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RMA Thesis Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies
14 August, 2021
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Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658): a Conventional Martyr?

Suffering and Sinfulness in Wallington's Seventeenth-century Notebooks

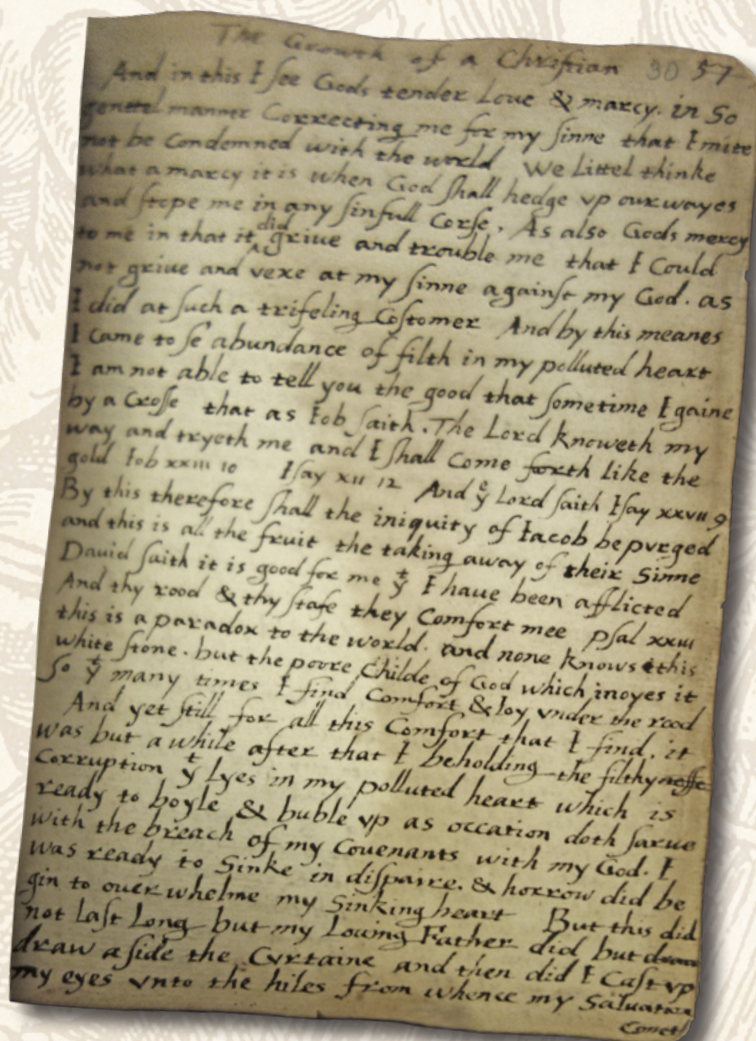


Image: folio 30 recto from *The Groth of a Christian*, Nehemiah Wallington, British Library, Additional Manuscript 40 883.
Background image: woodcut "The Burning of master John Rogers, Vicar of St Pulchers and Reader of St Paul's in London",
in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*, John Foxe and John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 41.

Abstract

The notebooks written by the London woodturner Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658) are a fascinating source for examining the enduring impact of the theme of martyrdom long after the persecutions of Protestants during the reign of Mary I (1553-1558). In a period in which even non-conformist Protestants were relatively safe, Wallington insists upon suffering, and quotes from John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (first published in 1563) in a way that suggests that the physical of Protestants is still his daily reality. The afterlife of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* is still understudied, and Wallington's notebooks offer a wealth of information on how people engaged with Foxe's legacy. In this thesis, I discuss how Wallington gives meaning to his suffering by constructing an imagined community of Protestants, which Wallington bases on Foxe's community of martyrs. Rather than death through martyrdom, Wallington sees suffering more generally as crucial to this community, and includes all Protestants. In addition to his imagined community, Wallington also creates his own narrative of suffering based on two major characteristics of suffering transmitted by Foxe: joyful suffering, and suffering as a trial of faith or an instructive message from God. Wallington struggles to apply these frameworks to his own suffering, because his suffering is spiritual, rather than physical, and characterized by an overwhelming awareness of his sinfulness. My analysis of Wallington's notebooks demonstrates that Foxe's templates do not always suffice in the case of feelings of spiritual inadequacy and the overwhelming sense of sinfulness that haunt Wallington. Wallington's writings demonstrate the shortcomings of his Foxean approach in the changed circumstances of his own time. As a consequence, Wallington experiences deep spiritual crises. My research findings demonstrate that Wallington still manages to relate his highly individual struggle with his sinfulness to his imagined community. Wallington does so by seeing not only suffering, but also sinfulness as a crucial characteristic of both him and his imagined community, and by approaching suffering as a purging mechanism that demonstrates his membership of God's special community.

Abbreviations

- BL MS 21935 Nehemiah Wallington, *A Bundel of Marcys* (British Library, Additional MS 21935)
- BL MS 40883 Nehemiah Wallington, *The Groth of a Christian* (British Library, Additional MS 40883)
- BL MS 922 Nehemiah Wallington, *Copies of Profitable and Comfortable Letters* (British Library, Sloane MS 922)

Spelling and punctuation

I have mostly retained Wallington's original spelling of words such as 'groth' and any inconsistencies in spelling. For ease of reading I have modernized his use of split words or words that he does not split where they should be. Besides, I have substituted 'j' for 'i' and 'v' for 'u', and expanded abbreviations: 'that' for 'y^t' and 'the' for 'y^e' (where it means 'the'). Wallington regularly seems to use a comma where we would use a period and vice versa, or leaves out punctuation altogether. I have retained this, because it gives a more precise and intimate impression of how Wallington wrote, which is already less intense in this thesis because of its rendition in typewriting rather than Wallington's original handwriting. I have glossed words that are unclear.

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1: Introduction

“Nature hath made you mortall, none but an enemy can make you a Martyr”, wrote the Puritan London artisan Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658) in one of his notebooks in 1640.¹ English Protestants had a vivid memory of the Marian martyrs - those persecuted and burnt at the stake during the reign of the Catholic Mary I (1553-1558). These persecutions were immortalized by John Foxe (1515/6-1587), an exiled Protestant who compiled the *Book of Martyrs*, originally published as *Acts and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Days, touching matters of the Church*.² During the subsequent reign of Elizabeth I, this monumental work was chained inside English cathedrals, and parishes were encouraged to acquire a copy, so that everyone had access to it.³ The unabridged version is nearly four times the length of the Bible and it went through ten editions between 1563 and 1684, which makes clear that this text remained important long after the Marian persecutions.⁴ The *Book of Martyrs* therefore was hugely influential and became part of the narrative of Protestant suffering of generations to come. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Wallington focused on martyrdom and suffering as strongly as he did, because in his lifetime, there were no persecutions on the scale there had been the century before.

In this thesis, I will argue that Wallington writes so much about suffering because this way, he tries to give meaning to his own afflictions and tries to fit in with the community of Protestants as Foxe modelled it in the *Book of Martyrs*. In contrast to the suffering of martyrs, however, Wallington’s suffering is largely spiritual and imbued with a deep sense of sinfulness. Wallington’s writings therefore demonstrate the shortcomings of his Foxean approach to his suffering. Yet through his typically Puritan preoccupation with his sinfulness, he finds a way again to give meaning to his suffering by using sinfulness as a way to connect with the larger community of suffering Protestants.

The absence of large-scale persecutions did not mean that the godly, as Wallington himself called Protestants of his persuasion, had nothing to contest. Charles

¹ BL MS 21 935, 51v, 1v.

² John N. King, “Introduction,” in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*, John Foxe and John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xli.

³ King, “Introduction”, xx-i.

⁴ John N. King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-2, 92-161.

I, reigning from 1625 until his beheading in 1649, had appointed William Laud (1573-1645) as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. With Charles's support, Laud introduced much-contested changes to the liturgy of the English church which the godly saw as Catholic ritual.

As one of the godly, Wallington belonged to a significant number of English Protestants, whom we now term Puritans. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes the godly as "Puritans who supported the parliamentary cause in the English Civil War and pursued the spiritual and moral reform of the nation during the period of the Commonwealth and the Cromwellian Protectorate, collectively".⁵ The godly, including Wallington, were convinced that the English Reformation had not gone far enough. In fact, they were concerned that it was even worse: they worried that Catholicism would return. The godly felt the need to "maintaine the true Reformed protestant Religion of the Church of England against all popery & popish innovations"; this was their protest against the importance Laud attached to outward signs of worship such as the communion table which they saw as evidence that Catholicism was being reintroduced.⁶ Nonetheless, there were hardly any Protestant martyrs in the traditional sense of someone dying for his or her faith - yet Wallington insisted on extensively relating his own and others' suffering.

Wallington's Notebooks

Wallington was active as a writer from 1618 until 1654; he left fifty notebooks, seven of which still exist.⁷ The matters which Wallington describes range from historical occurrences, recent military and political events, religion and his ideas on church government, to tragedy and worries in his own life, his thoughts and anxieties about election and his spiritual shortcomings. The general tone of his notebooks is very serious. The sources for my thesis are three of the four notebooks written by Wallington which are held at the British Library:⁸

⁵ "Godly", *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2020), accessed 23 July 2020, www.oed.com.

⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 25r. Anthony Milton, "Laud, William (1573-1645)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 11 August 2021, www-oxforddnb-com.

⁷ Nehemiah Wallington and David Booy, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A Selection* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 7-8.

⁸ Dr Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen of Leiden University kindly put at my disposal his photographs of all pages of these three notebooks.

- *A Bundel of Marcys*. British Library, Additional Manuscript 21 935 (1646)⁹
- *The Groth of a Christian*. British Library, Additional Manuscript 40 883 (1641 - 1643)
- *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*. British Library, Sloane Manuscript 922 (1650 - 1658)

Across a total of about 1,300 pages, these notebooks contain different kinds of contents. In *A Bundel of Marcys*, Wallington writes about the “righteous & a just God toward a wicked sinfull parvarse people of England.”¹⁰ *The Groth of a Christian* records his spiritual progress, a common occupation among the godly. *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* is a sort of commonplace book in which Wallington collected letters which he received, letters which he sent and letters from others, both past and contemporary, including a number of letters which he copies from the *Book of Martyrs*.

Taken together, these three notebooks offer a multifaceted view of Wallington’s preoccupations. Even though he copied many texts from other sources, the fact that he copies them makes clear that he agrees with the contents. The notebooks contain information from the timespan of approximately a decade. Although the British Library gives the creation date of *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* as 1650-1658, this notebook contains letters from Wallington and his family and friends from earlier decades, so it comprises personal letters to and from Wallington concurrent with the time scale of the other notebooks. The different purposes and subject matters of the notebooks, the different perspectives they offer and the different sources they contain, offer us a glimpse of the various sides to Wallington’s concerns.

Although I refer to Wallington’s writings as “notebooks”, as other scholars do, Wallington himself simply called them “books”.¹¹ Scholars do not agree on the most

⁹ In his own overview, Wallington refers to this notebook as *Three paper books of the weekly passages of Parliament* (Seaver 1985, 200). Booy refers to this notebook as *A Bundel of Marcys*. It is now in the British Library as part of *Additional Manuscript 21 935*. In his biography of Wallington, Paul Seaver includes Wallington’s own overview of his notebooks which gives 1640 as the date for *A Bundel of Marcys*. However, the British Library provides the year 1646 in its catalogue and mentions the period 1588-1646 as its ‘creation date’, because Wallington starts writing about events from 1588 onward and finished writing this notebook in 1646. Paul Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 200. British Library, “Historical notes and meditations, by Nehemiah Wallington, a Puritan; 1588-1646”, “The Growth of a Christian,” “Coppies of profitable and comfortable letters”, accessed 31 July 2020. bl.uk.

¹⁰ BL MS 21 935, 2v.

¹¹ Booy, *Notebooks*, 2.

illuminating term for designating the kind of writing Wallington engaged in, complicated by the fact that we now think in terms of genres that in Wallington's days simply did not exist. Generally, scholars argue for either "autobiography" or "life writing".¹² Kathleen Lynch, for example, calls it "'autobiography before 'autobiography'". Alan Stewart proposes the term "life-writing" to designate the writings of "authors who deliberately set out to *write lives*, whether their own or others."¹³ This is also the term David Booy uses in his introduction to Wallington's notebooks.¹⁴

In my view, the style of writing in these notebooks can best be characterized as "self-writing". This term is also employed by Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, whose article on consolation includes a discussion of Wallington's writings.¹⁵ I believe this is a more appropriate term than "autobiography" or "life-writing", because Wallington's principal aim was not to give an account of his life, as "life-writing" seems to suggest. Wallington wrote part of his notebooks out of a spiritual need, a sense of religious duty, to assist others in their spiritual troubles, and as a testimony for generations to come, resulting in a number of texts in which he is deeply preoccupied with himself, his religious anxieties, God's purposes and how to properly serve God. This was not unique to Wallington; the turbulent events of the period led to a great increase in such writings.¹⁶

Wallington's Life

Wallington worked and lived in the house where he was born in St Leonard's Eastcheap near London Bridge.¹⁷ According to Paul Seaver, Wallington's life is noteworthy because Wallington stayed in one place in a time when people increasingly sought work in other households, because he was literate when most people of his class were not, but especially because of the large volume of writings which he left behind.¹⁸ Besides, as a

¹² Kathleen Lynch, "Extraordinarily Ordinary: Nehemiah Wallington's Experimental Method," in *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell*, eds. Christopher D'Addario and Matthew C. Augustine (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 87.

¹³ Alan Stewart, *The Oxford History of Life Writing. Volume 2, Early Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6.

¹⁴ Booy, *Notebooks*, 12.

¹⁵ Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "'Never Better': Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5.1 (2018), 22.

¹⁶ Stewart, *Life Writing*, 16.

¹⁷ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 1.

¹⁸ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 1.

woodturner, Wallington belonged to a stratum of society otherwise represented mostly by official records because few personal writings from this group of people are extant.¹⁹

Wallington's life was burdened with tragedy. He had lost his mother at the age of five, and his first stepmother and three of his stepsiblings when he was fifteen, among whom his stepbrother Philip, to whom Wallington was very close. In addition, Robert Oswald has counted no less than eleven attempts by Wallington either to run away from home or to commit suicide.²⁰ From the time of writing of the three notebooks which I discuss in this thesis, his life was still very challenging. He and his wife Grace lost four children at a very young age; only one of them, their daughter Sarah, survived.²¹ The letters in *Comfortable and Profitable Letters* make evident that Wallington was not an exception; such tragedies occurred all around him.

By occupation, Wallington was a woodturner, a trade he learned from his father. He created wooden objects for customers. His father had helped him as early as he could to set up his own shop, so Wallington was an independent artisan. However, this also brought along with it responsibility for apprentices and worries about acquiring sufficient income to maintain his household, which included the apprentice and at least at one point in time, two servants.²²

Wallington relates how he often rises at between one and five in the morning to pray, meditate and write in his "studdy", so although he was not wealthy, apparently he did possess some space where he could withdraw and be alone.²³ Wallington explicitly wrote much of his work for posterity; he explains this multiple times, for example when he writes "I doe record the mercys which now followeth which should never be forgotten but one generation should shew it to another generation unto the worlds ende what God hath done for England".²⁴

Regarding Wallington's purpose in writing, Robert Oswald argues that as a writer, Wallington underwent a development from writing out of an emotional need in response to the death of his stepbrother to a more self-conscious, intentional style, but that he was ambitious as a writer all along; from the very first notebook he wrote,

¹⁹ Booy, *Notebooks*, 8; Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 2.

²⁰ Robert M. Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement in the Life of the Seventeenth Century London Artisan, Nehemiah Wallington*, PhD diss. (University of Edinburgh, 2011), 106.

²¹ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 19-21.

²² Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 113, 120; Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 202.

²³ BL Add MS 40883, 48r.

²⁴ BL, Add MS 21 935, 94r.

Wallington's objective was for his texts to be read by others.²⁵ Wallington must in total have written about 20,000 pages.²⁶ They were not just meant for personal use but also for sharing; Wallington passed on some of his notebooks to his wife and half-sister and read his notebooks with his family.²⁷ Wallington's only surviving daughter Sarah married Jonathan Houghton, with whom Wallington read some of his notebooks, and he bequeathed his notebooks to them.²⁸

In addition to the extreme misfortunes in his family, Wallington was tormented by thoughts about his own unworthiness and sinfulness, which he records at length in his notebooks. Although the way he felt about himself and his struggle with his sinfulness makes for poignant reading, his writings offer a rich source of information for examining how he applied religious doctrine to his own life.

The Relevance of Wallington's Writings

Wallington's texts are remarkable because as Wallington tries to make sense of his spiritual troubles and the occurrences around him, we can get a bit closer to the cultural structures of the Puritans of his time and the way Wallington applies them. As Margo Todd explains, the "[Protestant] structure ... contained multivalent meanings, but it coordinated them into a cogent whole that could both address individual issues and unify a diverse community."²⁹ Wallington's notebooks offer us a direct glimpse into his preoccupations and the way he tries to make sense of them as a Puritan in a Puritan network of co-believers.

Yet in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* he included letters written by people from various backgrounds: from the *Book of Martyrs* as well as letters written by acquaintances to others, or letters from himself and to himself, so his writings surpass

²⁵ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 51, 54, 95.

²⁶ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 2. The sizes of Wallington's notebooks differ. The size of MS 21935 is 'a small quarto,' MS 40883 is an octavo and MS 922 is a quarto. British Library, "Historical notes and meditations, by Nehemiah Wallington, a Puritan; 1588-1646", "The Growth of a Christian", "Copies of profitable and comfortable letters," bl.uk, accessed on 31 July 2020. The terms 'octavo,' 'quarto' and 'folio' designate the size of the paper, with 'folio' meaning that the original paper has been folded once, quarto twice, the size of a quarto ranging from 15 x 11 inches to 7 ¾ x 6 ¼ inches, and 'octavo' thrice. "Octavo", "Quarto" and "Folio", Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com, accessed 31 July 2020. For an extensive description of the sizes of Wallington's notebooks, see Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 78-9.

²⁷ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 6.

²⁸ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 6.

²⁹ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 406.

the individual. In *A Bundel of Marcys Wallington* copied many texts from other printed sources such as newsbooks, unfortunately without any references, this way reflecting more general existing thoughts on Protestants and godly life.³⁰

John Spurr notes that in spite of the many documents written by the godly, which give insight into their inner lives, it is difficult, if not impossible, to access “the puritan experience”, because the personal writings of the godly were partly guided by conventions, and were also often written to be shared.³¹ Indeed, many letters and responses to affliction as Wallington records them, especially those of others, seem to present ideal types. Wallington’s own reflections, however, are so interesting because they betray the struggle he experienced in trying to live up to exactly these conventions.

Accordingly, the immense introspection in Wallington’s texts reflects wider developments in society, while Wallington’s texts and struggles are highly personal, too, enabling us to witness such an introspective process very intimately. Erin Sullivan notes that Wallington’s notebooks are perhaps not representative, because of the intensity of Wallington’s views and the particularity of his own life, but states that he is nevertheless connected to “a broader network of godly beliefs and practices in the first half of the seventeenth century.”³² The fact that he includes his correspondence with likeminded family, friends and acquaintances in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* testify to this broader view.

In his monograph on religious despair, John Stachniewsky argues that scholars have tended to overlook the huge impact of Puritan ideas on Puritan subjectivity and the darker sides to Puritanism.³³ Wallington’s notebooks are the ideal case for examining this Puritan subjectivity. In the light of Wallington’s subjection to thoughts of and attempts at suicide, it is perhaps not surprising that Wallington was preoccupied with suffering.³⁴ Although Wallington’s spiritual troubles, sense of despair and thoughts of suicide were not unique to him but also occurred among other godly, Wallington’s

³⁰ Booy, *Notebooks*, 115.

³¹ John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 1998), 151-2.

³² Erin Sullivan, “The Watchful Spirit: Religious Anxieties towards Sleep in the Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658),” *Cultural History* 1.1 (2012), 15.

³³ John Stachniewsky, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 4-5.

³⁴ Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, 21-3; Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 148-92.

extensive descriptions of his spiritual troubles and the repetition of his worries offer us an intriguing look into his soul.³⁵

Writers after Wallington increasingly embraced the shift to mental rather than physical suffering, famously allegorized by John Bunyan in the suffering of his pilgrim in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Dutch reformed ministers in the early eighteenth century also concerned themselves with mental anguish and assurance of faith, and they turned to English Puritan texts such as Bunyan's for inspiration.³⁶ Therefore, Wallington's writings can help us understand why seventeenth-century Puritans heavily emphasized mental anguish, spiritual suffering and martyrdom and why their appeal endured.

