

**Howard University**

---

**From the Selected Works of Andrew T. Sulavik**

---

2006

# Protestant Theological Writings on Angels in Post-Reformation Thought from 1565 to 1939

Andrew T.H Sulavik, *Howard University*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/andrew\\_sulavik/1/](https://works.bepress.com/andrew_sulavik/1/)

Protestant Theological Writings on Angels in Post-Reformation Thought  
from 1565 to 1739: An Annotated Bibliography

by  
Andrew T. Sulavik

# Protestant Theological Writings on Angels in Post-Reformation Thought from 1565 to 1739: An Annotated Bibliography<sup>1</sup>

The Lord knows, we have weak Eyes, stammering Tongues, and  
trembling Quills; if we go about to speak or write of the deep and  
sublime things of God; And such, without peradventure, is the  
Doctrine of Angels<sup>2</sup> – Robert Dingley (1619-1660)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Eight years after accepting the presidency of Harvard College and long after the Salem witchcraft trials ceased, Increase Mather (1639-1723) began studying and preaching about angels.<sup>3</sup> His interest in celestial creatures stemmed from pastoral experiences with evil spirits as well as an account from his son, Cotton, who purportedly conversed with an angel in either 1685 or 1693.<sup>4</sup> Mather's sermons would later form the basis for a comprehensive treatise on angels initiated at the request of local Boston ministers. In the summer of 1696, reports of angelic visitations in Boston were so numerous that the Cambridge Association of Ministers, raising the question of angelic apparitions, charged him with the task of writing on the subject.<sup>5</sup> The completed work, *Angelographia*, published in 1696, was ostensibly a theological discussion on the nature and mission of angels, but it also reflected Mather's need to defend the existence of the spiritual world against a growing secularism and atheism.<sup>6</sup> His remarks on the paucity of available sources for that work merit our attention:

---

<sup>1</sup> The author extends his gratitude to two individuals whose expertise and comments improved this paper considerably: Professor William Robinson of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee, under whose guidance this paper was originally written; and Professor Peter Marshall, Department of History at the University of Warwick.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Dingley, *The deputation of angels* (London, 1654), p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather 1639-1723* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> There is some debate about when Cotton Mather experienced his angelic visitation, but no debate over the authenticity of the event recorded in his diary. David Levin asserts that it occurred in 1685, Kenneth Silverman in 1693. See David Levine, 'When did Cotton Mather See the Angel?' *Early American Literature* 15 (1980/1), pp. 271-79.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> In addition to his treatise, *Angelographia*, Mather also published an introduction, entitled, *Agathangelus, or, An essay on the ministry of the holy angels*, contained in the work of his son Cotton Mather, *Coelestinus. A conversation in heaven* (Boston, 1723).

The Doctrine which Concerns the Ministry of HOLY ANGELS, is a Subject most worthy to be Searched into. Several Learned Men have Published Elaborate & Solid Discourses thereon: In special *Zanchy*, *Rivius*, and *Stuckius*. There are also sundry Useful *English* Treatises, in which this Argument is Judiciously [*sic*] Handled. Particularly, by Bishop *Hall*, Mr. *Lawrence*, and Mr. *Ambrose*; This notwithstanding, a Learned Divine Laments, that there are so few Books Written, or Sermons Preached, concerning the Angels, of whom Scripture speaks so much.. . . As for Philosophical Questions about the Nature of Angels, and the way of their Understanding Things . . . *Heerboord* in his Select Disputations, and *Schiebler* in his *Metaphysicks* are among the clearest Authors, that Treat on those Speculations.<sup>7</sup>

Mather identifies eight Protestant theologians by name, yet his assertion that so few books had been written and sermons preached about angels gives the impression that nearly two hundred years after the inception of the Reformation, Reformers had scarcely produced any writings on the topic. Mather was not alone in his opinion of this lamentable state. Richard Saunders (d.1692), writing shortly before the publication of Mather's *Angelographia*, commented:

