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Heaven and Hell

(12) In Puritan Theology

CARL R. TRUEMAN

POPULAR views of Puritan understanding of heaven and hell tend to assume two things: that the Puritans were almost pathologically obsessed with hell; and that their thinking built upon their Reformation heritage and thus marked a distinctive break with Western (Roman) Catholic theology. In fact, close examination of Puritan writings reveals that Puritan thinking balances its teaching on hell with significant teaching on heaven, and that Puritans also drew extensively upon pre-Reformation models in their discussion of the after-life. As such Puritan eschatology offers evidence of significant continuities between the Reformed orthodoxy of the seventeenth-century and the scholasticism of the High Middle Ages. Furthermore their teaching on heaven and hell is also shaped by the social tensions of their own times.¹

1. Heaven and Hell in the Westminster Confession of Faith

The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), 1647, epitomised Puritan views on the whole scope of theology, and indeed still continues as the subordinate standard of faith for most of today's Presbyterian churches. In seventeenth-century England it was without doubt the most influential Reformed confession upon which other Calvinistic groups based their own creeds, the most important being the Independents' Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658, and the Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689. As such the WCF set the broad dogmatic boundaries within which heaven and hell could be discussed. Discussion of humanity's ultimate destinations is located in chapters 32 and 33, the last two sections, which are entitled 'Of the state of men after death, and of the resurrection of the dead' and 'Of the last judgment'. The two sections are very succinct, only three paragraphs each, and make only a very few points which are, perhaps, remarkable for their caution and non-speculative nature: at death, the soul immediately departs to be with God; those alive at the Last Day will be translated directly to the Last Judgment; those who have already died will be raised with resurrection bodies; those in Christ will be raised to honour, those without Christ to dishonour; each individual will be judged for what they have said or done; then the righteous will pass into heaven where they will receive 'that fulness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord', while the wicked 'shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His Power'. Chapter 33 ends by emphasising that the timing of this Last Day is hidden and known to no-one but God.

There are two points of note in these brief chapters. The first is the lack of polemic. Purgatory is dismissed in a single line at the end of 32.1,² and the closing comment concerning the timing of the Last Day is clearly guarding against wild eschatological speculation. Apart from these the WCF restricts itself to positive affirmation of doctrine. While they obviously felt it necessary

to reject purgatory, the Westminster Divines must have felt that this was a dead issue upon which it was not worth expending a great deal of polemical vigour.

The second point is the brevity and open-ended nature of the WCF's statements, which is perhaps inevitable in any confessional document. Of the fact that heaven will be eternal bliss and hell eternal torment there can be no doubt, but beyond that the WCF has little to say. Indeed, treatment of these issues is even more succinct in the Shorter Catechism, another of the Westminster Standards, where there is no reference to purgatory whatsoever, hell referred to only as a consequence of the Fall (Question 19), and heaven dealt with in two questions, 37 and 38. Neither document therefore exhibits anything resembling an over-emphasis on the afterlife, let alone upon hell and damnation. Nor do they give much specific content to the ideas of the afterlife, leaving plenty of room for Puritans subscribing to the WCF to use their theological imaginations to fill out the picture. This of course is what they did, even sometimes adapting pre-Reformation ideas to fit a Reformation framework.

2. Heaven and Hell and the medieval heritage

The most significant recent writing on the theology of Puritanism and its continental counterpart, Reformed Orthodoxy, has noted the significant use of medieval language and patterns by Reformed theologians, and the doctrines of heaven and hell are no exception to this.³ The most famous Puritan treatise on the subject, Richard Baxter's *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, is a case in point, heavily dependent upon scholastic thinking for its form and content. Indeed, in the light of a recent attempt to argue that the theology of the famous divine, John Owen, is thoroughly vitiated by his adoption of Aristotelian categories, while that of Baxter, for all its superficial Aristotelianism, is in no way 'scholastic',⁴ it is tempting to describe *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* as the greatest application of Aristotelian physics to the service of Christian piety in the history of the church. Hyperbole this may be, but not by much. The whole treatise is framed around an understanding of the Christian life as one moving towards a final goal, and the concepts used are profoundly Aristotelian. Baxter describes heaven as humanity's final goal, towards which we move during this life. Baxter's notion of God as the prime mover and of heaven as the goal or final cause of motion which comes first in the logical order but last in terms of chronology, gives his treatise its basic structure and also reflects his implicit Aristotelian understanding of causation.⁵ The Christian's ultimate rest is described as primarily the enjoyment of God, the chief good, a notion with which Thomas Aquinas would have been in complete agreement.⁶