Historiography

In 1869, Wallington's notebooks were published in an edited version of two volumes by the Protestant Rosamund Anne Webb, who was a secretary to the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East.³⁷ Since the latter half of the twentieth century, Wallington's texts have been of much interest to early modernists, especially after the publication of Paul Seaver's biography from 1985.³⁸ Since then, scholars have often consulted Wallington's work for the first-hand account he gives us of contemporary life and events or for information on, for example, the theme of consolation in Protestant authors.³⁹

Besides Wallington's value as an eye witness, there has been increasing attention to his writings as a valuable source of research in itself. David Booy's selection from Wallington's notebooks, for example, includes a useful introduction focusing on the course of Wallington's life, the local, political and religious context, Wallington's purpose, the expression of the self in the notebooks and his spiritual state.⁴⁰ Robert Oswald's dissertation examines Wallington's understanding of and experiences with

³⁵ Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689*, 180.

³⁶ Jo Spaans and Pauline Wegener, "Practical Theology after Dordrecht: Wilhelmus van Irhoven's 'Gronden van het verzekert Christendom'", *The Theology of Dort (1618-1619): Confessional Consolidation, Conflictual Contexts, and Continuing Consequences*, Groningen: 8 May 2019, publication forthcoming in conference proceedings about the Synod of Dordrecht 1618-19 (Dordrecht November 2018, Groningen May 2019).

³⁷ Rosemary Seaton, *Western Daughters in Eastern Lands: British Missionary Women in Asia* (Oxford: Prager, 2013), 91.

³⁸ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 1985.

³⁹ For example, in David Cressy, *Charles I and the People of England* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press USA, 2015), 231, 235 and Van Dijkhuizen, "Never Better", 2018.

⁴⁰ Booy, *Notebooks*, 2007.

death, taking into account Wallington's contemporary sources.⁴¹ In an article on Wallington's *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, Lucy Busfield explores Puritan spiritual doubt and the significance of the minister for the godly.⁴² James Daybell discusses *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* from the angle of the material book; he calls *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* "a peculiar hybrid form" because it contains personal correspondence as well as other letters.⁴³ Erin Sullivan has analyzed Wallington's attitude towards sleep to argue that a tension existed between the physical need of sleep and spiritual watchfulness.⁴⁴ Recently, Wallington's writing method has been examined by Kathleen Lynch who suggests that Wallington wrote as a memory exercise; Wallington's texts have also been studied from the perspectives of life-writing and with a focus on Wallington as author and Bible reader.⁴⁵ Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen discusses the theme of consolation in texts by Wallington and other Protestant authors to conclude that consolation discourses frustrated, rather than furthered Protestant unity, and that Wallington found it difficult to respond to affliction in the appropriate theological manner.⁴⁶ More generally, Wallington's notebooks serve to illustrate Puritan convictions and the impact this had on individuals, for example in John Spurr's monograph on English Puritanism and John Stachniewsky's study on religious despair.⁴⁷

The Appeal of Martyrdom

Why was suffering so important for Wallington and the other godly, even though there were no persecutions like those in Foxe's time? Knott argues that for the Christian martyrs, it was crucial to show that their faith could not be destroyed, by patiently

⁴¹ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 2011.

⁴² Lucy Busfield, "Doubt, Anxiety and Protestant Epistolary Counselling: The Letter-Book of Nehemiah Wallington," in *Doubting Christianity: The Church and Doubt, Studies in Church History*, eds. Frances Andrews, Charlotte Methuen, Andrew Spicer 52 (2016): 298-314.

⁴³ James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-writing, 1512-1635*, *Early Modern Literature in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 208.

⁴⁴ Sullivan, "The Watchful Spirit", 14-35.

⁴⁵ Kathleen Lynch, "Extraordinarily Ordinary: Nehemiah Wallington's Experimental Method," in *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell*, ed. Christopher D'Addario and Matthew C. Augustine (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 88; Suzanne Trill, "Re-Writing Revolution: Life-Writing in Civil Wars," in *A History of English Autobiography*, ed. Adam Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 70-86.

⁴⁶ Van Dijkhuizen, "Never Better", 23.

⁴⁷ Spurr, *English Puritanism*, for example 19, 95. Stachniewsky, *The Persecutory Imagination*, for example 5, 50.

enduring their martyrdom, modelled on Christ's suffering.⁴⁸ Likewise, Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen notes that the physical sufferings of Christ and of Christian martyrs are "the gold standard of all suffering."⁴⁹ This was also the case for Wallington and his fellow believers. In *A Bundel of Marcys*, Wallington writes that affliction is the way to be like Christ, and that being afflicted like Christ, paves the entrance to heaven.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, a gap remained, which could never be bridged: by its immense intensity and his self-sacrifice for mankind, the suffering of Christ was an ideal that could never be attained by people themselves. Therefore, becoming closer to Christ through suffering was important because it enabled Wallington and his fellow believers to reign with Christ, as they called it: to experience eternal life.

In Wallington's time, nonconformists were not persecuted to the extent they had been during Mary I's reign. In the decades leading up to 1642, when the Civil War broke out, relatively radical Protestants even increasingly became members of the House of Commons. Nevertheless, Puritans were critical of the established Anglican Church. Protestants felt threatened by the appointment of William Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, fearing "a papist plot to take over the English Church".⁵¹ However, apart from the mention of his name on a Star Chamber bill in 1638 along with Henry Burton, John Bastwick and William Prynne, and being called before the Star Chamber once for possession of forbidden books, Wallington was not threatened or imprisoned himself, as, for example, John Bunyan was.⁵² Yet the appeal of martyrdom and suffering endured.

Alec Ryrie argues that the appeal of persecution was exactly that it was both fact and myth, and that Protestants "were ready to understand their lives as dramas of persecution", even in relatively peaceful times, so all Protestants are in fact martyrs-by-association. Complicating this Protestant "martyr complex", as Ryrie terms it, is that Protestants - and, I would like specify, the godly in particular - clearly felt that there were still plenty of issues in the field of religion, politics and church governance to

⁴⁸ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 35.

⁴⁹ Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "'Never Better': Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5.1 (2018), 13.

⁵⁰ BL MS 21 935, 52v.

⁵¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin Books), 2004, 518.

⁵² Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 78, 100; John R. Knott. *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1993, 4.

confront.⁵³ Yet as John Stachniewsky argues, the “persecutory imagination” was more than a conscious attempt by authors to describe their convictions; he calls it a “communal construct” informing individual intentions.⁵⁴ Wallington draws upon this sense of martyrdom in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, by referring to and including letters from Christians across time to build a community across time and space, from Biblical characters such as John and Peter via the Marian martyrs to the godly of his time.

The concern with martyrdom was neither a solely Puritan, nor an exclusively English phenomenon. In seventeenth-century Europe, suffering and martyrdom inspired a wide range of creative output, from images like Jan Luyken’s etchings depicting executions to written works such as German *Märtyrerdramen* and translations of John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678) - even up to the early eighteenth century when, for example, Dutch ministers consulted, translated and annotated Bunyan’s work.⁵⁵ Martyrdom was a hot topic for Catholics as well.⁵⁶ Yet martyrdom was appropriated not only for religious reasons but also for political purposes, in so far as these two can be separated; Charles I, for example, was immortalized as saint and martyr in the *Eikon Basilike*.⁵⁷

John Knott explains that for Englishmen such as Bunyan and other nonconformists such as the Quaker George Fox, the *Book of Martyrs* was a great source of inspiration, connecting their own time to that of the Marian martyrs as well as that of the apostles. Suffering was a crucial element of their nonconformist faiths, a relation already established by Luther who held that “Christ’s true church must be a suffering,

⁵³ Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith that Made the Modern World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017), 90, 93.

⁵⁴ Stachniewsky, *The Persecutory Imagination*, 7.

⁵⁵ Michel van Duijnen, “‘Only the strangest and most horrible cases’: The Role of Judicial Violence in the Work of Jan Luyken,” in *Early Modern Low Countries*, 2(2), 2018: 169; Karolin Freund (ed.). *Hilger Gartzwiller: Chrysantus und Daria* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2019), originally published in 1609. As John Coffey points out, Bunyan and other English devotional writers were popular among Dutch reformed pietists in the seventeenth century, but this extended into the eighteenth century. John Coffey, “Puritan Legacies,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 335. Spaans and Wegener, “Practical Theology,” publication forthcoming.

⁵⁶ Susannah Brietz Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1. According to Brietz Monta, Catholics and Protestants were constantly busying themselves with ‘competing martyrologies’. Although Wallington may indeed indirectly be engaging in a Protestant-Catholic dialectic, his writings are principally aimed at peer believers, and in spite of his heavy emphasis on suffering and martyrdom, his chief aim was not writing a martyrology.

⁵⁷ William Kerrigan, John Rumrich and Stephen M. Fallon, *The Essential Prose of John Milton* (New York: Modern Library, 2013), 309.

persecuted church, constantly assaulted by the devil,” a point embraced by Protestants and further spread by martyrologists such as Foxe.⁵⁸ John King states that the *Book of Martyrs* must have heavily influenced “the consciousness of early modern England”.⁵⁹

Apart from the essential component of suffering, the widely accepted belief in the existence of an enemy was a large part of Wallington’s notion of martyrdom, as is clear from the opening quote of this chapter, “Nature hath made you [God’s children] mortall, none but an enemie can make you a Martyr”.⁶⁰ The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the Irish Rebellion in 1641 - when about 4,000 of Protestants were massacred by Irish Catholics, and about 8,000 Protestants died from cold and hunger - made a deep impression on Wallington and his countrymen and -women, serving to underline the inescapable suffering and martyrdom of Protestants.⁶¹ Clearly, the idea of martyrdom held a great appeal to Wallington, seventy to ninety years after the first publication of Foxe’s martyrology.

Puritan, Protestant, Christian?

I use various terms for designating Wallington’s convictions: Puritan, Protestant or Christian, and I frequently call Wallington one of the godly. Scholars generally agree that Puritanism is a term designating a wide variety of convictions, and for example Spurr argues that Puritans differ “in the degree not the kind of their religiosity” and cannot be defined in isolation, but only in relation to others with different viewpoints in their society.⁶² This is indeed how Wallington uses it; he uses the term Puritan a few times but only when he describes how others call him.

Even though the term “Puritanism” eludes a simple definition, the fact that there is a specific term for Wallington’s type of Protestantism suggest that there is something

⁵⁸ By “nonconformist” I mean those not assenting to the established church. Ryrie, *Protestants*, 89; Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 139.

⁵⁹ King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 1-2.

⁶⁰ BL MS 21 935, 51v.

⁶¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin Books), 2004, 523; Ryrie, *Protestants*, 110. By contrast, Wallington mentions the death of Charles I only briefly, when he writes “January the xxx 1649 about two a clock was King Charles beheaded on a scaffold at White Hall” (BL MS 21 935, 229v).

⁶² Spurr, *English Puritanism*, 4.

particular about it, and there are definitely characteristics typical of Puritanism.⁶³ These include its British origin as a Protestant reform movement (Calvinist rather than Lutheran), a wish to further reform the English Church and to clear it of any Roman Catholic thought and practice. For Puritans personally, it involved an intense experience of their faith; a deep concern with personal salvation; stressing unconditional predestination and the importance of the Word of God; and the leading of an exemplary life to transform society.⁶⁴ Additionally, influential English Puritans such as the theologian William Perkins (1558-1602) emphasized the importance of seeking assurance that one was one of the elect, and advocated a rigorous lifestyle “including godly reading, psalm-singing, prayer, fasting and spiritual meditation.”⁶⁵ Wallington, too, took great pains to lead such a representative life, and in his writings, there is a heavy emphasis on suffering for the sake of the true faith. As Lynne Magnussen points out, lay Puritans in particular were not so much occupied with the theological aspects of their faith as with the observances which they found important, such as “private worship, which reinforced the sense of belonging to a restricted godly community marked out for salvation or, in Calvinist terms, election.”⁶⁶

Protestant theology favoured an increasingly individual experience of faith and an emphasis on individual conscience and sin, which the Puritans in particular cultivated. Scholars have nonetheless paid attention to the continuing importance for individual Puritans of communal ties and the godly community. Paul Seaver argues that this community must have been an abstract and ideological entity held together by the love of other saints as an indication of their identity, rather than personal friendship, and furthermore, that the boundaries of this community were unclear, at times extending across parishes and social boundaries.⁶⁷ John Spurr notes that obvious

⁶³ For a more detailed discussion of Puritanism, see, for example, Spurr, *English Puritanism*, 3, 15, Alexandra Walsham, “The Godly and Popular Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 277-93, Coffey and Lim, “Introduction,” 1-16, and Francis J. Bremer, *Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2.

⁶⁴ Coffey and Lim, “Introduction,” 2-3; Bremer, *Puritanism*, 2-4.

⁶⁵ Coffey and Lim, “Introduction,” 4.

⁶⁶ Lynne Magnussen, “Imagining a National Church: Election and Education in the Works of Anne Cooke Bacon,” in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*, ed. Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 42.

⁶⁷ Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, 189, 194.

“godliness, zeal, piety, a life without sin, a fulsome profession of faith” displayed membership of this godly community.⁶⁸

Wallington’s convictions were conventionally Puritan in, for example, his sense of opposition to Catholics and his sense of difference from other Protestants. “Puritan” originated as a term of abuse, but later was adopted by the Puritans themselves. Though it may seem anachronistic to use the term Puritan or Puritanism, I still do so to when it is easiest or most clear to indicate Wallington’s specific viewpoints as member of a minority community. In most cases, I use Protestant, Christian, godly, or God’s children, because for Wallington, to be a Christian, was to be a Protestant, and to be a Protestant, was to be one of what we now, in hindsight, designate as Puritan and which Wallington most often called God’s children.

Robert Oswald concludes that the term “Puritan” for Wallington mainly seems to be a polemical definition for separating a certain type of Early Modern Protestant from other Protestants and from Catholics.⁶⁹ Indeed, for Wallington himself, the word “Puritan” clearly designates “the religious group of which he considered himself a member”, opposed to bishops and prelates, but he is also aware that it was a derogatory term given to people such as himself by others.⁷⁰ Once, a customer says to Wallington that “puritons ... make her pay so deare”.⁷¹ Yet Wallington’s texts also demonstrate a more positive attitude. Wallington once quotes from a letter in which the author writes that Charles I “hates the puritan party”.⁷² In a letter to “Goodman Coxs of advice to cingere sarvice of God”, Wallington writes:⁷³

my councell to you next that you would use some meanes to growe acquainted with those that they call purituns or (that new nickname) round head I say keepe company with such, for with the wise and Godly, you will learne to be wise and how to please God and so to get to heaven.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Spurr, *English Puritanism*, 44.

⁶⁹ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 6.

⁷⁰ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 6.

⁷¹ BL Add MS 40883, 9r.

⁷² BL MS 21 935, 188r.

⁷³ BL Sloane MS 922, 142r.

⁷⁴ BL Sloane MS 922, 143v.

Spiritual struggle typified Protestants', and particularly the Puritans', individual relationship with God. Wallington did not have the resources nor the conviction that he could research his struggles in a creative or artistic manner. On the contrary, he opposed any frivolity. He records how "Mr Ash shewed me what I should do to come up to God it must be with sorrow of heart saying O Lord I have bin a sarvant to prid, to lust to lying & I must forsake the sarvise of all my sinfull delights whatsoever."⁷⁵ John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* also describe in emotional language the crisis the speaker senses when the speaker meditates upon death, mortality and the speakers' relationship with God. Van Dijkhuizen calls the literary opportunities for researching the intricacies of English religion in this period "a special cultural zone" in which authors could examine the various sides to religious controversies without the need for a definite outcome.⁷⁶ Wallington, by contrast, is continually looking for a solution to his struggle, which only seems to aggravate this very struggle.

Concepts and Method

The most important approach in my thesis is taken from new historicism: the understanding that a text can best be understood with reference to its context, that texts do not convey a single and static historical truth but rather give us some insight into the particular, and an awareness that we do so from a position shaped by our own interests and experiences.⁷⁷ For example, Wallington's personification of God and his strong focus on suffering and sinfulness may seem alien to us, but we deprive him of his humanity if we do not acknowledge his very real spiritual crises. We can better understand his crises by looking at the leading theological frameworks of the time. If we situate his convictions in the context of the turbulent first half of the seventeenth century, whilst keeping in mind that from our distance, centuries later, we have the overview which Wallington and his contemporaries necessarily lacked, we can more easily relate to him.

The leading concept in my thesis which I apply to the sense of community Wallington shapes in his texts, is the notion of imagined communities, which Benedict

⁷⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 127r.

⁷⁶ Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "Literature and Religion in Early Modern England," in *Handbook of English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Ingo Berensmeyer. Handbooks of English and American Studies, 10 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019). E-book, no page number.

⁷⁷ Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 7.

Anderson coined in his seminal research on nations and nationalism: the nation is imagined, and it is imagined as limited, sovereign and as a community. It is an imagined community because people who may never meet in their lives, still feel connected. Furthermore, such a nation is imagined as limited, because it never encompasses all mankind. It is imagined as sovereign because the post-Enlightenment and Revolution nation does not accept the “divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm”, and it is imagined as a community because it is “always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁷⁸

Although Anderson wrote this with nation-wide imagined communities in mind, which emerged at the onset of the emergence of nation-states, the basic tenet of a community whose members may never meet but still perceive themselves to be members of the same community, is a useful way to approach the Puritan community as Wallington constructs it. I use the notion of imagined communities as a tool to investigate how Wallington perceives his community, and will use part of Anderson’s definition: the idea that Wallington’s community is imagined in the sense that its members may never meet, and that it is even more limited than Anderson’s examples, because it is a community within a nation. Yet the awareness of comradeship holds true for Wallington’s community as well. My notion of this imagined community differs from Anderson’s definition not only by its focus on a different kind of community, but also by stretching this community across time.

My analysis of Wallington’s work consists of a cultural historical approach. I examine how Wallington constructs a community of Protestants as an imagined community by distilling which characteristics he perceives as crucial to this community. In addition, I analyse how Wallington takes inspiration from Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* by researching which themes Wallington reuses from this book and how he uses them. Finally, I analyse Wallington’s language on suffering and sinfulness, especially the language on sinfulness which he applies both to himself and to the godly community, and the simile of the purification of gold in fire, to examine how he gives meaning to his afflictions.

⁷⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 2016), 6-7.

Academic Contribution

John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* has received ample scholarly attention, but its afterlife is understudied. Although John King states that the *Book of Martyrs* must have heavily influenced "the consciousness of early modern England", little to no research has been done on the exact nature of the reuse of the *Book of Martyrs* in the seventeenth century and beyond.⁷⁹ Why did Wallington make his selection from Foxe's letters? How does he recycle the themes and conventions which predominate Foxe's narratives? Why was identifying with martyrs, as a non-martyr, so important for Wallington? The results from my research show how and why it continued to have such appeal and how Wallington handled and struggled with key features of Foxe's martyrs.

Moreover, my thesis contributes to a deepened understanding of what motivated Wallington, giving us more insight into the Puritan community. My research shows how Wallington as a commoner, an artisan and as such a non-elite member of society, who did not have a political vote, constructs his own imagined community and how he tries to make use of the ordeals of illustrious members of this community for the benefit of his own conscience.⁸⁰

In chapter 2, I will discuss how Wallington constructs his imagined community of Protestants. I will examine Foxe's idea of the community of martyrs in contrast to Wallington's imagined community of Protestants. In Wallington's lifetime, when true martyrdom hardly still existed, Wallington still feels part of the community of the godly but shifts the perspective from martyrdom to suffering more generally. In chapter 3, I will describe Wallington's account of his own suffering, and how he tries to use Foxean examples of exemplary responses to suffering and affliction. As we shall see, these templates fall short because Wallington's suffering is spiritual, and he suffers because he is aware of his sinfulness. In chapter 4, I will show how Wallington makes his imagined community and his personal account of suffering converge by using his sinfulness as a shared characteristic both of himself and of the community, and by using a Protestant version of purgatory to battle his sinfulness, which for him is a token of membership of an exclusive Protestant community.

⁷⁹ King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 1-2.

⁸⁰ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 192.

2: Wallington's Imagined Community

The cultivation of martyrdom and suffering was not a new Protestant phenomenon; it had always been part of Christianity. However, with Protestantism and particularly with Puritanism, something changed: Protestants gave priority to the individual experience of faith and the examination of one's spiritual state, rather than collective practices. Although the community of the godly remained important in Wallington's time, the loss of communal rituals impacted upon how Protestants approached pre-existing, still prominent subjects, including those of martyrdom and suffering. Wallington's notebooks provide a case in point, showing how people connected to one another, how they built and maintained their community and continued to engage with martyrdom and suffering, but also, how the existing martyrological framework offered by John Foxe in his *Book of Martyrs* was not fully appropriate anymore. Wallington's writings are particularly interesting because Wallington reiterates conventional ideas on martyrdom and suffering as they had been shaped by Foxe, thus giving us an impression of how a commoner privately applied - and often struggled with - widely shared theological conventions.

In this chapter, I will argue that in spite of its lasting impact, Foxe's community of martyrs was not fully applicable anymore in Wallington's time, and therefore Wallington shifts his perspective to include suffering more generally, rather than suffering through death at the stake as the crucial feature of this community. This way, Wallington is also able to be part of this imagined community, even though he is not a martyr in the literal sense of someone dying for his faith. Wallington broadens this community by including other non-conformists or suffering Protestants who are not martyrs, because he wants to make clear that he associates with the right cause and that he therefore also belongs to this community. He contrasts this claim to martyrdom and suffering by the godly to those outside of this community, whom he denies martyrdom and suffering for higher purposes. In other words, Wallington's texts show that suffering is a large component of the legitimacy of membership of this imagined community, which Wallington claims to be unique to the godly as true Christians.

