

BIBLICAL REFERENCES IN THE NOVELS OF SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND  
HENRY FIELDING PUBLISHED IN THE 1740s

by

REBEKAH JANE ANDREW

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Department of English, Drama, and Creative Studies

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the biblical references in and moral conversation between six eighteenth-century novels. It investigates Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740); *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* (1742); and *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (1748), alongside Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741); *Joseph Andrews* (1742); and *Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749). By close reading these six novels, I have noted 440 biblical references, many of which have been previously unnoticed. These references were analysed in order to assess why the author chose to quote Scripture, and to what end. The high number of biblical references in these six novels show the importance of considering the Bible as part of the early novel's intertextuality. Not only are there more biblical references in these novels than have previously been noted, but there is also diversity between uses of Scripture within the individual authors' canons. These novels were selected as they form a moral conversation, with both authors responding to and correcting what they saw as moral flaws in the other's works, and even correcting their own morality if its expression was not clear. This thesis provides a reading of eighteenth-century novels aiming to give modern readers, less well-versed in the Bible than Richardson's and Fielding's audience, an indication of what an eighteenth-century reader may have appreciated, who may have put down their Bible to pick up a novel for some lighter but still morally edifying reading.

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## INTRODUCTION

In January 1741, the author Catherine Talbot and the poet and translator Elizabeth Carter were introduced to one another by a mutual acquaintance, the philosopher and astronomer Thomas Wright. This sparked a life-long friendship between the two women, conducted primarily in letters until Talbot's death in 1770. In their numerous correspondences, Carter and Talbot discussed a wide range of topics from high theology to national and local gossip. They also spent many pages discussing and recommending literature to one another. Reading novels, plays, and poetry, they often discoursed on both the literary merit and the moral worth of each piece. Commenting on James Thomson's plays, Carter wrote:

I have really so much pleasure in the beauties of Mr. Thomson's writings, and so great a veneration for the morality of them, that it hurts me to find any faults; but yet I cannot help thinking that all the characters in [*Tancred and Sigismunda*] (except Osmond's) are unnatural and inconsistent.<sup>1</sup>

Morally upstanding, the play's literary endeavour draws reluctant criticism.

Talbot also judged literature according to its moral standpoint. Writing of Michel de Montaigne, she commented:

To me he seems infinitely amusing. His character lively and original, and what with right and serious principles would have deserved esteem as well as liking: but unfortunately he wants [principles] to a very great degree [...].<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Carter to Catherine Talbot, 26 April 1745, in *A Series of Letters Between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, 3 vols (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1809), I, 93.

<sup>2</sup> Talbot to Carter, 5 October 1743, in *A Series of Letters*, I, 39.

Talbot admired the literary elements in de Montaigne, but she had a serious concern that there is not sufficient moral purpose to his work. Again, judgments on both morality and literary merit are joined in a single sentence. These are two examples of many from this correspondence alone.

Carter and Talbot were discerning readers, their correspondence reflecting how two educated people approached texts with sophisticated criticism. In these letters, barely a piece of literature is mentioned without some comment on its ethical standing as part of Carter and Talbot's textual criticism and exposition. This constant linkage indicates the importance of not only considering the literary nature of eighteenth-century novels, but also the moral edification readers expected from their works of literature. Carter and Talbot also discussed Samuel Richardson's and Henry Fielding's novels, comparing them in places (their readings are referred to throughout this thesis). To summarise, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* (1742) is mentioned in passing but unassessed. *Joseph Andrews* (1741) is received favourably in both moral and literary terms. *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (1748) is adored, and *Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749) is despised for its moral laxity yet admired for its humour.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *A Series of Letters*, I, 20, 23, 312, 315.



Richardson and Fielding both assert that their writing is moral. Fielding stated in his dedication to *Tom Jones* that 'to recommend Goodness and Innocence hath been my sincere Endeavour in this History [...] I have endeavoured to laugh Mankind out of their favourite Follies and Vices'.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in his preface to the first edition of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), Richardson asserts that the purpose for the novel is, among similar themes, 'to inculcate Religion and Morality in so easy and agreeable manner, as shall render them equally delightful and profitable'.<sup>5</sup> Here, Richardson separates religion from morality, but morality in eighteenth-century England was unquestionably founded in Christianity. When not adhering to Christian doctrine, even moral works are called into question. Carter criticises the polymath Blaise Pascal's writing for not representing Christian morality. In a letter to Talbot, she states 'I am going in the spirit of controversy to oppose this favourite author of your's [*sic*], who seems to have founded his notions of duty rather on the basis of a severe and gloomy temper, than on the cheerful, social, good-natured spirit of the Gospel'.<sup>6</sup> This could almost be a comment on the opposing literary styles of Richardson and Fielding. Here, Carter reveals that when morality was divorced from the fundamentals of Christianity, criticism could be made.

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, ed. by Fredson Bowers (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), pp. 7–8. Further references to *Tom Jones* are given after quotations in the text as (*TJ*).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, ed. by Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 3. Further references to *Virtue Rewarded* are given after quotations in the text as (*VR*).

<sup>6</sup> Carter to Talbot, 5 August 1748, in *A Series of Letters*, I, 285.

This thesis will analyse the biblical references in and moral conversation between six eighteenth-century novels: Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*; *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*; and *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*, alongside Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741); *Joseph Andrews*; and *Tom Jones, a Foundling*. In these six novels, there are approximately 440 biblical references, many of which have been previously unnoticed. The high number of biblical references in these novels show the importance of considering the Bible as part of the early novel's intertextuality. Not only are there more biblical references in these novels than have been previously noted, but there is also diversity between uses of Scripture within the individual author's canon. These novels were selected as they form a moral conversation, with both authors responding to and correcting what they saw as moral flaws in the other's works, and even correcting their own morality if its expression was not clear. This thesis aims to provide a reading of eighteenth-century novels for modern readers, less well-versed in the Bible than Richardson's and Fielding's audience, who may have put down their Bible to pick up a novel for some lighter but still morally edifying reading.

Having stated that eighteenth-century English society remained fundamentally Christian, the secularisation process was underway.<sup>7</sup> As Carol Stewart states, 'religion became increasingly redefined as morality and morality as the essence

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<sup>7</sup> Carol Stewart, *The Eighteenth-Century Novel and the Secularization of Ethics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

of Christianity might be emphasized as a way of eliminating religious discord'.<sup>8</sup> Although secularisation, itself stemming at least partially from Protestant individualism, had clearly begun in the 1740s it appears to be in its infancy. Cries of irreligion from pulpits, pamphlets, and even Richardson and Fielding engage in a tradition found in the Bible. They speak to fears more than the actual state of religion during the middle of the eighteenth century. With the increase in frequency of Anglican church services (as highlighted by John Spurr and also mentioned in *Clarissa* (for example p. 1021)); church building projects as noted by Walsh and Taylor; and a plethora of Anglican-affiliated reading materials in publication, adherence to Anglicanism was widespread.<sup>9</sup> While ecclesiastical histories of the Church of England in the eighteenth century exist, it is impossible to generalise what the eighteenth-century Anglican believed, and there was a great amount of diversity between individuals calling themselves 'Anglican'.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, this thesis will not attempt to define 'Anglican' beyond an individual's professed adherence to the Church of England, which was the religious adherence of the vast majority of the English population.

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<sup>8</sup> *Secularization of Ethics*, p. 5. I argue that, like 'Providence' used synonymously for 'God', 'morality' was a polite way of talking about Christianity in the age of religious pluralism and privacy of faith, avoiding any specific doctrines and divorced from the academic discipline of theology.

<sup>9</sup> John Spurr, 'The Church, the Societies and the Moral Revolution of 1688', in *The Church of England, c. 1689–c. 1883*, ed. by Walsh and Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 127–142 (p. 138); John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the "Long" Eighteenth Century', in *The Church of England, c. 1689–c. 1883*, ed. by Walsh and Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1–64 (p. 10).

<sup>10</sup> See for example William Gibson, *The Church of England 1688–1832: Unity and Accord* (London: Routledge, 2001), which highlights both the differences but also the agreement between Anglicans in the eighteenth century.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the main source of reading material was religious. As J. Paul Hunter notes, 'piety was the most acceptable, most persuasive and perhaps most fundamental basis for literacy'.<sup>11</sup> Motivated by the Protestant ideal of everyone being able to read the Bible for themselves, the drive for literacy was religious in origin. The burgeoning charity schools, replaced by the Sunday School movement in the latter part of the eighteenth century, enabled people from all social strata to read. As the most widely accessible book, the Bible was not only the motivation but also the resource for spreading literacy. Despite worries of irreligion, the number of religious publications during the eighteenth century outweighed any other genre. While one may be led to believe religion was declining, as many pamphlets and both Richardson and Fielding asserted, it appears this was not the case. John Feather remarks in his investigation into eighteenth-century print culture, 'predictably, religion in all its manifestations provides the largest single group of books, but secular matters, headed by social science (which includes politics) are not far behind'.<sup>12</sup> He notes circa 53,000 titles classified as religious, with social sciences at circa 47,000.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, religious works were popular amongst readers during the period, with, as Feather again remarks, 'on average three sermons [...] published in every week of the eighteenth century'.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (London: Norton, 1990), p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> John Feather, 'British Publishing in the Eighteenth Century: A Preliminary Subject Analysis', *The Library*, 6.8 (1986), 32–46 (p. 35).

<sup>13</sup> Feather, pp. 38, 36. Feather also notes that many sermons were dedicated to political matters showing such cataloguing has complexities (p. 37).

<sup>14</sup> Feather, p. 37.

Not only did many readers avidly consume religious literature, but religion was also an important part of most people's lives. Richardson and Fielding were no exception. These authors' views on matters of religion have been discussed by scholars to varying degrees. Fielding's religious affiliation was debated in detail by Martin C. Battestin and Ronald Paulson during the 2000s. Battestin argues convincingly that Fielding's beliefs were shaped by Latitudinarianism and Paulson countermanded this assertion by emphasising Fielding's deism.<sup>15</sup> However, as I will argue, the strong sense of providence within Fielding's novels distances him from deist sensibilities. He also treats deists with contempt in his fiction and nonfiction, likening them to atheists and condemning both. By contrast, no extensive academic study of Richardson's beliefs seems to have been undertaken. Many biographies include a paragraph on his religious affiliation, but no more detail is offered. This oversight is especially curious considering Richardson's widely acknowledged piety. The exception is T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel's 1971 biography, which briefly investigates Richardson's affiliation to Anglicanism, yet leaves the question of his exact theological stance and placement within the Anglican fold unasked and unanswered.<sup>16</sup> Also in the 1970s, Cynthia Griffin Wolff discussed Richardson's heroines and his style of writing as being heavily influenced by Puritan literature, yet draws back from making any definite conclusions about

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<sup>15</sup> See Martin C. Battestin, 'Fielding and the Deists', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 13.1 (2000), 67–76, responding to Paulson's *The Life of Henry Fielding: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), written explicitly as a response to Battestin's *Henry Fielding Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Eaves and Kimpel dedicate seven pages of their 600-page biography to Richardson's beliefs. See T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 550–57.

Richardson's own beliefs. She states, '*perhaps* even in his own life, the categories and attitudes of Puritanism were those which most readily come to mind'.<sup>17</sup> This unwillingness to state plainly and authoritatively Richardson's private beliefs and practices is curious, given it is widely acknowledged to be a key element of his fiction. This is something which this study addresses.

As with Richardson's beliefs, there appears to have been no detailed study of the biblical references in the novels under investigation, although some uses of the Bible have received attention. Pamela's Psalm 137, altered and compared with the Sternhold and Hopkins' *Book of Common Prayer* translation in *Virtue Rewarded*, has been commented upon frequently. For example, Michael Austin's article on the subject seeks a biblical reading of this psalm. He argues that in the later reading before the assembled gentry, Mr B seeks to redeem himself by playing on the biblical subtleties of the presentation of the Babylonian exile in Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.<sup>18</sup> I question whether Richardson's use of this psalm is as sophisticated as Austin suggests, yet Mr B's attempted reinterpretation of his actions does indicate his intention to usurp the Babylon parallel, unsuccessful as it may be. In most recent criticism, interest in *Virtue Rewarded* has focussed on its gender roles. *Virtue Rewarded* and *Exalted Condition* have both been discussed in feminist criticism. For example, Leah Grisham's article on teaching *Virtue Rewarded* in the context of #MeToo

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<sup>17</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972), p. 55. Italics mine.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Austin, 'Lincolnshire Babylon: Competing Typologies in Pamela's 137<sup>th</sup> Psalm', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 12.4 (2000), 501–14.

suggests Pamela's life is one of coercion by Mr B, plainly illustrated in the debate on breastfeeding in *Exalted Condition*. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, although Richardson's opinion is that mother's breast is best, Mr B overrules Pamela's well-reasoned (and biblically backed) argument.<sup>19</sup> Grisham notes that Pamela must also 'yield [the argument] up cheerfully'; Mr B not only seeks to control Pamela's actions but also her thoughts and emotions.<sup>20</sup> Not fully acknowledged by Grisham, as I will discuss, this episode is replete with biblical arguments on both sides.

Often treated as a supplementary text to either *Virtue Rewarded* or *Joseph Andrews*, scholarship on *Shamela* (1741) as a discrete work is sparse. Anaclara Castro-Santana's recent investigation into the relationship between marriage in Fielding's fiction and his earlier satirical plays appears to be the only study of *Shamela* published in the last ten years, and it is discussed alongside *Joseph Andrews*.<sup>21</sup> Castro-Santana mentions Fielding's moral criticism of Richardson in his parodying of Pamela's incongruous marriage, which I argue is one example of many criticisms of Richardson's moral schema Fielding made in *Shamela*. With regards to the use of the Bible in *Shamela*, it appears to have passed

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<sup>19</sup> Leah Grisham, "'Yield it up Cheerfully': Teaching Consent, Violence, and Coercion in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*", *Aphra Behn Online*, 10.2 (2020), <<http://doi.org/10.5038/2157-7129.10.2.1237>>. Other articles include Diana Rosenberger's 'Virtual Rewarded: What #MeToo Can Learn from Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*', *South Central Review*, 36.2 (2019), 17–32, and Nathalie Roxburgh's 'Rethinking Gender and Virtue through Richardson's Domestic Accounting', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 24.3 (2012), 403–29.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*, ed. by Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 318. Subsequent references to this edition are given in the main text as (*EC*).

<sup>21</sup> Anaclara Castro-Santana, 'Sham Marriages and Proper Plots: Henry Fielding's *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*', *English Studies*, 96.6 (2015), 636–53.

without comment. Eric Rothstein comes closest in his investigation into the novel's moral framework (the introductory matter and letters of Oliver and Tickletext), where he explores the novel's morality as established by these paratexts.<sup>22</sup> Hinting towards the treatment of the Bible by the Methodist Williams and by the dubious Tickletext, his investigation focusses on the framing letters rather than the main narrative.

In contrast to *Shamela*, attention has been given to biblical references in *Joseph Andrews*. The most frequently noted is the parallel between Joseph Andrews and Joseph from the Old Testament. Harold Fisch, for example, reads the story of biblical Joseph deeply into the narrative of *Joseph Andrews*, citing eight examples of clear parallels.<sup>23</sup> He acknowledges many biblical complexities, but focuses on this biblical story rather than wider influences. In more recent studies, as with Richardson's novels, the interest in gender relations has extended to *Joseph Andrews*. Kathleen Alves' article on Lady Booby's attempted seduction of Joseph Andrews highlights the subversion of the sexual standards of eighteenth-century society, neglecting the episode's biblical precedent.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Eric Rothstein, 'The Framework of Shamela', *ELH*, 35.3 (1968), 381–402.

<sup>23</sup> Harold Fisch, 'Biblical "Imitation" in *Joseph Andrews*', in *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*, ed. by David H. Hirsch and Nehama Aschkenasy (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), pp. 31–42.

<sup>24</sup> Kathleen Alves, "'Wither Doth this Violent Passion Hurry Us?': Hysterical Language and Desiring Women in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 32.4 (2020), 559–78.



*Clarissa* is Richardson's novel which has received the most attention with regards to its use of the Bible. *Clarissa's* 'Meditations' have been analysed especially frequently. Joshua Swidzinski has, among others, commented on the meditations contained within *Clarissa* and those from the separate volume Richardson circulated amongst his friends.<sup>25</sup> While perhaps uncharitably calling them 'unoriginal', he does note the variety of translations used within these passages.<sup>26</sup> He ignores, however, the plethora of minute alterations to the selected biblical verses which I discuss later. *Clarissa's* death is a particularly popular topic for scholarly comment, although the volume of biblical quotations surrounding it has passed relatively unremarked. Laura Baudot has explored the nature of baroque death in *Clarissa*, linking it with Taylor's popular *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.<sup>27</sup> While examining in detail the relationship between Taylor's baroque and that of Richardson, she does not mention the use of the Bible in her analysis of *Clarissa's* death. In other accounts of this episode, Candace Cunard likens Richardson's creation of suspense with the eighteenth-century idea of providence, unknowable and often unperceivable, and not perfectly reconciled with the world until the eschatological moment, whether personal or global.<sup>28</sup> This theological interpretation paradoxically seems to overlook the importance of the Bible in *Clarissa's* protracted demise especially

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<sup>25</sup> Joshua Swidzinski, "Great Labour of Mind and Tongue": Articularity and Interiority in Young's *Night Thoughts* and Richardson's *Clarissa*, in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry and the Rise of the Novel Reconsidered*, ed. by Kate Parker and Courtney Weiss Smith (Lanham, MD: Bucknell University Press, 2014), pp. 143–65; Thomas Keymer, 'Richardson's Meditations: *Clarissa's* *Clarissa*', in *Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 89–109.

<sup>26</sup> Swidzinski, p. 159.

<sup>27</sup> Laura Baudot, "Spare Thou my Rosebud": Interiority and Baroque Death in Richardson's *Clarissa*, *Literary Imagination*, 17.2 (2015), 153–79.

<sup>28</sup> Candace Cunard, "Labouring in Suspense": Paying Attention to Providence in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 30.3 (2019), 395–418.

where she loses herself through her meditations into the words of the Bible, dying with the penultimate verse of Scripture and the name of Jesus on her lips.

With regards to *Tom Jones*, the most frequently commented upon use of the Bible is in the relationship between Tom's childhood home, Paradise Hall, and the Garden of Eden. Most commentators also make brief statements about the parallel between Allworthy and God the Father (Ronald Paulson and J. Paul Hunter among others), but do not analyse the comparison in depth.<sup>29</sup> In recent Fielding scholarship, *Tom Jones* has been variously interpreted. Kelly Fleming decodes the symbolism of Sophia Western's lost muff. While acknowledging the sexual innuendo, she suggests the 'muff' is also an allusion to the political circumstances of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. Arguing that the muff raises questions about the inheritance of the crown, she concludes that it represents more than a crude *double entendre*.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Terence N. Bowers has investigated the character Tom Jones as a new model for masculinity, replacing characters such as Odysseus, providing a model of how to behave in a post-honour society.<sup>31</sup> As I will discuss, Tom rejects as a potential worldview the army's placement of honour over the Christian principle of forgiveness. This focus on the politics of *Tom Jones* adds a serious element to Fielding's comic

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<sup>29</sup> Paulson, *Henry Fielding: A Critical Biography*, pp. 215–16, and J. Paul Hunter, *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 148.

<sup>30</sup> Kelly Fleming, 'The Politics of Sophia Western's Muff', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 31.4 (2019), 659–684.

<sup>31</sup> Terence N. Bowers, 'Fielding's Odyssey: The Man of Honor, the New Man, and the Problem of Violence in *Tom Jones*', *Studies in Philology*, 115.4 (2018), 803–34.

novel, comedy as the vehicle for instruction and debate, a position with which I concur.

One of the theological constants throughout all the novels discussed in this thesis is providence. Whether through subtle guiding or blatant intervention, providence (a synonym for God as well as a theological construct) is a framing principle for all Richardson's and Fielding's novels. While their depiction of providence is different to some extent, Richardson advocating passivity and Fielding activity, the providential hand is always at work. There have been some studies on the nature of providence in the works of Richardson and Fielding. James Louis Fortuna, for instance, has examined the in-depth depiction of providence primarily in *Virtue Rewarded*, also with some observation of *Clarissa*.<sup>32</sup> He argues for the pervasiveness of the Christian providential worldview in Richardson's novels, not just manifest in the piety of his heroines. Similarly, Richard A. Rosengarten's monograph outlines the providential pattern in Fielding's works. He argues that, for Fielding, providence 'must exist [but] is inaccessible to human perception in ways that were once traditionally acceptable'.<sup>33</sup> For example, the hand of providence is not particularly evident in *Tom Jones* until the final chapters, where Tom is taken from the brink of execution to heir of the manor in a single book. Read again, the providential hand in *Tom Jones* is in fact evident from the beginning. The idea of providence

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<sup>32</sup> James Louis Fortuna, *Unsearchable Wisdom of God: A Study in Providence in Richardson's Pamela* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1980).

<sup>33</sup> Richard A. Rosengarten, *Henry Fielding and the Narration of Providence: Divine Design and the Incursions of Evil* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 127.

is something which all six novels have in common, and while its depiction in Richardson's and Fielding's works is distinct, both assert the workings of God in the world, whether blatant or more subtle.

More broadly than the recent investigations into the individual novels, intertextuality has been widely discussed between the eighteenth-century novel and other texts available to readers and authors at the time. Kate Rumbold has investigated the use of Shakespeare in a variety of eighteenth-century novels. She argues that by quoting Shakespeare frequently, the novel not only boosts its own status as a new genre, but also Shakespeare's growing reputation for emotional insight.<sup>34</sup> Richardson, she argues, relies heavily on Edward Bysshe's *Art of English Poetry* (an encyclopaedia of quotations), rather than on a personal, in-depth knowledge of Shakespeare. This is certainly not the case for the Bible, to which Richardson refers seemingly from memory. Character versus author knowledge is something which affects Richardson's earlier novels especially, where characters occasionally incongruously quote Scripture when it suits Richardson's narrative ends. Fielding is more cautious in assessing what a character would likely know about the Bible.

With regards to Fielding's intertextuality, Nancy A. Mace has outlined his widespread use of classical literature, both qualitatively and quantitatively.<sup>35</sup> She

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<sup>34</sup> Kate Rumbold, *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Cultures of Quotation from Samuel Richardson to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Nancy A. Mace, *Henry Fielding's Novels and the Classical Tradition* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996).

argues, among many other complex patterns, that Fielding uses the Classics both aptly in his narrators, but also to indicate character flaws and for comedic effect in mistranslation and misattribution by characters. This is also how Fielding sometimes uses the Bible. In Mace's work, the Bible is conspicuous only by its absence. The Bible's intertextuality with literature has received relatively little focussed attention, something this study seeks to address.

The Bible is often overlooked as a source material, even when it is pertinent to an investigation. Two of 2020's *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* issues contained articles with biblical references, but without acknowledgement. Kathleen Alves' article, "'Wither doth this violent Passion hurry us?": Hysterical Language and Desiring Women in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*", as I have already mentioned, extensively analyses the encounter between Lady Booby and Joseph Andrews. However, the article makes no mention of the biblical episode on which this scene is based. Alves instead cites the seduction episode, along with other 'fictional depictions of frustrated emotional lives' as 'rooted in the mechanics of the passions and the perceived inability of a woman's body to manage emotions'.<sup>36</sup> This scene is modelled closely on the Potiphar's Wife narrative of Genesis 39, and without acknowledging this parallel the conclusion Alves reaches that Fielding draws this episode from medical depictions of hysteria is flawed.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Alves, pp. 562, 559.

<sup>37</sup> The second article on *Robinson Crusoe* misses Crusoe's musing 'as we are all the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, no Vessel could say to him, Why hast thou form'd me thus?' as being drawn from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Romans. Wood fails to connect Crusoe's use of this imagery as a link between himself, the prophets of the Old Testament and the writings of the New. James

There is clearly a value in studying and making available both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the Bible's use in eighteenth-century fiction. In fact, as shown above, not considering the biblical precedents for many of the episodes in these novels can lead to incomplete or even faulty conclusions about authorial intention, intertextuality, and the reader's interpretation of these texts. Quantitatively, there are approximately 440 scriptural references in the six novels in this study (not to mention other religious principles and texts). This high number of biblical references, I argue, speaks against the idea that the novel was a secular genre of literature from its inception. A hallmark of secularising society perhaps, but the process was by no means complete. Qualitatively, the use of the Bible in Richardson's and Fielding's novels adds not only to their moral endeavours, elucidating what each author thought was 'virtuous', but also to the literary imagery, characterisation, and paralleling biblical stories. The Bible was a work with which any author in the eighteenth century could be reasonably certain his readership would be familiar. The motivation for and the tool of literacy, analysed in pamphlets, treatises, and sermons both heard and read, the Bible was pervasive in most readers' lives. An investigation into the biblical references used in eighteenth-century novels is crucial to understanding how an eighteenth-century reader may have appreciated the use of a book which permeated the lives of most people.

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Robert Wood, 'Robinson Crusoe and the Earthy Ground', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 32.3 (2020), 381–406 (pp. 400–401).

In order to find the biblical references within the novels in question, I have close read each novel and have documented every reference to the Bible by hand. Corpus linguistic software was considered as a possible method of finding biblical references within the novels. I tested three software programs (*Tracer*, *WordSmith* and *AntConc*) using Letter Thirty-two of *Virtue Rewarded* as a test piece. The letter contains one short quotation, three allusions and several instances of biblical paraphrase. Each programme picked up at least 20 irrelevant data points and failed to find the short quotation along with the allusions. From this test piece, I concluded that corpus linguistic software would not be a suitable means for gathering the data for this project. Relying on my own biblical knowledge means that the search is not without flaws. However, the assumption can be made, I think, that if I picked up on a biblical reference, others who know the Bible also could. I use the word 'approximately' throughout the thesis as I would not be surprised if more references existed, especially in Richardson's novels, where subtly embedded allusions are more common. In order to maintain clarity in describing types of biblical references, I have used four separate terms. 'Biblical reference' I use as an overarching term for any discernible use of the Bible. 'Quotation' refers specifically to a direct, word-for-word recitation of Scripture. 'Paraphrase' is any reference where the words are different, but the idea is clearly attributable to an identifiable part of the Bible. Finally, 'allusion' refers to more nebulous references, discernible but not directly related to a chapter and verse of Scripture but rather a biblical idea, principle, or a more general story.

This study is framed in terms of the moral conversation between Richardson's and Fielding's novels. The conversation was maintained until the publication of *Tom Jones*, which aggravated Richardson to such an extent that he appears to have ceased to see Fielding as anything other than a hack writer. For this reason, I have eliminated *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) and *Amelia* (1751) from the current investigation. *Sir Charles Grandison* was conceived as a male Pamela figure, requested by many of Richardson's friends. Talbot urges Carter (a friend of Richardson's), for example, to 'send [her] in mere hints your idea of the good and agreeable man' for Richardson to write of, adding that this character is 'whom every body wants him to draw'.<sup>38</sup> Thus, there is no suggestion that Richardson wrote *Sir Charles Grandison* in response to *Tom Jones*, but rather at the desire of his correspondents for a male example of virtue to be imitated. Similarly, there is no strong case that Fielding wrote *Amelia* in response to either *Virtue Rewarded* or *Clarissa*.

In this thesis, I have also not attempted to give a comprehensive overview of religious works other than the Bible. While I mention *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), *Holy Living and Dying* (1650) and *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658), I do so only when these works' presence is pertinent to the biblical references. These works among many others appear frequently, but due to the high number of instances, especially in Richardson's novels, extra-biblical religious works require a separate, dedicated study. The one extra-biblical text

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<sup>38</sup> Talbot to Carter, 17 December 1750, in *A Series of Letters*, I, 370.



to which I do refer frequently is William Dodd's *Commentary upon the Books of the Old and New Testament* (1770) in order to establish what exegesis and theological doctrines were espoused during the mid-eighteenth century. While this text would not have been available to Richardson and Fielding, it is the most contemporary, complete commentary I have discovered. Drawing on a multitude of other commentators and theologians, ancient and modern, Dodd draws together a wide variety of thinkers to create a detailed commentary representative of mid-eighteenth-century theological thinking.

While Dodd's commentary provides a snapshot of eighteenth-century biblical interpretation, the century saw many changes. Brian Downs highlights some of these doctrinal adjustments:

The Lord of Hosts might abdicate and the God of Love succeed. [...] The idea and conviction of Original Sin weakened together with the power of the jealous tyrant-god; it ceased to be an axiom that "the heart of a man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" [Jeremiah 17. 19]; and those who rejected it (which they could soon do without moulting a feather of their orthodoxy) might safely concern themselves with the passions and emotions.<sup>39</sup>

The Toleration Act of 1689 enabled people to enjoy relative freedom of belief. This is not to say, however, that debate over doctrinal issues had ceased. In fact, the mid-eighteenth century was witnessing 'a long, fiery pamphlet war', as John Dussinger notes, over the rise of deism and Methodism in particular, but more orthodox doctrines were still discussed and debated.<sup>40</sup> Carol Stewart

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<sup>39</sup> Brian W. Downs, *Richardson* (London: Cass, 1969), pp. 171–72.

<sup>40</sup> John Dussinger, 'Richardson's "Christian Vocation"', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 3.1 (1967), 3–19 (p. 3).

summarises that, 'all the novels of Richardson and Fielding's [sic] published in the 1740s were written when the Anglican ethos was perceived as being under threat either by Methodism or by the possible resurgence of popery and tyranny from the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745'.<sup>41</sup> Richardson and Fielding both shared fears of irreligion, and in writing their novels aimed to advocate Christian virtue and doctrines in subtle, palatable form.

In this thesis, I present the results of the first full investigation into the use of the Bible across Richardson's and Fielding's novels published in the 1740s. This study explores not only the quantitative data of the numbers of biblical references, but also provides a qualitative assessment of how each author chose to use the Bible and how a reader familiar with Scripture may interpret each reference and the pattern of scriptural allusion throughout each work. Each novel utilises the Bible in a different way, creating a nuanced intertextuality not only between Richardson and Fielding but also between novels in the same author's canon. I have also investigated some common theological and moral themes which run throughout the novels, such as the idea of providence and virtue. This study offers a reading of the novels in question with the Bible at the forefront of intertextuality. It highlights the importance of acknowledging the biblical references contained within these novels, not only on a moral level but also as a literary tool not perceived by many modern readers and critics unfamiliar with Scripture. The Bible, by the nature of its

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<sup>41</sup> *Secularization of Ethics*, p. 68.

pervasiveness, should have an impact on any interpretation or reading one seeks of these texts, whether reading them in light of modern sociological theories or seeking to understand the texts as an eighteenth-century reader might have done.

Chapter One investigates Richardson's and Fielding's theological adherences to establish what each author believed as a basis for their use of the Bible. It argues that Richardson and Fielding were not as doctrinally opposed as is usually assumed. Chapter Two begins the investigation into the use of the Bible in *Virtue Rewarded*, the novel that sparked Fielding's parodies and drew his criticism of both literary form and professed morality. Chapter Three explores *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding's most obvious parodies of Richardson, which elucidate Fielding's moral criticisms of *Virtue Rewarded*. Chapter Four examines *Exalted Condition*, Richardson's continuation of *Virtue Rewarded*, inspired by the criticism his first novel received from Fielding and others and utilising advice given to him by his correspondents. His alterations to Pamela's morality answer Fielding's criticism of her inactive piety as the means of her salvation. Chapter Five investigates *Clarissa*. While not overtly written in response to Fielding, it certainly responds to some of the moral criticism Fielding (and others) made of *Virtue Rewarded*. Finally, I investigate *Tom Jones*, Fielding's first novel not directly inspired by Richardson but rather elucidating Fielding's own ideas of virtue. Richardson despised *Tom Jones* on second-hand reports of its immorality and it severed the moral conversation

between the two authors, who were not as theologically and religiously opposed as is usually assumed.

## CHAPTER ONE – SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND HENRY FIELDING: LOW CHURCH, TOLERANT ANGLICANS

Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding are often regarded as morally opposed by readers and critics. While Richardson advocated living a pious life in his novels, Fielding's imperfect characters have goodness at heart. As far as I can ascertain, there has yet to be a comparative study of Richardson's and Fielding's beliefs, although these authors are contrasted frequently, both stylistically and morally.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I will analyse the religious affiliation of both Richardson and Fielding, contrasting their beliefs, but also highlighting many similarities. I will then compare Richardson's and Fielding's reasonably tolerant approaches to some other expressions of Christianity prevalent in the eighteenth century. I will finally contrast the presentation of certain important theological doctrines which recur in their novels. I will argue that not only are Richardson and Fielding theologically and morally in agreement with one another more so than is often assumed, but also that their faiths affected the choice and use of biblical references within their novels.

The importance of discussing Richardson's and Fielding's religious beliefs as part of the investigation into the use of the Bible is threefold. Firstly, it establishes what the authors argue when they state that they are exemplifying

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Allen Michie, *Richardson and Fielding: Dynamics of a Critical Rivalry* (Lewisburg, NY: Bucknell University Press, 1999) which traces the relationship between Richardson and Fielding, and their readers' perceptions of it from the eighteenth century onward.

'virtue rewarded' or the 'Beauty of Virtue' (*TJ*, p. 7) in their novels as Richardson and Fielding claim respectively. Secondly, it identifies what was conventional and what may have been unconventional about each authors' beliefs. This idea leads to an appreciation of how an eighteenth-century audience might have reacted to various uses of Scripture, and the theological concepts advocated or criticised by the authors. Thirdly, it reveals the parts of the Bible with which the authors were most familiar and therefore what will likely be found when discovering and analysing biblical references in their novels. For example, Richardson's emphasis on the sinfulness of man leads to a greater knowledge of laments and confessions; Fielding's belief in the value of charity lends itself to more knowledge of parts of the Bible which urge this duty. As Sheldon Sacks suggests, 'from the moment that we conceive of a novelist's beliefs as having a possible formal significance in his novels, we have postulated these beliefs as qualitative parts of his works'.<sup>2</sup> Sacks goes on to add that 'if his novel is coherent, then the writer's relevant beliefs, like all other qualitative parts, must be subordinate to the artistic end which informs the work'.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Sacks' assertion, in *Exalted Condition* (1742) Richardson placed morality over artistry and the novel suffers greatly as a consequence as I discuss in Chapter Four. In both Richardson's and Fielding's novels, their own sense of morality is evident and has an impact on plot, character, and even literary style. Each author's prefaces and postscripts highlight the moral, not literary, elements of their works, showing the importance of morality for their literary endeavours. While

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<sup>2</sup> Sheldon Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief: A Study of Henry Fielding: with Glances at Swift, Johnson and Richardson* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Sacks, p. 61.

stylistically different, in many ways Richardson and Fielding share a similar system of belief: simplicity of faith, the importance of charity, and of living virtuously. It is what constitutes virtuous living where Richardson and Fielding diverge.

As I stated in the introduction, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to define exactly what it meant to be 'Anglican' in the eighteenth century, as beliefs and theologies within the sect varied greatly between individuals within the Church of England. However, when discussing individuals, it is possible to make some more general statements about their place within Anglicanism using the terms 'high' and 'low' church. High Anglicanism in general refers to a believer whose theological emphasis is on the sacraments, church hierarchy, and liturgical worship.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, those considered 'low church' placed less emphasis on the sacraments and the church as the means of grace, preferring a more individualised spirituality. One must be careful, however, about polarising high and low church. As William Gibson points out, whether one adhered generally to high or low church ideals, this did not prevent a person from reading sermons by and associating with believers from the other end of the spectrum.<sup>5</sup>

Richardson and Fielding, despite disagreeing about the nature of virtuous living, both appear to have been low churchmen. Fielding was heavily influenced by Latitudinarian writers, for whom the term 'low church' was devised to be

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<sup>4</sup> For a full outline of what a High Anglican believed, see Peter Benedict Nockles, *The Oxford Movement: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760–1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 25-26.

<sup>5</sup> William Gibson, *The Church of England 1688–1832: Unity and Accord* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 23.

derisive. Richardson's emphasis on individualised spirituality independent from church structure and sacramentalism, and his heroines' worship grounded in but not limited to biblical and liturgical precedent place his sensibilities within the low church.

With regards to Richardson, there is some confusion about the exact nature of his religious beliefs. Peter Faulkner states that Richardson was 'a pious Non-Conformist' without qualification or further explanation.<sup>6</sup> John Dussinger and most others note that he exhibited in his correspondences and fiction 'fairly orthodox religious views'.<sup>7</sup> Despite Richardson's catalogue of work showing his dedication to promoting a Christian worldview, discussing his affiliation is complicated by the fact that he never overtly stated his position on matters of doctrine and religious practice in any of his published works, or in his private letters. Cynthia Griffin Wolff has argued persuasively that Richardson's fiction is heavily influenced by Puritan literature.<sup>8</sup> However, despite presenting convincing evidence of this, the question of Richardson's own beliefs goes unexamined. The puritanical moral exemplar is amply evident in the letter-diaries of his heroines, and Richardson's high regard for *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658), attributed to the royalist and high-church Anglican Richard Allestree, certainly suggests a religious outlook which encapsulates the whole of one's life. After Richardson's death, Lady Bradshaigh wrote the epitaph "in

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Faulkner, *Humanism in the English Novel* (London: Elek for Pemberton, 1975), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> John Dussinger, "'Stealing the Great Doctrines of Christianity": Samuel Richardson as Journalist', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 15.3 (2003), 451–506 (p. 458).

<sup>8</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972).



morals pure, Religion most Intense, | What more! A Christian in the noblest sense”.<sup>9</sup> Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson’s friend and long-term correspondent, clearly saw him as a very devout man, but his specific doctrinal affiliation and theological viewpoint must be inferred from his writings, both public and private.

Richardson’s early life does provide some indication of his Anglicanism. He stated in a letter to Joseph Stinstra in 1753 that his father ‘designed me for the Cloth’ before financial constraints made this impossible.<sup>10</sup> It appears that this would have been the Anglican cloth as Richardson served as a questman (a church warden’s assistant) between 1726 and 1727 at his parish church of St Bride’s on Fleet Street. He later ‘paid the usual fines to avoid serving as collector of rates or as church warden’ as his involvement in church life ceased, as noted by Richardson’s biographers T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel.<sup>11</sup> Having researched the tradition of Christianity preached at St Bride’s during the mid-eighteenth century, the incumbents (so far as can be gleaned from published sermons) seem to adhere to middle/low Anglicanism, so it is probable that St Bride’s was a church in this tradition. Living in London, Richardson had the choice to attend several churches, so his selection of St Bride’s in his early life was not only geographically convenient, but also at least partially indicative of his affiliation to a middle- or low-church Anglicanism.

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<sup>9</sup> Lady Bradshaigh’s Epitaph, quoted in Brian W. Downs, *Richardson* (London: Cass, 1969), p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Richardson to Joseph Stinstra, 2 June 1753, in *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence*, ed. by William C. Slattery (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 550.

When Richardson began writing his novels, however, he seems not to have attended any church. Richardson revealed in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh in their early correspondence when she requested to see him at church that he had 'long been deprived of [church attendance] by my nervous malady, which will not let me appear in a crowd of people'.<sup>12</sup> In another letter to Sophia Scudamore nee Westcomb on 12 September 1757, Richardson recalls his unavoidable visit to St George's in Hanover Square to give her hand in marriage, which caused him to be 'very nervously affected for many weeks before, [and] I have been grievously ill ever since'.<sup>13</sup> While his chronic nervous condition prevented him from going to church in his later years, there is no indication his beliefs altered after he ceased church attendance. The morals he presents in his earliest works and his latest are similar. All advocate a generalised acceptance of Christianity, but do not promote a specific sect. As Wolff has argued, Richardson's virtuous characters adhere to a form of puritanical Anglicanism and this therefore suggests, since they are designed as moral exemplars, that Richardson held these beliefs.<sup>14</sup>

Although he did not attend church, Richardson had access to devotional literature printed by himself and others so he could participate in many aspects

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<sup>12</sup> Samuel Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, [n.d.], in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), IV, 288.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Richardson to Mrs Scudamore, 12 September 1757, in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, III, 329.

<sup>14</sup> Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character*.

of church life in private. He could read the Bible, sermons, and other Christian literature to fulfil many of the aspects of an everyday service without leaving his home. There is no extant record of Richardson's library, so it cannot be established with any certainty the types of material he was reading. As Jean H. Hagstrom notes, 'we do not yet understand fully [Richardson's] precise relations to books of piety, sermons of all denominations, [...] [and] tracts for the times'.<sup>15</sup> There are hints within his fiction as to what devotional literature he regarded highly, however. Throughout *Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Exalted Condition, The Whole Duty of Man*, and the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) are given almost equal standing to the Bible. In *Exalted Condition*, for example, the Countess asks Pamela where she has gained her astounding morality. She states, 'The Bible [...] is the Foundation of all: But this, and [her parents'] Common Prayer Book, and the Duty of Man' (*EC*, p. 178). This trinity of literature is also mentioned while Pamela is on her 'benevolent Round' (*EC*, p. 239), and in *Virtue Rewarded* (p. 437). *The Whole Duty of Man*, first published in 1658, was still popular in the eighteenth century. It emphasises living a godly life by personal piety and careful charity, something Richardson's heroines exemplify. Richardson's press reproduced manuals for devotion such as the seventh and tenth editions of *The True Church of England-Man's Companion to the Closet: or, A Complete Manual of Private Devotions* in 1736 and 1749, showing that volumes such as these were readily available to him.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Jean H. Hagstrom, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> Keith Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 2001), p. 142.

Richardson's access to sermons, prayer books and guides to devotions meant he could participate in Anglican spirituality without church attendance in all but one way. A regular sacrament Richardson could not recreate as an Anglican without an ordained minister was communion. In the eighteenth century, communion was offered in the Church of England only once a month, and according to church historians John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'infrequent reception [...] could also be a mark of piety'.<sup>17</sup> Emphasis was placed on the worthiness to receive communion, and many felt to receive it unworthily would mean instant and permanent damnation, and they therefore did not risk accepting the eucharist. In *Exalted Condition*, Mrs Jewkes' conversion is highlighted by her attendance at church 'Morning and Afternoon' but she is only 'preparing herself [...] for receiving the Sacrament' (*EC*, p. 57). Similarly, Clarissa receives communion in her final days once all the preparations for her perfect death have been made and she is assured of her salvation (*C*, p. 1245). While this shows Richardson could receive communion at home, it also reveals his lack of acceptance of the sacrament was no hindrance to piety. In fact, it could be a mark of extreme religiosity, just as his lack of church attendance for health reasons did not exclude him from being considered 'a Christian in the noblest Sense' in the words of Lady Bradshaigh.

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<sup>17</sup> John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'Introduction: The Church and Anglicanism in the "Long" Eighteenth Century', in *The Church of England, c.1689–c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. by John Walsh and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1–64 (p. 23).

Having established the availability of devotional literature to Richardson, there is very little evidence as to the exact nature of his devotions. Richardson never wrote about his personal prayers in his private correspondence, and only hints at his heroines' inner spiritual lives. As T. R. Wright states, although 'Richardson dwells in greater detail on the inner consciousness of his heroines, he too remains content to hint at their piety, the root of their personal morality'.<sup>18</sup> Pamela's reading of the marriage service and subsequent conversation with Mr B on the subject, and Clarissa's meditations helping her come to terms with her situation are two of very few examples of his heroines' devotional lives revealed to the reader. The belief in the privacy of faith is common within many sects of Protestantism. Based on Matthew 6. 6, the belief in the privacy of faith has biblical foundations.<sup>19</sup> The generality of this belief among Protestants reveals little of Richardson's denominational affiliation, but it does show he could be perceived by others as incredibly devout despite, or even because of, never speaking directly about his religious life.

Richardson may have been guarded about his personal faith, but he did express his beliefs in his career as a printer, albeit indirectly. John Dussinger argues that, 'Richardson seems to have conducted his worldly trade as a Christian vocation'.<sup>20</sup> Puritanism urged living one's entire life around the tenets

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<sup>18</sup> T. R. Wright, *Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> 'And when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.'  
(Matthew 6. 6)

<sup>20</sup> John Dussinger, 'Richardson's "Christian Vocation"', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 3.1 (1967), p. 4.

of Christianity, and therefore Richardson's work being an extension of his faith is something that attests to his adherence to puritanical Anglicanism.

Richardson printed a wide range of material, from theological tracts to books on gardening and watercolour painting.<sup>21</sup> Of the theological tracts, most uphold non-controversial beliefs. He did print some early works by the Methodist George Whitefield and a number of tracts supporting supposed Catholics, showing tolerance for a variety of Christian expressions of faith.<sup>22</sup> The Christianity espoused by Richardson's printing output was relatively uncontroversial Anglicanism with a suggestion of nonconformism, but nothing that challenged the supremacy of revealed, Christian religion.

Accepting the idea that Richardson only printed works with which he agreed, or at least tolerated, reveals another facet of his faith. Richardson seems to have been unwilling to involve himself in religious controversy and appeared fearful of reading anything which would challenge his beliefs. John Dussinger comments: 'on purely doctrinal matters, [Richardson] not only discreetly avoided comment [...] but even appeared to be genuinely fearful of probing too deeply into the foundations of his piety'.<sup>23</sup> In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh responding to a question about Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749) and his idea of the doctrine of universal salvation, Richardson wrote, 'I could hope that the Doctrine

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<sup>21</sup> For a full list of Richardson's printing, see Maslen.

<sup>22</sup> Richardson printed some defences of those accused of possessing Catholic beliefs, such as *Mr. Archibald Bower's Affidavit* (1756) where Archibald refutes claims that he did not rescind his Jesuit vows. Richardson also printed several editions of *The Speech of Mr. George Kelly* (1723) denying his Catholicism to the House of Lords. See Maslen, pp. 62, 100.

<sup>23</sup> 'Richardson's "Christian Vocation"', p. 15.

is true: But dare not presume to decide (so fearful am I of weakening Foundations)'.<sup>24</sup> Even in his *Apprentice's Vade Mecum* (1734), Richardson seems not to have read the deist publications he attacks, but rather only the anti-deist works on which he based his argument. The fear of reading literature that challenges faith is not unusual, and by avoiding most religious controversy in his printing he could protect his faith and promote a generalised Christian worldview, practising his career as an extension of his beliefs. Another reason for Richardson's avoidance of theological controversy was educational. As Eaves and Kimpel point out (while disagreeing with Downs over Richardson's 'complacency' of faith), Richardson 'knew himself to be an uneducated man, unfit to cope with such subtleties [of theology], and was content to confine himself to the simple, clear essentials of religion'.<sup>25</sup> Many theological commentaries and tracts published during the eighteenth century were written in Latin or Ancient Greek, or included untranslated sections of these classical languages along with Hebrew, meaning one required a classical education to understand them fully, placing them beyond Richardson's capabilities.

To summarise, Richardson appears to have been a middle/low-church Anglican with an appreciation for puritanical literature. His heroines Pamela and Clarissa exhibit this belief system with simplicity of faith, living a wholly virtuous life, and privately performing religious devotions. Richardson valued the *Book of Common Prayer* and *Whole Duty of Man* along with the Bible, showing he

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<sup>24</sup> Samuel Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, 30 May 1754, in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. by John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 308.

<sup>25</sup> *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, p. 551; Downs, p. 58.

appreciated the resources available to him in order to perform many aspects of Christian worship in private, not attending church for health reasons. As a printer, he published a wide variety of religious works advocating Christianity and he seems to have conducted his professional life as an extension of his own private religion in keeping with puritanical tradition. As he never wrote of his private devotions, his religious life is difficult to pinpoint with any certainty, but as his writings both public and private are informed by Christian doctrine, he was clearly a devout man who wanted to advance the general cause of Christianity. Richardson's puritanical Anglicanism is reflected in his choice of biblical references in his novels. He frequently relies on the laments of the Bible – the Psalms, Job and Ecclesiastes. Puritan literature emphasised the fundamental sinfulness of man, and the necessity of repentance, something biblical laments use in abundance.

Like Richardson, Henry Fielding wanted to champion the 'Beauty of Virtue' (*TJ*, p. 7) in his fiction and, while writing in a very different style to Richardson, he seems to have shared Richardson's Anglican convictions. In his writing, Fielding revealed his Latitudinarianism and advocated this specific theology. As summarised by Jacob M. Blosser Latitudinarians, or 'low churchmen', sought

national and ecclesiastical unity, [and] they introduced a faith rooted in rationality and morality, principles they thought would be agreeable to all religious parties. Never denying the centrality of revealed Christian dispensation, latitudinarians also argued that God placed natural inclinations to morality in the heart and mind of humankind. More than the adiaphorous finer points of Christian theology and polity, such as predestination,



latitudinarians argued that the true fulfilment of both natural and revealed religion came in rational, moral action.<sup>26</sup>

Fielding's legal and journalistic writings are saturated with this Latitudinarian theology. For example, in *A Journey from This World to the Next* (1749), the narrator dies and is led to the gates of Elysium. Midos, the judge of souls, allows the charitable into Heaven regardless of religious profession and condemns the hypocritical pious to reincarnation. Richardson does agree that charity is an essential part of religion, with both his heroines exemplifying this: Pamela's charity is manifest once she has been 'exalted', and Clarissa ensures her wealth is left in a charitable trust to continue her good works once she dies, the ultimate exaltation. While *A Journey from This World to the Next* is not an indication that Fielding believed in reincarnation or that Apollo guides the soul to the afterlife, Midos' judgment appears to represent Fielding's, saving the charitable rather than those who profess Christianity, but do not live by its tenets.

