

POETIC THEOLOGY: COMPARING ANNE VAUGHAN LOCK
AND JOHN CALVIN

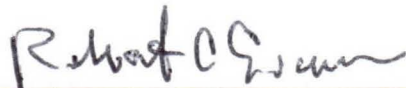
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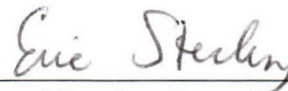
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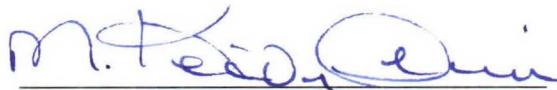
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INTRODUCTION

“For what is more consonant with faith than to recognize that that we are naked of all virtue, in order to be clothed by God? That we are empty of all good, to be filled by him? That we are slaves of sin, to be freed by him? Blind, to be illumined by him? Lame, to be made straight by him? Weak, to be sustained by him? To take away from us all occasion for glorying, that he alone may stand forth gloriously and we glory in him?” -- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (13).

John Calvin, in addressing his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* to King Francis of France, shows that God’s glory forms the core of Calvinist theology. Every work by John Calvin emphasizes both the inability of man to be righteous in his own merit and the glory of God in all of his activities, including his interactions with mankind in judgment and mercy. Anne Vaughan Lock, as a Calvinist poet, builds on this theological foundation in her sonnet sequence, *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner*, as well as in her poem *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction*. Both authors seek to emphasize the glory of God in the lives of Christians by depicting the right attitudes when confessing sin and while facing suffering. This thesis shows, in significant detail, the strong links between Anne Vaughan Lock’s poetic works and John Calvin’s theological works. Lock’s *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner* paraphrases Psalm 51 and reflects much of the same thinking found in Calvin’s *Commentary* on this same Psalm. Both authors argue for the right attitude in confession of sin and the hope Christians have in the assurance of God’s saving those whom he has predestined to salvation. God’s glory in both judgment and mercy stands as the theme throughout the works of both Calvin and Lock. Similarly, the ideas in expressed in Lock’s *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction* resemble Calvin’s

theology of suffering as presented in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. These two works show God's overall glory in allowing his followers to face suffering. Christians should hope that God is accomplishing greater works in their lives due to their facing the pain of suffering. Linking specific examples from the two authors' works together shows that Lock establishes the glory of God as the core of her theology. In analyzing Lock by closely comparing her to Calvin, one perceives how she clearly provides beautifully written artistic expression of Calvinist theology.

CHAPTER I:

**ANNE VAUGHAN LOCK'S PREFATORY SONNETS
AND JOHN CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION**

At the end of four John Calvin sermons translated by Anne Vaughn Lock, she writes a work of poetry now known to be the first sonnet sequence in the English language. These poems contain a considerable amount of Calvinist theology while offering a paraphrase of Psalm 51. Lock's sonnet sequence provides an artistic expression of Calvinist theology concerning this one passage of the Old Testament, especially when Lock's poems are compared with Calvin's comments on this same passage found in his *Commentary*. While her poems and his comments may not express the same ideas exactly, the two authors do express the same major themes. Close comparison and contrast of the two works shows their agreement in interpreting this Psalm, especially as illuminated by Calvin's major work of systematic theology, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which contains the bulk of Calvinist thought. Lock presents a beautifully rendered, striking artistic expression of her theological beliefs, which closely follow Calvinist theology. Lock's prefatory sonnets show the motivation behind King David's confession of sin in Psalm 51.

The brief introduction to Psalm 51 reads: "To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba" (*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*). This description of the creative origins of this Psalm places it in the context of David's life, when he is confronted by Nathan the Prophet after

his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, his deception in an attempt to cover up her pregnancy, and the killing of her husband Uriah on the battlefield so that David can marry her (1 Samuel 11-12). Calvin grants authorship of the Psalm to David because of this introduction. Lock also describes her work as a “Paraphrase upon the 51 Psalm of David” (*Collected Works* 62). The speaker of Lock’s sonnet sequence would necessarily be David, for Lock does not seek to add new information to Psalm 51 but instead paraphrases it into sonnet form. Neither Psalm 51 nor the passage in 2 Samuel provides insight into David’s emotions prior to the authoring of Psalm 51, yet Calvin and Lock both interpret his state of mind prior to penning his confession. Calvin describes David’s thoughts when he introduces his *Commentary* on the Psalm, and Lock writes five sonnets describing the same mindset. Lock’s sonnets bear strong resemblance to Calvin’s comments on the same subject matter. The summary introduction to Lock’s preliminary sonnets reads: “The preface, expressing the passionate minde of the penitent sinner” (*Collected Works* 64). Lock shows readers that these five sonnets will describe the motivation behind the rest of Psalm 51 and subsequently behind the rest of Lock’s sonnet sequence. Calvin describes David’s motivation by saying that David “was filled with self-loathing and humiliation in the sight of God, and was anxious to testify his repentance to all around him and leave some lasting proof of it to posterity” (*Commentary* 281).¹ The strong language of Lock’s prefatory sonnets shows this same “self-loathing and humiliation” as the speaker continually presses the point of confession and emphasizes the weakness of spirit he faces under the judgment of God.

¹ The references to Calvin’s work will be denoted by “Commentary” referring to his commentary on Psalm 51. Those denoted by “Institutes” refer to *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Lock begins her sonnet sequence with the words “The hainous gylt of my forsaken ghost,” an idea expressed almost verbatim by Calvin as he describes David “having his eyes directed to the heinousness of his guilt” (P1.1, *Commentary* 281).² At the outset of their works on Psalm 51, both authors describe the heinous guilt of the speaker, thereby implying the idea that true repentance begins with the realization of sin as misbehavior worthy of rebuke. After showing David’s recognition of his guilt, Calvin notes that David “encourages himself to hope for pardon by considering the infinite mercy of God” (*Commentary* 281). Though Lock’s prefatory sonnets lack an overall encouraging tone, the speaker of her poems clearly uses this confession as an opportunity to appeal to the mercy of God. The end of prefatory sonnet two shows this appeal for clemency: “My fainting breath I gather up and strain, / Mercie, Mercie to crye and crye again” (P2.13-14). Lock and Calvin agree on the overall motivation behind Psalm 51 – a Psalm which amounts to a confession of guilt and an ardent plea for mercy from the offended God. Calvin notes that David uses lofty language as he glorifies the mercy of God, even though Calvin describes David as “one who felt that he deserved multiple condemnation” (*Commentary* 281). Likewise, the idea of a deserved death runs throughout Lock’s prefatory sonnets. Prefatory sonnet one includes a reference to deserved condemnation as it mentions that the speaker “Deserved death” from “The mighty wrath of Myne offended Lorde” (P1.3, 6). The speaker shows that by offending God, he has incurred God’s wrath and deserves the punishment of death. Lock’s speaker, in a mental battle with the idea of despair, feels that he has been condemned “To hell, by

² References to Lock’s sonnet sequence will be parenthetically documented by sonnet number and line. For example, “P1.1” is Prefatory Sonnet 1, line 1. References to the main sonnets will begin with “S.”

justice, for offended law” (P3.14). This line shows not only a condemnation based on justice, but the sentence of the punishment, which is hell. In the last prefatory sonnet, the speaker describes himself in terms showing that he deserves the punishment of God. He feels as if he stands “Before the Lord, the Lord, whom sinner I, / I cursed wretch, I have offended so” (P5.9-10). Given the reputation of Calvinism as deterministic, readers may believe that Lock’s speaker, like King David, unnecessarily condemns himself if he truly is one of the elect. However, Calvin’s introduction confirms that this dark language is appropriate, because David or any sinner should be “conscious that he deserved to have been cast off for ever, and deprived of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit” (*Commentary* 281). Lock’s self-condemning language follows this same line of thinking; her language implies that the consequences of sin are so heinous that they leave the sinner deserving of rejection. A major foundational theme in both Calvin’s introduction to his analysis of Psalm 51 and Lock’s prefatory sonnets is the idea of the sinner deserving the punishment of God because of the offense of sin.

Calvin addresses the idea of just punishment in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This work serves as a systematic theological encyclopedia of Calvinist theology. According to Calvin, the sinner has rejected God and therefore deserves his punishment. Calvin describes that all mankind faces this peril, even though “some may evaporate in their own superstitions and others deliberately and wickedly desert God, yet *all* degenerate from the true knowledge of him. And so it happens that no real piety remains in the world” (*Institutes* 47, emphasis mine). According to Calvin, regardless of the degree of severity, all people have rejected God, and therefore they are guilty of “proud vanity and obstinacy” (*Institutes* 47). Calvin continues, “indeed, vanity joined

with pride can be detected in the fact that, in seeking God, miserable men do not rise above themselves as they should, but measure him by the yardstick of their own carnal stupidity, and neglect sound investigation; thus out of curiosity they fly off into empty speculations” (*Institutes* 47). The sinful pride of man is shown in his rejection of the true God in favor of one created by man’s imagination. Calvin argues that God’s justice must stand against such rejection: “Now there is nothing less in accord with God’s nature than for him to cast off the government of the universe and abandon it to fortune, and to be blind to the wicked deeds of men, so that they may lust unpunished. Accordingly, whoever heedlessly indulges himself, his fear of heavenly judgment extinguished, denies that there is a God” (*Institutes* 48). In this passage, Calvin shows two important concepts: first, that God would act against his nature if he were to refrain from punishing the sinful mind that rejects him, and second, that those who act sinfully and do not fear heavenly judgment deny the existence of the true God.

As a result of this understanding God’s judgment, Calvin argues that fear is the proper response to God, but that man, in his fallen state, will not acknowledge God. Calvin presents man’s nature as utterly corrupt and argues that a result of this corruption results in the misplacing of blame for sin. Man is “lost and forsaken” without the grace of God to rescue him (*Institutes* 291). Calvin shows that the inability to do good is a part of this fallen spirit: “because of the bondage of sin by which the will is held bound, it cannot move toward the good, much less apply itself thereto; for a movement of this sort is the beginning of conversion to God, which in Scripture is ascribed entirely to God’s grace” (*Institutes* 294). Calvin argues that the nature of man is utterly devoid of the ability to seek God, and the work in man’s heart to seek God comes from God’s work alone, a

theme Lock develops throughout her sonnet sequence. Calvin argues this point by showing that man, when left to his own devices, chooses not to glorify God. He writes that “all [people] degenerate from the true knowledge of [God],” and, as a result, they “furiously repel all remembrance of God” (*Institutes* 47-48). Seeing that many would argue for man’s capability to do good, Calvin states that “however excellent anyone has been, his own ambition always pushes him on – a blemish with which all virtues are sullied [so] that before God they all lose favor – anything in profane men that appears praiseworthy must be considered worthless” (*Institutes* 294). The measurement of good, according to Calvin, is whether or not someone glorifies God; and the person who does not honor God even with good works should be considered unrighteous because of selfish ambition (*Institutes* 294). Thus, mankind seeks only its own promotion and not the glorifying of God, a frame of mind King David experiences prior to his confession.

In his *Commentary* on Psalm 51, Calvin shows that David lacks fear of judgment for a time but ultimately considers his sin when confronted by Nathan the Prophet and writes Psalm 51 as his confession. Calvin develops the idea of the hardness of David’s heart prior to the king’s confession, a topic Lock does not include in the prefatory sonnets, perhaps because her sonnets paraphrase David’s confession after he is confronted. However, Calvin does argue that David was still a believer and as such, to use a Calvinist term, was one of the “elect,” despite his growing list of sins. “There is no reason to think that grace was wholly extinct [from] his heart,” Calvin writes, “but only that he was possessed by a spirit of infatuation upon one particular point, and labored under a fatal insensibility as to his present exposure to Divine Wrath” (*Commentary* 282). Thus, Calvin argues, “Grace, whatever sparks it might emit in other directions, was

smothered, so to speak, in this [denial]" (*Commentary* 282). David's sins are not proof of his reprobation, but rather provide an occasion that causes him to squelch the work of God to pursue his own desires.

Lock's prefatory sonnets speak often of the idea of reprobation, suggesting that the speaker is not one of the elect chosen by God but rather one who will bear God's wrath against sin. In the seventy lines of the prefatory sonnets, Lock expressly mentions the idea of reprobation eight times.³ The most poignant reference occurs in prefatory sonnet three, when the speaker argues with a personified character of Despair, who tells the speaker, "In vaine thou brayest forth thy bootlesse noyse / To him for mercy, O refused wight, / That hears not the forsaken sinners voice" (P3.5-7). However, David's fears of reprobation, in Lock's sonnets, do not contradict Calvin's understanding of the king's confession of sin. Calvin writes: "That the sense of religion was not altogether extinguished in his mind, is proved by the manner in which he was affected immediately upon receiving the prophet's reproof ... nor would he have so readily submitted himself, in the spirit of meekness, to admonition and correction" (*Commentary* 282). The important phrase in this passage is "in the spirit of meekness," which contrasts the spirit of pride that led David to ignore his sin. Calvin describes this pride as one of the marks of the reprobate in that reprobates do not seek God. David's approach then rightly reflects, as mentioned above, his feeling that he deserves condemnation and total rejection by God.

Theologians term this change from hardness toward God to confession of sin and proclamation of God's glory and works as "regeneration," an idea significantly explained

³ P3.47, P3.48, P3.49, P3.50, P3.54, P3.55, P4.57, P4.60.

in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin defines the transition of the sinner's mind in the process of regeneration: "one can embrace the grace of the gospel without betaking himself from the errors of his past life into the right way, and applying his whole effort to the practice of repentance" (*Institutes* 593). A fundamental shift occurs in which the sinner moves from prideful self promotion to true repentance, which leads to humble, God-honoring behavior. Calvin describes the nature of this shift: "God begins his good work in us, therefore, by arousing love and desire and zeal for righteousness in our hearts; or, to speak more correctly, by bending, forming, and directing, our hearts to righteousness" (*Institutes* 297). Calvin presents God as the primary acting force in moving a sinner to glorifying him. As a result, without this work of God, the sinful man will continue to glorify himself and actively turn away from the right knowledge of God as described above. Calvin describes this diametrically opposed will by referencing a passage in Ezekiel which he quotes and explains:

'A new heart shall I give you, and will put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes' [Ezekiel 36:26-27]. Who shall say that the infirmity of the human will is strengthened by his help in order that it may aspire effectively to the choice of good, when it must rather be wholly transformed and renewed? (*Institutes* 297)

Calvin vehemently opposes the idea that God is merely the catalyst or the assistant in effecting regeneration on the sinner. Rather, Calvin says that man's will "is wholly changed from an evil to a good will" and that he "affirm[s] that this is wholly God's

doing” (*Institutes* 297). The repetition of the word “wholly” shows both the total change needed for man to pursue righteousness and the fact that God alone initiates and performs this change.

Lock shows this change in the burden of the sonnet speaker’s heart since the speaker fears the judgment of God and is ashamed for breaking the law. This change, performed by God in the speaker’s heart, leads to repentance as it is powerfully expressed in Lock’s sonnet sequence. Otherwise, Calvin would argue, the sinner would disregard or seek to excuse his sin rather than repent of it. Therefore, without the work of God in regeneration, an individual would not seek to confess his sins and receive mercy from God. Rather, this person would continue to exalt himself over God and would feel no need to repent of his sin.

Herein lies the difference between those who seek God’s mercy and those who do not: God has regenerated the heart of the former so that he will in turn choose to seek God. Calvin shows that repentance necessarily follows belief in God’s goodness in that “no uprightness may be found except where that Spirit reigns that Christ received to communicate to his members. Secondly, I say that... no one will ever reverence God but him who trusts that God is propitious to him. No one will gird himself willingly to observe the law but him who will be persuaded that God is pleased by his obedience” (*Institutes* 594). The one who has been regenerated will not seek to obey God’s law and, by logical progression, will not fear when he has broken it. However, the regenerate person, according to Calvin, grieves over his sin:

For when anyone has been brought into a true knowledge of sin, he then begins truly to hate and abhor sin; then he is heartily displeased with

himself, he confesses himself miserable and lost and wishes to be another man. Furthermore, when he is touched by any sense of the judgment of God (for the one straightway follows the other) he then lies stricken and overthrown humbled and cast down he trembles; he becomes discouraged and despairs. This is the first part of repentance, commonly called 'contrition.' (*Institutes* 595)

Calvin here effectively describes the motivation behind Lock's prefatory sonnets. Lock shows this theme of contrition in the first prefatory sonnet, in which the speaker says that there "Still stand so fixt before my daseld sight / The lothesome filthe of my disteined life, / The mighty wrath of myne offended Lorde" (P1.4-6). In three lines, Lock shows exactly what Calvin describes as the first and necessary part of repentance, which is contrition. Lock's speaker sees both the filthiness of his own sin and the impending judgment of God. Fearing this judgment, the speaker moves on to plead for mercy throughout the sonnet sequence. Calvinist theology holds that this contrition is a sign of election and should encourage the Christian because it implies that he now knows he can receive God's mercy and will not face eternal damnation.