Tis great pity so rich a Privilege and Blessing, as is that we have by those Celestial Agents, should lie so much in the dark, and unobserved, as hitherto it hath: For tho' many great Divines have asserted it on Scripture Grounds, yet it hath been so rarely and sparingly spoken of, that few men take any considerable notice of it, or count much upon it.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, the Non-conformist pastor Thomas Shepherd (1665-1739), reinforcing Mather's and Saunders's claims, prefaced his 1701 publication, *Several Sermons on Angels*, with these words: 'The Doctrine of Angels has been handled by very few; and those that have done it, have done it mostly in a Scholastick way; so that the plain Christian is still in the Dark about it'.<sup>9</sup> Although these Puritan divines were chronologically closer to the sources at hand, their appraisal of the plight of Protestant angelology

---

<sup>7</sup>Increase Mather, *Angelographia* (Boston, 1696), To the Reader. Mather is most likely referring to the following works: Jerome Zanchy (1516-1590), *De operibus Dei intra spacium sex dierum creatis opus*, 2 ed. (Hanoviae, 1597); Johannes Rivius (1500-1553), *De familiari cuiusque genio, seu praesidio angelico libellus* (Vittebergae, 1537); John W. Stuck (1542-1607), *De angelis angelicoque hominum praesidio* (Tiguri, 1595); Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich (1574-1656), *The invisible world* (London, 1659); Henry Lawrence (1600-1664), *An history of angels* (London, 1650); Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664) *Ministration of, and communion with angels* (London, 1682); Adrian Heerboord (1614-1661), *Meletemata philosophica*, 4 vols. (Leiden, 1654); and Christopher Scheibler (d. 1610), *Theologia naturalis & angelographia* (Gissae, 1621).

<sup>8</sup>Richard Saunders, *Angelographia* (London, 1701), p. 190.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Shepherd, *Several sermons on angels* (London, 1702), Preface.

was not as grim as they had perceived. As the appended subject bibliography indicates, post-Reformation theologians between the second half of the sixteenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century produced an enormous amount of literature on the subject, which peaked during the first half of the seventeenth century and precipitously declined thereafter. The confluence of inexorable, intellectual forces – Newtonian physics, Hume’s philosophical empiricism, and Voltaire’s satirical polemics against church dogmatics – had so revolutionized cultural perceptions of cosmology, nature, and divine providence that most eighteenth century theologians declined to write about angels. By the latter half of the seventeenth century belief in good and evil spirits began to decline among the educated classes, creating a chasm between their increasingly secularized ideas and popular beliefs.<sup>10</sup> Robert West, surveying the development of Christian angelology in the West, noted the rapid erosion of serious discourse on angels after the seventeenth century.

As the seventeenth century moved on toward Deism angels and devils became increasingly inconvenient. By the end of the century angelology was an abandoned science as far as the main currents of thought were concerned. Few men of standing trouble to deny angels or even the “science” of them; but fewer still found much to say about angels or any real use for the “science”.<sup>11</sup>

Looking back on the rise and fall of Protestant angelology, it is easier to identify its decline than its ascendancy, especially the point at which it developed into a branch of theology and ultimately into a full-fledged ‘science’.<sup>12</sup> As the Reformers confronted the extensive doctrines of angels issuing from the medieval scholastics, they had good reason to take pains to see that angelology never became a major systematized branch of Protestant theology. It did, however, become a systematic field of study and integral subdivision of Protestant theology within the doctrine of Creation and within discussions of God as spirit, the human soul, and predestination.

---

<sup>10</sup> Cfr Andrew Fix, ‘Angels, Devils, and Evil Spirits in Seventeenth-Century Thought: Balthasar Bekker and the Collegiants’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50.4 (1989), p. 527.