As with Richardson, we do not know which church Fielding attended. He was living in Essex Street in London in the 1740s, which is in the parish of St Clement Danes. The only evidence I have identified regarding the theology of St Clement Danes during the mid-eighteenth century is a sermon preached in praise of the defeat of the Jacobites, something with which Fielding would

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<sup>26</sup> Jacob M. Blosser, 'John Tillotson's Latitudinarian Legacy: Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and the Pursuit of Happiness', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 80.2 (2011), 142–173 (p. 148).

agree.<sup>27</sup> In the early eighteenth century, a sermon was preached on the essentials of charity, which may be indicative of the middle of the century, although this is uncertain.<sup>28</sup> These two sermons are in keeping with Fielding's own belief and politics, opposing the Jacobite Rebellion and emphasising the essentials of charity in his writing. Fielding's devotional life is also mysterious. Frederick G. Ribble and Anne G. Ribble's catalogue of his library contains no *Book of Common Prayer* or devotional works, but there are a plethora of sermons and other religious writings recorded, and a biblical concordance.<sup>29</sup> In his few extant letters, no mention is made of religion. As I stated with regards to Richardson, this is not necessarily an indication of lack of private devotions, but rather indicative of what was considered private and not a suitable topic for conversation.

Unlike Richardson, whose beliefs must be gleaned by careful examination of his writing, Fielding's Latitudinarianism is prominently proclaimed even in his legal writings. In *A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor* (1753), Fielding uses Latitudinarian writers alongside the Bible to argue that poor relief is not only a Christian duty, but also a preventative measure for crime. Fielding refers to the work of the Latitudinarian Bishop John Tillotson, quoting him at length on the subject of religion and obedience, before commenting: 'all great

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Blackwell, *The Dangers of the Late Rebellion, and Our Happy Deliverance, Considered; and a Suitable Consequent Behaviour Recommended* (London: Brown, 1746).

<sup>28</sup> William Forster, *Propagation of the Gospel the Design of God, and the Honourable Employment and Duty of Christians* (London: D. Brown, J. Brown, 1714).

<sup>29</sup> Frederick G. Ribble and Anne G. Ribble, *Fielding's Library: An Annotated Catalogue* (Charlottesville, VA: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1996).

Law-givers [...] derived their Commissions from Heaven, and mixt [*sic*] religious Rites with civil Instructions, well knowing how necessary the former were to strengthen and give a proper Sanction to the latter'.<sup>30</sup> The mixture of religious and civil laws in the Bible illustrate the dual advantages of poor relief, not only as a spiritual duty, but also as a means of ensuring civil obedience. Richardson also acknowledged the civic advantages of religion not just the spiritual. By utilising Tillotson in a legal pamphlet, Fielding demonstrates his own ideas of charitable Christianity to inform the law not only to discourage crime, but as something spiritually and societally beneficial.

Fielding also argued for change in existing laws to reflect his Latitudinarian beliefs. As a lawyer, Fielding often compared the principles of the Bible with English law, using biblical allusion as a tool to convince his audience to adhere to charitable Christianity and hinting at his contempt for religious hypocrisy. Fielding wrote in *The Champion* of 'the most effectual, best and cheapest Methods of exerting [people's] Charity':

However, it is certain that the Laws, at present, (how wisely, or justly, or righteously I won't say) do put it in the Power of every proud, ill natur'd, cruel, rapacious Creditor to satisfy his Revenge, his Malice, or his Avarice this Way on any Person who owes him a few Shillings more than he can pay him; but let a Christian take Care how he uses it, and remember that as surely as he forgives not his Neighbour his Trespasses, so surely will his Father in Heaven deny to forgive him his; [...].<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Henry Fielding, *A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor* (London: Millar, 1753), p. 79.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Fielding, *The Champion*, 19 February 1740, in *Contributions to the Champion and Related Writings*, ed. by W. B. Coley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 192.

Fielding uses the words of the Lord's Prayer as translated in the *Book of Common Prayer* (the King James Version translates 'trespasses' as 'debts') to argue that in the matter of credit, the law often acts as a force for evil not good. Fielding's financial situation was often precarious, and he was perhaps writing from his own experience. He spent periods in debtors' prison throughout his life, although not seemingly before this article was published. Fielding's legal pamphlets show his adherence to specifically Latitudinarian sensibilities in contrast to Richardson, whose writings advocate a more generalised Christianity. He uses the Bible as part of his legal writings to suggest the moral deficit in English law when compared with the principles of Christianity.

As previously alluded to, while we do not have a record of Richardson's library, Fielding's library was sold after his death. Frederick G. Ribble and Anne G. Ribble have analysed and catalogued the auction document from the sale of Fielding's library. Fielding's interests were wide ranging, but of the most pertinence to this thesis there is a remarkable breadth of religious matter. Fielding owned at his death the deist writings of Conyers Middleton's *Enquiry into the Miraculous Powers of the Christian Church* (1749), and John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* (1702).<sup>32</sup> However, as Ribble and Ribble note, 'the auction catalogue as a whole [...] is weighted against deism'.<sup>33</sup> The complete works of Isaac Barrow (1741) and Tillotson's works (1752), along with a plethora of other Christian literature outweigh the presence of deist materials.

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<sup>32</sup> Ribble and Ribble, pp. 218, 329.

<sup>33</sup> Ribble and Ribble, p. xxvi.

Fielding owned a King James Version, along with a Septuagint, a Latin Pentateuch, a Greek New Testament and a New Testament translated into French.<sup>34</sup> He owned a biblical concordance and at least two biblical commentaries, both in Latin.<sup>35</sup> While this catalogue contains no novels, which Fielding surely had in his possession at some point in his life, two conclusions can be drawn from this list of works. Firstly, Fielding shows intellectual tolerance, possessing a variety of texts espousing different religious opinions. Secondly, it evidences his willingness to challenge his faith, of which Richardson was always wary.

Fielding's Latitudinarian faith strongly influenced his choice of biblical references. He refers to the gospels most frequently and elsewhere uses the Bible as an argumentative tool for convincing people of their sinful behaviour. In *Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men* (1743), Fielding outlines the disposition of the religious hypocrite, before quoting the Bible at length to illustrate the sinfulness of this behaviour. Taking two examples from the eleven scriptural references, Fielding writes: 'I shall mention but one symptom more of this hypocrisy, and this is a readiness to censure the faults of others, "Judge not," says Jesus, "lest you be judged." [Matthew 7. 1] — And again; "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" [Matthew 7. 3]'.<sup>36</sup> By using the Bible, Fielding

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<sup>34</sup> Ribble and Ribble, pp. 36–39.

<sup>35</sup> Ribble and Ribble, pp. 37, 153.

<sup>36</sup> Henry Fielding, 'Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men', in *Miscellanies* (London: Millar, 1743), I, p. 218.

can not only be reasonably certain his audience would know these verses from the Sermon on the Mount, but also chose an appropriate tool to argue with those who professes to follow the teachings of Jesus, but ignore them in favour of hypocritical behaviour.

Richardson and Fielding it appears were low-church Anglicans, emphasising charity as an essential expression of religion and adhering to an individualised simplicity of faith. Both men's careers are reflective of their beliefs, Richardson advocating the supremacy of a general Christianity in his publishing, and Fielding overtly advocating Latitudinarian doctrines. Both men's private religious lives are unknown, adhering to the general Protestant doctrine of privacy of prayer. However, there are noticeable divergences in their religious beliefs that affect their overall choice of biblical references. Fielding sought to challenge his faith by his reading and involved himself in religious controversy in his writings; Richardson on the whole did not. According to Richardson an individual must always behave virtuously, denying pleasures and living a strict life of piety. Fielding advocated living charitably and, so long as a person's heart was in this charitable Christianity, salvation was assured. Richardson favoured Puritan literature, which emphasised the sinfulness of man, leading to his use of biblical laments and reliance on the Old Testament. Latitudinarianism saw mankind as fundamentally good and naturally charitable, with Fielding choosing the New Testament most frequently as a scriptural source, using the teachings of Jesus which place more emphasis on benevolence.

The relationship between faith and works as the means of salvation was debated throughout the eighteenth century. While a comprehensive summary of every opinion is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief outline of two opposing views can be given. Calvinists such as George Whitefield asserted that faith is the sole means of salvation, going so far as to state that 'it is impossible that a Man that is unconverted can act for the Glory of God, he cannot do any Thing in Faith, for *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*'.<sup>37</sup> Latitudinarians such as the influential John Tillotson, by contrast, emphasised the role of works as the means of salvation. Tillotson argued that 'the children of God do the works of God [...] *whosoever doth righteousness is of God, and whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God*'.<sup>38</sup> To place in terms employed by Isabel Rivers, those adhering to Calvinism see works as the fruit of grace, not its cause.<sup>39</sup> In thinkers such as the Latitudinarians, works are the cause and grace is the fruit. Fielding's moral spokesperson Abraham Adams states in *Joseph Andrews* that 'a virtuous and good *Turk*, or Heathen, are more acceptable in the sight of their Creator than a vicious and wicked Christian, tho' his Faith was as perfectly Orthodox as St *Paul's* himself' (*JA*, p. 71), showing Fielding's adherence to the primacy of works. Richardson's beliefs on this matter are not as blatantly portrayed. He affirmed that charitable works are important as part of being a virtuous Christian but appears to see works as the fruit of grace, where faith

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<sup>37</sup> George Whitefield, *The Method of Grace* (Glasgow: R. Smith, 1741), p. 14. Whitefield paraphrases Romans 14. 23.

<sup>38</sup> John Tillotson, *The Works of the Most Reverend John Tillotson*, 7th edn (London: Goodwin, Tooke, Pemberton, Nicholson, and Tonson, 1714), p. 170. Tillotson paraphrases in italics I John 3. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Isabel Rivers, *Reason Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 10.

justifies, and works are the resultant duty. While both Calvinism and Latitudinarianism lay emphasis on faith and works respectively, they do not entirely exclude the other facet of faith. These extremes in one aspect of theology highlight the breadth of Christian thinking during the eighteenth century, yet this was not the cause of great schism, and a Christian could be tolerant of others' beliefs when they differed from their own.

Turning from Richardson's and Fielding's personal faiths to their approaches to other Christian sects, both men showed various tolerance towards expressions of Christianity different to their own. I will consider two extremes of the Christian spectrum, Catholicism and Methodism, as well as a new religious movement, deism, which Richardson and Fielding both opposed. With regards to Catholicism, evidence suggests Richardson was tolerant of it, although it was controversial to be so. In a published response to 'several anonymous Letters' concerning *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) querying Richardson's making Sir Charles willing to consent to his daughters being raised Catholic should he marry Clementina, Richardson concludes his response:

however usual it may be for people of different Religions, when they intermarry, to enter into compromises of this kind, they are not countenanced by the *judgment* of Sir Charles Grandison; who considered, as the greatest misfortune that could have befallen him, the situation he was in; which in a manner *compelled* him to make some concessions, in compassion to an excellent woman, who laboured under a disorder of mind on his account.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Answer to a Letter from a Friend*, 25 March 1754 (London?: [n. pub], 1754), p. 8.



The published letter expressing concern at Richardson's toleration of Catholicism shows it was controversial to be accepting in this way. His tolerance of Catholicism is also evident in *Exalted Condition*, where Pamela's concerns about not being able to attend Protestant church services while on the continent are resigned because she must not 'give Offence, on one hand, to the People we are among, nor Scandal, on the other, by Compliances hurtful to one's Conscience', paraphrasing I Corinthians 8. 13 (*EC*, p. 549).<sup>41</sup> Pamela must balance not offending her hosts with not partaking in any acts of worship that contradict her own beliefs. Lady Davers and Pamela also hope that Catholicism's 'fine Pictures and Decorations' will convert Jackey, because it is better to embrace a 'faulty Religion, than to permit him to continue as he was; that is to say, to have none at all' (*EC*, p. 557). While the ideal is certainly Protestantism, Catholicism is preferable to irreligion for a man who cannot be converted by the saintly Pamela. Richardson also affirms his puritanical Anglicanism, condemning Catholicism for its 'fine Pictures and Decorations' as a distraction from the true purpose of worship. Richardson's tolerance of Catholicism, while controversial enough to be publicly questioned, seems not to have been particularly scandalous. He accepted Catholicism as a religion offering salvation, yet a flawed one which lets 'fine pictures and decorations' detract from the simplicity of the worship of mainstream Protestantism.

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<sup>41</sup> This doctrine is found in advice Paul gives to the Corinthians, where some gentile Christians are eating meat sacrificed to idols, which disturbs Jewish Christians who believe this to be sinful. Paul does not condemn the practice in theory ('we know that an idol is nothing in the world', I Corinthians 8. 4), but rather condemns it as it causes offence to fellow church members. 'Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' (I Corinthians 8. 13).

In contrast to Richardson, Fielding showed himself to be more wary of Catholicism, especially with its threatened return to England to be imposed on the populace by force. In the *True Patriot*, Fielding uses the threat of Catholicism to convince his readers that the Jacobite Rebellion should be opposed.

And first, the most noble Party of Free-Thinkers, who have no Religion, are most heartily concerned to oppose the Introduction of Popery, which would obtrude one on them, one not only inconsistent with Free-Thinking, but indeed with any Thinking at all. How would a Man of Spirit, whose Principles are too elevated to worship the Great Creator of the Universe, submit to pay his Adoration to a Rabble of Saints, most of whom he would have been justly ashamed to have kept Company with while alive?<sup>42</sup>

Fielding claimed Catholicism to be a religion without ‘any thinking at all’, yet his primary objection is the perception that the religion would be enforced. In the catalogue of Fielding’s library, Ribble and Ribble note five works which could be ‘loosely described as Roman Catholic polemics’, mainly histories and biographies with a pro-Catholic bias.<sup>43</sup> In his fiction, Fielding shows he has no objection to Catholics on an individual level. In *Joseph Andrews* (1742), Adams has an extended discussion about the poverty of the clergy with a Catholic priest who hides his identity ‘for those who understand our Laws will not wonder he was not over-ready to own [his Catholicism]’ (*JA*, p. 220). Adams and the Priest agree that poverty in the clergy is beneficial, and throughout the interaction the Catholic holds a more charitable theology than Fielding shows of

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<sup>42</sup> Henry Fielding, *The True Patriot*, 26 November 1745, in *True Patriot and Related Writings*, ed. by W. B. Coley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 137.

<sup>43</sup> Ribble and Ribble, p. xxvi.

the Protestants Trulliber and Barnabas. Religious freedom was important to Fielding, and while in his writings he tries to convince others of Latitudinarianism's validity, he does not condemn those who hold other beliefs if they uphold what he saw as the core tenets of Christianity.

While Richardson and Fielding shared a relative tolerance of Catholicism, Fielding was vocally opposed to a strand of the revivalist movement at the other end of the church spectrum. He wrote passionately against the Methodism of George Whitefield, whose Calvinistic doctrines eventually defined the movement. As Martin Battestin summarises, 'the purpose of [Methodism] was to reform the Church of England – both the worldliness of the clergy and the rationalist, Pelagian tendencies of the latitudinarian divines'.<sup>44</sup> The early Methodist movement in the mid-eighteenth century sought to revive stagnant Anglicanism rather than form its own denomination, and the movement was not as large as the mid-century pamphlet war which surrounded it would have one believe. Only 24,000 people were calling themselves Methodists in 1767 out of a British population of approximately 6.5 million.<sup>45</sup> It is not the Methodist movement *per se* which Fielding opposed, in fact as noted by Jerry C. Beasley when speaking more widely of novelists including Fielding, 'the spirit that actually supported the popularity of John Wesley emerges frequently'.<sup>46</sup> Wesley is described by Roy Porter as 'a true-blue Anglican [...], loyal to the Church of

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<sup>44</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *Henry Fielding Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 241.

<sup>45</sup> Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, revised edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 177.

<sup>46</sup> Jerry C. Beasley, *Novels of the 1740s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), p. 17.

England to his dying day'.<sup>47</sup> Wesley was inspired to revitalise what many including Fielding saw as ailing Anglicanism by, among other things, opposing the excesses of the clergy. This is something with which Fielding also concerned himself. It was the Calvinism of George Whitefield (Wesley was no Calvinist) that Fielding found disturbing, and the re-establishment of the doctrines of original sin and predestination, uncharitable beliefs which were diminishing in other circles by the middle of the eighteenth century. Fielding saw in Whitefield's Methodism what Martin and Ruthe Battestin describe as 'a convenient mask for hypocrisy', where salvation is earned only by faith and election rather than charitable behaviour, thus excusing all manner of sinful conduct.<sup>48</sup> Taking one example from his account of Whitefield's Methodism, in the *True Patriot*, Fielding writes about his experience of a possibly fictional Methodist service:

I remember to have been present at a certain Religious Assembly of the People called *Methodists*, where the Preacher named the following Text: *It is reported, that Fornication is among you* [I Corinthians 5. 1]. The whole Congregation, as well as myself, expected, I believe, a wholesome Dissertation on all criminal Converse between the Sexes [...]; But to our great Surprize, the Sermon was entirely confin'd to the former Part of the Text, and we were only instructed in the Nature and various kinds of *Reports*.<sup>49</sup>

Fielding depicts himself as entering this service with an open mind but makes several criticisms of the preacher as a representative of the wider Methodist movement. The focus on the temporal and less significant part of the verse in

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<sup>47</sup> Porter, p. 176.

<sup>48</sup> Martin C. Battestin and Ruthe R. Battestin, *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 333.

<sup>49</sup> Henry Fielding, 1 April 1746, in *True Patriot and Related Writings*, p. 257.

question reveals the preacher's lack of theological education. He also accuses the Methodist church of not wanting to condemn fornication. Rather, the preacher's focus on 'reports' indicates that sinful behaviour is not condemned, showing an unwillingness to judge bad actions. Fielding's issues with Methodism are also evident in the Methodist Williams in *Shamela* (1741), who constantly interprets biblical texts to justify his sexual relationship with the main character. It was neither Methodism's attempts to revive Anglicanism, nor its criticism of the clergy to which Fielding objected, but rather Whitefield's emphasis on salvation by grace at the expense of charity, contrary to Fielding's Latitudinarianism.

Richardson, by contrast, appears to have been more appreciative of the attempts of Methodism to revive what he also saw as a decline in religious consciousness, although he was not without criticism of the movement. Keith Maslen lists a few titles from Richardson's printing that concern Methodism in his catalogue of Richardson's presses. Richardson printed two early sermons by George Whitefield in 1737, and two editions of William Law's *The Oxford Methodists* (1733 and 1738), an apology for the movement.<sup>50</sup> He also, however, printed William Bowman's *The Imposture of Methodism Display'd* (1740), which condemns Methodism in the area of Dewsbury.<sup>51</sup> Dussinger notes that 'while admiring [Methodists'] piety, [Richardson] is critical of their enthusiastic

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<sup>50</sup> Maslen, pp. 152, 100. Whitefield's sermons are entitled 'The Benefits of an Early Piety' and 'The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus in Order to Salvation'.

<sup>51</sup> Maslen, p. 62.

doctrines and mode of preaching outside the Church'.<sup>52</sup> In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh dated 31 March 1750, Richardson comments on the beliefs of James Hervey: 'I think him inclined to the enthusiastic part of Methodism. Yet I am sure he is a good and well-meaning man'.<sup>53</sup> 'Enthusiasm' in the eighteenth century could either mean a style of worship reliant on emotional responses, or the idea that private divine communication was how God connected with humanity rather than revelation through the Bible.<sup>54</sup> It is impossible to judge what Richardson meant by 'enthusiasm' here. Hervey was a keen proponent of revelation through Scripture, so he is perhaps referring to his worship style, although this could be a problematic interpretation. In *Exalted Condition*, Richardson allows Pamela to bear some characteristics of enthusiastic prayer. After Mr B has revealed he has no intention of divorcing Pamela, nor has he been unfaithful with the Countess, Pamela recalls, 'my Eyes were fixed, as the dear Gentleman told me; for he was a little startled, seeing nothing but the Whites; for the Sight was out of its Orbits, in a manner, lifted up to Heaven—in Ecstasy for a Turn so unexpected!' (*EC*, pp. 433–34). In *Tale of a Tub* (1710), Jonathan Swift describes the experience of attending a meeting of enthusiasts and their style of prayer, stating 'They violently strain their Eye balls [*sic*] inward, half closing the Lids'.<sup>55</sup> Richardson's approach to Methodism is one of cautious tolerance. Although wary of 'enthusiasm', he was nevertheless supportive of its revivalist attempts to breathe new life into eighteenth-century Anglicanism.

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<sup>52</sup> 'Richardson's "Christian Vocation"', p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, VI, 13.

<sup>54</sup> 'Enthusiasm', in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<http://www-oed-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/view/Entry/62879>> [accessed 24 August 2021].

<sup>55</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Tale of a Tub* (London: printed for Motte, 1727), p. 204.

Richardson and Fielding diverged slightly in their tolerance of Methodism and Catholicism. Richardson saw Methodism as attempting to revive the existing church, although flawed in some of its methods. Fielding, while appreciating revivalism, saw Whitefield's Calvinist Methodism as heretical, potentially permissive of sinful behaviour, and negating the duty of charity. Both authors also show tolerance of Catholicism to a certain extent. Richardson was tolerant enough to have his Christian hero Sir Charles potentially marry a devout Catholic and hope to have a character with no religion converted as a second-best to Protestantism. Fielding, while acknowledging the threat of imposed Catholicism, appears to have been tolerant of Catholics on an individual level.

One religious movement which Richardson and Fielding were united in condemning was deism. In brief, deism upholds the belief in a creator deity, but that God is not involved in creation, rejecting the revealed religion of Christianity. Richardson lamented in a letter to Thomas Edwards dated 30 December 1754 that the deist publications of Lord Bolingbroke contained 'dogmatical Abuse and Virulence'.<sup>56</sup> In Richardson's published works, in Part Three of *Apprentice's Vade Mecum* he elucidates religious duties and beliefs which apprentices should hold and those of which they should be wary. After making the argument that Christianity is the sole revelation of God by

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<sup>56</sup> Samuel Richardson to Thomas Edwards, 30 December 1754, in *Correspondence with Thomas Edwards*, ed. by John A. Dussinger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 359.

disparaging other faiths for their 'natural religion' without divine revelation, he states that deists are a 'fashionable Sort of Infidels'.<sup>57</sup> Although writing against deism, Richardson relies on anti-deist works rather than quoting original deist sources, evidencing his lack of wider theological reading. While Richardson's argumentative style pieces together other commentators and verses paraphrased from the Bible, in a personal comment he outlines one of his primary fears as to what would happen if deism were to determine the moral code of the country:

If this be the Case, *adds this Author*, that these Men would let us loose to our *Pleasures*, and free us from the apprehensions of a *future Account*, what Security can *society* have either of their *Honesty*, or of their *Conformity* to those Laws which preserve *Order* among Men, and hinder the World from falling into *Confusion*?<sup>58</sup>

This quotation illustrates Richardson's belief in the interrelatedness of civil society and the Christian faith; without the bedrock of Christianity undergirding morality, society would crumble as individuals were free to do whatever they pleased without fear of divine reprisal, an argument also made by Fielding.

More evidence for Richardson conducting his printing career as a religious vocation is indicated by the fact that he never printed any works advocating deism. Maslen's list of Richardson's printed works reveals no pamphlets or books promoting deism, but several denouncing it as heresy. These include Philip Skelton's *Deism Revealed* (1751) and the second and third editions of

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<sup>57</sup> Samuel Richardson, *The Apprentice's Vade Mecum, or Young Man's Pocket Companion*, 3 vols (London: Roberts, 1734), III, 58.

<sup>58</sup> *Apprentice's Vade Mecum*, III, 59.



John Leland's *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers* (1754), among others.<sup>59</sup> Richardson appears so averse to deism that he refused to print deist materials despite their financial success; his religiosity seems to have won over his commercial instincts. I have argued along with Dussinger that Richardson saw printing as a Christian vocation and while he printed no deist writings, he did print the *Daily Journal*, which allowed *The Bee* to be advertised. This publication repeatedly printed *The Philosopher's Prayer* by Matthew Tindal, a deistical writer.<sup>60</sup> This twice-removed support for deism is perhaps indicative that early in his career, Richardson was not so financially sound as to refuse this source of income. It appears, however, that as Richardson became more successful, he had greater choice as to what he printed.

Richardson's opposition to deism was shared by Fielding who equates it with atheism, condemning both. In his contribution to *The Champion* on 22 January 1740, Fielding writes an extended lament of the prevalence of vice, intermixing atheists and deists:

And supposing that the Deist, nay the Atheist, could carry his Point, supposing that the Belief of a future State, nay of a very Deity, could be rooted out of the World, and Men could be bought to believe that this vast regular Frame of the universe, and all the artful and cunning Machines therein were the Effects of Chance, of an irregular Dance of Atoms.<sup>61</sup>

Deism and atheism are distinct, but Fielding argues both are responsible for 'the present flourishing State of Infidelity', and if Christianity ceased to influence the

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<sup>59</sup> Maslen, pp. 139, 101.

<sup>60</sup> *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> *Contributions to the Champion*, 22 January 1740, p. 137.

populace, 'Mankind might be left to pursue their Desires, their Appetites, their Lusts, in a full Swing and without Controul'.<sup>62</sup> In his fiction, Fielding also treats deism with contempt. In *Amelia* (1751) he introduces Mr Robinson by stating 'this gentleman was what they call a freethinker; that is to say, a deist, or, perhaps, an atheist; for, though he did not absolutely deny the existence of a God, yet he entirely denied his providence. A doctrine which, if it is not downright atheism, hath a direct tendency towards it'.<sup>63</sup> Deism and atheism's interrelatedness in denying providence, a key theme throughout Fielding's fiction, caused Fielding to oppose both movements.

Despite many of Fielding's injunctions against deism, Ronald Paulson advocates the theory that Fielding was a deist at least for the first part of his career, stating that 'deism and orthodoxy [coexisted] for Fielding on different levels of belief'.<sup>64</sup> Confusion over Fielding's approach to deism arises from some of the similarities between the aims of deism and Latitudinarianism. Latitudinarianism accepted the deist idea of natural religion, but also, in the words of Patrick Müller, 'required the sanction of revealed religion'.<sup>65</sup> Latitudinarians also condemned the clergy for poor behaviour, as did deists. In *Tom Jones* (1749), the deist Square and the hypocritical Calvinist clergyman Thwackum are treated with equal contempt. Fielding's low opinion of some

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<sup>62</sup> *Contributions to the Champion*, 17 January 1740, pp. 132, 137.

<sup>63</sup> Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. by David Blewett (London: Penguin, 1987), pp. 22–23.

<sup>64</sup> Ronald Paulson, 'Henry Fielding and the Problem of Deism', in *The Margins of Orthodoxy: Heterodox Writing and Cultural Response 1660–1750*, ed. by Roger D. Lund (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 240–70 (p. 263).

<sup>65</sup> Patrick Müller, *Latitudinarianism and Didacticism in Eighteenth-Century Literature: Moral Theology in Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith* (Oxford: Lang, 2009), pp. 55–56.

members of the clergy is not evidence of deism; even Richardson reveals he shares some of the same beliefs in *Exalted Condition* where he condemns clergymen who accept more than one living. Paulson also cites Fielding's beliefs in the necessity of religion to hold society together as the primary reason he advocated Christianity; Richardson also acknowledged this function. Fielding's depiction of and belief in providence polarises him from deism; one cannot hold the notion of obvious providential intervention and the fundamental deist doctrine of God's lack of involvement simultaneously.

I have so far outlined in this chapter some of the relative tolerances of Richardson and Fielding regarding other Christian denominations and religious movements of the eighteenth century. While both men agree that deism should be opposed on civic and spiritual grounds, they reveal themselves to be tolerant of other Christian churches and sects in a variety of different senses. With regards to Catholicism, Richardson is highly tolerant, allowing intermarriage and Pamela to worship in Catholic churches when on the continent. Fielding also appears to be tolerant of Catholicism so long as it is not imposed on others, treating the Catholic clergyman in *Joseph Andrews* charitably. Richardson's acceptance of Methodism, although not without criticism, is greater than Fielding's. It was Whitefield's intolerant Methodism with which Fielding took issue rather than Methodism as a whole. As I have discussed briefly here, these tolerances are apparent in their fiction, and while it does not appear to have an impact on the choice of biblical references, it

certainly influences a variety of different religious characters treated with either sympathy or contempt.

With regards to theological concepts, there are again many topics on which Richardson and Fielding agree. Perhaps the most overarching theological principle in all of Richardson's and Fielding's novels is the concept of providence. I will comment on each individual novel separately as the use of providence is nuanced, but here it is important to establish some groundwork on the idea of providence in the eighteenth century. James Louis Fortuna provides a brief but thorough overview of providential thinking in the period. A belief in providence, Fortuna suggests, 'precludes the coincidental or accidental (though not such events as seem to be mere coincidence or accident), for such terms have no valid meaning for reasonable creatures, but imply simply a lack of understanding'.<sup>66</sup> Both Richardson and Fielding adhered to the idea of providence as God's involvement in the world, one of subtle guidance rather than miraculous intervention. With hindsight, each of the novels reveal a providential pattern. In *Virtue Rewarded*, 'Providence', synonymous with 'God', works Pamela's bleak situation for her temporal aggrandisement. Shamela's affair is finally discovered, and she is publicly sued for divorce. Joseph Andrews marries and gains higher social status by providentially discovered parentage. Clarissa's woes ultimately lead to her death, but also assurance of heavenly reward for her virtue. Tom Jones, while being led into a bleak predicament, is

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<sup>66</sup> James Louis Fortuna, *'Unsearchable Wisdom of God': A Study in Providence in Richardson's Pamela* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1980), p. 19.

ultimately redeemed and rewarded for his charity. In all these novels, an often-unperceived providence works for the benefit of the virtuous and punishment of the immoral as determined by their authors.

In Fielding's novels the idea of providence pervades the texts although this proved, perhaps surprisingly, a point of criticism for Richardson. In Fielding's fiction, rapes and robberies are prevented, characters cross paths on roads against all odds, and everything, no matter how hopeless, works for the benefit of the virtuous and the punishment of the wicked. Also emphasising the unknowable plans of God, Richard Rosengarten remarks: 'The endings of [Fielding's] novels and their overarching frame of reference bespeak complete confidence in the secure foundation of the divine moments of creation and the final judgment'.<sup>67</sup> Fielding explores within his work the hiddenness and knowableness of the actions of God. He leads his characters into dark situations before providence redeems them and the reader can review the text and see the divine hand working when it once seemed absent. Richardson criticised Fielding for his blatant use of providence in *Tom Jones*, where he comments as part of a larger diatribe 'Probability was not observed'.<sup>68</sup> Fielding adheres to a form of providence in his novels that is visible with hindsight, leading his characters into seemingly hopeless situations before they are

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<sup>67</sup> Richard A. Rosengarten, *Henry Fielding and the Narration of Providence: Divine Design and the Incursion of Evil* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 127.

<sup>68</sup> Samuel Richardson to Astrea and Minerva Hill, 4 August 1749, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, ed. by Christine Gerrard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 320.

redeemed (*Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*) or making the reader believe wickedness has triumphed until the very last sentences (*Shamela*).

Like Fielding, Richardson also adhered to the idea of providence in his novels, although it is more subtly portrayed. In *Virtue Rewarded*, Pamela trusts providence inactively to save her. However, she has the obligation to actively resist Mr B's rape attempts and not deny an opportunity to escape when one presents itself, although she attributes its failure to the divine hand instantly. Clarissa's inactive trust in providence is not complete, and her actions cause her earthly troubles. When she entirely trusts to providence at the end of the novel, she is enabled to die a peaceful death in sure and certain hope of salvation and reward in heaven. While not so apparent as in Fielding, who leaves the unwinding of providence until the last chapters, Richardson's providence is mentioned frequently and is often evident throughout, a providence which must be inactively trusted to bring about God's will on earth. That is not to excuse humankind from action, however, and everyone must assess their behaviour to discern whether they passively accept or actively resist trials as they happen.

Both Richardson and Fielding also asserted that providence necessitates action of the individual. Fortuna elucidates, 'not that man was to remain passive, [...] rather, man was to be watchful for those moments when God's will and human purpose intersected for the accomplishment of some larger public or private

good'.<sup>69</sup> In Fielding's novels, the idea of charity is pervasive, with good characters being virtuous because they offer assistance whenever it is in their power to do so. Richardson also seems to have adhered to the idea that action was necessary in the world for the alleviation of suffering. In *Letters to and for Particular Friends* (1741), Richardson writes 'To a Father, on the Loss of his Son, who died under Age', which he later sent to Andrew Millar on the death of his son for comfort.<sup>70</sup> There is a sense within this letter that the death of the son was God's action: 'he is taken away at an Age, at which God's Mercy renders his eternal Happiness unquestionably certain'.<sup>71</sup> Yet, the parents are praised for not accepting the fate of their sick child in helplessness, but rather trying to secure the child's life: 'you saw everything done for his Recovery, that *could* be done'.<sup>72</sup> While advocating a greater trust in providence, Richardson reveals he believed that humans have the obligation to charity and assistance whenever need arises, rather than inactive trust to predestination. Both authors affirm that human charity is necessary in bringing the workings of providence to light and adhered to similar beliefs surrounding the balance of God's providential action and human obligation to charity.

As Richardson criticised *Tom Jones* for not observing probability, Fielding critiqued *Virtue Rewarded* for its depiction of providential rewards and

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<sup>69</sup> Fortuna, p. 19.

<sup>70</sup> Samuel Richardson to Andrew Millar, 8 August 1750, in *Correspondence Primarily on Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. by Betty A. Schellenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends* (London: Rivington, Osborn and Leake, 1741), p. 265.

<sup>72</sup> *Familiar Letters*, p. 266.

punishments, which Richardson addressed in *Clarissa* (1748). *Virtue Rewarded* concentrates on temporal rewards for virtue but neglects the punishment of wicked characters for their behaviour, so vice is also rewarded. In *Shamela*, Fielding reveals Shamela's infidelity at the end of the novel and punishes her with public divorce. Similarly, in *Tom Jones* Fielding ends his novel with the punishment of the wicked and the exaltation of the good. It may be as a result of Pamela's rapid conception (written in only two months) that allowed this moral flaw to escape Richardson's notice, but it is certainly one he acknowledged and sought to correct in *Clarissa*. In response to Fielding's criticism (and those made by others), Clarissa's reward is wholly spiritual, her life acting as a counterpoint to Pamela's. Pamela is not punished for disobeying her parents and staying in Bedfordshire; Clarissa is punished for leaving her parents' house despite the terrible fate that possibly awaits her if she stays. Mr B is not punished for imprisoning and attempting to rape Pamela; Lovelace is punished by an early death and estrangement from the woman he loves. Mrs Jewkes is not punished for her hand in Pamela's imprisonment but is rather allowed to repent and die in the peace of salvation; Mrs Sinclair is punished with an agonising, unrepentant death. *Clarissa* responds to the system of 'reward' in *Virtue Rewarded*, where the previously wicked are redeemed in the idyllic world of Pamela's post-engagement letters; *Clarissa*'s world is one of rewards for the good and punishment for the unrepentant both in this world and the next.



In all the novels I study save *Clarissa*, rewards for virtue are worldly and it is only *Clarissa* where the concept of rewards in the afterlife are found. On the subject of temporal and future rewards, Carol Stewart asserts that:

Certainly, the fortunate and unfortunate conclusions in *Pamela* and *Clarissa* respectively were both equally acceptable within Anglican teaching of the time, with rewards in this life being used to promote the worldly Christianity of the Latitudinarians, and the rewards of the next life being used both to enforce morality and, often, to explain the seeming absence of divine intervention on earth.<sup>73</sup>

Fielding reflects Latitudinarianism in this respect, with his rewards and punishments being solely temporal while Richardson acknowledged a more complicated pattern of divine justice in *Clarissa* especially. The Bible is replete with examples of the good receiving rewards in this life (Daniel, Joseph, and Job to name a few) but also the idea that true reward can only come after death (the moral of much New Testament writings). Richardson and Fielding adhered to the idea that virtuous behaviour would lead to rewards, either here or hereafter, and wickedness would often be punished by the providential hand at work in the world.

To summarise, Richardson's and Fielding's beliefs are, perhaps surprisingly, more similar than different. Both show themselves to be low-church Anglican, Richardson leaning towards the puritanical and Fielding Latitudinarianism. Both emphasised individualised simplicity of faith, charity, and placed less emphasis

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<sup>73</sup> Carol Stewart, 'Pamela and the Anglican Crisis of the 1730s', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 32.1 (2009), 37–51 (pp. 37–38).

on the hierarchy of the church, of which each were sometimes critical. They share an appreciation for revivalist movements such as Methodism (although with Richardson wary of 'enthusiasm' and Fielding despising Whitefield's Calvinism) and were reasonably tolerant of Catholicism. They both opposed deism and atheism on religious and civic grounds, arguing that revealed religion is necessary for the individual but also for society. Theologically, they mostly agree on the doctrine of providence and were sceptical of predestination as it excused inaction when charity was necessary. They both hold to the idea that there are rewards for good behaviour and punishments for bad, either in this world or the next. Richardson and Fielding diverge, however, in their ideas of virtuous behaviour. For Richardson, virtue stemmed from perfect piety as exemplified in his own puritanically-flavoured Anglicanism, where the individual is rewarded for constant moral behaviour. For Fielding, good heart and pure motivation were the keys to virtue. Sins could be tolerated so long as at the core the individual was a good person, charitable, and willing to admit their mistakes rather than hypocritically cover them with professed religion; such tolerance was in keeping with the Latitudinarian emphasis on charity. In many respects Richardson and Fielding were not as polarised as is usually assumed, sharing many similar theological beliefs which are manifest in their novels, providing the reader with different but not wholly incompatible ideas of virtue. Both versions of virtue were charitable and urged an acceptance of Christianity as the means of redemption, reflecting low-church positions.

Richardson's and Fielding's religious beliefs impacted how each author chose to use the Bible. Fielding often selected biblical references which emphasise the benefits of charity in keeping with his Latitudinarian faith. Drawing most of his references from the gospels, especially the Sermon on the Mount, his fiction acts as an argument for living with a charitable heart, theologically confident enough to argue for Latitudinarianism. As the narrator states in *A Journey From this World to the Next*, 'I had indulged myself very freely with wine and women in my youth, but had never done an injury to any man living, nor avoided an opportunity of doing good; that I pretended to very little virtue, more than general philanthropy and private friendship'.<sup>74</sup> This summary of a life allows the narrator into Elysium. By contrast, Richardson was not confident enough in his own faith and abilities to argue explicitly for his puritanical religiosity, rather advocating a more generalised Christianity as the sole revelation of God. Drawing many of his references from the Old Testament, especially the laments of the Psalms and Job, he expresses his heroines' anguish through Scripture as they lament their situation, pray for salvation, and reaffirm their faith in Almighty God, assured of reward for their virtue in life or death. Richardson's heroines live lives of exemplary virtue in the puritan tradition of constant vigilance and regular private devotions and while providence may lead them into the valley of the shadow of death, it cannot fail to reward them for their devotion to God and exemplary living.

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<sup>74</sup> Henry Fielding, *A Journey From this World to the Next*, intro. by Claude Rawson (London: Everyman, 1973), p. 36.

## CHAPTER TWO – *PAMELA, OR VIRTUE REWARDED*: RICHARDSON'S PROGRAMME OF PIOUS VIRTUE

Reflecting his own religious adherences, Richardson designed Pamela as an exemplar of virtue to be imitated. She prays regularly, performs devotions in private, and lives her life dedicated to simplicity of faith. However, Richardson's ideal in some respects fails to come to fruition. Pamela claims to be humble yet records every compliment and admires herself in mirrors. She instantly accepts her rakish captor as a husband without seeking her parents' advice, who accept the engagement with praises to God rather than warnings against marrying a man seemingly devoid of morality. Once married, her world becomes an idyll as she begins to ingratiate herself with the upper classes without any difficulty. Some of these oversights stem from *Virtue Rewarded's* rapid composition between 10 November 1739 and 10 January 1740 'through all my other business' as Richardson revealed in a letter to Aaron Hill.<sup>1</sup> Richardson had little time to reflect on his writing, and his plethora of changes between editions attempt to redeem what he understood to be a flawed novel. In successive editions, compliments are toned down or removed; Mr B's character is made less demonic; and Pamela's style of writing is elevated to resolve some of the problems for which the hurried composition of the first edition of the novel was at least partially responsible.

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Richardson to Aaron Hill, 1 February 1741, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, ed. by Christine Gerrard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 90.

Not only does *Virtue Rewarded's* moral schema suffer from its rushed composition, but the use of biblical references is also affected by the speed of conception. In this chapter, I will argue that a biblically literate reader is, in the first half of the novel, presented with allegorical references which work on a variety of levels, providing enrichment to the novel. Mostly presented as subtle allusions, they are easily missed. As the narrative progresses, references become more obvious and can increasingly only be read superficially. When a contextual reading is attempted, the apt parallels begin to break down. By the end of the novel Richardson, writing it appears in haste, abandons his previously well-crafted biblical comparisons in favour of new verses which gloss *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative. These are chosen without due consideration, leading to interpretations of the novel contrary to Richardson's intentions.

This study is the first to consider the biblical references in *Virtue Rewarded* as a whole. I have discovered approximately ninety-seven references, forty-three of which appear not to have been noted previously, mainly in the first half of the novel in the form of subtle, carefully embedded allusions. As I stated in the introduction, the Bible was the principle tool for literacy in the eighteenth century, and as such one of the main frames of reference for understanding literature for an eighteenth-century audience. Therefore, any use of Scripture within *Virtue Rewarded* which can be gleaned by a reader becomes significant. Since eighteenth-century sermons frequently expand upon allegorical biblical

passages, readers were already used to analysing texts in this way.<sup>2</sup> While the novel may have been a relatively new genre, critical analysis was certainly not something unfamiliar to a reader in the eighteenth century.

After first outlining some religious principles and recurring biblical references, I will chronologically examine some of the ninety-seven references to the Bible in *Virtue Rewarded*, investigating them in terms of their use in various settings of the novel: Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire, and after Pamela's engagement. Each section uses the Bible in a nuanced way, but progressively exemplifies Richardson's decline in consideration in the selection and presentation of verses. Before Pamela's imprisonment, the novel is set in Bedfordshire. Most biblical references here are embedded allusions used cautiously, calculated to draw parallels between Pamela's story and those of characters and situations in the Bible. The use of Genesis' Joseph, the Exodus, and Psalm 23 form a tapestry and provide precedent for the reader to be able to examine closely and consider the context of biblical references. They enrich *Virtue Rewarded* and strongly link the novel with the Bible. In Lincolnshire, some references are carefully chosen whereas others can only be read superficially. More obvious

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<sup>2</sup> The gospel of Matthew provides an allegorical interpretation of the Parable which Jesus may have given in private to the disciples after it has been delivered to the people: "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty' (Matthew 13. 18–23).

paraphrase becomes more prevalent and many references, when considered allegorically as many commentators seek to read them, confuse rather than elucidate the text. The Babylonian Exile and Jesus' temptations are used in a similar way to those in *Bedfordshire*, but references to the stories of David and Goliath, and Samson confuse the text when considered on the same, deeper level. A biblically attuned reader expects the same tapestry from the first section, yet the precision and care with which references are used seems to decrease as the novel progresses. After Pamela's engagement, quotation becomes standard and previous allegories, so carefully used, break down entirely. Richardson attempts to redeem a previously despicable Mr B and remove from *Virtue Rewarded's* world all wickedness, so well established in the first half of the novel. Richardson attempted to draw new allegories, yet these in some respects open *Virtue Rewarded* to the criticism levelled at it by Fielding and others, especially the use of the Book of Ruth. When the same contextual scrutiny is applied to the text as previously, the narrative becomes confused and references cease to add meaning to the text, but rather detract from it. In some instances, the use of biblical references opens *Virtue Rewarded* to potential alternate and unintended interpretations.

The first edition of *Virtue Rewarded* seems increasingly convoluted, which was something Richardson attempted to remedy in subsequent editions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a full investigation into the changes Richardson made to *Virtue Rewarded* throughout his lifetime, see Jarrod Hurlbert, 'Pamela, or Virtue Reworded: The Texts, Paratexts, and Revisions that Redefine Richardson's "Pamela"' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Marquette University, 2012).

Richardson's eleventh and final revision was published in 1801, many years after his death, and was also amended by his daughters. As Eaves and Kimpel suggest, it is more than likely most of the amendments were Richardson's own, as *A Collection of Moral and Instructive Sentiments* (1755) contains similar wordings to the eleventh edition.<sup>4</sup> Thousands of small amendments to language, grammar, and punctuation were made to this 1801 edition, elevating Pamela's style of writing. The opportunity was also taken to adjust some of the biblical references to create a more polished novel. Thirteen references have been removed, solving some of the confusion and making Mr B a softer character. Four were added and seven subtly altered, although the significance and meaning of these remains the same. I will refer to the various editions of *Virtue Rewarded* throughout this chapter to show where removals and additions occur, which help reveal Richardson's intention and his later decisions about the biblical verses he chose to use, deciding some references were not fit for purpose.

While many authors consider what scriptural knowledge a character is likely to possess, it appears Richardson was not so inclined in his first novel. He designed many of his characters as Christian moral exemplars and thus we would expect any quotation of the Bible to be accurately used. However, many uses of the Bible are far from perfect. For example, Mr Andrews, Pamela's father, tutor and moral example, cites the book of Ruth as an allegory for *Virtue*

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<sup>4</sup> T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, 'Richardson's Revisions of *Pamela*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 20 (1967), 61–88 (p. 76).



*Reward* towards the end of the novel (*VR*, p. 287). Problematically, rather than purely a tale of virtue rewarded, it is also the story of a parent contriving a marriage between her daughter and a wealthy man. The scholar and failed schoolmaster Mr Andrews would know this, and therefore it is unlikely he would choose Ruth. This reference opens *Virtue Rewarded* to criticism and subtly hints to the reader that Mr Andrews has contrived the marriage between Pamela and Mr B, something Richardson did not intend. I take the approach throughout this chapter that Richardson is the one who uses the Bible rather than his characters. The flaws do not exist because Richardson's characters intentionally choose poorly as do Fielding's. Rather, due to the speed of writing, full consideration of what a biblically literate reader will take away from comparisons or what reference a character is likely to use in each situation was not always as considered as it might have been.

Turning to one of the most overarching theological concepts of *Virtue Rewarded*, throughout the novel 'Providence' acts for Pamela's benefit through seemingly desperate situations, ultimately rewarding her with marriage and elevated social status. James Louis Fortuna has dedicated a study to the providential pattern of *Virtue Rewarded*, one of the major themes and shaping factors of Richardson's narrative. His argument traces the role of the sometimes-unseen hand of the Deity in rewarding virtue in accordance with eighteenth-century providential thinking.<sup>5</sup> Constantly throughout *Virtue*

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<sup>5</sup> James Louis Fortuna, *'Unsearchable Wisdom of God': A Study in Providence in Richardson's Pamela* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1980).

*Rewarded*, Pamela states that she trusts entirely to providence for her salvation and redemption. She states that she will 'trust all to Providence, and nothing to myself' (VR, p. 79). She affirms this throughout, even as she plans her escape with the help of Williams, which is strangely prevented by several incidents. While the reader perceives at this point providence has abandoned her, it is all part of God's mysterious plan. There are fourteen references to 'Providence' in the first edition and thirty-five in the eleventh as Richardson replaced the word 'God' with the more descriptive 'Providence', also a seemingly politer way to refer to the Deity. Providence is a key principle in *Virtue Rewarded*, but Pamela often links her thankfulness to God with her praises of earthly beings. Pamela credits her salvation to God but does not neglect to acknowledge the roles of her parents, Mr B's mother, or Mr B himself. For example, 'God's Grace' is often linked with Pamela's parents: 'God's Grace and yours and my good Lady's Instruction'; 'God's Grace and their own Labour'; 'God's Grace and their good Lessons' (VR, pp. 376, 377, 418). The perfect Pamela must acknowledge that her salvation is not owing solely to divine intervention, but also to those around her who have shaped her character and have acted for Pamela's benefit as Richardson affirmed is humanity's duty. 'Grace' is firmly linked with human action.

Providence leads the saintly Pamela through a world of wickedness, highlighted by a recurring biblical reference added to the eleventh edition of *Virtue Rewarded* to make plain what was previously ambiguous. Richardson uses Matthew 12. 34: ('O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good

things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh') twice in the eleventh edition. The verse is alluded to in the first edition in describing Mr B: 'But I see, my dear Parents, that when [Mr B] will do wicked Things, it is no Wonder he will speak wicked Words' (VR, p. 37).<sup>6</sup> In the eleventh edition it is quoted directly to describe Mrs Jewkes and the newly added countess 'of some hard name', levelling their relative status:

But whatever reputation these freedoms [in speech] may give to [the upper class women's] *wit*, I think they do but little credit to their *hearts* – For does not the observation hold severely against such, *That out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh?*<sup>7</sup>

'This is like you, Mrs Jewkes,' said I. '*Out of the abundance of the heart.*'<sup>8</sup>

By using this verse in the eleventh edition to describe Mrs Jewkes, the countess, and in allusion to Mr B, Richardson shows amorality is found in all strata of society. Both the upper and lower classes can be described adequately using the same quotation and are thus spiritually of equal standing. These other characters' amoral speech contrasts with Pamela's own language, replete with godly words and the Bible, setting her apart from the wickedness of the 'generation of vipers' who surround her in the first half of the novel. By using this reference more blatantly in the eleventh edition, Richardson not only

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<sup>6</sup> This is retained in the eleventh edition, with a slight alteration: 'It is not to be wondered at, my dear parents, when a person will do wicked things, that he will speak wicked words.' (VR, p. 72).