As Calvin describes regeneration, a major theme of Calvin's work arises: who exactly receives God's work of regeneration? With this problem in mind, Calvin describes his doctrine of election and reprobation, which he defines as God's choosing of people to either receive salvation or face condemnation based on his choice alone. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* significantly addresses the idea of election and its counterpart, reprobation. The doctrine states that God calls certain people, by his choice alone, to salvation, and that he ordains others to be rejected forever. This doctrine

stands as the most prominent part of Calvinist theology. In commenting on John 1:12-13, Calvin describes faith in God as an inner working of the Holy Spirit, as opposed to the view that salvation occurs by the effort of man. He writes that the author of the book of John, by “contrasting God with flesh and blood [,] . . . declares it to be a supernatural gift that those who would otherwise remain in unbelief receive Christ by faith” (*Institutes* 541). Calvin argues that without the work of God in a person’s life, he by no means will begin to have faith and all of the resulting beliefs, including contrition as a sign of salvation. Calvin furthers the argument by commenting on Ephesians 1:13: “Paul shows the Spirit to be the inner teacher by whose effort the promise of salvation penetrates into our minds, a promise that would otherwise only strike the air or beat upon our ears” (*Institutes* 541). Calvin presents this work of the Holy Spirit to create faith as the necessary first point of the doctrine of election. Without the work of God, all people will continue in their sinful ways rather than acknowledge him in faith. The creation of this faith that moves the elect from a prideful spirit to a humble spirit before God stands as a work of the Spirit that God performs in those whom he chooses. Calvin also shows that those who are not chosen will remain insensitive to God and incapable of having faith in him. Similarly, Lock explains this faith of the regenerated spirit by the fact that her speaker, despite his arguments to the contrary, stands as one of the elect because of his ability both to acknowledge his sin and to plead with God as the only source of mercy.

Further understanding of Calvin’s description of the doctrine of election shows the difference between the behavior of the elect and the reprobate, as well as the nature of God’s choosing people either to come to salvation or to face punishment for their sins. The crux of the doctrine of election is God’s choice of whether or not a person will be

saved and incorporated into the family of God. Calvin shows that this doctrine, for which his theology is largely defined, carries a necessary weight of implication: “If it is plain that it comes to pass by God’s bidding that salvation is freely offered to some while others are barred from access to it, at once great and difficult questions spring up, explicable only when reverent minds regard as settled what they may suitably hold concerning election and predestination” (*Institutes* 921). Calvin emphasizes the centrality of this doctrine on all views of theology and the considerable decisions that must be made in order for it to be explained. He warns against those who would seek to understand election merely out of a spirit of curiosity:

Let them remember that when they inquire into predestination, they are penetrating the sacred precincts of divine wisdom. If anyone with carefree assurance breaks into this place, he will not succeed in satisfying his curiosity and he will enter a labyrinth from which he can find no exit. For it is not right for man unrestrainedly to search out things that the Lord has willed to be hid in himself, and to unfold from eternity itself the sublimest wisdom, which he would have us revere but not understand that through this also he should fill us with wonder. He has set forth by his Word the secrets of his will that he has decided to reveal to us. (*Institutes* 922-923)

No addressing of Calvin’s understanding of the doctrine of election would be complete without his warning that, to some degree, God’s will remains ultimately unknowable. Calvin’s emphasis on this kind of mystery places God in the center of attention even in man’s pursuit of knowledge, and this theme of the primacy of God in all things runs throughout the doctrine of election as well as throughout Lock’s sonnet sequence.

Calvin argues that this doctrine emphasizes God's glory in the abundance of his grace. He writes that "we shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast: that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives to some what he denies to others" (*Institutes* 921). Calvin argues that without this understanding of the doctrine and predestination, a person cannot truly grasp the fullness of the mercy of God. If God were to adopt everyone, then his mercy would not be as precious because of its broad application. According to Calvin, God's mercy stands as even more special because it is not given to everyone but to the select few he has chosen. Calvin's emphasis on the doctrine of election makes sense in light of his passionate interpretation of it as bringing glory to "the wellspring of God's free mercy" (*Institutes* 921). Calvin vehemently opposes those who argue against this understanding of election. He writes that these detractors "are obscuring as maliciously as they can what ought to have been gloriously and vociferously proclaimed, and they tear humility up by the very roots" (*Institutes* 921). To argue against God's election is to argue for pride and against humility; thus the doctrine of election should be held in highest esteem because it helps people cultivate a spirit of humility before God. Calvin always emphasizes the glory of God as contradicting man's pride in his own works. Therefore, God's work in election leads to the humility of a person rather than pride. In agreement with this doctrine, Lock's sonnet sequence contains no prideful language – language in which her speaker argues for his own righteousness. In fact, Lock's speaker exalts God's glory in justice and mercy as opposed to exalting himself.

The Calvinist doctrine of election places all the emphasis on God's work alone so that God receives the glory. In explaining Paul's letter to the Romans, Calvin writes that "when the salvation of the people is ascribed to the election of grace, then only is it acknowledged that God of his mere good pleasure preserves whom he will, and moreover that he pays no reward, since he can owe none" (*Institutes* 922). The initiation and preservation of the elect is God's work alone, and he receives all glory from the salvation of the elect. Again, Calvin emphasizes God's glory over man's pride in that man should feel complete obligation to God for his work in salvation (*Institutes* 922). Also, the elect may take confidence in God's promise of giving perseverance, which Calvin describes in commenting on John 10:28-29: "Here is our only ground for firmness and confidence: in order to free us of all fear and render us victorious amid so many dangers, snares, and mortal struggles, he promises that whatever the Father has entrusted into his keeping will be safe" (*Institutes* 922). Misunderstanding these benefits of the doctrine of election will ultimately lead to detrimental thinking marked by the presence of one's fear of losing his salvation (*Institutes* 922). While Lock's sonnets seemingly lack confidence in election, the speaker's continued requests for God's mercy show that he feels that God's grace is at least available to him. Also, these sonnets follow Calvin's description of man's devaluing his own ability in deference to God's complete ability to save and preserve the elect. Thus, while Lock's sonnets seemingly show a doubt not common to the elect, this doubt serves to emphasize God's work in salvation.

Calvin furthers his description of the doctrine of election by focusing on God's omniscience and its application in predestination. Calvin calls this omniscience "foreknowledge" and defines it as understanding that "all things always were, and

perpetually remain, under his eyes, so that to his knowledge there is nothing future or past, but all things are present” (*Institutes* 926). The “things,” as Calvin refers to them, are any aspect of God’s creation acting in the past, present, or future but being seen in God’s view of the eternal present. Therefore, God does not merely know what will happen, but the event is occurring to him in the present. In explaining this knowledge, Calvin defines election as “God’s eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or death” (*Institutes* 926). Herein lies the crux of predestination: some men and women, by no merit of their own, have been chosen prior to creation to be considered part of the elect, and God will successfully accomplish their salvation.

Calvin explains God’s foreknowledge by referring to the Old Testament accounts of the Jewish people. As the Psalms are written in the midst of the Israelite kingdom, Calvin’s emphasis on the Old Testament narratives applies directly to his *Commentary* on Psalm 51 and Lock’s paraphrase of this same Psalm. Calvin argues that God reveals his predestination in the choosing of the nation of Israel: “God has attested this [election] not only in individual persons but has given us an example of it in the whole offspring of Abraham, to make it clear that in his choice rests the future condition of each nation,” and Calvin also shows that Moses “teaches that they [i.e. the Israelites] excel solely by God’s freely given love” (*Institutes* 927). The emphasis on God’s grace in choosing people continues as Calvin shows the proper mindset of glorifying God, because “all who have been adorned with gifts by God credit them to his freely given love because they knew

not only that they had not merited them but that even the holy patriarch [Abraham] himself was not endowed with such virtue as to acquire such a high honor for himself and his descendents” (*Institutes* 927). Calvin always emphasizes that salvation occurs because of God’s work and that this work operates over and above any righteousness man may bring. Salvation happens only through God’s work in choosing (election) and saving people as a result of his choice. From the foundation of discussing the nature of Israel as an entire elect nation, Calvin progresses to show how individuals are elected within this nation as a part of an even more specific type of predestination.

This doctrine of individual election shows how God saves both Old and New Testament believers. In the Old Testament period, Calvin argues, election is shown by God’s rejection of some sons of the patriarchs of the Israelite nation and the blessing of others, especially the rejection of Abraham’s firstborn Ishmael in favor of Isaac and of Isaac’s firstborn Esau in favor of Jacob (*Institutes* 929). Calvin uses these examples to show the freedom of God in his choice, “for in the election of a whole nation God has already shown that in his mere generosity he has not been bound by any laws but is free, so that equal apportionment of grace is not to be required of him” (*Institutes* 929). The theme of God’s infinite freedom runs throughout Calvin’s description of God’s choice in election. Calvin writes that “the very inequality of this grace proves that it is free” (*Institutes* 929). God’s freedom reflects his glory in election because his choice is based completely on his own doing, not on any righteousness or faith in man. Calvin continues to show God’s glory in the selection of individuals, as fully exhibited in those who are elect in Christ, who receive “a far more excellent power of grace . . . for, engrafted into [Christ], they are never cut off from salvation” (*Institutes* 930). The full assurance of

salvation completes the idea of election for the believers in Christ. Calvin argues from Paul's description in Galatians that the "adoption of Abraham's seed in common was a visible image of the greater benefit that God bestowed on some out of the many. This is why Paul so carefully distinguishes the children of Abraham according to the flesh from the spiritual children who have been called after the example of Isaac [Gal. 4.28]" (*Institutes* 931). The choosing of the nation of Israel provides an illustration of God's election of Christians to salvation.

Lock's sonnets show the importance of this link in two ways: first, her writing paraphrases an Old Testament author who was king of the nation of Israel, and second, she expressly mentions the death of Christ as the source of mercy to the believer in sonnet nine. In addition, Calvin builds his theology of predestination beginning in the Old Testament and then shows the application of it to Christians, who also follow the New Testament. Summarizing this doctrine, Calvin writes:

As Scripture, then, clearly shows, we say that God once established by his eternal and unchangeable plan those whom he long before determined once for all to receive into salvation and those whom, on the other hand, he would devote to destruction. We assert that, with respect to the elect, this plan was founded upon his freely given mercy, without regard to human worth, but by his just and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment he has barred the door of life to those whom he has given over to damnation. (*Institutes* 931)

In light of this doctrine, Lock's speaker fears God's rejection because of the speaker's sin. He dreads that he may be one of those who have been chosen to face damnation. In

prefatory sonnet three he imagines that Despair tells him: “In vaine thou brayest forth thy bootlesse noyse / To him for mercy, O refused wight, / That heares not the forsaken sinners voice” (P3.5-7). In feeling grief over his sin, Lock’s speaker fears that he seeks mercy in vain because if he is one of the reprobates, then God will not hear him. He also fears the ultimate judgment reserved for those rejected by God when he hears Despair tell him that of God’s “swete promises” he “can claime no parte: / But thee, caytif, deserved curse doeth draw / to hell, by justice, for offended law” (P3.12-14). The last part creates a difficulty in understanding the doctrine of election: the sinner is chosen before creation to be a part of the reprobate and, unable to obtain God’s mercy, should still be considered guilty and deserving of eternal punishment. In facing his doubt, Lock’s speaker shows that he should receive the curse because of God’s justice for the sinner’s offending of God’s law. He does not challenge God’s justice in choosing the reprobate to bear his wrath because of his commission of sin.

Calvin handles this same problem by describing the whole world as destined for destruction and Christ as the rescuer of the elect. In addition, he argues that God’s choice determines the outcome of everyone’s life. The sinner necessarily earns God’s punishment for his sins because any sin separates the sinner from God. Calvin describes salvation as a rescue from this punishment: “It comes about that the whole world does not belong to its creator except that grace rescues from God’s curse and wrath and eternal death a limited number who would otherwise perish. But the world is left to its own destruction to which it has been destined” (*Institutes* 940). The whole world deserves destruction because of sin, and election is God’s method of saving those whom he has chosen. At the same time, Calvin shows God’s active choice in reprobation when Calvin

draws on Paul's argument from Romans 9: "The reprobate are raised up to the end that through them God's glory may be revealed. Finally, he [i.e. Paul] adds the conclusion that 'God has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills' [Romans 9:18]" (*Institutes* 947). The choosing of the reprobate belongs to God alone, which causes some to question whether or not God is just in his choosing the reprobate for punishment. Calvin answers this objection by arguing against his detractors' position when he writes, "Let us, in lieu of a reply, ask, in turn, what they think God owes man if He would judge him according to his own nature. As all of us are vitiated by sin, we can only be odious to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty but by the fairest reckoning of justice" (*Institutes* 950). In light of God's justice, sin must be punished, as is shown above in Lock's prefatory sonnets where the speaker fears to go "To hell, by justice, for offended law" (P3.55). Both Calvin and Lock's understanding of reprobation is that God chooses those who will bear his punishment for their offending his law.

Calvin denies that God rewards or punishes persons based on his foreknowledge of their behavior. In fact, he argues specifically against this sentiment by emphasizing people's inability to achieve righteousness and God's glory in choosing the elect. Calvin describes his opponents' argument as follows: "God distinguishes among men according[ly] as he foresees what the merits of each will be. Therefore, he adopts as sons those whom he foreknows will not be unworthy of grace; he appoints to the damnation of death those whose dispositions he discerns will be inclined to evil intention and ungodliness" (*Institutes* 932). The defining factor, according to this argument, is a person's future proclivity towards good or evil. Calvin, however, shows that all people are altogether unworthy of receiving any blessing and must be adopted "in Christ into the

eternal inheritance because in ourselves we were not capable of such great excellence” (*Institutes* 934). Sinners are not capable of receiving an inheritance, and since all people are sinners, no one can rightly lay claim to any blessing based on anything but God’s work. Calvin shows that his detractors’ view of foreknowledge stands in opposition to his view of election, which he claims is based on Scripture. He writes, “If he chose us that we should be holy, he did not choose us because he foresaw that we would be so. For these two notions disagree: that the godly have their holiness from election, and that they arrive at election by reason of works” (*Institutes* 935). His opponents’ argument concerning foreknowledge makes no logical sense to Calvin, and he argues that it should be rejected.

Lock’s position seems highly similar to Calvin’s. In reference to confession of sin, Lock’s speaker clearly sees no inherent value in himself but places all emphasis on God and his mercy alone. In fact, Lock’s speaker makes no mention of personal righteousness throughout the sonnet sequence. If he were counting on his election based on his foreknown godliness, he would then make such a claim. His withholding of any such language shows Lock’s agreement with Calvin concerning foreknowledge. The views of Calvin and Lock coincide: the elect receive mercy by God’s forgiving of sins committed, as Lock actively describes in the sonnet sequence paraphrasing Psalm 51.

CHAPTER II

**COMPARISON OF ANNE VAUGHAN LOCK'S SONNET SEQUENCE
AND JOHN CALVIN'S *COMMENTARY* ON PSALM 51**

After establishing the motivation behind Psalm 51 in the five prefatory sonnets, Lock analyzes each verse of the Psalm through one or two sonnets. In these poems, she continues her agreement with Calvinist theology as seen in her close similarity with Calvin's *Commentary* on Psalm 51 and the theological concepts presented in the *Institutes*. Both writers emphasize the glory of God in passing judgment and showing mercy and the inability of man to earn his salvation. This chapter will follow Lock's movement through the verses of the Psalm as she paraphrases them, and it will also feature Calvin's comments on the same verses as they appear in his *Commentary*. Because both authors follow the same order in their responses to the Psalm, the sections will be analyzed based on Lock's sonnets with headings for each sonnet.

SONNET 1

Lock writes the first two of the twenty-one main sonnets on the first verse of Psalm 51, showing that the initial verse carries immense importance in her sonnets. Lock's sonnet mimics the theme of the first verse of Psalm 51, "Have mercy, God, for thy great mercies sake" (S1.1). Calvin translates the second mention of "mercy" as "loving-kindness," but the two terms describe the same idea, namely that God holds a wealth of love and is therefore capable of forgiving so heinous a sin (*Commentary* 283).

Thus, Lock writes “for thy *great mercies* sake” (S1.1, emphasis mine). Likewise, Calvin writes that David’s sin is of “aggravated description,” so that therefore “he prays with unwonted earnestness” (*Commentary* 283). Lock shows this passion behind the speaker’s prayers. Mercy stands as the clear inspiration for Lock’s first sonnet paraphrasing this verse, as the word is mentioned expressly in ten of the fourteen lines of the sonnet. She often utilizes repetition in this way in her sonnet sequence to express major ideas. In accordance with these cries for mercy is the self-loathing of Lock speaker, emphasizing the greatness of mercy as contrasted with judgment. The speaker refers to himself as shameful, wretched, abusing of mercy, justly accused, guilty of great fault, and guilty of great offense (S1). The strength of language the speaker uses to describe his guilt, and the recurrence of the word “mercy,” allow Lock to express the “unwonted earnestness” described by Calvin. What Calvin describes in two words of prose, Lock beautifully dramatizes in fourteen lines of poetry, showing her agreement with Calvinist theology about the behavior of the elect before God. If Lock’s speaker were not one of the elect, he would not seek the acknowledgment of God, but would continue to excuse or deny his sin. Instead, Lock’s speaker recounts the vastness of his sin and seeks the many mercies of God to forgive his transgressions.