<sup>11</sup> Robert West, *Milton and the Angels* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1955), p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Both within and beyond the ambit of systematized Protestant theology, humanist efforts to organize all science and learning under the Ramist method developed by Peter Ramus (1515-1572) led to the classification of pneumatology as an identifiable field of learning. By the last quarter of the seventeenth century Thomas Govan (1631-1683), a representative user of the term ‘pneumatology’, divided *Pneumatologia*, the science of spiritual beings, into three subdivisions: *Theologia*, or the doctrine of God; *Angelographia* (including *Demonologia*), or the doctrine of angels (and devils); and *Psychologia*, or the doctrine of human souls. Cfr Norman S. Fiering, ‘President Samuel Johnson and the Circle of Knowledge’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 28.2 (1971), p. 222, n. 58.

Throughout the Reformation era (ca. 1517-1565), the early Reformers discussed angels in an unsystematic way, peppering their exegetical works with opinions on these supernal beings and occasionally preaching on them at Christmas and on Michaelmas Day.<sup>13</sup> Theological topics treated in their biblical commentaries served as foundational material for later systematic theological works where the subject of angels became a permanent fixture within a variety of organized compendia.<sup>14</sup> Some early Reformers, however, had begun the process of constructing their theological reflections according to the pattern of the catechetical and creedal models of the Fathers and the nascent *Loci communes* (1521; final edition, 1560) of Philip Melancthon (d. 1560), most notably John Calvin (d. 1564), Heinrich Bullinger (d. 1575), Wolfgang Musculus (d. 1563), and Andreas Hyperius (d. 1564). With the exception of Melancthon, all of these early Reformers offered a systematic treatment on angels.<sup>15</sup> Although Melancthon remained silent on the topic in his *Loci communes*, he did describe an angelic visitation he witnessed in 1529 in his commentary on the Book of Daniel.<sup>16</sup> His personal encounter would become an often quoted *exemplum* by later theologians as confirmation that angels continue to protect God's elect.<sup>17</sup> These works are the

---

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, Calvin's commentaries on Job, Zacheria, Ezechiel, and Daniel, published between 1561 and 1593: *Conciones In Librum Iobi*, Job 1.6-8, 4.12-19, 15.8-16, 25.1-6, 38.4-11; *Praelectiones In Duodecim Prophetas Minores*, Zacheria, 1.7-12, 2.2-4; Ezechiel *Praelectiones in Ezechielis Prophetiae Viginti Capita Priora*, 1.4, 10.1-8; and *Daniel Praelectiones In Librum Prophetiarum Danielis*, 3.24 -25, 4.10-17, 8.13-14; and Luther's commentary on the Book of Genesis, published in 1535: *Enarrationes In Primum Librum Mose*, Gen. 1.6, 3.24, 22.1, 24.6-9, 28.12, 32.1-2.

For sermon examples on angels produced by early Reformers, see Luther's Sermon on Michaelmas published in 1539: WA 30, 112-119; along with Philip Soergel's article, 'Luther on the Angels,' in Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *Angels in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 64-82. see also: Urbanus Rhegius's *Sermon on Michaelmas*, first preached in 1537 at Zella in Saxony, in *An homely or sermon of good and euill angels*, trans. Ri[chard] Robinson (London, 1590), pp. 1-36.

<sup>14</sup> Cfr Scott Amos, 'New Learning, Old Theology: Renaissance Biblical Humanism, Scripture, and the Question of Theological Method', *Renaissance Studies* 17.1 (2003), p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr John Calvin, *Institutionum christianae religionis* (Amersterdam, 1568), lib. 1, cap. 16, sect. 3 -13, *De angelis*, pp. 35a-38a; sect. 13-20, *De malis angelis*, pp. 38a-40a; Wolfgang Musculus, *Loci communes theologiae sacrae*. Basil, 1599: Locus 5. *De creatione in genere, De creatione angelorum*, p. 12-13; Locus 6. *De lapsu angelorum*, p. 13; Locus 37. *De cultu angelorum*, pp. 412-413; Andreas Hyperius, *Methodi theologiae sive . . . locorum communium libri tres*. (Basil, 1567), lib. 2. *De creaturis invisibilibus*, pp. 272-326; Heinrich Bullinger, *Fiftie godlie and learned sermons*, trans. by H.I. (London, 1587), decade 4, nineth sermon, *Of good and evil spirites [sic]*, pp. 731-54.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr Philip Melancthon, *In Daniele prophetam commentarius in Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 13 - ed. Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider. (Halis Saxonum, 1846), cap. 10, pp. 906-907.

