apart from any human activity, causes salvation.¹⁹⁴ Rous writes of God’s oneness and immutability in his *Meditations of Instrvction* (No. 17), but even here he has more practical ends in mind: “God is one and immutable, so may we as certainly know what he will be hereafter, as what he hath been alreadie...if we feare him he will also to vs be a mercifull God.”¹⁹⁵

Throughout Rous’s writings there is an emphasis on the jealousy of God, as when, for instance, Rous writes, “The Lord of hosts, is as iealous of his spouse, as thou of thy wife; he wil not haue temptations set before her, and therefore forbids altogether the making of images for any worship.”¹⁹⁶ Because God only is worthy of worship and guards his glory, he is to be loved above the creature. Humanity was made in “God’s image” and “likeness.”¹⁹⁷

What is significant about Rous’s conception of God is that he always places it within the greater context of redemption. His overarching aim is to show the path to humanity’s *Summum bonum*.¹⁹⁸ This is not surprising in that this was the aim of Puritanism in general and reflects mainstream Puritanism’s contention that theology is the science of knowing and living to God, and is to be learned with a submissive and humble mind.¹⁹⁹ While Reformed theologians often wrote of the doctrine of God in order to defend it against the Socinians and thus had more polemic aims, Rous wrote of it and the other loci in order to provide a “delightful use and advantage unto souls...to have intimate, large and frequent soul-ravishing meetings, communions, and communications with the Bridegroom of souls.”²⁰⁰

There was nothing radical about Rous’s understanding of the doctrine of God or humanity. As even a casual observance of the many Reformed treatises on the subject shows, this doctrine was a point of unity and continuity between the Reformed in England

¹⁹² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 16.

¹⁹³ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 19-92.

¹⁹⁴ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 509-10.

¹⁹⁵ Rous, *Meditations of Instrvction*, 60-1.

¹⁹⁶ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 436.

¹⁹⁷ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 12, 493, 659.

¹⁹⁸ See title page to *The Art of Happiness*.

¹⁹⁹ William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (London, 1623), 1-4; Edward Leigh, *A Systeme or Body of Divinity* (London, 1654), 3.

²⁰⁰ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, sig. B1.

and in the Continent. Where Rous was distinct was in the way in which he clothed the doctrines with mysticism.

4.4.2 *Predestination and Assurance*

For Rous, as for other Reformed polemicists, predestination was the central theme in the Arminian-Calvinist debates of the 1620s. Much effort was spent in his *Testis Veritatis* to show the catholicity of the doctrine. Indeed, Rous contends that double predestination has been and continues to be the doctrine of the English Reformed church and cites in support Augustine, Justin Martyr, Anselm, Vincent of Lerins, Isidore of Seville, Aquinas, John Field, John Rogers, and Theodore Beza.²⁰¹ Rous quotes from various ancient and medieval theological texts and shows awareness of scholasticism and its major sources, which is remarkable given his lack of formal theological education.

Other than his arguments for the catholicity of predestination found in *Testis Veritatis*, the only other place where predestination receives more extensive treatment is in his “Aphorisms of Predestination.”²⁰² Rous begins his discussion of predestination with a comment on how difficult the doctrine is to comprehend given that the doctrine is “unsearchable.”²⁰³ He therefore says that it is best to “set down short and evident Truths” and “by light to chase away the errors of those that deceive” and so “by brevity to make knowledge portable, and so either easie or pleasant to the knower.”²⁰⁴

There are ten short points in “Aphorisms of Predestination”: (1) That the doctrine is sweet and mysterious and so must be received with a passive and submissive receiving of the Bible’s teaching; (2) though God chooses some and leaves others (here echoing Dordt), the reason for God’s choosing is hidden and known only to him; (3) God’s will is joined with wisdom and justice; predestination and reprobation are just judgments of God;²⁰⁵ (4) since all humanity fell into sin freely, God is free to be a Judge and to punish sin; (5) before the foundations of the world, God has decided to leave some to their “self-purchased misery” and chooses or leaves according to what will bring him the most glory; (6) God fore-appointed Christ to be the Savior of the elect, and his elect to be saved by Christ, from eternity; (7) God is free to allow Adam to either take of the Tree of Life and Stability or the Tree of Death and Apostasy; (8) though God hardens, he does not do it by infusing corruption and is absolutely clear of causing sin; “God is not the cause of sin no more then the Sun is the cause of Ice”; “God...doth not put the hardness into the heart, but he leaves the heart and hath nothing to do with it” (more echoes of Dordt); (9) though Adam’s offspring are necessarily sinful, they may be justly punished because this necessity came from Adam’s voluntary sinning; “And surely if they had been in his place they would likewise have done the same; for *Adams Children* would have been no better then their Father, the print no better than the stamp;” (10) predestination is a mysterious doctrine