SONNET 2

Both Lock and Calvin pay particular attention to the second part of verse one, the major idea being the amount of mercy needed to cover up the greatly offensive sins. Calvin shows that David uses the appeal to “*the multitude of his compassions*, to intimate that the mercy of an ordinary kind would not suffice for so great a sinner” (*Commentary*

283). Here Calvin shows Psalm 51's use of the repetition of ideas as a literary tool to show the magnitude of the offense. Lock mirrors this perspective in the second sonnet: "My many sinnes in number are encreast" (S2.1). This comment agrees with Calvin's assessment: "When he speaks of his sin as remissible, only through the countless multitudes of the compassions of God, he represents it as peculiarly atrocious" (*Commentary* 283). Both writers are stressing the vast offense caused by sins to emphasize the mercy needed as a remedy for the offenses. Calvin describes this relationship: "There is an implied antithesis between the greatness of the mercies sought for, and the greatness of the transgression that required them" (*Commentary* 283). Lock again craftily uses repetition to express this idea: "With endlesse number of thy mercies take / the endlesse number of my sinnes away" (S2.6). The term "endlesse number" is repeated, and the words that follow that term show the congruence of ideas: "thy mercies" and "my sinnes." This parallel phrasing links the words together, and Lock's use of repetition of the first four words in these two lines unites them, showing that an overwhelming abundance of God's mercy is necessary, and available, to cover over the multitude of sins. Lock also emphasizes the need for multiple mercies later in the last four lines of the same sonnet, where she builds a series of parallel statements that show the relationship between sin and mercy:

Thy mercies ayde in my so woefull case:

My synne is cause that scarce I dare to crave

Thy mercie manyfolde, which onely may

Releve my soule, and take my sinnes away. (S2.11-14)

The many mercies of God are the only remedy for the confessing soul of the sonnet speaker. These statements suggest that the speaker's sin is so great that only an equally great mercy could forgive those sins. In both Calvin's *Commentary* and Lock's works, abundant sins are shown to require the many forgiving mercies of God. The description of multiple sins leads to a stronger view of the mercies of God.

SONNET 3

Psalm 51 describes the method of this mercy: multiple washings to cleanse the multitude of sins. Calvin describes this request: "he felt the stain of his sin to be deep and to require multiple washings" (*Commentary* 283). Lock, using her usual form of repetition, follows this same logic. She repeats the words "foule" or "unclean" to describe sin and the sinner seven times in sonnet three, a paraphrase of Psalm 51:2. This repetition emphasizes Calvin's point about the remorse felt by the sinner and the requirement of multiple washings. Calvin quickly addresses a misconception that could form: that God's washings cannot fully cleanse the sin. He explains by saying that it is not "as if God could experience any difficulty in cleansing the worst sinner, but the more aggravated a man's sin is, the more earnest naturally are his desires to be delivered from the terrors of conscience" (*Commentary* 283). The repetition of ideas reveals the sinner's contrition rather than disbelief in God's ability to save. Lock's speaker powerfully represents these "terrors of conscience":

So foule with sinne I see my selfe to be

So foule I dare not, Lord, approche to thee . . .

But I am foule againe . . .

do away the staine . . .

Of ugly sinnes that in my soule appear. (S3.2, 4, 6, 8, 10)

Her sonnet culminates in a description of heinous uncleanness, describing the speaker as exhibiting “bothe leproous bodie and defiled face” (S3.12). The Bible uses leprosy to describe a number of skin conditions, but the main reference is to being unclean and unable to approach God in the temple because of the leprosy.⁴ Therefore, the word “leproous” implies the guilty conscience of the speaker.

Lock reveals the nature of sin by referring both to the body and to the face. Leprosy on the body may be hidden with normal clothing, but leprosy on the face cannot be hidden. The sonnet presents the sin as so severe that it must be purged completely because it has corrupted the whole body; it cannot be hidden from God’s sight or the sight of others. By presenting sin in this way, Lock shows that she agrees with Calvin’s assessment that “sin resembles filth or uncleanness, as it pollutes us, and makes us loathsome in the sight of God, and the remission of it is therefore aptly compared to *washing*. This is a truth which should both commend the grace of God to us, and fill us with detestation of sin” (*Commentary* 284). Lock also shows the relationship between being unclean and being glorified through merciful washing by once again repeating ideas, especially in lines seven through eleven of sonnet three:

Yet washe me Lord againe, and washe me more.

Washe me, O Lord and do away the staine

Of uggly sinnes that in my soule appere.

Let flow thy plentuous streames of clensing grace.

⁴ The designation of leprous skin conditions as making people ceremonially unclean is found in Leviticus 13.

Washe me againe, yea wash me every where. (S3.7-11)

In the midst of stressing this self-deprecation and need for washing, Lock also emphasizes the “plentuous streams of clensing grace.” The result of this language culminates in the glorifying of God and in celebrating his ability to cleanse even the worst of sinners.

SONNET 4

The introspection depicted in both Calvin’s and Lock’s works follows the appeal for mercy in verse three, where the Psalmist acknowledges his sin. Calvin uses the speaker’s admission to explain the “reason for imploring pardon with such vehemency” (*Commentary* 284). That reason is “painful disquietude which his sins caused him and which could only be relieved by his obtaining reconciliation from with God” (*Commentary* 284). The self-deprecating language that Lock continually uses coincides with the Calvinist theology describing the proper grief about committed sin. Sonnet four, which serves as Lock’s commentary on verse three, shows a downtrodden speaker so disgusted with his own guilt that he cannot seem to see past it to God’s grace: “What ever way I gaze about for grace, / My filth and fault are ever in my face” (S4.13-14). After turning upward toward God to request his cleansing mercy, the speaker turns back to himself and his own guilt. The focus of this sonnet is the suffering resulting from sin, grief which is represented as depressing emotional pain to the speaker: “I fele my sinne, my sinne that hath opprest / My soule with sorrow and surmounting smart” (S4.7-8). Lock thus agrees with Calvin about the proper attitude a sinner should adopt when seeking forgiveness.

This attitude is shown in the life of David, who (in Calvin's words) "declares that he is subjected by his sin to constant anguish of mind, and that it is this which imparts such an earnestness to his supplications" (*Commentary* 284). Calvin continues:

From [David's] example we may learn who they are that can alone be said to seek reconciliation with God in a proper manner. They are such as have had their consciences wounded with a sense of sin, and who can find no rest until they have obtained assurance of his mercy. We will never seriously apply to God for pardon, until we have obtained such a view of our sins as inspires us with fear. (*Commentary* 284-285)

A comparison of these sentences and Lock's sonnet shows her agreement with Calvin. For example, at one point Lock's speaker says, "The horror of my guilt doth daily growe, / And growing weares my feble hope of grace" (S4.3-4). Lock represents the fear over sin as a fear that could leave the sinner unable to gain God's blessing, as opposed to the hypocrite, whom Calvin describes as one "who displays a complete indifference upon this subject, or when it intrudes upon him, endeavors to bury the recollection of it" (*Commentary* 285). Rather, the right mindset of the one seeking forgiveness involves "a rigid and formidable scrutiny into the character of our transgressions" (*Commentary* 285). Lock's sonnets clearly show this self-imposed "scrutiny" of the mind of a person seeking forgiveness for sins. Sonnet four ends with little hope that the speaker may find mercy, but this apparent hopelessness should be read in the context of the sonnet representing the correct approach (as Calvin describes it) for seeking God's forgiveness.

SONNET 5

Lock splits the first portion of verse four and dedicates an entire sonnet to the idea of sinning only against God. According to the narrative in 1 Samuel, David's sin could be interpreted as against many: Bathsheba, with whom David committed adultery; her husband Uriah, whom David had attempted to trick into claiming fatherhood of the unborn child of his adultery; or Joab, for having to issue the command to have a soldier killed (not to mention the entire army for beginning a failed attack against a strong position to cover the king's sin). Calvin shares his interpretation of the motivation of this confession. He says of David that "though all the world should pardon him, he felt that God was the Judge with whom he had to do, that conscience hailed him to his bar, and that the voice of man could administer no relief to him" (*Commentary* 286). The reference to conscience provides Lock with an image to describe the feelings of the penitent sinner:

My cruell conscience with sharpened knife
 Doth splat my ripped hert, and layes abroad
 The lothesome secretes of my filthy life,
 And sprede them forth before the face of God. (S5.9-12)

Lock utilizes New Testament imagery in this description, drawing especially on Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Lock shows the guilty sinner's emotions when facing the piercing knife of God's word wielded by the

conscience. The result is continued shame before God, as described by Lock in the final lines of prefatory sonnet five, where the speaker describes himself as someone “Whom shame from dede shameless cold not restrain,” so that “Shame for my dede is added to my paine” (P5.13-14). Lock’s speaker’s confession follows Calvin’s interpretation of this passage: “This will be the exercise of every penitent. It matters little to obtain our acquittal at the bar of human judgment, or to escape punishment through the connivance of others, provided we suffer from an accusing conscience and an offended God” (*Commentary* 286). The true penitent, as Lock’s sonnet shows, bears guilt so strong that the only remedy is to seek mercy at God’s hand.

Calvin describes this guilty conscience as the right motivation for confession: “And there is, perhaps, no better remedy against deception in the matter of our sins than to turn our thoughts inward upon ourselves, to concentrate them upon God, and lose every self-complacent imagination in a sharp sense of his displeasure” (*Commentary* 286). Lock’s sonnet follows this understanding of guilt: “Beholde again, how now my spirite it rues, / And wailes the tyme, when I with foule delight / Thy swete forbearing mercy did abuse” (P5.6-8). The speaker’s guilty conscience regrets offending God with his sin and fears impending judgment rather than attempting to forego confession, as Calvin describes.

SONNET 6

The next progression of Psalm 51 leads to an important theological idea, namely that the justice of God is seen in the way he deals with the sins of men. According to Calvin, many may have felt an increasing separation from God because of David’s fall.

That one so close to God would fall may lead people to doubt the ability of God to fulfill his promises (*Commentary* 288). Calvin responds to this idea with references to Paul's letter to the Romans (3:3-4) and summarizes the concept presented by Psalm 51: "The general doctrine which we are taught from the passage is, that whatever sins men may commit are chargeable entirely on themselves, and never can implicate the righteousness of God" (*Commentary* 289). Thus, the sinner bears his own responsibility for sin, and even being one of the elect does not take away from that responsibility or cast any doubt on the holiness of God. Calvin applies this truth to believers: "We should learn from the example which is here set before us to judge of the divine procedure with sobriety, modesty, and reverence, and to rest satisfied that it is holy, and that the works of God, as well as his words, are characterized by unerring rectitude" (*Commentary* 289). The proper response of the believer is to see God, in whatever action, as holy.

Lock's sixth sonnet, which is based on the second part of Psalm 51:4, presents a personal application of this truth: "Withdraw my soule from the deserved hell, / O Lord of glory, for thy glories sake" (S6.2-3). The repetition of the references to glory shows particular emphasis on maintaining God's reputation. In addition, Lock shows how God is glorious both in justice and in mercy. She writes that God acts

The worldes unjustice wholly to confound
 That damning me to depth of during woe
 Just in thy judgement shouldest thou be found:
 And from deserved flames relevying me
 Just in thy mercy mayst thou also be. (S6.10-14)

Lock reveals that the speaker sees God's glory both in condemnation and in mercy. God is glorified in the punishment of sin and is also glorified in the relief of that punishment by showing mercy. Lock also shows the difference between God's and the world's judgments by suggesting that God's decisions should be seen as utterly above the world's sense of righteousness. Calvin culminates his comments on this verse by agreeing with Lock: "although men when they sin seem to obscure his righteousness, it emerges from the foul attempt only [brighter] than ever, it being the peculiar work of God to bring light out of the darkness" (*Commentary* 289). This "light out of the darkness" is the glory of God as seen in his showing mercy to the sinner who seeks his forgiveness, so that God is glorified both in showing judgment and in offering mercy.

SONNET 7

Lock's next sonnet paraphrases verse five and implies the important Calvinist doctrine of total depravity from birth, or original sin (as it is more commonly known). The verse reads: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). This verse implies that sin is present even in the unborn from the moment of conception. Calvin shows this insight as the culmination of David's confession: "He now proceeds further than the mere acknowledgement of one or of many sins, confessing that he brought nothing but sin with him into the world, and that his nature was entirely depraved He was born in iniquity, and was absolutely destitute of all spiritual good" (*Commentary* 290). Lock follows this idea in presenting the speaker's self-description: "Sinne is my nature and my kinde alas / . . . I am but sinne, and sinfull ought to dye, / . . . Such was my roote, such is my juyse within" (S7.3, 5, 7).

According to these two writers, the whole nature of man is corrupted by sin, as Lock's speaker shows the personal application of Calvin's statements. Calvin turns to the explanation of the doctrine of original sin as he defines it: "the Bible, both in this and in other places, clearly asserts that we are born in sin, and that it exists within us a disease fixed in our nature" (*Commentary* 290). The concept of original sin stands as foundational in the whole of Christian theology, and as such Calvin addresses it more fully in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Calvin traces the root of sin back to Adam and Eve's fall in the garden. He shows that man was given the choice to serve God but that Adam ultimately chose to serve himself to gain the knowledge of good and evil and become like God (*Institutes* 245). Calvin writes, in agreement with St. Augustine, that the source of Adam's sin is pride, which "was the beginning of all evils, for if ambition had not raised man higher than what was meet and right, he could have remained in his original state" (*Institutes* 245). This pride, represented above as offensive to God, passes to each generation after Adam's sin. Calvin describes this "original sin" as man defiling himself by putting "in place of wisdom, virtue, holiness, truth, and justice, with which adornments he had been clad," various flaws, so that "there came forth the most filthy plagues, blindness, impotence, impurity vanity and injustice" (*Institutes* 246). However, Adam not only condemned himself to these punishments but "he also entangled and immersed his offspring in the same miseries" (*Institutes* 246). Adam's sin bears tremendous consequences for all those who follow after him. Calvin shows, agreeing with Psalm 51, that this fallen state of man occurs not from committed sins themselves, but because "we bear an inborn defect from our mother's womb" (*Institutes* 247). The effects of this

defect are disastrous, for Calvin describes that “all of us, who have descended from impure seed, are born infected with the contagion of sin. In fact, before we saw the light of this life we were soiled in God’s sight” (*Institutes* 248). Calvinist theology describes sin as a disease infecting all human lives.

Lock expands on Calvin’s use of the word “disease” by using the imagery of a fruit-bearing plant: “Such bloome and frute loe sinne doth multiplie, / Such was my roote, such is my juyse within” (S7.7-8). Lock shows this disease coming from the root (conception) and carrying on into the fruit of the plant (practiced sins). Both writers use different forms of imagery to describe the same point: human nature is corrupted from its inception. Calvin argues that all people must admit that sin can only be understood as “extending to every part of the soul, and acknowledge that both the mind and the heart of man have become utterly corrupt” (*Commentary* 291). Thus, a person sins because his nature is completely defiled from conception, the “root” of human life. Finally, neither Calvin nor Lock concludes from this verse that the parents stand at fault for passing on the sinful seed. Calvin writes that “David does not charge [his sin] upon his parents, not trace his crime to them, but sists [sic] himself before the Divine tribunal, confesses that he was formed in sin, and that he was a transgressor ere he saw the light of this world” (*Commentary* 290). The Calvinistic concept does not place blame on the parents but instead traces sin back to the beginning of life. Each person (in other words, each sinner) is a descendant of Adam, and, as a result, each sinner cannot ascribe to himself anything good. Lock’s speaker agrees that he alone should bear responsibility for his sins:

I plead not this as to excuse my blame,

On kynde or parentes myne owne guilt to lay:

But by disclosing of my sinne, my shame,
 And need of helpe ... (S7.9-12).

The result of confessing original sin leads to the sinner not blaming his parents but revealing his own “need of help,” so that such confession leads to the glorifying of God’s work in mercy, an idea with which Lock closes the sonnet. After her speaker confesses his sinful nature, the sinner also admits that he is in “nede of help, the plainer to displaye / Thy mighty mercy, if with plenteous grace / My plenteous sinnes it please thee to deface” (S7.12-14). Just as she did in sonnet six, Lock closes sonnet seven by exalting God’s mercy.

SONNET 8

As his comments on Psalm 51:6 suggest, Calvin shows that David felt from the beginning that he deserved death all the more because he had been granted special knowledge that made his sin all the more grievous. Calvin writes that “[David] aggravates his offence by confessing that he could not plead the excuse of ignorance. He had been sufficiently instructed by God in his duty” (*Commentary* 292). Therefore he could not blame his parents, who had passed the sinful nature to him, nor could he claim to lack knowledge of God’s will. Throughout the course of his *Commentary* on Psalm 51, Calvin reveals David destroying any self-relieving arguments and placing the blame clearly on himself. In light of David’s secret knowledge of his own total depravity, Calvin shows David to be one of the elect and a recipient of the “saving knowledge of the truth,” a fact that makes his sin that much more presumptuous (*Commentary* 293). Lock takes a different interpretation about the secret knowledge, showing it as enlightening a

person to his own sins: “This secret wisdom hast thou granted me, / To see my sinnes, and whence my sinnes do growe” (S8.5-6). Calvin suggests that secret knowledge implies knowing saving truth, while Lock describes it as a special, God-granted means of introspection so that the sinner can truly confess. Though they disagree about the particular interpretation of this important concept, Calvin and Lock agree about the result of secret knowledge: that the sinner feels humbled before God. As Calvin says, “we are brought to prostrate ourselves before God in deep self-abasement” (*Commentary* 293). Lock’s sonnet reveals the same way of thinking when the speaker says, “Dreding to drowne, my Lorde, lo howe I flee, / Simply with teares bewailing my desert, / Releved simply by thy hand to be” (S8.9-11). The result of this secret knowledge is the speaker humbly admitting guilt and seeking mercy.

