

Socinianism and John Owen

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One of the surprising features for modern readers of the works of John Owen (1616-1683), especially his commentary on Hebrews, is his constant and detailed interaction with a group known as the Socinians. In his context, however, it is neither unusual nor eccentric, and it makes good sense in the light of Owen's previous career and contemporary agenda. In this article, we will put his conversation with the Socinians into historical perspective, and particularly assess the way he links the Socinians with others, especially Richard Baxter and Hugo Grotius, and the often political motives behind this.

THE GREAT HERESY OF SOCINIANISM

For seventeenth-century theologians, the anti-Trinitarian theology known as Socinianism was, as Willem van Asselt put it, "the very nadir of heresy."¹ Many British and Continental divines wrote in great and earnest detail against the insidious errors of the so-called Polish Brethren and other Socinians. Their roots went back into the previous century to those considered heretics by the magisterial Reformers, such as Michael Servetus (1511–1553), but

they eventually became associated with the unorthodox Italian émigré to Poland, Faustus Socinus (1539–1604).

Gerard Reedy helpfully outlines two related ways in which the term Socinianism was used. First, theologically, it described those who followed Socinus' teaching in various ways, e.g., "rationalistic scriptural interpretation; the accordance to Jesus of a high place in the divine order but not of divinity; the limiting of Jesus' role in the drama of human redemption principally to one of moral exemplarity; the advocacy of a wide tolerance for believers of all creeds." Second, methodologically, "Socinian" often meant placing a greater accent on human reason and a spirit of free enquiry than was felt to be proper, so that "taken thus, the term may apply to those who actually held Socinian doctrines; it may also be used of those who did not hold them, and even attacked them, who in some way accentuated reason to a degree thought unorthodox by others."² Socinianism became the subject of particularly passionate debate during the Trinitarian controversy in England during the 1690s, but was closely scrutinized from the very beginning of the century. Yet Sarah Mortimer asserts that "the intense engagement with Socinian writing that is evident in so many scholarly works of the period has been largely overlooked,"³ except in the cases of a few leading lights such as John Locke, John Milton, and Isaac Newton.

Refutations of Socinianism across the Confessions

Socinianism's influence can however be detected throughout the seventeenth-century academic community and across the confessional divides. Roman Catholic polemicists, commentators, and theologians, particularly Jesuits such as Adam Contzen (1573–1635),⁴ Cornelius à Lapide (1567–1637),⁵ and Denis Petau (1583–1652),⁶ wrote against the Socinians.⁷ Lutheran theologians also took up their pens in defense of Trinitarian orthodoxy against them,⁸ none more so than Abraham Calov (1612–1686) who was from the East Prussian border with Poland (where Socinianism was strongest), which "made this conflict a priority within his polemical oeuvre."⁹ Willem van Asselt claims that amongst the Reformed, "one can notice a response to Socinian theology in almost every locus of the systems of high orthodoxy."¹⁰

Works dedicated to refuting the Socinian heresy came from French, Transylvanian, and especially Dutch Reformed theologians,¹¹ as well as from the

English, both conformist and non-conformist.¹² Dewey Wallace claims that “Socinianism, with its denial of the Trinity and the atonement as well as its grace-denying moralism, was a more complete challenge to Calvinist orthodoxy than Arminianism had been.”¹³ It is no surprise then that the word “Socinian” became “a stock part of the abusive rhetoric of much religious debate” in the seventeenth century,¹⁴ as it was singled out for attention by various polemicists and heresy hunters.¹⁵ Opponents disagreed among themselves of course, yet there was a strikingly broad agreement on the pernicious nature of Socinian heresy.

Reasons for Opposing Such a Small Group

Yet for all this scholarly and polemical energy, the surprising thing, as Klaus Scholder puts it, “is that at no time did Socinianism represent a real force. Simply in numerical terms its adherents were a tiny little group in comparison to the great confessions.”¹⁶ Indeed, Scholder estimates that “in its heyday in Poland, including foreigners the Socinian movement did not comprise more than a thousand families.”¹⁷ Their main center of influence was Poland, but their academy in Raków was deliberately destroyed in 1638. They were expelled from the country twenty years later, and persecuted almost everywhere they were found in Europe.

This discrepancy between the political insignificance of the Socinians as a group and the amount of time and energy spent by theologians in every denomination refuting them has not gone unnoticed by scholars of the period. It was apparently nothing to do with their morality for, writes Stanislas Kot, “in spite of the fact that they were hated and passionately opposed by all the confessions, we find no complaints against their morals whether collective or individual.”¹⁸ At the time, Roman Catholics like Edward Knott (1581–1656) frequently insinuated that Socinianism was the logical progression of Protestantism.¹⁹ As he wrote in 1636, “the verie Doctrine of Protestants if it be followed closely, and with coherence to itself, must of necessitie induce Socinianisme.”²⁰ Others called Protestants back to Rome since the doctrine of the Trinity could not be proven *sola scriptura*.²¹ Presbyterians and Episcopalians even excoriated Baptists and Congregationalists, whose ecclesiology they thought would inexorably end up in a denial of the Trinity.²²

Anti-Trinitarianism may have been opposed simply as a foil or as a form of virtue signaling, to demonstrate orthodoxy on the doctrine of the Trinity

against the aspersions of enemy theologians. Hans Blom recently traced Reformed antipathy to a fear of God's wrath and a forfeiting of his benevolence should Reformed divines be soft on heresy.²³ Evidence for such a motive in opposing Socinianism might be found in the 1666 Bill against Atheism, which was introduced into Parliament in the wake of the Great Fire of London and particularly targeted those who denied the Trinity.²⁴

Yet there was more to the widespread opposition to Socinianism than simply "God will show his displeasure against all heresy and so must we." After all, there were many heretical sects in the seventeenth century which escaped without attracting the attention Socinianism did, while both Jews and Muslims denied the Trinity. It may be partly true that traditionally orthodox clergy felt their power base to be under threat if their training and expertise were no longer needed to explain the grand mystery of the Trinity, as anti-Trinitarians alleged.²⁵ And perhaps some Reformed polemicists were simply desperate to find useful polemical targets and opponents against whom to demonstrate their scholarly prowess.²⁶ But there was often more to it than that.

