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BENJAMIN WALLIN:  
A RESPECTABLE MINISTER'S PROCLAMATION OF THE  
GOSPEL IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Joshua Hawkins Cook  
December 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

BENJAMIN WALLIN:

A RESPECTABLE MINISTER'S PROCLAMATION OF THE  
GOSPEL IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

To my steadfast Emily

*“The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
And he will have no lack of gain.” Proverbs 31:11*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE.....	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Thesis.....	3
Methodology.....	3
Summary of Research.....	4
Biography.....	5
Hymnody.....	7
Doctrinal Stances.....	9
Eighteenth-Century Particular Baptist Preaching.....	10
Significance.....	13
2. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF A MOST RESPECTABLE MAN.....	14
Maze Pond.....	16
Edward Wallin.....	19
Benjamin Wallin.....	26
Conclusion.....	35
3. BENJAMIN WALLIN'S TEACHING.....	36
Confessional Subscriptions.....	37
The Trinity.....	39
Covenant of Grace.....	41
Particular Redemption.....	43
Original Sin and Actual Sin.....	45

Chapter	Page
Conversion.....	47
Justification.....	50
The Law.....	54
The Gospel.....	58
Sanctification.....	61
Perseverance of the Saints.....	64
The Ordinances.....	67
Preaching.....	73
The Pastoral Office.....	76
Church Membership and the Communion of Saints.....	81
Prayer.....	87
4. BENJAMIN WALLIN’S PREACHING.....	92
Form Criticism.....	94
Defining the Genre.....	95
Structure.....	119
Generic Fidelity.....	121
Final Analysis.....	129
5. BENJAMIN WALLIN’S POSITION ON THE “MODERN QUESTION”: PREACHING THE GOSPEL.....	133
Preaching the Gospel in Southwark, London, England.....	133
Benjamin Wallin and “Hyper-Calvinism”.....	138
The “Modern Question”.....	142
Benjamin Wallin’s Position.....	151
6. CONCLUSION.....	158

APPENDIX	Page
1. ANNOTATED LIST OF REFERENCES AND LETTERS REGARDING BENJAMIN WALLIN FOUND IN GUILD'S <i>EARLY HISTORY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY</i> .....	163
2. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN WALLIN'S PUBLISHED WORKS ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY .....	166
3. JOHN BRINE'S AND BENJAMIN WALLIN'S SERMON OUTLINES OF 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1 .....	187
4. LETTER OF FEBRUARY 4, 1748, FROM BENJAMIN WALLIN TO MR. THOMAS PRATTEN .....	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	193

## PREFACE

The present work is the culmination of an unanticipated journey that has taken me by surprise at almost every turn. Throughout all of my academic studies I have had an intense interest in history that I can trace back to the very first cassette tape about the American Revolution that was given to me to play on my Fisher Price® tape deck. The story of history, its characters, and the way in which the preceding generations could so significantly impact the future by their choices to do or not do something as individuals, or, collectively as societies, caused me to marvel no less as a five-year-old than it does today. The Christian faith that was instilled in me by my parents helps me to give glory to God about his providential interaction with his creation, not as a distant clockmaker, but as its very Creator, Redeemer, and Lord. As I reflect on how God has directed my personal history, I can only but fall to my knees and give him the glory!

Raised in the General Baptist tradition, my parents laid the firm foundation of my faith by planting the seed of the gospel in my heart and mind by daily instructing me about the atoning work of Jesus on my behalf. The Holy Spirit from a very early age caused me to trust in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of my sins, and to treasure the gift of his Word above all, eventually bringing me to the waters of my baptism. To this day, I give thanks to God for my parents and for all of the men and women in our church that were used by God to nurture and grow the gospel message in my life. For parents, Sunday school teachers, vacation bible school volunteers, and pastors who stressed the need to memorize God's Word and to hide it in my heart I am truly grateful.

While serving in the U.S. Army and attending Hillsdale College between deployments, God was stretching my faith and understanding of his Word in ways that I could not have anticipated. During this time, God helped me to recognize and affirm that



I was wholly incapable of participating in my salvation, and that the work of justification had to be completely accomplished by him alone. God brought men of faith into my life like Pastor Norton, Major Welch, Dr. Wilson, Dr. Burke, and Professor Westblade, who demonstrated a courageous and academic faith that had a strong commitment to evangelism. These men helped me to appreciate the far-flung reaches of Christianity and to better understand the Body of Christ as it has existed across the millennia. They were not only influential in encouraging me to dig deeper into theology, but they were also used by God to direct me into pursuing a seminary education, and ultimately the pastorate. For the blessing that the ministry has been to me, and for their role in directing me toward that calling, I am sincerely in their debt.

The pastoral care that I received upon returning from Iraq and entering the Seminary in many ways can be credited with saving my life. Pastors Daniel Johnson and Doug Adams were essential in providing the care of souls to me and my young family that made it possible for me to heal and to embark upon the journey of Seminary. It was they who first began jokingly calling me “Dr. Cook,” which at the time I thought was ludicrous, but their encouragement to continue to pursue academic excellence was a needed support. At Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Doctors Marquart, Gieschen, Fickenscher, MacKenzie, Maier, Ziegler, and Senkbeil applied the grace of God’s Word to me in such a way that they opened my eyes to the tremendous responsibility and joy that would be entrusted to me through the office of the ministry. Their teachings connected exegesis, history, doctrines, and practice in such a way as to impress upon me the recognition of God’s love for his church by establishing the office of under-shepherd. Their faithful transmission of what they had learned and experienced to ensure that another generation of men would be equipped for service in the church has been an inspiration to me to complete this work so that I too might do my part in supporting God’s ongoing work of pastoral formation. To these soul-seeking shepherds, I offer my thanks, and pray that God would equip me as he has endowed them.

The faculty at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have been wonderful and godly men under which to study. Early in the PhD coursework section of this journey Dr. Wright and Dr. Wills continued to foster my love for church history, and their influence upon me certainly contributed to my desire to incorporate a historical component into my dissertation. The faculty of the Christian Preaching department have been inspirational, not only in their love of preaching, but also in their zeal to push their students to expand their understanding and familiarity with a broad range of preachers and preaching—getting right down to the nuts and bolts of sermon construction and proclamation. Dr. Vogel’s assistance in the field of rhetorical criticism was priceless, as was Dr. Pohlman’s in teaching an appreciation for, and an ability to analyze sermon genres which were unfamiliar to my eyes and ears. Dr. York is a preeminent preacher, and to be able to converse with him regularly about preaching as well as to have opportunity to frequently sit under his preaching in chapel over the past half-decade has been a tremendous blessing. Dr. York’s classes had a way of uniting his students into a brotherhood that could whole-heartedly give thanks to God for the privilege of being called to preach the Word. Finally, Dr. Haykin has spent countless hours with me in history courses, independent study, and supervising and suggesting edits to this dissertation. Dr. Haykin’s depth of knowledge, zeal for the truth, sincere evangelicalism, and willingness to befriend a Lutheran (of all people!) are some of the things I appreciate most about him. In addition to these qualities, Dr. Haykin’s interest in topics like “the theology of color” have opened my own eyes to the value of being a curious child of God who delights in his Father and seeks out the many things that glorify his name. His almost giddy excitement about discovering buried nuggets of truth in the eighteenth-century is a delight to behold, and contagious in every way.

I have had the privilege of serving in four Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod congregations as a pastor. At each of these congregations I have received love and support far beyond what I have deserved. Their patience with me as a sinner-saint, and

their willingness to follow, while at the same time, to come alongside a young pastor and to teach him has been a gift from God. The friendships that have been forged, are, in Christ Jesus, something that I look forward to enjoying into life eternal. Not only have you supported me and my family financially, but more importantly you have remembered us constantly in your prayers. You have been in my heart and mind as I have pressed on toward the goal of completing this project. You are the beautiful bride of Christ, and I am thankful to be counted among your number.

Finally, my enduring thankfulness and gratitude is offered to my best friend and helpmate, Emily. Not only is she the mother of our six amazing children, but throughout the course of our God-given history together, she has had to endure the hardships of deployments and a husband that is gone for church meetings and academic research at all hours of the night. Through it all she has been a diligent and selfless spouse, and her tireless service for others and her loving personality have been the very image of God's love in my life. Her intelligence is unsurpassed by any, and her willingness to listen to me drone on and complain about research while offering suggestions about how to state things more clearly, has always improved the quality of my work.

Joshua Cook

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2021

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist churches a battle was being waged for the heart and souls of the faithful. As the full influence of the Enlightenment came to maturity in England, from the perspective of the faithful Particular Baptist ministers, many people were being led astray by rationalistic preaching into the theological errors of “Baxterianism,” Arminianism, Socinianism, and Arianism. Many of the pastors shifted their focus to addressing these errors following the example of a gifted theologian like John Gill, but perhaps without his giftedness to maintain the precise theological distinctions necessary so as not to fall into error on the other side of the issue. Consequently, disputes arose within the Baptist churches surrounding the “modern question” (that is, the propriety of the free offer of grace through the gospel to all people), and some of those traditional Calvinists slipped into the theological error that has been called “high” or “hyper” Calvinism” in subsequent generations.<sup>1</sup> Believing themselves able to fully recognize and comprehend the scope of the errors, the generation immediately following these “high” Calvinists cast much negative light upon the

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<sup>1</sup> Recent work by Anthony Cross, and Jonathan White has argued that the use of the term “Hyper-Calvinism” is inappropriate and should be avoided as it typically involves an exaggeration and characterization of a theology that is held in disregard by the critic. In its stead, the historical term “high” Calvinist is meant to convey the idea that the theologian in question was very systematic in his theology and preaching and may have been willing to push the boundaries of theology by following theological propositions to their fullest logical extent without the explicit warrant of Scripture so long as sound reasoning was employed from an established Scriptural doctrine. Anthony R. Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival among English Particular Baptists* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), and Jonathan White, “A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill’s Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism,” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010). This dissertation will forego the use of the term “hyper” in favor of using the more defensible and charitable term “high” when describing the associated theology and theologians, unless it is in connection with a quotation that uses the term. Chapter five will further discuss the problematic use of the term.

theologians and pastors of the previous era, even referring to the whole system of theology propounded by Gill as a “continent of mud.”<sup>2</sup> Pointing to the decline in the number of members of the Particular Baptists who maintained “high” views, modern-day critics of these men have implied that this is evidence enough to continue to disparage the work that was being done among the people of God by these ministers.<sup>3</sup> The work of the early eighteenth-century Particular Baptist ministers has been largely under-evaluated in favor of spending more time uncovering the work and theology of those ministers in the latter half of the eighteenth-century who presided over the formation of the various missionary societies.

The Particular Baptist minister at Maze Pond, Southwark, Benjamin Wallin (1710–1782), has at times been lumped in with the men who have been disparaged as “high” Calvinist. This is surprising, given the scarcity of works that have been written that have sought to represent this man’s teaching by engaging the significant body of written material that he left behind in the form of published sermons and theological discourses. The goal of this dissertation will be to examine the works of Benjamin Wallin in the context of the theological and social setting which he served, and provide an objective understanding of his theological contributions, without simply replicating the opinions of detractors who have not engaged the thinking of the man himself. In doing so, insight will be gained into the theology and practices that God used to preserve his

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<sup>2</sup> Raymond Brown, *English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 93.

<sup>3</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 174–176. McBeth cites an observation from a passage from Ivimey, however, the statement by Ivimey does not necessarily imply that the reduced numbers at Currier’s Hall was the result of Brine’s “hyper” Calvinism but McBeth infers the decline to have been caused by the theology. See Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists Comprising the Principal Events of the History of Protestant Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1668 Till 1760; And of the London Baptist Churches, During that Period*, (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1823), 3:373. McBeth has repeated this claim in his *Sourcebook For Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 116, when he says: “Brine’s theology allowed no room for evangelistic preaching and thus, not surprisingly, his church declined severely.”

Church, while also identifying those latent errors (if any) that could be potential pitfalls for God's church in this generation and in generations to come.

### **Thesis**

Several research questions present themselves in relation to Benjamin Wallin, not the least of which is: Who was the man, and what did he believe? A full scope of Wallin's theology will not be possible within the limited framework of this dissertation, especially when it is noted that Wallin was one of the most prolific authors of the mid-eighteenth-century Particular Baptist community, leaving behind some forty-five published works. A particular goal of this dissertation is to identify Wallin's attitude toward the "modern question,"<sup>4</sup> and toward the ongoing Awakening, as well as his understanding of ecclesiology and the responsibility of church members to the local congregation. Wallin's formerly perceived coolness toward the Awakening was not the result of an entrenched "high" Calvinist doctrinal stance that denied the responsibility to proclaim the gospel to all people. Wallin was actually enthusiastic about the possibility of spiritual revival, so long as that did not come at the expense of sound doctrine and strong ecclesiology. Accordingly, this dissertation argues that Benjamin Wallin affirmed the "modern question" and his theological writings should be understood to represent an evangelical Calvinism firmly rooted in the orthodox Reformed tradition.

### **Methodology**

The focus of this dissertation, after providing a biography of this little-known Particular Baptist minister, is to uncover the theology and practice of Benjamin Wallin so that a better understanding of his position within the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist

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<sup>4</sup> This issue is discussed in later chapters in depth. Briefly, the "modern question" was a debate that raged among the Particular Baptist for the better part of a century. The debate took its name from Mathias Maurice's 1737 work entitled *A Modern Question Modestly Answer'd*. At the heart of the debate was a disagreement about whether it was an unbeliever's (moral) duty to obey the gospel upon hearing it.

debates is gleaned. Special attention is given to those times when Wallin addresses themes that relate to the “modern question” so as to demonstrate his willingness to side with those who affirmed the positive position in that question, while also maintaining close relationships with those who have been associated with the negative position. Wallin’s attitude toward preaching the gospel to unbelievers is identified through close examination of Wallin’s sermons, discourses, and letters. Additionally, Wallin’s considerable writings regarding ecclesiology are evaluated with a particular eye toward understanding his “strict”<sup>5</sup> ecclesiology that at times may have tempered his enthusiasm towards the Awakening because of its perceived excesses and errors. Through the study of this minister’s writings, and a demonstration of his theology, a broader understanding of the eighteenth-century Particular Baptists is gained that provides insight into the denomination’s life during the time when England wrestled with the grave theological errors that sprang from rationalism. This era was a time of testing and maturing for the newly-tolerated Baptist community, and a better understanding of one of its most respectable pastor-theologians will shed light on God’s preserving grace that would enable the coming missionary movement.<sup>6</sup>

### **Summary of Research**

Benjamin Wallin has not received the academic attention of some of his eighteenth-century peers such as John Gill. He was, however, well respected among the Particular Baptists in his day and was one of their more prolific writers. This state of the question will address the monographs and articles that have been written that include information concerning Benjamin Wallin. Wallin is not the principal subject of any

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<sup>5</sup> This issue is also discussed in a later chapter. The term “strict” eventually came to be used of a theologian who observed a strong ecclesiology that insisted upon local church membership for admittance to the local church’s observance of the Lord’s Supper.

<sup>6</sup> The use of “respectable” as an adjective to describe Benjamin Wallin in the title of the dissertation as well as occasionally throughout the dissertation is borrowed from one of his early biographers, Charles Stanford. More will be said about this in chapter two.

published works, but is occasionally, though incidentally, mentioned by historians alongside Gill and John Brine beginning with historians such as Joseph Ivimey and John Fawcett. This means that no substantial “question” is represented in the literature specific to Benjamin Wallin, and the vast majority of recorded references to Wallin are biographical in nature. However, because his name is mentioned alongside the names of Gill and Brine it does suggest that further attention is due to Wallin, in particular a deeper understanding of his relationship to the issues of his day, especially in regard to the “modern question,” preaching, hymnody, and the relationship between believers baptism and church fellowship. By including Wallin’s name alongside Gill and Brine there may be implied questions from some authors that are relevant to further Wallin studies, but to date, there is no literature that addresses these questions directly. The pertinent articles and chapters can be classified into three primary groups: 1) biography; 2) hymnody; and 3) suggested doctrinal stances in relation to pertinent eighteenth-century debates. Finally, in addition to those works which discuss Benjamin Wallin specifically, it will also be necessary for the sake of advancing Wallin studies, to situate him within the context of his peers by examining the history of research in regard to eighteenth-century preaching among the Particular Baptists.

## **Biography**

The vast majority of literature relating to Benjamin Wallin is biographical. The most substantial work on Wallin has been written by Terry Wolever as part of a biographical sketch of both Edward and Benjamin Wallin for the fourth volume of *The Particular Baptists: 1638–1910*.<sup>7</sup> Wolever records biographical information for Wallin and for the church that he served at Maze Pond, as well as documenting some of his correspondences with New England ministers and providing a very brief survey of some

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<sup>7</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin and Terry Wolever, ed., *The British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2018), 4:44–85.



of his published works. Wolever's work draws from the earlier histories of Walter Wilson and Joseph Ivimey, who wrote during the first half of the nineteenth century, and who provide a great amount of detail regarding Wallin's involvement at Maze Pond as well as in the broader life of the Particular Baptists of England.<sup>8</sup> While the historian Thomas Crosby does not record any information about Benjamin Wallin specifically, he provides significant information relating to his father Edward and to Maze Pond.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Timothy Whelan's *Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* does not speak principally of Benjamin Wallin, but in relating the history of James Dore, Wallin's successor, he helps complete the biographical picture of Maze Pond after Wallin's decease.<sup>10</sup>

Another substantial aid in presenting the history of Maze Pond and Benjamin Wallin's significance in that congregation is the work of Charles Stanford entitled *Home and Church*.<sup>11</sup> Stanford provides many intimate remarks and observations about the nature and importance of Wallin's ministry at Maze Pond. Historian William Thomas Whitley also records the names of the pastors that served at Maze Pond after describing the congregation's origin that resulted from a split in Benjamin Keach's congregation over hymn singing.<sup>12</sup> Whitley mentions elsewhere in his work Wallin's involvement with the Particular Baptist Fund.<sup>13</sup> Equally important are the letters that have been preserved

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<sup>8</sup> Walter Wilson, *History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2003) and Joseph Ivimey, *History of The English Baptists*.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2001), 390–394.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy D Whelan and John Rylands, *Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1741–1845* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 376.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Stanford, *Home and Church: A Chapter in Family Life at Old Maze Pond* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871).

<sup>12</sup> William Thomas Whitley, *The Baptists of London, 1612–1928* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1928), 122, 124.

<sup>13</sup> William Thomas Whitley, "The Baptist Church in Lyme Regis," *Baptist Quarterly* 8.1 (January 1936): 44–47.

by Ruben Guild in his *Early History of Brown University*.<sup>14</sup> Among the letters that Guild preserves from the archives of Brown University, the most significant to Wallin studies consist of letters between the first president, James Manning, and Wallin or one of his close associates. The two most significant letters of this collection deal with Wallin's assessment of the two greatest dangers to true religion in England and his positive dialogue with Manning about the New England revival and his excitement to share the news among the Particular Baptists.<sup>15</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall's article for the *Baptist Quarterly* entitled "The Letter-Book of John Davis (1731–1795)" further substantiates Wallin's eagerness to share the account of the revival.<sup>16</sup> This article provides a correspondence from Wallin to Davis that reproduces a letter that Wallin had received from New England relating the details of the revival. Finally, providing insight into Wallin's relationships with other ministers within the Particular Baptist circles are the works of Robert Oliver in *The British Particular Baptists* recording Wallin's participation in and approval of Abraham Booth's ordination,<sup>17</sup> and Arnold Baines' article "Pre-history of Regent's Park College" from *Baptist Quarterly* that documents Benjamin Wallin as one of the initial subscribers for London Baptist Education Fund.<sup>18</sup>

## Hymnody

Three monographs engage the hymnody of Benjamin Wallin among sketches of many other hymn writers. Edwin Hatfield's *Poets of the Church* provides a very brief biographical account of Benjamin Wallin and indicates that Toplady updated several of

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<sup>14</sup> Reuben Aldridge Guild, *Early History of Brown University* (Providence, RI: Printed by Snow & Farnham, 1897).

<sup>15</sup> Guild, *Early History*, 296–300 passim.

<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Letter-Book of John Davis (1731–1795)," *Baptist Quarterly* 24.2 (April 1971): 58–64.

<sup>17</sup> Haykin, *The British Particular Baptists*, 35–36.

<sup>18</sup> Arnold H. J. Baines, "The Pre-History of Regent's Park College," *Baptist Quarterly* 36.4 (October 1995), 191–201.

Wallin's hymns, which were subsequently reproduced by Dobell.<sup>19</sup> Hatfield suggests that because Wallin was well known and still alive when Toplady published, Wallin likely had given approval for the changes. The author John Julian also provides a brief biography of Wallin in his *A Dictionary of Hymnology*.<sup>20</sup> Julian's dictionary draws attention to the fact that Wallin was educated by the father of the hymnist, John Needham of Hitchin, of the same name, which could suggest a commonality inherited from the senior Needham's piety. The dictionary also indicates that in addition to being included in Toplady's *Psalms and Hymns*, Wallin's hymns were also in C.U., which is Julian's abbreviation for "common usage".

Richard Arnold is the author that engages Wallin as a hymn writer the most. In *English Hymns of the Eighteenth Century: An Anthology* Arnold helps to situate Wallin within the ongoing debate about the appropriateness of hymn singing in Particular Baptist churches.<sup>21</sup> Arnold uses the preface to Wallin's collection of evangelical hymns to note that Wallin is the first to use the term "evangelical" in the title of a collection of hymns. Discussing other points from Wallin's preface, Arnold postulates that Wallin was particularly sensitive to reassure his congregation that the hymns were not poetical flights of fancy from human imagination but were drawn directly from Scripture itself. Arnold observes that Wallin's collection of hymns had a "rather unusual" appearance because instead of providing Scriptural references in the margin, Wallin believed it necessary to provide not only the references but also some commentary so as to substantiate that the words of the stanza were indeed consistent with the Scriptural referent.

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<sup>19</sup> Edwin F. Hatfield, *The Poets of the Church: A Series of Biographical Sketches of Hymn-Writers with Notes on Their Hymns* (New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Company, 1884), 624–625.

<sup>20</sup> John Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology: Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations* (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 1231.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Arnold, *English Hymns of the Eighteenth Century: An Anthology* (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 244–249.

## Doctrinal Stances

Within this third category of literature concerning Benjamin Wallin one can discern arguments approaching a question. These authors are not focusing primarily on Wallin, and therefore in their somewhat incidental mentioning of him they are by no means claiming to have exhaustively represented his views. In each case the authors substantiate their claims with documentary evidence, but the question remains to be further examined if the broader body of Wallin's work further supports their understanding of his doctrinal positions, or whether a more nuanced understanding is required. Michael Haykin has written two articles for *Baptist Quarterly* in which he mentions Benjamin Wallin. In "The Baptist Identity: A View from the Eighteenth Century" Haykin quotes Wallin's critique of the revival and his insistence upon a proper understanding of the ordinances and church order as evidence of the traditional Particular Baptist focus on ecclesiological doctrines over and above soteriological doctrines.<sup>22</sup> In a similar vein, in "A Habitation of God Through the Spirit" Haykin once again notes Wallin's resistance to revivalism and further substantiates his insistence upon church order by quoting a letter between James Manning and Wallin, where Wallin insists that slack order is hindering the church along with the anti-Trinitarian controversies.<sup>23</sup>

Peter Naylor also observes Benjamin Wallin's insistence upon proper church order in his work, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists*, and places Wallin firmly within the "strict" communion camp along with Gill and Brine.<sup>24</sup> Next, in *Continuity and Change* R. Philp Roberts mentions Wallin frequently as part of the "old dissent" and "traditionalist" opposed to the revivalist and the new approach of the more

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<sup>22</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, "The Baptist Identity: A View from the Eighteenth Century," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 67.2 (Apr.–June 1995): 142.

<sup>23</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, "'A Habitation of God, Through the Spirit': John Sutcliff (1752–1814) and the Revitalization of the Calvinistic Baptists in the Eighteenth Century," *Baptist Quarterly* 34.7 (July 1992): 306.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion, and the Baptists* (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster, 2003), 110.

“evangelically” minded preachers who tended to use more dramatic and emotional preaching styles.<sup>25</sup> Roberts mentions Wallin in a favorable light as well, noting the growth within his congregation during his tenure, his participation in the planting of the congregation at East Lane, and his doctrinal defenses of orthodoxy.<sup>26</sup> Finally, three recent essayists who contributed to *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century*, mentioned Wallin’s attitude toward the state of religious zeal in England and among Particular Baptists, his thoughts on the proper posture for prayer, and his views on Christian political activism.<sup>27</sup>

### **Eighteenth-Century Particular Baptist Preaching**

In order to better understand Benjamin Wallin’s theology and practice, his sermons and theological writings will be the focus of examination. There are very few published works that address the preaching of the Particular Baptists as a whole during the long eighteenth century. Edward Dargan’s *A History of Preaching*<sup>28</sup> along with O. C. Edwards’s *A History of Preaching*<sup>29</sup> document the general shape of preaching within England during the eighteenth century but give consideration primarily to the established Church of England while only briefly mentioning the preaching of Dissent, before turning to descriptions of the preaching of George Whitefield and John Wesley. Dargan’s work provides brief sketches of Robert Robinson, Andrew Fuller, and William Carey, but the preaching of these men is only slightly considered within the five pages that are

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<sup>25</sup> R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival, 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: R. O. Roberts, 1989), 57–58, 69, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Roberts, *Continuity and Change*, 104, 118, 181.

<sup>27</sup> Baptist Historical Society (Great Britain), *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2017), 6, 86, 151.

<sup>28</sup> Edward C. Dargan, *A History of Preaching, from the Close of the Reformation Period to the End of the Nineteenth Century 1572–1900* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 287–349.

<sup>29</sup> O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 391–455.

dedicated to them. Hughes Oliphant Old's substantial multi-volume work, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*,<sup>30</sup> is a very thorough accounting of the state of preaching across the centuries. Old has dedicated a portion of chapter two, volume five, to the Awakening preaching of the eighteenth century, but once again only focuses on Gilbert Tennent, John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Samuel Davies. Similarly, Rolph Lessenich's work, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)*<sup>31</sup> focusses primarily on the preaching of the Latitudinarians, but also considers Whitefield and Wesley in contradistinction to the Latitudinarian "norm." In the edited work, *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*,<sup>32</sup> O. C. Edwards provides an overview of preaching that was taking place both on the continent and in England and discusses distinct sermon styles that were utilized during the time period. Finally, although also looking primarily at the Established Church, Barry Levis' article "The Pragmatic Pulpit: Politics and Changes in Preaching Styles in the Church of England, 1660–1760"<sup>33</sup> provides a useful analysis of the public's impression of preaching in the eighteenth century and the transformation that preaching was undertaking as a result of the changing political culture in England as well as the influence of rationalism.

While these broad overviews of eighteenth-century preaching present only slight aid in better understanding the preaching context of Benjamin Wallin, a few published books, articles, and dissertations examine the preaching of individual ministers, which accordingly afford more substantial analysis of eighteenth-century preaching. In

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<sup>30</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 7 vols., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 5:69–167.

<sup>31</sup> Rolph Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)* (Koln: Bohlau, 1972).

<sup>32</sup> Joris Eijnatten, *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 3-56.

<sup>33</sup> Barry Levis, "The Pragmatic Pulpit: Politics and Changes in Preaching Styles in the Church of England, 1660–1760," *Journal of Church and State*, 56.3 (September 2014): 454–485.

*The Forgotten Heritage: A Lineage of Great Baptist Preaching*<sup>34</sup> Thomas McKibbens highlights the preaching of John Gill, Hugh and Caleb Evans, and Robert Robinson in his first two chapters. McKibbens provides further insight into the preaching of Robinson in his article, “Robert Robinson: Baptist Historian with a Passion for Preaching,”<sup>35</sup> as well as outlining some of Robinson’s own homiletical theory and practice. Colin McGahey likewise provides some brief analysis of Robinson and his relationship to rationalistic preaching in his “Transcriber’s Preface.”<sup>36</sup> Finally, *Pulpit and People*,<sup>37</sup> an edited volume by John Briggs, contains several chapters which deal specifically with Particular Baptist preachers. These chapters provide insights into the way in which various Particular Baptists served in a similar cultural context, and how each individual uniquely answered the call to live out their theological convictions while following Christ.

Robert Oliver takes John Gill as the early subject of his *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1771–1892: From John Gill to C. H. Spurgeon*<sup>38</sup> as do the various contributors to Michael Haykin’s edited work *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*.<sup>39</sup> In these helpful chapters, the various authors draw out distinctives of Gill’s theology and practice and situate him over and against the more liberalizing theologians of his day. Since Gill has often been criticized as a “high” Calvinist, and Benjamin Wallin has been connected to the theology of Gill and John

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas McKibbens, *The Forgotten Heritage: A Lineage of Great Baptist Preaching* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1986).

<sup>35</sup> Thomas McKibbens, “Robert Robinson: Baptist Historian with a Passion for Preaching,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 15.4 (October 1980): 12–18.

<sup>36</sup> Colin McGahey, “Transcriber’s Preface to ‘Slavery Inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity’: An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Baptist Advocates Freedom,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 48.2 (Spring 2006): 215–249.

<sup>37</sup> John Briggs, *Pulpit and People: Studies in Eighteenth Century Baptist Life and Thought* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Robert Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1771–1892: from John Gill to C. H. Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> John Gill and Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*. Studies in the History of Christian Thought, V. 77 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

Brine, understanding the theological motives and the preaching practices of John Brine will aid in the determination of whether or not Wallin should be included among the “high” Calvinists of his day. A determining factor in the final decision of classifying a theologian as a “high” Calvinist is often that theologian’s opinion in regard to the “modern question” posed by Matthias Maurice. Accordingly, the article authored by Geoffrey Nuttall entitled “Northamptonshire and ‘The Modern Question’: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent,”<sup>40</sup> as well as the dissertations of Jonathan White<sup>41</sup> and Jason Montgomery,<sup>42</sup> which deal with “hyper” Calvinism and the “modern question” respectively, are also valuable aids in understanding Wallin’s theological context.

### **Significance**

Based upon the relative paucity of academic literature surrounding Benjamin Wallin, further research is advisable to ascertain a better understanding of his theology and practice. As the sermons and theological writings of Wallin are considered, an understanding of his preaching will contribute to the overall understanding of eighteenth-century Particular Baptist preaching and teaching, especially in regard to the “modern question” and “high” Calvinism. Additionally, Wallin’s contribution to Particular Baptist ecclesiology will aid in the understanding of the theological arguments that were used to justify a “strict” ecclesiology.

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<sup>40</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall, “Northamptonshire and ‘The Modern Question’: A Turning Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 16.1 (April 1965): 101–123.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan White, “A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill’s Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Jason Montgomery, “Benjamin Beddome: The Fruitful Life and Evangelical Labor of a Forgotten Village Preacher” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).



## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF A MOST RESPECTABLE MAN

Benjamin Wallin (1710–1782) was an influential and well-respected minister among the Particular Baptists of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> His father, Edward Wallin (1678–1733) was one of the subscribers at Salters’ Hall, and throughout his ministry the younger Wallin remained a staunch supporter of orthodox Trinitarianism.<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Wallin served with distinction at Maze Pond Church (hereafter Maze Pond) for over forty years and during that time he published forty-five discrete works.<sup>3</sup> He was active in the Baptist Fund,<sup>4</sup> of which his father was one of the founding six ministers.<sup>5</sup> He was also active in the Society of Ministers of London, and historian Joseph Ivimey mentions his name frequently in connection to delivering the charge or the sermon at ordination

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Wallin’s year of birth has always been recorded as 1711, but recent scholarship by Stephen McKay “The Trinitarian Theology of Particular Baptists in England (1734–1795): Anne Dutton, Benjamin Beddome, Caleb Evans, and Samuel Stennett” (Master’s thesis, Australian College of Theology, 2019), 176n209, has made the argument that the correct year is 1710. McKay has substantiated this claim by noting the year of Benjamin Wallin’s marriage bond as well as his signed and attested age on that document. Even after taking into account that England would have still been using the Julian calendar, McKay’s conclusion remains sound. Terry Wolever has recorded the provenance of the marriage bond accurately on page 57n28 of “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” but has mistakenly recorded the ages of Benjamin and Sarah as 22 years old, when the document attests that each were 23 years old when they applied for marriage on November 13, 1733.

<sup>2</sup> R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change* (Wheaton, IL: R. O. Roberts, 1989), 36.

<sup>3</sup> Terry Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” in vol. 4 of *The British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910*, ed. Michael Haykin and Terry Wolever, (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2018), 45.

<sup>4</sup> W. T. Whitley, “The Baptist Church in Lyme Regis,” *Baptist Quarterly* 8.1 (January 1936): 47. See also Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists Comprising the Principal Events of the History of Protestant Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1668 Till 1760; And of the London Baptist Churches, During that Period* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1823), 4:52.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Stanford, *Home and Church: A Chapter in Family Life at Old Maze Pond* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), 53.

services.<sup>6</sup> Yet, although “his influence on his own times cannot be measured today” as Terry Wolever has observed, it is remarkable that “most of his works were never reprinted.”<sup>7</sup> The ensuing result of this sad fact is that Wallin has been largely overlooked by recent scholarship, which has favored the more recognizable theologians, John Gill and John Brine. Consequently, not much is known about Benjamin Wallin, which has led to his name being used conterminously with Gill’s and Brine’s by those who are critical of the “high” Calvinism of the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

This dissertation seeks to begin to establish an understanding of Benjamin Wallin by providing a thorough account of his life. By examining this “most respectable man,” a better understanding of his place and influence within the Particular Baptists of the eighteenth century will be gleaned.<sup>9</sup> This study will develop Wallin’s history through an account of the history of his church, Maze Pond, his father and pastor, Edward Wallin, and finally, Benjamin himself.

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 3:478, 4:317, 4:322, 4:336 4:344.

<sup>7</sup> Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” 45.

<sup>8</sup> Roberts, *Continuity and Change*, 57–58, 64, 72.

<sup>9</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 96. Stanford introduces his section on Benjamin Wallin with a reflection on the honorific title “a most respectable man.” This quote will be introduced in full at a latter point, but as it was inspiration for the title of this dissertation, it is briefly included here: “Respectable, *respectabilis* (Latin), worth *again looking at*.” Adopting the definition thus given by Leigh Hunt, we shall be right in saying that the Reverend Mr. Benjamin Wallin, MA, was a most respectable man. He is surely worth twice, thrice, and four times looking at and considering.” (The spelling in this quote has been updated to the modern standard, and this practice will be continued throughout the remainder of this dissertation when it is deemed that altering the quotation in such a way does not diminish its meaning.)

## Maze Pond

The congregation of Maze Pond was established in 1691.<sup>10</sup> The original meeting house stood at Flower-de-luce-court, south of Tooley street.<sup>11</sup> The area of London that came to be known as Maze Pond is on the “Surrey side of the Thames” on the former property of the Abbot of Battle from the reign of King Henry VIII.<sup>12</sup> The city estate of the Abbot was vast,<sup>13</sup> and Stanford relates that the Abbot at times rivaled “Woolsey himself in the wealth and fantastic glory of the entertainments with which he lighted up the old house in Southwark.”<sup>14</sup> On May 20, 1539, King Henry VIII seized the property from the Abbot and granted it to Sir Anthony Browne.<sup>15</sup> On the estate was an immense mosaic of fields and gardens and hedges, and at the center of this maze of gardens was a large reflecting pond.<sup>16</sup> A century and a half later, when the congregation was formed, although the estate had long-since ceased to exist, the name of the pond was retained.

In 1691 several groups of grieved members from Benjamin Keach’s church in Goat-street, Horsleydown separated over the issue of hymn-singing<sup>17</sup>— Keach’s church being the first of the London Baptist churches to institute this practice as a regular feature

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<sup>10</sup> Walter Wilson, *History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark: Including the Lives of Their Ministers, from the Rise of Nonconformity to the Present Time: With an Appendix on the Origin, Progress, and Present State of Christianity in Britain*, vol. 4, *Dissent and Nonconformity Series*, 6 (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2003), 4:286.

<sup>11</sup> W. T. Whitely, *Baptists of London, 1612–1928: Their Fellowship, Their Expansion, with Notes on Their 850 Churches* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1928), 122.

<sup>12</sup> Stanford, *Home and Church*, 13.

<sup>13</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:461. Ivimey records that the Abbots used the city estate primarily when they were in London to attend “to their duty in Parliament.”

<sup>14</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:14.

<sup>15</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:17.

<sup>16</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:16

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:285.

of worship.<sup>18</sup> One group organized themselves immediately under the name of “Old Kent Road, Maze Pond” and called Samuel Mee to be their pastor that same year.<sup>19</sup> Another group, which ultimately joined the Maze Pond congregation during Edward Wallin’s pastorate, organized on March 23, 1693, under the name “New Way in the Maze,” and they called Thomas Warburton to be their pastor. He died in 1708.<sup>20</sup> Maze Pond joined the London Baptist Association in 1704, and quickly became one of the more influential churches among the Particular Baptists.<sup>21</sup>

Although founded upon the shared conviction that it was inappropriate to sing, by 1734 the congregation had reversed its opinion. The decision may have been more of a pragmatic nature than theological, however, since the church’s third minister, Abraham West, insisted upon signing as a condition of his acceptance of the call.<sup>22</sup> Charles Stanford memorably journals that historic day:

On a June morning in the year 1734, a deed was done at Maze Pond meetinghouse at which some of the fathers of the people sat astonished, and the very sound of which caused the ears of many to tingle. After all the ink that had been shed, after all the loud words that had been spoken in defense of silence; after sitting still for more than forty years, conscientiously refusing to sing, the congregation did on that morning join in singing a psalm. Remonstrance was useless; the new service

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<sup>18</sup> Edwin Hatfield, *The Poets of the Church: A Series of Biographical Sketches of Hymn-Writers with Notes on Their Hymns* (New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Company, 1884), 624.

<sup>19</sup> Whitely, *Baptists of London*, 122. This account is an attempt by the author to harmonize a variety of origin accounts recorded by Wilson, Ivimey, Stanford, and Whitely that do not collaborate each other’s accounts. However, by reading each of the accounts, the above description appears to this author to be the most probable explanation of the origin of Maze Pond.

<sup>20</sup> Whitely, *Baptists of London*, 124; Stanford, *Home*, 31; Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” 52. In Stanford’s account of the founding of Maze Pond he records: “On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 1693, seventeen seceders met at the house of Mr. Luke Leader in Tooley-street to consult on what was best to be done; and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March following, twenty-three formed themselves into a fresh church, resolving to have a songless sanctuary. Mr. James Warburton, a most earnest preacher of the gospel, was chosen pastor, and with God’s blessing on his ministry, 115 persons joined the church in the course of the first year.” Although Stanford’s account confuses the founding of Maze Pond and New Way before they were joined, it is significant to note that Luke Leader is named as one who would ultimately be a member of New Way. One of Edward Wallin’s unpublished works, as documented by Wolever on page 52n17, is the funeral sermon of Luke Leader, further confirming the hypothesis that the two congregations merged.

<sup>21</sup> Whitely, *Baptists of London*, 122.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:286.

became rapidly popular, and, as Mr. Crosby remarks, the people “have ever since tuned their voices to songs of praise like other Christians.”<sup>23</sup>

In addition to this somewhat humorous narration, Stanford records much about the reputation of Maze Pond, and states that they were best known for their “strict maintenance of discipline.”<sup>24</sup> Stanford reveals that, according to church records, members were disciplined for such things as: “Not keeping a promise; not speaking the truth; borrowing money, and making no sign of paying it again; disorderly walking; backbiting; idleness; breaking the law that disciples should only marry in the Lord; and, bringing a public charge against a brother without taking gospel rule (Matt. 18:15-17).”<sup>25</sup> While such strict discipline has fallen out of favor in many modern-day churches, in the eighteenth century discipline was still considered one of the marks of a true church, a subject that Wallin himself would take up regularly. Such a reputation would have been a compliment about the respect and seriousness that the congregation exercised in following God’s Word to the letter. The congregation also took seriously their obligation to serve their neighbors and provide for their physical needs as is evidenced in their initial subscription of £100 to the Baptist Fund.<sup>26</sup>

During the pastorate of Benjamin Wallin, as the Socinian and Unitarian errors were spreading, Stanford records that the church distinguished itself as one of the stalwart defenders of orthodoxy in a time when many other churches were “losing faith in the Deity of Jesus.”<sup>27</sup> To this end, the church also guarded closely whom of their number would be authorized to preach publicly. Stanford relates that Maze Pond sternly rebuked John Stanford, who later earned a doctorate and became the chaplain of the New York

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<sup>23</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 67–68.

<sup>24</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 44–45.

<sup>26</sup> Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” 48.

<sup>27</sup> Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” 78.

City humane and criminal institutions, for preaching in public places without the express consent of the congregation.<sup>28</sup> To remedy this situation, the congregation asked him to speak before them one Sunday, and, determining that he still needed to grow in his expression of the gospel, forbade him from speaking until he had been instructed further. In time, the congregation did authorize him to preach, but this incident sheds light upon the congregation's sober-minded approach to the preaching task.

Finally, the congregation of Maze Pond also placed great value upon the oversight and care of their members. Here, once again, Stanford gives a detailed account of the congregation's practice as he chronicles the life of one of the church's deacons, Job Heath:

The church was equally marked for its care to maintain practical consistency. One of the arrangements with a view to this was a system of periodical visiting amongst the members. London was divided into sections or "walks." Messengers were appointed to each district, to inquire into the spiritual welfare of the members residing in it. Then, at a general assembly, they would give in their report such as the following, made in March, 1754: "Brother Job Heath, one of the messengers to St. Thomas's Walk, reported that they had visited all but two or three of the members, that they were much entertained; some few were under sore trials, yet filled with joy and peace in believing, declaring the faithfulness of God in making good His word; two or three were much cast down and in darkness, and one in a sleepy frame. In general, they declare their love to the church, and their satisfaction with the ministry."<sup>29</sup>

### **Edward Wallin**

Edward Wallin was born in 1678 in England to religious and independent parents who "suffered much for the cause of Christ and the maintenance of a good conscience."<sup>30</sup> On his father's side, Edward was descended from Swedish lineage of the surname Wallen.<sup>31</sup> The English Wallins were impoverished through the religious

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<sup>28</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 81–85.

<sup>29</sup> Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 80–81.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:287.

<sup>31</sup> Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 45.

persecution they experienced, and Crosby takes note of how this impacted their ability to provide a substantial education for their son:

The hardships and suffering his religious parents underwent for the cause of Christ, who cheerfully and joyfully took the spoiling of their goods, did not a little disable them from giving that education his great genius required.<sup>32</sup>

Edward was baptized at an early age and was trained in an skilled trade, but also studied the Scriptures and the oriental languages diligently because he was early-on drawn toward ministerial preparation.<sup>33</sup> He first entered into the ministry as an assistant,<sup>34</sup> but received a call to Maze Pond and another unnamed congregation when he was in his mid-twenties.<sup>35</sup> Faced with the difficult decision of which church to serve, he chose the poorer church even though he already had a growing family.<sup>36</sup> In his early days at Maze Pond it was necessary for Edward to supplement his income from the church by also running a small school.<sup>37</sup> As the church began to flourish he was able to set aside the need to teach. Wallin's giftedness as a pastor was not only admired by his growing congregation, but by his fellow-pastors of the ministers' association as well. Wilson quotes none other than John Gill to record Edward's abilities:

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists: From the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I*, The Baptist History Series, No. 16–19 (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2001), 4:390–391.

<sup>33</sup> Wilson, *History and Antiquities*, 4:287.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, *History and Antiquities*, 4:287

<sup>35</sup> There is some uncertainty concerning when Edward was called to serve at Maze Pond. Wilson and Whitley place his call in the later part of 1702–1703 which would have meant that Edward was 25 years old when deliberating the call. This date does make some sense when considering that Samuel Mee died in 1702. However, Stanford places the date as late as 1707, and Wolever records that the Maze Pond Church Book (MPCB) registers the date as November 18, 1705. Given the specificity of the Maze Pond Church Book that date is to be preferred over the other authors' chronology, which has well-known flaws. This later date does introduce a question as to whom ministered to the church in the interim between Mee's and Wallin's pastorate. Presently this author is seeking the answer to this but must wait for copies of the MPCB to arrive. See also Wilson, *History*, 4:287; Whitley, *Baptists of London*, 122; Stanford, *Home*, 48; Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 47.

<sup>36</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:287. Wilson does not record how many children Edward had when he was called, nor do we know anything about Benjamin Wallin's siblings (if any), but this mention of a "growing family" by Wilson does suggest that Edward had multiple children even before Benjamin was born in 1710.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:287.

His ministerial endowments were of a respectable nature. “Besides a large experience of the grace of God, he had a considerable share of light and knowledge in the great truths of the gospel; he had an heavenly skill to lay open the wretched and miserable state and condition of sinners by nature, and to set forth the glory of Christ in his person, blood, righteousness and sacrifice. His language was plain and easy, though strong and masculine, far above contempt, and yet free from the swelling words of vain rhetoricians. His reasoning was clear and nervous, his mien and deportment were grave, his address was with majesty, which at once had a tendency to command awe, engage the attention, and strike the affection. And, let me not forget . . . to take notice of his excellent talent in prayer, and of that near communion he often enjoyed with God in the discharge of that work in private.”<sup>38</sup>

Thomas Crosby was a close acquaintance of Edward Wallin and in his *History of the English Baptists* he made the following observation about his friend:

It was none of the least of this man’s excellent qualifications for the ministerial work, that he knew how to behave himself in the house of God, in regard of the exercise of that discipline which is so necessary to Christian societies. He kept his church in peace all his days, notwithstanding there were but few amongst them who opposed the practice of singing the praises of God in the public assembly; and tho’ himself, and almost all the rest believed it a laudable practice, yet, because it was the principle upon which the church was first constituted, he, for the sake of peace, and that the weak consciences of his few brethren might not be offended, acquiesced in the non-performance thereof.<sup>39</sup>

This quote from Crosby is notable because it helps explain how Wallin could have a favorable attitude towards hymn singing while refusing to institute the practice at Maze Pond, and at the same time raise a son who would publish one of the first Particular Baptist hymnals.

After Edward’s death, a letter was discovered that was apparently never sent, and which Ivimey subsequently published. Ivimey speculated that the discord that it mentions was about hymn singing, and that opinion, if correct, sheds additional light onto Crosby’s observations. In the letter Wallin says:

Oh! That my present tears might cement the hearts of my dear members together in love, and that there might be no other contention among them, than what might express their self-denial for the sake of Christ, and as fellow members striving together for the faith of the gospel, but not with one another about different sentiments in matters not essential to true religion, or to the public worship of God

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<sup>38</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:287–288.

<sup>39</sup> Crosby, *History*, 4:392–393.



under the gospel. Oh! Imitate a dear Redeemer in this self-denying, loving and tender spirit and carriage one towards another: this will produce peace in the church; this will yield peace in your own souls; this will yield a comfortable reflection in the near views of death and an eternal world.<sup>40</sup>

Here, Crosby's opinion of his friend is seen to be well-founded, as Wallin reveals his heart's desire for peace among his people. It also becomes apparent that Edward practiced what he preached, for he himself exercised self-denial of his Christian liberty to sing in deference to those whose consciences were offended.

Although the topic of hymn singing appears to be slightly tangential to the biographies of Edward and Benjamin Wallin, because it was the *singular* issue that precipitated the formation of the church in which both men would serve out the entirety of their pastorates, it is beneficial to better understand the issue in order to better understand the men. Charles Stanford records the seven points of remonstrance to hymn singing sent to Benjamin Keach by the opposition:

1. In that you make that to be a constant standing ordinance which is indeed an extraordinary spiritual gift. (1 Cor 14)
2. In that you make that formal, which is in the right performance spiritual, and ought to be left to the management of the Spirit, instead of being confined to a limited form of words. (1 Cor 14:14–15; Eph 5:18–19)
3. In that you use plurality of voices in that which ought to be performed by a single voice, there being no Scripture warrant for using plurality of voices in singing more than in prayer.
4. In that you join in such close communion with the words in your singing, as to speak to God with your voices together, contrary to 2 Corinthians 6:14–15: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” etc.
5. In that you suffer women to speak and sing, to teach and admonish in the worship and service of God, in His church, contrary to the Word of God, which commands women not to speak nor to teach, but to learn in silence, and to be in silence. (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11–12)
6. In that there is no positive command in Scripture that singing is to be a standing ordinance with the church, like prayer and preaching.

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<sup>40</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:464.

7. In that singing in a precomposed limited form of words is the same as praying is a precomposed limited form of words. Common prayer and common singing must stand or fall together.<sup>41</sup>

During his pastorate, Edward Wallin chose to continue the practice of non-singing, but, as the quote from Crosby mentioned, the issue still remained a point of contention at Maze Pond in subsequent years. In 1691, Keach had published *A Breach Repaired in God's Worship: or Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ* which became a standard text for those who supported hymn singing, and, as the decades passed, more and more churches embraced the practice.<sup>42</sup> From the manuscript that Edward left behind, it is apparent that the hymn-related strife grieved him deeply. It is also apparent that Edward did not believe that the question of hymn singing should be elevated to a teaching that was “essential to true religion.” There is little room for doubt that Benjamin, who spent his entire life at Maze Pond, first as a child, then as a member, and finally as its pastor, was shaped by this ongoing debate within the close community of the church. Benjamin would have had first-hand knowledge and experience with how his father wrestled with both groups in an effort to maintain peace. Perhaps his own views on hymn singing were also shaped by one of the tutors his father had chosen for him, John Needham Sr., whose son likewise would become a hymn writer.<sup>43</sup> What the final influences were that convinced Benjamin of the appropriateness of hymn singing must be left to speculation, yet, what is known is that Benjamin’s early experience in his father’s home and church did impress upon him the importance of demonstrating the scriptural authority from which his hymns were drawn. Richard Arnold, commenting on Wallin’s hymnal, observes that Wallin was not satisfied to simply provide a Scripture reference in the margin, but also provided

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<sup>41</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 24–26.