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, 11th edn, ed. by Peter Sabor and intro. by Margaret Anne Doody (London: Penguin, 1980), p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> *Virtue Rewarded*, 11th edn, p. 233. The original from the first edition reads: 'Said I, Mrs. Jewkes, don't talk nastily to me. I see you are beginning again; and I shall affront you, may-be; for next to bad Actions, are bad Words; for they could not be spoken, if they were not in the Heart' (VR, p. 180).

emphasises the wickedness of the world, but also highlights to the less biblically astute reader the comparison subtly made in the first edition.

Providence acts as a constant refrain throughout *Virtue Rewarded*. Pamela appeals to and praises God throughout her imprisonment and exaltation. However, God does not receive sole credit for Pamela's salvation. It is God and her human examples of virtue to whom she gives thanks, along with Mr B whose hand in her elevation is also noted frequently. By recognising this duality, Richardson hints towards the idea that humans cannot trust solely to providence but are also obliged to act morally for themselves. This balance must be struck between the two and Pamela cannot neglect earthly credit and attribute her salvation entirely to God.

Turning to the use of biblical references in *Virtue Rewarded*, Richardson uses the Bible carefully throughout the Bedfordshire section of the novel. There are twenty-two references to the Bible in this section, mostly embedded allusion, pointing towards biblical passages and enriching the text. Pamela is likened to several biblical characters: Israel captive in Egypt, Joseph the faithful servant, and Tamar the victim of rape. Although Pamela is depicted as the innocent with these comparisons, Richardson may also subtly suggest Mr B's version of the story, where Pamela is the wicked character, ensnaring him into loving her. These references can be read allegorically, providing precedent for the entire

novel; due to the apparent increasing speed of conception, such subtlety is not realised in the latter stages of the narrative.

The first biblical reference within *Virtue Rewarded* is an embedded allusion, a form of referencing used throughout the Bedfordshire letters. In Letter One, Pamela alludes to Psalm 23, bringing to the reader's mind the pastoral idyll it depicts: 'And so I send to you these four Guineas for your Comfort; for God will not let me want' (VR, p. 10); 'The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want' (Psalm 23. 1). Psalm 23 is used again in Letter Seventeen, when Pamela's parents write that she is 'the Staff of our Old-Age, and our Comfort too' (VR, p. 34), echoing verse four, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me'. These carefully inserted references are designed to invoke an image of Eden: green pastures, still waters, protection in times of trouble, and overflowing cups of joy. The passage idealises the poverty in which Pamela's parents live, where reliance on God's bounty is all that is needed for survival. It also creates a viable alternative to Pamela's present circumstances. If poverty were depicted realistically, it would give Pamela pause before desiring so earnestly to return to her parents. By alluding to Psalm 23 in these early letters, Richardson can quickly depict the idea contained within the psalm that faith in God will not only meet spiritual needs, but also earthly ones.

Once the idyll of Pamela's parents' poverty has been established in the use of Psalm 23, the character of Old Testament Joseph is introduced, whose story has several parallels to *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative. In Letter Three, Richardson has Mr Andrews use a biblical paraphrase: 'the Loss of our dear Child's Virtue, would be a Grief that we could not bear, and would bring our grey Hairs to the Grave at once' (*VR*, p. 12). This reference to 'grey hairs' is an obscure reference to the story of Joseph from the Old Testament. Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and subsequently imprisoned on the false accusation of seducing his employer's wife, Joseph uses his God-given ability of interpreting dreams to become a servant of the pharaoh, eventually becoming governor of Egypt. During a famine, his brothers come to Egypt in search of food. Joseph (who they do not recognise) asks to see Benjamin his full brother; his father, reluctantly, lets him go: 'for his brother [Joseph] is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray [*sic*] hairs with sorrow to the grave' (Genesis 42. 38). Joseph eventually reveals himself and the family move to Egypt and are prosperously employed for the rest of their lives. Pamela repeats 'grey hairs' in her response to Letter Three with a more exact paraphrase of the King James Version: 'I never will do any thing [*sic*] that shall bring your grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave' (*VR*, p. 13). During Pamela's suicide 'attempt', 'grey hairs' is again mentioned (*VR*, p. 160) and the eleventh edition adds another reference to Joseph during this episode: 'Was not Joseph's exaltation owing to his unjust imprisonment?'.<sup>9</sup> In this brief overview of Joseph's life, there are

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<sup>9</sup> *Virtue Rewarded*, 11th edn, p. 213. This use of rhetorical questions in quick succession is typical of the debate style of Paul, see for example I Corinthians 11. 22: 'What? have ye not

several parallels with Pamela's story. Both Pamela and Joseph refuse to sleep with their employers, as it is against their duty to God, and are subsequently imprisoned. Pamela becomes mistress of Mr B's house, as Joseph became governor of Egypt. Seeming misfortune becomes salvation of a family by God's providential action. When speaking of religious motifs in *Virtue Rewarded*, Scott Robertson terms Pamela's story one of the 'Fortunate Fall, the general principle of a tragic descent that ultimately leads to a successful outcome', which can be found throughout the Bible.<sup>10</sup> The reuse of 'grey hairs', like Psalm 23, enriches the narrative. Pamela, a 'modern' character, shares the experiences of her biblical predecessor, who provides a pattern for her actions. Pamela needs to remember her duty not only to her parents but also to God, who will providentially reward her as the novel's title affirms.

The use of Joseph's story is not the only biblical parallel Richardson uses in the first half of the novel. Throughout the Bedfordshire narrative Richardson establishes a parallel between Pamela and Israel, often treated as a single character throughout the Old Testament. In Bedfordshire, Mr B equivocates over Pamela's departure. He says 'Yes [she can stay]; and then 'No, let her go'; 'Yet begone! – No, come back again'; and he is accused of 'Hard-heartedness' (*VR*, pp. 36, 53, 69). This equivocation mirrors Pharaoh's indecision in releasing the Israelites from Egypt: 'I will let the people go [...] [Pharaoh] hardened his

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houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.'

<sup>10</sup> Scott Robertson, 'The Eighteenth-Century Novel', in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and Theology*, ed. by Andrew Hass, and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 431–47 (p. 436).

heart, and hearkened not unto them' (Exodus 8. 8, 15).<sup>11</sup> This allusion is subtle, yet it establishes what will become fully manifest in Pamela's later use of Psalm 137. Pamela is in a sense captive in Bedfordshire, refusing to leave until she is permitted to go, staying against her parents' and Richardson's own advice given to a servant girl in *Familiar Letters* (1741).<sup>12</sup> Of course, if Pamela leaves Mr B's estate for a Psalm 23 poverty, the story cannot continue and therefore she must disobey her parents' advice and stay on flimsy excuses. The references to Israel captive here are representative of Richardson's use of the Bible in this early stage of the novel. Cautious and allegorical, it provides a biblically literate reader with insights into a scriptural episode relevant to the situation in which Pamela finds herself.

The Pamela as Israel and Mr B as Egypt metaphor returns once Pamela is permitted to leave Lincolnshire but is this time indicative of the increasing carelessness in the selection of biblical verses. Pamela writes at the inn after receiving Mr B's letter imploring her return:

I think I was loth to leave the House. [...] Surely, surely, I cannot be like the old murmuring *Israelites*, to long after the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt*, when they had suffer'd there such heavy Bondage? (VR, p. 226).

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<sup>11</sup> Mr B is also reported as having nearly been drowned 'in pursuing his Game', which could be a reference to the drowning of Pharaoh's armies after the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14–15).

<sup>12</sup> In Letter 139 of *Familiar Letters*, after having received a letter from her parents urging her to leave the house in which she works because of a seduction attempt by her master, the daughter writes: 'I Received your Letter Yesterday, and am sorry I stay'd a Moment in my Master's House after his vile Attempt. But he was so full of his Promises of never offering the like again, that I hoped I might believe him; nor have I yet seen anything to the contrary: But I am so much convinced, that I ought to have done as you say, that I have this Day left the House; and hope to be with you soon after you will have received this Letter'. Samuel Richardson, *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends* (London: Rivington, Osborn, and Leake, 1741), p. 182.



This refers to Numbers 11. 5, where the Israelites are receiving manna (a bread-like substance) as they wander the wilderness in search of the Promised Land. They complain, 'We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick'. They have forgotten the hardship under the lash of the Egyptians as they travel forty years as a punishment for their disobedience. By equating Pamela with Israel here, Richardson can quickly depict Pamela's internal struggle where she begins to admit her unlikely love for Mr B despite his constant attacks on her 'virtue'. Unlike the parallels drawn from earlier references to the Egyptian captivity, this reference cannot bear scrutiny in the same way. The Israelites do not return to Egypt and are punished further; Pamela does return and is almost instantly rewarded. Rather than an example of carefully crafted allusion, this reference is a fleeting glance at a biblical story, taken out of context. The subsequent return to the metaphor of Pamela as Israel captive in Egypt exemplifies the alteration in the cautious use of references. A biblically literate reader expects another well-crafted use of this story, but instead is presented with a parallel that does not work on multiple levels as previously. While adequate as a superficial glance into Scripture, it becomes confusing when considered in detail.

The references from *Bedfordshire I* have discussed thus far have been subtle allusions, but Richardson does include paraphrases of biblical stories to draw more obvious but still complex parallels between Pamela's situation and the

Bible. Richardson uses the story of Amnon and Tamar to highlight the danger in which Pamela finds herself. Pamela writes as she muses on the relationship between love and hatred: 'Thus we read in Holy Writ, that wicked *Amnon*, when he had ruin'd poor *Tamar*, hated her more than ever he lov'd her, and would have turn'd her out of Door!' (*VR*, p. 50). In II Samuel 13, Amnon lusts after his half-sister Tamar and tricks her into coming to care for him during a fake illness. He forces himself on her and rapes her. His lust turns to hatred and Tamar is cast out of his palace in disgrace. Mrs Jervis has previously noted that Mr B is in love with Pamela ('I believe he loves my good Maiden', p. 38), but Pamela sees his actions as being motivated by lust, not love. If she were to give in to his advances, she would be hated and cast out as was Tamar. The parallels which can be drawn between Pamela and Tamar are multiple. Tamar, like Pamela, is the innocent in the story, punished for good action. Both are depicted as physically powerless. However, unlike Tamar, Pamela can and does resist the attempts made to her virginity. The reference to Amnon and Tamar is removed from the eleventh edition, coinciding with Mr B's becoming a more sympathetic character (less would-be rapist, more over-enthusiastic wooer). The idea that he has the genuine potential to be a rapist, as this reference suggests, would have opposed Richardson's attempted character reformation. This early use of paraphrase is nevertheless carefully selected, where the reader is taken aptly into the entire biblical story, exploring the concepts of lust/love and its relationship to hatred; the danger in which the seemingly weak Pamela finds herself; and the innocence of her character at the will of a wicked man.

Richardson presents Pamela's story as one of opposition to the wickedness of the world, but in the first section, there are suggestions of Mr B's interpretation of the events which take place in his Bedfordshire estate. From Mr B's perspective, Pamela is the wicked temptress, drawing him into loving her by witchcraft and satanic means. During her time in Bedfordshire in the first edition, Pamela is referred to as an 'Angel of Light' twice by Mr B (*VR*, pp. 33, 46), apparently emphasising her angelic qualities, a common theme throughout the narrative. However, contained within this seemingly positive phrase is a negative biblical connotation. Although the concept of angels of light and darkness are familiar to Christianity (and very Miltonic), the only time 'Angel of Light' is used in the King James Version is in II Corinthians 11. 14: 'And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'. When using the term 'Angel of Light', Mr B adds that Pamela 'makes herself an Angel of Light', and 'makes even [Mrs Jervis] [...] think her an Angel of Light' (*VR*, p. 33, 46). The presentation of Mr B's viewpoint of the events in Bedfordshire by the use of the Bible may not be intentional on Richardson's part, however. An addition of this verse in the second edition undercuts what could have been a pathway to redeeming Mr B. Richardson added 'angel of light' to 'take up that fallen Angel!—Once I thought her as innocent as one [an angel of light]!' (*VR*, p. 168), said in Lincolnshire. This perhaps indicates Richardson did not intend the 'Angel of Light'/II Corinthians parallel, or it could be indicative of Richardson's rapid amendments to the text for the second edition, published only months after the original. Whether intentional or not, Richardson's first edition use of 'Angel of Light' does convey Mr B's impression of Pamela as a wicked, Shamela-esque

woman enticing him into love. Weakening this in the second edition, it appears Richardson may have failed to see the significance of 'angel of light', providing him with a potential solution to the issue of Mr B's amoral character.

To conclude the examination of Bedfordshire references, the uses of the Bible I have discussed are indicative of the wider use of the Bible in Bedfordshire.

Beginning with the Psalm 23 depiction of the idyllic poverty in which Pamela's parents live, the narrative also cautiously parallels Pamela's story with Joseph and captive Israel, creating a tapestry of allusion for a biblically literate reader to appreciate. While Pamela's virtue in distress is amply evident, Mr B's interpretation of the story is also potentially portrayed. Subsequent editions make relatively few changes to biblical references in this section, removing the reference to the story of Tamar and the second edition adding another reference to 'Angel of Light', undercutting the dual interpretation Richardson consciously or subconsciously achieved in the first edition. By appreciating the subtlety of many of the biblical references in this first section of the novel, a reader may gain a deeper appreciation of the complexity and care with which Richardson used the Bible. He showed himself capable of advanced, nuanced literary cross-referencing. As the narrative progresses, Richardson begins to show less carefulness in his choice of scriptural allusion. While still fitting, they fail to work on multiple levels and cease to be allegorical as they are in the first section of the narrative.

Moving on to discuss the Lincolnshire section of the novel, the first instance of the thirty-six references to the Bible after Pamela's departure from Bedfordshire is in a prayer made in desperation at her situation, typical of other examples of her prayer. Changes to the prayer throughout editions demonstrate an alteration in the relationship between the Psalm 23 humble Pamela and the elevated servant awaiting entry into the upper classes. In the first edition, she makes a pleading prayer to God for her salvation, which is amended slightly in the second edition and is almost unrecognisable in the eleventh. In the first edition the passage reads:

But, gracious Heaven, forgive me my Rashness! O let me not sin against thee; for thou best knowest what is fittest for thy poor Handmaid!<sup>13</sup> – And as thou sufferest not thy poor Creatures to be tempted above what they can bear; I will resign, thro' thy Grace assisting me, to thy good Pleasure. But since these Temptations are not of my own seeking, the Effects of my Presumption and Vanity, O enable me to withstand them all, and deliver me from the Dangers that hang over my poor Head, and make me perfect thro' Sufferings, and, in thy own good Time, deliver me from them! (VR, p. 91)

The first edition of Pamela's prayer is uttered in a moment of desperation, a realistic example of Pamela's distress at this point in the narrative. The second edition reads as follows (with additions indicated in bold and deletions struck through):

But, gracious Heaven, forgive me my Rashness **and Despondency!** O let me not sin against thee; for thou best knowest what is fittest for thy poor Handmaid!: – And as thou sufferest not thy poor Creatures to be tempted above what they can bear; I will resign, ~~thro' thy Grace assisting me,~~ to thy good Pleasure. **And still, I hope, desperate as my Condition seems,** ~~But since~~ **that as** these ~~Temptations~~ **Trials** are not of my own

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<sup>13</sup> 'Handmaid' is used throughout the Bible not only as a term for a female servant but also for one who is a faithful servant to God. See Ruth 2. 13 and Luke 1. 48 for example.

seeking, **nor** the Effects of my Presumption and Vanity, ~~O enable me to withstand them all~~ **I shall be enabled to overcome them,** and ~~deliver me from the Dangers that hang over my poor Head,~~ and ~~make me perfect thro' Sufferings,~~ and, in thy **God's** own good Time, ~~deliver me~~ **be delivered** from them!<sup>14</sup>

The second edition has been revised in the spirit of the first, although with slightly more coherence. Reference to God's grace as an assistance to human action has been removed along with the idea of being made 'perfect thro' sufferings', dispensing with the idea that Pamela is not perfect as she utters these words. 'Temptations' becomes 'trials' as Pamela is not to be tempted. There is still a sense of resignation to the providence of God and it is still a prayer from the heart, only now more carefully constructed. The eleventh edition of this prayer is completely different in tone:

But, gracious Father of all Mercies, forgive me my impatience. Thou best knowest what is fit for thine handmaid! And as Thou sufferest not thy poor creatures to be tempted above what they can bear, I will resign myself to thy will. And still, I hope, desperate as my condition seems, that as these trials are not the effects either of my presumption or vanity, I shall be enabled to overcome them, and in thine own good time delivered from them.<sup>15</sup>

The first edition prayer is a prayer of panic, with exclamations, 'o's, and incoherence, a farrago of religious ideas and images of a truly desperate mind. The eleventh edition prayer is more considered, less exclamatory. The desperate invocations to the Deity have been stripped away and the peril Pamela feels has been diluted with politeness. She asks God to 'forgive [her] impatience', yet no impatience is evident. In the first edition, Pamela flings

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<sup>14</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, 2nd edn (London: Rivington, and Osborn, 1741), p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> *Virtue Rewarded*, 11th edn, p. 130.

herself at the feet of God, pouring her heart out dramatically. In the eleventh, it is her head that prays, not her heart. Richardson used the sanitisation of Pamela's prayers to elevate her character, but in the process, she loses some of her charm. Reading the first edition gives the reader an insight into Pamela's anguish, the eleventh is a formality.

The first edition prayer establishes a close relationship between Pamela and God, which is amplified by other character comparisons. As noted briefly by Scott Robertson, '[Pamela's] confinement [in Lincolnshire] lasts forty days, a period of time no doubt reflecting the temptation of Christ in the wilderness'.<sup>16</sup> Richardson is careful to number the days of Pamela's captivity up to the thirty-sixth (*VR*, p. 166) with the final and most graphic rape attempt occurring on the fortieth.<sup>17</sup> In some respects, the use of the forty days/Jesus parallel stands up to scrutiny. Pamela's violent captivity does last forty days during which, like Christ, she is tempted three times: marriage to Williams testing her loyalty; the articles of mistressdom offering her money; and the rape attempt testing her 'virtue'.<sup>18</sup> There is also the sense of the inevitable failure of the temptations offered by Mr B as with those offered to Jesus. They have, as Cynthia Griffin Wolff notes when speaking of Pamela's trials more generally, a 'sham quality'.<sup>19</sup> As with Jesus in the Bible, one reads this story as though Pamela is never tempted to

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<sup>16</sup> Robertson, 'The Eighteenth-Century Novel', p. 436–37.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson makes an arithmetic error in his numbering of the fourth day, which is the fifth (*VR*, p. 109). This is corrected in subsequent numberings.

<sup>18</sup> Jesus is offered food to meet his bodily needs, worldly power, and tempted to prove he is the Messiah to the people. (Luke 4. 1–13).

<sup>19</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972), p. 43.

give in; Satan and Mr B are trying their best to break them, but there is nothing that can truly tempt them. The parallels between Pamela and Jesus are not exact, however. They show either Richardson's use of the Bible was becoming less cautious or a parallel with Jesus was not an intended reference. The most notable flaw is that Pamela is imprisoned for longer than forty days. On the forty-first day Pamela writes that 'I find I am watched and suspected still very close' (VR, p. 192), but there is a change of tactic by Mr B, who tries to '[Melt] her by Love, instead of freezing her by Fear' (VR, p. 193). After her enforced captivity is at an end, she still has trials to undergo, such as the reading of her 'scripture' and her battle against the '*Philistine*, myself' (VR, p. 193). It is on the forty-fifth day that she is permitted to leave. Richardson made no amendments to the length of time Pamela is captive in subsequent editions. It would be easy to number the days after the thirty-sixth and remove some of the 'empty' days from Pamela's confinement to have her leave Lincolnshire on the fortieth day and to make the parallel more apparent.

While there are parallels with the temptations of Jesus, it appears more likely Richardson meant to hint towards the Israelites' forty years in the wilderness with their subsequent arrival in the Promised Land. It is no coincidence Jesus' forty days in the wilderness mirrors the journey of Israel, and the two biblical events have been linked by theologians from the earliest commentaries.

Pamela is paralleled with Israel throughout the Bedfordshire section and it appears Richardson wished this metaphor to continue into Lincolnshire. By associating Pamela with Israel, Richardson gives an epic sense of Pamela's



battle against the wickedness of the world which she inhabits. Pamela must overcome the people of Lincolnshire to be given her place as mistress of the Promised Land and secure her reward. It seems more likely that Richardson wanted to link Pamela's captivity with that of Israel, where entry into the land flowing with milk and honey is the reward for Pamela's faithful adherence to the tenets of Christianity.

In the Lincolnshire section of the novel, a continued extended metaphor established in Bedfordshire is the prevalence of angels and demons. In Lincolnshire, however, Pamela is not described as an angel as she has been in Bedfordshire. Instead, Mr B's role as the devil's workman is emphasised, and the characters who surround Pamela are depicted as evil. Mr B is linked with Lucifer nine times, throughout the first half of the narrative. In Bedfordshire, he is 'as cunning as *Lucifer*' and 'an Implement [...] in the Hands of *Lucifer*'. In Lincolnshire, he is the servant of the devil: 'so securely had *Lucifer* put it into [Mr B's] Head to do his Work'; 'what Meanness will not *Lucifer* make his Votaries stoop to' (VR, pp. 52, 80, 97, 186). Throughout this recurring characterisation, as Jocelyn Harris notes in her investigation into Richardson's intertextuality, 'Mr B. only *looks* like Lucifer'.<sup>20</sup> The closest Pamela comes to accusing Mr B of being the Devil is when she states he is '*Lucifer* himself in the Shape of my Master' in her five days of captivity after the final rape attempt (VR, pp. 193–94). This careful comparison of Mr B's actions with the will of the devil

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<sup>20</sup> Jocelyn Harris, 'Richardson: Original or Learned Genius', in *Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by Doody and Sabor, pp. 188–202 (p. 192).

enables his later redemption; if he were Lucifer, he would be unalterable. Pamela's resistance of temptations offered by Mr B is in some respects reminiscent of the trials offered to Jesus by the real devil, again adding to the sense that there is more at stake than one woman's virginity. The allusion suggests fleetingly that Pamela has the task of not only overcoming Mr B, but also the wickedness of the world.

In building the amoral world of Lincolnshire, Richardson uses other biblical parallels to depict Pamela's surrounding characters unfavourably, further emphasising her purity. Mrs Jewkes is likened to Jezebel as she tries to convince Pamela to become Mr B's mistress. Pamela exclaims, 'Why, *Jezebel*, [...] would you ruin me by Force?' (VR, p. 116). The name Jezebel appears twice in the Bible. The first is the wife of King Ahab in the Old Testament who turns him away from the worship of Yahweh (I Kings 16–21; II Kings 9). Mrs Jewkes' attempt to convince Pamela to abandon her morals for financial remuneration links her with this character. The depiction of Old Testament Jezebel is unfavourable, but the other Jezebel from Revelation encourages fornication and is therefore a more apt comparison with Mrs Jewkes:

Notwithstanding I have a few things against [the church of Thyatira], because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. (Revelation 2. 20).

Like Revelation's Jezebel, Mrs Jewkes takes an active role in the final rape attempt, urging Mr B not to stand 'dilly-dallying. [Pamela] cannot exclaim worse

than she has done. And she'll be quieter when she knows the worst' (VR, p. 188). Pamela refers to Mrs Jewkes as Jezebel once, but throughout the narrative Mrs Jewkes reminds the reader of this comparison eight times as she reports to Mr B and other people about this insult, which she has clearly understood and is offended by.<sup>21</sup> There are no characters to describe Pamela as angelic in Lincolnshire and Richardson must therefore emphasise the blackness of the surrounding world. In so doing, he creates a problem for the novel's post-engagement section, where Mr B must be transformed from a devilish suitor into a suitable husband for the virtuous Pamela.

The wickedness of Lincolnshire leads Pamela into machinations for escape, and while Pamela claims inactive trust in God, she does not neglect an escape attempt when one presents itself. When this fails, Richardson theologises the ultimate escape from a wicked world: suicide. Before beginning, Richardson reveals his reason for detailing Pamela's thoughts on the subject: 'that God's Mercies may be magnify'd in my Deliverance, that I am yet on this Side the dreadful Gulph, from which there can be no Redemption' (VR, p. 158). In a significant change, from the fifth edition the word 'redemption' is replaced with 'return', softening the theological implications of Pamela's suicide. There is a sense in which she may be redeemable even after committing a cardinal sin.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> This use of 'Jezebel' highlights some of the difficulties in deciphering biblical phrases and ideas which have made their way into common parlance, becoming detached from their original source. It appears 'Jezebel' as an insult had become detached from its biblical origins in the eighteenth century. However, Mrs Jewkes understands the biblical context of the insult 'Jezebel', as she does not see it as an accusation that she herself is the adulterer but rather that she is responsible for the corruption of others.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, 5th edn (London: Rivington and Osborn, 1741), p. 227.

The change of 'Redemption' to 'return' in the fifth edition possibly reflects the changing attitude to suicide in the eighteenth century. As Donna T. Andrew points out: 'starting in the later seventeenth century, coroners' juries, faced with the bodies of those who had killed themselves, came increasingly to decide that such deaths were the result of lunacy, and therefore not culpable'.<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to be certain about the theological implications of suicide in the eighteenth century; the religious tracts on the subject in the period assert that suicide is a sin, but it appears not to be an irredeemable one.<sup>24</sup> There appears to be nothing published criticising juries of suicide cases for returning not-guilty verdicts, however, and it can therefore be inferred that there was no significant issue with returning verdicts of madness rather than self-murder. Pamela herself tells us she may be saved from 'the dreadful Stake [through the heart], and the Highway Interrment [*sic*]' (*VR*, p. 159) by virtue of the hardships she has undergone and at the testimony of Williams to a jury. There seems to have been some appreciation of the situation in which a suicide victim could be classed as a 'victim' rather than a perpetrator. Pamela's reasoning against suicide affirms the *status quo*, and Richardson's beliefs of a lenient jury and God's forgiveness, it appears, were uncontroversial.

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<sup>23</sup> Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> See for example Edmund Burton, *Suicide. A dissertation. Descend into yourself* (London: M. Vint, 1790). Burton also considers the natural and moral reasons against suicide. Using Hume's imagery of stepping into another room as a metaphor for the afterlife, Burton questions, 'But what, if the room he removes to should be a bad room?' (p. 24). This is the closest he comes to asserting suicide would lead one to Hell.

The references to the Bible I have discussed thus far have all been in keeping with Richardson's former usage: careful, allegorical and working on multiple levels. However, towards the end of Pamela's Lincolnshire captivity, biblical references become more haphazard. The references Richardson selects as the narrative progresses are not incorrect but can now only be read on the surface. When a deeper reading is attempted, for which the novel to this point has provided precedent, the stories no longer make sense. Richardson's use of Samson is one of the references that exemplifies this decline. Upon Mr B's arrival at Lincolnshire, he dines with the local gentry who know Pamela is a prisoner. Pamela wonders if she will be 'sent for, as *Samson* was, to make Sport for him' (VR, p. 173). She alludes to Judges 16. 25: 'And it came to pass, when [the Philistines'] hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport'. Read as a fleeting glance at the Bible, this reference is apt; Pamela wonders whether she will be sent for to be mocked. When a deep allegorical reading is attempted, as Paul Kelleher argues as part of his investigation into 'cross-sex' literary identification in *Virtue Rewarded*, the parallels begin to break down:

Clearly enough, Delilah cutting Samson's hair stands in for the threat of Mr B raping Pamela. And yet, even this analogy would seem to intensify the importance of Pamela's sexual purity, when we remember that Samson's hair regrows and his extraordinary strength returns, the implacable either-or logic of female chastity is undermined — and perhaps divested of some of its power to determine and uphold the sexual differentiation of moral character.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Paul Kelleher, *Making Love: Sentiment and Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century British Literature* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2015), p. 146.

As can be seen from this quotation, there are several ways in which the parallel between Pamela and Samson is not exact. Delilah succeeds in cutting Samson's hair, whereas Mr B does not rape Pamela. Samson's hair grows back and his strength returns, but if Pamela is violated, she loses something that cannot be regained. Samson is a sexually promiscuous, violent character, causing death and destruction wherever he goes; Pamela is so meek she cannot wish harm to a man who plots her ruin. Samson is sent for; Pamela merely speculates that she will be.

There is another scriptural reference that lends credence to the theory that Richardson became more careless in his use of the Bible. After Pamela's enforced captivity, she states that God has delivered her from 'the Paw of the Lion and the Bear [...]; [and] will also deliver me from this *Philistine*, myself, and my own Infirmities' (*VR*, p. 193). This is a paraphrase of I Samuel 17. 37: 'David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine [Goliath]'. As Paul Kelleher notes as part of his extended comment on Pamela likening herself to David, 'in one breath, Pamela paradoxically assumes the role of David and Goliath both'.<sup>26</sup> Pamela acknowledges that within her is a greater enemy to her virtue, affection for Mr B, proving she is aware that Mr B is right when he asserts that she can be 'thaw'd by Kindness' (*VR*, p. 193). Again, the reference is apt when read fleetingly, but becomes confusing when pondered,

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<sup>26</sup> Kelleher, p. 164.

as Pamela becomes many contrasting biblical characters at once. This reference is removed from the eleventh edition, showing Richardson perhaps recognised the confusion this verse causes. The references to Samson and David/Goliath indicate Richardson's increasing lack of caution in biblical referencing. In *Bedfordshire*, references take the reader into an entire story, but here the use of the Bible increasingly becomes more fleeting, where references do not stand up to scrutiny. These paraphrases are, however, easier to insert than previously deeply embedded allusions, which require consideration of what a biblically literate audience will notice and deliberation of the biblical context in which the verse is found. While not inappropriate, based on previously crafted and carefully selected references, the reader expects similar journeys into biblical worlds yet this is not the case. Instead, the reader gets a fleeting glance into a single verse and a single thought or emotion; biblical complexity has been sacrificed.

Linking with the David comparison, Richardson's use of Psalm 137 has also been used to equate Pamela with David. To bolster the idea that Pamela can be read allegorically as David, Kelleher equates Pamela's choice of a reworded psalm with its supposed Davidic authorship. He states 'modern biblical scholarship does not attribute Psalm 137 to David, but throughout the history of scriptural reception and interpretation, the book of Psalms has been closely identified with David'.<sup>27</sup> William Dodd's commentary nevertheless poses the

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<sup>27</sup> Kelleher, p. 164.

hypothesis that Psalm 137 was written by Ezekiel or another captive Israelite, which is also attested to by the influential biblical scholar Symon, Bishop of Ely.<sup>28</sup> Whether Richardson believed in Davidic authorship of Psalm 137 is unknown, although there is a hint in *Exalted Condition* (1742) that he at least believed some of the psalms were written by David. Pamela states to Mrs Jervis that 'I know your Debts [...] like *David's* Sins, are ever before you' (*EC*, p. 64), an idea found within the Psalms (for example Psalm 51. 3). The idea that Pamela is actively equating herself with David in her rewriting of a psalm appears questionable. Pamela's Psalm 137 is more indebted to the Sternhold and Hopkins' psalter than the original, taking her a step away from the Bible and supposed Davidic authorship. While there are some loose parallels between the story of David and that of Pamela (both are from humble origins chosen by God to be elevated in status for example, although it must be noted that the Bible is replete with such stories), the differences outweigh their similarities. If we take the extended allegory of Pamela as Joseph and Israel as a model for reading biblical characters into the text of *Virtue Rewarded*, an attempt to also read David into the novel, as Kelleher suggests, does not bear scrutiny.

It appears Richardson did not particularly wish to equate Pamela with David. By using Psalm 137, he rather places Pamela in the character of Israel again, this time with Mr B representing Babylon rather than Egypt's Pharaoh. By

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<sup>28</sup> William Dodd, *Commentary on the Books of the Old and New Testament* (London: R. Davis, L. Davis, Carnan, and Newbery, 1770), 3 vols, II, [n. pns]; Symon, Bishop of Ely, *The Books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, Paraphras'd* (London: Meredith, 1710), 2 vols, I, 503.



reinterpreting this psalm, as Roger Lund suggests, Pamela is not engaging in ‘some specimen of puritan spontaneity’ as with her first edition prayers, but rather a considered, carefully planned poem.<sup>29</sup> As Janet Min Lee argues, ‘Pamela borrows the Biblical scene not to understand her plight in relation to a preceding historical event, but rather to make use of its emotional model’.<sup>30</sup> It is the sentiment not the authorship and historical context of the psalm which is primary to its presence, yet the psalm dually represents the emotional model and also the plight of Israel captive in a hostile land, continuing the subtle theme of Pamela as Israel established in the first section of the novel. Taking the first stanza as an example:

*When sad I sat in Babylon  
All watched round about,  
And thought of ev’ry absent Friend,  
The Tears for Grief burst out.* (VR, p. 129)

When as we sat in Babylon  
the rivers round about,  
And in remembrance of Sion,  
the tears for grief burst out.<sup>31</sup>

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept,  
when we remembered Zion. (Psalm 137. 1)

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<sup>29</sup> Roger Lund, ‘Making an Almost Joyful Noise: Augustan Imitation and the Psalms of David’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39.1 (2016), 121–39 (p. 121).

<sup>30</sup> Janet Min Lee, ‘How Allegories Mean in the Novel: From Personification to Impersonation in Eighteenth-Century British Fiction’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 2015), p. 134.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, *The Whole Book of Psalms: Collected into English Metre* (Oxford: University Printers, 1704).

Richardson closely follows the Sternhold and Hopkins' metrical psalter rather than the original, providing a framework for the poetic form. The eleventh edition adds 'Brandon Hall', according to Eaves and Kimpel, 'perhaps in an effort to make readers forget about [Fielding's] "Booby"'.<sup>32</sup> Aside from this, the psalm remains relatively unchanged throughout all editions.<sup>33</sup> While Richardson closely follows the Sternhold and Hopkins' psalter for the most part, he changes its ending to suit Pamela's personality and situation, which was something not uncommon on the eighteenth century. In 1765 Christopher Smart also paraphrased Psalm 137, similarly altering the ending to a call for repentance rather than an invocation for revenge:

Yet blessed shall that man be called,  
That takes thy little ones,  
And dasheth them in pieces small  
Against thy very stones. (Sternhold and Hopkins')

*Yea, blessed shall the man be call'd  
That shames thee of thy Evil,  
And saves me from thy vile Attempts,  
And thee, too, from the D—I, (VR, p.130)*

But he is greatest and the best,  
Who spares his enemies profest,  
And Christian mildness owns;  
Who gives his captives back their lives,  
Their helpless infants, weeping wives,

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<sup>32</sup> 'Richardson's Revisions of Pamela', p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> There are two other alterations: 'watched' in stanza one becomes 'guarded', and in stanza five, 'sweet Spinnet' becomes 'harpsicord'.

And for his sins atones.<sup>34</sup>

Sternhold and Hopkins followed the sentiments of the original biblical reference: 'Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones' (Psalm 137. 9). Smart and Richardson instead changed the Old Testament call for revenge into the New Testament call for forgiveness. Richardson's cautious use of the Bible here anticipates Mr B's reading of it before company, acquitting Pamela of marrying him for social aggrandisement rather than for love. By placing Pamela in the position of Israel captive with this psalm, Richardson engaged with a tradition not only popular in the eighteenth century, but also found throughout *Virtue Rewarded*. Pamela is at the will of God who acts in mysterious ways, but she remains confident in God's abilities to save her from tragedy.

In Lincolnshire, then, the use of the Bible becomes increasingly fleeting. Early in Pamela's captivity Richardson's use of Psalm 137 and demonic imagery continue themes from Bedfordshire. However, towards the end of this section the references to Pamela as both Samson and David do not fully parallel a biblical story but are rather designed as momentary glimpses into the Bible not to be read allegorically. References also become more noticeable, in paraphrase and quotation rather than allusion, suggesting an increase in speed of composition with less time spent on creating the considered allusions of the

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<sup>34</sup> Christopher Smart, *A Translation of the Psalms of David* (London: Dryden Leach, 1765), p. 141.

first portion of the novel and requiring less biblical knowledge of the reader. After the Bedfordshire section of the novel, a biblically literate reader might expect allegorical references designed to carefully parallel their biblical counterparts. Instead, when a reader applies their knowledge of the context of references to the later part of *Virtue Rewarded*, the parallels begin to break down. Pamela cannot be likened to Samson in any detail nor is she representative of David, whose life story is very different and has few parallels with *Virtue Rewarded*.

After Pamela's engagement, the use of the Bible alters with the nature of the narrative. Before this point, Pamela's diary has been a window into her private thoughts, but after her engagement the letters become reports of conversations between herself and the gentry, who have previously been depicted as unworthy of her perfection. They, along with the formerly devilish but now godlike Mr B, must be redeemed in a world which becomes idyllic in stark contrast to the preceding narrative. There are thirty-nine references to the Bible in this latter section of *Virtue Rewarded*, mainly used in conversational quotations. The number of references may be high, but their use loses caution. For example, in a discussion about texts for a Sunday service, four characters provide their own interpretation of *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative using biblical stories, reducing *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative to plain allegory and opening it to criticism when the references are examined. The Sunday service which takes place within the narrative contains three references, two appropriate texts and one chosen purely for length. The reading of Psalm 137 in this section proves

Pamela married for love not money but also reminds the reader that Richardson has previously likened Pamela to Israel, God's chosen people, and that she has now married the sinful representative of Babylon.

As part of Richardson's attempts to validate Pamela and Mr B's marriage, Richardson has Pamela's Psalm 137 critiqued and compared directly with the Sternhold and Hopkins' psalter by Mr B and his guests. The exposition is stanza-by-stanza and in the first edition, Pamela faithfully records the sycophantic praises of those present at every pause. Lady Jones comments when Pamela objects to this reading, 'can you wish that we should be depriv'd of this new Instance of your Genius and Accomplishments', for example (*VR*, p. 294).<sup>35</sup> Not only an opportunity to highlight Pamela's perfection, it is also a chance for Richardson to attempt a reinterpretation of Mr B's character. In his article on Mr B's revision of Pamela's rendering of Psalm 137 to alter the Pamela as Israel and Mr B as Babylon parallels, Michael Austin states that Mr B cannot usurp this comparison entirely, but he can seek to reinterpret his role as Babylon in a more positive light.

No matter how much Richardson might attempt to show genuine reformation on the part of Mr B., he must also attempt to reinterpret some of the events of the Lincolnshire captivity in order to persuade readers to accept his heroine's marriage to her former captor. In this endeavour, Richardson could have chosen no biblical precedent more fitting than the narrative of Jewish captivity in Babylon, a captivity which deprived the Jews of their homeland and their kingdom, but which also brought about the

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<sup>35</sup> The eleventh edition renders this '[those present] were so good as to praise the simplicity of this stanza' (*Virtue Rewarded*, 11th edn, p. 350).

creation of a literature, a history, a body of sacred writings and a people.<sup>36</sup>

Although it is now widely known that much of the Old Testament was compiled during the Babylonian exile in which Psalm 137 was written, it is unclear whether Richardson was aware of this or, indeed, whether this was known at all in the eighteenth century. With regards to Richardson's attempted reinterpretation of Mr B, the presentation of the Babylonian exile in the Bible is varied. The books of the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel all present the Babylonian exile in different ways. According to Austin, Mr B wants to be seen as Babylon as depicted in Ezekiel, not Jeremiah or Isaiah, a tool used by God to try Israel for her crimes, acting for the long-term good of the people.<sup>37</sup> However appealing it may be to argue this, there are flaws in the case. Like Jeremiah and Isaiah, Ezekiel predicts Babylon's eventual destruction, and punishment at the will of God. Psalm 137 reflects this in its final stanzas and when compared with Richardson's version for *Virtue Rewarded* is very different:

Ev'n so shalt thou, O Babylon!  
At length to dust be brought:  
And happy shall that man be call'd,  
That our revenge hath wrought. (Sternhold and Hopkins')

*Ev'n so shalt thou, O wicked One,  
At length to Shame be brought;  
And happy shall all those be call'd  
That my Deliv'rance wrought. (VR, p. 130)*

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Austin, 'Lincolnshire Babylon: Competing Typologies in Pamela's 137<sup>th</sup> Psalm', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 12.4 (2000), 501–14 (p. 504)

<sup>37</sup> Austin, p. 509.

While likening Pamela to Israel once more, its reading before the public is designed primarily to acquit Pamela of the charge of making a marriage of convenience. Mr B can illustrate Pamela's love and thereby exonerate himself; why would she love and marry him if he were truly awful? Despite the possible reworking of Mr B as the Ezekiel Babylon, he is still Babylon, and thus Pamela's marriage to him turns her into the whore of Babylon, Israel given over to her enemy: 'And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them' (Ezekiel 23. 17). In the post-engagement section, the Pamela as Israel and Mr B as both Egypt and Babylon parallel, so carefully used throughout the first half of the novel, is no longer viable. Pamela cannot remain the chosen person of God when she is prepared to marry her enemy, devoid of morality.

Having failed to redeem Mr B in the exposition of Psalm 137, although managing to assure the reader that Pamela has married for love, *Virtue Rewarded's* world becomes, as Jocelyn Harris points out, 'the return to a prelapsarian state' where wickedness becomes in an instant Edenic perfection.<sup>38</sup> Pamela is referred to as an angel on ten occasions after her engagement by various characters. She is 'one Angel come down for these thousand Years' according to Sir Simon Darnford (*VR*, p. 377). Mr B describes her as 'my dear Angel' three times (*VR*, pp. 343, 383, 430), which is also the favourite term of Lovelace for Clarissa.<sup>39</sup> All language of the demonic

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<sup>38</sup> Jocelyn Harris, *Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Pamela's angelic description continues into *Exalted Condition*, where she is referred to as an angel on eighteen occasions by several characters.

disappears as Mr B's act of offering legitimate marriage to Pamela excuses his previous behaviour, for which he is unrepentant, turning him into an idealised husband in a world with no wickedness left in it. The act of marriage has the power of the apocalypse, to create a 'new heaven and a new earth' (Revelation 21. 1), where everything is perfect and only Lady Davers can, for a few pages, upset the domestic bliss.

The marriage of the angelic Pamela and the previously despicable but suddenly wonderful Mr B, without her so much as asking her parents or any warnings that he may continue his rakish behaviour, creates the anti-moral in *Virtue Rewarded* of vice rewarded. Mr B receives no punishment for his bad actions, for which he remains unrepentant, but is rather rewarded with a marriage to the perfect wife. Mrs Jewkes is also unpunished; she receives gifts of money and is reformed into the model of a Christian housekeeper. Richardson had in *Virtue Rewarded* inadvertently advocated, in Richardson's own words, the 'dangerous but too commonly received Notion, *That a Reformed Rake makes the best Husband*'.<sup>40</sup> This unintended moral of vice rewarded is something Richardson sought to correct in *Clarissa* (1748), where the unrepentant are punished for their roles in Clarissa's death, either in this world or the hereafter. The reader expects Pamela's virtue to be rewarded as the title of the novel promises, but the reward of marriage to her satanic captor, who becomes a suitable mate in a

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<sup>40</sup> Samuel Richardson, 'Preliminary Matters to Volumes I and II of the First Edition' in *Samuel Richardson's Published Commentary on Clarissa, 1745-65 Volume 1: Prefaces, Postscripts and Related Writings*, ed. by Jocelyn Harris and Thomas Keymer (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), p. 18.



matter of pages, gives to the act of marriage almost Christ-like redemptive powers.

Mr B's vice is rewarded to such an extent that he gains not only a wife but a worshipper. As Jean H. Hagstrom notes, 'the faulty Mr. B could by his very position [as older and wealthier], evoke solemn and awesome resonances in Pamela [...] she sometimes approaches him with the trembling reverence due a deity'.<sup>41</sup> Pamela uses 'lord' and 'master' when speaking of him, constantly referring to him as 'sir' even after marriage. Mr B is also credited with her salvation along with God. After her marriage, Pamela often seeks on her knees to 'bless *God*, and thank *you*' (*VR*, p. 421); her elevation is 'both at the Hands of God, and my dear Benefactor' (*VR*, p. 431). Pamela's world becomes skewed to such an extent that Mr B almost replaces God as the being to whom Pamela owes her salvation. In all editions save the eleventh, Mr B interrupts Pamela's prayers in the newly refurbished chapel, and she 'broke of sooner than I would' (*VR*, p. 286). This was altered in the eleventh edition, where Pamela is allowed to finish her devotions; as God commands Israel 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' (Exodus 20. 3). Pamela's placement of Mr B alongside and occasionally above God in this later section of the novel provides a dangerous precedent. To place the needs of a mortal above one's duty to God, who has steered Pamela through hardships, contradicts the morality previously

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<sup>41</sup> Jean H. Hagstrom, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 191.

established, where God is the ultimate saviour and man his subordinate means of action.

Not only has the morality and imagery surrounding Mr B completely changed in the novel's post-engagement section, but the depiction of the upper classes becomes more favourable and tolerant of Pamela's puritanical Christianity. In Letter Twenty-seven, Pamela instigates a religious discussion with Mr B as he tries to excuse himself from hiding in the closet. Pamela begins:

[...] surely your Honour ought to be more afraid of God Almighty, in whose Presence we all stand, in every Action of our Lives, and to whom the greatest as well as the least, must be accountable, let them think what they list. (*VR*, p. 63)

Mr B ends this exchange by saying he will have 'no more of this unfashionable Jargon' (*VR*, p. 64). By terming Pamela's speech 'unfashionable', Mr B suggests that religion is not a polite topic of conversation.<sup>42</sup> In later editions (which retain 'unfashionable jargon'), many references to 'God' are removed and substituted with 'Providence' or 'heaven', as Pamela becomes more genteel. Pamela's post-engagement conversation, however, is replete with religious language and edification. Religion now seems to be a valid topic of conversation for the upper classes. Having so carefully established to the reader their amorality in opposition to Pamela's virtuous poverty, this change is indicative of many of the flaws in Richardson's first novel. Previously established characterisations must now be reversed in order to make Pamela's

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<sup>42</sup> Samuel Johnson's dictionary defines 'jargon' as 'Unintelligible talk; gabble; gibberish'. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd edn (London: Knapton, Hitch and Hawes, Millar, Strahan, R. and J. Dodsley, and M. and T. Longman, 1760) 2 vols, I.

reward of elevated social status viable. This change also has consequences for many of the uses of the Bible I have previously discussed. Mr B as Lucifer and Babylon, Jezebel Jewkes and the gentry who speak 'out of the abundance of the heart' must all be redeemed to create a society for which Pamela is suited and in which she can live in bliss.

As the post-engagement section strips *Virtue Rewarded* of previously established allegories and comparisons, Richardson also attempted to introduce several new ones. The most sustained discussion of the Bible in *Virtue Rewarded* occurs when Mr B, Pamela, Parson Williams, and Mr Andrews discuss possible texts for a Sunday service. Richardson gives each character a biblical story reflecting their own viewpoint of the narrative and attempt to read back into Pamela's story previously absent biblical parallels. Mr B begins the discussion by suggesting Luke 15. 7: 'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance'. From Mr B's perspective, Pamela's story is one of his own salvation. Williams suggests Luke 2. 29–30: 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation'. For Williams, *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative is one that sees his benefactor saved, and his own profit in a new living. Mr Andrews views *Virtue Rewarded* as mirroring the book of Ruth. Ruth is a Moabitess who remains loyal to her Israelite mother-in-law Naomi and travels back to Israel with her after the death of Ruth's husband. Her loyalty is eventually rewarded with marriage to Boaz, Naomi's rich relative. These suggestions provide

alternate interpretations of Pamela's story framed in biblical terms yet are in some respects faulty. Mr B has not repented, seeing his actions as humorous rather than those of which to be ashamed; Williams does not depart from the narrative but is given a new, more lucrative position; Ruth marries Boaz because Naomi contrives for him to fall in love with her by having her sleep at his feet. This final parallel is particularly damaging and opens *Virtue Rewarded* to the criticism levelled at it by Fielding. Reducing *Virtue Rewarded* to little more than plain allegory, while attempting to provide the reader with alternate views of Pamela's story in biblical terms, these references in some instances rather undercut the previous well-established morality.

The exception to this is Pamela's suggestion for the pre-marriage Sunday service which brings to the fore her role as the virtuous virgin, a theme throughout the post-engagement/pre-wedding section of *Virtue Rewarded*. She suggests Luke 1. 46–48: 'if any body ever had Reason, I have, to say, with the blessed Virgin, *My soul doth magnify the Lord; for he hath regarded the low Estate of his Handmaiden, — and exalted one of low Degree*' (VR, p. 287). The use of the word 'Handmaid' is recurrent throughout the narrative (VR, pp. 91, 155, 250, 287) and establishes Pamela's purity and innocence, but also her reliance on God for her salvation and the idea that she has been specifically selected for reward.<sup>43</sup> Of all the Sunday service suggestions, Pamela's

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<sup>43</sup> Pamela's virginity is also highlighted by Mr B who compares her to Jephthah's daughter: 'Mr Andrews, we must leave something to these *Jephthah's* [*sic*] Daughters, [...] I suppose the little bashful Folly, which, in the happiest Circumstances, may give a kind of Regret to quit the Maiden State' (VR, p. 279). Jephthah makes an ill-conceived vow to God before a battle: 'If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that

continues a theme which has been previously established, rather than introducing new parallels not found in the text previously. Unlike the other suggestions, it can be read on a variety of levels; Pamela is not only the chosen one, but also the virtuous virgin to become the idealised wife and eventually mother after her marriage.