JOHN OWEN'S INTERACTION WITH THE SOCINIANS

Publishing against the Socinians

In the Preface to the 1721 posthumous collection of Owen's sermons and tracts, the editors note the attention he paid to the Socinians. "This great champion," they wrote, "made it his business to rase the foundation of the Socinian scheme, and to enervate their main strength, chiefly bending his studies to that controversy."²⁷ They list several of his works as evidence of this particular focus on the heterodox Socinians, including his commentary on Hebrews. His opposition to the Polish Brethren had begun in his first book (now lost) on Christ's priesthood.²⁸ His first extant published work, *Θεομαχία Ἀντεξουσιαστικὴ* or *A Display of Arminianisme* (1643) condemned a certain idea as "a wicked Pelagian Socinian heresie,"²⁹ and he continued to regard the Socinians as heretical for the rest of his publishing career. He wrote against their views of justification, atonement, divine justice, and especially the Trinity,³⁰ because there was not one city, town, or village without a drip of this satanic poison, he claimed.³¹

In 1655, at the request of the Council of State, Owen devoted a large volume called *Vindiciae Evangelicae; or The Mystery of the Gospel Vindicated*

*and Socinianism Examined specifically to refuting these errors.*³² This unpacked the thought of English anti-Trinitarian writer John Biddle (1615/16–1662) as well as the Polish Brethren.³³ As Paul Lim avers, Owen “latched onto sola scriptura as his main cudgel to fight against Biddle.”³⁴ His prodigious polemical output against the Socinians coincided with the rise in demand for their works. Thomas Edwards reported in 1646 that there was a flourishing trade in the books of Socinian authors Ostorodius, Oniedinus, Crellius, and Socinus amongst English and Dutch merchants.³⁵ Holland was seen by many as the bridgehead for Socinian influence to spread into England.³⁶ The translation of various Latin Socinian works in the middle decades of the century helps to account for the increasingly urgent polemics against them.³⁷ The first Socinian work ever to be translated into English and published in England, however, was a commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Originally purported to be based on the lectures of John Crell (1590–1633) as written up or arranged by Jonas Schlichting (1592–1661),³⁸ it was rather sneakily translated and published anonymously by Thomas Lushington—without mentioning its original authors or their provenance.³⁹ Owen may well have owned this commentary,⁴⁰ and he would certainly interact with it in great detail in his own exposition of Hebrews. The challenge from the Socinians was not only doctrinal, but also exegetical.

In countering the perceived threat, Francis Cheynell wrote in 1650 that, “it was most requisite that I should write in English, because since the beginning of the year 1645 there have been many blasphemous bookes to the great dishonour of the blessed Trinity printed in England.”⁴¹ Andrew Marvell comments that Socinian books sold “as openly as the Bible” in 1672,⁴² and by 1680, George Ashwell was complaining that Socinian books had been widely dispersed and were eagerly read by younger students.⁴³ It would be strange, therefore, if Owen, who was involved in the delivery of ministerial training at Oxford, was not sensitive to the threat posed by such material and keen to engage both Continental and British anti-Trinitarians. It is perhaps an overstatement to say he “bent his studies” chiefly to refuting Socinians,⁴⁴ but he was clearly concerned about the influence and effect they were having in his day.

Political Motives?

Sarah Mortimer also attributes a political motive to Owen’s engagement with

the Socinians. She claims that Owen, at the height of his political influence in the 1650s, “found in Socinianism a convenient and suitably unpopular target against which he could put forward his own ecclesiastical vision.”⁴⁵ This involved an “Erastian” church settlement which would exclude Arminianism and in which magistrates would be called upon to prosecute English anti-Trinitarians such as Paul Best and John Biddle. These domestic concerns and native forms of heterodoxy were, says Mortimer, more in Owen’s sights than the foreign heresy of Socinianism itself. Owen, she says, wished to discredit several theological positions (especially Arminianism) by associating them with Socinianism, and yet ultimately this ploy failed. The effect of Owen’s plan to promote a strictly Calvinist settlement by linking “all versions of Remonstrant-style theology to Socinianism and to anti-Trinitarian heresy” was merely “to hamstring efforts for theological unity and to ensure that no confession was agreed in 1654.”⁴⁶

Owen was indeed at the forefront of efforts to outlaw Socinianism in the 1650s, and had presented a petition against the Racovian Catechism to Parliament in 1652.⁴⁷ As we shall see, he was also keen to draw suggestive connections between Socinianism and other forms of theology that he disliked. Yet it is not necessary to propose that his distaste at the Racovian Catechism was merely a political maneuver. The widespread opposition to Socinianism all across the continent from every corner of Trinitarian Christendom is sufficient to show that he would have been justified in opposing it for purely theological reasons, and Biddle was, in any case, more than just a local nuisance.⁴⁸ Moreover, there were other political reasons for the lack of an agreed confession in 1654 and it is very unlikely that Owen’s linking of Socinianism with Arminianism (a commonplace since the Vorstius affair in the decade prior to the Synod of Dort anyway),⁴⁹ was responsible for the failure of this endeavor. Others on the committee appointed to discuss “fundamentals” were equally vehement against Socinianism and also made this link, such as Francis Cheynell and Thomas Goodwin.⁵⁰ Moreover, as John Coffey points out, in December 1654, Parliament specifically and deliberately agreed that, “the true reformed Protestant Religion” should be “the public profession of these nations.”⁵¹ The new insertion of the word “reformed” here may well indicate that Parliament was happy to tolerate varieties of Calvinism but had on some level decided between Reformed and Remonstrant.⁵² The committee of which Richard Baxter was a part was not hamstrung by Owen

and did in fact print twenty propositions for Parliament; they were not taken further because, as Baxter himself reports, “the Parliament was dissolved, and all came to nothing, and that labour was lost.”⁵³

In any case, Owen’s continued focus on Socinian errors in his multi-volume Hebrews commentary (published between 1668 and 1684), well after his political influence had all but disappeared at the Restoration, and his continuing insistence on drawing connections between Socinian and Arminian errors, is hard to explain if it was developed merely for short term political reasons in the 1650s. Sarah Mortimer claims that when John Owen accused Richard Baxter of promoting Socinianism in 1654, this can only be understood in the light of disputes about the interregnum church settlement.⁵⁴ This, I think, is too bold a claim, though it is certainly the case that Baxter’s approach to making a settlement was criticized for being too open to the Socinians, as was that of John Goodwin.⁵⁵ As Baxter recounts the discussions of 1654 he writes,

I would have had the Brethren to have offered the Parliament the Creed, Lord’s Prayer, and Decalogue alone as our Essentials or Fundamentals; which at least contain all that is necessary to Salvation, and hath been by all the Ancient Churches taken for the Sum of their Religion. And whereas they still said, [A Socinian or a Papist will Subscribe all this] I answered them, So much the better, and so much the fitter it is to be the Matter of our Concord.⁵⁶

Although he himself was a Trinitarian (“I unfeignedly account the doctrine of the Trinity, the very summ and kernel of the Christian Religion” he claimed),⁵⁷ it is clear that Baxter often spoke in such a manner that Socinians themselves considered him to be sympathetic to their ways of thinking. They did at one time attempt secretly to recruit him.⁵⁸ Far from being a merely short-term political issue in 1654, Owen and Baxter would still be disagreeing over these issues well after the Restoration. In 1668, for example, Baxter resisted Owen’s suggestion for explicit exclusion of Socinian errors in a formula of concord between dissenters.⁵⁹