To identify what is distinctive about this community, Wallington draws inspiration from John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, published around 90 years before Wallington wrote the notebooks discussed in this thesis, and Wallington literally copies texts from Foxe. This is exemplary for the immense influence Foxe had on subsequent

generations of Protestants. In his descriptions, Wallington bases his community on a Foxean model of the purity of his faith, martyred godly vis-à-vis enemies of faith, heroism and victimhood. Moreover, he pays attention to the suffering of Protestants who are not martyrs, thereby making suffering, rather than martyrdom, the key feature of his imagined community. His notebooks show both how Wallington shares his ideas with his family, friends and acquaintances, and how he acknowledges comparable notions in letters from others, past and present. Simultaneously, by being sensitive to the suffering of others from this community, he uses the experiences of others to declare his affinity with the cause of martyrs, which still remains the essence of Foxe's legacy.

Pure Roots

In order to appreciate how Wallington shapes his imagined community and how he relates to others in this community, it is instructive to consider how Wallington uses Foxe's legacy of martyrdom and Foxe's community of martyrs from the *Book of Martyrs*. This begins with the claim which both Foxe and Wallington make that they are heirs to the early Christian martyrs who were persecuted in Roman times. Wallington's approach is similar to Foxe's. Like Foxe, Wallington connects contemporary martyrs to the early ones, as described in the Bible. Besides, both use an earlier generation of martyrs as a frame of reference for contemporary martyrs. Foxe uses the early martyrs to compare with the martyrs about whom he writes: the Marian martyrs, persecuted under Mary I and burnt at the stake. Wallington uses not only the early martyrs but also the Marian martyrs to compare the few martyrs from his time to, and generally states the importance of suffering for the truth. Under the title "A few words of Encorgiments unto Gods Children unto Chearefull Sufferings", Wallington writes, for example:⁸¹

Looke still for what you suffer and for whom. For the Truth & for Christ, what can be so precious as truthe, not life itself all earthly things are not so vile to life, as life to truth, life is momentary, Truth eternall. Life is ours, the Truth Gods. Oh

⁸¹ BL MS 21 935, 51v.

happy purchase to give our life for truth. What can we suffer to much for Christ. He hath given his own Life for us.⁸²

John Knott argues that Foxe compares the Marian martyrs to the early Christian martyrs because these early martyrs “magnified” the Marian martyrs, and because this suggested that the Protestant reformers were inspired by the yet uncorrupted purity of the early church.⁸³ Wallington also looks back to the purity of the early church by starting *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* with the Second Epistle of John from the Bible. Wallington subsequently includes twelve letters from Marian martyrs, and various letters from other late sixteenth- and early seventeenth century Protestants before arriving at letters from and to his own direct circle. The resulting association of Wallington and his circle with earlier suffering Protestants who died for the truth, denotes the purity of Wallington’s efforts for the true faith, like it did for Foxe.

Wallington recognises that persecution of the godly has always been a central aspect of Christianity from its very start. He asks “How earely did Martyrdome come into the world The first man that dyed for Religion. Death was denounced to man as a curse, yet behold it first lights upon a saint, how soone is it altered by the mercy of that just hand which inflicted it”.⁸⁴ In other words, the saints – the godly - are the true heirs of original martyrdom, and they have the benefit of God’s mercy after death. So, Wallington continues, they should not be afraid of persecution and continue to strive for their “good course” because, he says, “feare not them which kill the body but are not able to kill thy soul”.⁸⁵

This “good course” suggests that the godly have an exemplary role and a special responsibility by “following with crosses”, in other words, to show that one is a follower of Christ by bearing affliction.⁸⁶ Although Wallington does not specify whom exactly he means by “saints”, the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains that it was a term claimed by Puritan sects for denoting “one of God's chosen people; in the New Testament, one of

⁸² BL MS 21 935, 51v. It is unclear whether these are Wallington’s thoughts or that he wrote it down after a sermon, or copied it from another source.

⁸³ John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 34-5.

⁸⁴ BL MS 21 935, 52r.

⁸⁵ BL MS 21 935, 52r.

⁸⁶ BL MS 21 935, 52r. Crosses: affliction.

the elect under the New Covenant; a member of the Christian church; a Christian”.⁸⁷ Paul Seaver states that for Wallington the term “children of God” did not denote a sect, and that he also did not necessarily see them as the elect.⁸⁸ Indeed, as will become clear throughout this chapter, Wallington saw the godly not as a separate body of believers but as the only true Christians. Yet Wallington also writes in this passage that these earlier martyrs will be judging him and his contemporaries and “our careless knowledge and unthankfulness unto God”: in spite of their exemplary role, the godly still need to exert themselves to behave properly towards God and the early martyrs have the authority to judge him and his contemporaries.⁸⁹

Foxe and Wallington’s writings have a comparable effect: they create an imagined community of believers with strong connections to past martyrs. Yet it is important to note that their goals were different. In Foxe’s time, Protestants really had a chance of ending their lives on the stake because of their faith. During Wallington’s time, a few Protestants were still executed or mutilated, but these were exceptions. The main concern of the godly in Wallington’s time was the threat of the authorities in altering the existing structure of the English church with Bishop William Laud’s reforms. As David Booy underlines, religion and politics were inseparable, and Wallington regularly discusses Laud’s unwanted reforms, because the Puritans suspected that these were meant to reintroduce Catholic elements in the English church.⁹⁰ Therefore, the threats which Wallington was so concerned with, were of a more generous religious-political nature, concerning wider developments in society, rather than a threat of him personally being burnt at the stake. Whereas Foxe wrote the *Book of Martyrs* to celebrate the return of Protestantism and exiled Protestants with the reign of Elizabeth I, Wallington was still strongly occupied by the thought of the hate and the injustice which the godly still had to deal with, and with the role the godly community should play themselves to overcome their difficulties by being more reverent and grateful to God.⁹¹

⁸⁷ “Saint, adj. and n.” 3a. *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), accessed 14 July 2021. www.oed.com

⁸⁸ Paul Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 144.

⁸⁹ BL MS 21 935, 52r.

⁹⁰ David Booy (ed.), *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654: A Selection* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 5.

⁹¹ John N. King, “Introduction,” In *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*. John Foxe and John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xix.

The Godly and the Wicked

Significantly, Wallington's imagined community is characterized not only by its pure roots but also by the continuous threat of persecution, in spite of the absence thereof. The continuous threat of persecution is also a Foxean principle in his description of the suffering inflicted on Protestants by the wicked. John King calls this "Foxe's unsubtle propagandizing and vilification of Roman Catholics as superstitious persecutors".⁹² Wallington copies this idea of persecution; his texts reveal that the wicked are the enemy of the godly not just because of their false religious opinions such as "idolatry and profainors of the Lords day", or because they are "bloody papists and malicious atheists that are enemies to God", but because they "hate and persecute the children of God".⁹³

Thus, a characteristic aspect of Foxe's and Wallington's imagined community is the opposition between the contemporary community of the godly and those "that hate and persecute the children of God". Wallington writes that in his own time, persecutors

cause & move others to hate the deere Children of God sheweing it by their mocking, taunting, reproaching with scofes and jeares. And calling them by names of peuritans, sismattical secticious, factious, troublestaites, traitors.⁹⁴

Wallington regularly withdraws into his study to pray, read the Bible and contemplate, in what he calls "meditations."⁹⁵ Upon one occasion, Wallington meditates upon "the Lord Fairefaxe, this is he that wone so many great battils and so what honour it would be to mee to have such a person at mine House: These thoughts brought to my minde many sweet heavenly meditations."⁹⁶ This leads to an extensive meditation on whom he will encounter in the afterlife. This includes not only Christ, "Abram Izake and Jaakob", relatives and minsters but also the wicked.⁹⁷ Wallington also relates the satisfaction he feels for the recognition by "the wicked our Enemies" of those they persecuted, by

⁹² John King, "Introduction.", xxvi.

⁹³ BL MS 21 935, 10r, 40r, 39r.

⁹⁴ BL MS 21 935, 39v, 40r. Sismattical: schismatic.

⁹⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 76v, 104r, 105v, 126v.

⁹⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 105r. Ferdinando Fairfax was a parliamentarian army officer. Andrew J. Hooper, "Fairfax, Ferdinando, second Lord Fairfax of Cameron (1584-1648)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 2 March 2021, www.oxforddnb.com.

⁹⁷ BL Add MS 40883, 104r.

having them exclaim: “O this is he whom we slandered had him up in court & persecuted O this is he whom I betrayed”.⁹⁸

Wallington includes various experiences and people in this one meditation which makes clear that he considers himself to be part of a community whose identity was partly built around the remembrance of religious persecution. He does this by meditating not only for himself, but also on behalf of the other godly. He writes, for example, “O here is my wife or husband” to indicate that other godly will also meet their loved ones again once they arrive in heaven.⁹⁹

God’s Protection

Another aspect to Wallington’s construction of the community of the godly is God’s protection, which is restricted to his imagined community. In spite of the perceived threat of persecution, the godly have the benefit of God’s protection. Knott notes that Foxe dwells upon the divine vengeance upon persecutors or enemies of the godly, and so does Wallington.¹⁰⁰ The *Book of Martyrs* therefore is not only a model of martyrdom and suffering; it also provides examples of God’s justice towards enemies of the faith. After a section entitled “Heavie Times upon the poore children of God”, Wallington catalogues “Examples of Gods fearefull Judgments against the wicked enemies of his church”.¹⁰¹ They die not at the hands of an enemy, but as a result of mental or physical torments through God’s intervention because they have tortured “the poore servants of God”¹⁰². Wallington thus underlines that God is on the side of the Protestants and will punish the wicked, God’s involvement confirms the “holy truth” whereas the Catholics encounter God’s enmity.¹⁰³

This distinction between the true Christian and antichristian, the godly and the wicked is as crucial for Wallington as it is for Foxe. The period of persecutions under Mary I about which Foxe writes, is an important point of reference for Wallington. Wallington gives several examples of divine retribution from Mary I’s reign, such as an instance when during a sermon, a friar who was “with open mouth rayling against

⁹⁸ BL Add MS 40883, 105r.

⁹⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 104v.

¹⁰⁰ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 37.

¹⁰¹ BL MS 21 935, 39r-40v.

¹⁰² BL MS 21 935, 42v.

¹⁰³ BL MS 21 935, 44r, 45r.

poore Christians on the sudden became speachlesse, and was caried out so from the pulpit, and not long after was found drowned in a ditch,” and a privy counsellor from Scotland who “was a sore persecutor of the poore Christians there, but ere long he fell into dispaire, and railing against their massing trumpery so died”.¹⁰⁴ Another instance is God’s punishment of Stephen Gardiner, the Catholic bishop under Mary I, when

the terrible hand of God fell on him, and he was carried from bord to bed, where hee continued fifteen daies his body miserably enflamed because hee could not expell his urine, his tongue was gratly swollne & black hanging out of his mouth most fearfully. Acts & Monuments.¹⁰⁵

In this quote, Wallington credits Foxe’s work, which he normally does not, but the many situations he quotes, exemplify the impact of the *Book of Martyrs* on Wallington’s thinking.

Those not belonging to Wallington’s community were not only the Catholics, but also those who lived their lives too frivolously. This then is where we recognise the common image of Puritanism as we still recognise it today. Wallington catalogues “many ferfull examples of Gods heavi Judgments upon those that brake his holy Sabbath day”.¹⁰⁶ This was not to be tolerated because it would lead to disorder: “take away the Sabbath and let every Man serve God when hee listeth and what will shortly become of Religion and that peace & order which God will have to be kept in this Church.”¹⁰⁷ According to Wallington,

☞ the true manner of keepeing holy the Lords day Is to rest from all the works of our calling ... we are to rest from all recreation and sports ... which doe more steale away our affections from the contemplation of heavenly things then any bodily worke or labour From grosse feeding liberall drinking of wine or

¹⁰⁴ BL MS 21 935, 44v. Booy notes that Wallington copies the following passages (45v-47v) from Henry Burton’s *A divine tragedie* which contains examples of God’s judgment on sabbath-brakers. Booy does not mention where Wallington copied the previous pages from; these pages are not included in his edition of Wallington’s texts. Booy, *Notebooks*, 122.

¹⁰⁵ BL MS 21 935, 44v. *Acts and Monuments* is the original (shortened) title of *The Book of Martyrs*.

¹⁰⁶ BL MS 21 935, 38r.

¹⁰⁷ BL MS 21 935, 21v.

strong drinke which may make us either drowsie or unapt to serve God with our hearts and minds.¹⁰⁸

Wallington dedicates quite a few pages in the beginning of *A Bundel of Marcys* to unchristian behaviour such as that of sabbath-breakers.

This kind of behaviour, which Wallington disapproves of, is a sin which he also tries to keep in check in his own attitude. He argues that one reason for doing so, is out of respect of other people's misfortunes, which again demonstrates his connection to the community of the godly. In *The Groth of a Christian*, Wallington relates an instance when

not mindeing what I had performed the day before and so either speaking idelly or delighting in one that speake idelly & so in misspending my precious time in laughing when others are morning. This sinne of mine did grive mee¹⁰⁹.

This shows that Wallington was not only severe to others, who did not keep to God's rules, but also to himself. He aims high regarding what he expects not only from others, but also from himself.

Past and Present

Wallington sustains his imagined community of true believers with a longitudinal perspective on the moral difference between the innocent godly, on the one hand, and "the wicked" with their "AntiChrist" who hate the "poor children of God" on the other hand.¹¹⁰ Wallington does so by adding contemporary examples to past ones. Under the heading "The wicked always hate the Godly and plot against them", he writes

that you may see now how Antichrist even these bloody harted papist doth plot against the poore Church of God as in 88 and that hellesh Gunpowder plott And

¹⁰⁸ BL MS 21 935, 22r. Wallington regularly draws manicules to highlight what he finds extra significant.

¹⁰⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 69r. Morning: mourning.

¹¹⁰ BL MS 21 935, 50r, 180r, 180v.

how have they layd snares for the poore Children of God, as with the reading that sinfull book of liberty.¹¹¹

In just two sentences, Wallington connects the failed invasion by the Spanish Armada in 1588 to the Gunpowder plot of 1605 and Charles I's *Book of Sports* from 1633 into a single narrative of the wicked plotting against the children of God.¹¹²

Wallington even adds an international dimension to this longitudinal perspective through his narration of the torture of Protestants in France a century earlier under King Francois I.¹¹³ Like Foxe, who "placed England Protestant sufferings against the background of the international fight with Antichrist", Wallington describes this torture as a confrontation between Catholics and Lutherans.¹¹⁴ Wallington writes that "in the time of Fraunces de Valois I King of Fraunce" a monk named John Rome was asked by a bishop to "sease upon the bodies of all that were called Lutherans his torments to fill their bootes with scalding grease and hanging their legges over a soft fire, to let them seeth to death".¹¹⁵ When he was about to be apprehended,

the cruel caitife ... fled, in whose flight he was robbed (by his owne servants) of that which by robbery he had taken from the innocents, whereupon he fell sicke of so fearfull and strange a disease that nothing could help him: so that growing loathsome, even to his frendes by reason of ulcers & virmine, he died most desparately.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ BL MS 21 935, 180v.

¹¹² BL MS 21 935, 180v. With '88' Wallington means the failed attempt by Philip II to invade England in 1588 with their fleet the *Spanish Armada*. The Gunpowder Plot was the attempt by Catholics in 1605 to blow up James I and houses of parliament with gun powder, in which Guy Fawkes was involved. The "sinfull book of liberty" is the *Book of Sports*. James I first issued this in 1618 and Charles I republished it in 1633. Puritans greatly opposed the *Book of Sports* because it allowed people to dance, erect may-poles and other recreational activities on Sundays (but only if they had attended church on Sabbath). Pauline Gregg, *King Charles I* (version 1st US ed.) (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1984), 273; Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 51; Booy, *Notebooks*, 119.

¹¹³ Under Francois I, many reformers, including John Calvin, fled France after a series of executions following upon reformer's attacks upon the Mass in public posters. In addition, Francois I had large numbers of heretics executed in his later years until his death in 1547. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 194, 198.

¹¹⁴ McCulloch, *Reformation*, 285. It is not clear whether Wallington copied this passage from another source. However, in the light of his other writings on Catholics, the fact that Wallington copies it demonstrates that he fully endorses its point of the aggressive Catholic versus the innocent Protestant.

¹¹⁵ BL MS 21 935, 42v.

¹¹⁶ BL MS 21 935, 42v.

By subsequently listing more recent “examples of Gods fearefull judgments”, from 1633-1635, Wallington attempts to prove God’s enduring and still current protection of his people by punishing their enemies.¹¹⁷

To demonstrate the opposition which the godly continue to encounter, Wallington dedicates a section in *A Bundel of Marcys* to “Scandalos and eronious Minnisters Even Ministers of Sathan and of the Church or sea of Roum”.¹¹⁸ As also mentioned above, Wallington greatly opposed Laud’s changes in the English Church, which Puritans perceived as very threatening. To underline this, Wallington includes various petitions against clergy such as one from the parishioners of Istleworth near London. This petition encompasses conventional Puritan points of view which Wallington obviously wholly agrees with: in this “humble petition” the parishioners complain about the instalment of William Grant as vicar to their parish. Grant has subsequently replaced their lecturer “Master Jammet” by “Master Bifield” who is “erroneous in opinion scandalous in life ... wholly unfitt for this sacred function”.¹¹⁹ Besides, Grant has “him selfe confeseth that he hath nothing against his [Jammet’s] life & conversation, but that he did it that he might root out all puritans there”.¹²⁰ The complaints against Grant are, among other things, that he would not read “the second service at the Communion Table ... to please the puritans” and also that Grant is concerned that the Archbishop might think “that he was a favourer of the puritans” if he would do so.¹²¹ Moreover, Grant is an opponent of marriage for the clergy, speaks “against the Doctrines of predestination”, “hath affirmed that pictures are lay mens books” and “calleth the booke of Martyrs a booke of lyes”.¹²² That the parishioners included the accusation against *The Book of Martyrs* in their petition is indicative of the huge significance for the godly of Foxe’s compilation.

For Wallington, there is another way to support this sense of community among the godly: a sense of joy following from vindication. For example, he mentions the “grate mercy of God in the delivering us from this grate Enemie of the church & Common welth ... the Earle of Strafford”.¹²³ Wallington writes extensively about the behaviour of

¹¹⁷ BL MS 21 935, 45r.

¹¹⁸ BL MS 21 935, 118v-119r.

¹¹⁹ BL MS 21 935, 118r-v.

¹²⁰ BL MS 21 935, 118v. ‘Conversation’: social behaviour (Booy, *Notebooks*, xxi).

¹²¹ BL MS 21 935, 119r.

¹²² BL MS 21 935, 119r.

¹²³ BL MS 21 935, 133r.

the first earl of Strafford and deputy of Ireland, Thomas Wentworth, in *A Bundel of Marcys*. In *The Groth of a Christian*, Wallington relates how Thomas Wentworth was beheaded “to the joy of the church of God” and quotes Proverbs 11:10: “for when the wicked perisheth the righteous rejoyce”.¹²⁴

In short, the contrast between the godly and the wicked is an essential feature of the imagined community of Protestants as Foxe and Wallington construct it. However, in Wallington’s time the contrast was not between Catholics and Protestants, but between the godly and the authorities who are officially Protestants. Wallington adds his own examples to Foxe’s examples to underline that they are still wicked. The difference between Foxe and Wallington is that Wallington stretches this community to include martyrs not only abroad, but also contemporary Protestants, whom he calls Puritans in the quotations above, and who feel threatened by the then current reforms in the church.

Heroic Martyrdom

Whereas Foxe’s martyrs, as victims of the wicked, heroically endure their death at the stake, Wallington is not always able to join heroism and victimhood together. In many instances, he does, but just as often, only victimhood gets the upper hand. Knott describes how important physical suffering is for the literature of martyrdom, because of the heroism tied in with their physical suffering: “[t]he more abuses of the flesh they endured without disavowing their faith, the greater their spiritual triumphs would seem.”¹²⁵ This heroism, thus, was of an ideological nature. John King calls the *Book of Martyrs* an “ideological construction” because Foxe’s major contribution was his ability to present polemic arguments as a compelling narrative, rather than that his accounts are necessarily truthful.¹²⁶

Although it could be argued that Wallington’s notebooks are an ideological construction as well, Wallington’s less polished writings give us an intriguing peek into his thought processes which alternate between highlighting heroic martyrdom or

¹²⁴ BL Add MS 40883, 7r; Booy, *Notebooks*, 150-1. Wentworth was charged with diverse crimes, mostly to do with various kinds of misbehaviour against English subjects such as confiscating their property, collecting revenues by use of soldiers and raising the Irish army against the English. Ronald G. Asch, “Wentworth, Thomas, first early of Strafford (1593-1641),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 10 January 2020.

