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“A GOLDEN MINE OPENED”: THE ROLE OF CHRIST-
CENTERED PREACHING IN THE SERMONS OF
BENJAMIN KEACH (1640–1704)

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Shane Jonathan Deane

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APPROVAL SHEET

**“A GOLDEN MINE OPENED”: THE ROLE OF CHRIST-
CENTERED PREACHING IN THE SERMONS OF
BENJAMIN KEACH (1640–1704)**

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To Luana,

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD” (Prov 18:22
NIV).

My darling, you represent all that is good in my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- 1644 London Confession* *The confession of faith, of those churches which are commonly (though falsly) called Anabaptists; presented to the view of all that feare God, to examine by the touchstone of the Word of Truth: as likewise for the taking off those aspersions which are frequently both in pulpit and print, (although unjustly) cast upon them. London, 1644*
- 1646 London Confession* *A confession of faith of seven congregations or churches of Christ in London, which are commonly (but unjustly) called Anabaptists. Published for the vindication of the truth, and information of the ignorant; likewise for the taking off of those aspersions which are frequently both in pulpit and print unjustly cast upon them. The second impression corrected and enlarged. London: Math. Simmons, 1646*
- 1677 London Confession* *A Confession of faith put forth by the elders and brethren of many congregations of Christians (baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the country. London: Benjamin Harris, 1677*
- 1699 London Confession* *A Confession of faith put forth by the elders and brethren of many congregations of Christians (baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the country. London: S. Bridge, 1699*
- Geneva Bible* *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament. Translated According to the Ebrue and Greke, and Conferred with the Best Translations in Diuers Languges. With Moste Profitables Annotations Vpon All the Hard Places, and Other Things of Great Importance as May Appeare in the Epistle to the Reader. Geneva, 1560*
- MTP* *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints. Edited by Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006*
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford University Press, 2004*

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PREFACE

People are often tempted to view dissertations as the solitary endeavor of one individual. However, the name inscribed on the title page, Shane J. Deane, serves as a mere conduit to a broader collective effort. While I, as the author, bear full responsibility for everything written in these pages, any richness within the content serves as a testament to the generous support and unwavering love extended by the community that surrounds me.

Without supervision and guidance, I would have faltered at the first hurdle presented by this PhD journey. Yet, propelled by the support of my supervisor, Dr. Michael Haykin, each towering challenge appeared surmountable. His expansive knowledge of seventeenth-century Particular Baptists, especially his insights into the life and context of Benjamin Keach, served me well. His depth of understanding provided me with the confidence needed to delve into an era and the life of a man I knew little about.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. David Prince, who helped guide me in the initial stages of this work. His profound grasp of Christ-centered preaching became a beacon, cutting through the foggy days with much-needed clarity of thought. I also wish to thank my committee members. Dr. Stephen Wellum initially encouraged me to pursue this PhD at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Without his gentle push, I doubt I would be writing these words today. I would like to thank Dr. Pohlman, who assigned the book that began the journey toward my dissertation topic, *Reformed Preaching*. Through reading its pages, I discovered the beauty of Puritan Christ-centered preaching.

Irish Baptist Missions pursue the goal of “Proclaiming Christ and Planting Churches,” to which I now add “Partnering with PhDs.” Though I am sure they never envisaged supporting a church planter while he attempted to complete his dissertation,

they did not withhold their encouragement. I thank Mervyn Scott and the Baptist Missions Ireland Committee for allowing me the writing leave necessary to complete the final stages of this research. I appreciate Joanne Dunstan for her never-ending patience with a man who constantly failed to submit his reports and prayer requests on time, if at all.

Passage Baptist Church stands not only as the congregation the Lord has called me to shepherd but also as the local body to which I belong. Throughout this journey, my brothers and sisters have been a source of love, care, and unwavering support. I feel compelled to express gratitude to the men who walk alongside me daily in ministry. To my Elders and Deacons, Brendan O'Brien, Steve Keating, and Andrew de Juan, my heartfelt appreciation. Your relentless dedication to Christ and his church has skillfully mended the gaps created by my depleted energy.

My parents John and Valerie, always provided a loving home for Janet, Stephen, Graham, and me. Words are not sufficient to express my gratitude for their support over the years. I thank my Mum for her love, care, and encouragement. Before exams she always told me to “read every question twice.” That little tip has served me well in all my years of study. My Dad has always believed in me. He made me think that nothing was too big to dream as long as I put in the effort. He has stuck by me through this entire process, even reading chapters in the middle of the night, while I pushed toward the final deadline.

My children proved to be an unwavering source of encouragement and love during this undertaking. Their daddy dedicated numerous hours away from them in pursuit of this research. Even in the moments I shared with them, I must confess that, although physically present, my mind was often absent. Talitha's joyous approach to life always helped me smile on the days I never thought I could finish. Simeon's funny jokes and playful spirit helped distract me from all my pressing deadlines. Dalia's hugs never

failed to brighten up those gloomy days. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your patience, love, and encouragement throughout the entirety of this project.

My darling wife, Luana, deserves profound gratitude. She stands as a woman beyond compare, with relentless passion, tireless strength, and endless support. My words, no matter how eloquent, can never fully capture the depth of my love for her. Luana's sacrifice and support for my research means this PhD is as much hers as it is mine. She offered encouragement on days when the daunting nature of this work seemed insurmountable. She never stopped loving and supporting our family in those times when I was absent. She did all this with a gracious and godly spirit. She even ordered all my books. While she may perceive her contributions as modest, the radiant beauty of my King's creation reflected in her eyes served as a constant inspiration, spurring me on toward the finish line. I have written about Christ-centered preaching; she exemplifies the Christ-centered life.

Finally, all glory, honor, and praise belong to Christ. Each day of this process I remained constantly aware of my failure in thought, word, and deed. Yet, in those moments, he comforted me with the knowledge of full and final forgiveness. During those long, lonely nights in my office, questioning why I ever undertook this project, he met with me in my time of need, strengthening me for the task. Through Keach's sermons, Christ has encouraged me by revealing himself as my mediator, my surety, my friend, and my pearl of great price.

Shane J. Deane

Cork, Ireland

May 2024

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Exalting Christ was the heartbeat of Benjamin Keach’s preaching: “Christ must be the subject of all preaching, we preach Christ, and him crucified. Christ is a Believer’s All, and should be the All of Gospel-administration; all is enjoyed in Christ; nothing will do us any good without Christ; . . . all is to set forth the Honour and Glory of Christ.”¹

Christ permeated Keach’s sermons, yet his Christocentric focus has escaped the research spotlight. While Keach is known for his vital role in the seventeenth century hymn-singing controversy;² his polemical writings against Baxterianism,³ infant

¹ Benjamin Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Or an Exposition of All the Parables, and Many Express Similitudes Contained in the Four Evangelists, Spoken by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Wherein also Many Things are Doctrinally Handled, and Practically Improved, by Way of Application* (London: R. Tookey, 1701), 1:252. Keach followed in the Christocentric footsteps of his predecessor William Perkins (1558–1602). In the conclusion of his preaching manual, Perkins stated, “The Summe of the Summe. Preach one Christ by Christ to the praise of Christ.” William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng, or, A Treatise Concerning the Sacred and Onely True Manner and Methode of Preaching* (London: Felix Kingston, 1607), 148. See more on Perkins in chapter 2.

² For a concise discussion of the Keach’s role in the hymn-singing controversy, see Michael Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage*, 2nd ed. (Peterborough, ON: H&E, 2019), 153–62. Haykin highlights the significant amount of literature devoted to this topic.

Thomas Crosby, Keach’s son-in-law and a Baptist historian, stated,

In the year 1691 Mr. Keach was engaged in another controversy with the Baptists, about singing the praises of God in the assembly for public worship. And tho’ he had very great success therein, yet it brought upon him much trouble and illwill. When he was convinced, that singing the praises of God was an holy ordinance of Jesus Christ, he labored earnestly, and with a great deal of prudence and caution, to convince his people thereof; and first obtained their consent to the practice of it at the conclusion of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and had but two brethren, in his church, that opposed him therein. (Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists from the Reformation to the beginning of the reign of George I* [London, 1738], 4:290)

³ Baxterianism was a term used to describe Richard Baxter’s view on justification. James Barry Vaughn summarizes Baxter’s views of justification and faith as follows: “Justification: Salvation under the new covenant is a result of fulfilling the conditions that Christ has laid down . . . Faith: Baxter consistently joined faith and repentance as the conditions which must be fulfilled for justification under the new covenant.” James Barry Vaughn, “Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1989), 227–28. See chapter 6 for a more in-depth analysis of Baxterianism.

baptism,⁴ Sabbatarianism,⁵ the laying on of hands controversy,⁶ and his pastoral instruction to young souls,⁷ researchers have not carried out an in-depth analysis of his preaching. Writers who investigate his sermons, honor him for his plain preaching style⁸

⁴ In his work *Light broke forth in Wales*, Benjamin Keach expelled the notion of infant baptism. The title page gives a twofold purpose for the writing. First, Keach desired to refute the writings of James Owen: *Light Broke Forth in Wales, Expelling Darkness, or, The Englishman's Love to the Antient Britains Being an Answer to a Book, Intituled [sic] Children's Baptism from Heaven, Published in the Welsh Tongue by Mr. James Owen*.

Second, Keach argued for total immersion of the body in baptism: "Also proving that Baptizing is Dipping the whole Body in Water, in the Name of the Father, &c. And that Believers are only the Subjects of Baptism." Benjamin Keach, *Light Broke Forth in Wales, Expelling Darkness, or, The Englishman's Love to the Antient Britains Being an Answer to a Book, Intituled [sic] Children's Baptism from Heaven, Published in the Welsh Tongue by Mr. James Owen* (London: William Marshall, 1696), title page. Highlighting Keach's conviction of the importance of the issue, the work was republished in 1705 a year after his death. See Benjamin Keach, *Believers baptism: or, Love to the antient Britains displayed: Wherein, the chief arguments for infant baptism, from the most eminent and learned authors, are collected, stated, and fully answered in the following chapters* (London, 1705).

Thomas Crosby noted that Keach "did not only stand up in defence of believers baptism, in opposition to that of infants, But also engaged in several controversies that were argued among Baptist themselves." Crosby lists the controversies as the following:

The practice of laying on of hands on baptized persons, and performing it with prayer, at their admission into the church . . . another controversy among Baptist, wherein Mr. Keach was also very serviceable, was about granting a due maintenance to those that were employed in the ministry, that they might be taken off from secular employments, and given wholly up to the ministry . . . the next trouble Mr. Keach met with in his church, was from a certain person of an unsettled and wavering spirit, and of an aspiring temper, who had from some considerable time, unknown to him, imbibed the notion of the Jewish Sabbath, and labored to corrupt many of the younger sort. (Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:290–301)

⁵ For an excellent discussion on this debate, see Vaughn, "Public Worship and Practical Theology," 74–84. He contends that Keach's argument could be asserted in two parts: "First, he argues that the seventh day sabbath was not a perpetual divine institution. Secondly, he shows that under the new dispensation Christians are bound to worship God on the first day of the week." Vaughn, "Public Worship and Practical Theology," 75–76.

⁶ Jonathan Arnold summarizes Keach's position, stating, "He argued that Christ instituted the practice of laying on of hands on all baptized believers and the early church established the practice . . . delineated in Hebrews 6:1–2 . . . this was God's normal method for providing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." Jonathan W. Arnold, *Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 11 (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, 2013), 103–7. Interestingly Vaughn contends that "it is slightly misleading to speak of the laying on of hands' controversy. Among Particular Baptists there was little disagreement; few churches practiced laying on of hands for "confirmation." Vaughn, "Public Worship and Practical Theology," 65–82.

⁷ During the 1670s and early 1680s, Keach produced two children's primers called, (1) *The Child's Delight: or, Instructions for Children and Youth*, and (2) *Instructions for Children*; two poems called, (1) *War with the Devil: or, The Young Man's Conflict with the Powers of Darkness*, and (2) *The Glorious Lover: A Divine Poem*; and two allegories called, (1) *The Travels of True Godliness*, and (2) *The Progress of Sin: Or, the Travels of Ungodliness*. Austin Walker summarizes these works: "The primers laid the foundations, the poems promoted conversion to Christ and the allegories were intended to further godliness." Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2015), 143–45. Also see Corey W. Johnson, "Instructor of Children: An Analysis of Benjamin Keach's Doctrinal Understanding of Believers' Children" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021).

⁸ Vaughn associates Keach's preaching with the Puritan style known as the "plain style," first advocated by William Perkins. This plain style of preaching may be summarized as, the reading of the text,

and his advocacy of metaphorical⁹ and parabolic preaching.¹⁰ However, a paucity of literature exists concerning Keach's Christ-centered preaching approach.

Thesis and Methodology

This dissertation will argue for the centrality of Christ-centered preaching in the sermons of Benjamin Keach through his *Tropologia* and Sin-Salvation methods. In order to prove this thesis, an initial investigation will explore Keach's general preaching method, unveiling Puritan godliness, influence, and application in his sermons.¹¹ This exploration will display the need for an evaluation of Keach's approach to preaching Christ in his sermons.¹²

Then, a survey of Keach's sermons will be conducted in order to assess how he preached Christ. A thorough analysis will encompass a selection of Keach's Old Testament and New Testament sermons across various genres.¹³ For each sermon, I will first examine structural, contextual, and thematic elements. Following this examination, the Christ-centered nature of each sermon will be posited. This inquiry will unveil how Keach's *Tropologia* or Sin-Salvation methods shaped his approach to preaching Christ.

Consequently, it is crucial to elucidate what is meant by: Christ-centered nature, the *Tropologia* method, and the Sin-Salvation method. Notably, the Christ-centered nature of the sermon does not initially refer to 21st-century Christ-centered

explanation of the text via articulated statements of doctrine, and the application of the text (i.e., its "use" to the people). Vaughn, "Public Worship and Practical Theology," 107. See Perkins's *The Arte of Prophecy* for a comprehensive depiction of this type of preaching.

⁹ See James Christopher Holmes. "The Role of Metaphor in the Sermons of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009) for a comprehensive review of Keach's use of metaphor in preaching.

¹⁰ Keach published 224 different sermons and 147 of them were devoted to the parables of Jesus. Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 43. See Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*.

¹¹ See the following sections in chapter 2: Puritan Godliness in Keach's Preaching; Puritan Influence in Keach's Preaching; Puritan Application in Keach's Preaching.

¹² See the Conclusion in chapter 2.

¹³ Justification will be presented for the selection of each sermon.

preaching methods. Modern-day homileticians propose different approaches for preaching Christ, which could unintentionally impose meaning upon Keach's methodology, that he never intended.¹⁴ Before considering contemporary methods, one must first discover how Keach preached Christ on his own terms. Therefore, the sermon's Christ-centered nature will highlight examples where Keach mentioned something of Christ's person, work, and nature. Assessing Keach's sermons in this way will serve as an overview highlighting Keach's proclamation of Christ. The overview will present an initial foundation from which one can discover Keach's own Christ-centered preaching methods.

When analyzing Keach's sermon corpus, patterns portraying his method emerged. Keach never explicitly named such patterns or methods, yet they predominated his sermons. Thus, to assess Keach's Christocentric preaching in a coherent manner, the following titles were assigned to his methodology: the *Tropologia* method and the Sin-Salvation method. Keach's *Tropologia* method was based on his work entitled *Tropologia*. Benjamin Keach co-authored the book with his friend Thomas Delaune (d. 1685).¹⁵ Delaune wrote a translation of Solomon Glassius's *Philologia Sacra* with his

¹⁴ Modern expositors espouse some of the following methods: Christotelic, Christiconic, Christo-promise, and Christ-centered. See chapter 7 for an assessment of these methods.

¹⁵ Thomas Delaune was born in Brinny in Co. Cork, Ireland. He and his Catholic parents rented a farm from Major Edward Briggs. Briggs founded Cork Baptist Church. Briggs supported Delaune's education and was influential in Delaune's conversation to Baptist convictions. In later life, Delaune moved to London. He co-authored a book with Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, and others that defended believers' baptism. Delaune was imprisoned for publishing his book entitled *A Plea for the Non-Conformists* (1683). His wife and two children joined him later in prison. Due to the terrible conditions, they all died in the London jail, in 1685. Michael A. G. Haykin, "Delaune, Thomas," *ODNB*. Today, Munster Bible College Cork host *Thomas Delaune lectures* in Cork Baptist Church, founded by Edward Briggs (c. 1640). For a more detailed account of Delaune's life see Andy Compton, *Thomas Delaune: The Life and Times of Ireland's First Baptist Martyr* (Louisville: The Andrew Fuller Centre for Baptist Studies, 2018). Additionally, the modern-day rendering of his name is "Delaune," when his name is cited in works like *Tropologia* "De Laune" is used.

own additions.¹⁶ Keach wrote about metaphors and typology.¹⁷ Holmes states, “*Tropologia* was the medium in which Keach published all of his data on biblical metaphors, and it is a key source to understanding not only Keach’s concept of metaphor but also aspects of his theology and hermeneutical methods.”¹⁸ Walker provides a good summary of Keach’s section within the work when he writes

It [*Tropologia*] deals with the metaphors of the Bible in a topical order, beginning with God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity, the gospel, and salvation from sin are dealt with under the heading the Word of God. There are further sections on graces and ordinances, the church, men, sin, and the devil, the means of grace, providence and affliction, the world, man’s life and death, resurrection, and heaven and hell, before he concludes with a section on the types of Christ from the Old Testament.¹⁹

This dissertation will focus on Keach’s *Tropologia* method of preaching Christ. Keach’s *Tropologia* method was threefold: (1) Keach used simple metaphors to preach Christ. In *Tropologia*, Keach composed a section entitled “Metaphors, Allegories, Similies, Types, and other borrowed Terms, Respecting The Lord Jesus Christ, The Second Person in the Glorious Trinity.”²⁰ Some of the metaphors Keach expounded are Christ a Mediator, Christ a Surety, Christ a Bridegroom, Christ the express Image of the

¹⁶ *Philologia Sacra* was work which identified and summarised various literary features within Scripture such as, metonymy, irony, synecdoche, hyperbole, allegory, etc.

¹⁷ More accurately, *Tropologia* was originally a two-volume work. The layout and titles of the volumes are somewhat complex. Volume 1 is called *Tropologia* and volume 2 is called *Troposchēmalogia*. Keach and Delaune contributed to both volumes. Delaune wrote *Philologia Sacra* (part 1) published in *Tropologia* and *Philologia Sacra* (part 2) published in *Troposchēmalogia*. Keach wrote about metaphors in *Tropologia* and *Troposchēmalogia*. In *Troposchēmalogia*, he also wrote *A Treatise of Types (Moses’s Vail Remov’d)*. Both volumes have different titles, therefore, for ease of reference the term *Tropologia* will be used henceforth in the main body. The footnotes will reference either *Tropologia* or *Troposchēmalogia*.

¹⁸ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor,” 43. Interestingly, Austin Walker likens the work to a systematic theology, “The resulting *Tropologia* was the closest Keach came to writing a systematic theology though it would have been far from complete.” Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 186.

¹⁹ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 187.

²⁰ See Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Tropologia, or, A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors the First Book Containing Sacred Philology, or the Tropes in Scripture, Reduc’d under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each / Partly Translated and Partly Compil’d from the Works of the Learned by T.D. The Second and Third Books Containing a Practical Improvement (Parallel-Wise) of Several of the Most Frequent and Useful Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes of the Old and New Testament* (London: John Richardson and John Darby, 1681), 2:86.

Father, Christ a Physician, etc.²¹ Throughout his sermon corpus, Keach spoke of Christ by utilizing the various metaphors he named in *Tropologia*. (2) Keach used metaphors that conveyed parities (parallels) and/or disparities between the metaphor and Christ.²² For example, in *Tropologia*, Keach wrote about “Christ a Physician.” When Keach compared Christ to earthly physicians, he highlighted the parallels between both parties. Concerning the everyday physician, Keach stated, “A Physician is a Person skilful in Distempers of the Body, knows the Nature of Diseases.” Accentuating the parallel between Christ and the physician, Keach wrote, “Jesus Christ is very skilful in Distempers of the Soul and Body too; he knows what the Nature of every Sin is.” Both Keach’s Old and New Testament sermons will reveal his continuous use of parities (parallels) and/or disparities between the metaphor and Christ as his method of preaching Christ. (3) Finally, Keach used typology to highlight persons, events, or institutions that foreshadow Christ.²³ In *Tropologia*, Keach wrote two sections that significantly contributed to his use of typology when preaching Christ: *Moses’s Vail Removed; or Types of the Old Testament Explained*, and *A Treatise Of all the Types, Parables and Allegories of the Old and New-Testament*. Through these sections, Keach considered various scriptural images, persons, places, things, and events where he found parities (parallels) and/or disparities between Christ and those elements.²⁴

²¹ See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:86–112.

²² See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:286–87.

²³ See Keach’s identification of types in *Moses’s Vail Removed*. Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia: Tropes and Figures; or, A Treatise of the Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes, &c. Contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To Which Is Prefixed, Divers Arguments to Prove the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures Wherein Also ’tis Largely Evinc’d, That by the Great Whore, Mystery Babylon Is Meant the Papal Hierarchy, or Present State and Church of Rome. Philologia Sacra, the Second Part. Wherein the Schemes, or Figures in Scripture, Are Reduced under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each. Together with a Treatise of Types, Parables, &c. with an Improvement of Them Parallel-Wise* (London: John Darby, 1682), 4:416. See Keach’s discussion on typology in *A Treatise Of all the Types, Parables and Allegories*. Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:25.

²⁴ This method is what makes *Tropologia* unique. Keach considered parallels and disparities not just for Christ and other elements but also for God, the Holy Spirit, the church, and more.

Keach's Sin-Salvation method of preaching Christ permeated his sermons by revealing man's sin and the solution found in Christ's salvation. Keach succinctly articulated this emphasis in his preaching when he stated, "My main design in all my Preaching (if I know my own Heart) is wholly to advance the Free Grace of God, through that Redemption which is in Jesus Christ, and utterly to abase the Creature, tho' it may seem a hard thing to keep in an even Line, and not fall into either Extream."²⁵ To "abase the Creature" is to reveal the true nature of a person's sin and thus their need for Christ's atoning sacrifice. Keach often preached in this manner when he spoke on the covenant of works (sin) and the covenant of grace (salvation),²⁶ or the imputation of sin through Adam (sin) and the imputation of righteousness through Christ (salvation).²⁷ The title Law-Gospel method serves as a compelling alternative to the Sin-Salvation method title since the method pervaded Puritan preaching and thought. However, a neutral title was deemed preferable due to the potential imposition of external frameworks upon Keach's method.²⁸ The Sin-Salvation method is more general in scope than the *Tropologia* method. Therefore, it will only be assessed in detail when a sermon does not exhibit elements of the *Tropologia* method.²⁹ Finally, after laying the foundation for Keach's

²⁵ Benjamin Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace, or, The Covenant of Peace Opened in Fourteen Sermons Lately Preached, in Which the Errors of the Present Day about Reconciliation and Justification Are Detected* (London, 1698), v.

²⁶ The two sermons that depict Keach's view on the covenant of works and the covenant of grace are *The Everlasting Covenant* (2 Sam 23:5) and *The Display of Glorious Grace* (Isa 54:10). See chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion.

²⁷ The two sermons where Keach most explicitly addresses the original sin and Christ's imputed righteousness are *The Marrow of True Justification* (Rom 4:5) and *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes* (Rom 8:1).

²⁸ For further insight into the Puritans use of Law and Gospel see Beeke and Jones' chapter, "The Puritan on Law and Gospel" in Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 425–41, Kindle. Beeke and Jones also note the complexity in the use of law-gospel amongst scholars, "Theologians from various traditions have not understood the law-gospel distinction—so important to Protestant dogmatics—in the same way. In fact, not even Reformed theologians agreed on all the details. . . . In the end, it is indeed proper to speak of the Lutheran versus the Reformed versus the Antinomian understanding of the law and the gospel, if the terms of the debate have been defined carefully." Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, 436.

²⁹ The only sermon where this is explicitly the case is *A Summons to the Grave* (Psalm 89:48) in chapter 2. It was published in 1676, five years before *Tropologia* in 1681. See Benjamin Keach, *A*

Christ-centered preaching, the dissertation will conclude with an examination of the following modern-day methods: Christotelic, Christiconic, Christo-promise, Christ-centered methods. Keach's *Tropologia* and Sin-Salvation methods will be juxtaposed with contemporary approaches, revealing that, even by today's vernacular, Keach emerges as a Christ-centered preacher.

A brief note on the method of quotation is necessary. Numerous primary sources are quoted from Keach's writings and those of his contemporaries. The original quotes are preserved with the following alterations: (1) when the author uses capitalization for obscure words, they will be changed to italics and (2) when the quotation presents an apparent copying error, [*sic*] will be used to show that it is original. No other alterations will be made. The titles for primary works will often be italicized, shortened, and capitalized in the main body of this work. In the footnotes, titles for primary works will be given in full, in their original form, whether capitalized or not.

A Summary of Research

Two areas of research are vital when considering this dissertation's thesis. Since the analysis focuses on Benjamin Keach's preaching, studies concerning Keach must be surveyed. This research seeks to focus on how Keach preached Christ, therefore, an analysis of the contemporary approaches to preaching Christ must be assessed.

Studies on Benjamin Keach

This review of studies on Benjamin Keach will depict the major works on Keach in chronological order assessing what, if any, contribution these works make to his preaching. Jonathan W. Arnold states that current interest in Keachean studies began with

Summons to the Grave, or the Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death. Demonstrated in a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of That Most Eminent and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ Mr John Norcott. Who Departed This Life March 24, 1675/76 (London, 1676).

William Eugene Spears.³⁰ Spears titled his work, “The Baptist Movement in England in the Late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704” (1953). The main purpose of Spears’s study was to present Keach as an initiator and leader of the Baptist Movement from 1689–1704.³¹ Spears highlights one of the most important aspects of Keach’s success, “his preaching.”³² Unfortunately, Spears only speaks of Keach’s preaching peripherally even though it was key to his success. Spears mentions a vital aspect of Keach’s preaching pertinent to his research: “Keach’s preaching was Christocentric.”³³ Unfortunately, Spears does not analyze or discuss Keach’s approach; he simply quotes Keach to substantiate his claim.

If Spears initiated the contemporary exploration of Keachean studies, Carnes propelled the investigation of Keachean studies concerning the hymn-singing controversy through his work “The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and His Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth-Century England” (1984). Carnes summarizes the content of his research when he notes, “This thesis reviews the historical climate of seventeenth century England, and discusses Keach’s life in terms of that background. Keach’s influence on congregational hymn singing, hymn writers, preaching, and education is also examined.”³⁴ Although Carnes claims he will examine Keach’s

³⁰ Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 7.

³¹ Spears presents three other purposes: “To give an analytical survey of the Baptist Movement from 1612 to 1640 which serves as a background . . . to show the development of Keach in his relation to the Baptist Movement from 1640 to 1689 . . . to make a critical estimate of the work and thought of Benjamin Keach in the light of the Baptist Movement. Knowing the purpose, the next aspect is the method of procedure.” William Eugene Spears, “The Baptist Movement in England in the Late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704” (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 1953), 1–2.

³² Spears, “The Baptist Movement in England,” 235.

³³ Spears, “The Baptist Movement in England,” 235.

³⁴ James Patrick Carnes, “The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and His Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth-Century England” (MA Thesis, North Texas State University, 1984), ii. Carnes states that Keach “is considered responsible for the introduction and continued use of hymns, as distinct from psalms and paraphrases, in the English Nonconformist churches in the late seventeenth century.” Carnes argues that Keach played a pivotal role in the inception and sustained

preaching, he does not present a thorough analysis and only leaves a few brief statements such as, “Keach’s sermons were almost wholly expository, and were discussed with interest among the people of Keach’s day (1640–1704).”³⁵

James Barry Vaughn’s dissertation, “Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)” (1989), focuses on reviving the practical theology of Benjamin Keach. Vaughn states, “This dissertation is a study of the practical theology of a prominent late seventeenth century English Nonconformist.”³⁶ Since Vaughn desired to understand the thought and practice of seventeenth century Baptists, he investigated Keach’s preaching in a chapter entitled, “Benjamin Keach as Preacher and Exegete,” presenting the most pertinent information for this present study. In that chapter, Vaughn discusses the plain style and poetic nature of Keach’s preaching but does not refer to his Christ-centered preaching.³⁷

James C. Brooks, in “Benjamin Keach and the Baptist Singing Controversy: Mediating Scripture, Confessional Heritage, and Christian Unity” (2006), makes significant conclusions regarding Keach and the hymn-singing controversy. Naturally, the focus of Brooks’s work is not Keach’s preaching. There is little mention of preaching, except for a brief citation of Keach’s contemporary and friend Hercules Collins in which he argues that just as preaching and prayer must align with the “sacred Record, so must singing.”³⁸

adoption of hymns, setting them apart from psalms and paraphrases, within English Nonconformist churches during the latter part of the seventeenth century.

³⁵ Carnes, “The Famous Mr. Keach,” 106.

³⁶ Vaughn, “Public Worship,” i.

³⁷ Vaughn, “Public Worship,” 107. A more in-depth analysis of this chapter will be conducted in the Significance section below.

³⁸ James C. Brooks, “Benjamin Keach and the Baptist Singing Controversy: Mediating Scripture, Confessional Heritage, and Christian Unity” (PhD diss., The Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2006), 109.

D. B. Riker's dissertation entitled *A Catholic Reformed Theologian: Federalism and Baptism in the Thought of Benjamin Keach* (2009), contends that Keach was "a reformed thinker working within the parameters of reformed orthodoxy."³⁹ Riker states two purposes for his work. First, his research contends that Keach "is neither a sectarian nor a Calvinist, but rather a catholic Reformed Theologian."⁴⁰ Second, Riker explores Keach's doctrines of covenant and baptism.⁴¹ Though Riker does not speak directly about Keach's preaching, it is clear his theology undergirds all his preaching. Therefore, this study provides useful insight into Keach's theological framework.

In "The Role of Metaphor in the Sermons of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704." (2009), James Christopher Holmes states, "This dissertation examines the manner in which Benjamin Keach used metaphors in his published sermons."⁴² He concludes that Keach employed metaphors in his sermons as a primary method to facilitate a deeper understanding of the biblical text and to establish a direct connection with the intellect and emotions of his audience.⁴³ Holmes argues that Keach used metaphor in his preaching, but does not mention the *Tropologia* method proposed in this research to preach Christ.⁴⁴

³⁹ D. B. Riker, *A Catholic Reformed Theologian: Federalism and Baptism in the Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 35 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2009), 222. The term "reformed orthodoxy," was coined by "Richard Muller and defined as the sixteenth and seventeenth century combination of the Dortian five-point emphasis with the doctrines of the Trinity, the dual nature of Christ, and infant baptism." Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 8.

⁴⁰ Riker, *Catholic Reformed Theologian*, 2. Riker states, "Keach disclaims any authority to the Tradition and places it rather on the Scriptures. This fact, however, does not make him a Biblicist, for (1) he conceives Tradition itself as sharing his view of authority, (2) he relies positively on the same Tradition to construct arguments, and (3) he makes the Tradition normative through appropriation. Under this light—whatever his claims—Keach turns out to be a catholic thinker." Riker, *A Catholic Reformed Theologian*, 58.

⁴¹ Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 8.

⁴² Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 199.

⁴³ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 200.

⁴⁴ Further analysis of Holmes's work will be conducted in the Significance section.

Thomas Eugene Hicks's dissertation, entitled "An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification in the Theologies of Richard Baxter and Benjamin Keach" (2009), reveals the purpose of his work from the outset: "This dissertation will show that two fundamentally different philosophical, theological, and practical systems supported and expressed the doctrine of justification in the theologies of Richard Baxter and Benjamin Keach."⁴⁵ Therefore, Hicks sought to present the divergent views of Keach and Baxter. One example of the difference between Keach and Baxter on justification is their view on how the covenant relates to justification: Keach held the covenant of grace was unconditional for humanity and Christ fulfilled the obligations necessary for the salvation of the elect. Conversely, Baxter argued that Christ purchased a new law, meaning that through covenant faithfulness Christians could keep their justification.⁴⁶ Hicks often assesses the significance of Keach's theology in his sermons. For example, in his chapter on Keach's justification theology, his key texts are Keach's sermons *The Marrow of True Justification* and *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*.⁴⁷

Jonathan W. Arnold clearly states the purpose of his work *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)* (2013),⁴⁸ when he says, "The primary goal of this study, then, is to understand the lenses through which Keach developed and viewed theological issues in order to gain a clearer understanding of his view of 'orthodoxy.'"⁴⁹ Arnold argues that Keach held the distinction of being the most prolific theologian within his community of dissenters. Owing to his prominence among his peers, Keach

⁴⁵ Thomas Eugene Hicks, "An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification in the Theologies of Richard Baxter and Benjamin Keach" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 5.

⁴⁶ Hicks, "An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification," 6.

⁴⁷ See chapter 6 for further insight.

⁴⁸ This refers to Arnold's published work. Arnold's original dissertation was officially submitted in 2009. See Jonathan W. Arnold, "The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2009).

⁴⁹ Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 9.

frequently assumed the role of a spokesperson for those who aligned with his perspective in significant controversies.⁵⁰ Arnold, like Hicks, often assesses Keach's theology in light of his sermons. For example, Arnold addresses Keach's covenant theology through his sermons *The Everlasting Covenant* and *The Display of Glorious Grace, or, The Covenant of Peace*.⁵¹

In Jae Ho Lee's work "A Golden Mine Opened: The Doctrinal Rubric of the Perseverance of the Saints in the Thought of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)" (2015), he argues that "Keach discussed in *A Golden Mine Opened* all the principles defined by the Canons of the Synod of Dort, under the rubric of the perseverance of the saints."⁵² Lee contends that perseverance was central to Keach because Keach believed that it was the "overarching theme of the whole [*sic*] Christianity."⁵³ Two sermons, *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep* (John 10:27–28) and *The Great Salvation* (Heb 2:3), reside within the larger collection that Lee assesses called, *A Golden Mine Opened*. Lee's analysis of Keach's perseverance theology within these sermons will help the investigation of their Christ-centered nature.

Austin Walker presents a comprehensive biography of Benjamin Keach in *The Excellent Benjamin Keach* (2015). Walker contends that among seventeenth-century Particular Baptists, Keach holds the distinction of publishing the largest number of sermons.⁵⁴ In chapter 10, he highlights Keach's preaching approach. Walker briefly acknowledges the centrality of preaching Christ in Keach's sermons, stating, "This

⁵⁰ Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 1.

⁵¹ See chapter 6 for further insight.

⁵² Jae Ho Lee, "A Golden Mine Opened: The Doctrinal Rubric of the Perseverance of the Saints in the Thought of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 17.

⁵³ Lee, "A Golden Mine Opened," 18.

⁵⁴ Walker, *Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 249–51. Additionally, Walker acknowledges Keach's adherence to Reformed orthodoxy, his firm Calvinist preaching without falling into hyper-Calvinism, and his parabolic and applicational preaching. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 252–77.

urging of sinners to turn to Christ was one of the joys of preaching for Keach.”⁵⁵

Although Walker highlights valuable insights regarding Keach’s preaching, he does not provide a comprehensive analysis of Keach’s Christ-centered preaching. Additionally, Walker presents a helpful summary of Keach’s work *Tropologia*. In his summary, he depicts one aspect of the *Tropologia* method when he states, “His method was to take a metaphor and then analyze it from every possible angle and to give the parallel from the Scriptures.”⁵⁶

Matthew Stanton summarizes his work *Liturgy and Identity* (2022) as follows: “This thesis describes and analyses the origins of this tradition by focusing on the controversy about congregational hymn-singing among English Baptists in the 1680s and 1690s, noting especially the contribution to the formation of a standard Baptist practice that was made by Benjamin Keach (1640–1704).”⁵⁷ Stanton’s thesis, primarily focused on hymn-singing, inherently provides a limited contribution to the discourse on Keach’s preaching, except for a few sporadic references. For example, Stanton observes that Keach viewed singing as “a distinct practice from prayer and preaching”⁵⁸ because he saw singing as an apostolic mandate in conjunction with preaching and prayer.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 258.

⁵⁶ One aspect is to consider the metaphor in light of its parities and disparities, the other is to consider typology, which Walker does not mention. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 186–91.

⁵⁷ Matthew Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity: London Baptists and the Hymn-Singing Controversy*, Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications 21 (Oxford: Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford, 2022), 1.

⁵⁸ Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 158.

⁵⁹ Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 158–59.

Studies on Preaching Christ

Stephen Wellum states that it is “not only the NT that teaches us of Christ Jesus our Lord, but also the OT.”⁶⁰ Yet, the debate rages as to how one preaches Christ and what method should be used. Various scholars propose alternative perspectives.⁶¹ In chapter 7 the review will assess the contemporary Christotelic, Christiconic, and Christo-promise methods and compare them with Keach’s approach. Subsequently, the Christ-centered preaching methods of Edmund Clowney, Bryan Chapell, and Sidney Greidanus will be analyzed and compared with Keach’s method.

Daniel Block advocates the Christotelic method. Block contends that Christ should be the telos of all preaching. Therefore, when one preaches YHWH in the Old Testament that person preaches Christ.⁶² Abraham Kuruvilla espouses the Christiconic approach. By embracing “pericopal theology,” Kuruvilla contends that every pericope in Scripture portrays something of the image of Christ. Therefore, each text calls on the adherent to become more Christ-like.⁶³ Elliott E. Johnson promotes the Christo-promise

⁶⁰ Stephen J. Wellum, “Editorial: Preaching the Glory of Christ from a ‘Whole Bible,’” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 5.

⁶¹ For a more in-depth analysis of these various approaches to preaching Christ see chapter 7. The recent publication of Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King, eds., *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament: Genre, Authorial Intent, and the Nature of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022), as the title suggests, the book presents five views of Christ in the Old Testament. The five views are: First Testament Approach, Christotelic Approach, Reception-Centered Intertextual Approach, Redemptive-Historical Christocentric Approach, and Premodern Approach. However, my summary of research is concerned specifically with methods of preaching Christ.

⁶² See Daniel Block, “Christotelic Preaching: A Plea for Hermeneutical Integrity and Missional Passion,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018), 7–31. For further analysis on the hermeneutical perspective that governs this approach see Tremper Longman III, “Christotelic Approach,” in Tabb and King, *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*.

⁶³ Kuruvilla presents his view in the following works: Abraham Kuruvilla, “Christiconic View,” in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018); Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 2013); Abraham Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching: The Journey from Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

Significantly, Daniel Block commends Kuruvilla’s hermeneutical approach, stating, “Finally, a book on the hermeneutics of preaching from the Old Testament that takes the biblical texts seriously. Responding to many approaches that pay lip service to authorial intent in Old Testament texts but then quickly impose typological and christocentric meanings on them, Kuruvilla asks seriously what biblical authors were doing with their words.” Daniel Block, endorsements in Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 2. This statement clearly proves that Block rejects the Christocentric approach.

approach. Johnson exegetes the text from a dispensational perspective,⁶⁴ yet, his approach is the promise-fulfillment method that most covenant theologians would advocate.⁶⁵ For example, he argues that Christ has fulfilled the covenant promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3.⁶⁶ These three approaches, while holding diverging perspectives, agree that Christ-centered preaching should be rejected.

Numerous Christ-centered approaches prevail in the contemporary homiletical landscape.⁶⁷ Three scholars will be considered: Edmund Clowney, Bryan Chapell, and Sydney Greidanus. Edmund Clowney advocates a Christ-centered approach that has biblical theology at its core.⁶⁸ Three words summarize Clowney’s method of preaching Christ: titles, symbols, and memorials.⁶⁹ Clowney is known for his typology triangle through which he advocates that the text is first interpreted in its initial context, then progressed through redemption history until it finally finds fulfillment in Christ.⁷⁰ Four redemptive foci summarize the Chapell method: the text may be predictive of the work of Christ, preparatory for the work of Christ, resultant of the work of Christ, and reflective of the work of Christ.⁷¹ Additionally Chapell embraces the Fallen Condition Focus

⁶⁴ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 36.

⁶⁵ See Sidney Greidanus, “Reflections on Preaching Christ from the Old Testament,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 107.

⁶⁶ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 39.

⁶⁷ Some other Christ-centered methods are: Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012); Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 2007); Vern S. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 1995).

⁶⁸ Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 17.

⁶⁹ Clowney presents a more developed view of his hermeneutical process in his later work, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* than his earlier work *Preaching and Biblical Theology*.

⁷⁰ Vern S. Poythress, “Edmund P. Clowney’s Triangle of Typology in Preaching and Biblical Theology,” *Unio Cum Christo* 7, no. 2 (October 2021): 232.

⁷¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267.

(FCF), which is the common fallen condition shared between those in Scripture and those reading Scripture and which requires the grace of God as a solution.⁷² Sidney Greidanus is known for his seven ways of preaching Christ: redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, New Testament reference, and contrast.⁷³

Considering these three Christ-centered methods, Greidanus is the only one who presents a historical survey of Christocentric preaching. He names Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon, and Vischer, but does not name Keach.⁷⁴ Additionally, Joel Beeke conducts a superb survey of Puritan preaching, naming Perkins, Rogers, Sibbes, Preston, Goodwin, Shepherd, and Bunyan, but chooses not to consider Keach. At times, Beeke even assesses Christ-centered preaching among the Puritans, but Keach is not presented as a model.⁷⁵

Significance

The summary of research has shown the absence of any studies that explore how Benjamin Keach preached Christ. The current scholarship on Keach lacks a comprehensive exploration of his Christ-centered preaching. The studies on preaching Christ purport their own methods or survey the methods of others yet fail to consider Keach's method. This dissertation is unique because it investigates the Christ-centered preaching of Benjamin Keach through his *Tropologia* and Sin-Salvation methods. A

⁷² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 30.

⁷³ Sidney Greidanus, "Reflections on Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 103–15.

⁷⁴ Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 111, Logos Bible Software.

⁷⁵ Joel E. Beeke, *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 149, Kindle. However, one should acknowledge that Beeke cannot name every Puritan example in a finite work. However, he presents a biography of Keach in Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 386. Beeke also penned the introduction for a contemporary edition of "The Marrow of True Justification," wherein he extolled Keach's significant contribution to the discourse on justification. Joel R. Beeke, Introduction to *The Marrow of True Justification* (1692; repr., Port St. Lucie, FL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2007).

more comprehensive examination of the two most salient contributions to Keach's preaching will further demonstrate the significance of this research. James Vaughn's work outlines the popularity of Keach as a preacher: "Keach's Horselydown church was enlarged several times and seated one thousand people by the time of his death."⁷⁶

Vaughn builds on this by discussing the poetic nature of Keach's sermons. Vaughn argues that Keach refrained from narrating stories in his sermons. However, he sought to allow the parables to unfold their own narratives. The imagery embedded in the parables served as the foundational material for his sermons.⁷⁷ Vaughn then roots Keach in the Puritan style of preaching known as the "plain style," first advocated by William Perkins.⁷⁸ This style of preaching may be summarized as: the reading of the text, explanation of the text via articulated statements of doctrine, followed by the application of the text (i.e., its "use" to the people).⁷⁹ Finally, when reviewing Keach's hermeneutical principles, Vaughn, highlights three features of his approach: "(1) Keach was a literalist; (2) in spite of his literalism, he took a certain amount of poetic license with Christ's parables; (3) there is an aspect of his interpretation of and commentary on scripture which can legitimately be referred to as sacramental."⁸⁰ Vaughn does not mention Keach's Christ-centered focus in preaching, which highlights the need for this present research. Holmes considers Keach's sermons through the lens of metaphor, but also reflects on the centrality of Scripture in Keach's sermons.⁸¹ He argues that Keach "knew that one of the main responsibilities of the pastors was the faithful preaching of the Scriptures."⁸²

⁷⁶ Vaughn, *Public Worship*, 85.

⁷⁷ Vaughn, *Public Worship*, 101–2.

⁷⁸ Vaughn, *Public Worship*, 107.

⁷⁹ Vaughn, *Public Worship*, 107.

⁸⁰ Vaughn, *Public Worship*, 115.

⁸¹ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 33.

⁸² Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 34.

Holmes describes Keach's preaching as "Engaging Exposition [*sic*]." ⁸³ Holmes rightly argues that Keach frequently incorporated figurative imagery in his sermons to enhance their substance. ⁸⁴

After emphasizing the centrality of Scripture, and the engaging nature of Keach's sermons, Holmes gives the reader a summary of Keach's prominent sermons. He categorizes the 224 published sermons of Keach as "pastoral sermons (4), doctrinal sermons (68), and parabolical sermons (152)." ⁸⁵ Keach's pastoral sermons (funeral sermons), his doctrinal sermons (polemical works), and his parabolical sermons (referring to the parables of Jesus) are the majority of his published works. While it is helpful to separate Keach's sermons into such categories, the categories are assigned by Holmes, not Keach. Therefore, a more comprehensive analysis of Keach's sermons is required, which categorizes his sermons by biblical categories such as the genres of Scripture.

Holmes's work ultimately focuses on analyzing the use of metaphor in Keach's preaching. To aid his analysis, Holmes turns to Keach's work, *Tropologia: A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors*. Holmes explains, "[*Tropologia*] was the medium in which Keach published all of his data on biblical metaphors, and it is a key source to understanding not only Keach's concept of metaphor, but also aspects of his theology and hermeneutical methods." ⁸⁶ Holmes analyzes the use of metaphors in a sampling of Keach's sermons. He provides an excellent insight into Keach's use of metaphor in his sermons. However, Holmes does not use the *Tropologia* method as described and applied in this research.

⁸³ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 36.

⁸⁴ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 36.

⁸⁵ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 45.

⁸⁶ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 82.

The *Tropologia* method used in this research represents a different approach to the one utilized by Holmes in two respects. First, Keach's *Tropologia* method embraces the use of typology. Holmes mentions typology five times in his work, one of which is a direct quote from Keach,⁸⁷ but he does not consider Keach's use of typology.⁸⁸ Second, Keach uses his *Tropologia* method to preach Christ by highlighting the parities and disparities between a metaphor and Christ.⁸⁹ Holmes presents small sections entitled, "Nature of Christ." In those sections he displays how metaphors are used of Christ. For example, he speaks about metaphors such as Christ as the conduit pipe, Christ as the pearl of great price, and Christ as testator, but does not connect these with Keach's *Tropologia* work. Holmes focuses on the image as a metaphor for Christ, but does not compare that image with the parities and disparities presented in *Tropologia*.⁹⁰

Holmes rightly states, "Keach was especially adept at using metaphorical imagery in his sermons to explain theological truths about Jesus Christ (an entire section of his *Tropologia* is devoted to such metaphors)."⁹¹ While Holmes mentions the section of *Tropologia* that points to Christ, he never directly compares the Christ metaphors (with its parities and disparities) to the Christ metaphor in *Tropologia* (with its parities and disparities) in the sermon he analyzes.⁹² Holmes's main objective is to highlight various metaphors in Keach's preaching whether they refer to the "Nature of Christ," "Nature of Man," "Nature of Believers," or "Nature of Judgment."⁹³ This is why Holmes does not

⁸⁷ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 118.

⁸⁸ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 122.

⁸⁹ Holmes proves his knowledge of this method in Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 96.

⁹⁰ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 141–44.

⁹¹ Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 153.

⁹² In chapter 6, where Holmes writes those sections about the Nature of Christ, Holmes does not cite *Tropologia* in the footnotes. See Holmes, "The Role of Metaphor," 132–71.

⁹³ All of these titles represent alternative subsections that Holmes utilizes to assess Keach's use of metaphor.

consider some of the major metaphors used of Christ in Keach's sermons, such as Mediator, Surety, Vine, and Shepherd.

Ultimately, Holmes does not reflect on the centrality of Christ in the sermons of Benjamin Keach through the *Tropologia* method. Instead, Holmes highlights the centrality of metaphors in Keach's sermons. This discussion on Holmes's excellent work is not intended call into question his contribution to Keachean studies, rather it serves to highlight the need for this present research. Therefore, though Keach's sermons have been sporadically referenced in research throughout the years (excluding Holmes), no work has considered Keach's unique Christ-centered methodology.

Argument

Following the exposition on the thesis and methodology, summary of research, and significance, the discussion can progress to the argument in the forthcoming chapters.

Chapter 2, entitled “‘Christ must be the Subject of all his Preaching’: Benjamin Keach's Life and Preaching,” will evaluate the life and preaching of Benjamin Keach. Walker's division of Keach's life into three main time periods will be utilized as the framework.⁹⁴ The early part of Keach's life was spent in Buckinghamshire from 1640–1668;⁹⁵ Keach lived in London from 1668–1689;⁹⁶ and he spent his final period in

⁹⁴ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 11.

⁹⁵ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 11–12. In the early period of his life, Keach left the church of England, joined the General Baptists, began to preach and write, and suffered persecution. Additionally, Thomas Crosby claims, “He was at first designed for a trade, and employed in one a little time; but his capacious soul soon aspired after higher things. He applied himself very early to the study of the Scripture, and the attainments of divine knowledge.” Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:269.

⁹⁶ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 12. During this period Keach continued to preach and write as a pastor in Southwark, which resulted in periodic spells in prison. This is also when he became a Particular Baptist. Although Walker labels this the second period in Keach's life, from 1668 onward Keach's ministry remained in London. As Crosby notes, “Their pastor having been dead for some time, they unanimously chose Mr. Keach to be their elder, and he was solemnly ordained, with prayer, and laying on of hands, in the year 1688; being the 28th year of his age; and with this people did he continue to the end of his days.” Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:272.

London from 1689–1704, which was Keach’s most extensive writing period.⁹⁷

Subsequently, a survey of Keach’s approach to preaching will illuminate his Puritan preaching method.⁹⁸ The chapter will argue that Keach’s approach to preaching is quintessentially Puritan in three areas: Puritan godliness, Puritan influence, and Puritan application.⁹⁹ This evaluation serves as the foundation for examining Keach’s Christ-centered preaching.

Chapter 3, entitled “Christ ‘the Antitype of all Types, and the Substance of all Shadows’ (Old Testament Sermons Part 1),” will assess Keach’s paradigmatic sermon, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven or Jacob’s Ladder Improved*. This four-part sermon series based on Genesis 28:12–13a will be reviewed along with *A Summons to the Grave, or The Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death* based on Psalm 89:48 and *God Acknowledged, or, The True Interest of the Nation and All that Fear God* based on Proverbs 3:6.

Chapter 4, entitled “‘Christ is not only Mediator of the Covenant, but Surety, Messenger and Testator’ (Old Testament Sermon Part 2),” will consider two sermon

⁹⁷ It was during this period that Keach wrote more than half of his published works. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 12.

⁹⁸ J. Stephen Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality: The Fear of God in the Affective Theology of George Swinnock*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 5–17. Yuille provides various definitions of the term Puritan. He acknowledges that scholars view Puritanism as either an ecclesiastical movement, political movement, theological movement, or a spiritual movement and argues that it is a spiritual movement.

⁹⁹ First, Puritan godliness. The research shows Keach’s metaphor of “Godliness compared to a trade,” thus highlighting two parts of godliness: doctrinal godliness and practical godliness. Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Troposchēmologia: Tropes and figures; or, A treatise of the metaphors, allegories, and express similitudes, &c. contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To which is prefixed, divers arguments to prove the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures wherein also ‘tis largely evinced, that by the great whore, mystery Babylon is meant the Papal hierarchy, or present state and church of Rome. Philologia sacra, the second part. Wherein the schemes, or figures in Scripture, are reduced under their proper heads, with a brief explication of each. Together with a treatise of types, parables, &c. with an improvement of them parallel-wise* (London: John Darby, 1682), 4:371. Second, Puritan influence. Andrew Ballitch surveys William Perkins’s interpretive method by dividing *The Arte of Prophesying* into two key components: biblical authority and biblical interpretation. Each component is considered in the analysis. See Andrew S. Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2020), 56–73, Logos Bible Software. Third, Puritan application. William Perkins’s seven ways of application will be considered. Perkins, *The Arte of Prophesying*, 101.

series that depict Keach's view on the covenants: *The Everlasting Covenant, a Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, Or, the Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace* based on 2 Samuel 23:5 and *The Display of Glorious Grace, or, The Covenant of Peace*, a fourteen-part sermon series based on Isaiah 54:10.

Chapter 5, entitled "'Christ the Pearl of Great Price' (New Testament Sermons Part 1)," argues that Keach adopted the *Tropologia* method for preaching Christ in the parables. To substantiate this claim, primary emphasis will be placed on demonstrating that Keach's published sermons revolve around the parables. The subsequent analysis will delve into Keach's interpretive strategy regarding the parables. Additionally, an examination of the Christ-centered orientation of Keach's parable sermons will be conducted, with specific scrutiny applied to one sermon from each of the Gospels. The sermons are: *The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matt 13:45–46)*, *The Parable of a Man Casting Seed into the Ground (Mark 4:26–29)*, *The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37)*, and *The Parable of God the Father an Husbandman (John 15:1–2)*.

Chapter 6, entitled "'Christ is your Shepherd, your Priest, your King, your Prophet, and Excels all that ever Bore those Names' (New Testament Part 2)," addresses Keach's Christ-centered preaching through a selection of sermons on texts from the Gospels and Epistles. These sermons comfort the Christian's heart and protect Christian doctrine. First, the solace bestowed upon believers emanates from two sermon series selected from a more extensive collection called *A Golden Mine Opened*. Those series are entitled *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep (John 10:27–28)* and *The Great Salvation (Heb 2:3)*. Both series were crafted to foster assurance of salvation among the saints through Christ. Second, the safeguarding of sound doctrine permeated Keach's corpus. In *The Marrow of True Justification (Rom 4:5; which encompassed two sermons)* and *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes (Rom 8:1; a single sermon)*, Keach advocated for justification by faith, resulting in the imputation of Christ's righteousness. In *The Jewish*

Sabbath Abrogated (Gal 4:10–11), Keach argued against celebrating the Jewish Sabbath among Christians.

The Conclusion, entitled “Keach and Contemporary Christ-Centered Preaching Methods Compared,” will explore what it means to preach Christ today. Initially, a summary of Benjamin Keach’s Christ-centered preaching method will be presented, followed by an assessment of the contemporary Christotelic, Christiconic, and Christopromise methods, contrasting them and Keach. Subsequently, the Christ-centered preaching methods of Edmund Clowney, Bryan Chapell, and Sidney Greidanus, and will be analyzed and compared with Keach. This conclusion will demonstrate that Benjamin Keach is a Christ-centered preacher worthy of emulation.

Therefore, with Christ’s help, this dissertation will extol the pivotal role of Christ-centered preaching in the sermons of Benjamin Keach through his *Tropologia* and Sin-Salvation methods. At the onset of this exploration, it seems appropriate to begin with an opening hymn, *Christ all in all*:

Ah what art thou, Lord Jesus, then?
What can we speak or shall?
Thou art unto all godly Men
Even their all in all.

The substance of all shadows too
The Antitype, likewise
Of all the Types we read of do,
Who would thee then not prize?¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody, Containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns* (London: John Hancock, 1691), 154–55. The verses presented are verses 1 and 5 of the hymn. *Spiritual Melody* was the first of Keach’s hymnbooks. In 1692, he published a poem called *The Banqueting-House*, and in 1696, he republished the poem in a hymnbook entitled *A Feast of Fat Things*. Later, in 1700, Keach published *Spiritual Songs*, which was a third and more extensive edition of *Spiritual Melody* (1691) and *The Banqueting-House* (1692) and (1696). Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 415. See Benjamin Keach, *The Banqueting-House, or, A Feast of Fat Things a Divine Poem, Opening Many Sacred Scripture Mysteries* (London: J. A., 1692); Benjamin Keach, *A Feast of Fat Things Full of Marrow Containing Several Scripture Songs Taken out of the Old and New Testaments, with Others Composed by the Author: Together with One Hundred of Divine Hymns, Being the First Century* (London: B.H., 1696). Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Songs Being the Marrow of Scripture in Songs of Praise to Almighty God from the Old and New Testament : With a Hundred Divine Hymns on Several Occasions as Now Practised in Several Congregations in and about London : With a Table of Contents / by Benjamin Keach, Author of the War with the Devil* (London: John Marshal, 1700).

CHAPTER 2

“CHRIST MUST BE THE SUBJECT OF ALL HIS PREACHING”: BENJAMIN KEACH’S LIFE AND PREACHING

“When I survey the wondrous Cross, Where the young Prince of Glory dy’d,
My richest Gain I count but Loss, And pour Contempt on all my Pride.”¹ The initial emergence of these Christocentric, congregational hymns in Baptist churches owes its existence to Benjamin Keach’s unwavering conviction, which paved the way for the works of Isaac Watts, widely acknowledged as the progenitor of English hymnody.² Keach endeavored to address the complaints raised by his adversaries,³ who contended that hymn-singing was excessively formal. In their reasoning, hymn-singing equated to

¹ The hymn was written in Book III of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* under the heading “VII. Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ; Gal. 6.14.” The original (i.e., first edition) words of this hymn said, “Where the young Prince of glory dy’d.” However, when the fifth edition of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* was published, the lyrics were changed to “On which the Prince of Glory dy’d.” For the first edition, see Isaac Watts, *Hymns and spiritual songs. In three books. I. Collected from the Scriptures. II. Compos’d on Divine Subjects. III. Prepared for the Lord’s Supper. With an Essay Towards the Improvement of Christian Psalmody, by the Use of Evangelical Hymns in Worship, as well as the Psalms of David* (London: John Lawrence, 1707), 189. For the fifth edition, see Isaac Watts, *Hymns and spiritual songs. In three books. I. Collected from the Scriptures. II. Compos’d on Divine Subjects. III. Prepar’d for the Lord’s Supper*, 5th ed. (London: John Lawrence, 1716), 289. It is worth noting that Keach published two hymnbooks. See Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody, Containing Near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns* (London, 1691); Keach, *Spiritual Songs being the Marrow of Scripture in Songs of Praise to Almighty God from the Old and New Testament: With a Hundred Divine Hymns on several Occasions as Now Practised in several Congregations in and about London: With a Table of Contents* (London, 1700). Michael Haykin states that the hymnbooks contain “in total four hundred hymns. Although none of them bear comparison with the finest of Watts’s hymns, Keach’s compositions are not to be rejected in toto as mere ‘doggerel’ as they have so often been.” Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage* (Peterborough, ON: H&E, 2019), 161.

² Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 161.

³ Matthew Stanton notes the strained relationship between Benjamin Keach and Isaac Marlow when he states, “Keach’s chief opponent, Isaac Marlow.” Marlow wrote against congregational worship in his fifty-page book, *Brief Discourse on Singing* (1690). Keach challenged Marlow’s work with a 270-page response in which he critiqued Marlow’s lack of scriptural reference and exegesis. In response, Marlow wrote a second and more robust work entitled *Prelimited forms of Praising God* (1691). In that work, he began with exegesis, knowing this debate amongst Baptists would be won or lost on the basis of scriptural evidence. Matthew Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity: London Baptists and the Hymn-Singing Controversy*, Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications 21 (Regent’s Park College, Oxford: Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford, 2022), 144.

praying rote-written prayers in accordance with the Church of England tradition.⁴

Although modern-day churches are indebted to Keach's polemics, his life and legacy are more than the hymn-singing controversy.

This chapter evaluates the life and preaching of Benjamin Keach, thus unveiling the man behind the hymn-singing controversy. Considering Keach's life, the following three time periods are of primary concern: his early life and ministry in Buckinghamshire (1640–1668), his ministry in London as the pastor of the Particular

⁴ Further arguments against hymn-singing were that hymn-singing was non-congregational. Keach's opponents believed hymn-singing had ceased as a supernatural gift along with tongues, prophesy, etc. Viewing hymn-singing as a non-congregational activity, they concluded that churches should follow the example of some early church practices by listening to a soloist. Furthermore, Keach's opponents also believed hymn-singing violated the purity of the church since it involved the participation of non-believers who were present. The final objection to congregational hymn-singing concerned passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11–12, suggesting that women could not speak a word in the congregation. See Murdina D. MacDonald, *London Calvinistic Baptist 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration*, Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications 23 (Regent's Park College, Oxford: Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford, 2022), 53–74; Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 156–57.

The debate between Keach and Marlow centered around three areas: "The interpretation of Scripture, their interpretation of history, and their sense of their distinctiveness as a religious community." See Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 144–46. Based on scriptural, historical, and ecclesiastical evidence, Keach's side prevailed, and on March 24, 1692, the General Assembly ceased debates on corporate hymn-singing, acknowledging its validity amongst their congregations. See Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 178. Keach published a response to his "chief opponent Isaac Marlow" in the following works: Benjamin Keach, *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship: Or, Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Proved to Be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ Wherein the Chief Arguments of Many Learned Divines, Who Have Wrote on That Subject, Are Recited, as Mr. Cotton of New England, Mr. Sidenham, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Owen, Mr. Caryl, Dr. Du-Veil, Mr. Wells, &c. With an Answer to All Objections. As Also, an Examination of Mr. Isaac Marlow's Two Papers, One Called, A Discourse Concerning Singing, &c. the Other, An Appendix: Wherein His Arguments and Cavils Are Detected and Refuted* (London: John Hancock, 1691). A more extensive edition, with the same title, was published in 1699. The additions to this work were an answer to DuVeil and an appendix by Thomas Winnell. Keach published a second edition of the work in 1700. Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2015), 408. See also Benjamin Keach, *An Answer to Mr. Marlow's Appendix Wherein His Arguments to Prove That Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Was Performed in the Primitive Church by a Special or an Extraordinary Gift, and Therefore Not to Be Practised in These Days, Are Examined, and Clearly Detected. Also Some Reflections on What He Speaks on the Word Hymnos, Hymnos: And on His Undue Quotations of Divers Learned Men. By a Learned Hand* (London: John Hancock, 1691).

Baptist congregation in Southwark (1668–1689), and the final fifteen years of his life in which he wrote numerous works (1689–1704).⁵

An examination of Keach’s preaching, focuses on providing a comprehensive assessment concerning his preaching methodology. This chapter posits that Keach’s approach to preaching was quintessentially Puritan. A review of his Puritan method will consider the following: Puritan godliness, Puritan influence, and Puritan application. The evaluation in this chapter serves as the foundation for delving into Keach’s Christ-centered preaching approach.

Benjamin Keach’s Life

Thomas Crosby, the prominent eighteenth-century Baptist historian, proves a reliable source for investigating Keach’s life. Crosby argued that before his biography of Benjamin Keach, “There has been no account [of Keach’s life] published to the world.”⁶ Yet, one does not have to guess what encouraged Crosby’s work when one learns that Crosby married “the youngest off-spring of the reverend gentleman [Benjamin Keach],”⁷ Rebecca Keach.⁸ Keach and Crosby’s close relationship allowed Crosby to profit from

⁵ Austin Walker also divides Keach’s life into these three time periods. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 11–12.

⁶ It is worth noting that according to Crosby, Keach had the intention of writing some form of an autobiography: “He had taken up a resolution of doing something of this kind himself sometime before his death, but was prevented by his more useful study.” Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists: From the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I*, 4 vols. (London, 1738–1740), 4:268–69.

⁷ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:268.

⁸ Thomas Crosby claimed,

[He] cared for his widowed mother-in-law. He was a schoolmaster and has been celebrated as the first Baptist historian. His four-volume work entitled *The History of the English Baptists* remains the seminal work on English Baptist history. Understandably, his lengthy, almost hagiographic, portrait of Benjamin Keach provided unique insight into Keach’s character and life events and has proven to be the lasting vision of Keach for centuries. Crosby was active in Horsleydown congregation during Benjamin Stinton’s pastorate and in the period following Stinton’s death, finally settling with the branch of the church which called John Gill (1697–1771) as its pastor. (Johnathan W. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)*, Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications 11 [Regent’s Park College, Oxford: Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford, 2019], 27)

“the memory of his acquittance, some papers left behind him, and what has been occasionally published in his writings.”⁹

Benjamin Keach was born in Buckinghamshire on February 29, 1640. His father, John, also born in Buckinghamshire, served as a church warden in 1627 and again in 1640.¹⁰ Keach’s mother, Joyce,¹¹ bore seven children, of which Benjamin was the sixth. Based on baptism records, his siblings’ names and baptism dates were: Henry on

⁹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:269. The brevity of Keach’s biographical sketch in this present work is due to the extensive and comprehensive work already completed on the life of Benjamin Keach. Austin Walker has produced some notable contributions. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*; Austin Walker, “The Life of Benjamin Keach,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Keach*, ed. Matthew Stanton and Ian Campbell (Knightstown, IN: Particular Baptist Heritage Books, 2023), 1:1–66; Austin Walker, “Benjamin Keach (1640–1704): Tailor Turned Preacher,” in *Pulpit and People: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Baptist Life and Thought*, ed. John H. Y. Briggs, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 28 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 25–42. Some other notable contributions are as follows: James Barry Vaughn, “Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1989), 1–24; James C. Brooks, “Benjamin Keach and the Baptist Signing Controversy: Mediating Scripture, Confessional Heritage, and Christian Unity” (PhD diss., The Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2006), 7–9; James Christopher Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor in the Sermons of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 9–33; James Patrick Carnes, “The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and His Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth-Century England” (MA thesis, North Texas State University, 1984), 26–74; Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*, 13–14, Arnold uniquely highlights Keach’s social networks, authorities, and influences; Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 4–8; Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 139–63; Thomas Eugene Hicks, “An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification in the Theologies of Richard Baxter and Benjamin Keach” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 24–32; William Eugene Spears, “The Baptist Movement in England in the Late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704” (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 1953). The breadth of work presented on Keach’s life led Justin Irwin to adopt a similar approach to this research. See Justin Irwin, “Benjamin Keach and Baptist Confessional Identity in Post-Reformation London, 1664–1704” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2016), 1–2. However, for the purpose of this work, it is important to deviate slightly from Irwin’s approach and give a greater context to Keach’s life, which influenced his preaching method. Therefore, a brief sketch of Keach’s life will suffice for this present work.

¹⁰ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 19.

¹¹ Walker writes a lengthy footnote regarding the identity of Keach’s mother: “There is some doubt over the identity of his mother. In the records of the church at Horsely-down (Keach’s Southwark congregation), Keach lists his parents as John and Joyce. In the Stoke Hammond church parish registers, his mother’s name is listed as Fedora or Feodra.” Walker speculates as to whether Joyce had two names and highlights that Vaughn suggests Joyce died and John Keach remarried Fedora. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 15–19n6. However, later, in entry for *Benjamin Keach Journal*, Walker posits conclusive evidence suggesting that her name was Joyce and not Fedora:

Confusion has arisen because of the record in the Stoke Hammond Parish Register . . . The baptismal entry for Henry is in English, Joseph and Benjamin are recorded in Latin. The script is not easy to read . . . When *The Excellent Benjamin Keach* was published I had been influenced by previous researchers who listed the name as Fedora or Foedora. More recently I have returned to the subject with the help of Dr. David Noy, a resident of Winslow. His expert knowledge of Latin correctly identified the name of Benjamin’s mother as Joyce. (Austin Walker, “Austin Walker-The Identification of the Mother of Benjamin Keach,” *Benjamin Keach Journal*, January 2018, <https://benjaminkeachjournal.com/austin-walker-the-identification-of-the-mother-of-benjamin-keach>)

December 22, 1624; Anna on November 7, 1630; Josiah on October 6, 1633; Maria on July 31, 1636 (she died in infancy); Joseph on September 21, 1637; and Maria (his youngest sister) on June 4, 1643. Benjamin was baptized on March 6, 1640.¹² Due to financial constraints, Keach's parents could not support his formal education. Consequently, he began his professional journey in the tailoring trade. Crosby's account briefly mentioned how Keach's early years played a pivotal role in shaping his convictions on baptism:

[O]bserving the Scripture to be entirely silent concerning the baptism of infants, he began to suspect the validity of the Baptism he had received in his infancy, and after he had deliberated upon this matter, was in the fifteenth year of his age baptized, upon the profession of his faith, by Mr. John Russel, and then joined himself to a congregation of that persuasion in that country.¹³

Keach was baptized at fifteen years of age, and three years later, he received a call to ministry in his congregation. Keach's theology developed throughout the years, but his doctrinal convictions were initially influenced by those who "held the Remonstrants scheme," that is, those who "went under the name of Arminians." Crosby asserted that Keach's adoption of this theology stems from his early immersion into "the sacred office of the ministry."¹⁴

In 1660, when he was twenty years old, Keach married Jane Grove (1639–1670) from Winslow in Buckinghamshire.¹⁵ According to Crosby, Jane was "a woman of great piety and prudence."¹⁶ She was "his companion in troubles, and suffering, ten

¹² Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 19.

¹³ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:269.

¹⁴ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:270.

¹⁵ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:273.

¹⁶ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:271.

years.”¹⁷ Jane bore Keach five children in their ten years together.¹⁸ Sadly, she died on October 7, 1670, at 31 years of age. Keach displayed his affection for her by composing a poem in her memory, titled *A Pillar Set Up*,¹⁹ drawing inspiration from Genesis 35, wherein Jacob sets up a pillar at Rachel’s grave. In the poem, Keach spoke of Jane’s “very great and noble character, commending her for her zeal for the truth and sensitivity of religion.”²⁰ In particular, Keach praised Jane for the “comfort, she was to him, in his suffering for the cause of Christ, visiting, and taking all possible care of him, while in prison, instead of tempting him, to use any base means, for delivery out of his troubles, encouraging him to go on, and counting it an honour done them both, in that they were called to suffer for the sake of Christ.”²¹ Keach wrote this piece to honor his wife and commended her as an example of a “good wife”²² who had stood by him through intense persecution.²³

¹⁷ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:273.