After the discussion about possible texts for the Sunday service, a selection of different verses is chosen which represent both Pamela's origins and her new obligations to charity. The first of the two psalms chosen is Psalm 23, emphasising Pamela's past of idyllic poverty. Richardson provides a transcript of the metric psalter from the *Book of Common Prayer* in a footnote in all editions so a reader can instantly see and appreciate the psalm's relevance not only to reliance on God but also the happy ending for the faithful. After the sermon, Psalm 117 is chosen and again footnoted. It is not chosen for its significance, however, but because, as Richardson points out several times within the text, it is short. It is not unsuitable as a call to praise and thanksgiving but compared with Richardson's previous choices, which have been at least on the surface appropriate, its selection for no reason other than length is curious and indicative of the decline in care Richardson exercised. It is hard to imagine such a choice in Bedfordshire. After the use of Psalm 23, a biblically literate

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whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me [...] I will offer it up for a burnt offering' (Judges 11. 31–31). He is victorious, but on his return home he is greeted by his only child, a daughter, who meets him 'with timbrels and with dances' (Judges 11. 34). Jephthah rends his clothes in devastation but cannot rescind a promise made to God. His daughter asks to have two months' reprieve to 'bewail [her] virginity' (Judges 11. 35, 37).

reader expects the final psalm to be equally apt but is instead given a psalm Richardson explicitly states is chosen for no other reason than length.

The sermon Richardson produces for the service is on Proverbs 11. 24–25, quoted in the text: '*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to Poverty. The liberal Soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself* (VR, p. 290).

The discourse is kept 'to Generals' but the message is clear to Pamela who now feels the burden to be charitable. Before her marriage, Pamela has little opportunity to be charitable, although she sends her parents four guineas at the beginning of the novel. Richardson draws on the imagery of Matthew 25 when outlining Pamela's ideas of the duty laid upon her by her wealth:

This, as I conceive, is the indispensable Duty of a high Condition; and how great must be the condemnation of poor Creatures, at the great Day of Account, when they shall be asked, What Uses they have made of the Opportunity put into their Hands? and are able only to say, We have lived but to ourselves. We have circumscribed all the Power thou hast given us into one narrow, selfish, Circle: We have heaped up Treasures for those who came after us, tho' we knew not whether they will not make a still worse Use of them than we ourselves did. And how can such poor selfish Pleaders expect any other Sentence, than the dreadful, *Depart, ye cursed!* (VR, p. 334)

'Depart, ye Cursed!' is a paraphrase of Matthew 25. 41.<sup>44</sup> While the virtue for which Pamela has been rewarded is almost entirely devoid of material charity, Richardson acknowledges that Pamela now has the duty to be charitable, the

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<sup>44</sup> The parable illustrates the idea that all people are divided into two groups: those who are charitable are saved and those who are not are damned.

special burden of the wealthy. This is in contrast to Fielding, who 'rewrites' the morality of *Virtue Rewarded* in *Shamela* (1741) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742), where Pamela's hollow words are satirised and charity is the virtue that is rewarded.<sup>45</sup> The final biblical reference in Richardson's first novel is an embedded allusion, but rather than enriching the story as previous allusions have, Pamela becomes, in the words of Wolff, the 'lecturing maiden aunt' of *Exalted Condition* where morality replaces story.<sup>46</sup>

To summarise, after Pamela's engagement, Richardson's use of biblical references becomes both less subtle and less well crafted, undercutting some of the previously established parallels. Pamela's world, formally nuanced and interesting, becomes idyllic. The previously wicked Mr B is now worshipped as though he were a deity, and his and Mrs Jewkes' sins are rewarded rather than punished. While Pamela may be acquitted of the charge of marrying for money by the reading of Psalm 137, her marriage contradicts her previously established character of Israel captive, wedding her amoral prisoner rather than leaving him in favour of virtue. The injunction towards charity from Williams' sermon and Pamela's own thoughts reflects Richardson's beliefs as I discussed in Chapter One, and anticipates the moralising of *Exalted Condition*. The apt recurrence of Psalm 23 during the church service is counteracted by another psalm chosen for brevity. In the discussion of the church service, while Pamela's use of 'handmaid' is in keeping with previous uses, the other

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<sup>45</sup> In *Exalted Condition*, Pamela does become the exemplar of charitable giving, but this was not published until a few months after *Joseph Andrews* as I will discuss later.

<sup>46</sup> Wolff, p. 71.

suggestions provide a surface reading of *Virtue Rewarded*. They reduce it to a narrative mirroring a single story, not emphasising parallels which had been carefully drawn previously, introducing new glosses of *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative. They are flawed when placed into context rather than aptly drawn as those in Bedfordshire and most of Lincolnshire are, and cannot be read on multiple levels.

The use of the Bible throughout *Virtue Rewarded* is one of gradual cessation of allegorical references working on multiple levels. In Bedfordshire, references are embedded allusions enhancing the narrative and are cautiously chosen, considering context and traditional interpretation. In Lincolnshire, the use of the Bible begins to become less careful. Psalm 137 is used to liken Pamela with captive Israel alluded to in Bedfordshire, but also as an expression of Pamela's innermost feelings. Other references such as those to Samson, and David and Goliath do not work on multiple levels as references had previously. By the post-engagement section, idyllic poverty, Pamela as Israel, and the language of angels and demons becomes idyllic wealth, Israel's marriage to her enemy, and a post-apocalyptic perfection where vices are rewarded along with virtues. In biblical reference terms, Richardson attempted to introduce new parallels to replace those no longer applicable. In doing so, he failed to consider deeply the stories he chose, leaving the potential (especially in the story of Ruth) for alternate readings.



This chapter has explored some of the previously unacknowledged biblical references in *Virtue Rewarded*, exemplified in Richardson's use of Psalm 23 assisting in the depiction of the idealised world of poverty and total faith in God. Not only does knowing the Bible increase the number of references a reader is able to glean, but knowledge of the Bible also adds contextual meaning to some of the more obvious references, helping but at times hindering the intended interpretation of Richardson's novel. This is exemplified in Mr Andrews' use of the Book of Ruth, which inadvertently opens *Virtue Rewarded* to the criticism levelled at it by Fielding in *Shamela*. The closing pages of *Virtue Rewarded* have Pamela begin her *Exalted Condition* moralising, verbally but not actively extolling the merits of charity which Fielding championed throughout his writing, even in the inverted moral world of *Shamela*.

CHAPTER THREE – *SHAMELA* AND *JOSEPH ANDREWS*: RESPONSES TO  
*VIRTUE REWARDED*

The popularity of *Virtue Rewarded* (1740) was unprecedented. It sold 20,000 copies by the end of 1741 and inspired imitations, criticisms, and even merchandise creating a Pamela vogue and a literary phenomenon. At least sixteen imitations continued or satirised Richardson's first novel, either turning Pamela into a Shamela-esque figure, or removing from her some of her 'perfect' virtue, and almost always elevating her social status. *Shamela* (1741) was the first example of, as Thomas Keymer states, the 'swift and elaborate trashing' which *Virtue Rewarded* received.<sup>1</sup> Fielding had clearly read Richardson's novel closely. He transformed Pamela who, for all her protestations of modesty, spends a substantial amount of time recording compliments and admiring herself in mirrors, into a scheming woman who knows the price of her 'virtue'. She, like Pamela, exercises what Bernard Kreissman terms 'good business sense'.<sup>2</sup> Pamela stays with Mr B in Bedfordshire on the flimsy excuse of embroidering a waistcoat. She exhausts coachmen and horses in her return to her captor's estate once marriage is offered. Then, she instantaneously lists all the things which will occupy her time as lady of the manor when Mr B enquires what she will do if the upper classes do not accept her. *Shamela* exploits these

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Keymer, 'Introduction', in Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. by Douglas Brooks-Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. ix. References to the main texts of *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* are taken from this volume and quoted in the text as (S) and (JA).

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Kreissman, *Pamela-Shamela: A Study of Criticisms, Burlesques, Parodies and Adaptations of Richardson's "Pamela"* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), p. 15.

character and narrative flaws, encouraging readers to reassess their moral judgment of *Virtue Rewarded*. Similarly, in *Joseph Andrews* (1742) Pamela is transformed into a less virtuous woman. She laughs in church, extols the doctrine of grace whenever her lips move, and lectures all who will listen about class boundaries. She becomes the exemplar of the worst traits of Richardson's upper classes: selfish, mocking, and without the desire for religious instruction. Both *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* are written in the comic mode in contrast to *Virtue Rewarded*, revealing to a reader the flaws with Richardson's first novel. These were flaws Richardson also acknowledged, heavily editing *Virtue Rewarded*, as I have discussed and writing *Exalted Condition* (1742) in an attempt to redeem *Virtue Rewarded's* morality.

This study is the first to consider the biblical references in *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*. For *Shamela*, no previous study has considered its nine biblical references. These references help establish the world of immorality and provide a more sinister undercurrent to the playful satire. Its abuse by characters to justify their amorality highlights Fielding's belief that at the hands of preachers like George Whitefield, the Bible could be a resource for wickedness, not good. In *Joseph Andrews*, there are forty-three biblical references which serve the morality of the novel, where the charity preached in the Sermon on the Mount is key to understanding what Fielding wanted to achieve with his second satire/imitation of *Virtue Rewarded*: the morality of Richardson's first novel as Fielding would write it. A reader aware of the Bible and its interpretation would

have a keener appreciation of the morality of both *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*, which lies behind the comic narration and action.

In this chapter, I will first argue that *Shamela* exploits the questionable morality that lies below the surface of Richardson's novel. In *Virtue Rewarded*, the virtue which is rewarded is not based on good works but adherence to a strict, inactive, personal piety in contrast to Fielding's idea of Christian virtue. The nine biblical references in *Shamela* and their exegesis create an inverted world of morality. The Bible is misinterpreted to excuse sinful behaviour with the moral that lip-service repentance can earn one divine forgiveness. The wickedness of the central characters extends to the doctrines they profess, with Williams revealing his amorality to Shamela using his own interpretations of the Bible. A biblically literate reader, understanding the faulty interpretation of these references, gleans a more sinister undertone to what is usually read as a work of pure comedy. Outside the main narrative, Parson Tickletext is the Williams of the real world, unquestioningly accepting Pamela's morality and therefore a warning to the reader to question what they hear from the pulpit. The second part of this chapter examines *Joseph Andrews*. Old Testament Joseph provides the framework for the narrative, but the morality Fielding espoused through his spokesperson Abraham Adams is taken directly from the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, where charity is heralded as the primary Christian virtue. Counteracting the morality of *Virtue Rewarded*, Fielding advocates a different idea of 'virtue', one of active charity not passive reliance on God.

Both of Fielding's parodies satirise *Virtue Rewarded*, whether blatantly in *Shamela* or subtly in *Joseph Andrews*. Fielding's style of satire has often been likened to the Scriblerian. Henry Power summarises the Scriblerian approach to satire as follows: 'the figure of Scriblerius was associated, at mid-century and beyond, with a particular species of satire which targeted pedantic scholarship and incompetent literature [...] and which in doing so inhabited the forms of both'.<sup>3</sup> Fielding attacks what he saw as the 'incompetent literature' of *Virtue Rewarded* in *Shamela*, with *Shamela's* 'virtue' and in imitating Pamela's low style of writing. His treatment of pedantic biblical scholars like Trulliber in *Joseph Andrews* also falls into the definition of Scriblerian. However, Fielding's debt to the Scriblerians has been questioned. In her article investigating the relationship between the Scriblerians and Fielding, Ashley Marshall poses the idea that, '[Fielding's] parodies of low-cultural forms may smack of the Scriblerian — but this kind of satire was hugely prominent in the late 1720s and 1730s'.<sup>4</sup> Fielding's comic form, especially in *Joseph Andrews*, does not adhere to the standard of the Scriblerian. The popularity of Scriblerian satire meant that in imitation, Fielding could ensure his work would be received favourably by a reading public, whose concept of satire was shaped by this influential movement. This chapter aims to examine the serious undercurrent of the satirical *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*, which is more apparent to a reader

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Power, *Epic into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and the Consumption of Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ashley Marshall, 'Henry Fielding and the "Scriblerians"', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 72.1 (2011), 19–48 (p. 41).

familiar with the Bible, who has a deeper understanding of traditional interpretation of verses and their contexts.

Throughout *Shamela*, Fielding transforms *Virtue Rewarded*'s characters from moral to amoral. Williams, rather than an example of a good clergyman, is a drunken advocator of salvation by grace, hollow repentance, and a ruthless social climber. Williams and Pamela's relationship in *Virtue Rewarded* is a meeting of two virtuous minds. Fielding exploits the undercurrents from *Virtue Rewarded* to suggest that perhaps the moral Williams would make a better husband for the virtuous but impoverished Pamela, who claims not to want money, yet accepts the rakish but wealthy Mr B as a husband instantaneously. Pamela's parents also accept the engagement, with no warning nor concerns that their virtuous daughter is marrying a man who has not shown a single redeeming moral quality. Mrs Jervis, in *Shamela* a madam, advises Shamela in her behaviour to ensnare Booby, parodying *Virtue Rewarded*'s Mrs Jervis who begs Pamela to stay in Bedfordshire despite the danger it poses to her 'virtue' and allows Mr B to listen to private conversations, and to see Pamela in her country dress, tempting him further. The effectiveness of *Shamela* as a satire stems from the fact that the motivations Fielding sets forward for his characters are credible within *Virtue Rewarded*'s narrative. Pamela presents herself as humble to the point of protesting too much; Williams waits on the death of another to secure his financial future; and Mrs Jervis hopes to matchmake Pamela and Mr B, which would no doubt work in her favour.

While attacking the morality and style of *Virtue Rewarded*, Fielding it seems did not acknowledge Richardson as the author. According to Thomas Keymer, Richardson's authorship, by the time of *Shamela*'s publication, was 'an open secret'.<sup>5</sup> However, although it may appear Fielding was launching a personal attack on Richardson, as Eaves and Kimpel (and others) point out, 'it is unlikely that Fielding knew that Richardson was the author of *Pamela*'.<sup>6</sup> Whether Fielding believed a middle-aged, middle-class printer who had shown little literary inclination previously could write *Virtue Rewarded* is questionable. Allen Michie speculates that Fielding's attack was prompted by his belief that Colley Cibber, whom Fielding despised, had written the work.<sup>7</sup> Parson Oliver's first letter names 'C—ly C—b—r' as the 'editor' of *Shamela*, as Richardson was 'editor' of *Virtue Rewarded* (S, p. 312). Nowhere in *Shamela* does Fielding name Richardson or imply his authorship, suggesting Fielding did not believe the literary gossip.

Despite drawing his characters from both *Virtue Rewarded*'s religious and societal potentially amoral undercurrents, Fielding does not utilise any of Richardson's biblical references. The reading of psalms is mentioned

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Keymer, 'Introduction to Volume 1', in *The Pamela Controversy: Criticisms and Adaptations of Samuel Richardson's Pamela, 1740–1750*, ed. by Peter Sabor and Thomas Keymer, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), I, p. liii.

<sup>6</sup> T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 293. It is worth noting that five days after the publication of *Shamela*, 'Advice to Booksellers (on Reading Pamela)' all but named Richardson as the author: 'Since printers with such pleasing natures write [...] Let printers write; and let your writers print', 'Advice to Booksellers (on reading *Pamela*)', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1 April 1741, p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> Allen Michie, *Richardson and Fielding: Dynamics of a Critical Rivalry* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1999), p. 38.

frequently, but no cross reference to a psalm exists. Fielding used quotations and paraphrases rather than embedded allusions, carefully selecting and providing exegesis contrary to standard interpretation. Despite references being misinterpreted and misused, Fielding treats the Bible with respect. The wickedness of characters is emphasised by their faulty interpretation of Scripture, which is treated as a very serious offense. A biblically literate reader would appreciate the seriousness of the Bible's misuse and Fielding's subtle cautions to readers to be wary of this in the real world.

Similarly, Fielding did not satirise the providential plan of *Virtue Rewarded*. Rather, contrary to Fielding's other novels, providence is almost entirely absent in *Shamela*. Shamela and her fellow characters behave badly and selfishly without consequence for most of the novel; vice is seemingly rewarded. As characters neglect their Christian duties, so too does God neglect Fielding's fictional world. However, it appears Fielding could not resist the intervention of providence for the benefit of traditional morality in order to bring about a comic ending. A postscript by Parson Tickletext reveals that 'Mr *Booby* hath caught his Wife in bed with *Williams*; hath turned her off, and is prosecuting him in the spiritual Court' (S, p. 344). When the reader thinks vice has triumphed, the natural order of providence is restored to the world. If Shamela were to succeed, the novel's comic ending would be questionable.



Fielding's use of the absence of providence in *Shamela* assists in creating the amoral world in which his characters live. By contrast to the clearly fictional central figures, Fielding frames the narrative of Pamela as an exchange of letters between two clergymen, who comment on *Virtue Rewarded* and *Shamela*. Tickletext reveals his uncritical love of *Virtue Rewarded*, but Oliver has in his possession Shamela's letters, which he proposes to reveal to the world. These two clergymen represent Fielding's bad and good clergymen respectively. Parson Tickletext is depicted as a bad clergyman evidenced in his uncritical love of *Virtue Rewarded*. In his investigation into the framing elements of *Shamela* (the dedication and letters of Oliver and Tickletext), Eric Rothstein comments that, 'Fielding proceeds to imply through Tickletext's language that *Pamela* is somehow a substitute for the Bible itself'.<sup>8</sup> Tickletext states, 'Happy would it be for Mankind, if all other Books were burnt, that we might do nothing but read thee all Day, and dream of thee all Night' (S, p. 311). Tickletext does not, however, as Knightley Chetwood asserted in a letter to Ralph Courteville, exclude the Bible from the set of books to be saved from the flames 'if all the Books in England were to be burnt'.<sup>9</sup> Tickletext also upholds salvation by grace, 'the useful and truly religious Doctrine' (S, p. 310), and seeks his own glorification: 'dost [*Virtue Rewarded*] not teach us to pray, to sing Psalms, and to honour the Clergy? Are not these the whole Duty of Man?' (S, p. 311). This is footnoted in the Douglas Brooks-Davies edition of *Shamela* used throughout this thesis as a biblical reference to Ecclesiastes 12. 13: 'fear God, and keep his

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Rothstein, 'The Framework of *Shamela*', *ELH*, 35.3 (1968), p. 391.

<sup>9</sup> Knightley Chetwood to Ralph Courteville 27 January 1741 quoted in *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, ed. by Eaves and Kimpel (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), p. vi.

commandments: for this is the whole duty of man'. The duty of man is not psalm singing and honouring the clergy according to this verse, but obeying God. For Fielding, obeying God means being charitable. Tickletext chooses to interpret the duty of man freely as Williams does. He is the Williams of the nonfictional world and is therefore more pernicious; a fictional character in an amoral world possessing these beliefs is not as dangerous as one designed to be representative of the real.

Parson Oliver is Tickletext's positive counterpart, able to see through the narrative of *Virtue Rewarded* and scold Tickletext for his praises of the book. He criticises Tickletext for seeking 'worldly Honours' rather than spiritual (S, p. 312) and admits the clergy need reform (S, p. 342). According to Oliver, Williams, rather than being one who will be 'imitated by all our Cloth in the Country' in the words of Tickletext (S, p. 310), is an example of how not to behave; 'be the reverse of *Williams*' (S, p. 342). In Fielding's earlier works, for every Tickletext there is an Oliver, and it is not until *Tom Jones* (1749) that this balance is upset, where Parson Thwackum is the only theologically trained but ungenerous 'Christian'. Both Oliver and Tickletext represent non-fictional clergymen and embody two critics of *Virtue Rewarded*, one accepting its morality and the other rejecting it. By Tickletext's reading *Virtue Rewarded* uncritically, Fielding satirises Richardson's novel's praises from the pulpit. Oliver has read the novel critically, and as such rejects its doctrines and disputes its position as a moral novel.

In Fielding's depiction, the doctrine of salvation solely by grace has corrupted Williams and Tickletext. In *Shamela*, Fielding engages in *reductio ad absurdum*, pushing the doctrine of salvation by grace to its limits. In Letter Four, Shamela states 'let me do what I will, I say my Prayers as often as another, and I read in good Books, as often as I have Leisure; and Parson *William* [sic] says, that will make amends' (S, p. 316). Shamela writes often of her devotional reading as part of her spiritual life, where religious literature and carnal appetites are compartmentalised. Shamela believes she can absolve herself from sin by paying lip-service to repentance without the least hint of remorse or desire to change her behaviour, defying biblical teaching. For example, the woman caught in adultery in John 8. 11 is told 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and *sin no more*' (italics mine). Critiquing the increasingly influential teachings of George Whitefield on the subject of grace as the sole means of salvation, a theologically astute reader perceives a satirical rebuttal of this idea and a fictional representation of the dangers grace-only salvation poses to society.

Related to the doctrine of salvation by grace is the negation of the duty to charity. As I discussed in Chapter One, charity was an important obligation for Fielding, with all his moral characters exemplifying this virtue above good behaviour and hypocritical profession of faith. One of Fielding's criticisms of *Virtue Rewarded* was that the virtue for which Pamela receives her reward is not materially charitable. All her charitable deeds and moralising on charity come after her marriage. As James Evans states while investigating the importance of *The Whole Duty of Man* to Fielding, 'the limitation of duty to

prayer, psalms, and honouring the clergy reflects Fielding's belief that Pamela's well-rewarded virtue involves little active charity, but primarily concern for self'.<sup>10</sup> In *Virtue Rewarded*, Pamela's primary concern is the retention of her 'virtue'. She sees her marriage as her personal reward, her charity a secondary by-product of her salvation rather than the other way around. Fielding does not take issue with piety *per se*, but rather its use as a mask covering amoral behaviour and an excuse not to be charitable. In *Shamela*, Fielding creates a character who is initially devoid of charity (monetary or social), yet after her marriage she engages in charitable giving. Williams condemns charity as 'one of the greatest Sins we can commit, when we don't do it for the sake of Religion' (S, p. 324). Shamela gives not from any religious conviction, but from the desire to spend. In the middle of the countryside, she has nothing to buy so her only means of spending is charitable giving, charity transformed into profligacy.

[Booby] made me a Present of 100 Guineas, which I gave away before Night to the Servants, twenty to one, and ten to another, and so on. [...] The next Morning we rose earlier, and I asked him for another hundred Guineas, and he gave them me. I sent fifty to Parson *Williams*, and the rest I gave away, two Guineas to a Beggar, and three to a Man riding along the Road, and the rest to other People. (S, p. 335)

There are both similarities and differences with *Virtue Rewarded's* narrative with regards to charity. Fielding satirises the incongruousness of Pamela's eleventh-hour moralising on charity with her previously established character. Just as Shamela's charity is confusing, so too is Pamela's tailpiece of moralising.

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<sup>10</sup> James Evans, 'Fielding, "The Whole Duty of Man", "Shamela", and "Joseph Andrews"', *Philological Quarterly*, 61.2 (1982), 212–19 (p. 215). It must be noted that Pamela is critical of Parson Peters. When she is forbidden from attending church, she muses that 'it was impossible I should have [been] edify'd under any Doctrine preached by Mr. *Peters* so I apply'd myself to my Private Devotions', which produces her rendering of Psalm 137 (VR, p. 129).

Shamela like Pamela gives gifts to the servants on her marriage. Unlike Shamela, however, Pamela is careful in her giving; there is a definite sense of the 'deserving poor' in *Virtue Rewarded* not represented by the 'Man riding along the Road'. While Fielding may not condemn this form of charitable giving motivated by selfishness, in relation to the inverted morality espoused in *Shamela* she is committing a sin. Fielding uses Shamela's charity in direct defiance of Williams' moral lessons, adding to the picture of a character unconcerned with anything other than ruthless social climbing and financial status. Fielding's other generous characters give from an excess of kindness of spirit not disobedience to salvation by grace alone.

The moral and religious themes which run through *Shamela* of the corruption of the clergy and salvation by grace are both used to create an inverted moral world. In *Shamela*, the clergy are not interested in saving souls but worldly aggrandisement and personal honour, a topic which appears throughout Fielding's novels. The doctrine of salvation by grace alone is also key. Taken to its extreme by Fielding, sinful behaviour can be justified by misinterpreted biblical references, and charity becomes transgressive. Shamela gives not from good heart but because Pamela has moralised that the rich are duty bound to charity, incongruous as that is with her character in *Virtue Rewarded*. While providence may appear absent, in the final three lines Shamela is punished for her profligate life as Fielding cannot resist introducing the involved deity, always present but sometimes invisible.

Turning to more specific examples of the use of the Bible and other religious texts in *Shamela*, *The Whole Duty of Man* is a prominent devotional work. For Shamela its reading forms part of her hollow repentance for her sinful life. When Booby arrives in Lincolnshire, Shamela reports practising over 'all my Ains before the Glass, and then I sat down and read a Chapter in the Whole Duty of Man' (S, p. 327). Fielding does not specify a chapter, but Sunday VI (*Duty to our Selves; Of Sobriety; Of Humility; The great Sin of Pride; Of Vain Glory, the Danger, Folly; The Means to prevent it; of Meekness, &c*) seems particularly apt. Her reading is highly selective, only considering personal not social morality. Satirising Pamela's detailed cataloguing of her 'bundles', Shamela lists: '*The Whole Duty of Man*, with only the Duty to one's Neighbour, torn out' (S, p. 332). The duty to one's neighbour is almost half the volume, unnecessary to the point that the book needs to be defaced rather than unread as its presence in a devotional work is sinful. The juxtaposition between Shamela's devotional reading and her prettying herself for the reception of Booby, even going so far as to 'shew as much as I could of my Bosom' (S, p. 327), illustrates Shamela's duality, reading religious books but compartmentalising their teaching; reading becomes a form of penance. Shamela's devotions form part of the inverted moral world, contrasting her sinfulness and giving a reader familiar with *The Whole Duty of Man* an insight into her blasphemy. Shamela reads, but she does not comprehend or let her reading alter her behaviour.

The character in *Shamela* who has control of the morality and the exposition of the Bible is Williams. An example of Williams' exegesis comes from his sermon on Ecclesiastes:

Well, on *Sunday* Parson *Williams* came, according to his Promise, and an excellent Sermon he preached; his Text was, *Be not Righteous over-much*; and, indeed, he handled it in a very fine way; he shewed us that the Bible doth not require too much Goodness of us, and that People very often call things Goodness that are not so. [...] 'tis not what we do, but what we believe, that must save us. (S, p. 324)

The text on which Williams preaches is Ecclesiastes 7. 16: 'Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?'. Traditionally interpreted by William Dodd, this text is designed to warn against over righteous behaviour leading to vanity.<sup>11</sup> Fielding's depiction of Williams' idea of virtue satirises Pamela's reliance on grace without need for charity, summarised in his statement 'tis not what we do, but what we believe, that must save us', in contrast to Fielding's Latitudinarianism. Throughout *Shamela*, Williams has a biblical verse or theological idea to excuse his amoral behaviour and reassure Shamela about their affair, entirely unnecessarily. Just as Shamela does not care to heed Williams' teaching on charity, so too does she not feel the need to have their relationship justified. She has vocally repented and therefore is free to do as she pleases.

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<sup>11</sup> William Dodd, *A Commentary on the Books of the Old and New Testament*, 3 vols (London: R. Davis, L. Davis, Carnan, and Newbury, 1770), II, [n. pns].

In another example of Williams' faulty theology, he begins to 'discourse very learnedly, and told [Shamela] the Flesh and the Spirit were too distinct Matters, which had not the least relation to each other' (S, p. 338). In the New Testament, especially in the theology of Paul, the flesh and the spirit are depicted as two separate entities, often opposed to one another. An example of this dualism is Romans 8. 5–8, which read in the context of Williams' exegesis is reversed in meaning.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Williams ignores verse six: 'for to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace'. Paul argues that the spirit can and should overrule the flesh and be its master, preventing bodily sin and corruption. This theology is present within *Virtue Rewarded*, where Pamela strictly controls her sexuality even after marriage. Throughout *Shamela*, Williams is motivated by lust and worldly aggrandisement rather than by his spiritual duties, sinning before saying words of repentance until the next instance his flesh overrules his spirit. Williams is particularly pernicious as he speaks 'very learnedly', and his position of moral power in *Shamela* allows him to spread his heretical doctrines, warning the reader of similar figures (Tickletext and Whitefield) outside the central narrative.



After Williams' exposition of why Shamela's continued relationship with him is biblically justified, there is a subtle allusion to the passion narrative and the betrayal of Jesus himself. Shamela states, 'I am sure I remember every Word, for he repeated it three Times; O he is very good whenever I desire him to repeat a thing to me three Times he always doth it!' (S, p. 339). The 'three times' recalls Peter's betrayal of Jesus. In Matthew 26, Jesus foretells that Peter will deny him three times as he stands on trial before his crucifixion. Peter strenuously denies this, but the prophecy is fulfilled: 'And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly' (Matthew 26. 75).<sup>12</sup> By having Shamela repeat the specific 'three times', Fielding can subtly suggest that Williams is betraying Jesus by misinterpreting his teachings and, by repeating his error, compares him to a biblical betrayer, albeit one who repents of his error unlike Williams. In this use of the Bible, Fielding makes a direct accusation that the preaching of faulty doctrine is a betrayal of Jesus himself, giving a religious significance to faulty preaching beyond the human into the divine.

In *Shamela*, Fielding created a world of moral opposites using misinterpretation of the Bible to highlight this reversal. The doctrine of salvation by grace is carried to its extreme, where lip-service repentance and hollow piety are heralded as salvific over good work. Charity is sinful unless motivated by 'religion', its importance is denied, and damnation preached to those who do

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<sup>12</sup> See also Mark 14. 72, Luke 22. 61 and John 18. 27.

charity without proper motivation. The character of Williams, the 'moral' spokesperson for *Shamela*, interprets biblical references to suit his own behaviour. 'Be not righteous overmuch', rather than extolling the virtue of lacking pride, becomes an excuse for selfishness. The flesh and the spirit are separate entities, but rather than this being a warning to have the virtuous spirit control the body, the two can be kept separate from one another, excusing the vices of the flesh. Even Fielding's prized charity becomes a sin if not motivated by religion, and Shamela sins as she uses her new-found wealth not in carefully considered and meticulously accounted gifts to the virtuous poor as Pamela but gives to whoever is at hand to receive. By having characters abuse the Bible and theology in such a way, Fielding passes comment on the state of religion. Only a bad clergyman such as Williams or Tickletext away from falling into sinfulness, religion is in serious danger. Knowing the Bible and standard exegesis, a reader can appreciate how heinous Williams' doctrines are, pernicious and self-serving, aiding in the creation of an amoral world resting beneath the surface of Richardson's novel. By creating this upside-down religious world, Fielding satirised the morality of *Virtue Rewarded*, focusing on what he found most distasteful. Although *Joseph Andrews* is also a response to *Virtue Rewarded*, Fielding's satirical technique is somewhat different.

*Joseph Andrews* was designed to elucidate Fielding's ideal of a moral world, comically portrayed. The events which befall the central characters may be comic, but conversations with other characters on the topic of religion have a serious intent. They promote charity and highlight the hypocrisy of those who

profess religion with their tongues, but do not have it in their hearts. Writing in the comic mode, Fielding creates in *Joseph Andrews* as T. R. Wright states, 'a profoundly Christian book'.<sup>13</sup> Saturated with the theology of Christian charity and replete with biblical quotation and motif, criticism of *Virtue Rewarded* becomes secondary to Fielding's own story and moral programme. In *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding again criticises Pamela's central moral of inactive virtue. He does not believe that Pamela's inert morality will earn divine protection and earthly rewards. He repeatedly emphasises charitable Latitudinarian morality by the actions of the central characters, in contrast with other religious figures designed to highlight the charitable nature of Parson Abraham Adams, the central moral figure of *Joseph Andrews*. Unlike the hollow moralising on the duty of charity for the wealthy at the end of *Virtue Rewarded*, Fielding asserts that this is a duty of all strata of society. In *Joseph Andrews*, it is those who are poor who often exhibit more charity than those who have the means. A postillion gives Joseph his second coat after the robbery ('He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none', Luke 3. 11) and a poor pedlar pays the heroes' inn bill he can ill afford. In this section, I will argue that Fielding creates in *Joseph Andrews* the morality of *Virtue Rewarded* as he would have written it, constantly emphasising charity as the primary virtue of man. He shapes the narrative around the story of Genesis' Joseph, but the Sermon on the Mount provides the moral schema of the story.

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<sup>13</sup>T. R. Wright, *Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 114.

There are forty-three references to the Bible in *Joseph Andrews*. The majority are drawn either from the narrative of Joseph from the Old Testament (Genesis 37–50) or from the gospels, particularly the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). Fielding mainly uses these in quotation and paraphrase, not copying Richardson's preferred embedded allusions. Because of their more obvious presentation, Fielding's use of references requires less biblical awareness of the reader. Fielding ignored the biblical parallels drawn in *Virtue Rewarded*, and there are only a few instances of verses used both in Richardson's novel and in *Joseph Andrews*. For example, the Parable of the Talents from Matthew 25 and the story of Joseph from Genesis appear in both novels but are used in different ways. Fielding's biblical references support the idea that charity is the hallmark of Christianity, providing biblically literate readers with a fictional manifesto of Latitudinarianism, emphasising charity's role in religion. By appreciating the use of the Bible in *Joseph Andrews*, a reader can come to a fuller understanding of the moral aim of the novel. Constantly reminded of the teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount, charity is emphasised over profession of religion as the route to salvation and doing the will of God.

By the time Fielding wrote *Joseph Andrews* he acknowledged Colley Cibber was not the author of *Virtue Rewarded*, although Richardson's name still did not appear on the title page of his first novel.<sup>14</sup> Fielding recognised different authorship by separating the authors of 'the Lives of Mr. *Colley Cibber*, and of

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<sup>14</sup> F. H. Dudden notes that 'probably Fielding discovered his error soon after the publication of *Shamela*', *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works and Times*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), I, 325n.

Mrs. *Pamela Andrews*' in Chapter One of Book One (*JA*, p. 16). Although the title suggests that *Joseph Andrews* is another simple satire of *Virtue Rewarded*, it takes a very different form from *Shamela*. Simon Varey comments that 'although jokes and satirical thrusts directed at Richardson and Cibber are scattered through the narrative, they neither dominate nor give shape to *Joseph Andrews* in the sense that they do *Shamela*'.<sup>15</sup> While drawing on certain characters from Richardson's novel, Fielding created new ones to represent his own ideas of charitable Christianity. He depicts a male Pamela who resists sexual temptation and remains virginal until his wedding night, satirising the double standard prevalent in the eighteenth century. He introduces Abraham Adams, the archetypal charitable clergyman. In his version of Pamela, Fielding emphasises *Virtue Rewarded*'s Pamela's reliance on grace above charity and her inactive dependence on God for reward. Nevertheless, if one looks beneath the satirical intention of *Joseph Andrews*, the morality contained within it would perhaps meet Richardson's general approval. The virginal Joseph, charitable Christianity, and the providential victory of the good are present within Richardson's moral thinking.

As with the biblical references, in *Joseph Andrews* 'there is no attempt to mimic the manner and style of Richardson's book', as Martin C. Battestin states.<sup>16</sup> Fielding created, in his own words, the 'comic Epic-Poem in Prose' (*JA*, p. 3) rather than a fictional diary. The narrator frequently uses biblical references,

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<sup>15</sup> Simon Varey, *Henry Fielding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 53.

<sup>16</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. 8.

and rather than expressing a character's inner turmoil as they do in most of *Virtue Rewarded*, they draw parallels between the novel's characters and those in the Bible. Henry Power comments that Fielding 'attempted to define the relationship between the emerging novel and the great works of classical literature – above all, the great works of classical epic'.<sup>17</sup> He did this by creating what Battestin points out is a 'Christian epic', in the same tradition of the stories of Moses, David, Noah, Abraham and others.<sup>18</sup> In some respects treating the Bible as a piece of classical literature, Fielding used it along with the classics in *Joseph Andrews*. By appreciating this morality, which the plot and in some respects the comedy serves, *Joseph Andrews* becomes less of a comic novel and more of a moral one, which uses comedy as a vehicle for ethical instruction in the vein of satire.

Unlike Richardson who in *Virtue Rewarded* confined himself primarily to English texts, Fielding quoted from Greek and Latin literature alongside the Bible.

Nancy A. Mace has discovered thirteen allusions and twelve quotations to Latin authors and thirty allusions and two quotations from Greek authors, totalling fifty-seven.<sup>19</sup> The Bible is used forty-three times in two quotations and forty-one allusions and paraphrases. The use of the Bible exceeds any individual classical author. Indeed, if considered individually, the books of Genesis (thirteen references) and Matthew (ten) outweigh any other classical work. As

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<sup>17</sup> Power, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> *Moral Basis of Fielding's Art*, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> Nancy A. Mace, *Henry Fielding and the Classical Tradition* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), pp. 158–59.

Harold Fisch notes when exploring the influence of Josephus' version of the biblical Joseph's narrative on *Joseph Andrews*, 'the Bible is important, indeed indispensable, for the new middle-class literary sensibility, and yet somehow it won't do. The whole tradition of epic and romance revolts against it'.<sup>20</sup> Literary tradition has often been separated from biblical, yet in Fielding's novel they come together in a work reflecting not only literary sensibilities but also with a strongly Christian worldview. Satirising Richardson's novel yet writing in a different genre to *Virtue Rewarded* (comic prose rather than fictional spiritual autobiography), Fielding's reliance on the classics, buttressing the 'epic', contrasts Richardson's preference for English language sources. While quoting the Classics frequently, Fielding takes his morality from the Sermon on the Mount and shapes the narrative around the story of Genesis' Joseph rather than a classical figure.

The favouring of Greek over Latin allusions in *Joseph Andrews* stems from the central character Adams' biblical scholarship, which Fielding uses to prove his validity as a trustworthy interpreter and quoter of the Bible. In *Shamela*, Williams interprets the Bible for his own ends, but Adams elucidates translation issues and observes traditional interpretation. His biblical knowledge and exegesis demonstrate his scholarship and make him credible in the novel as a moral spokesperson. When in conversation with the Catholic priest in disguise, Adams discusses Matthew 19. 24: 'And again I say unto you, It is easier for a

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<sup>20</sup> Harold Fisch, 'Biblical "Imitation" in *Joseph Andrews*' in *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*, ed. by David H. Hirsch and Nehama Aschkenasy (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), p. 38.

camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God'. Adams elucidates:

For it hath always appeared to me easier for a Cable Rope (which by the way is the true rendering of that Word we have translated *Camel*) to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. (*JA*, p. 220)

Dodd highlights this interpretation in his commentary, as well as suggesting that the saying is proverbial.<sup>21</sup> Adams is thus not stating anything controversial here, but rather proving his learning by engaging in textual analysis, educating the reader on the complexities of biblical translation and proving he is trustworthy in his interpretation of Scripture. He understands and adheres to acknowledged interpretations, unlike Williams who abuses the Bible for his own aggrandisement and convenience. This quotation not only highlights the central moral of charity, but also shows Adams' trustworthiness in his exegesis of scripture, adding credibility to his biblical knowledge and character. Without knowing that the camel/cable rope translation controversy exists, Adams could be accused of altering Scripture.

Having stated that Richardson and Fielding differ in their choice of genre and reliance on other texts of reference, they both adhere to a strong sense of providence within their novels although they differ in their ideas of the duty of action of humanity. As Simon Varey states in his investigation into religion in *Joseph Andrews*, 'when we talk about religion in *Joseph Andrews*, we are not

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<sup>21</sup> Dodd, III, [n. pns].



talking about altars, hymns, or prayers, but rather about a system of ethics governed by a simple concept of a providential deity'.<sup>22</sup> There are twelve uses of the word 'Providence' in *Joseph Andrews*, always capitalised, drawing the reader's attention to some of the unlikely events in the novel. For example, when Adams rescues Fanny from her ravisher, he states 'he doubted not but Providence has sent him to her Deliverance' (*JA*, p. 121). Adams is present to hear her screams and is one of the few characters in *Joseph Andrews* who is willing to run to her aid. Fielding's idea of providence in *Joseph Andrews* is like Richardson's: both assert that providence is God's involvement in the world. However, unlike *Virtue Rewarded* where the onus is on Pamela to wait for providence's unwinding, in *Joseph Andrews* the use of providence emphasises the duty of individuals to act and assist rather than passively pray that God's will is done. Adams acts to rescue Fanny, whereas Mrs Slipslop would have him inactively pray that '[Fanny] might be strengthened' (*JA*, p. 138), as Pamela prays in *Virtue Rewarded*: 'I presume not upon my own Strength, [...] I hope the Divine Grace will assist me' (*VR*, p. 50). As with his use of the Bible, Fielding depicts his own idea of the nature of providence's action in the world, with less subtlety than Richardson, and requiring action of the individual whenever it is in their power to do so. Fielding's central morality of charity is key to understanding his depiction of the role of providence. Humanity has the ability and obligation to act for the benefit of creation.

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Varey, *Joseph Andrews: A Satire of Modern Times* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1990), p. 89.

*Joseph Andrews* may be a more 'independent' book than *Shamela*, but it still portrays *Virtue Rewarded's* heroine unfavourably. Described by Harold Pagliaro as 'mean-spirited but conventional', Pamela becomes not the humble wife Richardson envisioned, but a snobbish lecturer on the importance of class boundaries. She inadvertently appears as something akin to the Pamela of *Exalted Condition*, only without the semblance of humility.<sup>23</sup> Pamela hypocritically lectures Joseph on the impossibility of his marrying milkmaid Fanny now he has been socially elevated by Pamela's marriage. The lecture is not dissimilar to Pamela's lecture to Polly about her dalliance with Mr H in *Exalted Condition* (*EC*, pp. 255–56). Fielding's Pamela also advocates the doctrine of grace, constantly asserting that other characters should 'pray for the Assistance of Grace' (*JA*, p. 264). Satirising Pamela's seeming obliviousness to her pride in *Virtue Rewarded*, Fielding's Pamela states, 'I hope I shall never behave with an unbecoming Pride; but at the same time I shall always endeavour to know myself, and question not the Assistance of Grace to that purpose' (*JA*, pp. 264–65). Highlighting Pamela's ignorance of her inner pride but also placing prominence on her adherence to the doctrine of salvation by grace, Pamela's hypocrisy is exposed. As Robert Alan Donovan states, '[Fielding] offers a powerful rebuke to [Pamela's] spiritual pride, a pride which suggests the arrogance of the Calvinist divine proclaiming his own election'.<sup>24</sup> Pamela's eleventh-hour moralising on the duties of charity is not enough to save her from this criticism. Fielding emphasises *Virtue Rewarded's* Pamela's

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<sup>23</sup> Harold Pagliaro, *Henry Fielding: A Literary Life* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 148.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Alan Donovan, *The Shaping Vision: Imagination in the English Novel from Defoe to Dickens* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 83.

adherence to grace for her salvation (she uses the word approximately sixty times in Richardson's novel) by creating a character whose constant calls to grace highlight this part of Pamela's character. In *Joseph Andrews*, Pamela barely speaks without the word 'grace' on her lips.

In contrast to Pamela's advocacy of salvation by grace, Fielding expresses his own idea of the doctrine via his moral spokesperson, Adams. In the inverted world of *Shamela*, Fielding emphasised Shamela's devotional life as compensation for her wickedness. Her charitable giving ridicules Pamela's moralising on charity without execution at the end of *Virtue Rewarded*, an extension of her role as a wealthy woman. In *Joseph Andrews*, the argument for charity is biblically grounded. The most apparent example of this doctrine is in Adams' conversation with Parson Barnabas and the Bookseller, where Fielding also takes the opportunity to criticise George Whitefield and Richardson. With regards to Richardson, Barnabas states, 'Whoever prints such Heterodox Stuff [as Whitefield], ought to be hanged'; Richardson printed two of Whitefield's pamphlets.<sup>25</sup> Barnabas outlines his issues with Whitefield, which centre around Whitefield's idea that Christians and especially the clergy should live in poverty:

[Whitefield] would reduce us to the Example of the Primitive Ages forsooth! and would insinuate to the People, that a Clergyman ought to be always preaching and praying. He pretends to understand the Scripture literally, and would make Mankind believe, that the Poverty and low Estate, which was recommended to the Church in its Infancy, and was only temporary Doctrine adapted to her under Persecution, was to be preserved in her flourishing and established State. Sir, the

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<sup>25</sup> Richardson printed Whitefield's *The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in Order to Salvation* and *The Benefits of an Early Piety* in 1737.

principles of *Toland*, *Woolston*, and all the Free-Thinkers, are not calculated to do half the Mischief, as those professed by this Fellow and his Followers' (*JA*, p. 70).<sup>26</sup>

There is no mention in the Bible that the poverty of the clergy emphasised in Luke 10 and the epistle to James is a 'temporary Doctrine'. In fact, its emphasis suggests it to be a fundamental tenet. It serves Barnabas' purpose to argue for a 'temporary Doctrine' at this juncture, and thereby like Williams in *Shamela*, justify his bad actions. Adams seems to reflect Fielding's own opinion. He takes a more moderate approach to Whitefield, contrary to what may be expected. It is not Whitefield's idea that the clergy should take a vow of poverty as in the early church with which Fielding takes issue as does Barnabas, but his teaching on the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, biblically attacking him for such a 'detestable Doctrine'.

if Mr *Whitfield* [*sic*] had carried his Doctrine no farther than you mention [poverty of the clergy], I should have remained, as I once was, his Well-Wisher. [...] Surely those things, which savour so strongly of this World, become not the servants of one who professed His kingdom was not of it:<sup>27</sup> but when he began to call Nonsense and Enthusiasm to his Aid, and set up the detestable Doctrine of Faith against good Works, I was his Friend no longer; for surely, that Doctrine was coined in Hell, and one would think none but the Devil himself could have the Confidence to preach it. For can anything be more derogatory to the Honour of God, than for Men to imagine that the All-wise Being will hereafter say to the Good and Virtuous, *Notwithstanding the Purity of thy Life, notwithstanding that constant Rule of Virtue and Goodness in which you walked upon Earth, still as thou did'st not believe*

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<sup>26</sup> The name 'Barnabas' has possibly been chosen by Fielding, whose character is contrasted with the biblical Barnabas who sold his possessions and gave all to the apostles for distribution among the poor (Acts 4. 36–37).

<sup>27</sup> This is an allusion to John 18. 36: 'Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.'

*everything in the true Orthodox manner, thy want of Faith shall condemn thee?* (JA, pp. 70–71)<sup>28</sup>

The italics Fielding used here do not indicate a biblical quotation but bring to the fore the idea that ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven’ (Matthew 7. 21). Adams even goes so far as to add ‘that a virtuous and good *Turk*, or Heathen, are more acceptable in the sight of their Creator than a vicious and wicked Christian, tho’ his Faith was as perfectly Orthodox as St *Paul’s* himself’ (JA, p. 71). Fielding subtly utilises the Sermon on the Mount, his favourite source of morality, to advocate the merits of charity as a Christian virtue. While stating that a virtuous (charitable) heathen can be redeemed was perhaps controversial, the nature of Adams’ rebuttal of the doctrine of salvation by grace, biblically backed, exemplifies Fielding’s own beliefs on the subject. It shows not only his consideration of his own beliefs, but also his ability to use texts to argue for the charitable Christianity to which he adhered.

The doctrine of salvation by grace and inactive Christianity are, then, constantly criticised throughout *Joseph Andrews*. Whether in the unlikeable Pamela’s constant prayers for grace or in Adams’ diatribe against Whitefield’s preaching on the subject, Fielding regarded this doctrine as pernicious. His critique of *Virtue Rewarded* in *Joseph Andrews* is that the doctrine of inactive trust to

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<sup>28</sup> The doctrine of works over grace is also manifest in Adams’ son Dick, who sacrifices his own provisions, so Fanny does not go hungry: “rather than poor *Fanny* shall be starved, I will give her all this Bread and Cheese.” [...] *Adams* smiled on the Boy, and told him he rejoiced to see he was a Christian’ (JA, p. 283).

providence advocated coldly by Pamela is heralded as salvific over charitable deeds. Pamela's late moralising on the virtue of charity is not enough to redeem *Virtue Rewarded* from the criticism of its central theology of trust to providence and the salvation of those who inactively claim virtue. Fielding alters the morality of *Virtue Rewarded* to fit his own ideas of the virtue which God rewards. Not the invocation to the deity ('Lord, Lord') but doing the will of the Father is the key to morality. A theologically astute reader of *Joseph Andrews* would be able to see beyond the novel's comedy into its serious morality. Entertained by the comedy, they are informed of the charitable Christianity Fielding would have Pamela argue in *Virtue Rewarded*.

Having established some of the primary theological principles which shape *Joseph Andrews*, it is evident that there are several biblical stories which also pervade the text. The most prominent and most discussed story parallel is the relationship between Joseph Andrews and Old Testament Joseph. The story of Genesis' Joseph's exile, elevation and eventual prosperity give shape to Fielding's narrative. Fielding established this link early in the novel. He renames 'Joey', 'whom for a good Reason we shall hereafter call JOSEPH' (*JA*, p. 24) explicitly introducing the idea that a character similarity will be drawn (although no mention is made of which Joseph this will be). Fielding uses a subtle allusion before this point by stating that Joseph is 'now seventeen Years of Age' as Old Testament Joseph is at the beginning of his story (*JA*, p. 18; Genesis 37. 2). Shortly after his renaming, Joseph Andrews' encounter with Lady Booby mirrors that of Joseph with Potiphar's Wife in Genesis 39:

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Genesis 39. 7–9)

Joseph Andrews rebuts Lady Booby's attempts in similar words: "I would not have your Ladyship think any Evil of me. I have always endeavoured to be a dutiful Servant both to you and my Master" (*JA*, p. 26). The close narrating of the story introduces the first extended parallel between Genesis' Joseph and Joseph Andrews, with which there are overt equivalences. Potiphar's Wife attempts again, forcibly grabbing Joseph who runs from the house leaving behind his tunic (Genesis 39. 12) while Joseph Andrews is sent out of Lady Booby's home in borrowed clothing (*JA*, p. 41). Harold Fisch argues the story of Old Testament Joseph was an extensive influence on *Joseph Andrews*. He cites other examples such as Parson Adams' recognising Joseph's coat as representing Jacob's recognition of his son's bloodstained coat in Genesis 37. 33 (*JA*, p. 56). He also links Joseph's abduction as a baby with his biblical namesake's sale to the Midianites (Genesis 37. 28) and the final reunion of Joseph and his biological father Wilson represents the reunion of Jacob and Joseph at the end of the biblical story (Genesis 46. 29; *JA*, p. 298).<sup>29</sup> Fielding cautiously parallels his narrative with that of Old Testament Joseph, who provides the most overarching character comparison, recurring throughout the novel. Unlike Richardson's use of Joseph in *Virtue Rewarded*, the parallel is

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<sup>29</sup> Fisch, 'Biblical "Imitation" in *Joseph Andrews*', p. 32.

drawn explicitly and the story of Genesis' Joseph gives the entirety of *Joseph Andrews* multiple but not simplistic parallels. Joseph is selected as the biblical figure because elements of his story mirror those of Pamela, especially in the refuting of sexual advances by employers. It also allows Fielding to buttress the story of Joseph with the New Testament charitable morality of the Sermon on the Mount.