Here Psalm 51 shifts from depicting confession to describing the method of God’s purging of sin from the believer. Calvin, before moving forward in his analysis of Psalm 51:7, pauses to summarize the discussion so far. He explores David’s confession and his realization of the fact that his nature has been corrupt from birth (*Commentary* 293). Beginning with this foundation, David then seeks the forgiveness of God. In the word of Lock’s speaker, “Thou lovest truth, thou taughtest me the same. / Helpe, Lord of truth, for glory of thy name” (S8.13-14). Lock’s speaker offers neither excuse nor any attempt at self-justification but instead shows an utter dependence on God for his mercy, so that God might be glorified. Indeed, lines 13-14 of sonnet eight could be understood as a summary of the sonnet sequence thus far, since they show that the speaker has emptied himself of any presumption through his confession and that he appeals only to the mercy of God for salvation.

SONNET 9

With the initial confession in place, Psalm 51 now turns to the method of cleansing. Verse seven reads: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Calvin defines “hyssop” in a footnote to his *Commentary* as he describes its uses in Hebrew society in the Old Testament:

Hyssop was much used by the Hebrews in their sacred purifications and sprinklings. The allusion here probably is to the ceremony of sprinkling such as had been infected with leprosy... It was intended as a declaration to the people, that, God having healed him of a disease which no human means could remove, he might with safety be restored to society, and to the privileges of which he had been deprived. (*Commentary* 291, Note 1)

As shown above, according to the Pentateuch, leprosy makes a person ceremonially unclean. Lock refers to this disease earlier in sonnet three, when the speaker describes having “Both leprous body and defiled face” (S3.12). The appropriate cleansing method in such a situation is to be washed with hyssop, which Calvin associates with Jesus’ blood by saying, “it is no doubt to the blood of Christ alone that we must look for the atonement of our sins” (*Commentary* 294). David sought for forgiveness of sin, and therefore “God would show to the people that he had pardoned [David’s] sin, restored him to favor, and purified his soul” (*Commentary* 294, Note 1).

Lock follows this linking of the Old Testament hyssop with Jesus’ blood:

With swete Hysope besprinkle thou my sprite:
Not such hysope, nor so besprinkle me,
As law unperfect shade of perfect light

Did use as an appointed signe to be

Foreshewing figure of thy grace behight. (S9.1-5)

Both Lock and Calvin link this Old Testament verse with New Testament theology, which focuses on the salvation wrought by Jesus' death. Lock writes: "With death and bloodshed of thine only sonne, / The swete hysope, cleanse me defyled wyght" (S9.6-7). The blood of Jesus replaces the hyssop of the Old Testament cleansing ritual, a ritual which, according to these two writers, stands as only a picture or foreshadowing of the salvation to come in Jesus Christ. Lock's sonnets look to this atonement through the linking of hyssop and the crucifixion, leading to the culmination of sonnet nine's phrasing: "Wash me, O Lord: when I am washed soe, / I shalbe whiter than the whitest snowe" (S9.13-14). Calvin describes this same belief in *Institutes*. He writes that Christ is preeminent "over against all the sacrifices of the law, to teach that what those figures showed was fulfilled in him alone" (*Institutes* 531). In paraphrasing the Apostle Paul, Calvin says that "God has given the price of redemption in the death of Christ; then he bids us to take refuge in Christ's blood, that having required righteousness we may stand secure in God's judgment" (*Institutes* 532). Christ's death on the cross pays the penalty for sin, and his blood fulfills the Old Testament foreshadowing of his death as seen in his blood cleansing sin in the same way that hyssop was used to clean ceremonial uncleanness. Lock's use of the superlative in the final line shows that speaker feels that the forgiveness utterly cleanses the stain of sin.

SONNET 10

After giving a detailed explanation of the imagery of cleansing by hyssop, Calvin shows a transition to the next two verses, which show how David seeks peace with God. The Psalm illustrates the grief David feels when it says: “Let the bones that you have broken rejoice” (Psalm 51:8). Calvin shows that this imagery “alludes to the extreme grief and overwhelming distress to which [David] had been reduced” (*Commentary* 295). Lock emphasizes this same kind of grief by building on the illustration. Her speaker mentions “My broosed bones, that thou with paine / Hast made to weake my febled corps to beare” (S10.12-13). Lock uses the word “corpse” – which chiefly means body -- to suggest the deadness of the human spirit under the weight of the guilt of sin, and it is important to note that the “corpse” is feeble, not dead. Indeed, Calvin shows that brokenness of spirit leads to David’s belief that “the joy of the Lord would reanimate his soul,” and Calvin suggests that this renewed life would come from hearing the word of God (*Commentary* 295). Calvin explains the importance of understanding the word of God as the source of life, “for it is the word of God alone which can first and effectually cheer the heart of any sinner. There is no true or solid peace to be enjoyed in the world except in the way of reposing upon the promises of God” (*Commentary* 295). Lock uses this implied imagery of hearing to describe both the fear of hearing the law of God and the joy of hearing the mercy of God: “Lorde, pearce myne eares, and make me to rejoyse, / When I shall heare, and when thy mercy shall / Sounde in my hart the gospel of thy grace” (S10.7-9). God’s “piercing” of the ears leads to the sinner being capable of hearing the word of God and rejoicing.

Lock uses the imagery of another type of physical pain to lead to rejoicing in God. In sin, her speaker feels broken bones and physical pain, but he asks that God pierce his ears so that he can rejoice. The pain caused by God's piercing overwhelms the pain felt from confession, and through this greater pain, Lock's speaker can rejoice in God. Exodus 21 describes the piercing of the ear as a symbol of a Hebrew slave's voluntarily continuing his service to a master even when the servant should be set free in the Year of Jubilee (Exodus 21:2-6). Lock uses this imagery to show her speaker's submitting his life to God. The piercing of his ear, as described in Exodus, marks the servant as willfully belonging to the master. The fact that the slave chooses this service shows the voluntary decision Lock's speaker makes to turn away from sin and turn to God.

SONNET 11

In order for God to give the speaker joy again, his sin must be pardoned. So Psalm 51 - and Lock in paraphrase - again asks God to look away from the sins and toward forgiveness. Lock's sonnet shows fear at the initial look from God: The speaker assumes "That sight of sinne so sore offendeth thee / ... Thou canst not loke on me / But with disdain, with horror and despite" (S11.2, 4-5). According to Lock, sin is so offensive that God cannot look with favor on the sinner. Nevertheless, the sonnet begins with a request for God to "Loke, on me..." (S11.1). Even while the speaker is trembling at God's gaze, the sonnet requests God to turn away from sin (even though he sees everything) and to make the sinner pure. Although the speaker is "foule by sinne," he asks that God "but make me by thy grace / Pure in thy mercies sight," and he continues, "Lord, I pray, / That hatest sine, wipe all my sins away" (S11.12-14). Lock shows how

this mercy comes by an active intervention of God: the speaker asks, concerning his sin, that God should “so remove it from thy wrathfull eye, / And from the justice of thyne angry face, / That thou impute it not . . .” (S11.9-11). God here performs the complete activity of removing the punishment of sin and its effects on the sinner. Calvin’s *Commentary* agrees: He says that Psalm 51 shows that human justification consists “in a voluntary act of God, by which he condescends to forget all our iniquities; and it represents our cleansing to consist in the reception of a gratuitous pardon” (296). The only action of the sinner is to receive the gift in accordance with the understanding that the sinner is utterly deserving of judgment and incapable of seeking God’s favor. Likewise, the first part of Lock’s sonnet eleven shows how God views sin as onerous; the middle of the sonnet shows God wiping the sins away; and the culmination of the poem suggests that the sinner will be pure in God’s sight. The speaker walks through a definite progression in seeking and enjoying the forgiveness of God.

At this point in the *Commentary*, Calvin moves into an explanation of an important question raised by Calvinist theology - namely, why does an elect believer, who is assured of forgiveness and salvation, fear the judgment of God to such a point that such fear grieves his soul? David, after all, receives absolution from the prophet Nathan in 1 Samuel, and so Calvin asks, “Was he not chargeable with dishonouring [sic] God by disbelieving the word of his prophet?” (*Commentary* 296). God offers forgiveness through his prophet, yet David writes his confession as though he fears the judgment of God. Calvin shows, however, that the fear of judgment leads to the believer’s right response: “However rich and liberal the offers of mercy may be which God extends to us, it is highly proper on our part that we should reflect upon the grievous dishonor which we

have done to his name, and be filled with due sorrow on account of it” (*Commentary* 297). Therefore, the somewhat harsh language Lock uses in presenting her speaker’s self-description reflects Calvin’s view of the confessing sinner’s proper attitude. This perception comes from an understanding of God’s mercy and from the confessor’s belief that he will receive pardon from God (*Commentary* 297). According to Calvin, the act of asking for mercy should provide encouragement to the believer since that act is a sign of his election. Calvin uses the Lord’s Prayer to illustrate this point: “We are taught to begin by addressing God as our Father, and yet afterwards to pray for the remission of our sins” (*Commentary* 296). Calling God Father, according to Calvin, proves faith, while the confession of sins shows the believer’s assurance of receiving mercy. Calvin does not argue that repetition of confession softens the heart of God, but that continual confession reveals the growth of our faith: “We advance by slow and difficult steps to the requisite fulness [sic] of assurance” (*Commentary* 297).”

Lock’s use of repetition echoes this assumption; she, too, implies that the sinner’s confession should consistently request the mercy of God. The imagery of washing again points to the source of this mercy, as Calvin explains that use of such imagery “teaches us, in all our prayers for the pardon of sin, to have our thoughts directed to the great sacrifice by which Christ has reconciled us to God” (*Commentary* 297). The sinner’s continual looking to the work of Christ in expectation of mercy reveals the sinner’s belief in the Christian doctrine of salvation – the doctrine that Jesus’ death pardons the penalty of sin. Calvin briefly describes this belief: “The sinner, if he would find mercy, must look to the sacrifice of Christ, which expiated the sins of the world . . . for it were vain to imagine that God, the Judge of the world, would receive us again into his favour [sic] in

any other way than through a satisfaction made to his justice” (*Commentary* 298). Thus, the continual passionate appeals of Lock’s sonnets reflect Calvin’s understanding of the right responses to any commissions of sin: remorse and confession.

SONNET 12

Now that the Psalmist has confessed his sin and appealed for mercy, he begins in verse ten to ask for the renewal of his heart and spirit. Calvin notes this change as an important shift in doctrine for the speaker. He writes that David “passes from the subject of the gratuitous remission of sin to that of sanctification” (*Commentary* 298).

Sanctification involves the growth of the believer into becoming more like God, a journey undertaken by the elect. Calvin writes that the elect will still struggle with sinful tendencies, “until they are divested of mortal bodies . . . for in their flesh there resides that depravity of inordinate desiring which contends against righteousness” (*Institutes* 603). Calvin defines sanctification as the believer putting to death the flesh after being “aroused to diligence and attention that he may escape from the devil’s snares,” in order “that he may better take precaution against his wiles, and that he may not afterward fall away from the governance of the Holy Spirit, nor be lulled into a sense of security” (*Institutes* 608).

Lock shows this desire to be sanctified in sonnet twelve, where the speaker moves from mentioning the possession of a heart controlled by sin and despair to asking for a spirit that will “still uphold thassurance of thy love” (S12.14). The sonnet thus moves from deep grief to a hopefulness of the assurance of salvation. Calvin argues that this change also comes via an act of God: “By employing the term *create*, [the Psalmist]

expresses his persuasion that nothing less than a miracle could effect his reformation, and emphatically declares that repentance is the gift of God” (*Commentary* 298). Calvin describes another important assumption of traditional Calvinist theology, that guilt over sin and repentance is a gift from God and a part of being one of the elect. Likewise, throughout her sonnet sequence, Lock emphasizes the need for God to do the work of repentance in the sinner’s heart. Lock shows this dependence on God, for instance, when she has her speaker ask God to “Create a new pure hart within my brest: / Myne old can hold no liquour of thy grace” (S12.5-6). According to Lock, God must render the needed change, because the sinful heart cannot bear the presence of God since, as shown above, the old heart has incurred the judgment of God.

Calvin explains the word choice in verse eleven in the context of his view of original sin or total depravity. He adds to his comments on the Psalmist’s use of “create”:
 “he acknowledges that we are indebted entirely to the grace of God, both for our first regeneration, and, in the event of our falling, for subsequent restoration” (*Commentary* 299). The Calvinist view of a person is that he is so depraved that he needs a complete work of God’s grace for initial salvation and he also needs this grace to continue to follow God through life. Lock’s opening lines of sonnet twelve show this theology:
 “Sinne and despeir have so possest my hart, / And hold my captive soule in such restraint,
 / As of thy mercies I can fele no part” (S12.1-3). The middle words of the second line illustrate Calvin’s point beautifully. The “captive soul” cannot break free from the chains that bind it but is completely dependent on God’s grace to set it free, hence the reason for the vehement supplications of Lock’s sonnet sequence. Calvin argues this point against those who would say that there remains some ability to seek salvation without God’s

assistance: “He does not merely assert that his heart and spirit were weak, requiring divine assistance, but that they must remain destitute of all purity and rectitude till these be communicated from above” (*Commentary* 299). The sinner is completely dependent on God to provide the grace to lead any kind of pure life, both initially and continually.

Lock’s sonnet requests that this mercy from God will lead to continued understanding of God’s love: “Renew, O Lord, in me a constant sprite, / That stayde with mercy may my soul susteine, / A sprite so settled and so firmly pight” (S12.10-12).

According to Lock, the renewed soul placed in the sinner by God has at least the potential to contemplate God’s love and rise out of the mire of self-doubt. Again, the spiritually holy activity only comes after God renews the soul. Calvin utilizes the Psalmist’s words to summarize the doctrine of total depravity: “By this it appears that our nature is entirely corrupt: for were it possessed of any rectitude or purity, David would not, as in this verse, have called the one *a gift of the Spirit*, and the other a *creation*” (*Commentary* 299). By analyzing the use of particular words, Calvin shows that the sinner’s heart is completely dependent on God for any saving work, a sentiment also implied by Lock’s sonnet based on the same verse.

SONNET 13

According to Calvin, the power God uses to effect this change is the work of the Holy Spirit, work that God performs in the lives of the elect. Calvin writes, “If God reconciles us gratuitously with himself, it follows that he will guide us by the Spirit of adoption. It is only such as he loves, and has numbered among his own children, that he blesses with a share of his Spirit” (*Commentary* 299). However, the next verse asks that

God not remove the Holy Spirit from the confessing sinner (Psalm 51:11). The inference could be made that the elect sinner could be in danger of losing his salvation, but Calvin uses this opportunity to emphasize his belief in the security of the elect person's salvation. He shows this idea first by arguing that "the words of this verse imply that the Spirit had not altogether been taken away from him, however much his gifts had been temporarily obscured" (*Commentary* 299). Lock's sonnets show this "spark" of the Holy Spirit's work: "Take not away the succor of thy Sprite, / Thy holy sprite, which is myne onely stay, / The stay that when despeir assaileth me" (S13.8-10). The act of asking God not to take away the Holy Spirit shows that the speaker still maintains belief that the Holy Spirit is present in his life; however, the speaker has lost some of the assurance provided by the Holy Spirit. Hence, Lock's speaker asks for the Spirit to defend him from despair.

Calvin argues from two New Testament passages that the work of God cannot be nullified once it has begun in the believer's life (*Commentary* 300, referencing 1 Peter 1:23 and 1 John 3:9). He then applies this idea to the guilt felt after sin: "It is natural that the saints, when they have fallen into sin, and have thus done what they could do to expel the grace of God, should feel an anxiety upon this point; but it is their duty to hold fast the truth that grace is the incorruptible seed of God, which never can perish in any heart where it has been deposited" (*Commentary* 300). From the assurance of the indwelling of God's spirit, the "sinning saint" cries out to God for mercy, confident that God will answer and provide. Lock's sonnet thirteen exemplifies this truth:

... faintest hope yet moveth me to pray,
 To pray for mercy, and to pray to thee.
 Lord, cast me not from presence of thy face,

Nor take from me the spirite of thy grace. (S13.11-14)

Lock's speaker is not completely devoid of hope but feels enough hope to cry out to God for mercy. The reference here to the speaker's "faintest hope" illustrates Calvin's point that the sinner cannot hope in anything but God for rescue but does maintain that hope, thereby showing that he is one of the elect. The cry from the fallen sinner is one of utter dependence on God and on his ability to rescue. The Calvinist doctrines of depravity, election, and the believer's perseverance are addressed in Psalm 51, in Calvin's *Commentary*, and in Lock's sonnet. (Lock further develops the idea of perseverance in sonnet twenty-one, as explained below).