The problem of perception here was a difficult one for Baxter. He liked to call himself a “meer Christian” and tried to promote the Bible and the Apostles’ Creed as sufficient tests for orthodoxy (sometimes adding the Lord’s Prayer and Ten Commandments as additional touchstones). As

early as 1659 he used the term “meer Christians,”⁶⁰ and this became one of his regular slogans in later years, so that in 1680 he could write, “I am a CHRISTIAN, a MEER CHRISTIAN, of no other Religion; and the Church that I am of is the Christian Church . . . I am against all Sects and dividing Parties: But if any will call Meer Christians by the name of a Party, because they take up with Meer Christianity, Creed, and Scripture, and will not be of any dividing or contentious Sect, I am of that Party which is so against Parties.”⁶¹ Indeed, one might say of Baxter’s “autobiography” that “his attraction to ‘meer Christianity’ functions as an organising principle throughout his narrative and colours the way he sees and describes events.”⁶²

Both the slogan and this approach to ecclesiology were, however, held in common with some other groups, including anti-Trinitarians.⁶³ Most prominently, John Biddle had claimed in the title that his *Twofold Catechism* (1654) was “Composed for their sakes that would fain be meer Christians, and not of this or that sect.”⁶⁴ This was assailed a year later by the London Provincial Assembly, who complained, “How blasphemously have some disputed against the infinite merit, yea, and Deity of our Saviour . . . Thus pretending to make their disciples meere Christians, they have taken a faire course, to leave them meere Atheists.”⁶⁵ Owen also mocked Biddle’s self-designation as a “mere Christian” in *Vindiciae Evangelicae*, insinuating that his doctrine was more Islamic than Christian.⁶⁶ He also added an appendix to this, his major work against Socinianism, specifically aimed at Richard Baxter, an intimation of association that did not go un-noticed.⁶⁷

Jonas Schlichting sought in his *Confessio Fidei* (1642) to promote Socinian views by “insisting on the sufficiency of the Apostles’ Creed as an adequate and sufficient summary of Scripture.”⁶⁸ It was, he said, “a full and genuine mark of Christianity,”⁶⁹ and Anglicans like Jeremy Taylor had long been happy with this uniting approach to various sects.⁷⁰ This meant that in the mid-seventeenth century a “meer Christian” who claimed to stand on scripture and the Apostles’ Creed alone could actually be, when pressed further, a Quaker, a Roman Catholic, an Episcopalian, or a Socinian. In such a context, it was no wonder, then, that Owen and other Reformed divines not only opposed such a loose definition of essential articles of faith but could also attack Baxter’s method as both sounding like and ultimately sponsoring Socinianism. Socinians did indeed promote and benefit from such tolerationism, which Owen saw as a “recipe for Socinian proliferation.”⁷¹

THE CRYPTO-SOCINIANISM OF HUGO GROTIUS

Socinianism was just one of a number of heterodox tendencies during the seventeenth century, and could easily be linked in contemporary minds with other currents of thought that led away from Reformed orthodoxy. In this regard, it is important to notice how throughout Owen's commentary on Hebrews he associates Socinian comments on the text with those of the Dutch Remonstrant theologian Hugo Grotius.

Arminianism and Socinianism

There was a long history of associating Arminianism with Socinianism. Arminius himself was accused of aiding and abetting the anti-Trinitarian cause through his interpretation of certain passages of scripture.⁷² The Reformed writer Nicolaus Bodecherus, who in 1618 had been deposed as a minister for having Remonstrant sympathies,⁷³ soon afterwards condemned Arminianism for agreeing in essence, words, and even method (*sive reipsa, sive verbis, sive etiam methodo*) with the Socinians.⁷⁴ Étienne Courcelles, a Professor in the Remonstrant College in Amsterdam, had even helped to prepare the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* (a major series of Socinian works) for the press,⁷⁵ and it was published by former Remonstrant pastor Frans Kuyper.⁷⁶ Socinian minister Martin Ruar, who had more than once been to England, even tried on behalf of the Racovians to effect a union with the Dutch Arminians,⁷⁷ some of whom (such as Episcopius and Courcelles) joined the Socinians in attacking the Nicene Creed and aspects of patristic orthodoxy.⁷⁸

In England itself, Richard Resbury accused well-known Arminian John Goodwin of "Pelagio-Socinianism,"⁷⁹ a doctrinal link which was also noted by George Walker,⁸⁰ as well as Thomas Edwards in his *Gangraena*.⁸¹ Indeed, Edwards reports that Goodwin sowed the seeds of Socinianism in London by publicly undermining the "cheif (sic) and most pregnant places" in scripture used to support the deity of Christ, with Arian and Socinian evasions.⁸² Thomas Firmin (1632–1697), "the best known and most influential Socinian in England in the latter part of the seventeenth century" had been close to Goodwin and attended his church,⁸³ but Goodwin himself was emphatic in his belief in the deity of Christ and the Spirit, and rejected the label Socinian despite admitting to being interested in acquiring Socinian books.⁸⁴ While insisting on justification *sola fide* and attacking Richard Baxter for undermining it, John Troughton (c. 1637–1681) lambasted the idea of justification

by faith plus obedience as 'Arminian, Popish, and to lead unavoidably unto Socinianism.'⁸⁵ As Carl Trueman suggests, "it was easy to see in the modifications of Trinitarian perspectives required by Arminian soteriology a decisive move towards . . . anti-Trinitarianism."⁸⁶ John Goodwin, Baxter, and others were therefore easily ensnared polemically in an anti-Socinian net.

Hugo Grotius and Socinianism

No bigger fish was caught in that widely cast net than Hugo Grotius. Owen is not the only commentator to be wary of Grotius, whose *Annotations on the Old and New Testaments* were first published in Amsterdam and Paris between 1641 and 1650. Abraham Calov also sought in his work on the Bible to explode "Grotian distortions and false interpretations."⁸⁷ The text of Grotius' *Annotations* was printed in one column and a detailed refutation of it in the other.⁸⁸ Richard Simon (1638–1712), as well as criticizing Grotius for his use of profane authors and his unnecessary multiplying of variant readings, also noted how in his biblical annotations, Grotius "being filled with the prejudices of the Arminians & Socinians, has sometimes favoured those two sects."⁸⁹

John Conant, Presbyterian successor of Owen as Vice Chancellor at Oxford, lectured on Grotius' *Annotations* while Regius Professor, seeking to vindicate the scriptures "from such of his expositions as the Socinians had taken any advantage."⁹⁰ The learned Theophilus Gale, while praising Grotius as "a good Critic" also warned his students against his Socinian tendencies and counselled them not to imbibe his erroneous theology from the *Annotations*.⁹¹ Grotius' approach to biblical interpretation added to suspicions so that, "in the seventeenth century Grotius was generally believed to be a Socinian himself, and suspected of a hidden political agenda."⁹² Even his attempt to distance himself from the Socinians on the atonement was considered to have assisted his adversary in many respects.⁹³