Baxter's adoption of an Aristotelian causal structure is both a profound point of continuity with medieval perspectives and scarcely untypical for a Reformed theologian, given Reformed theology's remarkable resistance to Cartesianism and the fact that Newtonian physics had yet to be born. What is perhaps more surprising is the willingness of Puritans to adopt the very distinctions of medieval scholasticism in order to clarify the nature of the afterlife. Speaking of hell with reference to question 29 of *The Shorter Catechism*, Thomas Watson defines the punishment as twofold:

Original sin without repentance exposes to hell and damnation. This is the second death, Rev. 20:14. Two things are in it: (1) *Poena damni*, Punishment of loss. The soul is banished from the beatific presence of God, in whose presence is fullness of joy. (2) *Poena*

sensus, Punishment of sense. The sinner feels scalding vials of God's wrath . . .⁷

This is a classic medieval distinction concerning hell⁸ and, as if to underline the Catholic nature of this very point, Watson goes on to quote Cardinal Bellarmine as support. Even if the Puritans considered Catholic and medieval teaching on the afterlife as defective as regards purgatory, they certainly appreciated the conceptual vocabulary which it offered to them. Here a scholastic distinction allows Watson to emphasise the twofold nature of hell as both loss of God and positive torment. It is significant, however, that while the Puritans were happy to adopt scholastic models and Aristotelian concepts to elucidate notions of the afterlife, they did not allow these to lead them into discussion of the philosophical problems which these raise. The most obvious example from the Middle Ages is the notion of suffering in the afterlife: between death and the resurrection the soul was a pure immaterial form; because matter was, on an Aristotelian view, potential, its presence was essential if change, of which physical suffering was a part, was to take place; thus disembodied souls could not suffer physically but only intellectually.⁹ This point is not picked up by the Puritans, a sign perhaps that their use of scholastic thought did not lead them into being as philosophical and 'rationalistic', and into marginalising Christ, as some scholars would like to maintain. Indeed, the medieval scholastic emphasis upon the intellectual nature of heaven forms a key strand in Puritan thinking on heaven, but one which strengthens rather than weakens the christological focus of Puritan theology.

3. The Christological focus

The Reformed teaching on heaven rested upon two axioms: life in heaven was the perfection of life on earth and therefore continuous with it; and *finitum non capax infiniti*, 'the finite cannot comprehend the infinite', a phrase never used by Calvin but which reflects an important aspect of his thought and is commonly known as the *extra calvinisticum*.¹⁰

In terms of unity, the life of the believer on earth and of the saint in heaven are united by their common foundation in Christ: the believer apprehends Christ by faith, while the saint apprehends Christ by sight.¹¹ In both cases the object is the same, the glorified Christ, but the mode of apprehension is different. This reflects the biblical contrast between faith and sight. It is in discussions of the latter that the *extra calvinisticum* and the medieval heritage come to play an important role in Puritan thought.

The idea of the *extra calvinisticum* has important implications in two areas of particular relevance in this context: christology and epistemology. Christologically, it refers to the fact that the Logos is manifested in the human person of Christ but is not fully contained therein. Epistemologically, it underlines the idea that human minds can never know God as infinite but only in accordance with their own finite capacity. Despite Lutheran claims to the contrary this whole notion is no Calvinistic extra but an integral part of the Western Augustinian tradition.