SONNET 14

After showing why the Psalmist feels confidence about receiving God's mercy, Calvin shows in verse twelve where the Psalmist asks God for joy to return. This joy establishes an emotional link with the spiritual reality occurring in the sinner's life. Calvin explains: "He cannot dismiss his grief of mind until he have [sic] obtained peace with God. This he declares once and again, for David had no sympathy with those who can indulge themselves in ease when they are lying under divine displeasure" (*Commentary* 300). This same grief pervades Lock's sonnet sequence, showing the correlation between initial grief and ultimate peace with God. The speaker, feeling grief, will continue to request mercy until peace is received. To do otherwise would contradict Calvin's assessment of David's mindset in Psalm 51, since David is a representative of the elect. Lock shows the origin of this grief. It is grief over losing the joy God provides: "But render me my wonted joyes againe, / Which sinne hath reft, and planted in they

place / Doubt of thy mercy ground of all my paine” (S14.1-3). Lock’s speaker clearly does not feel peace with God, because sin has taken it away and replaced it with doubt. Once the sin is effectively remedied, the joy can be restored. The sonnet shows the internal doubt of someone once sure of election: “. . . the signes that dyd assure / My felyng ghost of favor in thy sight, / Are fled from me . . .” (S14.5-8). From this place of doubt caused by sin, the speaker asks for restoration, showing Calvin’s “grief of mind” again. As he says later in his *Commentary*: “David, under a painful consciousness of the bondage to which he had been reduced by a sense of guilt, prays for a free and cheerful spirit” (301). Lock’s sonnet complements Calvin’s *Commentary* by showing that this spirit will provide a new sense of assurance of salvation: “With thy free sprite confirme my feble ghost, / To hold my faith from ruine and decay / With fast affiance and assured stay” (S14.12-14). Having first explored the origins of grief, Lock’s sonnet then follows the appropriate Calvinist mindset of confession and confidence in God’s sustaining grace.

SONNET 15

At this point, Psalm 51 moves into action brought forth from the mercy shown by God and the restoration of joy in God, and both Lock and Calvin show this progression in their works. Verse thirteen reads: “Then I will teach transgressors your ways, / and sinners will return to you.” The transitional word “then” shows that the teaching of others flows out of the restored joy sought in verse twelve. Calvin writes that this teaching comes from gratitude and that David shows this gratitude by “exerting himself in effecting the conversion of others by his example” (*Commentary* 302). Lock agrees that the example of the speaker’s life will be the source of the message: “So shall the profe of

myne example preach” (S15.9). According to Calvin and Lock, the forgiveness and restoration of the sinner, brought on by confession, will provide an example for others to follow. David’s presentation of himself as an example is appropriate to his role as king. This role meant that his subjects would see both his guilt and restoration and would seek to follow him. Calvin shows David’s example: “Those who have been mercifully recovered from their falls will feel inflamed by the common law of charity to extend a helping hand to their brethren and in general, such as are partakers of the grace of God are constrained by religious principle, and regard for the divine glory, to desire that others should be brought into the preparation of it” (*Commentary* 302). Calvin argues that the restored sinner will seek to help others. The restored sinner will be motivated by the “religious principle” of the “common law of charity,” this common law being that charity received should become charity given. The sinner has been given much and should lead others to ask for the same gifts of forgiveness and joy. Calvin also carefully emphasizes again that this activity only takes place with an eye toward God’s glorification.

In agreement with Calvin, Lock writes: “By mercy saved, thy mercy shall I tell” (S15.4). Lock uses parallel phrases to emphasize the relationship between mercy that has been received and the proclamation of that same mercy, showing an artistic expression of Calvinist ideals. She closes the sonnet with more emphasis on being an example: “Have mercy, Lorde, in me example make / Of lawe and mercy, for thy mercies sake” (S15.13-14). Even in emphasizing God’s mercy, Lock carefully presents the idea that the sinner should still be an example of God’s law, for without the law, a person would know the depth of his sin. In this passage, Lock shows that the presentation of mercy only makes sense alongside an understanding of God’s judgment according to his law.

SONNET 16

The next verse of Psalm 51 asks for God's deliverance from blood, and both Calvin and Lock show that the passage means deliverance not from man's vengeance but from God's punishment, which results from impugning his glory. Calvin writes that David makes this supplication out of a "severe struggle he sustained with inward terrors" (*Commentary* 302). These terrors do not come from fear of retribution for David's murder of Uriah, Calvin argues, but from fear of the death sentence he faces from God for his sin (*Commentary* 302). Lock's sonnet sixteen, which paraphrases this verse, likewise shows this same fear of God's judgment: "Upon my bloud and soule extend not, Lorde, / Vengeance for bloud, but mercy let me finde, / And strike me not with thy revengyng sworde" (S15.6-8). Lock's speaker makes no mention of fearing any retribution from man; instead, the speaker clearly fears God's vengeance. The understanding that God is the offended party derives from the statements made earlier, both in Lock's sonnets and in Calvin's *Commentary* on Psalm 51:4. As shown above, both writers assume that the Psalmist sees God as primary in the list of those offended. Thus it follows that God's vengeance is the vengeance to be feared most. Calvin argues that David's request to celebrate the righteousness of God implies definite hope in God's goodness, "for this attribute, as usually ascribed to God in the Scriptures, does not so much denote the strictness with which he exacts vengeance, as his faithfulness in fulfilling the promises and extending help to all who seek him in the hour of need" (*Commentary* 302-303). King David believes God will answer his request for mercy.

In sonnet sixteen, Lock similarly juxtaposes justice and mercy, defining justification as receiving the forgiveness of God: "My voice shall sounde thy justice, and

thy waies, / Thy waies to justify thy sinfull wight” (S16.11-12). These two lines accurately represent the point of Calvin’s comments on this verse. The first line represents the justice of God, the same justice that the speaker fears so vehemently, while the second line testifies of God’s way of satiating his need for justice and still forgiving the sinner. Calvin’s *Commentary* alludes to Romans 3:26, which shows Jesus’ death as making God “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Referring to God’s justice in this way allows Lock to maintain God’s holiness in judging sin while also proclaiming his mercy in forgiving it, or (as Calvin puts it), “fulfilling the promises and extending help to all who seek him in the hour of need” (*Commentary* 303). The need is forgiveness of sin, and Lock’s sonnets show the pleas for the fulfillment of this need through God’s mercy.

Calvin and Lock disagree on the translation of the second clause of verse fifteen, though they agree on the meaning. Calvin translates the passage “thou God of my salvation” and shows the importance of this phrasing in his *Commentary*: “There is much emphasis and vehemency [sic] in the mode of his address, *O God! The God of my salvation*, intimating at once how tremblingly he was alive to the danger of his situation, and how strongly his faith terminated upon God as the ground of his hope” (303). Lock translates this verse: “*O God, God of my helth*,” using the importantly different word “health,” rather than “salvation” (*Collected Works* 69). Lock’s sonnets show the emphasis on this word: “O God, O God of my health, my saving God, / Have mercy Lord, and shew thy might to save” (S16.1-2). The line immediately following Lock’s reference to God as “God of my health” alludes to God’s work of mercy, shown above to refer to the forgiveness of sin. Lock’s sonnet also asks for healing from the corruption

resulting from sin: “And eke from sinne that I ingrowyng have / By fleshe and bloud and by corrupted kinde” (S16.4-5). These lines explain the importance Lock places on the restoration of the soul as part of the mercy of God. She agrees with Calvin’s definition of salvation and thus agrees with his translation, even though she uses different words than he does.

SONNET 17

Both Lock and Calvin continue to emphasize God’s activity as they continue commenting on the Psalm, even in the motivation of the forgiven sinner singing praises. The joy of the sinner’s heart as he sees God’s forgiveness manifests itself in singing about God’s righteousness, but even the will to sing God’s praises must be initiated by God, as shown in Psalm 51:15. Calvin comments on his translation of this verse: “[David] prays that *his lips may be opened*; in other words, that God would afford him matter of praise. The meaning usually attached with this expression is, that God would so direct his tongue by the Spirit as to fit him for singing his praises” (303). According to Calvin, the sinner needs God to work in order for the sinner to praise God rightly. Lock similarly shows that the reason for the sinner’s need of God is that the grieving sinner is incapable of praising God as he should:

Lo straining crampe of colde despeir againe
 In feble brest doth pinche my pinyng hart,
 So as in greatest need to cry and plaine
 My speache doth faile to utter thee my smart. (S17.1-4)

Lock's speaker cannot sing praises to God because grief overwhelms his heart, and he cannot look past the despair that clouds his mind. Thus, he requests God to "Refreshe my yeldyng hert, with warming grace, / And loose my speech, and make me call to thee" (S17.5-6). Lock's sonnets show again the sinner's complete dependence on the grace of God to bring joy. This dependence is especially shown in lines 9-10: "I can not pray without thy movyng ayde, / Ne can I ryse, ne can I stande alone" (S17.9-10). Lock shows that a person can "rise" to seek God only by his mercy and that even prayer comes from his work, so that he receives all of the glory.

Calvin argues that the overflow of this joy will be the proclamation of God to others: "[David] again signifies the gratitude which he would feel, and which he would express, intimating, that he sought the mercy of God with no other view than that he might become the herald of it to others. *My mouth*, he says emphatically, *shall show forth thy praise*" (*Commentary* 303). Throughout his comments on Psalm 51, Calvin emphasizes the outward progression of joy: David, as the forgiven sinner, will proclaim God to others. Lock closes sonnet seventeen by expressing this same mindset: "Lord loose my lippes, I may expresse my mone, / And finding grace with open mouth I may / Thy mercies praise, and holy name display" (S17.12-14). God, by freeing up the speaker's mouth, leads to the speaker displaying God's glory to others, and as a result those people will seek God in the same way.

SONNET 18

In commenting on the following verse, Psalm 51:16, Calvin and Lock show that the sinner must seek a changed heart and not seek merely external forgiveness. Calvin

shows that this verse shows dependence on God's mercy because "[David] expresses his confidence of obtaining pardon, although he brought nothing to God in the shape of compensation, but relied entirely upon the riches of Divine mercy. He confesses that he comes to God both poor and needy; but is persuaded that this will not prevent the success of his suit, because God attaches no importance to sacrifices" (*Commentary* 304). This explanation shows that God's lack of emphasis on sacrifices allows David to approach God with nothing and still receive mercy. God's indifference to sacrifices thus leads to David's confidence in approaching God.

Lock takes a slightly different stance, showing that the speaker brings praise of God's mercy rather than a sacrifice, though the emphasis remains on the importance of God's work in forgiveness. The authors show that the ineffectiveness of the sacrifices comes from the fact that sacrifices are mere foreshadows of the Christ to come, who will be the final sacrifice. Calvin argues that the people of David's time had misunderstood the real point of the sacrificial system in the law: "In proclaiming that the sacrifices made expiation from sin, the Law had designed to withdraw them from all trust in their own works to the one satisfaction of Christ; but they presumed to bring their sacrifices to the altar as a price by which they hoped to procure their own redemption" (*Commentary* 304). Clearly, Calvin and Lock would vehemently argue against any such presumption that would lead the sinner to feel that he could use any means to gain expiation for his sin. They have been arguing previously that the sinner could not bring any righteous act or mind to ask for forgiveness because doing so would impugn God's glory. Now, Lock denies that it is "delitefull in thine eyes, / Up to heaven the vapie smoke to send: / Of gyltless beasts, to purge my glit and blame" (S18.3, 6-7). Lock shows that if salvation

were achievable by any human means, the sinner would strive to accomplish the activity on his own, presuming that his own works could gain God's forgiveness. Calvin argues that David himself challenges this presumption: "He speaks of [the sacrifices] as observed by the proud and the ignorant, under an impression of meriting the divine favor" (*Commentary* 304). Lest anyone think that the sacrifices themselves were of no value, Calvin argues that it was not the sacrifices themselves that were valueless but rather the wrong interpretation of them as capable of gaining true salvation.

Now that Calvin and Lock have established the insufficiency of sacrifices, they next move to show the true point of the sacrificial system. According to these two authors, the sacrifices described in the Pentateuch serve to foreshadow the coming atonement made possible by Jesus' death on the cross. For example, Lock writes that forgiveness of human sins is obtained through the sacrifice offered

. . . By thy swete sonne alone,
 With one sufficing sacrifice for all
 Appeaseth thee, and maketh the at the one
 With sinfull man, and hath repaired our fall. (S18.9-12)

Line 10 shows that Jesus' sacrifice stands as sufficient to cover the sins of mankind.

In the same sonnet, Lock contrasts Jesus' death with the insufficient sacrificial system. Jesus, as the atoning sacrifice, reunites God and man and repairs the damage done by the sin brought on by the fall. Whereas men's seeking of salvation through the sacrificial system glorifies them, Lock shows that God, through Christ's death, accomplishes the work of salvation and receives the glory. Thus, her illustration agrees with Calvin's argument that any method of redemption that allows man to receive glory

operates on a wrong assumption. God accomplishes the work of salvation through Christ, as Calvin argues when explaining David's confession: "Diligent as [David] was, therefore, in the practice of sacrifice, resting his whole dependence upon the sacrifice of Christ, who atoned for the sins of the world, he could yet honestly declare that he brought nothing to God in the shape of compensation, and that he trusted entirely to a gratuitous reconciliation" (*Commentary* 305). Calvin argues that David depends utterly on the work of Christ and thus cannot trust in anything he has done. The work of salvation, as described by Calvin and Lock, consists completely in Jesus' death on the cross. Understanding salvation by this definition leads to humility on the part of the elect believer, as shown in the next verse of Psalm 51.

SONNET 19

Building on the idea of sacrifices, Psalm 51 reveals that what pleases God is a humble spirit, which Lock and Calvin show as the proper response in contrition. Calvin explains that "[David] needed to bring nothing whatever to God but a contrite and humbled heart. Nothing more is necessary, on the part of the sinner, than to prostrate himself in supplication for Divine mercy" (*Commentary* 305). Lock agrees with Calvin's assessment of the right mindset: "I yeld my self, I offer up my ghoste... / To God a trobled sprite is pleasing hoste" (S19.1, 3). Lock uses the important verb "yield" to show complete surrender to God, agreeing with Calvin's illustration of the sinner "prostrating" himself when asking God for mercy. In describing the humble spirit, Lock's speaker is careful not to fall into the presumption of assuming God's mercy:

My trobled sprite doth drede like him to be,

In whom tasteless languor with lingring paine
 Hath febled so the starved appetite,
 That foode to late is offred all in vain,
 To holde in fainting corps the fleing sprite. (S19.4-8)

The speaker stands on the cusp of falling into utter despair, using the illustration of a starving person who risks receiving “foode to late” to revive his spirit. Because God approves a troubled spirit, Lock’s speaker’s desire shows the exact attitude a sinner should have in approaching God. Lock concurs with Calvin’s beliefs that the sinner seeking mercy should only approach God with a humble spirit. Calvin says that “the man of broken spirit is one who has been emptied of all vain-glorious confidence, and brought to acknowledge that he is nothing. The contrite heart abjures the idea of merit, and has no dealings with God upon the principle of exchange” (*Commentary* 306). Though weakened, the sonnet speaker still offers up his soul, expecting that God will not despise him, not because of his merit but because of his humble spirit (S19.11-14).

Calvin argues that the contrite soul separates the reprobate from the elect:

I would observe, that faith cannot be separated from the humility of which David speaks. This is such a humility as is altogether unknown to the wicked. They may tremble in the presence of God, and the obstinacy and rebellion of their hearts may be partially restrained, but they still retain some remainders of inward pride. Where the spirit has been broken, on the other hand, and the heart has become contrite, through a felt sense of the anger of the Lord, a man is brought to genuine fear and self-loathing, with

a deep conviction that of himself he can do or deserve nothing, and must be indebted unconditionally to God's mercy. (*Commentary* 306)

Calvin presents the difference between the elect person's sense of humility and the reprobate person's sense of pride as a defining issue between them. This distinction argues against the idea that Calvinism gives its followers pride in their election.

According to Calvin, humility defines the elect person's life and his approach to God, while pride defines the reprobate's life, even when he is facing the judgment of God.

Thus, Calvin shows that a person who pushes honor to God from self, or has a humble and contrite spirit, should be confident in receiving God's mercy, though that person lays no claim to it by his own actions. In light of Calvin's description of the proper spirit to exhibit in approaching God, Lock's continually self-degrading language in her sonnet sequence shows her agreement with Calvinist theology as her speaker continually appeals to God for his mercy.