Owen attacked the Dutchman in *Vindiciae Evangelicae* and elsewhere, finding in his *Annotations* an affinity with Socinianism or, at least, faulty exegesis of key Christological texts which undermined the orthodox doctrine of Christ's deity.⁹⁴ So at the end of his assertion of Christ's deity and pre-existence, against the Socinian catechism, Owen adds "a little animadversion upon the catechists' good friend Grotius," showing how he agrees in the end with Socinian doctrine.⁹⁵ The Anglican theologian Henry Hammond

(1605–1660) leapt to Grotius’ defense, calling him “such a Gyant in all kinds of literature,”⁹⁶ and Owen attacked the *Annotations* again in 1656.⁹⁷ He continued to regard Grotius and other Arminians as at least “friends” to the Socinians as he had since his earliest published work.⁹⁸

The Arminian leader, John Goodwin, was fond of Grotius’ work, especially his *Annotations*,⁹⁹ and followed him on the atonement.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, “Mere Christian” Richard Baxter declared that in some subjects he had learned more from Grotius than almost any other writer, and praised his *Annotations*.¹⁰¹ Baxter considered Grotius a “Moderate Papist,”¹⁰² but cleared him from all suspicion of being a Socinian, claiming that he clearly believed in the Trinity, “however he dealt with particular Texts of Scripture that concern it.”¹⁰³ Yet as Mortimer says, “To Owen, it was not Biddle but Grotius who had done the most to undermine this Trinitarian reading of the Scriptures.”¹⁰⁴

Grotius’ hermeneutical approach can be seen to have roots in the humanist revival of Erasmus in the sixteenth century. Erasmus too had been suspected of denying the Trinity and the deity of Christ because of his textual observations. He defended himself from such accusations, but his scholarly approach was used by others to undermine the Trinity.¹⁰⁵ He is cited fifteen times in the Racovian Catechism, for example.¹⁰⁶ Grotius was a great admirer of his fellow-countryman and “intellectual ancestor” Erasmus, ostentatiously visiting the monument to the great humanist when he returned briefly to Rotterdam in October 1631.¹⁰⁷ Stephen Nye, in his sympathetic *Brief History of the Unitarians* (1687), mentions Erasmus as an honored forerunner of the Socinians, and then immediately follows up with a brief section on Grotius in which he writes that, “Grotius is Socinian all over . . . publishing some Annotations on the Bible, he interpreted the whole according to the mind of the Socinians. There is nothing in all his Annotations, which they do not approve and applaud. His Annotations are a compleat System of Socinianism.”¹⁰⁸

Owen on Grotius’ Socinian Tendencies

Given all the theological and personal links noted above, it is therefore no surprise that Owen referred to “the Pelagians, whose errors and heresies are again revived among us by a crew of Socinianized Arminians.”¹⁰⁹ Throughout his Hebrews commentary he associates Grotius in particular with the

Socinians, often mentioning them in the same breath. It is not my purpose to examine Grotius' theology to decide the issue of his orthodoxy on this point. Grotius did not directly deny the doctrine of the Trinity. Owen constantly insinuates, however, that Grotius adopted Socinian methods of interpretation and anti-Trinitarian readings of various key texts. He accuses him of speaking like one who denies the divine personality of the Holy Spirit,¹¹⁰ and casts doubt on Grotius' grasp of other aspects of Trinitarian orthodoxy.¹¹¹ More often than not, however, his approach is to show how close Grotius is to anti-Trinitarianism on exegetical details.

Grotius' agreement with the Socinians is logged in detail by Owen on numerous occasions throughout his commentary on Hebrews. On the word *οικουμένη* (world) in Hebrews 1:6, for example, the strange interpretation of the Socinians (that it means not world but "heaven") is also held "by Grotius after them."¹¹² Owen also notes in his comments on Hebrews 1:8, "your throne, O God, is for ever and ever" that Erasmus had mooted a non-Trinitarian reading of this—not allowing the title God (*θεός*) to be granted to Christ from this text—which the Socinians had happily seized upon and Grotius then followed.¹¹³ He speaks of a Socinian interpretation of Hebrews 2:14-15 held by "Enjedinus, and after him Grotius."¹¹⁴ On Hebrews 5:3, Owen will canvass the opinion of Crell and Schlichting and then add the view of "Grotius, who speaks to the same purpose."¹¹⁵ And on Hebrews 7:22 he writes of "the Socinians, who are followed by Grotius and Hammond."¹¹⁶

Discussing whether Christ offered a sacrifice for his own sins (Hebrews 7:27-28), Owen points out that "Socinus first affirmed that the Lord Christ offered also for himself, or his own sins. And he is followed herein by those of his own sect, as Schlichtingius on this place: and so he is also by Grotius and Hammond;—which is the channel whereby many of his notions and conceptions are derived unto us."¹¹⁷ In further elaboration of this "novel invention" he concludes that "Grotius adds little unto what Schlichtingius offers in this case," and "Hammond says the same."¹¹⁸ Owen notes that Crell and Grotius have disagreed on an exegetical detail from Hebrews 8:4 in their debate over the satisfaction of Christ.¹¹⁹ Yet he links them together in holding an unorthodox position on the same subject when discussing what *ἁμαρτίας ἀνεγκέιν* ("to bear sins") means in Hebrews 9:27 saying, "Grotius wholly follows the Socinians in their endeavours to pervert the sense of this word. It is not from any difficulty in the word, but from men's hatred unto

the truth, that they put themselves on such endeavours.”¹²⁰ So, in summary, Crell and Schlichting’s novel interpretations are opposed throughout Owen’s commentary, but he also feels compelled to draw attention to the fact that, on points both great and small, the Socinian “is followed in his conjecture (as almost constantly) by Grotius.”¹²¹

There are strong clues as to Owen’s motivation for demonstrating these exegetical links. Partly he wished to surround Grotius’ faulty annotations with doctrinal suspicion, so that a new generation of ministers did not start to read and preach the Bible in a Socinianizing fashion.¹²² He also wanted to warn such students of the scriptures that this way of reading the text would soon lead down a slippery slope to a denial of the Trinity, the atonement, and other core doctrines so that Christianity became merely a moral or ethical code.¹²³ Yet, more broadly, Arminians within the Church of England were looking to Grotius as their leading light and inspiration as they sought to re-orientate the Restoration Church away from its Reformed roots. Henry Hammond, a great admirer and defender of Grotius, played a leading part in that program,¹²⁴ which Owen sought to undermine.¹²⁵

Seen in this light, Owen’s theological polemic against Grotius does also contain, therefore, a strong element of domestic political concern. He not only associates Grotius with the heretical Socinians but shows that Hammond is the English face of this movement which could be “a direct pathway to Socinianism.”¹²⁶ He claims that Hammond and Grotius are the channels for Socinian ideas into England.¹²⁷ Hammond is often referred to as Grotius’ admirer or follower, particularly in the last volume of Owen’s commentary published in 1684.¹²⁸ So there can be little doubt as to whom is being referred to when Owen speaks of “the Socinians and those who syncretize with them in an opposition unto these testimonies given unto the Trinity.”¹²⁹ Hammond and the Arminianizing party within the Church of England were within Owen’s sights as he worked his way through Hebrews. He attempted to show in detail how they and Hugo Grotius, one of their intellectual inspirations, were guilty of crypto-Socinianism, or at least incipient Socinianism, at the exegetical level.