¹⁸ Only three children survived after birth. Their names were Mary Keach (born in 1663), Elias Keach (born in 1665), and Hannah Keach (born in 1667). Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, xxviii, 16–17.

¹⁹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:273. The full title of the poem is *A Pillar Set Up, to the memory of his first dear and beloved wife*. At one point, most recognized that “no copies are known to be in existence.” Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 403. During this period, the only knowledge of the poem’s content was found in Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:273–74. However, Stanton, recently unearthed a solitary extant copy of this work in the National Archives in Dublin, Ireland. See Stanton, *Liturgy and Identity*, 65.

²⁰ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:274.

²¹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:274.

²² Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:274.

²³ According to Walker, Keach was arrested at least three times in his life. Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 72. In response to his persecution and those suffering in The Great Fire of London. Keach wrote a poem called *Zion in Distress*. The authorities were tightening their grip on Keach and the Christians around him, so he wrote this poem in response. In the first edition, he mentions persecution and prison: “Who for Christ Jesus sake, with much content, Do from their Foes indure all punishment: For they in Prison rather chuse to lie, Then to obtain, by sin, their liberty.” Benjamin Keach, *Zion in Distress, or, The Sad and Lamentable Complaint of Zion and Her Children Wherein Are Demonstrated the Causes of Her Miserable Calamities, and Her Faith in God: Also Shewing the Dreadful Controversie God Hath with the Beast of Rome* (London, 1666), 3. The reality of persecution was setting in for Keach and his fellow dissenters. Keach also wrote another edition of the poem. See Benjamin Keach, *Sion in Distress, or, The Groans of the Protestant Church [sic]* (London: George Larkin, 1681). The poem’s final edition came when “Keach joined the chorus of voices who saw the events of 1688 and 1689 and in particular the coming of William of Orange, as a national deliverance from popery.” Walker, *The*

After Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658, it appears that toleration and liberty of conscience died with him. A series of laws, known as the "Clarendon Code," were enacted in London during this period (1661–1665), leading to the persecution of dissenters. The "Clarendon Code" formed four acts, which resulted in the prohibition of all public services unless held in Church of England churches or chapels. Unauthorized services were declared unlawful, and attendees were subject to arrest.²⁴ The first act was The Corporation Act (1661) only allowed Royalist Anglicans to be appointed as magistrates. Subsequently, the Act of Uniformity (1662) was implemented, requiring ministers to be ordained in the Church of England, adhere to the Book of Common Prayer, and renounce the Solemn League and Covenant. Additionally, the Conventicle Act (1664) stipulated penalties for those who hosted unauthorized services. Additionally, anyone over sixteen attending such meetings faced punishment. Finally, the Five Mile Act (1665) dictated that ejected ministers could not reside within five miles of their former parish.²⁵ As a result of the "Clarendon Code," Keach frequently suffered for the sake of Christ.²⁶ Crosby wrote, "He was often seized, when preaching, and committed to prison, sometimes bound, sometimes released upon bail, and sometimes his life was threatened."²⁷

Excellent Benjamin Keach, 119. In this final version, Keach included some hymns of praise to God as Keach embraced future hope. Benjamin Keach, *Distressed Sion Relieved, or, The Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness Wherein Are Discovered the Grand Causes of the Churches Trouble and Misery under the Late Dismal Dispensation: With a Compleat History of, and Lamentation for Those Renowned Worthies That Fell in England by Popish Rage and Cruelty, from the Year 1680 to 1688* (London: Nath. Crouch, 1689).

²⁴ Walker, "The Life of Benjamin Keach," 1:9.

²⁵ Walker, "The Life of Benjamin Keach," 1:10.

²⁶ Relief from the threat of persecution finally came when The Act of Toleration (1689) was passed. Hatred for the dissenters remained, yet they had a new-found freedom, which had not been experienced for years. Walker, "The Life of Benjamin Keach," 43–44.

²⁷ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:185.

While Keach was still in Buckinghamshire, troopers discovered a meeting where he was preaching. Crosby recounted, “They came with great rage and violence upon the assembly, and swore they would kill the preacher. Accordingly he was seiz’d, and four of the troopers declared their resolution to trample him to death with their horses; and laying him bound on the ground they prepared themselves for the fact.”²⁸ Mercifully, by God’s grace and protection, another officer who saw what was happening rode up and prevented his colleagues from killing Keach.²⁹ That same year, 1664, Keach, at twenty-four years of age, published his first primer entitled *The Child’s Instructor; or, a new and easie Primmer*.³⁰ The primer includes arguments that run counter to the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of England. The arguments are threefold: (1) renouncing paedobaptism, (2) laymen can preach the gospel, and (3) the eschatological view that Christ would reign personally on the earth in the last days.³¹

Keach’s primer served as another reason for persecution at the hands of authorities. When Thomas Strafford, a Justice of the Peace, heard about Keach’s primer, he took a constable to Keach’s house. In Keach’s residence, copies of the primer were confiscated. Keach was apprehended, subsequently being taken over to the Assizes (periodic law court sessions that heard various criminal cases).³² Keach stood trial before Lord Chief Justice Robert Hyde on October 8, 1664. This was no friendly trial, the judge continuously threatened Keach so much that Keach’s friends feared for his life.³³ At the trial’s conclusion, Judge Hyde pronounced the following verdict upon Keach:

²⁸ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:185–86.

²⁹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:185–86.

³⁰ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:186.

³¹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:186.

³² Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:186.

³³ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:199.

Benjamin Keach, you are here convicted, for writing, printing and publishing, a seditious and schismatical book, for which the court's judgment is this, and the court doth award: That you shall go to goal [*sic*] for a fortnight without bail or mainprize; and the next Saturday, to stand upon the pillory at Ailsbury, in the open market, for the space of two hours, from eleven of the clock to one, with a paper upon your head with this inscription: "For writing, printing and publishing, a schismatical book, intituled, The Child's Instructor, or, a new and easy Primmer." And next Thursday, to stand in the same manner, and for the same time, in the market of Winslow; and there your book shall be openly burnt, before your face, by the common hangman, in disgrace of you and your doctrine.³⁴

Though Judge Hyde's verdict served as the last word of judgment, he did not have the final word. Keach responded, "I hope I shall never renounce these truths, which I have written in that book."³⁵

When authorities brought Keach to the pillory at Ailsbury, he did not feel dismayed, as he understood the purpose of his suffering. Walking to the pillory, he uttered, "The cross is the way to the crown."³⁶ For Keach, the pillory was his pulpit, and from it, he began to preach these words:

Good people, I am not ashamed to stand here this day, with this paper on my head; my Lord Jesus was not ashamed to suffer on the cross for me' [*sic*] and it is for his cause that I am made a gazing-stock. Take notice, it is not for any wickedness that I stand here; but for writing and publishing his truths, which the Spirit of the Lord hath revealed in the Holy Scriptures.³⁷

Unfortunately for Keach, the persecution extended beyond the pillory in Ailsbury. Keach stood in the same manner the following Saturday at Winslow. No account of his speech that day exists, but Crosby assumed he stood with "the same Christian spirit and courage as before" while witnessing his primer burnt before his eyes. According to Crosby, the persecutions faced by Keach catalyzed his decision to relocate with his family to London:

His publick trial and suffering rendering him more acceptable to informers than others, so that it was not likely he could enjoy any quiet settlement in those parts for the service of the church of Christ; and he, having not then taken upon him the

³⁴ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:202–3.

³⁵ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:203.

³⁶ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:204.

³⁷ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2:204.

charge of any people, thought of removing to London, where he might have an opportunity of doing more good.³⁸

In 1668, Keach liquidated all his assets and relocated to London with his wife and children. While the intention behind the move was to evade severe persecution, the journey itself was fraught with adversity. On their way to London, Keach and his family fell victim to highwaymen who robbed their coach, resulting in the loss of all their possessions. Crosby noted, “This was no small trial, to be bereft of all that he had and left to shift, with a wife and three children, in a strange place.”³⁹ Despite the hardships faced by the Keach family, the Lord’s provision for them remained evident. Soon after arriving in London, Keach found himself selected and ordained as the pastor of a modest congregation situated in Southwark.⁴⁰ At twenty-eight years of age, Keach “was solemnly ordained, with prayer, and laying on of hands, in the year 1668.”⁴¹

Upon Keach’s arrival in London, where he had increased access to scholarly resources and diverse intellectual influences,⁴² he underwent a theological transformation, diverging from his earlier Arminian convictions concerning “the extent of Christ’s death, and freedom of man’s will.”⁴³ While the precise moment of Keach’s conversion to Calvinist doctrines remains uncertain, Crosby intimated that, following his relocation to

³⁸ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 3:143–44.

³⁹ It should be noted that after the incident, Keach “joined with the rest of the passengers in suing the county, and so recovered the whole of their loss again.” Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 3:144.

⁴⁰ Crosby noted, “This people, had formerly belonged to one of the most ancient congregations of Baptists in London, but separated from them in the year 1652, for some practices which they judged disorderly . . . They had for their Elder Mr. William Rider, who published a small tract, in vindication of the practice of laying on of hands on baptized believers.” Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:272.

⁴¹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:272.

⁴² Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:271.

⁴³ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:270.

London, a definitive resolution crystallized in Keach's beliefs within a few years, shaping his theological stance for the remainder of his life.⁴⁴

Faced with persecution, Keach's fledgling congregation sought refuge in the secluded Tooty Street, a strategic move to evade their oppressors. However, when King Charles II later granted leniency to Protestant dissenters, the Southwark congregation, buoyed by this newfound freedom, opted to construct a meeting house in Horselydown.⁴⁵ The success of their ministry prompted the continuous expansion of the meeting house, ultimately transforming it into a capacious venue capable of accommodating nearly a thousand people.⁴⁶ Two years after Keach's pastoral appointment, in 1670, his wife Jane died of unknown causes. Keach remained single for two years before he married "Mrs. Susannah Partridge, of Rickmansworth in Hartfordshire."⁴⁷ Susannah was the widow of Samuel Partridge, who had died only nine months after his marriage to Susannah.⁴⁸ Keach and Susannah had five daughters together: "Elizabeth, Susannah, two named Rachel, and one Rebekah."⁴⁹ Crosby affirmed Keach's character, "a very affectionate husband, a tender father, a prudent master, and a constant and faithful friend."⁵⁰

Alongside affection and tenderness, Keach was also a man of conviction. For example, Keach strongly believed that Christians should celebrate the Sabbath on Sunday. He wrote works such as *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated, or The Saturday*

⁴⁴ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:271. Haykin observes Keach's Calvinistic preaching through *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*. Reflecting on Keach's sermons on Luke 15, Haykin highlights Keach's use of "scriptural proof that regeneration was wholly God's work, a work in which men and women are entirely passive." Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 147.

⁴⁵ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:272–73.

⁴⁶ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:273.

⁴⁷ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:274.

⁴⁸ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:275.

⁴⁹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:275.

⁵⁰ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:306–7.

Sabbatarians Confuted (1700).⁵¹ Keach composed this sermon in response to several members departing from the congregation due to their belief in celebrating the Sabbath on a Saturday. Nevertheless, despite Keach's firm convictions regarding the Sabbath, he remained a "faithful friend" to those who maintained divergent perspectives. In his final days, Keach asked a Sabbatarian friend, the Seventh-Day Baptist pastor Joseph Stennett,⁵² to preach at his funeral.⁵³ In fact, when Anglican layman David Russen labelled Keach an Anabaptist preacher and accused him of inappropriate behavior when baptizing women,⁵⁴ Stennett rushed to his friend's defense. Stennett attempted to acquire a retraction from Russen, but to no avail. However, when Russen refused, Stennett wrote a response defending Keach's name and character. The letter was signed by twenty-eight people, including paedobaptists and Anglicans,⁵⁵ testifying to the sterling reputation of Keach's character and catholicity.

Keach's friends and close relatives never questioned his character. While portraying a picture of perfection in a biographical account is tempting, perfection remains unattainable on this earth. Keach's son-in-law, Crosby, was not short of compliments for Keach, yet his close familial relationship allowed him to shed light on his father-in-law's most intimate flaws. As Crosby wrote,

⁵¹ Benjamin Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated, or, The Saturday Sabbatarians Confuted in Two Parts: First, Proving the Abrogation of the Old Seventh-Day Sabbath: Secondly, That the Lord's-Day Is of Divine Appointment: Containing Several Sermons Newly Preach'd upon a Special Occasion, Wherein Are Many New Arguments Not Found in Former Authors* (London: John Marshall, 1700).

⁵² Joseph Stennett (1663–1713) was "the pastor of the Pinner's Hall Seventh Day Baptists and also lectured for the General Baptist Church meeting at the Barbican." However, during this time, the congregation at the Barbican called on him to reject his Calvinistic preaching, yet he declined. Therefore, though Keach and Stennett disagreed about the Sabbath, their theology was in alignment on other issues. Stennett, Keach, and others were "involved in the April 1704 assembly of thirteen associated churches at Lotimar's Hall." It was through such connections that Stennett and Keach remained friends unto death. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach*, 24.

⁵³ Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 162–63.

⁵⁴ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2.

⁵⁵ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 5.

The vivacity of his temper sometimes exposed him, to sharp and sudden fits of anger, which occasioned no small uneasiness to himself, as well as those who had given him any provocation; but those fits were but of a short continuance, and so the trouble occasioned by him was soon over: And the goodness and tenderness of his nature was such, as afterwards made sufficient amends to those who had fallen under his resentment. Besides, if his natural passion, at any time, so far transported him, as to cause him to speak any rash or offensive words, he was presently recovered, and would with the greatest humility and frankness retract what he had said.⁵⁶

Despite such imperfections, this “very affectionate husband” remained devoted to his wife for thirty-two years. In 1704, Susannah Keach found herself widowed for the second time, leading to twenty-three years of singlehood. Keach died at the age of sixty-four on July 18, 1704, at around 11 in the morning. Keach was buried at his own meeting place on the following Friday at the Baptist burial ground in Southwark.⁵⁷ Before his death, Keach asked his friend Stennett to preach on 2 Timothy 1:12 at his funeral.⁵⁸ Although many people were there to hear his funeral sermon, “Mr. Stennett being ill disappointed them. It was sometime afterward when he preached it.”⁵⁹

Following Keach’s passing, Susannah lived with Crosby and Rebecca (Keach’s daughter).⁶⁰ Crosby attested, “She was a woman of extraordinary piety, who had a good report of all; a most tender mother, and grandmother.”⁶¹ What spoke most about Susannah’s character was that “her confidence was not in the flesh; her rejoicing

⁵⁶ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:307.

⁵⁷ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:309.

⁵⁸ Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 161–62.

⁵⁹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:309.

⁶⁰ Crosby specifically noted that “she lived with me many years, and during the time I was acquainted with her, which was near the last twenty years of her life.” Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:275. Susannah was without Keach for twenty-three years, and Crosby noted that she lived with him and his wife for twenty years. So, it is possible that Susannah lived on her own for a three-year period after Keach’s death. Alternatively, it is also possible that Crosby was referring to a general period of twenty years in his home.

⁶¹ Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:275.

was in Christ, and Christ was her all.”⁶² It seems that Susannah Keach was much like her husband, Benjamin Keach, pious, tender, and Christ-centered.

Benjamin Keach’s Preaching

In his work, *The Glory of a True Church*. Keach outlined what a faithful Pastor should do. The first item Keach mentioned was preaching: “The work of a Pastor is to preach the Word of Christ, or to feed the Flock, and to administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel.”⁶³ As a faithful Pastor, Keach sought to preach the Word of Christ. Yet, it is the word “Puritan” that characterizes Benjamin Keach’s preaching style. When substantiating this claim, one must establish a clear definition of the term “Puritan” prior to investigating the nature and style of Keach’s preaching. Stephen Yuille aptly articulates the challenge inherent in defining the term. The label “Puritan” characterizes a diverse array of figures, including Thomas Cartwright, John Preston, William Ames, John Goodwin, John Bunyan, John Milton, Oliver Cromwell, John Owen, Richard Baxter, John Cotton, and numerous others. Yuille rightly stresses that crafting a comprehensive definition of Puritanism to accommodate the diverse perspectives of these individuals remains a difficult task.⁶⁴

Yuille further notes that secondary literature depicts Puritanism through one of four perspectives. Some scholars portray Puritanism as an ecclesiastical movement. Yuille encapsulates this viewpoint: “Puritans encompassed a broad spectrum of opinion, yet all shared one common denominator—dissatisfaction with the extent of the

⁶² Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4:276.

⁶³ Benjamin Keach, *The Glory of a True Church, and Its Discipline Display’d Wherein a True Gospel-Church Is Described: Together with the Power of the Keys, and Who Are to Be Let in, and Who to Be Shut out* (London, 1697), 13.

⁶⁴ J. Stephen Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality: The Fear of God in the Affective Theology of George Swinnock*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 5.

Reformation in England.”⁶⁵ This discontent stemmed from disapproval of Henry VIII’s endorsement of the Six Articles enacted by Parliament in 1539. Puritans were also disheartened by the persistence of certain remnants of Roman Catholic worship in Elizabeth I’s England. Despite the liberties granted by the Act of Toleration during Cromwell’s era, disillusionment deepened in 1662 with the passing of the Act of Uniformity. This legislation mandated that “ministers had to declare their consent to the entire Book of Common Prayer and their rejection of the Solemn, League and Covenant.”⁶⁶ Thus, Yuille concludes, “For many scholars, this ecclesiastical struggle is the essence of Puritanism.”⁶⁷

Other researchers propose that Puritanism constituted a political movement. The view that political movements shaped Puritanism embraces the conflict between the Puritans and their monarchs. From the Puritan standpoint, they feared that Charles I intended to govern as an absolute monarch. This meant Charles I had complete control of the church and the state. According to Yuille, James II also asserted royal absolutism and favored Roman Catholicism.⁶⁸ The absolute authority of any monarch over the church was a concept the Puritans rejected outright. Yuille notes, “Many view this political movement, spanning the reigns of the four Stuart kings, as the essence of Puritanism.”⁶⁹

Yuille continues, “In the opinion of some scholars . . . [the] Reformed theology of grace is at the heart of Puritanism.”⁷⁰ Interestingly, in his footnotes, Yuille acknowledges a consensus amongst some scholars regarding the Puritans’ emphasis on

⁶⁵ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 6.

⁶⁶ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 7.

⁶⁷ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 7.

⁶⁸ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 9.

⁶⁹ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 9.

⁷⁰ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 13.

predestinarian theology. Yuille highlights the arguments of Dewey Wallace that stress the centrality of theology of grace in the Puritan movement.⁷¹

Finally, despite the persuasiveness of the arguments just outlined, Yuille convincingly contends that Puritanism was ultimately a spiritual movement.⁷² Drawing insights from primary and secondary literature, Yuille aligns with J. I. Packer’s assertion that “Puritanism was at heart a spiritual movement, passionately concerned with God and godliness.”⁷³ Yuille acknowledges that “spirituality” was not a term used by the Puritans, citing words like “godliness, holiness, piety, or religion”⁷⁴ as more common terms. Yet, he argues that when “spirituality” is adequately defined, it aptly describes the Puritan movement. Marian Raikes succinctly defines “spirituality” as “the way people practice what they believe.”⁷⁵ Glen Scorgie states, “Christian spirituality is the domain of lived Christian experience. It is about living all of life—not just some esoteric portion of it—before God, through Christ, in the transforming and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁶

Yuille asserts that mortification, which refers to the killing of sin, is at the heart of Christian spirituality and, thus, the Puritan movement.⁷⁷ Yuille contends, “In this

⁷¹ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 13.

⁷² Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 13–17.

⁷³ J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 28.

⁷⁴ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 14.

⁷⁵ Marian Raikes, *Light from Dark Ages? An Evangelical Critique of Celtic Spirituality* (London: Latimer Trust, 2012), 76.

⁷⁶ Glen G. Scorgie, “Overview of Christian Spirituality,” in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen G. Scorgie et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2011), 27, Kindle.

⁷⁷ Keach fervently advocated for the adoption of mortification among Christians. His emphasis on godliness in the life of a believer was intricately connected to the theme of mortification. In his allegorical work, *The Travels of True Godliness* the character Godliness lamented the prevalence of counterfeit godliness stating, “Alas, don’t you see how counterfeit Godliness gives liberty to men to please their sensual and British Lusts, teaching an easier way to Heaven than ever I did or can, for I alwaies taught, as at this day the Doctrine of Self-denial, the necessity of Faith in Christ, Regeneration and Mortification of Sin, &c.” Benjamin Keach, *The Travels of True Godliness, from the Beginning of the World to This Present Day in an Apt and Pleasant Allegory* (London: John Dunton, 1684), 52. One of

conflict, there are two essential marks: growth in holiness and pursuit of holiness. This zeal for holiness stands at the center of Puritan spirituality.”⁷⁸ He concludes, “In the primary literature, the term *Puritan* is often used to describe such zeal.”⁷⁹ As stated above, Packer argues that Puritanism is “passionately concerned with God and godliness.”⁸⁰ In other words, one may accurately define Puritanism as a movement devoted to the promotion of godliness. Significantly, Benjamin Keach concurred with this conclusion. When defending the cause of hymn singing, he stated, “How zealous were the Godly Puritans (as they were called) for this blessed Ordinance [hymn singing], in whom Godliness shone so gloriously, that few since may compare with them?”⁸¹ This reference highlights Keach’s perspective on Puritanism, characterizing it as a godliness movement. Notably, Keach referred to Puritans in the past tense, indicating a potential reluctance to identify as a Puritan himself. However, it seemed customary for Puritans to avoid embracing the term “Puritan.” For instance, Joel Beeke and Stephen Yuille assert that William Perkins was the “Father of Puritanism.” However, they argue that Perkins “would never have described himself as a Puritan, given its negative connotation. Yet, it

Keach’s get influences, John Owen, also wrote extensively about the subject in John Owen, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers: The 1. Necessity, 2. Nature, and 3. Means of It. With a Resolution of Sundry Cases of Conscience Thereunto Belonging* (London: Nathanael Ponder, 1668).

⁷⁸ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 17.

⁷⁹ Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality*, 17. Yuille’s work focuses upon the fear of God in the affectionate theology of George Swinnock (1627–1673). Swinnock was born in Maidstone, Kent in England. His Father died when he was a young boy. Swinnock was known for his abilities as a practical preacher. *MTP*, 568–69. Therefore, Yuille asserts that Swinnock described himself as a Puritan, not on ecclesiastical, political, or theological grounds but on the basis of his spirituality, which he called “Serious piety.” George Swinnock, *The Christian-Man’s Calling: Or, A Treatise of Making Religion Ones Business: Wherein the Nature and Necessity of It Is Discovered: As Also the Christian Directed How He May Perform It in [Brace] Religious Duties, Natural Actions, His Particular Vocation, His Family Directions, and His Own Recreations* (London: T. P., 1662), To the Reader.

⁸⁰ Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 28.

⁸¹ Benjamin Keach, *The Breach Repaired in God’s Worship: Or, Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Proved to Be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ Wherein the Chief Arguments of Many Learned Divines, Who Have Wrote on That Subject, Are Recited, as Mr. Cotton of New England, Mr. Sidenham, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Owen, Mr. Caryl, Dr. Du-Veil, Mr. Wells, &c. With an Answer to All Objections. As Also, an Examination of Mr. Isaac Marlow’s Two Papers, One Called, A Discourse Concerning Singing, &c. the Other, An Appendix: Wherein His Arguments and Cavils Are Detected and Refuted* (London: John Hancock, 1691), 69.

is the very term that others used, favorably or not, to describe that experiential theology so prevalent in his life and ministry.” Although Keach, like Perkins, may not align himself with the term, this chapter will demonstrate that his preaching was quintessentially “Puritan.”⁸² Benjamin Keach passionately embraced such Puritan godliness in his life and preaching.

Puritan Godliness in Keach’s Preaching

“Godliness is the occupation of every true Christian.”⁸³ These words by Keach capture his dedicated commitment to fostering godliness among God’s people. When discussing Keach’s view on godliness, Austin Walker asserts that comprehending Keach necessitates an appreciation of his convictions regarding the process of becoming a Christian and the expectations placed upon individuals after professing their faith.⁸⁴ The expectations imposed upon Christians in light of the gospel they profess, relate to Christian practice, which is the heart of Puritan godliness. In the search for Keach’s views on godliness, one might well consider his metaphor of “godliness compared to a trade.”⁸⁵ In the introduction to this discourse, Keach stated, “The profession of godliness

⁸² Joel R. Beeke and J. Stephen Yuille, “Biographical Preface: William Perkins, the ‘Father of Puritanism’” In *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 1:xxxii

⁸³ Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia: Tropes and figures; or, A treatise of the metaphors, allegories, and express similitudes, &c. contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To which is prefixed, divers arguments to prove the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures wherein also ‘tis largely evinced, that by the great whore, mystery Babylon is meant the Papal hierarchy, or present state and church of Rome. Philologia sacra, the second part. Wherein the schemes, or figures in Scripture, are reduced under their proper heads, with a brief explication of each. Together with a treatise of types, parables, &c. with an improvement of them parallel-wise* (London: John Darby, 1682), 4:371. It is worth noting that Book 4 was printed separately in 1682 under the title *Troposchēmalogia*, and Books 1–3 were printed first in 1681 under the title *Tropologia*. See Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Tropologia, or, A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors the First Book Containing Sacred Philology, or the Tropes in Scripture, Reduc’d under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each / Partly Translated and Partly Compil’d from the Works of the Learned by T.D. The Second and Third Books Containing a Practical Improvement (Parallel-Wise) of Several of the Most Frequent and Useful Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes of the Old and New Testament* (London: Enoch Prosser, 1681).

⁸⁴ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 141.

⁸⁵ It is worth noting that Keach believed “Godliness is twofold, 1. The doctrinal part. 2. The practical part.” For the purpose of the current discussion, the focus will be Keach’s view on the practical

is in this, and divers other Scriptures, compared to a Trade or calling; and it is a very fruitful and profitable metaphor.”⁸⁶ Keach emphasized the necessity of godliness when he stated, “Now Godliness is the occupation of every true Christian, it is that which he hath been trained up in, it is that which he exerciseth and daily employeth himself about.”⁸⁷ For Keach, Christians were to be trained in, exercise, and practice godliness daily because “they must look upon it as their chief and principal calling.”⁸⁸

Keach recognized that godliness does not consist of the mere observation of practical piety. Godliness, according to Keach, “lies not in the bare expression, or knowledge of words, nor in the external form of profession of these words; but it lies in the divine glory of God.”⁸⁹ The divine glory of God finds its expression in “the mystery of that glory which is in this, that Christ is God’s Son.”⁹⁰ Godliness is revealed in Christ, and it is the proper recognition of Christ as the Son of God that leads to true godliness. Keach encouraged believers “[t]o have the powerful influences of it [godliness] upon the heart, whereby the soul is brought into the image or likeness of Christ’s death and resurrection.”⁹¹ The recognition of Christ conforms believers to the image of Christ in their daily lives.

part of godliness with a brief mention of the doctrinal part. A discussion on the doctrinal part of godliness is reserved for later chapters, which assess the Christ-centered nature of Keach’s preaching. In sum, Keach referred to doctrinal godliness as the revealing of “the mysteries of Godliness.” The revealing of such mysteries was seen through the unfolding gospel narrative in Scripture’s account of redemption. See Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:371. Keach’s use of the *Tropologia* method is not only apparent in his convictions about godliness, but also his approach to Christ-centered preaching. The use of this method in his Christocentric preaching will be noted throughout this present work.

⁸⁶ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:371.

⁸⁷ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:371.

⁸⁸ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:376.

⁸⁹ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:373.

⁹⁰ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:373.

⁹¹ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:373.

On the foundation of Christ, Christians build a life of practical godliness. Keach urged the pursuit of such godliness when he asserted, “So every Christian . . . must keep close to it [godliness], he must follow it day and night, and manage it wisely, throughout all his other affairs.”⁹² Godliness should permeate through every aspect of the Christian life, as Keach continued, “Godliness must be followed without intermission, it must be every day’s work; the head, heart, hands, feet, time, strength, discourse, contrivance, must be taken up about it.”⁹³ Thus, according to Keach, godliness is a daily exercise that requires continual practical obedience by Christians.⁹⁴ In sum, for Keach, godliness was a life of genuine devotion to God.

One illustration of godliness in Keach’s preaching is found in *A Golden Mine Opened*.⁹⁵ This work forms a collection “Containing the Substance of near Forty Sermons upon several Subjects.”⁹⁶ *A Trumpet Blown in Zion* is a two-part sermon series published within *A Golden Mine Opened*, based on Matthew 3:12.⁹⁷ From the beginning, Keach delineated the purpose of the series, providing the rationale for their publication: “Now

⁹² Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:375.

⁹³ Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:375.

⁹⁴ The practical outworkings of such daily godliness were numerous for Keach. First, practical godliness requires a life of daily repentance: “Renew repentance every day, and labour after fresh acts of faith; keep thy accounts even with God, observe the mercies thou receivest from him, and be sensible of thy faults and miscarriages.” Second, Christians must resolve not to trust in their own merit: “So it behoveth a Christian; he must not trust his own heart, nor in his own righteousness, nor put too much confidence in princes.” Third, Christians should ensure that they remember all they have in Christ: “Remember all your graces, gifts, and temporal goods too, are the Lord’s.” Finally, Christians must remember that a life of godliness requires self-sacrifice: “A Christian, who will not lay out his strength, time, and parts, and what he hath, for God, will never grow rich in faith and Godliness.” In other words, the pursuit of godliness means a life of self-denial. See Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:375.

⁹⁵ Benjamin Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened: Or, the Glory of God’s Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers: And His Direful Wrath against Impenitent Sinners: Containing the Substance of near Forty Sermons upon Several Subjects* (London, 1694), A2r.

⁹⁶ Keach recognized that the publication of this work touched on some matters of controversy. However, Keach’s goal was not to focus upon the controversy but “to clear up the Truths of Christ for the Establishment and Comfort of the People committed to my Care.” So, what was the controversy about which Keach wrote? Stated plainly, “The grand Controversy here insisted upon, is that about Election, and the Saints Final Perseverance, which I hope the Reader will find to his satisfaction confirmed.” Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, A2r.

⁹⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 1.

Published as an *Allarm to the Drousie and Chaffie Professors of this Age*.”⁹⁸ Considering this purpose statement, it is clear this sermon series emphasizes that godliness was a significant concern for Keach.

Keach highlighted the difference between wheat and chaff throughout these sermons. Keach effectively urged the pursuit of godliness by illuminating the disparity between believers and unbelievers. On the one hand, the wheat are those whose “Judgments are informed, their Understandings savingly enlightened [*sic*].”⁹⁹ The wheat hold Christ and heavenly realities in the highest esteem, surpassing all things on earth. Their understanding not only acknowledges the truth and glory of Christ but is also attuned to the beauty that Christ embodies.¹⁰⁰ The chaff, on the other hand, are those “vain Professors [who] are startled at every small blast of Persecution.”¹⁰¹ They dissociate from God’s people and neglect the gathering of believers.¹⁰² In order to differentiate the wheat from the chaff, Christ—the Fanner—uses the “Fan of the Word” and the “Fan of Church-Discipline.”¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 1.

⁹⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 25.

¹⁰¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 25.

¹⁰² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 25.

¹⁰³ Keach mentioned other “fans” in his discussion. However, the two fans mentioned here are the most pertinent to the present discussion. John Lightfoot (1602–1675), one of Keach’s Puritan influences (for example see his references to Lightfoot in Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 18, 46.) was a Hebrew scholar born Stoke-on-Trent. In 1643, he was appointed to the Westminster Assembly. For more information see *MTP*, 393–95. Notably, Lightfoot presented comments on Luke 3:17, which he paralleled with Matt 3:12. He noted that by the fan in Christ’s hand “most Expositors understand the power of judgement that God the Father hath committed to him.” Lightfoot, however, held an alternative interpretation: “I rather adhere to the interpretation of them that by the Fanne of Christ, understand the Gospel, and his preaching and publication of the same.” John Lightfoot, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists among Themselves, and with the Old Testament: The First Part, from the Beginning of the Gospels to the Baptisme of Our Saviour, with an Explanation of the Chiefest Difficulties Both in Language and Sense* (London: R. Cotes, 1644), 166. Keach seemingly held Lightfoot’s position that the fan is the Word, yet he also posited that Christ uses the fan for judgment.

Considering the “Fan of the Word,” Keach depicted Christ as the Fanner, but asked, “What fan does he use?” Keach answered this question in a “spiritual sense.”¹⁰⁴ Concerning Christ’s fan, Keach explained that his Word, especially the doctrine thereof is indicated by the term “fan.”¹⁰⁵ In Keach’s sermon, the merging of the doctrinal and practical parts of godliness becomes evident. The Word of God has a doctrinal purpose: “Let him take heed according to that holy doctrine taught and held forth in God’s Word; so that he attain unto a right knowledge of God, and of the Messiah.”¹⁰⁶

The deciding factor between the wheat and the chaff is whether they receive this doctrine of the Word and the culmination of this doctrine of the Word is found in Christ. Those who do not receive this doctrine, regardless of their outward appearance, are considered chaff in the sight of God and will be revealed as such on the last day.¹⁰⁷ Keach concluded, “Unless they receive Christ, believe in Christ, and are found gracious persons, fit Wheat for Christs spiritual Garner” they will be blown away like chaff.¹⁰⁸

Keach described the “Fan of Church-Discipline.”¹⁰⁹ The merging of the doctrinal and practical parts of godliness again becomes clear as Christ wields the fan of church discipline. Church discipline is deemed necessary when certain individuals, who are wicked and corrupt, infiltrate among God’s people or into his church, masquerading as genuine believers.¹¹⁰ Christ remains the ultimate authority behind the implementation of church discipline, “Christ by this Fan of Discipline purges out” the chaff.¹¹¹ The

¹⁰⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 9.

¹⁰⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 13.

¹¹⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 13.

¹¹¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 14.

recipients of that discipline are “All gross and scandalous Persons, who are Guilty of any Act or Acts . . . are such that suck in Heresies or Capital Errors . . . and are such who refuse to hear the Church.”¹¹² Keach spoke of Christ’s involvement in church discipline, including the final excommunication step: “Excommunication is to be used in the Name of Jesus Christ, and they purged out.”¹¹³ Keach believed that every aspect of church discipline is Christ’s work through the church: “The Power of the Keys, to receive in and shut out of the Congregation, is committed onto the Church.”¹¹⁴

Keach went on to note the difference between true godliness and false godliness. Keach spoke first against the false godliness of professing Israel who relied only upon “that external Covenant God made with Abraham; on which they stood, and of which they boasted; as also all that confidence they had in their own good works.”¹¹⁵ In this “Metaphorical text,” Keach asserted that the floor immediately or directly represented Israel.¹¹⁶ Speaking of this floor, Keach said, “A more prophane and ungodly generation was hardly ever in the world; and but a very few godly ones among them.”¹¹⁷ Keach referred to the Jewish church as a mix of wheat and chaff and that Christ would come with his fan and separate the wheat from the chaff.¹¹⁸

According to Keach, the floor, in a peripheral sense, also referred to “any spiritual community of Christians, Church, or body of People, professing religion.”¹¹⁹

¹¹² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 15.

¹¹³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 15.

¹¹⁴ Benjamin Keach, *The Glory of a True Church, and its Discipline Display’d Wherein a True Gospel-Church Is Described: Together with the Power of the Keys, and Who Are to Be Let in, and Who to be Shut Out* (London, 1679), 20.

¹¹⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 2.

¹¹⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 3.

¹¹⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 3.

¹¹⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 4.

¹¹⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 3. Keach spoke of the floor referring to the church in a more “remote sense.” In contrast, Lightfoot contended only one meaning for the floor: “By the floore of

Therefore, Keach understood a double meaning in the text since the floor represented both unfaithful Israel and the church. Keach was primarily concerned with the spiritual purity of this floor. About the pile of chaff that is on the floor of the church, Keach asked, “Are there worse, or more notorious, more loose, light, prophane, unbelieving and ungodly Wretches living on the face of the Earth?”¹²⁰

Keach expressed concern about individuals within the church who identify as Christians, yet disdain others, questioning whether they truly deserve such a designation. He contemplated whether some among them are more reprehensible than those in Sodom.¹²¹ The harsh rhetoric rendered by Keach depicts his desire for true godliness in the church. Keach continued to denounce the ungodliness of the chaff when he listed them in accordance with their behavior:

See what a heap of prophane Swearers and cursed Blasphemers are here . . . O what a great and a filthy heap of beastly and brutish Drunkards are in this floor also, who shew their Sins as Sodom . . . What a multitude of common Harlots are here among us, besides Secret ones, who are beheld by him whose eyes are like a flaming fire. . . . which the fire of Gods wrath will Consume and burn up, viz. all the proud and haughty ones. . . . What a cursed heap is there also of Atheists, and Graceless Wretches, who contemn God and all Supernatural Revelation of the Divine Being, and Religion! . . . Besides, what a heap have we among us, of Traiterous [*sic*], blind and deceitful Persons, who seek to betray the Protestant Interest, and all our Civil and Religious Liberties.¹²²

When addressing the wrath of God, Keach discussed how shame will torment the ungodly chaff: “The Drunkard will be also tormented with Shame: I was such a Fool, (he

Christ in this place is meant the Church of Israel, or the nation of the Jews alone.” He made six points in defense of his view. Lightfoot, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, 167–68.

¹²⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 4.

¹²¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 4.

¹²² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 5–6. William Perkins also sought to warn Christians against ungodliness and the “chaffe of corruption . . . in your nature.” He continued, “Bee well assured: thou man, whatsoever thou art: there is so much Chaffe in thee, that if thou search not, and fanne it not out, thou wilt proue nothing but Chaffe at the last day, and so be blown away with the winde of Gods iustice into Hell.” William Perkins, *M. Perkins, His Exhortation to Repentance, out of Zephaniah Preached in 2. Sermons in Sturbridge Faire. Together with Two Treatises of the Duties and Dignitie of the Ministrie: Deliuered Publicly in the Vniuersitie of Cambridge. With a Preface Præfixed Touching the Publishing of All Such Workes of His as Are to Be Expected: With a Catalogue of All the Peticulers [*sic*] of Them, Diligently Perused and Published, by a Preacher of the Word* (London: T. Creede, 1605), 42–43.

then may say) that for the sake of my Cups, and Love to my cursed Companions, and merry Bouts, have lost God, the Perfection of Happiness; I rather chose to go to the Ale-house, or Tavern, to Drink and carouse with these Damned Wretches, than to go to hear Gods Word.”¹²³ The shame and regret experienced by the ungodly stem from their choice to embrace the words of fools rather than heeding the sound counsel offered by God’s Word. When the ungodly chaff makes such a choice, they experience significant loss: “The loss of the presence of God, the Vision of God, and the glorious Enjoyment of Christ, and the Eternal Crown and Kingdom above.”¹²⁴

In addition to all of the above denouncements, Keach abhorred the worldliness of the chaff: “What abundance of carnal Worldlings, covetous and Earthly-minded Wretches are there also, whose gain is their Godliness.”¹²⁵ In other words, the chaff do not display true practical godliness; their godliness is their covetous gain. Moreover, when concluding this section about the chaff’s behavior, Keach’s desire for practical godliness is evident: “O how little does the power of Grace and true Godliness shine amongst this sort! what formality and lukewarmness is there in these days, amongst such who are called Saints and holy Brethren!”¹²⁶ Keach’s conclusion was clear—there is too much lukewarmness and not enough godliness. The only solution to this abandonment of practical godliness is the work of Christ, who will fan away the chaff from the church.¹²⁷

¹²³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 59.

¹²⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 61–62.

¹²⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 6.

¹²⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 8.

¹²⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 7.

Puritan Influence in Keach's Preaching

William Perkins (1558–1602), known as “Elizabethan England’s premier Puritan preacher . . . , the ‘father of Puritanism,’”¹²⁸ significantly influenced Benjamin Keach’s preaching. In Keach’s work *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, he listed some individuals who influenced his writings, and it is not surprising that Perkins made the list.¹²⁹ Perkins’s work, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, proved formative in Keach’s preaching method and style.¹³⁰

Andrew Ballitch surveys William Perkins’s interpretive method by dividing *The Arte of Prophecyng* into two key components: biblical authority and biblical interpretation.¹³¹ Perkins’s biblical interpretation provided an effective lens through which to analyze his influence on Keach’s preaching. According to Ballitch, Perkins’s method for biblical interpretation was threefold: Perkins’s hermeneutical approach “uses Scripture to interpret itself through the analogy of faith, context, and collation. This order is significant, and whenever summarizing his method, Perkins remained true to it.”¹³²

In relation to context, Ballitch outlines Perkins’s methodology as follows: context constitutes what surrounds the text. The search for context involves an examination of grammatical, rhetorical, historical, and literary aspects within the text.

¹²⁸ 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), 158, Kindle.

¹²⁹ In this work, Keach listed a number of key influential figures: “Luther, Melancthon, Calvin Zanchy, Ames, Dr. Usher, Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Dr. Sibs [sic], Dr. Preston, Norton, Burroughs, Caryl, Pemble, and Perkins.” Benjamin Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes Wherein it is Proved that the Whole First Adam was Condemned and the Whole Second Adam Justified* (London: Andrew Bell, 1698), 36. Keach references Perkins numerous times throughout his works. For example, see Benjamin Keach, *Light Broke Forth in Wales, Expelling Darkness, or, The Englishman’s Love to the Antient Britains [sic] Being an Answer to a Book, Intituled [sic] Children’s Baptism from Heaven, Published in the Welsh Tongue by Mr. James Owen* (London: William Marshall, 1696), 38, 74, 97, 98, 210, 225, 258, 272, 297; Benjamin Keach, *Gold Refin’d, or, Baptism in Its Primitive Purity Proving Baptism in Water an Holy Institution of Jesus Christ . . . : Wherein It Is Clearly Evinc’d That Baptism . . . Is Immersion, or Dipping the Whole Body, &c: Also That Believers Are Only the True Subjects (and Not Infants) of That Holy Sacrament: Likewise Mr. Smythies Arguments for Infant-Baptism in His Late Book Entitled, The Non-Communicant . . . Fully Answered* (London: Nathaniel Crouch, 1689), 69, 81.

¹³¹ Andrew S. Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 56–73, Logos Bible Software.

¹³² Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text*, 68.

The emphasis of the words within the text is shaped by its surroundings.¹³³ Perkins himself summarized the determination of the text's context in the following fashion: "The circumstances of the place propounded are these: Who? to whom? upon what occasion? at what time? in what place? for what end? what goeth before? what followeth?"¹³⁴

In Keach's *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd* (an exposition of the parables), he was concerned with the context. For example, in his introduction, Keach spoke about the necessity of determining "the main design and scope" for the parables. Keach stated, "If we would understand the Mind of God in them, we must always take Care to consider the main Design and Scope of them; or which way the sacred story tends, or what our Lord chiefly designeth therein."¹³⁵ The scope is essentially the central theme or purpose of the parable. Noteworthy is Keach's approach to determining the main scope of the text: "The main Scope or Design of a Parable, is commonly to be understood, either from our Saviour's more general or more particular Exposition of it, or else from his main and principal Design, which may be gathered from the Preface to it, or else from the Conclusion thereof."¹³⁶ Thus, Keach suggested three options for determining the scope of a parable: (1) the introduction to the parable, (2) the conclusion of the parable, or (3) Christ's explanation of the parable. When focusing on these three factors, the exegete utilizes the context of the text.

Relating to context is what Perkins described as collation. Perkins defined collation as follows: "The collation or comparing of places together, is that, whereby places are set like parallels one beside another, that the meaning of them may more

¹³³ Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text*, 68.

¹³⁴ William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng: Or A Treatise Concerning the Sacred and Onely True Manner and Methode of Preaching*, trans. Thomas Tuke (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607), 32.

¹³⁵ Benjamin Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Or an Exposition of All the Parables, and Many Express Similitudes Contained in the Four Evangelists, Spoken by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Wherein Also Many Things Are Doctrinally Handled, and Practically Improved, by Way of Application* (London: R. Tookey, 1701), 1:3.

¹³⁶ Keach, *Gospel mysteries unveil'd*, 1:3.

evidentlie appeare [*sic*].”¹³⁷ Perkins stressed that there is a twofold nature to the concept of collation: “Collation . . . is the comparing of the place propounded with itself cited and repeated elsewhere in holy writ.”¹³⁸ Simply put, he argued that the repetition of concepts in Scripture contributed to the text’s overall meaning in various ways. Perkins cited numerous cases of this phenomenon. For example, Isaiah 6:10 is repeated six times in the New Testament (Matt 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:27; Rom 11:8).¹³⁹

Perkins argued, “Collation is of the place propounded with other places: and those againe are either like or unlike. Places that are alike are such, as by certaine waies or in some sort agree one with another. And places doe agree either in their phrase and manner of speech, or in sense.”¹⁴⁰ Perkins gave numerous examples concerning this type of collation. In Keach’s sermons, there are multiple examples of collation, as evidenced by the number of cross-references in his sermon marginal notes.¹⁴¹ However, one of the most significant examples of collation is in his sermon series on Genesis 28 entitled *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*. When interpreting the significance of Jacob’s Ladder, Keach established his primary view of the ladder: “I understand by this Ladder directly,

¹³⁷ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 32.

¹³⁸ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 33.

¹³⁹ Perkins stated five possible reasons for such repetition.

First, Places repeated have often alterations for sundrie causes. These causes are, first, exegetically, that is, for exposition sake . . . A second cause is diacriticall, or for discerning sake, that places, times, and persons might bee mutuallie distinguished . . . Third, these causes are circumscriptive, or for limitation sake, that the sense and sentence of the place might be truelie restrained, according as the minde and meaning of the holy Ghost was . . . A fourth cause is for application sake, that the type might bee fitted unto the trueth, and the generall to a certaine speciall, and so contrariwise . . . Fifthly, some things are omitted for brevity sake: or because they do not agree with the matter in hand. (Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 33–40)

¹⁴⁰ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 40.

¹⁴¹ For example, see Keach’s marginal notes in his exposition of Proverbs 3:6: Benjamin Keach, *God Acknowledged, Or, the True Interest of the Nation and all that Fear God Opened in a Sermon Preached December the 11th, 1695: Being the Day Appointed by the King for Publick Prayer and Humiliation* (London, 1696).

and Primarily is meant our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴² Keach then made his argument for the connection between the ladder and Christ: “Moreover, very evident it is, that our Saviour himself refers to Jacob’s Ladder, Joh. 1.51 speaking of himself and of the Angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”¹⁴³ Keach’s use of collation at the beginning of this sermon series provides the foundation for his Christocentric approach throughout the series.

Finally, context and collation rely upon the analogy of faith. The most significant and visible overlap between Perkins and Keach was their emphasis on the analogy of faith. Important in Keach’s understanding is the rule of interpretation expressed in the Second London Confession of Faith. Keach affirmed and signed this confessional document. The rule of interpretation states, “The Infallible Rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: And Therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, (which is not manifold but one) it must be searched by other places, that speak more clearly.”¹⁴⁴ This statement expresses the analogy of faith, which Keach adopted as his interpretive lens for preaching the Scriptures. Stephen Weaver affirms that both William Perkins and Hercules Collins (d. 1702),¹⁴⁵ another signatory of the Second London Confession of Faith, deemed the

¹⁴² Benjamin Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven, Or, Jacob’s Ladder Improved Containing Four Sermons Lately Preach’d on Genesis XXVIII, XII: Wherein the Doctrine of Free-Grace is Display’d through Jesus Christ: Also Discovering the Nature, Office, and Ministration of the Holy Angels: To which is Added One Sermon on Rom. 8, 1: With some Short Reflections on Mr. Samuel Clark’s New Book Intituled Scripture Justification* (London, 1698), 2.

¹⁴³ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ *1699 London Confession*, 8. The first London Baptist Confession was the 1644 London Confession. Seven Particular Baptist Churches in London signed the Confession. The London Baptists produced another edition in 1646, the 1646 London Confession. A significant revision was published, the 1677 London Confession, which was later signed and ratified by the London Baptist church in 1689. Keach did not sign the earlier confession as it was only published in 1644, four years after his birth. However, Keach certainly would have signed the 1677 London Confession and the 1689 London Confession. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 66–68.

¹⁴⁵ Hercules Collins was a Particular Baptist minister in London. In 1684, Collins was thrown in jail because of his non-conformity. His imprisonment was due to his failure to comply with the *Five Mile Act*. Due to the *Act of Toleration* (1689), Collins used his new found freedom to gather with Particular

interpretation of Scripture by Scripture as the analogy of faith.¹⁴⁶ Perkins acknowledged the same principle that the later Second London Confession stated when he declared, “The Supreme and absolute meane of interpretation is the Scripture it selfe.”¹⁴⁷

Perkins clearly defined the analogy of faith when he stated, “The analogie of faith is a certaine abridgement or summe of the Scriptures, collected out of most manifest and familiar places.”¹⁴⁸ By the “summe of the Scriptures,” Perkins means doctrines, which are formed from clear texts and used to interpret unclear texts. The clear text does not impose meaning upon the unclear, but mitigates against false doctrinal conclusions.¹⁴⁹ In applying the analogy of faith, Keach was uninterested in stretching the images and metaphors in Scripture to mean something the Spirit never intended: “Yet let us all take heed (which I shall endeavour to do), that we strain no Metaphors or Parables, beyond their due Bounds, beyond the clear Analogy of Faith.”¹⁵⁰ Consequently, from a hermeneutical perspective, the analogy of faith was Keach’s essential interpretive tool.

Baptists and sign the 1689 version of the *Second London Baptist Confession*. Michael A. G. Haykin, “Collins, Hercules,” *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁶ Garry Stephen Weaver Jr., “Hercules Collins: Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 112–13.

¹⁴⁷ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 31.

¹⁴⁸ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 32.

¹⁴⁹ Yuille makes this point in the following way, “Perkins uses this ‘sum’ (i.e., doctrines), constructed from clear texts, as the basis for interpreting unclear texts. It does not determine the meaning of a particular text, but rules out aberrant interpretations; that is to say, it establishes boundaries within which accurate interpretation can take place.” Stephen Yuille, “The Wholesome Doctrine of Faith,” in *William Perkins: Architect of Puritanism*, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), chap. 4, “Perkins Exegetical Method,” para. 2, Kindle.

Derek Cooper considered the Puritan use of the analogy of faith in James 2:14–26. After reflecting on the exegesis of Puritan John Mayer (bap.1583, d. 1664), Cooper states, “Although he interacts at length with the exegetical tradition, his greater authority is the analogia fidei: James’s words must be placed within the context of Paul’s words and the rest of Scripture.” Derek Cooper, “The Analogy of Faith in Puritan Exegesis: Scope and Salvation in James 2:14–26.” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 237. John Mayer was known as a Bible commentator. He was baptized in 1583 in Suffolk, England. Mayer developed a commentary on the whole Bible. One of his most popular works was entitled *An Antidote Against Popery*. Nicholas Keene, “Mayer, John,” *ODNB*.

¹⁵⁰ Benjamin Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:7.

Under the influence of William Perkins, Keach both directly and indirectly incorporated context, collation, and the analogy of faith into his preaching.

Puritan Application in Keach's Preaching

William Perkins employed a preaching method known as “plain style.”¹⁵¹ Perkins developed a four-step process: read the text, give a sense of the text, collect profitable points of doctrine, and finally “applie (if he have the gift) the doctrines rightly collected to the life and manners of men, in a simple and plaine speech.”¹⁵² Keach applied this method consistently throughout his sermons. For example, in *A Golden Mine Opened*, Keach commenced each sermon by reading and presenting the scope, design, or sense of the text. Throughout the series, Keach derived thirty-two doctrines, ending every sermon with a “use” or “application” section.¹⁵³

To closely examine Keach's Puritan method of preaching, this study will delve into one specific aspect of the “plain style”—application. Joel Beeke states, “Application is the major emphasis of experiential preaching. The Reformers and Puritans spent many times more effort in application than in discrimination. Many preachers today fall far short in this area.”¹⁵⁴ Beeke distinguishes between “discrimination” and “application.”

¹⁵¹ Maarten Kuivenhoven labels Puritan preaching as “plain style” in contrast to the “ornate style” of other preachers in the Puritan era. Maarten Kuivenhoven, “Condemning Coldness and Sleepy Dullness: The Concept of Urgency in the Preaching Models of Richard Baxter and William Perkins,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 4, no. 2 (July 2012): 180.

¹⁵² Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 148. Perkins developed this “plain style” logic from the thought of Petrus Ramus (1515–1572), a French philosopher-logician. Donald K. McKim summarizes Ramus's contribution, when he states, “A logician's task was one of classification, arranging concepts in such a fashion as to make them understandable and memorable. ‘Method’ was Ramus' term for the orderly presentation of a subject.” Donald K. McKim, “The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16, no. 4 (1985): 504. McKim continued to argue that Perkins's “plain style” method of preaching was a direct application of Ramist Philosophy. See McKim, “The Functions of Ramism,” 511. For a presentation of the Ramist logic see: Petrus Ramus, *A Compendium of the Art of Logick and Rhetorick in the English Tongue Containing All That Peter Ramus, Aristotle, and Others Have Writ Thereon: With Plaine Directions for the More Easie Understanding and Practice of the Same* (London: Thomas Maxey, 1651).

¹⁵³ See Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*.

¹⁵⁴ Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 30. By “experiential preaching,” Beeke means that “Reformed experiential preaching uses the truth of Scripture to shine the glory of God into the depths of the soul to call

Beeke defines “discrimination:” “Discriminatory preaching aims to distinguish the Christian from the non-Christian so that people can diagnose their own spiritual conditions and needs.”¹⁵⁵ Beeke asserts that the process of “application” entails extending the text’s relevance to every facet of the listener’s life, fostering a religious experience that transcends mere external piety.¹⁵⁶

Perkins represents the premier Puritan example of an applicational approach to the text.¹⁵⁷ Perkins did not use the term “discrimination,” but he used the term “application.” In chapter 7, “Of the waies how to use and applie doctrines,” of *The Arte of Prophecyng*, Perkins spoke about what he called the foundation of application: “The foundation of Application is to know whther [*sic*] the place propounded be a sentence of the Law, or of the Gospell.”¹⁵⁸ The sentence of the law is the curse brought about by the works of the law, but the sentence of the gospel “is that, which speaketh of Christ and his benefits, and of faith being fruitfull in good workes.”¹⁵⁹ So, Perkins concluded, “Hence it is that many sentences, which seeme to belong to the Law, are by reason of Christ to bee understood not legally but with the qualification of the Gospell.”¹⁶⁰

people to live solely and wholly for God” (24). Thomas D. Lea states, “The Puritans excelled in the area of application. They sought to make the Bible practical for themselves and their people.” Thomas D. Lea, “The Hermeneutics of the Puritans,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 2 (June 1996): 271–84.

¹⁵⁵ Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 25–26.

¹⁵⁶ Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 29–30.

¹⁵⁷ In his work *The Gloss and the Text*, Andrew Ballitch provides an adequate summary of Perkins’s *The Arte of Prophecyng*, yet his summary only focuses on chapters 3 and 4 of the work (he mentions chapter 5). Ballitch’s reason for his emphasis on these particular chapters is that his research centers on Perkins’s exegesis of the text rather than his delivery or application of the text. Consequently, Ballitch’s summation of *The Arte of Prophecyng* is limited as it does not discuss chapters 7–8, which Perkins devoted to the application of the text.

¹⁵⁸ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 100.

¹⁵⁹ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 101.

¹⁶⁰ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 101.

Perkins is best known for his seven ways of application.¹⁶¹ When discussing these seven ways, Beeke states, “[Perkins’s] analysis reflected what we call discriminatory preaching, sermons that give distinct applications aimed at different spiritual conditions.”¹⁶² Perkins seven ways of application are as follows. First, Perkins considered, “Unbelievers who are both ignorant and unteachable.”¹⁶³ In such cases, the preacher is advised to engage in argumentation and reasoning to cultivate a teachable disposition.¹⁶⁴ Second, Perkins identified those who are “teachable but yet ignorant,”¹⁶⁵ advocating the delivery of catechism, specifically recommending his work, *The Foundations of Religion*,¹⁶⁶ as a comprehensive summary of six critical Christian principles. The six critical principles include repentance, faith, baptism, Lord’s Supper, imposition of hands, and synecdoche (pertaining to the ministry of the Word).¹⁶⁷

Perkins identified a third category as “Some have knowledge, but are not as yet humbled.”¹⁶⁸ Perkins urged the preacher to stir up repentance in such a person by building upon the sorrow of their sin.¹⁶⁹ Fourth, there are “Some [who] are humbled.”¹⁷⁰ Concerning those not humbled, Perkins said, “Let the Law bee propounded, yet so discreetly tempered with the Gospell, that being terrified with their sinnes, and with the meditation of Gods judgment, they may together also at the same instant receive solace

¹⁶¹ Perkins, *The Works of William Perkins*, 10:371.

¹⁶² Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 170.

¹⁶³ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 102.

¹⁶⁴ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 103.

¹⁶⁵ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 105.

¹⁶⁶ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 105.

¹⁶⁷ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 106–7.

¹⁶⁸ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 109.

¹⁶⁹ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 109.

¹⁷⁰ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 112.

by the Gospell.”¹⁷¹ Yet, concerning those who are humbled, Perkins stated, “The doctrine of faith and repentance and the comforts of the Gospell out be promulged and tendred”¹⁷² to them. Perkins recognized another group who “doe believ [*sic*].”¹⁷³

Fifth, Perkins turned his attention to believers, recommending two forms of instruction: the gospel of justification, sanctification, and perseverance, and the Law without the curse, guiding them in producing the fruits of repentance.¹⁷⁴ Sixth Perkins considered “Some are fallen.”¹⁷⁵ Perkins urged the preacher to discern whether the fall is by faith or in manners. Concerning the former, he emphasized the importance of maintaining knowledge in the doctrine of the gospel and the apprehension of Christ.¹⁷⁶ In the latter, he described falling in manners as when a faithful individual succumbs to committing actual sins in life.¹⁷⁷ Finally, “There is a mingled people.” Perkins summarized, “A mixt people are the assemblies of our Churches. To these any doctrine may be propounded, whther [*sic*] of the Law or of the Gospell.”¹⁷⁸

Chapter 8 of *The Arte of Prophecyng* is entitled “Of the Kinds of Application.”¹⁷⁹ For Perkins, the application types are twofold—either mental or practical. The mental application “is that, which respecteth the minde: and it is either

¹⁷¹ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 113.

¹⁷² Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 114.

¹⁷³ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 115.

¹⁷⁴ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 115.

¹⁷⁵ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 116.

¹⁷⁶ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 116.

¹⁷⁷ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 120.

¹⁷⁸ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 121.

¹⁷⁹ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 122.

doctrine or Redargution.”¹⁸⁰ Doctrine is the type of teaching used to inform the mind. Redargution is the type of teaching used to transform the mind.¹⁸¹ Additionally, “practicall application is that which respecteth the life and behaviour.”¹⁸² In practical application, the process encompasses both instruction and correction. Instruction entails applying doctrinal principles to mould an individual’s behavior, fostering virtuous living within the realms of the family, commonwealth, and church.¹⁸³ Conversely, correction entails applying doctrine to reform one’s life by steering away from ungodliness and unrighteous conduct, with admonition falling under this category.¹⁸⁴ This pragmatic approach to Puritan application permeates Keach’s preaching.

Keach followed Puritan application as set forth by Perkins. For example, Keach’s first published sermon, *A Summons to the Grave* based on Psalm 89:48 was preached at “The Funeral of that most Eminent and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ Mr. John Norcot. Who departed this Life March 24, 1676.”¹⁸⁵ John Norcott (d. 1676)¹⁸⁶ was the author of the most famous tract on baptism in the seventeenth century, entitled *Baptism Discovered Plainly & Faithfully According to the Word of God* (1672).¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁰ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 122. McKim states the connection between Ramist logic and how Perkins sought to apply the text: “In Ramist fashion Perkins dichotomized ‘application’ into ‘mentall’ [*sic*] and ‘practical.’” McKim, “The Functions of Ramism,” 511.

¹⁸¹ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 122–23.

¹⁸² Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 123.

¹⁸³ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 124.

¹⁸⁴ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 124.

¹⁸⁵ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor in the Sermons of Benjamin Keach,” 43. Benjamin Keach, *A Summons to the Grave, or the Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death. Demonstrated in a sermon preached at the funeral of that most eminent and faithful servant of Jesus Christ Mr John Norcott. Who departed this life March 24, 1675/76* (London, 1676), 2. A3r.

¹⁸⁶ Walker notes that “Norcott” is sometimes spelled “Norcot” or “Northcott.” From this point forward, the name will be rendered “Norcott.” Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 172.

¹⁸⁷ The tract was reprinted numerous times and translated into multiple languages. When Norcott wrote the tract he was the pastor of the Particular Baptist in Wapping, London. This congregation was founded in the 1630s, making it one of the oldest Baptist churches in the British Isles. Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 85–102.

When *A Summons to the Grave* approaches its conclusion, Keach stated, “Thus much for the Reasons of the Point; more might be said, but I must hasten to the application.”¹⁸⁸ Keach’s *modus operandi* was to “hasten to application” in his preaching. As Keach drove toward the application, he stated, “I have onely four Uses to make of it, as first an Use of Exhortation, secondly an Use of Direction, thirdly an Use of Lamentation, fourthly an Use of Consolation.”¹⁸⁹ When Keach began each use, he addressed it to a particular category of people. As Keach divided the various groups, he utilized what Beeke calls “discrimination” and engaged with some of Perkins’s seven ways of application.

Keach’s “Use of Exhortation” explicitly addressed unbelieving sinners: “Then poor sinners shall I prevail with you to prepare for death? Let me exhort you to look about you and get ready.”¹⁹⁰ Keach implored these sinners to consider their fate by pronouncing ten awakening considerations.¹⁹¹ Through these considerations, Keach called hearers to reflect on their life and death.¹⁹² Keach’s “Use of Direction” was directed to poor sinners and “all others that would be prepared for the grave, if this be

¹⁸⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 22.

¹⁸⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 22.

¹⁹⁰ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 22–23.

¹⁹¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 23.

¹⁹² The following were Keach’s proposed considerations:

First, Consider what a great favour and mercy it is that God hath let you and I live so long . . . Secondly, Consider what dreadful provocations you and I have given him to take us away and command death in his name to arrest us . . . Thirdly, How often hath the Lord called you, and yet you have rebelled? . . . 4. Consider, That the abuse of Mercy and Goodness will greatly aggravate thy misery in the day of wrath . . . 5. Consider for Christs sake of those advantages you have had and still have: If some had the like, we may conclude they would have made better use and improvement of them then some of you have done . . . 6. Do you know that you shall have all these helps continued to you? Will God still suffer his holy Spirit to strive with you? . . . 7. Do you know for certain the Gospel sall [*sic*] be continued to this Land? Be you sure you shall hear the joyful sound? . . . 8. Consider of the shortness and uncertainty of your days . . . 9. Consider how you have loitered hitherto and lost much of your precious time which God hath lent you to prepare for the grave . . . And lastly, Consider what will become of your precious souls, if death takes you before you are ready. (Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 23–38)

so.”¹⁹³ Keach gave his hearers seven points of direction, encouraging them to search their souls. For example, Keach stated, “In the first place labour to get a full sight and sense of your sins.”¹⁹⁴ Keach continued to exhort sinners to “labour to get Brokenness of heart, oh strive to melt in the sight and sense of your iniquities.”¹⁹⁵ Keach knew that once sinners grasped a sense of their sin, they would understand their need for the Savior, so he directed sinners to “labour to get an interest in Jesus Christ. Oh that this opportunity might have some tendency this way!”¹⁹⁶ After this third direction, Keach shifted from directing unbelievers to directing believers: “Fourthly, Labour in the strength of Christ to oppose sin.”¹⁹⁷ Thus, Keach exemplified discrimination in his application by addressing differing groups within the congregation.

Keach began his “Use of Lamentation” by stating, “Let me lay down some grounds that we have for lamentation.”¹⁹⁸ He addressed the congregation: “Oh it’s grievous to loose a godly Preacher, a Pastor, a faithful Labourer.”¹⁹⁹ Keach amplified their loss by reminding them that they lost a tender shepherd and a father.²⁰⁰ He poetically expressed the congregation’s grief by emphasizing their beloved figure was gone, and they will no longer experience his voice or presence. The metaphorical

¹⁹³ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 39.

¹⁹⁴ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 39.

¹⁹⁵ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 40.

¹⁹⁶ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 41.

¹⁹⁷ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 41. Additionally, Keach addressed believers when he stated, “Fifthly, Take heed you do not sin against the Light. Neglect no conviction either of Sin or Duty . . . Sixthly, Never be satisfied until you have all your sins subdued . . . Seventhly, Labour after a pure Conscience. What will stand your souls in greater stead, when you come to die than this?” Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 43–44.

¹⁹⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 47.

¹⁹⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 48.

²⁰⁰ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 49.

description of a silenced “golden Trumpet” emphasized the irrevocable nature of the absence.²⁰¹

Keach’s “Use of Consolation” addressed believers: “If thou art a Believer, I have a word of comfort for thee; there is none I am sure for Christless Souls.”²⁰² Keach’s main consolation for believers—the consolation from which all of his other consolations derive—was: “Consider death cannot hurt thee; it cannot hurt those that are Believers, because it hath lost his sting.”²⁰³ Keach pivoted from consoling believers to encouraging John Norcott’s congregation: “And now one word more particularly to you that have lost your Pastor.”²⁰⁴ In order to comfort Norcott’s congregation, Keach implored them to “consider also your loss is not so great, but God is able to repair it and make it up to you.”²⁰⁵ Furthermore, Keach stated, “To Support you under this sore affliction, Consider the great Shepherd of the Sheep never dyes.”²⁰⁶

Concluding his “Use of Consolation,” Keach extended a pastoral message to Norcott’s family, providing them with words of comfort and solace in the present circumstances.²⁰⁷ Keach’s pastoral word encouraged them that “death shall not separate us long, we shall see one another again over a short time.”²⁰⁸ Yet, Keach’s final word stressed the urgency of the occasion for all: “And now in the last place and to shut up all,

²⁰¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 49.

²⁰² Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 58.

²⁰³ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 59.

²⁰⁴ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 72.

²⁰⁵ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 72.

²⁰⁶ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 73.

²⁰⁷ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 74.

²⁰⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 74.

consider, uncertain is thy life, and mind; you know not but that in a very few days you may go after, it will not be long be sure, and thither we all must go.”²⁰⁹

Conclusion

Keach’s Puritan preaching manifested Puritan godliness, Perkins’s influence, and applicational thoroughness. Yet, one key element of Keach’s Puritan preaching remains—Puritan Christ-centeredness. Beeke describes the preaching of the Puritans as Reformed experiential preaching.²¹⁰ When considering the aspects of such preaching, he states, “Reformed experiential preaching is Christ centered. That is, it focuses on God’s living Word, Jesus Christ, made known in God’s written Word, the Bible.”²¹¹ Beeke continues, “In Christ, sinners find assurance of eternal life and willingness to live for God. Therefore, we must preach Christ.”²¹² This Christ-centered approach was echoed by the father of Puritanism and Keach’s preaching influence, William Perkins when he concluded *The Arte of Prophecyng*: “The Summe of the Summe. Preach one Christ by Christ to the praise of Christ.”²¹³ Keach sought to preach Christ with his sermons and praise Christ through his songs. Therefore, as this journey proceeds to Keach’s Old Testament sermons, it seems right to praise Christ with the hymn, *Christ a Glorious King*:

Abundantly, to such degree
That none before thee had;

²⁰⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 79.

²¹⁰ Beeke sets forth the following definition:

For now, I can offer the following tentative definition: Reformed experiential preaching is preaching that applies the truth of God to the hearts of people to show how things ought to go, do go, and ultimately will go in the Christian’s experience with respect to God and his neighbors—including his family members, his fellow church members, and people in the world around him. Even more simply, we could say that the Reformed experiential preacher receives God’s Word into his heart and then preaches it to the minds, hearts, and lives of his people. (Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 41)

²¹¹ Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 60.

²¹² Beeke, *Reformed Preaching*, 60–61.

²¹³ Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, 148.

And like a King with Sovereignty,
Lord Jesus thou art clad.
Adore, and see ye reverence him,
All ye who live on Earth;
Obey his Laws, Saints sing his Praise,
And set his Glory forth.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Keach, *Spiritual Melody*, 62, verses 4 and 7.

CHAPTER 3

CHRIST “THE ANTITYPE OF ALL TYPES, AND THE SUBSTANCE OF ALL SHADOWS” (OLD TESTAMENT SERMONS PART 1)

“Christ is lifted up to Heaven, in that he is the Sum and Substance of Law and Gospel: I mean the Antitype of All Types, and Substance of all Shadows: He is the great Subject of Gospel-ministration. What have Ministers to Preach but Jesus Christ?”¹
Benjamin Keach delighted in extolling Christ as the subject of his Old Testament sermons.

Benjamin Keach published 224 sermons, which highlights Keach’s publishing prowess in the seventeenth century.² Austin Walker states, “Among seventeenth-century Particular-Baptists, Keach published the largest number of sermons.”³ Though Keach’s sermons are acknowledged for their immensity, they are not known for their diversity since his published sermons almost exclusively drew from New Testament texts.⁴ Of the 224 sermons Keach published, only the following titles represent Keach’s Old Testament expositions, which will be analyzed in two parts. In part 1, Keach’s paradigmatic sermon *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven or Jacob’s Ladder Improved*, a four-part sermon series based on Genesis 28:12–13a, will be reviewed along with *A Summons to the Grave, or*

¹ Benjamin Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven, Or, Jacob’s Ladder Improved Containing Four Sermons Lately Preach’d on Genesis XXVIII, XII: Wherein the Doctrine of Free-Grace is Display’d through Jesus Christ : Also Discovering the Nature, Office, and Ministration of the Holy Angels: To which is Added One Sermon on Rom. 8, 1: With some Short Reflections on Mr. Samuel Clark’s New Book Intituled Scripture Justification* (London, 1698), 46.