SONNET 20

Psalm 51 ends with David asking God for blessings not just for himself, but for all of God's people, blessings which Calvin and Lock show as the natural overflow of an understanding of the mercy of God. Calvin argues that David moves toward this request for corporate blessings "for the collective Church of God, a duty which he may have felt to be the more incumbent upon him from the circumstance of his having done what he could by his fall to ruin it" (*Commentary* 307). David's sin had caused both potential and actual damages to the Israelites: his fall from grace could lead God to reject his people and lead them toward a path of destruction, as shown in the histories of the many fallen

kings of Israel and Judah.⁵ His actions did indeed lead his army to a dangerous situation that resulted in the death of an innocent man. Calvin explains David's corrupt leadership: "Raised to the throne, and originally anointed to be king for the very purpose of fostering the Church of God, he had by his disgraceful conduct nearly accomplished its destruction" (*Commentary* 307). Although David proclaimed that he sinned against God only, Calvin argues that David rightly requests blessings for his people, whom he had wronged.

While Lock does not delve into the idea of David's past sins adversely affecting the nation, she does show a request for additional blessing for his people: "Shew mercie, Lord, not unto me alone" (S20.1). Lock's sonnet thus shows the overflow of the desire for mercy described by Calvin in his *Commentary*. Calvin shows that David makes this request for mercy based on God's goodness alone: "He makes no mention of the righteousness of others, but rests his plea entirely on the good pleasure of God, intimating that the Church, when at any period it has been brought low, must be indebted for its restoration solely to Divine grace" (*Commentary* 307). This argument agrees with the statements made by Calvin throughout the *Commentary*, namely that no one can bring any righteousness to God and expect to receive any blessing. If this rule applies to King David, then it necessarily applies to all people. Lock makes no mention of any righteousness of the people that would allow them to claim any blessing from God. She thus shows her agreement with Calvin that God's corporate blessing derives from his mercy alone. This blessing includes the strengthening of the holy city of Jerusalem, but Calvin argues for a spiritual interpretation of this request: "We are not to imagine that

⁵ References to these fallen kings may be found throughout the Old Testament histories of 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, and 2 Chronicles.

David refers simply to the Church as a material structure, but must consider him as having his eye fixed upon the spiritual temple, which cannot be raised by human skill or injury... the Church is in a peculiar sense the erection of God, who has founded it upon the earth in the exercise of his mighty power, and who will exalt it higher than the heavens” (*Commentary* 307-308).

Lock follows this idea by having her speaker address God as follows: “Defend thy church, Lord, and advance it” (S20.9). She makes special reference in this sonnet to both the physical Jerusalem and Zion as the place for those who follow God, but she additionally mentions the “church” as needing both defending and advancement from God (S20.4-5). Calvin also shows that this request is not simply for temporary redemption: “In this prayer David does not contemplate the welfare of the Church for a short period merely, but prays that God would preserve and advance it until the coming of Christ” (*Commentary* 308). Lock agrees with Calvin’s assessment of David’s request for long-term blessing, as her speaker shows when asking that Jerusalem “with mighty wall / May be enclosed under thy defence, / and bylded so that it may never fall” (S20.5-7). Lock does not follow Calvin’s statement concerning the request for the blessing of Jerusalem continuing until the coming of Christ, but both Lock and Calvin show a need for God’s blessing to last long into the future, with an eye toward the New Testament Church as the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Israel.

Calvin and Lock give insight into the Psalmist’s movement from seeking personal forgiveness to seeking corporate blessing for the church – a blessing which Calvin argues should give hope to all believers. This hope comes from the recognition of the effectiveness of God’s reconciliation. Calvin presents the question to his readers: “And

here, may it not justly excite our surprise, to find one who, in the preceding part of the [Psalm], had employed the language of distress and almost of despair, now inspired with the confidence necessary for commending the whole Church to the care of God?" (*Commentary* 308). According to Calvin, there has been a clear rise in David's confidence. The king who initially could not bear the idea of God's judgment now requests God's continual blessing on the kingdom. Calvin explains this transition: "In this we have a striking proof, that, provided we obtain reconciliation with God, we may not only expect to be inspired in confidence in praying for our own salvation but may hope to be admitted as intercessors in behalf of others, and even to be advanced to the higher honour still, of commending into the hands of God the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom" (*Commentary* 308). The key statement in this passage is "provided we have obtained reconciliation with God," which describes the foundation of the confidence believers have in asking for the blessing for others. Prayer for others stands as a sign that believers have received reconciliation, giving them confidence in their own salvation.

Lock's entire sonnet twenty shows this same kind of request for mercy: Lock's speaker does not seek merely his own reconciliation with God but also seeks the benefit of the entire kingdom. Lock's final lines show the benefits God can provide to all believers: "That Sion and Hierusalem may be / A safe abode for them that honor thee" (S20.13-14). Note Lock's use of "them" and "thee" instead of first person-singular nouns. Her sonnet clearly emphasizes the totality of the believers, as shown in Calvinist theology's belief in the continuation of the Old Testament Kingdom of Jerusalem and the New Testament Church.

Calvin argues for election to be the unifying theme in the lives of New Testament and Old Testament believers; therefore, the Old Testament community of faith and the New Testament community of Christians are both rightly referred to as “the Church.” Calvin says that believers must “consider the unity of the church as that into which we are convinced we have been truly engrafted. For no hope of future inheritance remains to us unless we have been united with all other members under Christ, our Head All the elect are so united in Christ that as they are dependent on one head, they grow together in one body” (*Institutes* 1014). In encouraging his readers against the criticism of outsiders saying that no church remains in the world, Calvin refers to an Old Testament passage (I Kings 19:18) to argue that God has left a remnant. By using this reference, Calvin shows God’s work in the Old Testament believers continuing with the New Testament believers and giving them hope in God. Calvin continues to use Old Testament passages to encourage Christians, most notably Psalm 46:5, which Calvin translates: “God will abide in the midst of Jerusalem forever, that it may never be moved” (*Institutes* 1015). He applies this verse by saying, “so powerful is participation in the church that it keeps us in the society of God” (*Institutes* 1015). By using Old Testament passages to define the New Testament church, Calvin shows that references to Jerusalem and Zion in the Old Testament apply to the entire church that includes all of the elect.

Lock’s sonnets agree with this argument in her mentioning of both Jerusalem and Zion in sonnet twenty as well as in her assumption that Jesus’ crucifixion is the completion of the sacrificial system that foreshadows his death. Calvin writes that the same covenant connects both the Old Testament Israelites and the New Testament Christians, though there are notable differences in the timing of the individual promises

(*Institutes* 429). Lock and Calvin agree on the unity of the two testaments and the application of both testaments to the Christian's life.

SONNET 21

Though Calvin and Lock have argued that ceremonial sacrifices foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross, Calvin shows that the last verse should be interpreted in the context of David's current situation, even as he maintains the view that the sacrifices are insufficient for atonement. He writes: "In these words there is an apparent, but only an apparent, inconsistency with others which he had used in the preceding context. He had declared the sacrifices to be of no value when considered in themselves, but now he acknowledges them to be acceptable to God when viewed as expressions or symbols of faith, penitence, and thanksgiving" (*Commentary* 308). Calvin has argued for the view of sacrifices as inadequate methods for winning forgiveness and, in agreement with his earlier points, he shows that the sacrifices are valuable as symbols of an inward faith. He is careful to make this distinction to avoid contradicting his earlier points, yet he chastises other commentators for taking this interpretation too far. Calvin writes: "The whole of this verse has been figuratively applied by some to the kingdom of Christ, but the interpretation is unnatural and too refined" (*Commentary* 309). Calvin carefully argues against pursuing the theological ideas too far by offering overzealous interpretations.

Lock, without mentioning the atonement of Christ, follows Calvin's interpretation of this symbolism by showing people as the sacrifice: "...then with gentle eyes / Thou shalt behold upon thine altar lye / Many a yelden host of humbled hart" (S21.4-6). Lock

uses the term “heart” to describe those living in submission to God who have “sacrificed” themselves to his will. To give a full understanding of this verse, Calvin shows that “David designs to teach us that none of all the legal rites can find acceptance with God, unless they be used with a reference to the proper end of their institution” (*Commentary* 309). The “proper end” is, as Calvin argues throughout the *Commentary* on Psalm 51, the glorification of God’s mercy as opposed to man’s outward obedience covering a sinful heart. Calvin argues that David uses this terminology to emphasize the need for gratitude: “We find him again exciting himself and others by his example to the exercise of gratitude and to the expression of it openly in the solemn assembly” (*Commentary* 309). The life of the person enjoying the grace of God should overflow with thanksgiving.

Lock shows this behavior in a corporate prayer: “We praise thee, God our God: thou onely art / The God of might, of mercie, and of grace” (S21.8-9). Lock shows this to be a corporate prayer by having the speaker ask at the end of the sonnet that he might be included in God’s releasing of his mercy, “That I then, Lorde, may also honor thee, / Releve my sorow, and my sinnes deface: / Be, Lord of mercie, mercifull to me” (S21.10-12). Lock shows that God’s restoration of Jerusalem leads to right sacrifices being made in thanksgiving and praise to God.

The sonnet pleads again for God to allow the speaker to participate in this restoration by the mercy of God and free from sorrow over sins. The sonnet closes with one last plea, with a slightly different emphasis than the plea raised at the beginning of the sonnet sequence. Lock writes: “Restore my feling of thy grace againe: / Assure my soule, I crave it not in vain” (S21.13-14). Lock does not plead for redemption, forgiveness, or mercy any more. The speaker asks for the restoration of his “feling” [sic]

of God's grace and the assurance of his soul. While he may have questioned his inclusion among God's elect, through this confession he has assured himself of the atonement of his sins. The final mercy he requests from God is assurance and a restored joy. The last words of the sonnet show an assurance that God will grant this plea. The sonnet sequence begins with significant fear of the judgment of God and ends with "Assure my soule, I crave it not in vain" (S21.14). Lock's speaker has received, to some degree, the assurance that God will restore his soul; otherwise, how could he pray with the confidence that he does not crave the feeling of grace in vain? The assurance of mercy has been received, and now the sonnet requests the joy that coincides with that assurance.

Assurance, or perseverance, stands as a major part of Calvinist doctrine with which Lock agrees at the end of her sonnet. The core of the doctrine of perseverance comes from Christ's promises, as Calvin describes: "For those whom Christ has illumined with the knowledge of his name and has introduced into the bosom of his church, he is said to receive into his care and keeping. All whom he receives, the Father is said to have entrusted and committed to him to keep unto eternal life" (*Institutes* 971). According to Calvin, those who are elect have been guaranteed salvation in Christ. Calvin addresses those who appear to be Christians, yet who still fall away from the faith as not being a part of the elect at all. He writes that "such persons never cleaved to Christ with the heartfelt trust in which certainty of election, has I say, been established for us" (*Institutes* 973). These people did not "fall away" *per se* but never attained salvation from the beginning. The assurance of salvation is based on believing God's promises even when facing guilt from sin, as Calvin admonishes believers to "let not such instances [of sin] induce us at all to abandon a quiet reliance upon the Lord's promise,

where he declares that all by whom he is received in true faith have been given to him by the Father, none of whom, since he is their guardian and shepherd, will perish” (*Institutes* 973). However, Calvin is also careful to reject any pride on the believer’s part by saying that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:12, “does not discourage Christians from simple confidence but rather from crass and sheer confidence of the flesh, which bear in its train haughtiness, arrogance, and contempt of others, snuffs out humility and reverence for God, and makes each one forget grace received” (*Institutes* 973). True believers show a humble trust in God instead of themselves.

CONCLUSION

Understanding assurance as Calvin defines it leads to humility on the part of the believer, and Lock expresses this humility throughout her sonnet sequence, especially in the last sonnet, where she shows the belief in God’s mercy in the restoration of the speaker’s soul. Lock closes her sonnet sequence with a final word of assurance, following Calvin’s theology about the perseverance of the elect in Christ. Throughout the sonnets Lock has faithfully represented Calvinism in her paraphrase of Psalm 51, and she gives personal application of this theology to the life of her readers, most notably in the glorification of God and the humbling of man. As she and Calvin interpret David’s heartfelt confession of his sin, they argue for the humility of the believer in facing God and the acceptance of Jesus’ death as the ultimate sacrifice for their sin. Those who put their faith in Jesus stand as those whom God elected before creation to obtain salvation by no work of their own but by Christ’s work completely. The major themes of both works focus on the right amount of contrition on the sinner’s part as he fears the

judgment of God, the restoration of the sinner's emotion, and the overflow of emotion in the proclamation of God's mercy to others. What Calvin provides in theological treatises, Lock describes in powerful yet beautiful language, leading people to apply these beliefs to their lives.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN AND SUFFERING

One major aspect of the works of Lock and Calvin on Psalm 51, the experience of grief as a part of God's plan for the greater pursuit of his glory, continues to receive emphasis in *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction*, a poem written by Lock much later than her sonnets. However, the sufferings described in this poem and the sufferings described in Lock's sonnets are of two different types. The mental anguish of the speaker in Lock's sonnet sequence comes as a part of extreme guilt over sin and fear of God's judgment. The suffering emphasized in Lock's other poetic work does not seem to have a source in any sin, but rather seems the result of God's will in allowing Christians to experience suffering in general. The sufferings featured in the two works, though deriving from different causes, still lead Lock to the same conclusion: God's glory is shown in the suffering of believers. Whether they experience suffering solely by God's plan or as a result of their own commission of sin, Christians should look to God in order to understand his purposes in allowing suffering. Ideally, the result of pain of any kind is that the Christians are should no longer be looking to themselves for anything amounting to righteousness, but should instead be looking to God for complete sustenance in all things. Calvin and Lock both look to show the inability of man to accomplish anything, and they contrast that inability with God's glorifying of himself because of his ability. This emphasis provides Lock with a perspective from which to write her poetry on

suffering. In agreement with Calvin, she emphasizes the glory of God and the need for Christians to trust God's work even in the midst of great suffering.

Lock includes a work of poetry at the end of her translation of a group of writings by John Taffin that Taffin called *Of the Markes of the Children of God, and of Their Comfort in Afflictions*. She titles this poem *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction*, and in it she presents suffering as God's method of blessing his followers by turning their hearts away from the world and back to him. As in her sonnet sequence, Lock's commitment to Calvinist ideals pervades the entire poem. Both Calvin and Lock view suffering as a blessing from God that teaches people to glorify God by trusting his work instead of their own abilities and following him in obedience. In addition, both authors show that Satan's work in causing suffering happens under the will of God to accomplish his purposes. Finally, Lock and Calvin provide specific examples of how believers show their obedience to God after facing suffering. A comparison of Lock's work with John Calvin's writings on suffering in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* shows how Lock provides a beautiful application of Calvinist theology about Christians' suffering.

GOD'S PURPOSES IN ALLOWING CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

Lock begins her poem with assurances that believers will face problems while in the world and that this suffering comes about by God's will. The initial lines show that "GReat [sic] trouble and vexation / the righteous shall sustaine" (1-2).⁶ Christians will not be kept from suffering; in fact they are promised that they will face great hardship. Lock's promise emphasizes, through the first word of the poem, that the struggles of the

⁶ References to Lock's *The Necessitie and Benefit of Affliction* will be parenthetically documented by line number. For example, 1-2 refers to the first two lines of the poem.

righteous will be considerably difficult. Her words echo John 16:33, wherein Jesus tells his followers, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” Jesus promises his disciples that they will experience hardship in the world, as Lock also promises in her poem. Calvin shows this promise of suffering in the *Institutes* when he writes, “for whomever the Lord has adopted and deemed worthy of his fellowship ought to prepare themselves for a hard, toilsome, and unquiet life, crammed with very many and various kinds of evil” (702). Calvin leaves no doubt as to what kind of life Christians can expect to live and thus agrees with Lock’s assessment that the believer will face considerable trouble in the world.

In fact, Lock argues that this suffering is a part of God’s will for the believers. She writes that suffering comes “By God’s determination, / whilst here they do remain” (3-4). Therefore, according to Lock, Christians will face hardship in the world, and this hardship comes primarily from the will of God, who does not simply make life easier for the believers but leads them through difficult circumstances. God chooses suffering for his people, showing his omnipotence over all things, even those events that cause pain. Calvin also agrees that Christians face suffering because “it is the Heavenly Father’s will thus to exercise them so as to put his own children to a definite test” (*Institutes* 702). Believers do not face suffering because God is unable to prevent suffering but because God has chosen suffering as a method of developing faith.

Before entering into an explanation of the reasons behind God’s choice for his followers to face suffering, Lock describes the intensity of this suffering and the reasons why the tribulations are so painful. She writes that suffering is “grievous” and “irksome

both / for flesh and blood to bear” (5-6). Lock’s reference to “flesh and blood” reiterates that the Christians will experience suffering while on earth in their physical bodies. She uses strong language to show that this suffering will cause major and minor difficulties, in that the suffering will be “grievous” (major) and “irksome” (minor). The use of these words to describe suffering allows Lock to admonish Christians that the severity of the suffering they experience has been ordained by God.

The use of the words “flesh and blood” implies a connection to the crucifixion because Jesus, in the establishment of communion, shows that his flesh and blood are broken for the believers’ benefit (Luke 22:14-23). Calvin also argues that believers should expect to face the same suffering as Jesus and that they should be comforted by this knowledge: “Hence also in harsh and difficult conditions, regarded as adverse and evil, a great comfort comes to us: we share Christ’s suffering in order that as he has passed from a labyrinth of all evils into heavenly glory, we may in like manner be led through various tribulations to the same glory” (*Institutes* 702). Calvin shows that, in the same way that Christ’s flesh and blood were broken, believers will face similar suffering. However, they should take comfort in the promise of future glory after the suffering. Calvin and Lock agree that the believers will face tremendous trouble in the world, and that this trouble will resemble the sufferings of Christ.