CONCLUSION

Socinianism was one of the greatest theological threats to Reformed orthodoxy in the seventeenth century. It is not surprising, therefore, that John

Owen spent considerable time and effort interacting with this heretical movement. His efforts were not simply theological but as with many other orthodox Trinitarian theologians at the time, he also sought to engage them exegetically in a sustained attempt to prove that their way of reading the Bible simply did not make as much sense of the text.¹³⁰ His repeated accusation that they had mishandled scripture was intended to persuade his readers that Socinianism was not merely a pernicious heresy on the theological, historical, and philosophical levels but that on the very ground they claimed to be strongest—close, unprejudiced reading of the text—their views were fatally flawed.

According to Owen, “the most outrageous errors that at this day infest Christian religion, as in the Socinians and others” were caused by “neglect and contempt of clear, open revelations, because the things revealed are mysterious.”¹³¹ As Reedy explains, when scripture clashed with what the Socinians supposed was reasonable, “for all their pious insistence on the primacy of Scripture, it is always Scripture which is corrected when a conflict between it and reason occurs. Either it is found that a text can be emended on the basis of a survey of ancient copies, or the interpreter realizes, under the pressure of the conflict, that the text at issue uses metaphorical language. The compromise always occurs on Scripture’s ground, not reason’s.”¹³² On this basis, Owen therefore accused the Socinians and those like them of having to twist scripture, neglecting the scope and design of specific passages, to avoid the deity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. He, on the other hand was keen to embrace the “fullness of the scriptures;” not to over-interpret them or engage in eisegesis, but to exegete them fully and carefully from the original languages, whatever the results.

In a highly charged polemical atmosphere, Owen also sought to draw strong connections between Socinianism and what he saw as other heterodox tendencies. Such connections were neither short-term political rhetoric, nor entirely without foundation since on both ecclesiological and exegetical levels there was great similarity between, for example, Baxter, John Goodwin, and Grotius on the one hand, and Crell and Schlichting on the other. This approach was also not unprecedented, as theologians and exegetes from other Continental confessions also noted vital links between Grotius (and other Arminians) and the Polish Brethren. Owen is meticulous and detailed in his efforts to document the relationships between these different groups and

approaches. He is, however, by no means as unusual or eccentric for doing so as some would suggest when his work is viewed from a wider perspective.

Dewey Wallace is not entirely wrong to note that refutations of Socinianism in the later seventeenth century, especially Owen's, often focused more on the atonement than the Trinity.¹³³ We can see, however, that Owen was particularly keen to expose the “πρῶτον ψεῦδος” (first lie, or basic error) of the Socinians concerning the deity of Christ. As Carl Trueman helpfully puts it, “in the light of the radical scripture principle of the Socinians, there was a pressing need for theologians such as Owen to counterbalance the Reformation emphasis upon scripture's perspicuity with an emphasis upon the need for responsible exegesis set in the context of broader theological concerns. Only in this way could such basic orthodox doctrines such as the Trinity be safeguarded. The naive anti-intellectualism which was the alternative could provide no realistic defence against the Socinian's radical onslaught.”¹³⁴ Owen's own exegesis therefore aimed to be deep, rigorous, and detailed in an attempt to undermine the Socinian claim to be radically biblical. He attacked their theological plausibility at a crucial foundational level, by attempting to demonstrate that their exegesis of key texts did not stand up to close scrutiny.

¹ W. Asselt, *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 122.

² G. Reedy, *The Bible and Reason: Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 119–120.

³ S. Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.

⁴ A. Contzen, *Crudelitas et Idolum Calvinistarum Revelatum* (Moguntiae, 1614), 540 lumps Socinians together with Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists for their doctrine of *sola scriptura*.

⁵ C. à. Lapide, *Commentaria in Omnes Divi Pauli Epistolas* (Antwerp, 1635 [1614]), 206 associates Socinians with Peter Abelard's doctrine of the cross.

⁶ D. Petau, *Theologicorum Dogmatum: Tomus Secundus* (Paris, 1644), 218, 255 etc. and D. Petau, *Theologicorum Dogmatum: Tomus Quartus. Pars Altera* (Paris, 1650), 168, 617 etc. associates them with ancient heretics such as Ebionites, Julian the Apostate, and Paul of Samosata.

⁷ The Jansenist Pierre Nicole was also aware of the Socinian threat, and associated it with Calvinism. See for example, P. Nicole, *La Perpétuité de la Foy de L'Eglise Catholique Touchant L'Eucharistie* (Paris, 1666), 120, 147, 189 and P. Nicole, *Préjugez Légitimes Contres Les Calvinistes* (Paris, 1671), 8, 364, 402. Oratorian Richard Simon is also concerned to “refuter solidement les subtilités des Sociniens.” See the Preface D'Lauteur in R. Simon, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris, 1680).

⁸ E.g. J. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica, sive Systema Theologicum* (Wittenberg, 1691), 189, 232, 383, 448, 539 etc.

⁹ K. Appold, “Academic Life and Teaching in Post-Reformation Lutheranism,” in R. Kolb, ed., *Lutheran*

- Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 109. See also T. Schmeling, “*Strenuus Christi Athleta: Abraham Calov (1612–1686)*,” in *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 44.4 (December 2004): 357–399. Calov’s anti-Socinian works include A. Calov, *Socinismus Profligatus: Hoc est, Errorum Socinianorum Luculenta Confutatio* (Wittenberg, 1652) and A. Calov, *Scripta Antisociniana*, 2 vols. (Ulm, 1684).
- 10 Asselt, *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, 136.
 - 11 E.g. S. Maresius, *Hydra Socinianismi Expugnata* (Groningen, 1651); P. Jasz-Berenyi, *Examen Doctrinae Ariano-Sociniana* (1662); J. Hoornbeeck, *Socinianismi Confutati* (3 vols.; Utrecht, 1650–1664); N. Arnold, *Religio Sociniana... Refutata* (Amsterdam, 1654); J. Cloppenburg, *Compendiolum Socinianismi Confutatum* (Franeker, 1651).
 - 12 E.g. G. Walker, *Socinianisme in the Fundamentall Point of Justification Discovered, and Confuted* (1641). F. Cheynell, *The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme* (1643); N. Chewney, *Anti-Socinianism* (1656); J. Tombes, *Emmanuel, or, God-Man: A Treatise... against the Lately Vented Socinian Doctrine* (1669); G. Ashwell, *De Socino et Socinianismo Dissertatio* (Oxford, 1680).
 - 13 D. Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660–1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 235.
 - 14 P. Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (T&T Clark, 2003), 39.
 - 15 E.g. T. Edwards, *The First and Second Part of Gangraena or A Catalogue and Discovery of Many of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies and Pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time (1646)*, 13. E. Pagitt, *Heresiography or A Description of the Hereticks and Sectaries of these Latter Times* (1645), 122–124.
 - 16 K. Scholder, *The Birth of Modern Critical Theology: Origins and Problems of Biblical Criticism in the Seventeenth Century* (SCM, 1990), 27.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, 150.
 - 18 S. Kot, *Socinianism in Poland: The Social and Political Ideas of The Polish Antitrinitarians in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1957), p218.
 - 19 E. Knott, *Mercy & Truth. Or Charity Maintayned by Catholiques* (Saint-Omer, 1634), pp102–105, 134. See also E. Knott, *Infidelity Unmasked, or, The Confutation of a Booke Published by Mr. William Chillingworth under this title, The Religion of Protestants, A Safe Way to Salvation* (Gant, 1652), pp118, 247, 343, 631, 635, 752, 779–780, 802, 876, 895.
 - 20 E. Knott, *A Direction to be Observed by N. N. if Hee Meane to Proceede in Answering the Booke Intituled Mercy and Truth, or Charity Maintained by Catholiks* (1636), 16.
 - 21 T. White, *Controversy-Logicke, or, The Methode to Come to Truth in Debates of Religion* (Paris, 1659), 12–13.
 - 22 P. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91.
 - 23 H. Blom, “Grotius and Socinianism,” in M. Muslow & J. Rohls, eds., *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 122.
 - 24 Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes*, 85 makes the link, particularly with regard to Thomas Hobbes. J. Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 178–179 discusses the Bill and the eventual abolition of *De Haeretico Comburendo* in 1678.
 - 25 Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 149, 156, 159, 164–165, 167.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, 57.
 - 27 *A Complete Collection* (1721).
 - 28 See *Works*, 13:2.
 - 29 J. Owen, *Θεωαχία Αὐτῆς οὐσιαστικῆς; or, A Display of Arminianisme* (1643), 118. *Works*, 10:111.
 - 30 E.g. J. Owen, *Diatriba de Justitia Divina* (Oxford, 1653) and the translation in *Works*, 10:481–624; *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* in *Works*, 2:365–454; *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated* (1677) in *Works*, 5:1–400.
 - 31 See Owen, *Works*, 12:52–53 where he refers to “a general Arminian malaise of which antitrinitarianism was merely one symptom” according to B. Worden, “Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate,” in W. J. Sheils, ed., *Persecution and Toleration* (Blackwell, 1984), 204 fn. 19.
 - 32 Owen, *Vindiciae Evangelicae; Works*, 12:1–590. Cf. CSPD, March 2nd 1653/4.
 - 33 Owen was aware of variations in anti-Trinitarian doctrine and noted how, for example, the Socinians distanced themselves from Arians, and how Biddle differed from the Socinians on the personality of the Holy Spirit in *Works*, 12:15, 334.
 - 34 Lim, *Mystery Unveiled*, 140.
 - 35 T. Edwards, *The Third Part of Gangraena* (1646), 169.
 - 36 H. McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford University Press, 1951), 24, 30, 44.

- ³⁷ See Asselt, *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, 136 who lists some Dutch examples. We might also add works such as J. Crell, *The Two Books of John Crellius Francus, touching One God the Father* (Kosmoberg [i.e., London], 1665) an English translation of J. Crell, *De Uno Deo Patre Libri Duo* (Raków, 1630).
- ³⁸ C. Sand, *Bibliotheca Anti-Trinitariorum* (Amsterdam, 1684), 117 lists the work under Crell's name but adds that it is elaborated with the help of Schlichting ("ipsius ope à Jona Slichtingio concinnatus est"). See J. Crell & J. Schlichting, *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Hebraeos... ex J. Crellii Praelectionibus Conscriptus a Jona Schlichtingio* (Raków, 1634) and J. Crell & J. Schlichting, *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos, Johannis Crellii Franci Opera Omnia Exegetica*, vol. 2 in *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, vol. 7 (Eleutheropoli [Amsterdam], 1656).
- ³⁹ T. Lushington, *The Expiation of a Sinner: In a Commentary upon the Epistle to the Hebrewes* (1646). See the background to its publication in E. Porter, *Θεός Ανθρωποφόρος. Or, God Incarnate... Wherein also are Contained a Few Animadversions upon a Late Namelesse and Blasphemous Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrewes* (1655), 9–10.
- ⁴⁰ *Bibliotheca Oweniana* (1684), 4 #131, 18 #388, lists both the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* and the 1634 edition of Schlichting's commentary.
- ⁴¹ Epistle Dedicatory in F. Cheynell, *The Divine Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... in opposition to Pagans, Jewes, Mahumetans, Blasphemous and Antichristian Hereticks, who say they are Christians, but are not* (1650).
- ⁴² A. Marvell, *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1672), 96.
- ⁴³ "Socinianorum libros apud nos passim dispersos habuimus, & à junioribus quoque Scholasticis avide perlectos." Ashwell, *De Socino et Socinianismo Dissertatio*, 5 of his dedication to Thomas Barlow, Owen's old tutor. See also the "Ad Lectorem" and "Proemium" of G. Bull, *Defensio Fidei Nicæne* (Oxford, 1685) where he complains about the popularity of Christoph Sand's *Bibliotheca Anti-Trinitariorum* amongst theological students.
- ⁴⁴ As P. Toon, *God's Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1971), 174 points out, in 1721 when the *Complete Collection* was published, "a large portion of Protestant Dissent was quickly moving in the direction of Arminianism and Socinianism" which may account for this emphasis in the preface to that work.
- ⁴⁵ Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 197.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 205, 220.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.
- ⁴⁸ Biddle had attracted sufficient international attention to earn refutations from continental theologians, such as J. Cloppenburg, *Vindiciae pro Deitate Spiritus Sancti adversus Pneumatomachum Johannem Biddellum Anglum* (Franeker, 1652) and N. Arnold, *Atheismus Socinianus à Johanne Bidello Anglo* (Franeker, 1659).
- ⁴⁹ See Rohls, "Calvinism, Arminianism and Socinianism," 22–27. The link achieved confessional status when *Rejectio Errorum IV* on the Second Head of Doctrine of the Synod of Dort (1619) linked Arminian views *cum impio Socino*, "with wicked Socinus."
- ⁵⁰ E.g., Cheynell, *Divine Trinity*, 39, 147–148, 233, 330, 332, 442. T. Goodwin, *A Discourse of the True Nature of the Gospel* (1695), 3, 12, 67, 69, 74.
- ⁵¹ J. Coffey, *John Goodwin and the Puritan Revolution: Religion and Intellectual Change in Seventeenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 243.
- ⁵² See my discussion of the word "Reformed" in the debates surrounding its insertion into the 1689 Coronation Oath in L. Gatiss, *The True Profession of the Gospel: Augustus Toplady and Reclaiming our Reformed Foundations* (Latimer Trust, 2010), 28.
- ⁵³ R. Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae, or, Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times* (1696), ii.205.
- ⁵⁴ Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 223.
- ⁵⁵ See e.g., W. Prynne, *Faces About, or, A Recrimination Charged upon Mr. John Goodwin* (1644), 12. Goodwin wrote the "Epistle to the Reader" for an edition of Acontius' *Satans Strategems* which contained a list of "fundamentals" that "even Socinians could endorse" according to Coffey, *John Goodwin*, 160. Baxter defended Goodwin from the charge of Socinianism; see T. Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 52 fn. 111, 81.
- ⁵⁶ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ii.198.
- ⁵⁷ R. Baxter, *The Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1667), 377.
- ⁵⁸ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ii.205–206.
- ⁵⁹ See their letters in *ibid.*, iii.63–65.
- ⁶⁰ R. Baxter, *Five Disputations of Church-Government and Worship* (1659), 137.
- ⁶¹ R. Baxter, *Church-History of the Government of Bishops and their Councils* (1680), in the section entitled, "What History is Credible?" See the use of "meer Christian/Christianity" in his *Christian Directory, or, A Summ of*