<sup>42</sup> Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” 48.

<sup>43</sup> John Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology: Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations* (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 1231.

extensive commentary and references for each stanza, substantiating them from Scripture. According to Arnold, this gave Wallin's hymnal a "rather unusual appearance," when compared to other hymnals of the time.<sup>44</sup> Undoubtedly, whether consciously or subconsciously, Benjamin's experience in a church that was formed on the principle of non-singing, may have given his hymn writing an outwardly awkward appearance, but it also rooted his work firmly in the Word of God. This impulse in Benjamin can be traced back to his father Edward, who desired his people to be "striving together for the faith of the gospel . . . [and in imitation of] a dear Redeemer."<sup>45</sup>

In addition to trials related to hymn singing, Edward would also face the threat of harassment from outside of his church. Stanford records that the Wallins were neighbors to Henry Sacheverell, a very outspoken High Churchman and chaplain at St. Saviour's in Southwark.<sup>46</sup> Sacheverell had the ear of the queen and was aggressively opposed to Dissent. Stanford, in a speculative mood, perhaps mixes fact with vivid-but-hypothetical language when he records:

Dr. Sacheverell's "lambs," in a playful freak, demolished the pulpits, pews, and galleries of five meeting houses, and the sky was red with reflected fires that night. You may be sure that a nonconformist living in Southwark would be the first to suffer from such furious orthodoxy. It would not be wise for him to be out after dark, his lozenge-paned casement might at any unexpected moment come in with a crash, and strong window shutters would be wanted for the meeting house.<sup>47</sup>

Nor did Edward allow himself to be drawn into some of the inter-denominational strife related to the teaching of eternal justification and other doctrines which would later be labeled as "high" Calvinism. Crosby, whose own account may be

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<sup>44</sup> Richard Arnold, *English Hymns of the Eighteenth Century: An Anthology*. American University Studies, Series IV, English Language and Literature, Vol. 137 (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 244–249.

<sup>45</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:464.

<sup>46</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 51.

<sup>47</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 52. There is no mention that any bodily harm came to the person of Edward or his family, nor that Maze Pond itself suffered any damage.

colored slightly against Gill, nonetheless records Gill's comments at Wallin's funeral as evidence of Wallin's ability to move freely between those of differing opinions. Edward Wallin died on June 12, 1733, and Crosby bears witness to the humility of his friend:

It is true, he was a man of great moderation, tho' of them who profess the Calvinist scheme of religion, and did not run into those flights, of justification before faith, and of good works, in no sense, being necessary to salvation; but with the English Baptists in general held, that none can be said to be actually reconciled, justified, or adopted, until they are really implanted into Jesus Christ by faith; and accordingly in his discourses did well distinguish betwixt justification and sanctification, exalting the imputed righteousness of Christ without undervaluing the work of the Spirit. Neither do I know, tho' I was intimately acquainted with him many years, that he ever, publicly or privately, boasted of his learning or knowledge.<sup>48</sup>

Here, Crosby would have his readers know that Wallin was as equally talented and knowledgeable as other well-known preachers, but that his preaching did not range into the more speculative doctrines. While Crosby paints a fairly distinct line between those who held to eternal justification over against those who did not, it is remarkable to note that, at least in relation to Edward Wallin, there was not so much animosity between them that the two parties couldn't join together in celebrating his life. Equally worth consideration is the fact that Crosby relates that the English Baptists "in general held that none can be said to be actually reconciled, justified, or adopted, until they are really implanted into Jesus Christ by faith." Certainly, Crosby has in mind men like Gill and Brine, who wrote treaties on such topics, as those who held the opposing view; these he places in the minority. Apparently, while those who have been later labeled as "strict" or "high" Calvinists held to a rigid doctrinal system, they did not use the doctrine of eternal justification as a litmus test of orthodoxy, for then men such as Wallin would have been excluded from their fellowship. Instead, the collegiality of the ministers of various opinions does not appear to have been hindered, and debate about such doctrines was allowed to continue. This understanding of the context of the English Particular Baptists

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<sup>48</sup> Crosby, *History*, 393–394.

also helps to explain how men of such varying opinions over the free offer of grace in Benjamin Wallin's time could remain in such close fellowship with one another.

### **Benjamin Wallin**

Benjamin Wallin was born in London in 1710 while Edward was serving as the pastor of Maze Pond church. There is no record of Benjamin's mother, nor any mention of siblings, save what has been implied by historians who recorded that Edward accepted the call to the impoverished Maze Pond even though he had a growing family to support.<sup>49</sup> Wilson documents that "whilst at nurse" Benjamin was dropped and injured, and that the injury was "improperly concealed through fear" with the result that Benjamin suffered an incurable lameness throughout his childhood.<sup>50</sup> Providentially, at the age of fourteen, a Baptist minister named Jonas Thurrowgood took notice of his lameness and "in the course of a few months treated his complaint with so much skill, that he was enabled ever afterwards to walk in a more comfortable manner."<sup>51</sup>

During his childhood, Benjamin's father enlisted the help of fellow ministers to tutor his young son. Wolever records that Benjamin was first instructed by John Needham of Hitchin and received additional instruction from Sayer Rudd and Joseph Stennett.<sup>52</sup> In 1725, Edward moved the church of Maze Pond into a newly constructed

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<sup>49</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:287. In private communication by email with Stephen McKay, and from the photographs of church books housed in multiple archives throughout London, it is known that Edward was married a second time to a woman named Joanna Winber on April 27, 1715, when Benjamin would have been nearly five years old. *Church of England Parish Registers, 1538-1812* (London: London Metropolitan Archives, Reference Number: CLC/199/TC/013/MS09665).

<sup>50</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:290.

<sup>51</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:290–291. Wilson has quoted these words from the funeral sermon of Mr. Thurrowgood, and Terry Wolever has provided additional information, including that it was Benjamin Wallin who had preached the funeral sermon in 1753. See Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 56n26.

<sup>52</sup> Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 57; Peter Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion, and the Baptists: A Study of English Calvinistic Baptists from the Late 1600s to the Early 1800s*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought, Vol. 7 (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster, 2003), 83–86. It is very doubtful that Sayer Rudd had yet to espouse his unsound opinions regarding the Trinity while he was Wallin's tutor. As has already been noted, the church at Maze Pond was known for its strict discipline, and Edward was a highly capable and knowledgeable minister. Rudd was not only a member of Maze Pond, but the

meeting house that Wilson describes as “a neat, substantial brick building, with three galleries, and has a burial ground adjoining, where are interred the former pastors, together with a considerable number of persons of the Baptist denomination.”<sup>53</sup> In this year also, Benjamin was baptized and became a member of the Maze Pond church. He would later reflect upon this period in his life in the dedication to his book *Christian Life*:

Among you of this church, I have had the advantage of hearing the Word of God from my infancy; and with many of you in particular, I have continued to attend the service of the sanctuary, without any considerable interruption, to the present time; this is owing to the near relation I stood in to that excellent person, who was for many years your beloved and successful pastor, and whose memory is still precious, not only to you, but to many of the churches of Christ. Under his judicious and affectionate instructions, both as a parent and a minister, I continued a long time a melancholy instance of the insufficiency of the best of means, without a special blessing: but I trust, before his mournful removal, it pleased God, who is rich in mercy, to open the eyes of my understanding, and to change what was before only the form into the power of Godliness; after this I made a free choice of you as the temple in which I would pay my vows, and offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as well as seek my future spiritual improvement.<sup>54</sup>

From this quote Benjamin’s affection for his father and for the congregation of Maze Pond can be clearly seen. Yet, as will be observed shortly, Benjamin did not aspire to be a pastor during his teen and early twenty years. While details about Edward’s and Benjamin’s conversations about this topic would be delightful, one must be content with what is known — which can be pieced together from what has been recorded by Ivimey:

When Mr. Wallin was in his twenty-first (read twenty-second) year, about 1732, and whilst he was an apprentice, the year before his father’s death, some of the members of the church proposed that he should be encouraged to exercise his gifts for the

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congregation also recognized and authorized him for ministry before sending him out to minister in 1725. It was eight years later, after Edward’s death in 1733, and during Rudd’s candidacy at Maze Pond, that the congregation uncovered his unorthodoxy. Rudd eventually joined the established church after being rejected by the Particular Baptists. It is also worth noting here that Peter Naylor has convincingly argued against Whitely that the ‘B.W.’ that is mentioned as a supporter of open communion in Mathias Maurice’s *The Manner of Baptizing with Water Cleared up from the Word of God and Right Reason*, is not Benjamin Wallin, who would have only been 15 at the time, and who was always a proponent of strong church order. With these two things considered and addressed, the orthodoxy of Wallin’s education need not be doubted.

<sup>53</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:286.

<sup>54</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Christian Life* (London: Aaron Ward, 1746), iv–v.

work of the ministry, but, on account of some interposing difficulties, the design was abandoned until several years afterwards.<sup>55</sup>

Here, it is discovered that Edward had apprenticed Benjamin to an (unrecorded) trade, but it is also discovered that the church sought to induce Benjamin to preach while Edward was still living. One has doubts that the church would have approached Benjamin without Edward's blessing, but it is also difficult to imagine Edward having encouraged Benjamin to consider the proposal, without Benjamin later recording that encouragement as advice that helped him to eventually accept his suitedness for the ministry. Perhaps Edward remained a silent and neutral observer regarding this stage of his son's spiritual development so as to allow God's Spirit to "open the eyes of [his] understanding" in this aspect as well.

Shortly after the church approached Benjamin, Edward passed away. Five months later, on November 15, 1733, Benjamin married Sarah Heathfield of London.<sup>56</sup> Together the two would have two sons and three daughters, but we are informed by Stanford that "his wife and his children died before him, and he was left to finish his journey alone."<sup>57</sup>

**Deliberating the call.** In May 1734, two deacons from Maze Pond church, John Manypenny and John Williams once again approached Benjamin about speaking before the congregation, but Benjamin declined.<sup>58</sup> Subsequently, the congregation called Abraham West in June 1734. Five years later, on November 6, 1739, after West's death at the age of twenty-seven, three deacons—George Ring, Edward Tomkins, and Thomas Cox—informed Benjamin that the church "had unanimously given him a call to exercise

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<sup>55</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:473.

<sup>56</sup> Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 57.

<sup>57</sup> Wolever, "Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin," 57; Stanford, *Home*, 100; Ivimey, *History*, 478. Ivimey records that Sarah died in 1752 and that she was "interred in the same grave with [Benjamin's] honored father."

<sup>58</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:473.

before them the next church meeting.<sup>59</sup> Apparently, Wallin did not immediately comply with the church's decision, and Ivimey records a letter from Benjamin to the church dated December 3, 1739, in which he says:

When I consider the design of such a call, which at least must be if I am approved of, to be employed more or less in preaching the gospel; the very thought strikes me with terror: to address the judgments and consciences of men, on subjects revealed from heaven of the most lasting importance to their precious and immortal souls, is a work of so awful a nature, that an inspired apostle, with all the greatest natural, acquired, and miraculous gifts, thought himself insufficient for it. It is no wonder then that one void of almost every qualification should think it presumption to touch the sacred service.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time Benjamin related to the congregation that it would be with great difficulty that he would “relinquish his business,” and acknowledged “his fears, lest he should, by not providing for his own house, bring a reproach upon the gospel.”<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, he promised to take the matter under consideration.

Next, Wallin turned to Joseph Stennett for advice and to confess his hesitation:

The main point with me is, whether it is probable I can be more useful in the station proposed to me, than that in which I at present stand? So many are those qualifications, necessary to the honorable discharge of that work, which I am destitute of, and so much do the credit of religion and peace of my own conscience depend upon such a discharge of it, if I enter upon it; that the deep sense I have of my own inability and unworthiness, will not suffer me to entertain a hope sufficient to encourage me. If the Lord is descending to me in this way, He makes the clouds his chariots. Did I but know His will, my heart deceives me if I am not ready to obey it. But so many instances of unfaithfulness have I to charge myself with in my private station, that sure I cannot think I can be counted faithful and put into the ministry!<sup>62</sup>

After this exchange, Ivimey does not record Benjamin's successive reply to the church, but he does note that the church was willing to wait until Wallin's other churchly office—of which he made mention in his letter to Stennett—was expired. During the

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<sup>59</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:473–474.

<sup>60</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:474

<sup>61</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:474

<sup>62</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:475



interim Benjamin Beddome preached to the church, and, a member who was “unfriendly to Mr. Wallin’s being brought into the pastoral office” made a motion during a meeting of the church that Beddome be called as the pastor.<sup>63</sup> Seemingly, this was an unpopular suggestion amongst all voting members, for Ivimey records that the motion did not receive a second, and subsequently failed.<sup>64</sup>

When the church began to urge Benjamin once more, and it appeared that a division may occur if action was not taken soon, Wallin once again consulted his mentor Joseph Stennett. Stennett replied:

As for your humble, broken, timorous frame, with all the circumstances which have tended to promote such a temper of mind, I apprehend it is that preparation of heart which is from the Lord. Conscience testifies for you, my brother, that you are not seeking your own things: you have the regular call of God’s people; and without a trial, how will you know whether it is the call of God or no? Take courage, dear sir, and put your trust in him, and he will, I trust, strengthen your heart and guide you in the way in which you ought to go.<sup>65</sup>

Benjamin heeded Stennett’s advice and agreed to preach to the congregation on July 6, 1740. However, he was so discouraged after having done so, that he asked the congregation never to ask him to preach again.<sup>66</sup> The prospect of Wallin becoming a pastor would have shipwrecked at this point, had it not been for a persistent deacon who continued to encourage Benjamin. This deacon wrote two letters to him asking him not to place too great a weight on the perceived opposition from within the church.<sup>67</sup> Wallin accordingly wrote a letter to John Gill, Joseph Stennett, Samuel Wilson, and John Brine, requesting their advice.<sup>68</sup> Having been encouraged by these men to not set aside the

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<sup>63</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:476

<sup>64</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:476

<sup>65</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:476

<sup>66</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:476

<sup>67</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:477 When one considers that there was not one person found in the congregation to second the motion to set aside Wallin as a candidate in favor of Beddome, the possibility that Wallin was being overly timorous in his perception of opposition must be entertained.

<sup>68</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:477

congregation's invitation, Wallin once more agreed to preach on November 9, 1740. This offering met with the church's approval, and they asked Wallin to begin preaching twice a Sunday on June 8, 1741. On July 9 the congregation called Wallin as its pastor and held a season of solemn prayer on July 15 on his behalf. Finally, Wallin was ordained as the pastor of Maze Pond church on Thursday October 15, 1741.<sup>69</sup> On Friday November 18, 1741, Wallin was admitted into the Society of Ministers by John Brine who was the chair of the meeting.<sup>70</sup>

**Pastoral character.** Charles Stanford's observations about Benjamin Wallin are perhaps the most memorable of the historians that chronicle his life. In opening his reflection describing Benjamin Wallin's pastorate, Stanford states:

'Respectable, *respectabilis* (Latin), worth *again looking at.*' Adopting the definition thus given by Leigh Hunt, we shall be right in saying that the Reverend Mr. Benjamin Wallin, M.A., was a most respectable man. He is surely worth twice, thrice, and four times looking at and considering. The scribe who wrote the church breviates never mentions him without some epithet of respect, such as our "beloved and honored pastor." He was not a man of daring originality; his mind had no sparkling and graceful play: almost everything he did was "tormented out of him" by a process of slow hard labor, so much the more does he claim our respect for having done so much work, and done it so well.<sup>71</sup>

Stanford was not alone in his praise and respect for Wallin, and Samuel Stennett lavished praise upon Benjamin in his funeral address. One of the pastoral strengths that Stennett chose to highlight was Benjamin's ability to pray, noting: "He preserved a habitual reverence for God, which was particularly discoverable in his prayers, and he was an attentive observer of the conduct of Providence in the various incidents of his life."<sup>72</sup> Stennett also commended Wallin's preaching as "methodical, scriptural, and practical,"

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<sup>69</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:477.

<sup>70</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:478. Ivimey mistakenly records the year as 1740, but elsewhere has rightly recorded the year to be 1741.

<sup>71</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 96–97.

<sup>72</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:291.

and observed that “he labored to get at the consciences of his hearers, to rouse the impenitent, to direct the inquiring, to comfort the distressed, to animate the slothful, and to edify the faithful.”<sup>73</sup> Abraham Booth likewise had high praise for Wallin and held him out as an example to fellow ministers when he too spoke at Wallin’s funeral:

On such an occasion as this, it is proper that we, who bear the ministerial character, should feel, with redoubled force, our obligations to diligence in the faithful discharge of that sacred trust which is reposed in us. Our great business is, as my brethren well know, to preach the gospel of God, and to watch for the souls of men. We are bound so to preach as to commend ourselves to the enlightened and impartial conscience; and so to watch as those that must give an account of their whole conduct. To entertain and to please, are the design of an actor on the stage, not of a minister in his pulpit. Our parts and learning, our spiritual gifts and sacred office, answer the great end of the Christian ministry no further than they are means of promoting true virtue and real piety. Nor, in any other view, can the exercise of them afford peaceful reflections when we come to die. It is possible for us to gain the applause of a multitude, while the principles on which we act and the end at which we aim are detestable in the sight of God; and such as our consciences, if awake, must abhor in the near views of eternity. Of this our venerable deceased friend was well aware, as I learned from frequent conversations with him.<sup>74</sup>

While Stanford and Wallin’s contemporaries had many positive things to note about Wallin, Stanford does relate two small criticisms as well, both in relation to his preaching, but both offered with continued respect. The first criticism that Stanford levels at Wallin was his willingness to engage in politics from the pulpit. He records with no approbation: “living as he did when Popery was a power to be feared, when love to England generally meant hatred to France, and when no one ever thought of war as a sin, he sometimes preached political doctrines that would surprise our modern congregations.”<sup>75</sup> Stanford’s second criticism is milder, and could potentially be leveled at any preacher, but is worth mentioning for the memorable picture that it paints:

If, in public speaking, he sometimes used a phrase too grand and ponderous for the thought it had to carry, thereby disturbing for a moment the gravity even of an elder,

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<sup>73</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:292.

<sup>74</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:482.

<sup>75</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 98. Stanford also here records that Wallin had a favorable regard for the cause of the American Colonies.

there was no disrespect toward Mr. Wallin. Often in a family circle a smile only means love when it looks like irreverence, and there was no real irreverence here.<sup>76</sup>

**Broader influences.** Benjamin Wallin's influence was not limited to the Maze Pond church. Stanford observes: "Outside his own peculiar sphere he enjoyed the friendship of persons remarkably diverse in mind, creed and station, such as Mr. Augustus Toplady, Dr. Priestly, Mr. Hugh Farmer, and Mr. Speaker Onslow."<sup>77</sup> While Wallin's active involvement with the Baptist ministers of London and the Baptist Fund has already been noted in this paper, it is also worth noting that he was a founding member of The London Baptist Education Society.<sup>78</sup> As a protector of orthodoxy within the Particular Baptist ranks, Wallin was instrumental in establishing the rule that the Baptist Fund would only grant aid to those who were willing to affirm a confession of the Trinity in orthodox terms.<sup>79</sup> He was additionally in regular correspondence with ministers from the other side of the Atlantic such as James Manning, Isaac Backus, and John Davis.<sup>80</sup> His involvement with these men led to a close relationship being forged between the English Particular Baptists and the American Particular Baptists, especially those associated with the College of Rhode Island (later Brown University). Through Wallin's work, not only were copies of each of his own publications gifted to the school, but also those of Gill, Stennett, Wilson, Booth, and Bunyan.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 98–99.

<sup>77</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 100.

<sup>78</sup> Arnold Baines, "Pre-history of Regent's Park College." *Baptist Quarterly* 36.4 (October 1995): 191–201. In this article Baines identifies Wallin as one of the original subscribers to the London Baptist Education Society along with Brine. Gill was present but did not become a subscriber, perhaps because of a lack of Hebrew in the curriculum.

<sup>79</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 4:52.

<sup>80</sup> Reuben A. Guild, *Early History of Brown University: Including the Life, Times, and Correspondence of President Manning, 1756–1791* (Providence, RI: Snow & Farnham, 1897). See Appendix I for a summary of the letters (and their page numbers) relevant to Benjamin Wallin in the records of James Manning. See also, Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Letter-Book of John Davis (1731–1795)," *Baptist Quarterly* 24.2 (April 1971): 58–64.

<sup>81</sup> Guild, *Early History*, 237, 239, 254.

**Last days.** Wilson informs that Wallin’s ministry was rarely interrupted with ill health. Reporting on the illness that would claim his life he says: “it was not protracted to a very great length... his reason was continued to him very nearly till the close of life, which he finished on the 19th of February 1782, at the age of seventy-one years.”<sup>82</sup> Ivimey’s record has preserved Wallin’s final words as: “Oh! Pardon!—rejoicing!—I—.”<sup>83</sup> Having been told that these were Benjamin’s last words, Samuel Stennett crafted a sermon from Matthew 25:23, “Enter thou the joy of the Lord,” and entitled it “The Faithful Minister Rewarded.”<sup>84</sup> Benjamin Wallin was interred in the burial ground behind Maze Pond church. His tombstone read:

Sacred to the Memory  
Of the  
Rev. Benjamin Wallin, A. M.  
A Man  
(Human frailty abated)  
Exempt from all the faults,  
And endowed with all the virtues  
Of a Christian minister.  
By the unanimous desire of a few people  
He succeeded his father  
Edward Wallin,  
As pastor of this church,  
And  
By a diligent discharge of his office,  
By a constant course of manly and social actions,  
By wise application of means to incidents,  
For more than forty years  
Rendered a large congregation happy.  
In the year 1782,  
On February the 19th,  
In the seventy-first year of his age,  
His tranquil soul departed,  
Happy in itself,  
At peace with God,

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<sup>82</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:291.

<sup>83</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:482.

<sup>84</sup> Wolever, “Edward Wallin and Benjamin Wallin,” 75.

And all mankind.<sup>85</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Benjamin Wallin served faithfully at Maze Pond for nearly forty-one years. During his pastorate he continued to lead his people to observe the strict discipline for which they were known. He was instrumental among the Particular Baptists in defending the deity of Jesus Christ. His published writings made his name familiar not only to the Baptists of London but of England and the American Colonies as well. He was closely associated with men like John Gill, John Brine, Joseph Stennett, and Abraham Booth in England, and influenced the first two presidents of the College of Rhode Island through his writing as well as his direct pastoral care. Charles Stanford called Benjamin Wallin “a most respectable man,” and it is believed that when Wallin’s neglected works are once again considered, his present-day readers will agree.

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<sup>85</sup> Wilson, *History*, 4:293.

## CHAPTER 3

### BENJAMIN WALLIN'S TEACHING

Although very little has been written on Benjamin Wallin, when he has been mentioned in monographs and journal articles there has been a tendency to generalize about his doctrinal teachings. Without a comprehensive examination into his body of writing, authors have been at a loss to know with any degree of certainty whether or not a particular quote is representative of his theological attitude toward their subject. Accordingly, Wallin has at times been characterized as holding theological positions that were consistent with those of other well-known theologians of his day, like John Gill and John Brine, but without significant textual evidence to establish Wallin's own attitude and thought. Because Benjamin Wallin did not set about to write a systematic theology, no singular resource exists which can be consulted. However, by closely reading his discourses, lectures, and sermons, a judicious picture of his theology emerges as his teaching is considered on a whole. While the limited focus of this dissertation will not allow for an exhaustive handling of Benjamin Wallin's doctrine, nonetheless a brief survey will be advantageous toward establishing the claims of the thesis. Therefore, this chapter will strive to ascertain and depict Wallin's teaching with particular focus on those doctrines which shape his attitude toward preaching the gospel and regular church order. Because Wallin treated all theology as intimately related to itself because of the unity of the Scripture from which it was derived, an attempt will be made to draw connections between the doctrines that are examined. The exclusion of a discussion of any one doctrine should not be understood to be absolutely indicative of its absence in Wallin's writings, nor should the particular ordering of the doctrines surveyed be considered to suggest a similar ordering in Wallin's own thinking, but are simply those doctrines which

readily present themselves as significant to the mind of this surveyor while seeking to balance the constraints on space with a respectable demonstration of the scope of Wallin's teaching.

### **Confessional Subscriptions**

Wallin's attitude toward confessional subscriptions may appear to be an odd entry point to lead with when it comes to exploring the doctrine of Benjamin Wallin.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it likely would not be a "doctrine" that Wallin himself would identify *per se*, but because of the rampant Deism, Arianism, and Unitarianism of Wallin's theological world, as well as the General Baptists' aversion to subscriptions, his attitude and willingness to subscribe to a doctrinal confession of a teaching that is not expressly named in Scripture is relevant. As already noted, Benjamin's father, Edward, was one of the original subscribers at Salters' Hall in 1719. In the preface to his *The Scripture-doctrine of Christ's Sonship*, Wallin briefly relates some of the details of the debate as he wrestles with and seeks to demonstrate the need for holding to a confessional standard when it comes to the doctrine of Christ's sonship.<sup>2</sup> Wallin does not disparage the men who refused to subscribe as less than orthodox in their beliefs, but he does state that in their attempt to "plead the first principle of Protestantism, liberty of private judgement," that "these good men seem to have mistaken a rational testification of their own sense of this article in debate for a test or standard of truth, which is the Scripture alone, in which

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<sup>1</sup> "Confessional subscription" here refers to a willingness to affirm a theological statement (confession) about a particular doctrine or doctrines as an authoritative restatement of Scriptural truth as one's own, even though that restatement may utilize language that is not itself found in Scripture, such as the term "Trinity." Confessions such as the Westminster Confession, and the Particular Baptists' First and Second London Confession were well-known systematic statements and explications of the theology found in the Word of God.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Scripture-doctrine of Christ's Sonship* (London: George Keith, 1771), ix–xii. Wallin does not name Salters' Hall explicitly as he relates the history of the debate. He footnotes his information as having been gleaned from a piece he cites as: *A sober defence [sic.] of the ministers who subscribed for Cruttenden*, 1719.



disguise the proposal was artfully dressed.”<sup>3</sup> In this way, he criticizes, “they therefore peremptorily refused any form of sound words, and insisted ‘that matters of faith, designed to be imposed as a test, ought to be only in Scripture words.’”<sup>4</sup> He quotes with approbation the proponents of subscription as having noted that the logical force of the opponents’ position would “condemn all explanation of Scripture, in any form whatever, and in a word, under this pretense the enemies of the truth might cover themselves.”<sup>5</sup> He concludes his history of the account by reflecting upon the consequence of the debate:

But alas, the warmth of the party spirit gave the enemy an advantage; from that time, in zeal against tests of this kind, catechisms, creeds and confessions of faith, have been decried as injurious to liberty, this falling in with a taste for pleasure, and an aversion to discipline, has greatly obstructed a religious education among us, insomuch that the present rising generation, through ignorance, are exposed to the subtlety of every deceiver; they too often appear in the world, I am sorry to say it, *unprincipled* in point of religion; and are easily attached to those notions which favor the cause of infidelity and licentiousness.<sup>6</sup>

For Wallin, maintaining a strong confessional subscription to the orthodox doctrines of Scripture, even if they were articulated in terms not expressly used in Scripture, was a safeguard against Satan’s attacks to weaken the very core of the Scriptural revelation. Without a willingness to bear testimony about systematic truths that Scripture had revealed throughout its pages, and draw them into an articulated doctrine, Christianity would suffer from an inability to educate the rising generation and leave that generation vulnerable to a corruption of its understanding and faith. Wallin’s interpretation of Paul’s advice to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:13 to “hold fast the form of sound words” encouraged him to unflinchingly subscribe to confessional doctrines such as the Trinity. In fact, he would be so bold as to assert: “I think it is incumbent on every disciple, and still more on every minister of Jesus, to bear a testimony to an article of

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<sup>3</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, x.

<sup>4</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, x–xi.

<sup>5</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, xi.

<sup>6</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, xii.

faith, in proportion to the contempt or opposition it meets with.”<sup>7</sup> Wallin’s support of confessional subscriptions demonstrates his willingness to use words not expressly used in Scripture, which in turn rules out that argument as an explanation of why he may not have been supportive of those doctrines that would be used by the “high” Calvinists to support the limitation of the free offer of grace to all unregenerate people. Wallin did object to some of those doctrines as will be seen, but it was not on the basis of a hesitancy to confess inferred doctrines, but on the grounds that those doctrines did not align with the revealed testimony of Scripture.

### **The Trinity**

Directly related to his position on confessional subscriptions is Wallin’s willingness to confess the doctrine of the Trinity. Wallin’s writings do not contain an apologetic for the doctrine of the Trinity itself, but he frequently attests to the divine nature and unity of the three persons as he has occasion to speak about God. Wallin understood a major theological error of his day to be a denial of Christ’s divinity, and devoted two works, *The Eternal Existence of the Lord Jesus Christ Considered and Improved* and *The Scripture-doctrine of Christ’s Sonship*, to establishing the orthodox belief and Scriptural warrant for confessing Jesus as the divine, only begotten Son of God.<sup>8</sup> Without a firm belief in the Trinity there could be no proper understanding of Jesus’ mediatorial work as the divine Word made flesh, and therefore no saving faith in him.<sup>9</sup> Wallin so passionately argues for the necessity of confessing Christ’s divine

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<sup>7</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, xx.

<sup>8</sup> Reuben Aldridge Guild, *Early History of Brown University: Including the Life, Times, and Correspondence of President Manning, 1756–1791* (Providence, RI: Snow & Farnham, 1897), 240. See Wallin’s letter to James Manning of July 30, 1773, in which he identifies anti-Trinitarianism and the lack of church order (discipline) to be the two greatest sicknesses which are ailing the cause of religion in England.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Ivimey, *A History of The English Baptists Comprising the Principle Events of the History of Protestant Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1668 Till 1760; And of the London Baptist Churches, During that Period*. (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1823), 4:52. Ivimey relates that the Baptist Fund resolved to support only those ministers who would subscribe to a Trinitarian confession. This motion was set forth by Benjamin Wallin on Dec. 1, 1772: “That the ministers and churches, who receive out of the

sonship as a chief point of Christianity that it is worth allowing him to speak in his own words:

Seeing then it is of such consequence to know who, or what manner of person the Redeemer is; may we not justly lament the inattention of the generality to this capital point? In all appearance, scarce anything is less understood or regarded by the multitude; nor is it any cause of wonder, that they who are unsettled in their ideas about the person of Christ, should be superficial, inconstant, and carried about with every wind, for he is the centre, and unless men are “rooted and built up in *him*, they *cannot* be established in the faith.” It is therefore a masterpiece of craft in the enemy, to pass over this great article, which is essential to the doctrine of the Trinity, that first and grand principle of revealed truth and the gospel. The old Serpent well knows the insufficiency of every other doctrine that can be preached, if this lies neglected; namely, “that Jesus is the Son of God, of the same divine nature with the Father and the Holy Ghost.”<sup>10</sup>

Unlike the writings of some of the other more notable Particular Baptist theologians, Benjamin Wallin’s works do not demonstrate a tendency to address theological errors first and foremost through systematic theology. This is not to say that Wallin’s writings contain no systematic theology, but rather to observe that Wallin’s typical approach to teaching doctrine has a more pastoral timbre, and he generally attempts to win hearers to his position through a gospel-oriented proclamation of the truth. Thus, in *The Scripture-doctrine of Christ’s Sonship*, which is a significant volume of two-hundred forty pages, Wallin addresses the doctrine of Christ’s divine sonship not with a philosophical, and potentially dry, argument about the Trinity, but by interweaving his discussion of the doctrine with his pastoral observations of four Scripture passages over the course of ten discourses. The discourses read like his sermons, given in Puritan plain-style, and were likely adapted from sermons which he had preached to his own congregation.<sup>11</sup> Wallin was not interested in engaging in public and written disputes with

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fund, on their next application, give a particular and explicit account of their faith, especially relating to the divinity of our Lord and the Doctrine of the Trinity.”

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Eternal Existence of the Lord Jesus Christ Considered and Improved* (London: J. Buckland, 1776), iv–v. Italicized text original to Wallin.

<sup>11</sup> Most of Wallin’s published writings are derived from sermons which he preached during a church meeting, or lectures that he gave during a public lectureship. The title pages of his various works generally identify them as sermons or discourses derived from sermons, although some of the works give

errorists, and when speaking of the purpose of his writing in *Scripture-doctrine*, while acknowledging that there were those who deny the Trinity and Christ's sonship, he unapologetically confessed:

But I speak not to such, nor shall I handle the subject as though I were disputing with an adversary; it would rejoice me, if any who oppose themselves, should be persuaded to the acknowledgement of the truth; but my immediate design is the establishment of believers in the Son of God, that we may be steadfast in our view of Christ, and not wavering, as some, in regard of that glorious person with whom we have entrusted our all, for eternity.<sup>12</sup>

While Wallin did not dispute with the errorist head-on in classical apologetic fashion, he nevertheless did add apologetical comments to Scripture as he unfolded its meaning. Thus, when expositing the text of 1 John 2:22, "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son," Wallin put forth an argument for Jesus' divine sonship that is similar to that of a systematic theologian:

However it is certain that *Father* and *Son* are correlatives, not to be separated; in whatever sense there is a *Father*, in that same sense there is, and must be, a *Son*. If then that distinct relative character, *the Father*, is grounded in the divine nature, in which alone, it must be allowed, that divine person exists, the correspondent character, *the Son*, must also have its foundation in the same divine nature, or, to speak plainly, if there is such an one as *God the Father*, a distinct divine person, there is doubtless such a person as *God the Son*.<sup>13</sup>

### **Covenant of Grace**

In a similar fashion, Wallin spoke about the covenant of grace, not strictly in systematic terms, but usually in a descriptive manner that highlighted the gospel results of the persons of the Trinity's everlasting covenant with themselves. The following quotation is an example of one of Wallin's most extended references to the results and consequences of the covenant of grace, but occasionally Wallin chose to allude to the

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no indication as to the writing's origin. In the case of *The Scripture-doctrine*, the discourses are identified as sermons.

<sup>12</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 25.

<sup>13</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 65.

doctrine only in passing,<sup>14</sup> with simply a line or two dedicated to referencing what he seemed to take for granted that his audience understood:

The Scriptures shew the order and method of divine operation in this astonishing kindness of God towards man! There we learn that it was the *Father* who sent his Anointed into the world to save us, and that this Messiah is no other than his *own* and *only begotten Son*; and again, that not the *Father* or the *Holy Ghost*, but the *Son*, united himself to the chosen, and undertook for them in the covenant of redemption, assumed flesh and blood, died for his people, and having purged their sins, sits enthroned in the heavens; and it further appears from the oracles of God, that the divine Spirit is the agent of the covenant, in and by whom the gospel is effectual in them that believe; but, unless Jesus is the true *Son of God* in the divine nature, equal in perfection and glory with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, we can neither think, or speak with understanding, of this marvelous and interesting affair.<sup>15</sup>

This quotation highlights Wallin's insistence on Jesus' divine sonship, but it also illustrates how Wallin wove systematic concepts, such as the covenant of grace, into his preaching and writing in such a way that the doctrine itself did not become the subject of the sermon, nor was it always even specifically named, but was used to support the overarching gospel theme that Wallin was pressing.

Later, in the same work (but a different sermon), Wallin was even more specific as to the nature of the covenant of grace.<sup>16</sup> In this second treatment of the doctrine, Wallin addressed the concept of union with Christ, and distinguished between a union that is real, but relative, and effected by the covenant of grace, which he termed an *eternal* union, and one that he termed *vital, spiritual, and mystical*, which occurs in time at regeneration. Wallin argued the necessity of the covenant of grace, demonstrating his orthodoxy in accepting this key doctrine:

This divine paction proceeded on the mystical union between the great Surety, and them for whom he undertook, as already described; and thus arose a natural and legal ground for laying the iniquity of us all upon him, and, on his complete

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<sup>14</sup> See for instance: Benjamin Wallin, *God's relation to the faithful after their decease, a proof of their present life, and future resurrection* (London: George Keith, 1754), 15–17.

<sup>15</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 113–133.

satisfaction to justice, for the imputation of his righteousness to us, in the way and time settled by infinite Wisdom.<sup>17</sup>

Yet, Wallin went on to further define what kind of union God's election accomplished in the covenant of grace:

This connection or union, though *real* and *important* is purely *relative* in respect of the chosen, and therefore did not require their actual existence: it implies nothing transient: Indeed it eventually secures their salvation and glory, yet simply, and of itself, leaves them in the state in which they were viewed when Christ was set up as their Head, and they were chosen in him, which no doubt was a guilty and ruined state, through the apostacy of man, which God foresaw, and determined to permit, for it is expressly declared that they were from the beginning, that is, from everlasting, chosen in him to *Salvation*, 2 Thess 2:13, and the whole process described, has a manifest reference to this their deplorable condition under the fall.<sup>18</sup>

So that, finally, Wallin described the union which took place at regeneration, and thereby distinguished his conception of what happened as a result of the covenant of grace from that espoused by the "high" Calvinists:

Believers are united to Christ in a certain peculiar intimate manner, whereby they become partakers, each in his degree, of the same Spirit that was poured forth without measure on him, as man and Mediator. This union is the effect of a divine change; it immediately results from the quickening influences of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, whereby the subject becomes possessed of a divine nature, as it is emphatically styled, 2 Peter 1:4, that is, renewed in the spirit of his mind after the image of God, in point of understanding, will and affections; his whole soul is changed, and he is sensibly and visibly quite another man; "therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature," 2 Cor 5:17.<sup>19</sup>

Without naming a direct antagonist, Wallin's distinction between the two kinds of unions that are accomplished in the life of the elect is a criticism of those theologians that argue for eternal justification as a logical necessity of the covenant of grace.

### **Particular Redemption**

Wallin was also thoroughly orthodox in his Calvinism when confessing particular redemption, though, once again, Wallin refrained from speaking about the

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<sup>17</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 123–124.

<sup>18</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 125.

<sup>19</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 128.

doctrine over-much when preaching, choosing instead to prefer gospel admonitions for sinners to repent and place their trust in the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners. Wallin indicated his affirmation of this doctrine from time-to-time in his writing with simple limiting phrases like “the chosen”<sup>20</sup> or “those who were appointed to obtain salvation by him,”<sup>21</sup> and “the effectually called.”<sup>22</sup> On one occasion, during the funeral sermon for Rebekah Cox in which he was expositing the text of Hebrews 11:13, “These all died in the faith,” Wallin indicated his support for the doctrine of particular redemption through his negative rejection of the doctrine of universal redemption, saying: “This very term *All*, is so far from being essentially universal, as the advocates for that unscriptural notion of universal redemption insinuate, that it is scarce ever used without limitation.”<sup>23</sup>

When Wallin did bring up the doctrine, it was always in connection with a text that he was addressing, and never simply as a doctrinal point of soteriology that was intended to limit the scope of a call to repentance. Wallin believed and taught that Scripture indicated that men would die in their sins and pass into eternal judgment apart from Christ. In order to remain true to the Scripture’s confession of this reality, Wallin concurred with his Calvinist forebearers that this must logically mean that Christ’s atonement was not given for all, because Christ’s shed blood would be infinitely sufficient to cover the sins of any for whom it was given. Wallin cited Romans 11:5’s reference to a “remnant” as a Scriptural proof that only some would be saved, and applied that teaching to passages such as Zechariah 3:2’s figure of a burning branch plucked from

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<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Lectures on primitive Christianity* (London: Robinson, 1768), 105.

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The compassion of the dying Savior to those that crucified him, considered and improved* (London: A. Ward, 1746), 11.

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Faith in Christ, and Life Everlasting* (London: 1762), 11.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The universal character of departed saints* (London: J. Buckland, 1769),

the fire to find there an illustration of God's electing grace:

Far be it to strain a figure in support of any human system, but certainly in the case represented, the fire, and consequently the fuel, in general, remains; nothing can be more expressive of a discriminating act; a man that plucks a brand out from the fire is necessarily supposed to leave the rest burning; here then is a manifest choice in the voluntary agent: it is true, the redeemed are innumerable, nor is an individual sensible sinner left without hope; nevertheless, everyone pluckt [*sic*] from this fire, is chosen to the salvation he obtains, and, notwithstanding the contrary flattering notions that sometimes prevail, yea, and awful as it may seem, in all appearance, the rescued are a *remnant*, as the Scripture declares.<sup>24</sup>

Yet, Wallin also recognized the universal call of Scripture to repentance and forgiveness of sins, and therefore his preaching kept in tension the doctrine of particular redemption, which explained why some would not heed the call of Scripture, and the universal command to preach the gospel to all nations. Thus, for instance, Wallin did not hesitate to assert:

Fear not, O penitent Soul; it appears that, as it is possible that the oldest offender may be converted and brought to believe, so he that obtains this mercy, however late in his day, is admitted to the hope of life everlasting. The text is without limitation; *Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die*. No repenting transgressor whatever is excepted from the promise.<sup>25</sup>

### **Original Sin and Actual Sin**

Sin is one of the most prominent doctrines in all of Wallin's writings, and there is not a single work that does not in some way address sin as rebellion against God. Indeed, two of Wallin's primary themes are the need for repentance of sin and man's need of salvation accomplished by Christ alone. As was already seen in the quotation regarding the covenant of grace, Wallin understood all mankind to be shackled in the guilt of original sin as a result of the apostacy of Adam's fall, with the need to be united to Christ as a new head and mediator for the forgiveness of sin, not just through the eternal union effected in election, but also in the subjective union effected in

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18. <sup>24</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Satan rebuked and the saint defended* (London: James McGowen, 1781),

<sup>25</sup> Wallin, *Compassion*, 10.



regeneration.<sup>26</sup> Without Christ, Wallin observed, “every man in his sins is in this fire (the fire of God’s eternal wrath) in respect of his desert . . . the wicked shall endure it as the just recompence of their disobedience and unbelief, and accordingly under the curse of the law, it’s transgressor is doomed to this wrath.”<sup>27</sup>

But it is not only the unbeliever that is subject to sin, for Wallin recognized that even Christians are still liable to fall prey to their sinful desires. While examining the meaning of Proverbs 25:26, which discusses a righteous man falling down before the wicked, Wallin identified a fallen believer as one who “through love of the world, the fear of man, or any other temptation, [puts] away faith and a good conscience, and [makes] shipwreck of the same, 1 Timothy 1:19.”<sup>28</sup> He also identified a second way that believers may fall when: “allured or intimidated, on any occasion they shun the truth, or do not bear a faithful testimony against error and vice, and still more when they are tempted servilely to flatter the profane, or it may be join them in anything unbecoming the gospel of Christ.”<sup>29</sup> In these two ways, Wallin included an understanding of sin in the believer’s life that entailed guilt for sins that were done actively (the classic sins of commission), as well as sins that resulted from inaction (sins of omission), such as failure to stand for the truth.

These quotes illustrate how Wallin was ever conscious of the danger that Christians faced, not of falling away entirely, as will be seen in a later section, but of “losing their first love” by allowing their spiritual life to grow cold. Wallin was a strong proponent of experimental, that is, experiential, religion because only in this way was the

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<sup>26</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 125.

<sup>27</sup> Wallin, *Satan rebuked*, 12. Parenthetical explanation inserted.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The case of a fallen professor, stated and considered* (London: J. Buckland, 1775), 9. Words in brackets added for clarity.

<sup>29</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 10.

believer constantly spurred on toward a life of spiritual vitality.<sup>30</sup> Lack of spiritual vibrancy was not only a danger to the individual, but Wallin also comprehended that whole nations could be guilty of falling into collective sin against God:

Lamentable case indeed! On what denomination soever we turn our eyes, we behold the contempt of divine Ordinances. We have need therefore all to unite in humbling ourselves before God, on account of this sure token of a growing infidelity in the nation, and of the dreadful hardness and impenitency of the people, who can thus impiously defy the Almighty, and despise his providence, by casting off the form of his fear, at a time when we are chastised by a desolating and expensive war, and a spreading pestilential disease among our cattle. Judgements which have often forerun the destruction of a wicked nation, who have obstinately persisted in their rebellion against God.<sup>31</sup>

### Conversion

One of Wallin's most repeated criticisms of England was that it had fallen into spiritual slothfulness and had placed too much confidence in reason to serve as its guiding light. Wallin desired that his nation would return to the Lord, and that the unregenerate would be converted—not to mere outward righteousness, but to a genuine holiness that was the fruit of salvation. Yet, Latitudinarian England struggled to answer what means God had instituted to accomplish this conversion. To clear up any misunderstanding about where he stood on the question, Wallin argued:

No man has been able to shew how *reason* can engage the awakened criminal to repent; it cannot insure him the pardon of a single transgression, much less of a discharge from the guilt of his innumerable errors, without which he must be undone. *From revelation* only we learn that repentance, which is unto life, and its certain connection forgiveness.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> From this point forward the more modern use “experiential” will be used in place of the older “experimental” of Benjamin Wallin’s day except when Wallin himself uses it in a quotation.

<sup>31</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Redeemer’s charge against his declining churches, exemplified in the case of the Church of Ephesus* (London: Aaron Ward, 1743), vii–viii.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of penitent transgressors, exemplified and vindicated* (London: George Keith, 1775), i.

Having read this quote in the preface to one of his largest works, *Superabounding grace*, Wallin's reader subsequently would not have been surprised to find that Wallin turned to the Scripture alone to discover God's power to save.

In his various writings Wallin regularly took up the subject of conversion as he expounded Scripture, although he did not always refer to the doctrine with this singular name, observing that "to repent, to be converted, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are synonymous phrases, at least the repentance Peter intends, and which is the subject of the gospel-ministry."<sup>33</sup> This repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus was more than just an intellectual assent or outward reformation of behavior for Wallin, who recognized that there could be "hypocritical" or "formal" professors:

The Faithful, each to a man, hath an experience of this; that in a view of his sinful state, and conscious of his own ill deserts, and also of his utter incapacity to merit the favor of God, he seeks to be justified, and to inherit the kingdom, alone by free grace: This is not barely his inward persuasion, that so a Sinner must be saved, which simple truth a man may really understand, and heartily credit, and yet be in a state of unbelief; nor is it his outward profession only, that he hopes to be saved in this way, but unto this evangelical doctrine every true Believer's heart is actually conformed: It is his experience; *i.e.* he doth truly and habitually renounce all claim on the score of his own obedience, and, encouraged by the report of the gospel, through divine assistance, hath put his trust in, and resteth alone on the merit of Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

Here, once more, Wallin's stress upon experiential religion can be observed, as can his insistence upon divine assistance in the conversion of an unbeliever. When the Holy Spirit began the work of conversion in the life of the unbeliever, the work would be manifest in both the head and heart so that in every way the converted person might be termed a "new man."

Wallin's understanding of the Spirit's work of conversion is closely connected with many of the other doctrines that he professed. The covenant of grace meant that the

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<sup>33</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 171.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The experience of the saints asserted and proved* (London: J. Buckland, 1763), 41.

Triune God had determined to save some of fallen mankind who were elected unto salvation. This election was not the result of their faith, as Wallin insisted: “their faith was not in any degree the deserving cause of their obtaining this favor: No, the Spirit is a free gift, and all his operations of every kind are purely of grace.”<sup>35</sup> Nor, according to the doctrine of particular redemption would the Spirit work upon the hearts of all the reprobate through God’s various means of grace. But, for those whom God had elected, he set his love upon them while they were still in their sins,<sup>36</sup> thereby covenanting that he would send his Spirit to “[take] away the stony heart, and [give] an heart of flesh, *i.e.* [quicken] and [renew] his people in the spirit of their minds, and then [take] up his abode with them.”<sup>37</sup> For Wallin, it was only the divine operation of the Spirit that could work this change in the unregenerate. Due to man’s utter inability to truly love God, even “the most exuberant bounty or providential kindness of the Almighty, are insufficient to the conversion of a sinner.”<sup>38</sup> As Wallin understood it, this reality was evidence of the spiritual insanity that gripped reprobate humanity, noting:

The truth is, that not only the more profligate... but all mankind in their present apostate state, are in some degree spiritually insane, insomuch that no unregenerate man *will*, or *can* think soberly on his wretched state, or form an effectual resolution of turning to God, till quickened by the Spirit of grace, his mind must *be turned* before it will *turn* . . . . He that has a just notion of human depravity, will admit the necessity of a *new heart*, by the operation of God, according to the promise, Ezekiel 36:26, antecedent to the transgressor being, even *mentally*, active towards a saving repentance.<sup>39</sup>

Wallin was intent on safeguarding his theology from any notion that man was savingly active in his will or mind prior to regeneration, so, in addition to statements such as the previous quote, he fortified his monergistic teaching about conversion stating:

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<sup>35</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 69.

<sup>36</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 78.

<sup>37</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 93. The bracket words were altered for understanding.