The experience of suffering similar to Christ’s leads Christians to greater joys than they would know without hardship. Therefore, God’s goal in allowing suffering is to lead his followers into lives of even greater blessings than the lives they would experience otherwise. Lock writes:

Yet doo the righteous by the crosse

moe blessed things obtaine,
 than anie waie can be the losse,
 the dolor, or the paine. (17-20)

According to Lock, the loss and pain associated with suffering lead to “more blessed things,” and these blessings will outweigh any difficulties the believers may face. Lock shows that the pain is temporary but that the blessings remain. She writes that the pain will “passe, fade, and decay / Even of itself: the gaine alwaies / can no man take away” (23-25). The reference to the cross in line 17 refers to both Jesus’ death and his challenge to the disciples: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). The cross, as a method of torture and capital punishment, symbolizes the suffering that followers of Christ must face in the world. Calvin argues that Christ’s life was nothing but a sort of perpetual trial by the cross (*Institutes* 702). According to Calvin, the symbol of the cross does not refer simply to the crucifixion but also refers to the struggles Christ faced while on earth. Following Christ, therefore, leads believers to a lifetime of struggle, though they carry hope in promised blessings. Lock shows that this bearing of this cross leads to “heavenlie consolation / [which] the soule dooth then imbrace” (27-28). Temporary pain, as symbolized by the cross, leads to eternal blessing, or “heavenly consolation,” as Lock terms it.

Lock closes her poem by writing that as a result of facing suffering, Christians “then for religion love the crosse, / though it doo bring some paine” (121-122). To Lock, Christians will love bearing the cross even though it causes pain because the blessings of discipline far outweigh the pain believers experience. The final two lines summarize the point she makes throughout the poem: “The joy is great, small is the losse, / but infinite

the gain” (123-124). According to Lock, the pain cannot compare to the immense joy found in obedience to God. Her words imply a connection to Philippians 3:8, where the Apostle Paul writes, “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.” Lock agrees that suffering “the loss of all things” is small compared to the joy of “the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus” and the “infinite gain” of Christ. Lock and Calvin both show that the believers who experience suffering gain a perspective into the reason for that suffering: they may seek their satisfaction in God, who will satisfy far more than all worldly satisfactions will.

The two authors reason that God, in allowing his followers to face these troubles, thereby detaches their commitments to earthly desires and attaches their hearts to heavenly goals. Lock shows that human hearts are committed to earthly treasures and that “Affliction turn’th these worldly joyes / to greater paine and woe, / Because the love was linck’d with toys” (61-63). This earthly focus prevents the believer from being truly committed to God, as Lock suggests when she writes, “For when mans heart doth most delight / in pleasure, wealth, and pride: / Religion will then take her flight” (65-67). According to Lock, true piety cannot exist in a person who desires the temporary blessings of the earthly life. In addition, she describes these desires as part of our nature, “because by nature we are loath / to want our pleasure heere” (7-8). Our natures, Lock argues, desire pleasure on earth as opposed to God’s blessing. Calvin describes this earthly focus as an inability to understand God. He writes, “Human reason, therefore, neither approaches, nor strives toward, nor even takes a straight aim at, this truth: to

understand who the true God is or what sort of God he wishes to be toward us” (*Institutes* 278). The crucial difference between the thoughts of a redeemed person and the thoughts of one who has not believed in Christ is that the latter does not seek to understand God or his will. Rather, the unsaved person focuses his life on earthly, natural matters. This focus also manifests itself in man’s complete dependence on himself rather than on God’s work. Calvin writes that people “are lifted up into a stupid and empty confidence in the flesh; and relying on it, we are then insolently proud against God himself, as if our powers were sufficient without his grace” (*Institutes* 703). According to Calvin, people will continue to trust in their own abilities unless they have something to move them toward trusting God because their natural instincts lead them away from God.

Calvin argues that man will not seek God without his prompting. Calvin describes man’s inability to change without the work of God: “Flesh is not capable of such lofty wisdom as to conceive God and what is God’s unless it be illumined by the Spirit of God” (*Institutes* 278). As a result, Calvin shows that man acts according to natural, animalistic instincts in that man, according Calvin, “does not choose by reason and pursue with zeal what is truly good for himself according to the excellence of his immortal nature; nor does he use his reason in deliberation, or bend his mind to it. Rather, like an animal he follows the inclination of his nature, without reason, without deliberation” (*Institutes* 286). Without the work of God, man’s focus remains on earthly, temporal blessings, and he is incapable of seeking what is “truly good for himself” in God.

Lock follows this same description of man’s enslavement to his desires, for she asserts that

. . . our soules in wofull plight
 continually remaine:
 Yet have we not the grace or might
 From such lusts to refraine. (69-72)

Lock describes a person's inability to seek anything but earthly fulfillment unless God works in his heart. In fact, referring to God's purposes, she says, "We compt our chiefe felicitie, / and love therein to dwell" (75-76). Man sees earthly fulfillment as the source of ultimate happiness when it is actually a part of his enslavement to sin. Left in this state, people, by necessity of their inherently corrupt wills, cannot seek God but reach for temporal happiness. In order to break people's grip on these ungodly desires, God allows Christians to face suffering.

Lock shows that the suffering of Christians under the will of God leads to a reorientation of their hearts from a complete focus on temporary earthly pleasures toward God's eternal blessings. Lock describes people's commitments to "worldly pleasures," which are "worldly riches, goods and wealth" (29, 33). Lock describes the pleasures in monetary terms, implying that she feels that the temptation many face in dedication to the world is a temptation toward money and possessions. Her language here implies a connection to 1 Timothy 6:10, which reads, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." Lock agrees that loving the temporal benefits of wealth leads people astray and that therefore God allows suffering so that people will not trust in these earthly riches. Lock writes that "afflictions worldly pleasures will / abandon [i.e. drive] out of mind" and that these earthly treasures "by troubles may depart" (29-30,

34). Lock argues that suffering leads people to abandon those things which distract them from a heavenly perspective. Suffering results in people seeking “more earnest still / the joyes of heaven” (31-32). The Christian’s focus moves from seeking earthly blessings to pursuing heavenly blessings.

Calvin agrees with Lock about the necessity of suffering being according to God’s will, and he also agrees that such suffering will lead Christians away from an earthly focus toward God. Calvin writes that Christians face suffering “lest in the unmeasured abundance of our riches we go wild; lest, puffed up with honors we become proud; lest, swollen with other good things . . . we grow haughty, [so that] the Lord himself . . . confronts us and subjects and restrains our unrestrained flesh with the remedy of the cross” (*Institutes* 706). In addition, Lock shows that Christians experience a commitment to these heavenly blessings because “then inward joyes and saving health / may wholly rule the heart” (35-36). According to Lock, suffering leads people from a commitment to earthly goals to a spiritual state in which believers are ruled by “inward joys.” By describing these joys as inward, Lock implies that they are not temporal, like material wealth, and therefore are greater than worldly treasures.

Lock’s use of the word “health” links her work to Calvin’s description of the degrees and types of suffering people face. Calvin writes, “For not all of us suffer in equal degree from the same diseases or . . . need the same harsh cure. From this it is seen that some are tried by one kind of cross, others by another” (*Institutes* 706). Calvin continues by showing that “since the heavenly physician treats some more gently and cleanses others by harsher remedies, while he wills to provide for the health of all,” God works in all believers to cure them from the disease of attachment to the world (*Institutes*

706). Calvin presents God as providing health for his followers by curing the sickness of attachment to the world that everyone faces. Calvin thus agrees with Lock's statements that believers experience an inward healing.

One of the manifestations of God's comfort is his continual presence in the life of Christians, as shown by both Lock and Calvin. This presence also shows Christians that they should trust that God always acts for their benefit. After describing the eternal benefits of following God as opposed to seeking worldly treasures, Lock extols the promise of God's presence. She writes:

In trouble friends doo start aside,
as cloudes doo with the winde:
But Gods assistance doth abide
To cheare the troubled minde. (37-40)

Lock implies that suffering will lead a Christian's companions to abandon him, but that their leaving will allow the Christian to see God's ever-present comfort. She writes that God acts "with mercie, pitie, grace, and love, / that always from him flow" (79-80). Lock argues that even in trials, God shows "mercy, pity, grace, and love" and that He leads the believers to trust him despite their present suffering. She writes that God shows his great love by mixing grief with "these earthly things / wherein we do doo delight" (81-82). Though Christian souls delight in these earthly attractions, Lock shows the pain inherent within them. She calls them these "earthly things . . . which to our soules all sorrow brings / or else remoov'th them quite" (81, 83-84). Therefore, God, operating in the believer's best interests, allows them to experience suffering to keep their souls from great sorrow or from death altogether. She understands that without God's discipline,

imposed through suffering, “we er’de and went astray: / But now we keepe the law of God, / and waite thereon alway[s]” (118-120). In linking God’s mercy with the pain associated with suffering, Lock, through an apparent juxtaposition, shows that the suffering ordained by God comes from his love and mercy, and presents a far healthier situation for the believers than if he were to leave them attached to the world. Christians, because of suffering, now seek this greater life in obedience to his commands, knowing that from his hand comes the suffering that leads them to be blessed. Therefore, God-ordained suffering should be seen by Christians as loving discipline.

Calvin writes that this suffering comes from God’s role as a father to his children. He writes that Christians even “in the very harshness of tribulations . . . must recognize the kindness and generosity of our Father toward us, since he does not even then cease to promote our salvation” (*Institutes* 706). Calvin describes how the suffering God ordains comes from “kindness and generosity,” showing that even pain is meant by God to benefit Christians. In addition, Calvin argues that the believers’ response to God causing them to suffer stands as a mark of election. He writes, “Scripture teaches that this is the difference between unbelievers and believers: the former, like slaves of inveterate and double-dyed wickedness, with chastisement become only worse and more obstinate. But the latter, like freeborn sons, attain repentance” (*Institutes* 707). The true followers of God will recognize suffering as a blessing intended to tear their minds away from a worldly focus and toward godly pursuits. The unbelievers will not recognize God’s goodness in allowing their suffering and will continue pursuing their earthly desires.

Lock shows this shift in focus as brought on by suffering. She writes that the world “which earst most pleasant was / now loathsome seem’th to be” (89-90). The

person who has faced suffering now sees the world as undesirable in comparison to the riches of knowing God. In fact, Lock says that the world “doth appeare (as in a glasse) / all fraught with miserie” (91-92). God’s goal, in permitting suffering, is for believers to see the world as a miserable, loathsome place so that they will seek greater joys from following God, thus leading them to a right confession of God’s goodness. Suffering leads to confession as a necessary part of these fervent prayers, and this confession comes from an understanding of the greatness of following God as opposed to being enslaved to the world. Lock writes that Christians, after experiencing suffering, “see, feele and confesse / the state wherein we dwelt, / to be nothing but wretchedness” (105-107). This confession includes a realization that Christians formerly felt “worldly joyes” (108). Lock implies that the former state included seeking satisfaction in the world as opposed to God. Now that the believer has received God’s blessings, he confesses that his former life did not lead toward the benefits of godliness. This confession includes an acceptance of God’s abundant blessings as opposed to a fixation on worldly satisfactions.

God will continually lead his followers through suffering to make this confession. Christians, according to Calvin, must be continually disciplined by suffering in order to learn to turn away from worldly desires and depend on God. Calvin contends that this suffering that leads to Christians seeking God continues for even “the most holy persons, however much they recognize that they stand not through their own strength but through God’s grace, are too sure of their own fortitude and constancy unless by the testing of the cross he bring them into a deeper knowledge of himself” (*Institutes* 703). God will lead his followers into suffering because He wants to remind them continually to depend on his strength rather than their own. Calvin shows how people begin to doubt their own

ability when they are “warned by such proofs of their diseases, [so that they] advance toward humility and so, sloughing off perverse confidence in the flesh, betake themselves to God’s grace. Now when they have betaken themselves there they experience the presence of a divine power in which they have protection enough and to spare” (*Institutes* 703). Lock and Calvin argue that God uses suffering to lead his followers away from earthly desires and toward heavenly desires, wherein Christians will find tremendously greater blessing.

THE ROLE OF SATAN IN GOD-ORDAINED SUFFERING

In agreement with Calvinist theology, Lock uses her poem to show that suffering takes place because God allows Satan to tempt believers to seek only earthly and temporal benefits as opposed to heavenly and eternal blessings. She writes that suffering is made all the more difficult “because by nature we are loath / to want [i.e. lack] our pleasure heere” (7-8). Lock develops a link between the amount of suffering Christians experience and the dedication Christians show to the earthly life. Calvin writes that this commitment to temporal life can be seen in examining “the plans, the efforts, the deeds, of anyone” in which “you will find nothing else but earth. Now our blockishness arises from the fact that our minds, stunned by the empty dazzlement of riches, power, and honors, become so deadened that they can see no farther” (*Institutes* 712). Calvin defines man’s nature as completely focused on the earthly life and the benefits of this life. “Riches, power, and honors” all seem to be beneficial to a person’s life, but Calvin argues that these temptations keep a person’s mind on earthly matters rather than on heavenly

matters. Lock shows that the temptation to keep one's mind on the temporary earthly life comes from Satan; she explicitly blames

. . . our enemie
 that auncient deadly foe
 Satan, with cruell tyrannie
 The worker of our woe. (9-12)

Lock presents Satan as an “enemy,” an “ancient” and “deadly foe.” The fact that she mentions Satan so early in her poem shows Lock's emphasis on the power Satan has to cause suffering in the believers' lives.

Calvin shows the power of Satan in referring to several New Testament passages: “Satan is called the god [II Cor. 4:4] and prince [John 12:31] of this world, [and] when he is spoken of as a strong armed man [Luke 11:21; Matt. 12:29], the spirit who holds power over the air [Eph. 2.2], a roaring lion [1 Peter 5:8], these descriptions serve only to make us more cautious and watchful, and thus more prepared to take up the struggle” (*Institutes* 173). By using the references to Satan in the New Testament, Calvin shows the immense power that Satan holds, and he implies that Christians should understand this power in order to better battle against him. Lock also shows Satan as having enough authority that he can practice “cruel tyranny.” However, Calvin shows Satan's authority, as strong as it is, still operating under God's rule and suggests that Christians should battle against Satan as their enemy with the understanding that they will be victorious.

Calvin teaches that God holds authority over Satan and that all of his activity happens as a part of God's overall plan. Calvin writes that despite the “the discord and strife that we say exists between Satan and God, we ought to accept as a fixed certainty

the fact that [Satan] can do nothing unless God wills and assents to it” (*Institutes* 175). Even though he possesses some limited authority, Satan still must submit himself to God as a vassal to a lord. God guides even Satan’s evil activity according to God’s plan. Calvin uses the book of Job to describe Satan’s limits within God’s will. Satan “presented himself before God to receive his commands, and did not dare undertake any evil act without first having obtained permission Therefore Satan is clearly under God’s power, and is so ruled by his bidding as to be compelled to render him service” (*Institutes* 175-176). Satan’s power is limited to whatever power God allows him to have. This perspective shows that Satan does not hold power equal to God’s power and that they are not constantly in struggle with one another, with Satan sometimes gaining the upper hand. Rather, all of Satan’s work only occurs under the will of God. Like Calvin, Lock also makes reference to Job and, though she does not show Satan as the primary actor, she describes the suffering Job experiences:

Job lost his friends, he lost his wealth,
and comfort of his wife:
He lost his children and his health,
yea, all but wretched life. (45-48)

Though Job experiences tremendous pain, Calvin writes that Satan does not cause this pain except that God allows him to do so. Lock shows that God never leaves Job in his misery and that Job receives “mercie, kindness, and love” and the relieving of his pain (49-52). Although God allows Job to face this suffering, the suffering benefits him greatly in that he receives God’s love. Moreover, Lock shows that God uses this opportunity to teach Job “. . . by experience, / that all things fickle be / . . . and yield all

miserie” (53-54, 56). According to Lock, God accomplished his plan of showing mercy and teaching Job to avoid the trappings of earthly riches by allowing Satan to take away everything Job had and to beset him with great suffering.

The encouragement provided by this story allows believers to have hope even in the midst of trials. Calvin shows this application when he writes, referring to Satan, that “I deny that believers can ever be conquered or overwhelmed by him. Often, indeed, are they distressed, but not so deprived of life as not to recover; they fall under violent blows, but afterward they are raised up; they are wounded, but not fatally; in short, they so toil throughout life that at the last they obtain the victory” (*Institutes* 177). According to Calvin, believers have considerable hope in suffering under Satan’s work. They, like Job, will not be left alone by God; rather they trust that they will be able to bear suffering until they “obtain the victory.” However, Calvin shows that the believers cannot trust themselves but ultimately must trust God’s strength. He writes, “Such is our weakness and such is the power of [Satan’s] fury, how could we stand even in the slightest against his manifold and continuous attacks, unless we relied upon the victory of our leader?” (*Institutes* 177). Even when Satan seems to display immeasurable fury, and even when man stands in a weakened state, God’s victory remains secure and gives hope to the believer.