As discussed in Chapter One, Fielding was opposed to deism and by selecting Joseph as a biblical model, Fielding chose a controversial character. As J. Paul Hunter states, 'two heroes [who] were singled out for special attack [by deists] in 1740, [were] Joseph and Abraham'.<sup>30</sup> An example of this attack is Thomas Morgan's *The Moral Philosopher* (1737). Joseph is questioned for his seemingly impossible behaviour with Potiphar's Wife. As paraphrased by Hunter, 'Can you believe, [the *Moral Philosopher*] asks, that a healthy young man ran away from an attractive, willing, and anxious woman out of an abstract sense of duty and love of virtue?'.<sup>31</sup> By applying the Enlightenment double standard of sexuality to the biblical story of Joseph, Morgan denies the possibility that Joseph could turn down such an offer, thus questioning the authenticity of the story. William Dodd's commentary provides special reflection on Joseph's virtue in Genesis 39 where he acknowledges the temptation Joseph felt but outlines the advantages of his resistance: obedience to God by not betraying his heritage, and loyalty to

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<sup>30</sup> J. Paul Hunter, *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 101.

<sup>31</sup> *Occasional Form*, p. 103.



his master.<sup>32</sup> Fielding also portrays a hero who refuses to 'defile' himself, rejecting Lady Booby's advances out of duty and devotion to Richardsonian virtue, and an equivalent sense of duty to his master as had Old Testament Joseph. While *Joseph Andrews* may be a satire of *Virtue Rewarded's* sexual ethics, Fielding created a character whose moral position is such that he is able to resist the allure Morgan suggests would be impossible in the age of the double standard. Rebutting the deist attack on this story, Fielding 'rewards' Joseph Andrews in a similar way to Genesis' Joseph, with eventual reunion with family and elevated status.

Fielding uses Genesis' Joseph as a template for many of the events which befall Joseph Andrews, using the biblical history to exemplify his central moral of charity by also linking it to other biblical stories. The parallels between Old Testament Joseph and Joseph Andrews come to the fore in the robbery episode, which also references another biblical story, the Good Samaritan. Fielding may have added the robbery based on its presence in the Old Testament, but there are more parallels with the Good Samaritan than there are with biblical Joseph's experiences. Old Testament Joseph is stripped of his coat, thrown into a pit and abandoned by his brothers (Genesis 37. 23–24). A

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<sup>32</sup> Dodd, I, [n. pns]. Dodd states, 'We learn from this part of Joseph's history, especially from his answer to his mistress, 1st, that the fear of God, and a serious regard to his authority, *is a most effectual preservative* for all criminal indulgences. It was *this* that restrained *Joseph* from complying with the loose solicitations of his mistress, and gave him the perfect superiority and *command* over his passions. [...] We are, 2ndly, taught from hence, the *shamefulness*, and *heinous guilt of ingratitude*. This was the *principle* thing Joseph urged, against committing the crime to which he was strongly excited; [...] It is, 3rdly, one of the most remarkable parts of *Joseph's* history, that the *lowest scene* of his disgrace, the most *melancholy*, and, to human probability, *desperate* state of his affairs, was the means of his *advancement* to eminent dignity in *Pharaoh's* court, and to be the first minister in his kingdom.'

similar situation appears in the Good Samaritan: 'A certain man [...] fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.' (Luke 10. 30). Both of these stories are reflected in *Joseph Andrews*: 'both [thieves] together fell to be-labouring poor *Joseph* with their Sticks, till they were convinced they had put an end to his miserable Being: They then stripped him entirely naked, threw him into a Ditch, and departed with their booty' (*JA*, p. 45). The ditch recalls biblical Joseph, while the half-dead beating, and the stripping of all clothing parallels the Good Samaritan. It is explicitly stated in the Old Testament that Joseph's brothers do not physically harm him (Genesis 37. 22). The robbery serves to parallel both biblical stories and while its presence may be due to Old Testament Joseph's sale to the Midianites, the more prominent parallels of the stripping and severe beating recall the Good Samaritan.

As the robbery narrative progresses, the parallels with the Good Samaritan come especially to the fore. Once the stagecoach stops, the passengers within debate whether to leave Joseph to die or whether legally (not morally) they have a duty to help him, reflecting the priest and the Levite in the Good Samaritan's story. It is the morally ambiguous postillion who aids Joseph, even giving him a coat to cover his nakedness despite the cold the postillion will have to endure sat outside the coach. To understand fully the significance of the parable's use, one must appreciate the significance of Jesus' example of a Samaritan. In the eighteenth century, there was recognition of the relationship between the Jewish and Samaritan communities and an understanding that the

act of the Samaritan in this story was remarkable for Jesus' Jewish audience. Dodd's commentary notes that, 'if a Jew and a Samaritan met in a narrow way, they were exceedingly solicitous that they might pass without touching each other, for fear of pollution on either side'.<sup>33</sup> The Samaritan in the eyes of Jesus' contemporaries was the worst of sinners, and yet he is the one who shows compassion for the robbed man. The postillion, on the lowest social rung of the coach party, is the one who saves Joseph not out of fear of legal repercussion (as the lawyer) but out of a sense of human compassion.<sup>34</sup> It is then revealed that the postillion has been transported for theft. The Bible names the Samaritan as good purely from this act of charity; he continues the 'sin' of being a Samaritan. His character, beyond this act of charity, is irrelevant.<sup>35</sup> Without an appreciation of the detested nature of the Samaritan and his subsequent continuation of 'sin', Scott Robertson states that Fielding is posing the question: 'is the boy a Bad or Good Samaritan?'.<sup>36</sup> The postillion embodies the Good Samaritan precisely by being a morally ambiguous figure. By understanding the background to the biblical narrative, a reader who knows the story sees a deeper parallel between the transported postillion and the Good Samaritan.

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<sup>33</sup> Dodd, III, [n. pns].

<sup>34</sup> The poverty of the postillion also reflects the implied poverty of the Samaritan in the parable, who leaves only two small coins for the care of the injured man rather than a larger sum, promising to pay more on his return (Luke 10. 35).

<sup>35</sup> Another morally ambiguous character is Mrs Slipslop, who is both charitable and hypocritical. She is 'Daughter of a Curate' (*JA*, p. 21), although the reader is left to speculate whether an Adams, a Barnabas, or a Trulliber. While she states that 'she who hath no Compulsion for [Joseph] is a Myhummetman' (*JA*, p. 108), she has previously tried to seduce Joseph and therefore her motives for this statement are questionable. She certainly treats Fanny contemptibly. She shows a reasonable amount of goodwill towards her fellow person, unlike Lady Booby, under whose command the 'Poor would have wanted many a Cordial' (*JA*, p. 87), again proving the charitable nature of the lower orders against their rich counterparts.

<sup>36</sup> Scott Robertson, 'Henry Fielding: Literary and Theological Misplacement' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2008), p. 110.

Fielding seems to have chosen to use Old Testament Joseph's story for four reasons: firstly, its story provides an explicit framework for many of the events which befall Joseph Andrews, allowing Fielding to give shape to the narrative. Secondly, it provides the Pamelarian ethical model important to Joseph's character of pious behaviour leading to eventual social exaltation. Thirdly, it speaks to the deist application of eighteenth-century sexual ethics to the biblical story, providing the example of a male character able to resist sexual temptation although expressed in satire. Finally, the events of Joseph's life allow the introduction of Fielding's model of virtue: charity. When Joseph is cast out naked, Lady Booby's butler clothes him; when left for dead, the Good Samaritan postillion saves him; when his parentage is discovered, Joseph can not only marry the woman he loves but is also able to show financial charity towards those who have been charitable (Adams and the pedlar are explicitly mentioned). Fielding combines Old Testament narrative with New Testament morality. This morality is emphasised in the charitable figure of Adams, the ethical centre of *Joseph Andrews* whose exploits, whilst comic, are also exemplary of the Latitudinarian charity which Fielding asserts is the way to salvation.

Joseph Andrews, with his Pamelarian morality, cannot, then, be the moral centre of *Joseph Andrews* as he advocates an inactive behavioural model of morality following his sister. Instead, Fielding used the figure of Parson Abraham Adams as the moral exemplar. He embodies characteristics of both

his scriptural namesakes. Biblical Abraham is a nomad, sent by God from his father's land in search of a new habitation. For most of the narrative, Adams is on the road. While not as prominent as that of Old Testament Joseph, there is a point in the narrative where the story of Abraham comes to the fore. Adams lectures Joseph Andrews about providence and resigning oneself to one's fate, using the example of Abraham from the Bible. 'Had *Abraham* so loved his Son *Isaac*, as to refuse the Sacrifice required, is there any of us who would not condemn him?' (*JA*, p. 270). In Genesis 22, God commands Abraham to take 'thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering' (Genesis 22. 2). Abraham unquestioningly obeys, but as he is about to light the pyre, an angel descends to tell him he is not to perform the human sacrifice and a ram is provided. This passage has caused controversy and questions of interpretation in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Carol Stewart outlines some of the readings of this text when discussing this episode as indicative of Fielding's beliefs:

On one rabbinical reading, it is only through complete submission before God, symbolized in Abraham's obedience to God's command, that the nation of Israel will be redeemed. [...] In another *midrash*, however — midrash being the distinctively Jewish method of exegesis — Abraham confronts God with the fact that he seems to have changed his mind about putting Isaac to death. God tells Abraham that he has misunderstood a command 'to offer up' as a command to offer up as a burnt sacrifice (a translation of the verb '*alah*' also found in the King James Bible). The only explicit demand was that Abraham take his son up the mountain: now he can take him down again.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Carol Stewart, 'Joseph Andrews and the Sacrifice of Isaac: Faith, Works and Anticlericalism', *Literature and Theology*, 27.1 (2013), 18–31 (p. 20). Stewart concludes by asserting, as I do, that Fielding was Anglican but critical of hypocrisy, especially in the clergy.

Both of these interpretations are also present within Christianity. Dodd's commentary outlines the act of faith on the part of Abraham that God would keep his promise to have Isaac's children outnumber the stars (Genesis 15. 5, see also Hebrews 11. 17–19 which interprets this act of faith in terms that if Isaac were sacrificed God could bring him back from the dead). This multiplicity of interpretation highlights the difficulty of this passage and speaks to deist interest in this story as did the choice of Joseph regarding Potiphar's Wife previously discussed.<sup>38</sup>

Adams goes on to state that Abraham would be condemned for not being obedient to the commands of God. He continues, '[...] no Christian ought so to set his Heart on any Person or Thing in this World, but that whenever it shall be required or taken from him in any manner by Divine Providence, he may be able, peaceably, quietly, and contentedly to resign it' (*JA*, p. 270).<sup>39</sup> Adams professes to advocate a Pamelarian passive acceptance of the workings of God, yet this is incongruous to his character as a man of action. It is at this moment that his son's supposed drowning is announced. Adams hypocritically but understandably laments his loss, providing an insight into the emotional turmoil of Abraham not presented in the Bible (Genesis 22; *JA*, pp. 270–71). The account of Jacky's demise is premature and once this is revealed, Adams

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<sup>38</sup> Abraham was also a controversial figure for deists. Thomas Morgan argued that Genesis 22 not only illustrates God changing his mind, but also provides a precedent for human sacrifice. See Thomas Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 3 vols (London: [n. pub], 1740), III, 269.

<sup>39</sup> As noted by Maurice Johnson, the word order 'so loved' could also recall the words of John 3. 16: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son'. Maurice Johnson, *Fielding's Art of Fiction: Eleven Essays on Shamela, Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 80.

rejoices in his 'resurrection'. Despite his earlier assertion that 'no Accident happens to us without the Divine Permission' (*JA*, p. 230), Adams is not always able to practise what he preaches. This episode not only highlights the emotional responses of a man who loves his son not overtly present in the biblical narrative, but also Fielding's idea of virtue. To resign to the providence of God as Pamela does almost without emotion in *Virtue Rewarded* is unrealistic and denies natural human feeling. Adams' emotional outburst is linked with being charitable. It is difficult for a charitable man of feeling to say 'thy will be done' without expressing emotion. Jesus expressed great emotion in his prayers during the passion narrative: 'And he [...] fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt' (Matthew 26. 39). Adams has no time to progress from lamenting the divine will into 'thy will be done'. Fielding chose to use this episode from the life of Abraham to draw parallels between Adams and his biblical namesake and to illustrate the difficulties with inactive trust to providence without emotional response.

There are certain links with Abraham and Adams' characters, but the most significant parallel between Adams and a character of the Bible is in his surname. Fielding states that Adams is 'as entirely ignorant of the Ways of this World, as an Infant just entered into it could possibly be' (*JA*, p. 19), linking him with the pre-fall Adam in Genesis. Naïve, trusting, and innocent, Adams, as his name suggests, possesses almost comic ignorance of motivations of others acting outside charitable Christianity. Speaking of the drowning episode, Judith

Stüchiner states, 'though [Adams] wants to be an exemplar of obedience, his last name, Adams, connects him to Adam, the father of the human race and, more importantly, the bearer of responsibility for an act of disobedience that has never been matched'.<sup>40</sup> As discussed above, Adams is disobedient to his teachings on the emotionless acceptance of providence when faced with his son's death. However, in Fielding's moral schema, this is not a dreadful sin but rather a natural expression of charitable compassion. Adams is always obedient to Fielding's central moral of charity, lamenting when he cannot be charitable (*JA*, p. 221) and acting benevolently in conversations with those who hold differing views. By appreciating Fielding's choice of name for Abraham Adams, a biblically literate reader gains an insight into Adams' characteristics. Abraham the great patriarch and Adams as the representative of innocent humanity both possess characteristics which are intermingled in *Joseph Andrews's* central moral figure.

In order to highlight Adams as the moral centre of the novel, he is contrasted with other religious characters who represent the corrupt members of the clergy against whom Fielding wrote vociferously. The first parson introduced in *Joseph Andrews* is Barnabas, who is called to minister to the supposedly dying Joseph, but instead prefers drinking with the landlord and lady (*JA*, p. 50). When he eventually comes to see Joseph, he is less than comforting. Asking Joseph if he has repented of his sins, Joseph says he hopes so, but adds that he regrets

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<sup>40</sup> Judith Stüchiner, 'Fielding's Latitudinarian Doubt: Faith "versus" Works in *Joseph Andrews*', *Studies in Philology*, 114.4 (2017), 875–94 (p. 892).



leaving Fanny. Barnabas responds angrily to this: 'any Repining at the Divine Will, was one of the greatest Sins he could commit' (*JA*, pp. 51–52). According to Fielding's morality, while adherence to the divine will is important, it is no sin to have emotions. Barnabas also asks Joseph if he forgives the robbers, to which Joseph responds, 'he forgave them as much as he could'. Barnabas states 'that will do' (*JA*, p. 52). While intolerant of any emotional response, Barnabas appears apathetic about direct commands of God for the total forgiveness of enemies (Matthew 5. 44). A religious reader of *Joseph Andrews* gains a deeper insight into Barnabas' disregard for fundamental Christian teachings. Enemies can be partially forgiven and any form of emotional response to a situation is a great sin. Barnabas' interactions with Joseph have an uncaring formality to them. By contrast, Adams alleviates Joseph's fears for Fanny's health and attends to Joseph's financial and physical needs, offering him some of his small sum of money and advising his diet for recovery (*JA*, p. 59). Adams' true concern for Joseph's health, spiritual and physical, mirrors those of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10. 35) while Barnabas visits again only to see the gold Joseph has (*JA*, p. 58). Throughout, Barnabas lacks compassion, a crucial element of the clergy which Fielding gives Adams in abundance. Not merely expressing his compassion vocally, Adams also expends much energy and money in ensuring Joseph's recovery.

While Barnabas may be contemptible, he is no match for the wickedness of Trulliber. More concerned with selling pigs than saving souls, Trulliber is the embodiment of Fielding's criticism of the clergy. The action which surrounds

Adams' and Trulliber's conversation is comic, but the conversation itself is serious. After having tumbled into the pig pen, Adams and Trulliber discuss the merits of charity. The discussion centres around Matthew 6. 19–20: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven'. Adams begins his request for money by assuming Trulliber, as a clergyman, will 'joyfully embrace such an Opportunity of laying up a Treasure in a better Place than any this World affords' (*JA*, p. 144). Trulliber responds ominously, 'what matters where a Man's Treasure is, whose Heart is in the Scriptures?'. Trulliber forgets the continuation of the above quotation: 'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Matthew 6. 21). As the conversation becomes confrontation, Adams condemns the angry reaction of Trulliber, accusing him of being 'no Christian' (*JA*, p. 146). While written in the comic mode, a biblically literate reader senses the serious moral undertone that pervades this episode of the novel. By alluding to the Sermon on the Mount, Fielding again draws the reader's attention towards charity as the primary virtue a Christian can possess.

Not only is Trulliber uncharitable, becoming violent when the word is mentioned, he is also a hypocrite, something intolerable to Fielding. Once Adams returns to the inn empty handed, having lost his coat and hat in the escapade with Trulliber, the hostess outlines the character of the parson according to the locals. The hostess states that 'he had not only a very good Character, as to other Qualities, in the Neighbourhood, but was reputed a Man of great Charity:

for tho' he never gave a Farthing, he had always that Word in his Mouth' (*JA*, p. 148). Based on Adams' interaction with him, the fact that he can say the word 'charity' is almost offensive. Trulliber's hypocrisy is highlighted and he has committed the greatest sin in Fielding's worldview: knowing the importance of charity but not acting upon it. As Robert Alter comments, 'the word "Christian" is on every tongue, including some that look suspiciously forked'.<sup>41</sup> Trulliber's tongue is certainly forked.

Barnabas and Trulliber are the antitheses of what a religious representative should be for Fielding. Barnabas, concerned more with socialising than comforting Joseph, is a cold advocate for emotionless acceptance of events as Pamela is in *Virtue Rewarded*, where any emotional response is sinful, yet enemies may be partially forgiven. Trulliber is the representation of everything Fielding perceived as odious in eighteenth-century clergymen. Concerned with storing treasures up on earth, he becomes violent at the suggestion he should be charitable, although he is hypocritically willing to sully his mouth with the word frequently. In no way does Trulliber practise what he preaches. By comparison, Adams represents the clergyman as Fielding would have him be. Charitable, compassionate and without any concern for social aggrandisement, he acts as the servant of the people rather than their lord. He embodies the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount to which Fielding constantly refers and, despite his emotional outbursts, stays true to the central morality of charity. His

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Alter, *Fielding and the Nature of the Novel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 125.

sin of repining the divine will, if it is a sin at all as Fielding questions, is the natural response to the events of life and serves to make Adams more human than the angelic Pamela of *Virtue Rewarded*.

In conclusion, rather than a simple parody of *Virtue Rewarded*, Fielding produced in *Joseph Andrews* a book which advocated his own morality in contrast to what he found in Richardson's first novel. Creating a new set of characters, he repudiates the doctrine of grace in favour of Latitudinarian charity, a moral which pervades the story. Using Old Testament Joseph as a shaping tool, Fielding constantly refers to the Sermon on the Mount, providing *Joseph Andrews* with its moral emphasis on charity as the core of morality. Impoverished but generous, it is the poorest characters (Adams, Slipslop, the pedlar and the postillion) who exemplify the charitableness preached by Jesus. Contrary to this, the rich and educated (Pamela, Barnabas, Trulliber) adhere to the doctrine of grace, preferring to keep their coffers full rather than store treasures in heaven. Joseph Andrews has learned morality from Pamela, and must therefore be re-educated by Abraham Adams, who embodies two biblical figures at once. He is the character central to the morality of *Joseph Andrews*. His comic exploits contain within them the serious morality of charity which Fielding wanted to advocate. By understanding the interpretation of biblical references, a biblically literate reader perceives a more serious and occasionally sinister aspect of the novel. The Bible is abused by the amoral to justify their own sin, and Fielding encourages questioning the doctrines preached from some pulpits. When charity is ignored and the Bible seems to

advocate a convenient way to salvation by emphasis on repentance, hollow or otherwise, *Joseph Andrews* asks the question of the reader as to whether this is acceptable in the scheme of the Sermon on the Mount, the most famous preaching of Jesus.

*Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* share the same moral aim. *Shamela* illustrates the dangers of the doctrine of salvation by grace carried to its extreme, which can be used to veneer a variety of sins by hypocritical repentance in direct defiance of biblical teachings. Similarly, *Joseph Andrews* ridicules *Virtue Rewarded*'s Pamela's inactive trust to grace with Fielding's amoral characters conveniently adhering to this system of belief, excusing their inaction. Fielding rewrites the morality of *Virtue Rewarded* in both *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*. In *Shamela*, Fielding satirises the morality potentially present in *Virtue Rewarded*, attacking the novel's ideas of inactive, self-centred virtue as deserving reward. In *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding recreated Richardson's world but with his own morality rather than Richardson's. The key moral tenets espoused in all of Fielding's novels is charity. *Shamela*'s charitable giving is in direct defiance to the inverted morality of her novel. She has no compassion for her fellow person. *Joseph Andrews*' virtuous characters are virtuous because of their charitable natures. While Joseph himself is morally somewhat neutral, imitating his sister but increasingly learning from Adams' example, Adams has charity in abundance. As the moral centre of *Joseph Andrews*, Adams represents not only Fielding's ideal clergyman but also acts as the standard to which all people should adhere. Biblical references are used to highlight faults

in various characters and to extol the merits of charity. The Bible and its interpretation by characters is an important tool for Fielding to express his own belief in the supremacy of charity and to highlight its abuses by figures such as George Whitefield. By appreciating the interpretation of biblical references, a biblically literate reader perceives the serious moral intent of both novels, where the danger of lacking biblical knowledge is highlighted, and questioning the pulpit encouraged. By no means the only critiques of *Virtue Rewarded*, *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* set forth a moral criticism of Richardson's first novel. They appear to have acted as a motivation for Richardson's writing a continuation of Pamela's story, elucidating his own morality and responding to Fielding's and others' criticisms.

## CHAPTER FOUR – *EXALTED CONDITION*: RICHARDSON'S RESPONSE TO THE ANTI-PAMELA MOVEMENT

Both *Shamela* (1741) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742) were well received by readers. *Shamela*'s exploitation of Pamela's unacknowledged and unintentional flaws caused one commentator to write, 'Admir'd *Pamela*, till *Shamela* shown, | Appear'd in every colour — but her own'.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, *Joseph Andrews* was favourably reviewed. In a letter from Elizabeth Carter to Catherine Talbot in 1743, Carter thanks Talbot for:

the perfectly agreeable entertainment I have met in reading Joseph Andrews, as it was your recommendation that first tempted me to enquire after it. It contains such a surprizing variety of nature, wit, morality, and good sense, as is scarcely to be met with in any one composition, and there is such a spirit of benevolence runs through the whole, as I think renders it peculiarly charming.<sup>2</sup>

Carter reveals she read *Joseph Andrews* with moral edification and improvement in mind rather than solely for entertainment, judging it positively because it has both moral and literary merit. Her admiration for *Joseph Andrews*'s moral qualities as well as her fondness for Richardson show that it was entirely possible for one reader to enjoy both authors' works, as the moral schemas of *Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Joseph Andrews* are not entirely incompatible.

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<sup>1</sup> 'To the Author of *Shamela*', London Magazine (June 1741).

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Carter to Catherine Talbot, 1 January 1743, in *A Series of Letters Between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, 3 vols (London: F. C. Rivington and J. Rivington, 1809), I, 23–24.

Despite *Shamela*'s initial popularity, Fielding sought to suppress it shortly after publication. As I have previously argued, there is strong evidence to suggest that Fielding believed Colley Cibber was the author of *Virtue Rewarded*. It appears that when Fielding discovered this was not the case, he attempted to stop *Shamela* from being printed. He never publicly acknowledged writing *Shamela*; it did not appear in Andrew Millar's posthumous collection of Fielding's *Works*, although Millar owned half the rights to it according to Thomas Keymer.<sup>3</sup> Fielding's unwillingness to admit authorship and *Shamela*'s withdrawal from the presses is curious given Fielding's financial situation. When *Shamela* was published, Fielding was in the midst of one of his frequent financial crises. He spent two weeks in mid-March 1741 in a sponging house, a place of confinement for non-payment of debt.<sup>4</sup> To withdraw a popular work from print during his hardship, and to deny having written a successful satire, indicates the possibility of remorse. To mock a work by Colley Cibber was reasonable; to mock Richardson, of whom it appears Fielding had little knowledge, unfair.

There is no contemporary comment by Richardson on *Shamela*, and he similarly seems not to have remarked on *Joseph Andrews* until after the publication of *Tom Jones* (1749). He observed in a letter to Astrea and Minerva

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<sup>3</sup> Keymer, 'Introduction', in *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. by Douglas Brooks-Davies, intro. by Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xii.

<sup>4</sup> Keymer, 'Introduction', p. xiii.



Hill in 1749 that *Joseph Andrews* was a 'lewd and ungenerous engraftment', written to 'fill [Fielding's] Pocket, by accommodating it to the reigning Taste'.<sup>5</sup> Like *Shamela* before its withdrawal from print, *Joseph Andrews* had been a popular publication. As Pat Rogers notes, 'two editions [of *Joseph Andrews*] amounting to 5000 further copies were called for within a year' after an initial print run of approximately 1500.<sup>6</sup> Fielding's use of Pamela in *Joseph Andrews*, with her constant affirmation of grace and lack of respect for religion, laughing through Joseph's wedding to the extent that Adams has to publicly rebuke her (*JA*, p. 301), were self-evidently contrary to Richardson's intentions for Pamela's character. As discussed in Chapter One, and as will be discussed with regards to *Exalted Condition*, Richardson acknowledged charity as a duty of a pious Christian. There is no firm evidence to confirm or deny Richardson's having read *Shamela* or *Joseph Andrews*. Based on some of the moral 'corrections' in *Exalted Condition*, it is either possible that he read or probable that he knew *Shamela*'s contents as Richardson responds to Fielding's moral criticism of Pamela's inactive piety as worthy of reward.

In this chapter, I argue that in *Exalted Condition* Richardson tried to respond to Fielding's parody *Shamela*, alongside spurious continuations such as John Kelly's *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* (1741), and fulfil the outline for the sequel that his friend, medical advisor, and correspondent George Cheyne desired.

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel Richardson to Astrea and Minerva Hill, 4 August 1749, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, ed. by Christine Gerrard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 82, 320.

<sup>6</sup> Pat Rogers, *Henry Fielding: A Biography* (New York, NY: Scribner's Sons, 1979), p. 116.

Firstly, I will look at some aspects of Cheyne's eight-point plan for *Exalted Condition*, which outlined the morality he wished to see in the sequel along with advice for the events of the narrative. Richardson especially moralised on the relationship between husbands and wives, and detailed Mr B's redemption. While *Virtue Rewarded's* moral message is clear, that of *Exalted Condition* is confused. Richardson attempted to elucidate seven prominent morals: the relationship between wives and husbands, charity, the behaviour of the clergy, class boundaries, piety, redemption, and self-reflection, alongside several other minor topics. Then, I will turn to investigating Richardson's response to John Kelly's elevation of Pamela's social status and his removal of her piety once she has been rewarded. Richardson appears to have felt it important to moralise on the maintenance of Pamela's piety and ensure she remained elevated solely for her virtue, not her hidden class status. In doing so, Richardson added yet more moral messages to *Exalted Condition*. Of primary importance to this thesis is Richardson's response to Fielding's criticism of Pamela. Pamela becomes in *Exalted Condition* aware of her faults and exemplifies charity in contrast to Fielding's satire. Richardson also commented on Fielding's general low treatment of the clergy. As a result of attempting to correct these criticisms, Richardson's literary endeavour, if there was one, collapses under the weight of *Exalted Condition's* morality. *Virtue Rewarded's* core moral, virtue rewarded, gives a sense of cohesiveness to Richardson's first novel. *Exalted Condition*, lacking a central idea, is fragmented. More a collection of moral essays than a piece of literature, narrative is primarily used to move the reader from one moralising passage to the next. It is not until the fourteenth edition and the

removal or reduction of many extended moral sections where the literary endeavour ceases to be secondary.

With regards to the use of the Bible, this chapter provides the first substantial analysis of the biblical references in *Exalted Condition*. There are approximately seventy-two scriptural references in the novel, compared with ninety-seven in *Virtue Rewarded*, a work of a similar length. References are used primarily in quotation and paraphrase rather than embedded allusion, in contrast to *Virtue Rewarded*. This chapter argues that Richardson uses Scripture primarily to elucidate *Exalted Condition*'s many moral arguments, with at least one selected to support each idea. Throughout, Pamela seeks the will of God, buttressing her moralising with scriptural passages proving her opinion. Mr B by contrast utilises the Bible to support his own opinions, creating a moral tension. As a wife Pamela must be subservient, sacrificing the views she has previously convinced the reader are moral to appease her half-reformed husband, lest he remain unreformed and engage in polygamy. Pamela's role as moral spokesperson is therefore undermined. Although Richardson's use of Scripture is primarily moralistic, there are some instances where the Bible is used to draw literary parallels, which come especially to the fore in the fourteenth edition, where many of the long tracts are cut down and the literary character comparisons, buried in previous editions, become more noticeable.

Richardson was inspired to write *Exalted Condition* by several factors. Firstly, he sought to correct the moral failings in *Virtue Rewarded* as noted by Fielding, particularly his lack of emphasis on charity as a virtue. Secondly, Richardson wished to produce an official sequel in response to several spurious ones, written by 'cold *Killers*' in the words of Aaron Hill.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, he also wished to add to *Virtue Rewarded*'s morality, using his correspondents' suggestions to do so. It appears that Richardson had little literary motivation for continuing Pamela's story. Margaret Ann Doody notes while discussing the spurious continuations *Virtue Rewarded* inspired, *Exalted Condition* is 'the only one of [Richardson's] novels that he did not really wish to write. He had nothing especially new to say about Pamela; rather, there were things he wished to gainsay'.<sup>8</sup> As far as the novelistic elements of *Exalted Condition* are concerned, Richardson certainly had little new to add. Richardson was forced into writing *Exalted Condition* to regain control of Pamela's story, interpretation, and continue his programme of moral literature, with narrative secondary to morality.

Despite clearly wanting to respond to parodies and continuations, in his preface to *Exalted Condition*, Richardson claims a more straightforward motivation for writing the novel:

*It may be expected, therefore, that [the author] should enter into an Explanation of the Reasons whereby he was provoked into a Necessity of altering his Intention. But he is willing to decline saying Any-thing upon so well-known a Subject; lest his Interest*

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<sup>7</sup> Aaron Hill to Samuel Richardson, 29 July 1741, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 76.

*might appear more concern'd, than the Satisfaction of the Publick.* (EC, p. 3)

Richardson hints towards his other motivations for writing *Exalted Condition* but affirms '*Satisfaction of the Publick*' as primary. Whether the public were satisfied with what he produced is debateable. When Carter wrote to Talbot of *Exalted Condition*, she states, 'I intend to look over the two last volumes of Pamela, which I have yet had no sort of inclination to'.<sup>9</sup> No further mention is made of these volumes in their letters. The continuation did not cause a second Pamela vogue and no parody seems to have been written of it, indicating its failure to inspire other authors.

In some respects, Richardson did respond to his public's desire for a sequel. He received advice from his correspondents about their opinion as to what to include. The most extended list of ideas for *Exalted Condition* was sent to Richardson in a letter from George Cheyne on 24 August 1741. He outlines eight points for Richardson's consideration: the relationship between wife and husband; events for instruction not just entertainment; the conversion of Mr B; Pamela as an example of the perfect upper class neighbour, wife, donor, and mother; maintaining Pamela's private devotions; avoiding detailing the 'fondling' of marriage; raising characters' social statuses; and elevating Pamela's writing style.<sup>10</sup> Richardson appears to have addressed several of these desires in *Exalted Condition*. While a full investigation is beyond the scope of this chapter,

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<sup>9</sup> Carter to Talbot, 4 August 1742, in *A Series of Letters*, I, 20.

<sup>10</sup> George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson, 24 August 1741, in *Correspondence with George Cheyne*, ed. by David E. Shuttleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 68–72.

to select some of Cheyne's most prominent moral suggestions, the relationship between husbands and wives, Mr B's conversion, and Pamela's continued role as exemplar receive much attention in the pages of *Exalted Condition*.

In keeping with Cheyne's request, the use of the Bible is most evident in *Exalted Condition* in the discussion of the duty of wives to be subservient to husbands. Pamela affirms wifely submission and uses the Bible to evidence her beliefs. However, Richardson allows Pamela the freedom to debate issues with Mr B, even if she must ultimately bend to his will. Pamela and Mr B debate various topics, exchanging biblical references and matching each other verse-for-verse. It is only by threatening polygamy that Mr B can be victorious. In these debates, Richardson unintentionally created a moral dilemma. Pamela as a wife, Richardson argues, must be subservient to her semi-reformed husband, but as moral spokesperson she must sacrifice what she is convinced, and convinces the reader, is moral in order to appease her husband who is not interested in God's will, only his own.

Having Pamela and Mr B's debate of various topics in biblical terms also raises another issue. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a sense in *Virtue Rewarded* that it is Richardson who uses the biblical reference rather than his characters, which is continued in *Exalted Condition*. Throughout the novel, Mr B quotes some obscure passages from the Bible to argue with Pamela; based on his previous depiction, it is questionable whether he would have more than a

superficial knowledge of Scripture. Richardson also reduces Pamela's biblical knowledge, which seems encyclopaedic in the first novel. Pamela is now surprised by Mr B's references, and seemingly ignorant of their presence in the Bible. Incongruous with Mr B's character but convenient for the moral argument, Mr B must quote scripture.

The most thorough use of the Bible in *Exalted Condition* is Richardson's establishment of the nature of the roles of wives in relation to husbands. He has Pamela cite three biblical references that define the ideal relationship:

For the Apostle, in the Context, says, That he *suffers not a Woman to teach, nor usurp Authority over the man, but to be in Silence*. [I Corinthians 14. 34]

"for", says he, "*Adam was NOT deceived; but the Woman, being deceived, was in the Transgression*". [I Timothy 2. 14]

*I will greatly multiply thy Sorrow in thy Conception: In Sorrow shall thou bring forth Children,—and thy Husband shall rule over thee*. [Genesis 3. 16]

(*EC*, pp. 279–80)

These verses all emphasise the wife's subservience to the husband, something Pamela takes very seriously. Her only flexibility is that she is allowed opinions, yet knows she must sacrifice her own desires and morality should Mr B wish it. Early in the novel Pamela claims that Mr B's command 'requires nothing of me, but what is consistent with my duty to the supreme Benefactor' (*EC*, p. 7). As the narrative progresses, Mr B interposes his own wants over the will of God

and this statement is called into question. As the supplicant wife she must obey her husband, in doing so abandoning her duty to God.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Richardson came close to asserting a husband's position over and above that of God in the life of his wife, and this is something he affirms in *Exalted Condition*. Pamela introduces Mr B's thoughts about his role as mediator between his wife and God by reporting that Mr B believes 'if a Wife thinks a Thing her Duty to do, and her Husband does not approve of her doing it, he can dispense with her performing it, and no Sin shall lie at her Door?' (*EC*, p. 264). While the biblically literate Pamela can cite no verse ('Did you ever hear of such a Notion before, [...] Of such a Prerogative in a Husband?' (*EC*, p. 264)), Mr B refers to Numbers 30. 6–8:

And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the Lord shall forgive her.

William Dodd's commentary on this passage cites Pufendorf's assertion that this was to protect 'women in their imprudent years' financially pledging more than they could afford.<sup>11</sup> Mr B uses these verses to assume control over Pamela and her actions, which not even God's will can override.

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<sup>11</sup> William Dodd, *A Commentary on the Books of the Old and New Testament* (London: R. Davis, L. Davis, Carnan, and Newbury, 1770), I, [n. pns]. Dodd quotes Samuel, Baron von Pufendorf, 'Of Law of Nature and Nations', book IV, ch ii sec 1.



When Pamela is considering Mr B's argument, Richardson uses a verse from the Bible that could justify Mr B's stance. Pamela states:

But do you take it *indeed*, that a Husband has such a vast Prerogative? Can it be, now under the *Gospel*, that this setting themselves, as it were, in God's place, and *dispensing* with our Wills as pleases theirs, is still in Force? – Yet it is said, that our Saviour came not to *break the Law, but to fulfil it.* (*EC*, p. 315)

This paraphrases Matthew 5. 17: 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil'. At the end of this letter, Pamela submits herself both to 'my Lawgiver' Mr B and 'God's Direction' (*EC*, p. 316), two things that *Exalted Condition* reveals to be incompatible.

Richardson's argument that wives are to be always subservient creates a moral tension throughout *Exalted Condition*. Mr B, placed between Pamela and God, is unqualified for such a position yet Pamela must obey him. The most prominent example of Pamela's abandonment of her own beliefs is in the breastfeeding debate, also answering Cheyne's request that Pamela become the archetypal upper-class mother. Pamela outlines her arguments for breastfeeding her own child, citing biblical precedent of the matriarchs, the 'good Wives we read of in Scripture' (*EC*, p. 310), stating it is a '*Divine Duty*' (*EC*, p. 309), as well as other more temporal reasons for it, such as the difficulty in finding a virtuous nurse so as not to impart wicked behaviours into the child via the milk. Mr B's long rebuttal of Pamela's argument relegates breastfeeding to a household task beneath her station, explaining that the matriarchs also

concerned themselves with other chores. He counters her argument that the nurse's milk may corrupt the child by providing biblical precedent for children breastfed by the patriarchs (Reuben is his main example) who still committed sins; the breast milk itself therefore does not cause these personality defects. Mr B thus turns biblical precedent to his own wants: Pamela sees breastfeeding as a motherly duty; Mr B classifies it as a household task beneath her. Pamela worries that imparting breast milk from an unvirtuous source will corrupt the child; Mr B cites the bad behaviour of those breastfed by the virtuous patriarchs to counter. When all avenues of argument have been exhausted, Mr B threatens polygamy, unless 'by your Adherence to the Example given you by the Patriarch Wives, [...] I ought to follow those of the Patriarch Husbands' (*EC*, p. 313). This threat frightens Pamela greatly, 'I had rather he should mention any thing than that' (*EC*, p. 313). In this debate, Pamela and Mr B are equally matched in terms of biblical references, and it is only by threatening polygamy that Mr B can get his way. Pamela has sought the will of God through Scripture to dictate her thoughts; Mr B has found examples which support his existing stance. Mr B's use of the Bible is not overtly condemned (who would do the condemning?) but while Richardson's moral of wifely subservience is served, God's will becomes secondary to a husband's whim. *Exalted Condition* to a certain extent supports breastfeeding as moral. Pamela must, however, obey her husband, who refuses to have his wife's attention divided between himself and the nursery.

Mr B's argument against breastfeeding elucidates his desire to keep Pamela away from the nursery and have her behave like an upper-class mother rather than one of the lower orders as Cheyne suggested. Throughout *Exalted Condition*, Mr B appears to shun the company of his children and expects Pamela to do the same. On the birth of their first child, Mr B does not enquire after the health of the baby (although it is described as 'fine'), but rather Pamela: 'how does my *Pamela*? Is *she* safe? Is *she* like to do well?' (*EC*, p. 381). Similarly, when arguing against breastfeeding, Mr B states, 'I shan't care, [...] to seek my Beloved in the Nursery' (*EC*, p. 312). Mr B brings Pamela's father Mr Andrews to the nursery upon his arrival, but according to Pamela 'he has not been there since: indeed he han't!' (*EC*, p. 389). When the countess visits, she and her sister kiss Billy before Mr B demands 'Take him away' (*EC*, p. 412). This seeming lack of care for his son and heir highlights Mr B's own fears that the baby will usurp him as Pamela's primary object of love and affection, and by breastfeeding she will by necessity have to leave Mr B; he argues selfishly and uses the Bible to support his position. In Pamela's parents' response to her letter outlining this moral argument, they affirm Pamela's moral position but advise that she surrender to Mr B's wishes for the greater good of his reformation. Pamela's father draws an idealised picture of lower-class breastfeeding, reminiscing about his wife performing the duty, but it appears this image is one to be denied Pamela in her new role as an upper-class mother; idyllic poverty must give way to affluent sensibilities. Not quite acquiescing with Cheyne's desire to see Pamela and her family wholly elevated, Richardson

does affirm Mr B's upper-class ideals over those of Pamela's lower-class biblical precedents.

In Pamela and Mr B's biblically argued debates, Mr B does not win his arguments with Pamela by citing more convincing scriptural references, but rather threatens polygamy to scare Pamela into acquiescing to his desires. Pamela becomes almost obsessed with the notion, 'the Effects of his former too free Life' (*EC*, p. 265), introducing it several times and worrying that Mr B will take the Countess as a second wife, forcing her to leave rather than 'consent to live with a Gentleman [...] in what I cannot but think open Sin with another' (*EC*, p. 430).<sup>12</sup> When Mr B is dissuading Pamela from spending her time in the nursery, he cites the example of Rachel, whose husband Jacob has 'several other Wives' to occupy him while his favourite wife was caring for their children (*EC*, p. 313). While Pamela cites no scriptural rebuttal for the practice of polygamy, Lady Bradshaigh summoned biblical argument in her discussion with Richardson on the topic ten years later, where she asks, 'do you think that Adam would not have lost another rib, had polygamy been thought more eligible to the nature of man?'.<sup>13</sup> Pamela appears too frightened of the genuine possibility of polygamy to rebut Mr B's use of Jacob and Rachel, presenting no

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<sup>12</sup> With Pamela's belief that polygamy is a sin, if Mr B were to bring the Countess into the family the only option for her is divorce, where she affirms the biblical and eighteenth-century standards of the act: 'you shall chuse to be divorced from me'; 'it is you that part with me' (*EC*, pp. 430, 431).

<sup>13</sup> Lady Bradshaigh to Samuel Richardson, 19 May 1752, in *Correspondence with Lady Bradshaigh and Lady Elchin*, ed. by Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 216.

argument against it, as she could easily have done. The question of polygamy in *Exalted Condition* remains open ended.

In the threat of polygamy, narrative requirements again run up against the morally instructive components of the text. The issue is that Richardson does a better job in arguing for polygamy rather than against it. As Howard Weinbrot observes, 'for all Richardson's ambivalence regarding aspects of polygamy, he intended that this episode be normative'.<sup>14</sup> Pamela may take the threat of polygamy very seriously, but Mr B does not, explaining he has been 'teizing [the Countess] [...] in favour of that foolish Topick *Polygamy*' (*EC*, p. 454). The reader is supposed to side with Pamela, yet Richardson makes no firm argument as to why the practice is sinful. Mr B's opinions of polygamy are such that only 'the Laws of [his] Country were sufficient to deter him from this Practice' (*EC*, p. 406). No moral rebuttal is offered, and thus the morality of polygamy is unexplored.

In Richardson's moral schema, Pamela cannot win an argument if it goes against Mr B's wishes. However, she can and does employ rhetorical strategies to lead Mr B into her way of thinking. For example, Pamela petitions Mr B to have Miss Goodwin live with them by claiming to want a child on whom she can practise Locke's theory of child rearing. She introduces this idea by saying there would be a local father who would freely give a child to come and live with them

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<sup>14</sup> Howard D. Weinbrot, 'Johnson's *Irene* and *Rasselas*, Richardson's *Pamela Exalted*: Contexts, Polygamy, and the Seraglio', *Age of Johnson*, 23 (2015), 89–140 (p. 110).

for a while. Mr B asks what father would give a child in such a way. Pamela then reveals that she is speaking of Miss Goodwin and that Mr B, as father, would be at perfect liberty to allow this. Mr B is angered by this rhetorical sleight of hand and after they are reconciled Pamela likens her actions to those of the prophet Nathan. Pamela 'took the Example of the Prophet, to King *David*, in the Parable of the *Ewe-Lamb*' (*EC*, p. 393). Reading allegorically, Albert J. Rivero comments that this reference is 'intriguing' given the 'sordid details of this biblical passage'.<sup>15</sup> In II Samuel, Nathan receives word from God that David has slept with the married Bathsheba. To add to his sins, David kills her husband Uriah when he refuses to sleep with his wife while his men are on the battlefield in order to disguise the fact that she is pregnant by David. Nathan employs a parable to lead David to the realisation of his sin:

And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. (II Samuel 12. 1-4)

David is incensed by this story and demands that the rich man be killed for his actions. Nathan then dramatically turns to David and says, 'Thou art the man' (II Samuel 12. 7), revealing to David the heinousness of his actions. As a divine condemnation of his behaviour, the first baby born to Bathsheba and David

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<sup>15</sup> *Exalted Condition*, p. 706.

dies. Pamela is not drawing attention to a story parallel here, as Rivero suggests, but rather Nathan's strategy. Found in the Bible, it excuses Pamela's use of it. She desires Mr B to be '[led] on in this manner against [him]self' (*EC*, p. 392). The fact that a reader attempts an allegorical reading demonstrates Richardson's lack of consideration as to what a reader scrutinising his text is likely to note.<sup>16</sup> If read as a buttress for Pamela's use of the rhetorical strategy rather than allegorically, Rivero's questioning is no longer an issue. When a deeper allegorical reading is attempted, the parallel breaks down. Pamela here usurps the traditional roles of wives by employing more covert means to get what she desires. Unable to win a debate, she can influence Mr B and subtly lead him to seeing her point of view.

The conclusion which can be drawn from these extended, biblically grounded debates over the relationship between wives and husbands is clear: wives are to be subservient to their husbands in all matters. While Richardson allows Pamela to think for herself and even argue with Mr B over issues such as breastfeeding, she must ultimately sacrifice what she has argued is moral to appease her half-reformed husband. Mr B refuses to have Pamela's attention divided between himself and their children. He demands her full admiration and uses her own moral support, the Bible, to remonstrate with her. Pamela

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<sup>16</sup> There are two other references to the story of David in *Exalted Condition*, both incidental. Pamela compares David's mourning the death of Saul with her sadness over the death of Mrs Jervis and Jonathan (II Samuel 1. 23; *EC*, p. 559). Pamela earlier states to Mrs Jervis that 'I know your Debts [...] like *David's Sins*, are ever before you' (*EC*, p. 64), an idea found within the Psalms (for example Psalm 51. 3). Both used incidentally, they are designed as a fleeting glance into the emotional content of Scripture.

ultimately, at her husband's wishes, adheres to what is expected of her as an upper-class mother, surrendering her desire to breastfeed. Fulfilling Cheyne's recommendation to see her fully elevated and behave as an upper-class woman, she must sacrifice her biblical sensibilities in order to achieve this.

Pamela as the perfect exemplar of virtue must be obedient to her husband, but a former rake whose selfishness has been well established is not qualified to be the moral spokesperson, adding moral complexities to the narrative. The tension between Pamela as moral spokesperson and Mr B as husband-ruler is unresolved until the final pages, where Pamela's prayers are answered and Mr B reforms completely.

Another of Cheyne's requests for Richardson's continuation was the complete reformation of Mr B; 'I would make my Heroine convert my Hero'.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the novel, Pamela punctuates the narrative with her hopes of Mr B's reformation: 'and [I] had only to hope, that God [...] would perfect the good Work already begun in him'; 'and made me often pray for him, (as I constantly do) that God will intirely [*sic*] convert a Heart so generous and worthy'; 'and does now this shew, that the Seeds of Honour were kept alive in his Heart, 'tho choaked or kept from sprouting forth' (*EC*, pp. 61, 145, 108). This final quotation references the Parable of the Sower: 'and some [seeds] fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them' (Matthew 13. 7). In *Exalted Condition*, Mr B begins his reformation with the hope of vicarious salvation, making direct

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<sup>17</sup> George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson, 24 August 1741, in *Correspondence with George Cheyne*, p. 69.



reference to the Bible: 'Is there not, my *Pamela*, a Text, *That the unbelieving Husband shall be saved by the believing Wife, while he beholds her chaste Conversation coupled with Fear?*' (*EC*, p. 551).<sup>18</sup> This paraphrase combines two biblical verses. The first is I Corinthians 7. 14: 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband'. The second paraphrases I Peter 3. 1 ('Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives'). This verse from I Peter is key for *Exalted Condition*, as Pamela must wait patiently for her own quiet example to convert Mr B, having to sacrifice some of her Christian duties in order to obey the commands of her husband. Eventually, however, her prayers are answered. Before their trip to Europe, Mr B states:

You shall therefore, my *Pamela*, from this Instant, be my Guide; and, only taking care, that you do not all at once, by too *rigorous* Injunctions, damp and discourage the rising Flame, I will leave it to you to direct it as you please, till, by degrees, it may be deem'd worthy to mingle with your own. (*EC*, pp. 551–52)

Pamela greets this news with rapturous enthusiasm, 'My Face lifted up to Heaven, and to his dear Face, by Turns' (*EC*, p. 552), blurring the line between praise of God and her husband as in *Virtue Rewarded*. Mr B moves from hopes of vicarious sanctity to wishing to emulate Pamela's spirituality as he becomes more aware of his faults and desires to change for her sake. As the quotation suggests, Pamela must be cautious not to be too zealous in her example; Mr B

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<sup>18</sup> Mr B has previously hinted towards this idea in *Virtue Rewarded*: 'And thus shall my own bad Actions aton'd for by your exemplary Goodness, and God will bless me for your sake' (*VR*, p. 245).

is controlling to the extent that he seeks to dictate his own conversion.