²⁰¹ Rous, *Testis Veritatis*, 3-5, 8-9, 15, 17.

²⁰² Rous, *Treatises and Mediations*, 137-40.

²⁰³ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 137.

²⁰⁴ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 137.

²⁰⁵ Rous does not here use the word “reprobation” but refers to it in substance in the hardening of Pharaoh. Rous does, however, use the word “reprobation” in *Testis Veritatis*, 18.

and every person should tread carefully; and rather than trying to understand mysteries above them, one should rather aspire to understand the doctrines of salvation, such as one's grafting into Christ by faith, growing in Christian love, and establishing of the heart in the earnest of the Spirit.²⁰⁶ Rous concludes, "Miserable it is to see (as I have seen it) a man possessed by pieces of this secret, rather than possessing them, and so uttering his distractions rather than resolutions, that one might pity his amazement sooner than conceive his meaning."²⁰⁷

Rous also sought to address the experiential questions or problems that arose for parishioners which predestination would undoubtedly cause, especially when it came to the assurance of faith. He opted for a more infralapsarian line of thought and may have been influenced by the Canons of Dordt. In his "Aphorisms of Predestination," Rous clearly emphasizes the passive aspects of reprobation when he writes that "[God] does not put the hardness in the heart, but he leaves the heart and hath nothing to do with it; and then where God doth nothing to soften, there will quickly enough be done by sin and Satan to harden. Therefore, when we are hardened, Let us rather complain that God doth nothing, then that he doth something in us."²⁰⁸ God thus does by not doing or by withholding his grace as the sun, when it is down, withholds its warmth.²⁰⁹ In conjunction with predestination, Rous emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit as the effector and sanctifier of salvation, even more so than the Father as Creator or the Son as Redeemer.²¹⁰ Rous's path to assurance seems more grounded in mysticism and mystical union with the blessings or testimonies of the Spirit than in the marks of grace, though he does, at times, correlate growth in grace and assurance.²¹¹ At times, Rous implies that the elect might be more numerous than one might suspect and that any operation of grace, however small, should be looked on as the possibility of effectual grace.²¹² Rous cautions against too much sorrow for sin and says it may be a sin not to joy after sorrow for sin.²¹³

Again, with more mystical overtones, Rous writes, "there is a secret earning and owning of God for a Father, put into the soul of a son of God, by the Spirit which new begetteth him, and thereby he calls God Father; and yet not he, but the very seed and spirit of his Father in him...There is an Abba, Father, which no man knows but he that hath it; and he that hath it cannot express it; it is like the earning of a Lamb, whereby she owneth her Dam; by which she owneth her, but knows not her self whereby she owneth her."²¹⁴ Rous elsewhere emphasizes the testimony of the Spirit.²¹⁵ For Rous, assurance is a foretaste of one's true end in eternal life and bliss, and one of the many benefits of one's mystical marriage with Christ in the present life.²¹⁶

²⁰⁶ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 137-40.

²⁰⁷ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 140.

²⁰⁸ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 139.

²⁰⁹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 139.

²¹⁰ Brauer, "Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic," 75-85, 219-20.

²¹¹ Brauer, "Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic," 213.

²¹² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 137.

²¹³ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 603-4.

²¹⁴ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 302.

²¹⁵ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 597-9.

²¹⁶ Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 66.