<sup>38</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 28.

<sup>39</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 58.

Now this change is internal, instantaneous, and solely by the power of God, in which the subject is entirely passive: the will and power of the natural man can have no place in his regeneration, for being dead in sin, he is utterly destitute of any principle of operation toward his revival.<sup>40</sup>

Yet, once “awakened,” Wallin was also insistent that the former sensible sinner (now regenerate) was now responsible for obeying the gospel, and that there was a real sense in which the regenerate’s will would experientially and freely turn in repentance toward its Savior in conversion:

It appears that the conversion of a sinner, however supernatural, is perfectly rational and consistent with the freedom of his will: Indeed, mere moral suasion is insufficient to open his eyes; a divine change and influence are needful to his repentance unto life, nevertheless, thus enlightened and assisted, his repentance is cordial and free; it is his own voluntary act. And this choice of his heart is on principles to be justified by reason itself; nor doth the gracious hand of the Almighty in his conversion in the least impede, but rather enlarge his mental powers, Psalm 119:32, being turned, the sinner turneth himself as a reasonable creature.<sup>41</sup>

### **Justification**

Benjamin Wallin’s teaching on justification was in keeping with the Reformation’s articulation of the doctrine. In *Superabounding grace* Wallin unfolds the text of the Prodigal Son and reflects much upon how the Prodigal’s behavior is illustrative of the sensible sinner’s repentance and a coming to his Father. As the Prodigal did not prepare himself in any way for his return to the father, so Wallin insists that the only preparatory work that is done in justification is the quickening work of the Spirit, observing that:

Whoever can loiter or postpone, is not well apprised of his impotence and danger, or of the ways of the Lord with transgressors, who is ready to forgive; but he that is taught of God, hath no time to lose, he sees himself instantly exposed to everlasting destruction . . . and, in prospect of salvation, hastens to the throne of mercy, with unfeigned contrition, that he may be thoroughly washed from his iniquity.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 68–69.

<sup>41</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 72–73.

<sup>42</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 79–80.

Here Wallin is teaching against any preparatory work that might be encouraged by some people prior to justification.<sup>43</sup> According to this erroneous theological view, it was important for the unregenerate to prepare their hearts for the working of God’s grace; to discern what grace God had given them; and even to pray that he might give them a saving and regenerating grace.<sup>44</sup> No, Wallin observes that “whoever finds himself ready to perish, has a presumptive evidence of being of that happy number (of the elect), whom “God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,” and therefore may be encouraged to appropriate the blessings of grace.”<sup>45</sup> The reality of the spiritual death and insanity in which Wallin believed the natural man was thoroughly ensconced meant that no one without the work of the Spirit could be sensible of the damnable nature of their sins, and therefore, to be a sensible sinner meant to be one in whom the Spirit was already accomplishing his quickening work.

Such a sensible sinner was to be taught:

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<sup>43</sup> In this, Wallin was in confessional unity with The Westminster Confession, 9:3 and the Cannons of Dort, III/IV:11. Wallin’s comment of “here is no preparation,” immediately preceding the above quote in the text is not leveled at any specific theologian but does not strike the reader as a mere throwaway thought either. Certainly, within the theology of some English (and later American) Puritans, there was a tradition of preparationist thought that distinguished between the resistible work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the unregenerate that did not necessarily lead to regeneration, and the irresistible and saving grace of regeneration itself. While it cannot be known with certainty what, if anything, Wallin had in mind when denying preparation, one suspects that there were some who were prolonging their uniting with a church until they had taken such steps as to prepare themselves for assurance of their regeneration. In other words, the distinction was not between the varying work of the Holy Spirit prior to and after regeneration, but rather erroneously emphasized a human work of preparation prior to regeneration. In his funeral sermon for Elizabeth MacGowan (*The fountain of life freely opened to the willing-hearted sinner*, 1774) Wallin criticizes the practice of encouraging young people to delay joining the church until they are able to provide sufficient “proofs.” pp. 29–31

<sup>44</sup> Martyn McGeown, “The Notion of Preparatory Grace in the Puritans,” *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 41, no.1 (2007): 58–84. McGeown lists William Perkins, William Ames, and Richard Sibbes as his primary examples of those theologians that taught a preparatory grace, but also finds examples of the theology in men like John Owen and Thomas Shepard. It is unknown if Wallin has these theologians in mind, or if he would even be critical of their preparationist theology. What is absolutely certain is that Wallin would not stand for any theology that suggested that man had any role to play whatsoever in his salvation (as was also the case with those Puritan theologians identified by McGeown, although he believes that they did introduce human works).

<sup>45</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 78. Parenthetical comment added for clarity.

In the article of Justification, *works of the law* and *grace* stand in direct opposition; they are inconsistent with each other and cannot be mingled: A man must be justified either wholly by his own obedience, or altogether by the obedience of Christ, and therefore he that adheres to the righteousness of the law can have no claim on the grace of the gospel.<sup>46</sup>

Mingling works and grace was fatal to the article of justification, and thus Wallin took steps to instruct his readers about the danger of thinking that they were justified by faith *per se*, saying that “faith, strictly speaking, either as a *principle*, or a *work*, is not the meritorious cause of what he shall hereafter enjoy, neither doth it in any sense or degree give him a right thereunto.”<sup>47</sup> It was only Christ’s obedience, Christ’s righteousness, Christ’s sacrifice alone that the believer should trust for atonement, the complete remission of sins. Wallin rejected any notion of man’s cooperation with God’s grace to effect a personal righteousness unto salvation too, stating: “Nor can any works of the sinner, however renewed by grace, in this imperfect state, have the least justifying virtue in them.”<sup>48</sup> Christ’s righteousness and obedience was imputed by God’s grace to the elect sinner as a consequence of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on the cross, and received through faith. The resulting declaration of pardon was the sinner’s justification. Faith then was the instrument by which sinners were justified, it was not the ground of justification.

Moreover, his justification “is not merely forgiveness of sin, it also includes a title to life, grounded on the merit of the Savior’s obedience to the death of the cross, by which his people are made righteous.”<sup>49</sup> This is the birth of the “new man.” Although the sinner’s sins were forgiven and he was declared righteous, Wallin observed that “the believer thus purged and invested, in my opinion, is rather *acquitted* and *justified*, than

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<sup>46</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The ancient believers’ transition from morality to life* (London: J. Buckland, 1779), 6. Here Wallin is arguing against any notion of an infused grace or imparted righteousness that the Roman Catholic church would teach.

<sup>49</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 97. Quotation taken from Wallin’s footnote.

*innocent.*<sup>50</sup> Thus, a justified believer was continually on guard against the root of sin in his flesh. Still, Wallin went on to explain that there were two kinds of righteousness at work in those who were justified, the one, a legal righteousness, and the other, a moral righteousness.<sup>51</sup> “These,” said Wallin, “are inseparable to a life of faith, yet distinct in their nature and properties; the one inherent and practical; the other imputed and judicial, and they are both everlasting.”<sup>52</sup> Yet, while legal righteousness had to do with justification and was perfectly complete in every believer, moral righteousness was “in the present state imperfect, so that there are degrees of true holiness, and consequently a difference among the saints themselves.”<sup>53</sup>

Finally, as it is an important doctrine in establishing a theologian’s agreeability with those doctrines that were especially taught within “high” Calvinism, Wallin’s opinion on eternal justification also needs to be considered under this head of justification. As was previously noted in the sub-section dealing with the covenant of grace, Wallin at times criticized a doctrine or theologian without directly naming the one whom he opposed. There, Wallin made a distinction between the two kinds of union that the elect have with Christ in order to demonstrate that eternal justification was not a logical necessity of the covenant of grace. In a funeral sermon entitled *The fountain of life freely opened to the willing-hearted sinner* Wallin once again renounced eternal justification without naming names or even the doctrine itself:

Indeed it seems unreasonable to assert, as some do, that our Redeemer, by his sufferings on the cross, procured or merited the favor of God for the penitent, seeing

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<sup>50</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 97. Quotation taken from Wallin’s footnote.

<sup>51</sup> These “two kinds of righteousness” should not be confused with Martin Luther’s distinction of moral and civil righteousness. Rather, Wallin’s concept seems to entail Luther’s concept of moral righteousness that is imputed from Christ, and deemed by Wallin as legal righteousness, and the second kind, which he deems moral righteousness that corresponds to an imparted righteousness that is the root of sanctification.

<sup>52</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 98. This final phrase, “both everlasting” demonstrates Wallin’s understanding of Scripture’s promise that God “will not forsake the work of his hands.” (Psalm 138:8)

<sup>53</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 100–101.



the constitution of his office, and even the covenant of redemption itself, is the fruit of his favor to his chosen; nor do I think it just to assert, that Christ, properly speaking, purchased the kingdom prepared by the Father for these vessels of mercy, before the foundation of the world; but surely he reconciled his people to God by his blood, and the meritorious cause of their obtaining grace or glory, lies in the complete atonement he made by his death.<sup>54</sup>

This quote not only demonstrates Wallin's willingness to criticize doctrines he considered dangerous even though they were being taught by such notable men from within his own denomination as John Gill and John Brine, but also his pastoral desire to be charitable to men whom he considered as fellow co-workers, evidenced by his refraining from naming them.

### **The Law**

Undergirding Wallin's understanding of justification was his understanding of righteousness. God himself was perfectly righteous, while man, in Adam's sin, had fallen from the righteousness with which God had created Adam.<sup>55</sup> Through the law, God insisted that man obey his will and live as he commanded, yet the law did not give the ability to keep the law perfectly—it could accuse and terrify, but it could not regenerate—therefore by works of the law no man could be justified.<sup>56</sup>

As with nearly all of Wallin's doctrinal convictions, his works do not include a distinct definition of the law, which means that his understanding of the law must be gleaned from his sermons and observed in the manner in which he used it in order to

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<sup>54</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The fountain of life freely opened to the willing-hearted sinner* (London: J. Buckland, 1974), 19.

<sup>55</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 102.

<sup>56</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, ii, 71, 247. Wallin also speaks against the notion that in the New Covenant man is still capable of becoming righteous by obedience – an obedience of faith which has relaxed the requirements of the law. He says in a footnote on page 247: “To quiet themselves under this awful, but undeniable truth, some would have it that the gospel is a kind of new law, according to which they say, God accepts *sincere*, though *defective*, instead of *perfect* obedience, for justification in his sight, this appears to me a vain imagination; it is neither the language of reason nor Scripture; neither is it agreeable to law or gospel; yet, alas, this kind of commutation with our Judge, without any warrant from him, is eagerly received, and runs smoothly down, as though the invention of men would certainly avail them against the counsel of God; anything rather than submit to the righteousness of faith set forth in revelation.”

convict sinners. In his *Lectures on primitive Christianity* Wallin described the work that the law was doing on the hearts of Peter's hearers on the day of Pentecost:

He (Peter) seems to be exceedingly earnest after their repentance; and therefore to awaken, them takes the opportunity of rehearsing their crime, that being deeply convinced of their horrid and inexpressible guilt, they might on due encouragement be prepared to look on him whom they had pierced, and mourn . . . Sinners are for the most part hardened in unbelief, and have need to be told again and again of their evil; and affectionate ministers, who watch for their souls, will repeat their remonstrances with a view to convince them; they will cry aloud, and spare not to shew unto them their transgressions and their sins, that if God peradventure should awaken them to a sense of their folly and danger, and give them repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth, they may recover themselves and be plucked as brands from the fire.<sup>57</sup>

Here, Wallin's understanding of the preparatory office of the law is witnessed, as well as a slight glimpse of his view of the gospel as being that word which God uses to provide "encouragement" for the terrified sinner to have the confidence to come to Christ. Wallin consistently insisted that the bare word of the Scripture was not by itself capable of creating faith, but that the Holy Spirit would use both the law to convict of sin and the gospel to promise remission of that sin through the blood of Christ.<sup>58</sup> He also faithfully warned against resisting the Spirit-inspired Word:

Again, when under hearing of the Word, or by any other means we are reprov'd for a practice we cannot without self-denial forsake, or when we are convinced of a doctrine, or an ordinance of the gospel, an open and zealous avouchment of which will expose us to scorn and difficulty, I say, when under such circumstances, we do thro' the prevalency of some lust, from fear and cowardice, or for the sake of ease, stifle these convictions; in such instances, we quench the Spirit.<sup>59</sup>

Wallin did not see the inspired Word as the only God-ordained preaching of the law, but also taught that "there are not of his creatures, from the most exalted spirit in

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<sup>57</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 122–123. Parenthetical explanation added.

<sup>58</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 92. For example: "But this may be affirmed, that the written Word, though inspired of God, and able to make wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ, is ineffectual to any saving purpose, unless attended with the same divine power that raiseth from the dead: The inspired Word, however skillfully and earnestly applied, can no more possess a man dead in trespasses and sins, with a vital principle of holiness, and the love of God, than the sun in his meridian strength and brightness, can revive an human body in a state of natural death; which we know is impossible."

<sup>59</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *An exhortation against quenching the Spirit* (London: John Ward, 1748), 24.

heaven to the meanest insect of reptile on earth, but what have been or may be the rod of his anger; even the wicked . . . are sometimes employed by the Almighty to punish sinners.”<sup>60</sup> This punishment of sinners was God’s exercising the punishing function of the law so that by his Providential hand the world (believers and non-believers alike) might be terrified by the calamities it experienced and become aware of its sinfulness so that it “may humble us under a sense both of our own evil and the national guilt, and become a means to prevent deserved ruin.”<sup>61</sup>

While the unregenerate can only be terrified under such terrible providences, Wallin calls the children of God to take comfort that it is indeed the Lord that causes these desolations—they are not by chance. He notes:

We are undoubtedly exposed to the same desolations. What the text asserts, is a sufficient relief to the righteous, who are well satisfied, and can rejoice, when they consider that, even in the present uncertain state, no evil can befall them without the *Lord, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth for them whose heart is perfect towards him.*<sup>62</sup>

This quote is typical of Wallin in that it demonstrates a pastoral sensitivity for not leaving those who are in Christ Jesus under the condemnation of the law but pointing them to the gospel promises after the law has had its opportunity to convict of sin. Such a pastoral instinct is derived from his understanding of the Spirit’s use of law and gospel, noting that “under his efficacious operations the Word of God burns like fire, either in a way of conviction, or consolation,” citing the examples of Jeremiah in whom the Word burned like fire until he spoke, and the disciples on the road to Emmaus whose hearts burned within them for joy as he opened the Scriptures to them.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Christian’s duty and confidence in times of public calamity* (London: George Keith, 1756), 7.

<sup>61</sup> Wallin, *The Christian’s duty*, 27.

<sup>62</sup> Wallin, *The Christian’s duty*, 16.

<sup>63</sup> Wallin, *Exhortation against quenching*, 11.

Yet this pastoral concern for not allowing those declared righteous by Christ to remain under the conviction of the law should not be misinterpreted as a latent antinomianism in Wallin's theology. Indeed, this theological moniker was bandied about quite frequently in Wallin's time—especially by Latitudinarians that wanted to insist on the necessity of works—and was often a polemic term engaged to discredit a theologian that was thought to promote God's free grace over-much.<sup>64</sup> While Wallin spoke habitually of God's free grace, he abhorred antinomianism. In one of several such lengthy passages scattered throughout his works he says:

Are the falls of the righteous so distressing and pernicious? Then let us beware of every sentiment and practice that borders on licentiousness. The *doctrine* of some falls within the comparison of the text. All those notions that extenuate sin, or that have a tendency to seduce from a vigilance or mortification of the flesh, under a pretense of gospel liberty, and the aboundings of mercy, are to be shunned as abominable and hurtful. It is a wretched perversion, or abuse of divine grace, and the believer's security in Christ, when men argue from thence to an indifferency about sin, or against keeping under the body of this flesh, lest we stumble and fall; and he that considers the deplorable consequences of being cast down under the power of any lust, represented in the text, will have reason to abhor every such idea, and deem those who presume to utter it as an enemy to mankind, and the pure and undefiled religion of Jesus, however under specious pretenses they may exalt themselves, or be admired by others.<sup>65</sup>

Far from refusing to teach the law, Wallin insisted that it is the father and master of the house's Christian duty to instruct the people of his household in the law. He called into question any man's Christianity and manhood who failed in this vocation:

My friends, it is of great importance to society, and the ornament of our holy profession, to keep up the dignity of a parent or master; and he who through indolence, fondness, or even want of capacity, or fortitude of mind, rules not well in his own house, is defective in the character of a *man* and a *Christian*.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ralph Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)* (Köln: Böhlau, 1972), 163. Lessenich notes: "As has been indicated, Latitudinarian preachers believed in the superiority of good works over faith, faith being but a means to the true end of religion, the amelioration of man and society, the production of better men, better neighbors, and better citizens." Wallin himself addressed this criticism in an extensive footnote for his work *The blessedness of the man, whom the Lord shall find diligent in his station* (London: J. Buckland, 1773), 32–33.

<sup>65</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The importance of family-religion* (London: J. Buckland, 1771), 7.

Moreover, he points to the Angel of the Lord's attestation about Abraham's faithfulness in this matter as the norm for all Christian fathers:

*I know him, saith the Lord, that he will command; i.e. teach with authority, direct charge, and by every lawful and becoming method in his power to see to it, that each under his care keep the way of the Lord.*<sup>67</sup>

## The Gospel

Keeping the way of the Lord was not only a matter of observing God's law for Wallin, but it also included the proper understanding of the God-ordained way of salvation. From what has already been discussed, a fair understanding of Wallin's theology of the gospel can be inferred, but a further examination is nevertheless warranted. Wallin used the term "gospel" in a variety of ways as is common in most Christian writing. At times the term "gospel" is simply used to designate that good news about what Jesus has undertaken and accomplished on behalf of sinners. Wallin demonstrated this use here as he masterfully chained together multiple expressions and images of the good news for sinners:

Here, if the expression may be allowed, the wardrobe of heaven is opened for him that is naked, and the unsearchable riches of Christ displayed, that the poor wretched, who are ready to perish, may come, "Ho! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Ye that are utterly destitute, come! The God of all grace is furnished with every blessing you need, and is ready to supply you according to his riches in glory. Behold his righteousness is near; he that believes in his heart shall be saved. Fear not, O trembling sinner, who are sinking under the weight of thine iniquity! Justification is free; trust in the Lord, his Spirit shall sanctify and adorn thee: Lo, he waits to be gracious! A broken heart and a contrite spirit he will not despise.<sup>68</sup>

Such proclamations of the gospel are necessary according to Wallin because "without a prospect of reconciliation, or at least, a possibility of being accepted and pardoned, the deepest conviction of guilt and wrath would rather drive the miserable subject to

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<sup>67</sup> Wallin, *Family-religion*, 9.

<sup>68</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 178. For another striking example of Wallin drafting a prolonged gospel proclamation of Jesus' atoning sacrifice see his *Scripture-doctrine* 153–154.

despair.”<sup>69</sup> In this, Wallin once again demonstrated how he understood law and gospel to cooperate hand-in-hand according to the design of the Spirit. The law by itself convicts, but “an apprehension of impending ruin is not sufficient of itself to induce the sinner to repentance, it is needful that he is morally assured, that, vile and unworthy as he is, and near to destruction, there is at least a probability, if not a certainty of his escape, on his coming to God by his Son.”<sup>70</sup>

At other times Wallin uses the term “gospel” to indicate anything that has to do with the new covenant instituted at Christ’s death and resurrection. Therefore, he will speak of “gospel ordinances” to indicate not only the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper, but also prayer, family devotions, church membership, and the like. His use of the term “gospel” in this sense would be the broad sense as contrasted with the narrow sense that has to do with the message of the good news itself. In the broad sense, Wallin spoke of the gospel in much the same way that the Old Testament used the term “law” to indicate both the commands and promises of God in the old covenant. Thus, in Wallin’s understanding, the gospel ordinances were those things which God put in place for his new covenant people to observe for good order and the right worship of him. Although they included rules or laws, these were “gospel” in that they were given so that the Church would live as the healthy bride of Christ, warned of the things that would

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<sup>69</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 77.

<sup>70</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 77. This quote could be misinterpreted to suggest that Wallin was in the habit of introducing uncertainty into the proclamation of the gospel because of his views on Particular Redemption and Election. However, the full context of this quote indicates that nothing could be further from the truth, as he explains: “Now this hope is set before him in the Word; the general report of the gospel, namely, that, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” warrants any man, sensible of his guilt, to look unto him and be saved; for there being no exception in the gracious report, he may well hope for mercy, nor is this hope interdicted by the election of God, or the limitation of Christ’s propitiatory death to a people given him by the Father, according to the Scripture; the chosen he hath redeemed are before him, but his secret and revealed will must needs coincide, and his decrees correspond with the promise of his mouth.” This quote will be taken up again when discussing Wallin’s attitude toward the “modern question.” For now, it is sufficient to note that the uncertainty that Wallin implies exists not in the gospel promise, but in the sensible sinner—as he is being drawn into faith in Christ and the assurance of salvation by the Spirit through the testimony of the Word.

cause her sickness, and instructed to do those things that continued to conform her to the image of Christ.

One other doctrinal question that is important for the overall goal of this dissertation's thesis is the answer to this query: did Wallin teach that the gospel ought to be obeyed, even by unbelievers? Wallin did not hesitate to speak of the necessity to obey the gospel demands, indicating:

We have a divine *exhortation* or *warrant*. In either point of view it amounts to the same: Every exhortation implies a *warrant* to conform to its dictates, and the publishing of a *warrant*, carries in it an *exhortation* to apply it. In this sacred declaration each one addressed is invited and authorized without any scruple, "to take of the water of "life.""<sup>71</sup>

Of course, this quote should not be used to invalidate any of the theology that has already been discussed. Wallin was bedrock in his affirmation that the natural man had no ability to obey the gospel command without the prior awakening and enabling of the Holy Spirit. But that was not the question that was posed in the debate about the "modern question." Instead, it must be determined if Wallin believed that there was a moral obligation to obey the gospel, even for unbelievers. The prior quote does establish Wallin's willingness to speak of obeying the gospel exhortation, a phrase that many so-called "high" Calvinists would be wholly averse to use. Furthermore, when commenting on a similar gospel exhortation, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little" (Psalm 2:12), he noted that it was "a proclamation perceptive wherever the gospel is published, for the warning of every careless or prejudiced hearer, and the consolation of them that believe."<sup>72</sup> This comment implies that Wallin saw a gospel obligation even for unbelievers, but the implication is made explicit a few pages later when he said:

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<sup>71</sup> Wallin, *Fountain*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 162.

It is certainly a proclamation for the warning of unbelievers, who dream of happiness, or think to escape the wrath of the Lamb, short of trusting in him; it points to the only way of salvation and blessedness; namely, their submitting themselves unto Jesus, and carries in it, that whoever refuses to embrace him, whom the Father hath sealed, is accursed, and must inevitably perish in the time of his anger, when he descends from heaven in flaming fire to take vengeance on them who obey not his gospel. In one word, this sentence proves that final unbelief will be fatal to the subject, and be punished with everlasting destruction, which greatly strengthens the argument for attending to this counsel of God, and falls in with the design of the place.<sup>73</sup>

In this quote Wallin not only used the language of obedience, but he also made it clear to his readers that even unbelievers were indeed warned and obligated to obey. If they chose not to obey, Wallin insisted, final unbelief would be counted against them as a punishable sin.

### **Sanctification**

Connected with obedience to the gospel and the forensic righteousness that Wallin taught was imputed to the Christian at the time of his justification, is the doctrine of sanctification. This encompasses the new life of the Christian as God the Holy Spirit works to develop the moral righteousness of the individual by his grace and the cooperation of the new man. In *The Christian's concern that he may not be a cast-away* Wallin opened his discourse with the strong assertion that:

Self-denial is ungrateful to the flesh; but however distasteful the very doctrine of it may be to some nominal Christians, yet certain it is that without self-denial, in this sinful state, there can be no Christianity or real religion: and the Scripture is plain, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die.*<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Wallin, *Scripture-doctrine*, 172–173. The English of this sentence is somewhat archaic and therefore presents a challenge to understanding. The phrase “whom the Father hath sealed” should not be understood to be a limiting phrase meaning that only those whom the Father hath sealed are required to obey the gospel. Instead, the phrase should be understood as an appositional phrase that modifies the pronoun him, which itself has Jesus as the antecedent earlier in the sentence. Further evidence that this is the sense that Wallin intended is provided in *Exhortation against quenching*, pg. 23, when he states: “I am of opinion all who disobey the gospel will be found quenchers of the Spirit.” Wallin provides a footnote for this opinion pointing to Luke 19:27 where Jesus’ parable mentions the king’s condemnation of all those who “would not that I should rule over them.” Wallin’s comment here is to demonstrate that those who are condemned are guilty not only of disobeying the gospel, but also of quenching the Spirit who accompanies the gospel and has used it as a means of grace which those men have willfully rejected.

<sup>74</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Christian's concern that he may not be a cast-away* (London: J. Buckland, 1765), 1.



Indeed, Wallin repeated similar sentiments elsewhere, as for instance when he noted the importance for the believer to be concerned with fruitfulness:

Some seem to flatter themselves in a barren profession, but the man who can be indifferent about increasing in the fruits of righteousness, understands not the gospel, and has a very sorry pretense to an experience of its power, and the love of God in his heart, without which his religion is vain; and such would do well to look to themselves.<sup>75</sup>

At times, Wallin's strong assertions about the necessity to subdue the flesh seem to go so far as to elevate the person's struggle against sin to the same height as Christ atonement. Wallin clearly had in mind those men who claimed to be Christian but who engaged in open licentiousness when he admonished: "Remember, we are called unto holiness: the death of sin is no less needful than the death of Christ; and a man may as justly expect to attain the fruition of heaven without the blood of the Savior, as without the destruction of indwelling sin."<sup>76</sup> However, Wallin should not be suspected of contradicting his own understanding of the grace of the gospel, and he rightly strove to balance the Christian's duty with free grace, noting that:

The road to heaven is an *highway of holiness* as well as a *way of free-grace*. . . The man who is an utter stranger to the keeping under his body, is plainly in subjection to it, and hath no visible claim to the reward of the inheritance; on the other hand, he who is conscious of striving against sin with a view to destroy it, however imperfect, is truly sanctified and an heir of the kingdom.<sup>77</sup>

In the preceding quote, Wallin's pairing of the law and gospel are on full display. So also is his image of the sanctified life as being one of struggle against the sinful flesh in order to keep it under. This image echoes Paul's image of the boxer found in 1 Corinthians 9:26 and allows Wallin to highlight the Christian's role in the struggle against the flesh, while at the same time providing the gospel proclamation about the

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<sup>75</sup> Wallin, *Ancient believers*, 25.

<sup>76</sup> Wallin, *Christian's concern*, 18–19.

<sup>77</sup> Wallin, *Christian's concern*, 19–20.

victory that has already been won in Christ, and the final victory that will be gained through Christ, as he went on to explain:

Thus exact is the likeness of the figure under which the Apostle presents himself with that of the militant saint, in whom the power of sin is broken, and though often impetuous and sometimes alarming, yet it shall never be able to rise up again so as to enslave him, but shall be still more weakened, and in the end be totally destroyed. Happy is the man thus saved of the Lord!—And this is thy blessedness, O Christian! fear not; keep under thy body; thou art more than a conqueror through him that hath loved thee.<sup>78</sup>

The battle is ongoing in the life of the Christian and incomplete until Christ finally calls the believer to his eternal rest. Wallin never spoke of any instantaneous sanctification and insisted that the progressive sanctification of the saint was God’s work of ripening the elect before the final harvest to everlasting righteousness.<sup>79</sup>

Wallin’s teaching on progressive sanctification meant that he acknowledged varying degrees of sanctification in this life, although, as was seen under the heading of justification, Wallin believed that both the justification and final sanctification of the sinner were ultimately eternally complete and applied to the believer at regeneration.<sup>80</sup>

Wallin provided one of his most extensive treatments of progressive sanctification during the funeral sermon of Thomas Wildman:

Believers, while in the body, are truly alive in this sense, they have received a principle of life from Christ, as before observed, and are made new creatures; they are, through grace, the happy subjects of righteousness and true holiness, and some are more advanced in this divine life, while here, than others; yet, alas! there are great imperfections attending the most eminent saint in this sinful and mortal state, but, when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, the Christian is made perfect in holiness, light and love: If that measure of sanctification which the children of God

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<sup>78</sup> Wallin, *Christian’s concern*, 23.

<sup>79</sup> Wallin, *Ancient believers*, 16–19.

<sup>80</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 98. See prior discussion under “Justification.” Sanctification was eternally complete in the sense that God committed to seeing his work of sanctification through to completion. In another of his works, *Blessedness of the man*, Wallin connects God’s work of sanctification to the covenant of grace and the decree of election saying: “Thus the Father and the Son are agreed in the end of their choice. It is true, this divine determination does not immediately and directly make the subject good, but it is infallibly connected with a decree of what is needful to the effect in due time, and eventually secures the holiness of the chosen, since the counsel of the omniscient and immutable Jehovah shall certainly stand (Psalm 33:11)” pg. 26.

attain unto in this world, where they universally complain of remaining corruption, entitles them to be esteemed of the living in *Jerusalem*, much more may they be so accounted, when they are passed into the world to come, where the blessed inhabitants are perfectly purified, and where all sin and darkness, and every evil affection is done away forever.<sup>81</sup>

This sanctification does not merit the saint's admittance into God's eternal rest, nevertheless, that rest can be spoken of as a reward of grace, even as the master in Jesus' parable in Matthew 25:23 says to the faithful servant "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter into the joy of your master!"<sup>82</sup> For Wallin, God has chosen to acknowledge the good works that his children have done, even though they only did those works because of the Spirit's sanctifying influence in them. Because it was the Spirit that caused the works, God is not in his servant's debt to reward him, but in his gracious largesse he has said "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40)."

### **Perseverance of the Saints**

Part of the grace that God provided through his sealing and indwelling Spirit was the assurance that he who had begun a good work in them would bring it to completion.<sup>83</sup> Wallin was a firm proponent of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and saw the doctrine as necessary to preserve God's glory. In Wallin's theology, the Holy Spirit was the divine person who applied the atoning work of Jesus to the elect. In his work of conversion, the Spirit's work was irresistible, as Wallin would note:

The influences of the Spirit are efficacious and irresistible; indeed such is the state of the human soul by nature and under the dominion of sin, that were it possible for

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<sup>81</sup> Wallin, *God's relation*, 23.

<sup>82</sup> Wallin, *Blessedness of the man*, 30. "I may soberly assert, that where the works of a just man have most abounded, his future reward will still more abound, even to an unspeakable degree; not measured by the *virtue* of his action, but according to the *munificence* of his heavenly Father, which is boundless: this shews that the reward is not of debt but of grace; a consideration of importance to adjust our notions concerning the place, or influence of good works in a future state."

<sup>83</sup> Wallin, *Exhortation against quenching*, 16.

the baseness and stoutness of men so to resist the Spirit as to frustrate his work, none would ever be converted.<sup>84</sup>

This irresistibility of the Spirit's work, or the thwarting of his will, was not only impossible at the very genesis of the believer's new life, but also at the termination of the believer's life on earth. Wallin insisted that:

To suppose the creature's obstinacy and wickedness can frustrate the will, or overcome the power of the divine Spirit is absurd and impious, a notion that contradicts the sovereignty and omnipotence of this glorious person, and deprives him of the honors due to his divine nature.<sup>85</sup>

Yet, Wallin was fully aware that there were examples of believers who had fallen into grievous sin, who appeared to be as spiritually dead as unbelievers. He needed to be able to speak to this observable reality without having to deny the irresistibility of God's grace, or the perseverance of the saints. To this end, Wallin taught that it was possible to quench the Spirit, which he defined as:

To quench the Spirit is the same as to resist, vex, grieve, rebel against, or do despite unto him; all which are applied to the conduct of men with respect to the blessed Spirit, and are expressive of a greater or lesser degree of opposition to, or provocation of him; and, I conceive in general it signifies a neglecting, or despising the tokens of his power and grace, and thereby offending his holiness, so as to occasion his voluntary departure in a way of chastisement, or judgment.<sup>86</sup>

Key to understanding Wallin's distinction in this quote is his qualification of the man despising the "tokens" of his power and grace. While the Spirit's immediate operation could not be resisted by anyone, the tokens or means that the Spirit used could be, therefore Christians who refused to use and obey the gospel ordinances had a faith-life that was nearly extinguished or quenched. Wallin sounded the alarm against any who would underestimate the danger of sin for the believer because of a false understanding of the doctrine of perseverance:

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<sup>84</sup> Wallin, *Exhortation against quenching*, 14.

<sup>85</sup> Wallin, *Exhortation against quenching*, 15.

<sup>86</sup> Wallin, *Exhortation against quenching*, 16–17.

Such fearful havoc sin may make in the soul of a transgressor, and such may be the transgression even of a righteous man; so far is it from being true that sin can do the believer no harm, as some proudly say, as though it was impossible to express his security in a phrase more decent and safe; but, be it known that sin may reduce the real Christian to a deplorable condition in his person, character and estate, and even send him down to the grave in misery and shame; and is this to be accounted no injury?<sup>87</sup>

While Wallin was willing to admit that outwardly a person may look like a formal professor only, he warned that “no man’s state is to be determined by his fall, it is unwarrantable and rash to pronounce him a reprobate; peradventure, his repentance, through grace, may recover his character.”<sup>88</sup> Wallin continued to insist that “a diligent Christian may attain to a comfortable assurance of his own state,” but reminded his readers that while “tares grow up with the wheat... a certain discernment between the righteous and the wicked is reserved to the day of the Lord.”<sup>89</sup>

Accordingly, Wallin demonstrated a willingness to continue to preach the law and gospel to all of his hearers, frequently using the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints as an encouragement to godly believers and a call to repentance to those who had fallen, assuring them that the gospel was true even for backsliders.<sup>90</sup> For Wallin, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints was indeed part of the gospel which alone could cause a terrified sinner to hope. It is little wonder then that Wallin would extensively articulate the doctrine in his funeral sermons, not only to comfort those who were grieving with the assurance it offered about their loved one, but also to signal God’s

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<sup>87</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 16. Wallin also warned against this in *The Christian’s concern*, 45–46.

<sup>88</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 6.

<sup>89</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 6–7.

<sup>90</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer and the Lord’s Supper* (London: John Ward, 1752), 70–71. “These are the ways of the Lord with repenting sinners, even with those who have backslided again and again. *Jehovah* is still the same; he is still merciful, and remains in the same disposition to pardon and accept repenting backsliders as when this declaration was sent forth. Nor is there any respect of persons with him. Who, then, that consults these gracious declarations, and finds his heart open to shame and grief for his ungrateful revolts, can doubt the readiness of God to hear and forgive, or hesitate about crediting this comfortable assurance, that he will *not despise their prayer*.”

faithfulness to those terrified by the prospects of their deaths and the guilt of their backslidings:

The doctrine I note hath already been hinted: It is no other than the final perseverance of the saints. A doctrine opposed by some; but of great importance in the hope of a Christian. If these words are true, the uncomfortable notion of a believer's apostacy is absolutely false . . . . A continuance in the faith is absolutely needful to the enjoyment of life; but the promise of life given to the believer as such; the moment a man commences a real believer in Christ he is entitled to expect he shall never die in a gospel sense, as explained, if therefore this promise is certain it insures persevering grace to the believer in order to its accomplishment; for otherwise it might be in vain.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Ordinances**

As Wallin discussed the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, he continued to underscore both the encouragement and the call to repentance that each ordinance held before men. When reflecting upon the Lord's Supper Wallin noted the tension that was maintained in the ordinance indicating "the blood of Christ, though it pleads for pardon, nevertheless calls for repentance."<sup>92</sup> So also, when instructing concerning baptism, Wallin stressed both the repentance and redemption that was held out to those who desired to be saved, using the convicted sinners of Pentecost as an example:

No, as if Peter should say, though you have been thus guilty, guilty of the blood of the Lord, and guilty in cursing your posterity, and deserve everlasting destruction, yet God, who foresaw all your wickedness and knows the extent of his own grace, hath directed his promise to you; he has promised remission of sins on repentance to you and to your children, even to as many as he shall effectually call, being convinced of your evil, fear not to flee unto this same Jesus, whom you have crucified; neither ye, nor your children, not one of you are excluded from the report of salvation in the Redeemer.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Wallin, *Faith in Christ*, 22–23. See also these funeral sermons: Wallin, *Blessedness of the man*, 23–24; Wallin, *Satan rebuked*, 20–21; Benjamin Wallin, *A pious memorial* (London: J. Buckland, 1769) 23.

<sup>92</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 164.

<sup>93</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 192–193.

For Wallin, the ordinances were not a matter of indifference, but intimately bound up in what it was to be a disciple of Christ. He insisted that Satan attacked the Church on two fronts in relation to the ordinances, observing: “first . . . he aims at the cutting off from one principal means of establishment and growth in grace,” and then second, “to wound the Redeemer’s honor in the most sensible part, and bring at the same time a deadly mischief on the head of the offender.”<sup>94</sup> This was accomplished, according to Wallin, when Satan led believers to forego participation in the ordinances, or when he tempted the church to be slack in their administration of the ordinances and people were allowed to partake (or not partake) contrary to the gospel command. Wallin considered it to be part of his sacred office to insist upon the right administration of the ordinances:

Far be it to urge on disciples any opinion or doctrine of men, however piously designed, but the counsel of God is not to be shunned; nor could I count myself pure from the blood of all men, if I spared to insist on this great command of my Master. It is true ordinances are no saviors; but my Friend, if thou are tempted to indifferency about them, remember they are sacred, and likewise binding on all Christ’s disciples, and that salvation is to be obtained in a way of gospel-obedience.<sup>95</sup>

The first ordinance of the Church was baptism. In his teaching about the primary tenets of baptism, Wallin was thoroughly consistent with his Particular Baptist credo, insisting upon baptism by immersion; baptism of adult believers only; immediate baptism upon profession of faith; receipt of the Holy Spirit at baptism; and baptism as admittance into church membership.<sup>96</sup> On one occasion, Wallin earnestly warned the

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<sup>94</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 106.

<sup>95</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 195–196.

<sup>96</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 176–220. Baptism’s mode: 176–179; Believers only: 188–190; Immediate application: 202, 219; Receipt of the Holy Spirit: 185–187 (this is a special coming of the Holy Spirit in a different way than when He worked his quickening and regeneration prior to baptism—Wallin taught that this corresponded to what Scripture referred to as being “sealed” by the Spirit); Membership: 212, 215, 219. Wallin did not cite any theologians as he articulated these particulars about baptism, so it is unknown how and where he came to the opinion about the baptized receiving the Holy Spirit at baptism. Wallin acknowledged that the receipt of the Holy Spirit at baptism could have referred to a special outpouring of that gift in the Primitive Church, but he indicates that he does not himself read the passages that way. Additional textual context on this point of doctrine will be given below because on this point Wallin was more in the minority among Particular Baptists, although it was not entirely unheard of at the time. “Nevertheless, if believers now have any interest in this promise, it is not to be confined to these

congregation at Hitchin, in Hertfordshire, during the funeral of their minister, Samuel James, that those who had resisted baptism during the small revival that had occurred in that place were in grave danger of condemnation:

Your case, my dear hearers is truly deplorable! Indeed you are yet under the means of grace; and all things are possible with God; but permit me, in compassion and faithfulness, to tell you, that you are in a worse condition than you were before these convictions fastened on you, which you since have shook off in favor of the flesh.<sup>97</sup>

Here, Wallin's thinking about the necessity to obey the gospel exhortation to be baptized, and the danger of resisting the means of grace and quenching the Holy Spirit, are on full display as he does not hesitate to use the law to accuse secure sinners. Yet Wallin also did not hesitate to insist on the gospel comfort of baptism being offered to all, demonstrating his willingness to stress the universal nature of God's gospel call of free grace to all who would hear:

In like manner the gospel is sent to bind up every broken heart, and to comfort every sinner who mourns. And therefore, dear Reader, if thine heart is wounded receive the consolation, for a reconciled God is no respecter of persons.<sup>98</sup>

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extraordinary gifts. The promise is given to every one: and I cannot help thinking that Peter includes, if not chiefly intends, those operations of the Holy Ghost, whereby the faithful are more abundantly enlightened, sanctified and confirmed, even that working of the Holy Spirit, by which the Christian is sealed to the day of redemption, and made meet for communion with God and his glorious inheritance, compare 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1: 13, 18; and Ephesians 4:30. Certain it is that the Comforter, as a spirit of adoption and a witnessing spirit, is more or less given to them that obey the gospel, and that, in waiting on the Lord in his appointments, believers may expect to be established with grace, and to increase in the knowledge of him unto a meetness for glory." 186–187.

<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The happiness of the saints in a separate state* (London: J. Buckland, 1773), 34.

<sup>98</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 187. Prior to this gospel affirmation, Wallin had given a more complete witness to his understanding of the universal exhortation: "This manner of speaking, "be baptized for the remission of sins," is by way of encouragement and direction to these afflicted enquiring souls, and shews that there was remission even for them, and that they should submit to baptism in the exercise of faith on Christ, who, by the sacrifice of himself, obtained eternal redemption, and whose sufferings, death and resurrection, are shadowed forth in the appointed form of this gospel-institution. In a word, the exhortation is universal and without any exception, "every one of you;" to shew that not one person, among the thousands who were pricked in the heart, and who stood in need of pardon, was excluded from the hope of God's mercy in Christ; and that likewise not a single believer, who laid hold of this mercy, was excluded from a professed subjection to the gospel, or public acknowledgement of his divine authority, and devotion to his will in the sight of mankind." 185.



The Church's second ordinance was the Lord's Supper. Once more, Wallin remained faithful to the teachings of the Particular Baptist regarding the Lord's Supper.<sup>99</sup> Wallin himself testified that he regarded the Lord's Supper as the highest of the Lord's gifts saying, "Of all the institutions of our blessed Redeemer there are none more sacred, or which ought to be regarded and solemnized with greater Reverence, Holiness and Spirituality of Mind, than the Lord's Supper."<sup>100</sup> Wallin accordingly went to lengths to instruct his readers regarding the proper use of the Supper, and to admonish against unworthy reception. Wallin believed that communicants dishonored Christ's gift by refusing to approach the table for fear of unworthily receiving the elements, or by approaching it, but doing so as if they were those "who are dragged before an incensed enemy or a rigorous judge," rather than "draw[ing] nigh to a loving friend and an

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<sup>99</sup> Peter Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion, and the Baptists: A Study of English Calvinistic Baptists from the Late 1600s to the Early 1800s*. Studies in Baptist History and Thought, Vol. 7 (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster, 2003), 110; Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 130; David Thompson, "Baptists in the Eighteenth Century: Relations with Other Christians," in *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. S. L. Copson and Peter J. Morden (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2017), 273–278. Naylor identifies Wallin as having "strict" communion policies. The term "strict" should be used cautiously in relation to Wallin so as not to confuse him with the Strict Baptist Society that was formed in 1841 – 60 years after Wallin's death. Benjamin Wallin did hold to the necessity of local church membership for admittance to the local celebration of the Supper, as did many of his Particular Baptist forebearers; this fact however should not be used to justify the anachronistic conflation of all of Wallin's doctrine with that of either the "high" Calvinists" or "Strict Baptists." The "open" or "closed" communion debate stretched all the way back to John Bunyan and William Kiffin, but the formation of the Strict Baptist Society did not occur until after the deaths of the late eighteenth-century theologians Joseph Kinghorn and Robert Hall, Jr. who were two of the last notable adversaries in the debate. The attitudes of the latter Strict Baptist in regard to the Lord's Supper, evangelism, and the "modern question" will coincide at times with Wallin's thinking and diverge at other times. Wallin's position should be established based upon his own teaching, not upon generalizations that are based upon similarities which have been recognized on a point of doctrine or two. Thus, Wallin should not be regarded as opposed to the new evangelistic preaching that was coming out of Bristol simply because he was opposed to open communion – Fuller also was also opposed to open communion, while being a champion for evangelistic preaching.

<sup>100</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 109. In this work, Wallin takes the unusual step, for him, by concentrating nearly all of his thoughts regarding the Lord's Supper into the second half of the book. The first half, dedicated to the topic of prayer, is a concentrated effort from Wallin as well, but nevertheless he will bring up the topic of prayer in nearly all of his other writings. In contrast, in *Exhortations* Wallin discusses the Lord's Supper for over a hundred pages, while in three others of his works, the Supper is only mentioned on a single page. Interestingly, Wallin's hymnal, *Evangelical Hymns and Songs, in two parts*, dedicates the second half of the hymnal to hymns on the Lord's Supper that were composed by Wallin, whereas hymns about baptism were limited to the supplemental section, and were composed by Joseph Stennett (in the attribution, Wallin (mis)-spells Stennett, dropping the final "t"). Wallin certainly had a passion and respect for the Lord's Supper. Perhaps his somewhat singular treatment of the subject is evidence of his commitment to limiting his subject matter to the text that is being handled, and his aversion to importing theological subjects simply because they were a personal favorite.

almighty savior, whose blood cleanseth from all sin.”<sup>101</sup> He also taught that mere external attendance upon the Supper was not a worthy participation, noting that “the manner in which we attend is of great importance, and renders it either profitable or pernicious.”<sup>102</sup> For Wallin, the Apostle Paul’s admonition against unworthy reception was clear (and he states its simple clarity in a very verbose sentence!):

The meaning seems to be plainly this, that he, who in an unworthy manner, being ignorant and unholy, eats this bread and drinks this cup irreverently, by such his attendance, and in so doing, devolves guilt upon himself, and exposes himself to the righteous displeasure of a Holy God, who will be sanctified by them who come nigh unto him, and who will rebuke and chasten those he loves: a declaration that may justly awaken all, who come to this spiritual ordinance, to circumspection, holiness and godly fear; but does not in the least discourage any enlightened sinner, who under a sense of his guilt and unrighteousness, and adoring the riches of divine grace through the blood of Christ, is desirous of waiting on the Lord at his table: such will find themselves welcome and approved, under all their involuntary defects, by that merciful High Priest, who is sensibly touched with the feelings of their infirmities who trust in him.<sup>103</sup>

Wallin spent considerable space in the text of *Exhortations* wrestling with what it meant to “not discern the body of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:29). He acknowledges that the body referred to is the physical body of Christ and suggests that what the Apostle intends is a warning against “receiving the holy supper without a due regard to the object presented in it, which is the broken body of the Lord.”<sup>104</sup> This body is not locally present in a physical sense, for the “elements are symbols,” yet, “a complete discernment of the Lord’s body in the supper, comprehends a view of this flesh as united to the Word, and of

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<sup>101</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 113. Bracketed word modified for understanding.

<sup>102</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 114.

<sup>103</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 121–122. Although not stated in this long sentence, Wallin is not suggesting that any sensible sinner be admitted to the Table prior to baptism and membership in the local church. This sentence presupposes that the “enlightened sinner” is regenerate (See later discussion in *Exhortations relating to prayer*, 143) and has come to baptism and been accepted into the communion of the local congregation. For more on Wallin’s criterion for admittance, the references in footnote 95 of this chapter regarding baptism are also instructive as to what qualifies a person for membership in a church, which Wallin refers to as “communion” with the church, demonstrating his thinking that membership leads to and is required before participation in the Lord’s Supper.

<sup>104</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 124–125.

these sufferings as an atonement for sin.”<sup>105</sup> Thus, communicants are not to eat the elements in a common way, nor are they to forego self-examination, for in so doing “they come to the Lord’s Table, their spiritual senses being stupefied with earthly cares and affections, and consequently, their frames utterly unsuited to this heavenly entertainment.”<sup>106</sup> Prolonged absence from the Lord’s Table contributed to this stupefied state, and was a serious danger to the Christian’s faith. In one of his rare treatments of the Lord’s Supper elsewhere, Wallin would note:

All who believe in Christ are called to commune with the faithful. A neglect of this divine institution is a growing evil, and a threatening symptom upon us, for the church is the pillar and ground of truth; and it is vain to expect the presence of Jesus, or the continuance of his truths, in the neglect of this fellowship... Without communion at the Lord’s table, and submitting ourselves to the order and discipline of a church-state, as Christ hath appointed, purity in doctrine and life cannot be maintained. They who, under any pretense, lead persons off from the grand institution of church-fellowship, and indispose Christians for walking together, and watching over one another, as prescribed in the Word, are no friends to the cause of Christ; at least they ignorantly promote a scheme which tends to remove his gospel from us.<sup>107</sup>

If the reader of Wallin’s discourse at this point languishes under a stricken conscience, that he has indeed partaken of the Supper in an unworthy manner, Wallin once more applies the gospel to those who have been broken by the law:

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<sup>105</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 145–146. Wallin goes on to explain in a footnote: “Thus we are to understand the flesh and blood of Christ; the eating and drinking of which he urges the necessity and advantage of *John 6* not of his human nature simply considered, nor merely of that holy thing united to the divine nature in the wonderful person of the Redeemer, but of this human body thus united, as having suffered in that one offering and sacrifice Jesus made of himself to God for the sins of his people; for it is only in this view of it that the flesh and blood of Christ are the objects of saving faith; the exercise of which upon them is evidently intended by eating and drinking of the same.” 146.

<sup>106</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 157.