Richardson links Mr B's conversion with Pamela's continued subservience. She hopes and prays for his reformation but is unable to do anything to bring it about. She must rely inactively on God's providence to answer her prayers.

There is another example of conversion within *Exalted Condition* which contrasts Mr B's gradual one. Mrs Jewkes' conversion is almost instantaneous. Hired by Mr B for her 'try'd Fidelity' (*EC*, p. 137), in *Virtue Rewarded* Mrs Jewkes is Jezebel, but from the earliest pages of *Exalted Condition* she is wholly reformed:

She reads Prayers, or makes one of the Servants read them, every *Sunday* Night, and never misses being at Church, Morning and Afternoon, and is preparing herself by Mr. *Peters's* Advice and Direction, for receiving the Sacrament, which she earnestly longs to receive, and says it will be the Seal of her Reformation. (*EC*, p. 57).

Mrs Jewkes' redemption begins with Pamela's forgiveness of her, leading her to become the ideal servant to recompense for her previous misdeeds. She eventually dies a holy death in constant repentance of her former ways (*EC*, p. 475). This miraculous transformation from Jezebel to Christian exemplar illustrates the swift power of Pamela's example. But the conversion is questionable. The previously selfish, greedy, amoral Mrs Jewkes becomes, in a matter of pages, the ideal Christian. Richardson, in the character of Mrs Jewkes, seems to have wanted to represent instant conversion, yet there is a sense that this may be a ploy to enable her to remain in the household. Pamela has no insight into Mrs Jewkes' inner spiritual life, so must report her actions only.

Representing two ways of conversion, both at the hands of Pamela's virtuous example, Mr B and Mrs Jewkes' redemptions illustrate the moral of I Peter 3. 1, where quiet prayer and hope in God's action ultimately lead to conversions to virtuous ways of life. Cheyne's moral ideas for Richardson's sequel of conversion along with the moral outline of the relationship between wives and husbands are treated carefully. Cheyne's influence, however, was not the only motivation for Richardson's continuing Pamela's story.

In *Exalted Condition*, Richardson also turned his attention to continuations of *Virtue Rewarded*, seeking to regain control of Pamela's afterlife and ensure his morality was served in his official sequel. One of the more popular examples of a spurious continuation is John Kelly's *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* which changed Pamela's character in significant ways, seemingly intolerable to Richardson. Firstly, as with most of *Virtue Rewarded's* continuations and parodies, Pamela's social status is elevated. Richardson designed Pamela to be rewarded solely for her virtue, and while her father is a failed schoolmaster rather than a true day labourer, Pamela is firmly of the lower orders. In *High Life*, after Pamela and Mr B's marriage, Kelly's Mr B challenges his sister's snobbishness by revealing that Pamela is of more elevated lineage than Lady Davers.

Hence 'tis evident that *Pamela* on both Father and Mother's Side, for Mrs. *Andrews* is a *Jinks*, [...] this *Beggar's Brat*, is a Gentlewoman, by many Kings Reigns of more ancient Descent, from more noble Blood, than the *imperious Lady Davers*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> John Kelly, *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* (London: Ward and Chandler, Wood and Woodward, and Waller, 1741), p. 215.

Kelly elevates Pamela by her marriage into the social stratum in which she belongs rather than as a reward for her virtue and faith in God, contrary to Richardson's intentions. One of the fears surrounding *Virtue Rewarded* was that it would encourage the gentry to marry 'beneath' themselves as well as ambitious servants to desire marriage above their station, and Richardson addressed this fear in *Exalted Condition*. After Pamela discovers the affair between Mr H (Jackey) and Polly, Pamela's waiting maid, Richardson has Pamela lecture the reader on the idea of virtue rewarded. Pamela contrasts her own, bold resistance to Mr B with Polly's permissive behaviour, adding a spiritual dimension to the temporal condemnation she makes for sexual forwardness. Pamela states, 'how must they appear before an unerring and omniscient Judge, [...] The Words *Weeping* and *Wailing*, *Howling* and *Gnashing of Teeth*, [...] calling upon the *Mountains to fall upon them*, and the *Hills to cover them!*' (EC, p. 257). 'Weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth' is Matthean in origin, appearing in several places towards the end of his gospel, where most of the sayings of Jesus about the judgment of God are collected (for example Matthew 24. 51: 'And [God] shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth'). The latter expression comes from Luke. At the crucifixion Jesus prophesises the fate of the people of Jerusalem, who will be under such harsh constraint that they will 'say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us' (Luke 23. 30). The application of these two shocking biblical images to a secular condemnation of sexual misconduct and desiring elevated social status places a heavy price on those willing to forfeit their sexual purity for personal gains. In this lecture,

Richardson asserts that Pamela is an exception to the rule of class boundaries. By her constant virtuous behaviour, Pamela earns her elevation into the upper classes. She did not, at least in Richardson's depiction, design to be elevated but was rather elevated as a reward for her virtue, kept for virtue's sake. This lecture ensures not only that Richardson maintains Pamela's humble origins but also affirms rigid class boundaries, which only exemplary virtue can possibly transcend.

The second alteration Kelly made to Pamela's character in *High Life* on which Richardson sought to comment is her piety, something Cheyne also wished Richardson to maintain.<sup>20</sup> In Kelly's continuation, there are a few prayers of thanks to God early in the novel, but as the work progresses praises to God become more fragmented as prayers are no longer necessary since God has rewarded Pamela and now she can rely on herself. While Kelly's Pamela does occasionally quote the Bible ('The Ways of Omniscience are inscrutable — let us not presume to enter into the secret Decrees of the Almighty. *Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay?*'), she becomes one of the upper classes Richardson depicted negatively early in *Virtue Rewarded*.<sup>21</sup> In answer to this, Richardson maintains Pamela's piety throughout *Exalted Condition*. This is particularly evident in her preparations for the birth of her first child. Richardson appears to have wanted to portray Pamela's emotion and fears on this occasion

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<sup>20</sup> George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson, 24 August 1741, in *Correspondents with George Cheyne*, p. 70

<sup>21</sup> Kelly, p. 12, quoting Romans 9. 21: 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?'

but could not do so without affecting her steadfast faith in the divine will of God. She comes close to emotion but draws away from it. Pamela asks Lady Davers to 'let me be always remember'd in your Prayers – *Only* for a Resignation to the Divine Will' (*EC*, p. 370). Close to faltering, Richardson draws her back from having anything other than perfect acceptance of providence. Pamela hopes her 'Weakness of Mind will not be punish'd with a spiritual Dereliction' and for this sin, apparently a grave one, she hopes she 'may be forgiven' as she comforts herself with 'the Divine Exemplar, which prayed in bloody Sweats for the bitter Cup to be removed; [...] *However, not mine, but thy Will be done!*' (*EC*, p. 370; Luke 22. 42–44). Richardson does not allow Pamela even a Christ-like repining of the divine will in the face of her fears. By the birth of her second son, she is more confident: 'But I was so apprehensive before, and so troublesome to my best Friends, with my own vapourish Fears', adding that she now has, 'a perfect Resignation to the Divine Will' (*EC*, pp. 492–93). Unlike Adams' laments of his son's supposed drowning in *Joseph Andrews*, Pamela allows herself little space for compassion; the will of God must, as in *Virtue Rewarded*, be accepted instantaneously and coldly. Here, Richardson may have intended to portray Pamela's fears, yet there is a sense of hollowness about them. She is not allowed to ask for prayers for her safety, only for strength to accept whatever may happen. Unlike in Kelly's continuation, Richardson's Pamela is constantly reliant on God for her strength, maintained throughout *Exalted Condition* even though Pamela's popularity and wealth have increased.

Not only is Pamela privately devout, but Richardson continued her attendance at church. In *Exalted Condition*, Richardson outlines his ideas of how religious people should behave, which is in a way contrary to what may be expected of an Anglican with puritanical leanings. In a conversation between Pamela and Lady Davers after attending church, Lady Davers remarks that they had dinner ‘as chearful and easy, [...] as if we had not been present at so solemn a Service’ (*EC*, p. 180). Pamela’s post-service behaviour is edifying to Lady Davers, who says Pamela ‘makes Religion so pleasant and delightful a thing, that I profess I shall have a much higher Opinion of those who make it a regular and constant Part of their Employment [*sic*], than ever I had’ (*EC*, p. 180). Lady Davers further observes: ‘I have seen [...] such wry Faces, and such gloomy Countenances, among some of your pious Folks, in and after a solemn Office, that quite dishearten’d me’ (*EC*, p. 180). Pamela replies, ‘this Over-gloominess was not Religion, I was persuaded, but Constitution and Mistake; and I was sorry always when I met with it; for tho’ it might betoken a pious Mind, it certainly shew’d a narrow one, and I fear’d did more Harm than Good’ (*EC*, p. 180). The ability to behave piously during a service, Richardson argues, should not be accompanied by misery outside of it as this neglects a part of the Christian experience of the joys of God’s gifts. He makes a similar argument in *Familiar Letters* (1741), where he urges the parents of a child who has died to ‘shew a thankful Spirit for the Mercies *yet continued* to you’, lest these are also taken.<sup>22</sup> Pamela’s behaviour redeems Lady Davers’ opinion of religious people, providing an example of a pious woman who is joyful. This also extends to Pamela’s

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<sup>22</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Letters Written To and For Particular Friends* (London: Rivington, Osborn, and Leake, 1741), p. 266.

literary style. While encouraging Pamela's correspondence with her, Lady Davers comments on Pamela's writing:

We can hear at Church, or we can read in our Closets, fifty good Things that we expect not from you; but we cannot receive from any body else the Pleasure of Sentiments flowing with that artless Ease, which so much affects us when we read your Letters. (*EC*, p. 39)

According to Lady Davers, devotional literature and the Bible provide 'good Things', but it is only the style of the novel that can appeal to fashionable sentimentalism, morality in palatable form.

In contrast to Kelly, Richardson ensured in *Exalted Condition* that Pamela's social status remained humble, her rewards predicated solely on her virtue, not elevating her into the class in which she belongs by blood. Lecturing the less virtuous about desiring social aggrandisement, Richardson argues that one must seek virtue for virtue's sake not for the rewards it may bring. Pamela's piety is also maintained throughout *Exalted Condition*. Reliant on God and attending church at every opportunity, Pamela is an example for the upper classes. Richardson wanted to regain control of interpretations of his heroine, and he made sure to moralise on class boundaries and continued piety, adding two more facets of morality to those already discussed. In response to Kelly, the Bible is again used to support morality rather than for literary effect. Adding spiritual condemnation for promiscuity, it condemns those prepared to exchange 'virtue' for personal gains, also speaking to Fielding's first response to *Virtue Rewarded*.



Richardson responded to Fielding's first critique of *Virtue Rewarded*, *Shamela*, which was published eight months before *Exalted Condition*. Whether Richardson read *Shamela* is unknown, but he certainly seems to have been aware of the criticism it made of *Virtue Rewarded*, as he answers several of Fielding's objections in his continuation. Richardson appears to be especially careful to criticise Fielding's treatment of the clergy and correct Pamela's lack of charity. *Joseph Andrews* (February 1742), was not released until after *Exalted Condition* (December 1741) but their close publication date meant they would have been written concurrently and there has been speculation about the influence of one over the other. Thomas Keymer points out that Fielding was in Bath with his friend Ralph Allen during the probable time of writing *Joseph Andrews*. Allen at the time had in his possession a copy of *Exalted Condition* sent to him by Richardson. According to Keymer, this could explain why Pamela's chaplain shares the name Adams and why there is a servant called Abraham.<sup>23</sup> However, it should be noted that Abraham also appears in *Virtue Rewarded* (*VR*, p. 235) and that Adams is a reasonably common name. Perhaps if Fielding knew the contents of *Exalted Condition*, his Pamela from *Joseph Andrews* may have been more favourably characterised as, in Richardson's continuation, she dedicates much time and money to charity, Fielding's primary criticism of Richardson's depiction of virtue. While they may not have known the exact contents of each other's work, it is probable that both Richardson and Fielding knew the other was writing something relevant to their

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<sup>23</sup> Keymer, 'Introduction', in *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, p. xxv.

own projects. The relationship between *Joseph Andrews* and *Exalted Condition* is questionable, but what is clear from reading *Exalted Condition* is that Richardson responded to the criticisms made by Fielding's first satire *Shamela*, especially the idea of inactive piety covering a myriad of sins.

Fielding's primary criticism of *Virtue Rewarded* was Richardson's placement of piety over charity, almost entirely neglecting the latter in his depiction of rewardable virtue. In *Shamela*, the central character performs her devotions as does Pamela, but uses these as an excuse to behave abominably outside these windows of piety. Fielding satirised the idea that Pamela's constant invocations to grace are enough for her to be rewarded. In *Exalted Condition*, as Pamela's wealth increases, her faith becomes more ostentatious. Now Pamela can assist others, she does so enthusiastically. She takes Lady Davers and a Countess on her benevolent round, where she provides money and doctors for 'good Folks' worthy of her attention (*EC*, p. 238). She not only provides money and healthcare, but also Bibles, Books of Common Prayer, and other religious works for the children whom she quizzes about their learning (*EC*, p. 239). While acknowledging the duty of charity, Richardson's promotion of it is very different to Fielding's. Pamela's charity is a manifestation of her piety; Fielding's good characters are depicted as charitable at heart without the need for overt religion. Richardson held to the concept of the deserving (religious) poor; Fielding advocated no distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor. Pamela keeps meticulous records of her charities as Mr B's mother taught her (*EC*, p. 42); Fielding's charitable figures do not, giving all they can regardless of their

own financial situation. The duty to charity in *Exalted Condition* is an important one. Neglected in *Virtue Rewarded* (although what Pamela could do with regards to charity in the novel is questionable) Richardson ensured that, in *Exalted Condition*, Pamela's piety contained within it acts of charity in order to correct the inactive nature of her faith, ridiculed in *Shamela*.

*Shamela's* criticism of the behaviour of the clergy also receives attention in *Exalted Condition*. In a long dinner conversation, Williams outlines his plan to hold two livings, one with Mr B and the other with a wayward Earl of his acquaintance. To do this, he proposes to hire a curate on reduced wages to cover Mr B's parish while he is with the Earl, whose wages are not enough to support him. Given permission by Lady Davers to speak on the subject, Pamela utilises biblical imagery to elucidate the idea that this practice is contemptible:

Only, that the Gentleman who does all the Labour in the Vineyard, shall live upon 30, 40, or 50 *l. per Annum*, more or less, while the Gentleman who has *best* nothing but *best* Interest [...] shall receive twice, and perhaps three times the Sum for doing nothing at all. (*EC*, p. 194)

The imagery of labourers in vineyards is common to the Bible, for example Matthew 20. 1 provided in the footnotes to the Cambridge edition, although the parallels to the story of the labourers in the vineyard from Matthew 20 are not exact.<sup>24</sup> A closer biblical parallel of Pamela's use of the vineyard is from Song of Solomon 8. 11–12:

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<sup>24</sup> Labourers come to work in a vineyard at various times in the day, some early in the morning, others near the end of the working day. The owner of the vineyard pays all the labourers the same amount regardless of how many hours they worked.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

Solomon's gain for doing no work outweighs that of the labourers, just as the replacement curate could be paid less than his predecessor. Richardson's 'criticism' surrounds the material circumstances of the impoverished clergy rather than appraising the behaviours of individual clergymen. Williams' motives are pure, but it is not hard to imagine another unscrupulous clergyman taking advantage of a curate. Pamela's solution is that Williams leave, and Mr B supplement his wages. Not only a chance for moralising, this also serves to remove Williams from the narrative at Pamela's insistence to put an end to any idea the reader may have gleaned from *Shamela* that his and Pamela's relationship is anything other than platonic. Responding to Fielding's criticism of the clergy, Richardson presents a more nuanced situation. While acknowledging the difficulties faced by ministers, he does not permit amoral behaviour, even stemming from Williams' best motives.

Another element of *Virtue Rewarded* Fielding criticised was Pamela's obliviousness to her faults. Cynthia Griffin Wolff argues that one of Richardson's aims for *Virtue Rewarded* was that it be a fictional puritanical diary, yet Pamela, Wolff suggests, remains 'divinely ignorant' of her inner failings.<sup>25</sup> Pamela does

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<sup>25</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972), p. 61.

little soul searching in *Virtue Rewarded*.<sup>26</sup> However, in *Exalted Condition* she airs her dirty laundry, showing Richardson's acknowledgement of Pamela's failings as highlighted by the anti-Pamela movement and *Shamela* especially. Pamela is not the instigator of this list, Lady Davers requests it, 'lest we should think you above that Nature, which in the most and *best* Cases is your undoubted Talent' (*EC*, p. 331). Pamela responds:

Indeed, Madam, I have a great many Failings: and you don't know the Labour it costs me to keep them under; not so much for fear the World should see them, for, I bless GOD, I can hope they are not capital, as for fear they should become capital, if I were to let them grow upon me. (*EC*, p. 332)

Pamela lists 'Malignancy of Heart', citing her occasional short-lived outbursts (calling Mrs Jewkes 'Jezebel') in *Virtue Rewarded*; general spitefulness towards Mrs Jewkes and Mr Colbrand; sauciness in some of her answers to Mr B; a 'Tincture of *Jealousy*' in the case of Miss Godfrey and Mr B's relationship with the Countess, although explained away by 'laudable Motives'; '*secret Pride* and *Vanity*' over her new condition as a lady; and finally vindictiveness (*EC*, pp. 332–34).<sup>27</sup> At least five of these six failings are exploited in *Shamela*, where Pamela becomes spiteful, jealous, vain, vindictive, and impudent. In outlining her faults, Richardson acknowledges Pamela's imperfections but presents them as an opportunity for her to act virtuously. She has the duty to 'keep them

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<sup>26</sup> Compared with an example of a real spiritual autobiography, that of Samuel Ward, who on Sunday 14 June 1595 listed seventeen sins stemming from 'my drowsiness in God's service', examining his day in minute detail and repenting of his sin. Sidney Sussex College Library, Cambridge, MS 45, fol. 18v–19, quoted in Margo Todd, 'Puritan Self-fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward', *Journal for British Studies*, 31.3 (1992), 236–64 (p. 236).

<sup>27</sup> Both spitefulness and vindictiveness are removed from the fourteenth edition. These removals are possibly because there is no evidence for them in *Virtue Rewarded*, as Pamela is unwilling to condemn Mr B and seek revenge for her captivity.

under', part of being a virtuous Christian and a moral example for others to imitate.

To summarise Richardson's responses to Fielding, *Exalted Condition* engages with *Shamela* in three primary ways. Pamela acknowledges her faults in *Exalted Condition*, almost a complete list as noted by Fielding, yet these are dressed as opportunities for displaying more virtue. Imperfect, she must engage in self-reflection and exert herself to maintain her piety in the face of her flaws, an example for all readers to follow. Similarly, Richardson comments on the behaviour of the clergy. In *Shamela* mostly despicable, the clergyman Richardson created pointed out the genuine situation of many clerics, who did not seek financial gains but needed to supplement low wages, a more nuanced criticism. Unlike *Shamela*'s clergymen, Williams is a labourer deserving of living wage in order to support him. Richardson also corrects Pamela's reliance on inactive piety for her salvation, Fielding's primary moral criticism. Charity as an extension of piety is added to Pamela's merits and while different from Fielding's depiction, Richardson ensured Pamela could not be accused of pious inactivity, instead spreading her wealth to assist others. By responding to Fielding's moral criticism, Richardson acknowledged the flaws of his first novel and sought to correct them with a degree of success in this instance.

For all Richardson's moral intentions for *Exalted Condition*, the literary story is secondary to his moral messages. However, as with *Virtue Rewarded*,

amendments were made to subsequent editions of the continuation, and Richardson took the opportunity afforded by subsequent editions to edit his use of the Bible. An example of this is in Letter Thirty-two, where Lady Davers states, 'For, to talk to thee [Pamela] in thy own grave Way, thou has verify'd the Scripture, *What is done in Secret, shall be known on the House-top*' (EC, p. 116). From the second edition, this reference is omitted and replaced with the vague 'for Works of this Nature will not be long hidden'.<sup>28</sup> This removal considers the negative context of the original verse, which is a warning to hypocritical Pharisees: 'Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops' (Luke 12. 3). A warning that the machinations of the Pharisees will be made known, a reader who knows this reference and its context perceives that while the surface idea is apt, when examined closely Pamela could become Shamela in her closet, conspiring to further her own status. This and many other small amendments are typical of Richardson's style of editing, and there are numerous examples of this within the much amended fourteenth edition of *Exalted Condition*.

In 1801, the final version of *Exalted Condition* edited at least partially by Richardson was published. This fourteenth edition of *Exalted Condition* is almost a different novel to the first. Like *Virtue Rewarded's* eleventh edition, as Albert J. Rivero suggests, the fourteenth edition of *Exalted Condition* was

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<sup>28</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded [...] and Afterwards in her Exalted Condition*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (London: Richardson, 1742), III, 232–33.

'contaminated, to an extent we cannot now recover, by the editorial interference of [Richardson's] daughters'.<sup>29</sup> There are, however, indications as to which amendments were Richardson's and which his daughters. Two types of amendments were made to the final edition of *Exalted Condition*. The first is a series of smaller grammatical and stylistic amendments, in keeping with those made to previous editions of *Virtue Rewarded* and *Exalted Condition*. The second type of amendment was the drastic reduction of moralising passages.

While Richardson's practice for *Virtue Rewarded* was to subtly amend and correct, in *Exalted Condition*'s final edition, there are some uncharacteristic redactions most probably made by Richardson's daughters owing to their incongruousness with Richardson's style of minor editing. Many of the moralising passages are cut down or removed, such as Pamela's diatribe against the behaviour of the clergy (87% removed) and much of the biblical debate surrounding breastfeeding (54% cut). Richardson did not typically reduce his novels in such a way, adding more to the million-word *Clarissa* (1748) as editions progressed. These substantial excisions, all occurring in the fourteenth edition, look to be the editorial work of his daughters, who appear to have attempted to cut down the moralising in order to create a more literary work. In this they to a large extent succeeded. In heavily editing the moral passages, although not removing the majority of them entirely, the two literary

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<sup>29</sup> Albert J. Rivero, 'Textual Introduction', in Samuel Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. lxxxiv.



uses of the Bible come to the fore and the novel becomes a more viable work of literature.

In *Exalted Condition*, the primary use of the Bible is to support the morality espoused by Pamela and by Mr B to buttress his own selfishness. There are, however, two instances of literary uses of Scripture akin to those in *Virtue Rewarded*, which become more prominent and easier to trace through the text with the removals of the fourteenth edition. The biblical character of Esther is mentioned frequently, whose story is a model for virtue rewarded and this virtue assisting the wider community. Esther is the favourite wife of the Persian king Ahasuerus and, because of her beauty and virtue, saves Mordechai her adopted father's life and the lives of all Jewish people living in exile. Esther is the ultimate story of virtue rewarded and of how that reward can save and benefit others. On the surface there is a sense of parallel with Pamela. Newly exalted to lady of the manor, she saves not only souls (Mr B and Mrs Jewkes) but the poor from penury in her acts of charity. Pamela likens herself to 'Hester' as she approaches Mr B without being sent for to know whether she is to be divorced so Mr B can marry the countess. Mr B has expressly forbidden this as the primary point in his rules for Pamela's behaviour as a wife (*VR*, p. 412).

Pamela writes:

Thus poor *Hester*, to her Royal Husband, ventur'd her Life, to  
break in upon him unbidden. But that Eastern Monarch, great as  
he was, extended to the fainting Suppliant the golden Sceptre!  
(*EC*, p. 416)

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. (Esther 5. 2)

Esther is not reported to have fainted before the king in the Bible, but she does faint in the apocryphal additions to the book, having fasted for several days before she approaches the king. In both books, Esther is given permission to enter Ahasuerus' presence without being called, an act usually punishable by death (Esther 4. 11). Because of the king's affection for her she is permitted to enter to plead her case, paralleling events of *Exalted Condition*. Placing Mr B in the role of Ahasuerus emphasises his high status as master/husband able to call for and send Pamela away at will. The use of this passage linking Pamela with Esther not only likens her with a virtuous biblical character, but also emphasises Mr B's high place of authority. Pamela is only likened directly with Esther in this instance, but recurrent uses of the story add a motif to the literary aspect of the narrative, becoming more prominent in the fourteenth edition with the removal of many of the long moralising passages.<sup>30</sup>

Richardson draws attention to the similarity between Pamela and Esther early in *Exalted Condition*. In Letter One, Pamela uses a reference to Esther to reassure her parents that they are deserving of the Kent estate Mr B gives

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<sup>30</sup> Added to the second edition is a reference to Pamela putting on 'the Robes of Royalty', which could be an allusion to Esther 5. 1: 'Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house'. This comment is made as part of a larger section of praise for Pamela sent from Miss Darnford to her parents, in the same paragraph also comparing Pamela to Eve. See Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded [...] and Afterwards in her Exalted Condition*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (London: Richardson, 1742), IV, 51.

them, placing them in the position of Mordechai, who by revealing a regicide attempt, receives a high position in the King's court.

And don't make your grateful Hearts too uneasy in the Possession of [the farm], by your modest Diffidence of your own Worthiness: For, at the same time that it is what will do Honour to the best of Gentlemen, it is not so *very* extraordinary, considering his Condition, as any one to cause to Censure it as the effect of a too partial and injudicious kindness for the parents of one whom he *delighteth to honour*. (EC, p. 5)

And the king said unto [Haman], What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? [...] Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. (Esther 6. 6,10)

Mordechai is loyal to the king and therefore worthy of reward, just as Pamela's parents have been loyal to Mr B by not questioning their daughter's decision to marry a rake, greeting the news with rapturous praises to God rather than warnings. Pamela uses '*delighteth to honour*' about herself rather than her parents, showing again a slight lack of attention in Richardson's use of the Bible, but in this instance without affecting the meaning. 'Delighteth to honour' is used again in the description of the hypothetical procession of the virtuous child Miss Goodwin, who is heralded above her schoolmates and rewarded for her virtuous behaviour. As part of the imagery surrounding this, Pamela paraphrases Mordechai's procession, concluding with an altered quotation:

methinks I can see the dear little Miss, who has, in some eminent Task, borne away the Palm, make her publick Entry, as I may call it, after her Dairy Breakfast and pretty Airing, into the Governess's Court-yard, through a Row of her School-fellows, drawn out on each Side, to admire her; her Governess and Assistants receiving her at the Porch, their little Capitol, and lifting

her out with Applauses and Encomiums, with a *Thus shall it be done to the Miss, whom her Governess delighteth to honour!* (EC, p. 514)

Imitating the procession King Ahasuerus gives to Mordechai (Esther 6. 11), as with the previous example of the use of this verse, the reader is reminded that Mordechai did not seek reward for his actions but was rewarded for his loyal service at the king's pleasure, the moral of virtue for virtue's sake. In this use of Esther, Richardson goes so far as to create an exaggerated spectacle, where the child is praised and exalted as a Pamelarian example of virtue before classmates, someone to be imitated.

Richardson uses the story of Esther three times within *Exalted Condition*. The character similarities between Pamela and Esther are present and the references, all used for different characters, remind the reader of Esther's story, one where virtue and loyalty are rewarded. The repetition of 'delighteth to honour' elucidates the idea that neither Pamela's parents nor Miss Goodwin has sought reward, but that it is a by-product of their virtue, just as Pamela did not seek her own exaltation or Mordechai his. The use of Esther in Letter One introduces the potential for this to be a sustained parallel, but this is never realised. Richardson's main aims of answering criticism and elucidating morality relegating the parallel to an afterthought. It is only with the removals of the long moralising passages that this comparison comes to the fore. The moral of Esther story is that both virtue and loyalty will be rewarded and once in a

position of power it is the duty of the individual to act for the benefit of others, also speaking to Fielding's criticism of Pamela's lack of charity.

There is another literary parallel, used more cautiously than Esther, which adds another facet to Pamela and Mr B's newlywed relationship. In the early section of *Exalted Condition*, Pamela and Mr B's relationship is often compared to that of the pre-fall Adam and Eve. The Countess of C comments that, 'till now she had been at a Loss to form any Notion of the Happiness of the first Pair before the Fall' (*EC*, p. 225). There is also reference to a non-biblical example of the Adam and Eve narrative in the form of the mention of 'the first Pair in old *Du Bartas*' (*EC*, p. 40). Miss Darnford comments that Pamela is an 'angel, dropp'd down [...] to shew what the first of the Species was designed to be' (*EC*, p. 338). Used in the first portion of the novel only, this model relationship, like that of Adam and Eve, has its fall. After the misunderstanding surrounding the affair with the Countess has been resolved, the gossip Turner is marked out as 'the Serpent in the Ear of my *Eve*' (*EC*, p. 428). This is the final reference to the Adam and Eve narrative in *Exalted Condition*, as Pamela and Mr B's relationship is no longer that of unshakeable perfection. By appreciating these parallels, more prominent in the fourteenth edition, the reader is in the first half of the novel reminded that Richardson wanted to depict Pamela's relationship as perfect. However, with the threat of an affair, polygamy, and arguments over breastfeeding, the parallel is overtaken by the events of the novel.

In the fourteenth and final edition of *Exalted Condition* published in 1801, it is most likely Richardson's daughters made the large removals from the text. Cutting down the moralising, they created a novel rather than a moral tract held together by chunks of narrative. In doing so, they highlighted the more literary uses of the Bible. Esther's story, which parallels Pamela's frequently, is used as another biblical example of virtue rewarded, and a template as to how this virtue can save others. Similarly, the use of pre-fall Adam and Eve to describe Pamela and Mr B's early relationship before the affair with the Countess highlights the perfection of their relationship. By the fourteenth edition, *Exalted Condition* is no longer weighed down by the voluminous moralising without a central message. With the plot freed from Richardson's desire to correct, change and respond to parodies, continuations and correspondences, biblical metaphors previously secondary come to the fore.

To summarise, *Exalted Condition* in some respects fails as a novel because Richardson's intention was not literary. Seeking to respond to Fielding's criticism of Pamela's lack of charity and his low opinion of the clergy while also acknowledging his central character's failings, he moralises that charity, self-reflection, and adequate remuneration of the clergy are all essential for piety and society. Forced to write his own continuation, Richardson also emphasised Pamela's piety and virtue, the only reason for her elevation. Moralising that virtue should be maintained for virtue's sake rather than the rewards this may bring, and reliance on God is essential even for those with money, Pamela's personality remains unaltered by her elevation. Looking to his correspondents

for advice, Richardson ensured many of George Cheyne's requests for his sequel were fulfilled. Moralising over the relationship between wives and husbands, the role of the upper-class mother (contrary to biblical precedents), and ensuring the conversion of Mr B, Richardson adds yet more morals to his work. His attempt to regain control of Pamela's narrative, while also correcting some of the moral overemphases from *Virtue Rewarded* and trying to keep a valued friend satisfied, causes *Exalted Condition* to fail as a literary endeavour. In trying to do too much, the morality espoused in *Exalted Condition* has no central message, leaving the reader with a fragmented novel, both morally and literarily.

The use of biblical references in *Exalted Condition* centre around affirming the multiple moral messages Richardson wanted to convey. Various parts of the Bible are selected for their suitability for an argument; no moral engagement with a passage is sustained for extended periods. Interrupting rather than enriching the narrative, they punctuate the novel as Richardson uses them to convince the reader of Pamela's morality. Used by Mr B not to ensure the will of God is done but to get his own way, Pamela's well-reasoned and piously sought opinions are disregarded in favour of Mr B's wants. Pamela must patiently wait for a conversion that the reader is unsure will ever come. The recurrent but infrequent uses of Esther and Adam/Eve on a literary level do add some interesting parallels, but the verbose moralising in all but the final edition, where it appears Richardson's daughters made redactions, make these challenging to chart through the novel for the casual reader. The morality confused and the

literary endeavour secondary, *Exalted Condition* fails to live up to Richardson's artistic potential, evident in the first half of *Virtue Rewarded*, and coming to full fruition in his next novel, *Clarissa*.



CHAPTER FIVE – *CLARISSA, OR THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY:*  
*LIVING AND DYING IN IMITATIO CHRISTI*

Unlike *Virtue Rewarded* (1740), *Exalted Condition* (1742) seems to have inspired no comment or parody. While Richardson's correspondents wrote praise of the sequel, searches of digital resources between 1741 and 1750 returned no published reviews, responses, or criticism of Richardson's continuation. Although advertised widely, it appears *Exalted Condition* was not deemed worthy of public comment. As I have discussed in Chapter Four, the novel is not literary in form, and also does not appear to have inspired moral comment. Consequently, one cannot gauge with any certainty how eighteenth-century readers outside of Richardson's correspondents engaged with *Exalted Condition* and what they thought of Pamela's post-marriage life. Sold appended to *Virtue Rewarded* as one novel, its commercial attractiveness is also difficult to determine. In a letter to Richardson written by George Cheyne, he notes that, according to his local booksellers, the piece '[sold] very well, but not so quick as the first'.<sup>1</sup>

Richardson's first attempt to salvage *Virtue Rewarded's* plot holes and moral difficulties, exploited by Fielding and others, appears to have been a failure. In writing *Clarissa* (1748), Richardson created a novel that seems to have

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<sup>1</sup> George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson, 10 January 1741, in *The Letters of Doctor George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson (1733–1743)*, ed. by C. F. Mullet (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1943), p. 82.

benefited from *Virtue Rewarded*'s mistakes. It may not appear *Clarissa* was written in response to *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Shamela* (1741), but as Leopold Damrosch suggests, 'Fielding's shrewd satire in *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* no doubt had something to do with [the writing of *Clarissa*].'<sup>2</sup>

Damrosch's throw-away comment as part of his investigation into the relationship between *Clarissa* and puritanism highlights the interrelated nature of Richardson's and Fielding's fictions in the minds of critics. My research affirms Damrosch's comment, with many of the moral criticisms made of *Virtue Rewarded* and *Exalted Condition* answered in Richardson's second attempt at a moral novel. Richardson aimed to create a heroine who could not be accused of self-aggrandisement or neglecting charity as a part of virtue. Learning his lesson from creating a character supposedly devoid of any sin, *Clarissa*'s minor imperfections are repented of and overcome by her total religious conversion.

This chapter is the first comprehensive study of the role of biblical references in *Clarissa*. While the meditations have been commented on frequently, most of the 169 references to the Bible have either escaped notice or received little attention. Richardson's use of the Bible in *Clarissa* is sophisticated. He considered what references a character would likely know and has them misquote and misinterpret the Bible in a telling fashion. Scripture is used sparingly until *Clarissa*'s imprisonment, when the number of references increases once the heroine's faith in the world has dissipated and she gives

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<sup>2</sup> Leopold Damrosch, *God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1985), p. 214.

herself wholly to God, moving towards the perfect afterlife. The use of the Bible by other characters will also be considered, where misquotation and misattribution are common and provide a reader familiar with the Bible a deeper insight into the wickedness of the characters who surround Clarissa. By investigating the use of the Bible in the novel, this chapter will provide modern scholars with a new reading, reflecting what intertextual references an eighteenth-century audience would more likely perceive as they read *Clarissa*.

This chapter will first argue that from the novel's beginning Clarissa lives in imitation of Christ, set first against the pharisaical Harlowes. They urge adherence to Old Testament law, disregarding Christian justice and mercy. Richardson cautiously uses biblical references in this section. He utilises subtle allusion and more blatant quotation, which creates something more sophisticated than *Virtue Rewarded* and *Exalted Condition*. The wicked Harlowes can quote the Bible, but do not use it to persuade Clarissa to obey. Misquoting and misinterpreting scriptural references, they show themselves to be uninterested in anything other than financial aggrandisement. After her abduction, Clarissa must resist the imitator of Satan, Lovelace, in the isolated wilderness of London as Jesus had to resist the temptations of Satan in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 4), returning to a biblical theme from *Virtue Rewarded*. Lovelace, like Mr B in *Exalted Condition*, possesses a surprising amount of biblical knowledge. Using Scripture like classical literature, he mirrors Satan's use of the Old Testament, selective but faulty. After her imprisonment and total conversion to a religious way of life, Clarissa dies

surrounded not by loving representatives of the temporal church but again in the manner of Christ, abandoned by all, save widows, sinners, and strangers.

Clarissa loses herself through her meditations in the words of the Bible. Her final words are taken almost exclusively from Scripture, climaxing in the name of Jesus. Of the three representatives of the church from the post-imprisonment section of the novel (Brand, Lewen and the unnamed clergyman) only the unnamed clergyman offers Clarissa any Christian comfort. She outshines the named representatives of the church in behaviour, piety, and use of the Bible. Brand, for example, quotes the Bible for self-aggrandisement rather than for the edification of the dying saint Clarissa. It must be noted that unlike Christ (and Richardson's intentions for Pamela), Clarissa is imperfect. Actively seeking her escape from Harlowe Place rather than passively waiting for providence, her tragedy stems from action, but ultimately leads to her happiness and salvation in the ultimate story of virtue rewarded.

Comparatively, Richardson's use of the Bible in *Clarissa* is far more considered than in his previous novels. He clearly spent time assessing each use, ensuring no alternate readings and incongruous imagery might appear. When comparing the number of biblical references in *Clarissa* with *Virtue Rewarded*, what is striking is their distinct scarcity in the later work. As Robert A. Erikson notes in his article exploring the relationship between the form of the Bible and *Clarissa* as represented by the concept of 'heart': 'Moreover, Richardson is remarkably sparing of scriptural allusions throughout *Clarissa*. He does not want the novel

to sound like a tract'.<sup>3</sup> If the rate of biblical references in *Clarissa* were to match that of *Virtue Rewarded*, one would expect to find over 300 references, rather than the ninety-four my research has discovered.<sup>4</sup> Erikson again notes that 'in the first three-quarters of the novel, *Clarissa* alludes to the Bible, directly or indirectly, only about fifteen times'.<sup>5</sup> I have found forty-six references to the Bible before *Clarissa*'s imprisonment approximately two-thirds into the narrative, twenty-seven of which originate from *Clarissa*. If the number of scriptural references in the final third of the novel were to be representative of the whole, there would be approximately 370 references, an indication of the religious significance of the later part of the novel.

As with *Virtue Rewarded* and *Exalted Condition*, Richardson made amendments to subsequent editions of *Clarissa*. He added, as Shirley van Marter observes, 'over two hundred pages of text' mainly to the third of four editions printed during Richardson's lifetime.<sup>6</sup> All of the biblical references from the first edition have been retained in the third, except for the prostitute Sally's reference to the Apocrypha: '*Ecclesiasticus* too! — That's Apocrypha, as they call it', perhaps because Richardson saw this as knowledge she was unlikely to

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<sup>3</sup> Robert A. Erikson, "Written in the Heart": "Clarissa" and Scripture', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 2.1 (1989), 17–52 (p. 39).

<sup>4</sup> Here, I have counted each meditation as one reference to give an idea of the numbers involved overall. If the references in the meditations are counted individually, the total reaches approximately 169.

<sup>5</sup> Erikson, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Shirley van Marter, 'Richardson's Revisions of "Clarissa" in the Second Edition', *Studies in Bibliography*, 26 (1973), 107–32 (p. 108).

possess.<sup>7</sup> Nine biblical references were added to the third edition. Most significantly, two references occur in new letters from Brand the pedant clergyman, where he likens himself to David slaying the Goliath Lovelace with ‘*slings and stones of the ancient sages*’ and glorifying himself as the peacemaker between Clarissa and her family by offering her marriage.<sup>8</sup> An extended conversation between Lovelace and Clarissa about the Bible was also added, further illustrating Lovelace’s faulty biblical exegesis and determination to avoid reform. Richardson’s additions are consistent with other uses of the Bible, chosen to indicate character flaws and emphasise Clarissa’s biblical knowledge and religious commitment.

In *Clarissa*, Richardson presents his heroine as an imitator of Christ set against a variety of enemies. The first contrast Richardson presents is between Clarissa and her family, who urge her to follow the letter of the Old Testament law of family obedience without considering its spirit: ‘Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [...] [you] have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith’ (Matthew 23. 23). The Harlowes, like the Pharisees in the gospels, know Scripture. Of the ten biblical references (of twenty-five) from Harlowe Place not used by Clarissa, four are used by Arabella, one by Anna, three by Antony, one by John Harlowe and one by Clarissa’s mother. Their choice of verses is idiosyncratic, and it is only Antony who uses the Bible

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<sup>7</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*, ed. by Angus Ross (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 1061. Subsequent references to this edition are quoted in main body of text as (C).

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*, 3rd edn, 8 vols, (London: printed for Richardson, 1751), VIII, 395, 391.

in his letter trying to persuade Clarissa to obey her parents. Clarissa is the source of fifteen scriptural references using a wide cross-section of the Bible. There are three references to the Apocrypha, five to the Old Testament and seven to the New Testament, the only part of the novel where Clarissa's references are weighted more towards the New Testament. However, just as the Harlowes fail to engage coherent biblical argument, so does Clarissa. She remains relatively secular until her faith in the justice of the world has vanished after her imprisonment.

In the entirety of the section of the novel set at Harlowe Place, nowhere is Clarissa urged to obey her family based on coherent biblical argument. As Levin L. Schücking states while arguing for the 'complete ignoring of the religious factor' in the early part of the novel:

Clarissa's father would surely have tried to persuade his recalcitrant daughter by means of religious arguments. She would have been prayed for at family prayers. She would have had the Bible quoted at her and all moral means available to the family theocracy would have been used to break her obstinacy.<sup>9</sup>

Schücking explores Richardson's reliance on the puritan family model for the Harlowes, a model that has collapsed under the weight of greed. The Harlowes are church-attending (C, p. 250), but secular in their argument. It is enough for them to demand something of Clarissa, they do not in their view need anything

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<sup>9</sup>Levin L. Schücking, *The Puritan Family: A Social Study from the Literary Sources* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1969), p. 155.

other than secular authority. A biblical argument, however, would no doubt give the religious Clarissa pause for thought.

Although biblical arguments may have been a more effective way to argue with Clarissa, her uncle Antony is the character who comes closest to utilising biblical argument in his correspondence with his niece. In the response to Clarissa's plea for allies against her forced marriage, Antony begins his response by using a reference that establishes the atmosphere of Harlowe Place. He states, '*He that is first in his own cause, saith the wise man, seemeth just: but his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him*' (C, p. 154). This is a direct quotation from Proverbs 18. 17, and acknowledges the trial Clarissa is undergoing. In his second allusion, Antony rejects Clarissa's pointed use of I Timothy 6. 10 in her letter to him. In arguing against Solmes' suitability, Clarissa writes: 'in his loves too (the object only differing), if *the love of money be the root of all evil?*' (C, p. 151). To this, Antony responds misogynistically that women are 'Such *gnat-strainers* and *camel swallowers*, as venerable holy writ has it' (C, p. 154), an accusation Jesus made of the Pharisees: 'Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel' (Matthew 23. 24). Accusing the Pharisees of obeying the minutiae of the law while losing sight of its wider duties, Jesus' comic imagery is here applied to Clarissa's situation. Clarissa is accused of 'gnat-straining' when she quotes from I Timothy, showing Antony perceives that her objection is a minor one. He is a Harlowe who has never married for the financial aggrandisement of the family. Antony's letter, rather than forming a coherent biblical argument, shows that he knows and respects



the Bible but has misinterpreted it as the New Testament Pharisees do. The use of the references without appreciation for their context highlights Antony's lack of understanding of Jesus' ministry of mercy and justice, and by extension Clarissa's calls for it. Despite prominent examples which could be selected from the Bible, Antony chooses instead to belittle Clarissa, stating her well-argued objections are minor, acting as a Pharisee when confronted with an imitator of Christ.

Perhaps the most obvious biblical argument Richardson could have the Harlowes make is the invocation for the obedience of children in the Ten Commandments: 'Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee' (Exodus 20. 12). In fulfilment of this commandment, Clarissa's earthly life is not long once she has disobeyed her parents. While not explicitly quoted, the idea of parental authority as prescribed in the Ten Commandments pervades the early section of narrative. Clarissa's father, goaded by her older siblings, seeks to hold a God-like authority over his daughter. As the Harlowes could quote the Ten Commandments at Clarissa, she could also theoretically counter with a New Testament text enjoining reasonableness of parental commands. In Ephesians 6. 1-4 (repeated in Colossians 3. 20-22), parents have the obligation to consider their commands: 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right [...] And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord' (Ephesians 6. 1, 4). Such New Testament acknowledgment that the absolute of the Ten Commandments relies

on the reasonableness of parental demands is clearly applicable to Clarissa's situation. Nevertheless, Richardson seems to have actively chosen not to use the Bible in the Harlowe's remonstrations with Clarissa.

While not quoting the Ten Commandments, Richardson does note a biblical reference which outlines the authority of fathers over daughters, also used in *Exalted Condition* regarding the obedience of wives to husbands. Clarissa states as she muses on her disobedience, 'far, very far, would *those* be, who according to the Old Law have a *right of absolving or confirming* a child's promise, from ratifying *mine*, had it been ever so *solemn* a one' (C, p. 361).

Richardson comments in an uncharacteristically extended footnote:

See Numbers 30. Where it is declared, whose vows shall be binding, and whose not. The vows of a man, or of a widow, are there pronounced to be indispensable; because they are sole and subject to no other domestic authority. But the vows of a single woman, and of a wife, if the father of the one, or the husband of the other, disallow of them as soon as they know them, are to be of no force.

A matter highly necessary to be known, by all young ladies especially, whose designing addressers too often endeavour to engage them by vows, and then plead conscience and honour to them to hold them down to the performance. (C, p. 361)

Richardson applies the principle of female vow annulment to romantic vows, rather than suggesting a mediatory role of the father between the daughter and God as he came close to advocating in *Exalted Condition*, a role for which Clarissa's father, like Mr B, is unqualified. As Florian Stuber notes, 'Mr. Harlowe speaks with a voice of thunder, making his sake God's sake, as if convinced his

authority were sanctioned by a kind of Divine Right'.<sup>10</sup> This is so much the case that Clarissa's father sees his authority as extending 'both *here* and *hereafter*' (C, p. 509) as he issues his curse to Clarissa. In *Moral and Instructive Sentiments* (1755), a volume teasing out the morals of his fiction to ensure none could be overlooked by his readers, Richardson states: 'the Almighty gives not his assent to rash and inhuman curses'.<sup>11</sup> Mr Harlowe has radically overstepped his authority when issuing this curse, but Clarissa takes it very seriously until her final preparations for death, desiring its lifting before her death not for her sake, but for her father's, who will soon be stricken with grief. She no longer believes human curses can bind her soul. The rigid and authoritarian demand for obedience by the Harlowes is symptomatic of the approach of the Pharisees to obedience to God, who in the gospels urged following the minutiae of the law but neglected its larger duties. The Harlowes have strained the gnat of mercy and swallowed the camel of financial aggrandisement.

The world of Harlowe Place is one of following the letter of Old Testament law but not the spirit of it. The Harlowes attend church and can quote the Bible, but they have failed to take the teachings of Scripture to heart. In a place devoid of love and mercy, obedience to the absolute command of the Old Testament is demanded but unreferenced as Clarissa's father attempts to exercise God-like sovereignty over a daughter whose spirit is diametrically opposed to that of her

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<sup>10</sup> Florian Stuber, 'On Fathers and Authority in Clarissa', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 25.3 (1985), 557–74 (p. 561).

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Samuel Richardson's Published Commentary on Clarissa, Volume 3: Moral and Instructive Sentiments*, intro. by John A. Dussinger (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), p. 211.

family. Clarissa's uncle Antony comes closest to biblical remonstrance, yet he cannot form a coherent argument. He misquotes the 'venerable' Bible and evidences the wickedness the Harlowes embody. To object to a marriage of convenience to a wealthy but odious man is, for the Harlowes, to strain a gnat. Upon leaving Harlowe Place, Clarissa escapes a world from which she originated but one to which she does not belong. She embodies the New Testament message of love and mercy, which has sprung from the harsh, unbending absolutes of the Old Testament as interpreted by the self-serving Pharisees depicted in the New Testament. Clarissa has not yet lost her faith in the world and her family show no interest in biblically arguing their case (which Clarissa could rebut) as their authority as endowed by the secular society is enough justification for their behaviour. They select their principles of religion, conveniently benefiting the family financially, the only thing about which the Harlowes are concerned.

It is in Clarissa's clandestine correspondence with Lovelace and her plans to escape her family's insistence on marriage that constitute Clarissa's fatal mistake. She neglects to place her faith solely in 'Providence'. Unlike Pamela, whose inactive trust in providence is unwavering, Clarissa acts, and by doing so brings about her earthly sufferings. Early in the novel, Clarissa insists she is trusting entirely to providence: 'The will of Providence be resigned to in the rest: as *that* leads, let me patiently and unrepiningly follow!' (C, p. 333). However, she relies on her own action to escape her seemingly hopeless situation. She states she is 'to *hope* everything, to *bear* everything and to *try* everything' (C, p.