In Puritan theology the *extra calvinisticum* serves as the foundation for heaven's christological focus. Glorified saints are still finite and thus must continue to know God in a finite way. Thus their knowledge of God cannot be immediate knowledge of his infinite essence but mediated to them through the glorified humanity of the resurrected Christ. This is a particularly important

point to grasp, because it underlines the cruciality of the incarnation to historic Reformed theology even within the eschaton, a point missed by at least one influential modern Reformed theologian in his criticism of traditional Reformed christology.¹² As Thomas Watson declares:

Believers at death shall gain the glorious sight of God. They shall see him (1) Intellectually with the eyes of their mind, which divines call the beatific vision . . . (2) They shall behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ . . . Through Christ's flesh, as through a transparent glass, some bright rays and beams of the Godhead shall display themselves to glorified eyes. The sight of God through Christ will be very delightful; for the terror of God's essence will be taken away; his majesty will be mixed with beauty and sweetened with clemency.¹³

Here Watson points to a number of interesting aspects of Puritan teaching on heaven. There is the notion of the beatific vision which again gives evidence of the influence of Catholic scholastic concepts upon Reformed thinkers. There is also the fact that the vision is intellectual, a sign that the saint's human faculties have been restored to their pristine order. Elsewhere Watson expresses the richness of this intellectual vision by stating that it will involve both the enjoyment of God and some kind of transformation into his image.¹⁴ Nevertheless, he warns that God's essence is such that saints can only know it through the flesh of Christ.¹⁵ The same ideas are expressed by John Owen in his treatise, *Christologia*:

The person of Christ, and therein his human nature, shall be *the eternal object of divine glory*, praise, and worship. The life of glory is not a mere state of contemplation. Vision is the principle of it, as faith is of the life of grace. Love is the great vital acting of that principle, in adherence unto God with eternal delight. But this is active in it also. It shall be exercised in the continual ascription and assignation of glory, praise, and honour unto God, and the glorious exercise of all sorts of grace therein; hereof the Lamb, the person of Christ, is the eternal object with that of the Father and the Spirit; the *human nature* in the Son, admitted into the communion of the same eternal glory.¹⁶

Such statements, while thoroughly consistent with the christocentric presuppositions of Puritan theology, do seem to contradict other references to heavenly contemplation also involving some vision of hell. For instance, in *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* Baxter makes the following comment:

What an astonishing thought it will be . . . [t]o look down upon hell, and see the vast difference that grace hath made betwixt us and them! To see the inheritance there, which we were born to, so different from that which we are adopted to! What pangs of love will it cause within us to think, 'Yonder was the place that sin would have brought me to!' . . . Doubtless this will be our everlasting admiration, that so rich a crown should fit the head of so vile a sinner!¹⁷

Astonishing indeed – to imagine that heavenly bliss will involve witnessing the torments of the damned, even if this does serve to emphasise God’s free grace towards the saints – but no doubt Baxter would have regarded objections based upon human criteria as inadequate for judging the nature of the afterlife, a useful device for rendering doctrinal statements above criticism.¹⁸ Bunyan too makes a similar point: that heaven is visible from hell and forms part of the damned’s torment. Using rhyming verse which to modern ears gives the sentiment expressed a certain levity which is inappropriate to the subject matter, he declares that:

Out of these brazen bars they may
The Saints in glory see;
But this will not their grief allay,
But to them torment be.¹⁹

The idea that hell is visible from heaven and *vice versa*, while having only marginal support in the Bible and standing in a problematic relation to Reformed christology, is clearly a very emotive image and points to the rich rhetorical potential of hell as a subject, potential most (in)famously tapped by Jonathan Edwards, who will be discussed in the final section.

While visions of hell are not uncommon in Puritan treatments of heaven, it is the christological motif which flavours most Puritan writing on this subject and which provides the meeting-point for doctrine and piety. As Owen remarks:

He [Christ] leads not in heaven a life of mere glory, majesty, and blessedness, but a life of office, love, and care also. He lives as the *Mediator* of the church; as the King, Priest, and Prophet thereof. Hereon do our present safety and future eternal salvation depend.²⁰

Here Owen uses the classic Reformed notion of Christ’s threefold office to describe his activity in heaven. It is this threefold office, whereby Christ presently effects the salvation of the church, which makes heaven not simply significant for eschatology but for the Christian’s life here and now.²¹ Thus meditation upon Christ’s continuing work in heaven both underscores the fundamental unity of object for both saints on earth and in glory, and forms an important part of Puritan piety. Baxter recommended everyone to meditate frequently upon heaven, especially on the Lord’s Day, as a means of ensuring their soul’s health.²² Thomas Goodwin, in a tract entitled *The Heart of Christ in Heaven towards Sinners on Earth*, argued that meditation upon Christ’s work in heaven was useful for the following:

[T]o hearten and encourage believers to come more boldly to the throne of grace, unto such a Saviour and High Priest, when they shall know how sweetly and tenderly his heart, though he is now in his glory, is inclined towards them; and so to remove that great stone of stumbling . . . that Christ being now absent . . . they therefore cannot tell how to come to treat with him about their salvation so freely, and with that hopefulness to obtain, as those poor sinners did, who were here on earth with him.²³

Here we find the union of Reformed concern for doctrine and for piety. Richard Muller has convincingly demonstrated that Christ’s mediatorial work is one of the basic elements and motive-forces behind the development of Reformed

scholasticism in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and here is the same doctrine operating as a key part of Puritan piety.²⁴ If nothing else this should surely serve to raise doubts about drawing simplistic conclusions about the opposition between scholasticism and piety, doctrine and life. In Puritanism the intention at least was to integrate doctrinal and practical concerns, and heaven is one such example of this. The development of the threefold notion of Christ's mediation is something which does not take place in isolation from practical concerns but which is vitally connected to the believer's assurance and thus, within a Reformed framework, to the whole practical outworking of the Christian life. This connection between doctrine and practical action is also true, in a very different way, of Puritan teaching on hell.

4. Hell

Puritan teaching on hell is inevitably formulated as a stark contrast to that on heaven. The most obvious difference is that, while heaven consists of the enjoyment of God's presence, hell involves being deprived of him for all eternity. As George Swinnock says in his *Heaven and Hell Epitomised*, 'the loss of God is hell'.²⁵ While believers enjoy union with God the unbeliever has no such union, and this is the essence of hell.²⁶ Hell and heaven are not therefore strictly parallel: heaven has a christological reference, while hell has none. This leads to a certain qualitative asymmetry between what happens in each place, as Baxter points out:

It seems the saints' joy shall be greater than the damned's torment; for their torment is the torment of creatures, prepared for the devil and his angels: but our joy is the joy of our Lord.²⁷

Here, of course, Baxter also points towards the most important aspect of Puritan teaching on hell: the notion of divine punishment. In this connection there are a number of points which must be made.

The first concerns the language used about hell. The Puritans were well aware that human language about the afterlife, both heaven and hell, was inadequate to express the realities intended.²⁸ John Owen is clearly aware of this when he argues that hell-fire refers to God's wrath, thus pointing to the essentially metaphorical nature of the language.²⁹ Nevertheless this theoretical caution did not in practice stop the Puritans from writing on hell using the language of physical suffering, while devoting little time to reflecting on the limits of this approach. The results are therefore frequently reminiscent of the famous sermon by the Catholic preacher in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

This also reveals another point about the language of hell: while heaven is discussed using the language of the visual, hell is discussed using the language of the physical suffering of the flesh. The reasons for the contrast are obvious: it reflects a basic contrast in the Bible's own language; it builds upon the medieval vocabulary of heaven and hell; it prevents heaven being conceived of in a carnal manner which might well have been regarded by the Puritans as pandering to human lust;³⁰ and it provides the preacher with a much richer rhetoric when dealing with hell, a rhetoric which was apparently often used to frighten individuals into serious soul-searching. The most famous example of this is, of course, Jonathan Edward's sermon of 1741, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.³¹

With its vivid imagery and apocalyptic tone, this sermon on Deuteronomy 32:35 effectively delayed the recognition of Edwards as America's most important philosopher and ensured that his reputation until recently was that of hell-fire-and-brimstone fundamentalist.³² Two things are remarkable about this sermon. The first is the vividness of the language, with its emphasis upon fire and physical suffering. This has been interpreted as a sign of the influence of John Locke's empiricist philosophy of language, with its close connection between meaning and sensation.³³ Edwards was the first American to read and appreciate the philosophical significance of Locke. There are certainly some similarities between Locke's theory of language and Edwards' use of language in his sermon: Locke stressed pleasure and pain being the most powerful sensations humans can experience, indicating that the words used to describe them are also the most effective;³⁴ Edwards' sermon abounded with such language. Nevertheless the whole issue of Edwards' dependence upon Locke is highly contentious and, given the general use of such language in discussions of heaven and hell in pre-Lockean Christian tradition, perhaps the most that can be said is that Locke's philosophy might have reinforced Edwards' approach on this issue.