<sup>107</sup> Wallin. *Christian’s duty*, 65. This quotation not only exemplifies Wallin’s understanding of the necessity of participation in the Lord’s Supper for the Christian, but also provides insight into why Wallin would at times be critical of the “revivalist” preachers. If revival preachers encouraged sermon gadding and drew people away from local fellowship in the church-state, proper order and discipline could not be exercised over the Christian who engaged in such activity, nor would that Christian have a worthy and regular reception of one of Christ’s gifts given for the strengthening of the individual and the congregation’s union and fellowship with Christ and with one another. Accordingly, Wallin was not opposed to revival *per se*, but opposed to unscriptural teaching and preaching that in fact led people away from the God-ordained ordinances of the church. This quotation also illustrates how closely linked communion and church membership were in Wallin’s teaching.

So let everyone, who may be conscious of the guilt reprov'd, humble himself before the Lord, who healeth the backslidings of his people and invites them to return. Let not such omit this institution they have abused; but mourning over their past presumption and unworthy conduct, let them wait on their offended Redeemer, who is ready to forgive, and with whom there is plenteous redemption.<sup>108</sup>

## Preaching

Not only did Wallin consider the two ordinances essential to the life of the Church, but he also understood the necessity of preaching God's Word as the normal means God had instituted to create and sustain faith. As a member of a Dissenting denomination, Wallin valued the freedom of preaching the gospel and encouraged his members and fellow countrymen to remain active in the choosing of their representatives so that that freedom would be preserved, recognizing that the life of the Church depended upon it.<sup>109</sup> Wallin understood preaching to be a testifying about Christ's mission and authority to save the lost. The authority of preaching came directly from Christ and the Word that he had been given from the Father. Wallin pointed preachers to the disciples' commissioning so that they would have full confidence in the necessity of their calling to preach and in Christ's ability to save through this means:

The divine authority of Jesus is of the utmost importance; without a full satisfaction herein no man can trust him. . . . Our Savior declares, concerning his disciples, saying to his Father, "I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me," (John 17:8). A full assurance of his divine mission was the ground of their confidence in him . . . the apostle therefore, with great propriety, urges this point on the Jews, to convince them of their danger, and of the power of Jesus to save, that they might not, through unbelief, perish in their sins. This example should be followed by the ministers of the gospel . . . . In this way faith comes by hearing, through the power of the Holy Ghost, by possessing the subject, with an evidence to his conscience that Jesus is indeed the Lord's Christ, and able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by him.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer*, 169.

<sup>109</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The popular concern in the choice of representatives* (London: J. Buckland, 1774), 2.

<sup>110</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 131–132.

Elsewhere Wallin would once again insist upon the preaching of Christ, this time highlighting the need for all preaching to faithfully hold out Christ's atoning work:

When a crucified Jesus is little insisted on, the means of conversion and faith is neglected, and it is quite inexcusable, since remission of sins is obtained alone through faith in his blood, by which the believer is justified; so that if the Son of Man is not lifted up, as having taken away the sin of the world, they who hear are disappointed or deceived. In short, since the blood of Jesus is necessary to possess a mourning sinner with hope, and since by this alone we have boldness with God, that preaching, which is in a manner void of Christ and him crucified, however moral and ingenuous, is not suited to the taste of the godly, nor an adequate means of salvation.<sup>111</sup>

As Wallin reflects on the nature of preaching, he again demonstrates his agreement with the experiential sensibilities of the Puritans and their preaching. First, he identifies the disagreement some have with preaching to the heart or with preaching application:

I am sensible, that while some have little regard to the judgment of their hearers, and make the passions a first and principal object of address, some others have condemned all endeavors to touch the affections, and would confine the preacher to a naked exposition, or bare report of the truth, with its evidence from Scripture; applications are represented as savoring of the creature's ability, yea and as intruding on the work of the Spirit, whose office, say they, is to apply his own grace.<sup>112</sup>

Then, he goes on to insist that both preaching to the affections, as well as applying the Scriptures to the hearers fits with the example of the apostle Peter's preaching recorded in the book of Acts. He identifies the proponents of the afore-mentioned objections to doing so on the grounds that it diminishes the work of the Holy Spirit, who alone is operative toward salvation, while at the same time amplifying the work of men—and responds with a criticism of his own:

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<sup>111</sup> Wallin, *Experience*, 51.

<sup>112</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 133. This quote not only hints at why Wallin would take the affirmative side of the "modern question," but it also has to do with him rejecting the "non-application" style of preaching, which is similar to, but not identical with the primary concern of the "modern question," which was whether or not it was an unbeliever's duty to obey the gospel and believe in Jesus. The one focuses on the hearer duty, while the other focuses on the preacher's responsibility.

On this pretense, all kind of preaching may be censured as useless, and indeed every means of knowledge and conviction refused, since there is no branch of the ministry, the success of which doth not absolutely depend on the power of the Holy Ghost: But moral endeavors to inform the judgment, and to touch the hearts of a Christian audience, are equally just, agreeable to the testimony of God, and perfectly consistent with the office of the Spirit, who alone can effectually teach the children of men.<sup>113</sup>

For Wallin, the error does not lie in aiming to stir the emotions, nor in applying the message, but in failing to balance either impulse. He observes:

To aim at moving the passions, without informing the judgment, or a full persuasion of the truth; and on the other hand to rest in a bare report of the doctrines revealed in the Bible, in a neglect of personal application and addressing the consciences of men, that they may be suitably impressed with the things that are spoken, seem equally wrong; the one has a tendency to flatter persons with an hope grounded in their own imaginations rather than the testimony of God, which is vain; and the other to fill them with a conceit of themselves, on account of their notions of the gospel, without any regard to the fruits of that faith which is of the operation of God: in each case the subject deceives himself; and therefore whatever tends to cherish either, should be avoided as unfriendly to the interest of real religion.<sup>114</sup>

Accordingly, Wallin is perfectly consistent with his own teaching when delivering the ordination charge to Abraham Booth in *A Charge and Sermon* a year later.<sup>115</sup> He directs:

Thus you are continually to provoke them to love and good works, which, believe me Sir, will not be the least difficult part of your service in a wanton and dissolute age. In a word, let your sermons be judicious, methodical, scriptural, plain, and experimental. Adapt them to the capacities and circumstances of the people: and let them be delivered, not with any subtle affectation; but in a serious earnest manner as from the heart, and with a boldness becoming one in commission from the chief and great Bishop of souls.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 134.

<sup>114</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 136. I believe that Wallin would have seen too strong of application as a form of inappropriate rhetoric that attempts to move the passions in a manipulative or over-forceful way. This would be a form of over-application, while on the other side was under-application.

<sup>115</sup> Michael Haykin, *The British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910*. Vol. 4. (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2018), 35–36, 53. Robert Oliver in his chapter “Abraham Booth” records Abraham Booth’s installation and the fact that Wallin preached at the ordination after Booth’s work *The Reign of Grace* was noticed by the London Baptists leading to his call. It also records that Booth was buried at Maze Pond and that James Dore preached his funeral sermon. These associations with the Maze Pond pastors do not seem to indicate the great divide between Wallin and the “evangelical” preachers that has been suggested by some. This observation is only circumstantial in nature, but it may be possible to demonstrate in another work the continuity between Wallin, Booth, and Dore as far as their approach to preaching and their willingness to evangelize.

<sup>116</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *A charge and sermon together with an introductory discourse and confession of faith delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Abraham Booth* (London: George Keith, 1769), 38.

## The Pastoral Office

The Pastor's primary responsibility was preaching, but his obligations toward the members of the flock did not end there. Wallin was frequently invited to preach either the sermon or the charge at the ordination services of the Particular Baptists, especially in the environs of London and the surrounding communities.<sup>117</sup> Wallin did not hesitate to instruct the newly-ordained pastors as to their Christian duties toward their congregations. He describes gospel ministers as laborers in keeping with Luke 10:2 and notes:

Ministers are laborers sent forth into the field, harvest, or vineyard of the Lord of Hosts; they are to plough up the fallow ground, *i.e.* to reprove and convince unregenerate sinners, and fruitless professors; they are compared to them who sow and reap, and are said to build and plant and water; nor is the intense study, earnest preaching, and other branches of the ministerial work less fatiguing to the flesh than these laborious employments.<sup>118</sup>

He also insisted that God had placed his laborers in a specific field and warned that “to rove about under the character of a Christian minister may suit ostentatious, and designing men, but is inconsistent with the relation of a pastor in the Church of Christ.”<sup>119</sup> Rather, Wallin instructs that the office of the pastor “is relative to a particular church, gathered according to divine appointment; and results from a solemn contract

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<sup>117</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:478, 4:317, 4:322, 4:336 4:344.

<sup>118</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The obligations of a people to their faithful minister* (London: George Keith, 1755), 4.

<sup>119</sup> Wallin, *Obligations*, 5. This quote should probably be understood as a very thinly veiled criticism of the revival movement. Wallin's criticism of the revivals are never about the calling of sinners to repentance and faith in Christ, but instead focus upon the disorder that is introduced when people are enticed away from regular church membership, or the pride that is allowed to blossom in those preachers who gain celebrity on account their preaching and accordingly neglect the other obligations of their calling. A few paragraphs after this quote Wallin will expand his criticism: “Some men go out into the world and, like wandering stars, they shoot from one place to another, and thereby draw to themselves many, who, captivated by this appearance, with admiration, follow them, as somewhat more than common, but I see no warrant in Scripture to justify this conduct in ordinary ministers, where the gospel hath obtained, and therefore, however specious the practice, it appears to me an human contrivance, and not of Divine appointment. The constitution of Christ's Church, and the custom of the saints in the Apostle's days manifestly shew, that whatever occasional call the pastors of churches may have to minister elsewhere, their stated and constant labors are required among those who are committed to their charge.” pp. 5–6. In characteristic Wallin etiquette, he does not mention any names of those of whom he is critical.

between a minister and the people of his charge.”<sup>120</sup> Accordingly, the pastor should expect to serve there “to the end of your days,” because “scarce anything is more grievous, or hurtful to social religion, and the welfare of churches, than frequent and unnecessary changes in this near and tender relation among the people of God.”<sup>121</sup>

Wallin taught that the ministers of the gospel were called upon “not only to *suffer*, but even to *die* for the gospel,”<sup>122</sup> calling the office itself, “painful, important, and glorious.”<sup>123</sup> He acknowledged that such suffering could be dangerous, for:

When the waves roll one upon another, and we are tossed to and fro, and in a manner laid waste, nature is prone to rebel; we soon discover our weakness, and, if grace prevents not, through carnal reason, the suggestions of Satan, and our own unbelief, we are liable to be moved.<sup>124</sup>

He then further expands upon the struggles that assail a pastor, but subsequently and mercifully points to the sufficiency of God’s grace:

Sometimes it is the wisdom of God to hide his face from his ministers for a season; they walk in darkness, and seem to labor in vain. You may, as the apostle, be grieved by the indecent behavior of some, and forsaken by others, even by such from whom you had the greatest expectation . . . . In a day of lukewarmness and

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<sup>120</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 35. Here Wallin is speaking specifically of someone called to be the pastor of a congregation. Wallin and the Maze Pond congregation did recognize the legitimacy of “evangelists” being sent out from the congregation to preach but insisted upon the congregation’s authorization of such as a necessity to maintain good gospel order. Charles Stanford records in *Home*, pp. 81–84, the discipline that was taken against John Stanford (who later would succeed Dr. Manning in the pastorate at the congregation founded by Roger Williams in Rhode Island) when he took it upon himself to preach as an evangelist: “Sept. 6th, 1779. It appearing an undoubted fact, to the grief of this church, that Brother John Stanford has assumed the liberty of preaching in public without her knowledge, probation, consent, or commendation, as required in the rule of the gospel, by which a trial of gifts and a separation to the work of the ministry is referred to the notice and direction of the churches of Christ, Brother Henry Keene and Brother John Hayward were appointed to admonish our brother Stanford of his unbecoming and disorderly conduct, and exhort him, on conviction, to acknowledge his fault, and henceforward keep within the limits of his private capacity in all humility and uprightness, submitting himself to the orders of the sanctuary, giving no further offence to any individual or to the Church of God, as the Lord hath commanded (1 Cor. 10:32).” This episode resolved a year later when John Stanford, having been proved by the congregation through training and preaching opportunities, sought permission to be sent out as an evangelist officially. This incident should be instructive when considering Wallin’s stance toward evangelistic preaching. Wallin was not opposed to all such preaching; he insisted that all things be done decently and in order.

<sup>121</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 35.

<sup>122</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 32.

<sup>123</sup> Wallin, *Obligations*, 18.

<sup>124</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 43.



division, the wounds of a man are chiefly in the house of his friends: the treachery, ill-will, and contempt of a brother tend more to discourage than the scandal of the world, and especially when joined with an ungrateful neglect of others, which is sometimes the case. . . . If these or any other offences, overtake you, my brother, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;” “his grace is sufficient; therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ,” and let none of these things move you away from his service.<sup>125</sup>

Such frankness about the challenges of the pastoral office were characteristic of Wallin, who took very seriously his own pastoral responsibility not to sugar-coat the dangers and trials of the Christian life, but to acknowledge the depth of the corruption and brokenness of the world and then to point to the salvation which Christ alone could accomplish.

Wallin’s pastoral experience was a commodity that he could share with young pastors so that they would not feel overwhelmed when they faced trials—a way in which he could assure them, as if to say: “This is normal; do not lose hope.”<sup>126</sup>

Another subject that Wallin emphasized was the purity of the office and the need for pastors to be above reproach. Should a minister succumb to the temptations or trials that Wallin had warned of, especially if falling into open and public sin, the minister himself could be forgiven and restored to fellowship in the church, but “it is a fundamental article of religion, that its ministers are blameless.”<sup>127</sup> To drive this point home, Wallin asks:

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<sup>125</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 44–45.

<sup>126</sup> Ivimey, *History*, 3:482. Wallin did not only use the gift of his experience to instruct and encourage new pastors but was also in the habit of meeting with younger pastors as they themselves grew in experience in order to speak about the ministry. Abraham Booth testified to this in his interment sermon for Wallin: “On such an occasion as this, it is proper that we, who bear the ministerial character, should feel, with redoubled force, our obligations to diligence in the faithful discharge of that sacred trust which is reposed in us. Our great business is, as my brethren well know, to preach the gospel of God, and to watch for the souls of men. We are bound so to preach as to commend ourselves to the enlightened and impartial conscience; and so to watch as those that must give an account of their whole conduct. To entertain and to please, are the design of an actor on the stage, not of a minister in his pulpit. Our parts and learning, our spiritual gifts and sacred office, answer the great end of the Christian ministry no further than they are means of promoting true virtue and real piety. Nor, in any other view, can the exercise of them afford peaceful reflections when we come to die. It is possible for us to fain the applause of a multitude, while the principles on which we act and the end at which we aim are detestable in the sight of God; and such as our consciences, if awake, must abhor in the near views of eternity. Of this our venerable deceased friend was well aware, as I learned from frequent conversations with him.” For the entire text of the funeral sermon given by Samuel Stennett and the interment given by Abraham Booth see: *The Faithful Minister Rewarded* (London: George Keith, 1782).

<sup>127</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 13.

Who will trust the man that is unfaithful, or hearken to the reproof of the guilty? What authority has the transgressor over sinners; or how shall they who hate the garment spotted with the flesh cleave to him whose filthy skirts are exposed? Certainly the man who, under a sacred character, by manifest wickedness, in the sight of the world, has caused the enemy to blaspheme, or, by any foul blot, ruined his reputation, and openly dishonored the name of God, is by no means a fit instrument of public utility, or of promoting the interest of religion.<sup>128</sup>

For Wallin, it was a biblical truth that “a troubled fountain and corrupt spring is unfit for service.”<sup>129</sup>

A man, who by God’s grace would walk blamelessly before his flock, should be regularly engaged in prayer for his congregation and should also be habitually committed to visiting his members, to not only discern their spiritual state, but to be able to provide them with godly counsel as to their worldly affairs when advice was sought.<sup>130</sup> He should be faithful and diligent in the administration of the ordinances, and make sure to instruct the members so that they “know they are not mere ceremonies, or only external tests of obedience, but also wise and gracious appointments for promoting their faith and joy.”<sup>131</sup> As the shepherd of the sheep, the minister was to be diligent in gathering the church together, not only for regular worship, but also for “stated meetings for discipline” which are “essential to the purity and peace of a congregational society.”<sup>132</sup> And finally, Wallin instructs that the pastor is to make it his business to:

Seek the increase of the flock: not, by opening the door of the fold beyond the limits prescribed, or to any who are unmeet for the communion of saints; nor, by giving countenance to weak and unstable professors, much less by enticing any to leave the churches to which they belong, at their pleasure; nor, by any other selfish indirect method, which is carnal and low; but by adapting your ministrations, with fervent prayer, for the awakening and conversion of sinners, and direction of the ignorant who are out of the way.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 13.

<sup>129</sup> Wallin, *Fallen professor*, 13.

<sup>130</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 39.

<sup>131</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 40.

<sup>132</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 40.

<sup>133</sup> Wallin, *A Charge*, 41–42.

This final bit of advice concurs with Wallin’s advice found elsewhere, where he demonstrates his sense of the preaching office to be primarily bound up in evangelism and the preaching of the gospel for the instruction and nourishment of the people, rather than in wrangling over doctrines. Seeking the increase of the flock means not only preaching for the conversion of unbelievers, but also the growth of the people of the congregation. Writing could be used for the building up of the flock, or it could be a method in which a minister unfittingly drew a crowd unto himself. Wallin clearly valued writing and publishing, but noted the danger of being drawn into the trap of writing to feed people’s hunger for disputes, rather than the edification of their souls:

I have often wished some great talents in the church were not so wholly taken up as they seem to be with mere doctrinal points, handled only in an argumentative way. . . . I apprehend the attention of ministers may possibly be too much engaged in this work; while persons are fighting the adversaries with chosen arguments, they should not forget to feed the flock with the choice experience, which, though despised by carnal people, is very healthful and nourishing to the souls of God’s children.<sup>134</sup>

Wallin’s teaching on the pastoral office was not limited to pastors only, but also included instruction to congregations as to their duties toward their pastors. Wallin urged Christians not to “[grieve] your pastor and guide, by a willful and habitual neglect of his daily ministrations among you,” and encouraged them to “cultivate an intimate correspondence with him; [confining] not your knowledge of him to the pulpit; but, as ye have opportunity, let your houses witness to your friendship, and becoming freedom one with another.”<sup>135</sup> As the pastors were to pray for their members, so too were the members to pray for their pastor and encourage him, while also demonstrating their willingness to receive instruction from him by cheerfully doing what he commanded.<sup>136</sup> Wallin also

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<sup>134</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, Preface to Part III, page vi.

<sup>135</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The constitution of a gospel-church adapted to union and peace* (London: J. Buckland, 1766), 36.

<sup>136</sup> Wallin, *Obligations*, 10–14.

instructed congregations concerning their responsibility to care for their pastor financially, observing “you are likewise to assist them to your power; and more especially by a free and generous contribution of your substance, whereby they may be supplied for the discharge of their office.”<sup>137</sup> And finally, Wallin suggested that the congregation should support their minister by assisting him in continuing education, stating: “you may do many things toward your minister’s improvement . . . as opportunity serves, supply him with books or other conveniencies [*sic*] for study, in want of which, on first setting out, some have been greatly at a loss.”<sup>138</sup>

### **Church Membership and the Communion of Saints**

The pastoral office was established by God for the benefit of the Church. Wallin taught that the Church was both universal (mystically speaking) and local, but his primary meaning when speaking of the church was the local assembly.<sup>139</sup> Wallin would give multiple definitions of the local church, but his most concise definition was “a company of the Elect, who being born again, and vitally united to him, are joined to one another, and walk together in the order of the gospel, for the glory of the Lord, and their mutual edification.”<sup>140</sup> According to Wallin, to become a member in the church was to commit to walking together in “the order of the gospel.” By “the order of the gospel” Wallin intended quite a number of Christian responsibilities or duties, and an extensive

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<sup>137</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The universal concern of saints in communion represented in an sermon* (London: J. Buckland, 1763), 22–23.

<sup>138</sup> Wallin, *Universal concern*, 26.

<sup>139</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Church a habitation of God, through the Spirit* (London: J. Buckland, 1774), 3. Of the universal church and local assembly distinction Wallin observes: “Indeed the church, mystically taken, is universal or catholic; it comprehends all the chosen and redeemed, out of every nation, who have, are, or shall be gathered to Jesus who is the head of the body the Church (Col 1:18). . . . But these Christians, as already observed, are addressed as a particular body in Christ, united in the order of the gospel. Nor have we any idea of a visible catholic church, possessed of governing authority in all the New Testament.”

<sup>140</sup> Wallin, *Constitution*, 7.

quote will provide the best understanding of what those entailed:

Saints, thus incorporated into a church-state, and duly organized with a pastor and deacons (whom they, having been graciously directed to, have freely chosen, and solemnly set apart to office) must necessarily have frequent and stated assemblies for the exercise of the several duties they owe to each other, in order to the edification of the whole body; such as joint-prayer, the ministration of the Word, and other ordinances; the maintaining of discipline, the contributing to the support of the ministry and the relief of the poor, and for other fruits of love: In a word, for the discharge of all the duties, and the enjoyment of all the privileges, of the House of God.

Persons, thus united, stand in a special relation, and are under a special obligation to each other in the Lord; a relation and obligation peculiar to themselves, and distinct from, tho' in no wise destructive of, their relation and obligation to every other church and particular believer. This special relation in particular church-communion, as it is rational and necessary, so it is no less plainly revealed . . . .

From this special relation ariseth an obligation, which lies on every church-member, to various duties which he oweth the body, namely, the church and each particular member of it; which it becomes him diligently and faithfully to discharge; and in the discharge of which he may be assured of a blessing, and to obtain great honor when the chief Shepherd shall appear; who will graciously account everything his people do for each other, at his direction and for his Name's sake, as done to himself. (Matt 25)<sup>141</sup>

The special relations that Wallin identifies were reserved for those in church-communion. God had commanded such fellowship with the object of establishing peace and mutual edification between those in communion with Him and with one another.<sup>142</sup> Such edification was not to be sought only because of the personal benefit gained by membership in the church, but was something that the church member was to be equally engaged in promoting for the sake of his fellow member:

This is the genuine and noble spirit of Christian-communion! Every man, contrary to the maxims of this world, laying aside all private and sinister views, and, as it were, forsaking himself, under the influence of divine Love; is preferring and seeking the good of his brother.<sup>143</sup>

Since church membership selflessly sought the good of one's brother, members were to be devoted to encouraging converts to join themselves to the church for the

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<sup>141</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *A humble address to the Churches of Christ* (London: John Ward, 1750), 4–6.

<sup>142</sup> Wallin, *Universal concern*, 3.

<sup>143</sup> Wallin, *Universal concern*, 5.

increase of the convert's blessing and for the continued building of the house of God, while giving glory to God alone for the growth that he was providing.<sup>144</sup> The church was distinguished from other assemblies by the fact that it was built not of human effort and ingenuity, but was built upon Christ to be a habitation of the Holy Spirit by the Spirit himself:

This is that which distinguishes the communion of saints in the order of the gospel, from any other society in which they may be joined, either as men or Christians; namely, that they are "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Drop this idea, lose sight of your God in the midst of you, my brethren, and the sacredness of your character disappears; you are then, no other than a *common* building, and every motive to reverence, humility, holiness, gratitude and joy, being in a good manner lost, no wonder a threatening lukewarmness and dissipation ensues.<sup>145</sup>

As the habitation of the Holy Spirit, the church's members were given stations and gifts to be used in their unique callings for the benefit of the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit used men and women in his construction in different capacities, but the same Spirit animated and called them all to the singular work:

The identity of this care lies in the *manner* in which everyone guided by the same Spirit, exerts himself to fulfil it, namely, in the diligent exercise of his talent in the place he is fixed: In a discharge of this obligation each man keeps to his post and attends the duties of his function.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Wallin, *Universal concern*, 27–28, 34–35; Wallin, *Fountain*, 29–31. In *Fountain* Wallin is very critical the hesitancy of some to join the church or the cause others such hesitancy: "The truth is, that persons enlightened in their youth, however convinced of their duty, are under great discouragement in a day when it is so common for senior Christians, or those who seem to be so, by their talk of faith and experience, in private conversation, to decline a public confession of Jesus; it is easy to conceive a thousand objections and fears that may arise in the mind of the modest young saint, to a presentation of himself at the altar, when he beholds his parent, his master, or any other serious relation or friend, whom he esteems a believer in Christ, stand without, or at the threshold of the sanctuary; which they do well to consider, who can allow themselves to live out of communion... It is likewise very hard upon these tender branches in Christ, that when their vital religion transpires, or is manifest, sometimes, even pious parents, who would otherwise rejoice to see them come forth in the name of the Lord, through wrong ideas, or a false delicacy, forbear to exhort or encourage them to confess the grace they have received, as is something more than *believing* was required to the communion of saints: but is this not arguing against the counsel of God? . . . Happy would it be if all carnal reason, in matters of religion, was laid aside, and elder Christians, instead of being deficient themselves, would, by their example and advice, promote the earliest submission to gospel ordinances in them who give a credible testimony of their spiritual understanding."

<sup>145</sup> Wallin, *Church the habitation*, 26.

<sup>146</sup> Wallin, *Constitution*, 25.

For this reason, the church was to be continually interested in pursuing and maintaining holiness through its commitment to right order and church discipline. If men and women neglected their duties, encroached upon other's stations, or walked in a manner unbecoming a Christian, the whole Body would suffer and the building would be deficient. Wallin warned that "The visible interest of Christ, and the continuance of the gospel in any place, depends on the communion of Saints, in order appointed by heaven, which is that of particular fellowship."<sup>147</sup> Here, Wallin is not asserting that the life of the universal Church depends upon the people and their effort, but is stressing the importance of the church in the local community, and emphasizing why it is that members should be zealous to participate in the work they are called to do in the local congregation. By walking in good order, the church showed forth their commitment to Jesus as their Lord and insisted that the church was identical to the kingdom of God:

Now, what is the Kingdom of Christ but his Church? And, what is his Church, but his disciples joined in communion, and walking together in his ordinances, to whom alone they are each subjected as their King, in the affair of religion, which includes divine worship? I think nothing short of this public and social regard to the commands of our Lord, comes up to a tolerable idea of his Church, and that Christians, separately considered, or even united otherwise than in this sacred fellowship, do not, properly speaking, make up a part of Christ's visible Kingdom on Earth... The Communion of Saints is the indispensable duty of each true believer, and absolutely necessary to a sufficient visible subjection to Christ as his King; and that it is by an upright and steady regard to this evangelical obedience, which is inseparably connected with an holy conversation, that men yield the fairest and the best proof of their love to the Lord, and of their hearty concern for his interest in the world.<sup>148</sup>

In this world the church would still suffer the ignominy of sin and would find it necessary for the maintenance of good order to rebuke and discipline her members who strayed from the paths of righteousness. Wallin insisted that "error and heresy must be censured," noting that, "Christians must bear their testimony against the conduct of an

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<sup>147</sup> Wallin, *Constitution*, 30.

<sup>148</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The folly of neglecting divine institutions. An earnest address to the Christian who continues to refrain from the appointments of the gospel* (London: George Keith, 1758), vi–vii.

obstinate, immoral, profane or disorderly person.”<sup>149</sup> Wallin knew that some would object to disciplining a fallen Christian on the grounds that it would be unkind. He rejected this argument, and insisted that not only was it their duty toward their fellow member, but their active presence in the meeting that would censure the fallen believer was also required:

When a delinquent is convicted of apostacy in doctrine or in practice, the glory of Christ and the preservation of a community make it necessary (if he cannot be reclaimed by methods prescribed in the gospel) that he be censured; nor is it any token of true moderation for members of churches to withhold their concern in such censures: though many weakly absent on such occasions, under a pretense of charity; but I think such are betrayed into an immoderate coldness toward their incumbent duty, the neglect of which tends to the impenitency of backsliders, and destruction of churches, with other fatal consequences they seem little aware of. However in these censures our moderation should appear, in using all those methods for recovering the wandering brother, and exercising all the compassion, the nature of the case, and the laws of Christ will admit of.<sup>150</sup>

Far from the act of disciplining being unloving, Wallin believed that when it was done in accordance with the gospel mandate, it was a demonstration of love, and was intended for the restoration of the fallen person to healthy fellowship with Christ and the local church.

Wallin demonstrated a willingness to acknowledge and accept differences of opinion arising between believers that would ultimately result in the continuation of denominational differences between churches. In the prefaces of many of his works, as well as in the body of some of them, Wallin reached across party lines, as it were, to urge charity and understanding in order to find areas of common ground between fellow Christians.<sup>151</sup> However, Wallin was also aware of a growing tendency to practice a looseness or openness toward church order to which he strenuously objected:

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<sup>149</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Christian life, in divers of its branches, described and recommended* (London: Aaron Ward, 1746), 126.

<sup>150</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 126.

<sup>151</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 134. For instance, Wallin would note that it is becoming to Christian moderation that “praying for, and walking with such who differ from us, as far as our consciences will let us, is another evidence of moderation in the church.”



Christians are not, under the specious pretense of moderation, to give up a tittle of the truth, or to dispense with an ordinance of *Jesus Christ*: faithfulness to my Lord and master, and charity to my Christian brethren, who differ from me in some points, may surely consist together; to suppose the contrary, is to make moderation consist in lukewarmness, or indeed a criminal negligence of our duty: but men are not to violate their consciences out of tenderness to any man, nor is any cruelty to ourselves necessary to a spirit of candor toward others, under a profession and in religious matters . . . . If I believe Christ has commanded anything necessary prerequisite to the fellowship of a visible body of saints in communion, and a participation of the privileges of his house, I must abide by my conscience in this point till I am otherwise convinced, and keep the ordinances with care and diligence, as I think they are delivered by our Lord to his Apostles, and by them to his churches, without any slavish fear of being charged with an immoderate, uncharitable spirit; charity is no enemy to a free enquiry after truth, nor a firm attachment to it, when persuaded of it. He that censures such a person, either discovers a want of understanding, or of moderation in himself.<sup>152</sup>

Here, is an excellent example of Wallin's theology regarding the right of private judgement as well as his absolute commitment to the necessity of unity in belief as constituting the grounds of church fellowship. In his *The Universal concern of the saints in communion represented in an sermon*, Wallin would warn against the hazard of defining church membership as consisting in anything other than unity of confession:

For on this principle (membership based on agreement as to the form of worship) men may externally join, whose hearts are strangely divided; they may neither adore the same object, nor trust in the same Savior; while they seem to be one they in truth may be many, and opposite in point of their faith, and their hope of justification and life everlasting may be on a very different, yea, on a contrary foundation . . . . Experience shews that nothing more tends to interrupt the peace and edification of a church than the members being differently minded concerning the essential doctrines of their holy profession.<sup>153</sup>

For Wallin, church membership was no common fellowship, but was a mystical participation in the body of Christ that came from Christ's gracious willingness to unite himself to his elect. Subsequently, membership in the church was centered on Christ and his ordinances and sought to obey Christ's commissioning by walking in the gospel order

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<sup>152</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 134–135. Once more, without naming any names, Wallin should be understood to be censuring some of the practices that were used and once again on the rise by some of the revivalists. (Open communion had been urged and practiced by John Bunyan and others in the preceding century, and Baptism was not considered by them to be a prerequisite to church communion/membership.)

<sup>153</sup> Wallin, *Universal concern*, 13–14. Parentheses are not original to Wallin but added for understanding.

that Christ had instituted for his Church for the edification of all who put their trust in him.

## Prayer

As this chapter began with a doctrinal position that was not patently clear in its relation to the “modern question” or Wallin’s understanding of church order, so it will conclude with a topic that at first blush appears tangential. However, the topic of prayer and Wallin’s teaching about it was so pervasive in all of his writing, that, upon examination, a consideration of Wallin’s understanding of prayer will prove illuminating.

Wallin described prayer using different metaphors, at one time saying that, “prayer is, as it were, the breath of the church,”<sup>154</sup> and at another time likening it to weaponry, observing, “the prayers of *all saints* may be considered as their artillery in the war against Satan.”<sup>155</sup> When Wallin was not writing so poetically, he would define prayer simply:

Prayer, in its simple and native idea, is no other than an address to the Almighty, on matters that concern us in the present of future state of existence; the manner of these addresses differ, and may be considered as consisting of various branches, as specified in the context ... *supplications*, i.e. deprecations of evil, to which we are continually liable in a state of temptation and sin; *prayers*, or petitions for every blessing we need, *and intercessions*, or pleadings ... and *giving thanks*.<sup>156</sup>

He also identified three essentials to prayer: purity, charity, and faith. By purity, Wallin did not intend “spotless innocence” before God but suggested that “to have holy hands is to be free from an allowance of any iniquity.”<sup>157</sup> Wallin saw that a contrite heart was what the Lord desired in prayer:

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<sup>154</sup> Wallin, *Humble address*, 11.

<sup>155</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations*, xiii.

<sup>156</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Gospel-requisites to acceptable prayer* (London: J. Buckland, 1770), 4–5.

<sup>157</sup> Wallin, *Gospel-requisites*, 13–14.

The Lord respects the heart in prayer. He sees the desires of the humble, and hears the groaning of the prisoner, and will not despise him because of his weakness and infirmities; while he pours contempt on the forced and formal petitions of the vainglorious and carnal man under all the advantages of method and propriety of expression.<sup>158</sup>

He further observed that even notorious sinners through repentant faith would be found at God's throne of grace:

It is the *Destitute*, and only the Destitute that cry; they cry under a sense of their affliction and misery. The throne of grace is chiefly surrounded by those who are overwhelmed with grief, either on account of soul, or body. These are the praying persons; and particularly those who are made sensible of their spiritual wants; who see themselves lost and undone, unless saved by grace, through an interest in the blood of Christ, and a free exhibition of pardoning mercy.<sup>159</sup>

As God accepted even destitute sinners at the throne of grace purely by his divine love, so too Wallin discerned that a genuine prayer can only proceed from charity and without malice:

No doubt it is here to be extended to every species of anger, ill-will and contempt, unto which we may be tempted in the flesh, and which dwells in the bosom of a proud selfish man, who is not to be pleased, and disdains to forgive; such rancor and malice, with a disposition or purpose of revenge on every offence, as the word implies, is the opposite of a Christian temper, and however indulged or palliated by men, is disallowed of God, and an abomination in his sight.<sup>160</sup>

Finally, Wallin was insistent that prayer issue from a sincere and genuine faith, that is, a confidence that the prayer would be received by God and was pleasing to him because he himself had commanded it.<sup>161</sup> Wallin understood that from man's perspective

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<sup>158</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations*, 60.

<sup>159</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations*, 28–29.

<sup>160</sup> Wallin, *Gospel-requisites*, 16. Wallin does not address the imprecatory Psalms in any of his writings, and therefore one can only regret that it is impossible to know how he would address David's psalms/prayers that appeal for God's vengeance.

<sup>161</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 195–196. "I think we can never enough admire the condescension and kindness of being admitted to this liberty, in so free and unexceptionable a manner; that God should have opened a way of access, and thus wait to be gracious *in everything*, is wonderful. Believer there is not a moment or circumstance of your life, but his language is, come to me with all your burthens, distresses, and sorrows; in *everything*, whether oppressed with sin or sorrow; whether your affliction be of the inward or outward man; whether you have trials of soul, body, or estate; how deep or difficult, how hard or intricate soever your case be; though fresh wants arise and multiply daily, continue to notify your requests; your God is not weak or weary, he is the same, and his Word is eternal. In this sweet portion of his sacred revelation, he calls upon, warrants, and invites your soul and mine, *in everything by prayer and supplication* to make known our *requests with thanksgiving*."

there was uncertainty in prayer, and therefore he was careful to distinguish between uncertainty and faithlessness so as to not burden anyone's conscience wrongly:

There is indeed a decent and honorable doubt or suspense, becoming the faithful when they pray; whether or not it may suit the wisdom of God to grant the particular temporal blessing requested, either natural or spiritual ... they are all reserved in the bosom of our heavenly Father to be dispensed or withheld, as it seemeth good in his sight, and the believer will hold himself in readiness for his pleasure; but his faith must be steadfast in the divine promise; no debate or hesitation may be indulged in his mind concerning an audience, or obtaining needful grace, on any consideration whatever.<sup>162</sup>

With this thinking about prayer, Wallin reflected upon the Christian's duty and joy to pray. Wallin instructed that prayer was a gospel ordinance of the church.<sup>163</sup> In this construal of prayer as both a duty and a joy, Wallin once more maintained a tension in his teaching that sought to balance a Christian imperative with the indicative understanding of what Christ had accomplished on behalf of the sinner. It was on account of the Holy Spirit's operation that the Christian could fulfil his duty and be filled with the Spirit's joy:

This duty is a soul-humbling, but it is also a soul-nourishing duty; perhaps it is that, in the exercise of which, we draw the nearest to God of any duty or privilege we are admitted to, or are capable of in the present state; and the experimental Christian must acknowledge, that, when assisted by the divine spirit, so as to be able to attend upon it with an holy freedom, no employment is so delightful.<sup>164</sup>

When the individual or the church, quenching the Spirit's work, refused to be present at the throne of grace, Wallin warned them that they would soon answer for this affront to God's mercy at the throne of judgement:

Let those who live without prayer, and so without God in the world, beware of despising his grace . . . . Healthy and prosperous they think they need nothing, and therefore pray for nothing. But he who never cried to God, under a sense of his being destitute of holiness, righteousness, and wisdom, and is a stranger to bemoaning before the Lord his own nakedness, as bare of everything spiritually good, considered in himself, is a stranger to himself, and in a woeful state of ignorance

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<sup>162</sup> Wallin, *Gospel-requisites*, 19.

<sup>163</sup> Wallin, *Humble address*, 2.

<sup>164</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 339.

with respect to his deplorable condition as a descendant of apostate Adam; an ignorance which, if final, will be fatal; for a sight of this, and brokenness of heart under a sense of it, constraining the sinner to apply for mercy in the way of God's appointment, is absolutely necessary. They, who pray not at the throne of grace in this manner, will surely perish at the throne of judgment.<sup>165</sup>

The Spirit's role was as essential in prayer as it was in all other things concerning man's justification and sanctification. The Spirit led the prayer of the petitioner to be open and honest and not unthinking and formal. Wallin was personally opposed to written and formal prayers, although he did not go so far as to say that they would not be heard by the Father.<sup>166</sup> He quipped that "of all spiritual duties, this of prayer seems the least to need a form, or is the least capable of being confined to a form."<sup>167</sup> He urged:

When we come to the throne of grace, we must open our hearts, and the concern of our minds; we are to notify our requests; the real breathings of our souls are to be set forth in our petitions: our heart's desire is necessary in our addresses to him that searches the heart; formal, lifeless words, are no prayers.<sup>168</sup>

The Spirit's leading was not to be despised or quenched in any way. The Spirit who searched the heart was the same Spirit who worked conversion and regeneration in the life of an unbeliever. In Wallin's theology, no sinner genuinely seeking remission of his sins was to be forbidden to approach the throne of grace. As was already observed, Wallin understood gospel commands to be universally applicable and to give all people who would hear them warrant to believe that the promise was for them. Wallin must have known that some of the people that read his works were unregenerate and not part of God's elect. And yet he did not hesitate to apply the gospel invitation and command to them regarding prayer, demonstrating in a beautiful apostrophe on God's gracious call to

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<sup>165</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations*, 100–101.

<sup>166</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 246. "Forms of expression indeed may express real desires, and I doubt not many serious, godly persons, do pour out their souls to God in forms of prayer: such who, thro' the prejudice of education, have been accustomed to that practice, may use it with sincerity and spirituality in public."

<sup>167</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 246.

<sup>168</sup> Wallin, *Christian life*, 245–246.

prayer a similar sensibility that he would exhibit toward the free grace of the gospel proclamation:

And it must be acknowledged, O afflicted sinner, who has been thus guilty, thy case is shameful; and deep humiliation becomes thee. Divine goodness could not be impeached, if thou shouldst be excluded from all expectation of being regarded in the time of thy calamity; yea, many very great sinners may have a door of hope opened to them in their distress, and yet it might justly be shut against such as thou art. Thy conduct is indeed very provoking, and thy case much to be lamented. Nevertheless, bad as thou art, there is hope for thee; for all this unworthiness, ingratitude and guilt are overcome by the grace and love of God in this promise, if thou art a penitent praying person. Behold, there is no bill of exclusion against any person, even in thy circumstances, either expressed or implied in the Text: read and see; Satan may suggest, and unbelief may say, thou are excluded; but what proof can they bring? Either thou art included or else excluded: If the latter cannot be proved, the former is certain. And, blessed be God, there never will nor can be found a proof of thy exclusion. Thou may'st read the passage again and again, ponder it all the days of thy life, thou wilt always see occasion to admire the riches of free grace, but never be able to find a just reason from the text to conclude, that the ear of mercy shall not be open to thy cry: notwithstanding all thy unworthiness, the Word still remains for thy encouragement; nor shall unbelief or the Devil alter the thing that is gone forth from *Jehovah's* lips. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Wallin, *Exhortations*, 67–68.

## CHAPTER 4

### BENJAMIN WALLIN'S PREACHING

Benjamin Wallin's doctrinal understanding about the nature of preaching has already been examined in a subheading of the previous chapter. In this chapter, the focus will turn to an analysis of his preaching itself. One of the challenges that faces a student of Wallin's preaching is the fact that none of Wallin's sermons exist in an unedited state. None of Wallin's forty-five works indicate that they are the product of a scribe taking down verbatim what was said in the sermon. Quite the opposite, in fact. Many of them affirm that they were indeed sermons preached at Maze Pond or other local congregations. It is unknown whether Wallin preached from prepared manuscripts, or whether the texts that were published were created after the sermon was preached. Wallin regularly acknowledged that he had prepared the text for publication in the preface or dedication, but he also habitually addressed those who had been present for the sermon in a manner that implied that what was being published was indeed what was said at the time of the actual public proclamation—perhaps suggesting the sermon's written existence and Wallin's reluctance to alter the text significantly.<sup>1</sup> Little is known about Wallin as a preacher, with only a few testimonies given as to the quality and reception of his sermons, but Joseph Stennett's and Abraham Booth's witness about his preaching corroborates the style that his edited sermons exhibit, further establishing confidence that

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. Benjamin Wallin, *The blessedness of the man, whom the Lord shall find diligent in his station* (London: J. Buckland, 1773), dedication pg. 1. "The ensuing discourse, which was delivered without any intention of its being made public, is presented at the entreaty of the rising generation of our late worthy friend." c.f. Benjamin Wallin, *The appearance of deceased saints with their Lord, at his coming, the consolation of surviving believers* (London: John Ward, 1753), A2. "To Mrs. Catharine Tomkins, relict of the deceased, to the other relations, and to all who desired the publication of the ensuing discourse. My dear friends, at your request this plain sermon appeareth in public. Whatever reception it may meet with from any others, I trust that you will peruse it with attention and candor, and also follow it with your prayers, that, under the Divine blessing, it may be rendered extensively useful."

what is extant of his sermons is a close proximation to what was actually heard by the congregation.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the published sermons cannot completely capture the passion and tone of the original public proclamation, and therefore the reader is left to decipher these elements on his own.

Before turning to an analysis of Wallin's sermons it will first be necessary to articulate the method by which those sermons will be analyzed. According to my assessment, Wallin's funeral sermons tend to have the most aural sermonic tone and lead me to believe that they may be the closest representation of his actual preaching, *i.e.* have the least amount of post-proclamation editing. The selected sermons will be examined according to the established form-critical format. After establishing the methodology and rationale behind the selection of form criticism, this chapter will next seek to articulate what constitutes the specific generic structure to which Wallin's sermons belong, namely, Protestant-Reformed-Puritan(plain-style)-funeral sermon, by establishing some of the historic foundations of the genre in each of its four parts. This step is necessary in the process of analysis because one of the values of generic analysis is in defining the constraints of the genre so that when those generic norms are broken the critic can ask why the particular author chose to do so. Certainly, to describe the four constituent parts of the genre in their entirety would take this project too far afield, and therefore only a cursory sketch of the general distinctives will be presented. Next, several of Benjamin Wallin's funeral sermons will be analyzed alongside several of John Brine's funeral sermons, which ostensibly belong to the same genre, in order to determine if there are any significant deviations in structure from the sermonic genre in either man that would shed light on their respective attitudes towards gospel preaching. This effort is undertaken to better understand whether or not there was something specific to the

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<sup>2</sup> See chap. 2, pp. 43–44, in particular the testimonies of Stennett and Booth as recorded by Wilson in *History*, as well as the observation of Charles Stanford in *Home*.



sermon structure that had changed which would suggest that a certain minister would be more or less likely to affirm or deny the “modern question,” or whether that answer lay entirely in the individually held doctrines of the preacher.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Wallin’s sermons will be assessed based upon his own critical standard, identified in the previous chapter, that the sermon should be “judicious, methodical, scriptural, plain, and experimental.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Form Criticism**

The task of analyzing sermons is made less subjective by choosing a fixed standard against which the sermon can be measured. Numerous valid “critical” standards have been advanced, but for the sake of this dissertation, form criticism was selected for its ability to allow the critic to analyze and evaluate the rhetor’s choices regarding structure, form, and genre. Throughout this brief discussion explaining the methodology used to analyze the sermons, Roderick Hart and Suzanne Daughton’s textbook *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* will be utilized to provide definition to the various critical tasks.<sup>5</sup>

In a discussion of form criticism it is essential to define three terms: structure, form, and genre. Hart and Daughton note that structure refers to the “apportionment and sequencing of message elements.”<sup>6</sup> Structure results from the choices an author makes regarding the arrangement of his argument. To illustrate structure, the authors point to an

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<sup>3</sup> It has been recognized by multiple authors that the evangelical preaching of the latter portion of the long eighteenth century was innovative when compared to the preaching of the “high” Calvinists. By exploring the possible influence of the sermonic structure on the form of the sermon I believe that it will be possible to demonstrate that it was the “high” Calvinists that were the sermonic innovators who were themselves deviating from well-established sermonic structures as well as doctrines inherited by their forebearers in the faith. This deviation made their error more likely to occur as the orthodox sermonic constraints which they had inherited were ignored. Consequently, the evangelical preaching that would soon emerge could then be understood to be a conservative, reforming movement that reconnected the church to the preaching distinctives of the Reformation, while not denying its own creative contributions to homiletics that nevertheless remained faithful to the prior century’s constraints.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *A charge and sermon together with an introductory discourse and confession of faith delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Abraham Booth* (London: George Keith, 1769), 38.

<sup>5</sup> Roderick P. Hart, Suzanne M. Daughton, *Modern Rhetorical Criticism*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018), chap. 6, pp. 101–123.

<sup>6</sup> Hart and Daughton, *Modern*, 103.

image of the American flag with its well-known stars and stripes. The arrangement of the various elements of the image is its structure. Not to be confused with structure is the term form. In form criticism, the form does not refer to the shape of the argument but refers instead to “the patterns of meaning audiences generate when they take in a message.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, by again using the image of the American flag, two things become apparent: 1) structure can alter form, as for instance, if the stars and stripes were arranged differently on a flag, the “Americanness” of the impression would change; 2) different messages are formed based on context, for instance the American flag meant something different to an Allied soldier versus a soldier of the Axis Powers during World War II. Finally, Hart and Daughton have defined genre as “a class of messages having important structural and content similarities and which, as a class, creates special expectations in an audience.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Defining the Genre**

Before an analysis of the sermons can take place therefore, it is first necessary to establish the generic structural expectations of each of the four constituent sub-genres. Once this task is accomplished it will then be possible to compare and analyze the funeral sermons of John Brine and Benjamin Wallin with an eye trained toward observing how each man followed or departed from the broad generic structural expectations. Analyzing the sermons will provide insight into the preaching habits of the two men whom this paper argues are on different sides of the “modern question.” It is the hypothesis of this chapter that because structure can alter the message that is formed, a deviation from the generic sermon structure signals a divergent underlying theology, as well as accounts for the change in the message that is “formed” in the people of the congregation.

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<sup>7</sup> Hart and Daughton, *Modern*, 104.

<sup>8</sup> Hart and Daughton, *Modern*, 116.

It also must be kept in mind that each congregation had its own unique micro-context and culture, helping to explain why it is probable that the two congregations differed in their expectations for the sermon in the narrow sense, as, over time, a local generic expectation was formed by the decades of preaching from each minister in his own pulpit.<sup>9</sup> This local reality may also account for why it was possible for two homiletical strands to exist contemporaneously, not only between Curriers' Hall and Maze Pond, but also within the Particular Baptist denomination.<sup>10</sup> It is my contention that while all Particular Baptist would have initially shared a general approval of the broad generic constraints as outlined below, when certain constraints were ignored for years-on-end from the pulpit, those constraints simply ceased to be recognized by those congregations, thereby creating a divergence in generic expectations, and an acceptance of preaching which did not include the gospel "offered" for all men. When attending the sermons of other Particular Baptists, there was initially enough generic similarities that the differences may have been able to be counted as variations in style or emphasis, but when Matthias Maurice posed his "modern question" he brought to the fore the reality that there were two homiletical systems, along with their underlying theological assumptions, that were at variance with one another within the denomination. When this dissertation finally turns to the examination of the sermons, form criticism will be utilized to identify the hallmarks of the two homiletical systems.