<sup>17</sup> For examples of the use of Melancthon's angelic visitation as an *exemplum* in later theological works on angels, see: Benjamin Camfield, *A theological discourse of angels* (London, 1678), 87-88; Saunders, *Angelographia*, 135-36, 169; Isaac Ambrose, *Ministration of, and communion with angels* (London, 1682), pp. 133-34; Simon Patrick, *Sermon XVI, Fifteen Sermons* (London, 1719), 462-64; and Joseph Hall, *The invisible world* (London, 1659), 59-62.

precursors around which the systematic compendia of the post-Reformation theologians were framed and the vehicle by which Protestant angelology took shape and flourished over the next 150 years, culminating in compositions by Catholics and Protestants of lengthy treatises aptly entitled, *angelographia*.

The post-Reformation era of scholastic orthodoxy (ca. 1565-1739), the time frame within which this bibliography is set, is a highly significant theological and historiographical period of Protestant thought. Through the literary activity of post-Reformation theologians, difficult questions pertaining to angelology were not only elaborated and elucidated, but far more significantly the faith of the Reformed churches were successfully defined and defended, thus ensuring that the efforts of the early Reformers would not be forever lost to posterity.<sup>18</sup> The post-Reformation theologians were able to successfully defend and define their doctrines against a highly elaborate Roman Catholic theology in large measure through the re-appropriation and modification of late medieval scholastic methodology and its application to their own pastoral and doctrinal needs. The synthesis of scholastic methodology with orthodox teaching developed primarily within the universities where, for pedagogical reasons, the Protestant schoolmen needed a means of organizing the growing body of theological topics.

### 1.1 SYSTEMS OF THEOLOGY

Although a variety of compendia of systematic theology evolved over time, the preferred systematic model adopted by many theologians was the *loci* method, which was especially emulated by Lutheran academics at the university centers of Wittenberg, Tübingen, Leipzig, and Jena. The *Loci communes*, meaning 'common topics' or 'commonplaces,' gave a fairly complete systematic expression of the chief doctrines of the Reformation. Within the *loci* method, theologians occasionally placed the topic of beneficent and malevolent angels under the doctrine of Predestination, but chiefly under the doctrine of Creation, which treated the Genesis account of the first six days of creation, otherwise known as the hexameron.

The advantage for theologians adopting the *loci* method was twofold. It not only provided a coherent and fixed means for students and clergy to easily find the standard, theological topic needed, but each *locus* consisted of a set, ordered and formalized series of questions, which could be expanded to

---

<sup>18</sup> Richard Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 46: 'In no small measure, we have the nearly two hundred years of scholastic orthodoxy to thank for the preservation of the barely fifty years of theological achievement that was the Reformation. Without the establishment and successful defense of the confessional orthodoxy in the Reformed churches, the reform efforts of Bucer, Zwingli, Calvin, Bullinger, and their contemporaries would probably have registered in the pages of Western history as an evanescent movement long ago vanished from the face of the earth rather than as the foundation of an institutional form of Christianity.'

almost unlimited possibilities. However, the institutionalization and formalization of these questions aided the unwary theologian from straying too far from the subject matter and entering into unnecessary speculative areas that could be cause for error. This was a real danger, especially for Reformers discussing the topic of angels. Theologians were often sternly warned not to express vagrant notions on angels. The Non-conformist theologian, Richard Baxter (1615-1691), writing during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, admonished angelologists:

Be satisfied in knowing so much of Angels as God in Nature and scripture hath revealed, but presume not to enquire further, much less to determine of unrevealed things. That there are Angels, and that there are holy spirits, is past dispute. But what number they are, and of how many Worlds, and of what orders and different dignities and degrees; and when they were created, and what locality belongeth to them . . . are unnecessary questions . . . Almost all the Hereticks in the first ages of the Church did make their Doctrines of Angels the first and chief part of their Heresies.<sup>19</sup>

Reformers transgressing the prescribed limits of orthodoxy as established in the *loci* on angels risked being ostracized. For those willing to express their views more freely, treatises offered a better, though riskier, theological genre for accomplishing this aim, as Robert Dingley (1619-1660) makes clear in the preface to his treatise, *The Deputation of angels*:

And tis easy for any one to write in the beaten road of common places, where every Author doth overflow, and is ready to guide the hand of him that writeth. I here present thee with a secret vein of Gold, which hath cost me some digging; And let my absence from publick Libraries be considered: I acknowledge this Doctrine is not commonly received by Protestants, who (I humbly conceive) might reject it chiefly in opposition to the Sea of Rome, wherein such a multitude of Monsters do swim.<sup>20</sup>

The 'beaten road of common places' to which Dingley refers is the *loci* method, which, in the instance of *loci* on angels, adhered to a core set of questions that a reader could expect to find answered. The standard questions were loosely patterned after the medieval construction of Peter Lombard's (c. 1100-

---

<sup>19</sup> Richard Baxter, *A christian directory* (London, 1707), p. 615. Baxter's reference to angelic heresies is probably to the early Church's Trinitarian and Christological heresies that presented the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity in angelomorphic terms, as creatures. Such views, championed by heretical groups such as the Ebionites, Clementines, Arians and Pneumatomachi, bordered on subordinationism. See Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John A. Baker (Chicago: The Henry Regnery Company, 1964), pp. 125-35.

<sup>20</sup> Dingley, *The deputation of angels*, To the Ingenuous Reader.



1160) eleven distinctions on angels in the *Sentences*. In the preface to the distinctions on angels (and demons) the Master of the Sentences summarizes the prototypical questions on angels that all subsequent Catholic theologians would comment on until well into the seventeenth century:

These are the matters to be considered on angels: these subjects are to be treated first concerning the angelic nature: when was it created, where, its original state; then the effects of the angels' fall and the lack of it; and other matters are to be discussed pertaining to their powers, orders, different gifts, functions, names and many other things.<sup>21</sup>

The subjects that Lombard selects for treatment are of Patristic origin, but their selection and ordering represent the first effort to systematize the field of angelology in the Christian West. The appropriation of these distinctions by Protestant theologians exemplifies the positive use of medieval materials. Listed below are some of the foundational questions invariably posed within a *locus* on angels, excerpted from Andreas Hyperius's (1511-1564) *Loci communes*:

On the knowledge and free will of angels.

On the sin and fall of the angels.

On good angels: and whether they are deserving of merit because they adhered firmly to truth (God).

On the functions of good angels.

Whether there are distinct ranks of angels.

Whether there are individual angels assigned to each person, nation, and province, as guardians and rulers.

Whether good angels assume bodies.

On fallen or evil angels: that they were not created evil.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, vol. I, ed. I Brady, (Grottaferrata, 1971), lib. 2, dist. 2, cap. 1, p. 336: '*Quae consideranda sunt de angelis. De angelica itaque natura haec primo consideranda sunt: quando creata fuerit, et ubi, et qualis facta dum primo conderetur; deinde qualis effecta aversione quorundam et conversione quorundam; de excellentia quoque et ordinibus et donorum differentia, et de officiis ac nominibus aliisque pluribus aliqua dicenda sunt*'.