² James Christopher Holmes. “The Role of Metaphor in the Sermons of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704.” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 45.

³ Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2015), 251.

⁴ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor,” 43.

The Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death based on Psalm 89:48 and *God Acknowledged, or, The True Interest of the Nation and All that Fear God* based on Proverbs 3:6. In part 2, two sermon series that depict Keach’s view on the covenants will be analyzed: *The Everlasting Covenant, a Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, Or, the Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace* based on 2 Samuel 23:5 and *The Display of Glorious Grace, or, The Covenant of Peace*, a fourteen-part sermon series based on Isaiah 54:10.

Christ Alone the Way to Heaven (Gen 28:12)

In *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, Keach stated what it is to preach Christ:

To Preach Christ . . . ’Tis to Preach the Excellencies of his Person . . . To Preach that he is *God* . . . To Preach that he is *Man* . . . that he is *God* and *Man* . . . To Preach Christ is to Preach his incarnation . . . To Preach Christ is to preach his holy Doctrine . . . To Preach Christ is to Preach the necessity of Christ, and of his Death . . . To Preach Christ is to Preach the Preciousness of Christ.⁵

Prior to extolling the excellencies of Christ, Keach set the series in his ministry context. He provided the context by dedicating the series to the believers in six churches in Hampshire, along with their respective elders and deacons.⁶ Without the support of his fellow church leaders, Keach might never have published the work—“some of you also giving encouragement for the Publication of them.”⁷ Just as these men encouraged Keach to publish, Keach encouraged them to strengthen one another by mutual prayer, practical care, and gathering together once or twice in the year.⁸ Keach believed he had reason to “throw away his Pen,” knowing there were those “far more able, and better accomplished

⁵ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 46–47.

⁶ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, A1r.

⁷ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, A1r.

⁸ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, A1r.

to write,”⁹ but he persisted due to his friends’ encouragement and the necessity to proclaim the “doctrine of free justification by Christ alone.”¹⁰ Keach based his series on Genesis 28:12–13a.

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

Sermon I establishes the foundation for Keach’s Christ-centered approach in this series. Keach commenced the sermon by offering a brief contextual note: Jacob is afraid because he stole his brother’s blessing and birthright.¹¹ On this ground, Keach asseverated the reason for the dream: “To succour and comfort him in his Journey; and not only so, but to discover a greater Good to him than his present Support; even to make known by this Dream, the Messiah that should proceed from his Loyns.” In this instance, Keach outlined the dual purpose of the dream: to console Jacob and to affirm the arrival of the promised seed, namely, Christ. From the outset, Keach indicated his Christocentric emphasis.

After affirming the purpose of Jacob’s dream, Keach offered a brief explanatory note on the ladder’s significance:¹² “I understand by this Ladder directly, and Primarily is meant our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹³ Based on this statement, Keach attributed a

⁹ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, A1v. Keach expressed similar humility in his other Old Testament sermon introductions. For example, in *The Display of Glorious Grace*, Keach stated, “And indeed I greatly fear, many will see their Expectation frustrated, (I mean such who did not hear the Sermons Preached, but only had some small account of them;) yet they knowing the Author, I may see cause to recal what I speak of my Fears. I must confess, divers Worthy and Learned Men have wrote most excellently upon the *Covenant of Grace*, yet perhaps hardly any in the Method here used.” Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, A2v.

¹⁰ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, A1v. Chapter 6 will delve more thoroughly into Keach’s perspective on the doctrine of justification.

¹¹ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2.

¹² Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2. Keach also considered a secondary significance of the ladder, saying, “It may refer (as some think) to the Church of Christ: Some being on Earth, and others in Heaven.” Though Keach made this point, he gave little attention to it in the sermon, instead focusing most of his attention on Christ as the ladder.

¹³ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2.

typological significance to the meaning of the ladder. Keach's statement seems illusory, but his reasoning for such an assertion must be considered.

Keach made connections between Christ and the ladder in two distinct ways. Initially, he presented a simplistic defense that argued he was "not alone in this respect; for divers learned Men hint at the same thing."¹⁴ One learned man was Matthew Poole (1624–1679),¹⁵ whom Keach quoted as saying, "This Ladder represents Christ . . . who is called the way to Heaven."¹⁶ However, Keach did not mention the two interpretations Poole offered in his commentary. The literal interpretation: "This Ladder may be considered . . . Literally, and so it represented to Jacob the Providence of God, who though he dwell in heaven extends his care and governance to the earth, and particularly makes use of the Angels as ministering Spirits for the good of his People."¹⁷ Poole also

¹⁴ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2. One learned divine who espoused Christ as the ladder was Thomas Brooks (1608–1680). Brooks enrolled in Cambridge, 1625. He studied in the same University as Thomas Hooker, John Cotton, and Thomas Shepherd. He was first ordained as a preacher in 1640. Brooks became a minister at a church in Moorfields in London. During the Great Plague in 1665, he stayed with his congregation in London. *MTP*, 96–100. In his work *Heaven on Earth* Brooks gave a reflection on communion, illustrating it through the metaphor of Jacob's ladder: "Communion is Jacobs Ladder, where you have Christ sweetly descending down into the Soul, and the soule by divine influences sweetly ascending up to Christ." Thomas Brooks, *Heaven on Earth or a Serious Discourse Touching a Wel-Grounded Assurance of Mens Everlasting Happiness and Blessedness. Discovering the Nature of Assurance, the Possibility of Attaining It, the Causes, Springs, and Degrees of It, with the Resolution of Several Weighty Questions* (London: R.L., 1654), A6v.

Jeremiah Burroughs (c. 1600–1646), was born in England and moved to the Netherlands from 1638–1640. In Netherlands he taught in an English Independent Congregation at Rotterdam. William Ames was the former minister of the same congregation. Burroughs returned to London for the final period of his life 1640–1646. He was known for his preaching and became a leading figure in the Puritan movement in London. *MTP*, 118–25. With Keach, Burroughs claimed, "Christ he is Jacob's Ladder. When Jacob lay asleep he saw a ladder on which the Angels did descend and ascend up to Heaven. Now this Jacob's Ladder is no other but Jesus Christ to Christians, and that must be set up to Heaven." Jeremiah Burroughs, *Two Treatises of Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs. The First of Earthly-Mindedness, Wherein Is Shewed, 1. What Earthly-Mindedness Is . . . 6. Directions How to Get Our Hearts Free from Earthly-Mindedness. The Second Treatise. Of Conversing in Heaven, and Walking with God. Wherein Is Shewed, 1. How the Saints Have Their Conversation in Heaven . . . 9. Rules for Our Walking with God* (London: Thomas Goodwyn, 1652), 254.

¹⁵ Matthew Poole was born in 1624 in York, England. In 1649, he accepted a call to ministry in St. Michael le Querne—a Presbyterian church—in London. "In 1662, Poole refused to comply with the Act of Uniformity and was ejected from his pastorate. For the next twenty years, he apparently made no attempt to gather a congregation, but instead worked mostly in solitude." *MTP*, 485–87.

¹⁶ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2.

¹⁷ Matthew Poole, *Annotations Upon the Holy Bible. Wherein the Sacred Text Is Inserted, and Various Readings Annex'd, Together with Parallel Scriptures, the More Difficult Terms in Each Verse Are Explained, Seeming Contradictions Reconciled, Questions and Doubts Resolved, and the Whole Text Opened* (London, 1685), 1:Genesis XXVIII.

argued for the “mystical interpretation” that the ladder symbolized Christ, a perspective grounded in the reference to Christ’s explanation in John 1:51. While Poole never expressed a preference, Keach insinuated concordance with his Christocentric interpretation. Although Keach’s initial defense (relying on Poole as an authority) was not flawless, it unmistakably reflected his endeavor to underpin his interpretation by aligning his position with the perspectives of his contemporaries.

Keach offered a more robust argument for the connection between the ladder and Christ when he added, “Moreover, very evident it is, that our Saviour himself refers to Jacob’s Ladder, Joh. 1.51 speaking of himself and of the Angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”¹⁸ This reference to John 1:51 followed Poole’s logic. Furthermore, the Geneva Bible, which Keach used and referenced frequently, states, “Christ is the ladder whereby God and man are joyed together.”¹⁹

Using the analogy of faith, Keach observed, “The Lord Jesus may fitly be compared to a Ladder that is set upon the Earth, and the Top of it reaching to Heaven.”²⁰ Keach’s observation illustrates his typological approach. He depicted the observation

¹⁸ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 2. Walker critiques Keach’s exegesis in this series: “These are sermons with some quaint exegesis . . . Keach displays some ingenuity in setting out the person and work of Christ as prophet, priest, and king from this exposition.” Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 271. However, Keach’s comments at this point are in line with contemporary Christocentric exegesis. Sydney Greidanus’s comments,

One can also use typology to preach Christ from this narrative. The ladder Jacob sees in his dream is a symbol of the theme “God is with us.” The ladder connects heaven and earth, with angels ascending and descending. God is not absent from this earth (as in deism); God is connected with his creation. The ladder is a symbol of this connection. The ladder is the “mediator” between heaven and earth. In the New Testament, Jesus suggests that the ladder prefigures Jesus as mediator. Nathanael meets Jesus and exclaims, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus responds, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John 1:49, 51). Jesus alludes to Jacob’s ladder, but a reference to the ladder is missing. The point is that Jesus himself is the ladder. (Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 286, Logos Bible Software)

¹⁹ *Geneva Bible*, 13. Jonathan Arnold states, “Keach frequently cited the Westminster Assembly and ‘our Annotators’—a term he used to refer to the major Puritan Biblical commentators such as Matthew Poole and to notes such as those found in the Geneva Bible.” Jonathan W. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 11 (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, 2013), 39.

²⁰ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 10.

with twenty points that govern the rest of *Sermon I*, most of *Sermon II*, and part of *Sermon III*. Through this examination, Keach drew parallels between Jacob's ladder and Christ's person and role. Keach anticipated skepticism regarding his exposition: "Before I proceed I know not, my Brethren, why we may not run the Parallel so far as there is a clear Parity, and it is consistent with the Analogy of Faith."²¹ On the one hand, Keach desired an interpretation consistent with the analogy of faith in citing John 1:51; yet, on the other hand, he used the image of the ladder type to draw parallels between the ladder and the work of Christ.

Keach made twenty points of parity between Christ and the ladder. Point three states, "A ladder must be long enough to reach the thing desired: Now Jesus Christ in this respect of his two Natures, is prepared so by the Wisdom of God, that in his Person he may be said to reach from Earth to Heaven."²² Keach stressed that Christ's human nature is pictured by the foot of the ladder on the earth and his divine nature by the top of the ladder in heaven.²³ Furthermore, in point six, Keach said, "A Ladder so exceedingly high,

²¹ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 11. Keach's definition of the analogy of faith was discussed in chapter 2 and defined by *The Second London Confession of Faith* as "The Infallible Rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: And Therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, (which is not manifold but one) it must be searched by other places, that speak more clearly." *1699 London Confession*, 8.

Keach defended himself as his work faced criticism in the years following its publication. The critique even emanated from a well-known pastor who later shepherded the Southwark flock. Following Keach's death in 1704, the congregation was led by John Gill (1697–1771), John Rippon (1834–1836), and ultimately, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892). Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 11. Spurgeon's comments on Keach's metaphors are noteworthy:

When you have exhausted all the Old Testament types, you have left to you an heirloom of a thousand metaphors. Benjamin Keach, in his laborious treatise, proves most practically what mines of truth lie concealed in the metaphors of Scripture. His work, by the way, is open to much criticism on the score of making metaphors run not only on all-fours, but on as many legs as a centipede; but it does not deserve the condemnation of Dr. Adam Clarke, when he says it has done more to debase the taste both of preachers and people than any other work of the kind. A discreet explanation of the poetical allusions of Holy Scripture will be most acceptable to your people, and, with God's blessing, not a little profitable. (C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my students: a selection from addresses delivered to the students of the Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle* [London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1875], 109)

²² Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 12.

²³ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 12.

must have many Rounds, or Gradations to ascend by.”²⁴ He continued, “Now a poor sinner being brought thus to the Foot of Christ, the first Step, or Gradation he makes in ascending onto the Ladder, is to believe.” Finally, in point fourteen, in *Sermon II*, Keach said, “A Ladder is a narrow way to go upon, and it is a difficult thing to travel upon all day.”²⁵ Keach used this to point his readers to Jesus Christ as the narrow way, referring to Matthew 7:13–14. From the three examples above, Keach asserted truths about the nature and divinity of Christ, the necessity to believe in Christ, and the challenge of traversing the narrow path, yet none of these truths reflect the original intent of the text to which the type points.

In the second half of *Sermon III*, Keach asserted that “the way which God hath found out to save lost Man, namely Jesus Christ, ought to be beheld with the greatest Care or utmost Diligence; and with the greatest Admiration and Wonderment.”²⁶ Here, Keach called on his hearers and readers to worship the ladder, Jesus Christ. In his first two points, Keach never referenced the width or length of the ladder or even the different rounds on the ladder. He merely encouraged his congregants to “Admire the ladder.”²⁷ Keach gave two reasons for the admiration of Christ. The sending of Christ (1) shows God’s love and compassion toward us and (2) God’s wisdom in making a way for us to enter heaven.²⁸ However, Keach returned to literary artistry when he asked his audience

²⁴ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 19.

²⁵ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 31.

²⁶ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 70.

²⁷ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 70–72. When Perkins declared, “Christ is that ladder of Jacob,” he also conveyed the idea that this should inspire Christians to admire God. He recounted, “This ought to make us all admire the endless and unspeakable goodnes of God, who hath not onely given us to be Lords of heaven and earth by the meanes of Christ, but even the glorious Angels.” William Perkins, *Satans Sophistrie Ansuered by Our Sauour Christ and in Diuers Sermons Further Manifested / by That Worthy Man Maister William Perkins; to Which Is Added, a Comfort for the Feeble Minded, Wherein Is Set Downe the Temptations of a Christian* (London: Richard Field, 1604), 136.

²⁸ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 70–72. When Perkins declared, “Christ is that ladder of Jacob,” he also conveyed the idea that this should inspire Christians to admire God. He recounted, “This ought to make us all admire the endless and unspeakable goodnes of God, who hath not onely

to admire the matter of the ladder, which is made of the divine Son of Man,²⁹ and to admire the design of the ladder, which manifests the glory of God and magnifies the Law in its fulfilment.³⁰ Keach was a Christ-centered preacher who calls on sinners to behold Christ in the following ways: exclusively, with an eye of faith, and as a sure way to the Father.³¹

At this juncture, Keach sought to preach Christ, proving the Christ-centered nature of the sermon. Keach depicted the ladder as a “glorious Type of Christ.”³² One must consider whether his zeal to extol Christ moved him beyond the bounds of a legitimate typological approach. The problem is resolved when considering Keach’s *Tropologia* method of preaching Christ.

***Tropologia* Method of Preaching Christ**

Keach stated, “Before I proceed I know not, my Brethren, why we may not run the Parallel so far as there is a clear Parity, and it is consistent with the Analogy of Faith.”³³ He desired to remain within the bounds of the analogy of faith in citing John 1:51, yet he used the ladder as an illustration to draw numerous parallels between it and the work of Christ. When Keach used parallels between Christ and the ladder, this study

given us to be Lords of heaven and earth by the meanes of Christ, but even the glorious Angels.” William Perkins, *Satans Sophistrie Ansuuered*, 136.

²⁹ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 74.

³⁰ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 75–76. Additionally, in *Sermon IV*, Keach considered the angels that are ascending and descending on the ladder, or “antitypically upon Jesus Christ.” The doctrine that Keach affirmed in this sermon was “that in and thro Jesus Christ, the holy Angels minister to Believers, while in this World.” The sermon was divided into three parts: (1) the nature of angels, (2) the work and office of angels, and (3) the reasons why Christ sent the angels. Essentially, this sermon functions as Keach’s angelology, but this is not to the neglect of Keach’s Christ-centered focus. This focus was illustrated most poignantly in part 3 of the sermon when he asked, “Why doth Christ employ the holy Angels to minister to his Saints?” The two answers Keach gave to this question are as follows: (1) because of Christ’s love for his saints and (2) “to greaten his own glory.” Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 92–107.

³¹ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 80–83.

³² Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 25.

³³ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 11.

contends that this was not an inadequate use typology, but what one may instead call Keach's *Tropologia* method.

In *Tropologia*, Keach has two sections that significantly contribute to his method of preaching Christ: (1) *Moses's Vail Removed; or Types of the Old Testament Explained* and (2) *A Treatise Of all the Types, Parables and Allegories of the Old and New-Testament*. Through these sections, he considered various scriptural images, persons, places, things, and events where he found parities (parallels) and/or disparities between Christ and those elements.³⁴ Throughout his sermons, Keach consistently used images or metaphors to illustrate parities and disparities between Christ and that image. Keach did not argue that his parities and disparities exemplify authorial intent. Instead, he used this method to preach all aspects of Christ and his work. This method aided his illustrative expression, which highlighted the wonders of Christ.

In *Moses's Vail Removed*, Keach wrote a paragraph of parallels between Jacob's ladder and Christ. Keach listed four parallels in total. Just as the ladder stands on the earth and its top reaches to heaven, "so Christ, albeit he was humbled in shape of sinful flesh, to the Earth, as it were; yet he was the Most High God; reaching so to Heaven., and "The Angels went up and down by it: So we ascend up to God by Jesus Christ." He further stated, "The Lord stood above it, and made Promises . . . So God in Christ, and through him, hath made all Promises of Heaven." Finally, Keach argued, "In the Place which was called the House of God, and Gate of Heaven, was the Ladder seen: So in Christ's Church, the true House of God, we get a clear and full Sight of Christ."³⁵

³⁴ This method is what makes *Tropologia* unique. Keach considered parallels and disparities not just for Christ and other elements but also for God, the Holy Spirit, the church, and more.

³⁵ Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia: Tropes and figures; or, A treatise of the metaphors, allegories, and express similitudes, &c. contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To which is prefixed, divers arguments to prove the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures wherein also 'tis largely evinced, that by the great whore, mystery Babylon is meant the Papal hierarchy, or present state and church of Rome. Philologia sacra, the second part. Wherein the schemes, or figures in Scripture, are reduced under their proper heads, with a brief explication of each. Together with a treatise of types, parables, &c. with an improvement of them parallel-wise* (London: John Darby, 1682), 4:416.

In *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, Keach listed more than these four parallels and so expanded upon his *Tropologia* work. Therefore, in this sermon, Keach employed his *Tropologia* method to proclaim Christ.

Concerning typology as a topic, Keach labored to define and explain his typological position in *Tropologia*. He distinguished between types and allegories and, in so doing, he presented a definition of typology. Borrowing from James Durham (1622–1658),³⁶ Keach listed five points tied to his typological consideration:

1. Types suppose still the Verity of some History, as Jonah's being three Days and three Nights in the Fishes Belly; when it is applied to Christ in the New Testament, it supposeth such a thing was once done, &c. Allegories again have no such necessary Supposition, but are as Parables, propounded for some mystical End. Thus whilst it is said, Mat. 21. A certain King made a Marriage for his Son, planted a Vineyard, &c. Those Places suppose it not necessary as to the being of the Allegory, that ever such a thing was; but a Type cannot be without reality in the thing, as Fact, which is made a Type.

2. Types look only to Matter of Fact, and compare one Fact with another, (as Christ being slain, and lying three Days in the Grave, to the Paschal Lamb, and Jonah's lying so long in the Whale's Belly): But Allegories take in Words, Sentences, Doctrines, both of Faith and Manners, as in the former Example is clear.

3. Types compare Persons and Facts under the Old-Testament, with Persons and Facts under the New, and is made up of something that is present, prefiguring another to come: Allegories look especially to Matters in hand, and intend the explaining some hidden and mystical Sence upon the Words, which at present they seem not to bear.

4. Types are only Historical, as such; and the Truth of Fact agreeing in the Antitype makes them up: it being clear in Scripture, that such things are Types; for we must not forge Types without Scripture-Warrant: But Allegories, &c. are principally Doctrinal, and in their Scope intend not to clear or compare Facts, but to hold forth and explain Doctrines, or by such Similitudes to illustrate, and make them the better understood, and to move and affect the Heart the more, or the more forcibly to convince the Conscience; as Nathan made use of a Parable, when he was about to convince David.

5. Types in the Old-Testament respect only some Things, Persons, and Events; as Christ, the Gospel, and the spreading thereof, &c. and cannot be extended beyond these: But Allegories, Similitudes, &c. take in every thing, that belongs either to Doctrine, or Instruction in Faith, or Practice, for ordering of one's Life.³⁷

³⁶ James Durham was a highly esteemed Scottish minister. He earned his MA from the University of Glasgow in 1647. He was known for being diligent, gifted, pious. Durham became one of the leading ministers in Scotland during his day. K. D. Holfelder, "Durham, James," *ODNB*.

³⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:A3r. The original assertion of these points is found in James Durham, *Clavis cantici, or, An exposition of the Song of Solomon* (Edinburgh, 1668), 8–10.

Keach remained aware that caution must be taken when determining a type, stating, “Care ought to be had that they [types] be not run beyond the *Analogy of Faith*; and many times it behoveth to see we go not beyond the Scope of the Text, which plainly shews the whole Mind of the Spirit, in making use of such Similitudes.”³⁸ Keach refuted any typological approach that neglected Scripture’s intent. Thus, his approach in *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven* did not represent a poor application of typology, but was the necessary implication of Keach’s *Tropologia* method.

Driven by his reluctance to go beyond the bounds of the analogy of faith, Keach presented *A Treatise Of all the Types, Parables and Allegories of the Old and New-Testament in Tropologia*.³⁹ This treatise revealed Keach’s view on typology more precisely. In Article I, Keach considered several definitions for typology and stated, “A Type, denotes a Figure, Image, Effigie, or Representation of any thing, and that either painted, feigned, or engraven or expressed by any other way of Imitation.”⁴⁰

Keach specified his position when he referenced the divines: “Divines understand nothing else by Types, but the Images or Figures of things present, or to come; especially the Actions and Histories of the Old-Testament, respecting such as prefigured Christ our Saviour in his Actions, Life, Passion, Death, and the Glory that followed.”⁴¹ One such divine, whom Keach referenced in his *Treatise of All Types*,⁴² is Thomas Taylor (1576–1632).⁴³ Taylor’s most significant contribution to typology is his

³⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:A3r.

³⁹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 2:25.

⁴⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 2:26.

⁴¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 2:26.

⁴² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:418.

⁴³ Taylor was born in 1576 in Richmond, Yorkshire, England. Taylor “served as a fellow (1599–1604) and lecturer in Hebrew (1601–1604) prior to entering the ministry.” It is worth noting that “Taylor was one of Perkins’s most avid disciples” so further links are established between Keach and Taylor since Keach heavily relied on Perkins’s work. *MTP*, 577–80.

work *Moses and Aaron, or The Types and Shadows of Our Saviour in the Old Testament*. Referring to types, Taylor stated, “So long as Christ was to come, it please God to train his Church by an heap of Ceremonies, rites, figures, and shadows, to strengthen their Faith in the expectation of him.”⁴⁴ Thus, the typology that Keach adopted accords with the divines who saw typology as Christocentric in focus.⁴⁵ From a methodological standpoint, Keach emphasized the significance of types in defining similarities and differences between the type and the antitype. For example, Keach stated, “But in the former place (Rom. 5.14.) a Type seems not properly to denote what we here intend, for there is a certain Comparison made between Adam and Christ, which carries rather a Disparity than a Similitude in it.”⁴⁶

Moreover, Keach noted the various biblical terms associated with typology. The first term Keach considered was the term “shadow.” This term is derived from Hebrews 8:5, which mentions “a shadow of things to come.” Keach proposed that in the Old Testament, Christ, along with the blessings and works undertaken for the salvation of humanity, was presented to the righteous in a veiled or “shadowy” manner.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Thomas Taylor, *Moses and Aaron, or, The types and shadowvs of our Saviour in the Old Testament opened and explained* (London, 1653), 2. Taylor’s work was published a number of years after his death in 1632. Samuel Mather’s (1651–1728) *Treatise on Types* also presented a significant contribution to Puritan typology. Mather was an independent minister born in Lancashire, England. He emigrated to New England with his parents and three brothers. In New England he received his education at Harvard College and graduated with an MA in 1643. In 1656, Mather received the call to be the minister at St. Nicholas in Dublin. He also lectured at Christ Church, a fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. For more information see Francis J. Bremer, “Mather, Samuel,” *ODNB*.

⁴⁵ Samuel Mather, *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament by Which Christ and the Heavenly Things of the Gospel Were Preached and Shadowed to the People of God of Old: Explained and Improved in Sundry Sermons* (Dublin, 1683). Both Taylor’s and Mather’s work will be referenced throughout this dissertation.

⁴⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 2:26.

⁴⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 2:27. Taylor furthered the notion of the term “shadow” when he stated,

Hence also Paul to the Col. 2, 17. speaking of observances of the Ceremoniall Law, saith: they were but shadows of things to come, but the body is Christ. Whence he would have us conceive: 1. That as the body is the cause of the shadow, and the cause more excellent than the thing caused: So Christ was the cause of those Ceremonies, and more excellent than they. 2. As the shadow representeth the shape of the body, with the Actions and motions: So those rites, and Ceremonies resemble Christ in all his actions, passions, motions, as after we are to hear. 3. As the shadow is but an obscure resemblance in respect of the body: So the Ministry of the old Testament in rites and Ceremonies is

Keach also utilized the term “sign.” Keach contended that Jonah in the belly of the fish was a sign “as a Type of himself.”⁴⁸ Keach considered the word “parable.” He reflected on Hebrews 11:19, which mentions that Abraham believed God could raise his son from the dead, as an example of a parable. Thus, Keach stated, “In a Parable or Similitude, is well expounded, that he [Isaac] was a Type or Similitude of Christ.”⁴⁹ Keach also expanded on how the terms “type” and “antitype” relate to one another: “The Correlative, or that which answers a Type, is the Antitype, that is, the thing represented by the Type, or that which answers to it.”⁵⁰

After considering Keach’s typological approach as a whole, it becomes evident that he consistently applied this method throughout the entire sermon series. Two occasions are the most prominent. The first occasion is the main type within the text: Jacob’s ladder. As mentioned above, Keach spoke of Christ as the ladder. Interestingly, Keach used Jacob’s ladder as a key illustration for typology in *Tropologia*. In that treatise, Keach considered “(1.) Prophetical Types” and “(2.) Historical Types.”⁵¹ Under “Prophetical Types,” the example given is Jacob’s ladder.⁵² Concerning this vision and its interpreter, Keach relied on the chief interpreter of Scripture, Christ:

a dark representation of the body, namely Christ and his spirituall worship. 4. As the body is solid, firme, and of continuance, even when the shadow is gone: So the Ceremonies as shadows are flown away, but Christ the body and his true worship lasteth for ever. In all which Christ and his grace are advanced, as the publisher and perfecter of our salvation without any shadows; whereas of the Law it is said: It made nothing perfect, Heb. 7. 19. (Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 3–4)

⁴⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:27.

⁴⁹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:27.

⁵⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:27.

⁵¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:28. For Keach, a historical type concerned salvation events in the history of God’s people that point forward to Christ such as the rescue of God’s people from Egypt. Stephen Charnock (1628–1680) also spoke of this historical salvation event as a type: “God hath been in Christ, Reconciling us to himself, is the Tenour of the Gospel; and should be an Incitement to greater Service, by how much our Spiritual Deliverance (the Antitype of it [the exodus]) is greater.” Stephen Charnock, *A Sermon Preached by the Late Eminent Mr. Steph. Charnock on 2 Cor. V. XIX* (London: Thomas Milbourn, 1680), 26.

⁵² Keach defined “Prophetical Types” as follows: “These may be thus distinguished, viz. such as were shewn to Men sleeping, or waking: To Men asleep their Dreams have been sent from Heaven. In these there is a twofold difference, some are mere, or naked Sight or Views, which without Figures, and

But Christ is a more sure Interpreter, who, Joh. 1.51. makes himself the Antitype of that Vision. Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see Heaven opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man: That is, from day to day, ye shall more and more understand, that I am he who is prefigured in that Vision of Jacob's Ladder.⁵³

For Keach, Christ as the ladder's antitype revealed two essential pictures of Christ's work. The type revealed "the Personal Union of two Natures in the *Messiah*, which is prefigured by the Ladder standing upon the Earth, whose top reached Heaven, denoting the Union of the Divine and Humane [*sic*] Nature."⁵⁴ Additionally, the ladder pictures Christ touching heaven, meaning "through Christ, the Ascension or Entrance into Heaven, is open to all Believers, Joh. 3.14, 15, 16. and by him only, Acts 4.12."⁵⁵

The second occasion of typology was Keach's excursus on Christ-centered preaching in *Sermon II in Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, titled "What 'tis to preach Christ"⁵⁶ in which Keach revealed some important insights. This excursus demands the reader's attention as a highlighted addition to the sermon and resides in a position of prominence at the sermon's climax before Keach's customary closing application.

The excursus's first paragraph discloses Keach's Christ-centered typological approach: "Christ is lifted up to Heaven, in that he is the Sum and Substance of Law and Gospel: I mean the Antitype of All Types, and Substance of all Shadows: He is the great Subject of Gospel-ministration. What have Ministers to Preach but Jesus Christ?"⁵⁷ By this statement, Keach adhered to a typological approach for preaching Christ from the

the mystery of Types, represent deep things, and future Events." Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:29. John Bunyan identified the ladder and Christ as an example of typology: "Jacobs ladder was the figure of Christ, which ladder was not the gate of heaven, but the way from the Church to that gate which he saw above at the top of the ladder: Gen. 28. 12. and Joh. 1. 51." John Bunyan, *The Strait Gate, or, Great Difficulty of Going to Heaven Plainly Proving by the Scriptures That Not Only the Rude and Profane, but Many Great Professors Will Come Short of That Kingdom* (London: Francis Smith, 1676), 11.

⁵³ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:29.

⁵⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:29.

⁵⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 2:29.

⁵⁶ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 46.

⁵⁷ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 46.

Old Testament. Following the statement, Keach made eighteen points to highlight what it means to preach Christ. In point fourteen, Keach reiterated his stance: “To preach Christ, is to Preach him, as I said, to be the Antitype of all Types, and the Substance of all Shadows.”⁵⁸ Keach then provided twenty-three examples of types in the Old Testament for which Christ is the antitype.⁵⁹

Keach followed the concept that types are determined as persons, events, and institutions. Keach began by referring to sixteen people for which Christ is the antitype: “The second Adam . . . The true Noah . . . The true Melchizedeck . . . The true Abraham . . . The true and Antitypical Isaac . . . etc.”⁶⁰ Keach followed each statement with a description of why Christ typifies the character. In doing this, Keach highlighted the escalation of the type. When Keach spoke of Isaac, for example, the escalation follows: “The true, and Antitypical Isaac, long Promised before Born, and brought forth of a dry Root, by the almighty Power of God, and Word of Promise; three days dead, and yet, as to his Deity, dyed not, and yet was Offered up for a Sacrifice by the Father.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50.

⁵⁹ In providing twenty-three examples, Keach gave readers a taste of what they could expect from his *Treatise of All Types* and resembling Thomas Taylor’s work *Moses and Aaron*. In his book, Taylor also listed numerous types that point to Christ.

⁶⁰ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50. Preaching Christ as the antitype of the biblical patriarchs was a preaching approach that the Puritans embraced. For example, George Swinnock (1627–1673) urged his readers run toward the true Noah: “Reader, since there is a flood, and vengeance, and wrath upon the face of the World, flie [*sic*] as the distressed Dove to this Ark of the Covenant; see how Jesus Christ the true Noah, a Preacher of righteousness puts forth his hand to take thee in.” George Swinnock, *The Fading of the Flesh and Flourishing of Faith, or, One Cast for Eternity with the Only Way to Throw It Well: As Also the Gracious Persons Incomparable Portion* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1662), 68.

Thomas Boston (1676–1732), when reflecting on the covenant of grace, spoke about it fulfilling the covenant with David: “He was an eminent type of Christ.” Moreover, when he addressed God’s covenant with Abraham, he stated, “He was an eminent type of Christ, the true Abraham, father of the multitude of the faithful.” Thomas Boston, *A View of the Covenant of Grace from the Sacred Records. Wherein the Parties in That Covenant, the Making of It; Its Parts . . . and the Administration Thereof, Are Distinctly Considered. Together with the Trial of a Saving Personal in-Being in It, and the Way of Instating Sinners Therein* (Glasgow: W. Walker, 1767), 24–25.

⁶¹ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50. In *Tropologia*, Keach affirmed this thought: “Isaac was offered (as it were) and three days dead in his Father’s Mind and Purpose, yet died not; but his Father received him as from the Dead: So Jesus Christ offered, but in respect of his Divinity died not; and tho his Humanity lay dead three days in the Heart of the Earth, yet it revived again.” Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:415. In this same section, Keach again referred to Thomas Taylor, who said, “So both

Keach did not make arbitrary typological connections, as shown in his use of New Testament references in the margin notes. When Keach declared Christ as “The true Melchizedeck,” he referenced Hebrews 7.⁶² When he pronounced Christ as “the true Abraham,”⁶³ he referenced Galatians 3. While Keach did not verify every character type with a New Testament reference, the references he used function to highlight his concern for affirming the legitimacy of the type.

Not only did Keach refer to people as types of Christ, but he also referred to events that point to Christ. Keach talked about Christ being “the true Antitypical Rock, that was smitten in the Wilderness.”⁶⁴ Although Keach did not mention it in his margin notes, he found scriptural backing for this claim in 1 Corinthians 10:4: “And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”⁶⁵ In this text, Paul harkens back to Numbers 20:2–13, describing this spiritual rock from which they drank as Christ. Similarly, Keach referred to Christ as “the

were delivered from death the third day: wherein the Apostle plainly makes him a type, Heb. 11:16.” Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 24.

⁶² Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50. When speaking of “Melchisedeck” [sic] in *Tropologia*, Keach used Hebrews 7:3 as the key New Testament text. This text refers to the fact that Melchizedek had no father or mother, but there is a typological purpose for this. Yet, Keach said, “There is no mention of these things concerning him in the holy Scripture; we have not his Genealogy, or Story of Life; tho none doubt, but he had both Father and Mother, and Descent. But God on purpose concealed, that he might be a more express Type of Christ.” Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:414.

⁶³ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50. In *Tropologia*, Keach not only cited Galatians 4 but also Hebrews 9:13 and Romans 4:13 in justifying Abraham as a type of Christ. Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:415.

⁶⁴ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50.

⁶⁵ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 50. While Keach did not mention this text in his excursus, he highlighted it in *Tropologia*. Keach devoted an entire section to this type, entitled “The Rock which was Smitten, out of which cause Water, Exod. 17. Was a Type of Christ.” Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:434. Furthermore, Keach referenced Taylor concerning the waters that followed Israel: “It followed them through the wilderness even unto Canaan. All the drynesse of that day and barren wilderness could not dry it up: So, the waters of grace streaming from the Rock Jesus Christ, follow the believing Israel of God through the wilderness of the world.” Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 269.

Antitypical brazen Serpent that is lifted up to cure all that are stung with sin”⁶⁶ and cited John 3:14 in his margin notes.

Keach also referred to the Day of Atonement when he called Christ “the Antitype of the Slain and Scapegoat, on whom all our Sins are laid; and who bears them all away into an unknown land,” an assertion verified by New Testament texts (see Heb 9:12–28; 10:19–22).⁶⁷ Furthermore, Keach affirmed Christ to be “the true Passover, that was Sacrificed for us,” also validated by New Testament texts (see John 1:29, 36; 1 Cor 5:7).⁶⁸ In the examples above, Keach sought to ground his typological assertions in New Testament texts.

In sum, Keach utilized a legitimate typology on two specific occasions in *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*: (1) when he referred to Jacob’s ladder and (2) in the excurses he presented near the sermon’s terminus. Furthermore, when Keach described parallels between Christ and the ladder, he did not engage in arbitrary typology or allegory, he simply applied his *Tropologia* method as a means to preach the wonder of Christ.

⁶⁶ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 52. Stephen Charnock also discussed the healing that the antitype of the bronze serpent could provide: “As long as men receive any Venom from the fiery Serpent, they may be healed by the Antitype of the Brazen one, though it were so many years since he was lifted up. And those who are stung all over, as well as those who are bitten but in one part, may by a believing looking upon him, draw virtue from him as diffusive as their Sin.” Stephen Charnock, *Two Discourses the First, Of Man’s Enmity to God, from Rom. VIII, 7: The Second, Of the Salvation of Sinners, from I Tim. I, 15* (London: Tho. Cockerill, 1699), 76.

⁶⁷ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 51. Keach spoke of Aaron’s laying his hands on the scapegoat as “figuring thereby, how Christ should bear all our Sins.” Furthermore, this scapegoat represented “Christ Jesus alive in his Divine Nature, tho’ put to death in his Humans [*sic*] Nature, or alive, after he rose again from the dead.” Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:432.

⁶⁸ Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 52. In Keach’s conclusion, he not only affirmed “what ‘tis to Preach Christ” but also explained what it is to “not” preach Christ. Keach implored preachers to “Preach him only, not to Preach Moses, nor to take the Law from his Mouth, but from the Mouth of Christ.” Second, Keach exhorted preachers “not to preach morality” because morality can neither justify nor save. Third, Keach implored preachers “not to Preach the Decrees of general Councils, or National Synods.” Lastly, according to Keach, to preach Christ was not “to mix our inherent righteousness, and sincere Obedience; no, nor our Faith with Christ’s righteousness.” Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, 46–53.

A Summons to the Grave (Ps 89:48)

“What man is he that he liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave.”⁶⁹ The first sermon that Keach published, *A Summons to the Grave*, served as a funeral sermon for a friend.⁷⁰ Keach preached this sermon at “The *Funeral* of that most Eminent and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. John Norcot. Who departed this Life March 24, 1676.”⁷¹ John Norcott was the author of the most famous tract on baptism in the seventeenth century, entitled *Baptism Discovered Plainly & Faithfully According to the Word of God* (1672).⁷² Not only was Norcott an established author, but, in the eyes of Keach, an accomplished preacher: “He was a most sweet and choice Preacher, most excellent skill had he to dive into Gospel-Mysteries; he saw, if I may say without offense, as far into a Text of Scripture, as most men now surviving.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Benjamin Keach, *A Summons to the Grave, or the Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death. Demonstrated in a sermon preached at the funeral of that most eminent and faithful servant of Jesus Christ Mr John Norcottt. Who departed this life March 24, 1675/76* (London, 1676), 2.

⁷⁰ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor,” 43.

⁷¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, title page. This marked the initial publication of three funeral sermons by Benjamin Keach. The other two sermons are: Benjamin Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant, a Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened in a Sermon Preached January the 29th, at the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty, Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks, Who Departed This Life Jan. 25th 1692/3 and Was Interr'd at Southwark: To Which Is Added, An Elegy on the Death of the Said Minister* (London: Barnard, 1693); Benjamin Keach, *A Call to Weeping: Or A Warning Touching Approaching Miseries In a Sermon Preached on the 20th of March, 1699. At the Funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Westen, Late Wife of Mr. John Westen, Who Departed This Life on the 17th of the Said Month, in the 38th Year of Her Age* (London, 1699).

Through funeral sermons “Puritan ministers assisted the community covertly by reading and interpreting the life of the individuals, much as they did the scriptural texts: the life of the deceased was something to be studied carefully, divided meticulously, known conclusively, and presented definitively.” Etta Madden, “Resurrecting Life through Rhetorical Ritual: A Buried Value of the Puritan Funeral Sermon,” *Early American Literature* 26, no. 3 (1991): 233. Keach was an exemplar of this practice. He was acquainted with the individuals for whom he conducted funeral services and his intent was to preach in a manner that glorified Christ and prompted those in attendance to trust him by faith.

⁷² Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage*, 2nd ed. (Peterborough, ON: H&E, 2019), 93. The tract was reprinted numerous times and translated into multiple languages.

⁷³ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, A2r.

Keach stated the doctrine derived from his text in his usual method: “Doct. That all men must die.”⁷⁴ Keach elaborated, “Or thus, That no man whatsoever, can escape the power of the grave.”⁷⁵ Keach belabored the extent of death coming upon the oldest, the strongest, the wisest, the richest, the poorest, and the rest of men.⁷⁶ He acknowledged that death comes to ministers of the gospel: “Though a person be never so much in the favour of God, and honoured by Christ Jesus; though never so laborious for the good of souls, as to be an Ambassador of Peace and Minister of the Gospel, yet these will not exempt from death.”⁷⁷

Following the extent of death’s grip, Keach gave three reasons for death. People must die because “all have sinned.” People must depart this earth because God ordained it.⁷⁸ Finally, one dies “because he would thereby magnifie his glorious Attributes.”⁷⁹ In death, the glorious grace of God is on display when believers enter their eternal home, and God magnifies his divine justice when the ungodly “suffer the intolerable pains and incensed wrath of the Almighty.”⁸⁰ Following this reasoning, Keach moved to the most extensive part of his exposition, the application, in which Christ was most magnified.

⁷⁴ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 11. Prior to stating the doctrine, Keach discussed meaning of “soul” and rules for interpreting “soul” in Scripture (5–10).

⁷⁵ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 11.

⁷⁶ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 11–18. Keach possibly considered the comments from Matthew Poole when deriving his doctrine that death comes on all men, including the rich: “All men at their best estate are mortal and miserable, Kings and People must unavoidably die by the condition of their natures.” Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, 1:486.

⁷⁷ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 18.

⁷⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 19.

⁷⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 20.

⁸⁰ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 21.

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

In crafting this funeral sermon, Keach invested the majority of his time in application. This emphasis is intentional, as Keach stated, “I must hasten to the application.”⁸¹ Keach presented four “Uses” as a means of application: “First an Use of Exhortation, secondly an Use of Direction, thirdly an Use of Lamentation, fourthly an Use of Consolation.”⁸² Through application, the sermon’s Christ-centeredness shines.

Two uses particularly highlight the sermon’s Christocentric nature. Keach articulated the use of direction, which he desired to be used by poor sinners in their preparation for the grave.⁸³ In this use, Keach urged sinners to understand the depth and weight of their sin to “get a full sight and sense of your sins, and of your lost and undone condition by nature.”⁸⁴ Keach argued that sinners must come to understand their brokenness before God: “Labour to get Brokenness of heart.”⁸⁵ Once sinners established

⁸¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 22.

⁸² It was typical for the Puritans in Keach’s day to use such application categories in their preaching. John Flavel (1630–1691) provides one example: “Use of Lamentation. Wherein the miserable, and most wretched state of all those to whom Jesus Christ is not effectually applied, will be yet more particularly discovered, and bewailed.” John Flavel, *The Method of Grace, in Bringing Home the Eternal Redemption Contrived by the Father, and Accomplished by the Son through the Effectual Application of the Spirit unto God’s Elect, Being the Second Part of Gospel Redemption: Wherein the Great Myserie of Our Union and Communion with Christ Is Opened and Applied, Unbelievers Invited, False Pretenders Convicted, Every Mans Claim to Christ Examined, and the Misery of Christless Persons Discovered and Bewailed* (London: M. White, 1681), 526.

Anthony Burgess (d. 1664) as part of his “Use of Consolation” asks the question, “Now what surer remedy, what more precious cordial can there be then this Omnipotency of Christ, this plenitude of power?” Anthony Burgess, *CXLV Expository Sermons upon the Whole 17th Chapter of the Gospel According to St. John, or, Christs Prayer before His Passion Explicated, and Both Practically and Polemically Improved* (London: Abraham Miller, 1656), 49.

⁸³ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 39. Keach was not the only Puritan to use this directional application. Isaac Ambrose (1604–1664), is an example of one who spoke about application in this way. Ambrose was born in 1604 in Lancashire. He was the son of a vicar. In 1640, he was chosen to be the vicar of Preston in Amounderness. Some have said that “Ambrose was a Christ-centered and warmly experiential author.” *MTP*, 33–37. Ambrose, in his “Use of Direction,” sought to direct his hearers to live out their faith in response to Christ: “Is inward, experimental looking unto Jesus a choice, or an high Gospel Ordinance? why then some directions how we are to perform this Duty. Practice is the end of all sound doctrin, [*sic*] and duty is the end of all right faith.” Isaac Ambrose, *Looking unto Jesus a View of the Everlasting Gospel, or, the Souls Eying of Jesus as Carrying on the Great Work of Mans Salvation from First to Last* (London: Richard Chiswel, Benj. Tooke, and Thomas Sawbridge, 1680), 21.

⁸⁴ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 39.

⁸⁵ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 40.

the depth and weight of their sin, they should “labour [and] so get an interest in Jesus Christ.”⁸⁶

For Keach, this funeral sermon was an opportunity to call sinners to repent and trust Christ. Thus, Keach addressed the needy soul in a forthright yet tender manner:

Can you still stand it out against such precious patience and offers of grace? Will you not yet open to Christ? Shall he call and cry to you and will you give him no entertainment? Can you close in with a better friend? How long hath he stood knocking at the doors of your hearts? Was he not graciously calling upon you the last Lords day? and now in mercy he is giving you another knock . . . Sinner, sinner, hasten to him, and open the door, do'st not hear that lovely voice that was spoken to the blind man, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee, Mark 10. 49.⁸⁷

Keach sought to give direction not only to the sinner but also to the saint. For example, he encouraged Christians to “labour in the strength of Christ to oppose every sin.”⁸⁸

Keach called on Christians not to neglect any conviction they felt of sin.⁸⁹

Keach not only sought to give direction to his listeners but also to give comfort, hence his use of consolation.⁹⁰ The target of his comfort was primarily toward those in Christ: “If thou art a Believer, I I [*sic*] have a word of comfort for thee; there is none I am sure for Christless Souls.”⁹¹ Keach highlighted numerous reasons why death cannot hurt Christians. He affirmed that the sting of death is taken from them by Christ.⁹²

⁸⁶ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 41.

⁸⁷ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 41–42.

⁸⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 42.

⁸⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 43.

⁹⁰ Keach was not alone in the provision of this use, for he followed in the footsteps of his great Baptist influencer Hanserd Knollys (1599–1691), who stated when preaching, “Use of Consolation unto the Wise Virgins. Art thou an Israelite indeed? Dost thou worship God in Spirit and Truth? Hast thou both the form and power of Godliness? Then be of good Comfort.” Hanserd Knollys, *The Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded, or, An Exposition of the First Thirteen Verses of the Twenty Fifth Chapter of Matthew* (London: Benjamin Harris, 1674), 46. Furthermore, Jeremiah Burroughs again provided a similar use in title to Keach. See Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Fear, or, The Heart Trembling at the Word of God Evidenceth a Blessed Frame of Spirit Delivered in Several Sermons from Isa. 66, 2 and 2 Kings 22, 14* (London: B. Aylmer, 1674), 106.

⁹¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 58.

⁹² Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 59.

Death does not harm believers who are in union with Christ.⁹³ Death has no power over Christians because “saints by faith can now, through Jesus Christ triumph over them, and shall have a compleat, a full Conquest, over a short space.”⁹⁴ Death does not hurt Christians because of all Christ has accomplished on their behalf.

Not only does death not harm Christians, but also death “‘twill be for thy profit and advantage every way.”⁹⁵ Death is to the believers’ advantage because they are freed from the frail body, from an evil world, from the hands of persecutors, from the devil, from disunity, from longings to see God’s face, and from “all thy toilsome pains and labour, of what nature soever it be.”⁹⁶ Therefore, Keach asked the question, “Who would be unwilling to die, that hath an interest in Jesus Christ?”⁹⁷ The saints’ union with Christ guarantees the freedom death offers.

Furthermore, Keach insisted upon the joy, company, and peace that Christ brings believers in death. Concerning joy, Keach claimed that, for the true believer, it is not about escaping the trouble, but immediately experiencing profound joy in communion with Jesus Christ.⁹⁸ He exemplified the picture of transcendent joy in Christ’s presence when he stated, “I shall receive more joy, more consolation, more of the fulness of God and Christ (as if he should say) when I die, then I can whilest I am in this body.”⁹⁹ When concluding his point, Keach proclaimed in a doxological fashion, “O what a blessed thing

⁹³ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 59.

⁹⁴ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 60.

⁹⁵ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 61.

⁹⁶ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 61–64.

⁹⁷ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 63.

⁹⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 65.

⁹⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 66.

it is to die in Christ? O what a happy estate is our friend in, the gain is exceeding great.”¹⁰⁰ At death, Christians are in the presence of Christ and thus enjoy his company:

They shall enjoy glorious company too. They shall be with Jesus Christ, have his company, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there be pleasures for evermore; be with Christ, holy Angels, and glorious spirits of just men made perfect. O what a blessed state and condition of soul have they gained that are gone thither!¹⁰¹

Lastly, believers enjoy everlasting peace. The Christian will attain tranquility. Not just peace found in Christ, which is the portion for God’s people in this world, but a state of peace with Christ.¹⁰² Keach contemplated the passing of believers and concluded, “O we shall see Christ, enjoy him, yea lie in his arms to all eternity. Enter thou, saith Christ, into the joy of thy Lord.”¹⁰³

Sin-Salvation Method of Preaching Christ

A Summons to the Grave was Keach’s first published sermon (1676).

Tropologia was published six years later, in 1681 so this sermon presents few traces of the *Tropologia* method. However, segments of the sermon resemble *Tropologia*. For instance, Keach drew parallels between ministers and pilots, shepherds, and captains. In *Tropologia*, he dedicated a section to ministers.¹⁰⁴

While Keach used *Tropologia* to preach about ministers, he adopted his Sin-Salvation method to preach Christ. Keach’s stated doctrine (“That all men must die. Or thus, That no man whatsoever, can escape the power of the grave”) introduces the

¹⁰⁰ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 70.

¹⁰¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 70.

¹⁰² Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 71.

¹⁰³ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 71.

¹⁰⁴ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 177. See Keach’s discussion on ministers: Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:256–90.

problem of original sin.¹⁰⁵ Concerning inherited sin from Adam, Keach stated, “Sin and Death came into the world together. Death came by the fall in the Garden, ‘tis part of the punishment due to us for that transgression.”¹⁰⁶ Throughout the sermon, Keach encouraged the congregation not to ignore the reality of death. For example, Keach addressed the “poor sinners”¹⁰⁷ by forcing them to consider the punishment: “Their souls must go to its places, to suffer the intolerable pains and increased wrath of the Almighty; and that their bodies also, with their souls, when they shall hereafter meet again, might be fit fuel for eternal flames to kindle upon.”¹⁰⁸ Consequently, Keach encouraged non-believers to labor over their sin and brokenness before God.¹⁰⁹ Once they reflect on their sin and brokenness, they can “labour [and] so get an interest in Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁰ Therefore, the sinner finds the solution in Christ. In the comfort application, Keach focused on believers’ union with Christ, which is derived from the solution. Union in and with Christ gives Christians joy, comfort, and peace at death.¹¹¹ By reflecting on union with Christ, Keach encouraged his listeners to contemplate the wonder of their salvation rather than the depravity of their condition.

God Acknowledged (Prov 3:6)

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Keach preached *God Acknowledged* on December 11, 1695, during a day of public prayer and

¹⁰⁵ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 19.

¹⁰⁷ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 21.

¹⁰⁹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 39–40.

¹¹⁰ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 41.

¹¹¹ Keach, *A Summons to the Grave*, 71.

humiliation appointed by the king.¹¹² While Keach preached the sermon in 1695, he published it in 1696. Keach printed the sermon in recognition of the day appointed by William III as a National Day of Prayer.¹¹³ Keach took the opportunity to call on the nation to acknowledge God. In typical Keachean fashion, he asserted a doctrinal point from the text: “Doct. That it is the Indispensable Duty of every Man, or all Men who are Sons of Wisdom, in every thing they enter upon or go about to do, to Acknowledge God, which they must do, if they would Prosper or meet Success.”¹¹⁴ Keach structured the sermon in line with this doctrine, showing what it is to acknowledge God, ways to acknowledge God, how to acknowledge God, the reasons for acknowledging God, and the application of all these points.¹¹⁵

The enduring nature of *God Acknowledged* was proven when, in 1738, Benjamin Franklin oversaw the printing and sale of copies in Philadelphia.¹¹⁶ Holmes suggests that Elias Keach, Benjamin’s son, spent five years ministering in Baptist churches in Philadelphia, which may have influenced the sermon’s popularity in the state.¹¹⁷ Thus, the sermon’s popularity and Christ-centered nature deem it worthy of consideration.

¹¹² Benjamin Keach, *God Acknowledged, Or, the True Interest of the Nation and all that Fear God Opened in a Sermon Preached December the 11th, 1695: Being the Day Appointed by the King for Publick Prayer and Humiliation* (London, 1696), i.

¹¹³ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 250.

¹¹⁴ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 6.

¹¹⁶ Charles Evans, *American Bibliography: a chronological dictionary of all books, pamphlets, and periodical publications printed in the United States of America from the genesis of printing in 1639 down to and including the year 1820*, vol. 2 (New York: P. Smith, 1941), 128.

¹¹⁷ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor,” 53.

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

When assessing the number of times Keach named Christ in *God Acknowledged*, this sermon might be interpreted as more theocentric than Christocentric.¹¹⁸ This observation is valid based on how often Keach mentioned God the Father over Christ. However, when Keach spoke of Christ, he did so in significant ways that highlight the Christ-centered nature of this sermon.

In his introduction, Keach stated that Christ is the central figure of Proverbs. Thus, Christ is the seminal character in any sermon preached from Proverbs. Keach declared, “By Wisdom, in several places of this Book of Solomon, is meant Jesus Christ; by Law, here may comprehend Christ’s Doctrine, his Word and Holy Precepts.”¹¹⁹ Here, Keach considered the context by referring to Proverbs 3:1, which speaks of wisdom and Law. Keach interpreted wisdom to mean Christ and the law to speak of Christ’s instruction. Therefore, the word “wisdom,” and all wisdom given in Proverbs, proceeds from Christ and points toward Christ. Consequently, though Keach did not actually name Christ much in this sermon, one cannot ignore the centrality of Christ.

Keach’s clarion call in this exposition was to acknowledge God. Keach delivered his first point to “shew you what it is to Acknowledgd [*sic*] God, or open the purport of that word more largely.”¹²⁰ Keach made numerous points about what it truly means to acknowledge God. For example, “To Acknowledge God, Is to Own and Acknowledge that all things come to pass by his All-wise Providence: According to his

¹¹⁸ Keach was following the stream of thought in the commentaries of the day that focus on the text’s theocentric nature and God’s ultimate sovereignty. For example, Poole argued that the design of this text is to acknowledge God’s “power and goodness, in expecting success from him, his Sovereignty in managing all thy Affairs so as to please and glorify him.” Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, 519. In the *Westminster Annotations*, a brief comment suggests the direction of the text: “Use Gods counsel in all thy actions, and do nothing contrary to his will.” John Downname, ed., *Annotations Upon All the Books of the Old and New Testament; Wherein The Text Is Explained, Doubts Resolved, Scriptures Paralleled, and Various Readings Observed* (London: John Legate and John Raworth, 1645), 884.

¹¹⁹ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 3. In the original document, the page numbers begin at page 5. This page number is derived on the basis that it is two pages before the numbering begins.

¹²⁰ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 6.

Eternal Decree,”¹²¹ or “To Acknowledge God, ‘Tis to acknowledge and own his Infinite Wisdom; or, that he is a Most Wise God.”¹²²

For Keach, to acknowledge God meant primarily to acknowledge God the Father. When Keach spoke of the need to acknowledge God’s justice and holiness, he stated, “The Justice and Righteousness of God is seen in his punishing the Wicked for their Sin; but more especially, in punishing his own Son when he came to stand in our stead and Law-place, as our Sponsor and blessed Surety; he spared not his own Son, as an act of Justice.”¹²³ One is to acknowledge the justice and holiness of God the Father based on the fact that he punished his Son in our place to satisfy his justice. Furthermore, to acknowledge God the Father also means to acknowledge God the Son: “To Acknowledge God, Is to acknowledge Jesus Christ to be God; not God by Office, but God by Nature, the only wise God, the Eternal God, Co-equal with the Father.”¹²⁴ Though this sermon is mostly theocentric in its language, this is not due to the neglect of Christ. Keach continued, “This it is to acknowledge God, viz. To own Christ to be God; ye believe in God, believe also in me, i. e. Ye acknowledge the Father is God, acknowledge the Son also to be the same God.” Interestingly, Keach was not as concerned with discussing the need to acknowledge the Spirit,¹²⁵ again revealing his Christocentric focus.

Keach instructed ministers to preach Christ as a means of acknowledging God in their ministries. He called ministers to “purpose to hear, and know their Doctrine well,

¹²¹ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 7.

¹²² Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 8.

¹²³ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 9. Keach referred to Christ as our “blessed surety.” As discussed above, this was a theme that Keach talked about at length in his sermon and was reflective of his *Tropologia* method. See Keach, *Tropologia*, 91–97.

¹²⁴ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 9.

¹²⁵ Keach only referred to the Spirit in passing twice in this sermon. The first instance was when he spoke about the creation of a new heart: “A new Heart must be created in thee by God’s mighty and glorious Creating-Power, and his Spirits operating Influences.” Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 15. The second instance was when he discussed the power of the Spirit to make the foolish wise: “He can make the Foolish, Wise, and put his Spirit upon them” Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 25.

and their Lives.”¹²⁶ Keach implored preachers to a life devoted to Christ. He subsequently instructed ministers,

See that they Preach Christ, that they Preach the Gospel clearly; whose main design, is to Exalt Jesus Christ and the Free Grace of God; and particularly, that they are Sound about the Doctrine of Free Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, as it is Imputed and Received by Faith alone, without any mixture of Mans own Inherent Righteousness.¹²⁷

In general terms, Keach desired that all ministers preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Keach narrowed his focus to preaching the justification of Christ and the imputation of his righteousness. This was an essential mark of gospel preaching for Keach since it refuted the errors of Richard Baxter’s justification doctrine.¹²⁸

Finally, rather than preaching a Christ crescendo in *God Acknowledged*, Keach preached a Christ inclusio. Christ was preached at the beginning of the sermon, where Keach acknowledged Christ as the personification of wisdom: “By Wisdom, in several places of this Book of Solomon, is meant Jesus Christ; by law here may comprehend Christ’s Doctrine; his Word and Holy Precepts.”¹²⁹ The wisdom that Proverbs instructs readers to find is ultimately found in Christ. Christ as the personification of wisdom was also preached at the climax of the sermon: “Men must be Untaught, or become Fools, before they can be Wise; I mean, emptied of their own Wisdom, and confess, they know nothing as they ought to know: Christ’s Office and Work, is to Teach his People: He only hath the Tongue of the Learned; therefore let all men Learn of him.”¹³⁰ Keach’s proclamation at the onset of the sermon resonates harmoniously with his declaration at the sermon’s climax—to learn wisdom is ultimately to learn Christ.

¹²⁶ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 15.

¹²⁷ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 15.

¹²⁸ See chapter 6 for a more in-depth insight into Baxterianism also called Neonomianism.

¹²⁹ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 3.

¹³⁰ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 41.

***Tropologia* Method of Preaching Christ**

Keach preached Christ in two ways in this sermon: as the wisdom of God and as God in the flesh. Keach's preaching of Christ as the wisdom of God is not expressed as a section heading in *Tropologia*. However, this theme pervades *Tropologia* and informs Keach's approach. For example, in his section, "Solomon a Type of Christ,"¹³¹ Keach listed parallels between Christ and Solomon, he considered the wisdom of both:

"Solomon exceeded all other Men in Wisdom and Knowledge: Christ is the Wisdom of God."¹³² Keach continued, "Jesus Christ is made of God unto us, Wisdom; he makes us wise . . . Christ was in all things wise in him was no Folly."¹³³ This theme appears in other types that Keach presented. One example is "Joseph a Type of Christ."¹³⁴ Keach presented Joseph as "a Man of great Wisdom, able to expound deep Secrets."¹³⁵ Keach paralleled this wisdom with Christ when he stated, "In Jesus Christ are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, who is therefore called the Great Counsellor."¹³⁶

Additionally, it is not just the types that sustain this theme but also the other titles in Scripture used to reflect Christ. For example, in "Christ a King," Keach reflected on Christ's wisdom:¹³⁷ "The Lord Jesus Christ hath glorious Qualifications. He is not only endued with natural Wisdom, and that far beyond Solomon, (A great[er] than

¹³¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:419.

¹³² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:419.

¹³³ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:419. Keach was not alone in asserting that Solomon is a type of Christ based on the wisdom that he exudes. For example, Thomas Taylor stated, "Solomon excelled all other men in wisdom and knowledge, 1 Kings 4.29,30. But Christ is the wisdom of the father, & far excels Solomon; as in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 68.

¹³⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:416.

¹³⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:416.

¹³⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:416. In similar fashion, Thomas Taylor spoke of Joseph as a type of Christ due to the wisdom he possessed: "Joseph was endued with such a measure of wisdom and understanding as none was like him . . . figuring Christ in whom were treasures of wisdom, and the Spirit beyond all measure. Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 29.

¹³⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:143.

Solomon is here), but hath had the Advantage also of such Education that none ever had, being brought up with God himself.”¹³⁸ More significantly, concerning Proverb 8, Keach asserted, “He hath all the Treasures of Wisdom in him, is skill’d in all Politicks.”¹³⁹ This reference in *Tropologia* acknowledges that Christ is the wisdom of God referred to in Proverbs. Furthermore, Keach said, “Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God, and could not be circumvented by great Beelzebub.”¹⁴⁰

In *God Acknowledged*, Keach affirmed that acknowledging God means acknowledging Christ as God.¹⁴¹ This is something that *Tropologia* stated in “Christ the express Image of the Father,”¹⁴² as Keach claimed, “Christ is the Likeness of the Father, the true Form, Figure, Character, or Representation of him.”¹⁴³ In expressing this point, Keach displayed what it means to acknowledge God. He said, “Christ, respecting his Essence, is the same God with the Father.”¹⁴⁴ Yet, he affirmed that “the Subsistences or Persons of the Father and Son are different.”¹⁴⁵ Finally, Keach affirmed Christ as God in the flesh: “Christ, God-Man in one Person, or God manifested in the Flesh, the glorious Representation of the Father to Sinners.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, Keach utilized aspects of his *Tropologia* method in *God Acknowledged*.

¹³⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:143.

¹³⁹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:143.

¹⁴⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:147.

¹⁴¹ Keach, *God Acknowledged*, 9.

¹⁴² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:108.

¹⁴³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:108.

¹⁴⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:109.

¹⁴⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:109.

¹⁴⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:109.

Conclusion

Keach's sermons unfold before the readers the wonder of Christ—the true ladder to heaven, the remedy for sin, and the embodiment of God's wisdom. However, as the diamond turns, revealing another facet of Christ's excellences in part 2 of Keach's Old Testament sermons, the journey takes a further step. Before delving deeper, one can contemplate Keach's hymn, *Jacob's Ladder, a Type of Christ*:

Behold, and Wonder now,
in a most sacred Song;
O let's Exalt the Name of Christ,
to him doth Praise belong.
Thou God-Man, King, and Priest,
Almighty art yet Meek;
Thou art most Just yet Merciful,
the guilty cam'st to seek.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual songs being the marrow of Scripture in songs of praise to Almighty God from the Old and New Testament: with a hundred divine hymns on several occasions as now practised in several congregations in and about London: with a table of contents / by Benjamin Keach, author of the war with the devil* (London, 1700), 77–78.

CHAPTER 4

“CHRIST IS NOT ONLY MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT, BUT SURETY, MESSENGER AND TESTATOR” (OLD TESTAMENT SERMONS PART 2)

Expounding upon God’s glorious grace displayed in Isaiah 54, Keach declared, “My main design in all my Preaching (if I know my own Heart) is wholly to advance the Free Grace of God, through that Redemption which is in Jesus Christ, and utterly to abase the Creature, tho’ it may seem a hard thing to keep in an even Line, and not fall into either Extream.”¹ Keach sought to wound the heart with the piercing reality of sin, yet heal it with the redemption found in Christ alone.

In part 1, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven* (Gen 28:12–13a) depicted Christ as the true ladder to heaven, *A Summons to the Grave* (Ps 89:48) revealed Christ as solution for sin, and *God Acknowledged* (Prov 3:6) displayed Christ as the wisdom of God. Part 2, considers Christ’s role in the biblical covenants through two sermon series *The Everlasting Covenant* (2 Sam 23:5) and *The Display of Glorious Grace* (Isa 54:10).

The Everlasting Covenant (2 Sam 23:5)

“Beloved, *the Solemn Occasion* of this Assembly, may put us all in mind of our Mortality, Death is certain; all must dye (as the Psalmist says) What Man is he that liveth and shall not see Death? Can he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave? Psal.

¹ Benjamin Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace, or, The Covenant of Peace Opened in Fourteen Sermons Lately Preached, in Which the Errors of the Present Day about Reconciliation and Justification Are Detected* (London, 1698), v.

89.48.”² Keach preached this solemn sermon on January 29, 1693, at the funeral of his dear friend, Mr. Henry Forty (d. 1693),³ “Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks.”⁴ The sermon Keach preached was from a text given to him by Forty, which according to Keach, “shews the comfortable Hopes he had in Death.”⁵ The text is “2. of Sam. 23.5. Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered on all things and sure: for this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, although he make it not to grow.”⁶ These words depict “David’s dying Words, or Words which he uttered upon the near approach of his Death.”⁷

Though this sermon functioned originally as a funeral sermon for a friend, Keach dedicated the published sermon to his congregation at Horselydown.⁸ Keach acknowledged the original purpose and occasion of the sermon, yet, he felt he did not have time to preach the full scope of the text, therefore he preached the passage again the following Sunday.⁹ Keach understood this topic is “of the highest Concernment,” and so he published the work in its entirety. Keach stated his purpose: “I have endeavoured to

² Benjamin Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant, a Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened in a Sermon Preached January the 29th, at the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty, Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks, Who Departed This Life Jan. 25th 1692/3 and Was Interr’d at Southwark: To Which Is Added, An Elegy on the Death of the Said Minister* (London, 1693), 1.

³ Keach’s friend, Henry Forty, was a gospel preacher who preached while under great persecution and “for more than Twelve Years he lay in Prison for Jesus Christ’s sake.” Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 37. Additionally, Forty signed both the 1644 and 1689 London Baptist Confessions. James Renihan, when arguing that there was no substantial difference between the 1644 and 1689 London Baptist Confessions, notes that “several key men signed both Confessions: William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, and Henry Forty.” Henry Forty also signed the third edition 1651. Thus, he was a key figure in the seventeenth-century London Baptist movement. James M. Renihan, “Confessing the Faith in 1644 and 1689,” *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 41.

⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, title page.

⁵ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 1.

⁶ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 1.

⁷ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 1.

⁸ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, i.

⁹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, i.

shew, That the Distinction some Men make between the Covenant of Redemption, and the Covenant of Grace, is without Ground, being but one and the same Covenant; and, That the Covenant of Grace, comprehendeth that between God, and Christ for us, as Mediator about our Redemption, which was as full of Grace.”¹⁰

In advocating there is one covenant of grace, Keach promoted three doctrines derived from the text, yet the third doctrine is his primary focus throughout the exposition. The third doctrine states, “Doct. That the Covenant of Grace which is made with Believers in Christ, is an everlasting Covenant, order’d in all things, and sure, and is the only Spring or Fountain of their Salvation, Hope, Desire and Consolation, both in Life and Death.”¹¹ Keach chose to concentrate on this doctrine because

It is the last Proposition or Point of Doctrine I shall now Prosecute, judging it may most fitly Answer that which was the chief Design and end of our Honoured Brother deceas’d, in chusing this Text to be opened at his Funeral, from whence he doubtless found so much Comfort under those grievous Afflictions and Trials in his Life, and also at the time of his Death.¹²

From this fundamental doctrine, Keach elucidated the following points: the nature of the covenant and its primary parties and beneficiaries, a believer’s salvation, hope, desire, and consolation in life and death connected to the covenant, and practical applications.¹³

¹⁰ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, To the Congregation. David Copeland argues that Keach “utilized its [the sermon’s] entire breadth to address the nature of the covenant.” David A. Copeland, *Benjamin Keach and the Development of Baptist Traditions in Seventeenth-Century England* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 40. It seems unusual that Keach would use such a sermon to preach the nature of the covenant, yet one must understand that “The covenant and all its accompanying blessings are the driving force in, and give coherence to, Keach’s entire theological scheme.” Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*, vol. 1 (Fearn, RossShire: Mentor, 2005), 167. Consequently, there are very few times in which Keach did not seek an opportunity to mention or discuss the covenants.

¹¹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 3. The two other doctrines are: “1. Doct. That Darkness, Troubles, and Afflictions, with a decay of Grace, or spiritual Liveliness, may attend the State of Christians sometimes, while in his Life, which they cannot but acknowledge and mourn under the sight and sence of. 2. Doct. That God hath made with True Believers a blessed and well ordered Covenant.”

¹² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 3.

¹³ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 3.