The number of sermons that will be examined is limited by the selection of the

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<sup>9</sup> John Brine served the Curriers' Hall Meeting for thirty-five years, and Benjamin Wallin served the Maze Pond Meeting for forty years.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and 'The Modern Question': A Turning Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16.1 (April 1965): 101–123. I contend that Benjamin Wallin was of this evangelical strand, even though he was not trained at the Bristol Academy. I believe that the evangelical strand could be found even among the ministers of London, and that belonging to that strand had as much to do with observing the homiletical constraints of the genres outlined below as to the place where one was educated. It is undeniable that Bristol played an important role in forming ministers who would be faithful to the broader Protestant homiletical tradition; Bristol itself was not responsible for the creation of this strand in Protestant preaching, but rather a guardian of the traditions inherited from the gospel preachers of the previous centuries.

funeral sermon genre. As was already noted, this genre was selected primarily because of my subjective assessment of Wallin's funeral sermons for their aural quality.

Additionally, it has seemed reasonable to suppose that for both Benjamin Wallin and John Brine the occasion for the funeral sermon meant that contextually both men were in a setting that likely included people in attendance who were not their own members, whether that was because there were visitors at the funeral or because the funeral was actually being preached at another congregation. This unique setting is desirable for the sake of this analysis because it creates a different sermonic situation than the regular Sunday sermon—one in which both ministers were likely to be uncertain as to the salvation of at least a few of their auditors. Because of this situational reality, the funeral sermon presents itself as perhaps the best gauge of each man's evangelistic preaching and style when considered in relation to their attitude toward the "modern question."<sup>11</sup>

John Brine only published four funeral sermons, while Benjamin Wallin published fifteen. Accordingly, all of Brine's sermons will be examined, while three of Wallin's sermons will be selected randomly, and the fourth will be selected because it shares the same Scriptural text as one of Brine's sermons.<sup>12</sup> This limiting of Wallin's

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<sup>11</sup> I readily acknowledge that by limiting the scope of Brine's sermons to the funeral sermon that this dissertation cannot claim to be establishing Brine's overarching habits of preaching. It may be that upon further analysis, Brine's ordinary sermons demonstrate an entirely different character than his funeral sermons (although a glancing survey I have made appears to affirm Walter Wilson's claim that his sermons were "More doctrinal than practical, he abounds rather in the discussion of religious subjects according to his own particular apprehensions, than in their application to the conscience. Exhortations to sinners he would consider as legal" (Wilson, *History of Antiquities*, 2.577). If such an analysis is done at a future date, and a different homiletical approach is discovered, it would be extremely beneficial to enquire into the reason why Brine changed his approach. It is the position of this dissertation that a significant factor in Brine's preaching choices for his funeral sermons is the "mixed" composition of his audience.

<sup>12</sup> The sermons that were selected are: John Brine, *The Believer's Triumph over Death* (London: Aaron Ward, 1735); *The Covenant of Grace Opened* (London: Aaron Ward, 1734); *Job's Epitaph Explained* (London: John Ward, 1755); *The Knowledge of Future Glory: The Support of the Saints, in Present Troubles* (London: John Ward, 1758); Benjamin Wallin, *An Eternal Mansion Prepared in the Heavens for the Righteous* (London: J. Buckland, 1769); *The Happiness of the Saints in a Separate State* (London: J. Buckland, 1773); *God's Relation to the Faithful After Their Decease, A Proof of Their Present Life, and Future Resurrection* (London: G. Keith, 1754); *The Appearance of the Deceased Saints with Their Lord, at His Coming, the Consolation of Surviving Believers* (London, John Ward, 1753). The random selection of Wallin's sermons was carried out in this way: Wallin's funeral sermons were gathered alphabetically and assigned a number from 1–14. An online random number generator ([www.pickerwheel.com](http://www.pickerwheel.com)) was then used to select which sermons would be used for analysis.

sermons was done so as not to bias the results of the analysis based upon the preponderance of evidence on Wallin's side. An outline of each man's sermon which was preached on 2 Corinthians 5:1 has been provided in Appendix III. A description of the fundamental components of the inherited sermonic genre follows below.

**Protestant.** The term "Reformation" is used to describe what was happening in continental Europe within the churches that were breaking away from the doctrine and authority of the Catholic church. These churches were initially recognized by a reformation of preaching – making the sermon in the vernacular a central component of public worship. Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Heinrich Bullinger, John Calvin, and Theodore Beza are often considered the leading proponents of this evangelical reformation that would eventually come to be called "Protestant." While there were many people that were critical of the moral laxity of the Late Medieval church as well as the institutional abuses about how rank and favor was gained and given within the church, the magisterial reformers by-in-large focused on doctrinal teachings as the primary area that needed to be addressed within the church. Many of the reformers were influenced by the Humanist ideal *ad fontes*, and because of their new-found appreciation of the Biblical text and the Church Fathers, were wrestling with doctrine and the faithful transmission of those doctrines over the centuries. The Church was languishing primarily from deformed doctrine in their view, and therefore there was a great need for a reformation of the teaching and preaching of the church. The magisterial reformers believed that Scripture alone should be the rule and norm of the Church and taught that the doctrines of the church that had grown up by tradition needed to be eschewed so that the church could be liberated from the errors that had crept in through human invention. The church was certainly plagued with corrupted morals and leaders, but the reformers believed that the first step needed was to recover the genuine teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. Martin Luther's theological critique of the practice of

indulgences led into other theological critiques that ultimately produced the hallmark doctrines of the Reformation: *sola gracia*; *sola fides*; *sola Scriptura*. The magisterial reformers taught that the Biblical doctrine of justification meant that good works played no role in the individual's salvation, and they were troubled by the doctrines and practices that seemed to suggest that man participated in his own salvation. All this led the reformers to stress the importance of the preached Word, not only for the reformation of the Church, but also as the God-given means to create genuine faith in Christ alone. Protestant sermons were distinguished by their insistence upon Scriptural preaching that conveyed the literal sense of the text to the people without wild allegorical interpretations. The sermons highlighted the doctrines of the Reformation's *solae* so that the people would be taught the Protestants' most treasured doctrine: justification by grace through faith alone, apart from works of the law.

As the first Reformer, Martin Luther played an important role in developing the expectations of the Protestant church's understanding of the sermon. Perhaps his most notable contribution in preaching was his law and gospel distinction. While the law and gospel distinction was not directly addressed in one of the well-known *solae*, it was absolutely foundational to the theology of Martin Luther.

As an Augustinian monk, Luther was heavily influenced by the work of Augustine, and theologians like Gerhard Ebeling, Erik Herrmann, Christopher Ocker, and Robert Kolb have done much to demonstrate that Luther developed his law and gospel dialectic from Augustine's distinction of letter and spirit.<sup>13</sup> Yet, Luther did not simply take-over Augustine's distinction, but advanced it further. While Augustine's understanding of letter and spirit was a distinction that could be used to contrast the law's "dead letter" inability to the life-giving "spirit" of the gospel, Luther's conception

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 119-120.

addressed how the Holy Spirit used both law and gospel in his address of mankind. Kolb summarizes Luther's new understanding of law and gospel to be: "two words from God that continually address human beings in their daily lives."<sup>14</sup> As Kolb reflects on Luther's hermeneutical development, he approvingly cites Herrmann's assessment of his transition from the predominant Medieval view:

The traditional methods that Luther inherited proposed a solution to the Christian appropriation of the Scriptures through a framework of graduated continuity—the continuity of prophecy to fulfillment, and the movement from literal to spiritual meanings. Yet precisely for this reason it was unable to deal with the radical *discontinuity* suggested in Paul's writing between adherence to the law and faith in the promises of Christ. Luther grappled with Paul and had a personal stake in trying to understand this relationship of law and faith as expressed in Paul's doctrine of justification and the righteousness of God.<sup>15</sup>

For Luther, the Medieval system's insistence on works of the law to merit salvation stood in direct contradiction to Paul's insistence that "one is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (Rom. 3:28). As Luther broke with the Medieval system he stopped looking for a continuity between a system of laws that were first established by Moses and then expanded by Jesus—making Jesus the "greater" lawgiver. Luther began to develop his distinction between law and gospel as he became convinced that God's law was designed to accuse and terrify sinners and drive them to the free gift of righteousness in Christ as proclaimed in the gospel.

Even before he had posted the *95 Theses* Luther said in his lectures on Judges: "The law makes sinners, the gospel comforts and saves them. The law is a word that humbles, troubles, upsets, condemns: the gospel is a word that saves, exalts, comforts. The law is a ministry of death, condemnation, and unrighteousness: the gospel is a ministry of delight, joy, salvation."<sup>16</sup> For Luther the law functioned as a preparatory work

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<sup>14</sup> Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 120.

<sup>15</sup> Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 120.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke* [Weimar Ausgabe] (Weimar: Bohlau, 1883-1993), 4:567.

of God that made a sinner receptive to the gospel. The law could never create faith or motivate man to do a truly good work—that was the work of the gospel.<sup>17</sup>

As Luther continued to think and write about the distinctions between law and gospel over the years, Fred Meuser notes that he “was not primarily interested in a theoretical definition of law and gospel. Rather he was concerned to show that nothing we can do can bridge the gap, restore us to God, and give us new life.”<sup>18</sup> No doubt this lack of definition was why Luther’s view of the law was misunderstood at times, and why he has been claimed by antinomians since the time of the Reformation as a supporter of their views. Because of this, Luther was eventually forced to define his view of the distinction between law and gospel more carefully, and, with the aid of his colleague Philip Melancthon, made it clear that he believed that *both* law and gospel were absolutely necessary, and that *both* were words of God directed toward humanity to ultimately accomplish its salvation.<sup>19</sup>

**Reformed.** The most-recognized father of the “Reformed” tradition was the second-generation reformer, John Calvin. Unlike Luther, “Calvin labors for elegance of expression and an orderly arrangement.”<sup>20</sup> This difference, along with the variation of the theological context in which Calvin taught, meant that Calvin was more systematic in his exposition of law and gospel distinction, in particular in what came to be known as the

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<sup>17</sup> The reader will perceive how Luther’s theology of the distinction between law and gospel developed along similar lines to his own personal experience as he came to understand the meaning of the “righteousness of faith” in a new light. Thus, for Luther, his tendency was to refer to both law and gospel in their “narrow” or theological, doctrinal, senses rather than the “broad” redemptive-historical senses. This is not to suggest that Luther would deny the “broad” senses, but simply to note that when reading Luther, the “narrow” senses are more commonly implied. Care should be taken when reading the Reformer to note which sense is intended.

<sup>18</sup> Kolb, *Martin Luther*, 122.

<sup>19</sup> Thanks to the translation of Holger Sonntag there is now available a complete Latin and English edition of Martin Luther’s antinomian theses in which he makes this position clear. Sonntag’s translation is titled: *Solus Decalogus Est Aeternus: Martin Luther’s Complete Antinomian Theses and Disputations* (Minneapolis: Cygnus Series, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Thomas K. Johnson, “Law and Gospel: The Hermeneutical and Homiletical Key to Reformation Theology and Ethics,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 43, no. 1 (2019): 53.



“third-use” of the law. Although both the Reformed and Lutheran traditions have each had their own discontinuity theorists who pitted the Reformers against their theological progeny, making much of the supposed differences both intra-traditionally as well as between the traditions themselves, the more recent works of scholars such as Thomas Johnson, Michael Horton, and I. John Hesselink have done much to demonstrate the uniformity of belief between Luther and Calvin on the law and gospel distinction.<sup>21</sup> A thorough discussion about the ongoing debate about Luther and Calvin’s view of the law and gospel distinction and the proper place of the third-use of the law in their respective theologies is outside the scope of this paper, but it is sufficient to note for the sake of establishing the Reformed sermonic genre and its continuity with the Protestant genre, that both Luther and Calvin affirmed the appropriateness of what would come to be called by Calvin and Melancthon the “third-use of the law.”

While a thorough discussion is not possible, it is however necessary before turning to a description of Calvin’s teaching on the third use of the law, to note some of recent scholarship’s helpful corrections to a reductionist view that had been prevalent in the decades following World War II and the age of Neo-Orthodoxy.<sup>22</sup>

John Calvin is well-known to have identified the third use of the law as the “principal” use in his 1559 edition of the *Institutes*.<sup>23</sup> Yet, Michael Horton cautions that

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<sup>21</sup> In addition to the previously cited article by Johnson see also his Martin Bucer Seminary Text entitled *Law and Gospel: The Hermeneutical / Homiletical Key to Reformation Theology and Ethics* (MBS Text: 2009) available at: [https://www.bucer.org/fileadmin/\\_migrated/tx\\_org/mbstexte138\\_c.pdf](https://www.bucer.org/fileadmin/_migrated/tx_org/mbstexte138_c.pdf). Additionally see: Michael Scott Horton, “Calvin and the Law-Gospel Hermeneutic,” *Pro Ecclesia* 6, no. 1 (1997): 27-42; Michael Scott Horton, “Calvin on Law and Gospel.” Westminster Seminary California. Published September 1, 2009. <https://wscal.edu/resource-center/calvin-on-law-and-gospel/>; I. John Hesselink. *Calvin’s Concept of the Law* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1992); I. John Hesselink, “Christ, The Law, and the Christian: An Unexplored Aspect of the Third Use of the Law in Calvin’s Theology,” in *Reformatio perennis: essays on Calvin and the Reformation in honor of Ford Lewis Battles*, ed. Brian Albert Gerrish, Robert Benedetto, and Dikran Hadidian, Vol. 32 (Pittsburg, PA: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1981), 11–26.

<sup>22</sup> Horton, “Calvin and the Law-Gospel Hermeneutic,” (page numbers not provided in the web document, and will not be included in the following citations).

<sup>23</sup> John Calvin and John T McNeill. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The Library of Christian Classics, Vols. 20-21 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1961), 2.7.12. “The third and principal use, which

“we would be too hasty to conclude from this one statement that Calvin intends to make this the emphasis on the preaching of the Law.”<sup>24</sup> Horton then cites numerous instances in Calvin’s commentaries as well as the *Institutes* that have led him to the conclusion that “Calvin does not regard the third use as primary in general, but only in respect to its service to the believer who recognizes that he is under grace and not under law.

Whenever that believer forgets this fact and hears the Law condemning him, however, the pedagogical use is once again primary.”<sup>25</sup> Here, Horton’s insight about Calvin’s view of the law is helpful in reminding Calvin (and Luther) scholars about the danger of reductionism. To dismissively reduce either reformer’s theology to simplistic generalizations such as: “Luther taught that the law always accuses,” or, “Calvin had a more positive view of the law that made him guilty of being a “law-teacher,”” misconstrues the theology of both.<sup>26</sup> Rather, I. John Hesselink’s observation that “Calvin does not differ significantly from Luther [on the function of the *nuda lex*], except in emphasis and discretion” should be heeded as well as explored to further understand this

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pertains more closely to the proper use of the law, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns.”

<sup>24</sup> Horton, “Calvin and the Law-Gospel Hermeneutic.”

<sup>25</sup> Horton, “Calvin and the Law-Gospel Hermeneutic.”

<sup>26</sup>For instance, John Frame, relying on the insights of non-confessional Lutherans, has wrongly understood the Augsburg Confession’s phrase *semper accusat lex*, the law always accuses, to mean that Lutherans confess the law *only* accuses (Frame, *Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 2013), 96) and indeed some Lutherans have attempted to make the Confessions teach this in an effort to deny a third use of the law, e.g., Elert, Althaus, Bartling, and Schroeder. However, when the Confessions speak of the law always accusing, they do so because the law is always addressed to someone who is a sinner. If the law could speak to a Christian according to his new nature alone it would not have to speak using an accusatory or pedagogical function. But, as Scott Murray notes: “This argument is a *reduction ad absurdum*: If there were any perfect Christians (and there are not), then they would never be in need of information from the Law on what is to be done. Since in this life the old Adam still inheres, however, the Law is still needed both to goad and to inform. Only perfect Christians can jettison the third use, according to the Formula of Concord, and there are no perfect Christians. (Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God* (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 2002), 94.) See also Hesselink, “Christ, the Law, and the Christian,” pp. 1–5, 14–16 where he discusses criticisms of Calvin’s teaching of the law, including one leveled by Georgia Harkness that claims Calvin’s “whole outlook on life is tintured with the spirit of Moses rather than Christ,” and demonstrates the baselessness of these claims. I would suggest that this erroneous view of Calvin as a “law-teacher” is made possible because of the reductionist view of Calvin that takes his statement about the third-use being the primary use of the law exclusively and then disregards or at least makes too small the other uses that he taught, thereby introducing a harmful imbalance to Calvin’s teaching on the law.

important doctrine and hermeneutic of the Reformation and the unity that it affords between the two traditions.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, scholars such as Michael Horton and Thomas Johnson have engaged Hesselink's thesis in order to dig deeper into both Luther's and Calvin's teaching so that a more unified understanding of their teaching on the law could be ascertained. In doing so, they have demonstrated that Luther's emphasis in preaching tended to be more negative because, when considering the *simul iustus et peccator*, Luther's habit was to address the "sinner" side of the believer who was always trying to justify himself by works of the law, while Calvin frequently saw fit to address the "saint" who was clothed in Christ's righteousness and being perfected by the Holy Spirit.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, different uses of the law were more or less prominent in each of the reformers' sermons, but, as Hesselink has suggested, this was not due to a fundamental disagreement on the legitimacy of either use, but had more to do with personal emphasis and style.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Hesselink, *Calvin's Concept*, 158. Brackets included for clarity.

<sup>28</sup> As has already been noted, Luther's lack of emphasis on the use of the law in the life of the believer left him open to criticisms of antinomianism which he would then have to clarify at a later date. Perhaps one of the differences of discretion that can be observed between Luther and Calvin is that Luther had a very high regard for the perfection of the new man (considered by itself) as a result of Christ's imputed righteousness, while also maintaining a lack of perfection in imparted righteousness. The reality of the believer's union with Christ and his imputed righteousness gave Luther a very positive view of what the saint knew intrinsically about God's will, while a lack in imparted righteousness meant that the law needed to continually crucify the Old Adam so that the New Adam could "daily emerge and arise" (*Luther's Small Catechism*, Baptism Q.4). In distinction to this emphasis, Calvin's very positive understanding of the law, *tota lex*, meant that he emphasized God's use of the law as a means to inform the believer concerning God's will – in this Luther would not have fundamentally disagreed. But, when Calvin uses the image of the law as a "whip" or "prod" for the believer (here perhaps Calvin is considering the whole believer, sinner and saint together, rather than the saint *per se*), even while saying that "it does not have the power to bind their consciences with a curse" (*Institutes*, 2.7.12–13), Luther most likely would have accused Calvin of mingling the second and third uses of the law.

<sup>29</sup> I do not claim that there are no differences between Luther and Calvin on law and gospel. When it comes to Calvin's *nuda lex*, I agree with Johnson, Horton, and Hesselink that there is indeed fundamental agreement. Calvin fully recognized and taught the antithetical relationship of law and gospel in this regard. However, whereas Luther would insist on a proper distinction between law and gospel across all uses, Calvin's way of speaking about the third-use indicates that he was not opposed to the mingling of the two in this use. In fact, for the believer, because Christ is the interpreter, fulfiller, and fulfillment of the law, and because by his adoption he is being conformed to the image of Christ, both Christ and the law are "the norm or rule of godly living and the expression of the will of God" for Calvin. (Hesselink, "Christ, the Law, and the Christian," 18). This means that when Calvin conceptualizes the preaching of the law according to its third-use he believes he is really preaching Christ to the believer, which is a preaching of the gospel, which brings the law and gospel into perfect harmony, not distinction or antithesis.

These differences in emphasis led to the further development of the Reformed sermonic genre that accentuated the preaching of the law both as a guide for Christians and as an instrument of exhortation. Calvin's fullest explanation of the third-use of the law is found in the *Institutes*, and his clarity on the topic merits repeating his teaching in full, including the illustrations, despite its length:

The third use of the Law (being also the principal use, and more closely connected with its proper end) has respect to believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already flourishes and reigns. For although the Law is written and engraven on their hearts by the finger of God, that is, although they are so influenced and actuated by the Spirit, that they desire to obey God, there are two ways in which they still profit in the Law.

For it is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with greater truth and certainty what that will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow, and to confirm them in this knowledge; just as a servant who desires with all his soul to approve himself to his master, must still observe, and be careful to ascertain his master's dispositions, that he may comport himself in accommodation to them. Let none of us deem ourselves exempt from this necessity, for none have as yet attained to such a degree of wisdom, as that they may not, by the daily instruction of the Law, advance to a purer knowledge of the Divine will.

Then, because we need not doctrine merely, but exhortation also, the servant of God will derive this further advantage from the Law: by frequently meditating upon it, he will be excited to obedience, and confirmed in it, and so drawn away from the slippery paths of sin. In this way must the saints press onward, since, however great the alacrity with which, under the Spirit, they hasten toward righteousness, they are retarded by the sluggishness of the flesh, and make less progress than they ought. The Law acts like a whip to the flesh, urging it on as men do a lazy sluggish ass.

Even in the case of a spiritual man, inasmuch as he is still burdened with the weight of the flesh, the Law is a constant stimulus, pricking him forward when he would indulge in sloth. David had this use in view when he pronounced this high eulogium on the Law, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes," (Ps. 19:7, 8). Again, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," (Ps. 119:105). The whole psalm abounds in passages to the same effect.

Such passages are not inconsistent with those of Paul, which show not the utility of the law to the regenerate, but what it is able of itself to bestow. The object of the Psalmist is to celebrate the advantages which the Lord, by means of his law, bestows on those whom he inwardly inspires with a love of obedience. And he adverts not to the mere precepts, but also to the promise annexed to them, which alone makes that sweet which in itself is bitter. For what is less attractive than the law, when, by its demands and threatening, it overawes the soul, and fills it with

terror? David specially shows that in the law he saw the Mediator, without whom it gives no pleasure or delight.<sup>30</sup>

In seeking to explain why Calvin placed such a high priority on utilizing the third-use of the law, Hesselink has noted that for Calvin:

The three uses of the law correspond roughly to the three persons of the Godhead and their respective offices: the *usus politicus* and God the Creator; the *usus elencticus* and God the Redeemer; the *usus in renatis* and God the Sanctifier. However, whereas the first two functions of the law are essentially negative in that they either restrain, condemn, or reveal the nature and power of sin, the “third and principal use pertains more closely to the proper purpose of the Law,” for it “finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns.”<sup>31</sup>

This observation from Hesselink, when also coupled with B. B. Warfield’s claim that Calvin was “pre-eminently the theologian of the Holy Spirit,” helps to clarify why the third-use of the law played so prominent a role in Calvin’s conception of preaching—it was the Holy Spirit’s tool to accomplish the sanctification of the elect.<sup>32</sup> Therefore to understand Calvin’s stress on the third-use of the law, an understanding of his teaching on the Third Person is helpful.

Calvin’s understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit is one of his foundational truths from which the *Institutes* is written – as foundational as his understanding of the person and work of the Father and the Son. As Calvin writes the *Institutes* he is constantly drawing attention to the design, purpose, and work of God, but in so doing, is not content to attribute all this merely to “God,” but regularly demonstrates the distinct roles of the persons of the Triune God. Thus, when describing the creation of all things, Calvin does not simply affirm that God created, but articulates that it was the Spirit who was the active power of God whereby all things were created and sustained.

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<sup>30</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.12. The paragraph breaks are not included in Calvin’s text but are added here as a visual aid to understanding.

<sup>31</sup> Hesselink, *Calvin’s Concept*, 251. Hesselink quotes Calvin’s *Institutes* 2.7.12. He also notes that Calvin’s term *usus in renatis* “means literally the use of the law for those who are regenerate” (n.152).

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield, “John Calvin the Theologian,” *Calvin and Augustine* (1909): 484.

Likewise, when describing how the Scripture is instrumental in drawing a person to faith in Christ, Calvin highlights how it is the Spirit who: 1) has inspired and authored Holy Scripture; 2) has borne witness to the veracity of Scripture; 3) has accompanied the Word of Scripture to apply it to the individual heart; 4) has prepared the way for the Scripture in the individual's heart; 5) has created faith in the individual to receive the Word; 6) has sealed that Word and created assurance; etc.

Even so, while Calvin is doing this descriptive work of the Holy Spirit's activity, he is simultaneously speaking of the Father and the Son so that in everything the unified and cooperative work of the Trinity is underscored. Calvin accordingly affirms: "to the Father is attributed the beginning of activity, and the fountain and wellspring of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the ordered disposition of all things; but to the Spirit is assigned the power and efficacy of that activity."<sup>33</sup> Here it can be seen why Calvin is so intent on speaking about the activity of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Spirit's activity that works upon the subject—the object of God's election—and brings the work to completion. God's plan of salvation began in the Father, and was accomplished by the Son, but is applied to the individual by the Spirit. Nor is the Spirit's work *fully* complete by only applying Jesus' justifying work to the elect, because Calvin insists upon the Spirit's ongoing activity in the lives of the regenerate to accomplish their sanctification. Accordingly, in light of Calvin's correlation of the Holy Spirit's work *with* sanctification, and third-use preaching as an instrument *for* sanctification, his emphasis on the necessity and primacy of the third-use is seen to be theologically justified in his system. Third-use preaching is the very tool which the Spirit uses to apply the sanctifying Word to the believer and it is a means whereby the Spirit fulfills the promise that "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion," (Phil. 1:6) as he enables the believer to aim for and aspire to conformity with his Savior. This third-use preaching is devoid of the

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<sup>33</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.13.18.

law's curse and makes use of the promises annexed to its precepts "which alone makes that sweet which in itself is bitter."<sup>34</sup>

From what has been discussed it can be seen that Calvin's preaching remained theologically consistent with the earlier Reformation's law-gospel distinction but it also more expansively developed preaching that intentionally utilized and stressed the third-use of the law. This third-use preaching meant that Reformed sermons began to include more explicit applications for their auditors, usually near the conclusion of the sermon, but sometimes interwoven with the explication of the Scriptural text.<sup>35</sup> Thus, when defining the "Reformed" sermonic genre, applicational third-use preaching is a hallmark distinctive.

**Puritan plain-style.** The next development in the sermonic genre that will be relevant for the study of Benjamin Wallin's sermons is the sermon form that came to be used initially by the Puritans, and subsequently by many of the Non-Conformist and Particular Baptists of the long eighteenth century. Joel Beeke has observed that "the Puritans viewed preaching as the minister's "principal work" and the hearer's "principal benefit.""<sup>36</sup> He also notes the great importance that the Puritans placed on preaching for conversion and cites William Ames' teaching from *The Marrow of Theology* that "preaching is the ordinance of God, sanctified for the begetting of faith, for the opening of the understanding, for the drawing of the will and affections to Christ."<sup>37</sup> Ames' tutor at Christ's College, Cambridge had been William Perkins who had written *The Art of*

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<sup>34</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.12.

<sup>35</sup> O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 315–320. Edwards approvingly follows T. H. L. Parker's analysis of John Calvin's sermons from *The Oracles of God: An Introduction to the Preaching of John Calvin*.

<sup>36</sup> Joel R. Beeke, *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 210.

<sup>37</sup> Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 210. Beeke's footnote cites: William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. and ed. John D. Eusden (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), 194.

*Prophesying*. When commenting on the importance of Perkins' work, W. F Mitchell claims that:

Its influence and vogue were enormous, owing to the extra-ordinary contemporary reputation of its author, whose theological works were accorded a place alongside those of Calvin and Hooker. All through the seventeenth, and among dissenters in the following, century, this short work on preaching continued to be recommended and quoted.<sup>38</sup>

As noted above, *The Art of Prophesying* did much to define the Puritan sermon genre by articulating in detail not only a process for exegeting the text of Scripture, but also by outlining a sermon structure that has come to be known as Puritan plain-style. In developing the plain-style sermon, Perkins was not breaking with the Protestant or Reformed sermon genres but brought together the sermonic wisdom that had been passed down from his forebearers. Andrew Ballitch notes:

Perkins's *The Arte of Prophecy* was not revolutionary in its presentation of interpretive method, not even in England. Though his preaching manual addressed the preparation and delivery of sermons, which included sustained attention to proper exegetical method, his contributions to homiletics and biblical interpretation were not new... what his work lacked in originality, it made up for with clarity, concision, and accessibility. He offered a usable, understandable, and repeatable summary of a Reformed method of interpretation.<sup>39</sup>

This repeatable method has often been noticed when describing the sermons of the Puritans or Non-Conformist who came after them, because the practitioners very rarely strayed from the established structure. Typically, Perkins' own summary of his method is used:

Preaching involves:

1. Reading the text clearly from the canonical Scriptures.
2. Explaining the meaning of it, once it has been read, in the light of the Scriptures themselves.
3. Gathering a few profitable points of doctrine from the natural sense of the passage.

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<sup>38</sup> William F. Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson: A Study of Its Literary Aspects*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1932), 99.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew S. Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture*, (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), chap. 2, "The Arte of Prophecy," para. 1, Kindle.



4. If the preacher is suitably gifted, applying the doctrines thus explained to the life and practice of the congregation in straightforward, plain speech.  
The heart of the matter is this:  
Preach one Christ,  
by Christ,  
to the praise of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

While Perkins' summary of his own method is certainly adequate for describing the general structure of the Puritan plain-style genre, it lacks much of the specificity of Perkins' manual, and therefore may not provide enough definition to make possible an evaluation of similar sermons within the same genre. In order to execute a closer analysis of Benjamin Wallin's and John Brine's sermons, a deeper look at *The Art of Prophesying* is warranted.

William Perkins term for preaching is "prophesy" or "prophesying," which he defines as "a solemn public utterance by the prophet, related to the worship of God and the salvation of our neighbors."<sup>41</sup> After dealing with the proper method for interpreting the Scriptures in the first five chapters of *The Art of Prophesying* Perkins turns to a discussion of how the Scriptures should be handled for the benefit of those who will hear the sermon.

To begin, Perkins suggests that Scripture must be properly divided, and by this he means separating the sermon into "1) resolution or partition, and 2) application."<sup>42</sup> During the resolution portion of the sermon, which corresponds to point three in Perkins' summary of his method, Perkins envisions the preacher "unfolding the passage into its various doctrines, like the untwisting and loosening of a weaver's web."<sup>43</sup> Yet, he cautions, lest the preacher become over-zealous and imaginative in this task, "that doctrines ought to be deduced from passages only when it is proper and valid to do so.

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<sup>40</sup> William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying* (Charles River Editors: Kypros Press, 2016, Scribd: <https://www.scribd.com/book/381955977>), 82.

<sup>41</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Perkins. *Art*, 51.

<sup>43</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 51.

They must be derived from the genuine meaning of the Scripture. Otherwise we will end up drawing any doctrine from any place in the Bible.”<sup>44</sup>

Next, Perkins draws out what he intends by use and application (point four of the summary) stating: “application is the skill by which the doctrine which has been properly drawn from Scripture is handled in ways which are appropriate to the circumstances of the place and time and to the people in the congregation.”<sup>45</sup> For Perkins, as with his theological forebearers, “the basic principle in application is to know whether the passage is a statement of the law or of the gospel.”<sup>46</sup> He then proceeds to clarify his understanding of the functions of the law and gospel and to insist upon a homiletical ordering of the two doctrines:

When the Word is preached, the law and the gospel operate differently. The law exposes the disease of sin, and as a side-effect stimulates and stirs it up. But it provides no remedy for it. However the gospel not only teaches us what is to be done, it also has the power of the Holy Spirit joined to it. When we are regenerated by him we receive the strength we need both to believe the gospel and to do what it commands. The law is, therefore, first in the order of teaching; then comes the gospel.<sup>47</sup>

Here, Perkins demonstrates that he is in full agreement with both Luther and Calvin in regard to the function of the *nuda lex*, and, in terms similar to Calvin, he affirms the appropriateness of a third-use interpretation, saying: “many statements which seem to belong to the law are, in the light of Christ, to be understood not legally but as qualified by the gospel.”<sup>48</sup>

Where Perkins becomes more specific than Luther and Calvin is in his observation of seven ways in which application should be made with a correspondence to

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<sup>44</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 54.

<sup>45</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 57.

<sup>46</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 57.

<sup>47</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 57.

<sup>48</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 59.

the spiritual conditions of those who would hear the sermon. Perkins' seven categories of hearers are: 1) Those who are unbelievers and are both ignorant and unteachable; 2) Those who are teachable, but ignorant; 3) Those who have knowledge, but have never been humbled; 4) Those who have already been humbled; 5) Those who already believe; 6) Those who have fallen back; and 7) Churches with both believers and unbelievers.<sup>49</sup> Within these categories of hearers, Perkins makes observations as to how application ought to be made. The discerning preacher for instance, will know the difference between those who are in need of "spiritual milk" rather than "strong meat." He also teaches men to discern the difference between a worldly sorrow for sin, which is sorrow for the punishment received, versus a godly sorrow for sin, which is "grief for sin simply because it is sin."<sup>50</sup> Once godly sorrow for sin is recognized, Perkins admonishes the preacher to "then let the gospel be preached in such a way that the Holy Spirit effectually works salvation."<sup>51</sup> To believers, Perkins instructs preachers to preach 1) The gospel – especially the doctrines of justification, sanctification, and perseverance; 2) The law – here Perkins means the non-accusatory law of the third-use; and 3) The law – once again, not as though the believer is once more under the curse of the law, but as the law is opposed to the remaining sinfulness in the believer's flesh.<sup>52</sup> As to those believers who have backslidden, Perkins recommends that a diagnosis of the cause of the backsliding be undertaken, and encourages the use of private confession both to discern the cause, as well as apply the remedy.<sup>53</sup> As Perkins discusses the application of the remedy, he

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<sup>49</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 59–66.

<sup>50</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 61.

<sup>51</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 61–62.

<sup>52</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 62–64.

<sup>53</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 64–65. Although much of what Perkins has taught to this point is related directly to the public proclamation and delivery of sermons, in this point Perkins seems to have in mind a more private encounter, perhaps demonstrating that for him, the office of preaching was not limited only to the public delivery of the Word in a sermon. This is a helpful constraint to keep in mind, because often

demonstrates a thoroughgoing gospel understanding, and presses preachers to impress upon their hearers among other things “that the promises of grace are made generally to all who believe. They are not made to specific individuals; they therefore exclude no one.”<sup>54</sup> Finally, as Perkins deals with his last category, the church with mixed hearers, he insists:

This is the typical situation in our congregations. Any doctrine may be expounded to them, either from the law or from the gospel, so long as its biblical limitations and circumscriptions are observed (John 7:37). This was what the prophets did in their sermons, when they announced judgment and destruction on the wicked, and promised deliverance in the Messiah to those who repented.

But what if someone in the congregation despairs, when the rest are hardened? What should be done? The answer is: those who are hardened must be made to hear the law circumscribed within the limits of the persons and sins in view. But the afflicted conscience must be helped to hear the voice of the gospel applied especially to it.<sup>55</sup>

After enumerating the spiritual conditions of those who would be preached to, Perkins also differentiates between application that is mental, which involves teaching doctrine with the specific aim of addressing a mental error, and application that is practical, which deals specifically with lifestyle and behavior. Of the second type of application, Perkins observes that it is designed to “enable us to live well in the context of the family, the state, and the church,” and that it “involves both encouragement and exhortation.”<sup>56</sup> He also saw a place for application to serve as correction and admonition with an aim to “transform lives marked by ungodliness and unrighteousness.”<sup>57</sup> In all of

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times Perkins’ system is applied only to the crafting and delivery of sermons, whereas, he himself seems to indicate that many (if not all) pastoral interactions should be governed by the system he outlines.

<sup>54</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 65. Related to Perkins’ point here, Beeke observes of his theology: “Since the elect are known only to God, Perkins assumes that everyone who listens to a sermon could potentially be gathered into gospel grace. He thus presses every sinner to accept God’s offer of salvation in Christ. The gospel promise must be offered freely to every hearer as a “precious jewel,” Perkins says. At the same time, he explains that there are two ways of regarding election: “One especially whereby God knows who are his. The other is more general, whereby we repute all men to be Elect that profess faith in Christ, leaving secret judgments to God.” (Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 244.)

<sup>55</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 66.

<sup>56</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 67.

<sup>57</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 69.

this, Perkins demonstrated a pastoral wisdom that highlighted the need for pastoral discernment on individual bases, and was sensitive to directing God’s Word to both the head and heart of the individual. He concluded his section on application and uses with the warning:

Any passage in Scripture can be handled in this way. Note, however, that we should not try to expound every doctrine on every occasion; but only those which can be applied appropriately to the present experiences and condition of the church. These must be carefully chosen, and limited to a few, lest those who hear God’s Word expounded are overwhelmed by the sheer number of applications.<sup>58</sup>

The final element of the sermon genre that Perkins fathered is the “plainness” of the sermon. While Perkins identifies this trait with the delivery of the sermon itself, it is reasonable to conclude that he would also direct this quality to be observed for sermons that were prepared for publishing as well. Perkins is careful to describe precisely what he means:

Two things are essential: 1) the hiding of human wisdom, and 2) the demonstration or manifestation of the Spirit. Human wisdom must be concealed, both in the content of the sermon and in the language we use. The preaching of the Word is the testimony of God and the profession of the knowledge of Christ, not of human skill. Furthermore, the hearers ought not to ascribe their faith to the gifts of men, but to the power of God’s Word (1 Cor. 2:1–2, 5). But this does not mean that pulpits will be marked by a lack of knowledge and education. The minister may, and in fact must, privately make free use of the general arts and of philosophy as well as employ a wide variety of reading while he is preparing his sermon. But in public exposition these should be hidden from the congregation, not ostentatiously paraded before them.<sup>59</sup>

Of particular note in the above quote is the fact that in Perkins’ explanation of what is essential, he points to both the hiding of human wisdom, *and* the demonstration or manifestation of the Spirit. Often-times the first point that Perkins made has been stressed to the exclusion of the second. When Perkins’ broader teaching is allowed to have voice

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<sup>58</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 71.

<sup>59</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 75.

his emphasis on plainness is also understood to be an exaltation of the Spirit's work in the sermon:

The 'demonstration of the Spirit' (1 Cor. 2:4) becomes a reality when, in preaching, the minister of the Word conducts himself in such a way that everyone – even those who are ignorant of the gospel and are unbelievers – recognize that it is not so much the preacher who is speaking, but the Spirit of God in him and by him (Mic. 3:8; 1 Cor. 2:4; 4:19–20; 14:24–25). This is what makes his ministry living and powerful (Luke 11:27).<sup>60</sup>

This dual emphasis is an important balance that Perkins maintained that helped his homiletical teaching to preserve the prominence of the Spirit in preaching which Calvin had affirmed. It also illumines Perkins' insistence that preaching is the means God uses for the "salvation of our neighbors" by confessing that "it is not so much the preacher who is speaking, but the Spirit of God in him and by him."<sup>61</sup>

**Eighteenth-Century Non-Conformist funeral sermon.** Perhaps not too surprisingly, there has not been a great deal of research done about the funeral sermon genre among Particular Baptists of the long eighteenth century. To encounter any significant studies, the net must be cast more broadly to include the Anglican, Puritan, and Dissenting churches of both England and America. Once this has been done, a small vignette of the funeral sermon emerges which displays both an established sermonic genre, but also a genre that was in transition.

Penny Pritchard has observed that "the protestant funeral sermon occupies a unique position in the wider genre of religious literature in early modern England, not least because (according to the most stringent interpretation of Calvinist reform) it shouldn't exist at all."<sup>62</sup> Pritchard's observation is rooted in the precision of the strict

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<sup>60</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 75.

<sup>61</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 8, 75.

<sup>62</sup> Penny Pritchard, "The Protestant Funeral Sermon in England, 1688–1800," in *The Oxford Handbook of The British Sermon 1689–1901*, ed. Keith A. Francis and William Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 322.

Calvinists to only allow those religious ceremonies which were authorized by a Scriptural mandate, and the fact that, in Leviticus 21, rather than authorizing funeral sermons preached by the clergy, there is a prohibition for priests to participate in the burial rites of the Israelites. She notes that while some objected strenuously to the “Romish” rite continuing in the English church, by the end of Elizabeth’s reign a compromise had been achieved that made the funeral sermon more palatable by breaking the sermon into two asymmetrical parts: the first and longer section which was a sermon on the text in the usual form; and a second, shorter section which served to “commemorate the deceased’s life and character, the manner of their death, and their spiritual legacy.”<sup>63</sup>

While Pritchard’s thesis does capture the reality that there was an evolving attitude toward the funeral sermon in England during the long eighteenth century, by grouping all of the Protestants together, she perhaps suggests that the transformation was thoroughly complete sooner than it actually occurred.<sup>64</sup> In the highly conservative denomination of the Particular Baptists for instance, as well as in the American colonies, elements of the more stringent Puritan view persisted well into the Hanoverian era, as will be evidenced shortly when John Brine’s sermons are analyzed.<sup>65</sup> Regardless of when the transformation was complete, scholarship agrees that while the funeral sermon’s basic

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<sup>63</sup> Pritchard, “Protestant Funeral Sermon,” 322.

<sup>64</sup> Selmer W. Westby, “The Puritan Funeral Sermon in Seventeenth Century England” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1971), 18. Pritchard is not the only one to date the transformation of the funeral sermon at an early date. For instance, Westby notes that “Before 1640, the Puritans did not regard the funeral sermon as in any essential way different from other sermons preached during the normal course of the ecclesiastical year.” Perhaps both Pritchard’s and Westby’s work is best understood to be indicating that in the early seventeenth century the funeral sermon genre itself came to be legitimately recognized, and then subsequently went through additional transformations from that point forward.

<sup>65</sup> Desiree Henderson, “The Imperfect Dead: Mourning Women in Eighteenth-Century Oratory and Fiction,” *Early American Literature* 39, no. 3 (2004): 490. When describing the funeral sermons of the American Puritans of the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries Henderson observes an attitude that both Pritchard and Westby had dated before 1640: “Colonial era funeral sermons do not resemble funeral oratory as we think of it today; they were not delivered on the day of burial or at the gravesite, but rather on the closest Sabbath to the day of the death. The practice of commemorating the dead within the normal cycle of weekly sermons was intended to communicate that the loss was an unremarkable event within the community.”

asymmetrical form was established, the sermonic genre itself continued to be in flux during the eighteenth century.

In turning to an observation of the sermon genre itself, Westby also notes the asymmetrical form of the funeral sermon and comments on the early attitude of the preacher toward the second section of the sermon. His analysis provides insight into the significant contrast between the importance the pastors placed upon the well-ordered sermon of the first section, and the *ad hoc* impression that was given by the typical memorial:

The eulogy in its relationship to the exegesis was accidental, a kind of *obiter dictum* in no way charged with the sanctifying attributes which, in the eyes of the Puritans, made the latter the central act of worship. The exegesis was enveloped in its own mystique. Both Puritan and Anglican ministers saw it in the shape of a cross. The horizontal member represented the text in its coherence and its scope, that is to say, the context in which it was set, and the theme which it was the preacher's purpose to exploit. The vertical represented an extension of the text through its divisions, doctrines, and applications, reaching "from the heights of divine glory to the heart of the listener." The eulogy was regarded as prose, bare and unenigmatic, the trivial partner of the association, and obliquely stigmatized by the Puritan clergy as a "lean-to."<sup>66</sup>

Continuing in this vein of observation, Henderson has equally described the hesitancy of the ministers to eulogize, and has assigned a corresponding theological motive:

One hallmark of the genre is the way it works to downplay if not eliminate altogether the specific details of the deceased; biography is omitted in favor of the spiritual lesson. Many early Puritan funeral sermons do not mention the name of the deceased except in the title . . . . Orators strove to demonstrate that the loss of an individual was not to be commemorated for the person's worth or specific characteristics; rather, the death was meant to act as a reminder of God's judgment and humanity's mortality. For this reason, funeral sermons repeatedly direct their audiences to transfer their attention away from the dead to their own approaching deaths.<sup>67</sup>

As the eighteenth century progressed however, the funeral sermon began to change rather rapidly, allowing for the expansion of the memorial section, and sometimes

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<sup>66</sup> Westby, "Puritan Funeral Sermon," 18–19. In this quote, Westby cites n.2: Millar Maclure *The Paul's Cross Sermons, 1534–1643* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 150; n.3 Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Harper, 1938, 1957), p. 385.

<sup>67</sup> Henderson, "Imperfect Dead," 490.



even inverting the order of the sections.<sup>68</sup> While the work of Emory Elliott is describing the transformation of the funeral sermon in New England, it is nevertheless important in establishing the societal norms and pressures that the Particular Baptists would have experienced in their context, especially as regular communication between the divines on both sides of the Atlantic continued. Emory traces the relationship between the literary forms of the elegy and the funeral sermon to demonstrate how each genre impacted the other. When commenting on the funeral sermon he states:

Although these developments in the Puritan elegy indicate that it was by no means a static form, its evolution does seem very gradual when compared to the rapid changes that occurred in the funeral sermon during the same decades. The Puritan sermon had always been a literary form most responsive to change. As the population came to include increasing numbers who did not embrace the fine points of Puritan theology, the ministers adapted the funeral sermon especially to these listeners and readers. The motives for this accommodation were several, not the least of which was to use the emotional occasion of a funeral to discover new saints among the as yet unregenerate . . . . But most important, the clergy adjusted the form and style of their funeral sermons in order to respond to the needs of living church members for greater assurance and consolation. Thus the primary motive was pastoral.<sup>69</sup>

Pritchard's work affirms Emory's observation about the changes in the funeral sermon and indicates that it was happening in England as well. Pritchard helpfully observes that the expansion of the memorial section was not an innovation entirely without precedent but had its "precursors in popular martyrologies and deathbed repentance narratives such as Burnet's 1680 account of Lord Rochester's conversion."<sup>70</sup> Thus, in the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon for "funeral sermons to feature vivid deathbed scenes, complete with emotional dialogue, details of the subjects dying moments, and multiple eyewitness accounts from friends or relations."<sup>71</sup> Such sermons

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<sup>68</sup> Emory Elliott, "The Development of the Puritan Funeral Sermon and Elegy: 1660-1750," *Early American Literature* 15, no. 2 (1980), 157.

<sup>69</sup> Elliott, "Development," 156.

<sup>70</sup> Pritchard, "Protestant Funeral Sermon," 326-327.

<sup>71</sup> Pritchard, "Protestant Funeral Sermon", 326.

had popular appeal, and during this time period, the published funeral sermon represented a significant portion of religious writing, including the works which this dissertation will examine.<sup>72</sup> Speaking generally about the advantages of the published sermon, Pritchard notes:

The published funeral sermon's second section provided a creative space in which the Protestant congregation—or individual reader—was invited to call upon its own interpretative and spiritual resources to glean useful moral lessons from the example of the deceased's life and death.<sup>73</sup>

## Structure

John Brine's four funeral sermons are all very similar in structure. Brine first acknowledges the occasion for the funeral briefly before introducing the text. After introducing the text, Brine announces his outline for improvement, and then systematically proceeds through each enumerated point and their subpoints. As Brine addresses each of the points within the outline he regularly uses Scripture to support his assertions, and only occasionally will draw upon an external authority such as Dr. Goodwin, whom he quotes in two of the sermons. The sermons are ordered very much like those which are structured on the Puritan plain-style of Perkins, but there is a very conspicuous absence of a specific "uses" section. This is not to suggest that there is no attempt at application in Brine's sermons, but the application that is present is usually very subdued and indirect. Brine's sermons conclude with a memorial section, the longest

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<sup>72</sup> Pritchard, "Protestant Funeral Sermon," 328. Pritchard makes an interesting observation about the ratio of funeral sermons that were published by Dissenters. "Although by no means an exclusive feature of Dissenters' literature, the investment of the details of everyday life with spiritual significance clearly has a special appeal for Dissenters. This factor may help to explain the disproportionately high number of published funeral sermons which can be attributed to dissenting ministers throughout the period. Though estimates vary widely, Michael Watts has suggested that Dissenters in this period comprised somewhere between 6 and 10 per cent of the English population, with higher concentrations living in urban centres. Their minority representation in the population as a whole is not reflected in the extant body of published funeral sermons from this period, in which Dissenters' works are represented in approximately equal measures with those from the Church of England." In light of this, it is also interesting to note that of Benjamin Wallin's forty-five published works, fifteen were funeral sermons, eight were sermons, and the remainder were collections of sermons which were edited into theological works.

<sup>73</sup> Pritchard, "Protestant Funeral Sermon," 327.

of which is three-and-a-half pages long, or roughly ten percent of the total sermon. The memorial sections of three of the sermons contained the most direct application with admonishments to faithful living, but the fourth sermon contained no such exhortation.

Benjamin Wallin's four funeral sermons are also very uniform in their structural similarities. Wallin's exordiums serve to both introduce the text and the funeral occasion, but also immediately begin to suggest how the image of the text is applicable to the congregation. The conclusion of the exordium operates to introduce the points which Wallin will consider for doctrinal improvement. Wallin clearly enumerates his points and subpoints throughout the text, making the logical progression of his argument simple to follow. Wallin's arguments are equal to Brine's in terms of adequacy and rational support, yet Wallin's support leaves the reader with the impression that Scripture, not reason, is the connective tissue of the argument.<sup>74</sup> Unlike Brine, Wallin has preserved Perkins' "uses" section and makes application in both the mental and practical forms; thus, the reader is directed to both corrections of thought as well as positive actions that affirm the truth of the message. Wallin's memorial section of the funeral sermons retains the asymmetry noted of the funeral sermon genre, but he appears much more willing to expand the memorial section, with one sermon's memorial section taking up thirty-five percent of the sermon's total number of pages. Wallin uses the memorial section of the sermon to not only point out godly qualities of the departed, but in some respects, it could be considered a second "uses" section as Wallin fills the section with admonitions and direct address to sinners.