Lock likewise encourages believers to look to the story of Job to receive encouragement so that “If we should feele these losses all, / at once, by sudden change: / We may not be dismaid withal” (41-43). The story of Job encourages believers that though they may lose everything by Satan’s hand, they should not despair, for God will continue to bless them with greater lives than they could hope to experience on earth

alone. Lock and Calvin show that man's hope in suffering rests on God's authority over Satan and on God's promises to his elect. Lock and Calvin both utilize the book of Job to establish their beliefs in the will of God as it pertains to the believers' suffering.

Lock and Calvin also write that Christians will face trials from others, as one of Satan's methods of attack. Lock shows that Satan "doth still provoke the wicked sort / to please themselves and make great sport, / to vex us with despite" (13, 15, 16). Lock does not specify whether or not she is writing of the activity of demons or of people, but she clearly shows Satan as the source of their motivation, as he stirs those "in sinne which doo delight" (14). Calvin agrees that Satan actively turns peoples' hearts away from God and causes many troubles in the world. Calvin writes of Satan, "He opposes the truth of God with falsehoods, he obscures the light with darkness, he entangles men's minds in errors, he stirs up hatred, he kindles contentions and combats, everything to the end that he may overturn God's kingdom and plunge men with himself into eternal death" (*Institutes* 174). This description shows that Satan, in striving against God, uses lies, errors, hatred, contentions, and combats. Calvin attributes all of these "sins" to Satan's moving others against the kingdom of God in order that they may join him in hell for eternity. Calvin also describes demons as "the faction of the impious and impiety itself" and says that they serve "their prince who holds supreme sway over them" (*Institutes* 174). Even though Calvin does not specifically mention whether those creatures used by Satan to cause suffering are humans or demons, Lock agrees with Calvin that they are serving Satan. For the demons hold sway over those who do not follow God, as Calvin describes how the "unclean spirits" capture the ungodly: "the wicked they subdue and drag away; they exercise power over their minds and bodies, and misuse them as if they

were slaves for every shameful act” (*Institutes* 174). Those people who act against God are driven by the spiritual forces under the authority of Satan, so Lock’s lack of specific identification of those who act against Christians still agrees with Calvinism for, according to Calvin, the actions of the wicked people and demons have their origin in Satan. Even by describing Satan as a prince, Calvin shows Satan’s subservience to God, and both Lock and Calvin reiterate in their works that God holds authority over Satan and that God uses Satan’s works to bring about his God’s will.

THE BENEFITS OF SUFFERING RESULTING IN GODLINESS

Lock and Calvin adamantly argue for trusting God’s ultimate purposes in the midst of hardship, and Lock provides encouragement to believers by showing them the beneficial effects of this God-ordained suffering for the believers. In the midst of her challenge against worldly pride, Lock shows that “godliness within the heart” leads to true contentment: “In wealth and woe, it is her [i.e. godliness’s] part, true comfort to procure” (57, 59-60). According to Lock, people will chase after worldly riches, but the godliness that comes from suffering teaches believers comfort in all circumstances. She logically deduces that if people can find contentment in sorrow, then they can also find prosperity in it as well, implying a link with Philippians 4:11-13, which reads, “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Lock shows her agreement with this passage by showing that godliness leads to comfort in either riches or poverty.

Similarly, Calvin writes that God utilizes suffering to produce trust in him, for “the saints, therefore, through forbearance experience the fact that God, when there is need, provides the assistance that he has promised” (*Institutes* 704). God is revealed as consistently present in the midst of the Christians’ suffering. Calvin shows how this confidence leads to trust in God in future suffering, since Christians see their “hope strengthened, inasmuch as it would be the height of ingratitude not to expect that in time to come God’s truthfulness will be as constant and firm as they have already experienced it to be” (*Institutes* 704). Calvin agrees with Lock that seeing God through suffering teaches Christians dependence on God and trust in him in all circumstances. In addition, Calvin writes that believers show their trust in God by their ability to bear suffering. He writes, “Here [the Christian’s] forbearance reveals itself: if sharply pricked he is still restrained by the fear of God from breaking into any intemperate act. Here his cheerfulness shines if, wounded by sorrow and grief, he rests in the spiritual consolation of God” (*Institutes* 708). The Christian’s resting in God’s provision in the midst of suffering proves the sustaining power of God’s grace that is made known in suffering.

Lock also uses a third person feminine pronoun to describe godliness in line fifty-nine, which implies a connection with Proverbs 1:20-33, where wisdom is described as a woman who calls out for people to follow her to godly paths and Proverbs 3:13-18, where wisdom as a feminine character is compared to great treasures: “her profit [is] better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.” By building an implied connection with these passages, Lock glorifies the “riches” of following God, suggesting that his followers will be content with his will in spite of their present circumstances.

Lock and Calvin show that this comforting trust in God comes from a change in the believer's view of the Bible. Lock writes that people, prior to experiencing suffering, consider the Bible "mere follie" (88). Because of suffering, however, Lock says that Christians see the Bible in a new way. She writes, "Then dooth the holie word of God / most comfortable seem" (85-86). Due to suffering, the Christians' perspective on the Bible shifts from seeing it as at the very least lacking life application to seeing it as "most comfortable." Lock further shows that suffering leads to a greater dedication to the Bible. She writes that after experiencing suffering, "then read we with all care" (102). Lock writes this statement only sixteen lines after her proclamation that God's word becomes a great comfort to believers, so it follows that Lock refers specifically to the Bible as the object of the verb "read." Calvin similarly attests that the Bible, "gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God" (*Institutes* 70). He adds that in Scripture, "God is known not only as the Founder of the universe and the sole Author and Ruler of all that is made, but also in the person of the Mediator as the Redeemer" (71). According to Calvin, the Bible reveals the true nature of God and teaches believers how to serve him. He writes, "in order that true religion may shine upon us, we ought to hold that it must take its beginning from heavenly doctrine and that no one can get even the slightest taste of right and sound doctrine unless he be a pupil of Scripture" (*Institutes* 72). True and complete knowledge of God and the right application of this knowledge can only come from the Bible, which (Lock argues) will become all the more powerful to those who have experienced suffering.

As people face suffering, the veneer is removed from the world, and Lock shows that they now move toward a greater pursuit of righteousness. As shown above, one of the goals of suffering is the detachment of believers' hearts from the world and a reorientation of their lives toward godliness. Lock shows that Christians who suffer begin to see the world as "loathsome" and "all fraught with miserie" and, as a result, they will pursue God with renewed vigor. Lock describes this change: "Then fear we hell, then flie we sinne, / then seeke we heaven the more" (93-94). As a result of this change in focus, Lock shows that the first method of pursuing God is to avoid both hell and sin and to "seek heaven." The paradigm shift leads believers to greater zeal for acts of pursuing God – acts that they formerly would not desire to perform. Lock writes that believers start to "use goode meanes... which we despised before" (95-96). Suffering, according to Lock, leads believers toward obedience, which Calvin also shows as God's plan.

Calvin writes that God is completely justified in his actions if those actions lead Christians to greater obedience. He writes, "If God himself does right in providing occasion to stir up those virtues which he has conferred upon his believers in order that they may not be hidden in obscurity – nay, lie useless and pass away – the afflictions of the saints, without which they would have no forbearance, are amply justified" (*Institutes* 705). Facing suffering does not provide a justifiable reason for believers to complain to God; rather, they should see it as his method of growing them in their virtues and leading them to greater lives of holiness. One of these virtues encouraged by suffering is earnest prayer.

Lock, near the end of her lengthy poem, shows the change that occurs in Christians by describing their passionate prayers – prayers encouraged by suffering. She

writes that suffering leads Christians to ask God for “strength and grace: / which things before might not at all / with us have anie place” (98-100). The person whose focus stays on the world would not seek God for strength and grace but would continue to live life without them. As a result of suffering, the believer will ask God for his provision and love rather than not seek them at all, thereby showing the believer’s dependence on God instead of himself. Calvin agrees with Lock by saying “that we may all draw from [God] as from an overflowing spring, [so that] it remains for us to seek in him, and in prayers to ask of him, what we have learned to be in him” (*Institutes* 850). Further, Calvin also argues that it would be ridiculous for man not to ask God for his blessings, for “to know God as the master and bestower of all good things, who invites us to request them of him and still not go to him and not ask if him – this would be as of as little profit as for a man to neglect a treasure, buried and hidden in the earth, after it had been pointed out to him” (*Institutes* 850). Prayer, according to Calvin, resembles actively seeking a treasure that has been made readily available. Calvin also agrees with Lock that Christians will seek God in this manner because “in Christ [God] offers all happiness in place of our misery, all wealth in place of our neediness; in [Christ] he opens to us the heavenly treasures that our whole faith may contemplate his beloved Son, our whole expectation depend upon him, and our whole hope cleave to and rest in him” (*Institutes* 805). Calvin shows that God is the source of all good things that Christians should seek, and his language refers to the fleeting pursuits that Lock mentions in line sixty-six – pursuits that those who have not faced suffering seek: “pleasure, wealth, and pride.” Calvin argues that prayer provides the access to these blessings. He writes, “It is, therefore, by the benefit of prayer that we reach those riches which are laid up for us with the Heavenly Father” (*Institutes*

851). This true fulfillment of what people are seeking, Lock and Calvin write, comes from asking God, in prayer, to give them his abundant blessings. Lock shows that this asking comes after the Christian has experienced suffering and aggressively seeks God.

Lock also shows that Christians who have faced suffering also pray with great expectation. In addition, the believers expect God to respond, and they “heare... with attentiveness,” which shows strong devotion to God (101). Lock also shows this dedication by the believers to God in that they “pray . . . with great ferventnes,” so that “no travaile then we spare” (103-104). Lock describes believers’ prayers as impassioned and difficult, but she shows that Christians will perform the work of prayer because of the suffering they have experienced as they know that felicity is found in seeking God. Lock argues that true Christian prayer is marked with strong effort and desire. Similarly, Calvin writes that Christians rightly reflect the proper attitude in prayer when they pray vehemently, for “the godly must particularly beware of presenting themselves before God to request anything unless they yearn for it with sincere affection of heart, [and] at the same time desire to obtain it from him” (*Institutes* 857). Calvin shows that Christians need to approach God with a strong desire and expect that he will answer. However, this confidence does not lead to a sense of entitlement; rather, Calvin exhorts each Christian, “as he prepares to pray [to] be displeased with his own evil deeds, and (something that cannot happen without repentance) [to] let him take the person and disposition of a beggar” (*Institutes* 859). The imagery of a “beggar” shows both the asking of God for his blessing and the complete dependence on him for this blessing. Lock also implies this attitude when she describes the Christian praying unfiltered, wholly God-seeking prayers after experiencing suffering.

CONCLUSION

In her poem *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction*, Anne Vaughan Lock provides a theology of suffering that implies a significant connection with Calvinist theology, as is shown when her poem is compared with John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Both authors show that God allows suffering in his followers' lives in order to detach them from slavery to the world. After experiencing this freedom, believers see the greatness of God's blessing as opposed to what they used to find beneficial in the world. Rather than see Satan as an equally powerful evil counterpart to a good God, Lock and Calvin argue that God holds dominion over Satan. God allows Satan to act as an overall part of God's will in order to promote God's glory, as shown in the story of Job. Finally, God allows suffering in Christians' lives in order to teach them complete dedication to him and to lead them toward a more obedient life. Lock's overall position, as informed by Calvin, shows that Christians should take comfort in trusting that God will ultimately lead them to a more joyful life through suffering.

CHAPTER IV

**ANNE VAUGHAN LOCK'S EMPHASIS
ON GOD'S GLORY IN BOTH POETIC WORKS**

In both *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner* and *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction*, Lock emphasizes the theme of God's glory in all things, especially suffering. An emphasis on God's glory provides the unifying foundation of Lock's works, especially as they reflect Calvinist theology. Lock's sonnet sequence shows the glory of God in punishing sin and also in the fear of this punishment. Also, the mercy the speaker desires shows God's glory in offering loving forgiveness. Similarly, *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction* leads people to trust God in the midst of their suffering, showing their faith in his ultimately good will for their lives, despite their current circumstances. Studying Lock's works results in an understanding of her theology of God receiving glory in all ways and for all reasons.

In *Meditations*, Lock presents the sinner having acted against God and, as a result, needing his forgiveness because God's glory has been impugned. Lock writes that the speaker, because of his sin, hears his own despair tell him that he is destined to go "to hell, by justice, for offended law" (P3.14). The law, as written by God, has been broken, and in order to continue to be just, God must punish his "offended law." Lock uses the same word, "offended," in the last prefatory sonnet, showing that God is the offended party when his law is broken. She writes, ". . . the Lord, whom sinner I, / I cursed wretch, I have offended so" (P5.9-10). The real issue at stake is the speaker's offending of God

by breaking his law and justly receiving punishment. As a result, God's glory has been challenged, and the speaker fears God's retribution. Lock continues to emphasize this idea in sonnet five, where she writes, ". . . Lord: thee thee alone / I have offended" (S5.1-2). As shown above in chapter one, the speaker's sins impacted a wide group of people, yet his main concern is the offense his sin has caused to God. Because God's glory has been challenged by sin, the sinner must be punished, and the speaker rightly fears this punishment for his actions. Yet, the speaker also shows how God may be glorified in showing mercy. Lock writes, "But mercy Lord, O Lord some pitie take, / Withdraw my soule from deserved hell, / O Lord of glory, for thy glories sake" (S6.1-3). Lock shows that God is glorious in both mercy and punishment; hence the speaker vehemently pleads for God to show mercy based not on the speaker's merit but on God's grace alone. As the concepts of justice and mercy form the foundation of Lock's sonnet sequence, she shows God's glory as the factor uniting these two themes, despite their seeming contradiction. Even in the least obvious places, God's glory shines, according to Lock.

In the same way that God is glorified by decreeing both justice and mercy, Lock also argues, in *The Necessitie and Benefite of Affliction*, for his glory in imposing suffering of believers. She shows that Christians experience suffering "By Gods determination," so that they may "moe blessed things obtaine" (3, 18). God allows Christians to face suffering so that they may experience a life more in accordance with his will and acknowledge his blessing in leading them to this life. Despite experiencing pain, the Christians embrace a "heavenlie consolation" that leads them to seeking "the joyes of heaven" (27, 32). The references to these heavenly blessings imply God's giving of these blessings by imposing or allowing suffering. In fact, Lock looks to "God's

assistance ... to cheare the troubled minde” (39-40). In the midst of describing the great blessings those who experience suffering should expect, Lock shows God as the giver of this “assistance” to provide Christians with confidence despite the pain of suffering. Lock shows that Christians, like Job, can experience God’s comfort in “mercy, kindness” and “love” (51). Lock reveals that God allows suffering to take place and provides the hope to which Christians should cling to while facing this suffering. As a result, God is seen as ultimately good because he uses this suffering to tear the human heart away from “worldly toys,” which leave the Christian unsatisfied (61). The end result of suffering, as Lock presents it, is utter dependence on God’s plan in allowing this pain to enter the Christian’s life so that ultimately the Christian can see God’s love and detach himself from the world. Lock writes that Christians, along with King David, will say “that God from heaven above / (By humbling us) doth well expresse / his mercie and his love” (114-116). Even in the unlikeliest of circumstances, God’s glory is shown in the ultimate benefit he provides Christians through pain and suffering.

Lock shows that the unifying element in both her poetic works is the glory of God in the midst of seemingly difficult circumstances. The sinner seeking God’s forgiveness of sin shows her belief in God’s glory in both justice and mercy. Although these two ideas stand at opposite ends of a spectrum of God’s actions, Lock shows them as correlating since both show his mercy to the sinner. In fact Lock argues that God’s glory can be seen in the midst of great suffering because this suffering leads Christians’ hearts away from attachment to worldly desires and toward seeking God and his will. Lock presents God actions, even those that cause pain, as beneficial to Christians as they seek him for mercy or for hope in affliction. The end result of conviction and suffering is the

Christian's ultimate dependence on God (in contrast to dependence on self). Lock shows the tremendous blessings that await the person who seeks God first above all else. In this regard, she agrees with the whole of Calvinist theology.

In writing the first sonnet sequence in the English language as well as a poem on the benefits of suffering, Anne Vaughan Lock provides beautifully intense portraits of the theology of a 16th-century Calvinist. Lock's prevailing theme, like a key theme in John Calvin's *Commentary* on Psalm 51 and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, is God's glory as revealed even in unlikely circumstances. In her paraphrase of Psalm 51, Lock poetically describes the proper grief a sinner should feel for offending God and the proper hope the elect Christian should have in God's mercy. A similar hope pervades her poem on suffering, where she encourages Christians to see the benefits of God allowing suffering in their lives. As a result of analysis of these two artistic works alongside Calvin's theological works, readers can clearly see a unifying theology both in Lock's poems and in Calvin's didactic literature. Where Calvin provides the theological foundation, Lock shows the practical application. Thus, Lock stands as a powerful Calvinist writer who produced two noteworthy works during the English Renaissance.

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