- Practical Theologie and Cases of Conscience* (1673), 31; *Which is the True Church?* (1679), 125; *An Apology for the Nonconformists Ministry* (1681), 131 (mostly written 1668–9); *A Paraphrase on the New Testament* (1685) on Revelation 13:18.
- 62 L. Gatiss, “The Autobiography of a ‘Meer Christian’: Richard Baxter’s Account of the Restoration,” *Churchman*, 122/2 (2008), 169.
- 63 William Chillingworth desired to see “plain and honest Christians” who tolerated others in the name of Christ instead of fighting over party labels; W. Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants A Safe Way to Salvation* (Oxford, 1638), 180 on which also see McLachlan, *Socinianism*, 84. Cambridge Platonist Henry More spoke highly of “a meer man, a true man, a Christian” as opposed to sectaries; H. More, *The Second Lash of Alazonomastix, Laid on in Mercie upon that Stubborn Youth Eugenius Philaethes* (Cambridge, 1651), 15. Roman Catholic J. Lewgar, *The Only Way to Rest of Soule in Religion Here, in Heaven Hereafter* (1657), 108–110 contrasts the “meer Christian” to the Catholick. Quaker R. Barclay, *Universal Love Considered and Established upon its Right Foundation* (Holland, 1677), 30, 31, 34 praises the “meer Christian.”
- 64 Lim, *Mystery Unveiled*, 240 says this “intriguing connection of phraseology” has not been noted in contemporary scholarship. I included my exploration of it in the first draft of this chapter before Lim’s book was published but could not, unfortunately, beat him into print! See also Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter*, 183–184.
- 65 *An Exhortation to Catechizing* (1655), 3–4.
- 66 *Works*, 12:76. See his censure of the ‘mere Christian’ phrase on 70.
- 67 *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, i.111.
- 68 G. Williams, *The Polish Brethren: Documentation of the History and Thought of Unitarianism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Diaspora 1601–1685*, 2 vols. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1980), 2:386. Williams claims this approach dates back at least to Hilary and was shared by Erasmus.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 2:391.
- 70 J. Taylor, *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΕΚΛΕΚΤΙΚΗ: A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying* (1647), 32–33 suggests Papists, the Greek church, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Socinians, Anabaptists, and Ethiopian (Nestorian) churches could all unite around the Apostles’ Creed. On pages 74–75, he does also attack certain Anabaptist and Socinian exegetical tactics.
- 71 Lim, *Mystery Unveiled*, 251.
- 72 J. Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1956), 2:400–402. See also C. Bangs, “Arminius and Socinianism,” in Szczucki, ed., *Socinianism*, 81–84.
- 73 See I. De Smet, “Town and Gown in the Dutch Golden Age,” in D. Sacré & G. Tournoy, eds., *Myrica: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Memory of Jozef IJsewijn* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 493. J. Platt, *Reformed Thought and Scholasticism: The Arguments for the Existence of God in Dutch Theology, 1575–1650* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 219 calls him “a deserter from the Remonstrant cause.”
- 74 N. Bodecherus, *Sociniano-Remonstrantismus* (Leiden, 1624).
- 75 McLachlan, *Socinianism*, 138 fn. 4. This significant collection is available online at <http://www.sbc.org/pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=3075&from=publication&tab=3>.
- 76 McLachlan, *Socinianism*, 23.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 27–28.
- 78 See *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 4:94, 108. G. Burnet, *A Modest Survey of... Naked Truth* (1676), 5–6.
- 79 R. Resbury, *The Lightless-Starre, or, Mr. John Goodwin Discovered a Pelagio-Socinian* (1652).
- 80 Walker, *Socinianisme*, 8 speaks of “Socinian John” referring to Goodwin.
- 81 Edwards, *The First and Second Part of Gangraena*, 41.
- 82 Edwards, *The Third Part of Gangraena*, 115–116.
- 83 McLachlan, *Socinianism*, 52, 294. S. Nye, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin* (1698), 6. See E. Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and Its Antecedents* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1945), 2:217 on Firmin’s practical help to Polish religious refugees.
- 84 See J. Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei. Or a Treatise of Justification* (1642), Part 1, 112 on the deity of Christ and Goodwin, *Πληρωμα τὸ Πνευματικόν, or, A Being Filled with the Spirit... as also the Divinity, or Godhead of the Holy Ghost Asserted* (1670), 142–238 on the deity of the Holy Spirit (cf. 189, 200–201, 237 on Christ). In his *Hagiomastix, or The Scourge of the Saints Displayed in his Colours of Ignorance & Blood* (1647), 109–110 Goodwin claims he could not get hold of Socinian books “either for love or money.”
- 85 J. Troughton, *Lutherus Redivivus, or, The Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith Onely, Vindicated and a Plausible*