<sup>22</sup> Hyperius, *Methodi theologiae*, pp. 277-92: '*De Angelorum cognitione & libera voluntate; De angelorum peccato & lapsu; De Angelis bonis: & utrum, quòd in veritate perstiterint, sint promeriti; De bonorum Angelorum officiis; Utrum sint distincti angelorum ordines; Utrum sint singuli angeli singulis hominibus, populis, provinciis, velut tutores & praesides dati; Utrum angeli boni assumant corpora; De angelis lapsis, sive malis: & quòd non sint mali conditi*'.

On the surface, the subjects raised by Hyperius are not significantly different from those of Peter Lombard, and although he may not be consciously following Lombard, he is framing his subject matter within an earlier established theological tradition.

The Reformers' tasks of defending their doctrines on angels against conflicting Catholic doctrines and of ascribing pastoral applications to them influenced the content of their angelology. For example, it is common to find part of a *locus* on angels devoted to a vigorous attack of Catholic doctrines on guardian angels, the invocation of angels, and the Dionysian angelic hierarchy. Polemics aside, the Reformers were more concerned to develop an angelology that was pastorally attuned to the needs of their congregations. As Richard Saunders crisply put it, 'This *Doctrine* of Angels may to some seem to be but a nice speculation, but as we have been considering of it, it is part our *Theology*, and capable of very holy Improvement. *Theology* is not a *Speculative*, but a *Practical Doctrine*'.<sup>23</sup> Many of the *loci* on angels conclude with a treatment of how the teachings on angels profit the reader, as Matthias Hafenreffer (1561-1619) professor of theology at Tübingen, did, asking, '*Quis est usus huius Loci?*', or what is the benefit of this topic? His answer:

*That we may draw consolation from it.* Even though we have God Himself as a most trustworthy protector everywhere, He also wished to include angels, those mighty spirits in number and power, as guards to assist us in our weakened condition.

*That we may be moved to a pious and holy way of life.* What sane person would be so stupid as to wish to sin and commit shameful acts in the sight of very respectable people? No, rather we should grow embarrassed in the presence of those most holy and chaste spirits, and recoil from sins that we can neither conceal from God nor the angels, then we will have been watchful of our soul. Therefore, always be mindful of this: Do not sin: [for] God, the examiner of our hearts, sees: a witnessing angel assists: death threatens: the Devil accuses: our conscience pricks: Hell widens its maw. May we, through the example of the angels, be moved to perpetual and unceasing praise of the Lord.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Saunders, *Angelographia*, p. 190.

<sup>24</sup>Matthias Hafenreffer, *Loci theologici* (Tubingae, 1603), pp. 216-217: '*Ut Consolationem inde hauriamus. Quòd licet Deum ipsum ubique habeamus fidissimum protectorem, ad nostram tamen imbecillitatem sublevandam, etiam Angelos, & numero & virtute potentissimos Spiritus, quasi praesidiarios milites, nobis adiungere voluerit. Ut ad pietatem & morum sanctitatem excitemur, quis enim homo sanus tantae esset impudentiae, ut in conspectu honestissimorum hominum turpia agere & peccare velit? Quin potius ergo ad Angelorum conspectum, sanctissimorum & castissimorum spirituum, erubescimus, & à peccatis, quae neque Angelos, neque Deum possumus celare, animum nostrum meminerimus avocamus. Illud igitur perpetuò: Noli peccare: Deus cordium*