The second point about the sermon is that to a large extent it is not the description of physical punishment which is most striking, but the feeling of total dependency upon God which Edwards engenders, a feeling made explicit in the title of another sermon, *God Glorified in Man's Dependence*.³⁵ Obviously aimed at emphasising the sinner's need to turn to God without delay, Edwards uses a series of graphic images to drive his point home:

'There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.' By the *mere* pleasure of God, I mean his *sovereign* pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment . . . The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back . . . [T]he pit is prepared, the furnace is now hot . . . The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them . . . The *devil* stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him . . . Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen . . . [N]atural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell.³⁶

It is this emphasis upon the uncertainty of the human condition and upon the potential imminence of hell, and not the descriptions of hellish torments, which makes Edwards' sermon so powerful and striking. God's sovereignty, not his wrath, is the primary point being stressed, and this is done not simply to thrill the congregation but to shatter their complacent attitude towards the afterlife. In this Edwards reflects a basic Puritan pastoral preoccupation with indifference towards hell amongst members of their communities and congregations, an indifference which was regarded as potentially lethal. Such is the case with the

central character in John Bunyan's *Life and Death of Mister Badman*. At the very start of the work, reference is made to the 'fearful death' of Badman although details are not specified.³⁷ The reader thus expects his end to be dreadful to behold. In fact Badman dies peacefully, 'as quietly as a Lamb', unaware that there is anything wrong.³⁸ It is his sheer ignorance of his own sinfulness and of the torments which lie before him that makes his death so horrific. While Edwards and Bunyan may have given this concern its most powerful literary expression, this perceived indifference of people towards hell lies behind most Puritan writing on the subject.³⁹

While the major concern of such emphasis on hell is to turn sinners towards God, there is also an obvious element of concern for social discipline: fear of hell acts as a restraint upon individual wickedness. For example, John Owen in *Vindiciae Evangelicae* attacks the Socinian John Biddle's rejection of hell as having terrible moral consequences because there would be nothing left to restrain people's sinful urges.⁴⁰ Behind such statements lay his rejection of the annihilationist position which had been put forward by Socinians such as the Dutch poet Dirk Camphuysen, who argued that it was belief in hell, not its rejection, that had the worst social consequences.⁴¹ Bunyan too argues for a similar view to Owen, saying that belief in hell is crucial to repentance,⁴² but it must always be remembered that the primary purpose which Puritans explicitly ascribed to the preaching of hell-fire was the driving of lost souls to Christ.⁴³

A further point concerning Puritan notions of hell is the lack of speculation amongst the orthodox Puritans concerning the notion of eternity itself. This may well reflect an implicit understanding of the inadequacy of temporally-conditioned language to describe something which had traditionally been understood as qualitatively different from time. Images used generally point towards an understanding of eternity as an infinite duration of time rather than demonstrating similarities with the scholastic notions of eternity as the simultaneous possession of perfect life or the lack of change, but it is scarcely legitimate to draw complex philosophy out of figures used in a pastoral context. The important thing was that hell and heaven were eternal, and that life did not cease at death but was transferred out of time into eternity. Even the radical Puritan John Milton, whose orthodoxy on many issues was highly dubious, believed in an eternity where the righteous were rewarded and the unrighteous punished eternally.⁴⁴ Indeed, his argument for locating hell outside of the world is based on the fact that the world is to be destroyed by fire at the end of time and that, if hell were somewhere on earth, such a conflagration would destroy it: 'If this were to happen it would be very nice for the damned, no doubt!'⁴⁵

Conclusion

When Puritan perspectives on the afterlife are examined, a number of points emerge. First, Puritan notions of the afterlife shed light upon the world in which they themselves lived. As radicals and rationalists arose to deny the reality of hellish torment, and as society itself went through the traumas of the seventeenth century, belief in hell came to function as a means of maintaining social discipline as well as of driving individuals to Christ.