¹²⁵ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 37.

¹²⁶ John N. King, “Introduction.”, xiii, xxvi-i.

victimhood. For example, Wallington relates how the Star Chamber (the English court of civil and criminal jurisdiction) severely punished his Protestant contemporaries William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick in 1637 for libel and sedition; their ears were cropped and they were “banished & sent out of the land from their wives & children to three & several places as namely the castles of Carnarvan, Cornwall & Lancaster.”¹²⁷ When Wallington discusses the sentence of William Prynne, he writes that “Master [William] Noy a joyfull spectator laugh at his sufferings and this his grat exploit he had brought to passe which divers there present observed and condemned in him”.¹²⁸ Although Noy was a Protestant and “generally considered a man of integrity”, he was also a friend of Archbishop Laud, a prosecutor of Puritans and said to have enjoyed Prynnes’ suffering.¹²⁹ Of course, we cannot tell now whether this was true; Wallington probably copied his description from another source who may have been ideologically motivated. What matters is Wallington’s emphasis on Noy’s enjoyment of Prynne’s suffering, whilst Prynne suffers quietly, and “like an harmlesse Lambe tooke all with such patience, that he not so much as once opened his mouth to let fall one word of discontent”.¹³⁰ Wallington also describes Prynne as a “poore distressed gentleman”.¹³¹

In Wallington’s texts, therefore, the heroic martyrdom which Knott describes as being so crucial to the *Book of Martyrs* seems to make place for an image of vulnerability and an emphasis on the victimhood of the godly. Notwithstanding this side to Wallington’s descriptions, a degree of heroism regularly remains an important part of the victim’s attitude. Wallington’s description of Prynne’s patience and his avoidance of negative comments displays a degree of resilience which Wallington contrasts to the enemy’s behaviour to the detriment of the latter. Apart from God’s intervention to punish this enemy for his treatment of Prynne - the “just judgment of God on him [Noy]” so that Noy dies after “miserable torture ... of voiding blood” - Noy is cruel, and does not possess such dignity and calmness as Prynne does.¹³² Wallington records that

¹²⁷ BL MS 21 935, 48r. Kenneth Gibson, “Burton, Henry (bap. 1578, d. 1647/8),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 22 December 2020.

¹²⁸ BL MS 21 935, 46r. William Noy was a lawyer and member of Lincoln’s Inn, as was Prynne. Booy, *Notebooks*, 122.

¹²⁹ BL MS 21 935, 46r. James S. Hart Jr., “Noy [Noye], William.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 11 August 2021.

¹³⁰ BL MS 21 935, 46v.

¹³¹ BL MS 21 935, 46v.

¹³² BL MS 21 935, 46v.

hearing there that his disease of voiding blood was then publicly known and talked of in London, he was vexed at it that he fell out with his physicians and servants, railing on them like a franticke man as if they had betrayed him and disclosed his secrets.¹³³

Noy does not perish heroically, and neither does he act with Prynne's patience, with the effect that Prynne's composure appears all the more brave.

The contrast between the innocent Protestant and the cruel enemy underlines Prynne's heroism as well as Prynne's moral victory. The passage of the cropping of Prynne's ears and scarring of his cheeks demonstrates this even more strongly and is worth quoting at length:

Now the executioner being come, to seare him and cut off his eares Mr Prynne speake these words to him, 'Come friend, come burne me cut mee, I feare it not, I have learned to feare the fire of hell and not what man can doe unto mee. Come seare mee seare mee I shalle beare in my body the markes of the Lord Jesus,' which the bloody executioner performed with extraordinary cruelty, heating his iron twice to burne one cheeke and cut of his eares so close that he cut off a peice of his cheeke. At which exquisit torture hee never moved with his body, or so much as changed his countenance, but still lookt up as well as he could towards heaven with a smiling countenance, even to the astonishment of all the beholders. And uttering (assoone as the executioner had done) this heavenly sentence, 'The more I am beate downe, the more am I lift up.' And returning from the execution in a boate made (as I heare) these two verses by the way on the two characters branded on his cheeks: S.L. Laud DS SCARS / Triumphant I returne, my face descries / LAUDS scorching SCARS, Gods gratefull sacrifice.¹³⁴

Prynne acts heroically and morally superior to Noy in various ways. Firstly, Prynne turns the other cheek: he does not debase himself to an equally nasty response to the wilful cruelty of the executioner. Secondly, Prynne behaves in a heroically brave manner by not fearing the mutilation; he even welcomes it. Thirdly, Prynne says that he has

¹³³ BL MS 21 935, 46v.

¹³⁴ BL MS 21 935, 61v.

learned to fear hell more than he does man, implying that this is something the executioner has not learned, so that Prynne is superior to him morally, as well as implying that man cannot really hurt him because only God can. In addition, Prynne, known to have been “notoriously obstreperous”, is here aligned with Christ as well as identified as one of God’s flock through the imagery of “an harmlesse Lambe” - not only through the literal comparison with a lamb but also as a result of his patient comportment, acceptance of his fate and quiet suffering, in great contrast to Noy.¹³⁵

Apart from the sensationalism of the trial of Prynne, Burton and Bastwick, what would have been the specific appeal of this case for Wallington to write it down in his notebook? Wallington is in no such position as Prynne is, so he cannot bring heroism to bear on his own experiences with an enemy. Nevertheless, he shares with Foxe the ideas of the division between the godly and the wicked and God’s retribution. In describing the sentence imposed on Prynne, Burton and Bastwick, Wallington stresses the suffering of these “three worthy sarvants of God”: “And of their patient and comfort they had in their bitterest of their sufferings their persecutors could inflict upon them I did then at that time of their sufferings wright it downe after another that did heare them at their sufferings”.¹³⁶ After describing “Gods fearfull judgments” of those who treat Protestants violently, Wallington writes: “Thus you have seen many heavie judgments of God upon those that hate and persecute the children of God and many more you may see if you reade in the booke of Marters & of in other books of many men of great reckoning and worthy by their worldly procedings.”¹³⁷

For Wallington, therefore, this case is reassuring because it proves that God will punish “those that hate and persecute the children of God”, as he has done previously, and thereby protect his people.¹³⁸ Wallington sees his contemporaries as part of a tradition of Protestant martyrs; he directly aligns them with Foxe’s martyrs and presents them as victims of the authorities, just like the Marian martyrs were. By relating their experiences at length, Wallington associates with their cause, the cause of the imagined community of the children of God. By calling them “children of God”

¹³⁵ Hart, “Noy [Noye], William”, accessed 17 November 2020. Hart writes that Noy was generally considered to be an enemy of the Puritans, and that he is indeed reported to have enjoyed the sight of Prynne in the stocks. Of course, we do not know whether this was transmitted that way for propagandistic purposes.

¹³⁶ BL MS 21 935, 48r.

¹³⁷ BL MS 21 935, 48v, 49r.

¹³⁸ BL MS 21 935, 48v, 49r.

Wallington proves that along with them, he is morally on the right side; in contrast to those rendering the verdict.

Victimhood

When non-martyrological Protestant suffering occurs, Wallington does not include the aspect of heroism, nor does he always focus on divine retribution but rather, on victimhood. In the case of violence against Protestants as a result of the Irish rebellion in 1641, Wallington describes the Protestants not heroically at all, but merely as victims. For example, Wallington writes in *A Bundel of Marcys* about “the misery & wofull condistion of our bretheren in Ireland”, the “barbarous inhumanity” with which “the papists ... oppresse and persecute the protestants there” and how “the dayly bemonings of the poore oppressed protestants would almost pierce any Christians heart to heare them” in 1641.¹³⁹ In addition, he catalogues cruelties from the rebels upon the English in Ireland, such as then the rebels “went to the house of an Englishman where they slew his wife an ancient woman & ravished her daughter in a most barbarious manner that ever was knowen”.¹⁴⁰ In addition, Wallington relates “the first plot in Ireland in 1630” when a certain “Marke Davo” marched to a town “most inhabited with Irish” and “with his forces the gates were presently opened but as sounne as he was entered they presently massacred the protestants” and mutilated the minister.¹⁴¹ Wallington also includes parts of a further unspecified letter from Ireland, which reads:

our miseries are unspeakable but like to increase if not prevented by sudden a provided death But our only woe is, that you are like to suffer with us and that very soone, if some speedy course be not taken for the stopping of the great multitude of Irish papist which daily flocke from hence into this Kingdom under pretenc to assist his Majestie against the puritans.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ BL MS 21 935, 164v. Wallington’s general concern for the Protestants would become highly personal later that year when Grace’s brother Zachariah Rampaigne, a wealthy planter, was killed in Ireland, of which Wallington gives a heartbreaking account (BL MS 21 935, 228r-229r). Zachariah Rampaigne was killed by rebels in the winter of 1641. Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, 83.

¹⁴⁰ BL MS 21 935, 164v.

¹⁴¹ BL MS 21 935, 184r.

¹⁴² BL MS 21 935, 248r.

Even more sinister are Wallington's descriptions of the "bloody life & curell treacherous plots of the Lord Macquire in Ireland".¹⁴³ "Many & evill hath the dayes bin of those poor protestant people in Ireland", writes Wallington,

a sad part wherein was slaine one hundred fifty foure thousands of poore distressed souls: Oh how many children have they buried alive, they have fed upon the flesh of innocent protestants boasting of their cruelty, saying they never faired better then when they suckt the blood of infants and fed upon the flesh of protestants.¹⁴⁴

They were found guilty and "drawen hanged & quartered and their heads set on London Bridg & their quarters on the gats of the city", but Wallington does not mention the role of God in this punishment.¹⁴⁵ Powerlessness and vulnerability, rather than heroism, are the the key features of the Protestants in these anecdotes.

Nevertheless, Wallington does try to have faith in divine intervention and in a Foxean belief in his moral superiority. In the following instance, he presents himself as a victim of derision by "the wicked" when he meditates upon meeting the saints, prophets and apostles in the afterlife:

These medidations tho with teeres filled my soule with joy in thinking that will be then ... When the wicked our Enemies shall se us They shall admier and shall be vexed with horrible feare and shall be amazed for our wonderfull deliverance And they shall change their minds & sigh for grieve of mind and say within themselves This is he whom wee sometime had in derision and in a parable of reproche this is he that we mocked and called him ovritum hippocrit crop eard Round Head.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ BL MS 21 935, 267v.

¹⁴⁴ BL MS 21 935, 267v.

¹⁴⁵ BL MS 21 935, 267v.

¹⁴⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 104v. The 'roundheads' were the supporters of parliament, so called because of their hairstyle, whilst the royalists were called 'cavaliers'. In Wallington's text, Wallington has struck through a second sentence "When the wicked our Enemis shall looke at us with grief of mind and admier saying".

In this passage, Wallington suggests that for the wicked, justice will come in the afterlife. Although Wallington does not relate this to his examples of heroic martyrdom, the scene which Wallington describes, justifies his more general confidence in reciprocity for the godly through God's justice and retribution. The fact that God will deliver Wallington exemplifies his moral superiority opposite the enemy, whilst as a form of retribution, the enemy will be vexed by remorse about their treatment of Wallington during his life.

Suffering and Wallington's Imagined Community

Whereas Foxe focuses specifically on the suffering of martyrs, Wallington sees suffering as an essential characteristic of all true Christians – and true Christians are the Protestants sharing his convictions. Therefore, in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, Wallington expands upon the imagined community of martyrs by including epistles written by non-conformist clergy who note in their letters the importance of suffering. We find this idea, for example, in the spiritual letters from the nonconformist preacher Edward Dering (c. 1540-1576).¹⁴⁷ In a number of his letters, Dering writes about the benefits of suffering during life, such as in his letter to "Mistris Hall": "the momentary afflictions of this world they are not worth of the glorie that shall be reveled unto us. Or what can be great if we say with the Apostle Bretheren rejoyce in affliction rejoyce exceedingly when ye fall into many and great tribulations".¹⁴⁸ Wallington clearly draws inspiration from such letters, for he writes in *The Groth of a Christian* about the function of tribulation:

God Children ought not to be discouraged, for this tribulation that we meet with in the world shall not hurt us for the Lord Christ hath overcome it. It is a grate fault in Christians and a disgrace in him to be cast down with crosses in the world because the world cannot hinder us from that comfort & peace we have from Christ.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Like Wallington, Dering also possessed a great concern for the nature of sin. Patrick Collinson, "Dering, Edward (c. 1540-1576)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 12 April 2021.

¹⁴⁸ BL Sloane MS 922, 27r-v.

¹⁴⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 92v.

Both Dering and Wallington use plural pronouns such as “us” and “we”: they generalise affliction and tribulation as a mark of the Christian community.

Because of the importance of this community, Wallington and his co-religionists try to see the suffering of members of their imagined community as more significant than their own suffering. In *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, for example, Wallington includes several letters from his brother-in-law Livewell Rampaigne, the brother of his wife Grace. Rampaigne writes to Wallington about the miseries befalling the people in French town of La Rochelle – where Charles I sent regiments to support the Huguenots, only to be besieged by the French - to tell Wallington that the tribulations of the people there are much worse than their own.¹⁵⁰ Rampaigne says that he and Wallington might tend to think that God treats them harshly, yet that it should teach them cheerfulness because their situation is still not as miserable as that in La Rochelle: “you doe apply there crosses to yours, their losse to yours, you may esely discern by how many degrees their greefe exceeds yours”.¹⁵¹ Next, Rampaigne refers to the fact that Wallington has just buried his own son: “it greeved me much to heare of his death whom you had most cause tenderly to love”.¹⁵² This comparison of personal loss to the fate of God’s people elsewhere, then, is an attempt to make Wallington’s grief more bearable. Although he does not include his own response to this letter, Wallington expresses a similar viewpoint in *The Groth of a Christian*: “Let us be thankfull for Gods favour how littel have we suffered in regard of others of our bretheren”: Wallington tries to support the view that his own suffering is indeed inferior to the suffering of others.¹⁵³ The suffering of the community then seems to be a point of reference for Wallington and others in his direct network which helps them to assess their own suffering.

Conclusion

Wallington is greatly inspired by Foxe’s community of martyrs. He broadens the borders of this community to include non-martyrs, so that this imagined community becomes an imagined community of all Protestants. Wallington actively constructs his

¹⁵⁰ Gregg, *King Charles I*, 164-5.

¹⁵¹ BL Sloane MS 922, 78v-79r.

¹⁵² BL Sloane MS 922, 78v-79r.

¹⁵³ BL Add MS 40883, 185v.

imagined godly community by taking Foxe's martyrs as his exemplars and including them into this community, as well as contemporary non-conformists and other suffering Protestants. The ensuing imagined community is wider than his direct network of kin, fellow parishioner, neighbour and friend, in which Wallington is also strongly involved. Furthermore, Wallington's community of Protestants is an imagined community because it is a limited community: it encompasses Protestants, and excludes the wicked and the ungodly. It is imagined, because Wallington includes those whom he does not know personally.

Wallington pays tribute to Foxe's heritage by copying Foxe's focus on the pure roots of the Protestants, the contrast between the godly and the wicked, and the heroism of martyrs, who died for the highest cause achievable, namely God's truth. Wallington continues to contrast Foxe's basic division between the goodness, righteousness and innocence of those belonging to his imagined community to the evil, sin and guilt of those outside of this community. Yet because the suffering of Protestants often does not involve literal martyrdom of dying at the stake, Wallington is not always able to sustain the heroism perspective. Instead, in many cases he foregrounds the victimhood of the Protestants, rather than their heroism in the face of death.

Foxe's model gives Wallington and his peers clarity and purpose for their own non-heroic suffering not only through its black-and-white battle between the godly and the wicked and the need to be heroic, but also through the message of the inescapability of suffering. This leads to an innovation to Foxe's martyrological model on Wallington's part: Wallington extends the borders of the imagined community not only by including non-martyrs, but also by shifting the focus from physical martyrdom to other kinds of suffering. Even more than suffering at the stake, Wallington sees suffering more generally as the common denominator characterising membership of his imagined community. At the same time, Wallington and his correspondents consider the suffering of the community as more important than the suffering of the individual – unless this individual is a martyr. This indicates the importance they attach to the community, and it also expresses their conviction that Protestants were always to be victims.

Significantly, by associating with martyrs and suffering Protestants, Wallington is able to be a legitimate member of this community himself, which not only helps him to situate his suffering in a meaningful context, but also offers a form of protection. The revenge of God on the wicked implies that firstly, meaningful suffering was a

prerogative of the godly, and secondly, that God offered protection to his people by punishing the wicked and the ungodly. This implies that Wallington's suffering, too, could be revenged by God if necessary: membership of this community thus offers a form of safety.

The *Book of Martyrs* served not only to provide models for Protestant suffering and martyrdom, but also to shape images of the enemy and their perceived just deserve. This way, Wallington presents suffering as an instrument to distinguish the godly from the wicked. An important distinction between the suffering of the godly and the suffering of the wicked is that Wallington denies the wicked any meaningful suffering. The godly suffer because of the cruelty of an enemy, which is a way to die for God's truth, whereas the wicked, including unbelievers who were not violent towards the godly but only towards God by not being obedient, suffer as a result of God's intervention. This is also a different kind of godly interference than when non-Catholics behave in an unchristian manner: in those cases God's punishment demonstrates the importance of the proper rules which Christians should adhere to.

Foxe's model thus helps to explain atrocities of times past and present, but the godly could also suffer from causes not inflicted by an enemy. In this case, the godly saw their suffering as an intervention by God, in the form of a trial or instruction. Although Wallington associates himself with the suffering of others, including martyrs, in reality these are different kinds of suffering: suffering inflicted by an enemy, and suffering more directly caused by God as a form of trial or instruction. Wallington was truly haunted by an all-pervading conviction of his sinfulness, but did Foxe's legacy offer him sufficient structure and comfort to handle this? In the next chapter, I will analyse how Wallington tries to battle this inner enemy, again using suffering as an instrument, in those cases to overcome this sinfulness.

3: Wallington's Suffering

In the previous chapter, we have seen that Wallington presents the suffering of the godly as inflicted by an enemy. Wallington, however, also lived out another conflict: the battle with his own sinfulness. Apart from conceiving the imagined community more widely than the one that emerges from Wallington's copies of Foxe's letters, a major difference between Foxe and Wallington is that Wallington also writes extensively about his own suffering, which was often caused or aggravated by his feelings of unworthiness and sinfulness, rather than an external enemy.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Wallington tries to use Foxean templates of responses to suffering to produce his personal account of suffering in his efforts to achieve spiritual growth, which was one of the chief theological aims of the godly. However, Wallington has difficulties applying the existing models because they relate to the physical suffering of martyrdom, whereas Wallington's suffering is largely of a spiritual nature, and not caused by an external enemy. Although John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* passed on to subsequent generations the ideal responses to suffering, Wallington's personal contemplations demonstrate the shortcomings of this approach in these different circumstances.

A crucial difference between Wallington and his martyrological examples taken from Foxe, is that the martyrs had an external enemy who caused their suffering. Even though their suffering was providential – ordained by God - the martyrs could still blame their enemy for their suffering. Wallington does not have such an external enemy, at least not personally, so he sees his suffering as resulting from his own flaws, especially his sinfulness.

Another important difference between Foxe and Wallington is that Foxe's collection of letters served a different purpose than Wallington's very personal writings. Foxe consciously shaped the *Book of Martyrs*, based on various sources including letters, into a persuasive narrative of evil versus innocence.¹⁵⁴ Wallington's objectives were different: he wrote *The Groth of a Christian* to record his spiritual progress, also for the benefit of others, included the letters in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* "to instruct and advise, some to reprove and admonish. Some are sweete and comfortable & some

¹⁵⁴ John N. King, "Introduction," in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*. John Foxe and John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xxvi.

are to stir up to praise and thankfulness. They be all very usefull & profitable".¹⁵⁵ *A Bundel of Marcys* was intended to make the reader "Behold and stand amased and wonder at the exceeding great patience & long suffering of a righteous & a just God toward a wicked sinfull parvarse people of England."¹⁵⁶

In spite of the different aims of Foxe and Wallington, there are two dominant convictions from Foxe's martyrs which Wallington reiterates: the importance of welcoming suffering with joy, and seeing affliction as an instructive experience or a trial by God. Although most of the personal suffering which Wallington discloses is not of a physical nature, but of a spiritual kind, Wallington tries to understand his suffering and substantiate it by applying the martyrological frameworks as monumentalized by Foxe for the Marian martyrs.