167), alluding to I Corinthians 13. 7 'Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things'. Clarissa tellingly adds 'try' to the passively worded biblical reference. After leaving Harlowe Place, Clarissa admits that her trust in providence was not complete, and acknowledges her error: 'I too little, perhaps, cast up my eyes to the Supreme Director: in whom, mistrusting myself, I ought to have placed my whole confidence!' (C, p. 565). In a letter to Aaron Hill dated 29 October 1746, Richardson stated, 'I had further intended to make [Clarissa] so faultless, that a Reader should find no way to account for the Calamities she met with, and to justify Moral Equity but by looking up to a future Reward; another of my principle Doctrines; and one of my principal Views to inculcate in this Piece'.<sup>12</sup> This responds to Richardson's presentation of reward in *Virtue Rewarded*, where Pamela's elevation is solely temporal. While Richardson may not have realised a faultless character, he created one with inarguable virtue and one whose 'punishment' is not in correlation with her crime.

Clarissa's lack of inactive trust to providence has also been noted by other scholars. In her article exploring the conflict between active and passive responsibility in a world of providence through the lens of female roles in eighteenth-century society, Lois A. Chaber argues that Clarissa, as a woman, should remain passive.

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<sup>12</sup> Samuel Richardson to Aaron Hill, 29 October 1748, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, ed. by Christine Gerrard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 226.

Indeed, it *is* out of [Clarissa's] power to help herself in any morally approved way, according to the theological imperatives to which Richardson subscribed; hence, she ought to have passively waited for a providential interposition, an imperative reinforced by her own self-condemnation after the flight to St Albans with Lovelace, with its tell-tale recurrence of the verb "to do": "O that I had it still in my power to say I *suffered* wrong, rather than *did* wrong!".<sup>13</sup>

After Clarissa's escape, she discovers her family were planning to end their insistence on her marriage to Solmes and the reader glimpses what might have been if Clarissa had trusted solely in providence (C, p. 504). What Chaber does not acknowledge, however, is that there are suggestions in the novel that male characters should also wait on providence rather than act for themselves.

Lovelace is punished for his impatient action. As Clarissa states, if it were not for the rape, she 'had begun to think that I must be [Lovelace's]' and 'I once could have loved him' (C, pp. 908, 1341). Clarissa's lack of trust in providence during the first two thirds of the novel raises an interesting question: can human action undermine God's providential plan? As Anthony Winner argues, *Clarissa* extols a 'Providential scheme unalterable by human machination'.<sup>14</sup> However, if one is to read *Clarissa* with this idea of predestination in mind, God ordains all the woes that befall Clarissa and she becomes a second Job. Alternately, one can view providence in *Clarissa* as dynamic. Once disobeyed, providence can work the current situation for the benefit of the good and the punishment of the bad both in this life and the hereafter. The neglect of providence is a theme which shapes the first two-thirds of the novel, and it is only after her

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<sup>13</sup> Lois A. Chaber, 'Christian Form and Anti-Feminism in *Clarissa*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 15 (2003), 507–37 (p. 520).

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Winner, 'Richardson's Lovelace: Character and Prediction', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 14.1 (1972), 53–75 (p. 53).

imprisonment that Clarissa places her faith entirely in God. After her complete conversion, providence begins to work the current situation for the good of those who believe and act in a Christian way, and the damnation of those who do not.

After her abduction, Clarissa leaves behind her Pharisaical family in exchange for the devilish Lovelace, her suitor and captor. As Margaret Anne Doody notes, Richardson 'evidently saw that the themes of the first novel — captivity, sexual conflict, the stress on the individual personality forced to deal with a hostile environment — could carry more serious implications than they do in *Pamela*'.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike Pamela, who the reader never truly feels is in any danger assured as they are of 'virtue rewarded', Clarissa is clearly in trouble. Lovelace is one of the most theologically complicated characters in *Clarissa*. He is depicted as Satan, the tempter to Clarissa's Christ in the wilderness. Of the twenty-one biblical references between Clarissa's abduction and her imprisonment, eight originate from Lovelace in the first edition, a surprisingly high number. However, this is less surprising when consideration is given to the biblical Satan's ability to quote salient passages: 'And [the devil] saith unto [Jesus], If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone' (Matthew 4. 6; quoting Psalm 91. 11–12). Jesus, unmoved by this tactic, quotes another verse back at him: 'It is written again, Thou shalt

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<sup>15</sup> Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study in the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 99.

not tempt the Lord thy God' (Matthew 4. 7; quoting Deuteronomy 6. 16). As are the temptations of Jesus, Clarissa's and Lovelace's battle of wills is of great consequence. Lovelace understands the Bible as a tool to convince Clarissa of his potential to reform, but a reader who appreciates the scriptural war between evil and good as depicted in the Bible knows the Devil can quote the Bible when it suits him.

Throughout *Clarissa*, Lovelace is constantly presented as Devil-like. Anna Howe describes Lovelace as 'a devil' (C, p. 278, italics mine). Like Mr B in *Virtue Rewarded*, the thoroughly wicked Lovelace is never Satan himself, but rather his workman, something Lovelace acknowledges himself: '*the* devil indeed, as soon as my angel made her appearance, crept out of my heart; but he had left the door open as was no further off than my elbow' (C, p. 642, italics mine). A devil he is, *the* Devil has, however inhabited him, preying on his fatal flaw: 'these confounded girls. But for *them*, I could go to church with a good conscience: [...] Everywhere does Satan spread snares for me!' (C, p. 419). These are snares that Lovelace is able to resist in the case of Rosebud but cannot when it comes to Clarissa. As Jean H. Hagstrom notes after pointing out Lovelace's benevolent qualities such as his charity and compassion, '[Lovelace] destroys the hopes that he himself has helped to arouse; and he is profoundly evil precisely to the degree that he is potentially good. [...] he becomes a rebellious Satan who has consciously chosen evil'.<sup>16</sup> For all his charity and

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<sup>16</sup> Jean H. Hagstrom, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980) p. 211.



plans for reform, Lovelace cannot overcome his self-definition of rake. It is hard to read the character of Lovelace without sensing the parallel with Satan in *Paradise Lost*, which has been noted by many.<sup>17</sup> Presented with repentance, both Milton's Satan and Lovelace move further away from the good path offered to them. Lovelace undergoes Satan's 'crisis of faith' in the letters leading up to the rape. His usually eloquent, well-crafted epistles become fragmented as he debates whether to complete the act which, as he reasons, must gain Clarissa's consent; 'once subdued, always subdued' (C, p. 675). This crisis is summed up by his statement, 'And, oh Jack, the rage of love, the rage of revenge is upon me! By turns they tear me!' (C, p. 882). *Paradise Lost*'s Satan is equally torn between repentance and continuing on his path of destruction, but the price of salvation is deemed too high: 'is there no place | Left for repentance, none for pardon left? | None left but by submission; and that word | Disdain forbids me'.<sup>18</sup> Lovelace is in these letters a Miltonic Satan, drawn towards the light, but his pride and his own self-image as a rake draws him towards the act he believes will finally get him what he wants – Clarissa's consent – while his conscience, subdued by 'the women [goading] me on' (C, p. 881), urges him to stop.

Once Clarissa has left Harlowe Place, Richardson begins to emphasise her spiritual qualities. The devilish Lovelace is contrasted with Clarissa's constant depiction as an angel. Clarissa is called an angel 139 times throughout the

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<sup>17</sup> For example, Gillian Beer, 'Richardson, Milton and the Status of Evil', *Review of English Studies*, 19.75 (1968), and Thomas Keymer, *Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>18</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost: The Biblically Annotated Edition*, ed. by Matthew Stallard (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011) p. 135.

novel, mostly by Lovelace, whose favourite term is 'my angel'; she is also 'my goddess', emphasising Lovelace's belief that it is only Clarissa who has the power to redeem him from his profligate life. This angelic imagery reaches its climax when Lovelace discovers Clarissa after her first escape. Above the closet in which Clarissa hides hangs a portrait of St Cecilia, famed for keeping her virginity even after marriage by divine command and converting her husband to Christianity before both were martyred. When Clarissa exits, Lovelace describes her appearance as 'blaz[ing] upon me, as it were in a flood of light, like what one might imagine would strike a man who, born blind, had by some propitious power been blessed with his sight, all at once, in a meridian sun' (C, p. 772). This quotation refers to many of the healing stories of the gospels, where the blind receive sight through Jesus' healing as well as Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. This imagery of Clarissa as a saint recurs at her death in Lovelace's dream, and again as he calls to her from his deathbed to save him from damnation (C, pp. 1218, 1487–88). For Lovelace, Clarissa is the means by which he can be saved. She is his Christ; he has failed to recognise she lives in imitation of another, of whom he remains wilfully ignorant.

Despite Lovelace's satanic depiction, he is biblically literate. However, Richardson uses careful misattribution and misquotation to indicate to the reader that Lovelace's understanding of Scripture is only superficial. Lovelace misquotes the Bible twice in the first and second editions, and three times in the much-amended third edition. The most prominent example of this misquotation

is an extended conversation about the Bible added to the third edition. It reveals Lovelace's quotational abilities, but also his flawed recollection, counterbalanced with Clarissa's ability to perceive these faults and, despite his intention, remain unmoved by his faulty scholarship. Clarissa writes:

I asked him, if he knew what he had said, alluded to a sentence on the best of books, *That there was more joy in heaven*

He took the words out of my mouth,

*Over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons which need no repentance,* were his words.

Yes, Madam, I thought of it as soon as I said it, but not before. I have read the story of the Prodigal Son, I'll assure you: And one day, when I am settled as I hope to be, will write a dramatic piece on the subject.<sup>19</sup>

While in keeping with Clarissa's biblical knowledge to recognise a misattribution, Richardson is careful to inform the reader of Lovelace's fault, inserting the footnote 'Luke xv.7 The parable is concerning the 99 Sheep, not the Prodigal Son, as Mr Lovelace erroneously imagines'.<sup>20</sup> Not trusting the reader to recognise the exact context of the verse, Richardson highlights Lovelace's fault. The introduction of the story of the Prodigal Son here is not intended to draw a parallel: Lovelace is 'wast[ing] his substance with riotous living' (Luke 15. 13) but will not return home in repentance. As the conversation progresses, Lovelace reveals his unwillingness to repent and learn of Christ:

O Madam, I have read the Bible, as a fine piece of antient history—But as I hope to be saved, it has for some few years past made me so uneasy, when I have popped upon some passages

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<sup>19</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, III, 149–50. Betty Barnes has previously quoted this text at Clarissa while she is captive at Harlowe Place (C, p. 362), suggesting Clarissa is the prodigal son who needs repentance and forgiveness for her refusal to blindly obey family commandments.

<sup>20</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, III, 149.

in it, that I have been forced to run to music or company to divert myself.

Poor wretch! lifting up my hands and eyes—

The denunciations come so slap-dash upon one, so unceremoniously, as I may say, without even the By-your-leave of a rude London chairman, that they overturn one, horse and man, as St. Paul was overturned, There's another Scripture allusion. Madam! The light, in short, as his was, is too glaring to be borne.<sup>21</sup>

Here, Lovelace shows himself to be potentially redeemable. He recognises the power of the Word of God yet resists the call to repentance and a pious life, causing Clarissa to despair. Lovelace designs this conversation to impress upon Clarissa the extent to which she can redeem him. However, he drives a further wedge between himself and the heroine. She is not convinced by his quotation, just as Jesus is unconvinced by Satan's use of Scripture in the wilderness and she remains unwilling to bend to the demand that she be his redeemer.

One of the most dramatic features of Lovelace's character is the question of whether he will repent and reform or continue in profligacy. Despite the constant use of demonic imagery surrounding Lovelace, Richardson wrote in his preface that Lovelace is not beyond redemption:

that the gentlemen [Lovelace and Belford], though professed libertines as to the fair sex, [...] are not, however, either infidels or scoffers; nor yet such as think themselves freed from the observance of other moral obligations.

On the contrary, it will be found in the progress of the collection, that they very often make such reflections upon each other, and each upon himself and upon his actions, as reasonable beings

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<sup>21</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, III, 150.

who disbelieve not a future state of rewards and punishments (and who one day propose to reform) must sometimes make—one of them actually reforming, and antidoting the poison which some might otherwise apprehend would be spread by the gayer pen and lighter heart of the other. (C, p. 35)

Richardson does not state at this early stage whether it is Belford or Lovelace who will reform. As the narrative progresses, however, it becomes apparent that the 'gayer pen' belongs to Lovelace. Richardson may see Lovelace as redeemable, but Lovelace himself does not share this faith. Throughout the post-rape section of the novel, Lovelace asserts that he has committed a sin that cannot be forgiven, even by God. If Clarissa will not forgive him, as Lovelace believes she never can, despite her insistence to the contrary, 'how then can I expect mercy anywhere else!' (C, p. 1385). Lovelace urges Clarissa to accept his proposal of marriage after the rape in terms of repentance for himself: 'the God whom you serve requires but repentance and amendment. Imitate *Him*, my dearest love, and bless me with the *means* of reforming a course of life that begins to be hateful to me' (C, p. 909). After Clarissa's rejection of his offers and her subsequent death, Lovelace begins something of a suicide mission, seemingly still unrepentant. As James Louis Fortuna states, 'Lovelace's last words, "let this expiate!", [...] are evidence not of a sincere repentance, but rather, again, of a pride which causes him to *demand* that his own death be acceptable as an "atonement" for the suffering and death of Clarissa'.<sup>22</sup> The three words Lovelace utters could reflect John's gospel account of Jesus' final words – 'it is finished!' (John 19. 30) placing his death alongside

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<sup>22</sup> James Louis Fortuna, *'Unsearchable Wisdom of God': A Study in Providence in Richardson's Pamela* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1980), p. 33.

Christ's in its ability to be redemptive. The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides an obsolete meaning of 'expiate' as 'to cleanse, purify (a person, a city) from guilt or pollution by religious ceremonies', which seems to be the intended meaning of Lovelace's use of the word here; he demands that his act of 'martyrdom' satisfy a God he sees as revenging, not loving. Lovelace's death raises the question as to whether in the theological scheme of *Clarissa* he is beyond achieving salvation. In defiance of Richardson's theology, Lovelace tries to earn salvation by his death, rather than repenting and accepting freely given grace. Richardson writes in an additional postscript to the third edition: 'this one consolation, however, remains: [Lovelace] is not an Infidel, an Unbeliever. Had he been an Infidel, there would have been no room at all for hope for him'.<sup>23</sup> However, in *Moral and Instructive Sentiments* Richardson states, in gothic font highlighting its significance, 'Lovelace lived not to repent!', thus placing him beyond the state of grace.<sup>24</sup> It appears Richardson purposefully wanted to leave the reader in suspense over Lovelace's salvation, a warning to all.

For Lovelace, Clarissa is not imitating Christ, she *is* Christ, endowed with the power to save him as is evident in his appeal to Belford to let him see Clarissa: 'I will not touch the hem of her garment without her leave' (C, p. 1219; Matthew 14. 36). As Rita Goldberg states when writing of Clarissa's coffin, 'even the biblical quotations contribute to the pattern of anticipation and fulfilment: they are from the Old Testament, as if Clarissa were herself the Christ, the missing

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<sup>23</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VIII, 292.

<sup>24</sup> *Moral and Instructive Sentiments*, p. 197.

last turn of the prophecy'.<sup>25</sup> The three verses Richardson chooses for Clarissa's coffin (Job 3. 17; Psalm 116. 7–8; Psalm 103. 15–16) espouse the idea of death as a comfort, prevalent within the books of Job and the Psalms. None have been interpreted as Messianic. It is improbable that Richardson intended an explicit comparison between Clarissa and Christ, whose death is uniquely salvific. Rather, he meant to evoke the earthly suffering of characters such as Job, the psalmists, and the apostles and martyrs, whose trials were rewarded with salvation *through* the death of Christ rather than having Clarissa's death as the *means* by which salvation is achieved; Clarissa is an imitation of Christ, not a repetition of Christ. Lovelace's misinterpretation of Clarissa's ability to save him like Christ is presented as misplaced.

The major event of Clarissa's pre-imprisonment narrative is the rape. Once this has occurred, Clarissa continues to defy Old Testament law in obeying biblical rulings on the offense of rape. The price for adultery is the stoning to death of both parties, but if the sexual interaction is forced, the judgment is different:

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.  
(Deuteronomy 22. 28–29)

If Clarissa were to follow Old Testament teaching, she should have no choice but to marry Lovelace. In commenting on this episode in 'Hints of Prefaces for

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<sup>25</sup> Rita Goldberg, *Sex and Enlightenment: Women in Richardson and Diderot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 126.

*Clarissa*' (1751), Richardson utilises a biblical rape story which highlights the similarity between the situations of Clarissa and Dinah. Unpublished in the eighteenth century, this writing provides an insight into a biblical parallel:

*Dinah*, like **Clarissa**, had Proposals of Marriage made to her by the Ravisher. But these were not thought sufficient to expunge the Stain upon a Person of that Family, from which was to proceed the **Son** of Him whose eyes are purer than to behold Iniquity.<sup>26</sup>

Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah, is raped by the Hivite prince Shechem who falls in love with her and asks his father to obtain her as his wife. The condition Jacob lays on the Hivites is that they are all circumcised, which they are. However, three days later Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi kill all the male Hivites as revenge for her defilement. While it may be tempting to interpret this episode allegorically, Richardson insists that this story should not be read in this way: 'the only Use we intend to make of the Passage is, to shew that it is no new thing, that a Violation of this sort should be desperately resented as this was by the resolute **Morden**'.<sup>27</sup> Collective punishment is against Richardson's individualised theology, as is evidenced by Clarissa's meditation to Lovelace which removes all references to the household of a sinner suffering punishment which I will discuss later. As with the consequence of Clarissa's rape, biblical rapes end in violence, such as the rape of the concubine, which sparks a long-lasting war between the tribes of Israel (Judges 19. 22–26). The parallel with Dinah is not found within the text of *Clarissa*, although it provides an apt

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<sup>26</sup> Samuel Richardson, 'Hints of Prefaces for *Clarissa*', in *Samuel Richardson's Published Commentary on Clarissa: Prefaces, Postscripts and Related Writings*, ed. by Thomas Keymer and intro. by Jocelyn Harris (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), p. 335. Bold font original.

<sup>27</sup> 'Hints of Prefaces for *Clarissa*', p. 336. Bold font original.



comparison between a biblical figure and that of Richardson's heroine, providing some indication of Richardson's intended scriptural analogues.

Despite the angelic imagery and Clarissa's imitation of Christ, while captive with Lovelace Clarissa is the source of only four of the twenty-one references in this section. These do not draw extended biblical parallels but can rather be classified as incidental. Clarissa states: 'since, like Solomon, I can say, There is nothing new under the sun'; 'And yet I ought to consider *that faithful are the wounds of a friend*'. (C, pp. 443, 991; quoting Ecclesiastes 1. 9 and Proverbs 27. 6 respectively). Even after her rape, which one might expect to be the catalyst for her use of the Bible, she relies on secular sources to try and re-orientate herself. In the ten 'mad papers' to which Lovelace gains access, the Bible is conspicuous by its absence. Only in Paper VII does Clarissa mention religion: '*If*, as religion teaches us, God will judge us in a great measure by our benevolent or evil actions to one another — Oh wretch! bethink thee, in time bethink thee, how great must be thy condemnation!' (C, p. 892, italics mine).<sup>28</sup> The use of 'if' here is highly significant. Contained within the mad papers is Clarissa's crisis of faith in the divine authority over the world. In her frantic and disoriented state, she is unable to recall an image of a just God.

In the middle section of the novel, between Clarissa's abduction and imprisonment, Richardson utilises the Bible to indicate Lovelace's faulty morality

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<sup>28</sup> Here, Clarissa uses 'actions' as the means by which God will judge, not the acceptance or rejection of grace.

by his misuse and misattribution of references, as Satan uses them when tempting Jesus. Throughout, Lovelace is a devil in the tradition of Milton's Satan, knowing the path of salvation and hearing the call, but too proud to obey. His scriptural knowledge is wide-ranging but consistently flawed. Richardson leaves Lovelace's soul in a state of limbo to the point at which it is unclear as to whether Richardson was prepared to judge such a character's fate. Placing Clarissa in the position of Christ rather than His imitator, Lovelace inadvertently reveals his knowledge of Jesus is limited. The twenty-one biblical references in this section, a relatively low number, establish Lovelace as a danger to scriptural interpretation, separating him from Clarissa who perceives his artifice; despite his best efforts, he inadvertently presents himself as an unsuitable husband.

It is Clarissa's imprisonment that marks the spiritual turning point of the novel. Devoid of family and friends, and with failing health, the Bible becomes increasingly prominent, especially the Book of Job. This book's importance to *Clarissa* has been noted by multiple commentators. The book of Job is, according to Jonathan Lamb, 'the scriptural centre-piece of *Clarissa*'.<sup>29</sup> There are a multitude of similarities between the two narratives. Both Job and Clarissa are persecuted 'innocents', although Job is more innocent than Clarissa, whose lack of trust in providence is her undoing. Both characters are isolated from family and lose their health and wealth. In more concrete parallels, Clarissa's

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<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Lamb, *The Rhetoric of Suffering: Reading the Book of Job in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 227.

imprisonment sees the story of Job come to the fore. She is visited daily by the prostitutes who act as Job's comforters, simulating helpfulness while mocking her situation. However, the differences between the characters must be noted to prevent a reading of Clarissa's story as the reinvented Job for the eighteenth-century. Firstly, Clarissa accepts her fate in a way Job never does, comforted by the Christian faith, dying with the half-uttered name of Jesus on her lips. Job is entirely sinless, making burnt offerings for sins that he and his family may have overlooked to ensure they are innocent (Job 1. 5); Clarissa's lack of trust in providence is the sin which causes her earthly downfall, but also her salvation. While Job is certainly an important book for *Clarissa*, an allegorical reading cannot be drawn beyond the episode in the prison house. Richardson relies on the book of Job because it is a source of appropriate references of individual suffering, just as Psalm 137 is to Pamela.

Unlike Pamela, whose faith in God is absolute, Clarissa, before her imprisonment, places her faith in the laws of the land. When Lovelace threatens to harm her family after her escape from Harlowe Place, she responds, 'to Providence, Mr Lovelace, and to the Law will I leave the safety of my friends' (C, p. 376). Similarly, after the rape, when she confronts Lovelace and the prostitutes, penknife to her breast, she states 'The LAW shall be all my resource: the LAW [...] the LAW only shall be my refuge!' (C, p. 950). Upon her arrest, she realises that the law cannot be relied on to assist the innocent. After her imprisonment, Clarissa returns to the Smiths' shop and residence, where Belford reports that Clarissa states '*she had been in prison*, she said before a

stranger in the shop, and before the maid-servant: and so, probably, she would have said, had there been twenty people in the shop' (C, p. 1972). Her pride and faith in the world have entirely dissipated, but there is the sense that her life moving on from this moment is one of complete contentment, bought about by her surrendering herself fully to the will of God.

Turning to the post-imprisonment section of the novel when Clarissa is preparing for her perfect death, her character is contrasted with that of the religious representatives of the novel, the clergymen Dr Lewen and Mr Brand. Both figures are measured against Richardson's standards for the clergy and found wanting. There are eighteen references to the Bible in the post-imprisonment section of the novel not used by Clarissa. Only two come from the letters of Brand, none from Lewen. To begin with Brand, in the first edition he is introduced in a single letter to Clarissa's brother James, informing him of Clarissa's lifestyle in the bleakest possible interpretation based on the gossip of her neighbours. Even her churchgoing is suspected as 'the *pretence* and *cover* of *private assignations*' (C, p. 1293). He tells the Harlowes what they want to hear and what he expected to discover upon enquiry. Richardson added to the third edition of *Clarissa* two more letters from Brand, further revealing his character as unworthy of his ordination. In the first to a friend, he outlines his plans to marry Clarissa ('*the Lady, in me, would marry a Gentleman and a Scholar*'), in order to ingratiate himself with the Harlowes.<sup>30</sup> In the second

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<sup>30</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VIII, 385.

inserted letter to James Jr, he outlines his fanciful plan of redeeming Clarissa from her perceived sin. Interestingly, he uses no biblical references to 'convert' her, but rather Latin sayings. The words of Ovid, Prudentius, Horace, Mantuan, Virgil and Juvenal are selected, which, as he states, will 'entertain Miss; and as she is a *well-read* and [...] a *wise* young Lady, I make no doubt but I shall *prevail* upon her'.<sup>31</sup> He finishes by exclaiming 'Oh! what *wisdom* is there in these *noble classical authors!*'.<sup>32</sup> The only biblical quotation in any of his first edition letters is used as he offers to go to London, which would be a '*blessed* employment, (for, *Blessed is the peacemaker!*)'.<sup>33</sup> He adds a sense of self-aggrandisement to the verse, rather than the humility with which the biblical verse suggests the peacemaker should be endowed.<sup>34</sup> Throughout his letters, Brand is depicted as self-serving and wholly unconcerned with the offices and duty of care of a man in his position. Richardson affirms this conclusion in *Moral and Instructive Sentiments*, where he warns 'the young Clergyman, who throws about to a Christian audience scraps of Latin and Greek from the Pagan Classics, shews something wrong either in his heart, or head, or in both'.<sup>35</sup> In the words of Margaret Anne Doody, Brand 'is a symptom of the chronic sickness of [Richardson's] society, and of the chronic fatigue of a Church weakened from within by proud and self-centred men who do not love their fellow beings'.<sup>36</sup> Brand certainly falls into this category of clergyman. The church

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<sup>31</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VIII, 394.

<sup>32</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VIII, 394.

<sup>33</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VIII, 391.

<sup>34</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VIII, 391. See Matthew 5. 9.

<sup>35</sup> *Moral and Instructive Sentiments*, p. 100

<sup>36</sup> Margaret Anne Doody, 'The Gnostic Clarissa', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 11.1 (1998), 49–78 (p. 73).

as represented by Brand is incapable of curing souls and preparing the dying for the afterlife, which Clarissa must do almost entirely alone. Contrasted with Brand is the dying Dr Lewen, who writes to Clarissa on several occasions when she, too, is mortally ill. His letters are not filled with edifying biblical references or religious language as are Mrs Norton's, but with secular invocations to prosecute Lovelace. Lewen urges 'your religion, your duty to your family, the duty you owe to your honour, and even charity to your sex, oblige you to give public evidence against this very wicked man' (C, p. 1251). While a better clergyman than Brand, Lewen in these letters is still a defective representative of the clergy. He uses no biblical references, and while the overtone of his letters is supportive, there is an accusatory undertone.

The church of Brand and Lewen is a secular one. Clarissa has responsibility for her personal faith, in keeping with Protestant understandings of individual rather than corporate salvation. As Carol Houlihan Flynn comments: 'without help from the church, Clarissa saves herself by herself'.<sup>37</sup> However, there is a religious figure in the last third of *Clarissa* who does provide some Christian comfort to the dying heroine: the unnamed clergyman who gives Clarissa communion (C, p. 1245). Although this anonymous pastor plays a minor part in the novel, he is significant as being the religious representative who brings some comfort, and one who recognises that the Smiths have 'an angel in [their] house' (C, p. 1245). Although not referenced in the text, the role of this clergyman can be

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<sup>37</sup> Carol Houlihan Flynn, *Samuel Richardson: Man of Letters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 42.

compared to the unnamed 'disciple whom Jesus loved' from John's gospel (for example John 20. 2), given care of Jesus' mother Mary in the final moments of Jesus' life and one able to recognise Christ's divinity. As previously discussed, in Richardson's theology communion is the mark not the means of salvation, so while the unnamed clergyman performs this comforting duty, it is not one which has the power to save Clarissa. In her article exploring eighteenth-century theories of atonement in relation to *Clarissa*, Peggy Thompson argues that Richardson's pietist emphasis on Christ's gift of individual salvation led to 'personal acceptance of Christ and a decision to live in his spirit' as a replacement for 'the sacraments as the means of salvation'.<sup>38</sup> Clarissa has saved herself, communion is merely indicative of an internal conversion, as is also evident in *Exalted Condition*.

The two central clergymen in the final section of the novel highlight not only Clarissa's saint-like ascent to heaven, but also the shortcomings of the established church in eighteenth-century English society. Neither Brand nor Lewen reach the standard of Williams in *Virtue Rewarded*. Brand is willing to believe the worst of Clarissa and her situation, driving a further wedge between her and her family who cannot accept she is about to die. Rather than the peacemaker, he shows himself to be consumed with his own self-interest, a character from whom no Christian comfort can be received. Similarly, Dr Lewen provides little support. His only source of news the Harlowes, he urges faith in

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<sup>38</sup> Peggy Thompson, 'Abuse and Atonement: The Passion of Clarissa Harlowe', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 11.3 (1999), 255–70 (p. 266).

the temporal courts to prosecute, something in which Clarissa has entirely lost confidence. The unnamed clergyman is the only religious representative who shows compassion, but his relatively minor role emphasises the idea that Clarissa is not saved institutionally by the church, but by her own, individualised faith.

Part of Clarissa's endeavour to save herself is her surrender to the words of the Bible, beginning with her meditations. Of all the biblical references in *Clarissa*, the meditations have been commented upon most frequently. For example, Joshua Swidzinski states, "these documents of Clarissa's "inwardest mind" consist entirely of scriptural citation. Wholly unoriginal and radically unlike the epistolary confessions that precede and surround them, they appear to be "meditations" in name only'.<sup>39</sup> While they may appear 'wholly unoriginal', Clarissa's selection of biblical references is careful, and purposeful. The paraphrases are cropped and changed to fit her situation. Although there are many precedents for using the Bible in this way, Richardson may have taken inspiration from Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* (1650). Taylor provides a meditation for '*the sick person [to] often meditate upon*', wholly comprised of biblical references changed in a similar way to those in *Clarissa*.<sup>40</sup> There are five meditations usually noted in the novel, but there appears to be a sixth

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<sup>39</sup> Joshua Swidzinski, "Great Labour of Mind and Tongue": Articularity and Interiority in Young's *Night Thoughts* and Richardson's *Clarissa*', in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry and the Rise of the Novel Reconsidered*, ed. by Kate Parker and Courtney Weiss Smith (Lanham, MD: Bucknell University Press, 2014), 143–65 (p. 159).

<sup>40</sup> Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*, ed. by P. G. Stanwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 268. I do not by any means think Taylor is the only person rewriting the Bible in this way, but as an influential book for *Clarissa*, it is possible that Richardson took the precedent for Clarissa's alterations to the Bible from here.



bearing all the hallmarks of Clarissa's adaptation of the Bible for religious edification, only written for Lovelace not herself. In addition to Clarissa's five personal meditations, Richardson compiled *Meditations Collected from the Sacred Books* (1751), a separate volume of thirty-six meditations including the ones found in *Clarissa*, a work prepared for publication with title page and introduction but only ever circulated amongst Richardson's acquaintances rather than offered for general sale. As Thomas Keymer remarks, 'the meditations, however, take the Job-theme further: from their viewpoint, *Clarissa* begins to look, retrospectively like little more than an allegory'.<sup>41</sup> As has been noted with reference to Dinah, Richardson was keen to prevent his fiction from being read as simple allegory. To include these meditations within *Clarissa* turns the latter third of the book into devotional literature, which was not Richardson's stated intention.

The biblical references in Clarissa's meditations are, as I have stated above, carefully selected and changed to fit her situation. In Richardson's separate volume of meditations, unlike those included in *Clarissa*, he provides biblical chapters for all his verses, informing the reader of where his extracts can be found. However, in Meditation 22 in this volume he does make many errors in this, for example where he neglects to inform the reader that he has moved from Psalm 27 on line 10 to Psalm 104 for line 11, before mis-attributing Psalm 85 as Psalm 35, possibly a copy error as these are labelled in Roman numerals.

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<sup>41</sup> Thomas Keymer, 'Richardson's *Meditations*: Clarissa's *Clarissa*', in *Samuel Richardson Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 89–109 (pp. 104–05).

He modernises the punctuation in all his meditations, mainly replacing colons with commas and adding exclamation marks to make Clarissa's use of the Bible more dramatic. Clarissa's choice of verses is also personalised, changing the gender of verses, for example Meditation Four from *Clarissa*: '*But she* that is ready to slip with *her* feet, is as a lamp despised in the thought of *them* that *are* at ease' (C, p. 1207). The original verse reads 'he that is ready to slip with his feet, is a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease'. In this example, Richardson cautiously highlights in italics where he has made these alterations, but on occasion he neglects to use them, for example in Meditation 22, line two: 'I *found* trouble and heaviness, and I called upon the Name of the Lord' (Psalm 116. 4, *Book of Common Prayer*). '*Found*' is correctly italicised, but the next section of the verse reads 'and I *will call* upon the Name of the Lord' (italics mine). Richardson also makes use of em dashes to indicate where he has omitted a section of verse. For example, in Meditation Four from *Clarissa*, Richardson writes, 'If your soul were in my soul's stead, I also could speak as ye do: I could heap up words against you—' (C, p. 1207, rearranging Job 16. 4). He omits 'and shake mine head at you' at the end of this selection. This removal indicates Richardson's careful amendments to biblical verses not in keeping with Clarissa's forgiving spirit. Only occasionally do Richardson's additions or subtractions change the meaning of a verse, as in Meditation 22 from the separate volume. Line Nine changes the ending to suit Clarissa's situation, convinced as she is that she is dying: 'I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord *in his holy place* [in the land of

the living]'.<sup>42</sup> For Clarissa, the goodness of the Lord is reserved only for the afterlife to which she is now being called in earnest.

There are also a variety of biblical translations used in the meditations. In Meditation Two in *Clarissa*, Richardson starts with the Book of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) from the King James Version Apocrypha before changing on line seven to Coverdale's Psalms from the *Book of Common Prayer*. He then reverts to the King James Version for the final two verses from the Psalms, showing his selection of translation of the psalms is not simply drawn from Coverdale throughout. While all the meditations included in *Clarissa* take their verses from the Old Testament or Apocrypha, in Meditation 22 from Richardson's separate volume, he ends with an uncharacteristic New Testament quotation of Luke 2. 14 '*Glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men!*'. This is indicative of Meditation 22's final turn from lament to praise. All of Clarissa's first edition meditations are laments, but Richardson made amendments to Meditation One for the third edition of *Clarissa*. He replaced 'Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the book for ever!' (C, p. 1125, quoting Job 19. 23–24) with 'But behold God is mighty, and despiseth not any. He giveth Right to the Poor—And if they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their works and their transgressions'.<sup>43</sup> Clarissa's life is written in a book, and therefore the prophecy of her final

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<sup>42</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Meditations Collected from the Sacred Books* (London: Osborn, Millar, Rivington, and Leake, 1751), p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> *Clarissa*, 3rd edn, VI, 392 (paraphrasing Job 36. 5, 6, 8, 9).

invocation from the first and second edition is fulfilled. This replacement is the only note of praise in her meditations as published in *Clarissa*.

From this brief analysis, it is apparent Richardson used his encyclopaedic biblical knowledge with care to select references appropriate to Clarissa's situation. They are selected from different translations, modernised, with sections omitted, genders altered, and verses rearranged to form coherent meditations as found in Taylor's *Holy Living* for the edification of the sick and dying. Supplemented by Richardson's additional book, these meditations form part of Clarissa's reorientation of her life and acceptance of her impending death. As Erikson comments, 'as she rewrites the Bible, it rewrites her'.<sup>44</sup> The secular 'mad papers' failed to help Clarissa cope with the trauma of rape, and it is only by wholly giving herself to the hands of God and the words of Scripture that she can accept her fate and begin to prepare for the perfect afterlife which undoubtedly awaits someone of Clarissa's character.

There is a sixth meditation in *Clarissa* not included in Richardson's separate volume of meditations and not usually noted by commentators. This meditation is not written for Clarissa's edification, but as a warning for Lovelace. Sent to him after her death, it is a stark cautioning from the afterlife of the fate that awaits a sinner:<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Erikson, p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> I have included in square brackets the missing sections of verse, any alterations, and the specific biblical verses to which Clarissa refers.

[That] The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment [Job 20. 5]. [For] He is cast into a net by his own feet — [and] he walketh upon a snare [Job 18. 8]. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet [Job 18. 11]. His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side [Job 18. 12]. [It shall devour the strength of his skin: Even] The first-born of death shall devour his strength [Job 18. 13]. His remembrance shall perish from the earth; and he shall have no name in the streets [Job 18. 17]. He shall be [driven from light into darkness, and] chased out of the world [Job 18. 18]. He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people [nor any remaining in his dwellings] [Job 18. 19]. [Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung] They that [which] have seen him, shall say, Where is he? [Job 20. 7]. He shall fly away as a dream [and shall not be found, yea]: he shall be chased away as a vision of the night [Job 20. 8]. [Yet] His meat [in his bowels is turned, it] is the gall of asps within him [Job 20. 14]. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike through him [him through] [Job 20. 24]. [All darkness shall be hid in his secret places] A fire not blown shall consume him [it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle] [Job 20. 26]. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him [Job 20. 27]. [The womb shall forget him] The worm shall feed sweetly on him. He shall be no more remembered — [and wickedness shall be broken as a tree. Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked] This is the fate [place] of him that knoweth not God [Job 24. 20; Job 18. 21]. (C, p. 1427)

As with her other meditations, there are similarities in the way Clarissa uses the Bible. She takes the liberty to omit certain sections which do not suit her theology. She removes two references to relatives of the wicked suffering punishment, and two references to bowels and excrement. Her final amendment, replacing 'place' in the King James Version with 'fate', changes the meaning of the meditation from the temporal to the afterlife, where Lovelace will finally be punished for his actions unless, perhaps, he repents. As with the meditations included in *Clarissa*, the reader and Lovelace are not provided with citations, but Clarissa does point Lovelace in the direction of Scripture: 'Whenever you shall be inclined to consult the sacred oracles, from whence the

above threatenings [*sic*] are extracted, you will find doctrines and texts which a truly penitent and contrite heart may lay hold of for its consolation' (C, p. 1427). The consolation does not come in the verses surrounding those chosen for the above, so Lovelace must seek them elsewhere.

Clarissa's character in the post-imprisonment section of the novel undergoes the most significant change of any character within the book. Surrendering herself to the will of God and losing herself in the words of the Bible as her source of literary comfort, her meditations are not merely a collection of references but rather ones that have been gathered from a variety of versions, trimmed, changed and arranged to lend deeper, personal meaning to Clarissa's emotional and spiritual situation. The meditation she sends to Lovelace, designed to point him towards redemption and the only one not written for her personal edification, shows she earnestly desires his reform by highlighting the spiritual danger he is in. Set in stark contrast to the fallen world which surrounds her, to the end she lives and dies in imitation of Christ. Clarissa dies in a haze of religious imagery, biblical quotation, praises of God, and calls for God's forgiveness for Lovelace and those who have wronged her. In one of her final moments, 'a charming lecture she gave us, though a brief one, upon the happiness of a timely preparation and upon the hazards of a late repentance' (C, p. 1356). She dies with the penultimate words of the Bible on her lips, 'come – Oh come – blessed Lord – JESUS' (C, p. 1362); 'Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' (Revelation 22. 20). Her earthly life, like the words of the Bible, has come to an end and her soul is now liberated to return to the bosom of her

Creator. All her final moments point to God and she dies not as Christ but in *imitatio Christi*, as a martyr to virtue in a world which does not value it.

In choosing Clarissa's reward to be heavenly rather than material as is Pamela's, Richardson pressed the Christianity of his audience. He asks the question Terry Eagleton overtly poses 230 years later, 'if you really believe a heavenly reward is the ultimate good, why would you have Clarissa live?'.<sup>46</sup>

Richardson's postscript answers calls for a traditionally comic ending:

And who that are in earnest in their profession of Christianity but will rather envy than regret the triumphant death of CLARISSA, whose piety from her early childhood; whose diffusive charity; whose steady virtue; whose Christian humility; whose forgiving spirit; whose meekness, whose resignation, HEAVEN *only* could reward? (C, p. 1498)

Interpretation of Clarissa's death depends on how the relationship between life and death is viewed. If the space between life and death is separated by a 'dreadful Gulph' (VR, p. 158), Clarissa's death becomes one of uncertainty and injustice, her worldly virtues wasted. However, if the afterlife is viewed as a single plane of existence with this life, with the omniscient, benevolent providence ready to accept good souls instantly, Clarissa's virtues make her eternal happiness certain. Her sufferings in this world make her reward sweeter. As Cynthia Griffin Wolff summarises, 'death itself becomes not a loss of self but the only way to realize identity completely — not a defeat but a triumphant

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<sup>46</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 75.

affirmation of her newly discovered self', in keeping with Christian tradition.<sup>47</sup>

Only in Heaven will Clarissa truly become 'herself', the embodiment of virtue in a sphere of existence perfectly suited to her, and Richardson leaves the reader in no doubt that Clarissa will be rewarded in the hereafter.

To summarise, from the outset of the novel, the martyr and imitator of Christ, Clarissa, comes into conflict with the fallen world, as Jesus does in the gospels. In a failed attempt to preach a message of love and mercy to the Pharisaical Harlowes, Clarissa makes the mistake of acting rather than passively awaiting the guiding hand of providence. Falling into the hands of Lovelace who lives in imitation of Satan, the angelic Clarissa is tempted and resists with iron will before Lovelace himself ceases to wait for providence to turn Clarissa's heart to him and acts. By doing so, he alienates her forever. Once her faith in the world has dissipated, Clarissa dedicates herself entirely to the direction of providence, and is thus called home to the perfect world of heaven, the only place where her virtue can truly be rewarded.

The biblical references Richardson uses in *Clarissa* have been carefully chosen and sparingly used for most of the novel. At Harlowe Place, Clarissa's family demand Old Testament obedience of children to parents but as secular 'Christians' they fail to utilise their biblical knowledge in persuading Clarissa to bend to their will. Lovelace attempts to use Scripture as Satan does to tempt

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<sup>47</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972), p. 163.



Clarissa into seeing him as redeemable, yet his flawed recollection and refusal to heed the Divine call drives her further from this conclusion. The named clergymen Brand and Lewen, as the Harlowes before them, fail to realise the Bible's power, instead preferring either the Classics or invocations to temporal prosecution. Clarissa must stand in opposition to all these forces. Before her imprisonment, she places faith in herself and secular law to come to her aid and quotes the Bible sparingly as a result. After her imprisonment when her faith in the world has evaporated and her secular mad papers have failed to help her come to terms with her tragedy, the number of biblical references increases dramatically. By Clarissa's deathbed scene, her words are almost entirely Scripture. Acknowledging the widows, sinners and strangers who surround her, she dies a perfect martyr's death, in sure and certain hope of blissful eternity.

Having explored the spiritual nature of Clarissa's virtue, unlike in *Virtue Rewarded* Richardson did not neglect charity as a hallmark of virtue. Towards the end of the novel, Richardson reveals to the reader his heroine's charitable giving, most evident after her death. After Belford has refused James Harlowe's offer of money to relinquish his position as executor, he reports Clarissa's will, which leaves most of her estate to various members of the Harlowe family. She does, however, provide a sum for charitable giving. After her bequests to others she states, 'it is my will and desire, that the remainder, [...] shall become a fund to be appropriated, [...] to the like purposes with the sums which I put into Mrs. Norton's hands, [...] who knows my whole mind in this particular' (C, pp. 1418-19). Revealing her previous charitable actions, Clarissa enjoins the remainder

of her estate be used in charitable giving. She is careful, however, to moralise to the reader about the concept of the deserving poor:

It has always been a rule with me, in my little donations, to endeavour to aid and set forward the sober and industrious poor. Small helps, if seasonably afforded, will do for such; and so the fund may be of more extensive benefit; an ocean of wealth will not be sufficient for the idle and dissolute: whom, therefore, since they will always be in want, it will be no charity to relieve, if worthier creatures would, by relieving the others, be deprived of such assistance as may set the wheels of their industry going, and put them in a sphere of useful action. (C, p. 1419)

Delineating the deserving from the undeserving poor, Richardson depicts his characters as discriminating in their giving, also evident in Pamela's benevolent rounds in *Exalted Condition*. This form of charity opposes Fielding's, which makes no distinction between deserving and undeserving poor as outlined in the Good Samaritan, a story to which Fielding refers frequently. Richardson is careful to outline Clarissa's charity both before and after her total conversion, making it a fundamental consideration of the virtuous individual as he saw it.

Richardson designed Clarissa to be his second moral exemplar. Her virtue intermingles piety and charity, no doubt a reflection of *Virtue Rewarded's* neglect of charity and the criticism this inspired. Fielding's criticism appears to have caused Richardson to see some moral flaws in his first novel, and in creating *Clarissa* he answers these criticisms. While still adhering to the idea of passivity in the will of providence, Richardson ensured Clarissa's charitableness was manifest in her piety, revealed after her death when she is in a position to be charitable. Biblical references in *Clarissa* are limited before her

imprisonment. At Harlowe Place, the depiction of Clarissa's family may be based on the puritanical family model, but one that has gone awry. Not remonstrating biblically with Clarissa, they demand adherence to their will without reference to religion or the Bible. When captive in London, aside from the additional conversations added to the third edition, the Bible is also reasonably absent. After her imprisonment, Clarissa increasingly gives herself to religion, and her speech becomes almost exclusively biblical references and moral edification, dying in imitation of Christ in sure and certain hope of a perfect afterlife, one which is suited to her virtue in a way the temporal world fails to be. Her death imitates Christ's to such an extent that Lovelace appears to mistake her for his saviour. By the time he wrote *Clarissa*, Richardson seems to have realised the potential of biblical misquotation for characterisation, which Fielding also used adeptly in his next novel: *Tom Jones* (1749).

## CHAPTER SIX – *TOM JONES*: FIELDING'S PROGRAMME OF CHARITABLE VIRTUE

The final instalment of *Clarissa* (1748) realised Richardson's aims for his second novel. Despite calls for a traditionally comic ending, Richardson adhered to his plans for the novel's outcome. Lady Bradshaigh's correspondence with Richardson was motivated initially by her desire to see Clarissa live. In her first letter to Richardson she wrote: 'Therefore, Sir, after you have brought the divine Clarissa to the very brink of destitution, let me intreat (may I say, insist upon) a turn, that will make your almost despairing readers half mad with joy'.<sup>1</sup> Richardson's decision to have Clarissa die a saintly death did not prevent the public from receiving the novel well, however. Lois E. Bueler has compiled over 600 pages of responses to *Clarissa* from a variety of readers. The shopkeeper and diarist Thomas Turner, for example, records how his wife read *Clarissa* aloud to him. When she concluded, Turner writes, 'Oh, may the Supreme Being give me grace to lead my life in such a manner as my exit may in some respects be like the divine creature's'.<sup>2</sup> The most common negative critique is of its length but overall readers, both inside and outside of Richardson's circle, appear to have responded well to it.<sup>3</sup> However, it failed to

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<sup>1</sup> Lady Bradshaigh (Belfour) to Samuel Richardson, 10 October 1748, in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), IV, 179.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Turner's Diary, Wednesday 25 February 1756, quoted in *Clarissa: The Eighteenth-Century Response 1747–1804, Volume 1: Reading Clarissa*, ed. by Lois A. Bueler (New York, NY: AMS, 2010), p. 261.

<sup>3</sup> See for example poet William Shenstone's letter to fellow poet and clergyman Richard Jago, 15 March 1750, where he complains that 'the author is a man of genius and nice observation; but he might be less prolix'. *Reading Clarissa*, p. 245.

inspire the same enthusiastic response as *Virtue Rewarded* (1740).

Richardson's elucidation of 'virtue' in *Clarissa* is not dissimilar to *Virtue Rewarded* and *Exalted Condition* (1742), where piety and surrender to the will of God grant one salvation, and charity is an overflowing of the acceptance of God into an individual's heart.

*Tom Jones* (1749) is another story of virtue rewarded, yet with a different idea of 'virtue'. Written in the comic style, Tom's charitable exploits sit in stark contrast to the seriousness of Clarissa's saintly virtue. Just as Clarissa is given her reward because of her eventual perfection, Tom earns his by charity. Tom's adventures eventually lead to providential revelations of his parentage, enabling him to not only be the spiritual but also the temporal heir of his uncle Allworthy. He represents the gospel message as interpreted by Fielding, one emphasising love of your fellow man. Fielding challenges Richardson's conception of the moral novel, and his model for charity as outlined in *Clarissa*. Creating an alternative to Richardsonian virtue, *Tom Jones*' central moral is still 'virtue rewarded', but depicts a very different idea of the virtue God rewards.

This chapter will firstly examine the relationship between *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*. It argues that Fielding wrote a portion of *Tom Jones* with knowledge of at least the first two publication issues of *Clarissa*. I will then investigate the biblical references, arguing that they are used by the amoral, misinterpreted to excuse sinful behaviour. Characters who quote Scripture are a contrast to the

biblically illiterate Tom, whose goodness is innate rather than motivated by piety. In *Tom Jones*, Fielding utilised the Bible to provide a more serious undertone to the novel as he occasionally did in *Joseph Andrews* (1742). Undercutting the comedy, a biblically literate reader would sense the danger characters such as Captain Blifil and Parson Thwackum pose to the comic narration. If either of them imposes hollow piety as a means of salvation over Squire Allworthy's charitable Christianity by their use of the Bible, Fielding's ideals of charity as the path to salvation would be overwhelmed. Finally, Richardson's reaction to *Tom Jones* will be investigated. He seems not to have read Fielding's novel, but his response to reports of amorality caused the deterioration of the distant but respectful relationship between himself and Fielding.