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

From the outset, Keach considered the Christocentric nature of the covenant of grace: “This Covenant was Primarily made with Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, as Mediator, and as the Root, common Head and Representative of all the Elect, or all that the Father hath given to Christ.”¹⁴ The Christ-centered emphasis does not divorce Christ’s work from the work of the Father and the Spirit.¹⁵ In the latter half of the sermon, Keach stated, “In this Covenant there is a clear Revelation or Manifestation of the Three Persons in the Deity, and their Glory doth equally and joyntly shine forth.”¹⁶ Keach consistently spoke of the Father’s work with the Son in forming the covenant of grace. For example, he asserted, “Now that there was some Gracious Covenant Transactions, between the Father and the Son, from before all Worlds, about the bringing in and establishment of this blessed Covenant of Grace.”¹⁷ Furthermore, Keach occasionally emphasized the role of the Spirit.¹⁸ Though Keach stressed that the glory of the Trinity “doth equally and joyntly shine forth,” it is clear, even from the most casual reading of this exposition, that Christ’s work takes center stage.¹⁹

¹⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 4.

¹⁵ Keach often extolled the work of the Trinity in his preaching. However, his most significant single treatment of the Trinity comes from his work *Beams of Divine Light*. In this work, Keach magnifies the blessed Trinity. See Benjamin Keach, *Beams of Divine Light: Or Some Brief Hints of the Being and Attributes of God and of the Three Persons in the God-Head. Also Proving the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy-Ghost. Written at the Request of a Most Pious, and Honourable Citizen of London. And Published by Him for the Sake of the Poorer Sort of Christians, in These Perilous Times* (London: K. Allwood, 1700).

¹⁶ Keach was aware of the Trinity’s role in salvation: “Tho’ the whole Trinity are concerned in our Salvation, yet (as our Protestant Writers observe) each Person acts a distinct Part in it, the Father chose and substituted Christ to do this glorious Work, and accepted him in our stead, as our Surety and Saviour.” Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 24.

¹⁷ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 24.

¹⁸ Keach stressed the work of the Spirit when he considered how “The Glory of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity shines forth in this Covenant.” See Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 26–27.

¹⁹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 24. Similarly, Keach stressed the glory of the Trinity’s work in *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven* when he stated,

In respect of his own Person, and the Glory of his Son, and the Glory of the Holy-Ghost; for every sacred Person of the blessed Trinity, shines forth in equal Glory in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of our Salvation by Jesus Christ. 1. The Glory of the Father is manifested in Election; or in Chusing all that shall be Saved in Christ. 2. The Glory of the Son in Redemption; or

The main issue Keach addressed is whether there is both a covenant of redemption and covenant of grace. It is through this issue that Keach preached Christ. Keach approached the issue first by asking a question, “Question, Is not that Covenant which was made between the Father and the Son (considered as the latter, is Mediator) called the Covenant of Redemption, made from all Eternity a distinct Covenant from the Covenant of Grace?”²⁰ In his answer, Keach confessed he was previously “inclined to believe the Covenant, or Holy Compact between the Father and the Son, was distinct from the Covenant of Grace.”²¹ Keach previously held a threefold covenant system: the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. Later Keach conceded that “upon farther search, by means of some great Errors sprang up among us, arising (as I conceive) from that Notion, I cannot see that they are Two distinct Covenants, but both one and the same glorious Covenant of Grace.”²²

Keach refused to believe that one could read the Scriptures and see three covenants.²³ He was adamant that the Scriptures only speak of two primary Covenants, yet he conceded that “both these Covenants had several Revelations, Ministrations, or

in dying to redeem them. 3. The Glory of the Holy Spirit in Sanctification; or in Renewing and Regenerating of them. (Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven, Or, Jacob's Ladder Improved Containing Four Sermons Lately Preach'd on Genesis XXVIII, XII: Wherein the Doctrine of Free-Grace Is Display'd through Jesus Christ: Also Discovering the Nature, Office, and Ministration of the Holy Angels: To Which Is Added One Sermon on Rom. 8, 1: With Some Short Reflections on Mr. Samuel Clark's New Book Intituled Scripture Justification* [London, 1698], 76)

²⁰ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6.

²¹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6.

²² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6. Arnold states, Recognizing that the biblical record described numerous covenants, Keach argues that all of those transactions merely repeated one of two “organizing” covenants, namely the old covenant which he variously called the “covenant of works,” the “covenant of life,” the “law of innocency,” or simply the “law” and the new covenant, called the “covenant of grace,” the “covenant of redemption,” the “gospel covenant,” the “covenant of peace,” or the “covenant of reconciliation.” Every other covenant noted in the biblical record, though possibility containing some idiosyncrasies, simply repeated the original transactions of one of the other organizing covenant. (Jonathan W. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach [1640–1704]*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 11 [Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, 2013], 124)

²³ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 7.

Editions.”²⁴ The covenant at Sinai, with Noah, or with Abraham were all subsumed under the umbrella of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.²⁵ Keach ensured he was not alone in this when he consulted the work of Samuel Petto (ca.1624–1711).²⁶ Of particular interest is Petto’s discourse, *The Difference Between the Old and New Covenant*, in which he argued, “There is no Scripture Evidence for making these, two Covenants, one of Surety ship or redemption with Jesus Christ, and another of grace and reconciliation made with us: that distinction which some use, is improper, for the parts of it are coincident, seeing that as with Jesus Christ was out of meer grace also: John 3. 16.”²⁷

In *The Display of Glorious Grace*, Keach noted that *The Larger Catechism* states,

Q. Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the states of sin and misery? A. God doth not leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery into which they fell by the breach of the first Covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Work; but, of his meer love and mercy, delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second Covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace.²⁸

²⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 7.

²⁵ With reference to Samuel Petto, Keach underscored the fact that the promises or covenants point to Christ: “1. The Promise to Adam, primarily runneth to Christ, as the Woman’s Seed, and so to us in him. 2. To Abraham, in thee, and again, in thy Seed shall all the families of the Earth be blessed, Gen. 12.3. Gen. 22.18. that this Promise refers to Christ, see Gal. 3.16. and to us in him, see vers. 29. 3. The Covenant with David runneth to Christ, and also in him to us, Psal. 89.20.28, 29.” Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 9–10.

²⁶ Samuel Petto’s birthplace and parents are uncertain, yet Petto was given a “Protestant and Calvinistic education at Cambridge in the 1640s.” In 1648, Petto was ordained and “installed as rector of Sandcroft (or St. Cross) in the deanery of South Elmham, Suffolk.” Additionally, “In October 1657, Petto was selected to be an assistant to the Suffolk commission of Triers and Ejectors, a body appointed by Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) to examine ministers and their credentials.” Michael G. Brown, “Samuel Petto (C. 1624–1711): A Portrait of a Puritan Pastor Theologian,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 2, no. 1 (January 2010), 79–81.

²⁷ Samuel Petto, *The Difference between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained with an Exposition of the Covenant of Grace in the Principal Concernments of It* (London: 1674), 19.

²⁸ Westminster Assembly, *The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines Now by Authority Sitting at Westminster Concerning a Larger Catechisme Presented by Them Lately to Both Houses of Parliament: A Certain Number of Copies Are Ordered to Be Printed Only for the Use of the Members of Both Houses and of the Assembly of Divines to the End That May Advise Thereupon* (London, 1647), 7.

Based on this answer, Keach argued the Divines held two covenants: “From hence it doth appear, that this opinion of two distinct Covenants was not received by that Assembly; they own but two Covenants i. e. that of Works and that of Grace, and I am sure the Scriptures bear witness of no other Covenant of Redemption.”²⁹ Keach also referenced *Neonomianism Unmask’d* by Isaac Chauncy (1632–1712),³⁰ who argued for two covenants: “If the Covenant of Redemption be not the Covenant of Grace, then there is more Covenants than the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace for Life and Salvation, but there is no more Covenants for our Life and Salvation, but that of Works, and that of Grace.”³¹ It was through his covenant theology that Keach preached Christ.

Concerning the singular covenant of grace, Keach stressed that it “doth peculiarly respect Christ’s Person as Mediator; and as he is so considered in the Covenant.”³² Keach focused on the work of Christ as mediator in this covenant. The covenant was not a covenant of grace for Christ but for his people: “For he obtains all by

²⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 216.

³⁰ In the reference he cites “Doctor Chauncy” [*sic*] and not the work itself. Keach, *The Display of His Glorious Grace*, 211. Isaac Chauncy was an “independent theologian who succeeded (one pastor removed) the eminent John Owen (1616–1683) as pastor of the Bury Street Independent congregation.” Jonathan W. Arnold, “The British Antinomian Controversies,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 25, no. 49 (Autumn 2012): 52.

³¹ Isaac Chauncy, *Neonomianism Unmask’d, or, The Ancient Gospel Pleaded against the Other, Called a New Law or Gospel in a Theological Debate, Occasioned by a Book Lately Wrote by Mr. Dan. Williams, Entitled, Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated* (London, J. Harris, 1692), 127. Though Keach cited Samuel Petto, the Westminster Divines, and Isaac Chauncy in defense of the twofold covenant structure, there were those who adopted the threefold covenant structure which Keach once held. Two examples will suffice. First, John Owen distinguished between the “Covenant of the Mediator” (covenant of redemption) and the “Covenant of Grace,” stating, “But, in the Covenant of the Mediator Christ stands alone for himself, and undertakes for himself alone, and not as the Representative of the Church. But this he is in the Covenant of Grace.” John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated by John Owen* (London, 1677), 269. For further insight see Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 123–41. Second, Keach noted that Richard Baxter, Daniel Williams, and Samuel Clark believed that “our Obedience is the Condition of our Justification before God.” Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 77. In order to promote this view, Baxter adopted the threefold covenant structure, whereby he held to a conditional covenant of redemption in which “the conditional aspects of the covenant applied only to Christ. In other words, Christ’s fulfillment of the stated conditions only served to qualify Christ as the Mediator.” Additionally, Baxter held to a conditional covenant of grace: “Baxter used the term Law of Grace as a synonym for the third covenant, the covenant which was made between God and humanity. That covenant, too, was conditional.” Arnold, “The British Antinomian Controversies,” 50–51. Consequently, Keach argued that Baxter and others affirmed “that Christ dies for our good, but not in our stead.” Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 77.

³² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6.

Desert and Merit; yet seeing God entered into that Covenant with him, for us, as our Head, Surety and Representative, and not for himself singly, considered, it cannot be anything else but the Covenant of Grace.”³³ Remarking on the singularity of the covenant, Keach noted, “I see not (I say) but that they are but one and the same Covenant of Grace, yet so as that Christ has his Part, Work and Reward distinct from us; he hath all by hard Work, and Merit, that we might have the Blessings he merited freely by Grace alone.”³⁴ In short, Christ did the work, the elect receive the grace.

The dynamic between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace highlights Keach’s Sin-Salvation method in the sermon. The covenant of works depicts man lost in his sin. The covenant of grace shows the salvation given by Christ to his elect. The interplay between these covenants is vital for Keach’s Sin-Salvation approach. Preaching Christ in this manner allowed Keach to emphasize the various roles of Christ in the covenant of grace. Keach declared,

Christ in the Covenant of Grace, is the Mediator, we are those he mediates for; Christ is the *Head*, we are the *Body*, the covenanted for; Christ is the Surety, we the Poor Debtors and Criminals, he struck hands to satisfie God’s Justice for; Christ is the Redeemer, we the Redeemed; Christ the Saviour, we the Saved; Christ is the Purchaser, we are the Inheritance he purchased, and that it might be thus, Christ entered into this Covenant with the Father for us, out of his infinite Grace and divine Goodness; and it was even like inconceivable Grace and Mercy in God the Father, to find out in his infinite Wisdom, this way, and substitute his own Son in our stead.³⁵

Structurally, the sermon’s polemical nature embodies eight objections to Keach’s twofold covenant scheme. Keach answered each objection with a focus on Christ’s work as a verification for his position.

³³ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6.

³⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6.

³⁵ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 6. Each title given to Christ in this instance is reflective of Keach’s *Tropologia* Method, which will be discussed in the next section. Arnold calls these titles “analogies,” which speaks to their function. See Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 126–127n94.

The first objection suggests the covenant of redemption is a covenant between two equal parties (God and the Son), whereas in the covenant of grace “there is a superiour God, and an inferiour Man.”³⁶ Keach disputed this perspective confirming that Christ “entered into that Covenant for us, i. e. as our Saviour and Surety, to satisfie for our Sins, and perfect our Redemption.”³⁷ Thus, Christ entered into the one covenant of grace on believers’ behalf as their surety.

The second objection is the time of the covenants. Some suggested the covenant of redemption was made in eternity and the covenant of grace was only established after the covenant of works was broken.³⁸ Keach proposed that the dilemma is resolved through Christ’s federal headship, emphasizing that the covenant of grace was established in Christ as the head and representative before the foundation of the world.³⁹ He further stressed the covenant of grace’s eternal nature, asserting that though Christ’s

³⁶ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 10.

³⁷ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 10. Christ as surety is a theme that permeates Keach’s writing. This theme is found in his didactic sermons where he wrote,

Christ dying for our Sins, was a full and complete Paiment of all our Debts, which bound us over to Death and Condemnation; we owed ten thousand Talents, and Christ our *Surety* was charged with it, even with all we owed to Justice; and by his Death he paid the uttermost Farthing: Now the Principal and the *Surety* are legally and judicially one Person; so that in Christ we paid all, though it was God and not we that found out the *Surety*. (Benjamin Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened, or, The Glory of God’s Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers, and His Direful Wrath against Impenitent Sinners Containing the Substance of near Forty Sermons upon Several Subjects* [London, 1694], 245)

Keach even wrote of this theme in a hymn entitled, “Christ our Surety.” In the last verse he proclaimed, “And thou as Surety for us, Gav’st up thy self to die; And in our stead, Lord, thou didst thus God’s justice satisfie.” Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody, Containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns* (London: John Hancock, 1691), 41.

³⁸ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 11.

³⁹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 11. Christ, as the head of the covenant of grace, was an essential part of Keachean theology. *The Articles of Faith*, established by Keach and his Horsley-down congregation, define the federal headship of Adam and Christ. First, under the heading “Of Original Sin,” it states, “WE do believe, that God having created Man, he entered into a Covenant of Life with him, upon the condition of perfect Obedience; making the first Adam a common Head to all his Seed.” Therefore, due to Adam’s representation of humanity in the garden, “by Imputation all Men became Sinners in the first Adam.” Benjamin Keach, *The Articles of the Faith of the Church of Christ, or, Congregation Meeting at Horsley-down Benjamin Keach, Pastor, as Asserted This 10th of the 6th Month, 1697* (London, 1697), 6–7. Second, under “Of the New and Second Covenant,” it states, “We believe the Covenant of Grace was primarily made with the second Adam, and in him with all the Elect, who as God-man, or Mediator, was set up from everlasting as a Common Person, or as their Head and Representative.” Keach, *The Articles of Faith*, 31.

redemption was not the cause of election, believers were chosen in him as the head and redeemer.⁴⁰ Keach reinforced this point through typology, specifically referring to David as a type of Christ in the text, affirming that the covenant mentioned was the covenant of grace made with the True David.⁴¹

The third objection states, “The Conditions are different, Death and Satisfaction for Sin was the Condition of the Covenant of Redemption. Faith is the Condition of the Covenant of Grace.”⁴² Keach’s answer is Christocentric. Initially, he asserted that Christ, not believers, is the active agent in the process who justifies the elect.⁴³ Subsequently, he highlighted that Christ possesses what he has by grace, not by merit.⁴⁴ In the same vein, believers receive their blessings not by merit, but through the grace of Christ. Finally, Keach reiterated the argument that Christ serves as the representative for all the elect, emphasizing that the covenant, primarily made with Christ, extends to him as the head and surety for all.⁴⁵ Regarding this point, Keach focused on the Spirit’s role in illumination, noting that if individuals are adults, they can only perceive through the bestowal of faith, unless the Holy Spirit, the great promise of the Father, enables them to believe.⁴⁶

The fourth objection argues, “Christ is the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, but not the Mediator of the Covenant of Redemption, but a Party.”⁴⁷ Keach articulated his

⁴⁰ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 11.

⁴¹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 11. Keach’s use of typology is key to his *Tropologia* method of preaching Christ.

⁴² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 12.

⁴³ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 13.

⁴⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 13.

⁴⁵ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 13.

⁴⁶ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 13–14.

⁴⁷ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 14.

stance that when Christ initially entered into the covenant with the Father to fulfill the covenant of grace, he willingly assumed the roles of mediator and surety for this covenant.⁴⁸ When scrutinizing the covenant of redemption, Keach rejected any notion suggesting that Christ is merely a participant in the covenant. He affirmed God's entry into a covenant of grace with believers, without Christ being the primary covenanting party on their behalf, is faulty assertion.⁴⁹ For Keach, there was one covenant of grace in which Christ is the "Mediator and Surety."⁵⁰

Significantly, Keach combined "Mediator and Surety." Keach considered the connection between Christ as mediator and surety when he stated, "Christ in the Covenant, First Articled with the Father, to be a Mediator, and in the Execution of the Covenant, actually discharges that Office, and the like, as a Surety."⁵¹ Keach elaborated on Christ's role as surety when he said, "He must accept and freely and readily agree to

⁴⁸ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 14.

⁴⁹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 14.

⁵⁰ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 14.

⁵¹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 15. Arnold acknowledges Keach's theological deftness as he considers Christ's role as mediator and surety. As mediator, Christ makes the covenant with God the Father and as surety, Christ seals the covenant by executing it on our behalf. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 133. Keach spoke elsewhere of Christ as mediator and surety, but did so by referring to Christ's role in the covenant of redemption! He did not critique the covenant of redemption in this instance, but acknowledged Christ's role within the covenant: "According to that glorious Compact or Covenant of Redemption made between him and the Father before the World began, upon the account of his blessed Undertaking as a Mediator and Surety, that so he might impart all those purchased Blessings and Privileges to all who believe in him, or were given to him by the Father." Benjamin Keach, *Light Broke Forth in Wales, Expelling Darkness, or, The Englishman's Love to the Antient Britains [sic] Being an Answer to a Book, Intituled [sic] Children's Baptism from Heaven, Published in the Welsh Tongue by Mr. James Owen* (London: William Marshall, 1696), 48–49. This work was published as a rebuttal against infant baptism in 1696, three years after *The Everlasting Covenant* was published in 1693. Conversely, in *A Golden Mine Opened*, Keach spoke only of the covenant of grace with no mention of the covenant of redemption. He stated that the covenant of grace was made "between God in the Person of the Father, and Man in the Person of Christ. Our Lord Jesus was constituted in this Covenant, the great Head, Representative, and blessed Surety, for and in behalf of all the Father gave unto him." Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 202. In this covenant of grace context, Keach acknowledged Christ's role as mediator and surety, for God put his people "into Christ's Hand as their great Sponsor, Mediator and Surety; and that before the World began, in that Covenant and Blessed Compact the Father and Son entered into, in order to the Eternal Salvation of all his Saints." Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 274. Consequently, this theme of Christ as mediator and surety appears most often in the Keachean corpus as part of the covenantal context.

do all that is necessary to be done which the Creditor requires, and the Nature of the said Covenant calls for: yea, and some things that peculiarly belong to him, as Surety.”⁵²

Christ as mediator and surety represents an important theme within Puritan theology. The first Puritan to espouse this phrase was William Perkins.⁵³ In Perkins’s *Exposition of the Apostles Creed*, he spoke about the difference between Christ’s passion and the sufferings of the martyrs. Perkins argued, “The passion of Christ is meritorious for us even before God, because he became our Mediatour and suretie in the covenant of grace.”⁵⁴ Perkins tied the phrase directly to covenant of grace. Arguably, the Puritan who popularize the phrase “mediator and surety” was another of Keach’s influences, John Owen (1616–1683).⁵⁵ The phrase appears prominently in his work *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*. In a discussion where Owen highlighted the difference between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, he argued that the covenant of grace “is of Grace, which wholly excludes Works.”⁵⁶ In addition, Owen contended that this covenant

⁵² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 14.

⁵³ As previously stated, Joel Beeke and Stephen Yuille affirm that William Perkins was the “Father of Puritanism.” Joel R. Beeke and J. Stephen Yuille, “Biographical Preface: William Perkins, the ‘Father of Puritanism’” In *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 1:xxxii. Therefore, it is the first time a Puritan has employed the phrase whenever Perkins affirms Christ as the mediator and surety. The first use comes from the example of Perkins’s *Exposition of the Apostles Creed*.

⁵⁴ William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbole or Creed of the Apostles According to the Tenour of the Scriptures, and the Consent of Orthodoxe Fathers of the Church*. By William Perkins (London: John Legatt, 1595), 178. This phrase is also found in Perkins’s reprint of *An Exposition of the Apostles Creed* which is located in his popular work, William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine: Or The Description of Theologie Containing the Order of the Causes of Saluation and Damnation, According to Gods Word. A View Whereof Is to Be Seene in the Table Annexed. Hereunto Is Adioyned the Order Which M. Theodore Beza Vsed in Comforting Afflicted Consciences* (London: John Legat, 1600), 297.

⁵⁵ John Owen was an independent minister in London, England. He was born in Stadham, Oxfordshire. Owen was appointed dean of Christ at Oxford in 1651 and vice-chancellor of Oxford University eight months later. Owen was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from Oxford University in 1653. Despite the Coventicle Act (1644), Owen still held services in his home and was indicted for it. Richard L. Greaves, “Owen, John,” *ODNB*. For more information see *MTP*, 455–63.

⁵⁶ John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated* (London, 1677), 398.

differs because it “hath a Mediator and Surety.”⁵⁷ Owen elaborated on Christ as mediator and surety when he stated,

That what we cannot do in our selves which was originally required of us, and what the Law of the first Covenant cannot enable us to perform, that should be performed for us, by our Mediator and Surety. And if this be not included in the very first notion of a Mediator and Surety, yet it is in that of a Mediator or Surety that doth voluntarily interpose himself upon an open acknowledgment, that those for whom he undertakes, were utterly insufficient to perform what was required of them.⁵⁸

Reflecting on Owen’s use of the phrase “mediator and surety” in *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, Joel Beeke and Mark Jones note, “In the covenant of grace, Jesus Christ fulfills that role of mediator and surety inasmuch as He is the principal subject of this covenant. As the surety (i.e., guarantor) of the covenant, Christ undertook, in obedience to God, to perform the terms of the covenant on man’s behalf, and Christ accomplished it in His own person.”⁵⁹

The fifth objection states, “Christ performed his Part in the Covenant of Redemption: and by vertue of his Mediatory Covenant, performed the Covenant of Works, but he did confirm, not perform, the Covenant of Grace.”⁶⁰ Keach unequivocally

⁵⁷ Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 398.

⁵⁸ Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 398. See also Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 275, 310, 398, 399; John Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews Viz, on the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Chapters: Wherein Together with the Explication of the Text and Context, the Priesthood of Christ . . . Are Declared, Explained and Confirmed: As Also, the Pleas of the Jews for the Continuance and Perpetuity of Their Legal Worship, with the Doctrine of the Principal Writers of the Socinians about These Things, Are Examined and Disproved* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1680), 217, 226, 257, 261, 264, 266; John Owen, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ or The Mystery of the Gospell Vindicated, and Socinianisme Examined, in the Consideration, and Confutation of a Catechisme, Called A Scripture Catechisme, Written by J. Biddle M.A. and the Catechisme of Valentinus Smalcus, Commonly Called the Racovian Catechisme. With the Vindication of the Testimonies of Scripture, Concerning the Deity and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, from the Perverse Expositions, and Interpretations of Them, by Hugo Grotius in His Annotations on the Bible. Also an Appendix, in Vindication of Some Things Formerly Written about the Death of Christ, & the Fruits Thereof, from the Animadversions of Mr R. B.* (Oxford: Tho. Robinson, 1655), 370, 513, 601, 625.

⁵⁹ Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 349, Kindle. Additionally, Arnold states, “Often, the two terms—mediator and surety—appeared inseparable and even somewhat synonymous as Keach consistently handled the two issues in tandem, relying heavily upon the phrase ‘mediator and surety’ much like Owen and numerous other Reformed divines.” Arnold articulates Keach’s understanding of how Christ role as mediator and surety relate: “Thus Christ as mediator ‘First Articled’ with God the Father in the making of the covenant, and as surety, Christ actually executed that covenant.” Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 133.

⁶⁰ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 15.

rejected this perspective, deeming it the worst of all and suggesting its tendency to promote Arminianism rather than uphold sound divinity.⁶¹ He contended that the covenant of grace, singular in its essence, was validated by Christ. Keach emphasized the indispensable role of Christ's work, asserting that all individuals are spiritually lifeless in sins and must receive a principle of spiritual life from Christ before they can live, act, or believe in him.⁶² Keach argued his case through rhetorical questions that elevate Christ's role in salvation:

Hath not he obtained Grace for us, to enable us to believe? Is not he the Author and Finisher of our Faith? Doth not he begin the good Work in us, and will he not perform it unto the end? . . . Is not Christ the Mediator? (as I have said before of Two) i. e. Is he not to bring us to God, as well as God to us? Who can remove that Enmity that is naturally in our Minds against God, Rom. 8.7. but he only? Why is Christ called a Quickening Spirit, and so full of Grace?⁶³

The sixth objection concerns the believers reward: "By the Covenant of Redemption, Christ could challenge his Reward upon his own Account; but in the Covenant of Grace, Believers have a Right to the Reward only upon the Account of Christ."⁶⁴ Keach responded to this objection in a Christocentric manner, asserting that believers in Christ have the right to claim Christ's reward.⁶⁵ Keach emphasized the distinction between Christ's merit as the Savior and believers' reception of his merits, asserting that Christ played a meritorious role in the covenant, while the saved partake in it freely through grace.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 15.

⁶² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 15.

⁶³ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 16. Keach utilized various titles for Christ to elevate Christ's work in salvation. The use of these titles highlights his *Tropologia* method discussed below.

⁶⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 18.

⁶⁵ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 19.

⁶⁶ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 19.

The seventh objection states, “The Mediatory Covenant respects others as well as Christ, viz. his Seed; and giving them Glory: but in the Covenant of Grace, the Promise respects only the Particular Person that believes, answering the Terms of the Covenant, &c.”⁶⁷ First, Keach highlighted the contradictions within the arguments of his objectors, asserting that they inadvertently concede their case by contradicting themselves regarding their initial objection. Keach underscored that believers are the ones involved in the application of the covenant of grace.⁶⁸ Following this line of reasoning, Keach asserted that the application of the covenant of grace occurs through Christ encompassing all his seed, as the Scriptures affirm him to be the mediator of the new covenant. He questioned the ability of anyone to fulfill the terms of this covenant without Christ executing his role as mediator and surety.⁶⁹

The eighth objection considers Christ’s role as testator and party: “Obj. 8. If the Covenant of Grace and that of Redemption were the same, then Christ should be both the Testator and a Party: A Testator maketh not a Will to bequeath Legacies to himself.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 19.

⁶⁸ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 19.

⁶⁹ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 19. When Keach used the phrase “Mediator and Surety,” he called this an office (singular). Suggesting this role to be a singular office communicated Keach’s view that these functions of Christ were inseparable. However, Keach addressed Christ as mediator and Christ as surety in separate sections of *Tropologia*. See Keach, *Tropologia*, 86, 91.

⁷⁰ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 19.

The concept of Christ as testator of the covenant of grace was not new in Puritan thought. Isaac Ambrose (1604–1664) spoke about Christ in this way. Ambrose was born in 1604 in Lancashire to a vicar. In 1640, he was chosen to be the vicar of Preston in Amounderness. Some have said that “Ambrose was a Christ-centered and warmly experiential author.” *MTP*, 33–37. In his work *Looking onto Jesus*, Ambrose wrote,

Christ is the Testator of the covenant: He dyed to this very end, that he might confirm the covenant, Where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator, for a Testament is of force, after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all, whiles the Testator liveth. Christ then must dye, and Christs blood must be shed, to seal the covenant of grace; it is not every blood, but Christs blood that must seal the everlasting covenant, Heb. 13.20. And his blood being shed, he is then rightly called the Testator of the covenant. (Isaac Ambrose, *Looking unto Jesus a View of the Everlasting Gospel, or, the Souls Eying of Jesus as Carrying on the Great Work of Mans Salvation from First to Last* [London: Richard Chiswel, Benj. Tooke, and Thomas Sawbridge, 1680], 99)

Keach's answer to this objection focuses on Christ as the testator.⁷¹ However, Keach emphasized the distinctions between ordinary testators and Christ, the testator, pointing out several disparities in the "Testatorship of Christ."⁷² Firstly, while a testator cannot witness their own will and testament, Christ, according to Keach, is appointed by the Father as a witness to the people for all the gospel or covenant blessings, serving as a testator of his own last will and testament given to all believers.⁷³ Secondly, a testator cannot enjoy their own estate, yet Christ, identified as the spiritual testator by Keach, shares in the same glory and blessed inheritance himself, being a coheir and destined to possess it with believers.⁷⁴ Lastly, Keach noted that a human testator cannot see their own will executed but leaves it to others to be executors. In contrast, Christ, through his Spirit, observes his will being executed, for although he was once dead, he is now alive and lives forevermore.⁷⁵ Countering all eight objections to his proposition, that the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace are one covenant, Keach sought to remedy each objection with a focus on the person and work of Christ. Therefore, Keach's Christ-centered approach is amplified in this sermon through his rebuttals.

⁷¹ In his other writings (with the exception of Keach's sermons which will be analyzed throughout) Keach focused on Christ in his role as testator. For example, Keach wrote hymns dedicated to this topic. One hymn, titled "Christ the glorious Testator," says, "Lord Christ, thou the Testator art Of the New Testament." Keach, *Spiritual Melody*, 53. Additionally, in a polemical work against paedobaptism, Keach referenced that Israel in the old covenant was cut off like branches but in the New Covenant "there is a new will made, a new and last Testament confirmed, and ratified by the Death of the *Testatour* Jesus Christ, and the fleshly Seed as such have no such legacy, left them as in the Old Testament, viz. to be Members of the New Testament Church, that running to none but to such who believe." Benjamin Keach, *A Counter-Antidote, to Purge out the Malignant Effects of a Late Counterfeit, Prepared by Mr. Gyles Shute . . . Being an Answer to His Vindication of His Pretended Antidote to Prevent the Prevalency of Anabaptism, Shewing That Mr. Hercules Collins's Reply to the Said Author Remains Unanswered: Wherein the Baptism of Believers Is Evinced to Be God's Ordinance, and the Baptized Congregations Proved True Churches of Jesus Christ: With a Further Detection of the Error of Pedo-Baptism: To Which Is Added, An Answer to Mr. Shute's Reply to Mr. Collins's Half* (London: H. Bernard, 1694), 39.

⁷² Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 20.

⁷³ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 20.

⁷⁴ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 20.

⁷⁵ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 20.

***Tropologia* Method of Preaching Christ**

Keach utilized his *Tropologia* methodology to preach Christ in this series. When considering the titles Keach ascribed to Christ in the above text, four are noteworthy: mediator, surety, head, and testator. First, Keach considered Christ as mediator. Significantly, Keach listed this title for Christ as the first of the “Metaphors, Allegories, Similes, Types, and other borrowed Terms Respecting The Lord Jesus Christ” in *Tropologia*.⁷⁶ There is no indication that Keach positioned this title first due to its prominence, yet as will be seen throughout Keach’s sermons, this is one of his favored titles for Christ. When explaining the term, Keach referred to his typological approach, “The Term is applied to Moses typically, Deut 5. 4, 5. With Gal. 3.19. but really and antitypically to Jesus Christ, Heb. 12. 24. Col. 1. 20. Rom. 5. 10, 11. 1 John 2. 1.”⁷⁷

Second, he affirmed Christ as surety. In *Tropologia*, Keach defined surety as “a Surety, is one that undertakes for another, wherein he is defective really, or in Reputation; in Latin, Sponsor, Fidejussor.”⁷⁸ Keach elaborated, “A Surety is properly one that engages to make satisfaction for another.”⁷⁹ For example, when noting the parallel between human surety and Christ’s surety, Keach asserted that, with human surety, “if the Party he engages for be not able to satisfy, or give full Compensation to the Creditor,

⁷⁶ Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Tropologia, or, A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors the First Book Containing Sacred Philology, or the Tropes in Scripture, Reduc’d under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each / Partly Translated and Partly Compil’d from the Works of the Learned by T.D. The Second and Third Books Containing a Practical Improvement (Parallel-Wise) of Several of the Most Frequent and Useful Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes of the Old and New Testament* (London: Enoch Prosser, 1681), 2:86.

⁷⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:86. Keach further developed Christ as a type of Moses in *Moses’s Vail Removed; or A Treatise of Types* within *Tropologia*. Keach asserted that Moses was a type of Christ in his person, office and function, faithfulness, as a law deliverer, and in his actions. See Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:417–18.

⁷⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:91. This definition was derived from John Owen, who stated,

A Surety, is one that undertaketh for another wherein he is defective really or in Reputation. Whatever that undertaking be, whether in Words of Promise, or in depositing of real security in the hands of an Arbitrator, or by any other Personal engagement of Life and Body, it respects the defect of the Person for whom any one becomes a Surety Such an one is sponsor or fidejussor in all good Authors and common use of speech. (John Owen, *A Continuation*, 221)

⁷⁹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:91.

pays the Debt himself; for in the sense of Law he is one with the principal.”⁸⁰ Similarly, with Christ’s surety,

Christ seeing how unable we were to make Satisfaction according to the Demands of Law, made a full Compensation, and laid down a valuable Price, satisfactory to Law and Justice; for he bore the Punishment due to us for our Sins. First, he endured Death, and the Curse of the Law; he died, and was made a Curse for us. Secondly, he bore or sustained the Wrath of God, being under a deprivation of the Light of his Countenance.⁸¹

Third, Keach extolled Christ as head. Keach began this section in *Tropologia* by stating, “The Son of God is very often in the holy Scriptures called an Head.”⁸² Following his initial statement, he considered the ways in which Christ is head: he is head of the angels, the human race, the powers of this world, the “Gospel-Building,” and “the Body, the Church.”⁸³ For the first three titles, Keach did not speak specifically about their parallel or disparity to Christ, as he did in *Tropologia*.

However, when Keach spoke of Christ as testator, he considered the disparity between Christ and a human testator. In *Tropologia*, Keach elucidated the connection between the testator and the testimony, articulating that a testament is the declaration of one’s will and what they desire to be done after death. It is named a testament because it serves as a testimony of the individual’s mind, becoming effective only upon the death of the testator.⁸⁴ Keach drew a parallel between this example and the work of Christ, emphasizing that the New Testament or gospel law is ratified through the death of Christ.⁸⁵ Also, in this sermon, Keach underscored the differences, noting several

⁸⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:93.

⁸¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:93.

⁸² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:185.

⁸³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:185.

⁸⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:119.

⁸⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:119.

disparities between ordinary testators and the unique “Testatorship of Christ.”⁸⁶ In *Tropologia*, Keach referenced six disparities, but in this sermon he focused on three. The three disparities common to both works are: A testator cannot be a witness to his own will, cannot enjoy his estate after his death, and the testator must leave others execute his will.⁸⁷

Furthermore, Keach utilized typology with reference to David: “For none can doubt, but David was a Type of Christ, and so represented in my Text; the Covenant here spoken of, is that they call the Covenant of Grace, and tho’ it was Primarily made with the True David.”⁸⁸ Typology is a significant part of the *Tropologia* method. David was a type of Christ in his person, as a king, as a man after God’s heart, as the head of nations, as a prophet, etc.⁸⁹ Significantly, though Keach spoke at similar lengths in *Tropologia* about the images in Scripture that reflect the work of the Father and the work of the Spirit, he chose to focus on the images of Christ as presented in *Tropologia*, thus revealing Keach’s Christ-centered emphasis in this sermon.

The Display of Glorious Grace (Isa 54:10)

“I must confess, divers Worthy and Learned Men have wrote most excellently upon the Covenant of Grace, yet perhaps hardly any in the Method here used, nor under the Notions of a Covenant of Peace.”⁹⁰ In this fourteen-part sermon series, Keach sought

⁸⁶ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 20.

⁸⁷ See Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 20; Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:122.

⁸⁸ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 11.

⁸⁹ See Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:418–19.

⁹⁰ Benjamin Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, iv. Keach was not the only Puritan writer to speak about a covenant of peace and connect it with the covenant of grace. For example, Matthew Poole, in his *Annotations*, connected the covenant of peace with the new covenant, stating, “The sense of the place is, That God will not cast off his Christian Church, as he did cast off the Church of the Jews; and that the New Covenant is established upon better and surer Promises than the Old, as is observed Heb. 8.6, 7, &c.” Poole, *Annotations*, 1: Isaiah Chap LIV. Moreover, when preaching on reconciliation and peace from 2 Corinthians 5:19–20, Jeremiah Burroughs highlighted the need for the covenant of peace: “It is the glory of the Covenant of Life, to be a Covenant of Peace. Peace, it is a most amiable thing; But Peace with God, how lovely, and amiable, and glorious is it?” Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Reconciliation, or, Christ’s*

to preach something old in a new way. The focus of this series, as Keach stated, was the covenant of grace. Yet, Keach called this covenant a “Covenant of Peace.”⁹¹ Rather than seeking to “make the Covenant of Redemption, a distinct Covenant from that of Peace and Reconciliation,”⁹² as other men did, Keach recognized only two covenants, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.

Sermon I is a paradigm for Keach’s method: the stated purpose or design of the text, the doctrine, points derived from that doctrine, and application. Keach outlined the main purpose for the series: “I have promised some Brethren to Enter upon the Great Subject of Peace: Not to Treat of Peace with Men, but Peace with GOD: not National Peace, but Spiritual Peace.”⁹³ Walker contextualizes this emphasis on peace when he indicates that Keach was “preaching at a time when peace in Europe was uppermost in the mind of the nation.”⁹⁴ Rather than preaching on national peace, which may not last, Keach preached on the “peace that God had promised in the Gospel.”⁹⁵

Trumpet of Peace to the World Wherein Is Shewed (besides Many Other Gospel Truth) . . . That There Was a Breach Made between God and Man . . . to Which Is Added Two Sermons (London: Peter Cole, 1657), 38. Therefore, the new method does not refer to the “Covenant of Peace” terminology or even Keach’s twofold covenantal structure, rather, as Arnold suggests, Keach innovatively used the analogies of two warring parties and two traders which moved “those analogies to the forefront of the discussion utilizing them as organizing features.” Additionally, Arnold suggests, Keach’s emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit “made his covenantal system overtly trinitarian, a stance which separated Keach’s view from that of the major Reformed confessions of his day and from that of most other divines.” Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 142.

⁹¹ Arnold notes the numerous names Keach uses for the covenant of grace, stating, “The new covenant, called the ‘covenant of grace’, the ‘covenant of redemption’, the ‘gospel covenant’, the ‘covenant of peace’, or the ‘covenant of reconciliation.’” Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 124.

⁹² Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, iv.

⁹³ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 1.

⁹⁴ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 252. In his footnote on this page, Walker states, “Keach is probably referring to the Treaty of Ryswick signed by France, United Provinces, England and Spain and the Emperor in 1697. It is also interesting to note that he is still awaiting the seven last plagues of Revelation and the fall of Babylon but is content to wait and see what is produced by divine providence as 1700 approaches.” Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 252fn8.

⁹⁵ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 252.

Keach sought to preach a single point of doctrine through the entire series (except *Sermon XII* and *XIII* where no doctrine is stated).⁹⁶ The doctrine is: “That there is a Covenant of Peace made or agreed upon, and it stands firm in behalf of all Gods Elect.”⁹⁷ Subsequent to stating the doctrine Keach stated the *Sermon I*’s outline:

In the speaking unto this Proposition, I shall take this Method following, viz.
1. Lay down eight Explanatory Propositions by way of Premise. 2. I shall endeavour to open the main or chief Transactions about the bringing in, and establish-of this Covenant of Peace. 3. I shall open the Nature of this Covenant of Peace. 4. I shall shew you what is contained, granted or given in this Covenant. 5. Shew the Nature of the Peace comprehended in this Covenant. 6. Apply it.⁹⁸

Each sermon within the series has its own independent structure, yet they follow a similar pattern of stated doctrine, points derived from the doctrine, and application.

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

Keach stated his purpose in preaching is to “utterly abase the Creature” and thus, show them their need for grace found through redemption in Christ.⁹⁹ The abasement of the creature is achieved when reflecting upon the covenant of works and the grace offered to the sinner is found in the covenant of peace. This relates to Keach’s Sin-Salvation method. The covenant of works shows the individual their sin, the covenant of grace brings about salvation in Christ. Therefore, Keach’s initial inroad to preaching Christ in this series centered around his twofold covenant structure. Keach began by stressing the fall of man, stating, “Proposit. I. That God foresaw from Eternity, that Man would fall from that happy and blessed State in which he was Created; and that a fearful

⁹⁶ For Keach to only raise one point of doctrine throughout a fourteen-part sermon series was unusual. Normally, Keach cited numerous doctrines throughout individual sermons and within sermon series.

⁹⁷ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 9.

⁹⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 9.

⁹⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, v.

Breach would arise betwixt himself and Mankind.”¹⁰⁰ This fall reveals the breach of the covenant of works and underscores the necessity for the covenant of peace. Without this circumstance, there would be no reason for God to establish a covenant of peace with his Son on behalf of man. The absence of a foreseen conflict eliminates the need for a covenant of peace and reconciliation.¹⁰¹

Keach mentioned the covenant of works in Proposition IV. The breach of this covenant showed the need for the covenant of peace and thus the need for Christ’s redemption. Keach spoke about the breach, stating,

That the Breach betwixt God and Man, was occasioned by the violation of the First Covenant which God entered into with *Adam*, as the Common or Publick Head and Representative of all Mankind; which Covenant was a Covenant of Works; I say, God gave a Law, or entered into a Covenant of Works with the First *Adam* and his Seed, and in that Covenant he gave himself to be our God, even upon the strict and severe condition of *perfect Obedience*, personally to be performed by Man himself, with that Divine Threatning of Death and Wrath if he broke the Covenant.¹⁰²

These words concerning the covenant of works highlight Keach’s definition of that covenant.

Keach acknowledged that God forms a law agreement with Moses, he deemed this a repetition of the initial covenant of works formed with Adam. He concluded, “Tho’ evident it is that God afterwards more clearly and formally repeated this Law of Works to the People of *Israel*, it being written into Two Tables of Stone, tho’ not given in that Ministration of it for Life.”¹⁰³ Keach then referenced Galatians 3:19 to demonstrate that “Paul frequently called the Old Covenant, the Covenant of Works.”¹⁰⁴ Keach believed the covenant of works served to display man’s total inability to fulfill righteousness “so that

¹⁰⁰ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 9–10.

¹⁰² Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 14.

¹⁰³ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 15.

Law, together with the Types and Sacrifices, might be a Schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.” Therefore, the covenant of works’ purpose was to lead us to Christ and, ultimately, his covenant of peace.¹⁰⁵

In Proposition VII, Keach defined the covenant of peace: “Proposition VII. And from hence it appeareth, That the Covenant of Peace is the Covenant of Grace.”¹⁰⁶ Keach exchanged the more common word “grace” for his own term “peace.” In respect to Christ, the covenant of peace designates him “as our Mediator, Head and Surety.” It is a covenant only received “upon the Condition of His Merits,” not the merits of his elect. Yet, “as to the Design, End and Purpose of it, in respect of us, it was only an act of Pure Grace.” Therefore, the benefits of this covenant belong to the people of God, who were given “the Free Grace of God the Father to vouchsafe us a Substitute, a Saviour, a Mediator of this Peace.”¹⁰⁷

God’s people derive benefits from the covenant, yet Keach regarded it fundamentally as an agreement between the Father and the Son. The free grace of God led the Son to commit to the Father and enter into this covenant for the sake of making

¹⁰⁵ *The Articles of Faith*, which Keach composed for his Horsley-down congregation, state that the covenant of works was “not given for Life, but to make Sin exceeding sinful, and to shew how unable Man was in his fallen state to fulfil the Righteousness of God; and so (with the Ceremonial Law) it was given in subserviency to the Gospel, as a Schoolmaster to bring Sinners to Christ.” Keach, *The Articles*, 30. Therefore, the covenant’s purpose was Christocentric in that it led the sinner to Christ. Furthermore, *The Second London Confession of Faith* (which Keach signed in 1689), addresses the interaction between the covenant of works and covenant of grace, stating, “Moreover *Man* having brought himself under the *curse* of the Law by his fall, it pleased the *Lord* to make a *Covenant of Grace* wherein he freely offereth unto *Sinners*, Life and Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, requiring of them Faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal Life, his holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.” *A Confession of Faith Put Forth by the Elders and Brethren of Many Congregations of Christians (Baptized upon Profession of Their Faith) in London and the Country*. (London, 1677), 26–27. *The Second London Confession* was first composed in 1677 “by William Collins (d. 1702) and Nehemiah Coxe (d. 1689), co-pastors of the Petty France Church in London.” Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach*, 61–62. Keach later signed the Confession along with representatives of “upwards of one Hundred Baptized Congregations in England and Wales.” See *1699 London Confession*, i.

¹⁰⁶ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 20. Keach used the title mediator as a key expression of Christ’s role in the new covenant in *The Articles of Faith*, under the heading “Of the New and Second Covenant.” Keach addressed “the Covenant of Grace,” stating that it “was primarily made with the second Adam, and in him with all the Elect, who as God-man, or Mediator, was set up from everlasting as a Common Person.” Keach, *The Articles of Faith*, 31.

peace. The mutual glory of both Persons radiates equally. They are the architects of this agreement.¹⁰⁸ As for the timing of this agreement, Keach asserted that the free and rich grace of God in this covenant deserves adoration. Its ultimate purpose is not based on human works but on his own purpose and grace in Christ before the world began.¹⁰⁹ After discussing the nature of the two covenants, Keach turned to the one who is head of that covenant, Christ. Keach depicted Christ through the use of vivid imagery: Christ as messenger, mediator, priest, king, prophet, and surety.

First, Christ as messenger is a theme depicted in *Sermon II*. Keach noted the sermon's purpose, stating, "I shall endeavour to open the main or chief transactions about the bringing in this Covenant of Peace."¹¹⁰ In presenting the main transaction, Keach initially affirmed Christ's role in the covenant as a messenger. He acknowledged that Christ is referred to as the messenger of the covenant, a role in which believers find delight. Christ is the delegate, messenger, or trustee, and this office and power were delegated to him by the Father.¹¹¹ Keach justified his claim, emphasizing that believers should understand this as denoting Christ's work and office. He highlighted Christ's free and voluntary condescension to undertake the position as messenger.¹¹² Christ's role as a messenger, according to Keach, signifies his position as the great trustee, ambassador,

¹⁰⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 20–21.

¹¹⁰ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 23. In the context of the new covenant, John Bunyan spoke about two offices. The first is related to Christ as surety. The second is regarding Christ as messenger. He stated: "But secondly, in the next place, after that Jesus Christ had stood bound, and was become our surety in things pertaining to this Covenant, his next office was to be the messenger of God touching his Mind, and the tenour of the Covenant, unto the poor world." Later in his exposition, he concluded, "Thus have I spoken something concerning Christ, being the messenger of the New Covenant." John Bunyan, *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded, or, A Discourse Touching the Law and Grace the Nature of the One and the Nature of the Other, Shewing What They Are as They Are the Two Covenants . . . Wherein for the Better Understanding of the Reader There Is Several Questions Answered Touching the Law and Grace . . . : Also Several Titles Set over the Several Truths Contained in This Book, for Thy Sooner Finding of Them, Which Are Those Following the Epistle* (London: Nath. Ponder, 1685), 128, 134.

¹¹¹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 24–25.

¹¹² Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 25.

and plenipotentiary for believers.¹¹³ He serves as their representative to negotiate with the Father in eternity, establishing the terms of their peace. Keach described Christ as the messenger who published good news of the peace contained in this covenant.¹¹⁴

Second, Christ as mediator is the key theme in *Sermon II*.¹¹⁵ Keach used human treaties as his entry point into the discussion: “Commonly in all Treaties, or Covenants of Peace amongst Men, there is a Mediator chosen.”¹¹⁶ Consistent with his emphasis, Keach proposed that the work of this mediator differs from the work and office of all other mediators. He argued that Christ is not merely a mediator of the covenant; he also serves as surety, messenger, and testator of the covenant.¹¹⁷ Keach defined a mediator as a middleman, a reconciler, and one who lays his hands on both parties,

¹¹³ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 25.

¹¹⁴ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 25.

¹¹⁵ Keach spoke often about Christ as mediator throughout this sermon series. For example, he showed the reader “what a mediator signifies.” He stressed that “A Mediator must be of a yielding and condescending Spirit, one that can comply with each Party, not Self-will’d, nor seeking his own Honour.” He stated, “A Mediator is not only to bring one Party to Terms of Peace, but to reconcile both Parties if possible.” Moreover, Keach reminded his readers that “A Mediator many times meets with great trouble, and Difficulties in undertaking to make Peace.” Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 45–54. Therefore, what is presented in this section is a summary of key aspects of Christ’s mediation. Furthermore, the theme of Christ’s meditation of the covenant permeates Keach’s works. For example, when defending baptism by immersion and arguing that baptism is a “Holy Ordinance of Baptism doth continue to the end of the World,” Keach stated, “Whatsoever is given forth by Jesus Christ, is given forth by him as he is King, and Mediator of the New Covenant, and as part of his last Will and Testament; and his last Will and Testament, I hope, all will grant stands in full force and virtue, and every Part and Branch of it unalterable to the end of the World.” Benjamin Keach, *Gold Refin’d, or, Baptism in Its Primitive Purity Proving Baptism in Water an Holy Institution of Jesus Christ . . . : Wherein It Is Clearly Evinced That Baptism . . . Is Immersion, or Dipping the Whole Body, &c: Also That Believers Are Only the True Subjects (and Not Infants) of That Holy Sacrament: Likewise Mr. Smythies Arguments for Infant-Baptism in His Late Book Entitled, The Non-Communicant . . . Fully Answered* (London: Nathaniel Crouch, 1689), 6–7. See also Benjamin Keach, *The Rector Rectified and Corrected, or, Infant-Baptism Unlawful Being a Sober Answer to a Late Pamphlet Entituled An Argumentative and Practical Discourse of Infant-Baptism, Published by Mr. William Burkit, Rector of Mildin in Suffolk: Wherein All His Arguments for Pedo-Baptism Are Refuted and the Necessity of Immersion, i.e. Dipping, Is Evidenced, and the People Falsly Called Anabaptists Are Cleared from Those Unjust Reproaches and Calumnies Cast upon Them: Together with a Reply to the Athenian Gazette Added to Their 5th Volume about Infant-Baptism: With Some Remarks upon Mr. John Flavel’s Last Book in Answer to Mr. Philip Cary* (London: John Harris, 1692), 50–53; Benjamin Keach, *The Counterfeit Christian, or, The Danger of Hypocrisy Opened in Two Sermons: Containing an Exposition of That Parabolical Speech of Our Blessed Saviour, Matth. XII, 43, 44, 45* (London: John Pike, 1691), 36–37.

¹¹⁶ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 33.

¹¹⁷ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 33.

reconciling them. He exclaimed, “Jesus Christ is a middle Person, and fit every ways to be a Mediator betwixt God and Man.”¹¹⁸

Keach recognized that Christ’s role as mediator is “not barely to see our Peace made . . . but the whole Work of making Peace is solely committed to our Lord Jesus Christ, not to see others do it, but he himself doth it all.”¹¹⁹ Keach stated that God provided one way of peace and that is through Christ, the mediator.¹²⁰ Christ is the only way for peace with God because the breach between God and man is so significant, “There could be no other way, as we can conceive, because the breach that was between God and us, must be made up by a full satisfaction to the Law and Justice of God, God being Just as well as Gracious; and hence one end why Christ was made a propitiation through Faith in his blood [*sic*].”¹²¹

Keach asserted that for genuine mediation to occur, the mediator must possess not only the knowledge of how to achieve it, but also the ability to satisfy all of God’s requirements.¹²² Christ is the only one capable of meeting these demands with his nature as both God and Man.¹²³ Being equal with God, Christ knew everything concerning his Father’s will.¹²⁴ Christ the mediator must be God

because those Evils which he was to expiate, could never be taken away by any Person that was not God . . . otherwise he could not sustain, or bear in his Body and Soul that great weight of Sin and Wrath laid upon him . . . otherwise his Suffering, or the purchase of his Blood could not have merited all that Grace and Glory for all

¹¹⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 45.

¹¹⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 34.

¹²⁰ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 34. Additionally, Keach stated, “There is no other way of Peace with God, and therefore a Necessity of Christ’s Mediation; because *without the shedding of Blood, there is no Remission*; no Pardon, and so no Peace; there could be no discharge from the guilt of Sin, no removal of the Punishment of Sin, nor any Purgation from the filth and pollution thereof, without the Blood of Christ be shed.” Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 37.

¹²¹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 35.

¹²² Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 38.

¹²³ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 38.

¹²⁴ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 39.

God's Elect . . . otherwise he could not have subdued, and overcome all his and our Enemies . . . he was obliged to quicken all God's Elect, (who in the *first Adam were dead in Sins and Trespases*) and raise them from that Spiritual Death, and overcome the Power of Sin and *Satan* in them, as well as for them.¹²⁵

Christ, being man, "could not but sympathize with the poor Creature; and as being God he did not only know all our Wants, but he is able also to supply them."¹²⁶ Christ the mediator as man

Must work out a Righteousness in the same Nature that had sined . . . he must die; now God as God (I mean the Godhead) could not die; Man must die to satisfie offended Justice for the Breach of the Law; therefore Christ must be Man and die . . . He must be one with us, or else how could his Obedience be imputed to us? For as our Sins was imputed to him, so his Righteousness is imputed to us . . . He must be Man, that he might be a Merciful High-Priest, being touched with the feeling of our Infirmary, he must have access to both, he was to deal with God for Man, and for God with Man . . . that we might find a Fountain of Holiness in our Nature, God hath poured out upon his Humane [*sic*] Nature, such a measure of Holiness, that he might be a common Fountain to all the Elect . . . give us a Pledge of that Tenderness of his Love and Compassion towards us.¹²⁷

Therefore, Keach declared, "the Spring or Foundation of our Happiness riseth from the Hypostatical Union of the two Natures in the Person of Christ."¹²⁸ Keach recognized that believers could never have been united to God without the hypostatic union of human and divine nature in Christ's Person.¹²⁹

Third, Keach proclaimed Christ as priest, king and prophet. Keach associated Christ's threefold office with his role as mediator. He asked, "Question. What Offices doth Jesus Christ exercise as he is Mediator."¹³⁰ Keach answered, "Divines generally assert, That he exerciseth a threefold Office, and this every one ought to know, and also the Work of Christ in respect had unto each Office, or what peculiarly relates to his

¹²⁵ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 39–41.

¹²⁶ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 39.

¹²⁷ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 41–44.

¹²⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 44.

¹²⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 44.

¹³⁰ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 66.

Priestly Office, and what to his Kingly Office, and what to his Prophetical Office, &c.”¹³¹ Furthermore, *The Articles of Faith* for Keach’s Horsley-down congregation, highlight the link between Christ as mediator and his offices: “We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer, and the one blessed Mediator between God and Man, executeth a threefold Office, both the Office of a Priest, the Office of a King, and the Office of a Prophet.”¹³² Similarly, John Owen believed Christ’s threefold office to be a function of

¹³¹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 66–67. Many notable divines who influenced Keach recognized the significance of Christ’s threefold office. For example, Thomas Manton (1620–1677), when preaching on Christ’s role as mediator, stressed how Christ functioned as mediator with respect to his threefold office: “For he that would be Mediator, was to be Prophet, Priest and King.” Manton continued to state that as prophet Christ is the “Arbiter,” as priest he is the “Intercessor,” and as king he has all “power.” Thomas Manton, *A Second Volume of Sermons Preached by the Late Reverend and Learned Thomas Manton in Two Parts: The First Containing XXVII Sermons on the Twenty Fifth Chapter of St. Matthew, XLV on the Seventeenth Chapter of St. John, and XXIV on the Sixth Chapter of the Epistle of the Romans: Part II, Containing XLV Sermons on the Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and XL on the Fifth Chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: With Alphabetical Tables to Each Chapter, of the Principal Matters Therein Contained* (London: Printed by J. Astwood for Jonathan Robinson, 1684), 60. Elsewhere, Manton preached with regard to the connection between Christ as mediator and his threefold office: “Consider his Work, and so he ought to be God: The Work of the Mediator could be dispatched by no inferiour Agent. Consider the Mediator in all his Offices, as Prophet, Priest and King.” Manton continued by describing Christ’s role as prophet, priest, and king. Thomas Manton, *A Fourth Volume Containing One Hundred and Fifty Sermons on Several Texts of Scripture in Two Parts: Part the First Containing LXXIV Sermons: Part the Second Containing LXXVI Sermons: With an Alphabetical Table to the Whole* (London: Printed by J. D. and are to be sold by Jonathon Robinson, 1693), 152–52.

William Ames preached fifty-two “lectures on chosen texts of Scripture, for each Lord’s-day of the year.” In the twelfth lecture he developed the following doctrine: “*Doct. I.* Our Saviour Jesus was ordained and constituted by the Father for the performing of all these things, that were necessary for our salvation.” In proof of the doctrine, Ames spoke of Christ as “the anointed Prophet . . . the anointed Priest . . . the anointed King,” giving three reasons for each assertion followed by three uses for application. William Ames, *The Substance of Christian Religion, or, A Plain and Easie Draught of the Christian Catechisme in LII Lectures on Chosen Texts of Scripture, for Each Lords-Day of the Year, Learnedly and Perspicuously Illustrated with Doctrines, Reasons, and Uses / by That Reverend and Worthy Laborer in the Lord’s Vineyard, William Ames* (London: Printed by T. Mabb for Thomas Davies, 1659), 84–86. Additionally, speaking “Of the office of Christ,” Ames stated, “The office it selfe to which Christ was called is threefold: Of a Prophet, of a Priest, of a King.” William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity Drawne out of the Holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters Thereof, and Brought into Method / by William Ames . . . ; Translated out of the Latine . . . ; Whereunto Are Annexed Certaine Tables Representing the Substance and Heads of All in a Short View . . . as Also a Table Opening the Hard Words Therein Contained* (London: Edward Griffin, 1642), 85–86.

See also, John Preston, *The Fulnesse of Christ for vs A Sermon Preached at the Court before King James of Blessed Memory. By Iohn Preston, Dr. in Divinity, Chaplaine in Ordinary to His Majestie, Master of Emmanuel Colledge in Cambridge, and Sometimes Preacher of Lincolnes Inne* (London: Printed by M. Parsons for John Stafford, dwelling in Blake-horse-Alley neere Fleetstreet, 1639), 4–7; Richard Sibbes, *Christs Exaltation Purchast by Humiliation Wherein You May See Mercy and Misery Meete Together. Very Vsefull I. For Instructing the Ignorant. II. For Comforting the Weake. III. For Confirming the Strong. By R. Sibbs D. D. and Preacher of Grayes-Inne* (London: Published by T. G. and P. N., 1639), 135–38; William Perkins, *The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered into Sixe Principles. And It Is to Bee Learned of Ignorant People, That They May Be Fit to Hear Sermons with Profit, and to Receiue the Lords Supper with Comfort* (London: Printed by Thomas Orwin, for John Porter, 1591), Exposition of Principles, III.

¹³² Keach, *The Articles of the Faith*, 9. The same statement may be found in Benjamin Keach, *A short confession of faith containing the substance of all the fundamental articles in the larger confession*

his mediation: “The Exercise of the Mediation of Christ, is confined unto the Limits of his Three-fold Office. Whatever he doth for the Church, he doth it as a Priest, or as a King, or as a Prophet.”¹³³

Christ is a priest and “as a Priest he is the Propitiation for our Sins.” Christ, as the propitiation for sins, discharged debts through his sacrificial offering, thereby extinguishing the flames of God’s wrath.¹³⁴ In his priestly work, he intercedes in heaven, ensuring that those for whom he sacrificed may receive the merits of his atonement. Keach recognized both dimensions of Christ’s priesthood, his earthly act of self-sacrifice and his ongoing intercessory role in heaven.¹³⁵ Acknowledging the importance of Christ’s heavenly intercession, Keach conceded that without it, the efficacy of Christ’s satisfaction and priesthood would be nullified because it is through his ongoing intercession that the merits of his sacrifice are applied to his people.¹³⁶

Keach intertwined Christ’s kingly role with his mediation, emphasizing that Christ has kingly authority in his capacity as mediator.¹³⁷ The extent of Christ’s power as king is significant, as he reigns over sin and death.¹³⁸ Moreover, Christ’s kingly office extends to subduing the elect, working grace in them, transforming their hearts, and

put forth by the elders of the Baptist churches, owning personal election and final perserverance (London: 1697), 9–10.

¹³³ John Owen, *Pneumatologia, or, A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit wherein an Account is Given of his Name, Nature, Personality, Dispensation, Operations, and Effects: His Whole Work in the Old and New Creation is Explained, the Doctrine Concerning it Vindicated from Oppositions and Pepproaches: The Nature also and Necessity of Gospel-Holiness the Difference between Grace and Morality, or a Spiritual Life unto God in Evangelical Obedience and a Course of Moral Vertues, are Stated and Declared* (London, 1676), 555. Keach referred to Owen a number of times in this work. See Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 86, 88, 203.

¹³⁴ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 67.

¹³⁵ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 67.

¹³⁶ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 68.

¹³⁷ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 69.

¹³⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 69.

conquering the power of sin.¹³⁹ While Christ imparts laws and statutes as a king, he has settled the debt of perfect obedience and the penal debt.¹⁴⁰ Finally, as king Christ will return to rule: “Christ as King, will exercise his Kingly Office, in taking to him his great Authority and Regal Power, and Reign over all the Earth.”¹⁴¹

Similar to the Christ’s role as priest and king, Keach subsumed Christ’s role as prophet within his role as mediator: “Christ as Mediator is a Prophet . . . He as Prophet, is the Minister of the New Covenant, or the chief and great Ambassador of Peace, the chief Shepherd of the Sheep, and *Bishop* of our Souls.”¹⁴² Christ’s primary role as prophet “*Is to reveal the Will, Purpose, Counsel, and Design of God unto his Chosen; and this he did in the Days of his Flesh in his own.*”¹⁴³ Keach delineated specific functions of Christ’s prophetic office. He clarified that while Christ’s role as a priest involves atoning for sins, and as a king involves issuing laws, his function as a prophet is characterized by the impartation of teachings, instructions, and the revelation of God.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 70.

¹⁴⁰ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 70.

¹⁴¹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 71.

¹⁴² Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 71.

¹⁴³ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 72.

¹⁴⁴ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 72. Owen noted a more detailed distinction between Christ’s offices when he stated,

Now as these Offices agree in all the general Ends of his Mediation, so they differ in their Acts, and immediate Objects. For their Acts it is plain, Sacerdotal, Regal, and Prophetical Acts and Duties, are of different Natures, as the Offices themselves are unto which they appertain. And for their Objects; the proper immediate Object of the Priestly Office is God himself, as is evident both from the Nature of the Office, and its proper Acts. For as to the Nature of the Office. Every Priest is taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining unto God, that he may Offer both Gifts and Sacrifices for sins, Heb. 5. 1. A Priest is one who is appointed to deal with God, in the behalf of them for whom he executes his Office. And the Acts of the Priestly Office of Christ are two; Oblation and Intercession, of both which God is the immediate Objects. He offered himself unto God, and with him he makes Intercession. But the immediate Object of Christ Kingly and Prophetical Offices are Men, or the Church. As a Priest he Acts with God in our Name and on our behalf; as a King and Prophet he Acts towards us in the Name and Authority of God. (Owen, *Pneumatologia*, 555–56)

Additionally, Keach utilized his discussion about the mediation of Christ as a means to thwart the false teachings of his day. The erroneous teaching suggested that “we fulfil the Gospel, and that our Obedience is the Condition of our Justification before God.” Keach named the teachers as, “Mr. Baxter, Mr. Williams, Mr. Clark of Wickham, and many others.” Subsequently, Keach refuted their teachings by reflecting upon Christ’s mediation:

Fourth, declared Christ to be the believers surety. Keach devoted *Sermon IV* entirely to the “Suretiship of Christ.”¹⁴⁵ Keach stated that “the Covenant of Peace so much dependeth upon the Suretiship of Christ.”¹⁴⁶ Concerning the covenant of works and suretyship,¹⁴⁷ Keach asserted that, even though Christ, as surety, was obligated to fulfill the covenant of works (perfect obedience), he did not act as the surety of the covenant of works. This distinction arises because Christ did not undertake that people should keep the Law perfectly themselves.¹⁴⁸ In other words, Christ as surety fulfilled the obedience of the Law in believers’ stead, but he was not ensuring their full obedience to the Law.

Keach defined surety as “one that undertakes for others, wherein they are defective, really, or in Reputation . . . one that engages to make Satisfaction for one, or

Christ did not come to engage, or undertake as a Mediator, that we should perfectly in our own Persons, keep the Moral Law, and so be Justified in God’s Sight; nor did he come to undertake that we should sincerely keep any other Law to that end; much less, leave us to the exercise of our Natural, or Spiritual Abilities, to keep such a Law, as the Condition of our Justification, and Acceptation with God; but he came to procure for us such a Righteousness by his own Obedience and Suffering, that the Holiness, Justice, and Law of God doth require of us if we are Justified with God. (Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 77–78)

¹⁴⁵ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 85.

¹⁴⁶ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 85. Keach was not alone in his desire to extol Christ as surety. This was a beloved Puritan theme. For example, Thomas Brooks (1608–1680) was an independent minister, who was probably born in the region of Sussex, England. In the year 1648–1651, Brooks established himself as a preacher at St. Thomas the Apostle, Queen Street. Tai Liu, “Brooks, Thomas,” *ODNB*. In his work, he presented a discourse on Christ as surety, stating, “Consider that all the sins of Believers were laid upon Christ their Surety, Heb. 7. 21, 22.” He gave the example of Judah who “became a Surety to Jacob for Benjamin” and concluded, “Herein he was a type of Christ (that came of him) who is both our Surety to God for the discharge of our debt and duty, and Gods Surety to us for the performance of his Promises.” Thomas Brooks, *A Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures, or, Several Great Points That Refer to the Saints Present Blessedness and Their Future Happiness, with the Resolution of Several Important Questions Here You Have Also the Active and Passive Obedience of Christ Vindicated and Improved . . . : You Have Farther Eleven Serious Singular Pleas, That All Sincere Christians May Safely and Groundedly Make to Those Ten Scriptures in the Old and New Testament, That Speak of the General Judgment, and of That Particular Judgment, That Must Certainly Pass upon Them All Immediately after Death* (London: Dorman Newman, 1675), 80–81. See also Thomas Brooks, *Paradice Opened, or, The Secrets, Mysteries, and Rarities of Divine Love, of Infinite Wisdom, and of Wonderful Counsel Laid Open to Publick View Also, the Covenant of Grace, and the High and Glorious Transactions of the Father and the Son in the Covenant of Redemption Opened and Improved at Large, with the Resolution of Divers Important Questions and Cases Concerning Both Covenants . . . : Being the Second and Last Part of The Golden Key* (London: Dorman Newman, 1675), 78–81.

¹⁴⁷ When quoting Keach, the spelling “Suretiship” will be used, but when reflecting on the concept outside of directly quoting Keach “Suretyship” will be used.

¹⁴⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 101.

more, or ingageth for others.”¹⁴⁹ Utilizing this definition, Keach claimed, “In this Sense we take Christ to be a Surety.”¹⁵⁰ He delineated the role of a surety as one who aids those with poor credit. In this context, Jesus functions solely as a surety for humanity unto God, not from God to humanity. God, being self-sufficient, requires no surety, having never failed any of his own.¹⁵¹ Keach underscored that the purpose of a surety is to give people stability and security. He posited that the covenant hinges on the “Suretiship of Jesus Christ.” God promised and covenanted with him, ensuring give his chosen people all his goodness eternally.¹⁵²

In human interactions, surety is a freely undertaken and voluntary act extended to the one in need. Keach conveys that, although God chose Jesus Christ to serve as the surety of this covenant for humanity, Christ, in a voluntary act, assumed that role.¹⁵³ The broken law imposed no obligation on Christ, nor was he naturally compelled to undertake it due to being the Son of God. Instead, his assumption of this role is entirely attributed to goodness.¹⁵⁴ Keach further contended that suretiship encompasses not only a voluntary obligation for others but also a union of parties for the undertaking of the conditions of that debtor. Consequently, by virtue of his suretiship, Christ not only bore humanity’s sins but also embraced their nature, placing himself in their legal position and adopting their condition.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Keach also stated, “A Surety is one that undertakes for one or more Persons whose Credit is gone, or is not good; one not to be Trusted, or whose Faithfulness, or Ability is suspected.” Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 86.

¹⁵⁰ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 86.

¹⁵¹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 88.

¹⁵² Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 88–89.

¹⁵³ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 89.

¹⁵⁴ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 89.

¹⁵⁵ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 90.

Finally, Keach established the relationship between “Surety and Mediation.”¹⁵⁶ He stressed that it was the Father who chose Christ “and Anointed him to be the Mediator and Surety of this Covenant.”¹⁵⁷ The covenant of peace consisted “of Christ’s Work, as Mediator and Surety therein.”¹⁵⁸ When summarizing his discussion on the role of Christ in the covenant of peace, Keach stated, “In such a Covenant, the Terms proposed are agreed unto by both Parties; so I have shewed you it was here; and also that the Mediator of the Covenant of Peace is Jesus Christ, who was also the Surety thereof; whose Work, both as he is Mediator and Surety, we have opened.”¹⁵⁹

Tropologia Method of Preaching Christ

As seen above, Keach depicted Christ through imagery: Christ as messenger, mediator, priest, king, prophet, and surety. All these depictions of Christ are located in *Tropologia*. The depiction of Christ as mediator, surety, and testator were already discussed in previous sermons under the *Tropologia* approach, therefore, the emphasis will be on the other images.