In *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, Wallington copies several letters from the *Book of Martyrs* in which the martyrs express their joy at suffering, or their idea that suffering is a form of trial or instructive message from God. The martyrs mention their joy at suffering for the truth and at being united with Christ. John Knott argues that Foxe "celebrate[s] a new kind of protestant saint who seems beyond human weakness at the approach of death" and states that "[p]rofessing that one was merry, even demonstrating this, was part of the unwritten script"; this joy then expressed the willingness to exchange life on earth for eternal life.¹⁵⁷ Robert Oswald describes how Wallington, in what Oswald defines as Wallington's "early period", already wrote about "Fatherly correction" in his earliest surviving notebook from 1624, when he was ill, seeing bodily affliction as having the purpose of overcoming sin and following the will of God.¹⁵⁸ Besides, Oswald explains that both sermons and the Bible sustained Wallington's ideas about "the benefits of affliction" and that especially later in life, Wallington was convinced that "affliction was a tool of God's discipline".¹⁵⁹

I will situate these convictions in the context of the absence of an enemy as well as spiritual growth which the godly attached so much meaning to. It then becomes clear that for Wallington, the high morals of his religious convictions regarding the positive

¹⁵⁵ BL Add MS 408834r, BL Sloane MS 922, 2r.

¹⁵⁶ BL MS 21 935, 2r.

¹⁵⁷ John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 82.

¹⁵⁸ Robert M. Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement in the Life of the Seventeenth Century London Artisan, Nehemiah Wallington*, PhD diss. (University of Edinburgh, 2011), 4, 120-1.

¹⁵⁹ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 4, 122, 124.

purpose of affliction, and his daily reality with its hardships and spiritual anxiety, did not always match. This will become particularly apparent when we contrast Wallington's convictions about affliction to the convictions of Foxe's martyrs, which were a great source of inspiration for him besides the sermons and the Bible which Oswald discusses.

Intriguingly, John Knott states that Foxe sometimes consciously leaves out spiritual struggles in his idealized stories, although the *Book of Martyrs* still "as a whole gives at least intermittent evidence of spiritual struggles", yet Wallington does not copy these passages into his notebooks.¹⁶⁰ This suggests that for Wallington, this was not the essence of the martyrs' letters, even though he highlights his own spiritual struggles. Rather, Wallington concentrates on the consolation which the martyrs' stories offer through their joyful suffering and endurance.

I will first look into Wallington's relationship to martyrdom. Next, I will examine the ideal responses to suffering as expressed in Wallington's copies of letters from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and the meaning of suffering and affliction for Wallington and his peer believers. After that, I will examine how Wallington and his peers try to apply the "unwritten script", as Knott calls it, of joyful affliction and affliction as trial or instruction, to events in their own lives.¹⁶¹

Wallington and Martyrdom

Because Wallington's life was never threatened, his faith was tested in a different way than that Foxe's martyrs was. This raises the question whether Wallington considered himself to be a martyr nevertheless. The answer to this question is ambiguous. On the one hand, Wallington fantasizes about being imprisoned like a martyr: he describes how, after having had a dream about "Lord Fairfax", he meditates about meeting others in the life to come, exclaiming "O here is my fellow prisoner & fellow Marter which were filed with joy in our gratest tryalls", the word "fellow" suggesting that he feels himself to be a martyr, too.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 46.

¹⁶¹ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 82.

¹⁶² BL Add MS 40883, 104v. Ferdinando Fairfax was a parliamentarian army officer. Andrew J. Hooper, "Fairfax, Ferdinando, second Lord Fairfax of Cameron (1584-1648)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 2 March 2021, www.oxforddnb.com.

At the same time, Wallington creates some distance between himself and Foxe's martyrs or those receiving physical punishment in his own days. Whereas Wallington's reference to his contemporary John Bradford, whose ears were cropped, as "sarvant of God", which is still a rather generic term which could also apply to non-martyrs, Wallington refers to the Marian martyr John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, as "martyr of Jesus Christ".¹⁶³ This sets Hooper apart from Wallington, who could not literally claim to be a victim of the authorities. As Knott argues, victims of the authorities were able to demonstrate "the limitations of the power of church or state to control the subversive spirit" by their indifference to their punishments.¹⁶⁴ Wallington did not have this opportunity.

Besides, by drawing attention to the physical suffering of his exemplars, which he did not undergo himself, Wallington highlights the contrast between himself and them. In *A Bundel Marcys*, for example, Wallington refers to the speech of his contemporary Henry Burton, punished for libel and sedition, as "Mr Burtons most heavenly and most comfortable speech, which hee made at the time of his suffering", thus stressing the weight of the moment and the composure of Burton in the prospect of having his ears cropped.¹⁶⁵ This is in stark contrast to Wallington's afflictions, which were not caused by the authorities nor involved physical mutilation. Nevertheless, Wallington refers to martyrdom in idealising terms when he writes "Oh glorious condition of Martyrs, whom conformmitie in death hath made like their savior in blessednesse, whose honour is to attend him forever", this glorious state being an ideal which he would never achieve himself.¹⁶⁶

Notwithstanding this contrast between himself and earlier martyrs, Wallington cultivates the key feature of martyrdom: the importance of suffering for God as a result of affliction. Wallington's suffering is at the core of his self-examination; indeed, suffering is so important because it is the way to achieve assurance of faith. At one moment, Wallington is worried about having to pay his debts, for which he lacks the money because he has not received payment from a customer in his woodturning shop.

¹⁶³ BL Sloane MS 922, 14v, 11v, 19v. Bradford was burnt at the stake for heresy. D. Andrew Penny, "Bradford, John (c. 1510-1555)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 9 December 2020. Hooper was imprisoned for his "radical protestant views". D.G. Newcombe, "Hooper, John (1495x1500-1555)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 18 February 2021, www-oxforddnb-com.

¹⁶⁴ Knott. *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ BL MS 21 935, 63r.

¹⁶⁶ BL MS 21 935, 51r.

He writes how he prefers to be afflicted rather than not to be confronted by affliction at all, because through trial he can know for sure that he has faith. Besides, he writes: “how often have I prayed unto the Lord not only for grace: but also to make it knowen unto me that I have grace.”¹⁶⁷ This suggests that in undergoing trial and affliction, assurance of faith is as important to Wallington as is overcoming sin through trial.

However, because Wallington is not a martyr and does not have an enemy, Wallington is greatly preoccupied with his suffering which results from feelings of unworthiness and sinfulness. For example, Wallington describes in *The Groth of a Christian* how he is about to have supper after a day in a “sad condition” in which he has difficulties fulfilling his religious duties; he is plagued by “distempred thoughts and unprofitableness under duty”.¹⁶⁸ Then, he realises that he is “so vile & unprofitable a sarvand” that he tells God that it would be just for him to be struck dead and be sent to hell, but “at that instant I did see free grace and the inconceivable love of my Lord in Christ in presarveing mee so vile a wretch and in providing such sweet creturs to refresh me that am so unworthy”.¹⁶⁹ Turning to God, asking why he is “become as other men: In regard of dutys”, God answers him by way of his conscience that he needs to perform his duties “out of contience in obedience unto mee” instead of “out of use & costom”.¹⁷⁰

Significantly, although his neglect makes him exceedingly sad, this message from God brings him reassurance; he writes that “with these bitter teers much comfort came flowing into my sad soule” because of the “assurance by this that I am his childe In that I hate that which he hats and love that dearely which he lovs”.¹⁷¹ In this instance, the ideal of properly serving God and the reality of thoroughly understanding and sensing how to do this, seem to converge. Wallington is capable of reassuring himself, but this is not always the case, especially when he tries to force himself into the mould of joyful suffering or seeing affliction as a form of trial or instruction.

¹⁶⁷ BL Add MS 40883, 112v.

¹⁶⁸ BL Add MS 40883, 100r.

¹⁶⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 100r.

¹⁷⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 100v.

¹⁷¹ BL Add MS 40883, 100v.

The Martyrs' Joyful Suffering

Wallington is inspired by Foxe's martyrs in his attempts to approach his own suffering joyfully. One of the first letters from the *Book of Martyrs* which Wallington copies in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* is a letter by Laurence Saunders, who was among the first to be persecuted under Mary I.¹⁷² Saunders mentions his cheer in the prospect of dying a martyr's death. From prison, he writes to his wife Joanna: "I am merry and I trust I shall be merry amongst the teeth of all the divels of hell, I utterly refuse my selfe and resigne my selfe unto my Christ".¹⁷³ This letter is followed by letters from other Marian martyrs who not only they claim to be joyful, they also urge their family and friends to share their joy.

Finding joy in suffering was a convention which those punished still insist upon in Wallington's time, almost a century after Foxe. In *A Bundel of Marcys*, Wallington relates the trials of William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick in 1637. In spite of their ear-cropping and banishment, Burton "looked towards the other pillary, and making a signe with his hand, cheerfully called to Dr Bastwicke & Mr Prynne asking them how they did, who answered, very well."¹⁷⁴ Further on, Wallington returns to this event:

Dr Bastwicke and Mr Burton first meeting, they did close on in the others armes three times with as much expressions of love as might be. Rejoycing that they mett at such a place upon such and occasion, and that God had so highly honoured them as to call them forth to suffer for his glorious truth.

Wallington furthermore relates Bastwick's speech in which he says that God has "filled our hearts with gratter (joy and) comfort then our shame or contempt can be."¹⁷⁵

The letters by Wallington's contemporary Christopher Love, executed in 1651, and his wife Mary, which they exchanged in the days before Christopher's execution,

¹⁷² Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 34. Saunders was executed for heresy in 1555 when he refused to give up preaching. John Foxe was not the first to publish Saunders's letters in *The Book of Martyrs* in 1583, Miles Coverdale had already published a large number of them in 1564. Tom Betteridge, "Saunders, Lawrence (d. 1555)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 21 December 2020.

¹⁷³ BL Sloane MS 922, 8v.

¹⁷⁴ BL MS 21 935, 64r.

¹⁷⁵ BL MS 21 935, 59r.

also emphasise the aspect of joy in dying for Christ.¹⁷⁶ Christopher expresses great confidence in his election and writes about the usefulness of affliction as a reason for his joy. Mary writes to her imprisoned husband about the joy she, too, feels, because his execution day is the day that he will be “married to [his] redeemer”.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, she compares the final blow of his beheading to a caress from God, calling it “thy Fathers stroke”, and focuses on the life afterwards, where they will be free from cruelty by the wicked.¹⁷⁸

In his narrative of his own suffering, Wallington clearly draws inspiration from the people whose letters he includes in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, and tries to approach his own suffering cheerfully as well. In a section entitled “A few words of Encorgiments unto Gods Children unto Chearefull Sufferings” in *A Bundel of Marcys*, Wallington writes, a few pages before his description of how Henry Burton, John Bastwick and William Prynne were jointly put on trial:

Nature hath made you mortall, none but an enemie can make you a Martyr. You must die though they will not, you cannot die for Christ but by them ... Oh glorious condition of Martyrs, whom conformmitie in death hath made like their savior in blessednesse, whose honour is to attend him forever. Whom they have joyed to imitate, what are these which are araied in long white robes and whence come they. These and they which come out of grate tribulation, and washed their long robs, and have made their robs white in the bloud of the lamb.¹⁷⁹

Wallington here extensively dwells on the joys of martyrdom. Wallington also describes the enemy’s instrumental role in dying for Christ and the idea of exchanging the earthly prison for heaven, “goeing from a prison to a palace”, as Christopher puts it in his letter to his wife Mary, and Mary’s idea of the role of the enemy in becoming a martyr.¹⁸⁰ The

¹⁷⁶ Love opposed the republican regime and was executed in 1651 for plotting to bring Charles II to the throne; Presbyterians immediately used these letters to hail Love as a Protestant martyr. E.D. Vernon, “Love, Christopher (1618-1651),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 2 August, 2020; Rachel Weil, “Love [née Stone], Mary (fl. 1639-1660),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 24 November 2020. According to Seaver, Wallington was also a Presbyterian. Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, 173. Presbyterians wanted a different form of church government, with presbyters instead of bishops. John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 1998), 35.

¹⁷⁷ BL Sloane MS 922, 192v.

¹⁷⁸ BL Sloane MS 922, 192 v-193r.

¹⁷⁹ BL MS 21 935, 51v. Wallington quotes from Matthew 16:25 and Revelation 7:13-14.

¹⁸⁰ BL Sloane MS 922, 192v-193r, 195v.

fact that Christopher and Mary wrote this to each other some years after Wallington wrote this in *A Bundel of Marcys*, as well as the fact that Wallington probably copied this text from another unspecified source, suggests that this approach to suffering was common among non-conformist Protestants.

Wallington, and his correspondents, too, insist upon the importance of joyful suffering in their own afflictions and tragedies. It is remarkable that they should do so, given the fact that there were no widespread persecutions anymore in Wallington's time. Although Wallington and his affiliates saw plenty of reason for portraying the Protestants as a suffering people due to the Laudian reforms, this does not sufficiently explain the depth of their personal suffering. In the next section, I will discuss how Wallington tries to approach his suffering joyfully and what his suffering actually consists of.

Wallington's Joyful Suffering

In contrast to Foxe's martyrs, Wallington has more difficulty approaching his suffering joyfully. It was Wallington's intention to draw inspiration from his collection of letters in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*; in his preface he writes that these letters "be all very useful to admonish and to comfort the troubled spirit".¹⁸¹ This means that Wallington felt the need both to reprove and to comfort himself and that he found the contents of these letters useful for this purpose. As Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen observes, "[f]or Wallington, affliction refers to a wide gamut of experiences, ranging from physical illness to financial adversity."¹⁸² Indeed, Wallington writes about affliction:

The corrections of God, the persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the malice of enemies, the contempt of the proud, the perfidiousnesse of false friends, the torture of the body even unto the death if God call us to it.

We should count it no strang thing to lie under affliction 1 Pet 1111 12 but rather that whereunto we ware ordained of old, namelie to be like Jesus Christ in affliction, that we might be like him in glory yea we must esteeme it as the beatten path which God hath laid out for all his children to enter into heaven by:

¹⁸¹ BL Sloane MS 922, 5v.

¹⁸² Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "'Never Better': Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5.1 (2018), 25.

Act xiiii 11 22 Timm 111. Knowing this that our light afflictions, which is but for a moment worketh for us a farre more excellent & eternall weight of glory.¹⁸³

Wallington stresses the necessity of affliction for the opportunity this offers to be with Christ. Besides, he sees affliction as useful because it is the way to heaven. Van Dijkhuizen calls the physical sufferings of Christ and of Christian martyrs “the gold standard of all suffering.”¹⁸⁴ This is clearly also how Wallington and his fellow believers see it.

Like Foxe’s martyrs, Wallington also aims to integrate a sense of joy in suffering into his account of his suffering. His peers, too, declare to experience a sense of joy when they suffer, even though they suffer not because of an enemy. For example, in a letter which Wallington introduces as “sent unto mee (Nehemiah Wallington) from my wives brother (Livewell Rampaigne) when the hand of God in sicknesse was in my family in 1625”, Rampaigne addresses Wallington’s suffering, because Wallington’s wife - Rampaigne’s sister - was severely ill. In Rampaigne’s words, she was under God’s “correcting hand” and Rampaigne feared, at the time of writing, that God had “taken her to himselfe”.¹⁸⁵ After Wallington and Grace already lost a daughter, which Rampaigne acknowledges by writing “your daughter is dead and I feare her mother a losse doubled upon an indulgent father and a loving husband”, Wallington must have been greatly worried by his wife’s illness.¹⁸⁶ By acknowledging Wallington’s “afflictions” which he must “compare ... with the heavie crosses which have befallen many prophets, Apostles, Saintes and sarvants of God in scripture”, Rampaigne suggests that Wallington’s worry about and potential loss of his wife are still unequal to the physically violent deaths of, among others, the apostles mentioned in the Bible.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ BL MS 21 935, 52v. 1 Peter 4, verse 12-13 reads: “Dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is among you to prove you, as though some strange thing were come unto you / But rejoyce, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall appear, ye may be glad and rejoyce.” *1599 Geneva Bible* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation), www.biblegateway.com, accessed on 12 August 2021.

¹⁸⁴ Van Dijkhuizen, “‘Never Better,’” 13.

¹⁸⁵ BL Sloane MS 922, 71r.

¹⁸⁶ BL Sloane MS 922, 71v.

¹⁸⁷ There is a chance that Rampaigne addresses Grace’s afflictions, rather than Wallington’s. This is not entirely clear from the letter. However, since the letter is addressed to Wallington, who was clearly distressed, and the ‘instructional’ paragraph is clearly directed at Wallington, I assume that Rampaigne is referring to Wallington’s concern and grief about his wife.

Apart from the fact that Foxe wrote for a different purpose, and in different circumstances, Van Dijkhuizen reminds us that the medium and its concomitant rhetorical conventions matter: because Burton, for example, played out his martyrdom in public, he was able to draw on tropes and themes associated with martyrdom.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, because Wallington's contemporaries Burton and Love were physically punished by the authorities, they could still make use of martyrological models of suffering to give meaning to their own mutilation and death.

Wallington has more difficulty experiencing the same joy the martyrs profess to feel, when he is confronted with affliction himself, and sometimes sees it as an incentive for learning rather than as a joyful occurrence. In *The Groth of a Christian*, Wallington writes about the troubles of his conscience and expresses gratitude rather than joy:

my contience doth chide & accuse mee continually ... this accuseing contience is as it were a little hell on earth Yet I see & finde abundance of Gods marcy's to me in this, in that the Lord will not let me sleepe & snort in any sine and so goe smoothly & quiete to hell (as others doe) but my God lay as it ware thorns and bryers in my way.¹⁸⁹

Wallington sees the way his conscience troubles him as directed by God, who does this to help him in seeing the need of Christ. For Wallington, this is one of God's great mercies, as is the fact that "the Lord doth cause this contience of mine to checke me & shew me all the filthy basse corruption that lies in my polluted heart".¹⁹⁰

A meaningful part of Wallington's narrative of his suffering is that Wallington attempts to see affliction as "partaking in saint's sufferings" which is a way for him to become more martyr-like.¹⁹¹ For example, he relates that "for troubles & afflictions which God saith are not only good but best for us, and commandeth us to count is exceeding joy when you fall into divers temptations, and rejoyce that you are partakers of saints sufferings", even though, he writes, "then I mourne & complaine & am sorrowful as if some strang thing had befallen mee" because of his "palsie shaking hand of faith"

¹⁸⁸ Van Dijkhuizen, "Never Better", 34.

¹⁸⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 32v.

¹⁹⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 32v.

¹⁹¹ BL Add MS 40883, 147v-148r.

needs strengthening.¹⁹² When Wallington and his brother are included in a Star Chamber bill – an accusation of possession of forbidden books - early in 1638, together with Henry Burton, John Bastwick, and William Prynne, Wallington is pleased “that I should be put among them and to be made a partaker of Saint’s sufferings.”¹⁹³ Although he does not literally call them “martyrs”, he does align Burton, Bastwick and Prynne with Foxe’s martyrs by writing that they “suffered persecution” followed by a list of other wrongs which he concludes with “thus you have seen many heavie judgments of God upon those that hate and persecute the children of God and many more you may see if you reade in the booke of Marters”.¹⁹⁴

This suffering with the saints is important for Wallington because it is a sign of God’s care for him. Elsewhere in *The Groth of a Christian*, Wallington gives a number of examples of God’s love in times of adversity. He sees affliction as a token that God loves him:

Remember this in the time of adversity when thou hast little trayding & hath a wife or childe lye a dying and thy God shall frowne & seeme to be an angry God with thee O then my soule be thou perswaded that thy God loves thee as well as now even as a mother loves her childe as well when shee gives her childe phisicke even bitter peeles which makes the childe very sicke nay shee is more tender over it then in time of helth. How much more is my God loving & tender over me in adversity which knows whereof I am made & will not administer no more then what he sees is best & fetest for me.¹⁹⁵

For Wallington, seeing affliction as something to be grateful for is essential, because affliction is a message, a “love token” even, from God, but in this quote, Wallington also dwells on the gloomier sides to affliction such as death or illness in the family.¹⁹⁶

Suffering thus was cause for joy because for Wallington, it proved God’s close and personal involvement with him. Another time, after rising early and meditating,

¹⁹² BL Add MS 40883, 147v-148r.

¹⁹³ Paul Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 1985, 150.

¹⁹⁴ BL MS 21 935, 48r, 49r.

¹⁹⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 34v.

¹⁹⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 34v.

Wallington records the joy he feels when he is afflicted, which concentrates on the positive emotional impact of affliction:

And herein I see Gods love to mee in mingeling sweet and sower together for if I should have carried the hole day away comfortably with a melted heart (for I teell you I find most comfort when my hart is most humbled & joy in my heart when tears are in mine eyes).¹⁹⁷

This is reminiscent of John Donne's Holy Sonnet 14, in which Donne writes "Batter my heart, three-personed God ... That I may rise and stand".¹⁹⁸ Although Wallington includes the joy which is absent from Donne's poem, both Wallington and Donne write about the need they have for a very closely involved God which they experience in a physical sense, Wallington with a "melted heart" and Donne through his desire to have his heart "battered". As John Spurr notes, Puritans who trusted in their election "knew that they were sinners and that God's merciful decision to elect them to salvation had nothing to do with their own merits ... the godly lived in a constant state of tension between anxiety and confidence".¹⁹⁹ This is certainly the case for Wallington, which becomes especially clear in his difficulties in seeing his suffering as a useful form of trial of their faith or an instructive message from God.