Teaching on heaven and hell also gave expression to Puritan pastoral concerns: meditating upon Christ as mediator gave the believer hope and strength to live from day to day despite the world, the flesh, and the devil; while hell gave the preacher a means of goading his congregation into concern for their

souls. As such these aspects of Puritan eschatology are eloquent testimony to the Puritan notion that theology and doctrine were ultimately about living well.

Finally it is quite clear that, while standing in the tradition of a Reformation theology which precluded the need for an intermediate, purgatorial state after death, the Puritans still stood firmly within the broad Western tradition of theology whose roots went back well beyond the sixteenth century. In terms of the language and concepts used Puritan writers drew upon medieval scholasticism and Aristotelianism to give some content to thoughts of the afterlife. This is particularly true with reference to the notion of heaven as consisting in the beatific vision, an idea for which the Puritans are clearly indebted to patristic and medieval teaching on christology and eschatology. There is a sizable literature on the allegedly deleterious influence on Puritanism and Reformed Orthodoxy of medieval scholasticism and Aristotelianism, much of it based upon *a priori* models of interpretation influenced by nineteenth century German liberalism and, more recently, by Barth, rather than upon study of primary texts. Followers of the latter in particular have stressed that the intrusion of scholastic categories into Reformed orthodoxy disrupts the christological focus of the Reformed thinking of men such as Calvin. In fact I suspect that it merely disrupts the Barthian christocentrism which such scholars have only found in Calvin after first putting it there themselves. As an examination of Puritan views on heaven shows, scholastic notions of the beatific vision helped to make the christocentrism of Reformed views of the afterlife more, not less, explicit.

Notes

1. As there are at least two significant books on heaven and hell in seventeenth century English thought, in this article I have focused on areas which are either not covered or not emphasised in these works. For more wide-ranging discussion, see the following: D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London, 1964); and P. C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge, 1994).
2. 'Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.'
3. See R. A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics 1: Prolegomena to Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1987).
4. See A. C. Clifford, *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790* (Oxford, 1990).
5. Early on in his work, Baxter lists the presuppositions of his approach, which include the fact that humans have an end to move towards; that they are distant from this end; that this end is a known good; that they are moved towards this end by a superior moving cause, i.e., God: see *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* (London, 1815). The basic causal structure of Aristotelian physics is unmistakable.
6. See *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, p. 7.
7. *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 153.
8. See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* 2.33.2.1.
9. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a.77.8.
10. The phrase was originally a term of abuse used by Lutherans of Calvinists in the context of controversies over the christological differences between the two groups, particularly in the context of eucharistic theology. Two excellent discussions of the term and its theological content are E. D. Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology* (Leiden, 1966), and H. A. Oberman, 'The 'Extra' Dimension

- in the Theology of Calvin', in *The Dawn of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1992) pp. 234-58.
11. See J. Owen, *Works* (London, 1850-53) 1, p. 272.
 12. J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (New York, 1974), pp. 257-59, where he misreads Calvin on this issue. For a critique of Moltmann's interpretation of the Reformed tradition, see R. A. Muller, 'Christ in the Eschaton: Calvin and Moltmann on the Duration of the *Munus Regium*', *Harvard Theological Review* 74 (1981), 31-59.
 13. *A Body of Divinity*, p. 291.
 14. Some Puritan authors do make statements which indicate a belief that the actual beatific vision by reason of its visual nature, is itself the thing which transforms the believer into the glorified image of God. This seems to depend upon two ideas: (i) the notion that the saint's perfection consists primarily in perfect knowledge of God, and such knowledge is provided by the beatific vision (e.g., Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, p. 292); (ii) the implicit adoption of a fundamentally Aristotelian epistemology whereby the potential intellect receives the form of the object perceived and thus becomes the object in an intentional sense (e.g., George Swinnock, *Works* (Edinburgh, 1992) 3, pp. 237-38).
 15. See, *A Body of Divinity*, pp. 300-01.
 16. *Works* 1, p. 272.
 17. *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, p. 31.
 18. Baxter was not untypical in his belief that the saints' sight of the suffering of the damned in hell would be a component of their everlasting bliss: see, for example, the quotation from Michael Wigglesworth in C. Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 313; Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* 2 (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 11. Such statements point towards a crudely spatial concept of the afterlife.
 19. *Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan VI: Poems*, ed. G. Midgley (Oxford, 1980), p. 93.
 20. *Works* 1, p. 252.
 21. A couple of pages further on, Owen elaborates on the functions of Christ's threefold office: 'He doth appear for them as the great representative of the church, to transact all their affairs with God. And that for three ends . . . To make effectual the atonement . . . To undertake their protection . . . To intercede for them . . .', *Works* 1, p. 254.
 22. See *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, pp. 212-88.
 23. *Works* (Edinburgh, 1862) 4, p. 95.
 24. For Muller's argument on the development of Reformed theology, see his *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids, 1988); also Martin I. Klauber, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Post-Reformation Reformed Theology: an Evaluation of the Muller Thesis', *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society* 33 (1990), 467-75.
 25. *Works* 3, p. 248.
 26. *Works* 3, p. 271.
 27. *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, p. 16.
 28. Owen makes this point in connection with heaven: 'What they [the glorified saints] see in God and in Jesus Christ, what they have experience of in themselves, what they know and learn from others, are all of them inconceivable and inexpresible.' *Works* 1, p. 257.
 29. See *Works* 10, p. 147.
 30. Owen warns of precisely this problem: 'In the thoughts of heaven most persons are apt to frame images in their minds of such carnal things as they suppose they could be delighted withal. But they are far remote from the worship of this holy assembly.' *Works* 1, p. 256. Elsewhere, he criticises the Moslems for conceiving of heaven as consisting in the full satisfaction of their physical desires: see *Works* 7, pp. 335-36.