Christ as Messenger is discussed in *Tropologia* under the section “Christ an Ambassador.”¹⁶⁰ Keach noted the connection between messenger and ambassador, when he said, “The Words, Ambassador, Legate, or Messenger, are synonymous Terms.”¹⁶¹ In a comprehensive examination, Keach maintains that Christ assumes the role of one who not only initiates but also completes the work of redemption, reconciling God and man,

¹⁵⁶ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant*, 14.

¹⁵⁷ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 102.

¹⁵⁸ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 102.

¹⁵⁹ Keach, *The Display of Glorious Grace*, 108–109.

¹⁶⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:230. In order to keep uniformity and ensure an understanding of Keach phraseology, Keach’s rendering, “Ambassador,” will be used rather than modern nomenclature, “Ambassador.”

¹⁶¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:230.

who were previously his enemies.¹⁶² Keach draws a parallel between Christ and earthly ambassadors, Keach explored how this title connects with the covenant of grace, emphasizing that Christ was chosen and appointed messenger of the covenant by the “Determination, Counsel, Purpose, and Foreknowledg [*sic*] of the King of Heaven.”¹⁶³ In the seventh parallel, Keach described Christ as the manager of the covenant of grace. He affirmed that Christ was ordained God’s messenger, entrusted with the concerns and management of the covenant of grace.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, in the ninth parallel, Keach emphasized Christ’s deity as he mediates the covenant, stating that Christ, “the Messenger of the Covenant,” represents God.¹⁶⁵

Christ as priest¹⁶⁶ and all the other images in *The Display of Glorious Grace* are subsumed beneath Christ’s work as mediator. In the sermon, there are three activities of priesthood: mediation, intercession, and propitiation. In *Tropologia*, Keach presented Christ as the priest who mediates when he enters the holy of holies, “Christ entered into Heaven it self alone for us, as Mediator, through the Merit of his precious Blood, shed to make Atonement once for all, there to appear in the presence of God for us.”¹⁶⁷ Just as the high priest who bore the names of the tribes of his chest, so “The Lord Jesus, as our

¹⁶² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:230.

¹⁶³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:230.

¹⁶⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:230.

¹⁶⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:230.

¹⁶⁶ Rather than the normal distinction between “Metaphor” and “Parallel,” for Christ as priest, Keach made the distinction between “Type” and “Parallel.” Consequently, Keach developed Christ as a type of priest in general terms in this section. Later, in *Moses’s Vail Removed; Or A Treatise of Types*, Keach asserted Aaron and the high priest are types of Christ. See Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia: Tropes and Figures; or, A Treatise of the Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes, &c. Contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To Which Is Prefixed, Divers Arguments to Prove the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures Wherein Also ’tis Largely Evinced, That by the Great Whore, Mystery Babylon Is Meant the Papal Hierarchy, or Present State and Church of Rome. Philologia Sacra, the Second Part. Wherein the Schemes, or Figures in Scripture, Are Reduced under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each. Together with a Treatise of Types, Parables, &c. with an Improvement of Them Parallel-Wise* (London: John Darby, 1682) 4:421–23.

¹⁶⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:152.

High-Priest, presents or bears the Remembrances of all his faithful People upon his Heart, when he appears before God to make Intercession for them.”¹⁶⁸ Concerning Christ’s propitiation, “Christ is both the Priest and Sacrifice.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, Keach concluded with his “Corollaries” section, stating, “Hence we may learn, that without the Blood of Christ offered up as a propitiatory Sacrifice to God, there is no Remission of Sin, nor eternal Life.”¹⁷⁰

In *The Display of Glorious Grace*, Keach emphasized the power and authority of Christ as king. In *Tropologia*, Keach began his section on “Christ as King” with a reflection on his power. Keach stated that Christ “is advanced is the highest among the Sons of Men, Potentare, Son or Man of Power, King of Kings, &c.”¹⁷¹ He highlighted Christ’s power as evidenced by his governance of the world. Keach observed that Christ rules and governs so well that his worst enemies cannot charge him with evil.¹⁷² The definitive indication of his power lies in being recognized as the King of Kings who created his subjects, both angels and men. Keach encouraged readers to pray for the exercise of Christ’s great power and his reign.¹⁷³

In *Tropologia*, as in *The Display of Glorious Grace*, Keach noted the connection between Christ’s roles as prophet, priest, and king. Keach stated, “It is a common and received Principle amongst all that are truly godly, that Jesus, the Son of the Highest, stands in a capacity of King, and Priest, and Prophet to his Church.”¹⁷⁴ The focus in the sermon series is Christ’s teaching role as prophet. Similarly, in *Tropologia*,

¹⁶⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:150.

¹⁶⁹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:153.

¹⁷⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:154.

¹⁷¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:143.

¹⁷² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:144.

¹⁷³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:148.

¹⁷⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:157.

Keach spoke of Christ as “the Mouth of God who speaks forth his Mind and Will unto the Sons of Men.”¹⁷⁵ Keach highlighted that Christ did not speak of himself. Instead, the Word of God came to him, guiding his speech. As the prophetic representative of God, Christ surpassed all those who preceded him. His excellence was acknowledged by the people, who acclaimed him as a teacher sent from God.¹⁷⁶ Considering all the evidence, this sermon bears the marks of Keach’s Christ-centered *Tropologia* method.

Conclusion

Benjamin Keach ascribed many titles to Christ: mediator, surety, testator, and messenger of the covenant of grace. Keach not only wrote sermons about such titles, he wrote songs. Before, turning to Keach’s Christ-centered preaching on the parables, it is appropriate to reflect on his hymn, *The Song of the Lamb*:

Thou art our Prophet, Priest, and King,
a Prophet that does bring
Such Light from whence true joys do spring,
Hosannah in the highest.
A Priest that stands ‘twixt God and Men,
who hast Atton’d for sin.
And hast us brought to God agen,
Hosannah in the highest.
A King that rules o’er all above,
and all that here do move;
He’s King of kings, yet full of Love,
Hosannah in the highest.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:157.

¹⁷⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:159.

¹⁷⁷ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Songs Being the Marrow of Scripture in Songs of Praise to Almighty God from the Old and New Testament: With a Hundred Divine Hymns on Several Occasions as Now Practised in Several Congregations in and about London: With a Table of Contents* (London, 1700), 17.

CHAPTER 5

“CHRIST THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE” (NEW TESTAMENT SERMONS PART 1)

“Reader, Thou art here presented with the Labours of near Twelve years, not that I preached every Lords day in the morning upon the Parables; no, but generally for so long time I so did.”¹ Benjamin Keach devoted so much of his preaching ministry to the parables because of what he believed to be the primary purpose of the parables themselves. Keach bemoaned the expositor who only preached parables to instruct people in the “practical Duties” of life.² He did not mean that parables should not result in application. On the contrary, when reviewing Keach’s 147 published parable sermons,³ only 22⁴ were without an “Application” or “Use” section.⁵ Keach critiqued these

¹ Benjamin Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Or an Exposition of All the Parables, and Many Express Similitudes Contained in the Four Evangelists, Spoken by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Wherein Also Many Things Are Doctrinally Handled, and Practically Improved, by Way of Application* (London, 1701), iii. There are no page numbers in the original document for the section “To the Impartial Reader”; therefore, Roman numeral were added to the section for clarity.

² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar–Av.

³ James Christopher Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor in the Sermons of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 43. The number of published parable sermons will be verified and discussed more extensively in the next section.

⁴ The following is a list of the sermon titles without “use” or “application” sections: *Similitude, every valley shall be filled, &c. Sermon II; Similitude, and now also the axe is laid to the root of the tree, &c. Sermon VI; Similitude, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, &c. Sermon XII; Parable, no man putteth a new piece of cloth into an old garment, Sermon XIX; Parable, behold a sower went forth to sow, Sermon XXII; Parable, behold a sower went forth to sow, Sermon XXIV; Parable, behold a sower went forth to sow, Sermon XXV; The parable of the prodigal son opened, Sermon XVI; The parable of the importunate widow, Sermon XXV; The parable of the householder, Sermon XXXVIII, Sermon XXXIX, Sermon XI, Sermon XII; Parable, of the marriage feast, &c., Sermon I, Sermon II, Sermon XV; The parable of the creditor that had two debtors, Sermon I, Sermon III; The parables of the barren fig-tree opened, Sermon VII; The parable of the two sons bid to go into the vineyard, Sermon IX; The parable of the rich man and lazarus, Sermon XVI, Sermon XXI.*

⁵ In his sermon *A Summons to the Grave*, Keach stated, “I must hasten to the application.” Immediately after making this statement, he commented, “I have onely four Uses to make of it, as first an Use of Exhortation, secondly an Use of Direction, thirdly an Use of Lamentation, fourthly an Use of Consolation.” Benjamin Keach, *A Summons to the Grave, or the Necessity of a Timely Preparation for Death. Demonstrated in a sermon preached at the funeral of that most eminent and faithful servant of Jesus*

preachers because in trying to be practical they ignored the main purpose of parables, which is “to open to us the great Doctrine of the Gospel, or to shew us the Necessity of Faith in himself, or to instruct us into Doctrinal Truths.”⁶ He believed the Lord intended parables to impress deeper truths upon the believer’s heart. More explicitly, Keach stated how the purpose of the parables related to Christ: “The Mysteries of the Gospel, or the Mysteries of our Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, which he mainly designed to instruct us in, by speaking his parables.”⁷ Keach devoted a significant portion of his preaching to the parables because he believed they were designed to direct people’s gaze to Christ. His gospel conviction inspired Keach to entitle his work *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*.

Before delving into the analysis of Keach’s parable sermons, it is crucial to examine the contextual background to his parable preaching. The initial step is an analysis of Keach as a preacher of parables. Subsequently, Keach’s allegorical and *Tropologia* interpretive approaches will be considered. Lastly, a thorough analysis of one parable sermon from each Gospel will be conducted to ascertain his Christ-centered approach to the parables.

Benjamin Keach: A Parable Preacher

Christopher Holmes calculates that “Keach published 224 different sermons.”⁸ Of the 224 sermons Keach published, 147 of them were devoted to Jesus’s parables.⁹ Among the remaining 77 sermons, 56 sermons were preached from the New Testament and 21 sermons were preached from the Old Testament. These published works establish

Christ Mr John Norcott. Who departed this life March 24, 1675/76 (London, 1676), 22. There are two implications of this. First, Keach used the terms “Application” and “Use” interchangeably. Second, based on the title and subsequent content of the “Uses,” both terms referred to the practical implications of the text in the lives of the congregations.

⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Av.

⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Av.

⁸ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor,” 45.

⁹ Holmes, “The Role of Metaphor,” 43.

Keach as a New Testament preacher and, not only a New Testament preacher but “a parable preacher.”

The question is why Benjamin Keach devoted so much attention to the parables in his published sermons. Keach was aware “that almost all which our Lord spake to the multitude, he spake in parables.”¹⁰ From Keach’s perspective, Christ’s emphasis on teaching through parables deserves consideration. Keach thought it “strange that none of our learned modern divines, nor others, have been stirred up to write an exposition upon all the parables and similitudes spoken by our blessed Lord in the four evangelists.”¹¹ In saying this, he did not deny some excellent reflections upon the parables prior to his series of sermons on them.¹² However, Keach’s issue was that “no one Author (as I can learn) hath in one or more Volumes written upon them all, if the greatest part, nor any Exposition as I can meet with of many of them.”¹³ Therefore, in *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, Keach sought to do what he believed had not been done.¹⁴

¹⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

¹¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar. Keach contended that his contemporaries failed to compile works incorporating all the parables into a single volume. Nevertheless, they delivered and published sermons about the parables. As an illustration, Nehemiah Rogers (bap.1593, d.1660), a steadfast royalist, disseminated numerous sermons focusing on parables. A. R. Pennie, “Rogers, Nehemiah,” *ODNB*. Nehemiah Rogers, *The Rich Fool Set Forth in an Exposition on That Parable: Luke 12, 16–22* (London: George Sawbridge, 1662); Nehemiah Rogers, *The Good Samaritan; or an Exposition on That Parable Luke X. Ver. XXX–XXXVIII. A Certain Man Went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and Fell amongst Theeves* (London: George Sawbridge, 1658); Nehemiah Rogers, *The Disabled Debtor Discharged: Or, Mary Magdalen Pardoned. Set Forth in an Exposition on That Parable Luke 7. 40.–51. There Was a Certain Creditor, Which Had Two Debtors* (London: George Sawbridge, 1658); Nehemiah Rogers, *The Fast Friend: Or A Friend at Mid-Night: Set Forth in an Exposition on That Parable Luke 11. 5.–11. Which of You Shall Have a Friend, and Shall Go unto Him at Mid-Night* (London: George Sawbridge, 1658); Nehemiah Rogers, *The Figg-Less Figg-Tree: Or, The Doome of a Barren and Unfruitful Profession Lay’d Open: In an Exposition upon That Parable: A Certain Man Had a Figg-Tree Planted in His Vineyard, &c. Luke 13. 6,7,8,9,10* (London: George Sawbridge, 1659); Nehemiah Rogers, *The True Conuert. Or An Exposition Vpon the Vvhole Parable of the Prodigall. Luke. 15. 11.12. &c. Wherein Is Manifestly Shewed; 1. Mans Miserable Estate by Forsaking of God. 2. Mans Happie Estate by Returning to God. Deliuered in Sundry Sermons* (London: Edward Griffin, 1620).

¹² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

¹³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

¹⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

Benjamin Keach's Interpretive Approach to the Parables

Keach was not without his critics regarding how he interpreted the parables. Most notable are the brief comments made by Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892).¹⁵ When recommending commentaries to his students, Spurgeon spoke about Keach's *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd (An Exposition of All the Parables)*, saying, "Although our honored predecessor makes metaphors run on as many legs as a centipede, he has been useful to thousands. His work is old-fashioned, but it is not to be sneered at."¹⁶ While Spurgeon's comment was veiled in some form of praise, his picturesque point suggests that Keach read too much into the parables' use of metaphorical imagery.

In *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, Keach sought to determine what is meant by the details of each parable. Keach was aware of other authors (though he does not name them) who preferred to take a more general approach to interpreting the parables.¹⁷ He critiqued this approach by stating that there are some "who insinuate as if no propositions nor answerable Applications ought to be made, but from the general scope of the parable. Now in this I am not of their opinion."¹⁸ In other words, Keach was conscious that some authors would only make general applications based upon the broad meaning of the parable. Consequently, in the second sermon of his parable treatise, Keach concluded,

Therefore let not any once think, that the bare Opening the Scope of these Metaphorical Words is enough (and so in other Symbolical and Parabolical

¹⁵ Walker notes that Keach was "the first of four notable preachers in Southwark in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries associated with what became the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Keach's ministry in Southwark began shortly after 1668 and continued until his death in 1704. He was followed as pastor of the Southwark congregation by John Gill (1697–1771), John Rippon (1751–1836) and finally Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892)." Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2015), 11.

¹⁶ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students: Lectures Addressed to the Students of the Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle* (New York: Sheldon, 1876), 4:221. Furthermore, Spurgeon offered a similar critique of Keach's work *Tropologia*, describing it as "a vast cyclopædia of types and metaphors of all sorts, and was once very popular. It is a capital book, though too often the figures not only run on all-fours but on as many legs as a centipede." Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 4:97.

¹⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:Ar.

¹⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:Ar.

Scriptures) and that it favours more of Wit than any solid Judgment, to attempt to shew, what may rationally be thought to be meant by Mountains, Hills, Vallies, Crooked Things and Rough Ways.¹⁹

Keach was not content with asserting the general meaning or design of the parables. In all his parable sermons, he desired to know the meaning of each part. Despite the criticism directed at him for adopting this approach, Keach endeavored to ground his interpretation in the recognized hermeneutical principles of his day. Specifically, Keach turned to two hermeneutical principles to justify his approach: the analogy of faith and the interpretation of the Savior.

Chapter 2 of this research discussed Keach's use of the analogy of faith in general terms. This uncovered a helpful rule of interpretation expressed in the Second London Confession of Faith that synthesized Keach's view of the analogy of faith: "The Infallible Rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: And Therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, (which is not manifold but one) it must be searched by other places, that speak more clearly."²⁰ More specifically, however, in Keach's interpretation of the parables, he spoke about the impact that his friend Hanserd Knollys had on him.²¹ In his writings, Keach recalled the counsel provided by a highly learned author, suggesting that when explicating metaphorical or parabolical Scriptures, one may extend the exposition as far as a clear

¹⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:8.

²⁰ *1699 London Confession*, 8. It is noteworthy that the First London Confession did not have a section on the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, it did not explicitly affirm the infallible rule of the interpretation of Scripture. Keach did not sign the earlier confession as it was published in 1644, only four years after his birth. See *The Confession of Faith of Those Churches Which Are Commonly, though Falsly, Called Anabaptists* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1644).

²¹ Knollys, a fellow particular Baptist Pastor, originated from Lincolnshire, England. He embraced separatism in 1636, and by 1646, he established a church that eventually convened at Broken Wharf, Thames Street. Notably, he adhered to the London Baptist Confession of 1646. Kenneth G. C. Newport, "Knollys, Hanserd," *ODNB*. For further insight see Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffen, Knollys, and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage* (Peterborough, ON: H&E, 2019), 71–84.

“analogy of faith” allows. In the marginal notes, Keach identified this erudite author as Hanserd Knollys.²²

Keach highlighted the importance of the analogy of faith as a hermeneutical tool for the parables: “In opening Parables, or such like dark Scriptures, we ought (I say again) well to eye the Scope and Drift of the Holy Spirit which may be known from foregoing or subsequent Things mentioned; and we cannot err much, if our Exposition of them agrees with the Analogy of Faith.”²³ Important in this description is that reference to the foregoing or subsequent things mentioned in the Scriptures. In other words, in order to interpret the difficult texts of Scripture, such as parables, one should turn to other texts of Scripture and so interpret Scripture by Scripture. Although Keach acknowledged the need to determine the main point of the text, he nevertheless sought to employ the analogy of faith to his advantage when preaching and applying the text: “Tho’ the Scope of a Parable be the chief Thing we should attend upon, yet more Generally many other things may be made use of to the Advantage of the Hearers; even so far as it bears a clear Analogy of Faith, as in Metaphorical Scriptures; as is showed in my Key to open Scripture-Metaphors.”²⁴

Keach’s second principle relates to the interpretation of the Savior. Again, he critiqued the general approach to interpreting the parables when he noted, “Some I find who have written on some Parables, have given such a general Exposition of the summ

²² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar. Knollys published a sermon on the parable of the ten virgins. Throughout the sermon, he provided numerous references to various portions of Scripture, demonstrating his commitment to the analogy of faith in interpreting the parables. Similar to Keach, he aimed to dissect the parable into distinct sections for interpretative purposes. He expounded on the kingdom of God, portraying “the Mystical Kingdom of the Church of God under the Gospel, wherein there are both wise and foolish Virgins.” Furthermore, Knollys held the conviction that the wise virgins symbolized Christians who devoted their entire lives to following Christ, exemplified by their genuine godliness. Conversely, the foolish virgins were seen as false professors leading ungodly lives. Hanserd Knollys, *The Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded, or, An Exposition of the First Thirteen Verses of the Twenty Fifth Chapter of Matthew* (London: Benjamin Harris, 1674), 4, 41–44.

²³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:9.

²⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:3.

and scope of some, as renders their Exposition quite different from the Exposition our blessed Lord gave himself.”²⁵ Keach believed this general approach was not the approach of Christ. Instead, Christ explained the particular parts of the parables when “he unfolded unto his Disciples: see Matt. 13 about the Sower, and that of the Wheat and Tares, in which he opens every particular part, and applies it.”²⁶ Keach concluded, “Now can any Directions given by Learned men be so safe a Rule to follow in expounding the Parables, as that Rule our Saviour hath left in the way taken by himself.”²⁷

In light of Keach’s twofold approach to interpreting the parables (the analogy of faith and the interpretation of the Savior), one should note Jared Bumpers’s discussion of Keach’s interpretative approach. Bumpers describes Keach’s approach as follows: “Keach advocated for an allegorical, doctrinal, and canonical interpretive approach to the parables.”²⁸ Bumpers elaborates,

The allegorical nature of Keach’s approach allowed him to draw points of connection between details contained in the parables and doctrinal truths contained in Scripture. These connections were confirmed by Scripture in its totality, preventing Keach from drawing unbiblical conclusions from the particulars in the parables.²⁹

Bumpers states a valid summation of Keach’s twofold interpretative approach. Keach drew a connection between the “details contained in the parables and doctrinal truths contained in Scripture”³⁰—a clear reference to the analogy of faith. Yet, according to

²⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

²⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

²⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:Ar.

²⁸ Jared Bumpers, “‘Worse than Idle’ or ‘Mysteries of the Gospel’: John Albert Broadus and Benjamin Keach on Interpreting and Preaching the Parables of Jesus,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 16, no. 2 (2019): 63.

²⁹ Bumpers, “‘Worse than Idle’ or ‘Mysteries of the Gospel,’” 6.

³⁰ Bumpers, “‘Worse than Idle’ or ‘Mysteries of the Gospel,’” 6.

Bumpers, Keach advocated for an approach to the parables which interpreted the text allegorically.³¹

Although Bumpers convincingly argues for Keach’s allegorical interpretation of the parables, he neglects to discuss how such an interpretation informs Keach’s Christ-centered preaching.³² Additionally, Bumpers refrains from discussing Keach’s allegorical

³¹ Bumpers, “‘Worse than Idle’ or ‘Mysteries of the Gospel,’” 62. As previously noted, Keach referenced Knollys to advocate for elaborating on metaphorical or parabolic Scriptures within the confines of the analogy of faith (Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:i). Consequently, Keach sought to embrace Knollys’s approach to such texts. In his exposition of the Song of Solomon, Knollys delineated a threefold interpretive method for exegeting the text. Knollys sought to “explain the Allegories of this Song, in Expounding and Interpreting the Historical, Prophetical and Spiritual Sense thereof.” Hanserd Knollys, *An Exposition of the First Chapter of the Song of Solomon. Wherein the Text Is Analysed, the Allegories Are Explained, and the Hidden Mysteries Are Unveiled, According to the Proportion of Faith: With Spiritual Meditations upon Every Verse* (London: W. Godbid, 1656), A1v. Therefore, in order for Knollys to interpret Song of Solomon, which he viewed as an allegorical text, he considered the historical (literal), prophetical, and spiritual sense of the text. Jay T. Collier contends that Knollys, instead of embracing the prevalent medieval quadriga approach to Scripture, adopted a modified threefold exegetical method aligned with Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141). Knollys embraced this approach and consistently guarded by the analogy of faith. Jay T. Collier, “Hanserd Knollys as Interpreter of Scripture: An Examination of His ‘An Exposition of the First Chapter of the Song of Solomon,’” *Eusebeia* 5 (Autumn 2005): 8. Consequently, Particular Baptist interpreters were unhesitant in exploring an allegorical meaning within the text.

Keach did not hesitate to consider allegory as a category of interpretation. He embraced John Durham’s assertions about allegory in his exposition of the Song of Solomon:

Allegories . . . as Parables, propounded for some mystical End. Thus whilst it is said, Mat. 21. A certain King made a Marriage for his Son, planted a Vineyard, &c. Those Places suppose it not necessary as to the being of the Allegory, that ever such a thing was; but a Type cannot be without reality in the thing, as Fact, which is made a Type . . . Allegories take in Words, Sentences, Doctrines, both of Faith and Manners, as in the former Example is clear . . . Allegories look especially to Matters in hand, and intend the explaining some hidden and mystical Sence upon the Words, which at present they seem not to bear . . . Allegories, &c. are principally Doctrinal, and in their Scope intend not to clear or compare Facts, but to hold forth and explain Doctrines, or by such Similitudes to illustrate, and make them the better understood, and to move and affect the Heart the more, or the more forcibly to convince the Conscience; as Nathan made use of a Parable, when he was about to convince David . . . Allegories, Similitudes, &c. take in every thing, that belongs either to Doctrine, or Instruction in Faith, or Practice, for ordering of one’s Life. (James Durham, *Clavis Cantici, or, An Exposition of the Song of Solomon* [Edinburgh, 1668], 8–10)

Keach referenced Durham’s work when comparing typology with allegory. Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia: Tropes and Figures; or, A Treatise of the Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes, &c. Contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To Which Is Prefixed, Divers Arguments to Prove the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures Wherein Also ’tis Largely Evinced, That by the Great Whore, Mystery Babylon Is Meant the Papal Hierarchy, or Present State and Church of Rome. Philologia Sacra, the Second Part. Wherein the Schemes, or Figures in Scripture, Are Reduced under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each. Together with a Treatise of Types, Parables, &c. with an Improvement of Them Parallel-Wise* (London: John Darby, 1682), The Epistle to the reader, 4:A3v.

³² Interestingly, Bumpers is a proponent of Christ-centered preaching and could have considered Keach’s sermons through that lens. See H. Jared Bumpers, “Christ Crucified: The Necessity of Preaching Christ from All of Scripture,” *Southeastern Theological Review* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2022), 37–44.

method in light of his *Tropologia* method.³³ Therefore, while acknowledging with Bumpers the allegorical, doctrinal, and canonical aspects of Keach's sermons, it is imperative to assess Keach's expositions in light of his own Christocentric methodologies.

Benjamin Keach's Parable Sermons

In *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, Benjamin Keach concluded his introductory sermon by exhorting his hearers: "Learn to be studious, and search into the Spiritual Meaning and Mysteries, of Allegorical and Parabolical Scriptures. O be Wise and Experienced Hearers, and before you [*sic*] do not despise Mens preaching on these Parables, since the Substance of our Saviours whole Ministry to the World is contained in them."³⁴ Keach desired Yet, some parameters must be set since it is not possible to survey all 147 of Keach's parable sermons in a single chapter. It is important to select parable sermons representative of Keach's entire corpus and his approach.

The parables were selected based on three considerations. First, Keach wrote on parables from each Gospel.³⁵ Therefore, a survey of one parable from each Gospel should give an adequate overview of Keach's approach to the parables. Second, parables that show the paradigm through which Keach approached the parables should have priority. Finally, the significance of a parable within the writings of Keach's

³³ Bumpers mentions *Tropologia* in passing: "His work on preaching from the types and metaphors of the Bible, as well as his expositions from the parables, is a classic." Bumpers, "'Worse than Idle' or 'Mysteries of the Gospel,'" 59. However, he fails to consider the work in his reflections.

Interestingly, John Calvin (1509–1564) rejected an allegorical approach to the text that Keach evidently adopted (see *The Parable of the Good Samaritan* below). John Calvin was born in northern France. Calvin is best known as the theologian who wrote *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Yet, Calvin also wrote numerous commentaries, lectured regularly, and preached through the Bible. Anthony N. S. Lane, "John Calvin: Preaching the Glorious Christ," ed. Benjamin K. Forrest, Kevin L. King, and William J. Curtis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 505, Kindle.

³⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:7.

³⁵ Keach recognized two parables in the Gospel of John: *Parable, Of the Door into the Sheepfold, John 10:1* and *Parable, Of God the Father an Husbandman, John 15:1–2*. Although he affirmed these texts as parables, their designation as parables seems inconclusive. However, due to Keach's affirmation, it is right to consider them as such for the purposes of this study.

contemporaries will enable a comparison between their approach and his approach. Based on these criteria, the following sermons will be assessed in their canonical order: *The Pearl of Great Price* (Matthew 13:45–46), *A Man Casting Seed* (Mark 4:26–29), *The Good Samaritan* (Luke 10:30–37), and *God the Father as a Husbandman* (John 15:1–2).

The Pearl of Great Price³⁶ (Matt 13:45–46)

Keach devoted four sermons to *The Pearl of Great Price*. Keach acknowledged this parable contains his “usual method,”³⁷ thus justifying its selection for review. The parable provides a useful insight into Keach’s structural approach for preaching the parables. When preaching on the parables, Keach adopted a threefold approach: “1. Open what the design or chief intention of our blessed Lord is, in speaking of it. 2. Open the parts thereof. 3. Raise one or two points of doctrine therefrom, and in our usual method prosecute them.”³⁸ In other words, in his normal method of studying the parables, he highlighted the main purpose(s) of the parable, the meaning of each element within the parable, and various doctrinal points gleaned from the parable (following the analogy of faith). According to Keach, the key to understanding the parable lay in the main point of the parable: “Therefore in Parables, if we would understand the Mind of God in them, we must always take Care to consider the main Design and Scope of them; or which way the Sacred Story tends, or what our Lord chiefly designeth therein.”³⁹

Additionally, it is important in the selection of this parable to consider various Puritan works that may have influenced Keach or may illuminate the Puritan method.

³⁶ The sermon titles given in this section do not correspond to the original title. For ease of reference shorter titles were allocated. For example, the original title for this sermon is, “Parable, Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Merchant-man Seeking goodly Pearl. Mat. 13.45, 46.” Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

³⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

³⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

³⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:3.

Significantly, two of Keach's key influencers preached sermons on this parable. First, in his work *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, Keach highlighted predecessors and contemporaries whose writings influenced him. In that list, Keach named Richard Sibbes (1577–1635).⁴⁰ Sibbes wrote a sermon on this parable within a collection entitled *The Saints Comforts*.⁴¹ The sermon itself was called *The Rich Pearle*.⁴² Thomas Taylor⁴³ is another author that Keach referenced a number of times in *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*.⁴⁴ Taylor's work on this parable is entitled *Two treatises: the pearle of the Gospell*.⁴⁵ Both works serve as a point of comparison for Keach's work and will be referenced throughout the analysis.

Keach's Interpretation of the Parable

Concerning the "Chief Intention" of this parable, Keach believes that Jesus intended two things.⁴⁶ First, Keach understood Christ to be speaking of "the Excellency of the Gospel Dispensation, there lying in it a precious Pearle."⁴⁷ Second, Keach believed

⁴⁰ See Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes Wherein it is Proved that the Whole First Adam was Condemned and the Whole Second Adam Justified* (London: for Andrew Bell, 1698), 36. Sibbes was born in 1577 at Tostock, Suffolk, England. "From 1610 to 1616 he served as lecturer at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge . . . Sibbes came to London in 1617 as a lecturer for Gray's Inn." Prior to his death in 1635, he served "as preacher at Gray's Inn, master of St. Catherine's Hall, and vicar of Holy Trinity." *MTP*, 534–41.

⁴¹ Richard Sibbes, *The Saints Comforts being the Substance of Diverse Sermons Preached on, Psal. 130. the Beginning. the Saints Happinesse, on Psal. 73. 28. the Rich Pearle; on Math. 13. 45, 46. the Successe of the Gospell, on, Luk. 7. 34, 35. Maries Choyce, on Luk. 10. 38. 39, 40* (London: Tho. Cotes, 1638), 108. The page number 108 represents the digital document number as seen on Early English Books Online (ProQuest). However, each work within *The Saints Comforts* was allocated a new title and begins with its own page numbers. Therefore, the internal reference is Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 11–13. Henceforth, *The Riche Pearle* reference will be used.

⁴² Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 1.

⁴³ See the description of Thomas Taylor in chapter 3.

⁴⁴ See Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:133, 134, 144, 148.

⁴⁵ Thomas Taylor, *Two Treatises: the pearle of the Gospell, and the pilgrims profession to which is added a glasse for gentlewomen to dresse themselues by. By Thomas Taylor preacher of Gods Word to the towne of Reding* (London, 1625).

⁴⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

⁴⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

Christ's purpose in telling the parable is "to set forth the transcendent Worth and Excellency of the Pearle of great price."⁴⁸ Keach spoke of this second purpose as being "the main Scope and Design of our Lord in this Parable."⁴⁹ Therefore, the focus of this analysis will be on the meaning of the pearl.

In accordance with his methodology, Keach outlined the sermon series by "open[ing] the parts thereof,"⁵⁰ thus determining what is meant by the kingdom of heaven, the merchant, and the pearl as well as what is sold in order to buy the pearl.⁵¹ Since the kingdom plays an important role in this parable and all the parables of Matthew 13, it is beneficial to consider Keach's definition. Keach defined the kingdom in the following way: "By the Kingdom of Heaven I understand is meant the Gospel Dispensation; (as it is in several other Parables) or the true and Spiritual Ministration thereof; in which the Special Grace and Favour of God is comprehended, and extend unto the Sons and Daughters of Men."⁵² Simply put, Keach believed the kingdom of heaven refers to the gospel age that has been spiritually inaugurated on this earth.

Sibbes outlined what is meant by the kingdom when he stated, "First by the Kingdome of heaven, is meant sometime the company of men that are under Christs regiment, that acknowledge him for their king, as wee say its not the walls that make the Citty, but the body of men united and governed by one law, custome and priviledge."⁵³ In

⁴⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

⁴⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

⁵⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

⁵¹ Sibbes offers a similar breakdown by considering what is meant by the kingdom, the merchant, and the pearl. Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 6–37. Taylor suggested that there are four parts of the text: "In which Parable consider foure things. 1. What is this kingdome of heaven. 2. What is this pearle, and the goodnesse of it. 3. Who is this Merchant man. 4. What are his actions, namely three. I. He seeketh good pearles. II. Hee [*sic*] findeth a pearle of great price. III. Hee sold all to buy it" ["He" and "Hee" are interchanged in the original text]. Taylor, *Two Treatises*, 3–4. This provides a Puritan pattern for determining the meaning of parables, namely, breaking down the various parts.

⁵² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

⁵³ Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 6.

delineating the meaning of the kingdom, Sibbes also elucidated that kingdom meant the blessed estate which belongs to those who trust Christ. This blessed estate includes prerogatives associated with it, such as peace, joy, grace, and the like. In addition, he argued the kingdom signified the glorious estate of a Christian, commencing on earth and reaching perfection in heaven. Sibbes further observed that the word at times means the kingdom of heaven where Christ will rule in the future.⁵⁴ Keach, with Sibbes, acknowledged the present inauguration of the kingdom with the comprehension of all its benefits. Yet, Sibbes more explicitly directed the reader toward the kingdom's future consummation. Given the general scope and the parts of the parable, it is necessary to consider the Christ-centered nature of the sermon.

The Christ-Centered Nature of the Parable

The Christ-centered nature of Keach's sermon is best perceived through the doctrines in his sermons. In his first doctrine, Keach stated, "That a man in seeking after heavenly things, viz. Grace and Glory, may be compared unto a Merchant."⁵⁵ Identifying the merchant, Keach said, "The Merchant-man may mean, any person who seeks after, or labours for such things that are of an excellent and Spiritual Nature."⁵⁶ In other words, the merchant is a spiritual seeker. Sibbes agreed: "This merchant is every Christian."⁵⁷ The Christian, like a merchant, is ever trading and laboring, seeking to fulfill their calling with faithfulness and avoiding counterfeit pearls offered by false teachers.⁵⁸ Yet, Keach was more nuanced in his view of the merchant. The merchant may refer to the "true

⁵⁴ Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 6–7.

⁵⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:158.

⁵⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:157.

⁵⁷ Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 9.

⁵⁸ Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 9–10.

Christian.”⁵⁹ Keach employed the merchant imagery to allude to a spiritual merchant who lacks knowledge about Christ. Such an individual is susceptible to being deprived of the true Christ. In summary, Keach highlighted that individuals unfamiliar with the true nature of faith in Christ are susceptible to being deceived by a false or counterfeit faith.⁶⁰

The merchant is searching for things of spiritual value. Keach concluded, “Therefore doubtless these goodly Pearl, that a Spiritual Merchant seeks, are some of the choicest things of God; as Peace and Reconciliation with God, Pardon of Sin, and Eternal Life.”⁶¹ Such pearls are only found when one discovers the pearl of great price. Thus, it is the pearl of great price that dominates Keach’s sermon series.

Keach’s second doctrine conveys the trajectory for the rest of the series: “That the Lord Jesus Christ (the Pearl of great price) is most precious, excellent, or of infinite Worth and Value.”⁶² Moreover, Keach explicitly defined the pearl of great price: “By this one Pearl of great price is meant our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶³ Significantly, Keach believed this was the view of “all Expositors generally.”⁶⁴ Although Keach did not name the expositors who held this view, he was influenced by both Taylor and Sibbes.⁶⁵ Taylor, who had a slightly more nuanced view concerning the pearl, suggested,

By the pearle is meant, 1. The happy estate of grace here. 2. The happy estate of glory hereafter. Of which latter, see Revel.21.21 the foundations of the new Jerusalem were garnished with all manner of precious stones; jasper, Saphir,

⁵⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:158.

⁶⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:159.

⁶¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

⁶² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:162.

⁶³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

⁶⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

⁶⁵ In his writings, Keach frequently cited Sibbes and Taylor, he also expressed affinity for another Puritan preacher, Thomas Manton. Manton concurred with Keach, Sibbes, and Taylor in identifying the pearl: “It appeareth from the nature of the Work. To follow Christ, is not to give to him as much as the Flesh can spare, but wholly to devote your selves to his Service, to sell all for the Pearl of great price, Mat. 13. 46.” Thomas Manton, *Several Discourses Tending to Promote Peace & Holiness among Christians to Which Are Added, Three Other Distinct Sermons* (London: Jonathan Robinson, 1685), 358.

Chalcedon, and the twelve gates were twelve pearles, &c. But here it signifieth the happy estate of grace, in which were still seeking, and purchasing the pearle, and the good things of the Gospell, as namely, the glad tidings of it; the offer of Christ with his merits; the gift of faith, justification, sanctification.⁶⁶

Though Taylor did not specifically say that Christ is the pearl, he did imply that the pearl represents all of the blessings that believers inherit from Christ. Taylor continued to describe the pearl: “What a world of wealth both spiritual and heavenly, is manifested by the Gospell, which exhibiteth Christ, in whom are al treasures of grace and glory? What a rich store-house is Christ himself? The least drop of whose bloud was more precious than al the world?”⁶⁷ Sibbes was more explicit in his definition—coming to the same conclusion as Keach—by acknowledging that “by this Pearle is meant Christ Jesus, with all his graces and prerogatives derived to us.”⁶⁸ He continued by saying, “Christ is the great Pearle, al the rest are pearles but no otherwise than as they leade us to Christ, the peerelesse pearle.”⁶⁹ The influence of expositors like Taylor and Sibbes gave Keach confidence with his conclusion that Christ is the pearl, thus validating his Christ-centered approach to the parable.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Taylor, *Two Treatises*, 10–11.

⁶⁷ Taylor, *Two Treatises*, 12–13.

⁶⁸ Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 12–13.

⁶⁹ Sibbes, *The Riche Pearle*, 13.

⁷⁰ It is worth noting that John Calvin, one of Keach’s influences, did not hold the same view. He likened the pearl strictly to the kingdom of God, which, in his view was a reference to heaven itself: “*One pearl*, though it be small, is so highly valued, that a skilful *merchant* does not hesitate to *sell* houses and lands in order to purchase it. The excellence of the heavenly life is not perceived, indeed, by the sense of the flesh; and yet we do not esteem it according to its real worth, unless we are prepared to deny, on account of it, all that glitters in our eyes.” John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, trans. William Pringle (Bellingham, WA: Calvin Translation Society, 2010), 2:131.

Similarly, William Perkins, when writing on Matthew 6:19–34, referred to the pearl of great price simply as the kingdom of God:

So let us look unto the performance of the former duties, showing herein the resolution of the “wise merchant” that parted with all he had “to get that pearl of price” (Matt. 13:46). This kingdom of God is here set out unto us like a city with suburbs and two gates. The suburbs of this city are those assemblies where the Word of God is truly preached and dispensed; and hereinto come not only the elect and godly, but hypocrites and reprobates. The first gate is the *true state of grace*, whereinto the elect of God alone do enter by regeneration; in which estate they continue in this life, going on from one degree of grace unto a greater, with endeavor in all things to keep faith and good conscience both towards God and men, and so wait to enter the gate of glory, which is set open unto them, and they

Keach succinctly described the relationship between the merchant (spiritual seeker) and the pearl (Christ) when he said that the merchant “parts with all his Sins, his Unrighteousness; moreover, he parts with his own Righteousness, also in point of Justification.”⁷¹ The reason the merchant sells all he has is “so he might have Christ and his Righteousness to Justifie him in the sight of God.”⁷² Compared to the pearl of great price, “all other things are of little worth to the Grace of God, the Love of God, Union and Communion with God, to have God to be our God, and Christ to be our Christ.”⁷³ Keach’s interplay between the merchant and the pearl highlights his *Tropologia* method of preaching Christ.

Tropologia Method of Preaching Christ

The two images Keach made in this sermon series accentuate his *Tropologia* method of preaching Christ. Keach’s initial image compares the merchant to spiritual seekers. In *The Pearl of Great Price*, Keach began by stating the merchant “deals for the good things of this World.” Keach compared this with the man who deals in “Spiritual Commodities.”⁷⁴ In *Tropologia*, Keach began with the same parallel. However, he was more specific in stressing that the merchant is “A True Christian,” whose “Affections are set upon those Things that are above.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, in the *The Pearl of Great Price*, Keach presented a list of twelve parallels between the merchant and the Christian, most of which correspond to the ten parallels Keach presented in *Tropologia*.⁷⁶ By utilizing

enter in at the house of death. (William Perkins, *The Works of William Perkins*, 10 vols., ed. Joel R. Beeke and Derek W. H. Thomas [Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014–2020], 1:578)

⁷¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:158.

⁷² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:158.

⁷³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:160.

⁷⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:158.

⁷⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:168.

⁷⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:168–169.

these parallels in the sermon, Keach followed his *Tropologia* method, a method which highlights the merchant's need and pursuit of Christ.

In *Sermon XXXI*,⁷⁷ Keach highlighted the primary parallel between Christ and the pearl. In the sermon, Keach set forth the doctrine that would govern the rest of the sermon series: "That the Lord Jesus Christ (the pearl of great price) is most precious, excellent, or of infinite worth and value."⁷⁸ Keach showed the primary way in which Christ is the pearl, namely, his inestimable worth and value. Keach stated, "Our Lord Jesus Christ no doubt is compared to a Pearl of great price upon this account chiefly: He is of an inestimable Worth and Value. God hath many rich Pearls; but Jesus Christ is the richest and most precious of them all."⁷⁹

As Keach delved into the assessment of the pearl's value, he enumerated a multitude of virtues inherited from Christ that contribute to its significance. The pearl, in this context, serves as a transformative agent: it resurrects the dead, grants sight to the blind, softens the stony heart, purges the poison of sin, instills joy in the Christian, revives the spirit, fortifies the heart, acts as the sustaining bread of life, and remedies the heart from envy and malice.⁸⁰ Keach concluded, "Thus hath this Pearl many most excellent hidden Vertues in it, which few ever come to understand, or have the Experience of."⁸¹

Christ as the pearl is an image Keach explicitly discussed in his earlier work *Tropologia*. In a section entitled "Christ the Pearl of great Price," Keach highlighted both

⁷⁷ This sermon is the thirty-first (XXXI) sermon in *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, but it was the second sermon in the four-part series on the pearl of great price. XXXI was the number Keach associated with the sermon. Consequently, this is the numbering scheme that has been adopted here.

⁷⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:162.

⁷⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:163.

⁸⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:163–64.

⁸¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:165.

the parallels and the disparities between Christ as the spiritual pearl and earthly pearls.⁸² For example, metaphor IV states, “Pearls are things of very great worth,” and the corresponding parallel notes, “Christ is of inestimable value, may well be called the Pearl of great price.”⁸³ Additionally, metaphor I states, “Pearls are of an earthly Original,” yet the disparity says, “Jesus Christ is the Lord of Heaven.”⁸⁴

In *Tropologia* Keach listed thirteen parallels between Christ and the pearl. Keach also listed four disparities between Christ and the pearl, in conjunction with four inferences drawn from his findings.⁸⁵ Though much could be said regarding Keach’s general exaltation of Christ in the sermon series, his emphasis on the excellencies of Christ proves his doctrine succinctly. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider, first, “the Excellencies of his Glorious Person”—which Keach noted is the “chief excellency of Christ”⁸⁶—and, second, Christ’s “excellencies . . . in his Offices and work as Mediator.”⁸⁷

Keach’s reflections on Christ’s excellencies were built upon the foundation of his *Tropologia* method. Keach compared Christ to a pearl by describing a pearl as “splendid and oriental Brightness both without and within.”⁸⁸ Correspondingly, Keach

⁸² Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Tropologia, or, A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors the First Book Containing Sacred Philology, or the Tropes in Scripture, Reduc’d under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each / Partly Translated and Partly Compil’d from the Works of the Learned by T.D. The Second and Third Books Containing a Practical Improvement (Parallel-Wise) of Several of the Most Frequent and Useful Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes of the Old and New Testament* (London: Enoch Prosser, 1681), 2:187–89.

⁸³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:188.

⁸⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:189.

⁸⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:187–89.

⁸⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168.

⁸⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168.

⁸⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:165.

stated, “Jesus Christ may well be compared to a Pearl upon this account; he being the Brightness of the Father’s Glory, and the express Image of his Person.”⁸⁹

The radiance of Christ surpasses that of angels and all living creatures as he embodies the exact representation of God. Keach posited that Christ outshines all spiritual pearls as the pearl of great price.⁹⁰ He questioned the worth of such pearls as grace, faith, pardon, and peace compared to the person of Christ.⁹¹ One who has discovered the pearl of great price regards all these spiritual treasures (though valuable in themselves) as insignificant compared to the Lord Jesus Christ.⁹² For Keach, the brilliance of Christ (the pearl) is most vividly revealed when one comprehends the person of Christ. Keach argued that the immense value, excellence, preciousness, and transcendence of Jesus Christ resides in the excellencies of his person.⁹³ Consequently, Keach asserted that it is essential for Christ’s people to comprehend his person. According to Keach, this involves understanding who the true Christ is in his humanity and deity.⁹⁴

When reflecting on Christ’s humanity and deity, Keach announced what he believed to full beauty of Christ the pearl. Keach assumed the voice of Christ in his sermon and stated, “I being God and Man in one person, God of the Essence of my Father, and truly Man, of the seed of David, or of the substance of the blessed virgin.”⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:165.

⁹⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:165.

⁹¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:165. This is where Keach departed from Thomas Taylor’s more general view of the pearl. The pearl is not the benefits of grace, forgiveness, and holiness. The pearl is of much greater value—Jesus Christ. See Taylor, *Two Treatises*, 10–11.

⁹² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:165.

⁹³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168. See the correspondence between these statements and point IV in *Tropologia*, which reflects upon the “inestimable value” of Christ. Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:188.

⁹⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168.

⁹⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168.

Consequently, it is imperative to consider the person of Christ in his two natures—divine and human. Concerning Christ’s deity, Keach emphatically stated, “Christ is the most high God.”⁹⁶ As a pre-existent divine being, Christ existed before the world’s conception and throughout the entirety of the world’s history.⁹⁷ Delving into the magnificence of the pearl of great price, Keach underscored that Jesus Christ possesses all the incommunicable names and attributes of God, establishing his eternal and divine nature.⁹⁸ Christ, as the omniscient and omnipotent Creator, sustains all things and deserves the same spiritual worship, honor, and adoration as God the Father.⁹⁹

Examining Christ’s humanity, Keach acknowledged him as “Truly Man, of the seed of David.”¹⁰⁰ For Christ to be the seed of David meant he had to come as Immanuel, God in human flesh, emphasizing the incarnation of Christ through a virgin. To grasp the essence of the pearl of great price, one must recognize Christ not only as God but also as man, existing in a hypostatic union of divine and human nature within one person.¹⁰¹ Keach concluded that Christ is the root and offspring of David, embodying both divinity and humanity in a single person.¹⁰²

The excellencies of Christ shine forth in his role as mediator and in his offices.¹⁰³ Keach investigated Christ’s role as mediator most thoroughly in *Sermon XXXI*.

⁹⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:171.

⁹⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:169.

⁹⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:171.

⁹⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:172.

¹⁰⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168.

¹⁰¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:173.

¹⁰² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:173.

¹⁰³ Keach had a section in the sermon that reflected on the personal excellencies of Christ. However, reflecting on two aspects of Christ’s excellencies sufficiently depicted Keach’s *Tropologia* method. Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:168.

Keach reflected, “This Pearl is a rich Pearl, or that Christ is rich, as Mediator.”¹⁰⁴ Keach saw Christ as mediator in three particular ways. First, Christ is the heir of all things: “For as Mediator he is Heir of all things, he hath the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his possession.”¹⁰⁵ Second, Christ has enriched the nations: “We may know Christ is rich by considering of the multitudes he hath enriched, even many Millions; and yet is not he one Fathering the poorer than he was before.”¹⁰⁶ Third, Christ is the fullness of deity. Here, Keach returned to ponder the deity of Christ by referencing Colossians 1:15: “It appears Christ is rich, because it pleased the Father that in him all Fulness should dwell. There is in him not only Abundance, but also a Fulness of Redundance, he is not only a Fountain that is full, but also overflows.”¹⁰⁷ Significantly, when reflecting on Christ as the pearl in *Tropologia*, Keach stated, “Christ singular; there is but one Christ, one Mediator between God and Man.”¹⁰⁸

In *Sermon XXXII*, Keach preached the excellencies of Christ’s offices.¹⁰⁹ Keach contemplated numerous personal excellencies of Christ to highlight Christ’s

¹⁰⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:166.

¹⁰⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:166.

¹⁰⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:166.

¹⁰⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:166.

¹⁰⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:189. Additionally, there is a section in *Tropologia* devoted to the metaphor (Keach’s language) of “Christ a Mediator.” See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:86–91.

¹⁰⁹As observed in Keach’s Old Testament sermons, Keach delighted to expound on the offices of Christ, irrespective of what text he preached. He did not stand alone in this Puritan tradition. William Gouge (1578–1653) was born in Bow, in Middlesex, England. He was appointed rector at the parish church of St. Anne Blackfriars, London. He became a popular preacher in London, many people were converted and encouraged under his ministry. *MTP*, 284–89. William Gouge preached a sermon called *The Whole Armor of God* in which he extolled the offices of Christ. He preached the offices of Christ in a similar manner to Keach. Frequently, when Keach delivered sermons on the offices of Christ, he discussed them within the framework of Christ as mediator. In a segment of his sermon titled “Of the Mediator,” Gouge addressed the significance of the title Christ, which “implies the three Offices of Christ, whereunto he was appointed, and set a part of his Father: his Princely Office to governe and protect his Church; his Priestly Office, to offer himselfe a sacrifice, and to make continuall intercession for his Church. His Prophetical Office to instruct, and direct his Church in the way of Salvation.” William Gouge, *The Whole-Armor of God: Or A Christians Spiritual Furniture, to Keepe Him Safe from All the Assaults of Satan First Preached, and Now the Second Time Published and Enlarged for the Good of All Such as Well use It: Whereunto Is Also Added a Treatise of the Sinne against the Holy Ghost* (London: John Beale, 1619), 402.

infinite worth as the pearl. Christ's worth extended to other personal excellencies, emphasizing the significant role Christ plays in relation to his church.¹¹⁰ Keach highlighted the personal excellencies of Christ as the God-man who ascended into heaven,¹¹¹ the great repository all divine truth,¹¹² the one to whom glory should be ascribed,¹¹³ the conduit of all spiritual blessings,¹¹⁴ the one who encapsulates magnificent beauty,¹¹⁵ the one in whom all the fullness of deity dwells,¹¹⁶ and the one who presents himself to the church¹¹⁷ as "a King to rule us, a Priest to atone for our sins, a Prophet to teach us."¹¹⁸

Therefore, the offices of Christ are worthy of special focus, as Keach argued, "The personal Excellencies of Christ shine forth in respect had to his Offices, as King,

Thomas Gouge (1605–1681), William's son, was born in Stratford-le-Bow, Middlesex. His Father trained him in the fear of the Lord. In 1638 he became the rector at St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, where he ministered for twenty-four year. *MTP*, 280–83. Thomas, when preaching in question-and-answer style, posed the following: "Q. What offices did Christ undertake to make us partakers of the benefit of that which Christ did and suffered? A. Christ undertook three Offices, he became a (a) King, a (b) Prophet, and a (c) Priest. (a) Act. 5.31. (b) Deut. 18.18. (c) Psal. 110.4." Following this question and answer, Thomas presented a discourse on the threefold office of Christ. Thomas Gouge, *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints The Former Tending to the Awakening the Consciences of Secure Sinners, unto a Lively Sense and Apprehension of the Dreadfull Condition They Are in, so Long as They Live in Their Natural and Unregenerate Estate. The Latter Tending to the Directing and Perswading of the Godly and Regenerate unto Several Singular Duties. As Also a Word to Housholders Stirring Them up to the Good Old Way of Serving God in and with Their Families, from Joshuah's Resolution, Josh. 24. 15. As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord. Set Forth Especially for the Use and Benefit of the Inhabitants of St. Sepulchres Parish* (London: George Sawbridge, 1668), 12.

¹¹⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:176.

¹¹¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:177.

¹¹² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:178.

¹¹³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:179.

¹¹⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:179.

¹¹⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:180.

¹¹⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:181.

¹¹⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:182. In Keach's original document the page numbers are mixed up. The page numbers are presented in the following order: 180, 181, 178, 179, 184, 185, etc. This must have been a printing error because pages 178–79 occur earlier in the document in their proper order. Therefore, to prevent confusion, the numbers are given here in their correct order. Pages 182 and 183 are supplied instead of the second occurrence of 178 and 179.

¹¹⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:182.

Priest, and Prophet.”¹¹⁹ Keach spoke on the images of Christ as prophet,¹²⁰ priest,¹²¹ and king¹²² in *Tropologia*, thus revealing his repeated use of this methodology.¹²³ The glory of Christ as king radiates through his power to subdue individuals to himself and to conquer all adversaries, whether external or internal, such as sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave.¹²⁴ Keach declared, “What a King is he, that is King of Kings, yea the Prince of all the Kings of the earth.”¹²⁵

Keach expressed the glory of Christ’s office as a prophet by posing eight rhetorical questions. For example, question 6 inquires how Christ makes his Word effectual to sinners or, by his voice, makes the dead hear and blind eyes see.¹²⁶ Similarly, question 8 ponders how Christ teaches men instruction in the night when they slept, as only God can do.¹²⁷ Keach asserted that Christ, as a prophet, teaches powerfully, effectually, efficaciously, and infallibly by offering teaching and instruction without error.¹²⁸ Concerning the glory of Christ’s priesthood, Keach asked how Christ could be

¹¹⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:178.

¹²⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:157–61.

¹²¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:149–56.

¹²² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:142–49.

¹²³ See the detailed discussions of Christ’s threefold office as it pertains to *Tropologia* in chapters 3 and 4.

¹²⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:178. Similarly, Thomas Gouge articulated Christ as the king who safeguards the church from “all enemies. Her enemies are Visible and Invisible. Her Visible Enemies are all manner of wicked men. Her Invisible enemies are the Devil and his Angels. Christ either keepeth these enemies from assaulting his Church.” Gouge, *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints*, 13.

¹²⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:178.

¹²⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:178. Thomas Gouge also portrayed Christ as the prophet who imparts instruction to us: “First, Christ instructs his Church outwardly by making known his Fathers will, which he did by his own mouth, when he lived upon the earth. And by his Ministers, after his Ascension into Heaven, by their writings and Preaching.” Gouge, *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints*, 13.

¹²⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:178.

¹²⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:179.

the altar, the sacrifice, and the priest offering up that sacrifice.¹²⁹ He declared that Christ, as a priest, had forever fully satisfied infinite justice for all God's elect through the worth of his sacrifice, leaving no room for any other atoning sacrifice.¹³⁰

The glories of Christ's offices stand alone in their beauty and yet should not be disassociated from Christ's person: "But pray note, that the Exercise of all his Offices do depend upon the Excellency of his person, as being God, and not Man only."¹³¹

Therefore, Christ is the pearl of great price because of his inestimable worth displayed most distinctly through the union of his deity and humanity in one person as expressed in his role as mediator and in his offices.

A Man Casting Seed (Mark 4:26–29)

In *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, Keach preached on two texts in Mark. The first text was Mark 9:49–50. Keach labelled this text as a similitude. The second text was Mark 4:26–29, which Keach noted was a parable. Since the second text is a parable, this is the text chosen for analysis.¹³² Keach preached on this text because "the Evangelist Mark only hath recorded this parable."¹³³ The uniqueness of the text was evident from

¹²⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:178.

¹³⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:178.

¹³¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:178. Thomas Gouge presented Christ not only as the one who offered a sacrifice on our behalf but also as the one who actively intercedes for us: "Here we have both Satisfaction, and Intercession applyed to Christ. Satisfaction by his death, and Intercession now that he is risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of God." Gouge, *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints*, 14.

¹³² It is worth noting that Keach often used the terms "parable" and "similitude" interchangeably. Keach stated, "A Parable signifies no more than a Similitude, which is to make use of Natural Things by Way of Allusion or Comparison, to open Spiritual Things the better to our Understanding." Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:2. Yet, in the table of contents, Keach named the majority of texts parables and some texts similitudes, thus implying some distinction between the terms.

¹³³ Keach, *A Supplement to the Book Entitled, Gospel-Mysteries Unvail'd*, 62. In *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, there are three books. Each book has its own number system. However, there is also an additional book called *A Supplement to the Book Entitled, Gospel-Mysteries Unvail'd* (Keach spelled the work differently on the *Supplement's* title page). Therefore, for ease of reference, the work will hereafter be shortened to the following: Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*.

what Matthew Poole confirmed: “Our Evangelist alone taketh notice of this Parable; nor hath it any particular Exposition annexed.”¹³⁴

In the previous parable, Keach presented his “usual method,”¹³⁵ namely, to determine the scope/design, parts, and doctrines of the parable. Uniquely for the parable in Mark 4:26–29, Keach deviated from this “usual method” to give two points of context. First, according to verse 24, people should take care as to what doctrine (seed) they hear because “if the Seed be not good, or of the right kind, the Fruit will not be good.”¹³⁶ Second, people should “take heed what you hear, as to the measure or quantity of your hearing; for if God Sowes plentifully, or measure forth abundantly unto you, he expects increase accordingly.”¹³⁷

There seems to be little Puritan exposition on Mark 4:26–29. Yet, Poole’s introduction to the Gospel of Mark sheds light on a possible reason for this:

His History is much shorter than that of any of the other three Evangelists, yet in some particular parts he added very much to Matthew’s Relations. He seemeth much to have compared Notes with Matthew, and hath very few things which Matthew hath not, (tho he omitteth many things which he hath) which hath much shortened our Annotations upon this Gospel.¹³⁸

Poole surmised that he could write less on Mark’s account because Matthew adequately addressed the information in his account, which may explain the apparent void in Puritan

¹³⁴ Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible. Wherein the Sacred Text Is Inserted, and Various Readings Annex’d, Together with Parallel Scriptures, the More Difficult Terms in Each Verse Are Explained, Seeming Contradictions Reconciled, Questions and Doubts Resolved, and the Whole Text Opened* (London, 1685), 2:Mark Chap. IV. Also, John Lightfoot (1602–1675), in *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, pays little attention to the Gospel of Mark. Lightfoot only expounds on Mark 1:4 and Mark 1:10 in his entire discourse. John Lightfoot, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists among Themselves, and with the Old Testament: The First Part, from the Beginning of the Gospels to the Baptisme of Our Saviour, with an Explanation of the Chiefest Difficulties Both in Language and Sense* (London: R. Cotes, 1644), 136–37, 192–93.

¹³⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 1:157.

¹³⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:62.

¹³⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:62.

¹³⁸ Poole, *Annotations*, 2:276.

literature. However, Poole's *Annotations* will serve well for interaction because Keach referenced Poole throughout *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*.¹³⁹

Keach's Interpretation of the Parable

Subsequent to his discussion about context, Keach returned to his usual method as he outlined three purposes for the parable.¹⁴⁰ The first purpose illustrates the significant blessing associated with the diligent preaching of the gospel.¹⁴¹ The second purpose demonstrates how the seed of the Word takes root and springs up in the hearts of those who receive it. It also advises ministers not to be overly concerned if they do not immediately witness the fruit of their labors.¹⁴² The ultimate purpose is to convey to disciples that the gospel would experience success and prosperity in the world, preparing all in its path for the day of harvest.¹⁴³ Notably, the common thread binding each purpose statement together revolves around the Word and the gospel. Additionally, in typical Keachean and Puritan fashion, Keach outlined the sermon by determining what is meant

¹³⁹ Consider the following example in which Keach referred to Poole: In *Book II, Sermon XXI*, Keach expounded Luke 25:23. In this exposition, Keach stated, "Some (as our Annotators) take the best Robe to mean our inherent Righteousness, but I have shewd that cannot be the best Robe. I should rather (saith he) chuse to interpret the killing the fatted Calf for the Prodigal to represent the application of the Blood of Christ." In the margin notes, Keach wrote, "Contin. Of Pool's Annot." Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:120. See also Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:36, 160, 212; 3:49. Jonathan Arnold suggests what Keach meant by "Annotators": "Keach frequently cited the Westminster Assembly and 'our Annotators'—a term he used to refer to the major Puritan biblical commentators such as Matthew Poole and to notes such as those found in the Geneva Bible." Jonathan W. Arnold, *Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies 11 (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, 2013), 39.

¹⁴⁰ Keach's numbering is slightly confusing. He began the section called "The Scope of the Parable" with the number 2. Consequently, the three purpose statements are labelled 2, 3, and 4. Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁴¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁴² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁴³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:63. Interestingly, Poole seemed to understand a different purpose for the parable. Though Poole's comments do not contradict Keach's three purposes, he had a different emphasis. Poole argued, "The Scope of it seemeth to be, to let us know, that God will have an Account of Men, for their Hearing of God's Word." Poole focused on the aspect of hearing and heeding the Word that is sown. Consequently, he ended his comments on this parable by noting, "Therefore Men had need take heed what and how they hear: This I take to be the sence of this Parable." Poole, *Annotations*, 2:Mark Chap. IV.

by the man who casts seeds, sleep night and day, the seed growing itself, the ear and full corn in the ear, and putting in the sickle.¹⁴⁴ The meaning attributed to this parable's parts reveals the Christ-centered nature of the sermon.

Christ-Centered Nature of the Parable

The Christ-centered nature of this sermon is not expressed primarily through the single doctrine presented in the text but the explanation of the parts.¹⁴⁵ In the previous sermon, Keach named Christ as the main character in the parable—Christ was the pearl of great price. As seen in the sermons that will follow, Christ as the main character is a key feature of Keach's parable sermons. In this sermon, however, Keach opted for a slightly different approach. He prefaced this by saying, "A man, the man may primarily refer to the Son of Man, for it is Christ who Sows the good Seed Matt. 13:8."¹⁴⁶ This statement shows that Keach was aware of the necessity to preach Christ. Additionally, Keach's statement acknowledges that it may be adequate to interpret the parable with Christ as the main character, identifying Christ as the sower. A possible validation for this conclusion is Keach's belief that the sower in Matthew 13 represents Christ. In his sermon on Matthew 13, Keach said,

The sower is the Son of Man; his Word it is; Thou hast the words of everlasting life. The Gospel is not the Word of men, but the Word of God. But more comprehensively, the faithful Ministers of the Gospel; they that preach the Word, may be said to sow the Seed, but indeed it is our Lord Jesus that is more properly the Sower; he it is that Sows the Seed of the Word by them, they are but Christ's Seeds-men.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁴⁵ The single doctrine stated in the text is: "Doct. That the Seed of the Word sown in the Heart of a hearer, insensibly takes Root, and Springs up, and gradually grows to full maturity." Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 64.

¹⁴⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁴⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 1:112.

In Matthew 13, Keach said that ministers sow the seed of the gospel. However, ultimately, the sower is the Lord Jesus because he sows the Word through his instruments, the ministers of the gospel.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, in Mark 4:26–29, Keach seemed confident that the sower refers specifically to ministers of the gospel: “Since the Lord Jesus sleeps not, I conclude our Saviour refers here to his Ministers; for the Man that casts Seed into the Ground, is said to sleep Night and Day, and rise; besides, the Lord Jesus knows how it grows and springs up, tho’ Ministers do not.”¹⁴⁹ Poole agreed that the sower in this instance refers to ministers: “So the Ministers of the gospel ought faithfully to do their parts, in sowing the Seed of the Gospel.”¹⁵⁰ Poole asserted that “the Minister of the Gospel doth not presently discern the fruit of his labour” because Poole argued that “the Fruit of the Word preached, appears by degrees.”¹⁵¹ Though Keach did not speak explicitly of Christ’s working through his ministers (as in Matthew 13), he spoke of the ministers as belonging to Christ: “So Christ’s Ministers having done their part, they may (with other Men) sleep or take their quiet rest, tho’ not without looking up to God for a Blessing upon their Ministry, nor without an expectation of increase.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Keach knew the importance of the role ministry of the Gospel had. He even wrote a treatise to defend the financial support of ministers for their labor. Hanserd Knollys is often credited with the work because he was one of the ministers who signed the document. However, Keach oversaw its composition. In the work he has a section entitled *The Gospel Minister’s Maintenance Vindicated*. See Benjamin Keach, *The Gospel Minister’s Maintenance Vindicated. Wherein, a Regular Ministry in the Churches, Is First Asserted, and the Objections against a Gospel Maintenance for Ministers, Answered. Also, the Dignity, Necessity, Difficulty, Use and Excellency of the Ministry of Christ Is Opened. Likewise, the Nature and Vveghtiness of That Sacred Vvork and Office Clearly Evinc’d. Recommended to the Baptized Congregations, by Several Elders in and about the City of London* (London: John Harris, 1689), 13.

¹⁴⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁵⁰ Poole, *Annotations*, 2:Mark Chap. IV.

¹⁵¹ Poole, *Annotations*, 2:Mark Chap. IV. Two comments in the Geneva Bible notes are significant. The note explains that the similitude speaks about the kingdom of God: “The kingdome of God seemeth to have very little appearance or beginning, yet God doeth increase it above man’s reason.” More significant is the comment about ministers: “If the ministers do their duetie [*sic*], God wil give ye increase.” *Geneva Bible*, S. Marke, 19.

¹⁵² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:63.

Therefore, if Keach did not see Christ as representing any element or character in the parable, how did he preach Christ? The doctrine is important: “That the Seed of the Word sown in the Heart of a hearer, insensibly takes Root, and Springs up, and gradually grows to full maturity.”¹⁵³ The seed sown by the minister is the Word of God. This Word, according to Keach’s first purpose of the text, is “the Preaching of the Gospel.”¹⁵⁴ Throughout this sermon, then, it is not a main character that Keach used to preach Christ. It is the image of the seed as the Word that is used to preach Christ. Through this lens, Keach revealed his *Tropologia* method.

Tropologia Method of Preaching Christ

Keach used an analogy from *Tropologia* to play a pivotal role in this sermon. The analogy is “The Word of God compared to Seed.”¹⁵⁵ Keach stated that “Some Seeds which the Sower sows fall upon stony place and some on thorny Ground.” By reference to Matthew 13, Keach compared this with God’s Word: “The Seed of God’s Word, which the Son of Man by his faithful Ministers soweth in the Ministration of the Gospel, falls oftentimes upon a hard and rocky-hearted Sinner.”¹⁵⁶ Keach compared the seed to the Word of God and Christ to the sower who sows through the ministers of the gospel.

In this sermon, Keach discussed why “the Seed of the Word doth not take Root in the Hearts of all Persons that hear it.”¹⁵⁷ He answered this concern by highlighting Satan’s role in removing the seed from the heart of man. Keach presented many ways by which Satan steals the seed from the heart. For example, Satan, at times, expels the Word from their hearts by inundating them with earthly thoughts. Additionally, he may seize it

¹⁵³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:64.

¹⁵⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:63.

¹⁵⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 3:67.

¹⁵⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 3:67.

¹⁵⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:64.

away by maintaining their ignorance of the Word. Keach emphasized the hearer's ignorance when he claimed they did not understand the need to receive Christ.¹⁵⁸ Thus, one who lacks comprehension of the gospel fails to grasp the necessity of receiving Christ. Consequently, while the seed in the parable does not explicitly refer to Christ, it does pertain to the Word of Christ, specifically, the gospel. Furthermore, Satan steals the seed from the heart by persuading individuals that they have already received the Word. Keach delineated the primary purpose behind the devil's activities, stating, "The Devil doth thus chiefly keep those who hear the Word from believing in Christ, who is the sole object and chief treasure of the Word."¹⁵⁹

Thus, the devil's main objective is to keep those who hear the Word of Christ from believing in Christ. In fact, the evil one is content to let people hear the Word as long as they do not believe the message: "If he can keep them from believing or, flying to, or depending upon the Lord Jesus, by an act of true and saving Faith: he'l [*sic*]never hinder a Man from hearing."¹⁶⁰ In sum, the seed of the Word is the gospel, which ultimately points to Christ and is intended to be heard in such a way that one believes in Christ.

Keach did not stop there. He moved from the purpose and intent of the seed to the effect of the seed. In the sermon, Keach intended to "shew you how, or after what manner or by what means the Seed springs up."¹⁶¹ Keach argued that the Word springs up in such a way that is not known to the individual, yet it is "by the Spirits creating in their

¹⁵⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:64.

¹⁵⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:64.

¹⁶⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:64. In *Tropologia*, Keach spoke about the seed saying, "When the Seed is cast into the Earth, it must be covered, or else the Birds may pick it up." Keach compared this to God's Word: "So the Word of God ought to be hid or covered in our Hearts, that Satan may not steal it away from us." Therefore, Keach used the same imagery in this sermon and *Tropologia*. Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 3:67.

¹⁶¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:64.