Suffering as Trial or Instruction

In addition to their appraisal of the role of joy, Foxe's martyrs had specific ideas about the meaning of suffering, which was twofold. They saw suffering itself as a trial to test the strength of their faith, or as a form of loving instruction or correction by God, both of which would further their spiritual growth.²⁰⁰ Wallington, however, struggles to fully accept suffering and affliction as a trial, a form of instruction or a correction by God. Instead, Wallington is very anxious about his sinfulness and inadequacy towards God. Although Wallington attempts to imitate Foxe's model of trial and instruction, this

¹⁹⁷ BL Add MS 40883, 63v.

¹⁹⁸ John Donne, "Holy sonnet 14" l. 1, 3, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. I, ed. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 1271. Abrams and Greenblatt note that it is not fully clear when Donne began writing these sonnets and when he wrote which one, but he probably started around 1609.

¹⁹⁹ Spurr, *English Puritanism*, 43.

²⁰⁰ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 95-7.

template regularly falls short for him, and his notebooks show us how he tries to adapt these notions to fit in with his personal circumstances by shifting the focus to his sinfulness.

Wallington does write that he sees his difficulties as resulting from trial or instruction, but when these difficulties result from spiritual distress, his attention shifts to a tremendous focus on his own sinfulness or unworthiness. Foxe's martyrs mention their sinfulness as well, but only shortly. Cutbert Symson, for example, writes to his wife in 1558 that God will only make that occur "which shall be most profitable for us For it is eyther a correction for our sinnes or a tryall of our faith, or to set forth his glory, or for all together".²⁰¹ However, Foxe's martyrs do not mention their sinfulness at such great length and, as we shall see, in a much more conventional sense; Wallington greatly expands upon this theme.

The Meaning of Affliction

Wallington supports his personal account of the usefulness of suffering by including in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* several epistles which discuss the usefulness and the meaning of affliction. A letter by Cutbert Symson "written to his wife out of the Colehouse" in 1558 states that "it is eyther a correction for our sinnes or a tryall of our faith, or to set forth his glory, or for all together, Let us give him most hearty thanks for these his Fatherly corrections for as many as he loveth, he correcteth".²⁰² In another letter, Paul Baynes, pupil of theologian William Perkins writes in 1620 on the occasion of the deaths of loved ones about "the needfulnesse of afflictions" and explains its importance for spiritual growth:

All afflictions though for the present not joyous, yet they bring us afterward the quiet fruit of righteousnes These evils they oftentimes disquiet the frame of the whole soule, but when they goe away they leave increase of grace of faith of patience, of experience, that the soule saith well it is good I knew these things.²⁰³

²⁰¹ BL Sloane MS 922, 22r.

²⁰² BL Sloane MS 922, 22r.

²⁰³ BL Sloane MS 922, 64r. C.S. Knighton, "Baynes, Paul," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 4 November 2020.

Suffering thus is a positive token from God, and as Baynes's letter makes clear, it also has positive consequences for the soul. By including letters not only from people from a previous generation such as Baynes, but also from his contemporaries, Wallington demonstrates that his view on suffering as a test or instruction is not a thing of the past but that it is still relevant.

Moreover, these letters have the underlying conviction that suffering was a token of election. In a letter from 1620 by Bishop Joseph Hall to "Master I.A. Merchant" entitled "Against sorrow for worldly losses", Hall writes:

It is your glory that hee intends in your so great affliction. It is no praise to wade over a shallow ford, but to cut the swelling waves of the deepe commends both our strength and skill ... These maine evils have crownes answerable to their difficultie."²⁰⁴

In another letter, from 1621, "of old Docter Burges consarning the sudden death of his daughter" Burges writes to his children that he wishes them "to be of good comfort in the Lord and still to labour after the assurance of your owne salvation, that you also may be able to stand before this or any other trial that God shall make of you."²⁰⁵ In 1625, in the letter Wallington's brother-in-law Livewell Rampaigne wrote to Wallington when Wallington's wife Grace was very ill, Rampaigne writes about affliction as an incentive for a learning process. Rampaigne writes that as a "son", Wallington has to "learne in the same schoole" as Christ; he has to suffer to "growe better under the rod" and become a better Christian, he is brought to the "way unto glory" and affliction is therefore to be welcomed.²⁰⁶ Some other letters express even more strongly the conviction that affliction is to be embraced because suffering is a sign of the elect. For example, a letter "to beare and profit by afflictions" from 1648 by Kat Lanes to her sister literally states that affliction should be cherished because it is a token of one's election:

²⁰⁴ BL Sloane MS 922, 50r.

²⁰⁵ BL Sloane MS 922, 69 v, 70v.

²⁰⁶ BL Sloane MS 922, 71r. On the previous page, Rampaigne writes "Grace must restraine and limit inordinate sorrow and apply comforts to our fainting hearts." (72r.). It could therefore also be the case that Rampaigne refers to Grace. Stephen Greenblatt explains that being hit with a rod was a common form of punishment in convents and monasteries. Transgressors carried the rod themselves and kissing the rod demonstrated that those punished welcomed the punishment. Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: Norton, 2011), chap. 4, loc 1493, Kindle.

“If God by affliction will evidence unto us our adoption, is not such an affliction precious”.²⁰⁷

These writings show that for Wallington, his exemplars and his friends, affliction was in part a test of the true faith or an instructive message from God. However, Wallington’s texts differ from those of his friends because even though Wallington tries to see affliction as a kind of instruction or catalyst of improvement by writing that “~~¶~~ Nay in crosses & losses in troubles & afflictions still to behold the wonderfull love of my God in turning these also for my good,” in many cases this was a theoretical, rather than a practical understanding for Wallington.²⁰⁸ As I will demonstrate in the next section, in many cases Wallington found it hard to unite theory and practice.

Spiritual Growth

Although Wallington attaches great importance to the experience of affliction as a reason for introspection which would advance his spiritual progress, his strong preoccupation with his sinfulness stalls any spiritual progress. Wallington writes that “~~¶~~ we despise & slight affliction when we doe not take notis of it.”²⁰⁹ As Oswald also explains, for Wallington, affliction serves to remind people of God’s intention for it, and they should look past the direct cause, such as “aire that made me sicke: or when we are poore it was such a sarvant that made mee poore”.²¹⁰ When Wallington reflects upon the usefulness of affliction, he compares it to the difficulty of swallowing bitter pills which help to purify his soul:

no affliction for the present semeth joyous, but greivous, but afterwards it bringeth forth the pleasent fruit of righteousness ... blessed is hee whom the Lord correcteth & teacheth in this way And thus my poore heart was dartting up unto heaven that God would sanctifie every sorrow and trouble unto me hoping that these bitter peels will purge filth from my soule.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ BL Sloane MS 922, 183v.

²⁰⁸ BL Add MS 40883, 76v. Wallington added the manicule.

²⁰⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 34r.

²¹⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 34r. Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 131.

²¹¹ BL Add MS 40883, 180r.

Like bitter pills purging the body from disease, affliction would purge the soul.

In spite of his objective of spiritual growth, Wallington does not find the “helth & lightsomnesse” which he is hoping for as a result of this pain and trouble which are the bitter pills, because he severely blames himself when he breaks a looking glass shortly after his reflections upon the usefulness of affliction.²¹² He describes how he wakes up the day after breaking the glass and reflects upon his spiritual shortcomings in feeling excessively sorry about the it: “how often have I crackt a good continence and never greived so much. And oh how often have I broken the cleere and righteous laws of God where in as ain a glasse I might see those foule and filthey spotes of my soule and never laid them to heart.”²¹³ In other words, Wallington feels guilty that he is too attached to worldly possessions, which he feels guilty about. Yet this is an occasion for spiritual insight because “the Lord my God of his great mercy still causes mee to finde honey in the dead carkis of crosses”.²¹⁴ Although Wallington does not describe this incident with the looking glass as a kind of trial, he does use the occasion for searching his soul. Wallington valued the idea of suffering as a trial or a form of correction by God not only theoretically, but also tried to apply it practically to his daily experiences.

Rather than growth or progress, in some cases Wallington’s reflections take the form of a series of vicious circles in which confidence in his election, gratitude for God’s care for him and concern about his own sinfulness succeed one another, all of which are dominated by feelings of sinfulness and inadequacy. Booy calls this Wallington’s “ebb and flow”; he also states that Wallington’s notebook do not evidence any spiritual progress.²¹⁵ According to Booy, this was the result “puritan theology and doctrine” and Wallington’s “understanding of self is fashioned entirely in accordance with the ministerial model of the elect but flawed man.”²¹⁶ Nevertheless, given his focus on spiritual growth, one would expect Wallington to reiterate the points of trial and instruction more lengthily or in more detail in connection to his own experiences.

²¹² BL Add MS 40883, 180r.

²¹³ BL Add MS 40883, 182v.

²¹⁴ BL Add MS 40883, 182v.

²¹⁵ Booy, *Notebooks*, 25-6.

²¹⁶ Booy, *Notebooks*, 26.

Spiritual Vicious Circle

Wallington's preoccupation with his spiritual growth seems to nullify his objective: he does not seem to manage to get past the point of occupying himself with his sinfulness, in spite of the fact that his introspection makes him conscious of his mood swings.

Wallington's aim in selecting the letters from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs for Profitable and Comfortable Letters* was that "they all be very usefull to admonish and to comfort the troubled spirit", which implies that this is what Wallington was looking for himself.²¹⁷

However, most of the letters, for example one by the martyr John Bradford to his mother and other relatives, do not really mention the writer's unworthiness or sinfulness, or their troubled spirit - either not at all, or not at length.²¹⁸ When they do address this issue, the letter writers are able to calm themselves. In one of the letters, from Laurence Saunders to his wife, Saunders writes: "O my heavenly Father, Looke upon me in the face of thy Christ, or eles I shall not be able to abide thy countenance such is my filthynesse. He will doe so, and therefore I will not be afraid, what sinne death, hell and damnation can doe against mee."²¹⁹ In contrast to Wallington, Saunders manages to reassure himself that God will protect him in spite of his sins.

Wallington does express an awareness of the changeability in his mood, but does not seem to get beyond this. He writes how God's corrections comfort him:

many times I find comfort & joy under the rood. And yet still for all this comfort that I find, it was but a while after that I beholding the filthy corruption that lyes in my polluted heart which is ready to boyle & buble up as occation doth sarve with the breach of my covenants with my God. I was ready to sinke in dispaire & horrow did begin to overwhelme my sinking heart. But this did not last long but my Loving Father did but draw aside the curtaine and then did I cast up my eyes unto the hiles from whence my salvation.²²⁰

However, this reassurance is only temporary. After relating how the thought of Christ's sacrifice brings tears to his eyes, Wallington reflects again upon his own shortcomings:

²¹⁷ BL Sloane MS 922, 5v.

²¹⁸ BL Sloane MS 922, 14r.

²¹⁹ BL Sloane MS 922, 9r. Saunders was one of the first to be persecuted under Mary I. Tom Betteridge, "Saunders, Lawrence (d. 1555)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 21 December 2020.

²²⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 30r.

he writes about his “proennesse to all manner of evill” and his “unability to anything or the least good” such as inadvertently breaking the fast.²²¹ Wallington also describes how he starts the day with good resolutions, to “goe about earthly things with an heavenly minde”, but when he enters his shop, he forgets about these resolutions and “one sinne or other runs away with all my joy and comfort that I begine to be a dead man againe.”²²² No matter how much comfort Wallington seems to draw from God, then, he is not able to hold on to these perceptions, and therefore he does not seem to make any actual progress in his spiritual growth.

This vicious circle may result from what Paul Seaver calls Wallington’s “partial grasp of the nature of the crucial changes that had occurred in his life.”²²³ It does indeed look as if Wallington did not have a coherent view of key moments shaping his life and outlook, in spite of his extensive introspection. This lack of overview is also evident in another passage, which illustrates in detail in that when Wallington tries to apply to his own life the idea of affliction as a form of correction, he does not seem to be able to reach a satisfactory, abiding conclusion. Wallington is convinced that God has let him see “how full of filth I am. And yet none of these sins now to tryumph over me as formerly they have don, ... the Lord hath subdued my sinnes in a grat measure”²²⁴. Wallington states that God “scourgeth every son whom hee receiveth ... corrections are badges of my sonship ... And by affliction I am made conformable to my Lord Christ and corrections of instrinctions are the way of life.”²²⁵ Wallington sees the use of affliction to make him conform, but he does not seem to reach a higher level of growth.

This is partly because Wallington struggles with all too human feelings which, in accordance with Christian convention, he classifies as sins. Wallington writes that God makes clear to him how sinful he is and that God teaches him to control his chief sins of infidelity, lust, pride, lying, and “rash anger”.²²⁶ In this section, Wallington expresses the feelings of progress he experiences with respect to his ability to conquer his sins, by courtesy of God. Wallington realises that sin is “a great torment unto me for I am a poore weeke sinfull man”, yet he draws comfort from the fact “[that] I see a power

²²¹ BL Add MS 40883, 30v.

²²² BL Add MS 40883, 30v-31 r. “Dead man”: not reborn.

²²³ Seaver, *Wallington’s World*, 25.

²²⁴ BL Add MS 40883, 34v.

²²⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 35r.

²²⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 35r.

overpowering all my corruptions & that I shall through my Lord & captain Jesus Christ overcome at last & be acceptable in & through this my sweet saviour."²²⁷ Although he does not specify these corruptions in this instance, in other cases these are common human traits such as pride and lust.²²⁸

Seeing affliction as a form of correction appealed to Wallington because it clearly offered him the idea that God was near him to comfort him, but again, he does not succeed in sustaining these thoughts of overcoming his corruptions for long. On the same page, Wallington continues to write that he realises that there is not an ounce of goodness in him: "I can have no good thought, nither set one stepe nither stere one hand or foote towards heaven no neither one glance of mine eye towards heave so emptie of all goodness am I".²²⁹ Although Wallington attempts to draw positive inspiration from these meditations, his thoughts only become gloomier:

I had no souner wrighten this but I was cast down with an heavy temtation (that I dare not wright it) which made me very sade & heavy all the day, and much a doe I had to keepe it out of my minde: I tremble to thinke of it for as it was sudden, so it was very strong but stronger was he that was with mee then he that was against me: blessed be his Name.²³⁰

Wallington claims to strongly feel God's presence, but this does not prevent him from returning to thoughts on his sinfulness, his unworthiness and shortcomings time and again. For Wallington, suffering inspires thoughts on his own sinfulness, but conversely, his understanding of his own sinfulness also generates more suffering.

Assurance of Salvation

We can look for an explanation for the divergence between moral ideal and daily reality sustaining Wallington's turmoil in his high religious ethical standard. For William Perkins (1558-1602), "doubtfulness and despaire, are most grieuous sinnes."²³¹

²²⁷ BL Add MS 40883, 35v.

²²⁸ BL Add MS 40883, 178r.

²²⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 35v.

²³⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 37r.

²³¹ William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine* (London: Edward Alde, 1591), chapter 42, unnumbered (image 134 on EEBO).

Wallington does not mention Perkins, but Perkins was an extremely influential Calvinist theologian, and it is not most likely that Wallington was familiar with this line of thinking. Owen Chadwick states that feelings of guilt can be increased by faith, because of its “high ethical ideals” which are unattainable to the majority of the people, and therefore generate guilt when people cannot achieve it, and becomes “accompanied by a more profound sense of frustration, inadequacy, or at its most powerful, despair.”²³² Oswald has written extensively on Wallington’s suicide attempts in his earlier years, which was not uncommon at the time as a result of religious despair.²³³ Although according to Oswald, Wallington did not attempt to commit suicide anymore after 1623, his high ethical standard and his difficulties in reaching this standard continued to haunt him.²³⁴

The ideal of physical suffering causing a trial of one’s faith such as of Foxe’s martyrs underwent - a physical suffering inflicted by an enemy - was unattainable for Wallington, and so was the ideal of living a life free of sin. Instead, Wallington was tormented spiritually by feelings of inadequacy and guilt - perhaps even more so because in line with general Reformed sentiment, Wallington wrote that he does not dare to skip attending the sacrament even though he felt unprepared for it, “because God hath commanded me so do doe and hath ordained it for sicke souls & weake in faith as I am at this time.”²³⁵ In other words, Wallington considers weak faith as a problem which had to be countered, but he often finds this exceedingly difficult because his concern with his sinfulness continually takes centre stage in his thoughts.

Wallington’s texts anticipate anxiety about salvation, spiritual crises and the need for assurance of salvation which would only intensify among non-orthodox believers in the decades to follow. These intensifying apprehensions about salvation fit in with the increasingly private, personal relationship with God which was prevalent especially among the godly, which made them for a larger part individually responsible for their salvation and made assurance of faith a more personal issue than ever before. John Bunyan’s allegorical tale *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678) - in which Bunyan describes

²³² Owen Chadwick, "Death," in *The Early Reformation on the Continent*, ed. Owen Chadwick, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69.

²³³ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 2011; John Stachniewsky, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 46.

²³⁴ Oswald, *Death, Piety and Social Engagement*, 147.

²³⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 44r.

the spiritual life of a Christian individual as a journey filled with danger, often leading to despair, which is always overcome because of his faith - is but one example. Although Booy suggests that Wallington did feel rather confident about his election, at least from 1639, he still does not offer a definite conclusion in his writings.²³⁶ The form of Wallington's writing, with many repetitions of related themes, intimates that any assurance Wallington might have experienced was not as resolute as he might have wished.

Conclusion

By applying martyrological conventions to their own lives, Wallington and his friends try to mould martyrdom into an ideal attainable to all godly. Foxe's martyrs insist upon seeing suffering as something to be welcomed with joy, and approaching affliction as a test by God or a form of instruction. In trying to apply these perspectives related to physical martyrdom to other kinds of tragedies such as deaths of family members and illness, Wallington and his friends draw inspiration from Foxe's martyrs.

For Wallington and other godly, the suffering of Christ was an ideal which was not fully attainable because of Christ's special status as son of God. The real-life martyrs which Foxe presents, as well as martyrs from Wallington's own time such as Burton, Bastwick and Prynne and Love, were closer to Wallington in time as well as in their humanity, as opposed to Christ's divinity. Yet the public nature of their suffering as well as the physical dimension of their martyrdom - being burnt at the stake in the case of the Marian martyrs, execution in the case of Love, and losing their ears in the case of Burton, Bastwick and Prynne, made their suffering closer to Christ's than Wallington's could ever be.

The difference between Wallington and the martyrs, the fact that the martyrs die or physically suffer for their faith whereas Wallington cannot, aggravates Wallington's spiritual crises. Although Foxe's stories of martyrdom were the ideals for Wallington and his contemporaries to aspire to, Wallington struggles to conform to these idealized models. Instead of an external enemy inflicting physical suffering on him, Wallington suffered from an inner enemy: his conscience. Even though Burton, Bastwick and Prynne did not die at the stake either, when their ears were chopped off, they could still

²³⁶ Booy, *Notebooks*, 26.

blame an external enemy for their suffering and dedicate their suffering to Christ, and as we have seen, Wallington considers them martyrs, even though he does not literally call them that.

Wallington tries to use the martyrological aspects of trial or instruction by acknowledging the importance of these sides to suffering, and using these as starting points for meditations upon his own sinfulness. The focus on his own sinfulness, typical for the Puritan tendency to spiritual self-search, appears at times to have helped Wallington to situate the many hardships and sufferings he had to manage in his life. Yet the fact that his ideas tend to meander towards inconclusion indicate that it not really bring him peace of mind or any enduring assurance though.

Wallington also struggles to conform because he was human, and not a saint, as Foxe's martyrs were portrayed in the *Book of Martyrs*. Because spiritual challenges continue to arise, partly as a result of his intense introspection, it is difficult for Wallington to conclude satisfactorily that his suffering is a kind of trial or a form of instruction. This forces Wallington to reassess his stance towards his suffering time and again. Wallington still endeavours to find support and encouragement in the idea of seeing suffering as a kind of trial or instruction for handling the difficulties of his life, but they do not seem to provide him with sufficient guidance for navigating his spiritual distresses.

In Wallington's texts, therefore, there is a discrepancy between his exemplars, who display the more conventional responses to affliction – the “unwritten script”, in Knott's words, by Foxe's martyrs, and the responses by Wallington and the other godly who did not have such a status as martyr.²³⁷ This is of course partly because of the different objectives of Foxe and Wallington; Wallington's writing is a direct expression of his spiritual suffering as it occurred, not an anecdote in hindsight with propagandistic purposes.

Yet although the personal account of his suffering lays bare his individual struggles, I have explained in chapter 2 how important the community also is for Wallington. Indeed, the community also gives him the opportunity to connect his individual difficulties to a wider purpose. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter,

²³⁷ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 82.

Wallington uses the imagined community of Protestants to give meaning to his suffering.