In addition to urging their readers to take note of the benefits derived by following the example of angels, Reformers addressed a host of pressing pastoral concerns that may have been triggered by an escalation in sensational writings about demonic copulation after 1570,<sup>25</sup> a renewed prominence given to angels in popular magic, and prophetic angelic visions that were in vogue in the mid-seventeenth century and again in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> The Reformers were clearly aware and alarmed by the popularity of occult works by the German Benedictine abbot Johannes Trithemius (1462-1519) and his disciple Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535),<sup>27</sup> as well as numerous later works published throughout the mid-seventeenth century by Renaissance intellectuals bent on predicting the course of events or trying to influence them through communication with angels. In response to the growing popular belief in magic, astrology, and the occult, and the place of angels (and demons) within these practices, it is not surprising to find Protestant theologians mitigate and even deny angelic and demonic powers. An extreme example of this is the Reformed minister Balthasar Bekker (1634-98), author of *The World Bewitched* published between 1691 and 1694, who argued against the popular belief that the world was pervaded by evil spirits.<sup>28</sup> Most theologians, however, addressed popular misconceptions about spirits through a careful evaluation of their limitations. This was accomplished by narrowing the possibility of *contemporary* angelic intervention in earthly affairs through miracles, apparitions, communication with humans, prediction of future events, and possession of human souls based on ontological argumentation, or by attributing constraints placed upon angelic activity to God's supreme will and rule over creation. They also frequently contested the Catholic practice of invoking angels, especially since it smacked of the occult practice of conjuring angels. The flexibility of the *loci* method made it an ideal instrument for addressing these and other pastoral concerns, and although the possibilities of questions that a theologian could ask were boundless, most theologians kept their investigation of angels to a minimum, leaving a broader discussion on the subject for publication in the form of a treatise or proclamation in the form of a sermon.

---

*scrutator videt: Angelus assistit arbiter: Mors minatur: Diabolus accusat: Conscientia mordet: Infernus dilatat rictum. Ut Angelorum exemplo, ad perpetuas & nunquam intermissas Domini laudes, excitemur'.*

<sup>25</sup> Cfr Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 101.

<sup>26</sup> Cfr Owen Davies, 'Angels in elite and popular magic, 1650-1790', in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, pp. 298 and 302.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Calov cites both Trithemius and Agrippa by name, cfr Abraham Calov, *Systema locorum theologicorum*, III (Witebergae, 1661), p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr Fix, 'Angels, Devils, and Evil Spirits', pp. 539-40.

## 1.2 TREATISES

Many of the systematic works were the products of classroom lectures intended for use at the universities to train clergy. With the exception of Abraham Calov (1612-1686) whose *locus* on angels runs a staggering 382 pages, theologians worked economically through their treatments on angels, giving a brief explanation to each question and moving on, much as a teacher does instructing students within a circumscribed amount of time. Similar questions and theological concerns treated in the *loci* of the systematic works are also found in treatises and sermons, but in a more protracted form. From the turn of the sixteenth century until the first half of the seventeenth, some angelologists began to describe their treatises with the term, *angelographia*, meaning a treatise on angels. '*Angelographia*' is not a neologism of medieval origin, but more likely was coined after the second half of the sixteenth century. Its earliest use as a title appears to be 1597, the year the Catholic theologian Otto Casman published his treatise on angels with that title.<sup>29</sup> Casman's work was consulted by at least three English angelologists, Benjamin Camfield (d.1693), Edward Leigh (d.1671), and John Salkeld (d.1660), suggesting that it was a work of some repute among angelologists.<sup>30</sup> The bibliography identifies two angelographies of twelve published between 1597 and 1738.<sup>31</sup>

## 1.3 SERMONS

Almost without exception all the systematic theologies and treatises were products of university clergy who prepared them as teaching guides and aids for preaching. The practical goals of theology included not only the clarification of doctrine, but also the preaching of the Gospel, the aim of which was to move listeners to fervent piety and good conduct. Teachings on angels moved swiftly from the classroom to the pulpit, connected by a common thread of Scripture, usually a particular verse or

---

<sup>29</sup> Cfr Otto Casmannus, *Angelographia... seu problematicus de angelis seu creatis spiritibus* (Francofurtii, 1597).

<sup>30</sup> Cfr Benjamin Camfield, *A theological discourse of angels* (London, 1678), p. 45; Leigh, Edward, *A treatise of divinity* (London, 1646), p. 91; and John Salkeld, *A treatise of angels* (London, 1613), p. 31.