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<sup>74</sup> Both John Brine and Benjamin Wallin's printed funeral sermons are replete with Scriptural references and footnotes. I do not intend to convey that Brine's sermons are not Scriptural, and when read in isolation, perhaps what I have suggested above would not even occur to the reader. However, when compared side by side, the subjective impression that was made upon me was how much more Wallin depended upon Scripture to support and illustrate his points. I was frequently left in wonderment about how Wallin's observations and connections to other Scriptures were there all along, but never noticed by me. The overall effect that this had was to amplify the value of the edification that was provided and ground it in the certainty of God's authoritative Word. Again, because this is a subjective assessment of the sermons, the impression may vary, but it is my suspicion that the effect that Wallin's arguments had upon me were largely attributable to the preponderance of gospel-themed texts used as proofs.

## Generic Fidelity

As has already been noted from the structure of Brine's sermons, John Brine was willing to break from the generic constraints of his tradition. John Brine's sermons were eminently Protestant in their use of Scripture and the highlighting of justification and were very faithful in the proclamation of the various *solae* of the Reformation. Brine's arrangement of his sermonic material was not as obviously structured according to law and gospel as a Luther sermon would be, but he regularly interwove the accusatory function of the law throughout his sermons, while also pointing to the infinite grace and mercy of God for the elect in the gospel sections of his message.

In one of Brine's sermons, *The Believer's Triumph Over Death*, Brine expounds upon the uses of the law that are very reminiscent of the manner in which Calvin spoke:

The law is to be considered either as it is in the hand of God, thus it is a Covenant of Works, and has a curse annexed to the breach of it; or as it is in the hand of the Mediator, thus it is not a Covenant of Works, but a rule of obedience; in which sense the saints are under it, *being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ.*<sup>75</sup>

Having expressed this understanding of the law, which is certainly consistent with the teaching behind the Reformed sermonic genre, it is surprising how little third-use preaching is evident in Brine's funeral sermons. His lack of third-use law does not imply that Brine's sermons consisted only of syrupy-sweet gospel, for his use of the accusatory law was regular and at times heavy in its effect. Of the four sermons, *The Believer's Triumph* alone has a single subpoint that could be termed a third-use application: "*Sixthly*, We are under the greatest obligation to praise God for this victory."<sup>76</sup> Therefore, when considering Brine's conformity to the generic constraints of

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<sup>75</sup> Brine, *The Believer's Triumph*, 10.

<sup>76</sup> Brine, *Believer's Triumph*, 33.

the Reformed sermon, it must be acknowledged that Brine was guilty of very loosely following the tradition on this point in matter of practice, if not in theological confession.

Furthermore, as the additional constraints of the Puritan plain-style are considered, Brine continues to demonstrate a devolution away from the tradition. Most obvious is his failure to divide his preaching into Perkins' two parts: the partition (doctrines), and application—settling upon partition as sufficient for the sermonic task. Yet, even in his handling of the doctrines, there are times when it is wondered if Brine is following Perkins' advice that “doctrines ought to be deduced from passages only when it is proper and valid to do so.”<sup>77</sup> For instance, when preaching from 2 Samuel 23:5 which deals with David's hope in the everlasting covenant between his house and the Lord, Brine preaches an entire sermon about the eternity of the Covenant of Grace along with the fine doctrinal points of eternal justification.<sup>78</sup> In this there is perhaps a clue as to what is motivating Brine to disregard the sermonic constraints of the prior generations. Brine does not seem interested in diagnosing the spiritual state of those to whom he is preaching so that he can apply the law and gospel effectively and appropriately, as Perkins had suggested. He does seem highly interested in helping people to know doctrine. If Brine is given the benefit of the doubt, and it is affirmed that he preaches applicationally, at very least, one would have to posit that he does so by mingling partition and application into one sermonic act. Brine's applicational focus would then be almost entirely limited to Perkins' first kind of application—mental application that is intended to correct errors of thought or belief. Perhaps Brine is not guilty of refusal to diagnose his hearers after all, but because of his theological system which affirms eternal justification, he is predisposed to see instruction in doctrine as the most pressing need

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<sup>77</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 54.

<sup>78</sup> Brine, *The Covenant of Grace*, 7. As was seen in Chapter four, Benjamin Wallin rejected this doctrine along with the 1689 Particular Baptist Assembly (Brown, *English Baptists*, 75).

because the justification of the elect has already been accomplished apart from faith. Therefore, he routinely chooses mental rather than practical application because knowledge of what Christ has accomplished is of primary importance rather than the movement of the heart through convictional preaching. By skewing the weight of his preaching towards doctrine and mental application, Brine has also opened himself to a final criticism regarding the “plainness” of his preaching as the highly intellectual content of his sermons did not always lend themselves to the “hiding of human wisdom.”<sup>79</sup>

Finally, in an analysis of Brine’s sermons against the generic constraints of the funeral sermon, Brine demonstrates more commonality with the older Puritan sermons than with the newer eighteenth-century memorial-expanded sermon when he makes statements such as:

Thus I have endeavored to explain these copious words, as briefly as I could. The principal design of funeral sermons, is not to bestow encomiums of the dead. And I confess, that I have not much inclination to it, nor satisfaction in it.<sup>80</sup>

That being said, Brine did not entirely refrain from praising those Spirit-instilled virtues which were observed in the departed. He continued the practice of not naming the deceased, but in addition to reminding people of the lessons that had been taught by the loved one, he was also willing to permit a brief testimony of their final hours in very general terms. Only in one of the sermons did Brine make explicit his confidence of the individual being welcomed into the Church Triumphant, while in the other three sermons he was content to conclude with a simple remark, similar to the one he made of Elizabeth Turner: “This view of her interest in the Covenant of Grace, kept her mind composed, resigned, and even cheerful, in the prospect of approaching death.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 75.

<sup>80</sup> Brine, *Job’s Epitaph*, 29.

<sup>81</sup> Brine, *Job’s Epitaph*, 30. Only in *The Believer’s Triumph* does Brine speak so confidently as to say: “I make no doubt but that as he is removed from the Church Militant on Earth, he is taken to the Church Triumphant in heaven, and is now perpetually engaged in the celebration of the Redeemer’s praise, with the rest of the saints above who thus express their gratitude to him for redemption from sin.” 37.

Even as John Brine was successful in communicating that salvation comes through faith alone apart from any works of the law, Benjamin Wallin was likewise highly persuasive when it came to the Reformation's central doctrine. Wallin's extensive use of Scripture to support his arguments, as well as his own warning about how a man's reason is to yield to the Scriptural testimony, demonstrates his loyalty to this Protestant constraint:

Here then faith must yield to the testimony of God, fancy is to be totally rejected, and we are to beware of intruding into things that are not seen, even in divine revelation. The most pious conjectures have rather amused than instructed us; nor is it any wonder that the manner of this heavenly mansion should be incomprehensible to us on this side the veil.<sup>82</sup>

While Wallin was content to use reason, this quote demonstrates that he understood reason to be the handmaiden to revelation, and that he was unwilling to allow reason to force revelation to speak when it had chosen to remain silent. It also demonstrates Wallin's forthcomingness as a rhetor, intentionally drawing attention to what he was unable to say so that the people were taught submissiveness to the text and were not led into the pre-Reformation error of allowing rational dogmas to dictate what the text must mean. Taking the Scriptures to be the authoritative Word of God, Wallin did not hesitate to assert the rationalistically unpopular confession of the centrality of Christ's death and resurrection as the gracious work of God for the atonement of sinners in ways that also demonstrated his prowess at using the law and gospel appropriately:

The death and resurrection of Christ are, therefore, fundamental points; on these as on two grand hinges, turns the door of the everlasting gospel: he that hesitates concerning either of these, can have no plausible pretense to the name of a Christian, much less can such an one be thought to know anything of that saving faith which is of the operation of God by the gospel, and which grounds the repenting sinner's hope on the atonement made by the blood of Christ, the reality and completeness of whose sacrifice is evidenced in his resurrection from the dead; *for he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Wallin, *Eternal Mansion*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Wallin, *Appearance of Deceased Saints*, 7. This quote is an amazing example of how Wallin was able to preach law and gospel simultaneously to a "mixed" audience. For any in attendance, or who

Turning to Wallin's faithfulness to the Reformed sermonic genre produces similar results. As was discussed earlier, Calvin's development of third-use preaching grew out of his commitment to understanding the sermon as one of the means that the Holy Spirit used toward the sanctification of the faithful. Wallin also understood preaching to be a means which the Spirit would use to convict and enlighten the as-yet unregenerate sinners to faith in him, and therefore it was his regular habit to apply the text to them as well, as this extensive quote demonstrates:

The promise to those who are in the covenant, runs thus, *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* Now this promise is fulfilled in regeneration and conversion, which includes repentance and faith: Not that this experience puts any person into the covenant, for grace is bestowed in consequence of being included therein, but nothing short of the happy change can demonstrate a person's interest in God, or warrant his claim to this peculiar relation; and everyone who hath passed under it may assure himself that *Jehovah* is his God. If any are secure under the smiles of an indulgent providence, and careless about this matter; would to God, they had hearts to consider that, if they are finally impenitent, the richest enjoyments of this life will leave them to die in their sins! And alas for the dead who die in that state! They fall under the power of the second death. What will their eternal existence in the unseen world be, but as it were a living death? Who can tell their anguish and sorrows, who have not the Lord for their God; when they shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *in the kingdom of God*, while they themselves are *thrust into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone?*<sup>84</sup>

Because Perkins' plain-style preaching was not a development away from the previously establish preaching genres of Protestantism and the Reformed, but an outgrowth and development of those principles which had been established as necessary for the faithful transmission of God's Word, it is not surprising to observe Wallin's willingness to follow the structure outlined in *The Art of Prophesying*. As has already been noted under the analysis of Wallin's sermon's structure, all four of the sermons in

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were reading the sermon after it had been published, the law's accusation against their rationalism and denial of Jesus' death and/or resurrection would have convicted them that they were not to be considered Christians, while the gospel of Jesus' atoning sacrifice and the gift of faith by God's working through the gospel pointed to his monergistically complete work in the salvation of sinners.

<sup>84</sup> Wallin, *God's Relation*, 33–34. This quote again demonstrates Wallin's regular habit of preaching law and gospel to an audience that he presumes to be "mixed." Although this quote appears to demonstrate an inversion of Luther's, Calvin's, and Perkins' order of law first and then gospel, that is simply an artifact of the quote being lifted from its broader context within the sermon.



question demonstrated fidelity to the four points of Perkins' summary of his method. Additionally, Wallin's sermons also evidenced that he was eminently aware that the sermon not only "related to the worship of God" as Perkins had insisted, but also that he firmly believed along with Perkins that it was for "the salvation of our neighbors."<sup>85</sup> Wallin seemed to intuitively practice that skill in application which Perkins had highlighted, demonstrating even in the opening lines of his sermons his experiential sensibilities as he strove to apply the text in "ways which are appropriate to the circumstances of the place and time and to the people in the congregation."<sup>86</sup>

*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* This assertion of our blessed Savior, at first view, may seem to throw a discouraging aspect on our deceased friends; but we are to be guided by the sense of Scripture, and not by the sound of the words; and the passage, when duly considered, will afford the true Christian great consolation in the prospect of eternity: Hereby, also, the dead, who die in the Lord, are placed in a satisfactory and pleasing light; I have, therefore, thought it no unseasonable subject upon the removal of one, who was nearly related to some present, and, who, since the last day of assembly, is entered on the unseen state.<sup>87</sup>

In this quote, Wallin not only recognizes the hurdle to comprehension that the limited context of the single verse posed to his congregation's understanding, but he also demonstrates sensitivity to the circumstances of place and time as he proposes to comfort his people who are struggling from the sudden loss of a member who was taken quickly—since the last day of assembly.<sup>88</sup>

When it came to third-use applications, Wallin continued to demonstrate a practical sensibility that addressed people right at the level their day-to-day choices were

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<sup>85</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 57.

<sup>87</sup> Wallin, *God's Relation*, 1.

<sup>88</sup> While an introduction such as this may seem remarkably short and potentially distant to a modern audience, in contrast to other introductions common in his day, Wallin's introduction exhibits contextual and experiential sensitivity. c.f. Brine, *The Believer's Triumph Over Death*, 3: "The infinitely wise God, at whose disposal all persons are, has been pleased to take from this society a member of long standing and usefulness. This mournful providence I am desired by his surviving relatives to improve; for which purpose I have made choice of these words."

made. As part of his application for a sermon that stressed the blessedness of believers in Jesus because he would resurrect them to be eternally with him, Wallin observes:

And should not this influence our choice of companions in civil life? It is surely most desirable to have this hope concerning everyone with whom we stand connected in the present world. Exceptions, indeed, are for the most part unavoidable, but seeing it is so conducive to our comfort that our departed friends die in Jesus, who cannot see the propriety of making some good evidence of true faith in a person a condition of our entering into any near relation with him? Is it not reasonable that this consideration should make us careful that, as much as in us lieth, we set our affections upon and contract an alliance with those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious? And more especially should we be careful of this in the choice of the *nearest relative*: no secular advantage, which may engage to this strict and important union in life, will balance the grief of beholding the just object of our tenderest affection, launching into the eternal world without hope of an interest in the only Redeemer; but to this trial every Christian, who joineth himself to an unbeliever, is liable from the moment the relation taketh place. Too many in these days, being led aside with divers lusts, neglect this concern when they choose their companions for life, and thereby fall into temptations while they live together, and at length, being the survivor, they are plunged into sorrows.<sup>89</sup>

This application is relevant for all of Wallin’s audience, but especially for believers, and receives rhetorical power from the situation of the funeral as he is able to point to both the sorrow and comfort that is experienced by the surviving spouse.<sup>90</sup> Here, is not a shameful manipulation of the emotions for the sake of persuasion, but a heart-felt plea to accept the *truth* and *practicality* of God’s law as it is applied to those who are no longer under the curse of the law, but are meant to live in the blessedness of its wisdom.

When the “plainness” of each of Wallin’s sermons is evaluated, it can be affirmed that Wallin routinely observed the constraint to hide human wisdom. His sermons are full of Scripture quotations denoting the authority from which the sermon is drawn while avoiding the citation of scholars and philosophers in the body of his

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<sup>89</sup> Wallin, *Appearance of Deceased*, 31–32.

<sup>90</sup> This quote demonstrates how Wallin was capable of designing applications that utilized both the accusatory function of the law for unbelievers, and the guiding function of the law for believers. Unbelievers were made aware of the poverty of relationships apart from Christ, while believers were reminded that God’s intention for them was that they should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers in marriage and thereby experience unnecessary grief.

sermons.<sup>91</sup> On the other division of Perkins' definition of "plainness," the demonstration or manifestation of the Spirit, Wallin was also particularly strong. Wallin accomplished this strength through the use of direct address, exclamation, and the use of apostrophe.<sup>92</sup> When utilizing this method of address, the ethos of Wallin's sincerity is on display as his speaking about salvation slips into direct address which comes from the "Spirit of God in him and by him:"<sup>93</sup>

Oh, may the Almighty King of saints triumph over your unworthiness, and bring down your rebellious and obstinate hearts, truly penitent, at the footstool of his mercy seat; where he waits to be gracious to the chief of sinners! if not, if you die in your sins, my dear departed brother, your late minister, who often wrestled with and for you, in vain; yea, and he also, that is now providentially speaking to you, will be called to testify against you. You will then be numbered with those, for such there will be when Christ comes to judgment, who, having trifled with the grace of God, will bewail, but, alas, in despair, in some such language as used in Jeremiah 8:20 "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"<sup>94</sup>

Finally, it must be noted in relation to the funeral sermonic genre that Wallin proved himself to be more willing than John Brine to part with the non-memorial, *orbiter dictum*, methods of the strictest Puritans. It appears from Wallin's willingness to allow the memorial section of the funeral sermon to swell all the way to thirty-five percent of the sermon's content that he found value in being able to point his hearers to God's faithfulness toward the deceased. He also found it suitable to use the natural emotion of the situation to function as an aid to the law so that people might be convicted of their need for repentance (if backslidden) and salvation (if unregenerate). Above all, Wallin

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<sup>91</sup> While avoiding citations in the body of the text, Wallin's citations of Scripture references in his footnotes is copious. It is unknown whether Wallin would have verbally referenced the references in his preaching or not. Some of his footnotes do contain citations of scholars, indicating that he is significantly well-versed in the topic, but they at no time overwhelm the force of the argument from Scripture itself within the body of the sermon.

<sup>92</sup> Edward P. J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 378. Corbett and Connors have observed that apostrophe, addressing an absent person or a personified abstraction, are rhetorical figures "calculated to work directly on the emotions."

<sup>93</sup> Perkins, *Art*, 75.

<sup>94</sup> Wallin, *Happiness of the saints*, 34-35.

skillfully applied the soothing salve of the gospel to the aching hearts of those whom he discerned were willing “to show the same diligence . . . in full assurance of hope to the end.”<sup>95</sup>

### **Final Analysis**

Although an analysis of John Brine’s sermons has demonstrated his willingness to part with the sermonic constraints of the previous generations, he readily admits that one of the purposes of his preaching is the “conversion of sinners.”<sup>96</sup> In Brine’s own view, his departure from the past’s preaching methods did not signal a departure from its goal, and he may not have been conscious about the extent to which his preaching represented a departure from its generic constraints. John Brine was eminently concerned about preserving God’s glory in the salvation of the sinner, and this likely was the theological reason that led him to alter his sermon’s structure to exclude a specific “uses” section. In his effort to remove any notion of man’s participation, his sermons may have lost some of their applicational force, hamstringing both the law’s and the gospel’s “for you” particularity. As was noted earlier, an alteration in a message’s structure regularly leads to an alteration of the message that is formed in the hearer. John Brine’s critics believed that his sermons contributed to an understanding among the Particular Baptists that the gospel should not be shared with unbelievers because there was nothing that they could “do” about it—the altered sermon structure reinforced this theological point. In the comparison between Brine’s and Wallin’s funeral sermons, Walter Wilson’s observation about Brine’s non-application sermon style is borne out. In the “mixed” audience that a funeral presented, a sermon structure that removed the “uses” section was capable of supporting Brine’s well-known aversion to affirming the “modern

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<sup>95</sup> Wallin, *Eternal mansion*, 47.

<sup>96</sup> Brine, *Covenant of grace*, 3.

question.” Nevertheless, Brine’s sermons were not entirely void of the gospel, and to those whom the Spirit gave ears, they would have heard its beauty in passages such as this:

The earnest of heaven is a sure evidence of a right unto it. That earnest is the holy Spirit of Promise, by whom believers are sealed. If God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into our hearts, to convince us of sin, our misery, and helplessness: and to reveal Christ to us, as a suitable Savior: and he hath directed us to flee to him for Refuge: if under his gracious influence, we have ventured upon Christ, for life and salvation, and we repose our entire trust in him, for pardon, peace, acceptance with God, holiness, and eternal life. We may from thence, draw this conclusion, without the least fear of being mistaken, in this important matter, that the holy Spirit is in us, as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance. And, that we shall most assuredly enjoy it.<sup>97</sup>

That being said, the structure of Brine’s preaching has revealed a different homiletical approach than that of Benjamin Wallin. Benjamin Wallin’s willingness to abide by the generic constraints of the Protestant-Reformed-Puritan-funeral sermon meant that the message that was formed in his audience remained consistent with the homiletical heritage which he had inherited from his theological forebearers. Wallin’s structural fidelity to the constraints of the first three genres allowed him to keep in tension the law and gospel dialectic as well as the tension between the head and the heart that was notable in the experiential preaching of the Puritans. Wallin’s generic fidelity meant that his sermons had the subjective “for you” quality that his theological fathers had striven to develop because of their belief that the sermon was the Holy Spirit’s means of working justification as well as sanctification. Wallin’s willingness to embrace the changing structure of the eighteenth-century funeral sermon was not an absolute denial of the earlier sermon constraints of that genre but enabled him to more adequately engage his auditors pastorally as he continued the earlier tradition of pointing people to their own approaching deaths with a more personal approach. In other words, the message that was formed in Wallin’s hearers was the same, although more fully formed in them, by his

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<sup>97</sup> Brine, *Knowledge of the Future Glory*, 26–27.

willingness to improve upon the structure inherited from his forebearers. Pastorally, Wallin's funeral sermons did not treat the reality of death only theologically and with the head, but also engaged the heart of the hearer/reader so that, even if the person was unknown to the auditor, the condemning reality of death as a consequence of breaking God's law was presented in its full horror, while the comfort and assurance of God's willingness to save the sinner was presented in its full sweetness.

Through Benjamin Wallin's charge to Abraham Booth we are provided with his own critical standard to which he held himself accountable, namely, that sermons were to be "judicious, methodical, scriptural, plain, and experimental."<sup>98</sup> These five criteria for preaching were Benjamin Wallin's confirmation of his acceptance of the sermonic constraints that have been outlined above. When a sermon was judicious it was sensitive to the spiritual needs of the hearers and would strive to properly divide the Word of Scripture by applying both law and gospel appropriately to the hearers; it embraced Perkins' insights about preaching to various kinds of hearers. A sermon demonstrated that it was methodical by laying out its argument in a logical fashion, while using reason to stitch together arguments and demonstrate the complementarity of doctrines from the whole canonical context; here the sermon exemplified the Protestant tradition of highlighting the threads of the various *solae* as they were woven throughout Scripture. Yet, reason was never to take the lead, and Wallin remained consistent with his forebearers as he insisted upon, and always practiced, the primacy of Scripture over reason, continually reminding and teaching his hearers of the absolute necessity of remaining submissive to the Word. Wallin also demonstrated that he was a "plain" preacher in the fullest sense of Perkins' definition as he not only hid his human wisdom while preaching, but also strove to manifest the Spirit in his preaching; this too was consistent with the stress of such preachers as Luther, Calvin, and Perkins upon

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<sup>98</sup> Wallin, *Charge*, 38.

preaching as the Spirit's primary work for justification and sanctification. Finally, Wallin continued the Protestant and evangelical method of experiential preaching to both the head and the heart, not only of those with whom he was well acquainted, but to all people indiscriminately. Through the consistent use of these criteria Wallin remained faithful to the generic constraints of the Protestant-Reformed-Puritan-funeral sermon and helped to preserve the evangelical homiletical strand among the Particular Baptists who would in turn affirm the imperative of the "modern question."

## CHAPTER 5

### BENJAMIN WALLIN'S POSITION ON THE "MODERN QUESTION": PREACHING THE GOSPEL

#### **Preaching the Gospel in Southwark, London, England**

Before now turning our attention specifically to Wallin's position on the "modern question," a brief picture of the people to whom he addressed his sermons is warranted. Generally, it is difficult to paint such a picture of the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist congregations because so little has been written about their clergy, let alone the laity. The recent work, *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Stephen Copson and Peter Morden did much to fill-in the blanks in broad terms, and is an excellent resource. Benjamin Wallin gave instructions to newly-ordained pastors admonishing them to be intimately familiar with their people, because "a good knowledge of their condition in life is needful to direct your private advice, but more especially your public ministrations."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, to understand Wallin's preaching, it is also necessary to understand the other part of the sermonic equation—Wallin's people, to whom he addressed his "public ministrations."

In the case of Maze Pond, more about the congregation is known than most thanks to the sometimes-hagiographical work of the Reverend Charles Stanford, *Home and Church: A Family Life At Old Maze Pond*. In this work that began as an obituary for his friend, Job Heath, Stanford fittingly observes of the entire Heath family:

It may be said that from one point of view these were only humble men who did their duty. The world was not waiting to hear about them; the story of their lives is

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *A charge and sermon together with an introductory discourse and confession of faith delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Abraham Booth*, (London: George Keith, 1769), 39–40.



but a slender thread, sometimes lost, never touching things that are great or splendid. But from another point of view they were really mark-worthy men. It would be difficult in our city of changes to find another Nonconformist family whose members have through 150 years been ever successively connected with one particular church, and whose “good name” has descended from father to son like and inheritance.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the case of many of the Particular Baptists who called Benjamin Wallin their minister. True, they may not have had as lengthy a connection to Maze Pond as the Job Heath family, yet each of them contributed to the meeting in such a way as to give the congregation a place of high esteem among her fellow Particular Baptist congregations of London. The research of Terry Wolever and Stephen McKay has brought additional information to light, and a diary of Benjamin Wallin along with the minute book of Maze Pond are invaluable resources in further understanding the context of Benjamin Wallin’s preaching.

Although Southwark, London, was not particularly known as an affluent community during the time of Wallin’s ministry, Charles Stanford records two facts that speak to the generosity of the congregation. First, was the congregation’s £100 initial contribution to the Baptist Fund, and second, a comment made to a friend by Rev. James Dore, who succeeded Benjamin Wallin as pastor, that “I have a larger income than any other Baptist minister in the world. I know that it is larger than any other in London, and therefore I may reasonably infer that it is larger than any other in the world.”<sup>3</sup> Stanford attributed this financial stability to the efficient management of the congregation’s resources by the third Job Heath, who became a member under Benjamin Wallin’s pastorate and served as a deacon and treasurer after Wallin’s death.<sup>4</sup> The Heath family itself had been blessed in their business of leather-merchant and shoe-mercery, and

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Stanford, *Home and Church: A Chapter in Family Life at Old Maze Pond*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), v–vi.

<sup>3</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 112.

<sup>4</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 108, 112.

deacon Heath's father, Job, "rose higher and higher in social esteem, and, with growing grace, had such growing prosperity in all secular interests that he became, we are told, one of 'the most eminent men of his calling in London.'"<sup>5</sup> Deacon Heath was remembered to make it "his habit to bring several of the poor members of the church home to dinner with him after the Sunday morning service," and, even when vacationing at Brightelmstone, to "call upon the Baptist and Independent ministers for a list of their sick poor, and spend a part of each day during his holiday in visiting them."<sup>6</sup>

Not all that happened at Maze Pond was positive, but the church and pastor worked in concert with one another to assure that proper church-order and discipline was followed. Chapter two has noted the congregation's rebuke and restoration of James Stanford. This instance was not an isolated case of church discipline, and a hand-written letter from Benjamin Wallin to Thomas Pratten contains the pastor's censure of Mr. Pratten for his "constant omission of the weekly evening assemblies for prayer and spiritual edification."<sup>7</sup> The minute book of the congregation also testifies that it was not only the laity that found themselves in need of pastoral intervention. In an entry dated February 16, 1767, the following inscription is found:

The minutes of the last meeting being read were confirmed. Our Hon. Pastor reported that since the last meeting he had been so happy as to procure an accommodation with the Rev. Dr. John Gill and had the pleasure of acquainting the church that he hoped every jealousy was removed, and that now a cordial and lasting friendship subsisted and further that he could not allow himself to forget that this reconciliation was greatly owing under God to the prudent zeal of his beloved friend the Rev. Dr. Stennett who freely engaged in this service.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 72.

<sup>6</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 113–114.

<sup>7</sup> Hand-written letter provided to the author by Dr. Michael Haykin from Terry Wolever in Wallin's hand and signed by him. A transcription of the letter is provided in Appendix 4.

<sup>8</sup> Taken from the Maze Pond Church, Southwark, bound minute book with the year 1744 imprinted on the spine. The book is located in the Angus Library at Regents Park College, University of Oxford, Oxford, England. pp. 298–299.

At the conclusion of the above report a resolution was passed that the congregation officially thank Dr. Stennett for his intervention. While the details of the disagreement between Wallin and Gill were not given, the congregation's interest in the resolution of the disagreement, as well as their calling upon their pastor to give an official accounting of that resolution, demonstrates that they also took seriously the principle of church discipline, even when it involved their own pastor.

Yet another distinguishing report about the Maze Pond meeting that has survived on account of Stanford's work is their characteristic patriotism. Benjamin Wallin published four works dealing specifically with national interests,<sup>9</sup> and one of Stanford's few criticisms of Wallin was that he engaged in matters of politics from the pulpit too much.<sup>10</sup> Wallin urged his congregation to pray in every work that he published, and prayers for the nation were among the duties that he insisted upon. Stanford reported that "the church would often assemble at eight o'clock in the morning, and spend a whole day in fasting and prayer on account of some public alarm or calamity."<sup>11</sup> He also indicated that "pastor and people were devoted to the House of Hanover," and repeated the tradition, which said "that in 1744, when it was known that the Pretender was preparing to march into England, they (the men of Maze Pond) formed themselves into a company of volunteers, and were trained in the use of arms, having resolved that if their services were wanted, they would join round the royal standard."<sup>12</sup> This company of volunteers was formed during the early pastorate of Benjamin Wallin, and it is difficult to imagine that they would have done so without their pastor's approval.

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<sup>9</sup> These works are: *Christian's duty*; *Fall of the mighty*; *Popular concern*; and, *Joyful sacrifice*.

<sup>10</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 97–98.

<sup>11</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 86.

<sup>12</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 90–91.

Finally, Stanford's record also affords an opportunity to address both Wallin's and his congregation's attitude toward evangelism and the "modern question." R. Philip Roberts records that Benjamin Wallin conducted seventy-eight baptisms in the first twenty years of his ministry and that Maze Pond "grew from seventy-six members in 1743 to an estimated one hundred in 1760."<sup>13</sup> This statistic is a significant testimony to the vibrancy and life of the ministry at Maze Pond, especially considering the high deathrate of the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Leon McBeth repeated the thesis that the "high" Calvinism of the eighteenth-century Particular Baptists was a major contributing factor in the decline of the congregations before Andrew Fuller and his associates began their influential work with the Baptist Missionary Society. Those who have argued this thesis have been able to numerically demonstrate that there was indeed a divide between the "evangelical" congregations, primarily pastored by Bristol Baptist Academy graduates, and those London congregations associated with the "high" Calvinism of John Gill and John Brine. Benjamin Wallin has been portrayed as guilty by association. Yet, caution should be exercised, at least when considering Wallin and the congregation of Maze Pond. The minister that succeeded Benjamin Wallin upon his death was the Bristol Academy graduate, James Dore. When voting on whether to extend a call to Mr. Dore, the congregation split their vote, thirteen against, and fifty-eight in favor.<sup>15</sup> If the afore mentioned thesis is assumed, it would be easy to conclude that those who were not in favor of Mr. Dore objected on the grounds that his Calvinism was not "high" enough. However, Stanford has preserved a letter written by the Reverend Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, to Dore which reads in part:

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<sup>13</sup> R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival, 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: R. O. Roberts, 1989), 71.

<sup>14</sup> Karen E. Smith, "Baptists at Home," in *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Stephen Copson and Peter J. Morden, (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2017), 105.

<sup>15</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 104.

If, as I suspect, the minority complain of the want of savor and *experience*, in your manner of treating the doctrines of grace, I would use proper caution in this case (that is, not to turn down the call too quickly). I don't wonder that Christians are jealous of the experimental part of religion; for doctrine without experience is a body without a soul. I do not think, however, that it is in your power; and what is more, I should not think it in the power of an Apostle, to speak satisfactorily on this subject without a long course of regular trial of his own. . . . The preaching of this kind of experience is not in your power; and it is not fair to expect it from you. If a church require this of a youth, they may have it dry, and in theory; but if they desire to have it in all its savor and weight, they should choose an old, broken-spirited, distressed man.<sup>16</sup>

Remarkably, what Robinson perceived to be the congregation's objection, was a lack of Dore's ability to preach experientially due to his youthful inexperience, not an objection to Mr. Dore's evangelical opinions. This too does much to inform this dissertation's opinion that Benjamin Wallin was an experiential preacher who had trained his congregation to appreciate the value of sermons that made application of both law and gospel, doctrines and uses, and should not be presumed to have opposed the rising moderate and evangelical Calvinism of the late-eighteenth century.

### **Benjamin Wallin and "Hyper-Calvinism"**

When addressing the "modern question" one is immediately drawn into a discussion of "high" and "hyper" Calvinism. As was indicated in the opening chapter, there are scholars that are beginning to question the usefulness of the term "hyper" Calvinism, in part because it was used as a derogatory term by a later generation to characterize a system of theology which the author was aligned against.<sup>17</sup> As these scholars noted, a definition of what precisely constitutes "hyper" Calvinism is elusive. Johnathan White's PhD dissertation included a remarkable survey of the many attempts to define "hyper" Calvinism. White's research revealed that some scholars have used a

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<sup>16</sup> Stanford, *Home*, 101–103. Italics original to the text.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 59. White also helpfully cautions that while reading the literature about eighteenth-century Particular Baptist, care should be given because "some conflate the two terms ("high" and "hyper" Calvinism) and use them as synonyms while others make a distinction between them." n.8 p.4.

very broad definition of “hyper” Calvinism while others have preferred a much narrower definition, thereby demonstrating that the term itself is often used in a relative manner based upon the author’s point of view. White attempted to build his definition from the arguments that arose surrounding the “modern question,” allowing the actors in the debate to demonstrate where their differences lie. In doing so, White helpfully distilled the points of disagreement about the “modern question” down to his working definition of “hyper” Calvinism:

Based on an examination of the documentation, the definition that will function as the working definition for Hyper-Calvinism is the denial of the duty of unregenerate man to believe the gospel for salvation based on man’s original lack of ability to believe the gospel for salvation. Coupled with this denial, a consequential denial of the duty of a preacher of the gospel to call indiscriminately on all people to believe savingly in Christ is the normal Hyper-Calvinistic tendency. This tendency flows from the essence. The basis of these denials is that man considered either in his fallen or unfallenness does not have the ability to believe savingly in Christ and therefore does not have the duty to believe in Christ. Also, there is the corollary belief that since faith is supernaturally added to a person they must wait to have the faith added which means they must come to believe that Christ died for them in particular.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, the debate about what constitutes “hyper” Calvinism will continue as different scholars provide evidence of why the theologian they are examining should or shouldn’t be considered a “hyper” Calvinist. While White’s definition is among the best, it too can be criticized for selecting points of doctrine and emphases that define the pejorative “hyper” Calvinism away from the theologian of interest, in his case, John Gill. Ultimately, White understood this fundamental weakness, which led him to argue:

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<sup>18</sup> White, “Theological and Historical Examination,” 50. While White’s definition is quite good, the lack of mention of some of the prominent doctrines such as eternal justification, and arguments about supra- and sub-lapsarianism may be a potential weakness. The men that were typically accused of being “hyper” Calvinist often used the hard logic of these theological concepts to insist upon their stance against the preaching of the gospel. It was not that they were opposed to the preaching first and then developed a system of theology that justified that opposition, but rather the other way around. White’s definition may serve well to identify their attitudes toward the “modern question,” and certainly those who took the negative stance in that debate would meet the criteria of the definition, however, by building the definition solely from what was gleaned from the “modern question” debate, other fairly essential components may have been neglected. White himself has wrestled with this in the dissertation and his comparison between a “whole web” and a “core of the web” approach to defining “hyper” Calvinism is a useful discussion. His attempt to isolate the “core” is to be commended.

With the complexity of both the term and the idea as evidenced by the present survey of attempts to define Hyper-Calvinism, it is questionable whether the term is helpful. Instead, the label arguably does more harm than good with regard to historical evaluations.<sup>19</sup>

One of the primary deficiencies of assigning the label of “hyper” Calvinist to any theologian is that it has had the tendency to shift attention away from the particular teaching of the individual theologian and to dismiss that theologian in favor of treating his theology in more broad and general terms—leading to a guilt-by-association historiography. The result has not led to a better understanding of history, because revealing the unique teachings and perspective of the theologian has been forgone in preference to assigning a label so that the person can be properly classified as belonging to a certain theological “camp.”

This historical reality is at least one of the reasons for which Benjamin Wallin’s history and theology have been neglected up to this time. While during their day John Gill and John Brine were regarded as two of the foremost theologians of the Particular Baptists, subsequent assessments, fueled in part by legitimate concern over declining numbers and a lack of missional zeal, caused their reputations to be reexamined. Michael Haykin cited John Ryland, Jr. for crediting the influence of John Gill and John Brine with the “‘spread pretty much among the ministers of the Baptist denomination’ that ‘it is not the duty of the unregenerate to believe in Christ.’”<sup>20</sup> Similarly John Fawcett, D. D. also critiqued Gill and Brine, but added Benjamin Wallin’s name to the “leading” ministers of London. In doing so, Fawcett created a connection between Wallin and the disapproved doctrines without citing a single example of the offending language from any of his works:

The Baptist cause being in its infancy in this part of the country, recourse was had to the churches of the same denomination in London and the vicinity, that their hands

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<sup>19</sup> White, “Theological and Historical Examination,” 59.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Haykin, *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1–2.

might be strengthened, and that by becoming better acquainted with the faith and order of those which were considered as sister churches, they might benefit by their direction and assistance. Mr. Brine, Dr. Gill, and Mr. Wallin, were considered as leading characters; and though as Dissenters they disclaimed all pretensions to dominion over the faith of others, yet it would have been difficult for them wholly to repel the charge of prescribing with too great minuteness, and in language not always authorized by Scripture, what ought to be the sentiments of those who connected themselves with these societies.

As divines they justly continue to stand in high estimation, and their memory will be revered to the latest period of time; but in the voluminous writings, an undue proportion of attention appears to have been paid to points confessedly beyond human comprehension. The questions respecting supralapsarianism and sublapsarianism, eternal justification, &c. are here particularly referred to.<sup>21</sup>

Here, Fawcett referred to “particular” doctrines, but in truth had not established that those doctrines were preached by the particular men which he had named! In fact, as has already been established, Benjamin Wallin rejected the same errors that Fawcett here decried. By lumping these theologians into camps, rather than assuring that these divines would “justly continue to stand in high estimation,” Fawcett is partly to blame for Wallin’s theological (and evangelical) contributions having been swept into the dustbin of history.<sup>22</sup>

In recent scholarship this older tendency toward reductionism is beginning to be corrected. Anthony Cross built upon the works of Raymond Brown and Philip Roberts to bring better definition to the distinctives of what Roberts termed “Old Dissent:”

Philip Roberts notes that High Calvinists, such as Brine and Gill, were “pro-revival in the sense that they favored a genuine renewal of the church,” but they were so “in Old Dissenting terms.” While the high Calvinists were not anti-evangelistic, they were, he states, generally non-missionary. What they also lacked was any positive

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<sup>21</sup> John Fawcett, *An Account of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett, DD: Who was Minister of the Gospel Fifty-four Years, First at Wainsgate, and Afterwards at Hebdenbridge, in the Parish of Halifax : Comprehending Many Particulars Relative to the Revival and Progress of Religion in Yorkshire and Lancashire: and Illustrated by Copious Extracts from the Diary of the Deceased, from His Extensive Correspondence, and Other Documents* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, Paternoster Row, and Halifax: P. K. Holden, 1818), 94.

<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Thomas Nettles criticized the early Baptist historian Joseph Ivimey, saying: “Ivimey infers many things from silence rather than from direct statements in Gill’s writings. Gill becomes guilty by association and silence rather than from direct violation of principles.” Thomas Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 86.



emphasis on the importance of the emotions and senses, the sorts of enthusiasms for which the Evangelical Revival was often criticized.<sup>23</sup>

Cross then established the basis for what he believed was a critical distinction between the moderate and evangelical Calvinists and the “high” Calvinists:

Moderate and evangelical Calvinists . . . also recognized the weak state of the churches, but they took a different path to that advocated by the high Calvinists, whose theological convictions continued to advocate election, the gospel, and sound doctrine, while minimizing “the church’s evangelistic imperative.”<sup>24</sup>

Finally, Cross pointed to none other than Benjamin Wallin to demonstrate this moderate and evangelical Calvinism, highlighting Wallin’s call for the “use of appointed means” and linking that call to William Carey’s quote that “we must not be contented however with praying, without exerting ourselves in the use of means for the obtaining of those things we pray for.”<sup>25</sup> Cross concluded:

There is no doubt that this call for exertion, and the use of the divine means were key in the development and spread of Baptist moderate and evangelical Calvinism in the eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

### **The “Modern Question”**

The “modern question” received its name from the title of Mathias Maurice’s 1737 work entitled *A Modern Question Modestly Answer’d*.<sup>27</sup> While the label for the theological debate was new, the debate itself stretched back into the seventeenth century on account of the opinions taught by Tobias Crisp. Raymond Brown noted of Crisp’s

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<sup>23</sup> Anthony Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival among English Particular Baptists* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 18. In this quotation Cross is referring to the Philip Roberts’ *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival, 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: R. O. Roberts, 1989), 79.

<sup>24</sup> Cross, *Useful Learning*, 19. In this quotation Cross is referring to an observation made by Raymond Brown’s *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 5.

<sup>25</sup> Cross, *Useful Learning*, 19. Cross cites both Wallin’s *A Humble Address*, p. 1, and Carey’s *An Enquiry*, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> Cross, *Useful Learning*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Matthias Maurice, *A Modern Question modestly answer’d (Whether God does by his Word make it the duty of sinners to believe in Jesus Christ?)* (London: J. Buckland, 1737).

theology that it “so exalted the initiative of God in human salvation that it appeared to sever the nerve of moral responsibility.”<sup>28</sup> Crisp taught that “Christ’s saving work... ensures that the elect sinner is *already* justified, independent of any significant action on his part.”<sup>29</sup> Brown indicated that this teaching did take root in some Particular Baptist meetings but that the 1689 Assembly “strenuously resisted” the teaching.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, when a comparison of the wording between the *First* and *Second London Confession* is made on the article of justification, article twenty-eight of the *First London Confession* made no mention of the timing of justification, whereas the *Second London Confession* mentioned it at least twice, saying in chapter eight (Of Christ the Mediator), paragraph six:

Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ, till after his Incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages successively, from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the Serpent’s head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: being the same yesterday, and today, and forever.<sup>31</sup>

And in chapter eleven (Justification), paragraph four:

God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fulness of time die for the sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time apply Christ unto them.<sup>32</sup>

These clear statements of the *Second London Confession* did not finally curtail the influence of Crisp’s teaching, and with the publication of John Skepp’s *Divine Energy* in

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<sup>28</sup> Raymon Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 73.

<sup>29</sup> Brown, *English Baptists*, 73.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, *English Baptists*, 73.

<sup>31</sup> *A Confession of Faith Put Forth by the Elders and Brethren of Many Congregations of Christians* (London: John Harris, 1688), 32.

<sup>32</sup> *A Confession of Faith* (1688), 42.

1722, Brown observed that the theology “was Crispianism in a fresh guise.”<sup>33</sup> Skepp had been converted under the ministry of Joseph Hussey of Cambridge,<sup>34</sup> who had written *God’s Operations of Grace: But No Offers of His Grace* in 1707, promoting an early version of what would become one of the positions of the negative stance on the “modern question.”<sup>35</sup> By the time the “modern question” arose in 1737, Hussey’s and Skepp’s version of “high” Calvinism was firmly established in the county of Northamptonshire, and from there had spread through the teaching of two of the county’s prominent sons, the London ministers, John Gill and John Brine.<sup>36</sup>

Initially equally “high” in his Calvinism, Mattias Maurice became the minister of the Independent meeting in Rothwell, Northamptonshire in 1715, and continued in his views until shocking those of his cause with his reversal when he published *A Modern Question* in 1737.<sup>37</sup> Maurice’s assertion that “God does by his Word plainly and plentifully make it the duty of unconverted sinners, who hear the gospel, to believe in Christ”<sup>38</sup> did not set well with the “high” Calvinists of Northamptonshire, and the theological lectureship at Brigstock, Northamptonshire broke into two lectureships as

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<sup>33</sup> Brown, *English Baptists*, 72–73.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, *English Baptists*, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall, “Northamptonshire and ‘The Modern Question’: A Turning Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 16.1 (April 1965): 111. Nuttall is careful to observe that Hussey’s argument, while similar to the latter opponents of the “modern question,” is not identical. “Hussey, in turn, was still concerned with theology: with the tenet that to none but the elect does God offer grace. ‘The modern question,’ whether any but the elect have the power, and therefore the duty, to believe, while consequential on Hussey’s position, related rather to psychology: its interest was anthropocentric.” 114.

<sup>36</sup> Nuttall, “Northamptonshire,” 117–119. Nuttall refrains from using the term “hyper” Calvinism in favor of “high” Calvinism. Nuttall identifies John Gill and John Brine as the two foremost proponents of the system of “high” Calvinism, agreeing with the previous assessments of historians such as Joseph Ivimey. However, Nuttall’s work is thorough, and he provides documentary evidence for his assessment. Accordingly, Nuttall’s work is a fine example of what Thomas Nettles’ has encouraged: historians making a fresh assessment of men like Gill (such as Brine and Wallin) based upon what they have actually said in the writings.

<sup>37</sup> Nuttall, “Northamptonshire,” 110.

<sup>38</sup> Matthias Maurice, *Modern Question*, 4.

party lines began to be drawn.<sup>39</sup> According to Geoffrey Nuttall’s research, “the two lecturers who opened the controversy were presumably Matthias Maurice and Lewis Wayman,” although Philip Doddridge “certainly had a prevailing influence in supporting Maurice.”<sup>40</sup>

Before turning to the details of Maurice’s argument from *A Modern Question*, it is first important to note that, even as those who aligned themselves against the “modern question” traced their doctrine back to an earlier tradition within the church, so too did those who affirmed its position. Maurice’s assertion along with his language of “obedience” and “duty” to believe was not anything new to the Particular Baptists minister’s ears. Although not himself a Baptist, Maurice’s language on this doctrinal point aligned well with both the *First* and *Second London Confession*. The 1644 *Confession* stated in article six:

This therefore is life eternal, to know the only true God, and whom he hath sent Jesus Christ. And on the contrary, the Lord will render vengeance in flaming fire to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>41</sup>

Taking up this language and strengthening it, the 1688 *Confession* spoke to this subject in several of its chapters. For instance, in chapter three (God’s Decrees), paragraph seven the *Confession* stated:

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination, is to be handled with special prudence, and care; that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election, so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.<sup>42</sup>

Then, again, in chapter twenty (The Gospel), paragraph three:

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<sup>39</sup> Nuttall, “Northamptonshire,” 118–119.

<sup>40</sup> Nuttall, “Northamptonshire,” 119.

<sup>41</sup> *The Confession of Faith, of those Churches which are Commonly (though falsely) Called Anabaptists* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1644), 2.

<sup>42</sup> *A Confession of Faith* (1688), 16.

The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in divers times, and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises, and precepts, for the obedience required therein, as to the nation, and persons, to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God; not being annexed by virtue of any promise, to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received, without it; which none ever did make, or can so do: and therefore in all ages the preaching of the gospel hath been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent, or strengthening of it, in great variety, according to the council of the will of God.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, the language of “obedience to the gospel” is precisely that of the two confessions of the Particular Baptists. Maurice and his fellow affirmers of the “modern question” stood within the majority position of their theological forebearers in this regard.

Having established that Maurice's language was not entirely new, it is now appropriate to examine his argument. After posing the question “whether the eternal God does by his Word make it the duty of poor unconverted sinners, who hear the gospel preached or publish to believe in Jesus?” Maurice proceeded to affirm that it was the unconverted sinner's duty, and then produced thirty Scripture references with commentary to ground his affirmation in the authority of God's Word. Before introducing the Scripture passages however, Maurice was careful to clarify that he was not asking about any natural ability or inclination in the unconverted to obey the gospel, nor was he suggesting that fallen sinners can assent to the report of the gospel, or “work themselves up into that faith.”<sup>44</sup> In these statements, Maurice was demonstrating that he was not advocating for a Pelagian or Arminian scheme of salvation, where man has a role to contribute in accomplishing his salvation. Instead, he sought to limit the scope of the question to a base question of duty, asking “who in the fear of God can say, that though God did command them, yet it was not their duty?”<sup>45</sup>

After presenting the scriptural evidence and commentary, Maurice proceeded in the second half of his work to present ten hypothetical objections and their answers,

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<sup>43</sup> *A Confession of Faith* (1688), 68–69.

<sup>44</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 3–4.

<sup>45</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 6

but due to space, this examination will only take up a few of the most pertinent examples. To the objection that the suggested duty is inconsistent with the election of grace, Maurice responded with Jesus' own words "many were called but few chosen" from Matthew 23:14 and quipped that Jesus must not have thought his calling of many sinners was inconsistent with his election of a few. He proceeded to affirm:

Whoever are called by the written Word must not stand questioning God's wisdom in this, or his authority for this, but think it their duty immediately to obey; and when any are satisfied they are among the chosen, let them admire grace, and in a holy conversation walk humbly with God; and let others give diligence to make their calling, or their answering the call of God, and then their election sure, 2 Peter 1:10.<sup>46</sup>

He also addressed the objection that man has lost his power to obey by observing:

Though man has lost his power, God has not lost his authority; nor is the law of God disannulled: besides, though man has lost his power, he has not quite lost his reason; therefore to deal with him by precepts, prohibitions and promises, is a most agreeable way.<sup>47</sup>

To the suggestion that to perform moral acts commanded by God would be one thing, but the ability to perform spiritual acts quite another, he responded:

And pray what power has he to perform moral, natural acts? The Scripture says he is without strength, Romans 5:6, and Paul says that he, after conversion, was not sufficient to think anything, and therefore not a moral, good thing, 2 Corinthians 3:5. But when God inclines the heart, in his strength, persons perform the one or the other; and seeing it pleases him, why should not he make use of commands to incline the heart to good acts of any kind?<sup>48</sup>

And, finally, to the suggestion that it may be the unconverted's moral duty to believe Christ—that is the report of or about him—but not their duty to believe *in* Christ, Maurice answered: "But Christ himself commands unconverted persons to believe *in*

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<sup>46</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 22.