4: Individual Suffering and the Imagined Community

So far, I have explained how Wallington is inspired by Foxe to create an imagined community of Protestants (chapter 2) and how Wallington tries to use conventions from Foxe's martyrs to give meaning to his own suffering (chapter 3). As John Spurr notes, one's personal relationship with God was vital to the godly, something which Wallington's writings testify to.²³⁸ Nevertheless, Spurr also argues that the social aspect of faith and support of each other as fellow Puritans was crucial to the Puritans to "grow in grace"; the favour of God to extend salvation.²³⁹ This raises the question of how this works out for Wallington, and how Wallington's individual suffering relates to his imagined community of Protestants.

In this chapter, I will argue that Wallington bridges the gap between his individual suffering and the importance of the community in two ways: firstly, by identifying similar characteristics of suffering and similar sins in the imagined community and in himself, and secondly, by seeing suffering as a necessary form of purging himself from his sins, which for him is proof of being part of an imagined community of the godly, which, in spite of Wallington's attempts to include all suffering Protestant, is simultaneously an elitist community. Laurie Throness calls the Protestant phenomenon of purging oneself from one's sins during one's lifetime, for example in church, in the family or during private reflection, a "Protestant purgatory".²⁴⁰

A large part of Wallington's suffering consists of his spiritual struggles in trying to combat his sinfulness, and to conform to the pattern offered by those around him, which he tries to adapt himself to in order to be the perfect Christian. Both Paul Seaver and Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen note that Wallington sometimes struggles to control his grief, for example upon the death of his children, or to respond in the appropriate manner as prescribed by his religious beliefs to circumstances such as illness.²⁴¹ Yet although Wallington stands out because of the intensity of his spiritual suffering, he was not as singular as we may tend to think. Erin Sullivan, too, concludes that even though

²³⁸ John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 1998), 151.

²³⁹ John Spurr, *English Puritanism*, 192.

²⁴⁰ Laurie Throness, *A protestant Purgatory: Theological Origins of the Penitentiary Act, 1779* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 297.

²⁴¹ Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "'Never Better': Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5.1 (2018): 27; Paul Seaver. *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 87-8.

Wallington's ideas "might have been more extreme than many of his peers, they were not necessarily different in kind."²⁴²

This is because Wallington's spiritual struggles testify to a wider development: the increasing interest among the Protestants in meditative introspection which we also find in, for example, John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* (1609). Donne's sonnets discuss, among other subjects, sin, the "soul's delivery" by death, and death of loved ones, themes which are also prevalent in Wallington's writings.²⁴³ Many scholars have researched and discussed the Protestant focus on individual introspection as opposed to Catholic communal rituals.²⁴⁴ To a certain extent, then, Wallington conveys typical concerns of his age.

Still, Wallington's writings demonstrate the tensions engendered by his attempts to adapt to communally shared ideas on the one hand, and his sometimes unmanageable individual suffering on the other hand. By highlighting the characteristics of the community, which Wallington also recognises in himself, such as suffering and sinfulness, Wallington shows a strong connection between himself and the community. In addition, by introducing the element of purging oneself from sin like refining gold in fire – a comparison which has a foundation in scripture – Wallington has a useful analogy at hand which he is able to apply to reassure himself that he is one of God's children, as well as to identify his place among them.

The Suffering Community

We can discover how connected Wallington feels to the imagined community of true Christians through the vocabulary he uses both for his own suffering, and for the community of the godly as a suffering community. As we have seen, Wallington tries to apply the ideal suffering of Foxe's martyrs to his own suffering, an approach which has its limitations for Wallington because of the different circumstances of Wallington and the Marian martyrs. One reason why Wallington finds combining his personal suffering with the imagined community so challenging, is that *The Book of Martyrs* presents ideal

²⁴² Erin Sullivan, "The Watchful Spirit: Religious Anxieties towards Sleep in the Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658)." *Cultural History* 1.1 (2012): 31.

²⁴³ John Donne, "Holy sonnet 10" l. 8, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. I, ed. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 1268-72, 1270..

²⁴⁴ See, for example, Debora Shuger, "The Reformation of Penance," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71:4 (2008): 557-71.

types of responses by others, as recorded by Foxe, whereas Wallington wrote about his own suffering, rather than that of others, and he recorded his suffering as it occurred, not as a stylized narrative written down in hindsight.

Besides, as Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen argues in his analysis of early modern consolation discourse, there is a difference between public and private contexts of suffering, and the public context of martyrs is unavailable to Wallington.²⁴⁵ The difficulty on Wallington's side to respond properly is in part the result of the discrepancy between communally shared, public suffering on the one hand, and privately experienced suffering on the other. This difference, in turn, is related to the dissimilarity between suffering at the hands of an enemy on the one hand, and suffering from afflictions such as illness, non-martyr death, mental torments or financial distress on the other, which are not shared with an audience as martyrdom was.

Another major difference between Foxe and Wallington is that for Wallington, the suffering of the martyrs is also a frame of reference for elucidating the suffering both of himself and of the Protestants more generally. Whereas Foxe writes about the suffering of martyrs, Wallington adds the account of his own suffering to his descriptions of the suffering of others. This way, Wallington connects the communal identity of Christians as a suffering people - Luther's "theology of the cross" - through stories of the sufferings of contemporary Christians such as those in La Rochelle and Ireland to his personal suffering.²⁴⁶

Wallington's language reveals how he connects his imagined community to his individual suffering by using similar vocabulary for himself and for the community, which demonstrates that he sees himself as a member of the community of God's children. Wallington calls himself God's "poore unworthy childe", as all God's children are: from a sermon he picks up the "use" that is

to shew the happy estat af all Gods children in the mids of all enemis & papest or any other troubs ... All is at worke for the good for Gods poore children It is true we have this & that sorrow upon us yet our estat is happy for God is our keeper and it shall be for our good.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "'Never Better': Affliction, Consolation and the Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5.1 (2018)," 32-34.

²⁴⁶ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 105.

²⁴⁷ BL Add MS 40883, 18v, 109r.

Furthermore, he writes about the usefulness of affliction, stating that only for God's children, affliction is a sign of their adoption by God:

David saith it is good for me that I have been afflicted. And thy rood & thy stafe they comfort mee Psal xxiii. This is a paradox to the world and none knows this white stone but the poore childe of God which inoyes it. So that many times I find comfort & joy under the rood.²⁴⁸

By writing about the comfort of affliction for David, Wallington demonstrates the biblical origin of his opinion. He states that the comfort of affliction is something known to God's children only, and by asserting that he finds this comfort himself, Wallington makes clear that he is one of them. Wallington also applies "Gods poore children" when he writes about the "use" of a sermon by his minister Henry Roborough on "a day of Thankesgiving over the whole city for that grat deliverance from that hillish plot (of fiering the city & to put to death all the people of God)":²⁴⁹

Use to shew the happy estat af all Gods children in the mids of all enemis & papest or any other troubs within us or without us If evill come on us het wee are kept in & under the trouble All is at worke for the good for Gods poore children It is true we have this & that sorrow upon us yet our estat is happy for God is our keeper and it shall be for our good.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ BL Add MS 40883, 30r. "Rood": rod. "White stone" refers to Revelation 2:17: "Let him that hath an ear, hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches. To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Manna that is hid, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." *1599 Geneva Bible* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation), www.biblegateway.com, consulted on 5 August 2021. Wallington used the *Geneva Bible* (see Robert M. Oswald. *Death, Piety and Social Engagement in the Life of the Seventeenth Century London Artisan, Nehemiah Wallington*. PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2011, 65), but the commentary to Revelation on the King James Bible Online explains that the new name refers to God's adoption which is at that moment fully understood by the believer. *The King James Bible, King James Version* (Cambridge Edition: 1769, King James Bible Online, 2020), <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Revelation-Chapter-2/>, consulted on 5 August 2021.

²⁴⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 108v. I assume that Wallington refers to the Gunpowder plot, which he also writes about in BL MS 21 935, 180v (see also Chapter 2).

²⁵⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 109r.

Besides, Wallington writes that “the Lord taketh notis of all the sufferings of his children. He knows all our desiers & sees our sighing”, so suffering is a token not only of adoption, but also of being truly noticed by God.²⁵¹

Even though as one of God’s children he needs to bear affliction, Wallington finds affliction difficult to cope with, especially at moments when he has the impression that God does not notice him. Wallington writes that “the next morning in my bead I had some few thoughts more of the unsearchable wayes of God in afflicting his children”, when he “did find that I have need (and that grat need) of Faith so support me under sorrows: which I meet with some times inward & some time outward & some times on both And then are they very heavi to beare”.²⁵² Next, he relates his sorrow about his feeling of not being heard by God, unlike Jabez was in “1 Chron iii 9 10”, yet “the Lord only knowes whereof I am made and that which be good for another may doe me hurt”.²⁵³ In other words, he is grieved that God ignores him, but he explains this as God’s purpose with him.

Wallington also shows the connection between his individual suffering and the community by using the community as a point of reference in his private musings. This demonstrates his sense of solidarity with peer believers, both those in the present and those to come. Wallington writes that suffering requires connecting to God, but this goes not only for himself but for all suffering Christians. For example, Wallington sees physical and financial affliction, which he presents as circumstances generally occurring, as something which all the godly should seize upon for introspection:

☞ we despise & slight affliction when we doe not take notis of it. And if we doe take notice we looke no further then the secondary means as thus when we are sicke it was such an aire that made me sicke: or when we are poore it was such a sarvant that made mee poore: & thus affliction is slightes or despised ... Let us be patient & not murmur in suffering times but we should have recourse unto God ... when God afflicts us, wee must enquier who it is & then seeke unto God, for this is that which God looks for when his rood is abroad, and it is the ende of his intentions ... Our recourse unto God may be a mense to middlegate the

²⁵¹ BL Add MS 40883, 90v.

²⁵² BL Add MS 40883, 180r.

²⁵³ BL Add MS 40883, 180r-v.

wrath of God, or eles to delay it, or eles to take it away, if not it shall be such a rood as we shall be bennifeted by it.²⁵⁴

Wallington comes to this conclusion when he prays in solitude, but a sense of community permeates his thoughts. Although he writes down these thoughts after individual prayer, Wallington uses the first person plural pronouns “we”, “us” and “our” to describe how this need for introspection applies to all members of the godly community.

The Sinful Community

In addition to the similarities between himself and the community with respect to the necessity of suffering, Wallington sees his own characteristics of sinfulness and weakness as typical of the community in general as well. When he refers to himself, Wallington uses terms such as “mee and other weeke ones”, “a basse sinnefull man as I am”, with a “weeke and shallow capassity”, “a poore despised srube” and a “peevisch wasppish creture”.²⁵⁵ Although he reserves some of these terms for himself, Wallington remarks that God’s people more generally are weak and sinful: “Gods people are a weeke people for without Christ we can doe nothing”.²⁵⁶

Wallington also uses persecution as a trait of the community to which he belongs. God’s children are weak not only because they have to depend on Christ, but also because they are a marginalized and persecuted group of people; victims of the dominant forces in society. One of the first letters in *Comfortable and Profitable Letters* is by Laurence Saunders who writes to his wife from prison: “wee suffer persecution, but are not forsaken therin We are cast downe neverthelesse we perish not”.²⁵⁷ In *Bundel of Marcys*, Wallington refers to persecution and imprisonment of the godly, too, when he writes that “many of Gods children that have bin persecuted & kept in prison are now set at libertie” which he sees as a mercy of God.²⁵⁸ Yet Wallington here focuses on their liberty rather than their persecution, and relates this to the English people more generally: in the same passage, he asks the reader to consider God’s mercy “as

²⁵⁴ BL Add MS 40883, 34r. Wallington drew manicules in his notebooks to mark specific passages or sentences.

²⁵⁵ BL MS 922, 141v, BL Add MS 40883, 64r, 97r, 104r, 148r.

²⁵⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 157v.

²⁵⁷ BL Sloane MS 922, 7v.

²⁵⁸ BL MS 21 935, 97r.

hath bine shewd to these sinfull people of England”.²⁵⁹ This sinfulness is very significant for Wallington.

The resemblances between Wallington and the community with respect to sinfulness and suffering imply that he belongs to this community, because it is a characteristic of all God’s people. With regards to the community, Wallington asks the reader, shortly after relating how Burton, Prynne and Bastwick have been released, to admire God’s mercies toward the “sinfull people of England” because the wicked’s “deceate both in church & comonwelth is brought unto light & made knowen”.²⁶⁰ Besides, “The Lord hath a sore worke to doe here in England for this sinne in cleaving to the traditions of men”.²⁶¹

Thus, in spite his focus on the purity of the Protestant’s lineage, which I explained in chapter 2, Wallington does not see his contemporaries merely as sufferers with an ancient lineage of true martyrdom, but also, as sinners. Wallington makes this clear by relating examples from the Bible to his own time and shifting the perspective from suffering to sinfulness. After naming Kaine who hated Abel, Esai who hated Jacob and Saul who hated David, and explaining how these “prophets & Apostels as Paul and Silas” were imprisoned, and how “our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ” was hated, Wallington writes: “They were tried by mockings and scourgings, by bondes and prisonments. They were stoned, they were hewen asunder, they were tempted, they were slaine with the sword ... Thus you see how the children & sarvants of God have bin used”.²⁶² He continues: “wherefore doe I note all this but that we should admier at the patience of God in the forbareing such vile wretches as we are in the land that hee hath not swept us all away.”²⁶³ In other words, God’s children were maltreated by enemies in the past, but in Wallington’s time, they should be grateful that God tolerates them.

In addition, Wallington needs the community as a medium for assessing his own circumstances. The community is important for cultivating one’s gratitude towards God, especially in comparison to the sufferings of others. Wallington describes himself as a “poore sinfull sonne of Adam”, but he also recognises God’s mercies to him.²⁶⁴ For

²⁵⁹ BL MS 21 935, 97r.

²⁶⁰ BL MS 21 935, 97r.

²⁶¹ BL Add MS 40883, 141.

²⁶² BL MS 21 935, 39r.

²⁶³ BL MS 21 935, 39r.

²⁶⁴ BL Add MS 40883, 149r.

example, when on a cold night he is still able to find some fuel, he is grateful for the warmth as well as his and his family's health, and explains his appreciation of God's goodness:

For the Lord mite have struke some of us sicke this hard time when so little mony is taken with so little gaines and we mite have grate expences with Docters & Apottecarys with fier and candel all night & day with hiering some nurse to looke to them & watching by them & grife of harte to here their gronings all the night longe and at last have tooke away an only childe or eles the pleasur or the eyes these thoughts did not only keepe from murmuring but mad my heart to earne & my eys to weepe to see how good is to me a sinfull wretch above many of his children.²⁶⁵

Therefore, the suffering of others is a yardstick for Wallington for measuring the extent of his own misery, and to take this an opportunity for gratitude.

Although the community is as sinful as he is, and seems to put into perspective Wallington's own suffering, Wallington sometimes also uses the suffering of others from his imagined community of believers to intensify his own suffering. For Wallington, this can be a way to try and transcend his own sinfulness:

The fift of March being the day before the sacrament ... I did desier the Lord of his great mercy for to mee his poore unworthy childe as for his day so likewise to goe to the sacrament. And the good Lord informed my contience of those things that are a mise in the church. As also those errower in my owne soul.²⁶⁶

God firstly lets Wallington know what things are wrong in the church, before informing him of the shortcomings in his soul. Wallington sees it as one of God's mercies that he has

a heart to be somewhat senchable of the miserys of the Church of God. That their sorrows are my sorrows, & some time I can set their miserys as if they were my

²⁶⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 22r.

²⁶⁶ BL Add MS 40883, 18v.

owne myserys & so mourne for them as if my soule were in their soules stead,
this I strive for more and more & so to find out and labour against my owne
beloved sinnes.²⁶⁷

In other words, in contrast to Foxe, suffering for others and for the state of the church is a way for Wallington to battle his sinfulness. Paul Seaver notes that in the 1640's, the letters between Wallington and his friends foreground politics rather than personal issues.²⁶⁸ Despite the concern with church government in his correspondence, the above quotation from *The Groth of a Christian* - which Wallington wrote between 1641 and 1643 - suggests that Wallington tries to make instrumental use of church politics to improve his mental wellbeing. It also shows that in his solitary meditations, the imagined community of believers is vital for Wallington's struggle with his sinfulness.

Wallington's texts exemplify the importance of Spurr's remark on the importance of the social aspect of faith and support in the Puritan community, because the suffering of others clearly helps Wallington to focus on his own goal of overcoming sin, whilst simultaneously, Wallington's battle against sin benefits the community, because this appeases God's wrath upon the community.²⁶⁹

Purgatory

So far, we have seen that suffering was important for Wallington and his friends to be "partakers of saints sufferings", to be secured of grace and to learn to overcome one's sins.²⁷⁰ Whereas Catholics had the opportunity to take recourse to penitential practices to relieve themselves from their sins, Protestants such as Wallington rejected such exercises and searched the soul, rather than that they punished the body.²⁷¹ In addition,

²⁶⁷ BL Add MS 40883, 38v.

²⁶⁸ Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 101. Seaver refers to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, also known as the British Civil Wars, which took place between 1639 and 1653 in England, Scotland and Ireland. They encompass a variety of wars and conflicts, including the English Civil Wars, the Bishop's War in 1639 when Charles I and Laud tried to impose Anglican structures on Scotland, the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the execution of Charles I in 1649. Helmer J. Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 27-8.

²⁶⁹ John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 1998), 192.

²⁷⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 147v.

²⁷¹ Shuger, "The Reformation of Penance", 557. Thomas More, soon after his death considered to be a Catholic martyr, is a notable example of a lay person who, for example, wore a hair shirt to punish himself for

as we have seen in the previous chapter, Protestants did see physical suffering as a way to overcome their sins, but not when it was self-inflicted.

Moreover, Foxe's martyrs and Wallington and his peers perceive suffering as purging mechanisms which are crucial to demonstrate that they are part of God's exclusive community. These purging mechanisms were effective not only for demonstrating endurance through physical suffering, but also for cleansing one's sins. This was extremely important for the godly because in spite of their conviction of election, the Puritan method of self-examination made clear that the godly were still sinful.²⁷²

Catholics furthermore had some chance to free themselves from their sins in purgatory. Protestants opposed the Catholic idea of purgatory because it had no basis in scripture; besides, they argued against the possibility of intervening in the condition of the dead.²⁷³ Owen Chadwick suggests that the prospect of not having to fear the pain of purgatory or hell anymore was part of the appeal of the Protestant wish for reform.²⁷⁴ Yet it also had other consequences. Paul Griffiths proposes that for Protestants, anxiety about election and salvation aggravated because Protestants did not have the opportunity to be cleansed of one's sins after death as Catholics did in purgatory.²⁷⁵ Besides, as Steven Mullaney points out, the attitude towards the dead changed dramatically, for example by not addressing deceased persons anymore as a person, but by referring to the deceased as "it".²⁷⁶ Because rituals around death changed radically, there were less opportunities for communally sharing emotions accompanying such dramatic life-events.

With the loss of belief in purgatory, Protestants could only overcome and purify their sins during their lifetime. Protestants replaced the Catholic use of intermediary action for cleansing the soul from sin, such as the use of indulgences or paying priests to

his sins. P. Marshall, "The last years," in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More*, ed. G. Logan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 133.

²⁷² Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 31.

²⁷³ Paul J. Griffiths, "Purgatory," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 434.

²⁷⁴ Chadwick, "Death", 77-8.

²⁷⁵ Griffiths, "Purgatory", 434. Griffiths writes that in Christian doctrine, purgatory is seen as a place or condition where souls dwell prior to their departure for heaven or hell, but also, that purgatory is perceived to be the tribulations of earthly life to bring people closer to God. In any case, it is a temporary dwelling place serving to purify souls, and thus it differs from hell's eternity. Griffiths, "Purgatory", 428-9.

²⁷⁶ Steven Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 12.

pray for souls in purgatory, with a more private, personal relationship with God. Although Protestants officially rejected the idea of purgatory, Wallington's texts demonstrate that for him and his friends, its basic idea persisted: that one was able to affect the purging of the soul from sin.

We can begin to understand the attraction of the idea of purging by looking at a counterexample. In *Hamlet*, which Shakespeare wrote around the turn of the sixteenth century - the time Wallington was born - Shakespeare intermingles Protestant and Catholic beliefs in purgatory.²⁷⁷ Hamlet is able to communicate with his father, the late King Hamlet of Denmark, when he visits Hamlet as the Ghost, claiming that he will soon have to "render" himself "to sulphurous and tormenting flames".²⁷⁸ The editors identify the flames as purgatory, but Hamlet later wonders whether "the spirit that I have seen / May be a de'il".²⁷⁹ Therefore, Shakespeare raises the issue whether purgatory exists, but the attractiveness of the idea to Hamlet has already become clear, because it offers him the chance to still communicate with his father. Polonius's afterlife is less confusing, it takes place either in heaven or "i'th' other place" according to Hamlet - in other words, in hell.²⁸⁰ Shakespeare was able to play with the different Catholic and Protestant ideas about what happened after death.