4.4.3 Covenant of Works and Grace

While Rous does not formally articulate a covenant theology along the lines of Cocceius, John Ball or Francis Roberts, he does show awareness of its thought.²¹⁷ Whether or not he had read or was aware of the many English texts on the subject is uncertain; Rous does refer to the Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace and possibly hints at a Covenant of Redemption.²¹⁸ He sees Christ as the Second Adam in his *Meditations* and presents Adam as the head of humanity in his “Aphorisms of Predestination.” He sees the Covenant of Grace as, essentially, a marriage contract.²¹⁹ He maintains the balance between the idea of man’s voluntary sinning and the unavoidability of the fall under the covenant of free will and general grace. Though Rous calls the fall a “voluntary certainty;” he says that Adam, having an enlightened understanding, was created with a holy will set in “equipoise” and “freedom;” he could choose to continue to depend upon grace and remain righteous or refuse divine grace and fall from his righteousness. His choice was between living as a “true expression” of the divine image by staying obedient or living in self-sufficiency by following the light of reason apart from the divine and heavenly light.²²⁰ Whether Rous conceived of Adam’s integrity, had he chosen to obey, as *non posse peccatum* is not certain. What is certain is that post-Fall, all humanity is *non posse non peccatum*; God is thus free to punish all humanity because not only did Adam fall “for himself” but all humanity “in gross” fell “in him.”²²¹

Throughout his writings, however, Rous seems unaware or unaffected by the technical terms of Protestant scholasticism. For instance, in his “Aphorisms” just referred to, Rous distinguishes between an active necessity (*necessitas activa*) and a passive necessity (*necessitas otiosa*) in reference to the freedom of Adam’s will and fall into sin. He notes that since the material cause (*causa sine qua non*) is called a stupid reason (*stolida causa*) he sees no reason for not calling the material necessity (*necessitas per quam*) a stupid necessity (*stolida necessitas*).²²² This distinction between active and passive necessity does not reflect the patterns of definition typically found within Protestant scholasticism and its lineage has not been possible to trace.²²³

The idea of the covenant is spread throughout Rous’s writings and is arguably in the background, but there is no elaborate discussion of it. Remarkable, however, there is a

²¹⁷ For Cocceius’s doctrine of the covenants, see Willem J. van Asselt, *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius, 1603-1669* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 248-70; Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. E. Bizer and trans. G. T. Thomson, 2nd ed. (1934; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 281-319.

²¹⁸ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 138, 652-53, 655.

²¹⁹ Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 406-15.

²²⁰ Brauer, “Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic,” 65-66.

²²¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 138-9, 504-5, 507-8, 542, 660, 675.

²²² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 138-9.

²²³ For Protestant scholastic distinctions on *necessitas*, see J. Martin Bac, *Perfect Will Theology: Divine Agency in Reformed Scholasticism as against Suarez, Episcopius, Descartes, and Spinoza* (Leiden; Brill, 2010), 96-156, esp. 142; and Richard A. Muller, “*necessitas consequentiae*” and “*necessitas consequentis*,” in *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms, Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1985), 200.

lengthy discussion of personal covenanting.²²⁴ Though Rous does refer to the new covenant of grace and salvation, the overall absence of a more nuanced articulation of covenant theology is suggestive of Rous's preoccupation with mystical piety and his status as a lay devotional writer. This is not to say that federal theologians were not equally preoccupied with piety; indeed, as Van Asselt has shown, Protestant scholasticism was much more than a reasoned exposition of biblical theology and had as its focus more nuanced pastoral concerns.²²⁵ Further, the heart of covenant theology, which is the binding relationship between God and his elect, does indeed play a prominent role within Rous's work.

4.4.4 *Justification and Sanctification*

We observed before how predestination and not justification was the hot topic of debate in the English Reformation.²²⁶ This too seems to have been the preoccupation of the religious debates of the 1620s when Rous, as a polemicist, was most active.²²⁷ For Rous, the term "justification" is only used sporadically and never receives a formal articulation, as does predestination. However, it is important to note that for Rous justification and sanctification are coterminous works of the Holy Spirit. Rous equates the removing of filth (sanctification) with the taking away of guilt (justification) in two distinct though simultaneous acts.²²⁸

Rous refers to the perpetual use of one's justification and sanctification. He writes that the "putting away the particular guilt of...sin by the washing of Christs blood, and the particular uncleanness of that sin by the washing of Christs Spirit, which we were before generally cleansed and justified, may also have a particular and continuall cleansing and justification." Both inward and outward baptism, though once performed, is of continual use and daily we must have recourse thereto that the "stock of justification, and sanctification at first imparted may be daily applied."²²⁹ Rous sees the act of justification as occurring only once, but sees sanctification as an ongoing process. Both have ongoing effects for the believer.