31. This sermon has yet to be published in Yale edition of Edward's works. The most accessible edition is to be found in *Works 2*, pp. 7-12.
32. The revival in Edwards' reputation was inaugurated by Perry Miller's important book, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1949).
33. See Miller, pp. 156-63.
34. See *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), pp. 149-55, esp. 150.
35. *Works 2*, pp. 1-7.
36. *Works 2*, pp. 7-9.
37. *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, ed. J. F. Forrest and R. Sharrock (Oxford, 1988), p. 16.
38. *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, p. 157.
39. E.g., see chapter 11 of Swinnock's treatise, *Heaven and Hell Epitomised* (*Works 3*, pp. 309-16).
40. 'Whether ever there were a more compendious way of serving the design of Satan, or a more expedient engine to cast down and demolish the banks and bounds given to the bottomless lust and corruption of natural men, that they may overflow the world with a deluge of sin and confusion, considering the depraved condition of all men by nature and the rebellion of the most against the love and mercy of the gospel, I much doubt.' *Works 12*, p. 587.
41. On Camphuysen, see Walker, pp. 86-92.
42. *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan X: Seasonable Counsel/A Discourse upon the Pharisee and the Publicane*, ed. O. C. Watkins (Oxford, 1988), pp. 205-11. Bunyan is, however, careful to stress that belief in God's mercy is also necessary because fear without hope leads to greater sinful excesses.
43. Materialist historians would not, of course, necessarily regard the conscious motives behind an ideology as being particularly significant. On the social uses of hell-fire, see Christopher Hill's *A Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People: John Bunyan and his Church* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 183-87. More recently, Professor Hill has again emphasised the radical social undercurrents of Bunyan's writing, particularly his treatment of heaven and hell in *A Few Sighs from Hell*, based upon the parable of Dives and Lazarus. In this sermon, Bunyan 'Biblically supported attack on the rich generally': see *The English Bible*, pp. 386-87. While those who do not accept the Marxian premises of his approach may feel that he overemphasises the social and economic dimensions of the problem, on this issue, as on many others, his work is nonetheless a corrective to any temptation the theologian may have to divorce Puritan spirituality from its historical context.
44. Milton's major statement on Christian theology is his *De Doctrina Christiana*, written sometime in the 1650s. It is translated by John Carey in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton 6* (Yale, 1973). In the selection from *De Doctrina* in *John Milton: a Critical Edition of the Major Works* (Oxford, 1991) the editors, Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg, present a one-sided view of Milton's eschatology by including a passage from Book 1.13 which argues for mortalism while failing to include passages which show that this was to be understood within a broadly orthodox understanding of a post-Resurrection eternity.
45. *Complete Prose Works 6*, p. 630. For Milton on the afterlife, see Almond, pp. 52-53.