<sup>31</sup>For works in the bibliography using the title, *Angelographia*, see T8, and T9. All works employing this term, arranged chronologically, are: Casmannus, *Angelographia*; Johannes Manitius, *Angelographia*. (Wittenbergae, 1662); Christopher Scheibler, *Theologia naturalis & angelographia* (Gissae, 1621); Jacobus Musselius, *Disputatio pneumatica de angelographia*, praes. J. Elero (Witteburgae, 1625); Johannes Scharfius, *Pneumatica . . . angelographia, seu doctrina de intelligentiis creatis* (Wittebergae, 1629); Johannes Manitius, *Angelographia* (Wittenbergae, 1662); Jacobus Ernestus, *Angelographia* (Wittenbergae, 1668); Johannes A. Quenstedt, *Angelographia sive disputatio theologica de angelis in genere*, respondens Johannes Samuel Cadner (Wittenbergae, 1678); Johannes Meier, *Angelographia sive exercitation metaphysica de angelis* (Wolphart, 1684); Mylius, Antonius, *Angelographia sacra* (Jenae, 1694); Mather, *Angelographia*; and Johannes Nieder, *Meditationes . . . de angelographia* (Giessae, 1738).

passage, a *locus classicus* or *sedes doctrinae*, that acts as a touchstone for discussing a specific doctrine. The *sedes doctrinae* for teachings on angels is Hebrews 1.14: 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heir of salvation?' Not only was Hebrews 1.14 the *sedes doctrinae* of many systematic theologies and treatises, it also served as the *thema* – meaning not a topic, but a verse of scripture around which a sermon is constructed – in sermons.<sup>32</sup> Without exception, all the sermons in the bibliography are thematic sermons on angels. The fourteen sermons contained in the bibliography serve as a reminder that the entire theological enterprise, beginning with the exegesis of Scripture in biblical commentaries, which are then organized into theological topics in systems of theology and further amplified in treatises, comes to completion in the act of preaching. Whether our sermons were actually preached within a liturgical setting remains outside the ambit of this introduction, but preached or not, these as well as the many yet to be identified remain vast and rich depositories of Protestant angelology not yet fully mined by scholars.

The Puritan divines may have lamented the scarcity of available sources on angels at the turn of the eighteenth century, but were they alive today they would be astounded at the immense amount of theological work on angels produced before their time. It is lamentable that with so much of the post-Reformation writings on angels preserved in published and electronic form, there is so little scholarly attention given to it, a sentiment first voiced by Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham.<sup>33</sup> There is growing hope that this situation is changing. The publication in 2006 of *Angels in the Early Modern World* and recent doctoral dissertations promise to shed more light on the subject and promote future interest in the field.<sup>34</sup> The subject bibliography of writings containing the intellectual beliefs of Protestant theologians is offered as a research aid, albeit a small one, to scholars willing to enter into the thicket of post-Reformation angelology.

---

<sup>32</sup> The bibliography lists two examples: S5, S6.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr Peter Marshall, and Alexandra Walsham, 'Migrations of Angels in the Early Modern World', in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, p. 2: 'Although art historians and a number of popular general surveys have cast the net more widely, early modern historians have paid relatively little attention to the cultural, intellectual and religious ramifications of beliefs about angels in the period between 1500 and 1800. This neglect is puzzling, as many other aspects of the supernatural, including prodigies, portents, miracles and providences, have recently come under the spotlight.'

<sup>34</sup> Recent and forthcoming doctoral dissertations include: K. Harvey, 'The Role of Angels in English Protestant Thought 1580 to 1660' Ph.D. diss., (University of Cambridge, 2005); Jonathan E.G. Macy, 'Angels in the Anglican Tradition, 1547-1662', Ph.D. diss., (King's College, London, 2004); and Laura Sangha, 'The Significance of Angelic Belief in England c. 1480-1700', Ph.D. diss., (University of Warwick). Forthcoming.