- Opinion of Justification by Faith and Obedience Proved to be Arminian, Popish, and to Lead Unavoidably unto Socinianism* (1677).
- ⁸⁶ C. R. Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen's Trinitarian Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 24.
- ⁸⁷ A. Calov, *Biblia Testamenti Veteris Illustrata in quibus... Grotianae Depravationes, & Pseudomeneias Iusto Examini Sistuntur & Exploduntur* (Frankfurt, 1672–1676).
- ⁸⁸ See H. Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation* (4 vols.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 3:230. See also A. Calov, *Disputatio Inauguralis Ad Divinam S. Apostoli Pauli Ad Romanos Epistolam... Hugonis Grotii Annotationibus Opposita* (Wittenberg, 1669), which contains page after page of “annotata anti-Grotiana” associating him (e.g., 55, 61) with Pelagians and Socinians.
- ⁸⁹ “Il faut pourtant prendre Garde qu'étant rempli des prejugez des Arminiens & des Sociniens, il a quelquefois favorisé ces deux Sectes.” Simon, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, 498.
- ⁹⁰ Tyacke, “Religious Controversy,” 599.
- ⁹¹ See Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 104.
- ⁹² Blom, “Grotius and Socinianism,” 123.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, 125, 131. See also Rohls, “Calvinism, Arminianism and Socinianism,” 37. Owen examines the Crell–Grotius exchange on the atonement in Exercitation 33 of the Hebrews commentary; *Works*, 19:217–236.
- ⁹⁴ *Works* 10:425 (1647) is perhaps his first published criticism of “treacherous” Grotius. He speaks here of the Socinians as “the most wretched prevaricators in Christian religion which any age ever yet produced,” and of Grotius’ “wretched apostasy” into the “very dregs” of their error.
- ⁹⁵ *Works*, 12:235.
- ⁹⁶ H. Hammond, *A Second Defence of the Learned Hugo Grotius* (1655), 1.
- ⁹⁷ Owen, *A Review of the Annotations of Hugo Grotius*.
- ⁹⁸ Owen, *Display of Arminianisme*, 19, 101.
- ⁹⁹ Coffey, *John Goodwin*, 37, 38–39.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 73–74, 203–204.
- ¹⁰¹ R. Baxter, *The Grotian Religion Discovered* (1658), 4–5.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 31–88.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 90.
- ¹⁰⁴ Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 227.
- ¹⁰⁵ “‘To Us There is But One God, the Father’: Antitrinitarian Textual Criticism in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth- Century England,” in A. Hessayon & N. Keene, eds., *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 118, 136. McLachlan, *Socinianism*, 5.
- ¹⁰⁶ Snobelen, “Antitrinitarian Textual Criticism,” 121.
- ¹⁰⁷ Reventlow, *History*, 3:213.
- ¹⁰⁸ S. Nye, *A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians in Four Letters, Written to a Friend* (1687), 31–32. This explains why, for example, H. C. De Luzancy, *Remarks on Several Late Writings Publish'd in English by the Socinians* (London, 1696) being ostensibly aimed against Socinians, spends an inordinate amount of time refuting the *Annotations of Grotius*. For as he says (De Luzancy, 17), “these Gentlemen look upon an objection not to be answerable, if it has but the name of Grotius.”
- ¹⁰⁹ *Works*, 3:245 (from his *Πνευματολογία*, 1674).
- ¹¹⁰ *Works*, 23:235. Presumably this accusation rests on the ambiguous use of the potentially depersonalizing word *afflatum* to refer to the Spirit in H. Grotius, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum. Denuo Emendatius Editae* (Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1829), 7:436, and his addition there of Moses as the agent rather than the Spirit himself.
- ¹¹¹ E.g. *Works*, 22:579 concerning the eternal generation of Christ as the true and formal reason for his title “Son of God.” In *Works*, 24:426 he accuses Grotius of avoiding the Bible’s testimony to the eternity of the person of Christ (on Hebrews 13:8). See *Works*, 24:69–70 on an instance of Grotian misinterpretation that is shared by neither Hammond nor (surprisingly) the Socinians.
- ¹¹² *Works*, 20:155. They are linked again on this same issue in 20:324.
- ¹¹³ *Works*, 20:181. Grotius, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*, 7:357–358. For Socinians on this verse, see J. Volkel, *De Vera Religione* (Raków, 1630), Book 1, 89–102 on “De Nomine θεός,” and the discussion of Hebrews 1:8 on 100; Crell, *The Two Books of John Crellius Francus, touching One God the Father* (Kosmoberg [i.e., London], 1665), 46–170, especially 107–110, 122 where Hebrews 1:8–9 is discussed; Lushington, *Expiation*, 8–10; and Crell & Schlichting, *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos*, 81.
- ¹¹⁴ *Works*, 20:433.
- ¹¹⁵ E.g., *Works*, 21:471. Cf. *Works*, 23:54.

- ¹¹⁶ *Works*, 22:499.
- ¹¹⁷ *Works*, 22:566. Cf. 22:551. Socinus, Schlichting, and Grotius are shown to all agree in *Works*, 23:328–329. Schlichting, Grotius, then Hammond are quoted one after another in *Works*, 22:468.
- ¹¹⁸ *Works*, 22:570–571.
- ¹¹⁹ *Works*, 23:28.
- ¹²⁰ *Works*, 23:412.
- ¹²¹ *Works*, 24:212 (on Hebrews 11:39–40). See also the links between Grotius and the Socinians in *Works*, 23:443; 24:46, 153, 263, 338.
- ¹²² Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 207, 209.
- ¹²³ E.g., *Works*, 21:519.
- ¹²⁴ On Hammond's importance to the re-envisioning of Anglicanism in the seventeenth century, see J. W. Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism, 1643–1660, with Special Reference to Henry Hammond* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969).
- ¹²⁵ For Owen's attachment to doctrinal Anglicanism and the political aspect of his support for it, see Lee Gatiss, "Anglicanism and John Owen" in *Crux* 52.1 (Spring 2016), 44–53 and Lee Gatiss, *John Owen: The Genius of English Puritanism* (London: Lost Coin, 2016), 18–20.
- ¹²⁶ Lim, *Mystery Unveiled*, 176.
- ¹²⁷ *Works*, 22:566. See also *Works*, 22:499–500 on Hebrews 7:20–22 and the threesome again in *Works*, 24:212.
- ¹²⁸ *Works*, 24:46 (linking "Crellius, and Grotius who followeth him, with his admirers, and others that borrow falsehoods from them"), 55, 70, 85, 97, 112 ("Grotius with his follower, and the Socinian expositors"), 153, 213, 338 (linking Schlichting, Grotius, and Hammond).
- ¹²⁹ *Works*, 19:48.
- ¹³⁰ I unpack some of the details of this exegesis, especially from Hebrews 1–2 in chapter 2 of Lee Gatiss, *Adoring the Fullness of the Scriptures in John Owen's Commentary on Hebrews* (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 2013).
- ¹³¹ *Works*, 21:550.
- ¹³² Reedy, *The Bible and Reason*, 124.
- ¹³³ Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 76. See Owen's comments, for example, on Hebrews 2:10 and the Socinian denial of penal substitution in *Works*, 20:402.
- ¹³⁴ Trueman, *Claims*, 85.