Rous extols the work of the Trinity in salvation when he writes that believers should ascribe glory to the Trinity for "our Election, for our Justification, for our Regeneration, which are the main works of our salvation, and are the joint works of the undivided Trinity."²³⁰ Further, good works come after the Christian enters "the state and right of life and glory." Thus it is from the Christian's regeneration that good works flow: "Therefore works add not a new part of salvation but onely increase the issues and fruit of

²²⁴ Rous, *The Only Remedy*, 299-300.

²²⁵ Van Asselt, *Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius*, 101-5.

²²⁶ See Chapter 2.

²²⁷ So his *Testis Veritatis* attacks Arminianism on the grounds of predestination, free will, and assurance.

²²⁸ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 311, 449.

²²⁹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 511-12.

²³⁰ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 509-10.

a part formerly possessed.” Good works are thus the “fruits of our salvation,” and do not give any glory to the individual, but to God.²³¹

4.4.5 *Law and Gospel*

In the *Mediations*, Rous includes a short statement on the relation between law and gospel, though the themes do occur throughout his other writings. Here Rous distinguishes between the “preaching” which is from God and that which is from the devil. The former begins with the law, and ends with the gospel. This is seen in God’s command to Adam: “When you eat, ye shall die;” and yet, when humanity falls, God “giveth Christ to restore him.” The latter preaches that man shall not die at all, and, after the Fall, that “God is merciful, and Christ is a reconciler of our sins,” in order to “go about to kill that Christ which was to be the life of them.” After sins are committed, the devil charges to those who have yet to receive grace, “whosoever sinneth is not born of God; The soul that sins shall die.” To those who have grace, he attacks, saying, “There remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgement.”

Rous’s solution to the devil’s assault is to “use Gods kind of Preaching” before the commission of sin, in order that the “the whole Law, even the terror of God,” should be considered to frighten and prevent willful sin. When sin is committed, Christians must “carry the yoaik of the Law,” until one is humbled for it, and, after “due humiliation” to “take hold of the Gospel,” which is promised to all who are truly penitent. This, Rous says, “is the true and rightful successor of the Law.”²³²

In his view of the relation between law and gospel, Rous, though a mystic, distances himself from some of the more radical mystics of his time, who would disparage any positive use for the law, and instead focus on love and feeling.

4.4.6 *Christian Life and Piety*

Of the topics discussed in this section, the subject of the Christian life, and the life of piety, is the most prevalent within Rous’s writings. Rous’s purpose in composing *Art of Happiness* is to bring believers to a state of perpetual happiness in the divine or “*summa philosophia est, quae exquirat Summum bonum.*”²³³ The *Diseases of the Time* contains numerous remedies for spiritual ailments and emphasizes the practice of holiness.²³⁴ The *Oyl of Scorpions*, Rous’s work on providentialism, traces the causes of the pestilence, economic crisis, poverty, and extreme weather to such social diseases as swearing and blasphemy, drunkenness, unthankfulness, deceitfulness, filthiness, prophaneness, and backsliding.²³⁵ *The Only Remedy* is a biblical exposition of the practice of repentance.²³⁶ The

²³¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 510.

²³² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 559-60.

²³³ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, Sig. A3r, 1-92.

²³⁴ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 93-214.

²³⁵ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 215-80.

²³⁶ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 281-332.

Meditations, devoted to the edification and reparation of the house of God, covers such themes of piety as motives to increase knowledge and good works, the excellency of Christian happiness, avoiding extremes of passion and despair, loving God, combating the devil, meditating on the divine, godly submission, trusting God, patience, humility, cards and dice, and maintaining a good conscience, among many others.²³⁷ Rous's intent with his *Meditations* is to gather "the diverse sparks of Holy fire, which have issued from the Spirit that baptizeth with fire...[and by] their united heat, to kindle a flame where is none or to increase it, where it is already kindled."²³⁸ Rous's "A Reason of This Threefold Work" for his *Interiora Regni Dei* gives the reason for his devotional writing: to "propose to the interal Eys of souls, the internal operations of this Kingdom...that hence they may gather true, and solid consolations, while they find themselves inwardly taught, drawn, and united to Christ."²³⁹ Prayer, for Rous, is essential for the believer; he or she can rest in the providence of God.²⁴⁰ Rous elsewhere writes that even one's best works are mixed with sin.²⁴¹