<sup>47</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 23–24.

him: and of Christ, the Father said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*”<sup>49</sup>

As Maurice concluded his argument, he once again sought to assuage those who would potentially object to his thesis because of visions in their imaginations of ministers standing in their pulpits, acting the “enthusiastical”<sup>50</sup> revivalist. He described the imagined scene thus, and he assured that this was not what he envisioned nor intended:

I am far from thinking it their glory or duty to stand for a long while together, as they have been represented, offering grace, and offering Christ, and offering life, and calling and inviting, and ‘Come now, why will you not come now, I offer grace again, and I offer you Christ still, but this is not to be done always, take him now, Oh! That I could prevail upon you to take him, &c.’<sup>51</sup>

He further insisted that the preacher “does not assume authority to himself, and say, I command you to believe, and I require you to repent, but tells the people what is written, and what the Lord requires of them.”<sup>52</sup> Finally, Maurice painted a grave picture of the sad situation that could arise in congregations where the duty of the sinner to believe in Christ was not taught:

There the unconverted cannot be reprov'd, because they believe not in Christ; for they are told it is none of their duty; nor is their distrusting Christ a sin; and there faith in Christ must be will-worship; for who has required it at their hands; there a poor, weak, doubting believer can have no relief: for as he does not know himself that he is a believer, no more can they (the preachers), therefore they dare not tell him it is his duty to believe in Christ, and if he takes in their doctrine, he must think it is not his duty, ‘till first he knows whether he is a believer or not; and therefore no wonder persons entangled with that notion look so indifferent upon the duty the Lord calls them to.’<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 25. Italicized text original to Maurice.

<sup>50</sup> This theologically polemic term was used from the time of Martin Luther forward to describe those who often set themselves against the Holy Spirit’s use of means in preference to personal revelations. It quickly became a term that could be used as an *ad hominem* against one’s opponents on any number of things.

<sup>51</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 25–26.

<sup>52</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 26.

<sup>53</sup> Maurice, *Modern Question*, 27–28.

Although many people were impacted by Maurice's argument and drawn to affirm its thesis because they were convinced of its scriptural soundness, as has already been noted, many others disagreed vehemently. Among those who disagreed and consequently took up his pen to deny Maurice's thesis was John Brine. Since Brine's preaching has already been examined, his specific critique of Maurice's *A Modern Question* is particularly relevant to this dissertation's examination of the topic, although he was by no means the first author to respond to the question.

John Brine's response came in the form of a published letter to a friend which he titled *A Refutation of Arminian Principles, Delivered in a Pamphlet, intituled, the Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith, examined with Candour [sic], &c.* In the opening pages, Brine gave a brief history of the dispute, and his "candor" did not prevent him from demonstrating his lack of approval of those who affirmed the "modern question," regularly accusing them of Arminianism and worse. As he opened his response to the argument, his first three points affirmed theological truths that both sides agreed upon. However, in his fourth point, Brine announced his counter-thesis to the "modern question:" "But with respect to special faith in Christ, it seems to me, that the powers of man in his perfect state were not fitted and disposed to that act."<sup>54</sup> He supported this thesis with four points, arguing that:

1. In his primitive state man did not have the power of special faith in Christ because to have such faith "would have been in vain; for there was no necessity, nor use of believing in Christ in that state."
2. Special faith "necessarily supposes dependence on Christ for salvation, as creatures lost and miserable in ourselves," therefore in the primitive state "God could not require man... to put forth such an act, as special faith in Christ is."
3. According to the "law of his first creation" man was given his abilities and powers, but "special faith in Christ, belongs to the new creation, of which he as mediator between God and his people, is the author."

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<sup>54</sup> John Brine, *A Refutation of Arminian Principles, Delivered in a Pamphlet, intituled, the Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith, examined with Candour [sic], &c.* (London: Aaron Ward, 1743), 5.



4. “It seems to me a very extraordinary dispensation, that man should be furnished with a power, he could not exercise in his perfect state; and in his corrupt state be deprived of that power, wherein alone the exertion and exercise of it can be necessary or useful.”<sup>55</sup>

As Brine continued to refute his opponents, he next laid out a positive argument of seven points that enumerated reasons why be believed it was not the duty of the unbeliever to believe in Christ. His final three points are the best articulation of his position:

5. But before God had revealed to him a Savior, it was not his duty to believe in him. The gospel proposes the object of faith, and the law obliges to the act of faith, suited to the nature of the revelation of that object.
6. Men enjoying an external revelation *merely* of Christ, are bound to believe the truth of his appearance in the world, and the truth of those doctrines relating to him, as a suffering redeemer.
7. Such who receive an internal revelation of Christ, are bound to exercise special faith, suitable to the nature of this supernatural revelation.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, he summarized what he considered should be a Calvinist minister’s attitude toward preaching to unbelievers, as well as the error that should be avoided:

Calvinist . . . think it their duty to inform sinners, that they stand condemned by the law, for their sins, that salvation from wrath and hell, is only in Christ, and that unless they believe in him, and are made conformable to him, they will perish for ever without any remedy, and is this doing nothing with a view to the salvation of sinners? It is not indeed telling them that the grace of God, is extended to all without exception, that Christ died with an intention to save every individual of mankind, that God and Christ have done their part, and that if they will not be wanting to themselves, but will exert their natural Powers, they shall have aids and assistances of divine grace, sufficient, if duly improved, to enable them to secure their eternal welfare. These Arminian tenets, the author, manifestly intends to make way for and introduce, to the dishonor of the grace of God, the subversion of Christ’s satisfaction by his death, and the overthrow of the doctrine of the efficacy of the gracious operations of the Spirit upon the Souls of men.<sup>57</sup>

Clearly, as the above quote demonstrates, Brine had no desire to debate the “modern question” in such a way that the two sides could arrive at a way of speaking about the question that would be satisfactory to both sides. It also demonstrates a

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<sup>55</sup> Brine, *Refutation*, 5–6. Italicized text original to Brine.

<sup>56</sup> Brine, *Refutation*, 19.

<sup>57</sup> Brine, *Refutation*, 21.

willingness, of which, no doubt both sides were guilty, to characterize and somewhat misrepresent the arguments of the opponent. Raymond Brown, commenting on the continuing debate, reported that “whenever evangelical ministers came together the subject was constantly under discussion and unhelpful polarization followed.”<sup>58</sup>

Eventually the animosity grew so intense that Brine himself was compelled to cool down the rhetoric, and Brown pointed to Brine’s 1753 tract entitled *Motives to love and unity among Calvinist who differ in some points*, saying Brine exhibited a “serious concern about division over ‘the Modern Question,’” and “urged both parties to recognize ‘how numerous they are already, who oppose those important principles wherein you are agreed, and that the number of such is increasing every day.’”<sup>59</sup>

### **Benjamin Wallin’s Position**

Among Benjamin Wallin’s published writings there are no tracts, sermons, or discourses that deal directly with the “modern question” by name. Given Wallin’s repeated arguments for Christians to live in harmony with one another and to avoid fruitless disputes over doctrines that remained part of the hidden will of God, this comes as no surprise. However, even Wallin could not avoid making his judgements known as he taught the various doctrines of Scripture and wrote sermons that were aimed at both the hearts and heads of those to whom he preached. Indeed, Wallin had very definite views on the topic, but he refrained from “naming names” and “throwing mud.” It is an unfortunate reality that Wallin’s refusal to engage in the polemics of his day resulted in subsequent generations overlooking his teaching on the subject, for in doing so his position was assumed and miscategorized. A close examination of his work reveals very definitively that Benjamin Wallin affirmed the “modern question.”

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<sup>58</sup> Brown, *English Baptists*, 74.

<sup>59</sup> Brown, *English Baptists*, 75.

Although the “modern question” was posed before Benjamin Wallin was ordained the pastor at Maze Pond, the debate raged on among the Particular Baptist throughout the entirety of his forty-plus year pastorate and well beyond. In one of Wallin’s first works, *The Christian life, in divers of its branches, described and recommended*, he already began to reveal his position when he stated in the preface:

It is of the utmost importance to all that sit under the sound of this gospel, that they receive, and obey it; to despise, or oppose it, must be of fatal consequence to guilty sinners, since it is to reject the only remedy God has provided for the redemption of our souls, and saving us from *wrath to come*: the obstinacy and ingratitude of putting it away from us will greatly aggravate our guilt in the day of judgment; for these are the plain and awful declarations of the New Testament: there is salvation in no other, and woe be to them that neglect this salvation, for there *remaineth no more sacrifice for sin*, therefore *he that believeth not shall be damned*.<sup>60</sup>

While this affirmation of the responsibility of hearers to “obey the gospel” is not the strongest and most obvious declaration regarding the “modern question” that Wallin could have made, as Wallin began to publish more and more, he routinely demonstrated by his own gospel admonitions that he did not shy away from what some may have critically labeled “gospel offers.” For instance, in his *Exhortations, relating to prayer and the Lord’s Supper* of 1752 Wallin gave this extensive gospel admonition:

Come then, ye that are oppressed with guilt, and destitute of all holiness and righteousness in yourselves, here is a door and an effectual one opened for you. Come, enter in; for it is no presumption for such as you thus to do. The Lord has bid you come. Harbor not the least fear of being despised after so plain and positive an assurance from the God of truth, that you shall be accepted. Be entreated therefore to come with freedom, resting on the Word. Miserable, forlorn and helpless as you may be, come and pour out your complaint to the Lord; his ear is open to hear you; his arm is ready to save you. And he has thus revealed it from his heart, that destitute souls, when they cry to him, shall find favor with him.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *The Christian life, in divers of its branches, described and recommended* (London: Aaron Ward, 1746), xxii–xxiv. Wallin cites Acts 4:12, Hebrews 10:26 and Mark 16:16 as Scripture references. The original italicized text of the Preface has been reversed to a regular type, while the italic font indicates Wallin’s quotation of Scripture.

<sup>61</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Exhortations, relating to prayer and the Lord’s Supper* (London: John Ward, 1752), 97.

As Wallin entered the last decade-and-a-half of his pastorate he wrote two lengthy discourses that established once-and-for-all his position on the gospel minister's responsibility to preach the gospel to all people, and their responsibility to respond in faith. In *Lectures on primitive Christianity*, written in 1768, Wallin gave specific instruction from the book of Acts to ministers that they must beseech every hearer by the means of gospel:

Nevertheless we find that Peter's address is to all this house of Israel. This affords an example of preaching to the end of the world. If a minister's idea of the Father's election straitens him in his report of the gospel, so that he cannot most earnestly beseech every hearer of the Word, with an ardent desire after his saving acquaintance with Christ, he seems under some unhappy mistake about this glorious doctrine of grace. Secret things belong unto God; and there is nothing revealed concerning his counsel, which is a just exception to our addresses and prayers, yea and our warmest pleadings with each individual, that he receive not the grace of God in vain. Not the *unknown elect*, but *known sinners*, are the immediate objects of a gospel-ministry, in respect of its general report. . . . The Lord knoweth them that are his. And a servant of Jesus hath not, nor can he have any rational or warrantable ground for respect of persons in his ministry, but is to preach the Word indefinitely; and labor, if by any means, every one may repent and receive remission of sins, and by submitting himself to the Lord, obtain life eternal. This is the example of Peter.<sup>62</sup>

He also rebuffed those who had insisted that to preach in such a way was inconsistent with Scripture's teaching about mankind's sinful inability, while affirming the need for special grace in order to come to saving faith:

It is therefore no other than cavil, in opposition to the express counsel of God, to argue from such-like exhortations to the power of man without special grace to repent and turn unto the Lord. Most certainly "no man can come to Christ, except the Father which sent him draw him," John 6:44. Yet awakened sinners are to be directed and exhorted to repent, and to submit themselves to Jesus for the remission of sins; and the moral ends of such exhortations are obvious to any unprejudiced person; they are to convince men of the necessity there is for repentance unto life, and a means, in the hand of the Spirit, to lead, encourage, and animate perishing sinners to believe and be saved. And this answer may suffice to show the perverseness of them who will represent this method, in a gospel ministry, as inconsistent with the impotency of man, or the goodness of God, since it is evident that these exhortations are adapted to excite convinced transgressors to repentance and faith, and the Almighty is pleased to render them effectual thereunto in the hearts of his chosen: therefore no man need scruple to follow the example before us, in the course of his ministry, when sinners enquire, what shall we do? But freely and

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<sup>62</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Lectures on primitive Christianity* (London: Robinson, 1768), 118–119. Italicized text original to Wallin.

earnestly recommend them, even everyone, to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; nor should any be offended at this, since it is manifestly rational, all things considered, and a means owned of God for the salvation of men.<sup>63</sup>

And finally, he observed that faith *in Christ* must be preached—not just testimony concerning him:

Nor is it becoming or safe, to lessen the importance of the repentance and faith universally enjoined in the ministration of the gospel, on any pretense whatever. And as Christ himself, so did his apostles preach the gospel to everyone wherever they went. This account Paul gives of his ministry in his appeal to the elders of Ephesus, Acts 20:21, testifying, *διαμαρτυρούμενος*; not simply publishing the doctrine, nor barely showing the necessity of “repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” The work signifies to call upon or charge the object addressed.... This Paul did both to Jews and Greeks, not only showing them that repentance was needful to the remission of sins, but stirring them up to repent.... The apostle’s address extends to the whole of his audience, and his argument comprehends every Jew to whom the promise belonged, even all the house of Israel, and everyone in particular, present or absent, under the like conviction, is exhorted and encouraged by these words of Peter, to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins.<sup>64</sup>

In the second of the two works, *Superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of penitent transgressors, exemplified and vindicated*, published in 1775, Wallin took up the subject of the responsibility of the hearer of the gospel. As he had done in many of his preceding works, Wallin again chose to address his reader directly, insisting upon obedience:

And now, my dear reader, seriously reflect on thy state: art thou in thy native apostate condition, either of a licentious or pharisaical cast, how wonderful the grace, that thou art yet on this side eternity, and not wandered into hell, beyond hope of recovery! Let the patience and mercy of the Lord be improved; unless thou repent, they will certainly increase thy future condemnation; but, hast thou obtained repentance unto life? thine obligations to love and to serve him are deep and eternal: then join thyself to him; enter his courts; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar, that he may have the glory of his grace, through thine obedience of faith, from the lips of those who love his salvation.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 175–176.

<sup>64</sup> Wallin, *Lectures*, 204–205.

<sup>65</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of penitent transgressors, exemplified and vindicate* (London: George Keith, 1775), 41.

He also made sure to remove any excuses that sinners might have clung to regarding their inability to believe, addressing them very bluntly:

It is awful to behold the stupidity of man, under the guilt and dominion of sin, and that even where the light of revelation shines. There, O thou impenitent sinner, thou art presented in thy chains and thy vileness! The wrath of God is upon thee, and thy judge at the door! But, at the same time, here is opened a way of relief: it is an *high* and *free* way, and every perishing soul is invited to Christ, with an assurance of pardon, and a justifying righteousness through faith in his blood. If thou neglect this glorious salvation, how wilt thou answer the charge of unbelief in the last and great day, when the wrath of the Lamb shall come on those who despise him! thou canst not plead ignorance, nor wilt thou be able to say that there was no hope for thee, if thou hadst turned unto God, and obeyed the gospel of his Son, neither thy name nor thy condition is excepted in the proclamation of grace: Wilt thou urge, I *could not* repent and believe? Let conscience speak: Is it thy *desire* to do it? If not, how vain thy pretense of inability? Besides, this plea will surely condemn thee, for thy impotence is moral; it is owing to the pride and naughtiness of thy heart, the enmity of which against God, appears in proportion to the free remission set forth in the name of the redeemer, which unbelievers despise.<sup>66</sup>

By asking his readers if it was their desire to repent and believe, Wallin was accomplishing two things: first, he was applying the text to each individual reader, and second, he was asserting that if the desire was present, the Holy Spirit had already begun his converting work. To resist and deny the Spirit's work would be a terrible stupidity and a refusal of the high and free way of salvation to which Christ invites every perishing soul. Finally, he insisted unequivocally that a sinner must consider himself among those called by the gospel:

It would be endless to cite all the places that confirm our proposition; it is the tenor of the gospel, Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here is no exception in the blessed report, the promise is free and unlimited; nothing can be more open and universal, and indeed if any transgressor had been excluded, how could it be reconciled to Mark 3:28? They are the Savior's own words; "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith-soever they shall blaspheme." That is them who repent, and, excepting the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, according to what immediately follows. The same runs through the whole testament, in numberless instances, but none more expressive than 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding grace*, 158–159. Italicized text original to Wallin.

<sup>67</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding grace*, 287–289.

Each of the preceding quotations establishes Benjamin Wallin's position on various points of dispute from the "modern question." Although the quotations are themselves quite lengthy, they are only a small sampling of the more than thirty pages of examples from his writings that are related to the "modern question"—not including those times in his preaching where he gave a gospel admonition.<sup>68</sup> Chapter three established that Benjamin Wallin rejected the doctrine of eternal justification. It also established that he refused to set at odds God's secret will against his revealed will:

Now this hope is set before him in the Word; the general report of the gospel, namely, that, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," warrants any man, sensible of his guilt, to look unto him and be saved; for there being no exception in the gracious report, he may well hope for mercy, nor is this hope interdicted by the election of God, or the limitation of Christ's propitiatory death to a people given him by the Father, according to the Scripture; the chosen he hath redeemed are before him, but his secret and revealed will must needs coincide, and his decrees correspond with the promise of his mouth.<sup>69</sup>

By taking this position, Benjamin Wallin demonstrated that he preferred to leave in tension the subjects which God's Word had left in tension. He did this while holding firmly to the Calvinist doctrines of his confession without diminishing or opposing any of them, including the doctrine of particular atonement, from which his denomination took its name. Wallin's orthodox teaching meant that he had much in common theologically with the "high" Calvinists, and his diary records that he regularly filled their pulpits and moved freely among men of differing opinions about the "modern question." However, he also refused to set aside the unencumbered experiential preaching of the gospel, even if that meant that he would open himself up to the criticism of Arminianism. Through his many writings, Benjamin Wallin modeled an orthodox evangelicalism that affirmed the tenets of the "modern question" without falling into the errors of the Rationalists,

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<sup>68</sup> Some of the most clearly related examples are found in these various works by Benjamin Wallin: *Exhortations*, pp. 67, 97–98; *Lectures*, 118–120, 176, 203–205; *Superabounding*, 41, 77, 158–160, 287–289; *Christian life*, xxiv; *Christian's duty*, 83; *Folly* (1758), ix; *Scripture doctrine*, 172; *Ability of Christ*, 43–44; *Ancient believer's*, 34–35; *Fountain of life*, 7, 12, 15, 17–18, 25.

<sup>69</sup> Wallin, *Superabounding*, 77.

Socinians, and Arminians. He did so in an irenic and charitable way that demonstrated that he was truly a “respectable man.”



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

A study of Benjamin Wallin’s teaching and preaching revealed that he did not hesitate to break with the doctrinal opinions of his “high” Calvinist peers in those topics related to the “modern question.” Wallin’s preaching exhibited fidelity to the Protestant-Reformed-Puritan-funeral sermon genre and demonstrated his conviction that preaching needed to be both applicational and experiential. Wallin stood squarely within the Calvinist doctrinal tradition while insisting that God’s “secret and revealed will must needs coincide, and his decrees correspond with the promise of his mouth.”<sup>1</sup> This doctrinal conviction led Wallin to affirm both particular redemption and all people’s duty to obey the gospel—leaving in logical tension a matter that God’s Word itself held in tension. Benjamin Wallin was a theological conservative who sought to affirm and maintain the teaching of God’s Word along with his theological forebearers without treading into areas of theological speculation. This conservatism also accounts for Wallin’s homiletical practice of continuing the third-use applicational preaching recommended by the theologians of the Reformation as well as by his fellow countryman, William Perkins. Whether Wallin ever read Perkins is unknown, but examination of his sermons revealed that pastorally Wallin was concerned to accomplish the same things that Perkins instructed in his *Art of Prophesying*. Wallin’s willingness to continue to include the “uses” section in his preaching set his preaching apart from the more non-applicational preaching of John Brine and meant that he was one of the preachers of the

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Wallin, *Superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of penitent transgressors, exemplified and vindicated* (London: George Keith, 1775), 77.

early and mid-eighteenth century to keep alive both the law and gospel preaching and evangelical preaching of the previous generations.

As a theologian-pastor, Wallin's writings were full of the doctrines of Scripture, without being doctrinal treatises. In this regard, Wallin's published works are excellent examples of how doctrinal preaching can be done well. Wallin believed that one of the pastor's responsibilities toward his people was to ground them in doctrine so that they would not be led astray by the popular beliefs of their day. Wallin's sermons were clear expositions of the text, that also paid attention to doctrinal implications that could be applied to the lives of his hearers. His homiletical sensitivity to applying the text to the congregation's context meant that Wallin was always admonishing and stirring up his people with practical advice on how to live out the demands of the text, while always rooting his admonitions in the objective declarations of what Christ had accomplished on the sinner's behalf.

While Wallin's sermons did not specifically intone a call to missions, they did exemplify how the Church was to entreat unbelievers through the proclamation of the gospel to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Wallin's preaching regularly insisted upon all mankind's need for the gospel, as well as the propriety of believers preaching that gospel to all through the authorized preaching of the local church. His preaching also stressed the importance and duty of believers living together in church communion and observing the gospel ordinances through biblical church order. According to Wallin, regular church meetings for instruction, prayer, and discipline were top priorities for the church, and his special emphasis throughout all his works was the duty of the Christian and church to come before the throne of grace in prayer. Declension in faithfulness as individuals and as a nation could be traced back to negligence to observe proper church order and prayer, on account of which, God's judgments were poured out so that sinners might heed his warnings.

Wallin has been wrongly characterized as being opposed to the small revival movements as well as the broader Awakening. This is due, in part, to his criticisms of the excesses of the practitioners of the movement—both leaders and followers. Thus, for instance, a passage from a letter to James Manning from August 30, 1777, can be cited where Wallin comments that a revival in England:

Seems to me vain-glorious, and in some respects tending to confusion, of which God is not the author.... I would hope by this means some may be led into a saving knowledge of Christ, and so far I rejoice; yet I cannot but lament the tending and the effect of this carnal contrivance and vague kind of social religion to the accommodation of man and the neglect of all gospel order.<sup>2</sup>

However, opinions such as this should not be used to assert that Wallin was opposed to evangelism, or even to revivals. Instead, it should be noted where his objection lies—the neglect of all gospel order. Indeed, in the same letter, Wallin had burst into an exclamation of God’s goodness over the revival that was happening in Rhode Island:

Oh the wonders of Omnipotent love! Peace on earth and good-will to men, dispensed by the everlasting gospel in a rebellious world, like the antediluvian, corrupt before God, and filled with violence! It is the Lord’s doing and marvelous in our eyes. Your striking account of the heavenly visitation on the church and college over which you preside filled me with gratitude and joy, as it did my people, and indeed many others, ministers and respectable individuals, from whom I could not conceal the glad tidings. They proved as cold water to a thirsty soul.<sup>3</sup>

Wallin very much sought after and prayed for God’s gracious work of salvation among unbelievers. He also believed that when the Holy Spirit called a person into genuine faith, that such a person would then become a member of the local church and observe all gospel order. This would be the genuine fruit of revival; anything else would be vain-glorious and false.

While this dissertation has answered some of the basic questions relating to Benjamin Wallin and his ministry, much more research into this man’s teaching is

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<sup>2</sup> Reuben Aldridge Guild, *Early History of Brown University: Including the Life, Times, and Correspondence of President Manning, 1756–1791* (Providence, RI: Snow & Farnham, 1897), 298.

<sup>3</sup> Guild, *Early History*, 298.

warranted. As observed, each of Wallin's works included the topic of prayer, and future research that reveals his teaching on that subject would be invaluable to the Church. Additionally, Wallin's preaching was full of gospel encouragement and the reader is regularly edified and spiritually blessed. Further study of Wallin's sermons would establish whether Wallin ought to be considered a preserver of the evangelical homiletical tradition among English speakers, while those who departed from the established generic sermon form were sermonic innovators who were responsible for inadvertently obscuring the gospel's light.

Benjamin Wallin served the congregation of Maze Pond during a tumultuous time of decline among the Particular Baptists. The threats of Rationalism, Unitarianism, Socinianism, and Arminianism were a serious frontal assault on the church. Yet, Benjamin Wallin continued to serve the Lord and to preach the gospel to all without shame. When the church of the twenty-first century faces similar hardships of decline and theological error, the life and ministry of Benjamin Wallin serves as a helpful example of a caring minister who understood the times and who remained true to the doctrines of Scripture without overcorrecting into a system of theology that was based upon the opinions of men. The temptation in any age to skew the teaching of the church to address perceived frontal attacks is significant, but in fact, a narrowing of the teaching of the church can open the church to dangerous sneak attacks on its flank. Wallin was able to maintain a balanced and confessional approach to theology while also addressing experientially the needs of his congregation in their cultural setting of eighteenth-century London. By maintaining the theological tensions that he observed in Scripture, and by not creating a priority of God's secret will over his revealed will, Benjamin Wallin was able to affirm the thesis of the "modern question" and preserve gospel preaching in London. Wallin insisted upon preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God, no matter what the attack might be. This providential preservation of the gospel's seeds would soon be used by the Holy Spirit and the next generation to sow those seeds near and far—from

whence they blossomed into the evangelical and missional movement of the late-eighteenth century.

## APPENDIX 1

### ANNOTATED LIST OF REFERENCES AND LETTERS REGARDING BENJAMIN WALLIN FOUND IN GUILD'S *EARLY HISTORY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY*

pg. 165 Wallin received a MA degree from R.I. on Sept. 8, 1770.

pg. 166 Wallin original member of the Committee on Grievances.

pg. 186 James Manning, Letter to John Ryland, May 19, 1772. Wallin's name mentioned indicating that Wallin did not approve of some of the men who had received conferred degrees.

pg. 191 James Manning, Letter to John Ryland, November 12, 1772. Manning indicates that the college has heeded Wallin's advice which he had given indirectly through Isaac Backus about not conferring degrees too generously.

pg. 231 John Ryland, Letter to James Manning, February 9, 1773. Ryland responds to Manning disagreeing with Wallin's advice and censuring him (Wallin) for having given it.

pg. 237 Brief description of Wallin by Guild, including a mention of his wealth and several of his writings. Letters between Manning and Wallin are reprinted. Mentions Wallin's gifts of books and wonders if they are for him personally or for the school. Also mentions that Dr.s Stennett and Gill had bequeathed the college books.

pp. 239–240 Benjamin Wallin, Letter to James Manning, July 30, 1773. A long letter of reply from Wallin to Manning indicating his initial intention to be a personal gift, but now allowing it to be for the college as well. Strong words of support for Stennett, Gill, and Booth, as well as indicating that he would send Bunyan's writings. Identifies Anti-Trinitarianism and the authority of Christ (especially in regard to church discipline) that are the two biggest threats to the cause in England.

pp. 241–243 John Ryland, Letter to James Manning, May 20, 1773. Ryland intimates that he had misunderstood Wallin's objection and retracts his censorship. Ryland mentions to Manning that Wallin would be able to provide him with a list of all the Calvinistic Baptists in England and Wales.

pg. 245 List of Baptist ministers in England that can read Greek – Wallin included.

pg. 254 James Manning, Letter to John Ryland, November 25, 1773. Letter indicating the receipt from Wallin of his bound works in ten (gilt) volumes and several other authors including Bunyan, Wilson, Booth.

pg. 257 James Manning, Letter to Benjamin Wallin, May 25, 1774. Manning references knowledge of a split within Dr. Gill's (former) church. It also indicates that he has not yet received Booth's work. Tells Wallin of Backus's work on collecting a history of American Baptists and also relates a long intestinal illness that he (Manning) has suffered.

pp. 296–297 James Manning, Letter to Benjamin Wallin, November 12, 1776. Letter describing the revival in Providence and intimating that he fully expects Wallin's delight and approval of the news, as well as his continued prayers for its furtherance.

pp. 298–300 Benjamin Wallin, Letter to James Manning, August 30, 1777. Wallin's reply to Manning's news of revival that expresses his exuberant joy over God's work. Wallin does admit dissatisfaction with the manner in which the revival is proceeding in England, but mainly on the grounds of the shallow and consumeristic tendency that those "awakened" are engaging upon. Wallin informs Manning that he is sending an 11th volume to him containing his work on the Prodigal.

pp. 342–344 James Manning, Letter to Benjamin Wallin, May 23, 1783. Letter from Manning to Wallin before he had learned of Wallin's death. Updates the news from the college and the revival.

pp. 359–360 James Manning, Letter to Henry Kane, November 8, 1783. Letter from Manning to Mr. Henry Kane (one of Wallin's members) indicating that Wallin had made a bequest to the college. Guild notes that he does not know from the college's record what the bequest was.

pp. 360–361 James Manning, Letter to John Ryland, November 8, 1783. Letter from Manning to Ryland indicating he has learned of Wallin's death and has begun correspondence with Dr. Stennett.

pp. 374–376 John Rippon, Letter to James Manning, May 1, 1784. Letter from Dr. Rippon (Gill's successor) who indicates with what joy he and Evans received the news of revival from Wallin when he was still alive and how Evans had had the letter printed in the Western Association Letter.

pp. 377–381 James Manning, Letter to John Rippon, August 3, 1784. Letter from Manning to Rippon indicating that while alive Wallin had made him aware of his (Rippon's) work.

pg. 393 Abraham Booth, Letter to James Manning, June 30, 1784. Abraham Booth writes a brief letter to Manning and in the postscript indicates that Wallin has been dead for two years.

pp. 393–395 James Manning, Letter to Abraham Booth, October 3, 1784. Manning’s reply to Booth that acknowledges Wallin’s death and declares him to be a “Great Man of Israel.”

pp. 420–421 James Manning, Letter to John Gill (goldsmith), July 9, 1784. Manning’s reply to John Gill indicating that he has directed Mr. Kane to use some of Wallin’s bequest to settle a debt owed to the recently deceased Mr. Keith (publisher).

pg. 423 John Gill, Letter to James Manning, March 28, 1786. Mr. Gill replies to Manning that Mr. Kane has informed him that he has no funds for Mr. Backus from Wallin, because Wallin never received the 70 copies of Backus’ history.



## APPENDIX 2

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN WALLIN'S PUBLISHED WORKS ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY

Wallin, Benjamin. *The Redeemer's charge against his declining churches, exemplified in the case of the Church of Ephesus*. London: Aaron Ward, 1743.

In this discourse Wallin regrets that it has fallen out of fashion to be zealous for the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel. He notes that there are not many who are willing to engage in the necessary work of defending the gospel, both in the pulpit and in the press. Wallin also notes that the society-wide declension of religion is symptomatic of the neglect of religious duties exercised in the home. A lack of confidence in preaching has come from the false notion that because man cannot personally effect the salvation of his hearers, his proclamation is unnecessary. Wallin sounds the alarm for his nation and for all Christian denominations and urges a return to vital experimental religion. Using the text of Revelation 2:4, Wallin uses the Puritan Plain Style to open and apply the passage about the church at Ephesus having lost its first love.

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. *The compassion of the dying Savior to those that crucified him, considered and improved*. London: Aaron Ward, 1746.

A sermon by Wallin on the text of Luke 23:34. Wallin discusses the implications of Jesus' words from the cross "Father, forgive them..." and defends an understanding of the text in view of the doctrine of the Limited Atonement. Wallin distinguishes between the prayer as uttered from Jesus' divine and human natures and suggest that Jesus was praying according to his human nature to witness to his willingness to forgive all who were responsible for his crucifixion and death. Jesus' prayer did not indicate that the people's sins must be forgiven, but that they might (i.e. be able to be forgiven according to his human will) be forgiven if the perpetrators repented. Wallin does not stress the fruitlessness of the non-elect attempting to come to Christ, but rather points to the words of Jesus that stand as a admonition and encouragement for sinners to repent. He also applies the text to the Christian and infers that the believer will have the Christ-like attitude of desiring his persecutor's good. Ignorance is no excuse or shield from judgment if one is outside of Christ, yet even the gravest of sins should not discourage a man from seeking the forgiveness of Christ. Wallin passionately admonishes the trembling sinner to go to Jesus who promises that he will not cast out anyone who comes to him. Finally, Wallin applies the gospel to those who are backslidden and assures them as well that God will forgive them their iniquities and heal their backslidings as they go to Christ.

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. *The Christian life, in divers of its branches, described and recommended.*  
London: Aaron Ward, 1746

A large discourse in four parts based upon Philippians 4:4-7. Wallin stresses the importance of living within church fellowship as well as not deceiving oneself as to the state of his salvation based simply upon the regular attendance of public worship. He requests that no offence be taken from the various denominations as he urges godliness in all his readers regardless of the denomination to which they belong. In Part I Wallin discusses the Christian's joy and its cause. Part II is a discussion of moderation and its role in the Christian's life. In Part III Wallin takes up the topic of anxieties and cares and observes that the church would be well served with more practical theology and less wrangling about doctrines, handled in an argumentative way. Wallin throughout stresses experimental religion and the benefit of constant prayer. Wallin speaks to the efficacy of God's grace and the manner in which the Holy Spirit uses God's various graces to call, gather, and keep his people. Wallin makes a point to insist that there is no room to engage in speculation about the mystery of God's election, while affirming that God has elected. The first sermon speaks primarily to the peace of God. Wallin highlights the importance of a saving interest in Jesus Christ and he pleads with unbelievers to commit their souls into his hands. Wallin appends two sermons from 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to these discourses which again stress the importance of continual prayer, and how that even the natural man is to be stirred up to this duty, demonstrating Wallin's opinion that there is a duty to obey the gospel. Wallin emphasizes the need for prayer in the closet, family, and church. In the second sermon, Wallin outlines some of the excuses that are used to cease praying and refutes them.

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. *An exhortation against quenching the Spirit.* London: John Ward, 1748.

This is a sermon that was preached to a society of young men at Maze Pond on the text of 2 Thessalonians 5:19. In this sermon Wallin discusses what it is to quench the spirit and how Christians should be on their guard against declinations of vital religion. Wallin asserts the irresistibility of the Spirit's operation, yet also warns against despising the Spirit's work lest he should withdraw his gracious operations. Wallin warns that all who disobey the gospel will be found to be quenchers of the spirit, as well as those who indulge known sin. The neglect of church assemblies is equally admonished against, while membership in religious societies that engage in partiality and disputes are to be avoided. Wallin also suggests that Christians far too frequently engage in vain and trifling conversations immediately following their assemblies which has a quenching aspect to the work that the Spirit has just done. The sermon concludes with a strict law exhortation but then a gospel hymn is adjoined to provide the gospel motivation for obedience.

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. *A humble address to the Churches of Christ.* London: John Ward, 1750.

This address was published by Wallin to exhort Christians not to forsake assembling together and to maintain their responsibilities within their respective churches. Wallin warns of the serious injuries that are inflicted upon communities when professed Christians do not take seriously their duties toward one another in the local congregation to which they are members. Wallin also addresses the need of ministers to preach not just Systems of Doctrine, but to accommodate himself to the circumstances and condition of his people and to preach sermons for their warning and comfort. Wallin also likens prayer to the breath of the body and says that a church without prayer will become a breathless corps. Wallin addresses antinomian error that exalts God's goodness but forgets his duty to his Lord. Wallin also points

out that the purpose for assembling together does not rest in the self's edification, but that the Christian is also led by the Spirit to desire the edification of his fellow believers which require his presence for the maintenance of the church-state. He also criticizes the neglect of listening to the Word in the church that the member belongs to being excused as long as the Word is heard elsewhere.

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. *Evangelical Hymns and Songs, in two parts*. London: John Ward, 1750.

Wallin's hymnal which includes his hymns plus some of Watts' and Stennett's. Wallin's hymns are collected under two topical headings: Christian Life and Warfare, and Praise of the Redeemer with a view to the Lord's Supper. There are 44 hymns written by Isaac Watts to go with his sermons. Finally, the hymnal concludes with Joseph Stennett's 12 hymns for Baptism.

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. *Exhortations, relating to prayer and the Lord's Supper*. London: John Ward, 1752.

This work contains Wallin's discourses on Psalm 102:17 and 1 Corinthians 11:29. In the preface, Wallin warns that when the taste of the people becomes corrupted for polemical writings, they will soon leave experimental religion behind. Controversies over doctrines in the church may appear as though people have great religious zeal, but often obscure that the plain duties of the Christian are being neglected. Wallin aims to encourage the church to use prayer as its spiritual artillery against Satan. In extended discourses, Wallin proceeds much as he would with a single sermon, but now drawn out over multiple chapters, to open the meaning of the text and apply it to his readers. Accordingly, Wallin minutely discusses the words of the Psalm and provides the sense in which they should be understood. Each chapter of the discourse builds upon the proceeding chapter, and usually ends with both a law and gospel admonition. The gospel is usually very broadly applied to any sensible sinner who is in terror over the state of his soul. Wallin describes the prayer as approaching the Throne of Grace and lists many reasons why people do not approach it, as well as the great advantages to going to God in prayer. In the second part of the work, Wallin turns to the Lord's Supper and the proper use and administration of the ordinance. He notes that there are many who are wrongfully abusing the Supper, and that there are still others who have stayed away because of a false understanding of worthiness. Wallin distinguishes between an external attendance upon the Lord's Supper and proper attendance and notes that the blood of Christ not only pleads for the pardon of sinners, but also calls for repentance.

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. *The appearance of deceased saints with their Lord, at his coming, the consolation of surviving believers*. London: John Ward, 1753.

Funeral sermon for Edward Tomkins based on the text of 1 Thessalonians 4:14. Wallin seeks to demonstrate through this sermon that the death and resurrection of Christ are fundamental points of the Christian faith and the basis of the Christian's hope. Wallin also speaks to the reasonableness of Christians seeking out earthly companions with whom they know they will be able to share the joys of eternity and warns of the deep sorrow over the loss of a spouse for whom there is not expectation of salvation. Wallin concludes with an admonition to sinners to repent and with church members to consider God's providence and accordingly be ready for the Lord's return.

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. *The ability of Christ to save, the believer's comfort in the near views of eternity.* London: George Keith, 1753.

Funeral sermon for pastor Jonas Thurrowgood based on the text of 2 Timothy 1:12. Wallin demonstrates how Christ is the sure foundation of the Christian's assurance. He stresses the importance of daily laying hold of Christ and knowing him not merely with a historical knowledge but with an intimate knowledge of him as their personal savior. In this sermon Wallin expresses a sincere desire for the lost to be saved and admonishes sensible sinners to commit themselves to Christ. He also calls upon the saints to frequently examine themselves and see where their confidence lies. Wallin notes that faith in Christ also leads to the faithful joining of oneself to a church. Wallin also records that it was Mr. Thurrowgood whom God used in his life to restore to him his mobility after a childhood injury. Wallin closes with a warning against engaging anyone to fill the pulpit that is unworthy.

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. *God's relation to the faithful after their decease, a proof of their present life, and future resurrection.* London: George Keith, 1754.

Funeral sermon for Thomas Wildman based on the text of Matthew 22:32. In plain style Wallin opens the text and improves it. He notes Jesus' use of the Old Testament and asserts that those who would like to pick and choose which parts of the Bible are authoritative are on the "high road to deism." Wallin makes clear Jesus' argument against the Sadducees' disbelief in the resurrection. Wallin uses the testimony of Jesus to assure believers that death does not have the power to break the covenant of grace. Wallin describes the covenant of grace but does not go into the kind of detail that Brine would use, nor does he draw out the negative about those who cannot be saved but uses the doctrine as a comfort of the eternity of a believer's assurance. Wallin also briefly reflects upon a believer's union with Christ and the benefits thereof, while additionally providing a description of the saints' progressive sanctification in this life. Wallin also provides his readers with a description of how one can be assured that the Lord is his God by providing a biblical witness that describes entrance into the covenant of grace. In Wallin's description of the deceased, he noted that the man had a sleeping disorder (probably narcolepsy) and how he had been so ashamed of it because of the dishonor that he felt it brought to the preached Word.

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. *A letter to the congregation meeting near the Maze-Pond, Southwark.* London, 1755.

This letter to his congregation, which was ultimately published publicly, seeks to stir up his people to examine themselves. He makes note of how the gospel ministry should take place among the people and how the ministers are bound to preach the Scripture and admonish their people with both the words of Scripture, as well as those that are faithful to the clear intention of Scripture. He asks those who are regular attenders of his congregation to consider whether or not he has frequently set before them the nature of their condition as well as the redemption that there is in the Son of God. He bemoans that although some have heard as many as 1000 sermons from him, he is still struggles to discern any evidence of their saving acquaintance with Christ. Wallin lovingly comforts his people that his desire is for their salvation and that he is praying that they will embrace Christ as their savior. As to the members of the congregation, he upbraids them for their frequent neglects and uncertain attendance. Wallin acknowledges that his approach with this letter is out of the ordinary, but he explains that his desire would be that it would have the effect of making it possible for him to carry out his responsibility toward them for being allowed to visit with them about their spiritual health.

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. *The obligations of a people to their faithful minister*. London: George Keith, 1755.

This is a sermon preached at the ordination of Samuel Burford of Mansel Street, Goodman's Fields. In the preface Wallin notes that, while not agreeable to some, the sermon should be welcomed to all who desire the good of Zion. He sounds the alarm that under the guise of "reformation" some people have given an extravagant regard for every new appearance (perhaps of preaching?). He insists however that "the way of reform is for everyone to keep close to the truths and ordinances of the gospel." Wallin acknowledges that Christians must rejoice at the proclamation of Christ, and says that he does rejoice, but warns that in the face of this new proclamation Christians must not become indifferent in matters of doctrine or in relation to the ordinances. As Wallin opens the sermon based upon the text of 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, he addresses the congregation as to their duties toward their newly ordained minister. Wallin uses the plain style to open and improve the passage. He admonishes all those who are united in the church relation to regard one another as brethren, regardless of talents or social station. Wallin describes the character of a gospel minister and notes that his call is to his people and that he must serve with order, and not be tempted to rove about – his first and proper call is to minister to the people who have been committed to his care. He charges the congregation with giving their minister the due respect of his office and to listen to and comply with his admonishments while enumerating their responsibilities toward him and his office. He points them to the Apostle's command to esteem their minister highly in love and demonstrates why it is the Paul would insist that the work of the minister is to be highly esteemed if the people care for their own souls and the souls of others. He continues to unfold the text by expounding upon the people's duty to be at peace with one another and to be on guard against anything that might occasion their division.

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. *The Christian's duty and confidence in times of public calamity*. London: George Keith, 1756.

This discourse was occasioned by the earthquakes and looming possibility of a French war. Wallin observes that after the earthquakes there was a call to a public fast that had a promising appearance that the people were inclined to reform their ways, but Wallin insists that the people have continued in the licentious and profane ways as before. He warns of the great offense that is given to God on this account. Wallin's first sermon of the discourse is composed from the text of Psalm 46:8. Wallin speaks of the earth and its brokenness and argues that the desolations are ascribed to the Lord and that accordingly people do well to take heed when the earth manifests its brokenness. In the second sermon, Wallin continues his observation on the previous text and explores what it is to behold the judgements of God upon the earth and when men have done so adequately and why they are disposed not to do so. Wallin concludes the second sermon with a call to repentance and to hasten unto the Lord for refuge. In the third sermon of the discourse, Wallin turns to the text of Psalm 46:2-4. From this text Wallin seeks to draw out the comfort of the text for his readers as they have now looked upon the earthquake and impending war as a rebuke and are repentant, he now seeks to console them with the promises of the text. Those whose trust is the Lord have God's promises and assurances that He will be their solid ground of confidence and joy even as the great calamities befall the rebellious world around them. Wallin discusses how the church is Jerusalem and admonishes his readers to maintain their church duty to assembling together and participating in the Lord's Supper. Wallin also observes that the promises of the passage are directed not to individuals (though they are not excluded), but to the

incorporated body of believers. In the fourth sermon of the discourse, Wallin once more continues his discussion from the preceding lecture. In this sermon Wallin addresses specifically the figure of the river in the city of God and after mentioning several possibilities as to its symbolic meaning intimates that he believes this river is a symbol of God's love that flows from his throne through the church. Wallin indicates that God has made open this river to every quickened sinner and true believer, and that it truly "opens the door of hope and salvation to every repenting sinner."

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Sermon on the text, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, Job xiii. 15.* London, 1756.

Sermon unavailable, though known to have been published.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The folly of neglecting divine institutions. An earnest address to the Christian who continues to refrain from the appointments of the gospel.* London: George Keith, 1758.

This discourse was first published in 1758 and went through multiple printings in the ensuing years. In this discourse Wallin upbraids those who are negligent in obeying God's commands, in particular, as it relates to the blessing of the communion of saints. Wallin clearly sets forth the distinction between being a nominal Christian and a true believer. Wallin notes his distress that so many people of every rank and station have devoted their time to the pleasures of sense but have no regard for the honor of God and their salvation. Wallin also takes the opportunity to address those who remain outside of fellowship because they remain doubtful if they are truly Christians and admonishes them not to judge themselves according to the opinions of men instead of the Word of God, indicating that having absolute assurance is not essential to faith. Wallin takes aim at the many excuses that people use to justify not gathering with the church, excuses which he denominates "pretenses." He then addresses the sins that these various excuses amount to when used. Wallin closes with an exhortation for those who have been convicted of their folly to abandon their excuses and to repent immediately of the offences they have given to God with a confidence and assurance that his is ready to pardon and assist them.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The folly of neglecting divine institutions. An earnest address to the Christian who continues to refrain from the appointments of the gospel.* London: George Keith, 1761.

The third printing of the above discourse. Little-to-no deviation from the original text.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The joyful sacrifice of a prosperous nation.* London: George Keith, 1760.

This is a sermon that was preached at Maze Pond on a day of national thanksgiving declared by the king in thanksgiving for God's granting success against the French. In this discourse Wallin stirs up the spirit of thanksgiving and exclaims that he desires that God would use this occasion to bring about a complete and lasting reformation in England as a result of their gratitude for all that God had blessed them with. The text that Wallin chose to examine in plain style was that of Psalm 118:27. After providing the historical context for the Psalm, Wallin proceeds to enumerate the blessings that God had recently bestowed upon England. Wallin addresses the suitability of a nation to humble itself before God and to bow to his power and rule in the world. He warns against the pride that follows God's blessings, lest it should cause the people to put their trust in anything other than

God, but also acknowledges the fittedness of national celebrations of God's favor as long as they are bound with proper decorum. Wallin beseeches his fellow countrymen not to believe that they have deserved these graces from God, but to acknowledge his excellent mercy for not abandoning them in spite of their many national sins. Wallin draws a distinction between feasting and fasting and acknowledges that this day is set aside for a feast of celebrating God's goodness and deliverance, while there will be a necessary time afterward to repent in humility. He also warns that feasting in God's presence is not license to excess. Rather, he encourages them to participate in the feast while resolving to continue to honor the Most High by their continual sacrifice of praise.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Faith in Christ, and life everlasting*. London, 1762.

This is a funeral sermon for the Rev. John Author based on the text of John 11:26. Wallin expresses his desire for the Divine Comforter to render the sermon effectual for those who believe as a source of rejoicing, and for those who do not believe that they may have faith in Jesus Christ. In this funeral sermon Wallin begins with some detail about the deceased man, which is out of his usual habit, but it allows him to draw a comparison with Lazarus and his sisters. Wallin notes that the same faithfulness that brought Lazarus out of his tomb after three days is at work in lives of all, and that patience and submission to God's dispensations is necessary while believers continue in hope, knowing that Jesus will also bring their loved one back to life from the dead. Wallin intimates his intention to cover the text's meaning concerning the life which the believer is supposed to sustain, the faith ascribed to him, and the sense of what is meant by the promises that he shall never die. Wallin differentiates between natural and spiritual life and is insistent that the time for coming to spiritual life is during the extent of one's natural life. He objects to the understanding of Jesus' local descent into hell and warns that there will be no future chance after death to hear the gospel unto salvation. Wallin also notes that this text is not limited in the extent of its promise and says that the word "whosoever" believeth should drive away the fear of all penitent souls, for the promises is intended for them. Wallin insists that any who are effectually called will believe in the Lord Jesus. Wallin notes that although some may experience full assurance of their salvation and be entirely free of doubts, that is not the case with many Christians, nor does it indicate that a total lack of faith. Assurance of salvation may be falsely believed as well, and so Wallin moves on to discuss true faith and indicates that he believes that true faith consists not only of knowledge or only persuasion, but on knowledge and persuasion combined. Wallin next moves to discuss the sense of the phrase "shall never die." He notes that it could be understood to be indicating the perseverance of the saints, which is true, but does not encompass the full extent of the promise; therefore, Wallin argues for an understanding that means that the believer will depart this mortal life into the nearer presence of God until the ushering in of the day of resurrection and life everlasting. Wallin questions his readers about their belief in all that has been discussed, with the aim at admonishing them to believe and receive salvation.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The universal concern of saints in communion represented in an sermon*. London: J. Buckland, 1763.