Hearts good desires and inclinations.”¹⁶² Similarly in *Tropologia*, Keach confirmed that just as the ground is often hard for the seed, so “Our Hearts are naturally hard, and have need to be plowed up, which is also done by the Word, and Conviction of the Spirit.”¹⁶³ Additionally, Keach noted that just as the “Seed lies some time in the Ground, before it springs up,” so “The Word of God does often lie hid for a while in the Heart of a Sinner, before it eminently shews it self.”¹⁶⁴

Keach asserted that once the Spirit accomplishes his work in the individual’s heart, their affections transform. In this altered state, they delight in conversing about Christ and matters pertaining to Christ, as their minds assume a spiritual orientation.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, the seed inclines individuals toward love for Christ because they discover in him “the Pearl of Great Price,” experiencing life and deliverance from death.¹⁶⁶ Keach affirmed that when the Word is firmly established in the heart, the individual’s soul earnestly longs for Christ, having fallen in love with Jesus. As the person undergoes a transformative experience through the Word, they forsake their love for sin and develop a profound affection for Christ, crying out, “I must have Christ or die; what is my life to me if I have not Christ; the rooting of the Word is the rooting of the sinner in love for Christ.”¹⁶⁷

Keach’s main contention in the sermon is the doctrine he set forth at the beginning—the seed is sown by the minister, and it takes root by the Spirit until it grows into maturity. Therefore, Keach concluded the sermon with a pertinent application: “That

¹⁶² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:64.

¹⁶³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 3:67.

¹⁶⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 3:67.

¹⁶⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:65.

¹⁶⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:65. Keach’s mention of the pearl of great price highlights further links between this parable and the previous parable.

¹⁶⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:65.

the faithful Ministers of the Gospel are Christ's Seeds men, they cast the Seed into the Ground, and must not regard either Wind nor Weather, but Preach the Word in Season and out of Season."¹⁶⁸ Correspondingly, Keach had two sections in *Tropologia* called, "Ministers compared to Planters."¹⁶⁹ In these sections, Keach stated, "A Planter's Work (like other Labourers) is very hard; they oftentimes sweat at it, spend and waste themselves." Likewise, "the Minister's Work a very hard and laborious Work; no Digger nor Planter works harder, or takes more pains, than some faithful Planters, or Preachers of the Gospel . . . their Study and great Labour, waste their frail Bodies. Some Sinner [*sic*] have rocky Hearts."¹⁷⁰ Therefore, the ministers of Christ do Christ's work, planting the seed of Christ's Word, trusting that many will believe in Christ, which results in a deep and passionate affection for Christ. Although Keach took a different approach to preaching Christ in this sermon, the sermon is still fundamentally Christ-centered.

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37)

Keach devoted five sermons to *The Parable of the Man that Fell among Thieves*, more commonly known as *The Good Samaritan*. When selecting a parable from Luke there were many to choose from. Yet, it seemed wise to consider a parable from *Book II* in the series, since the first parable was taken from *Book I*. This limits the choice to the parables in Luke 10 and Luke 15. The reasoning behind the selection of Luke 10 is: First, Keach noted a connection between Luke 10 and Matthew 13, urging readers to "see the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price."¹⁷¹ Second, there seems to be a pattern in the way Keach linked the main characters of the parables to Christ. Therefore, it is worth investigating whether Keach made the same connection between the Good Samaritan and

¹⁶⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:66.

¹⁶⁹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:275.

¹⁷⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:273.

¹⁷¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:30.

Christ. Finally, from the outset of the sermon, Keach critiqued annotators when he stated, “*Our late Annotators upon the Holy Bible, take but little notice of this Parable, more than to shew the design of our Lord herein, which is to shew who is our Neighbour.*”¹⁷² This statement justifies considering the annotators who may have influenced Keach. As mentioned previously, Poole serves well for interaction since Keach acknowledged his work numerous times. It is also worth consulting another Puritan annotator, Christopher Ness (1621–1705), the author of *A Compleat History and Mystery of the Old and New Testament*.¹⁷³ Further, though Calvin was not a Puritan, it is necessary to consider his annotations, for when Keach mentioned “late annotators,” it is possible that he had in mind Calvin’s work *A Harmony upon the Three Evangelists Matthew, Marke, and Luke*.¹⁷⁴ Justification for this theory is determined by Keach’s reference to Calvin’s annotations in *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*.¹⁷⁵

Keach’s Interpretation of the Parable

¹⁷² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

¹⁷³ Christopher Ness, *A Compleat History and Mystery of the Old and New Testament Logically Discusst and Theologically Improved: In Four Volumes . . . the like Undertaking (in Such a Manner and Method) Being Never by Any Author Attempted before: Yet This Is Now Approved and Commended by Grave Divines* (London, 1696). Christopher Ness (Nesse) was an independent minister born at North Cave, Yorkshire, England. For more information see *MTP*, 448–49. Although Keach did not explicitly reference Ness in his works, Ness is notable Puritan annotator who serves well as a comparison.

¹⁷⁴ Jean Calvin, *A Compleat History and Mystery of the Old and New Testament Logically Discusst and Theologically Improved: In Four Volumes . . . the like Undertaking (in Such a Manner and Method) Being Never by Any Author Attempted before: Yet This Is Now Approved and Commended by Grave Divines* (London, 1610). Keach mentioned Calvin numerous times throughout his corpus. For example, Keach named Calvin as one of those who excellently refuted the Jewish Sabbath: “Jesus Christ, who in the New Testament hath appointed the first Day of the Week, and not the last, to be the Day of Gospel-Worship for us) but the Jewish seventh Day, as Reverend Calvin excellently hath shewed (Institut. pag. 124, 125, 126.) was Ceremonial.” This also shows that Keach possessed and studied Calvin’s Institutes. Benjamin Keach, *The Breach Repaired in God’s Worship: Or, Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Proved to Be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ Wherein the Chief Arguments of Many Learned Divines, Who Have Wrote on That Subject, Are Recited, as Mr. Cotton of New England, Mr. Sidenham, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Owen, Mr. Caryl, Dr. Du-Veil, Mr. Wells, &c. With an Answer to All Objections. As Also, an Examination of Mr. Isaac Marlow’s Two Papers, One Called, A Discourse Concerning Singing, &c. the Other, An Appendix: Wherein His Arguments and Cavils Are Detected and Refuted* (London: John Hancock, 1691), 166–67.

¹⁷⁵ See Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 3:17. Additionally, Keach named Calvin as one of his influences. See Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 36.

In his introduction to the text, Keach set out three purposes for the parable. First, Keach noted, the purpose of the parable is “to shew who is our Neighbour.”¹⁷⁶ Keach conceded, along with other annotators, that this is “our Lord’s grand Design”¹⁷⁷ in telling the parable, yet Keach was not satisfied with this sole purpose. Then, through this contextual note, Keach determined another purpose. The parable was told to an expert in the Law who had great confidence in his justification by the Law.¹⁷⁸ Consequently, based on context, Keach determined that the parable displays the depravity of man and the evil of their sin.¹⁷⁹ Finally, the parable highlights the insufficiency of the Law, showing that neither the priest nor their sacrifices could undo the miserable state of the sinner.¹⁸⁰

From the outset, Keach viewed this as a “Metaphorical Text,”¹⁸¹ like many of his sermon texts. In *Tropologia*, Keach and Thomas Delaune,¹⁸² define biblical metaphor: “As to its definition, it is said to be a trope, when a word is translated from its proper and genuine signification to another less proper.”¹⁸³ Simply put, a metaphor is a word that represents or symbolizes something else. Thus, Keach outlined this sermon series by determining what is meant by the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho, the thieves, being stripped, being wounded, being half dead, being passed by the priest, the

¹⁷⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

¹⁷⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

¹⁷⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

¹⁷⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

¹⁸⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

¹⁸¹ This refers to Keach’s two-part sermon series on Matthew 3:12. In this series, Keach allocated a metaphorical meaning to every aspect of the text. For example, the fanner who fans the chaff is Christ. As the fanner, Christ uses different instruments as his fans, such as the Word of God and church discipline. A similar “metaphorical” approach was adopted in his parable expositions, which some like Blomberg and Bumpers would label as an allegorical approach. Benjamin Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened: Or, the Glory of God’s Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers: And His Direful Wrath against Impenitent Sinners: Containing the Substance of near Forty Sermons upon Several Subjects, 1–40* (London, 1693), 1.

¹⁸² Arnold notes, “Keach credited his co-author with the translation of *Philologia sacra* which comprised the first section of the lengthy tome.” Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 21.

¹⁸³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 38.

Samaritan, the binding of his wounds, setting him on his own beast, the inn, the host, and his coming.¹⁸⁴ For Keach, each component of the parable had a meaning, and each discussion of meaning formulated the structure of the sermon. Thus, by definition, Keach's overall approach to his parable sermons reflects his *Tropologia* method.

The Christ-Centered Nature of the Parable

Central to Keach's approach is his interpretation of the characters in the text. The man, Keach believed, was fallen man.¹⁸⁵ A further analysis of this fallen man is highlighted by the first two doctrines of the series: (1) "That Mankind who are gone from God, are fallen among Thieves"¹⁸⁶ and (2) "That Mankind by Sin naturally are in a miserable, wretched, and deplorable Condition."¹⁸⁷ Since the man represented fallen man, the only Samaritan capable of rescuing the man is Christ himself.¹⁸⁸ Keach was following the same Christ-centered pattern as found in *The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price* (Matt 13:45–46). There, the merchant represents the spiritual seeker, but, in the good Samaritan parable, the man represents fallen humanity. In addition, the pearl represents Christ and the Samaritan represents Christ.

This point is the most contested of Keach's points in interpreting this parable. Poole concluded that the main scope of the parable is to determine who our neighbor is: "It is certain that the Principal Scope of our Saviour in this History or Parable, was to convince the Lawyer, that every one is our Neighbour."¹⁸⁹ It is this view that Keach critiqued. In fact, Poole never even hinted at Christ being the ultimate Good Samaritan.

¹⁸⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:21–22.

¹⁸⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:20.

¹⁸⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:21.

¹⁸⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:25.

¹⁸⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:20.

¹⁸⁹ Poole, *Annotations*, 2:Luke Chap. X.

Calvin's comments aligned with Poole's when he stated the purpose of the parable: "The Lord therefore of purpose calleth all neighbours, that the affinity it self might joyne them together one to another."¹⁹⁰ Additionally, Calvin stated that the "chiefe purpose" of the parable was neighborhood, which joined all humanity together.¹⁹¹

Furthermore, Calvin deemed interpretations, like the one Keach provided, presented as allegorizing the text on two fronts. The first allegory that Calvin spoke against is that which the patrons of free will proposed in his day. This allegory suggested that the wounded man depicted Adam's post-fall condition. Calvin concluded it was not Christ's purpose on this occasion to speak about corrupt human nature.¹⁹² The "other Allegory" that Calvin spoke against is Keach's main thesis—that Christ represents the Good Samaritan. Calvin's lament is worth quoting in full:

They imagined this Samaritan to be Christe, because he is our keeper they say that wine and oyle were powred into the wound because that hrist health us with repentance and the promise of grace. They have forged a thyrde subiltie, that Christ doth not restore to health presently, but committeth us to the church as to an Inne keeper to bee healed by little and a little. I graunte that every of these is very plausible; but the Scripture must be more revered, then to take this libertie thus to alter the sense of the same. But it is manifest to every man that these imaginations were devised by curious men agianste Christes minde.¹⁹³

Though Poole and Calvin opposed the type of interpretation Keach offered, Keach's conclusion was not without Puritan support. Christopher Ness, within his Genesis annotations, briefly spoke about the Good Samaritan, saying, "The good Samaritan (who represents our Saviour, first poured in wine to search the wounds, and then oyl to supple them, Luk. 10.33, 34. 'tis Christ's method to apply first the sharpness of the Law, and then the sweetness of the Gospel."¹⁹⁴ When Ness spoke directly about the Good

¹⁹⁰ Calvin, *A Harmonie*, 597.

¹⁹¹ Calvin, *A Harmonie*, 597.

¹⁹² Calvin, *A Harmonie*, 598.

¹⁹³ Calvin, *A Harmonie*, 598.

¹⁹⁴ Ness, *A Compleat History*, 401.

Samaritan in his reflections on the life of Christ, he asked, “Who is this good Samaritan? Answer, ‘Tis our Blessed Saviour.”¹⁹⁵ Keach, with Ness, affirmed that the Good Samaritan represents Christ. Furthermore, from a Keachean perspective, he was not allegorizing the text, but noting the metaphors (tropes, analogies) within the text. Thus, Keach was simply adopting his *Tropologia* method to preach Christ.

By acknowledging Christ as the Samaritan, Keach affirmed that there were two possible implications of this truth. Christ as the Samaritan referred to his incarnation and penal substitution. As Keach suggested, it may refer “to Christ’s coming into the World to assume our Nature. And thus he came where the Sinner was, and put himself in our Law place.”¹⁹⁶ Then, Christ as the Samaritan could convey his empowerment of the Christian for godly living. Keach said, “It may refer also to his gracious coming to a wounded Sinner by his Word and Spirit, in helping him to apply the virtue of his on precious Blood to his wounded Soul.”¹⁹⁷ At this point in Keach’s discussion, it is impossible to ascertain which of these implications Keach preferred. However, Keach revealed his preference for the first implication throughout the sermon series. Keach set forth this view as he presented a number of doctrines that relate to Christ as the Good Samaritan, but for the purposes of this analysis, only three doctrines will be assessed.¹⁹⁸ The investigation of these doctrines will highlight Keach’s *Tropologia* method.

Tropologia Method of Preaching Christ

In *Sermon I* Keach derived the doctrine from Luke 10:30 “That Mankind who are gone from God, are fallen among Thieves, viz. Sin and Satan, who have wounded and

¹⁹⁵ Ness, *A Compleat History, The life of Christ*, 119.

¹⁹⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20–21.

¹⁹⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:21.

¹⁹⁸ The second doctrine in the sermon series concerns mankind in general: “Doct. So that we may infer, That Mankind by Sin naturally are in a miserable, wretched, and deplorable Condition.” Keach *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:25.

robbed them, and left them in a sad and lamentable State and Condition.”¹⁹⁹ In order to prove the doctrine, Keach sought to show how sin and Satan are compared to thieves. Following this statement, Keach presented five comparisons between thieves, sin, and Satan. Correspondingly, *Tropologia* has a section entitled “Sin a Thief,” in which Keach referenced Luke 10:30. Prior to his customary comparisons, Keach referred to thieves as representing sin and Satan.²⁰⁰ Concerning his parallels, the following example will suffice: Keach stated, “Thieves many times take and lead poor Travellers out of the King’s High-Way, into some by-Place.”²⁰¹ In a similar way, “Sin and Satan, lead Sinners out of the true way of God, into by and untrodden Paths of Sin and Idolatry.”²⁰² Keach made an almost identical comparison in his sermon when reflecting upon the work of sin and Satan.²⁰³ Keach formed the connection between the thieves, sin, and Satan because this provided a pathway for preaching Christ as the solution. Christ is the Samaritan who rescues sinners from the effects of sin and Satan.

Sermon VI, represents the most Christocentric sermon in the series. Christ is revealed most clearly by the two doctrines asserted in the sermon. The first doctrine, “The Compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ to poor Sinners is very great,”²⁰⁴ speaks of Christ’s compassion, emphasizing that he became a curse for humanity, standing charged with humanity’s sins and taking the curse of the Law on their behalf.²⁰⁵ Christ, as a substitute for sinners, received divine wrath due for humanity as an act of his love and

¹⁹⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:21. Earlier in the sermon Keach stated what he believed is meant by thieves: “By falling among Thieves, may be meant that Mischief and Misery which hath befallen Man by Sin, Satan, and other Enemies of the Soul.” Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20.

²⁰⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:331.

²⁰¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:333.

²⁰² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:333.

²⁰³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:20–21.

²⁰⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:30.

²⁰⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:31.

compassion, enduring the pains of hell so that they might live.²⁰⁶ Christ's role as a substitute was rooted in God the Son becoming flesh through the incarnation. Thus, it is through the incarnation that Christ manifested infinite mercy, with goodness and mercy being essential properties of his divine nature.²⁰⁷ Keach revealed Christ's compassion as the Good Samaritan. However, the second doctrine ties his Christocentric approach to his *Tropologia* method.

The second doctrine states, "Jesus Christ is the only Physician of our Soul."²⁰⁸ Keach spoke of Christ's skill and ability to heal every sin-cursed soul. Christ's role as the great physician results in the empowerment of Christians. In Keach's hymnbook *Spiritual Songs*, he composed a hymn entitled, "The good Samaritan." In the hymn's first line it reflected upon Christ as great physician, "Sinner rejoyce who wounded be, your blest Physician's near."²⁰⁹ While Keach did not devote a section in *Tropologia* to speaking of Christ as the Good Samaritan, Keach did note a link between Christ as Samaritan and Christ as physician. In his section about the disparities of Christ and the physician, Keach asserted, "Physicians provide not Hospitals, nor other Accommodations . . . for their Patients, at their own charge." Conversely, "Christ is at all the charge with poor Sinners; he, like the good Samaritan, sets the poor Soul on his own Breast, brings him to his own Inn or Hospital, which was his Church."²¹⁰

Therefore, as the Samaritan and physician, "Jesus Christ also knows the Constitution, or natural Inclination of every Soul, whether most addicted to this or that

²⁰⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:31.

²⁰⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:32.

²⁰⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*, 2:33.

²⁰⁹ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Songs Being the Marrow of Scripture in Songs of Praise to Almighty God from the Old and New Testament: With a Hundred Divine Hymns on Several Occasions as Now Practised in Several Congregations in and about London* (London, 1700), 42.

²¹⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:117.

Sin, or Pride, Passion, the inordinate Love of this word, or of a slothful Disposition.”²¹¹ By knowing what is wrong with his patient, Christ knows exactly what cure is needed, and so he cures the patient “by making the Sinner Sensible of his state, by the convictions of his Spirit, and putting him upon Prayer.”²¹² Through the work of the Spirit, Christ is doing his work as a physician of souls. Before concluding with his application, Keach posed the question concerning how Christ heals sick and wounded sinners.²¹³ His answer unfolds in a twofold manner, harmonizing the implications seamlessly. Keach argued that, in the first place, it is through Christ’s blood, shed to satisfy the Law and justice of God, that individuals are healed of the guilt of sin.²¹⁴ He believed Christ, as the Samaritan and the substitute, “put himself in our law place.”²¹⁵ Moving beyond this, Keach maintained that healing occurs by applying Christ’s blood to believers’ souls, accomplished by the Spirit. According to Keach, the Word plays a crucial role in making known the only way for cure and offering encouragement to believe its promises.²¹⁶ He contended that Christ, as the great physician, empowered Christians to godly living through the Spirit and the Word, thus healing their souls.

In *Sermon VIII*, Keach continued to speak of Christ as the Samaritan in his physician-like role. From Luke 10:34, Keach stated the third doctrine: “Jesus Christ takes care of all them that he heals, pardons, and brings into his Church.”²¹⁷ Keach determined from this text that Christ, who is shepherd and physician, is also the Samaritan.²¹⁸

²¹¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:33.

²¹² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:33.

²¹³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:34.

²¹⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:34.

²¹⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:21.

²¹⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:34.

²¹⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:40.

²¹⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:40.

Christ’s care as the Shepherd manifests in his redemptive work. They are his own through election, because the Father gave them to him. They are his through redemption, having purchased them with his blood. They are his through adoption and through regeneration. They are not only his followers, children, and friends, but also his beloved spouse.²¹⁹ Keach delved into this theme in *Tropologia*, dedicating a section to “Christ as Shepherd.”²²⁰ In comparing Christ to a shepherd, Keach echoed similar sentiments: “Christ’s sheep are His by Creation, by the free Donation of the Father, and by Election: They are His by Purchase or Redemption, bought with the Price of His Blood.” Through the lens of *Tropologia*, Keach articulated Christ’s role as Shepherd. Consequently, Christ is uniquely positioned to care for his saints, akin to the Samaritan’s care for the man.²²¹ Christ’s role as the Shepherd/Samaritan continues even now: “What is his business now in Heaven, but to take care of his Saints on Earth, and to intercede to the Father for them?”²²²

God the Father as a Husbandman (John 15:1–2)

Justification for the selection of *God the Father as a Husbandman* (John 15:1–2) is not difficult. First, it was necessary to select one parable from each Gospel. According to Keach, this was one of only two parables in John.²²³ This parable also

²¹⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:40.

²²⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:162.

²²¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:40.

²²² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 2:40.

²²³ The other parable sermon in John was titled *Of the Door into the Sheepfold, John 10.1*. See Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d*, 3:130. When one considers the choice between this parable and John 15:1, the fact that Thomas Goodwin gave an explicit exposition on John 15:1 weighs in favor of its selection. Modern writers do not acknowledge parables in the Gospel of John. For examples, see Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012) and Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018). The Puritans’ use of the Geneva Bible gave them the justification to call this text in John a “parable.” The Geneva Bible’s introductory note concerning John 15 states, “The swete consolation and mutual love between Christ and his members under the parable of the vine.” *Geneva Bible*, 51.

functions in a somewhat paradigmatic sense since it highlights Keach's concern for the immediate context, the scope/purpose, and the parts of the parable. Furthermore, those who influenced Keach commented directly on this parable. Significantly, Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) wrote an exposition on this parable called *The Tryall of a Christian's Growth*.²²⁴ Keach named Goodwin as one of the most significant influences on his thinking and named him numerous times in *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd*.²²⁵

Keach's Interpretation of the Parable

Keach initiated the sermon with introductory remarks on the context, following his customary practice. He observed two predominant perspectives regarding the parable's occasion: (1) Some propose that the occasion was connected to the Lord's Supper and (2) Others contend that he saw a vine while passing over the Mount of Olives. However, Keach ultimately asserted uncertainty about the immediate occasion.²²⁶ While Keach was concerned with the parable's context, he was unwilling to presume the context either.

²²⁴ Thomas Goodwin was born on the October 5, 1600, in Rollesby, England. Goodwin was a prominent figure among the independents "serving in the Westminster Assembly and on the committee which penned the *Savoy Declaration*." In addition, it is worth noting that Goodwin's "son and namesake originally collected and edited the elder Goodwin's works for posthumous publication." Consequently, "Keach cited both Goodwins, at times without distinguishing between the two." However, "Keach did occasionally distinguish between the two, referring to the elder Goodwin as 'Dr. Goodwin' and the younger as 'Mr. Goodwin'" (Arnold, *Reformed Theology*, 21n153). Also see Thomas Goodwin, *The tryall of a Christians growth in mortification, vivification, or purging out corruption. Bringing forth more fruit. A treatise affording some helps rightly to judge of growth in grace, by resolving some tentations, clearing some mistakes, answering some questions, about spirituall growth. Together with other observations upon the parable of the vine, Iohn 15. 1,2. Verses* (London, 1641).

²²⁵ See Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 36, where Keach named Goodwin as one of his influences. Additionally, Keach named Goodwin a number of times in *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd* (e.g., 1:170; 3:98).

²²⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138. Though Keach did not cite Poole on this occasion, the two possible contexts and his conclusion mirrored the comments of Poole exactly. Poole suggested that some believe the context relates to the Last Supper and others believe Christ saw a vine by the Mount of Olives. Yet, Poole concluded that there cannot be certainty as to the occasion. See Poole, *Annotations*, 2:361.

Keach directed the reader from the context toward the scope of the parable.²²⁷ Although Keach's numbering system is somewhat awkwardly laid out, it is possible to derive four purposes for this parable. The first purpose of this parable is "to shew that God the Father is first in all Spiritual Operation, or the prime or Original Author of all Spiritual Blessings."²²⁸ In order to demonstrate that God is the originator of spiritual blessings, Keach made a number of subpoints under this purpose statement that reveal the Christocentric nature of the sermon. Keach referred to God as the husbandman responsible for planting Christ, the Mediator, describing him as the first and foremost plant of God's cultivation.²²⁹ According to Keach, Christ, the true vine, was initially planted within the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son. Through the incarnation, the Father planted the Son by preparing a body for him. Furthermore, it is not only Christ whom the Father plants, but those who are united to Christ by faith.²³⁰

According to Keach, the second reason for this parable is "to shew the Necessity of our being united to Jesus Christ if ever we bring forth fruit to God."²³¹ The third is to show that "in Christ Mystical . . . are some barren Branches, I mean in the visible Church, and that such shall in time be cut off and cast into the fire."²³² The final purpose of the parable is to reveal that those who achieve genuine spiritual union with Christ remain in him and bear fruit leading to eternal life. Subsequent to the purpose statements, Keach began "to open the parts"²³³ of the parable that highlight the threefold

²²⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²²⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²²⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²³⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²³¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²³² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²³³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

structure of the sermon: (1) Christ as the Vine, (2) God the Father as the Husbandman, and (3) believers as the branches.²³⁴

The Christ-centered Nature of the Parable

Keach deviated from his usual method by neglecting to state explicit doctrines from the text. However, the Christ-centered nature of the sermon is apparent in the purpose statements mentioned above. Keach acknowledged Christ's self-affirmation as the Vine when he elaborates on Christ's statement,

I am the true vine, &c. That is, I am the true Messiah, the true Saviour, the right Plant, and the true Root of all Grace; even he only that communicates Life unto the Souls of men, or He whom my Father hath ordained and planted to be Supporter of all his Elect, out of whom they must grow, being first united to me, if ever made fruitful unto God.²³⁵

Thus, Keach's Christ-centered approach continued—not only was Christ the pearl and the Samaritan, but also, by Christ's own affirmation, he is the Vine. Goodwin aligned with Keach, as his first two observations indicated: "1. Obser. How Christ is a Vine"; "2. Obser. That Christ is onely the [True Vine]." ²³⁶ However, Goodwin did not devote as much exposition on the vine as Keach. Goodwin only assigned two of his observations to the Vine (Christ), one observation toward the husbandman (God), and four observations

²³⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 138–44. Goodwin also mentioned the same three parts to the parable: "The Parable hath three parts: 1. A Vine here is, of all the fairest, ver. 1. 2. A Husbandman, of all the carefulest. 3. The end of planting this Vine, fruitfulness." Goodwin, *The Tryall*, 2. In observation 1, Goodwin noted that Christ is the vine. In observation 3, Goodwin spoke of the husbandman as God the Father. In observation 4, Goodwin highlighted "two sorts of Branches in this Vine." Though it seems like Keach and Goodwin differed on what is meant by the branches (because Keach acknowledged that they represented believers), Keach stated that one of the purposes of the text was to reveal the "barren branches." Goodwin also contended there to be "fruitfull and unfruitfull" branches. In Goodwin's "Use" section in the sermon, he indicated what he meant by the branches: "The Use is to stir up all that professe themselves in Christ to examine whther they be true genuine branches of this vine or no." Goodwin, *The Tryall*, 5–20. Moreover, Poole divided the parable into three parts: "As he compareth himself to the true Vine, by which he signifieth to us, that he is the true root and support of our spiritual life and fruit; so he compareth his Father to the Husbandman, to let us know, that his people are not only under his, but under his Father's care, which he afterwards more particularly openeth. He also, ver. 2. Compareth Believers, or Members of the Church, to Branches in a Vine." Poole, *Annotations*, 2:John Chap. XV.

²³⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²³⁶ Goodwin, *The Tryall*, 5–10.

about the branches (fruitful and unfruitful believers).²³⁷ Keach asked a question that drives the Christocentric nature of the sermon: “Quest. But why is Christ compared to a Vine?”²³⁸ Keach responded to the question with seven points. Each answer that Keach provided enables the reader to appreciate the beauty of Christ from another angle.

Keach, in his Christocentric approach, did not neglect the Trinity’s role in salvation, as shown in the sermon’s conclusion. Keach spoke of God the Father as “the prime or original Author of all Spiritual blessings and Privileges.”²³⁹ It is God the Father, the Husbandman, who grafts the branches into the True Vine: “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, considered as Mediator, is the Root or blessed Tree, Vine and true Olive, into whom all the elect are grafted, united, and so become fruitful.”²⁴⁰ In the final application, Keach exhorted believers to worship the Godhead by ascribing all glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

Ascribe all Glory unto him as the Author of all Grace, and the first Person in all Divine Operations, as well as he is the first Person in the Godhead, or of the Trinity . . . Ascribe all Glory to the Son, for as all things are from the Father, so all things are thro’ the Son; all Grace and divine Blessings were purchased for us by his Blood, and we have them as the fruit of his mediation . . . Ascribe all Glory to the holy Spirit, by whom we are renewed and helped to believe, and to apply the Blood of Christ to our souls, and who by his immediate Influences hath made us fruitful, and shall be helped to abide so unto eternal Life.²⁴¹

Nevertheless, Keach began his sermon by comparing Christ and the vine which commenced his Christo-centric emphasis and *Tropologia* approach.

Tropologia Method of Preaching Christ

²³⁷ After Goodwin made his fourth observation, he seemed to change terms from “observation” to “doctrine.” Subsequent to the fourth observation, Goodwin gave the fifth doctrine. See Goodwin, *The Tryall*, 46.

²³⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:138.

²³⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:143.

²⁴⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:143.

²⁴¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:144.

Keach's *Tropologia* method becomes apparent when he speaks about the parable's three major parts. The parts of the parable are: (1) Christ as the vine, (2) God the Father as the husbandman, and (3) believers as the branches.²⁴² When discussing Christ as the vine Keach made seven comparison between Christ and the vine. First, Keach recognized that the "Vine is not a lovely, stately and amiable Plant to look upon."²⁴³ Keach used this picture to illustrate Christ's humiliation: "So the Lord Jesus in his Humiliation appeared not to carnal Eyes, to be beautiful or glorious, as many Princes and Kings of the Earth, who shine forth in outward Glory, Beauty and Grandure."²⁴⁴ Keach validated this image by referencing Christ's humiliation as depicted in Isaiah 53.²⁴⁵ In *Tropologia* this was the first point of comparison that Keach made between Christ and the vine.²⁴⁶ Keach named a further ten points of comparison and three points of disparity in *Tropologia*. Six of the seven points of comparison below, which are discussed in detail to emphasize the Christocentric nature of the content, all appear within this section of *Tropologia*.

Additionally, Keach drew parallels between the names attributed to the vine and the names given to Christ, such as the Son of God, mighty God, everlasting Father,

²⁴² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138–44. Goodwin also mentioned the same three parts to the parable: "The Parable hath three parts: 1. A Vine here is, of all the fairest, ver. 1. 2. A Husbandman, of all the carefullest. 3. The end of planting this Vine, fruitfulness." Goodwin, *The Tryall*, 2. In observation 1, Goodwin noted that Christ was the vine. In observation 3, Goodwin spoke of the husbandman as God the Father. In observation 4, Goodwin highlighted "two sorts of Branches in this Vine." Although it seemed like Keach and Goodwin differ on what was meant by the branches (because Keach acknowledged that they represented believers), Keach stated that one of the purposes of the text is to reveal the "barren branches." Goodwin also contended there to be "fruitfull and unfruitfull" branches. In Goodwin's "Use" section in the sermon, he indicated what he means by the branches: "The Use is to stir up all that professe themselves in Christ to examine whther [*sic*] they be true genuine branches of this vine or no." Goodwin, *The Tryall*, 5–20. Moreover, Poole divided the parable into three parts: "As he compareth himself to the true Vine, by which he signifieth to us, that he is the true root and support of our spiritual life and fruit; so he compareth his Father to the Husbandman, to let us know, that his people are not only under his, but under his Father's care, which he afterwards more particularly openeth. He also, ver. 2. Compareth Believers, or Members of the Church, to Branches in a Vine." Poole, *Annotations*, 2:John Chap. XV.

²⁴³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²⁴⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²⁴⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138.

²⁴⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:223.

prince of peace, and wonderful counselor.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, he highlighted the vine's abundant sap and inward virtue, likening it to Christ, who is replete with spiritual sap and divine life, containing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.²⁴⁸ Just as the vine provides sap to nourish its branches, Christ bestows the sap of his grace upon his people. Moreover, the vine's exceptional fruitfulness mirrors Christ's prolific bearing of fruit for life, death, resurrection, and intercession.²⁴⁹

Keach's final comparison between Christ and the vine is his most extensive. In this point, Keach asserted, "The Vine bears and brings forth choice and pleasant Fruit. What are more sweet and pleasant than Grapes in some Countreys?"²⁵⁰ Therefore, not only does Christ bear much fruit, but he bears the choicest of fruits. Keach explicated his point:

His love is better than Wine, more cheering, more restorative, more reviving; nor is there any such Cordial in the World to revive a drooping and heavy heart: How sweet is the vine of Reconciliation, Redemption, Union and Communion, Pardon of Sin, Peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost! All is the Fruit of the true Vine, for all this sweet Fruit hath Christ brought forth, by His Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession. And they that drink of this Wine, forget their sorrows, it is so chearing, so reviving, so strengthening, so restorative, no Cordial in the World is like this.²⁵¹

In this one passionate exhortation, Keach extolled the majestic reality of Christ's work from humiliation to exaltation to intercession. Keach also spoke of Christ's shading us like a vine from "the scorching heat of God's wrath, and from the wrath, rage, and fury of

²⁴⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:138–39. See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:223, metaphor number II.

²⁴⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:139.

²⁴⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:139. See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:223, metaphor number V.

²⁵⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:139. See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:223, metaphor number VI.

²⁵¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:139.

the Devil and wicked men.”²⁵² Interestingly, Keach’s seventh and final point does not precisely correspond to a parallel or disparity made in *Tropologia*, yet it depicts the *Tropologia* method. In this seventh point, Keach called the reader to reflect upon Christ’s crucifixion. Keach stated, “The Fruit of the Vine is bruised and pressed that the Wine may flow forth: So was Jesus Christ bruised under the pressure of divine Anger.”²⁵³ From this comparison, Keach led the reader to the man on the cross and the benefits he provided: “Unless the Lord Jesus Christ had been bruised, we could have had no Wine of true Consolation, viz., no peace with God, no Justification, no Pardon of Sin; therefore it is said, *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief*, Isa. 53:5.”²⁵⁴

Keach’s Christ-centered approach is clear when he addressed Christ as the true vine. However, Keach was no less Christ-centered when he addressed God as the husbandman and the branches as believers. First, Keach spoke of God the Father as the husbandman who “hath Ground to till, Seed to sow, and Trees to plant, and servants to employ.”²⁵⁵ With reference to the trees planted, Keach directed the readers gaze toward Christ: “First planted Jesus Christ, this true Vine; Christ was early planted, and reason for it, because all other Spiritual Trees or Plants grow out of his Root.”²⁵⁶ Moreover, when Keach spoke of the servants whom the husbandman employs, he said, “Jesus Christ considered as Mediator is God’s Servant, *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, &c.*”²⁵⁷ Keach spoke highly of the husbandman’s best servant: “The Lord Jesus is the best Servant that God ever had, and he had done the hardest Work; no other Servant

²⁵² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:139. See Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:223, metaphor number VIII.

²⁵³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:139.

²⁵⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:139.

²⁵⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁵⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁵⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

indeed could do what Christ hath done, nor ever brought that glory unto him; he did not only sweat at his work, but bled also, yea, sweat great drops of Blood.”²⁵⁸ Keach also spoke of the husbandman as one who “must be rich, and have a good Stock to manage all, or to defray the charge of all his Husbandry.”²⁵⁹ Keach concluded that God the Father has the richest of stock in Christ:

Now the great God cannot want a Stock, for all things in Heaven and Earth are his. Jesus Christ is Gods, *All things are yours, ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods*. He is not only his Son, but his Servant; also (as you newly heard), all the Riches of Christ as Mediator, he received from God the Father, the holy Spirit, and all Grace is his, the Word and Ordinances, and the Promises are this Husbandmans, the Angels are his, and Ministers are his, therefore he hath stores of Riches, or Stock sufficient to manage His Spiritual Husbandry.²⁶⁰

In *Tropologia*, Keach wrote a section entitled, “God a Husbandman.”²⁶¹ In that section Keach, listed twenty-five parallels and nine disparities between God and a husbandman. In his sermon, he presented a similar structural form to *Tropologia*. He listed eight comparisons to between God and a husbandman and two ways in which God excels the husbandman.²⁶² For example, Keach argued that a husbandman has a large stock to manage. Correspondingly, “God cannot want a Stock, for all things in Heaven and Earth are his.”²⁶³ In *Tropologia*, Keach made a similar comparison, when he compared the husbandman who has “many beasts” to “God who lays claim to all the beasts of the Field.”²⁶⁴ God’s ownership of all beasts is his prerogative as creator. Yet, in the sermon, Keach drew attention to the work of Christ: “He [Christ] is not only his Son, but his

²⁵⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁵⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁶⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁶¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:14.

²⁶² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140–141.

²⁶³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁶⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:14.

Servant; also (as yon newly heard) all the Riches of Christ as Mediator, he received from God the Father.”²⁶⁵

In addition to speaking of Christ as the vine and God as the husbandman, Keach spoke of believers as the branches: “By Branches are meant Professors of the Gospel, or Church-members.”²⁶⁶ Keach used the picture of Christ as the vine and believers as the branches to preach what it means for believers to be united to Christ.²⁶⁷ Keach articulated a dual connection with Christ: through an outward or apparent profession and through the efficacy of a genuine spiritual union. Those who are internally united with Christ, possessing a vital connection, will bear fruit, as indicated in verse 16.²⁶⁸ By this twofold paradigm, Keach meant that there is a difference between a false profession of union with Christ and true spiritual union with Christ: “There is a being in Christ, and not a being in Christ, or a being externally in him, but not savingly or spiritually being in him, and these bring not forth fruit in him.”²⁶⁹ According to Keach, it is possible that “Hypocrites may bring forth some kind of Fruit for a time, but ‘tis not by vertue of their Union with Christ.”²⁷⁰ Therefore, Keach contended, “For without a Person is in Christ, or savingly united to the Lord Jesus, God regards not that fruit he brings forth.”²⁷¹

When answering the question as to why believers are likened to branches,²⁷² Keach expanded on the nature of believers’ union with Christ. Keach posed numerous

²⁶⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:140.

²⁶⁶ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:141.

²⁶⁷ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:141.

²⁶⁸ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:141.

²⁶⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:141.

²⁷⁰ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:141.

²⁷¹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:141.

²⁷² Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Supplement*, 3:142.

answers to this question, with the first laying the foundation for the rest: “The Vine bears the Branches; so Christ supports Believers.”²⁷³ Through their union, Christ not only supports believers but helps them grow, causes them to conform to his image, and enables them to bear fruit.²⁷⁴ Keach succinctly affirmed the meaning of the vine and branches imagery when he said, “Even as the Vine feeds, nourishes, supports and makes the Branches fruitful; so it is by Christ: we are fed, nourished, supported and made Spiritually fruitful: and as the Branch that is not in the Vine, partakes not of its sap, so such that are not united to Christ, partake not of his Spiritual Vertue.”²⁷⁵

Although Keach did not have a section in *Tropologia*, that labels Christians as branches, he had two sections entitled, “Saints compared to Palm-Trees”²⁷⁶ and “The Church compared to a Vine.”²⁷⁷ In both sections, Keach referred to the saints and the church as branches. When comparing the church to a vine, Keach referred to John 15:2. Keach concluded that just as a vine is pruned, “So God takes much pains with his Church; it is pruned and purged, that it may bring forth more Fruit.”²⁷⁸ Additionally, in his sermon, Keach employed a *Tropologia* structure to draw parallels between the fate of branches on a vine and the relationship between Christ and believers. For instance, he likened the vine bearing branches to Christ supporting believers. Similar to branches

²⁷³ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:142.

²⁷⁴ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:142.

²⁷⁵ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:142. While acknowledging all the above reasons for believers' union with Christ, Keach asserted how union with Christ is made possible: “Being in him by his Spirit, and he in Christ by Faith, shall never cease bearing fruit.” Therefore, it is by the Spirit and faith that the “good spiritual Husbandman that grafts us into the true Vine, and he that prunes us, and doth all that is necessary to be done, to make us fruitful, and to abide fruitful.” Keach was quick to highlight “Man's natural impotency to do anything that is spiritually good.” Thus, he said, “Without me; that is, without Christ's concurrence, cohabitation and cooperation, we can do nothing.” Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 143. Consequently, Keach develops Trinitarian considerations in this sermon.

²⁷⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:175–177.

²⁷⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:193–194. Keach used Psalm 80:8, 14 and Hosea 14:8 to substantiate his point.

²⁷⁸ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:94.

growing out of the vine and producing fruit by partaking in the sap, believers grow out of Christ, having first been grafted into him.²⁷⁹ When considering Keach's portrayal of the vine, the husbandman, and the branches it is apparent that he adopted his *Tropologia* method to preach Christ.

Conclusion

Benjamin Keach preached Christ as the pearl of great price in Matthew 13:45–46, Christ as the good Samaritan in Luke 10:30–37, and Christ as the true vine in John 15:1. He preached Christ as the sower's seed (Mark 4:26–29). Twelve years of preaching the parables led him to praise. Keach's hymn *Buy of Me* stands as a fitting response to his extensive years of labor:

Come buy of thee? Lord let us see
what 'tis that thou dost sell!
The Pearl of Price and Paradice,
O Lord what Tongue can tell
What their worth are! what Fool is there
who doth refuse to buy?
A bargain's here! and 'twill appear
so to Eternity.
This Pearl excells the rich Beryl,
the Onyx and the Sapphire;
Rubies so rare can't with't compare,
no, nor the gold of Ophir!²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Supplement*, 3:142.

²⁸⁰ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Songs*, 44.

CHAPTER 6

“CHRIST IS YOUR SHEPHERD, YOUR PRIEST, YOUR KING, YOUR PROPHET, AND EXCELS ALL THAT EVER BORE THOSE NAMES” (NEW TESTAMENT PART 2)

“Christ’s Death is the meritorious Cause of all Spiritual and Eternal Joy and Comfort.”¹ The agony of Christ’s cross is comfort for the saint’s soul. This chapter addresses Keach’s Christ-centered preaching through a selection of sermons on texts from the Gospels and Epistles. These sermons comfort the Christian’s heart and protect Christian’s doctrine. The solace bestowed upon believers emanates from two sermon series selected from a more extensive collection called *A Golden Mine Opened*. The sixteen-part sermon series entitled *The Blessedness of Christ’s Sheep* (John 10:27–28) and fifteen-part sermon series *The Great Salvation* (Heb 2:3).² Both series were crafted to

¹ Benjamin Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened, or, The Glory of God’s Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers, and His Direful Wrath against Impenitent Sinners Containing the Substance of near Forty Sermons upon Several Subjects* (London: William Marshall, 1694), 248.

² *A Golden Mine Opened* is a collection of forty sermons divided into four series. Two series were devoted to the Gospels and two series were devoted to the book of Hebrews. *The Blessedness of Christ’s Sheep* (John 10:27–28) was selected because: (1) The alternative option in *A Golden Mine Opened* was a two-part series entitled, *A Trumpet Blown in Zion*. It is a series based on Matthew 3:12. This Gospel text is a parable and since parables were already analyzed in the previous chapter it is unnecessary to evaluate. (2) This sermon was used as an example of godliness in the preaching of Benjamin Keach in chapter 1.

Furthermore, concerning additional Gospel sermons in Keach’s corpus, two sermons are noteworthy. First, Benjamin Keach, *The Ax Laid to the Root, or, One Blow More at the Foundation of Infant Baptism, and Church-Membership. Containing an Exposition of That Metaphorical Text of Holy Scripture, Mat. 3. 10: Being the Substance of Two Sermons Lately Preached, with Some Additions, Wherein Is Shewed That God Made a Two-Fold Covenant with Abraham, and That Circumcision Appertained Not to the Covenant of Grace, but to the Legal and External Covenant God Made with Abraham’s Natural Seed, as Such: Together with an Answer to Mr. John Flavel’s Last Grand Arguments in His Vindiciarum Vindex, in His Last Reply to Mr. Philip Cary, Also to Mr. Rothwell’s Pædo-Baptisms Vindicatur, as to What Seems Most Material* (London, 1693). As the title suggests, Keach argued against infant baptism. This sermon was not selected because it is based on what Keach believed to be a parabolic text. See Benjamin Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveil’d: Or an Exposition of All the Parables, and Many Express Similitudes Contained in the Four Evangelists, Spoken by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Wherein Also Many Things Are Doctrinally Handled, and Practically Improved, by Way of Application*, vol. 1 (London: R. Tookey, 1701), 33. Parables were already analyzed in the previous chapter, therefore, it is unnecessary to consider this sermon.

foster assurance of salvation among the saints through Christ. Additionally, the safeguarding of sound doctrine permeates Keach's corpus. In the two-part series *The Marrow of True Justification* (Rom 4:5) and the sermon *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes* (Rom 8:1),³ Keach advocated for justification by faith, resulting in the imputation of Christ's righteousness. In the seven-part series *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated* (Gal 4:10–11),⁴ Keach argued against celebrating the Jewish Sabbath among Christians.

Second, Benjamin Keach, *A Call to Weeping: Or A Warning Touching Approaching Miseries In a Sermon Preached on the 20th of March, 1699. At the Funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Westen, Late Wife of Mr. John Westen, Who Departed This Life on the 17th of the Said Month, in the 38th Year of Her Age* (London, 1699). The reason against the selection of this sermon is twofold: (1) This was a single short sermon based on Luke 23:28. *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep* was a sixteen-part series, which allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of Keach's preaching. (2) As a genre this sermon was a funeral sermon. Two funeral sermons were already assessed in in this dissertation, *The Everlasting Covenant* and *A Summons to the Grave*.

Concerning the selection of *The Great Salvation* (Hebrews 2:3), two reasons for its selection will suffice: (1) It was selected because it is outside of the Pauline corpus. (2) *The Trail of the False Professor* based on Hebrews 6:4–6 comprises three sermons. However, *The Great Salvation* is a fifteen-part series and therefore, represents a more comprehensive guide to Keach's sermons.

³ Both sermons were assessed together because they dealt with the same subject, justification. Furthermore, they combat the same false doctrine, Baxterianism.

⁴ This series is divided into two parts. Part one considers Galatians 4:10–11. Keach preached seven sermons revolving around this one text. Part two contains four sermons from the following texts: Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 4:8–9, and Acts 20:7/Revelation 1:10. The last sermon in part two focused on instructions for celebrating the Lord's Day, Keach neglected to concentrate on any one text. Although Keach mentions Acts and Revelation in the last sermon of the series, he does not delve into the text. For his theology on Revelation and his end-times views, one should consider his treatise, *Antichrist Stormed*. Keach believed Revelation was being fulfilled before his eyes with the establishment of the new King. For an excellent treatment of Keach's eschatology, see Johnathan W. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)*, Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications 11 (Regent's Park College, Oxford: Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford, 2019), 194–218. Benjamin Keach, *Antichrist Stormed, or, Mystery Babylon the Great Whore, and Great City, Proved to Be the Present Church of Rome Wherein All Objections Are Fully Answered: To Which Is Added, the Time of the End, or a Clear Explanation of Scripture Prophecies, with the Judgment of Divers Learned Men Concerning the Final Ruine of the Romish Church, That It Will Be in This Present Age: Together with an Account of the Two Witnesses, Who They Are, with Their Killing, Resurrection & Ascension: Also an Examination and Confutation of What Mr. Jurieu Hath Latelý Written Concerning the Effusion of the Vials: Likewise a Brief Review of D. Tho. Goodwins Exposition of the 11th Chapter of the Revelations, Concerning the Witnesses, and of That Street in Which They Should Lie Slain, Proving It to Be Meant of Great Brittain: And a Brief Collection of Divers Strange Prophecies, Some Very Antient* (London: Nath. Couch, 1689). The Galatians text was selected because it represents a more comprehensive analysis of Keach's sermons on the Jewish Sabbath. Additionally, Keach's exegetical work in dealing with the other texts was not as comprehensive.

The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep (John 10:27–28)

“It is impossible for any Believer that hath Union with Christ to perish Eternally.”⁵ Keach preached a sixteen-part sermon series entitled *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep* to “defend the sweet and comfortable” doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.⁶ Before directly analyzing the series it is imperative to consider its context.

Regarding the context, *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep* resides within a more extensive work called *A Golden Mine Opened*, which consists of forty sermons. In addition to *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep*, *A Golden Mine Opened* contained two sermons from Matthew 3:12,⁷ three sermons from Hebrews 6:4–6, and fifteen sermons from Hebrews 2:3. Keach's aim in publishing the *A Golden Mine Opened* was to address the doctrine of election and the perseverance of the saints.⁸ Keach did not compose *A Golden Mine Opened* for polemical reasons but instead for pastoral purposes: he wrote, “It is true, touched upon several controvertible Points; but not as they are Matters of

⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 232.

⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 75. The perseverance of the saints was a doctrine that Keach cherished. Note his articulation of the doctrine in his statement of faith,

We believe all those whom God hath chosen, and who are effectually called, justified, and sanctified in Jesus Christ, can neither totally, nor finally fall away from a state of Grace; but shall certainly persevere therein unto the end, and eternally be saved; and this by virtue of their Election, or the immutable Decree of God, and the unchangeable Love of God the Father; and by virtue of their Union with Christ, together with his Death, Resurrection, and Intercession; as also from the nature of the Covenant of Grace, and Suretyship of Christ; and through the indwelling of the holy Spirit, who abideth in them for ever. (Benjamin Keach, *The Articles of the Faith of the Church of Christ, or, Congregation Meeting at Horsley-down Benjamin Keach, Pastor, as Asserted This 10th of the 6th Month, 1697* [London, 1697], xxxiii, 33)

Keach saw perseverance as an “essential Part” of the covenant of grace alongside faith, regeneration, sanctification, and eternal life. Benjamin Keach, *The Rector Rectified and Corrected, or, Infant-Baptism Unlawful Being a Sober Answer to a Late Pamphlet Entituled An Argumentative and Practical Discourse of Infant-Baptism, Published by Mr. William Burkit, Rector of Mildin in Suffolk: Wherein All His Arguments for Pedit-Baptism Are Refuted and the Necessity of Immersion, i.e. Dipping, Is Evidenced, and the People Falsly Called Anabaptists Are Cleared from Those Unjust Reproaches and Calumnies Cast upon Them: Together with a Reply to the Athenian Gazette Added to Their 5th Volume about Infant-Baptism: With Some Remarks upon Mr. John Flavel's Last Book in Answer to Mr. Philip Cary* (London: John Harris, 1692), 55.

⁷ Keach entitled this two-part series *A Trumpet Blown in Zion*. The purpose of the series is marked clearly from the outset as Keach gave the reason for their publication: “Now Published as an Allarm to the Drousie and Chaffie Professors of this Age.” Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 1. This sermon series was used as an example of Puritan godliness in Keach's preaching in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, A2r. The purpose of *A Golden Mine Opened* is addressed at the beginning of the publication with the introduction “To the Christian Readers.”

Controversy, but to clear up the Truths of Christ for the Establishment and Comfort of the People committed to my Care.”⁹ Though Keach sought to comfort his congregation, he was aware of contemporaries who disagreed with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Keach highlighted the work of John Griffith (1621/2–1700) entitled *A Treatise Touching Falling from Grace*.¹⁰ While Keach acknowledged Griffith as an individual deserving of esteem and honor, he refuted Griffith’s assertions that the elect may be deceived, that only those whose warfare is finished are the elect, and that Christ’s sheep may cease following Him and consequently fall out of His hand.¹¹

Concerning the structure of *The Blessedness of Christ’s Sheep*, Keach followed his usual method when he asserted four explicit doctrines. In *Sermon I*, Keach named the first doctrine of the series. Keach expounded on this doctrine in *Sermon I–Sermon VI*. Keach labeled the doctrine: “All true Believers are the Sheep and Lambs of Jesus Christ, and he is their Shepherd; they hear his Voice, and follow him.”¹² Through this doctrine, Keach made explicit what is derived from John 10:27. Keach focused on Christ, as is often the case with Keach’s stated doctrines throughout his sermon corpus.

⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, A2r.

¹⁰ John Griffith was a General Baptist preacher. In ca. 1640 formed a congregation who met in Dunning’s Alley London. Griffith officially became the pastor of the church in 1646. Griffith was constantly prosecuted for defying the Conventicle Act. Beth Lynch, “Griffith, John,” *ODNB*. Thomas Crosby, Keach’s son-in-law, wrote briefly about John Griffith, identifying him as a Baptist minister. Crosby noted that Griffith “suffer’d a long imprisonment in Newgate for the cause of Christ.” As a result, he published a work entitled, *A Complaint of the Oppress’d Against Oppressors*. Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists, from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I. Containing Their History to the Restoration of King Charles II*. Vol. 2 (London, 1738), 144–145.

See John Griffith, *A Treatise Touching Falling from Grace. Or Thirteen Arguments Tending to Prove That Believers Cannot Fall from Grace, as They Were Laid down at a Conference at Yalding in Kent, Examined and Answered, with Many Absurdities of That Doctrine Shewed. Whereunto Is Added Thirteen Reasons to Prove That Believers May Fall Totally and Finally from Grace, and Many Profitable Uses Flowing from That Doctrine* (London, 1653).

¹¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, A2v. In his treatise Griffith cited, “Thirteen Reasons by which its plainly proved that Believers in Christ may fall from Grace.” Griffith, *A Treatise*, 39. For example, Griffith presented, “The seventh Reason is, because the Lord threatneth sore punishment in case of non-continuance, which if there were no such thing as falling from grace, how could punishment be threatned?” Griffith, *A Treatise*, 44. In *A Treatise*, Griffith rejected the fact that God may use such warnings as a means to draw the Christian back to himself.

¹² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 76.

Keach listed the other three doctrines partway through *Sermon VI*. These doctrines refer to John 10:28.

Doct. 1. Everlasting Life is a free Gift, or Salvation is wholly by Grace; it is only of God, and the Gift of Jesus Christ.

Doct. 2. The Saints of God are committed into the Hand of Christ, he hath the Care and Charge of them.

Doct. 3. All the Saints, all Believers, or Sheep and Lambs of Jesus Christ, have Everlasting Life given to them; and they shall, every Soul of them, be saved, and none of them so fall away as eternally to perish.¹³

Again, Keach's doctrines are Christocentric. In the first, Christ was acknowledged as the One who bestowed salvation, grace, and eternal life as gifts. The second doctrine considered the perseverance of the saints in Christ's hand.¹⁴ And the third reiterated a Christ-centered perspective because it affirms that believers belong to Christ and are secure from perishing. Across all doctrines, Keach aimed to exalt Christ as the preserver of the saints.

Furthermore, Keach named ten arguments supporting the perseverance of the saints from doctrine three, which flows from *Sermon VII–Sermon XI*: (1) an argument based on election;¹⁵ (2) an argument concerning God's eternal love;¹⁶ (3) an argument

¹³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 143.

¹⁴ The second doctrine concerns the primary subject of the series, namely, the perseverance of the saints. Keach emphasized the fact that Christians are given into Christ's hand. Notably, Keach referred to Matthew Poole in his exposition (see Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 286). Keach's second doctrine corresponds with Poole's commentary on John 10:28. Poole commented by assuming the voice of Christ, "They are in my hand, and my hand shall preserve them, none shall ever pluck them out of it; they shall be preserved through faith, by the Power of God to eternal life and Salvation." Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible. Wherein the Sacred Text Is Inserted, and Various Readings Annex'd, Together with the Parallel Scriptures, the More Difficult Terms in Each Verse Are Explained, Seeming Contradictions Reconciled, Questions and Doubts Resolved, and the Whole Text Opened: Being a Continuation of Mr. Pool's Work by Certain Judicious and Learned Divines*, vol. 2 (London, 1685), John Chap. X. One should note Poole's use of the word "preserve," in line with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

¹⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 169.

¹⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 184.

based on Christ's love;¹⁷ (4) an argument considering the Covenant of grace;¹⁸ (5) an argument that saints are children of God;¹⁹ (6) an argument based on Christians union with Christ;²⁰ (7) an argument based on the benefits of Christ's death for the Christian;²¹ (8) an argument based on the effects of Christ's death;²² (9) an argument based on the fact that Christians are in the Father's hand and Christ's hand,²³ and (10) an argument

¹⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 194.

¹⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 202. Notably the covenant of grace pervaded Keach's Old Testament sermons. For example, see *The Everlasting Covenant* (2 Samuel 23:5) and *The Display of Glorious Grace* (Isaiah 54:10) in chapter 4.

¹⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 211.

²⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 221. Union with Christ is a topic that permeates the works of Benjamin Keach. For example, in Keach's works denouncing infant baptism: he cited numerous arguments to prove his case against infant baptism. He wrote in argument twenty, "Baptism is the solemnizing of the Souls Marriage-Union with Christ, which Marriage-Contract absolutely requires an actual Profession of consent. Infants are not capable to enter into a Marriage-Union with Christ, nor to make a Profession of Consent. Ergo, Infants ought not to be baptized." Benjamin Keach, *An Appendix to the Answer unto Two Athenian Mercuries Concerning Pedo-Baptism Containing Twenty Seven Syllogistical Arguments Proving Infant-Baptism a Mere Humane Tradition: The Gentlemen Called the Athenian Society Desiring in the Last of the Said Mercuries to Have Syllogism* (London: Printed for the author and sold by John Harris, 1692), 6. Also, Keach's reference to William Perkins concerning the fact that baptism signifies union with Christ and communion with Christ. Benjamin Keach, *The Rector Rectified and Corrected, or, Infant-Baptism Unlawful Being a Sober Answer to a Late Pamphlet Entituled An Argumentative and Practical Discourse of Infant-Baptism, Published by Mr. William Burkit, Rector of Mildin in Suffolk: Wherein All His Arguments for Pedo-Baptism Are Refuted and the Necessity of Immersion, i.e. Dipping, Is Evidenced, and the People Falsly Called Anabaptists Are Cleared from Those Unjust Reproaches and Calumnies Cast upon Them: Together with a Reply to the Athenian Gazette Added to Their 5th Volume about Infant-Baptism: With Some Remarks upon Mr. John Flavel's Last Book in Answer to Mr. Philip Cary Keach* (London: John Harris, 1692), 156.

See also Keach's hymns: Benjamin Keach, *A Feast of Fat Things Full of Marrow Containing Several Scripture Songs Taken out of the Old and New Testaments, with Others Composed by the Author: Together with One Hundred of Divine Hymns, Being the First Century* (London: B.H., 1696), 58. (Note verse 5 in particular); Benjamin Keach, *The Banqueting-House, or, A Feast of Fat Things a Divine Poem, Opening Many Sacred Scripture Mysteries* (London: H. Barnard, 1692), 302–303. (Note verses 2–3 in particular).

Additionally, Keach's Old Testament sermons: Benjamin Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven, Or, Jacob's Ladder Improved Containing Four Sermons Lately Preach'd on Genesis XXVIII, XII: Wherein the Doctrine of Free-Grace Is Display'd through Jesus Christ: Also Discovering the Nature, Office, and Ministration of the Holy Angels: To Which Is Added One Sermon on Rom. 8, 1: With Some Short Reflections on Mr. Samuel Clark's New Book Intituled Scripture Justification* (London, 1698), 35, 44, 61, 64–65; Benjamin Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant, a Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened in a Sermon Preached January the 29th, at the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty, Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks, Who Departed This Life Jan. 25th 1692/3 and Was Interr'd at Southwark: To Which Is Added, An Elegy on the Death of the Said Minister* (London: H. Barnard, 1693), 5, 9, 12, 17, 43–44.

²¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 235.

²² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 257.

²³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 269. Significantly, Keach spoke of the perseverance of the saints as a work carried out by the Father and the Son, which balanced Keach's Christocentric emphasis.

concerning saving grace.²⁴ Finally, in *Sermon XVI*, Keach answered thirteen objections against the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.²⁵

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

A cursory survey of Keach's doctrines and arguments illustrates the Christ-centered nature of the series. Yet, a more in-depth analysis will prove the point further. One sermon example highlighting the series's Christocentric nature will suffice.²⁶ In *Sermon IX*, Keach argued for the perseverance of the saints based on Christ's love. He explored six points concerning Christ's love. To begin, he described Christ's love as an "early Love."²⁷ Christ's love is an eternal love bestowed upon the elect before the foundation of the world. Keach then extolled Christ's love for the saints as "a wonderful Love."²⁸ He uses the word "wonderful" to describe the extent of Christ's love when compared with the human condition. He doxologically declared the wonderful accomplishments of Christ's love who became "a wonderful Surety" in order to "pay a wonderful Debt."²⁹ He left "wonderful Glory" to come to "dunghil Earth."³⁰ Christ "became wonderful Poor" even though he "was wonderful Rich."³¹ Christ bore

²⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 285.

²⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 297–317.

²⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 193. *Sermon XI* represents another example of the Christ-centered nature of this series. The sermon addresses in detail the believers' union with Christ. At the sermon's introduction Keach stated, "I shall now proceed to my next Argument, to prove, That none of Christ's Sheep can so fall away as eternally to perish. And that shall be taken from the Nature of that Divine, Spiritual and Mystical Union that there is between every true Believer, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 221.

²⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 193.

²⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 193.

²⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 194.

³⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 194.

³¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 194.

“wonderful and amazing Wrath” to become a wonderful “curse.”³² Keach concluded, “Christ’s Love to his Sheep, to his Elect, is wonderful; because it passeth knowledge.”³³ Thus, Keach is captivated by the wonder of Christ’s love.

Keach continued by claiming Christ’s love “is an immense, incomprehensible, or an infinite Love.”³⁴ Keach profoundly reflected on the breath, length, height, and depth of Christ’s love by stating

Christ’s Love is broad, enough to spread over and cover, like a Mantle, all the Sins of his Elect, and also to hide them from Satan’s Rage and Fury. His Love is long enough to reach us with his Arm of Affections, where-ever we are, or whatever our Wants be. Christ’s Love is deep enough to find us out, and relieve us under all depths of Afflictions, Despondency or Distress, of what sort soever. Christ’s Love has a Height in it, enough to defend us, like a high Wall, against all the Assaults of those Enemies that are in high Places, and above us.³⁵

Moreover, Keach declared “Christ’s love” to be an “Espousal Love.”³⁶ Keach used this point to express the depth of the marriage covenant between Christ and his bride, the church. Not yet finished, Keach extolled Christ’s love which “hath an attracting and a retaining Quality in it.”³⁷ Keach affirmed that Christ’s love draws the elect to himself, bringing them from darkness to light and keeping them in that light.³⁸ Finally, “Christ’s Love is a free Love,” and saints can do nothing to earn such love.³⁹ Individuals do not merit this love through their action. Instead, Christ bestows his love as a gift.⁴⁰

³² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 195.

³³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 195.

³⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 196.

³⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 196.

³⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 197.

³⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 198.

³⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 198.

³⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 199.

⁴⁰ Keach not only gloried in the love of Christ through his sermons, but also in his poetry. In his work entitled *The Glorious Lover* he wrote poetically about the love of Christ. For example, in his poem Keach spoke of the love Christ showed for the saint in his incarnation, “And for their sakes such Glory too forsook! Is this great Prince with such mean Lodging pleas’d So that he may of love-sick pains

***Tropologia* Method of Preaching Christ**

Defending the perseverance of the saints, Keach stated, “I shall now shew you in what respect, the Saints may be said to be in the Hand of Christ.”⁴¹ Keach claimed this truth was “held forth in part in the Sacred Scripture, by several Tropical Allusions.”⁴² In other words, Keach utilized his *Tropologia* method to prove that saints are held in Christ’s hand. Consequently, believers are in Christ’s hand as sheep are guided by their shepherd, as a bride is kept by her bridegroom, as a blind man is led by his guide, as little babes are nursed by their mother, as patients are cared for by their physician, as a garden is tended by the gardener, and as a ship is steered by its captain.⁴³ All these “Tropical Allusions” preach Christ’s care for the saints through imagery, which permeates Keach’s sermon series.

Christ as Shepherd is the principal image in this series. In *Sermon V*, Keach showed the nature of Christ being a shepherd.⁴⁴ Significantly, Keach expounded Christ’s role as Shepherd in *Tropologia* with John 10:11, “I am the good Shepherd,” labeled as the critical text.⁴⁵ Keach made eight points that revealed the kind of Shepherd Christ was.

be eas’d! O what a Lover’s this! Almighty Love!” Benjamin Keach, *The Glorious Lover a Divine Poem upon the Adorable Mystery of Sinners Redemption* (London: Christopher Hussey, 1679), 20.

One should note Keach’s focus on Christ’s love (or Christ himself) does not neglect the Trinity’s work. For example, Keach devoted much of *Sermon VIII* to God the Father’s love for the saints. See Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 184. Furthermore, as Keach expounded upon the assurance bestowed on believers by the Covenant of Grace, he grounded it upon the testimony of the highest witnesses in Heaven and Earth. These witnesses include the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 208. Keach proclaimed the work of the Spirit to regenerate and quicken souls with thirteen powerful points. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 260–61. However, when Keach spoke of the Trinity’s work within the Covenant of Grace, he mentioned their work in the context of Christ as surety of that covenant. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 207. Moreover, when Keach reflected on the Spirit’s work, he spoke in the context of “the Effects of Christ’s Death and Resurrection.” Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 257. Therefore, while Keach preached the work of the Trinity, the clear emphasis remained on Christ.

⁴¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 257.

⁴² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 257.

⁴³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 280–81.

⁴⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 122.

⁴⁵ Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Tropologia, or, A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors the First Book Containing Sacred Philology, or the Tropes in Scripture, Reduc’d under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each / Partly Translated and Partly Compil’d from the Works of the Learned by T.D. The Second and Third Books Containing a Practical Improvement (Parallel-Wise) of*

In order to show Keach's use of the *Tropologia* method, three points from his sermon will be assessed.

Keach's initial point was that no human being had the right to be the shepherd because that right belonged to the one who owned the sheep.⁴⁶ This point corresponds to Keach's first metaphor and parallel in *Tropologia*. For the *metaphor*, Keach stated, "A Shepherd is chosen and appointed to take care of the Sheep." For the parallel, he noted, "Jesus Christ is chosen of God, and appointed to take the Care and charge of the Church."⁴⁷

Keach labeled Christ as "the chief and great shepherd of the Sheep"⁴⁸ in his sixth point. In Keach's typical style, he asserted numerous subpoints to substantiate his claim. For example, "He may be called the chief and great Shepherd, because all the Sheep, or Elect of God, are given into his Hand, to keep, take care of, feed, heel, protect and preserve to Eternal Life."⁴⁹ Furthermore, Christ assumes the role of the great shepherd by virtue of his exaltation in glory, dignity and sovereignty over his sheep.⁵⁰ The assertion that Christ is the great shepherd corresponds to metaphor and disparity "IV" in *Tropologia*. The metaphor concedes that some shepherds are lowly because they have meager flocks and thus not much responsibility.⁵¹ Conversely, the disparity states, that Christ is the great Shepherd through both his person and power.⁵²

Several of the Most Frequent and Useful Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes of the Old and New Testament (London: Enoch Prosser, 1681), 2:162–64.

⁴⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 122.

⁴⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:162.

⁴⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 126.

⁴⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 126.

⁵⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 127.

⁵¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:163.

⁵² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:163.

Keach's seventh point stated that Christ was a watchful Shepherd, since he is fully aware of the dangers and snares that his sheep are threatened by.⁵³ Keach listed such threats: "sin, Satan, temptation, wolves, the human heart, which is deceitful, inward corruption, and false and self-seeking Teachers [*sic*], whose Design is to make a Prey of his Flock."⁵⁴ Keach's point about Christ's watchfulness corresponds to metaphor and parallel "XII" in *Tropologia*. The metaphor states, "The Shepherd watches over his Sheep, because of the Dangers that might otherwise befall them in the Night."⁵⁵ The corresponding parallel notes, "Christ continually keeps a strict watch over his People, his Eye is never off them."⁵⁶ Based on the above argument, one recognizes Keach's *Tropologia* method revealed through the depiction of "Christ as Shepherd."⁵⁷

Acknowledging "Christ as shepherd" means the people must have a corresponding image. The metaphor that coincides with the shepherd is sheep. The first doctrine clearly affirms Christ's relationship with his sheep: "All true Believers are the Sheep and Lambs of Jesus Christ, and he is their Shepherd; they hear his Voice, and follow him."⁵⁸ From this doctrine, Keach sought to show how believers may be called

⁵³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 128.

⁵⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 128.

⁵⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:163.

⁵⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:163.

⁵⁷ Surprisingly, Keach did not make a typological connection to David as a Shepherd and Christ in this series or in *Tropologia*. Furthermore, Keach quoted Thomas Taylor directly when he spoke about David as a type of Christ in *Tropologia*. Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Troposchēmologia: Tropes and Figures; or, A Treatise of the Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes, &c. Contained in the Bible of the Old and New Testament To Which Is Prefixed, Divers Arguments to Prove the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures Wherein Also 'tis Largely Evinc'd, That by the Great Whore, Mystery Babylon Is Meant the Papal Hierarchy, or Present State and Church of Rome. Philologia Sacra, the Second Part. Wherein the Schemes, or Figures in Scripture, Are Reduced under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each. Together with a Treatise of Types, Parables, &c. with an Improvement of Them Parallel-Wise* (London: John Darby, 1682), 4:418–19. Yet, he did not consider David's role as a Shepherd like Thomas Taylor did in his work: "David of a shepherd of sheepe, was raised to be a shepherd of men, even of Gods people: So was Christ raised of God to be the chiefe shepherd of the stock." Thomas Taylor, *Moses and Aaron, or, The Types and Shadows of Our Saviour in the Old Testament Opened and Explained* (London: John Williams, 1653), 55.