For Rous, the "fundamentals" are simple for the Christian life and without controversy: "to know God and Jesus Christ by a true faith unto justification and sanctification is life eternal." He continually returns to mystical union with Christ as the central theme in Christianity, and the Christian's motive for godly living.²⁴² As we saw before, this was a theme Rous integrated into his utopian vision for a Christian society. It is in the believer's personal awareness of the divine (*unio* and *communio*) that he or she best serves God in this world, and in which the mending of fences is possible with the disenfranchised and persecuted Reformed. In this sense, Rous's mysticism should be seen as contributing to the Reformed *sensus unitatis*.

4.5 Conclusion

Rous was an enigmatic character in many ways. First, he delved into the more mystical currents within the Christian tradition and articulated a utopian dream of toleration in which all true believers worshipped and adored the Triune God while protesting the advance of Arminianism. Second, though Rous employed sensual and mystical language that was both common and uncommon among his peers, he nonetheless retained prestige among orthodox Puritans, which is suggestive of tolerance and flexibility among confessionally minded Puritans. That none of his peers questioned his standing as a prominent member of "the godly," is attested by the reception of his Psalter by the Westminster Assembly. With his cousin John Pym, Rous had the reputation of being uncompromising in his adherence to Reformed doctrine, and saw the doctrine of

²³⁷ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 487-608.

²³⁸ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 489.

²³⁹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 610.

²⁴⁰ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 544-5; Brauer, "Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic," 137-47; C. A. Patrides, "The Experience of Otherness: Theology as a Means of Life" in *The Age of Milton: Backgrounds to Seventeenth-Century Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides and Raymond B. Waddington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 187.

²⁴¹ Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 481-5.

²⁴² Rous, *Treatises and Meditations*, 116, 209, 375, 445, 598.

predestination as conciliatory among the Reformed. Third, Rous's brand of mysticism is in keeping with earlier medieval trajectories and the robust interpretive tradition of the Song of Songs and teachings on spiritual marriage. Eclectically borrowing from patristic, medieval, and Reformation writings, Rous's unique contribution to *mystica theologia* was his belief that believers, as spiritual lovers and brides of Christ, were co-heirs of God and could experience the bliss of spiritual marriage in this life. Union and communion with Christ dominated his writings. Fourth, Rous was an active educator when most mystics were berating philosophy and secular learning. He shared Hartlib's vision to revive the intellectual life of Britain and by extension, Europe. He was *au courant* in matters that helped him promote a Puritan Reformation.

Rous demonstrates the internal polarities of the period, namely, the desire to be orthodox and counted among the historic Reformed or Calvinist line on the one hand (rational) while also delving into the deeper mysteries surrounding union and communion with Christ (emotional, spiritual) on the other. Rous's mysticism served as a way of bringing the Reformed together in a shared experience of other-worldliness in his attempt to unite a struggling and factious English Church. His thought shows a variety of emphases that constitute a distinct strain from that of precisionism, and yet nonetheless "mainstream" and "Reformed orthodox."

That Rous's writings were published in the Netherlands and were popular in the *Nadere Reformatie* further evidences the desire for the Reformed to come together with a common religious experience. The broad appeal of Rous's mysticism and its beatific and even erotic language among English laity, Quakers, German Pietists, and Norwegian clerics is suggestive of the spiritual atmosphere of the English Revolution as it magnified inherent tendencies within Puritanism.

Finally, Rous's life and work expresses the continuity with the earlier English Reformed tradition in its eclectic use of sources and attests to the diverse reading culture within mainstream Puritanism. Rous, though more mystical than Downname, shared a common style of experimental divinity that surrounded a cluster of Reformed doctrines, including the doctrine of God and man, predestination and assurance, justification and sanctification, covenant, and the Christian life. We will now turn to Tobias Crisp, who represents the antinomian strain within the Puritan Reformation.