This sermon was preached at the Devonshire Square church at the ordination of the Rev. Walter Richards to the pastoral office, and of three men, J. Tomkins, T. Cooke, and G. Wilkinson, to the office of deacon from the text of Romans 14:19. Wallin opens the text with a contrast of the Roman church of Paul's day with its current state as the seat of the Antichrist and warns that the church must hold closely to the Scripture rule, or else be subject to a similar falling away. The main

thrust of the sermon as declared by Wallin is to set before the congregation their duty to maintain a godly peace within the church and among themselves for the edification of one another. Wallin notes that as the church is called to increase in its edification of the believers that consequently and individual Christian's duty is that he himself must pursue spiritual growth. Wallin warns against an attitude that only looks at the church as a means of personal edification and encourages his readers to consider the edification of their fellow members as the rule for a faithful membership. He states: "This is the Duty enjoined; that every Member of a Christian Church should sincerely aim, and studiously endeavor, at all times, and in every station, to the end of his life, after the things which make for the public Peace and the Edification of his Neighbor." Wallin encourages the congregation to provoke one another to love and good works, to be steadfast in doctrine that is held in common among all the members of the church, to be impartial toward one another, and to be frequent in prayer. Wallin next instructs the congregation on the honor that is due to the offices that they are calling men into and subsequently the honor that is due to those men. Wallin concludes by calling on the congregation to keep their eyes "up" so as to look for their growth and assistance from the one who himself builds the church.

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. *The experience of the saints asserted and proved*. London: J. Buckland, 1763.

This discourse contains two sermons preached on Galatians 5:5, two sermons preached on Romans 5:5, and a final sermon on Ephesians 1:14 with the aim of establishing the believer's hope and a consideration of the operations of the Holy Spirit. Wallin begins with a sermon on the doctrine of justification by faith. Wallin notes that in the article of justification, works of the law and grace stand in direct opposition. Wallin observes that the believer's hope comes from justification and is that righteousness that one has imputed to him. The believer has a reasonable hope because the Spirit conveys this hope to the believer through his effectual calling and his sealing of the Spirit of adoption. While the believer waits for the completion of his righteousness – that is his hope of righteousness – faith is the thing which holds on to the promise. But, Wallin warns, that faith as a principle or work cannot be confused as the cause of justification, for only the blood of Christ can secure the believer's justification and righteousness. (In a footnote, Wallin guards against any antinomian misunderstanding) Wallin's second sermon addresses the ongoing work of the Spirit to supply the grace that is necessary to continue in faith and hope. Wallin insists that experience cannot be the source of a man's assurance, especially if it contradicts the counsel of God, but he does acknowledge that experience does have a vital role to play in the life of the believer because it provides the practical knowledge of the Spirit's operation. Wallin lists repentance and faith, communion with God, Self-humiliation, unfeigned sorrow for sin, cordial acceptance of Christ, and joy in God as examples of vital experiences in the life of the Christian. He acknowledges that the life of faith is both inward and an outward conformity to the gospel to put his trust in, and rest alone upon the merit of Jesus. Wallin takes the opportunity to reflect on the necessity of Christ-centered preaching, stating that it alone is an adequate means of salvation. In the third sermon, Wallin turns to the Romans text and discusses thoroughly the Christian's hope. Wallin argues that there was and is an internal and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit to work the love of God. He denies the concept of man's free will in respect to vital religion, insisting on the necessity of the Spirit's operation. Wallin does discuss election from before the foundation of the world but does not (in a positive assertion) bring up an election to damnation, choosing rather to stress the depth of God's love from of old. Once again Wallin insists on the proper understanding of justification, and states that the believer is not justified because of or by repentance or faith, but by grace



alone. The final sermon focuses primarily on the Holy Spirit and his work in the believer. While Wallin understands the Word to be the means the God uses to enlighten the unrepentant, he insists that the Word by itself could do no such thing, but that the gracious work of the Spirit is necessary to make the Word a life-giving work. The Spirit quickens the hearts on the unregenerate as he calls them; he abides in them as the Comforter; he works internally upon them as the Spirit of Adoption to assure them of his love; He, at times, superadds this own testimony that a man is a child of God. Wallin notes that the believer does not always experience the full measure of the Spirit's operation and states that that may be due to the Spirit's timing and work; he also warns that it may also arise from a sin or habit in a man, and therefore counsels both patience and repentance. The final sermon discusses what is meant by the "sealing" of the Spirit. Wallin indicates that the sealing of the Spirit is his taking up abode with the believer after his justification. Accordingly, this sealing includes the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, as well as his acting as the Spirit of Adoption and as Comforter. Wallin takes time to address the resurrection of the body, and insist that until the body is resurrected, the believer will not have attained his full inheritance. The Spirit provides many blessings both physical and spiritual to the saints, but these gifts are not to be confused as the believer's final inheritance, for the Spirit is the earnest of the full inheritance yet to come. The Spirit's sealing is also a testimony to the perseverance of the saints that God will be faithful to bring them at last to himself. Wallin concludes with a warning against grieving the Holy Spirit.

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. *The fall of the mighty, a just cause of universal lamentation*. London: J. Buckland, 1765.

Funeral sermon (in-absentia) occasioned on the death of His Royal Highness Prince William-Augustus Duke of Cumberland based upon the text of 2 Samuel 1:27. Wallin addresses this sermon especially to the people of London and Westminster and preaches it to the congregation at Maze Pond before it is subsequently published. Wallin opens the text which bemoans the death of Saul and Jonathan and addresses the fittedness of mourning the loss of one of the nation's nobles who has a gift from God. Wallin states that great men are raised up to rule the nation and defend it, and that the subjects' duty is to honor and obey them and consider them to be ministers of the Most High. Wallin enumerates several reasons why a nation should mourn the loss of their great men and honors the King and the house of Hanover for his deliverance from Catholic rule. Wallin uses a section of the sermon to recount the greatness of the duke and to remind the people why the loss of this great man is a reason for national mourning. Wallin concludes by encouraging the nation not to trust in her own strength, but to depend upon the living God who alone is their refuge from every storm; he further admonishes them to turn away from an inordinate love of pleasures.

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. *The Christian's concern that he may not be a cast-away*. London: J. Buckland, 1765.

This discourse consists of two sermons preached at the Rev. Larwell's meeting in Limehouse based upon the text of 1 Corinthians 9:27. In the preface Wallin notes that it is easy enough to decry the "badness of the times," but encourages the reader to examine his own heart and look to his own ways. Wallin notes that private zeal, family devotions, and lack of attendance has generally befallen the society. He acknowledges that sober enjoyment of God's good things are good, and warns against attacking those who are blessed by God with affluence simply for having more, if indeed they are living with honor toward their possessions. Wallin's first sermon takes up the topic of the necessity for self-denial. Wallin instructs the church

to run their spiritual race as those who take heed of the witnesses that are watching, and to fight the fight, not against a pretend foe, but against the real powerful enemies of the spiritual man. Wallin sums up the pastoral office as one whose whole business is to see that every man take care of himself (spiritually). He urges the congregation to be continually about the business of keeping under the body of sin. Wallin notes that while men may not have the power to overcome sin themselves, that Christ's victory has dethroned sin in their lives and given them the advantage over their enemy, who is pinned. In the second sermon, Wallin makes application of the text and describes what it looks like to keep under the body of sin. Wallin takes aim at carnal security that is justified because of any of the doctrines of grace, like perseverance, and makes clear he is no antinomian.

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. *The eternal existence of the Lord Jesus Christ considered and improved.* London: J. Buckland, 1766.

This sermon was preached by Wallin at a monthly association which met in Grafton Street near Seven Dials. The sermon is based upon the text of John 8:58. Wallin deals with the Subject of Christ's divinity through the use of the text "before Abraham was, I am." After dealing with some of the false notions that were used to dismiss this text as proving Jesus' divinity, Wallin demonstrates the force of Jesus' statement that he is the divine Son of God. Wallin also takes opportunity to refute that opinion that Jesus was pre-existent to Abraham according to his human soul. Wallin argues persuasively for an understanding of the personal union in Christ and rejects and refutes the opinions of the errorists.

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. *The constitution of a gospel-church adapted to union and peace.* London: J. Buckland, 1766.

This sermon was preached at the ordination of the Rev. John Reynolds who was the newly called minister at Cripple-Gate. Wallin reluctantly agreed to have this sermon printed because the custom was to print the charge and sermon together, but the minister who preached the charge declined at first, and then later the charge appeared in print. Wallin acknowledges that he was upset, but the Messengers finally persuaded him to allow the sermon to be printed. Wallin notes that not all Christians will agree with his views about what proper church order is based on their denominational understanding and asserts the right to private judgement with charity to allow Christians to demonstrate their view from Scripture. Wallin's sermon is based upon 1 Corinthians 12:25 where Paul urges that there should be no schisms in the body. Wallin encourages and wishes that more Christians would study the branch of religion that has to do with the proper ordering and conduct of a church so that they would know how to behave in the house of the Lord. Wallin defines a church as: "a Company of the Elect, who ding born again, and vitally united to him, are joined to one another, and walk together in the order of the gospel, for the glory of the Lord, and their mutual edification." Wallin asserts that the church's constitution can bear no human invention but must solely rest upon the instruction of God's Word. Wallin also addresses the proper understanding of the word schism and differentiates it from separation, with schism being divisions that arise within the church that are allowed to remain. While Wallin admits that there are valid separations, he also warns that needless separations are the bane of brotherly love. Wallin then addresses the advantage of being united in one body. He points to the mutual care that the Christians are to render to one another, and the diversity of gifts that are given so that not every member has the same benefit to give to the body. To require all members to have the same gifts, which the Savior himself has not granted them, is absolutely impossible. While the use of the same gifts isn't the obligation of every member, what is each members obligation is that

they use their gifts and office in service to their fellow members. Wallin notes the high place that preaching should be given in the local church for its very end is to gather the Church together as a communion of saints. Wallin decries “Promiscuous Assemblies,” while applauding the publishing of the truth, because they do not draw together a people under the constitution of a church. Finally, Wallin charges the congregation with a regular attendance upon their new minister and an intimate relationship with him who will shepherd their souls.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The Christian salutation*. London: J. Buckland, 1766.

This sermon was delivered at Maze Pond on the occasion of the separation of a sister congregation under the care of Rev. John Rogers from assembling with the Maze Pond congregation for seven months while they were without a meeting place. Having secured a meeting place, Wallin preached this farewell sermon in the hearing of both congregations on the text of 2 Corinthians 13:11. Wallin interprets the imperative of Paul to “be perfect” to mean in this instance an admonishment to be orderly in their church-state – to practice godly discipline and order. Wallin comments on the promise that God will be with his church and the joy that is present because of this promise. He expounds upon God’s presence and its importance for the confidence and defense of the church. He notes that some formerly large and flourishing churches have been utterly dissolved but declares that the fault for such decline does not lie with God’s unfaithfulness towards His church, but in the treachery and wickedness of man. Wallin notes that God works where he dwells, and therefore instructs that God’s churches should work for and expect increase through conversion and God drawing people to the gospel truth. The congregation’s walking together in love will attract outsiders to join her. Wallin warns the congregations to be on the lookout for the roots of bitterness that spring up among God’s people and between congregations, and praises God that such roots are not visibly present in their communities at this time. Wallin also takes the opportunity to instruct the members of each congregation as to their duty to remain loyal to their original congregation, warning that Satan would gain a victory if the body was severed in this way.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The everlasting communion of saints with their Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven their comfort, when mourning the loss of their fellow-communicants on Earth*. London: J. Buckland, 1767.

This sermon is connected to the handwritten “An Address Derived at the Interment of Mrs. Mary Keene” which was never published. It is the actual funeral sermon that Wallin gave for Mary Keene who was the daughter of Thomas Cox and Rebecca Cox who later died and whose funeral sermons were also published by Wallin under the title *A Pious Memorial*. Wallin selected the text 1 Thessalonians 4:17 for Mary’s funeral sermon. Wallin notes the grief of his congregation at the loss of such a beloved young member and points to the similar griefs that the Thessalonians were experiencing through the deaths of their members. As Paul comforted the Thessalonians, so the truth of his comforting message applies to the church of all ages. Wallin observes that there is tremendous joy for the Christian when gathered together in Christ’s presence and indicates that this is an occasion of Christ presence coming to his church. Yet, Wallin asserts, the eternal joy of the believer, and the promise of this text, is that “the believer will properly be with Christ where he is; i.e. in his immediate presence, in a local and visible manner.” Wallin goes on to observe that while this eternal joy is now a reality for the deceased it is still appropriate for Christians to mourn the loss of their “dear and valuable companions.” He also encourages the congregation to examine themselves, individually and as a congregation, for even the deaths of saints are providences sent

from God to be used to draw closer to him. Wallin brings in the figure of marriage and the nuptials exchanged “till death do us part” and reminds the people that having been married to Christ means that he will never be satisfied with anything less the everlasting enjoyment of his people.

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\_\_\_\_\_. “An Address delivered at the Interment of Mrs. Mary Keene in the burial ground at the Maze-Pond Southwark.” Collection of the John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. 1767.

Manuscript sermon in the handwriting of Wallin prepared for publication, but never printed.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Lectures on primitive Christianity*. London: Robinson, 1768.

This discourse is one of Wallin’s largest works and contains much of his thinking on ecclesiology – church order, the communion of saints, and love. He had begun the work earlier in his life but found it to be taking too much time away from the ministry, and therefore set it aside. However, when he was forced to convalesce because of a sickness, he took up the work again and completed it. Wallin thanks God that the King and Parliament have allowed the freedom that the churches are experiencing. He also accuses the nation of having fallen into a state of despising the ordinances and watering down religion to the point where many boast that they belong to no denomination at all and all they are concerned with is if one loves Jesus Christ. Contrary to this attitude, Wallin insists that to worship God in the way that he has appointed is the absolute duty of every person under every dispensation. Because charity and truth belong together, it is never the loving thing to do to join someone in their error or to overlook it. Wallin sets forth an outline for the work that is broken into six books. Book 1 contains nine lectures on the topic of Jesus’ death resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. Book 2 has two lectures on Peter’s Pentecost sermon with application. Book 3 consists of seven lectures that consider the success of Peter’s Pentecost sermon. Book 4 has four lectures on the topic of the history of the early church. Book 5 records in six lectures the history of the declension of the church in subsequent generations by looking at Jesus’ letter to the church at Sardis. Book 6 looks at the faithful believers in the days of Malachi the prophet in four lectures. The work as a whole deals with many doctrines and demonstrates Wallin’s thinking on such doctrines as the limited atonement, justification, repentance, conversion, the Holy Spirit, preaching, free grace, and baptism.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *A charge and sermon together with an introductory discourse and confession of faith delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Abraham Booth*. London: George Keith, 1769.

This piece contains an introductory discourse by William Clarke, Abraham Booth’s confession of faith as delivered at his ordination, The Charge delivered by Benjamin Wallin, and the Sermon delivered by Samuel Stennett. Wallin’s charge is based upon the text of Acts 20:24. Wallin charges Booth with understanding his ministry as his course of duty upon which he is to run; a course that is already set and consists in ministering to those that God is giving him this day. Wallin points to the example of Paul who did not count his life valuable to himself, but for the sake of others was willing to be present and allow his life to be valuable to them. Wallin differentiates between a general and special appointment for ministry, with the general consisting in a church authorizing a man to preach the gospel as opportunity arises in the world, and the special consisting in the rooted office of the pastor who is given charge over the flock. Wallin states that this calling, with little exception, is

to be understood as his personal duty to the end of his days. Wallin instructs Booth to let his preaching be full of sound doctrine, and for it to be neither legal nor licentious, but to strike at sin and exalt grace. He urges Booth's preaching to be on a broad selection of God's Word and to be preached to all sorts of people, not just the redeemed. Booth's ministry is to put them in mind of their duties, and to provoke them to love and good works. Wallin recommends that his sermons be "judicious, methodical, scriptural, plain, and experimental. He also insists that Booth be constant in prayer, and to know the state of his flock through visitations. Wallin insists that Booth must frequently urge his hearers to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to testify – not only report – of the grace of God so that his hearers are exhorted and pleaded with not to receive his testimony in vain. Wallin also warns Booth of the difficult times in ministry when it seems as though God has hidden his face and that the minister is laboring in vain, and encourages him, even then, to not give up his charge. He also encourages Booth to continue his study of God's Word as well as human authors, and to be diligent to make his own works rise to the high standard of God. He also warns him against being unsociable, and states that a private spirit is the bane of brotherly love.

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. *An eternal mansion prepared in the heavens for the righteous*. London: J. Buckland, 1769.

This sermon is the funeral sermon of Thomas Cox and is based upon the text of 2 Corinthians 5:1. The sermon is also found in *A Pious Memorial*. Wallin describes Thomas as having been a "pillar" in the church community. Wallin uses the imagery of the body as a tabernacle or house to show that it is common to all humanity that the body must be taken down. However, the believer does not lose hope about the temporary removal of the body from the soul because he has confidence that he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Wallin notes that the believer will not be found "naked" when the tabernacle of flesh is removed, but that he will be clothed with the house from heaven. Wallin also notes that the saint's longing after heaven is from God and is part of their confidence that God has indeed prepared a place for them. Wallin stresses in this sermon as he has in other funeral sermons the blessing of the saint being with God, physically present and seeing with their local vision God directly. Wallin also notes that one of the joys of the saints who have departed will be that of their subjective righteousness, their sanctification finally completed. The sermon concludes with an admonition for men not to place their confidence in the earthly houses, but to be wise for their souls and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As Wallin shares some final thoughts he relates how Thomas and his wife parted with genuine affection and Christian confidence; the scene evidently impacted Wallin, and perhaps explains why he ended up compiling all of the family's funeral sermons into one work, seeing in them a model of Christianity.

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. *The universal character of departed saints*. London: J. Buckland, 1769.

This sermon is the funeral sermon of Rebekah Cox and is based upon the text of Hebrews 11:13. The sermon is also found in *A Pious Memorial*. Wallin opens the sermon with a comment on Rebekah's faithfulness as a daughter of Israel and on how quickly upon her husband's death, the Lord called her home. Wallin then opens the text and addresses some of its particulars, including the sense in which "all" should be understood since Enoch is among the list and he did not die according to the flesh. Wallin observes that there is but one faith that was the faith of the saints in the Old Testament and continues to be the faith of the saints today. He also notes that another understanding of faith is that faith which is of the Spirit that clings to the Word of God; this too is common to all believers. To die in faith, for Wallin, is

“strictly and properly no other than to finish a life of faith.” In the life of faith, the believer is sensible of his redemption by the blood of Christ, has a personal interest in the covenant of grace, believes the promises of the gospel, has a hope of the approaching inheritance, and has confidence in the victory over death that Christ has accomplished and is believed in faith. Wallin concludes with a law and gospel admonition that asks the hearers “how wilt thou die?” the death of righteousness, or the death of unbelief. Wallin’s last words are to note how attending upon a dying Christian is an edifying thing and not to be avoided and prays that the church will take the rapid succession of the deaths of this family to heart as they study the providence of God.

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. *A pious memorial*. London: J. Buckland, 1769.

An edited compilation of the whole Cox family’s funeral sermons, including their daughter’s, Mary Keene. The annotations for each are provided under the individual funeral sermons.

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. *Gospel-requisites to acceptable prayer*. London: J. Buckland, 1770.

This sermon was delivered to the monthly association in Unicorn Yard and Tooley Street and is based upon the text of 1 Timothy 2:8. Wallin observes that this monthly meeting has been going on between thirty or forty years for the building up of one another and insists that this can only happen except that they be praying in the Holy Ghost. Wallin instructs that the prayers and sermons that they hear should be adapted to the general circumstances of the assembly and that they should be concerned with truly hearing the sermons, and earnestly offering the prayers. As Wallin discusses prayer he outlines the various kinds of prayers, including those of supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Wallin includes an admonition for believers to not withdraw from secular society, but to “fill up” their vocations with the fidelity and honor of God, and sharply criticizes the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. He admonishes his hearers to pray for all in authority. Wallin draws attention to the fact that prayers must be lifted up with holy hands, which is not an insistence upon perfection, but that in faith no one is willfully engaged in rebellion against the Word of God. He also notes that prayers are to be offered in a spirit of love and faith that is confident in the things for which it asks. Wallin insists that prayer is an “essential and capital branch of worship.” Wallin charges the Protestant Dissenters with shame for allowing the established church’s members show more interest in the regular attendance on prayer. Wallin does not censure the use of formal prayers directly and does not want to cause offense to any who use them but suggests that prayer books were not used in the primitive church, nor should anyone suppose that formal prayers are necessary to be heard by God. Wallin uses the authority of his pastoral office to censure those who refuse to pray in private or in public and suggest that such are practical atheists. Wallin hold up the use of prayer in the Spirit as the best aid towards holiness, love, and faith.

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. *The importance of family-religion*. London: J. Buckland, 1771.

This sermon was preached at the Devonshire Square meeting house and was based upon the text of Genesis 18:19. Wallin’s sermon is ordered in the typical plain style, and he begins with an examination of the text and its contexts. Wallin understands the Angel of the Lord to whom Abraham is speaking to be the pre-incarnate second person of the Trinity. As the Son addresses the angels that are with him, he states what Abraham as a faithful man will do in regard to teaching his children and his whole household the way of the Lord. Wallin interprets this to be a description of the behavior of the righteous; the teaching of their children the faith is

essential to who they are as believers. The teaching of the children is bound up in teaching them the right worship of the one True God both according to the object of worship and the mode. Wallin also notes the way in which Abraham and Joshua freely chose for themselves to instruct their households and points to this as a fruit of the righteousness that is given them in faith. Wallin demonstrates that just as the people of old needed the instruction in the way which they should go, so the rising generation needs the instruction because of the reality of original sin. When the heads of households are negligent in training up their children there is the real danger of a “universal deluge of impiety and vice” because of man’s corrupted nature. While assembling together in churches has been given for instruction and edification, it does not negate the necessity for the instruction to take place in the home. Family worship should not consist only in the reading of Scripture, but also in the explanation and application to the household, as well as the use of catechisms. Wallin encourages families to practice a judicious and impartially disciplined manner of living so that the fear of the Lord is promoted within the home. Wallin also warns those who are newlywed not to forsake the discipline of family devotions even though there are only two present, because it is still necessary for each to engage in this household devotion, and also because if the habit is not begun immediately upon the formation of the family, it will likely not begin at another time. In Wallin’s estimation, there is nothing more threatening or destructive to the rising generation than the potential loss of family worship as people make excuses that there is no time as they follow after earthly pleasures. One final thought that Wallin inserts is his opinion that the Particular Baptist should be interested in demonstrating their faithfulness and concern for their youth that they would be found to be encouragers of a public confession of faith at an early age.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The Scripture-doctrine of Christ’s Sonship*. London: George Keith, 1771.

This discourse consists of ten sermons that are aimed to affirm and prove from Scripture Jesus’ divine sonship and demonstrate why this doctrine is essential to the gospel. In the preface Wallin discusses the propriety of creedal confessions and mourns that most of those who were unwilling to subscribe have now given up the divine nature of Christ. Wallin suggest that the doctrine of Christ’s divine nature joining with his human nature is impossible for man to understand according to its mode, but that the fact is absolutely secured according to God’s revealed Word. He further notes that it is not fitting for men to pry into the secret things of God, like the manner of the Son’s generation from the Father, but that in relation to the hidden things of God, men should remain silent. As Wallin progresses through the various texts of his sermons, he cumulatively builds his Scriptural argument for the divine sonship of Jesus. Wallin also describes the errors that some have fallen into and describes the “sense” of the way in which they are interpreting Scripture, before stating rightly the meaning of the text. Wallin demonstrates that if the divine sonship of Jesus is denied, ultimately the whole ground to support the confession of the Trinity is lost – without the Son there is no sense of Father, nor of their Spirit. Wallin also discusses the benefit that is derived by believers being united to Christ. He distinguishes between an eternal union with him that was the result of covenant of grace in which the elect are properly said to be chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and a union that is distinct from the decree of election “which terminates on individuals, through faith of the operation of God, who calleth them according to his purpose.” This is a subjective and experiential union that an individual experiences as the Holy Spirit converts and regenerates. As the conclusion of this discussion of union with Christ, Wallin asserts the necessity of individuals being brought to repentance in time – a rejection of Eternal Justification. Wallin subsequently speaks of the experimental proofs that are given to assure of

union with Christ. Wallin describes a chain of needful doctrines that can never be broken or displaced as a golden chain – each linked together that come from union with Christ: remission, justification, acceptance and freedom with God, all needful grace, eternal life, resurrection, and ultimate glory. Wallin warns against God’s displeasure for those who reject his Son, and points to a need to obey the free invitation of the gospel. Wallin expresses his desire for the salvation of the lost, he points to the freedom the Christian is given in Christ so that he is no longer under the curse of the law but under grace and admonishes preachers to continue to seek after and hope for the salvation of all who hear the gospel proclamation. The preaching of the Word has been given as the means for salvation, so no preacher or hearer can seek salvation by any other means by denial of the necessity of preaching the Word. Wallin concludes with searching questions to aid the reader in discerning if he is obedient to the faith.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The victorious Christian receiving the crown*. London: George Keith, 1771.

This work is the combination of Samuel Stennett’s funeral sermon for John Gill and Benjamin Wallin’s address at the Interment. Wallin eulogizes Gill more than he typically does in a sermon, perhaps because this is the Interment. He has high praises for Gill and insists that Gill regularly called people to the importance and necessity of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He concludes his address in his usual manner with an admonition to believe the gospel.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The blessedness of the man, whom the Lord shall find diligent in his station*. London: J. Buckland, 1773.

This is a funeral sermon for the deacon Job Heath whose children were in attendance, and whom Wallin addresses directly in the Dedication expressing his sincere desire for them to follow their father’s example and publicly embrace God’s salvation. Wallin’s sermon text is taken from Matthew 24:46. Wallin acknowledges that there are various ways that the coming of the Lord can be legitimately understood, but urges his hearers to consider that the passage is speaking of the Lord’s coming at each individual’s death, and that to be found doing the Master’s work at this time is what the master seeks. Wallin notes that the life of faith is a life of work and diligent action seeking to do the things which God loves; he discusses the tension between faith and works. He also addresses the perseverance of the saints, and how a person’s salvation is also a working out of God’s decree so that the good works would be done which were foreordained. Wallin notes that the heavenly reward is not a reward of debt but of grace that comes solely from the munificence of the Heavenly Father. He clearly denounces attitudes of legality and trusting in one’s own righteousness, as well as an attitude of licentiousness and antinomianism.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The happiness of the saints in a separate state*. London: J. Buckland, 1773.

This funeral sermon was preached at Hitchin, in Herts, upon the death of Rev. Samuel James and was based upon the text of Psalm 16:2. Wallin relates that pastor James was called to the congregation when their prior pastor, Reverend John Needham, one of Wallin’s tutors, was taken home to be with the Lord. Wallin observes how it strikes us a strange that even those who are the proclaimers of life are overcome with the ravages of death. He then directs the congregation to consider the Psalm which he says points to Christ, and also to consider that he was the only one whose body was released from the bands of death, before it saw corruption. Wallin comments on the “popish” idea that Jesus’ soul descended into hell during his three-day rest in the tomb somewhat in passing. Once again in a funeral sermon



Wallin draws out the comfort that awaits the faithful departed in that they will be present with God in a local sense. Wallin next reflect on what the nearer presence of God means for the Christian and speaks of the joy that will arise from beholding Christ's shining face. Another element of the departed's joy will be satisfaction in the perfection of righteousness that God has accomplished in him. Additionally, joy will flow from a new understanding of God's providence as it becomes fully know how God worked things to the good of the believers and for his glory. Wallin also soothes the consciences of those who mourn, assuring them that to not mourn would be most unnatural and unchristian. A Christian's grief does not go to excess, but the grief does cause him to give thanks to God for his gifts and to call upon him for support. Wallin commends the deceased and the congregation for the longevity of their relationship with one another and encourages them to now return thanks for the good ministers that they have been blessed with, and to not take lightly the duty of selecting the next pastor. Wallin also recalls to the congregation that some years back there at been a significant increase in the congregation with many being baptized, and he addresses the congregation lest there be any who at that time had not joined through baptism that they would repent and come to the footstool of God's mercy seat. He asks the congregation not to make their late pastor testify against them on the last day.

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. *The Church a habitation of God, through the Spirit*. London: J. Buckland, 1774.

This sermon was occasioned when Dr. Gill's church called Rev. Rippon to succeed him and there was a division among the church over this choice which led to the creation of a new congregation. A meeting was held for all members of Gill's congregation at Maze Pond. Dr. Stennett addressed those who were departing to form the new congregation, and Benjamin Wallin addressed them with a sermon. At the conclusion of the meeting, Rev. Rippon closed the service with prayer, and the separation was brought about amicably. Wallin preached from the text of Ephesians 2:22. Wallin admonishes the new members of the new congregation to fix their minds upon the new constitution and the sacred duties to which it obligates them. Wallin acknowledges both the universal catholic church but says that Paul is writing specifically to a local visible church and his instruction are valuable to each local church. Wallin observes that the local church is to have union within itself – not just an external union, but a union and communion with one another in heart and soul. Wallin warns against the opinions of some that despise church order and says that those who keep the ordinances of the Lord maintain a building as designed and set upon the Chief Cornerstone, while those who despise church order cause deformity within the house. Wallin says that his primary purpose is to address the design for which God intends the church to be his building, and joyously announces that its purpose is to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. Wallin stresses how this building cannot consist in isolation and was never intended to stand alone. God's Spirit unites his members one to another in the local congregation and is truly and properly present among them in an invisible spiritual manner. Great comfort is offered by Wallin when he commends orderly communion and fellowship as he observes that God has promised to dwell with his people, and asks who will dwell where he finds no delight? Wallin also briefly touches on patriotism and the duty of a citizen as he asserts that the truest patriots of a nation are those who are concerned to build up the temple of the Lord. Wallin also reminds the people that because they are the sanctuary of the Lord, they will be mindful to not mingle themselves with the things that will defile that sanctuary. Finally, Wallin encourages the congregation to seek to multiply, but not by stripping members from other

congregations, and to seek the fellowship of her sister congregations when possible so that they might bless one another.

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. *The fountain of life freely opened to the willing-hearted sinner*. London: J. Buckland, 1774.

This is a funeral sermon for Elizabeth MacGowan, who was the sixteen-year-old daughter of the Rev. MacGowan and was preached by Wallin at MacGowan's church near Devonshire Square from the text of Revelation 22:17. Wallin points the grieving to the gospel of Christ which flows with everlasting consolation. He assures them that no contrite or humble soul should be dejected or despair because Christ has invited whosoever wills to take of the water of life freely. Wallin states that this gospel should be preached to everyone so that every sensible sinner will discern the work of the Spirit in his heart causing him to be willing to receive God's gracious gift. Wallin suggest that each divine command is also a warrant, and that the preaching of the gospel is the manner in which the command and warrant is set before the individual. The one who is spiritually thirsty and commanded to drink is the one who is convinced of his ignorance, guilt, and pollution and therefore ready to perish. The taking of the water is by the way of believing and by faith applying the grace of the gospel to himself. This gospel call is for everyone, though not all will heed the call. Those who are called have no merit or good in themselves which would has contributed to their calling, but it is entirely of grace. Sensible sinners are given the discernment to understand that they do indeed will to take of the water, and are therefore assured that the water is for them. Wallin specifically rejects the doctrine of eternal justification and insists that God's children were reconciled by the atoning blood of Jesus. Wallin calls to sinners to believe and warns that it is not sufficient only to be convinced that one is a sinner, but that one must also have faith to believe that notwithstanding his sin, Jesus has opened the way of salvation for him. Wallin concludes with an observation about the hesitancy of youth to present themselves to the church, in part, because more senior believers whom the youth look up to have not deemed themselves ready, and thus, by their example they hesitate to profess. Such was the case with Elizabeth, who, in conversation with her father on her deathbed, enlightened him to a habit of faith that existed far prior to her public confession. Wallin encourages parents not to forsake their duty to train up their children and make them familiar with the loving promises of God. Wallin concludes the sermon with a hymn with a strong gospel message.

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. *The popular concern in the choice of representatives*. London: J. Buckland, 1774.

This sermon was delivered both at Maze Pond and also at the Monkwel Street Lecture on October 9, 1774 prior to a national election. This sermon touches on the duty of Christian citizens and is drawn from the text of Isaiah 1:26. Wallin notes that the Kingdom of God is the proper subject of the pulpit, and that politics and philosophy ought not to intrude as the principal subject, however Wallin appeals to both the apostles' and Jesus' example of touching on the things of the time, to justify applying the Scriptural principles to a modern question of duty. Wallin reminds this audience that they owe it to themselves and to their posterity to look to the improvement of the state at the present juncture in order to continue to hold dear the things which God has given, including the freedom of preaching the gospel. He continues to remind his hearers of the nature of the constitution which they live under, and the responsibilities that are entailed with that civil constitution. Wallin addresses seven pillars, or links in a chain, that he believes a Christian should consider as the election approaches. They are: 1) That civil Magistrates and Counsellors are essential to the existence of a people; 2) That in the beginning of a

State her great mean are, for the most part, wise, good, and true; 3) That the counsellors of a nation may in time be corrupt, and prove unjust and cruel; 4) That the opportunity for the wicked to ascend into power, must be owing to the degeneracy of the populace; 5) That while evil counsellors have the sway,, a sinful nation or city cannot recover its purity and character; 6) that a restoration of discreet faithful judges and senators, is alone from the Most High; 7) That this blessing is not to be expected until, by some means, a national repentance and reformation, is procured. Wallin concludes the sermon will a passionate call to arms that is focused on serving the Lord, but includes doing one's duty to choose representatives who will work toward revival.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Memoirs of a gentleman lately deceased*. London: J. Buckland, 1774.

This work is a memoir that was constructed by Wallin after the death of the unnamed gentlemen who came to faith on his deathbed and requested that his story be related as a warning to others. In the preface, Wallin addresses some of the objections that he knows that the work will face because of its relaying of a deathbed conversion and the license that some may take - to take for granted that they too may likewise have a similar opportunity. He also addresses doubters that question whether any signs may be evident of regeneration on a deathbed. Wallin warns of the great danger of presuming upon God's grace without actually repenting and trusting upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ alone. Wallin describes the gentlemen's youth and that although he was made familiar with the gospel as he aged he "wandered away from what he was taught, cast away fear, neglected prayer, and associated with skeptical persons until his beliefs were contrary to the testimony of God." Even so, the man continued to attend worship, and his hypocrisy was undetected by his fellow members. It was not until his deathbed that the terror of his rebellion and hypocrisy struck him and he confessed to his friends, family, and Wallin, his guilt and terror, but also of his new-found trust in his Savior's forgiveness. Wallin concludes with a guided inquiry into the evidences of this man's self-examination and demonstration of the fruits of contrition and repentance as compared to those who continue to despise or presume upon God's grace to the very end. Wallin ends with a gospel admonition to repent and fall down at the Savior's feet.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of penitent transgressors, exemplified and vindicated*. London: George Keith, 1775.

In this large work, Wallin addresses in four parts the narrative of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15. Appended to that discussion are also two discourses that address the penitent woman in Simon the Pharisees house from Luke 7. Wallin asserts in his preface the reason is insufficient for bringing a man to salvation and insists upon the revelation of the gospel to work as the ministry of reconciliation. Wallin asks his reader to consider the grace of God and his willingness to save even the most vile of sinners, and then asks if there is "an exclusive line in the proclamations of grace?" indicating his willingness to preach the gospel to all. Wallin explains that he is not writing this work as a critique of anyone but to "illustrate and justify divine mercy bestowed on even very great sinners." Wallin states that while he certainly touches upon the doctrine of repentance, his principal aim has not been that, but to point to "the encouragement there is in the gospel for a penitent sinner." As Wallin opens the parable, he suggests that the two brothers are representatives of all of humanity which can either be classed with having a libertine, or self-righteous attitude. Wallin works through the parable in a similar plain-style manner to his sermons but on a much grander scale, with the exposition of certain verses taking up whole discourses without ever turning to the application or improvement of the text which comes in

later discourses, with the exception however of a brief admonition at the conclusion of each discourse. Wallin addresses throughout the work, both in the body of the text and in the footnotes, the saving influence of the Spirit to bring about regeneration and repentance – as such this work is an important resource for understanding Wallin’s soteriology. Wallin articulates clearly why the gospel is and must be the means of grace that God uses in the calling of the unregenerate and thereby provides an argument for the preaching of free grace to all people. Wallin asks his readers to be moved with compassion for their lost neighbors and to “wrestle” with them with the gospel so that his understanding might be opened. Wallin also discusses the nature of righteousness received in justification and distinguishes between a legal imputed righteousness and moral righteousness that comes about through the Spirit’s sanctifying influence as he speaks about the “best robe” that the Father provides for the prodigal. Wallin also suggests that the “fatted calf” is to be understood as the body of Christ crucified and given for the communion of God and man, and for the ongoing nourishment of the faith in the table of the Lord. Wallin discusses at length the necessity of divine change in order to bring about repentance. He also differentiates between legal and evangelical repentance and insists that evangelical repentance is something that is the “sinner’s own act” which he freely performs as a consequence of the means of grace that God has used to awaken him to his lost estate. Wallin includes an argument against sinners who would use election as a deterministic excuse to have not come to the Lord. Wallin also includes a discussion on the mystery of the feast and relates it to the Christians’ enjoyment of the Lord’s Supper. Wallin warns of the pride of the elder son, and while acknowledging that impenitent sinners cannot be welcomed into the fellowship of the church, those who have repented, no matter how base they formerly were, are to be admitted. Lest the truths that Wallin has argued for from the parable be dismissed because it was dependent upon an interpretation of a parable, Wallin uses the final two discourses to substantiate his doctrine from Jesus’ own interaction with the penitent woman and the self-righteous Simon.

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. *The case of a fallen professor, stated and considered*. London: J. Buckland, 1775.

This sermon was based upon the text of Proverbs 25:26. This work is unusual in that it does not contain a preface that introduces the purpose of the work as is typical of all of Wallin’s writings. Wallin opens the text in his usual plain style and notes that the text relates the case of a righteous man who falls into sin, and that it is not an indication of complete apostasy, which he asserts does not happen because of the Perseverance of the saints. Wallin warns against using the fall into sin of someone to determine whether or not they are eternally lost, but does not that it is a warning against merely a formal profession. He also holds out the highest standard for those who will be called to be ministers in the church; not that a fallen person cannot be restored and returned to fellowship, but the office of the ministry must remain for the blameless. Wallin also warns against a false understanding of Perseverance which holds that sin cannot harm a believer and asserts that nothing could be further from the truth, while it may not at the last rob him of salvation, it can destroy him and drive him to the grave in shame. Wallin concludes with a strong admonition against licentiousness and antinomianism. He also instructs the church on how it ought to handle the case of a fallen professor in private (when possible) so as not to do harm to the witness of the church.

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. *The ancient believers' transition from mortality to life*. London: J. Buckland, 1779.

This is a funeral sermon preached upon the decease of Mrs. Hannah Munn on the text of Job 5:26. Wallin addresses the subject of righteousness and affirms that good works, nor internal holiness has anything to do with the justification of the sinner which comes solely from the righteousness imputed to him from Christ Jesus. In this sermon Wallin speaks quite frequently about how this woman's age had brought about in her a ripeness of her faith and prepared her for her soul to ascend to Jesus' side. He instructs that true Christians are not indifferent to the increasing of the fruits of righteousness in the lives, but through tribulation and trials has become more and more rooted in the love and grace of God. Wallin concludes with a gospel admonition.

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. *Satan rebuked and the saint defended*. London: James McGowen, 1781.

This is the funeral sermon for the Rev. John MacGowan who was pastor of the church at Devonshire Square, whose daughter Elizabeth had passed away at age 16 and for whom Wallin had also preached and published a funeral sermon titled *The Fountain of Life Freely Opened*. Wallin includes the Interment address with this work which was preached by Samuel Stennett. Wallin's sermon was based on the text of Zechariah 3:2. As Wallin takes up the subject of a burning brand plucked from the fire, he notes that this is a fitting description for all of God's elect who are justly under the condemnation of their sins until his gracious rescue. He also points to the Savior's willingness to come to his chosen's defense against the accusations of Satan. Wallin affirms that the election of grace was from eternity, but also that it included in it a fulfillment in time. (this is an indirect argument against justification from eternity) Wallin also sets forth the doctrine of Perseverance as a comfort that God is willing to perfectly complete the work that he has begun. Wallin expresses his belief in the efficacy of preaching as a means which God uses to pluck perishing sinners from the fire. Wallin concludes with an admonition for the church and her officers to exert themselves in their stations toward the building up of the Temple of God and to not fall into the temptation of forsaking the regular assembling of themselves but to diligently seek to set a man over them to continue the work of God in their midst.

## APPENDIX 3

### JOHN BRINE'S AND BENJAMIN WALLIN'S SERMON OUTLINES OF 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1

John Brine, *The Knowledge of the Future Glory: The Support of the Saints, in Present Troubles*, (London: John Ward, 1759).

Introduction: Your pastor desired me to improve the text

Improvement:

1. A present house, or building
  1. The human body is earthly
  2. Our body is called a tabernacle, which suggest the short duration of our mortal frame
  3. The body must suffer a dissolution
2. A Future one
  1. The soul is distinct from the body
  2. The soul is capable of subsisting and acting without the body
  3. The souls of the pious, will be in a happy state, immediately after death
    1. the Souls of the departed saints, are absolutely free from sin
    2. Grace will be perfected
    3. The saints will enjoy most near, uninterrupted, and endless communion with the Father, Son, and blessed Spirit
      1. This state is a building of God
        1. He removes all impediments, which lie in the way of our coming to the enjoyment thereof
        2. A right and title to future glory is of God
        3. God in infinite goodness prepares us for the enjoyment of future glory
        4. He preserves the saints until their arrival unto this state of blessedness
        5. God is the fountain and object of future glory
      2. It is not made with hands
        1. None could remove the impediments
        2. No man is able to acquire a right to future happiness
        3. We cannot prepare ourselves for the enjoyment of the heavenly estate
        4. It is not in our power to preserve ourselves, unto that happy state
      3. This state is eternal in the heavens

3. The Apostle knew, that there is a future building, and that he had a title to it
  1. He had a certain knowledge, that there is such a state of felicity
  2. The Apostle knew, that he had a title to the future state of glory
    1. A meetness for its enjoyment, is a certain evidence of a title to it
    2. This may be known by the first fruits of it
    3. The earnest of heaven is a sure evidence of a right unto it
    4. By the witness of the Spirit we may obtain this knowledge and persuasion

Memorial:

1. Pastor asked that there be no enlargement upon his character
2. He was meek, humble, modest, perhaps too modest, wise and learned; diligent in study
3. In his last long illness, the truths which he preached to you were his own support, consolation and unspeakable joy
4. I decline to address his surviving relations on this sad occasion as it is too tender and delicate
5. Your pastor wanted me to recommend to you to endeavor by all possible means to cultivate love, Christian friendship, and harmony among yourselves

Benjamin Wallin, *An Eternal Mansion Prepared in the Heavens for the Righteous*, (London: J. Buckland, 1769).

Introduction: The loss of a pillar in our spiritual house

Improvement: This divine building is the universal expectation of the righteous

1. A certain event or period referred to
2. We have the certain prospect of a Christian when this comes to pass
  1. The subject of this change is obvious, namely the human body
  2. The believer has a glorious prospect when this change takes place
  3. To search the foundation of this hope, or shew on what principle a Christian may be confident of his future inheritance
    1. It is certain that the Father hath provided an habitation for his saints
    2. The Christian is prepared for this glory, in his eternal separation unto it, and by the Spirit of holiness and grace
    3. This hope stands confirmed by the promise
    4. The way is clear for the believer's entrance into heaven, by the sacrifice of Christ
    5. That the Lord hath gone before and taken possession
    6. The earnest hope and desire of the saints after this inheritance with the Father, which is of the Spirit, is a certain moral evidence of their having it in store
4. To point out the transcendent excellency of this divine mansion, compared with the believer's present abode
  1. In its magnificence and beauty
  2. There is no comparison between our dwelling in the flesh, and this divine house, in point of *situation*
  3. The excellency of this future mansion, compared with that in which we now dwell is great in respect of *duration*
  4. The celestial mansion is infinity preferable in point of *fruition*
5. To the happiness enjoyed by the saints in glory
  1. The heavenly joys or this divine abode, lie much in the *presence of God*
  2. Another enjoyment of the saints, which is certain and peculiar to the heavenly state, is that of a *subjective righteousness, or perfection in themselves*
  3. In this celestial state the saints communion with God and his church, is universal and unmolested
6. To consider the influence of this blessed prospect
  1. It will lessen the weight of ever affliction
  2. A prospect of this divine mansion means the subject from inordinate affection to things on the earth
  3. To observe that it is evident from the connection in our text, with what immediately follows, that in contemplation of this glory, the



heart is drawn out after God, and a longing desire of admission into his presence

Summary:

Uses:

1. There is no intermediate state
2. We should keep in mind our departure out of this world, which is not a melancholy prospect to the Christian
3. The gospel is precious for furnishing those who obey it with a certain hope of a mansion in heaven
4. We must see to it that we come not short of this inheritance of the saints - gospel admonition

Transition:

Memorial:

1. He was an eminent instance of goodness and grace
2. He was meek and benevolent
3. He was sometimes depressed under a deep sense of his own unworthiness, which he ever maintained, yet, through grace, his general habit was serenity and cheerfulness
4. In the floods of great waters, the Lord was his hiding place; he repeatedly assured me
5. For a season he was tossed up and down, but in the tumult of dying nature he held fast his hope
6. A solemn and voluntary parting (from his wife) by the will of God, leaving a noble testimony of their dependance on the promise

APPENDIX 4

LETTER OF FEBRUARY 4, 1748, FROM BENJAMIN  
WALLIN TO MR. THOMAS PRATTEN

To: Thomas Pratten

Brother Pratten,

With grief I observe your frequent absence from your place in the house of God being persuaded it must arise from some indulgence which if continued in will be attended with sorrowful consequences to yourself and a trouble to your fellow professors. When I consider your situation and circumstances, the vows you once made and the peculiar obligations you are under I can make no reasonable excuse for your constant omission of the weekly evening assemblies for prayer and spiritual edification. Those opportunities are held at such hours as consist at least sometimes with your attendance had you any inclination to enjoy the privilege. But it is now going on of 7 years since you made a profession and I scarce ever see you at one of them out of some many hundred opportunities of this kind as which you have been absent considering how near you live to the doors of the sanctuary. This \_\_\_\_ if you are not chargeable with the neglect of some \_\_\_\_\_ such neglect cannot fail of offending the Lord and injuring your own soul.

How much less can I reconcile your absence on the more public stated (reasons) of the \_\_\_\_ . You seem of late to satisfy yourself with attending once and I am sorry to add, you are then too often observed to sleep away part of the time, melancholy case indeed. In testimony of my affection and faithfulness I take this method of exhorting you to awake out of this lethargy and intreat you to consider how unworthy this is of your character your church and I hopes you profess. I tremble at the apprehension of your being \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ to those temptations thus betray you into such conduct for he that has put

his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God and him that draws back says our mighty Redeemer my \_\_\_\_ shall have no pleasure in him. God forbid this should ever be \_\_\_\_\_ upon you. I pray you hasten and return to your duty and thereby deliver thyself and prevent any public disgrace. Besides all other obligations to adorn your profession, remember it was your relation to the Church that occasioned you being put in possession of this place you enjoy which many gracious people would esteem a comfortable provision for self and family. I cannot but remind you of this not only as your pastor but also as the instrument of introducing you to your Savior and especially as I then received assurances from you of your endeavor to honor Christ by such a \_\_\_\_ . God knows how \_\_\_\_ you have answered, this must be left to your own conscience by me. I pray God incline your heart to his testimonies and desire you would let me see you as soon as you can, for I expect an answer without delay, having at heart your \_\_\_\_\_ welfare both in this world and that which is to come and desire to see you adorn this doctrine of God our Savior in all things without which your profession is vain and I must give up my account of you with grief which will not be profitable to you soul in the day of our Lord Jesus.

Your Affectionate Minister,

B. Wallin

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## ABSTRACT

### BENJAMIN WALLIN: A RESPECTABLE MINISTER'S PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON

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This dissertation introduces the work of the eighteenth-century Particular Baptist London minister Benjamin Wallin. After providing an overview of Wallin's life and ministry, the dissertation turns to an examination of his teaching and preaching. Benjamin Wallin was a known close associate of John Gill and John Brine, who have traditionally been associated with the "high" Calvinist movement of the eighteenth century. Accordingly, Benjamin Wallin has also been linked to the movement by association. This dissertation examines the textual evidence of Wallin's sermons to argue that Benjamin Wallin was not a "high" Calvinist. Furthermore, upon review of the sermons, the dissertation also establishes Benjamin Wallin as one who would affirm the thesis of the "modern question" and would readily preach the "offer" of the gospel to unbelievers. Through the use of form criticism, specifically genre criticism, Wallin's sermons are compared to those of John Brine to identify the homiletical fidelity of each man's sermons with the established sermonic genres of the Protestant church.

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