⁵⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 76.

sheep. Keach listed numerous points to substantiate the claim. For example, Keach believed Christians are Christ's sheep due to their election: "Christ hath no Sheep, but such that he was pleased to chuse, or make choice of for his own; and he knows them, before they know him."⁵⁹ Moreover, Keach argued, that they are Christ's sheep because he purchased them at a price.⁶⁰ Christ bought his sheep from sin and Satan by his blood shed on the cross for the payment of their sin.⁶¹

In *Tropologia*, Keach wrote about sheep representing Christians within two sections of the work: (1) the church was compared to a flock of sheep (this is the most significant discussion of the two)⁶² and (2) saints are compared to sheep (Keach only wrote a paragraph concerning this section).⁶³ Although both section titles correspond with the sermon's topic, Keach spoke of the sheep's attributes in slightly different ways from what he said in *Tropologia*. One correspondence Keach makes was about the change Christ wrought in his sheep who were turned from "their swinish and evil Qualities" and "infused new and holy Dispositions."⁶⁴ In *Tropologia*, Keach makes a similar point regarding the transformation that Christ brings about by his Spirit: "So the Saints of God are a People tamed, as it were, by God's Spirit, from the natural Wilderness and Perverseness, made gentle, willing to come into Christ's Fold."⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 77.

⁶⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 77.

⁶¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 78.

⁶² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:121

⁶³ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:148.

⁶⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 78.

⁶⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:121. Interestingly, Keach uses his *Tropologia* method when he compares God's people to "Babes." See Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 219–20 and Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:140.

In this series, Keach also utilized typology to preach Christ. Typology is a method Keach exhibited in *Tropologia* within a section entitled *Moses's Vail Removed*.⁶⁶ In *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep*, Keach briefly alluded to two types when that related to Christ as the Shepherd. Keach portrayed Christ as the second Adam: "We were all lost in the first Adam, not one Sheep but was lost; and had not Christ came to seek and save us, we had been all lost for ever."⁶⁷ Additionally, Keach presented Christ as the true David: "Jesus Christ must rescue them out of the Mouth of the Lion, and Paw of the Bear, as David did his Sheep, who was a Type of him."⁶⁸

However, the most significant typological reference in this series relates to Christ as the antitype of the scapegoat.⁶⁹ Within the context of Keach's seventh argument based on the efficacy of Christ's death for the perseverance of the saints,⁷⁰ he claimed forth Christ as "the Antitype of the Scape-Goat, hath carried away all our Sins who do

⁶⁶ See Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413.

⁶⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 123. For Keach's discussion on Adam as a type of Christ see Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413.

⁶⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 123. For Keach's discussion on David as a type of Christ see Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:418–19.

⁶⁹ Keach affirmed the typical puritan typological approach in this instance. For example, Samuel Mather (1651–1728) in his treatise on types and figures spoke about Christ as the representative of both goats in Leviticus 16: "So here two Goats, a flain Goat, and a scape Goat; the one to shadow forth Christ as dying and slain for our offences, the other as rising again for our Justification. The slain Goat represented Christ as he was put to death in the Flesh, that is, in his Humane nature: the scape Goat represented him as quickened by the Spirit, that is, by his Deity raising him up again from death to life." Samuel Mather, *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament by Which Christ and the Heavenly Things of the Gospel Were Preached and Shadowed to the People of God of Old: Explained and Improved in Sundry Sermons* (Dublin, 1683), 572. When Keach discussed typology in *Tropologia* he often referenced Thomas Taylor's work *Moses and Aaron*. Interestingly, Taylor did not mention Christ as the scapegoat in his work on type, yet he does mention this reality elsewhere. For example, when writing about types which pointed forward to Christ's resurrection Taylor noted,

Further, the types which fore-shadowed his resurrection, must not bee frustrate, but answered in the truth of them: as that of Jsaac bound upon the wood, but yet reserved alive, whom his Father received from the dead after a sort: of Sampson escaping the revenge and malice of his enemies, by carrying away the gates wherein hee seemed fast shut: of the two goats, one slain for sin, the other a scape-goat, shadowing Christ both slain for sin, and yet escaping, Levit. 16.5. (Thomas Taylor, *The Works of That Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ, Dr. Thom. Taylor, Sometimes Minister of the Gospel in Aldermanbury, London. Published by Himself in His Life Time, in Several Smaller Volumes, Now Collected Together into Three Volumes in Fol. Two of Which Are Here Bound Together* [London: Tho. Ratcliffe, 1659], 340)

⁷⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 235.

believe: The kill'd Goat made the Atonement for the Sins of all God's Israel."⁷¹ In his exegetical comments Keach observed that Leviticus 16 references the all-encompassing sin of Israel four times.⁷² Keach affirmed this emphasis in the text and exclaimed:

The Goat was a Type of Christ, to shew that not one Sin of a Child of God shall ever be laid upon him, charged upon him, because Christ had them all laid upon him: and he hath carried them all away, all their Sins, great Sins as well as smaller Sins; Sins before Grace and after Grace were all laid upon Jesus Christ; yea, Sins of all sorts, Sins of Commission and Sins of Omission; no Sin could be expiated without the Death and Blood of Christ.⁷³

Similarly, in *Tropologia*, Keach referred to Aaron laying his hand on the scapegoat as “figuring thereby how Christ should bear all our sins.”⁷⁴ Moreover, in the sermon, Keach deliberated on the concept that the scapegoat was dispatched into the wilderness to bear the people's sins. Keach concluded, “This hath our Lord Jesus done: Christ hath put away Sin, and put it away for ever.”⁷⁵ In *Tropologia*, Keach made a corresponding point as he considered the scapegoat's journey into the wilderness: “Figuring the utter abolishing of our Sins by Jesus Christ, both from the face of God, that so they may not appear before him against us, to condemn us.”⁷⁶

The Marrow of True Justification (Rom 4:5) and a Medium Betwixt Two Extremes (Rom 8:1)

“The Doctrine of Justification is one of the greatest and most weighty subjects I can insist upon; it being by all Christians acknowledged to be a Fundamental of Religion and Salvation.”⁷⁷ The doctrine of justification permeated Keach's sermon

⁷¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 242.

⁷² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 242.

⁷³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 242–43.

⁷⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:432.

⁷⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 243.

⁷⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:432–433.

⁷⁷ Benjamin Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification, or, Justification without Works Containing the Substance of Two Sermons Lately Preached on Rom. 4:5 . . . : Wherein the Nature of*

corpus.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, three sermons emerge in Keach's endeavor to promote and defend his view of justification: (1) *The Marrow of True Justification* (Rom 4:5), which encompassed two sermons, (2) *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes* (Rom 8:1). These sermons are considered together for three reasons. First, Keach based both sermons on Romans. Second, the sermons address the same subject of justification. Finally Keach recognized their connection when he concluded, "I have lately published on the great Doctrine of Justification, in two Sermons on Rom. 4.5. which Doctrine I have farther confirmed in those Sermons preached from the Text this is grounded upon, viz. Rom 8.1."⁷⁹

Both sermons are polemical, so it is imperative to consider the context in which Keach wrote more carefully. In the 1690s, the churches in London were embroiled in the Neonomian controversy.⁸⁰ This controversy stemmed from Richard Baxter's

Justification Is Opened, as It Hath Been Formerly Asserted by All Sound Protestants, and the Present Prevailing Errors against the Said Doctrine Detected (London, 1692), 1.

⁷⁸ Jonathan Arnold argues that Keach wrote eleven works which focused on the doctrine of justification. Jonathan W. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)*, Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford Publications 11 (Regent's Park College, Oxford: Centre for Baptist Studies in Oxford, 2019), 144–145. Arnold lists the works as follows: "*The grand imposter discovered* (1675) [this was a polemical work against Quaker theology]; *Travels of true godliness* (1683); *Gold refin'd* (1689); *The marrow of true justification* (1692); *The everlasting covenant* (1693); *A trumpet blown in Zion* (1694); *A golden mine opened* (1694); *Light broke forth in Wales* (1696); *A medium betwixt two extremes* (1698); *The display of glorious grace* (1698); and *Gospel mysteries unveil'd* (1701). Most of Keach's other works also touch on this doctrine, though somewhat more tangentially." Interestingly, Thomas Eugene Hicks, in his analysis of Keach's view on the doctrine of justification simply consults seven works, *The Marrow of True Justification* (1692), *The Everlasting Covenant* (1693), *A Golden Mine Opened* (1694), *The Display of Glorious Grace* (1698), *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes* (1698), *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven* (1698), and selection from Keach's *Exposition of the Parables* (1689–1701). Thomas Eugene Hicks Jr., "An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification in the Theologies of Richard Baxter and Benjamin Keach." (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), v. It seems appropriate that Hicks considers a selection of Keach's parables because not all 147 published parable sermons were devoted to the topic of justification.

⁷⁹ Benjamin Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes Wherein It Is Proved That the Whole First Adam Was Condemned and the Whole Second Adam Justified: Being a Sermon Lately Preached on Rom. 8:1 and Now Published to Prevent the Further Controversy (in One Main Point) about Justification: To Which Are Added Reflections on Some Passages in Mr. Clark's New Book Called Scripture-Justification* (London: Andrew Bell, 1698), iv.

⁸⁰ Keach engaged in various controversies of his day. Two other major controversies concerned hymn-singing controversy and infant baptism. See Austin Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 2nd ed. (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2015), 344.

(1615–1691)⁸¹ teaching that obeying Christ’s new law through faith and holy living merited one’s justification before God.⁸² In other words, personal obedience contributed to one’s right standing before God. Samuel Crisp reissued the sermons of his father, Tobias Crisp (1600–1643), which sparked the Neonomian controversy.⁸³ The reprinted works were entitled *Christ Alone Exalted* (1690).⁸⁴ Baxter labelled the sermons antinomian because of the purported free grace that they offered.⁸⁵ Keach took umbrage with Baxter’s position, which in Keach’s mind portrayed those who held the orthodox position of justification as antinomian: “‘Tis a hard Case that any of those who maintain the Old Doctrine of Justification, should be branded with the black Name of Antinomians.”⁸⁶ Keach held that his position derives from the traditional reformation view of justification, defended by the saints of old.⁸⁷ Although Keach

⁸¹Richard Baxter emerged as a prominent figure within the Presbyterian church, distinguished by his prolific writing and recognized as an authoritative source among theologians of his era. Baxter assumed a significant role alongside John Owen, serving as an inaugural lecturer for the Pinners’ Hall Merchants’ Lecturers. For more information see Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 37–38.

⁸² Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 344.

⁸³ Tobias Crisp was born in London in 1600. He later became a Church of England clergyman. Crisp developed in his theological framework from Arminianism to Calvinism. His son Samuel Crisp, an editor, sought to republish his sermons, which resulted in the controversy described. See *MTP*, 164–68.

⁸⁴ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 345. See Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted in Fourteene Sermons Preached in, and Neare London, / by the Late Reverend Tobias Crispe Doctor in Divinity, and Faithfull Pastor of Brinkworth in Wiltshire. As They Were Taken from His Owne Mouth in Shortwriting, Whereof Severall Copies Were Diligently Compared Together, and with His Own Notes. And Published for the Satisfaction and Comfort of Gods People*, vol. 1 (London, 1643); Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted. in Seventeene Sermons Preached in or Neare London, by the Late Reverend Tobias Crisp, Doctor in Divinity, and Faithfull Pastor of Brinkworth in Wiltshire: As They Were Taken from His Own Mouth in Shortwriting, and Compared with His Notes*, vol. 2 (London, 1643).

⁸⁵ Walker, *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 346.

⁸⁶ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, The Epistle Dedicatory, i.

⁸⁷ With reference to his position on justification, Keach argued, “Never more need for all that are Orthodox (I mean who are established in the Doctrine of Justification by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ, or by his active and passive Obedience alone, according to the Scripture, and as maintained by most of the Antient Fathers, and all our worthy modern Protestant Divines) to cement together in Love and Union.” Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 35.

disagreed with Crisp on specific points, he claimed he would rather “erre on their side, who strive to exalt wholly the Free Grace of God, than on theirs, who seek to darken it.”⁸⁸

In *The Marrow of True Justification*, Keach set out to prove two doctrines. First, all human works are excluded from justification with God.⁸⁹ Keach did not want any hint of individual obedience incorporated into his concept of justification. Second, that justification is a free gift of grace by faith resulting in the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.⁹⁰ Keach held that believers were counted righteous only due to Christ’s obedience credited to them. Keach enumerated disagreements concerning alternatives to his doctrine of justification, identifying both groups and individuals.

Regarding the groups, Keach seemed to name them briefly simply so he could disregard their position. More specifically, Keach denounced seven groups. Naturally, Keach called out “the Papists” for their stance on justification, asserting they advocated the belief that individuals are justified through inherent righteousness and good works, not solely by faith. He contended that the Papists held the meritorious nature of good works, suggesting that individuals can thereby merit eternal life.⁹¹ Keach also critiqued the Socinians because they denied the deity of Christ and also the full atonement for sin provided by Christ’s death.⁹² Keach was infuriated with the Arminians because they included acts of mercy and obedience as part of one’s justification. In other words, they “joyn Good Words done under the Gospel.”⁹³ Keach rendered similar complaints against the Dutch Arminians who “in pursuance of their main Doctrine of Free Will; they exalt Man’s Works, and therefore affirm, that he is Justified, not by Christ’s righteousness, but

⁸⁸ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, The Epistle Dedicatory, i.

⁸⁹ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 8.

⁹⁰ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 8.

⁹¹ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 9.

⁹² Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 9.

⁹³ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 9.

by his own Faith.”⁹⁴ Moreover, although Keach did not mention them by name, he disagreed with the Quakers (he only discussed the work of one prominent Quaker, William Penn (1644–1718),⁹⁵ entitled *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*.⁹⁶ According to Keach, the Quakers believed that justification made the person perfectly holy, and no man could be “Justified, unless he be in himself perfect without Sin.”⁹⁷ Penultimately, Keach denounced an unknown group, which he labeled “Another sort,” who believed people must prepare themselves for and procure their own justification.⁹⁸

Keach saved his sharpest criticism for last: “There are others of late, as well as formerly, who by too many are looked upon to be true Preachers of the Gospel, and Orthodox Men who are strangely tainted with that poysonous Notion, which brings in sincere Obedience unto the Gospel, as joyning it with Faith in point of Justification.”⁹⁹ Keach directed this harsh critique primarily toward two men throughout the rest of the sermon, Richard Baxter and Daniel Williams (ca.1643–1716).¹⁰⁰ Baxter spearheaded the opposition against what he perceived as antinomian teachings until he died in 1691, at

⁹⁴ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 10.

⁹⁵ William Penn was born in London on the 14th of October 1644. His Father was Sir William Pen (bap. 1621–d.1670), admiral in the English navy. Penn was a Quaker leader and founder of Pennsylvania. Mary K. Geiter, “Penn, William,” *ODNB*.

⁹⁶ Jonathan Arnold notes the three major Quaker theologians involved in the justification debates of the seventeenth century were George Whitehead, William Penn, and Isaac Penington. Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 147. Keach cited the following work: William Penn, *The Sandy Foundation Shaken, or, Those so Generally Believed and Applauded Doctrines . . . Refuted from the Authority of Scripture Testimonies, and Right Reason* (London, 1668).

⁹⁷ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 10–11. Keach was known for his disputes with the Quakers. He even wrote a poem refuting their theology. See Benjamin Keach, *The Grand Imposter Discovered: Or, The Quakers Doctrine Weighed in the Balllance, and Found Wanting. A Poem, by Way of Dialogue: Wherein Their Chief, and Most Concerning Principles Are Laid Down, and by the Authority of Gods Holy Word Clearly Refuted* (London: B. Harris, 1675).

⁹⁸ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 11.

⁹⁹ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Daniel Williams was a Presbyterian minister born in Wrexham, Wales. Williams collaborated with Isaac Chauncy and other individuals to establish the ‘Happy Union’ between the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians following the Glorious Revolution. For more information see Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 33.

which point Daniel Williams assumed leadership.¹⁰¹ Keach targeted both men in his analysis: “These Men say, that Obedience concurs with Faith to Justifie, or is part of our Righteousness to Justification.”¹⁰² In fundamental disagreement with such a notion, Keach advocated for the doctrine of worthy divines who stressed that by faith alone, one was justified and thus trusted in the righteousness of Christ for salvation.¹⁰³ In Keach’s opinion, men like Baxter and Williams rejected the notion that Christ’s actions and suffering were carried out as the surety and representative for all of God’s chosen people.¹⁰⁴ Their stance, as outlined by Keach, posited that Christ undertook these actions merely as a Mediator, aiming to reconcile the differences between God and sinners.

According to Baxterians, Christ did not fulfill the law of works on our behalf, but he fulfilled the distinct law applicable to a mediator. Keach concluded, “These Men do not say that the Righteousness of Christ whereby he fulfilled the Law, is imputed to us, who believe, to justifie us in God’s sight; tho’ for that Righteousness-sake, God grants us pardon of Sin, and hope of Eternal Life.”¹⁰⁵ Keach’s nuanced argument is that: Baxterians denied that Christ’s law-abiding active obedience was imputed to Christians.

¹⁰¹ Richard Baxter first engaged in the debate in 1649 through the publication of *Aphorismes of Justification*. See Richard Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification, with Their Explication Annexed Wherein Also Is Opened the Nature of the Covenants, Satisfaction, Righteousnesse, Faith, Works, &c.: Published Especially for the Use of the Church of Kederminster in Worcestershire* (London: Francis Tyton, 1649). A later edition of the work was printed in 1655. See Richard Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification, with Their Explication Annexed Wherein Also Is Opened the Nature of the Covenants, Satisfaction, Righteousnesse, Faith, Works, &c.: Published Especially for the Use of the Church of Kederminster in Worcestershire* (Hague: Abraham Brown, 1655). Henceforth, the 1655 edition will be referenced. Subsequent to the release of Tobias Crisp’s work *Christ Alone Exalted* (1690), Baxter released his rebuttal. Richard Baxter, *The Scripture Gospel Defended, and Christ, Grace, and Free Justification Vindicated against the Libertines . . . in Two Books: The First, a Breviate of Fifty Controversies about Justification . . . : The Second upon the Sudden Reviving of Antinomianism . . . and the Re-Printing of Dr. Crisp’s Sermons with Additions* (London, 1690). Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 150. Williams’s assumption of leadership was verified with the publication of his work, Daniel Williams, *Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated Wherein Some of Dr. Crisp’s Opinions Are Considered, and the Opposite Truths Are Plainly Stated and Confirmed* (London, 1692).

¹⁰² Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 12.

¹⁰³ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 12.

¹⁰⁴ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 17.

Yet, Christ's passive obedience granted forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

Consequently, Keach charged these men with the belief that

Christ's Righteousness or Obedience is not imputed to us, for which we should be justified and accepted, as being an Obedience due to the Law of the first Covenant; but to his own peculiar Law of a Mediator: But yet so, that Christ's Obedience did merit or purchase; i.e. that God should appoint Men new and easier Terms of Life, instead of perfect Obedience, and Death for the failure of that Obedience.¹⁰⁶

Richard Baxter directly addressed this issue in *Aphorismes of Justification*. He affirmed that among the Divines, a significant debate unfolded regarding the question of "whether we are justified onely by Christs Passive Righteousnesse, or also by his Active."¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, he defined passive obedience as not only the death of Christ but his humiliation, suffering, and resurrection.¹⁰⁸ Baxter believed that active obedience was perfect obedience to the Law through righteous action.¹⁰⁹ Thus, he contended the divines held that Christ perfectly obeyed in the place of the elect, thus crediting them with both his active and passive righteousness.¹¹⁰ Baxter concluded by stressing such an opinion contained "a great many mistakes."¹¹¹ Poignantly, Baxter stated what he believed to be the most significant mistake

The very core of the mistake, to think that we have by delegation paid the proper debt of Obedience to the whole Law, or that in Christ we have perfectly obeyed; whereas; 1. It can neither be said, that we did it; 2. And that which Christ did, was to satisfie for our non-payment and disobedience.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 30.

¹⁰⁸ Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 30.

¹⁰⁹ Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 30.

¹¹⁰ Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 31.

¹¹¹ Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 31.

¹¹² Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 31.

Baxterians thus traditionally held that only Christ's passive obedience was imputed to Christians.¹¹³ Later, it seems, Baxter modified his stance on the imputation of Christ's active obedience.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Baxterian "model of atonement, combined with the conditional aspect of the covenant of grace, left justification in an incomplete or imperfect state."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Arnold argues that scholars over-simplified the Baxterian position as a total rejection of any imputation of Christ's righteousness. Examples given were as follows: D.B. Riker, *A Catholic Reformed Theologian: Federalism and Baptism in the Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640–1704*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 35 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2009), 72–77; James Barry Vaughn, "Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of Benjamin Keach (1640–1704)" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1989). See Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 154n67. Arnold also corrected the unintentional misrepresentation of Baxter's view in Walker's first edition of *The Excellent Benjamin Keach*. Walker noted the correction in his second edition: *Excellent Benjamin Keach*, 357n31.

¹¹⁴ Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 154.

¹¹⁵ Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 154. For more on Baxter's view of the imputation of Christ's passive and active obedience see Richard Baxter, *Of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to Believers in What Sence [sic] Sound Protestants Hold It and of the False Divised Sence by Which Libertines Subvert the Gospel: With an Answer to Some Common Objections, Especially of Dr. Thomas Tully Whose Justif. Paulina Occasioneth the Publication of This* (London: Printed for Nevil Simmons and Jonathan Robinson, 1675). In this work Baxter outlines the history of the debate.

Notably, Keach was not the only one to write against Baxterianism, also known as Neonomianism. Isaac wrote against it in his work, Isaac Chauncy, *Neonomianism Unmask'd, or, The Ancient Gospel Pleaded against the Other, Called a New Law or Gospel in a Theological Debate, Occasioned by a Book Lately Wrote by Mr. Dan. Williams, Entitled, Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated* (London: Printed for J. Harris, 1692). The title description indicates that this work was designed as a rebuttal against Daniel Williams's work *Gospel-Truth Stated*. In this work Chauncy creatively set up a debate between an Antinomian and a Neonomian, which was an inventive way to denounce both errors. Later in the fictional debate Chauncy introduced a new character, John Calvin. Consequently, it is the voice of Calvin that denounces Williams's work:

It appears to be your Design to blast the whole Doctrine of Imputation, (whatever you pretend,) both of Imputation of our Sins to Christ, and of the Imputation of his Righteousness unto us. 2. That you make it your great Business to set up and establish a Covenant of Works, boldly asserting the Gospel to be a Law with Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, and that the conditional part thereof are Imperfect Works, and that we are justified by those Works as a Subordinate Righteousness to the Righteousness of Christ, and that Faith it self is concerned therein but as an Act, in the same manner as Repentance and other parts of imperfect sincere Obedience, tho in a little kind of Precedency. (Chauncy, *Neonomianism Unmask'd*, 39)

Chauncy also wrote the following works to combat Neonomianism: Isaac Chauncy, *A Rejoinder to Mr. Daniel Williams His Reply to the First Part of Neomianism [sic] Unmaskt Wherein His Defence Is Examined, and His Arguments Answered: Whereby He Endeavours to Prove the Gospel to Be a New Law with Sanction, and the Contrary Is Proved* (London: Printed for H. Barnard, 1693); Isaac Chauncy, *Alexipharmacum, or, A Fresh Antidote against Neonomian Bane and Poyson to the Protestant Religion Being a Reply to the Late Bishop of Worcester's Discourse of Christ's Satisfaction, in Answer to the Appeal of the Late Mr. Steph. Lob: And Also a Refutation of the Doctrine of Justification by Man's Own Works of Obedience, Delivered and Defended by Mr. John Humphrey and Mr. Sam. Clark, Contrary to Scripture and the Doctrine of the First Reformers from Popery* (London: Printed for, and sold by W. Marshall, 1700).

Chauncy was joined in his rejection of Neonomianism by Vincent Alsop (1630–1703). Alsop was born in Nottinghamshire and served as a minister in Wilby before being ejected for non-conformity in 1662. He later served as a minister in Westminster and was known for his polemical writings. See Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 31–32. Alsop wrote a work denouncing the writings of Daniel Williams.

In *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, Keach's sermon took a more traditional sermonic form. In this sermon Keach preached theological truths followed by application. Whereas in *The True Marrow of Justification* Keach refuted false doctrines by continually referencing the arguments posed by numerous writers. This sermon presented Keach with an opportunity to find a position that stood between the two extremes: Baxterianism (which magnified human free will and elevated justifying obedience) and Antinomianism (which glorified free grace and led to licentious living).¹¹⁶

Though the writings of others did not encumber the work Keach did attach a postscript at the end of the work in which he argued against Samuel Clark's new book *Scripture-Justification*.¹¹⁷ Like his criticism of Richard Baxter and Daniel Williams, Keach did not refrain from expressing his disagreement with Samuel Clark's (1626–1701) views.¹¹⁸ For example, according to Keach, Clark argued that Paul and James spoke of the same justification.¹¹⁹ In other words, “to be justified by Faith according to Paul, and by Works according to James, is all one.”¹²⁰ Keach asserted, “Now we and the Orthodox say, that Paul speaks of our Justification before God, or of the Person; James of the Justification of our Faith, good Works demonstrating our Faith to be

Vincent Alsop, *A Confutation of Some of the Errors of Mr. Daniel Williams by the Reverend Mr. Vincent Alsop in a Letter to the Reverend Mr. Daniel Burgess* (London: Printed for John Marshal, 1698).

¹¹⁶ Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 177.

¹¹⁷ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 35.

¹¹⁸ Samuel Clarke (Keach's writes Clark) was a non-conformist pastor known for his biblical scholarship. He was born at Shotwick in Cheshire. His Father was Samuel Clarke (1599–1682). David Wilson, “Clarke, Samuel,” *ODNB*. Prior to the publication of *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes* Keach became aware Samuel Clark's newly published book: Samuel Clark, *Scripture-Justification, or, A Discourse of Justification, According to the Evidence of Scripture-Light Wherein the Nature of Justification Is Fully Open'd, the Great Point of Justification by Works, Both of the Law and Gospel, Is Clearly Stated . . . Together with a Thesis Concerning the Interest of Christ's Active Obedience in Our Justification* (London, 1698). Keach acknowledged that Clark was “a Man of great Learning.” Yet, Keach's concern that Clark's promotion of Baxterianism would “do much harm to weak and unwary Christians,” prompted him to write a postscript. Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 36.

¹¹⁹ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 48.

¹²⁰ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 48.

of the right kind.”¹²¹ Subsequently, Keach listed numerous points that underscored the distinct objectives between Paul’s and James’s assertion of justification.¹²²

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

Justification is at the core of Keach’s Christ-centered preaching. Keach believed the subject of justification demands attention. Thus, Keach asserted, “Other Subjects a Minister may Preach upon, and that unto the Profit and Advantage of the People; but this [justification] he must Preach, this he cannot omit, if he would truly Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹²³ Thus, to preach Christ meant preaching about justification.

When expounding on the doctrine of justification, Keach highlighted two doctrines that present the Christ-centered nature of the sermons. In *The Marrow of True Justification*, Keach introduced a doctrine based on Romans 4:5 as follows: “That Justification is wholly of the free Grace of God, through the Imputation of the perfect Righteousness of Jesus by Faith.”¹²⁴ Through this doctrine, the focus remains on the imputation of Christ’s righteousness credited to the believer. Keach advocated a single doctrine in *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*: “That all those that are in Christ Jesus, or have obtained actual Union with him, are justified Persons, and for ever delivered from Condemnation.”¹²⁵

The imputation of Christ’s righteousness and our union with Christ permeate both of Keach’s works on justification. Regarding the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, Keach began *The Marrow of True Justification* by enumerating seven

¹²¹ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 48.

¹²² Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 48–49.

¹²³ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 1.

¹²⁴ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 8.

¹²⁵ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 11.

reasons that motivated him to address the subject. In one instance, Keach reasoned that from the doctrine of justification “doth proceed all the Hope we have of Eternal Life.”¹²⁶ Keach argued the foundation of such hope is “Justification through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.”¹²⁷ Keach’s focus on the imputation of Christ’s righteousness stemmed from the Baxterian rejection of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. Consequently, Keach often explicitly disassociated human works from the imputation of Christ’s righteousness: “A Man seeing himself a Sinner, doth not render him Righteous. Nothing renders a Man righteous to Justification in God’s sight, but the Imputation of the perfect Personal Righteousness of Christ.”¹²⁸

Concerning the writings of Samuel Clark, Keach acknowledged that Clark would not denounce God’s free grace and certainly refused to profane the name of those used by God in the Reformation.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, Clark refuted the very foundation upon which the Reformation stood: “Justification by the imputation of Christ’s active and passive Obedience, through the free Grace of God, apprehended and received by Faith alone, without any thing wrought in us, or done by us.”¹³⁰ Therein lies the crux of the issue: rejecting the imputation of Christ’s active and passive obedience. Additionally, Keach’s conception of justification by faith stressed that justification was “not by imputing Faith or any other act of Evangelical Obedience, but the imputing of Christ’s

¹²⁶ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 2.

¹²⁷ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 2.

¹²⁸ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 8. In order to substantiate his claims regarding the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, Keach often turned to the writings of John Owen. Keach referenced Owen often because of his nuanced articulation of this gospel truth. For example, when speaking about the need for faith alone, Owen stated, “The Truth which we plead hath two Parts. (1.) That the Righteousness of God imputed to us, unto the Justification of Life, is the Righteousness of Christ, by whose Obedience we are made Righteous. (2.) That it is Faith alone, which on our Part is required to interest us in that Righteousness, or whereby we comply with Gods Grant and Communication of it, or receive it unto our Use and Benefit.” John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated by John Owen* (London, 1677), 419.

¹²⁹ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 36.

¹³⁰ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 36.

Obedience and Satisfaction exclusively of all things else whatsoever. And that Faith is only said to justify us objectively, or in respect had to the Object Jesus Christ, which it taketh hold of.”¹³¹ According to Keach, faith itself does not justify; it is the object of that faith that justifies, the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, one could argue, that Keach’s view on justification was more “*solo Christus*” than “*sola fide*.”¹³²

Alongside justification, union with Christ accentuates the Christ-centered nature of these sermons. In *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, Keach sought to prove the doctrine he asserted by showing what it is to be united with Christ and “open the Nature of the Soul’s Union with the Lord Jesus.”¹³³ When Keach discussed believers union with Christ, he spoke about Christ’s atonement, which brought about the saint’s justification and redemption through his blood shed on the cross.¹³⁴ Keach argued that “Adam received the Atonement when he believed, and not till then.”¹³⁵ Similarly, Christians received Christ’s atonement when they believed, as Keach stated, “By Time I mean when they had, and we have actual Union with Christ, and believe, or do receive the Spirit, the Bonds of this Union.”¹³⁶ Keach’s conception of union with Christ functioned within his argument against Baxterianism. Keach promoted a specific order of salvation: “We do not tell you, you must be holy, and then believe in Jesus Christ; but that you must believe in him, that you may be holy. You must first have Union with him.”¹³⁷ The believer’s

¹³¹ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 36.

¹³² Arnold, *The Reformed Theology*, 174–75.

¹³³ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 12. Previously Keach noted the structure of Romans 8:1; “herein lies three things: Vocation, Justification, and Sanctification. Our vocation, we are in Christ; our justification, there is now no condemnation; and our sanctification, we walk not after the flesh, but the Spirit.” Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 9. Keach spends the most time on vocation.

¹³⁴ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 17.

¹³⁵ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 19.

¹³⁶ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 19.

¹³⁷ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 37.

union with Christ and receipt of his imputed righteousness is only made possible because he is their surety. Christ as surety presents the first connection with the *Tropologia* method.

***Tropologia* Method of Preaching Christ**

The *Tropologia* method seems less prominent in these sermons than others within Keach's corpus, yet it remains evident. Since both sermons address justification, it is no surprise that Christ as our surety permeates Keach's content. In *The Marrow of True Justification*, while addressing the flaws in Baxterianism, Keach sought to affirm Christ as a believer's surety. Keach critiqued individuals who were influenced by a concept that introduced obedience to the gospel i.e. personal obedience plus personal faith equals justification.¹³⁸ Keach presented Christ as the one who filled the law "in our Nature, and stead as our Head Representative and Surety, to do and perform the terms thereof."¹³⁹ By the law, Keach meant the law of works, which humanity failed to keep. Therefore, because Christ is the surety for the elect, his active and passive obedience is imputed to them through faith in Christ.¹⁴⁰

Keach defended Christ as Surety because individuals like William Troughton (1613/14–1686x90)¹⁴¹ argued "that Christ acted not the part of a Surety (though he be once figuratively so called) but of a Mediator expiating Guilt, and making reparation to

¹³⁸ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 11.

¹³⁹ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 12. Notably, John Owen in his treatise on justification, links the concepts of justification and surety. When Owen explained the doctrine of justification, he linked it with Christ as our surety: "Whether it be any thing in our selves, as our Faith, and Repentance, the Renovation of our Natures, inherent habits of Grace, and actual works of Righteousness which we have done, or may do; or whether it be the Obedience, Righteousness, Satisfaction and Merit of the Son of God our Mediator and Surety of the Covenant, imputed unto us." Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 3.

¹⁴¹ William Troughton was minister ejected from him post dew to his non-conformist views. His Father was William Troughton (d. 1584/5?), rector of Waberthwaite, Cumberland. Stephen Wright, "Troughton, William," *ODNB*.

Justice some other way than by the Execution of the Law.”¹⁴² Keach accused these men of trying to disregard the doctrine of justification. Thus, they were “denying that which Christ did and suffered, he did and suffered as a common Person, as a Head, Surety and Representative for all the Elect.”¹⁴³ Therefore, Keach persisted in saying that Christ was not simply a mediator who sought to resolve the difference between God and man, but both mediator and surety who stood in man’s stead.¹⁴⁴ In *Tropologia*, Keach asserted this point: “Christ (being a fit Person) undertook not only to be a Mediator betwixt God and Man, but also to be the Surety of the Covenant on Man’s part.”¹⁴⁵

In *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, Keach also addressed the subject of justification in response to Baxterianism, primarily by refuting Samuel Clark’s teaching. Keach spoke about Christ as surety. Initially Keach argued that one of the reasons man stood condemned prior to their union with Christ was “the Curse of the Law.”¹⁴⁶ Significantly, Keach utilized his *Tropologia* method to depict Christ as our surety who fulfilled the law and paid the atoning price for the forgiveness of sins.¹⁴⁷ Keach presented the traditional role of the one who offers surety: “A Surety may satisfy the Law for a Criminal, or for a Debtor, yea pay the utmost Farthing; but he may notwithstanding lie under the Sentence of Death, or remain in Prison for a time, and not have his personal

¹⁴² Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 15.

¹⁴³ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 15.

¹⁴⁴ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 15. Later in the sermon, when Keach spoke about the satisfaction of Christ’s justice, he stated, “His Justice must be satisfied, his Law fulfilled by us, or by our Surety for us, and will not abate a tittle of that Righteousness it doth require; yet such is also his Goodness, that what we could not do in keeping perfectly the Law, he sent his Son in our Nature, as our Surety and Representative, to do it for us.” Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 25. See also Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification*, 21, 22.

¹⁴⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:92.

¹⁴⁶ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 16.

¹⁴⁷ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 17.

Discharge.”¹⁴⁸ Subsequently, Keach presented Christ as surety for the redemption of the elect:

The Sacrifice may be offered up, and an Atonement may be made, but the Blood may not be sprinkled; the slaying the Sacrifice is one thing, and the sprinkling the Blood is another. So the Atonement made for us by Jesus Christ, which is the Price and meritorious Cause of our Redemption and Justification, is one thing, and our receiving the Atonement or the application of his Blood to our personal and actual discharge from Sin, Guilt and Condemnation, is another thing.¹⁴⁹

In *Tropologia*, Keach employed the same parallel. In the metaphor Keach stated, “A Surety does not only undertake for Debtors, but sometimes also engages Criminals.”¹⁵⁰ In the corresponding parallel, Keach asserted, “Those that Christ, the Surety of the Covenant, undertook to make Peace for, were not only spiritual Debtors, but Criminals also such as deserved Death.”¹⁵¹ Though the elect deserve a criminal’s punishment and death, Christ’s suretyship assures life.

The prevalence of Keach’s *Tropologia* method is also apparent on the title page for *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*. The description under the main title states, “Wherein it is proved that the whole First Adam was condemned, and the whole Second Adam justified.”¹⁵² Keach explained his desire that the elect understand their condemnation while abiding “in the first Adam” and the justification they now possess through union with Christ, the second Adam.¹⁵³ In the sermon’s introduction, Keach laid out how the first three chapters of Romans speak about the depravity of humanity, with “both Jews and Gentiles, as considered in the First Adam.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 17.

¹⁴⁹ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 17–18.

¹⁵⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:93.

¹⁵¹ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:93.

¹⁵² Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, title page.

¹⁵³ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, iii.

¹⁵⁴ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 5.

When Keach focused on Romans 8:1, he reminded his congregation of both their pre-Christian and post-Christian state:

once they who are now in Christ Jesus were in the first Adam, dead and condemned Adam; and were under the Law, and Children of Wrath by nature, as others; and so under the Sentence of Condemnation. But now being transplanted into Jesus Christ, or into the Second Adam, they are actually freed, and for ever acquitted and delivered from Condemnation.¹⁵⁵

Keach developed this theme through the sermon by making numerous arguments concerning the fact that the elect were under condemnation in Adam prior to their union with Christ.¹⁵⁶ Significantly, Keach named Adam specifically as a type of Christ:

“Adam no doubt was an Elect Person, the promise of Christ being directly made to him (who was also a Figure of him that was to come.)”¹⁵⁷

As part of Keach’s argument against Baxterianism (which denied the imputation of Christ’s active obedience for one’s righteousness), he sought to prove that just as Adam’s sin was imputed to man through their federal head, so Christ’s righteousness was imputed to the elect through their federal head. Therefore, Keach concluded:

Brethren, tho all in the first Adam were fundamentally and representatively condemned in him, his Sin being imputed so to all his Offspring; yet none are actually condemned until they actually exist and partake of his corrupt Nature: So in the second Adam all the Elect were fundamentally and representatively justified in him, his Righteousness being imputed so to all his Spiritual Seed, or Off-spring; yet none of them are actually and personally justified until they are united to him, and partake of his Divine Nature.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 8.

¹⁵⁶ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 13.

¹⁵⁷ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 14. In a sermon where Samuel Mather sought to summarize the various types of Christ, he concluded that they are “weak and imperfect Shadows of the Messiah.” Yet, he emphatically stated that “Adam was a Type of Christ in regard of his Headship and Influence.” Mather encouraged people to consider which Adam they were under, the first Adam or the second Adam. Those under the first Adam are under a covenant of works and those in the second Adam are under the covenant of Grace. Mather, *The Figures or Types*, 88.

¹⁵⁸ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 19.

In this sermon, Keach transitioned from an analysis of federal union with Adam to a discussion of federal union with Christ. Simply put, in the first Adam, humans were condemned; in the second Adam, they are justified.¹⁵⁹

The concept of federal headship allowed Keach to conceive of Adam as a type of Christ. In *Tropologia*, Keach named Adam as a type of Christ.¹⁶⁰ In the metaphor, Keach named Adam as humanity's representative through whom all people inherited sin: "By Adam's Sin were many made Sinner, &c."¹⁶¹ For the parallel, Keach wrote, "Christ, the second Adam, is a common or Publick Person, representing all his true Seed, or Spiritual Off-spring: So that as Adam's sin was imputed to all his Children; so is Christ's Righteousness imputed to all his Children, through faith."¹⁶² Keach focused on the imputation of sin through Adam and righteousness through Christ, which was the key to his argument against Baxterianism.

The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated (Gal 4:10–11)

Puritanism, from Keach and his Baptist co-religionists, was a Sabbatarian movement. Keach quoted one minister from Oxfordshire who declared that "to do any servile Work on the Lord's Day, is as great a Sin as to kill a Man."¹⁶³ Not only was forsaking the Lord's day worship equal to killing a man, but for some, it was tantamount to killing one's own children: "Another in a sermon in Norfolk told his hearers: 'To make

¹⁵⁹ Keach, *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes*, 25.

¹⁶⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413.

¹⁶¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413.

¹⁶² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413. Thomas Taylor, in his treatise on types, claimed "Adam a type of Christ." He spoke of Adam typologically in four categories: in respect of Creation, office and sovereignty, conjugation, and propagation. In his fourth point "propagation" Taylor discussed Adam and Christ's federal headship: "As by the first Adam sinne, and by sinne death came over all men: so by the second Adam came righteousnesse, and by righteousnesse life on all beleivers; and herein especially was the first Adam a figure of him that was to come." Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 5–7.

¹⁶³ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated, or, The Saturday Sabbatarians Confuted in Two Parts: First, Proving the Abrogation of the Old Seventh-Day Sabbath: Secondly, That the Lord's-Day Is of Divine Appointment: Containing Several Sermons Newly Preach'd upon a Special Occasion, Wherein Are Many New Arguments Not Found in Former Authors*, 164.

a Feast or Wedding-dinner on the Lord's Day, is as great a Sin, as for a Father to take a Knife and cut his own Child's Throat.”¹⁶⁴ Keach labeled such comments as “ignorance and an over-heated Zeal.”¹⁶⁵

Though the passion for the Lord's Day was extreme, enthusiasm for the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was equally as intense. Keach spoke of a Sabbatarian who likened breaking the Jewish Sabbath to adultery: “To work on that Day, was as bad as Adultery or Theft, or to that effect.”¹⁶⁶ In other words, to break the Sabbath command was equivalent to breaking any command within the Decalogue. In fact, it was worse: “Another lately told us, that we in not keeping the Sabbath, or fourth Command, broke all the rest; or words to the same purpose.”¹⁶⁷ For Keach, these remarks were not the spark that kindled his polemic, his concern was the protection of his local flock.

The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated begins with a note to the reader concerning the context and occasion for the sermon series. Keach was presented with a situation he never expected to address: “There is not one Controvertable Point in and about Religion that I less thought to have been concerned with this way, than that contained in these Sermons presented here to thy view.”¹⁶⁸ Thus, Keach told the reader that the Sabbath issue was an unexpected battle. However, driven by pastoral concern, it seemed Keach had little option:

I was alarm'd on a sudden, and provoked (some few Months ago) to undertake it; there being one Person especially under my charge (who for some time, by his unsettled and wavering Spirit, and aspiring Temper, I feared would be troublesome) who had for some considerable time, unknown to me, suck'd in the Notion of the Jewish Sabbath, and laboured to corrupt many others of the younger sort,

¹⁶⁴ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 164.

¹⁶⁵ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 164.

¹⁶⁶ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 164–165.

¹⁶⁷ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 165.

¹⁶⁸ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, A3r.

some of which, with himself, fell into the Practice of keeping that Day, and cast off the Lord's-day, as not being of Divine Appointment.¹⁶⁹

Not only did Keach have a congregant who embraced Jewish Sabbatarianism, but this congregant sought to divide the congregation with his newly-found view. Worse still, some embraced this teaching without consulting their pastor.¹⁷⁰ Keach entered the controversy not simply to address the individual that promulgated it in the church, but to ensure that those who “are firmly rooted in the Truth will not be soon shaken or removed.”¹⁷¹

The series is divided into two parts. Part one considers Galatians 4:10–11. Keach preached seven sermons revolving around this one text. In this section, Keach argued that the Jewish Sabbath is not a perpetual command prescribed by the Lord.¹⁷² Part two contained four sermons: Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 4:8–9, and Acts 20:7/Revelation 1:10. The fourth sermon focused on instructions for celebrating the Lord’s Day and does not concentrate on any one text. In this section, Keach contended

¹⁶⁹ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, A3r.

¹⁷⁰ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, A3r.

¹⁷¹ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, v. Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, iii. Two comments about Keach’s methodology are necessary: First, Keach assured the reader that his published sermons are not exactly what he preached: “Reader, I did not (for some reasons) deliver from the Pulpit great part of what is here published; and also some things I might say that are here omitted, which being not in my Notes, I could not remember.” Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, iv. Second, Keach quoted numerous authors in order to affirm his position: “Dr. Owen, Dr. Wallis, Mr. Warren, &c. in particular, with several other Reverend Ministers,” etc. Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, iv. John Wallis’s (1616–1703) work is: John Wallis, *A Defense of the Christian Sabbath in Answer to a Treatise of Mr. Tho. Bampfield Pleading for Saturday-Sabbath* (Oxford: L. Litchfield, 1692).

The works associated with John Owen and Edmund Warren (n.d.) are: John Owen, *Exercitations Concerning the Name, Original, Nature, Use, and Continuance of a Day of Sacred Rest Wherein the Original of the Sabbath from the Foundation of the World, the Morality of the Fourth Commandment with the Change of the Seventh Day Are Enquired into: Together with an Assertion of the Divine Institution of the Lord’s Day, and Practical Directions for Its Due Observation* (London: R.W., 1671). Keach more expansively enunciated the contents of this work in Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 23–27. Edmund Warren, *The Jews Sabbath Antiquated, and the Lords Day Instituted by Divine Authority. Or, The Change of the Sabbath from the Last to the First Day of the Week, Asserted and Maintained by Scripture-Arguments, and Testimonies of the Best Antiquity; with a Refutation of Sundry Objections Raised against It. The Sum of All Comprized in Seven Positions* (London: David Maxwel, 1659).

¹⁷² Vaughn, “Public Worship,” 75.

that Christians are bound to worship the Lord on Sunday (the first day of the week) under the New Covenant.¹⁷³ This present analysis focuses on the more expansive exegesis of Galatians 4:10–11. In this seven-part series, Keach sought to prove the following doctrines:

Doct. 1. That it is not the Duty of believing Gentiles under the Dispensation of the Gospel, to keep the Seventh Day as a Sabbath to the Lord.

Doct. 2. That it is a dangerous thing for any to plead for, and keep the seventh day, so is to lay the same stress on the observation thereof, as on a purely natural, or simply moral Precept.¹⁷⁴

Keach defended these doctrines in various ways. For example, he argued that there was no Sabbath law written on Adam’s heart prior to the fall¹⁷⁵ and God gave no positive command to Adam to keep the Sabbath.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, the patriarchs before Moses did not keep the Sabbath.¹⁷⁷ The Sabbath was not written on New Covenant Christian hearts.¹⁷⁸ Ultimately, Keach claimed that the Jewish Sabbath was abrogated because of Christ’s

¹⁷³ Vaughn, “Public Worship,” 75.

¹⁷⁴ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 29–35. Keach referenced Stephen Charnock who stated, “The Law for a Worship, and for a spiritual worship, by the faculties of our Souls was natural, and part of the Law of Creation; though the determination of the particular acts, whereby God would have this homage testified, was of positive institution, and depended not upon the Law of Creation Though Adam in Innocence knew God was to be worshipped.” In other words, while Adam knew what it was by nature to worship the Lord, he did not know by the law that he must worship him on a Sabbath. Stephen Charnock, *Several Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God by That Late Eminent Minister in Christ* (London: Printed for D. Newman, 1682), 131.

¹⁷⁶ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 37–56. Keach presented twelve arguments.

¹⁷⁷ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 58–74.

¹⁷⁸ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 156–57. Vaughn helpfully divided Keach’s entire argument into three parts: “First, he argued that the fourth commandment is really not one commandment but two. The command to observe one day in seven as a day of worship is part of the moral or natural law and is perpetually obligatory, but the command to observe the seventh day specifically is part of the ceremonial law and has been abrogated. Keach did this by showing that the seventh day sabbath was not observed by Adam in Paradise and is not part of the new law written on the hearts of believers. Secondly, Keach showed that Christ himself did not keep the seventh day sabbath. Thirdly, he argued that the purpose of the seventh day sabbath was two-fold: To commemorate God’s act of creation and to foreshadow the coming of Christ. Both parts of its purpose are now redundant; Christ has come, the shadows have disappeared, and Christians should commemorate the new creation, not the old.” For a fuller analysis of *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated* see Vaughn, “Public Worship,” 74–84.

work on the cross. Christ subsequent resurrection meant that Christ's could celebrate new life in him on Sunday, the first day of the week.¹⁷⁹

Christ-centered Nature of the Sermon

Keach claimed

But when Christ God-man came, and also had finished the Work of Redemption, and ceased from his Work, as God did from his; there is the same moral reason why the Day in which he rested from redeeming, i.e. the first day of seven, should be our day of Rest, because this is a far greater Work than that of Creation, as shall be made plain and clear hereafter.¹⁸⁰

The Jewish Sabbath was abrogated through Christ's redemption work, so the Christian Sunday celebration began on the first day of the week. In order to preach about this redemption Keach embraced the Sin-Salvation method in this sermon, which also points to the sermon's Christ-centered nature.

Keach addressed those that might object thinking the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath renders the Ten Commandments pointless.¹⁸¹ In response to such an objection, Keach presented various reasons why God gave the Ten Commandments.¹⁸² Apart from the Law being a guide for life, Keach noted that "It was added and written there, to aggravate Sin on the Conscience."¹⁸³ Keach recognized the connection between the Law and the awareness of sin. This apprehension of sin presents the sinner with their need for salvation. Additionally, Keach surmised that the Law was composed to show the fallenness of man. Keach argued the Law was written "to make known how unable fallen

¹⁷⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 80.

¹⁸⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 120.

¹⁸¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 33.

¹⁸² Before his nuanced reasoning, Keach suggested that the commandment presents "a Rule of Life." Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 33.

¹⁸³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 33.

Man was to fulfil the Righteousness of God.”¹⁸⁴ Again, Keach displayed the need for salvation through Christ and his imputed righteousness.

Consequently, Keach contended that the Law is “a Schoolmaster to lead such as were under it, to Christ, in whom perfect Righteousness only is to be found; Man being not able to keep perfectly that holy and just Law.”¹⁸⁵ Ultimately, Keach argued that the reason for the Law was twofold: (1) to make the sinner conscious of their sin and (2) to draw the sinner to salvation found in Christ.¹⁸⁶

Tropologia Method of Preaching Christ

The *Tropologia* method played a crucial role in Keach’s argument for the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath. According to Keach, Christians are not obligated to observe the Jewish Sabbath primarily because it served as a shadow of the rest, that finds its reality in Christ. In his exposition of Galatians 4:10, Keach argued that by “days,” Paul meant “the Jewish weekly Sabbath-days.”¹⁸⁷ He contended that Jewish Sabbath days were “shadowy Ordinances under the Law, in comparison of New Testament Ordinances,

¹⁸⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 33.

¹⁸⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 33. John Owen, when instructing churches about how they were to worship in a question and answer format, addressed the function of the Law as a schoolmaster: “The Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer render a Schoolmaster.” John Owen, *A Brief Instruction in the Worship of God, and Discipline of the Churches of the New Testament, by Way of Question and Answer with an Explication and Confirmation of Those Answers* (London, 1667),

¹⁸⁶ Keach gave two more reasons for the Ten Commandments:

4. And to shew them, as I conceive, that nothing but the Finger of God could write his holy Law in the stony Hearts of Sinners, as shall be further demonstrated hereafter; for that whole Ministration of the Law and Covenant I shall prove was a shadow and typical, and so no standing Law or Ministration as there written, but as it is in the hand of Jesus Christ. 5. That whole Law, and consequently the Seventh-day Sabbath, was given on Mount Sinai as it suited the Judaical economy, as well their Political as Ecclesiastical state. There are many Additions made to the Seventh-day Sabbath, together with other Ends annex’d, and Designs and Uses thereto employ’d; which is granted by such as assert it was given to Adam in Paradise. (Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 33).

¹⁸⁷ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 6.

are but weak and beggarly Elements.”¹⁸⁸ Keach also referenced Colossians 2:16–17 to further justify his claim that the Sabbath was a shadow.¹⁸⁹

Interestingly, concerning the Sabbath, Keach quoted Richard Baxter positively twice.¹⁹⁰ In the first instance Baxter addressed the Sabbath as a shadow: “How plainly and expressly Paul numbred Sabbaths with the shadows that cease, Col. 2. 16. (to pass by other Texts) And what violence mens own wits must use, in denying the evidence of so plain a Text.”¹⁹¹ Keach also was concerned with the text’s plain meaning: “The Shadow seems glorious till the Substance comes.”¹⁹² The substance, Christ, has now come; thus, there is no need for the shadow any longer. Therefore, Keach conceded to Paul’s conclusion: “The Jewish Weekly Sabbath . . . was a Shadow of that Rest we have in Christ.”¹⁹³

Keach’s explication of the Sabbath as shadow permeated the series, yet Keach’s most pronounced discussion on the topic is when he addressed the question of what the old Jewish Sabbath was a type or shadow of.¹⁹⁴ Keach responded:

Answ. It was a Type or Shadow of our blessed Rest in Christ: For we which have believed do enter into Rest. This is the Antitype of the seventh-day Rest, when no Labor is to be done, nor any burden of Sin to be born by Believers; this is that Rest

¹⁸⁸ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 6. This was Keach’s first expression in the series of the Sabbath as a shadow.

¹⁸⁹ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 9.

¹⁹⁰ See Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 11, 82.

¹⁹¹ Richard Baxter, *The Divine Appointment of the Lords Day Proved as a Separated Day for Holy Worship, Especially in the Church Assemblies, and Consequently the Cessation of the Seventh Day Sabbath: Written for the Satisfaction of Some Religious Persons Who Are Lately Drawn into Error or Doubting in Both These Points* (London: Nevil Simmons, 1671), 167. Keach quoted this text from Baxter in Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 11. John Bunyan (1628–1688) concurred with this view: “The Seventh-day-sabbath, as such, was a sign and shadow of things to come; and a sign cannot be the thing signified and substance too: Wherefore when the thing signified, or substance, is come, the signe or thing shadowing ceaseth.” John Bunyan, *Questions about the Nature and Perpetuity of the Seventh-Day Sabbath and Proof That the First Day of the Week Is the True Christian-Sabbath* (London: Nath. Ponder, 1685), 45.

¹⁹² See Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 12.

¹⁹³ See Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 13.

¹⁹⁴ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 107.

God is pleased with: and here we also rest from all Labour or Works of our own, as God did from his at first.¹⁹⁵

Keach contended that believers have already entered their rest through faith in Christ. Consequently, Christians no longer have to labor for righteousness; they can rest fully in Christ, the antitype.¹⁹⁶

The connection to Keach's *Tropologia* method is his stress on typology throughout the series. Keach stressed that Sabbaths, circumcision, new moons, and festivals were types and figures that all "did cease upon preaching the Gospel."¹⁹⁷ he referenced Sabbath rest as a type of Christ: "So what signifies the Shadow of Rest, to the true Antitypical Sabbath of Rest which we have in Christ? we that believe, do enter into Rest."¹⁹⁸ Keach did not devote a section in *Tropologia* to the Sabbath rest as a type of Christ.¹⁹⁹ However, he mentioned ceremonies like circumcision²⁰⁰ and celebrations like

¹⁹⁵ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 107.

¹⁹⁶ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 107. John Bunyan agreed that since Christ our rest has come there is no need to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath: "There remains a Rest; a Rest which stands not now in signs or shadows, in the Seventh day, or Canaan; but in the Son of God, and his Kingdom, to whom, and to which the weary are invited to come for rest." He argued in agreement with Keach that Christians should worship on the first day of the week: "Yet this casts not out the Christians Holy-day or Sabbath: For that was not ordained to be a Type or Shadow of things to come, but to sanctifie the Name of their God in, and to perform that worship to him." John Bunyan, *Questions about the Nature*, 52. Keach advocated for what he called "The Gospel-Sabbath" in Part 2 of *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*. See Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 175.

¹⁹⁷ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 10.

¹⁹⁸ Keach, *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated*, 12.

¹⁹⁹ *Moses's Vail Removed* is section in *Tropologia* dedicated to types, Keach names various types of Christ such as individuals like Joseph, Moses, and David. Furthermore, he identified objects like the tabernacle, the ark, and the candlestick as types of Christ. Yet, one should note that this list did not exhaustively portray every type. See Keach, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413. Interestingly, neither Thomas Taylor nor Samuel Mather explicitly consider Sabbath rest as a type of Christ. However, Mather, on one occasion, alluded to Sabbath rest pointing to Christ when he discussed the Sabbatical year. Mather, *The Figures or Types*, 561. Furthermore, when Mather mentioned the Sabbath, he said,

but yet the Jewish Sabbath was in some respects Ceremonial, and therefore it is abrogated, and the Christian Sabbath substituted in stead thereof: and therefore, the Holy Ghost here in the Text reckons the Jewish Sabbaths in the same rank with their New Moons and yearly Festivals amongst the shadows of good things to come; for it had some typical respects and uses, some ceremonial Rites and Observations annexed to it. (Mather, *The Figures or Types*, 558)

²⁰⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:433.

the Passover²⁰¹ as types of Christ. Keach did not present an exhaustive list for every biblical type in *Tropologia*. Therefore, one should consider his definition of types in *Tropologia* and, thus, that Keach utilized his *Tropologia* method for the Sabbath.

In his discussion of Typology, Keach advocated for the position of the Divines who contended that types were figures especially in the Old Testament that prefigures Christ in “his Actions, Life, Passion, Death, and the Glory that followed.”²⁰² Consequently because the Sabbath rest prefigures the salvation rest that Christian’s have in Christ, this view of the Sabbath remains a legitimate type. Keach further suggested that there are prophetic types and historical types.²⁰³ According to Keach Sabbath rest fits the historical type. Keach defines the historical type, as

the mystical sense of Scripture, whereby things acted or done in the Old Testament, (especially what respected the Priesthood and Worship of the Jews) prefigured and adumbrated things acted in the New-Testament-times, with respect especially to Christ the Antitype, who is, as it were, the Kernel inclosed in all those Shells of Old-Testament-Ceremonies, Types or Actions, &c.²⁰⁴

The Sabbath is an Old Testament practice of worship conducted by the Jews, which prefigured salvation rest found in Christ.

Keach also reverted to the *Tropologia* method when he presented Christ as mediator. While Keach spoke of Christ as surety²⁰⁵ and as testator,²⁰⁶ the metaphor that predominates is Christ as mediator. In presenting arguments to prove that Gentile believers no longer had to keep the Jewish Sabbath, Keach argued that the Law was taken

²⁰¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413.

²⁰² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia, Philologia Sacra*, 2:26. See the Thesis and Methodology section in chapter 1 for an explanation of the *Philologia Sacra* section in *Troposchēmalogia*.

²⁰³ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia, Philologia Sacra*, 2:28.

²⁰⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia, Philologia Sacra*, 2:31.

²⁰⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 102, 142. For Keach’s discussion on Christ as surety using the *Tropologia* method see Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:91.

²⁰⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 140–41. For Keach’s discussion on Christ as testator using the *Tropologia* method see Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:119.

from the hand of “Moses as Lawgiver” and put into the hand of “Christ as Mediator.”²⁰⁷ Thus, in the new covenant, Christ is now the mediator of the new law of Christ. Keach connected Christ’s role as mediator to his role as lawgiver: “There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Now is not this our Lord Jesus Christ?”²⁰⁸ Christ the lawgiver remains the law mediator between God and man.

More specifically, Keach presented Christ as the administrator of the moral law. Keach contended that the moral law is administered by the hand of Christ, the lawgiver and mediator. Christ can administer the moral law because he is the one who fulfilled the law.²⁰⁹ Keach highlighted his view on the interplay between the moral and civil law: “The whole Moral Law Christ hath fulfilled in our Nature, for us, and in our stead, in his Life: And by his Death, he hath antitypically fulfilled all the Prophecies concerning himself in reference to such things; and hath abolished the Ceremonial Law also; for till then not a tittle of that could pass away.” Thus, Keach held that Christ fulfilled the moral law yet abolished the ceremonial law (which included the Sabbath). Additionally, Keach’s nuanced answer to the question, “Is a fulfilling the Law a destroying it? Besides, all simple moral Precepts of the Law (as in Christ’s hand) stand firm for ever; therefore he came not to destroy the Law.”²¹⁰ While the moral law is administered in the hand of Christ the new mediator and lawgiver, the ceremonial laws, such as the Sabbath, “are abolished.”²¹¹ Therefore, Keach concluded, “That the whole Law is changed and that what was Ceremonial, or shadows of things to come, ceased at the death of Christ: and all Precepts of the Moral Law, or what is simply moral, as they

²⁰⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 136–37.

²⁰⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 137.

²⁰⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 139.

²¹⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 145.

²¹¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 139.

were formally given by Moses, are taken out of his hand, and put into the hands of Christ consider'd as Mediator, our Lord, and only Lawgiver.”²¹²

The link to Keach’s *Tropologia* method when considering Moses (a lawgiver and mediator) as a type of Christ, Keach noted the parallels between Moses and Christ in their office and function. Two points clearly relate to Christ as the new mediator of the law. First, concerning the administration of the law, “Moses gave the Law, having first received it from the hand of God: So Jesus Christ hath given us the Law of the Gospel as he received it from his Father.”²¹³ Second, regarding mediator role, Keach stated, “Moses was Mediator of the First Covenant, and as so considered, was both [*sic*] King, Priest, and Prophet: Jesus Christ is Mediator of the Second Covenant, and as so also both [*sic*] King, Priest, and Prophet.”²¹⁴ Furthermore, Keach expounded on the role of Christ as a mediator in the earlier sections of his *Tropologia* work. Within that context, Keach asserted that the typological appointment of Moses as a mediator served to foreshadow the mediatorial role of Christ.²¹⁵

The Great Salvation (Heb 2:3)

“The Salvation of the Gospel is a Great and Glorious Salvation.”²¹⁶ This

²¹² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 80. Additionally, Keach stated, “The old Church and old Church-Membership, Rites, Privileges, and Ordinances, both the old Jewish Worship, and old Day of Worship, are gone for ever; and a new Church-state, new Ordinances, a new Worship, and a new Day of Worship are introduced in their stead.” Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 139–40. For additional insights into Keach’s perspective on the abolition of the Ceremonial law, refer to Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 15.

²¹³ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:418.

²¹⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:418. Thomas Taylor also affirmed that Moses was a type of Christ through his role as mediator,

Now Moses was Mediator of the Old Testament, not a mediator of redemption, but of receiving the law and delivering it to the people, standing between God and them, as his mouth to them, and theirs to him: But Christ our true Moses, 1 not onely receives the Law but fulfils it. 2. When Moses had broken the tables, to shew how we in our nature had broken the Law, our true Moses repaires it againe. 3. He writes the Law not in tables of stone, but in the tables of the hearts of beleevers [*sic*] Joh. 1. 17. the Law was given by Moses, but Grace by Christ. Moses could not pierce the heart, nor supply grace to keep the Law. (Taylor, *Moses and Aaron*, 37)

²¹⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:86.

²¹⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 369.

fifteen-part sermon series entitled *The Great Salvation* represents another extended exposition within *A Golden Mine Opened*. In the introduction to *A Golden Mine Opened*, Keach stated “The grand Controversy here insisted upon, is that about Election, and the Saints Final Perseverance.”²¹⁷ Although Keach did not directly mention the doctrines of election or the perseverance of the saints in *The Great Salvation*, he believed Hebrews 2:3 contributed to the encouragement of the saints in such doctrines.

Keach commenced the series with contextual comments about the previous chapter, which shows the excellency, glory, and dignity of Christ.²¹⁸ Keach believed Hebrews extolled the supremacy of Christ over Moses, the prophets, and the angels.²¹⁹ Subsequent to his contextual investigation, Keach explored the content of the great salvation, “namely, the Salvation of the Gospel.”²²⁰ In order to explicate the nature of the gospel salvation, Keach asserted three essential doctrines, which governed the series. Keach derived these doctrines directly from the text:

- Doct. 1. That the Salvation of the Gospel is a Great and Glorious Salvation.
- Doct. 2. That the Means of this Salvation may be neglected.
- Doct. 3. That all such who do neglect this Salvation, shall not, cannot escape.²²¹

Keach addressed doctrine one in *Sermons I–VII*. He proved this doctrine by asserting sixteen arguments in its defense. Keach preached on doctrine two in *Sermons VII–XI* and explained it in four stages. Through the exposition, Keach elucidated the concepts of neglecting salvation, identifying those who neglect it, examining the origins of this neglect, and underscoring the magnitude of the sin involved in neglecting the salvation

²¹⁷ For more information regarding the context of *A Golden Mine Opened* see the commentary on *The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep* above.

²¹⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 367.

²¹⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 367–68.

²²⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 369.

²²¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 369.

offered through the Gospel.²²² Additionally, Keach expounded on doctrine three in *Sermons XII–XIV* through four steps. Initially, Keach’s exposition displayed the nature of the wrath that individuals are unable to evade. Subsequently, he investigated the reasons for their inability to escape. Following that, he pinpointed the circumstances or occasions when they find no means of escape. Finally, Keach analyzed the rationale behind the inclusion of formidable denunciations and threats within the gospel.²²³ For the last sermon, *Sermon XV*, Keach preached about the “legal way of preaching,” examining what it is and what it is not. In this sermon, Keach addressed the objection, “Is not this Doctrine a Legal Doctrine, or a legal way of preaching, to insist so much upon the Threatnings of Wrath and Divine Vengeance?”²²⁴

Christ-Centered Nature of the Sermon

The biblical text indicates that Keach’s series will be Christ-centered because it concerns salvation wrought in Christ. Keach equated this great salvation to “the salvation of the Gospel,”²²⁵ which is the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, Keach remained explicitly Christocentric. In eight points, Keach stressed Christ’s role in the great salvation.²²⁶

Keach proclaimed, “Certainly this must needs be [*sic*] a great Salvation, if we consider the Greatness, Dignity and Glory of his Person, whom God hath sent to save

²²² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 436.

²²³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 491. In this sermon, Keach anticipated the objection of some who might say that to preach warnings (threatenings) is to preach legalistically. Thus, Keach argued that it is not legal preaching to preach the justice and holiness of God, repentance, or God’s wrath against the ungodly, etc. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 491–493.

²²⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 491.

²²⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 370.

²²⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 379. Keach marked the last two points with the number “7.” This repetition represents a publication error, the last point should be “8.”

us.”²²⁷ Keach considered the greatness of Christ’s person in eight points: In his first point, Keach magnified the name attributed to Christ, the Son of God and the mediator for mankind.²²⁸ Additionally, Keach investigated the profound nature of Christ, emphasizing his divine being, co-eternal with the Father, and not considering equality with God as something to be grasped.²²⁹ Next, Keach emphasized the exclusive sufficiency of Christ for salvation, underscoring that no one but Christ possessed the ability to save.²³⁰ He continued to extol the majestic dimensions of Christ’s salvation.²³¹ Further, he asserted Christ’s capability to deliver from the various facets of sin, including its guilt, defilement, power, and dismantling the adversary’s chains. Christ’s role in rescuing the elect from the curse of the law was then elucidated, followed by Keach’s assertion of Christ’s enduring power as the author and perfecter of faith.²³² Finally, Keach focused on Christ’s willingness to rescue sinners from their dire predicament.²³³

Though Keach evaluated Christ’s role in this great salvation, Keach did not exclude the Trinity’s work. In fact, Keach presented Christ’s role within the context of his Trinitarian relationship. Prior to his emphasis on Christ, Keach gave seven points

²²⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 379.

²²⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 380.

²²⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 380.

²³⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 381.

²³¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 381.

²³² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 381–82.

²³³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 382. Keach referenced John Owen several times in this sermon series. See Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 486, 494. Therefore, it seems appropriate to consider his comments relating to this great salvation. Owen, declared, “So excellent are these Good things, as that the performance and procuring of them, was the cause of the coming of the Son of God, with his susception and discharge of his sacerdotal office. They are excellent in their Relation unto the Wisdom, Grace and Love of God, whereof they are the principal effects; and excellent in Relation unto the Church, as the only means of its eternal Redemption and Salvation.” After reflection on the excellencies of Christ’s salvation, Owen then asked, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?” John Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews Viz, on the Sixth, Seventh, Eight, Ninth, and Tenth Chapters: Wherein Together with the Explication of the Text and Context, the Priesthood of Christ . . . Are Declared, Explained and Confirmed: As Also, the Pleas of the Jews for the Continuance and Perpetuity of Their Legal Worship, with the Doctrine of the Principal Writers of the Socinians about These Things, Are Examined and Disproved* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1680), 359.

concerning the Father's work in salvation.²³⁴ After he proclaimed Christ, he spoke about the work of the Spirit in salvation.²³⁵ Keach commenced his discourse by arguing for the role of the Godhead in salvation:

Brethren, each Person in the Trinity hath a part in it; the Father hath his Part, the Son hath his Part, and the Holy Ghost hath his Part also. Remember, that these three are one; though three Persons or Subsistences, yet but one and the same God, one in Essence, though distinguished as to their distinct Personalities: the Person of the Father is not the Person of the Son; the Father took not upon him Flesh and died for our Sins, but the Son; the Son sent not the Father, but the Father sent the Son: The Father and the Son do not proceed from the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost doth proceed from them.²³⁶

Furthermore, Keach concluded the discourse with a Trinitarian *inclusio* by doxologically proclaiming the Trinity's work: "O what is the Nature of this Salvation; how Great, how Glorious! That the whole Trinity, both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are thus imployed in and about it, that we might have it made sure to us for ever."²³⁷

Keach did not preach Christ to the exclusion of the Trinity. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the vital need for a Christocentric focus. When Keach commenced *Sermon III*, he introduced it by first recognizing the work of the Trinity: "The last Day I shewed you that Gospel-Salvation is Great and Glorious Salvation, considering the Greatness, Dignity and Glory of the Persons that are concerned in bringing of it in, and working of it out for us, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."²³⁸ Yet, he proceeded to contrast his emphasis on the Trinity with his particular attention on the person and work of Christ: "But more particularly upon the Consideration of the Dignity of the Person of Christ, who is that great Saviour God hath sent, who is great in his Name, great in respect of his Person and Nature, great as to his Commission in his Call, and in respect of those

²³⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 377–79.