As for Polonius, there was certainly no purgatory for Wallington after his death. In a sense, Wallington replaces the idea of purgatory after death by a form of purgatory during life. Laurie Throness calls this Protestant phenomenon of purging oneself from one's sins during one's lifetime, for example in church, in the family or during private reflection, a "Protestant purgatory".²⁸¹ Throness argues that Protestants sought to cleanse themselves from sin during their lifetime in such a "Protestant purgatory", and Wallington was no exception in this respect.²⁸²

²⁷⁷ Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, "Introduction," in *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Cengage Learning, 2006), 36.

²⁷⁸ William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Cengage Learning, 2006), 211, 1.5.5-6.

²⁷⁹ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 278, 2.2.533-4.

²⁸⁰ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 363, 4.3.33.

²⁸¹ Laurie Throness, *A protestant Purgatory: Theological Origins of the Penitentiary Act, 1779* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 297.

²⁸² Throness, *A protestant Purgatory*, 297.

Purified Like Gold

What the idea of purgatory during life also offered, was proof of being part of God's community. The reformer and Marian martyr John Bradford, for example, whose letter to his mother and other relatives Wallington includes in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, expresses a strong awareness of the marginal, yet special position of the children of God. Bradford sees his suffering as a token of God's protection and evidence that he is one of God's children:

Now will God make knowen his children: when the winde doth not blowe then cannot a man know the wheat from the chaffe, but when the blast commeth then flieth away the chaffe but the wheat remaineth and is so far from being hurt, that by the wind it is more clensed from the chaffe and knowen to be wheat.²⁸³

Besides, like gold, God's children do not melt away in fire. Like gold - purified after having been cast into a fire - affliction cleanses the children of God, and makes them purer: "Gold when it is cast into the fire is the more precious, so are Gods children by the cross of affliction".²⁸⁴ The metaphor of metal or gold and fire recurs in other letters too, and, as Knott argues, these metaphors impress so much because they do acknowledge pain, but also because they "subordinate it to the process of purification by which the soul loses its earthly implications".²⁸⁵

Bradford writes about the prospect of physical suffering, whereas Wallington and his peers also employ this metaphor to discuss the intensity of their spiritual troubles and apply it to the idea of improving their soul during their lifetime. The metaphor of fire and gold is a particularly compelling one for evoking purgatory during life. This can take the form of a trial of faith as a result of mental suffering. For example, in a letter "consarning the sudden death of his daughter", Wallington's contemporary "old Docter Burges" writes to his children about his grief: "I take this present affliction to be rather for a triall then for a punishment. Although I doe know that I have deserved much worse at the hands of my maker, and trust to be better refined by this fire, in which I am melted but not consumed." The metaphor was also applied to spiritual

²⁸³ BL Sloane MS 922, 14r.

²⁸⁴ BL Sloane MS 922, 14r.-v.

²⁸⁵ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 97.

anguish. In “Short rules sent by Mr Richard Greenham to a gentelwoman troubled in minde for her direction and consolation 1612”, Greenham writes:

The patient bearing of miserie is an acceptable sacrifice to God: for when the goldsmith putteth a peece of gold into the fire to make better use of it. It seemeth to the unskilfull that hee utterly marreth it, so the children of God in affliction seeme to the judgment of the natural man undon and brought to nothing: but spiritual things, are spiritually discerned.²⁸⁶

Again, this affliction is a mark of belonging to the community of God’s children.

The idea of purification through fire resonates with the popular imagination of the Catholic invention of purgatory as a place filled with flames, which is also how Shakespeare portrays it. Yet these ideas come straight from 1 Peter 1:7 in the Bible, affirming the Protestant emphases on the word and on individual Bible reading.²⁸⁷ Wallington exemplifies this when writes that when he examines his sins, he discovers that he “did not take God with me in my selling” and therefore “just with God” loses a customer, which he sees as a correction by God of his sin.²⁸⁸ Besides,

by this meanes I came to se abundance of filth in my polluted heart. I am not able to tell you the good that sometime I gaine by a crosse that as Job saith. The Lord knoweth my way and tryeth me and I shall come forth like the gold. Job xxxiii 10 ... And the Lord saith ... the iniquity of Jacob [shall] be purged and this is all the fruit the taking away of their sinne²⁸⁹

In contrast to Bradford, Wallington does not focus on gold as a sign of election, but as a way to be purged of sin. Theoretically, Wallington sees affliction as necessary for “the purging away of sinne & the refining of our graces” which helps him to desist from sin.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ BL Sloane MS 922, 32r-32r.

²⁸⁷ Although we might tend to think of purgatory or hell when we encounter descriptions of fire, Griffiths notes that the idea that fire is a component of purgatory is a disputed one which was not universally accepted. Griffiths, “Purgatory”, 427.

²⁸⁸ BL Add MS 40883, 29v-30r.

²⁸⁹ BL Add MS 40883, 30r.

²⁹⁰ BL Add MS 40883, 134v.

Wallington's texts show that the difference between the physical martyrdom of Foxe's martyrs, and the spiritual suffering of Wallington and his contemporaries, has consequences for the impact the gold metaphor can have. Seeing their suffering as a purification process is particularly compelling in the prospect Foxe's martyrs had of being burnt at the stake. For Bradford, physical suffering prepares him for a spiritually cleansed afterlife as one of the elect, he writes, for example, "Alwayes God begineth his judgment at his house so now Gods children are chastised in this world that they should not be damned with the world."²⁹¹ Wallington and his contemporaries could solely apply the idea of gold being refined in the fire to spiritual suffering. For example, when Wallington is worried about church government, he "begegged of my Father that these sorrows may make me come forth as gold out of the fire".²⁹² Yet as we have seen in the previous chapter, the sufferings of the godly in Wallington's time could never be as close to Christ's suffering as that of the martyrs.

Life as Purgatory

For Wallington, life itself seems to be the principal trial of faith: he seems to perceive his life as a major kind of purgatory. To solve the discrepancy between the application of the gold metaphor to martyrdom, as Bradford does, and spiritual suffering, Wallington makes gold subservient to the importance of having faith itself. Several times, he refers to 1 Peter such as when he quotes 1 Peter 1:7: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ".²⁹³

When Wallington compares his faith to gold, the outcome is to the advantage of his faith:

I did find that as one wave of the sea follows another so doth one sorrow follow one the neck of a nother ... But O sweet faith (which is more precious then gold

²⁹¹ BL Sloane MS 922, 14r-v.

²⁹² BL Add MS 40883, 181r.

²⁹³ BL Add MS 40883, 5v. In this letter, Peter addresses 'strangers', whom he also addresses as the elect; various people persecuted for their Christianity. Under Nero, Peter was persecuted and martyred. Duane F. Watson and Terrance Callan, *First and Second Peter* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012, no page numbering). books.google.nl. Accessed on 23 March 2021; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament: The Abridged Edition* (version Abridged edition), ed. Marion L. Soards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 261.

that perisheth) that can behold and looke beyond all these transittory things and comforts & supports and carrys the poore soule through the greatest diffilcity and to see things invissible.²⁹⁴

In another instance, he refers to 1 Peter 1:7 when he relates how the thought of the trying of his faith leads to an increase of the faith he feels inside:

More I did thinke of the trying of my faith (1 Pet 1 7) And shurely at that time being foure a cloke on Tuseday morning my selfe alone at prayr I was much inlarged in duty my God did raise my heart to see such an hie pitch of faith in my soule at the time in the depending on him that I never felt that like that I find the Apostles words in 1 Pete 1 7.²⁹⁵

Here, then, Wallington takes the gold metaphor a step further by comparing gold as a material substance to faith, which is spiritual, with gold being less significant than having faith itself: the ideal instance of the Reformation's idea of "sola fide", justification through faith alone.

The tremendous physical suffering of martyrs as put forward by Foxe is of course an extreme example of a kind of Protestant purgatory during life. Because Wallington was neither persecuted nor suffered physically from external violence, it was harder for him to have the confidence that he would be able to overcome his sinfulness, as it is in Donne's Sonnet 14, "Batter my heart, three-personed God ... That I may rise and stand".²⁹⁶ As Knott writes, "The greater the physical abuse the victims of persecution endure, the more impressive their spiritual victory," which might be part of the explanation of why Wallington continually felt that he was falling short in his dedication to God and in subduing his sins.²⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the wish to purge his sins during his lifetime remained an important goal for Wallington. The idea of seeing his suffering as the refinement of gold in fire was a powerful metaphor through which he could give meaning to his suffering, and it allowed him to approach his faith as even more

²⁹⁴ BL Add MS 40883, 181v.

²⁹⁵ BL Add MS 40883, 6v.

²⁹⁶ John Donne, "Holy sonnet 14" l. 1, 3, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. I, ed. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 1271.

²⁹⁷ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 10.

significant than the precious material of gold. This made clear for him that like Foxe's martyrs, he suffered for the highest cause.

Conclusion

Exactly because of the solitary quality of his spiritual struggle, the imagined community of suffering Protestants is very important for Wallington to give meaning to his suffering. Wallington tries to connect his individual struggle to the community through identifying similar characteristics in the community as he does in himself, and by using a form of Protestant purgatory. Wallington regularly relates his sufferings, as well as God's mercies, to the English people as a whole, by choosing comparable vocabulary. He needs the suffering of others to make his suffering more worthy and does so by extending his individual suffering to the community, and vice versa. Wallington also perceives sinfulness to be a shared characteristic between himself and the community of the godly.

The sufferings of others from the community not only puts into perspective Wallington's own suffering, it also serves as an indication for him that suffering is inescapable. Besides, Wallington sees his suffering and his sinfulness as a quality and a deficiency of the community as a whole as well, which shows that he is embedded in a larger entity which his identity corresponds with. Finally, Wallington shares with others from his imagined community the view that suffering during life is crucial to be a true Christian and a token of being part of a special community of God's people. Although Wallington is haunted by a thorough awareness of his own sinfulness, the fact that all members of the community suffer or need to suffer, confirms his idea that his suffering is worthwhile and helps him to try and surpass his own suffering.

The idea of purging his soul from sin helps him to bear his suffering. Wallington tries to undergo a form of Protestant purgatory during his life, by continually attempting to purge himself from sin. Like Wallington's lifetime suffering, suffering in purgatory could also be exceedingly long. Nevertheless, ultimately the cleansing effect of purgatory was definite, which is a phase which Wallington never reaches.

For Catholics, purgatory was a way to cleanse oneself of one's individual sins, something which the community was involved in and which relatives could contribute to. Although the Protestants' relationship with God was of a more personal nature, and the idea of cleansing one's individual sins was equally important, the idea of a purging

oneself from sin in what we can in hindsight call a Protestant purgatory sustained the idea of membership of an exclusive community.

The metaphor of refinement through fire recurs throughout *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*; in a letter by Foxe's martyr John Bradford, in letters by Wallington's contemporaries and Wallington's friends, as well as in *The Groth of a Christian*, attesting the shared vocabulary across generations of Protestants. Yet for the Protestant martyrs, the comparison of their suffering to gold referred to their physical suffering. By comparing the refinement of gold to the importance of having faith, and subsequently seeing faith as more important than gold, Wallington demonstrates that he as well as his fellow believers are worthy Christians.

Conclusion

If we can draw one overall conclusion from Wallington's texts and the question of why Wallington was so preoccupied with suffering, it is that Wallington struggled with his humanity and the absence of any closure to his sinfulness. Wallington suffered because he was extremely agonized by what he saw as his sinfulness and unworthiness. Foxe's martyrs, by contrast, knew that they were dying for the highest cause, in the manner as close to Christ's suffering as possible. Therefore, Foxe's martyrs could see their physical affliction as a way to be purged of their sins, and their deaths caused by an enemy ended their sinful lives. Wallington is not able to escape from himself, the way martyrs could escape from their enemy. Even if they only lost their ears, rather than their lives, suffering Protestants experienced a form of closure, after which they were released from their enemy and their suffering ceased. Wallington did not have the prospect of such a termination. He did not know when his suffering would end, and when one affliction went, another would come.

I have examined how Wallington creates an imagined community of Protestants, for which he is inspired by Foxe's community of martyrs. Since not much research has been done on how Foxe's legacy has been creatively reused, Wallington's notebooks offer a great opportunity for learning how Wallington as a commoner engaged with Foxe's martyrs and how Wallington keeps martyrdom relevant for his own time. Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities, which Anderson originally devised for the emergence of nationalism, has proven to be a fruitful notion to apply to Wallington's construction of a community of suffering Protestants, because it reveals how Wallington is trying to get a grip on what is essential for him in the turbulent first half of seventeenth-century England: giving meaning to his suffering in a time when older notions about martyrdom do not fully apply anymore.

Because Wallington is not a martyr himself, he sees suffering more generally as the crucial characteristic of his imagined community. This way, he is able to be a legitimate member of this community as well. However, Foxe's martyrs are also typified by their joyful suffering and their idea that affliction is a test of the strength of their faith, or an instructive message from God. In his attempts to achieve spiritual growth, Wallington finds it hard to apply these frameworks, especially because he is overwhelmed by a deep awareness of his sinfulness for which these frameworks offer no solution. Another complicating factor for Wallington is that his sinfulness is always

with him: there is no external enemy to make him suffer and thus to relieve him of his sins.

Yet in combination with his imagined community, his sinfulness also offers an escape from his spiritual torments, offering some reassurance: by recognising his personal sins in the community as a whole, and seeing the English as a sinful people, Wallington feels connected. This way, he sees himself as embedded in a larger entity which his own identity corresponds with. My analysis of the language he uses for himself, and for the community, shows that apart from suffering, sinfulness is also an instrument for Wallington to identify with the community of the godly. This gives him the reassurance that he is not alone, not in his suffering, and neither in his sinfulness. This way, his sinfulness demonstrates that he is part of a community, a community, moreover, which often receives God's mercies. In addition, Wallington sees the purging of sins, like gold in the fire being separated from baser metal, as a token of being member of an elite community of the godly. In spite of his private suffering, Wallington continues to draw upon a sense of community, possibly also as a result of his explicit purpose of writing for those around him and for future generations.

On the whole, the notion of spiritual growth, so vital for the godly, seems to have aggravated rather than relieved Wallington's struggle. On the one hand, Wallington knows that he is one of the godly: he suffers, so he is worthy. On the other hand, he is convinced that he is unworthy, because he is so sinful. Spiritual growth was the means to overcome sin, but the existing models transmitted by Foxe do not suffice to reach a definite new level of growth, also because as one lived on, new sins continued to arise. Yet in spite of his struggles, Wallington's texts also demonstrate his resilience in trying to come to terms with his afflictions.

Significantly, for Wallington, suffering is also a way to be noticed by God. He knows that he is unworthy, but when he suffers, he knows that God sees him and is somehow communicating with him. In this respect, his writings anticipate the growing concern with assurance of faith in the century to come, and his texts show that he was perhaps a bit ahead of his time.

In addition to his dogged persistence in trying to grow spiritually time and again, Wallington also finds ways to give meaning to his suffering which do offer him some grip. Wallington creates a new direction, diverging from the martyr paradigm of Foxe's martyrs, by changing his focus to the usefulness of sinfulness as an additional

characteristic of his imagined community. Paradoxically, this sinfulness is also proof of membership of an elite community of the godly, the purging of which helped to demarcate the godly's special position. Whereas the notions of suffering as a form of trial or instruction did not always help Wallington to reach any spiritual progress, the idea of suffering to purge his sins in a sort of purgatory during his lifetime does seem to offer him some control over his feelings of spiritual suffering.

Wallington's texts demonstrate both continuity and change: Wallington continues the trial or instruction formulae, but differs from his exemplars in his inability to apply it successfully and his attempts to reshape it to include his sinfulness. In his spiritual struggles Wallington represents the typical, yet extreme outcomes his era could manifest in an individual. Concomitant with the Protestant practice of soloistic bible reading, prayer and meditation, which led to an increasingly inward experience of faith, the godly faced spiritual challenges because of their more direct relationship with God and their more personal responsibility for resolving their sins. Typical as these changes may have been for those of Wallington's generation, Wallington epitomizes his struggles with these developments in an intense way.

Thus, Wallington's life at times seems to be one extended purgatory, although officially, Protestants had abolished purgatory. The loss of communal rituals and beliefs involved those such as the belief in purgatory, which enabled Catholics to still in a sort of way communicate with the dead and in which they could still absolve their sins. With the abolition of purgatory, Protestants had to resolve their sins during their lifetime, in what Laurie Throness calls a "Protestant purgatory".²⁹⁸ Yet Wallington and his exemplars retain the idea of purging. With its scriptural foundation of gold being refined in fire, Wallington's purging even, as it were, overtakes the Catholic ideas on purgatory, by referring back to the Bible and thus to the purity of the early church.

Wallington had few opportunities for putting his experiences and his viewpoints into perspective. Whereas Wallington's contemporaries, like Shakespeare, John Donne and John Bunyan were able to creatively engage with the various religious perspectives and notions of suffering, Wallington only engaged with theological conventions, which for Foxe's martyrs may in part only have been literary conventions. Wallington may not have had the intellectual or creative capacities which Donne, Shakespeare and Bunyan

²⁹⁸ Laurie Throness, *A protestant Purgatory: Theological Origins of the Penitentiary Act, 1779* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 297.

had, but his convictions did not leave room for such pastimes either. His serious attitude towards God, life and proper behaviour also meant that he had less opportunity for putting his viewpoints into perspective.

Wallington was a conventional non-conformist. As a Puritan, he was a non-conformist because he opposed many of the Laudian changes to the established church. He was extreme in the extent to which he tried to apply the theological conventions of the godly to his own life, but his viewpoints were largely conventional in the Puritan sense: they concern the importance of suffering with Christ, spiritual progress through self-examination, and severe living rules, inspiring a serious lifestyle. In his writings, Wallington shows that he was absorbed by his daily reality of godly duties and care of his household, but nevertheless wrote for future generations, so that they could take notice of God's mercies and learn from his struggles. For us, as part of the future generations for whom Wallington wrote, the contents of Wallington's notebooks reflect crucial changes at a point in time at which for the Protestants, communal rituals had broken down.

Although my intention was to examine the three notebooks *A Bundel of Marcys*, *The Groth of a Christian* and *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* in conjunction, in practice the *Groth of a Christian* and *Profitable and Comfortable Letters* proved most useful for my research. This is because they offer more information about Wallington's personal struggles than *A Bundel of Marcys*, but *A Bundel of Marcys* was very valuable for the historical context it offers and because it reflects the events which Wallington found important.

Further Avenues of Research

There is so much in Wallington's notebooks that I had to leave unstudied or understudied. Apart from more thorough research on the influence of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* on Wallington's thinking, Wallington notebooks offer ample other opportunities for further research in the field of literature and religious studies from a wide variety of angles. There are still many opportunities for adding other insights to how Wallington gives meaning to his suffering from the disciplines of theology and history.

Profitable and Comfortable Letters as a whole has not yet been much examined. In this thesis, I have mainly focused on the letters from the Marian martyrs and their

impact on Wallington's thinking. These letters are only a small part of the scores of letters in this notebook. Further research could consist of an analysis of ideas on suffering and sinfulness in the other non-martyr letters in *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*. This could reveal which notions from non-conformists outside of Wallington's circle appealed to Wallington and his family and friends, whether they reshaped them, and if so, how. Also worth examining are the letters of admonition which Wallington wrote and copied from others. These letters urge people to behave in the proper godly manner and could thus demonstrate how Wallington and his peers applied Puritan convictions to daily realities.

A larger research project could examine any consistency between the ideas on suffering and sinfulness expressed in these letters and literature, for example, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* which also examines spiritual growth through adversity. In addition, a transnational research project could analyse how such ideas were transmitted into the eighteenth century and into the Netherlands, for example through translations.

Another angle of research could be directed more specifically at Wallington as an individual. Since I have examined three of Wallington's still existing seven notebooks, it may well be that other notebooks show other sides to Wallington's spiritual struggles. An examination of all seven notebooks may reveal how Wallington's thinking developed and whether he did make some spiritual progress on the long term, especially when his notebooks are examined in conjunction with spiritual literature of the time. In addition, an examination of Wallington's sources could demonstrate the impact of religious and political events on the development of his thinking on sinfulness, and to what extent Wallington's suffering had a political dimension because of his concerns about the unfinished state of the English church.

From a gender perspective, Wallington's notebooks could be part of a larger analysis of the role of Puritan non-intellectual women in their communities. Did they focus on suffering and sinfulness to the same extent as men did? With martyrs mostly being male, how did they approach martyrdom and suffering? Not much is known about Wallington's wife Grace, but from Wallington's notebooks emerges the image that her Puritan persuasions were as strong Wallington's. In *Profitable and Comfortable Letters*, Wallington also includes a few letters from other female Puritan acquaintances whom he admires for their godly example.

To learn more about the history of emotions, Wallington's notebooks enable us to examine how he handled emotions such as disappointment and grief. Finally, Wallington's writings offer a wealth of information for further research on the similarities and divergences between Catholic and Protestant martyrdom, such as shared or differing commonplaces and similarities or differences between spiritual and physical suffering.

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