²³⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 382.

²³⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 377.

²³⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 383.

²³⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 387.

great and glorious Anointings that were upon him.”²³⁹ Keach clearly announced the sermon’s Christ-centered emphasis.

The sermon’s Christ-centeredness fills the sermon through Keach’s Sin-Salvation Method of preaching Christ. Yet, he inverted the method. He spoke first about the excellencies of Christ’s great salvation and followed this by addressing the great sin of those who would neglect such a great salvation.²⁴⁰ Then, Keach described the ignorance of those who neglected such a great salvation and listed the reasons for their neglect.²⁴¹ For example, Keach posited, “Some neglect this Salvation, out of Love to unlawful things: They will feed on forbidden Fruit, I mean, on their filthy Lusts; they will swear, steal, whore, be drunk, grind the Face of the Poor, deal unjustly, give way to Pride, &c. and from hence neglect the Salvation of their Souls.”²⁴² In other words, people neglect the salvation Christ offers because they love their sin. Furthermore, Keach argued that people neglect their sin because of the vile depravity within their hearts.²⁴³

²³⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 387.

²⁴⁰ *Sermons VII–XIV* are where this theme is most predominant. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 436–90. When John Owen expounded on Hebrews 2:3, he also spoke about the connection between the condemnation of sin through the Law and the greatness of salvation through the gospel. He wrote, “The Law by reason of sin, proved the Ministry of Death and Condemnation, 2 Cor. 3.9. yet being fully published only by Angels, Obedience was indispensibly required unto it. And shall not the Gospel, the Ministry of life and great salvation be attended unto.” John Owen, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews Also Concerning the Messiah Wherein the Promises Concerning Him to Be a Spiritual Redeemer of Mankind Are Explained and Vindicated, His Coming and Accomplishment of His Work According to the Promises Is Proved and Confirmed, the Person, or Who He Is, Is Declared, the Whole Oeconomy of the Mosaical Law, Rites, Worship, and Sacrifice Is Explained: And in All the Doctrine of the Person, Office, and Work of the Messiah Is Opened, the Nature and Demerit of the First Sin Is Unfolded, the Opinions and Traditions of the Antient and Modern Jews Are Examined, Their Objections against the Lord Christ and the Gospel Are Answered, the Time of the Coming of the Messiah Is Stated, and the Great Fundamental Truths of the Gospel Vindicated: With an Exposition and Discourses on the Two First Chapters of the Said Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1668), 166.

²⁴¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 445.

²⁴² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 446.

²⁴³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 447. John Owen spoke about the graveness of this sin and the desperate result for sinners:

How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation? Impenitent Unbelievers under the preaching of the Gospel, are the vilest and most ungrateful of all Gods Creation. The Devils themselves, as wicked as they are, are not guilty of this Sin, for Christ is never tendered unto them, they never had an offer of Salvation on Faith and Repentance; this is their peculiar Sin, and will be the peculiar Aggravation of their misery unto Eternity. (John Owen, *Meditations and Discourses Concerning the*

Keach did not hold back when he spoke about the danger of neglecting salvation, “All those that neglect this so great Salvation, shall not escape the Wrath of God: This follows as the natural Consequence of the former; Divine Wrath pursues them, and every Soul of them that believe not, but refuse the Grace of God offered by Jesus Christ in the Gospel.” Keach knew the wrath of God was real and even warned people that they would not escape the “Damnation of Hell, or everlasting Burning.”²⁴⁴ The salvation is great, but the punishment is severe.

After such stark warnings, Keach ended the sermon as he had begun, with Christ. He concluded by presenting a general application of the whole series.²⁴⁵ Within his general application, Keach considered various application types like: information, inference, terror, and lamentation.²⁴⁶ Almost his entire application of exhortation was devoted to Christ: “Let me exhort you to praise God for Jesus Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of this Salvation: Christ is all, and in all, in our Salvation: God hath sent us an Almighty Saviour. O how miserable should we have been for ever, had not God sent us Jesus Christ.”²⁴⁷ Keach appealed to praise God the Father for sending God the Son. Furthermore, he presented two more exhortations. First, he urged his hearers to

Glory of Christ Applied unto Unconverted Sinners, and Saints under Spiritual Decays: In Two Chapters, from John XVII, Xxiv [London: J. A., 1691], 12)

²⁴⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 471–72. Thomas Manton was one of the people Keach often referenced in his published sermons. When preaching on Titus 2:11, Manton spoke about the great salvation in his “use” section. He urged his congregation to “Consider the greatness of the Salvation: Heb. 2.3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? It is not a slight matter, in the Gospel God doth not treat with you about Trifles, your eternal Life lies upon it; we preach to you a Doctrine that tends to Salvation.” Following this admonition Manton warned his listeners about the wrath to come; “The Blessing is so excellent, that we cannot neglect it without great danger; Heb. 2.3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? For what can we expect but that God’s Mercy and Patience abused, should be turned into Wrath and Fury: and we cannot despise it without a great deal of Sin and Profaneness.” Thomas Manton, *A Fourth Volume Containing One Hundred and Fifty Sermons on Several Texts of Scripture in Two Parts: Part the First Containing LXXIV Sermons: Part the Second Containing LXXVI Sermons: With an Alphabetical Table to the Whole* (London: J. D., 1693), 18.

²⁴⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 395.

²⁴⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 495–500.

²⁴⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 498.

admire the love of Christ as displayed by his salvation of their souls. Second, he encouraged his listeners to praise God for granting them the ability to comprehend the “Gospel-Salvation” they attained through Christ.²⁴⁸

Finally, at the sermon’s denouement, Keach posed a possible objection, “How may I know that I have Christ, or an Interest in him?”²⁴⁹ Keach provided five answers to the question. First, when one knows Christ, they are spiritually “quicken” and made alive in Christ. Second, when people trust Christ, they often cannot remember a time without Christ. Third, “If Christ be thine, he is very precious to thee.” Fourth, the Christian knows the ruling power of Christ in their life and this power enables them to denounce sin. Fifth, “if Christ is in thee, and thou by Faith art in him, then thou art a new Creature.”²⁵⁰ Through these closing answers, Keach glorified Christ’s work in the believer’s life. Nevertheless, Christ is most magnified through Keach’s *Tropologia* method.

***Tropologia* Method of Preaching Christ**

In this series, Keach’s use of the *Tropologia* method centers upon his numerous allusions to typology. As noted previously, the section in *Tropologia* devoted to typology is *Moses’s Vail Removed*.²⁵¹ Subsequent to his enumeration of the three doctrines, Keach proceeded to his first point: “It is a Great and Glorious Salvation comparatively: or when it is compared with all other Salvations.”²⁵² Keach sought to prove that salvation in Christ exceeded any salvation God had wrought in the past. The example Keach gave was God’s rescue of his people from the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

²⁴⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 498.

²⁴⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 499.

²⁵⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 499–500.

²⁵¹ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:413.

²⁵² Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 369.

Keach described the great salvation of the Lord's people at the Red Sea as "a Type of this Salvation, a Shadow of it: and as far as the Substance exceeds the Shadow of a Thing, so far doth this Salvation exceed that and all other Salvations."²⁵³ The Red Sea served merely as a shadow because, although Pharaoh was a cruel persecutor, God brought about a greater rescue from the hand of Satan. Through God's rescue of Israel, he saved their physical bodies, but in Christ, he saved souls and bodies. Finally, the Red Sea was a temporal rescue, but salvation in Christ is eternal.²⁵⁴

In *Moses's Vail Removed*, Keach listed many types. Keach's list was not exhaustive. Thus, unfortunately, Keach did not explicitly list the Red Sea as a type. However, Keach mentioned two associated types, the Passover and Moses. Keach discussed the Red Sea in his discussion of Moses as a type of Christ. Keach compared Moses to Christ: "Moses wrought many mighty Miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, to confirm the Law, and to shew Israel that he was really sent of God: So Jesus Christ wrought many strange and wonderful miracles, by Sea and Land, in Towns and Deserts, to manifest his Glory, to shew he was sent of God and to confirm his doctrine."²⁵⁵ Moreover, Keach stated, "Moses led Israel through the Red Sea: Christ leads his Church through the Sea of Tribulation."²⁵⁶ In both instances, Keach used the Red Sea within the typological image to point to the antitype. After he provided the example of the Red Sea, he said, "I need not mention any other." However, Keach did give two more examples later in *Sermon V*.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 370.

²⁵⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 370.

²⁵⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:417.

²⁵⁶ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:417.

²⁵⁷ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:370.

In *Sermon V*, when Keach presented his tenth argument the privileges believers possess through salvation, he referred to more types.²⁵⁸ One privilege that believers have is the promise of “a Crown of Glory” on the final day.²⁵⁹

Keach acknowledged that it was a great salvation for Joseph and David. Joseph was brought out of prison to be the King in Egypt and David was brought out of herding sheep to be the great king of Israel.²⁶⁰ Yet, Keach proclaimed “but nothing like this of Believers. What is an Earthly Throne to an Heavenly one? He that overcometh, shall sit down with Christ in his Throne, and reign for ever and ever.”²⁶¹ Interestingly, Keach presented events and people as typological. However, one should note that Keach mixed types. In *Tropologia*, Keach presented Joseph²⁶² and David²⁶³ in their kingships as types of Christ, but in this sermon, they are displayed as types representing believers enthroned on the final day.

In *The Great Salvation* series Keach did not always mix types in this way. For example, in the application section for *Sermon II*, Keach issued a warning to those who would neglect salvation.²⁶⁴ He stressed that the judgment for those who neglect the salvation of Christ will be greater than those at Nineveh, for “behold a greater than Jonas is here. The greatness of this Saviour who preaches the Gospel to you, and is come to save you, will aggravate your Condemnation.”²⁶⁵ Later, in the application of *Sermon XVI*, Keach posed the question, “What should Sinners do to escape the Wrath of

²⁵⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 413.

²⁵⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 419.

²⁶⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 419.

²⁶¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 419.

²⁶² Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:416–17.

²⁶³ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmalogia*, 4:418–19.

²⁶⁴ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 386.

²⁶⁵ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 386.

God?” One answer Keach provided was that the only way to appease God’s wrath is through Christ’s sacrifice. Keach compared that sacrifice to Jonah when he declared, “the Storm was great, and our beloved Jonas was thrown into the Sea of God’s Wrath to allay it, and to cause a Calm.”²⁶⁶ In *Tropologia*, Keach named Jonah as a type of Christ and listed three simple points to illustrate the comparison. First, Jonah’s name meant “dove,” so Christ’s nature is like a dove. Second, Jonah was three days and night in the belly of the fish, “So Christ was three Days and three Nights in the Bowels or Heart of the Earth, and yet rose again alive.”²⁶⁷ Lastly, Jonah preached repentance to sinners, “So did Christ.”²⁶⁸

Returning to the application section of *Sermon II*, Keach named Solomon in his wisdom as a type of Christ:

Solomon was a mighty King, and for Wisdom exceeded all that went before him. But alas, what was Solomon to Jesus Christ, who is the Wisdom of God it self, and the express Image of the Father’s Person, and the Brightness of his Glory? O know you, Sinners, this Day, that Jesus Christ, this glorious King, and Prince of the Kings of the Earth, this mighty Saviour is come to your Doors.²⁶⁹

Keach called on sinners to hear the voice of King Jesus and open the door of their lives to him. In *Tropologia*, Keach named Solomon as a type of Christ and identified numerous parallels between Solomon and Christ, one of which corresponded to what Keach preached in *A Great Salvation*. Keach argued that Solomon exceeded the wisdom and knowledge of men, so “Christ is the Wisdom of God: In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledg.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 390.

²⁶⁷ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 420.

²⁶⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 420.

²⁶⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 386.

²⁷⁰ Keach and De Laune, *Troposchēmologia*, 4:419.

Throughout the sermon, Keach alluded to other types that point to Christ as the antitype. For example, in a series of questions directed toward the sinner, Keach asked, “Do you want a Shepherd to feed you, a King to rule you, a Priest to sacrifice and make an Atonement for you, a Prophet to teach you? this Salvation provides all these for you: Christ is your Shepherd, your Priest, your King, your Prophet, and excels all that ever bore those Names.”²⁷¹ In *Tropologia* Keach labeled the shepherd,²⁷² priest,²⁷³ king,²⁷⁴ and prophet²⁷⁵ as types of Christ.²⁷⁶

In addition, Keach returned to a “Tropical” image he attributed to Christ throughout his sermon corpus, Christ as surety. Although Keach neglected to use the method of aligning the metaphor with parallels or disparities, he nevertheless addressed the topic.²⁷⁷ In *Sermon VI*, Keach asked the question, “Did we want a Surety, not only to pay our Debts, but also to secure us in a State of Grace, and to preserve all our Riches for us[?]”²⁷⁸ The answer to Keach’s question lies in the salvation that Christ provides: “This Salvation provides a glorious Surety for us.”²⁷⁹ Keach lamented the state of sinners, unable to manage what they have and in need of the surety that Christ provides; “We and all our Riches are put into the Hand of Christ, to keep and improve our Riches for us, and

²⁷¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 427. Elsewhere in the sermon Keach referred to Christ as being both the priest and king antitype, see Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 430–31.

²⁷² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:162.

²⁷³ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:149.

²⁷⁴ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:142.

²⁷⁵ Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:157.

²⁷⁶ Keach also referred to the cities of refuge as a type of Christ where sinner could run to escape the wrath of God. Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 472.

²⁷⁷ Interestingly, Keach normally used this method to preach Christ in his sermons and rarely availed of the method when addressing the work of the Father or the Spirit. However, in this sermon series Keach utilized the method when referring to God the Father as our portion. See Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 427–428 and Keach, *Tropologia*, 2:6.

²⁷⁸ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 428.

²⁷⁹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 428.

to give of it forth to us as he in his Wisdom sees best for us.”²⁸⁰ Later in the series, Keach decries the position of sinners in outstanding debt: “Jesus Christ, our blessed Surety, is contemned, utterly neglected, or not accepted of.”²⁸¹ In *Tropologia*, Keach declared Christ as Surety for believers. For example, he noted, “Christ, our Spiritual Surety, (as he is Mediator) undertakes on God’s part to the Creature.”²⁸² Keach was captivated by Christ’s suretyship.

Conclusion

Three words sum up this chapter: perseverance, justification, and rest. Keach pronounced the perseverance of the saints in *The Blessedness of Christ’s Sheep* (John 10:27–28) and *The Great Salvation* (Heb 2:3). Keach not only preached this truth, but he articulated this doctrine in his congregation’s statement of faith:

We believe all those whom God hath chosen, and who are effectually called, justified, and sanctified in Jesus Christ, can neither totally, nor finally fall away from a state of Grace; but shall certainly persevere therein unto the end, and eternally be saved; and this by virtue of their Election, or the immutable Decree of God, and the unchangeable Love of God the Father; and by virtue of their Union with Christ, together with his Death, Resurrection, and Intercession; as also from the nature of the Covenant of Grace, and Suretyship of Christ; and through the indwelling of the holy Spirit, who abideth in them for ever.²⁸³

Keach defended the doctrine of justification, declaring that Christ’s righteousness was imputed to the saints in *The Marrow of True Justification* (Rom 4:5) and *A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes* (Rom 8:1). While Keach guarded this doctrine in the pulpit, he also sang of it in the pew. In his hymn, *Righteousness of Christ Glorious*, Keach wrote,

Christ’s Righteousness imputed is,
to those who do believe;
Sing Praise to Christ, and God on high,

²⁸⁰ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 428.

²⁸¹ Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened*, 468.

²⁸² Keach and De Laune, *Tropologia*, 2:92.

²⁸³ Keach, *The Articles*, 33.

who do this Grace receive.²⁸⁴

Keach claimed that the Jewish Sabbath was abrogated because Christ is the true rest to which the Sabbath pointed. Not only did Keach prove his point through rhetoric, but he proclaimed it through song

‘It [*sic*] is he that leads, ‘tis he that guides,
and gives us Rest and Peace;
O sing Christ’s Praise, you pardoned Ones,
your joy shall never cease!²⁸⁵

Perseverance, justification, and rest were all glorious themes of Benjamin Keach’s Christ-centered preaching.

²⁸⁴ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Songs Being the Marrow of Scripture in Songs of Praise to Almighty God from the Old and New Testament: With a Hundred Divine Hymns on Several Occasions as Now Practised in Several Congregations in and about London* (London, 1700), 48.

²⁸⁵ Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Songs*, 81.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: KEACH AND CONTEMPORARY CHRIST-CENTERED PREACHING METHODS COMPARED

[To preach Christ is] to Preach the Excellencies of his Person . . . To Preach that he is GOD, God by Nature, not a petty-god, a god by Office, but the most high God, the eternal God, Co-essential, Co-equal, and Co-eternal with the Father. To Preach that he is *Man*, truly Man, made of a Woman, of the same Flesh and Blood that the Children partake of.¹

The final pages of this dissertation will explore what it means to preach Christ today. Initially, a summary of Benjamin Keach's Christ-centered preaching method will be presented, followed by an assessment of the contemporary Christotelic, Christiconic, and Christo-promise methods and a contrast between those methods and Keach's. Subsequently, the Christ-centered preaching methods of Edmund Clowney, Bryan Chapell, and Sidney Greidanus will be analyzed and compared with Keach's method. This conclusion will demonstrate that Benjamin Keach is a Christ-centered preacher worthy of emulation.

Benjamin Keach's Christ-Centered Preaching Method

This dissertation has argued for the centrality of Christ-centered preaching in Benjamin Keach's sermons through his *Tropologia* and Sin-Salvation methods. The *Tropologia* method permeated the analysis due to Keach's consistent use of the approach despite the genre or Testament that he was preaching on. Keach's *Tropologia* method was twofold. Keach used typology when he highlighted persons, events, or institutions

¹ Benjamin Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven, Or, Jacob's Ladder Improved Containing Four Sermons Lately Preach'd on Genesis XXVIII, XII: Wherein the Doctrine of Free-Grace is Display'd through Jesus Christ: Also Discovering the Nature, Office, and Ministration of the Holy Angels: To which is Added One Sermon on Rom. 8, 1: With some Short Reflections on Mr. Samuel Clark's New Book Intituled Scripture Justification* (London, 1698), 46.

that foreshadowed Christ. Then, Keach used metaphors that conveyed parallels and/or disparities between the metaphor and Christ. Keach’s sin-salvation method encompassed his sermon by revealing man’s sin and the solution found in Christ’s salvation. Keach achieved this by preaching about the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, or the imputation of sin through Adam and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. The term “Christ-centered” conveys meaning in modern-day preaching terminology. One could rightly ask whether “Christ-centered” is an appropriate term to describe Keach’s preaching. It is vital, then, to consider contemporary Christ-centered preaching methods.

Three Contemporary Methods of Preaching Christ

“How to read and to preach the Old Testament (OT) remains one of the greatest challenges and points of debate among evangelicals.”² In the modern era, there are numerous approaches proposed for preaching Christ. Though a plethora of methods prevail in the contemporary climate, this initial analysis will survey three. The approaches are as follows: Christotelic, Christiconic, and Christo-promise. First, each position will be succinctly described, and then each position will be briefly compared with Benjamin Keach’s method.

Christotelic Method

In this survey, Daniel Block’s Christotelic approach will be analyzed.³ Commendably, Block upholds biblical theology when he contends that the Bible has a single storyline revolving around God’s redemption plan for his people.⁴ Block states that

² Hershael W. York, “Reflections on Preaching Christ from the Old Testament,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 197–203.

³ Tremper Longman III, “Christotelic Approach,” in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament: Genre, Authorial Intent, and the Nature of Scriptures*, ed. Brian J. Tabb, Andrew M. King, and Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 73, Kindle.

⁴ Daniel Block, “Christotelic Preaching: A Plea for Hermeneutical Integrity and Missional Passion,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 13.

this “story climaxes in Jesus.”⁵ The climax of Scripture’s metanarrative unfolds in two phases: initially, the first coming of Christ, resulting in his death, burial, resurrection, and accession; subsequently, the second coming of Christ.⁶

Block’s divergence from alternative methodologies arises when he states, “Not every text of Scripture points to Jesus Christ as Messiah, but every text presents a vital part of that story of Jesus, ‘Who is the Christ.’”⁷ Block argues that sermons have many functions, such as evangelistic, encouragement, comfort, and more. Block notes, “Failure to mention Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins and whose resurrection gives us hope in life eternal in a sermon does not mean we have not preached a Christian sermon.”⁸ Block suggests that to preach YHWH is to preach God incarnate. Therefore, a sermon does not need to mention Jesus by name. Block posits that the New Testament preaches Jesus as the Davidic Messiah and, ultimately, Jesus as YHWH. When they preach YHWH in the Old Testament, they preach Jesus, whether they name him or not. Block emphatically states, “There is no need to resort to cheap and trivializing typologizing and Christologizing, which often actually reflects a low view of Scripture and a low Christology.”⁹ Based on Block’s comments, one may deduce that typology has no place in the Christotelic method.

Benjamin Keach’s Christ-centered preaching method certainly advocated Christ as the climax of the biblical storyline. However, that is where the correspondence concludes. Through his sin-salvation method, Keach could not conceive of a sermon

⁵ Block, “Christotelic Preaching,”13.

⁶ Block, “Christotelic Preaching,”13. Tremper Longman discusses the Christotelic approach, portraying Christ as the ultimate goal (the telos), the culmination of Scripture. In this perspective, Christ is the destination toward which the Old Testament directs. Tremper Longman III, “Christotelic Approach,” 74.

⁷ Block, “Christotelic Preaching,”14.

⁸ Block, “Christotelic Preaching,”15.

⁹ Block, “Christotelic Preaching,”12.

where Christ was not named. Additionally, through his *Tropologia* method, Keach thought it necessary to use typology to point people to Christ regardless of the text he preached. Typology resided at the core of his hermeneutical approach.

Christiconic Method

Abraham Kuruvilla espouses the Christiconic method. Significantly, Kuruvilla affirms a Christ-focused Bible-reading model because “every Christian inherently knows the Bible is about Jesus Christ.”¹⁰ Kuruvilla contends that the Christiconic reading of the text is the preferred hermeneutical lens through which one sees Christ. Essential to understanding Kuruvilla’s approach is the concept of “pericopal theology.”¹¹ In order to understand pericopal theology, it is best to quote Kuruvilla’s lengthy definition in full:

Pericopal theology by definition is the theology specific to a particular pericope, representing a segment of the plenary world in front of the canonical text that portrays God and his relationship to his people, and which bearing a transhistorical intention, functions as the crucial intermediary in the homiletical move from text to praxis that respect both the authority of the text and the circumstances of the hearer.¹²

In short, each pericope (a preaching unit determined through textual analysis) has its own unique theology and distinct application.¹³ In “pericopal theology,” the exegete determines not only what the author is saying but also what the author is doing with what he is saying.¹⁴ Therefore, the expositor determines the theology or overarching principle of the text for application.¹⁵ Each unit of text is unique and uniquely contributes to how

¹⁰ Abraham Kuruvilla, “Christiconic View,” in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 34, Kindle.

¹¹ Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 110.

¹² Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 111.

¹³ Abraham Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching: The Journey from Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 5.

¹⁴ Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching*, 6.

¹⁵ Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching*, 29.

we should live our lives for God.¹⁶ Each pericope calls the hearer to conform to the image of Christ; “every pericope portrays a facet of the image of Christ that man is to be conformed to; this model of biblical interpretation for preaching is labeled *Christiconic*.”¹⁷

Admirably, Kuruvilla seeks to privilege singular textual units through his approach. However, he maintains strong views regarding biblical theology, typology, and naming Christ in a sermon. Kuruvilla’s position on biblical theology is determined by his adamant insistence on privileging one Scripture text at a time. Though Kuruvilla does state that biblical theology can help one see “the wider historical context of a text,” he believes it is not the same as “seeing how a particular pericope makes a specific call to the reader.”¹⁸ He argues that biblical theology addresses broad themes, which could result in repeating themes every Sunday.¹⁹ Kuruvilla’s hermeneutical rule that consolidates his view on biblical theology:

So as a rule, you will rarely need to bring other portions of Scripture into your sermon. There is really no call to defend one text with another, for all of Scripture is equally inspired and authoritative. Besides, such support for one text by another is a figment of the imagination, for pericopal theology is exquisitely specific for a given pericope. I am convinced that no two biblical passages can ever have the same pericopal theology, and thus one text cannot render substantial support of another.²⁰

In other words, Kuruvilla vehemently believes that the expositor does not need to refer to other portions of Scripture in one’s sermon. Consequently, this shapes his opinion on typology. Commenting on Genesis 22, for instance, Kuruvilla critiques those who embrace typology based on themes like “sacrifice,” “son,” and “substitute.”²¹ He names

¹⁶ Kuruvilla, “Christiconic View,” 58.

¹⁷ Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 265.

¹⁸ Kuruvilla, “Christiconic View,” 58.

¹⁹ Kuruvilla, “Christiconic View,” 58.

²⁰ Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching*, 126.

²¹ Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 217.

redemptive-historical (some label them Christ-centered) expositors such as Edmund Clowney and Sidney Greidanus, criticizing them for espousing that the provision of a ram was a picture of the redemption to come in Christ.²² Kuruvilla concludes,

All of these typological explorations render the narrative a tangled skein of anachronistic references, especially for preachers. Rather than immediately fling out a lifeline from the NT to accomplish a Christocentric rescue of the *Aqedah*, I suggest that the interpreter privilege the text and its immediate context to figure out what the A/author was doing with what he was saying (the theology of this pericope).²³

Finally, with regard to naming Christ in a sermon, Kuruvilla suggests that there is no “hermeneutical constraint to mention Christ in every sermon,” yet he does concede that Christ should be mentioned in every service based on pragmatics.²⁴

Benjamin Keach’s Christ-centered preaching method would correspond with the initial concept of privileging the text. However, in Keach’s sermons, after he briefly explained the context and derived the initial meaning of the text, he sought to apply the analogy of faith in all sermons. He determined that Scripture interprets Scripture. Therefore, Keach felt free to draw from multiple Scripture texts in his sermons. Following his *Tropologia* method, Keach drew on multiple texts when connecting the type with Christ, the antitype.

Christo-Promise Method

Elliott E. Johnson argues for what he calls a Christo-promise approach to preaching Christ. He rightly urges those who use such an approach to allow “a grammatical-historical hermeneutic” to guide their exposition.²⁵ Johnson reminds readers

²² Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 218–19.

²³ Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 219.

²⁴ Abraham Kuruvilla, “Response to Bryan Chapell” in Chapell, “Redemptive-Historic View,” 30, Kindle.

²⁵ Elliott E. Johnson, “Expository Preaching and Christo-Promise,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 35.

that throughout Scripture, Jesus held prophecy, Old Testament Scripture, and promise in high regard.²⁶ Though Johnson cites Jesus as the primary reason for choosing the word “promise,” he also reveals the theological background for his choice of the word as he admits that “Dispensational theology” recognizes the central role of the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12–22.²⁷

Johnson overtly states his thesis when he declares his intent “to demonstrate that a grammatical historical interpretation of various OT mentions of promise includes the presence of Christ.”²⁸ The grammatical-historical analysis of the text is not unique to this approach; most competent exegetes would endeavor to commit to such an analysis. However, Johnson wants to emphasize the concept of “promise.” He argues that God’s Christo-promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 includes three traits: Initially, God promises to bless all of the nations. This promise has a prophetic aspect to it. Subsequently, God chooses to mediate this blessing through Abraham, who trusted God by faith. Finally, according to Johnson, this promise contains certainty and uncertainty—certainty because God, the Creator of the universe, makes a promise that he will keep, and uncertainty because nobody knows when God will fulfill this promise.²⁹

²⁶ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 35.

²⁷ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 36. Other covenant theology systems hold to the centrality of the promise given to Abraham. For example, progressive covenantalism views the Abrahamic covenant as essential for the progression of God’s redemptive plan climaxing in the new covenant. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 93, 107. See also Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, eds. *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016).

However, Johnson is alluding to one of the seven dispensations. The seven dispensations are as follows: innocence, conscience, civil government, dispensation of promise, Mosaic law, grace, and millennium. Johnson is naturally referring to the “Dispensation of Promise.” Therefore, this language of promise undergirds Johnson’s theological framework. Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 54, Kindle.

²⁸ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 36.

²⁹ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 38–39.

Therefore, Johnson concludes by highlighting the “Christo-promise” nature of Genesis 12:1–3:

While Abraham was a causal link to future generations, his obedience did not fulfill God’s promise. Thus, the certainty of God’s promise necessarily implies that there will be an ultimate descendent through whom the promise will be fulfilled. Thus the name, Christo-Promise, is chosen from our NT perspective. At the time of its composition by Moses, the promised one is defined as “the descendent through whom all the nations would be blessed.”³⁰

Christ came as the descendent of Abraham to fulfill the law and the promise given to Abraham, thereby blessing the nations (Gal 3:15–29).³¹ In the end, Johnson succinctly defines the two words related to his approach: promise, “having the force of a prophetic-future, speaks to God’s intent to restore and bless the fallen creation,” and Christo, which “speaks to the ultimate One through whom fulfillment of the promise would appear, since God has entrusted the outworking of his plan to chosen ones from the human race.”

Interestingly, although Johnson articulates his position grounded in his dispensational theology, the Christo-promise approach links well with some aspects of the Christ-centered approach (see the next section). For example, Sidney Greidanus, one of the leading proponents of the Christ-centered method, responds to the Christo-promise approach thus: “This is a fine description of the way of promise-fulfillment.”³²

Benjamin Keach would have seen value in Johnson’s Christo-promise method. Keach referred to the reality of promise-fulfillment in his writings. For example, in his work *The Rector Rectified*, Keach spoke about what the seed of Abraham referred to in the context of the Abrahamic covenant. He taught that the promise given to Abraham was first to Christ: “As the Promise refers to Christ, (so they cannot be included) who is

³⁰ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 39.

³¹ Johnson, “Christo-Promise,” 41–42.

³² Sidney Greidanus, “Reflections on Preaching Christ from the Old Testament,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 107.

Abraham's Seed in a special manner."³³ Additionally, he noted that the elect inherited the promise: "The Promise refers to the Elect Seed, or such who have the Faith of Abraham."³⁴

While Keach may have been concerned with the promise-fulfillment structure in Scripture, he certainly would not have held it from the dispensational standpoint that Johnson did through the "Dispensation of Promise." Although Charles Ryrie advocated that dispensationalism developed many years before John Darby, he nevertheless acknowledged that Darby systematized dispensationalism in the nineteenth century.³⁵ Keach, a seventeenth-century Puritan, had no notion of this dispensational scheme and primarily held a twofold covenant system: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.³⁶

³³ Benjamin Keach, *The Rector Rectified and Corrected, or, Infant-Baptism Unlawful Being a Sober Answer to a Late Pamphlet Entitled An Argumentative and Practical Discourse of Infant-Baptism, Published by Mr. William Burkit, Rector of Mildin in Suffolk: Wherein All His Arguments for Pedit-Baptism Are Refuted and the Necessity of Immersion, i.e. Dipping, Is Evidenced, and the People Falsly Called Anabaptists Are Cleared from Those Unjust Reproaches and Calumnies Cast upon Them: Together with a Reply to the Athenian Gazette Added to Their 5th Volume about Infant-Baptism: With Some Remarks upon Mr. John Flavel's Last Book in Answer to Mr. Philip Cary* (London: John Harris, 1692), 44.

Keach abbreviated the writings of Samuel Petto when he stated, "As Mr. Petto well observes the Covenant expresseure from the beginning ran first to Christ, and in him to us." Keach argued with Petto that "the Promise to Adam, primarily runneth to Christ," and he (Keach) saw the covenant given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 as a "Promise [that] refers to Christ." Benjamin Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant, a Sweet Cordial for a Drooping Soul, or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened in a Sermon Preached January the 29th, at the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty, Late Pastor of a Church of Christ, at Abingdon, in the County of Berks, Who Departed This Life Jan. 25th 1692/3 and Was Interr'd at Southwark: To Which Is Added, An Elegy on the Death of the Said Minister* (London: H. Barnard, 1693), 10. For the original Samuel Petto reference, see Samuel Petto, *The Difference between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained with an Exposition of the Covenant of Grace in the Principal Concernments of It* (London: Eliz. Calvert, 1674), 27–28.

³⁴ Keach, *The Rector Rectified and Corrected*, 44.

³⁵ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 65–67.

³⁶ Keach did not hold Johnson's position on Israel and the church. Ryrie, the systematiser of dispensationalism, defined it in the following way: "The essence of dispensationalism is (1) the recognition of a consistent distinction between Israel and the church, (2) a consistent and regular use of a literal principle of interpretation, and (3) a basic and primary conception of the purpose of God as His own glory rather than the salvation of mankind." Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 45. Note, Israel and the church are distinct. Interestingly, Johnson notes the distinction between Christ and Israel: "Jesus Christ did not replace Israel, but represented Israel in her partnership with God." Johnson, "Christo-Promise," 42. Keach believed the church to be the "true Israel." Keach stated, "As he chose the Natural Seed of Abraham; it was a Typical Church, and figured forth the true Spiritual Seed or true Israel of God." Benjamin Keach, *Light Broke Forth in Wales, Expelling Darkness, or, The Englishman's Love to the Antient Britains [sic] Being an Answer to a Book, Intituled [sic] Children's Baptism from Heaven, Published in the Welsh Tongue by Mr. James Owen* (London: William Marshall, 1696), xiii.

Three Contemporary Christ-Centered Preaching Methods

With the Christotelic, Christiconic, and Christo-promise methods of preaching Christ now surveyed, one method remains absent: the Christ-centered preaching method. This dissertation has argued that Christ-centered preaching is central to Benjamin Keach's sermon corpus through his *Tropologia* and sin-salvation methods. Significantly, the contemporary method that most aligns with Keach's practice is the "Christ-centered" method. To prove that point, an analysis of the following three contemporary Christ-centered preaching methods will now occur: Edmund Clowney's, Bryan Chapell's, and Sydney Greidanus's Christ-centered preaching methods.³⁷

Edmund Clowney's Christ-Centered Preaching Method

Bryan Chapell describes Edmund Clowney as "this generation's patriarch of redemptive-historical preaching."³⁸ Clowney advocates a redemptive-historical preaching approach when he warns fellow expositors, "Preachers who ignore the history of redemption in their preaching are ignoring the witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus in all

³⁷ One omission from this list worth mentioning is Graeme Goldsworthy's work. See Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). Although Goldsworthy's work is not reviewed in the same manner as the other representatives of Christ-centered preaching, his work will be referenced at pertinent times within the conclusion. Moreover, Vern S. Poythress, in "Christocentric Preaching," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 64, highlights a number of Christ-centered approaches worthy of consideration: Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007); Charles D. Drew, *The Ancient Love Song: Finding Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2000). Poythress also lists broader discussions about the centrality of Christ: Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975); O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980); Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004); Robertson, *The Christ of Wisdom: A Redemptive-Historical Exploration of the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012). Finally, Poythress lists some of his own work: Vern S. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Phillipsburg, IL: P&R, 1995); Poythress, *Reading the Word of God in the Presence of God: A Handbook for Biblical Interpretation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016); Poythress, *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, IL: P&R, 1999).

³⁸ Chapell elaborates by saying, "For decades he was the voice crying in the wilderness to encourage evangelical preachers to make Christ the focus of all their messages, since he is the aim of all the Scriptures." Bryan Chapell, *Endorsements in Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 1, Kindle.

the Scriptures.”³⁹ Clowney contends that preaching Christ from the Old Testament entails delivering sermons that consider the complete narrative of redemption and its fulfillment in Christ.⁴⁰ Consequently, Clowney’s approach centers upon his conception of biblical theology.

Clowney enunciated his position with the publication of his seminal work *Preaching and Biblical Theology*. Clowney describes his approach to biblical theology as redemptive-historical when he states, “The divisions of biblical theology are historical periods of redemption, marked by creation, the fall, the flood, the call of Abraham, the exodus, and the coming of Christ.”⁴¹ Ultimately, Clowney embraced Geerhardus Vos’s definition of biblical theology: “That branch of exegetical theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.”⁴² Concerning the ultimate purpose of biblical theology, Clowney argues that “biblical theology serves to center preaching on its essential message: Jesus Christ.”⁴³ Yet, Clowney eagerly exhorts the exegete to preach in a way that did not ignore the contours of the immediate text, stating, “You must preach Christ as the text presents him.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 9.

⁴⁰ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 10.

⁴¹ Clowney also presented some general statements about biblical theology through his work. For example: “The most fruitful understanding of biblical theology is that which recognizes both the historical and progressive character of revelation and the unity of the divine counsel which it declares.” He also stated, “Biblical theology as a distinct and fruitful study must take seriously both historical progression and theological unity in the Bible.” See Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 17.

Interestingly, Edward Glenny names Clowney as a covenant theologian who exemplified typology in the covenant tradition. Yet, Clowney divided the canon into an epochal structure rather than a covenantal structure. Edward Glenny, “Typology: A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 4 (December 1997): 627–38.

⁴² Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 13. Clowney quotes this in his section on defining biblical theology. See Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 15.

⁴³ Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 74.

⁴⁴ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 10.

Clowney believes in a hermeneutical method that was first grounded in the immediate theological horizon of the text as situated within its epochal period. Subsequently, the expositor could show how the text fits into the larger redemptive-historical plan of God.⁴⁵ Three words summarize Clowney's method of preaching Christ: titles, symbols, and memorials.⁴⁶

First, then, there are titles. According to Clowney, the primary titles that point forward to Christ are "Lord" and "Servant." The Scriptures allocate these titles to individuals in the Old Testament. Some may consider those individuals distinct from Christ, but Clowney stressed that these titles ultimately belong to Christ. Clowney describes Christ as "the Lord of the covenant."⁴⁷ Clowney argues that the designation "Lord" (*kurios*) in the Old Testament is a direct reference to Christ.

When considering the title "servant," Clowney advocates that "Christ who is the Lord is also the Servant of the Lord."⁴⁸ Thus, Clowney argues, "Where a righteous servant of the Lord appears in Old Testament history, it is the true Servant who is prefigured."⁴⁹ Moreover, there is a connection between the terms: "God makes his covenant, claiming his people as his, and giving them a claim on him. 'Lord' and 'Servant' express that relation."⁵⁰ Clowney proposes that Christ is the fulfillment of

⁴⁵ Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 92.

⁴⁶ Clowney presented a more developed view of his hermeneutical process in his later work, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (2003), than his earlier work, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (1961).

⁴⁷ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 10. Clowney succinctly articulated his argument in the following way: "The New Testament applies the title *kurios* (Lord) to Christ (e.g., Heb. 1:10; 1 Pet. 3:15). That Greek term, used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament to translate 'Yahweh,' became the short designation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Both the Old Testament and the New also use the term 'Lord' to designate 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' as in Peter's quotation of Psalm 2 in Acts 4:26."

⁴⁸ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 18.

⁴⁹ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 18.

⁵⁰ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 20.

every servant figure in the Old Testament, just as Christ is the great fulfillment of figures such as “the saviors, prophets, kings, priests, and judges of the Old Covenant.”⁵¹

Therefore, Clowney uses the titles of “Lord” and “servant” as examples of how Christ fulfills other titles and offices outlined in the Old Testament.

The second aspect of Clowney’s methodology focuses on symbols.⁵² Clowney acknowledges that symbolism, as opposed to allegory, has its place in sound exegesis, despite its critics.⁵³ He suggests that three forms of symbolism lead us to Christ: ceremonial, official, and historical.⁵⁴ Ceremonial symbolism “in the Old Testament uses the fundamental distinction between the clean and the unclean.”⁵⁵ The unclean item pollutes the clean. However, in “fulfillment, the prevailing power of Christ reverses the principle. When Jesus touches a leper, Jesus is not defiled, but the leper is cleansed and can claim his new status through the priest and sacrifice.”⁵⁶ Within the realm of ceremonial symbolism is the “sacramental symbolism” of the whole sacrificial system.⁵⁷

Clowney describes official symbolism as follows: “The symbolism of office appears everywhere in the Old Testament. A man may be presented as a sign (Zech. 3:8, *mophet*, almost = *typos*).”⁵⁸ Clowney subsumes typology within the context of

⁵¹ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 20.

⁵² This discussion is largely taken from Clowney’s later work *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*. However, it is worth noting the first iteration of his discussion about symbolism in Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, 100–112.

⁵³ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 20.

⁵⁴ Glenny summarizes Clowney’s approach to typology in these cases, stating, “Therefore the literal meaning of God’s dealings with Israel does not exhaust its significance in the context of redemptive history. The forms given to Israel are preparatory forms. The history of redemption uses a rich variety of figures and forms to carry along key concepts. Many of these forms and figures also point to the fulfillment of God’s promises (cf. the exodus, Isa 40:3).” Glenny, “Typology,” 629–30.

⁵⁵ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 23.

⁵⁶ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 23.

⁵⁷ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 23.

⁵⁸ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 24.

symbolism. Thus, official symbolism considers the threefold office of prophet, priest, king as well as Christ's fulfillment of each office. Additionally, historical symbolism permeates the Old Testament. Most significant is the historical event of Abraham's sacrificing Isaac in Genesis 22. Clowney draws attention to the name given to the place of sacrifice: "Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah Jireh—'the Lord will provide.'"⁵⁹ Clowney notes the interplay between the words "provide" and "see" in the text. Clowney said that Abraham could "see" the provision of the ram by the Lord. The Lord's provision of the ram points to God's final provision for his people through Christ.⁶⁰

Lastly, Clowney's method considers the role of memorials in the context of redemptive-historical preaching. Clowney names several memorial events, such as Jacob's dream in Bethel, memorialized by the changing of his name, or the Passover event, memorialized by the Passover meal.⁶¹ Significantly, one needs to note Clowney's conclusion about the event when Moses strikes the rock with his rod and how this memorial points forward to Christ:

When Paul says the Rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), he perceives the symbolism of the passage. Christ is present both in person and in symbol. In that incident, Christ the Lord stands on the Rock as the theophanic Angel, but the symbol of the Rock is needed to provide the symbol of that human nature he must assume to receive the atoning blow of judgment. We need not wonder at the severity of the Lord's censure of Moses when he struck the Rock a second time, unbidden (Num. 20:9–12).⁶²

Though Clowney's approach to preaching Christ considers titles, symbols, and memorials, he is best known for his focus on the relationship between symbolism,

⁵⁹ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 25.

⁶⁰ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 26. Note Clowney's elaboration of the type: "God's final atonement for sin was not a ram caught in the thicket but the Son of the promise. Isaac could be spared, must be spared, for while he was the seed of the promise, he was so only in shadow, pointing to the true Seed, the beloved Son, not of Abraham but of the heavenly Father. God the Father spared the beloved son of Abraham but not his own Beloved."

⁶¹ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 26.

⁶² Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 30.

typology, and significance (see figure 1 below). The Old Testament event must first possess an original symbolic significance. If that event is essential to the original hearers, then it may be used as a legitimate typological prospect pointing forward to Christ.⁶³

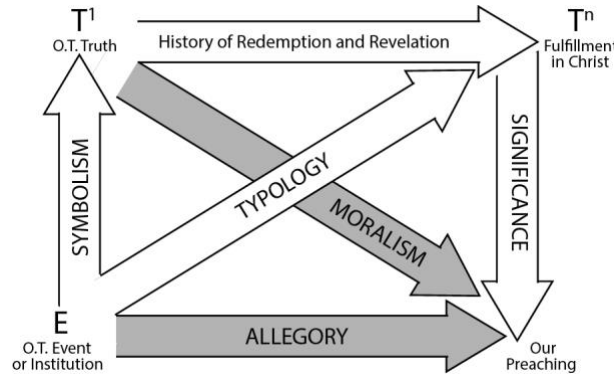


Figure 1. Clowney's typology triangle

Vern Poythress gives a helpful example of how Clowney's diagram works.⁶⁴ Poythress uses the example of the tabernacle. Step 1: Consider the symbolic nature of the tabernacle in its original Old Testament context. Simply put, Poythress states that the tabernacle "signifies that God has undertaken to dwell with his people."⁶⁵ Step 2: "We ask how this truth about God dwelling with his people comes to climactic manifestation as the history of revelation continues to unfold." Poythress posits the following answer:

⁶³ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 32.

⁶⁴ Vern S. Poythress, "Edmund P. Clowney's Triangle of Typology in Preaching and Biblical Theology," *Unio Cum Christo* 7, no. 2 (October 2021): 232. See also Poythress's example of a sermon based on Genesis 15:1–16 using Clowney's Triangle: Poythress, "Christocentric Preaching," 48–49.

⁶⁵ Poythress, "Edmund P. Clowney's Triangle of Typology," 232.

“It comes to a climax in Christ, ‘For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’ (Col 2:8; see John 2:21; 1:14). Therefore, the tabernacle is a type of Christ.”⁶⁶

Bryan Chapell’s Christ-Centered Preaching Method

Bryan Chapell advocates “a redemptive approach to preaching.”⁶⁷ The redemptive-historical approach to preaching asks the preacher to consider the wider canonical context: “By identifying where a passage fits in the overall revelation of God’s redemptive plan, a preacher relates the text to Christ by performing the standard and necessary exegetical task of establishing its context.”⁶⁸ Helpfully, Chapell proposes that every passage incorporates one or more of four redemptive foci, which do not need to be segregated.⁶⁹ The four redemptive foci are as follows: the text may be (1) predictive of the work of Christ, (2) preparatory for the work of Christ, (3) resultant of the work of Christ, and/or (4) reflective of the work of Christ.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Poythress, “Edmund P. Clowney’s Triangle of Typology,” 232. Opposing symbolism and typology are two negative approaches to preaching from the Old Testament: allegory and moralism (note the gray arrows). Clowney said allegory is present when “the preacher relying on allegory will try to explain a text by picking something in it and giving it an interpretation that is unrelated to the context or meaning.” Moralism “presents a truth apart from the history of redemption and, therefore, apart from the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, the Lordship of Christ.” When adopting the redemptive-historical approach to preaching, the expositor will successfully avoid allegory and moralism. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 33–35.

⁶⁷ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 249, Logos Bible Software.

⁶⁸ Bryan Chapell, “Redemptive-Historic View,” in Gibson and Kim, *Homiletics and Hermeneutics*, 4–5, Kindle. Chapell is known for his Christ-centered approach to preaching, but he embraces the freedom to use the title redemptive-historic to describe his approach. Jason DeRouchie applies the same approach by calling his method a redemptive-historical, Christocentric approach. Jason S. DeRouchie, “Redemptive-Historical, Christocentric Approach,” in Tabb, King, and Gundry, *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, 181, Kindle.

⁶⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267. By developing these four redemptive foci, Chapell argues the point he made elsewhere: “Christ-centered preaching, rightly understood, does not seek to discover where Christ is mentioned in every biblical text but to disclose where every text stands in relation to Christ’s ministry.” Chapell, “Redemptive-Historic View,” 7. Goldsworthy, a Christocentric expositor, seems more explicit in his understanding of the Scriptures’ witness to Christ: “All texts in the whole Bible bear a discernible relationship to Christ and are primarily intended as a testimony to Christ.” Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 113, Kindle.

⁷⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267.

Chapell asserts that some passages predict God's redemptive work through the person and work of Christ.⁷¹ Predictive texts concern a specific genre of biblical literature, such as messianic psalms, prophetic passages, apocalyptic texts, and more.⁷² Chapell is cognizant that many Old Testament reveal their inherent predicative nature via the illumination of New Testament texts.⁷³ Chapell advocates a continuity between the Old and New Testament, revealed in a biblical-theological approach, when he states,

We are New Testament believers and have both the right and the responsibility to view God's earlier revelations from the full perspective that his Word grants us. You and I live on this side of the cross. Ignoring that reality in order to expound texts only as they could have been understood by an original audience ignores the full canonical intentions of God's Word (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 9:9–11).⁷⁴

Consequently, a necessary hermeneutical step for the predictive approach recognizes that the New Testament is an essential tool when considering Old Testament texts.

Chapell also argues that some texts are preparatory for the work of Christ. In other words, while some passages are specifically about Christ, they prepare God's people for Christ in an anticipatory manner.⁷⁵ Chapell reminds expositors that "the accounts of the activities of the prophets, priests, and kings" prepared the way for Jesus, our true prophet, priest, and king.⁷⁶ Essentially, the preparatory function of the Scripture passage is evidenced by various types perceived in the text.⁷⁷ Chapell clearly

⁷¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267.

⁷² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267.

⁷³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267. Chapell is critical of any approach that ignores the illumination offered by New Testament text when he says, "The expositor assumes an unnecessary and inappropriate blindness when attempting to handle such texts without this illumination" (267–68).

⁷⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 267–68.

⁷⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 268.

⁷⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 268. Chapell notes, "Exodus events, temple sacrifices, foreign adoptions, merciful pardons, providential rescues, and a host of other features and exemplars (both positive and negative) in narrative, precept, prose, and poetry tune the hearts and minds of God's people to understand and receive the Redeemer's work at its appointed time."

⁷⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 264.

acknowledges that “God’s redemptive work in Christ may also be evident in Old Testament types.”⁷⁸

Additionally, texts may be resultant of the work of Christ. Chapell is keen that preachers consistently recognize the context of scriptural imperatives.⁷⁹ He bemoans preaching explicitly or implicitly, suggesting that “God’s love is a consequence of our obedience.”⁸⁰ Instead, Chapell advocates that “the true gospel proclaims that obedience itself is a blessing that results from God’s love for us.”⁸¹ Preachers must insist upon the enabling and empowering work of the Spirit in our lives, remembering that “the only obedience approved by God is that which he himself enables and sanctifies through the union with Christ he provides.”⁸²

Finally, some pericopes may be reflective of the work of Christ. When the predictive, preparatory, and resultant methods bear little fruit, Chapell calls expositors to read the text reflectively. In order to induce adequate reflection, Chapell encourages exegetes to ask the following questions: “What does this text reflect of God’s nature that provides redemption? What does this text reflect of human nature that requires redemption?”⁸³ This method leads us to consider two of the most salient tools for Christ-centered preaching that Chapell promulgates. The first tool Chapell is known for is the “Fallen Condition Focus”⁸⁴ (FCF). The FCF “reveals a text and sermon’s purpose.”⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Chapell, “Redemptive-Historic View,” 10.

⁷⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 269.

⁸⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 269.

⁸¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 269.

⁸² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 269.

⁸³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 271.

⁸⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 28. Oddly, Chapell never cited the Fallen Condition Focus in his chapter “Redemptive-Historic View” in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics*.

⁸⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 28.

Chapell contends that every passage of Scripture has a purpose, according to 2 Timothy 3:16–17.⁸⁶ Chapell reserves the title FCF as a designation for that purpose. Chapell defines the FCF as follows: “The Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) is the mutual human condition that contemporary persons share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy him.”⁸⁷

It is crucial for the preacher to bear in mind that Scripture does not solely address sins; an FCF can be any aspect or problem of the human condition necessitating the instruction, warning, or comfort found in Scripture.⁸⁸ Lastly, the preacher should ask the following questions when developing the FCF: “1. What does the text say? 2. What spiritual concern(s) did the text address (in its context)? 3. What spiritual concerns do listeners share in common with those to (or about) whom the text was written?”⁸⁹

When the preacher determines the FCF of the passage, he can utilize the second tool that Chapell suggests—“gospel glasses.”⁹⁰ By putting on gospel glasses, the preacher is simply “asking what a text reflects of God’s nature and our nature (or more simply, ‘What does this text teach me about God and me?’).”⁹¹ The FCF of the passage

⁸⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 29.

⁸⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 30.

⁸⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 32.

⁸⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 33. David Prince cautions against the full embrace of Chapell’s FCF approach to the text. In response to Chapell’s assertion that all Scripture has an FCF, Prince states, “One might conclude that a depravity hermeneutic is central to Chapell’s approach. The danger in this is a methodological transformation from eschatologically oriented Christocentricity to anthropocentricity.” David E. Prince, “The Necessity of a Christocentric, Kingdom-Focused Model of Expository Preaching” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 99.

Additionally, Abraham Kuruvilla would agree that humanity has fallen and needs correction. He argues that “divine command . . . transcends the fallen state of humanity.” Therefore, Kuruvilla asserts, “Each pericope is portrayed, not merely a sin-influenced failure on the part of mankind, but what it means to fulfill a divine demand.” Thus, Kuruvilla determines that the focus of the pericope is aimed at restoring man to the image of Christ via the divine command rather than focusing on the sin nature of man. The one who ultimately fulfilled the divine command is Christ. Therefore, the goal of the pericope is to call us into the restored image of Christ. Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Test!*, 259–60.

⁹⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 271.

⁹¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 271.

indicates what the passage says about the mutual human condition, our fallen nature. Therefore, the first lens the preacher looks through is man's fallen condition in the text. The second lens is the nature of God in the text, namely, how God's grace solves the problem of our fallen condition.⁹²

In sum, Chapell's Christocentric approach is a redemptive approach to preaching. His method uses four redemptive foci: predictive, preparatory, resultant, and reflective. Two tools aid in the pursuit of such approaches: the Fallen Condition Focus stresses the purpose of the text, then gospel glasses consider the fallen condition and the divine solution of God's grace.

Sidney Greidanus's Christ-Centered Preaching Method

Sidney Greidanus proposes a method of Christ-centered preaching that he calls "the christocentric method, or, more precisely, the redemptive-historical christocentric method."⁹³ Greidanus insists that his Christocentric methodology does not neglect the theocentric model but complements it.⁹⁴ It does so by focusing on God's redemptive plan brought to fulfillment in Christ as its center.⁹⁵ Elsewhere, Greidanus notes, "From the New Testament perspective, therefore, theocentric interpretation without any further additions is already Christocentric, for Christ is God."⁹⁶ Moreover, the practice of Christocentric preaching necessitates an interpretation of a passage that is theocentric,

⁹² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 271–72. Chapell stresses a critical point in the use of this methodology: "These gospel glasses are not X-ray goggles that make an image or reference to Jesus mysteriously emerge inside every biblical account. Rather, they enable us to see reflected aspects of divine character that provide the grace of God ultimately manifested in the person and work of Christ, to see our fallen nature that requires such grace, or both."

⁹³ Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 227, Logos Bible Software.

⁹⁴ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 227.

⁹⁵ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 227.

⁹⁶ Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 118, Logos Bible Software.

encompassing not only its original Old Testament context but also the broader horizon of the entire canon.⁹⁷ Therefore, when the preacher delivers a sermon on any portion of Scripture, it is imperative that he grasps its message in the context of the central figure, Jesus Christ.⁹⁸

When thinking about preaching Christ, Greidanus states, “Preaching Christ includes not only the person and work of Christ, but also His teaching—His teaching on such topics as God, the kingdom of God, Jesus Himself and His mission, salvation, God’s law, and believers’ responsibilities and mission.”⁹⁹ Greidanus’s method provides the expositor with sound exegetical steps toward preaching Christ. Greidanus does not want the preacher to leapfrog from the text directly to Christ. Instead, he highlights the need to preach the text historically, literarily, with a theocentric focus, and canonically. The goal of expository preaching is not to consider the preaching text in isolation.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, Greidanus suggests three basic moves for every expository sermon: “(1) determining the original meaning, (2) the meaning in the context of the whole canon, and (3) the application of this meaning for our hearers today.”¹⁰¹

Greidanus moves beyond the basic methods toward a more exegetical method, offering the expositor seven possible ways to preach Christ from any text.¹⁰² The most salient way of preaching Christ from the Old Testament is “the way of redemptive-historical progression.”¹⁰³ This way of preaching Christ is the foundation upon which all

⁹⁷ Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 119.

⁹⁸ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 227.

⁹⁹ Sidney Greidanus, “Preaching Christ from the Old Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161, no. 641 (January–March 2004): 7.

¹⁰⁰ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 231.

¹⁰¹ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 231.

¹⁰² For a succinct description of the seven ways to preach Christ from an Old Testament text, see Greidanus, “Reflections on Preaching Christ from the Old Testament,” 108–10.

¹⁰³ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 234.

the other ways are built.¹⁰⁴ Greidanus asserts that redemptive history is the foundational cornerstone supporting all other approaches that lead to Christ in the New Testament.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, he emphasizes that any methods employed for preaching Christ from the Old Testament must have a solid foundation in God’s redemptive history.¹⁰⁶ Essentially, this approach centers on the metanarrative of scripture: creation–fall–redemption–consummation.¹⁰⁷

Another way to preach Christ is “the way of promise-fulfillment.”¹⁰⁸ The preacher should recognize that “the concept of God’s promise goes back all the way to God’s covenant promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3), and even beyond that to Genesis 3:15.”¹⁰⁹ Those promises that stretch back to the beginning of the Bible find their fulfillment in Christ. Greidanus provides two guidelines for interpreting Old Testament promises. First, consider that God typically unfolds his promises gradually. This aligns with the already-not yet nature of Scripture. Second, in interpreting the text, proceed from the Old Testament promise to its fulfillment in Christ and backtrack to the Old Testament text.¹¹⁰

Greidanus embraces “the way of typology.”¹¹¹ In defining the use of typology, it is helpful to discern the difference between promise-fulfillment and typology:

¹⁰⁴ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 234.

¹⁰⁵ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 234.

¹⁰⁶ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 234.

¹⁰⁷ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 236. Greidanus underscores two characteristics of the redemptive-historical approach. First, redemptive history is inherently God-centered. God emerges as the principal character in this narrative. Second, another hallmark of redemptive history lies in its unity. Consequently, redemptive history culminates progressively in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, ultimately finding fulfillment in the new creation (236–37).

¹⁰⁸ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 240.

¹⁰⁹ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 241.

¹¹⁰ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 242.

¹¹¹ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 249.

This discussion has helped clarify somewhat the difference between typology and promise-fulfillment. Whereas promises are usually words spoken, types are historical events, persons, and institutions. Further, whereas promises point forward to future fulfillment, typology generally moves in the opposite direction, from New Testament fulfillment to the past type.¹¹²

Imperative in Greidanus's statement is that "types are historical events, persons, and institutions."¹¹³ Four characteristics¹¹⁴ mark out types in any text: As mentioned above, "a genuine type is historical." Then, "a genuine type is theocentric, that is, it has to do with God's acts in and through human persons and events." Third, "a genuine type exhibits a significant analogy with its antitype." Finally, "the relation of a genuine type to its antitype is marked by escalation."¹¹⁵

Greidanus also introduces "the way of analogy." This is his methodology's most simple and common approach. This method simply considers how the situation of the people of Israel is like that of the church.¹¹⁶ Greidanus states, "By analogy (parallel situations), the word of God for Israel can be addressed to the church today."¹¹⁷ The role of analogy becomes valid when the expositor adopts a strong continuity between the Old and New Testaments. Greidanus asserts, "We need to stress that the unity of redemptive

¹¹² Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 252.

¹¹³ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 252.

¹¹⁴ Not only does Greidanus identify four characteristics of types, but he also gives six rules for using types. First, literary-historical interpretation should always precede typological interpretation. Second, one must "look for a type not in the details but in the *central message* of the text concerning God's activity to redeem his people." Third, one must "determine the *symbolic meaning* of the person, institution, or event in Old Testament times." Fourth, one should "note the *points of contrast* between the Old Testament type and the New Testament antitype." Fifth, "in moving from the Old Testament symbol/type to Christ, carry forward the *meaning of the symbol* even as its meaning escalates." Finally, one cannot "simply draw a typological line to Christ but *preach Christ*. Simply drawing a line to Christ is not preaching Christ." Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 257–59.

¹¹⁵ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 256.

¹¹⁶ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 261.

¹¹⁷ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 262.

history adheres in Christ; the continuity between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church is accomplished only in Christ.”¹¹⁸

Greidanus asserts that the New Testament extensively elaborates on various Old Testament themes; therefore, he highlights “the way of longitudinal themes.”¹¹⁹ Today, scholars highlight many of these themes in the area of biblical theology.

Greidanus labels some of the themes as follows:

Major Old Testament themes which function as highways leading to the person, work, and teaching of Christ are the kingdom of God (reign and realm), the providence of God, covenant, the presence of God, the love of God, the grace of God, justice, redemption, law, sin and guilt offerings, God’s concern for “the poor,” mediator, the Day of the Lord, and so on.¹²⁰

Additionally, Greidanus presents “the way of New Testament references.”¹²¹

Interestingly, before considering the seven ways of preaching Christ, Greidanus promotes a cautious use of the New Testament when preaching the Old Testament, which is worth quoting in full:

Because the New Testament writers were inspired, our first inclination might be to place these references first on our list. But we have seen that these writers sometimes refer to Old Testament passages merely to illustrate their own specific messages rather than to proclaim and extend the message of the passage they cite. Moreover, if there is only a single New Testament reference, we might be tempted to read the Old Testament text through this single lens.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 262–63. When considering analogy in the text, Greidanus suggests some valuable lines of inquiry for the preacher: “They should inquire about the analogy between what God is and does for Israel and what God *in Christ* is and does for the church. They should inquire about the similarity between what God teaches his people Israel and what *Christ* teaches his church. And they should search for parallels between God’s demands in the Old Testament and *Christ’s* demands in the New Testament.” Each line of inquiry is helpful for the preacher who is willing to recognize the unified nature of Scripture.

¹¹⁹ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 266–67.

¹²⁰ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 267.

¹²¹ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 269.

¹²² Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 234.

Therefore, Greidanus suggests that the preacher would use this method of preaching Christ as one of the last steps to consider when preaching an Old Testament text.¹²³

The final way is “the way of contrast.”¹²⁴ While “way the of analogy” stresses the continuity between the Old and New Testaments, “the way of contrast” stresses the discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments. Greidanus states, “Old Testament text will sometimes stand in contrast to that of the New Testament. One thinks immediately of Old Testament ceremonial laws, civil laws, and the so-called ‘imprecations’ in some Psalms.”¹²⁵ This way of preaching Christ centers upon Christ because he is the reason for the change between the Old and New covenants.¹²⁶

Comparison: Keach and Contemporary Christ-Centered Preaching Methods

Initially, when one reviews Clowney’s three words, Chapell’s four redemptive foci, or Greidanus’s seven ways, it could seem that a significant disparity exists between these three contemporary Christ-centered approaches. However, all three methods recognize the need to embrace the redemptive-historic nature of Scripture. They advocate for a canonical reading of Scripture, which allows for the use of typology as an interpretive method. Typology represents the thread that ties the three models together.¹²⁷

¹²³ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 234. Greidanus seems to reserve New Testament references as a way to corroborate other methods for preaching Christ: “If preachers had already discovered any of these ways, the New Testament references serve not only as confirmation but can often be used as stepping stones in the sermon to make the point for the congregation” (269).

¹²⁴ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 271.

¹²⁵ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 271.

¹²⁶ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 272.

¹²⁷ One should acknowledge that the three contemporary methods presented here differ in their approach to Christocentric preaching. However, they do correspond on this subject of typology better than most. Christopher Peppier argues that “just as there were differences in the understanding of christocentricity, as practised by past theologians, so there are equally marked differences in the understandings of current scholars.” Christopher C. Peppier, “The Christocentric Principle: A Jesus-Centred Hermeneutic,” *Conspectus* 13, no. 1 (March 2012): 119.

Christ-centered preaching adherents do have slightly differing approaches to typology at times. Peter Gentry provides four factors that govern typology. First, there is a correspondence between events, people, places. Second, there should be escalation from the type to the antitype. Third, textual evidence

When Clowney speaks about official symbolism, typology functions as an essential part of that approach. Thus, official symbolism considers the threefold office of prophet, priest, king as well as Christ's fulfillment of each office.¹²⁸ Chapell's diagram was also intended to communicate how the exegete could determine a legitimate type within the text. Chapell views typology as a legitimate approach when he states, "God's redemptive work in Christ may also be evident in Old Testament types."¹²⁹ He acknowledges types as part of the preparatory function of specific texts. Chapell later defines typology thus: "Typology as it relates to Christ's person and work is the study of the correspondences between persons, events, and institutions that first appear in the Old Testament and preview, foreshadow, or prepare for New Testament salvation truths."¹³⁰ Similarly, Greidanus also acknowledges the legitimate use of typology as one of his seven ways to preach Christ from the Old Testament; he states, "Beginning with the Old Testament type, Christian preachers can proclaim the person or work of Christ so that people will commit themselves to this Savior and Lord."¹³¹

Embracing today's vernacular, one could rightly call Keach, even in the technical sense, a Christ-centered preacher. Through his sin-salvation method, Keach preached the depravity of humanity in their sin and their desperate need for salvation through Christ. Keach would have aligned with Chapell's Fallen Condition Focus, which

from the original text determines that it is a type. Fourth, "the progression of the covenants throughout the narrative plot structure of the Bible both creates, controls, and develops the typological structure across the canon of Scripture." Peter J. Gentry, "'Christotelic Preaching': Reflections on Daniel Block's Approach," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 96–97. This fourth point presents the unique contribution of Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum in their seminal work *Kingdom through Covenant*. Additionally, Graeme Goldsworthy uniquely presents what he calls "Macro-Typology: The entire epoch of salvation history from Abraham to David and Solomon, is confirmed in prophetic eschatology, and fulfilled in Christ. All aspects of Old Testament salvation history bear a typological relationship to Christ." Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 113, Kindle.

¹²⁸ Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, 24.

¹²⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 264.

¹³⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 264.

¹³¹ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 259–60.

presents humanity's fallenness and their need for God's grace. Furthermore, through his *Tropologia* method, Keach preached Christ via typology in a way that Clowney, Chapell, and Greidanus would embrace. Yet, what uniquely sets Keach apart is his use of the *Tropologia* method to preach the excellencies of Christ through metaphor, highlighting the parallels and disparities between Christ and the metaphor. The *Tropologia* method serves as a vibrant tool, invigorating the imagination of the Christ-centered preacher. It propels beyond the confines of a rehearsed three-minute gospel presentation at the climax of a Sunday sermon, allowing for a vivid portrayal of the multifaceted ways in which Christ parallels and outshines the metaphor of a pearl of great price.

A Concluding Word

In the melodic tapestry of Benjamin Keach's creative expression, his songs, akin to his sermons, incorporate his *Tropologia* method. Within his hymnbook *Spiritual Melody*, the titles of his musical compositions parallel those attributed to Christ in *Tropologia*. Hymn 17: Christ a Mediator. Hymn 18: Christ a Surety. Hymn 19: Christ a Bridegroom. Hymn 20: Christ the Image of God. Hymn 21: Christ a Physician. And more.¹³² Thus, it seems fitting to end with a closing hymn entitled *Christ preach'd*:

'Tis Christ, O God, that we do preach,
As thou dost us command;
O let thy Word Men's hearts so reach,
It may break Satan's Band.
There's none like Christ in all the Earth,
He is that lovely One;
His honour we would, Lord, spread forth,
And him exalt alone.

¹³² Compare the table of contents for *Tropologia* with *Spiritual Melody*, they read almost the same. The titles given for God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in both works also read the same. Benjamin Keach and Thomas De Laune, *Tropologia, or, A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors the First Book Containing Sacred Philology, or the Tropes in Scripture, Reduc'd under Their Proper Heads, with a Brief Explication of Each / Partly Translated and Partly Compil'd from the Works of the Learned by T.D. The Second and Third Books Containing a Practical Improvement (Parallel-Wise) of Several of the Most Frequent and Useful Metaphors, Allegories, and Express Similitudes of the Old and New Testament* (London: John Richardson and John Darby, 1681), 2:A Table of the Metaphors; Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody, Containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns. By Benjamin Keach, Author of Tropologia, Pastor of the Church of Christ Meeting on Horsly-down, Southwark* (London: John Hancock, 1691), Table of Contents.

Thou hast made him the All in all
To us in ev'ry thing;
Before him shall the mighty fall,
And own him to be King.¹³³

342. ¹³³ The stanza's presented are verses 3, 5, and 6 of *Christ preach'd* in Keach, *Spiritual Melody*,

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ABSTRACT

“A GOLDEN MINE OPENED”: THE ROLE OF CHRIST-CENTERED PREACHING IN THE SERMONS OF BENJAMIN KEACH

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This dissertation argues for the centrality of Christ-centered preaching in the sermons of Benjamin Keach through his *Tropologia* and Sin-Salvation methods. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis and Keach’s method. His *Tropologia* method was twofold. He used metaphors that conveyed parities (parallels) and/or disparities between the metaphor and Christ. Additionally, Keach used typology to highlight persons, events, or institutions that foreshadow Christ. His Sin-Salvation method revealed man’s sin and the solution found in Christ’s salvation. Chapter 2 sets Keach in his context by presenting an overview of his life and preaching. Keach’s preaching was based on Puritan godliness, influence, and application. This investigation sets the stage for considering Christ-centeredness in his preaching. Chapter 3, “Old Testament Sermons Part 1,” reviews three sermon series. The seminal series is *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven*, which sets the foundation for Keach’s *Tropologia* method. Chapter 4, “Old Testament Sermons Part 2,” considers Keach’s sermons on the covenants. He presented Christ as a mediator, surety, messenger, and testator through these sermons. Chapter 5, “New Testament Sermons Part 1,” investigates Keach’s parable sermons, highlighting Christ as the pearl of great price, the good Samaritan, and the true vine. Chapter 6, “New Testament Sermons Part 2,” evaluates Keach’s gospel and epistle sermons extolling Christ as the good shepherd, the one who brings great salvation, and the one through whom believers are counted justified. Chapter 7 explores what it means to preach Christ today. This chapter presents a

summary of Benjamin Keach's Christ-centered preaching method, followed by an assessment of the contemporary Christotelic, Christiconic, and Christo-promise methods compared with Keach. Subsequently, the Christ-centered preaching methods of Bryan Chapell, Sidney Greidanus, and Edmund Clowney are analyzed and compared with Keach. The conclusion demonstrates that Benjamin Keach is a Christ-centered preacher worthy of emulation.

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