Published on 28 February 1749, a few months after the final instalment of *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones* was compared with Richardson's novel from its release, both literarily and morally. In a letter from Catherine Talbot to Elizabeth Carter dated 22 May 1749, Talbot writes: 'The more I read Tom Jones, the more I detest him, and admire Clarissa Harlowe—yet there are in it things that must touch and please every good heart, and probe to the quick many a bad one, and humour that it is impossible not to laugh at'.<sup>4</sup> Even at this early date, the reading public were dividing into either Richardson's or Fielding's camps. Morally, Talbot prefers *Clarissa*, yet still admires *Tom Jones*. Talbot's

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Talbot to Elizabeth Carter, 22 May 1749, in *A Series of Letters Between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, 3 vols (London: F. C. Rivington and J. Rivington, 1809), I, 312–13.

observations highlight some of the difficulties when comparing the two novels. Stylistically opposed to one another, it becomes a matter of personal preference whether one wants to read a psychologically serious drama of the idealised moral exemplar Clarissa, or the humorous events which befall Tom and his journey from well-meaning promiscuity to sexual virtue in marriage. While it may be challenging to compare novels on literary grounds, morally both aim to champion the 'Beauty of Virtue' (*TJ*, p. 7) as Fielding stated in his dedication. Both novels punish the bad and reward the good based on the framework of Christian morality as their authors perceived it.

In more recent criticism, it seems impossible for scholars not to discuss the influence of *Clarissa* on *Tom Jones*, although there is disagreement as to the impact Richardson's novel had on Fielding's. Brean Hammond and Shaun Regan comment that *Tom Jones* was 'conceived, written and read in conscious opposition to *Clarissa*'.<sup>5</sup> However, Ronald Paulson states that '*Tom Jones* would have been written with only hearsay knowledge of *Clarissa*'.<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to say with any certainty how the composition of *Tom Jones* links with the publication timeline of *Clarissa*. Fielding's rushed ending to *Tom Jones* was perhaps the consequence of an attempt to publish as close to the final instalment of *Clarissa* as possible, a measure designed to boost sales by inviting comparison. While the exact relationship between the novels is

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<sup>5</sup> Brean Hammond and Shaun Regan, *Making the Novel: Fiction and Society in Britain, 1660–1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Paulson, *The Life of Henry Fielding: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 201.

uncertain, there is unquestionably a link between them, evident in the final third of *Tom Jones*. It can be argued that Fielding wrote the first two thirds of *Tom Jones* before the narrative of *Clarissa* was available to him. In the final third, Fielding links the two novels with some parallels. There are also indications, however, that Fielding did not know how *Clarissa* ended before he sent *Tom Jones* to the press.

There are points in *Tom Jones* where it appears Fielding wished to comment on the morality of *Clarissa*, giving some indication to the timeline of *Tom Jones*'s composition. When discussing with Lady Bellaston the idea of running away with Tom, Sophia states 'I will never run away with any Man' (*TJ*, p. 793). An extended footnote in the Wesleyan edition highlights this as a reference to *Clarissa*'s 'elopement' with Lovelace, accusing her of a sin greater than she bears. Sophia also promises not to write letters in her confinement (*TJ*, p. 850) and refuses to marry without parental consent (*TJ*, p. 955). What seems not to have been noted previously is that all these points of comparison occur from Book XII onward, suggesting that *Clarissa* may have influenced Fielding at this stage of his writing and not before. This is also true of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 which is not mentioned in the first third of the novel as Martin C. Battestin has noted.<sup>7</sup> Fielding, it seems, did not feel the need to redraft the first section of *Tom Jones* to add mentions of the Jacobite Rebellion, and it appears the same applied to the influence of *Clarissa*. The overt links with *Clarissa* in the final third

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<sup>7</sup> Martin C. Battestin, 'Introduction', in *The History of Tom Jones*, Henry Fielding, ed. by Fredson Bowers (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), p. xix.



only suggests that Fielding did not have access to *Clarissa* (published in instalments December 1747, April 1748, and December 1748) until he drafted the final third of *Tom Jones*.

Published only a few months after the final issue of *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones* would have to be in press before the last instalment of *Clarissa* was commercially available. Clarissa's rape, imprisonment and death all occur in the final instalment meaning that the temporally tragic ending of *Clarissa* would not be known to the reading public, and therefore perhaps Fielding. If *Tom Jones* were published without knowledge of the ending of *Clarissa*, it would explain the use of the term 'my Angel'. Sophia is referred to as an angel seventeen times throughout the novel; three times Tom refers to her as 'my Angel' (*TJ*, pp. 627, 676, 973) and the narrator uses 'his [Tom's] Angel' four times (*TJ*, pp. 692, 697, 713, 723), echoing Lovelace's favoured description of Clarissa. Again, 'my Angel' occurs only in the final third of the novel. What this suggests is that using 'my Angel' in this final third, Fielding was unaware of the ending of *Clarissa*, where this phrase as used by Richardson takes on a literal meaning not just figurative. If Fielding believed Clarissa and Lovelace would be married, 'my Angel' is an appropriate term. If he knew of Clarissa's death, when the term 'my Angel' becomes a malevolent attempt to possess Clarissa beyond the grave, one wonders whether Fielding would use it to describe the relationship between Tom and Sophia. It appears the composition of *Tom Jones* was completed between the second and third instalments of *Clarissa* when Clarissa's and Lovelace's marriage was assumed to produce the traditional comic ending.

There is a clear sense that the moral connection between Richardson and Fielding continued into *Tom Jones*. Fielding's novel was aimed not at ridiculing Richardson's morality as represented by Pamela, but rather offers an alternative to the Richardsonian conception of the novel and morality. The fictional lives of saints are challenged by the comically narrated stories of more realistic characters whose virtue stems from innate good action, not learned piety.

While one may expect Fielding to have ridiculed *Clarissa* in the same way he did *Virtue Rewarded*, he described it in the *Covent Garden Journal* as 'ingenious'.<sup>8</sup> In a letter written directly to Richardson on 15 October 1748, before the final instalment of *Clarissa* was published, Fielding praised Richardson's style of narration. He reports his tears over Clarissa's plight, adding his hopes for Richardson's masterpiece:

And sure the World will not suppose me inclined to flatter one whom they will suppose me to hate if the[y] will be pleased to recollect that we are Rivals for that coy Mrs Fame. [...] I will conclude then with assuring you. [*sic*] That I heartily wish you Success. That I sincerely think you in the highest manner deserve it.<sup>9</sup>

Fielding's letter indicates that a rift between the authors was assumed, but also shows that one either did not exist or was not as pronounced as one would be led to believe before the publication of *Tom Jones*. Martin and Ruthe Battestin classify this letter as an 'offer of friendship', but aside from the apologetic tone

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Fielding, *The Covent Garden Journal*, 4 February 1752.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Fielding to Samuel Richardson, 15 October 1748, in *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding*, ed. by Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 71.

(Fielding does not directly apologise for *Joseph Andrews* and would not for *Shamela* since he never admitted writing it) he reveals that he has little personal knowledge of Richardson.<sup>10</sup> If Fielding wanted to appease Richardson and knew him personally, he would not accuse him of seeking 'coy Mrs Fame' however true that may have been. Richardson's reaction to this letter was not as may be expected if one believes he disliked Fielding before the publication of *Tom Jones*. He forwarded part of Fielding's missive to Joseph Stinstra to encourage him in his translation of *Clarissa* into Dutch. Richardson makes no comment as to the unusual origin of the letter in his accompanying message.<sup>11</sup> Stinstra's response also makes no mention of their supposed feud, stating instead that Fielding's love of *Clarissa* 'has given me a better opinion of that gentleman [...] now I perceive in his favour that he could be touched by scenes'.<sup>12</sup> It appears that the relationship between Richardson and Fielding in October 1748 was distant but respectful.

Richardson and Fielding use the Bible in different ways in *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*, yet there are some similarities. Both use it to parallel biblical stories but also for more serious purposes. *Clarissa*'s morally serious story has a very different literary aim to Fielding's light-hearted comic novel, yet both espouse the eventual victory of good over evil. While a full investigation of the comic

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<sup>10</sup> *Henry Fielding: A Life*, p. 445.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Richardson to Joseph Stinstra, 2 June 1753, in *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence*, ed. by William C. Slattery (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Stinstra to Samuel Richardson, 24 December 1753, in *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence*, p. 63.

mode of *Tom Jones* is beyond the scope of this thesis, what is interesting to note is that the use of the Bible in *Tom Jones* challenges the novel's jovial tone. Its use by Captain Blifil and Thwackum especially has a sense of seriousness as they attempt to steer the righteous Allworthy away from adherence to Fielding's charitable Christianity. The incorrect use of scriptural references in the novel turn those characters into dangerously wicked ones, who threaten to undermine the comic treatment of the world by the narrator. If any character who misinterprets the Bible is successful in convincing Allworthy to cease being charitable, the novel becomes a tragedy rather than a comedy.

This chapter is the first to examine the use of the Bible in *Tom Jones*. There are approximately fifty references to Scripture in the novel, with thirty-four occurring when the novel is set at Paradise Hall. I will investigate the use of the Bible in *Tom Jones* chronologically, to chart its usage through various stages of the novel. References to Scripture are primarily used to indicate to a reader familiar with the Bible the amorality of various characters, rather than as a sign of virtue in good characters. Most of these references surround but do not originate from the imperfect moral exemplar Allworthy. Captain Blifil and Thwackum quote the Bible at Allworthy and interpret it to justify their behaviour, in a similar way to Williams' use of Scripture in *Shamela* (1741). Captain Blifil and Thwackum attempt to steer Allworthy away from Fielding's Latitudinarian charity, endangering the comedy and morality of the novel. Allworthy responds to these pointed references and heretical interpretation with answers saturated with New Testament charity, love and mercy: Christianity as Fielding would have it.

Once Tom is exiled from Paradise Hall, the number of biblical references declines significantly as the hypocritical characters using religion for personal justification are left behind at Paradise Hall. There are only ten biblical references during the time when Tom is on the road, used by a variety of characters. Tom, who sold his Bible while young, does not quote Scripture but alludes to its teachings in his responses to moral situations in imitation of his uncle Allworthy. He rejects the Man of the Hill's renunciation of the world to preserve his soul and the army's placement of temporal honour over religious principles, the two moral options presented in the central section of the novel to replace Allworthy's charitable Christianity. The Man on the Hill, after living a profligate life, has repented and removed himself from society. In self-imposed exile he renounces the world, neglecting the Christian duty of charity, important to Tom and his creator. The army provides Tom with an opportunity to place his own personal honour over charitable religious principles. Again, this is something the spiritual son of Allworthy is not prepared to do. These options are both rejected by Tom and in doing so he shows himself to have taken the principles of Christianity to heart despite his lack of biblical knowledge. Tom adopts the path of the Good Samaritan, who embodies the teachings of Scripture and exemplifies the natural goodness of mankind, in contrast to the religious hypocrite, Tom's half-brother Blifil, who has religion on his lips but no goodness in his heart.

When Tom is alone in London, the Bible is conspicuous by its absence. Until the arrival of Allworthy, there are only two allusions to Scripture. One to Romans 12. 19 concerning revenge (*TJ*, p. 799) made by Parson Supple, and one to Job's comforters (*TJ*, p. 749) used by the narrator to highlight Tom's pain on receiving Sophia's letter of rejection. However, during this time Tom's actions are again reminiscent of those of the Good Samaritan. Offering charity whenever the opportunity arises, Tom earns his place as the moral and rightful recipient of Allworthy's estate. Once Allworthy arrives in London, biblical references begin to be used again. In a letter admonishing Allworthy for showing charity to Tom, Thwackum interprets the Bible incorrectly in accordance with his former usage for his own aggrandisement. These are highlighted as especially vitriolic because of Square's deathbed confession, providentially read moments before Thwackum's letter, admitting the lies told which cause Tom's exile. Because of Square's confession, Thwackum's misuse of the Bible here is not as pernicious as it has been previously. The reader no longer fears Allworthy will be convinced to abandon charity and Tom.

Throughout *Tom Jones*, Allworthy is the embodiment of Christianity as Fielding would have it, but he is not the perfect moral exemplar. Like Adams in *Joseph Andrews*, Allworthy has the naivete of Adam, easily convinced by the serpents in the garden that Tom is deserving of exile from Paradise Hall. He is unable to perceive Thwackum, Captain Blifil and young Blifil's wickedness, though it is obvious to the reader. It is in this exile, however, that Tom receives his providential reward: inheritance, quasi-legitimacy as the son of Allworthy's

unmarried sister Bridget and the dead Summer, and the heroine Sophia as a wife. It is this quasi-legitimacy that many commentators have found troubling, including Richardson. The question posed is why did Fielding not make Tom fully legitimate by having Bridget marry Summer secretly before his death? The answer to this question again lies in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Tom is the Good Samaritan, of the 'wrong' (illegitimate) birth, as the Samaritan is of the 'wrong' religion. Their charity makes them the rightful recipients of the Kingdom of Heaven over hypocritical priests and Levites. To make Tom legitimate is to mitigate the fact that he has earned his reward by who he is, rather than by legitimate birth, just as to elevate Pamela's social status mitigates her reward received solely for her virtue. No explicit references to the parable of the Good Samaritan exist within the text, yet Tom's behaviour is such that a biblically literate reader would almost certainly detect the allusion. The parable also provides a biblical precedent for Allworthy's decision to disinherit the legitimate Blifil in favour of the illegitimate Tom.

While the Bible is an important text for *Tom Jones*, it is not the only source of quotation. Nancy A. Mace identifies data on the number of references within *Tom Jones* to ancient Greek and Latin texts. In the novel there are 118 references to Latin authors and fifty references to Greek; a total of 168.<sup>13</sup> Mace makes no reference to the Bible, but it appears from my research that Fielding used Scripture in a similar way to the classics. As Mace notes:

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<sup>13</sup> Nancy A. Mace, *Henry Fielding and the Classical Tradition* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), pp. 158–59.

Through the allusions and quotations, [Fielding] depicted the abuse of classical tradition in eighteenth-century society and explored its limitations as a means of communicating truth among those who did not thoroughly appreciate ancient literature. Furthermore, Fielding exploited classics in order to undermine the credibility of his most influential characters and to teach his readers to be discerning about “exemplary” figures they encounter in fiction and real life.<sup>14</sup>

The fifty references to the Bible in *Tom Jones* make Scripture the source of the most quotations from a single work. It appears that Fielding uses Scripture in a similar way to the Classics. His theologically trained characters (Captain Blifil and Thwackum) abuse the Bible, showing flawed morality and learning in those who the reader expects to be moral. Misquotation of the classics, however, carries less significance than the Bible; the Calvinist Thwackum is pernicious, schoolmaster Partridge comically bumbling.

As with the mistranslation of classical literature, Partridge’s religion adds to the comic effect of the novel. While the source of only two incidental scriptural allusions, in times of fear and anxiety he calls to heaven and attributes misfortune to the Devil. For example, on seeing the light in the window of the Man on the Hill, he exclaims ‘in a Rapture’, ‘Heaven hath at last heard my Prayers’ (*TJ*, p. 444). When convinced that there are ‘Ghosts, Devils, [and] Witches’ present shortly after, he automatically cries ‘Lord have Mercy upon us’ (*TJ*, p. 444). While in comfort he is totally reliant on the classics for quotation, in times of distress he resorts to a religion that is superstitious in contrast to his education. Partridge’s constant misquotation of classical works adds to the

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<sup>14</sup> Mace, p. 78.



novel's comic effect. However, the misuse of the Bible by other characters is something to be taken far more seriously. Rather than adding to the comedy, it threatens to undermine it.

As with all the novels in this thesis, providence plays an important role in the narrative. In *Tom Jones* it is often referred to by the omniscient but secretive narrator. For example, as Tom's story reaches its bleakest, providence begins to reveal the series of 'chance' events that have occurred throughout the novel. Of all the people Tom could meet on the road, he meets his supposed father Partridge; he also meets his supposed mother Jenny Jones alias Mrs Waters; Partridge and Mrs Waters fail to meet at Upton; Thwackum's vitriolic letter is read after Square's deathbed confession of Tom's innocence; Blifil's ability to cloak his hypocrisy behind piety vanishes at precisely the right moment (*'the Devil often deserts his Friends, and leaves them in the Lurch'* (*TJ*, p. 933)). The narrator introduces the final section of the novel by using the term 'chance' but it is linked immediately with providence: 'Here [at Old Nightingale's] an Accident happened [...] one indeed of those strange Chances, whence very good and grave Men have concluded that Providence often interposes in the Discovery of the most secret Villainy', namely Black George's attempt to invest the money he stole from Tom, and Allworthy's recognising it (*TJ*, p. 920). Battestin explains Fielding's use of 'chance' here by stating that it is 'no more than a figure of speech, a convenient vulgarism, enabling one to talk of Providence while avoiding the note of pious sobriety — a note well lost in the pages of a comic

novel'.<sup>15</sup> As I have discussed with regards to *Virtue Rewarded and Exalted Condition*, 'Providence' for Richardson is a polite synonym for God. 'Chance' can be said to be doubly removed from its godly origin. It is almost impossible to see the events of *Tom Jones* as chance; the odds are too great and the culmination so perfect that providence is surely at work.

Fielding's characters also acknowledge the idea of providence. In a conversation between Tom, Partridge, and the Man on the Hill, the characters agree that it is very fortunate that the solitary house had two visitors chance upon it just as its inhabitant was the victim of an attempted robbery (*TJ*, p. 448). Partridge later highlights the providential nature of the events surrounding the old man at the crossroads and the finding of Sophia's pocketbook, remarking "two such Accidents could never have happened to direct him after [Tom's] Mistress, if Providence had not designed to bring them together at last" (*TJ*, p. 650). Fielding notes that Partridge's doctrines are 'superstitious' but by using providence here and having Tom consider it seriously, the narrative begins to point towards the providential unravelling of the final chapters. In contrast to *Tom Jones*, Richardson's epistolary works are narrated by characters and depict providence in a more elusive fashion. The hand of God is not able to be seen by the reader in the same way as it is in *Tom Jones* through the third-person narrator, who knows the ending before the book begins. *Tom Jones's* obvious providence was criticised by Richardson, who commented that

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<sup>15</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *The Providence of Wit: Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and the Arts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 157.

'Probability was not observed'.<sup>16</sup> In all of Richardson's novels, providence is evident but in a more subtle way than Fielding wished to present it, especially in *Tom Jones*. By using an omniscient narrator, Fielding could draw attention to providential events whilst not revealing others, to leave the full unwinding of the providential plan to the final chapters.

Providence may be active in *Tom Jones* but Fielding also allows the operation of free will within his fictional world. When Tom is imprisoned and undergoing his 'conversion' away from the path of promiscuity he states, 'But why do I blame Fortune? I am myself the Cause of all my Misery' (*TJ*, p. 916). While not entirely true (other characters have certainly played their parts) Tom is not blameless. He exercises his free will as Clarissa does and, as in *Clarissa*, Fielding as God of the novel works Tom's bleak situation for his reward once he has repented. Without the misdeeds, Tom would remain at Paradise Hall never to discover his parentage or inherit the estate on Blifil's disownment. Fielding's depiction of providence allows for characters to act freely, yet the narrator retains control of the narrative, assuring the reader that good will eventually triumph. However, caution must be exercised in creating an extended analogue between God and the narrator. As Simon Varey comments, 'Fielding's facetiousness and irony, his lightness of tone, his uppishness when he addresses his readers: all these tend to undermine the apparently serious

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<sup>16</sup> Richardson to Astrea and Minerva Hill, 4 August 1749, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, ed. by Christian Gerrard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 320.

proposition that he is an analogue of God'.<sup>17</sup> While Fielding has creative control of the novel, the narrator tells the tale with a sense of buoyancy not perhaps pertinent to the real-world Deity. However, if one places oneself in the position of the characters of the novel, one would not perceive this jovial handling of the world. Many of the events of *Tom Jones* are serious. The characters in the novel exercise a certain amount of free will, yet the omniscient narrator is still in full control, knowing what free choices the characters will make.

Throughout *Tom Jones*, the omniscient narrator is one of the primary sources of biblical references. He uses fourteen references to the Bible, mainly as allusions to describe characters rather than in the introductory chapters to the separate books of *Tom Jones*, where the classics and Shakespeare predominate. For example, when Allworthy is told he is in danger of dying the narrator states that he 'might be considered as a faithful Labourer, when at the End of Harvest, he is summoned to receive his Reward at the Hands of a bountiful Master' (*TJ*, p. 241). This is footnoted in the Wesleyan edition as referring to the parable of the workers in the vineyard, some hired early in the morning and others in the afternoon. At the end of the day, each receives the same payment regardless of what time they arrived. The imagery of workers receiving payment is common in the New Testament as a parallel for the rewards of heaven after a well-lived life. Writing about the use of classics, Mace highlights that Fielding 'offered the narrator as a model for using classics

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<sup>17</sup> Simon Varey, *Henry Fielding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 86.

appropriately in the eighteenth century, thus enhancing his authority and reinforcing his bond with his audience'.<sup>18</sup> This also appears true of the Bible.

*Tom Jones's* narrator uses biblical references to enhance various points of the texts, enriching it with imagery and concepts taken from Scripture with which his audience would be familiar. This echoes Richardson's use of the Bible by his letter-writing characters, with both authors expecting the reader to notice and understand allusions and paraphrases as well as direct quotations.

In contrast to the narrator's apt usage of Scripture, the Bible is used primarily by amoral characters to justify their wickedness. Biblical references are most regularly found surrounding Allworthy, the moral centre of *Tom Jones*. Allworthy himself is the source of only four chapter-and-verse allusions to the Bible, yet his actions and words embody many biblical principles. Allworthy's character is also reminiscent of God as depicted in the Adam and Eve narrative of Genesis 2–3. In the closest point of allusion, Allworthy states he will 'not turn [Tom] naked into the World' (*TJ*, p. 310). In Genesis 3. 21, God makes clothing for Adam and Eve before they are banished, providing them with the necessities with which to survive, as Allworthy gives Tom a large sum of money. The God of Genesis 3 is highly anthropomorphised; he walks in the Garden and asks, 'where art thou?' as Adam and Eve hide their nakedness from Him, for example (Genesis 3. 8). In this respect, Allworthy can be compared to God of this section of the Bible, without omniscience and omnipresence. In his commentary,

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<sup>18</sup> Mace, p. 78.

William Dodd specifically explains the bodily presence of God in the Garden of Eden and his manufacture of clothing in the Genesis narrative, which is problematic if God is to be viewed as infinite and formless. Dodd comments, 'the Scripture frequently applies that action to the Deity, which he either enjoins or directs that is all that can be meant here'.<sup>19</sup> If the second creation narrative of Genesis 2–3 is to be taken as historical fact, this clarification must be made to explain how the omniscient, omnipresent, formless creator God can occupy physical space and engage in human activities. From the perspective of *Tom Jones*, the God of Genesis 2–3 is a model for Allworthy's character especially during Tom's banishment, although the text resists deep allegorical reading. Allworthy is misled by the serpents in the garden in a way God in Genesis 2–3 is not. This episode abounds with parallels to this biblical story which gives epic overtones to the judgment of Tom. In knowing the anthropomorphised God that Genesis 2–3 depicts, a reader appreciates the role of Allworthy not as the omnipresent God, but one with human attributes.

While Allworthy may act as God the Father in some respects, there is also a sense in which he is Adam, given 'dominion [...] over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth' (Genesis 1. 26). Early in the novel, Allworthy looks over his estate, meditating 'in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator, by doing most good to his Creatures' (*TJ*, p. 43). The name of Allworthy's estate, Paradise Hall, is not revealed until later in the

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<sup>19</sup> William Dodd, *A Commentary on the Books of the Old and New Testament* (London: R. Davis, L. Davis, Carnan and Newbury, 1770), I, [n. pns].

narrative (*TJ*, p. 98), making explicit what is here implicit. By referencing the Creator, Fielding draws attention to the idea that Allworthy sees himself and should be seen by the reader as the steward of God's creation. He is Adam, not God. Allworthy also shares Adam's naivete, unable to see the hypocrisy of his fellow characters, who appear to be God-fearing Christians, but are egotistical. Naivete is not necessarily a sin, but without caution leads to misinformed decisions as it does for Adam and Allworthy. Based on the hypocritical Captain Blifil, the young Blifil and Thwackum's use of the Bible, Allworthy should be aware of their faults and cautious of their statements about Tom. Eve Tavor states that 'the real effect of all [Allworthy's] goodwill and good qualities is to ruin Partridge, condemn Jenny, banish Tom and encourage the Blifils and Thwackums of this world'.<sup>20</sup> If one looks to the end of the book where the narrator reveals the full design of providence as previously discussed, all is made right. Partridge is redeemed, Jenny given a stipend, Blifil disinherited, and Thwackum left in obscure retirement. By reading Allworthy's character as based on Adam, not God, many of the issues in his human character are explained. While in the seat of judgment he is not the omniscient, ultimate judge of eternity but a naïve mortal, unable to perceive anything other than superficial words and seemingly good intentions.

In exiling Tom, Allworthy mimics an unforgiving Old Testament God, yet his other judgments are permeated with New Testament mercy. When Jenny Jones

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<sup>20</sup> Eve Tavor, *Scepticism, Society and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), p. 124.

is revealed falsely as Tom's mother, Allworthy's admonishment of her (later repeated to Tom as there is no sexual double standard in the Bible) is reminiscent of the woman caught in adultery from John 8. A woman is brought before Jesus as an adulterer for which the penalty is the stoning to death of both parties (Leviticus 20. 10), yet only the woman is brought. Jesus' response is 'he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her' (John 8. 7). As her accusers vanish, the woman waits for judgment from the sinless Jesus who tells her 'go, and sin no more' (John 8. 11). This principle is echoed in Allworthy's statement that 'I have talked thus to you, Child, not to insult you for what is passed, and irrevocable, but to caution and strengthen you for the future' (*TJ*, p. 53). This lecture to Jenny also contains some scriptural exegesis. Allworthy states, 'for though the Scripture bids us love our Enemies, it means not with that fervent Love, which we naturally bear towards our Friends' (*TJ*, p. 52; Matthew 5. 44; Luke 6. 27). Here the 'Enemy' is the supposed father of Tom who Jenny will not reveal. In Allworthy, there is a mixture of harsh intolerance of sin and merciful judgment. A forgiving New Testament mercy would not exile Tom, and an Old Testament condemnation of Jenny is beyond the bounds of law.

While showing mercy in some of his judgments, Allworthy also affirms harsh sentences when confronted with amorality. For example, Allworthy the magistrate must pass some form of judgment on Blifil once his wickedness is revealed to Allworthy towards the end of the narrative. Allworthy plans total



disownment, but Tom urges clemency. As William Empson highlights when exploring *Tom Jones's* morality:

The practical lawyer and prospective magistrate would have to find the Gospel puzzling on this point [of total forgiveness]; it is quite fair for Fielding still to refuse to admit that Allworthy is in the wrong, because he may well suspect that the command of Jesus would bring anarchy. To be sure, this is not one of the impressive tests of Tom; he is merely behaving nicely, just when everything is falling into his hands, and would lose our sympathy if he didn't [...].<sup>21</sup>

A mixture of moral and literary factors is pertinent to the disownment of Blifil.

Literarily, the reader expects Tom to forgive Blifil and earn his reward by exemplifying Christian forgiveness as Clarissa forgives Lovelace and her family before she dies. However, Blifil's punishment is also necessitated for a sense of temporal providential justice. Morally, the situation places Allworthy in a quandary. As a magistrate and in his role as Adam/God the Father it is his duty to pass sentence; as a Christian it is his duty to forgive. This is something Fielding faced in his role of magistrate. In his pamphlet *An Enquiry into the Late Increase of Robbers* (1751), Fielding urges harsh penalties for criminals: 'Mercy may appear more amiable in a Magistrate, Severity is a more wholesome Virtue; nay Severity to an Individual may, perhaps, be in the End the greatest Mercy'.<sup>22</sup> In his comic novels, Fielding presents characters whose punishment is harsh. The judge of the Good Samaritan postillion in *Joseph Andrews* for example is certainly willing to impose a severe sentence, but Fielding hints that this is excessive as the postillion is good at heart. Blifil, however, has no

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<sup>21</sup> William Empson, 'Tom Jones', *The Kenyon Review*, 20.2 (1958), 217–49 (p. 234).

<sup>22</sup> Henry Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers* (Dublin: Faulkner, Wilson, James, and Williamson, 1751).

goodness within and is therefore, in Fielding's worldview, deserving of a punitive sentence. Ultimately, it is Allworthy's justice which wins out and Tom is told 'you carry this forgiving Temper too far. Such mistaken Mercy is not only Weakness, but borders on Injustice, and is very pernicious to Society, as it encourages Vice' (*TJ*, p. 969). While forgiveness is important, vice must not be encouraged.

Allworthy's character is representative of a variety of biblical figures. Occupying the space of God the Father in Genesis 2-3 and Adam given dominion over Paradise, his morality stems from a mixture of Old Testament judgment and New Testament mercy. As a magistrate, he reflects Fielding's own approach to temporal justice, tinged with perhaps more mercy than Fielding would show in the real world so as not to encourage vice. While Allworthy may be Fielding's idea of a good Christian, what is interesting is that the religious man seldom utilises specific biblical references. He alludes to Scripture only four times, but his actions are based firmly in the biblical principles Fielding held most dear: charity and honesty. Allworthy is flawed, but his flawed judgment in banishing Tom ultimately leads by providence to Tom's salvation and the restoration of goodness to Paradise Hall. Allworthy's virtue is highlighted by the moral contrasts with other characters who commit blasphemy in their use of Scripture, to the extent that it blackens their characters beyond what may be appreciated by the modern reader, threatening to overwhelm the comic nature of the novel. Allworthy embodies the values of the Bible; other characters only quote it.

Turning to specific uses of the Bible in the first section of the novel, Captain Blifil is the first character in *Tom Jones* to use Scripture to attempt to steer Allworthy away from charitable Christianity, and to threaten the novel's comic tone. The narrator describes Captain Blifil as having 'an Inclination to *Methodism*' (*TJ*, p. 63), strong condemnation for Fielding, and in Captain Blifil's use of the Bible he conforms to Calvinism. He is the source of four scriptural references used to attempt to convince Allworthy of the evils of charity. Captain Blifil is 'well read in Scripture' (*TJ*, p. 79) yet his interpretation of the verses he uses is unusual. Arguing against the merciful treatment of Tom, Captain Blifil utilises two biblical quotations without consideration of traditional interpretation or context. He states that '[God] *visits the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children; and, the Fathers have eaten sour Grapes, and the Children's Teeth are set on edge*' (*TJ*, p. 79). The first of these references comes from the Ten Commandments: 'for I the Lord am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me' (Exodus 20. 5). In Allworthy's response to this reference, he engages in his own scriptural exegesis in a way he seldom does in *Tom Jones*, showing himself to be a competent biblical scholar and able to respond with scriptural authority. Allworthy states that it is 'a particular Denunciation against the *Jews* for the Sin of Idolatry, of relinquishing and hating their heavenly King' (*TJ*, p. 80). As the narrative progresses and the young Blifil starts to become more like his father in spirit, the use of this verse takes on new significance.

The second verse Captain Blifil uses is taken from Ezekiel 18. 2 which he quotes directly. However, he neglects to consider the following verse: 'As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel' (Ezekiel 18. 3, also Jeremiah 31. 29–30). Allworthy again correctly points out that 'the latter was parabolically spoken, and rather intended to denote the certain and necessary Consequences of Sin, than any express Judgment against it' (*TJ*, p. 80). This verse is traditionally interpreted as Messianic prophecy. As Dodd noted in his commentary, citing the work of Bishop Warburton, once God has revealed the future state of rewards and punishments through the Messiah, a new age of mercy begins.<sup>23</sup> This is the approach Allworthy takes to this verse of the Bible, and to his religion more generally. Allworthy concludes his rebuttal of Captain Blifil by stating that 'to represent the Almighty as avenging the Sins of the Guilty on the Innocent, was indecent, if not blasphemous, as it was to represent him acting against the first Principles of natural Justice, and against the original Notions of Right and Wrong, which he himself had implanted in our Minds' (*TJ*, p. 80). The phrase 'he himself had implanted in our Minds' is significant for the theology of *Tom Jones*. Tom embodies the natural goodness of mankind as Fielding saw it. By juxtaposing these biblical verses, Fielding can depict Captain Blifil as a man who knows the Bible but has failed to take its teachings to heart. He has also failed to understand the context of verses and shows himself to be willing to twist biblical teaching for his own means, a common theme among theologically astute characters at Paradise Hall. By understanding this section and Fielding's

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<sup>23</sup> Dodd, II, [n. pns].

extended commentary from Allworthy, one can appreciate not only the selfishness of Captain Blifil more deeply, but also the attempt to detract from the light-hearted world of *Tom Jones*. If Captain Blifil is successful and Allworthy convinced, charitable good humour is seriously undermined.

As the narrative progresses, Captain Blifil becomes less subtle in his attempts to convince Allworthy to cease being charitable. In a second attempt to engage Allworthy, he states that ‘the Word *Charity*, in Scripture, no where means Beneficence, or Generosity’ (*TJ*, p. 94). Captain Blifil is technically correct. The most prominent example of the use of ‘charity’ in the King James Version is in I Corinthians 13: ‘And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing’ (I Corinthians 13. 3). Dodd also disputes the rendering of the word ‘charity’ here, stating that ‘being in our language almost confined to the sense of *alms-giving*’.<sup>24</sup> The Greek word ‘agape’, translated ‘charity’ in I Corinthians signifies the love between man and God, which was becoming an increasingly but not totally obsolete meaning of the word ‘charity’ in the eighteenth century according to the *OED*. An eighteenth-century audience would most likely understand the obsolete meaning and know where Captain Blifil has drawn his conclusion about the word ‘charity’.

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<sup>24</sup> Dodd, III, [n. pns].

While Captain Blifil may be technically correct about the translation of the word 'charity', he ignores the many injunctions to almsgiving throughout the New Testament. He neglects to recall the teaching to the rich man: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me' (Matthew 19. 21, also Mark 10. 21 and Luke 18. 22). The Captain adds to his final attempt to convince Allworthy of the sinfulness of charity that 'Considering who the Disciples were, it would be absurd to conceive the Doctrine of Generosity, or giving Alms, to have been preached to them' (*TJ*, p. 94). While the twelve apostles may have been from poor backgrounds as far as is known, other disciples of Jesus were wealthy (Nicodemus from John's gospel and the women who funded Jesus' ministry referenced in Luke, for example). Throughout the gospels, Jesus also praises the almsgiving of the poor (Mark 12. 41-44; Luke 21. 1-4). Captain Blifil ignores much of the New Testament teaching in order to engage in linguistic pedantry. Allworthy responds to this discourse by asserting that, 'let the Word Charity have what Construction it would, it sufficiently appeared to be from the whole Tenor of the New Testament' (*TJ*, p. 95). While no quote is offered, the spirit of Fielding's interpretation of the gospels is summarised. While subtle in his previous attempt, Captain Blifil becomes more desperate to preserve Allworthy's estate for his own aggrandisement. His use of the Bible provides an opportunity for Allworthy to reveal not only his knowledge of Scripture, but also his adherence to the teachings of Jesus with regards to charity and kindness.

Captain Blifil's attempts to convince Allworthy against charity are continued after the former's death by the introduction of two scholars, who provide a 'balanced' education for Tom and young Blifil: Thwackum the Calvinist and Square the deist. As discussed in Chapter One, Fielding was contemptuous of deists and hypocritical clergymen who preached salvation by faith, neglecting works of charity. Thwackum and Square are introduced by the narrator as equally awful, reflecting Fielding's disdain.

*Square* held human Nature to be the Perfection of all Virtue, and that Vice was a Deviation from our Nature in the same Manner as Deformity of the Body is. *Thwackum*, on the contrary, maintained that the human Mind, since the Fall, was nothing but a sink of Iniquity, till purified and redeemed by Grace. (*TJ*, p. 126)

Perhaps oddly, Square's deist view of humanity is treated more charitably than the supposed Christian Thwackum's. As a deist, Square is predictably the source of no biblical references. Thwackum is the source of ten, interpreted to excuse his own behaviour and again to challenge Allworthy's charity. He is the next character after Captain Blifil to challenge the comedy of the novel by his misuse of Scripture.

The narrator introduces Thwackum's theology by stating that he 'decided all matters by Authority; but, in doing this, he always used the Scriptures and their Commentators, as the Lawyer doth his *Coke upon Lyttleton*, where the Comment is of equal Authority with the Text' (*TJ*, p. 126).<sup>25</sup> The commentary

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<sup>25</sup> Fielding's reference to '*Coke upon Lyttleton*' refers to Edward Coke's *Institutes of the Lawes of England*, the first part of which deals with land and property laws, commenting on Littleton's earlier *Tenures*. By relying on a commentary of a commentary, Fielding accuses Thwackum of using extra biblical musings to inform his practice, rather than the Bible itself.

which is 'of equal Authority' is Thwackum's own. An example of the narrator's accusation is Thwackum's lusting after Allworthy's widowed sister Bridget. He justifies his actions by misinterpreting Exodus 20. 17: '*Thwackum* was encouraged to the Undertaking, by reflecting, that to covet your Neighbour's Sister is no where forbidden' (*TJ*, p. 137); 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's'. Thwackum reasons that: 'as some Instances of Women, therefore, are mentioned in the divine Law, which forbids us to covet our Neighbour's Goods, and that of Sister omitted, he concluded it to be lawful' (*TJ*, p. 137). The reader who knows this verse, and therefore the final section, 'nor any thing that is thy neighbour's', knows Thwackum is interpreting this verse incorrectly to reassure himself that his actions are not prohibited by Scripture. The narrator here points out Thwackum's inner musings, making sure the reader is aware not only of his hypocrisy, but also that his behaviour is unmodified by his scriptural knowledge.

Another example of Thwackum's 'comment' occurs when Blifil purposefully reveals Tom has sold him his Bible. When Thwackum discusses this with his fellow characters, he likens Tom only to the 'Buyers and Sellers who were driven out of the Temple' (*TJ*, p. 145). Condemning Tom and suggesting corporal punishment, he refers to the story of Jesus driving merchants and those who use them out of the area of the temple reserved for Jewish gentiles, making it impossible for them to worship (Matthew 21; Mark 11; John 2). Square's response does not recognise the sacredness of the Bible over other



works of literature: 'he could not perceive any higher Crime in selling one Book, than in selling another' (*TJ*, p. 145). In the reactions of Thwackum and Square, there is a sense in which, as summarised by Ronald Paulson, 'these are the reactions of the Levites and the Pharisees to Jesus' teachings'; Thwackum wishes to punish, Square wishes to ignore.<sup>26</sup> It is Tom's advocate Bridget, herself a biblical scholar, who 'put an End to the Debate' and Thwackum's desire to punish Tom by pointing out that in the Bible both the buyers and the sellers are chastised: 'And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that *sold and bought* in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves' (*TJ*, p. 145; Matthew 21. 12, italics mine). Thwackum himself reminds the reader that both the sellers and the buyers are equally culpable, but he is only interested in punishing Tom for the 'crime'; unwilling to punish Blifil, Tom is spared. Thwackum's quotations show he is knowledgeable of the Bible, but arrogantly and conveniently prefers his own interpretation which for him has equal weight to Scripture. He is a hypocrite, and while Square is no better a religious example for Tom and Blifil, he is at least honest in his deism. While Thwackum's misuse of the Bible may be perceived as relatively minor, it still threatens to destabilise the novel's comic world. He has committed blasphemy and shows himself to be a danger to Tom's wellbeing.

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<sup>26</sup> *Henry Fielding: A Critical Biography*, p. 217.

Towards the end of *Tom Jones*, Thwackum appears again as the author of an ill-timed letter to Allworthy. Allworthy reads Thwackum's vitriolic letter directly after Square's deathbed confession that he has lied about Tom. The letter contains the final three references to the Bible in *Tom Jones* and again highlights Thwackum's hypocrisy. He both confirms the lie Square has revealed in the previous letter and uses the Bible for his own aggrandisement, taking the burden of convincing Allworthy to stray from charity. The letter admonishes Allworthy for his kindness towards Tom, who Thwackum believes to have committed murder on the basis of Blifil's report. The first biblical reference in the letter occurs after Thwackum has described Tom as 'Mr. *Square* the Atheist's young Pupil' condemning Tom to 'the Place of Wailing and gnashing of Teeth' (*TJ*, p. 928, Matthew 13. 42, 50). Thwackum has already used this phrase in convicting Allworthy on his sickbed for not seeking absolution from him with language reminiscent of Catholic sacramentalism. 'Who but an Atheist could think of leaving the World [...] without confessing his Sins, and receiving that Absolution which he knew he had one in the House duly authorised to give him?' (*TJ*, p. 247). Without absolution from Thwackum, according to him, the good Allworthy will be condemned to Hell against Protestant Christian teaching but in keeping with Thwackum's belief that he holds the keys to the kingdom of Heaven.

The second reference Thwackum uses is to Ecclesiastes 7. 16: 'Your Objection to Pluralities is being righteous overmuch' (*TJ*, p. 928–9). Thwackum laments that he was not given another parish by Allworthy to bolster his income,

something Pamela also argues vociferously against in *Exalted Condition*. Ecclesiastes 7. 16 is curiously phrased, but paired with the next verse, helps elucidate its presence in the Bible: 'Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time?' (Ecclesiastes 7. 17). These verses argue for moderation in conduct rather than trying to distinguish oneself by either excesses of righteous behaviour or wickedness as noted by Dodd.<sup>27</sup> Thwackum uses this allusion to admonish Allworthy for his moral standards, choosing this reference again without regard for its context or traditional interpretation.

In the third reference, Thwackum seems to wish for Allworthy's wellbeing, but again disputes the virtue of charity. He states he wishes for Allworthy's welfare, 'a Welfare to which all worthy Considerations are as trifling as the small Tithes mentioned in Scripture are, when compared to the weighty Matters of the Law' (*TJ*, p. 929). This alludes to two biblical passages. The most blatant is to Matthew 23. 23: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone'. The law, Thwackum would urge, is without mercy and ignores the joint injunction to both the law and tithing within this verse. The use of 'small' also calls to mind the parable of the poor widow in Mark 12, who puts into the temple treasury two small coins in comparison with the rich who gave

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<sup>27</sup> Dodd, II, [n. pns].

greater amounts. Jesus values her offering 'of her want' over those who give of their plenty. Thwackum not only disparages those who can give little to the church, but also the act of charity in direct defiance of the verse to which he alludes. He here shows himself to be a weak biblical scholar as he has throughout the novel. These verses, whose aim is entirely undercut by Square's deathbed confession, reveal Thwackum as a vitriolic Calvinist, further blackening his character. He has, however, lost all authority and as a result becomes almost comic in a way he has not been before. The flagrant misuse of the Bible has at this point lost all its potential power over Allworthy; the reader no longer fears he will be convinced because of Square's confession.

Overall, Thwackum's use of the Bible detracts from the comic nature of the narrative. Prepared to manipulate Scripture to say whatever he wishes, he believes he holds the keys to the Kingdom. He absolves himself of any wrongdoing in coveting Bridget and uses every opportunity to admonish Allworthy for his charity to Tom. Allworthy is the 'victim' of biblical references in the first third of the novel, used by Captain Blifil and Thwackum especially for their own aggrandisement. Allworthy resists all attempts to steer him away from charity and in doing so maintains the air of joviality which pervades the narrative. The victory of the misquoted and misinterpreted biblical references of Captain Blifil and Thwackum would lead to a bleak narrative, in contrast to the benevolence which prevails.

When Tom departs Paradise Hall the number of biblical references declines significantly, but Allworthy's charitable Christianity is not abandoned. Tom is Allworthy's spiritual son, a character resembling the Good Samaritan. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Samaritan is the archetypal heathen, but one who embodies the teaching of Jesus with regards to charity and loving one's neighbour. Tom is unwavering in his adherence to charitable Christianity, yet he possesses flaws as Allworthy did in his youth. The narrator describes Allworthy as 'naturally a Man of Spirit, and his present Gravity arose from true Wisdom and Philosophy, not from any original Phlegm in his Disposition: For he had possessed much Fire in his Youth' (*TJ*, p. 284). Allworthy, as the older and wiser 'man of spirit', has brought his natural temperament under control, something which the young Tom will eventually achieve but not before a series of sexual encounters, motivated by an excess of generosity rather than unbridled lust. On his sick bed, Allworthy acknowledges that Tom has 'much Goodness, Generosity and Honour in your Temper; if you will add Prudence and Religion to these, you must be happy' (*TJ*, p. 244), foreshadowing who Tom will become at the end of the novel. In personality and morality, Tom and Allworthy resemble each other.

One of the first acts of charity Tom performs is selling 'a fine Bible' (*TJ*, p. 144) to relieve the poverty of the Seagrims. He is predictably and carefully the source of no biblical quotations yet alludes to Christian principles on several occasions. Untutored in Scripture, he has imbibed the Bible's teaching through Allworthy's example. While Tom is on the road, there are only six biblical references

compared with thirty-four in the preceding section at Paradise Hall of about the same length. There are few religious characters once Tom has left Paradise Hall. A Quaker appears to highlight Tom's pain before disappearing quickly without reference to the Bible. Parson Supple, Squire Western's chaplain, meditates to Western, who despairs of ever finding his daughter that he should 'Sorrow not, sir [...] like those without Hope' (*TJ*, p. 622), referencing I Thessalonians 4. 13. Tom's lack of biblical knowledge and the absence of surrounding religious figures means there are very few references occurring in this mid-section of the novel.

The Bible is absent while Tom is travelling, but two moral options are presented to contrast Allworthy's charitable Christianity. Tom is tempted not with scriptural quotation, but morality divorced from Fielding's Christian fundamentals of charity and self-sacrifice. Tom rejects both the army's placement of worldly honour over religion and the Man on the Hill's renunciation of the world as viable schemes of belief, moving increasingly towards earning his reward by exemplary charity. The army provides the first moral option for Tom: the placement of worldly aggrandisement over Christian charity and forgiveness. In response to the Lieutenant urging Tom to fight Northerton in an act of revenge, Tom states that 'to cherish Malice in his Breast, [is] in Opposition to the Command of him who hath expressly forbid it' (*TJ*, p. 383), alluding to Matthew 5. 44 and Luke 6. 27. Tom declares himself a Christian for the first time before this statement (*TJ*, p. 383) and has clearly imbibed enough of the Bible from Allworthy to know the forgiveness of enemies as a command. The Lieutenant

responds to this principle by stating 'I believe there is such a Command [...] but a Man on Honour can't keep it [...] I love my Religion very well, I love my Honour more. There must be some Mistake in the wording the Text, or in the Translation, or in the understanding' (*TJ*, p. 384). The Lieutenant, like Thwackum and Captain Blifil, is unwilling to change his morality based on biblical principle, disregarding what he knows to be a command of the Bible. Fundamentally, Tom's character is unsuited to the army and its value of personal honour over a charitable forgiveness of others and therefore it is rejected as a viable scheme of belief for the hero.

The second moral option with which Tom is presented is the Man on the Hill's renunciation of the sinful world in favour of a solitary, uncharitable existence. Tom is initially attracted to this lifestyle, but unthinkingly rushes to the cries of Mrs Waters while the Man on the Hill wanders away, unwilling to involve himself despite Tom's earlier assistance against the robbers. As Sheldon Sacks states, 'It is not a life spent in contemplating God's grandeur and worshiping Him that Tom reacts to unfavourably; it is the old man's rejection of mankind as a worthy creation of God that he finds objectionable'.<sup>28</sup> While it appears Tom is about to accept the Man on the Hill's philosophy, he cannot resist the call to charitable action. Summarised by William Empson, the Man on the Hill is 'too much of a stoic to be a real Gospel Christian, which is what Tom is turning into as we watch him'.<sup>29</sup> Fielding quotes heavily from the four gospels in *Tom Jones*

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<sup>28</sup> Sheldon Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief: A Study of Henry Fielding: with Glances at Swift, Johnson and Richardson* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 204.

<sup>29</sup> Empson, p. 228.

(eighteen references of fifty) and both moral options, the army's and the Man on the Hill's, are without sufficient charity to make the Good Samaritan Tom renounce Allworthy's system of belief.

There are several parallels between the character of the Good Samaritan and that of Tom Jones. Firstly, both show an excess of generosity: Tom, in giving whatever he has to others, the Good Samaritan doing the same for the injured man. Secondly, they both go out of their way to assist those in need, placing kindness above their own agendas. Thirdly, they show no discrimination in who to assist. Unlike Richardson who adheres firmly to the idea of the deserving poor, Tom and the Samaritan hold no such distinction. It is enough that there is need. Fourthly, both are heathens. Untutored in Scripture, they still act according to its tenets. Finally, both Tom and the Good Samaritan continue 'sinning' even after their acts of charity. Jesus specifically chose the Samaritan because of his perceived wickedness, as discussed above, yet what is truly shocking is that there is no conversion of the Samaritan. He continues as he was. Similarly, Tom still liaises with Lady Bellaston after offering his fifty pounds to Mrs Miller. The act of charity nevertheless has the virtue of redeeming the individual. Fielding does not quote the story of the Good Samaritan, yet these parallels are striking ones, to the extent that Fielding has little need to quote the story directly. As one of the most famous of Jesus' parables, Fielding could be almost certain that his reader would note the similarities between the two figures.



Tom's charitable behaviour reaches its pinnacle in London. Financially, when he receives the fifty pounds from Lady Bellaston, he immediately offers it all to Mrs Miller for the relief of her cousin the highwayman who Tom has previously spared from arrest (*TJ*, p. 721). Tom arrives in London with nothing save for Sophia's money which he refuses to spend, so he gives everything he has to Mrs Miller as is implied in the parable of the Good Samaritan. He is charitable not only financially but also socially. He arranges the marriage of the pregnant Nancy with Nightingale who is prepared to abandon her in favour of a wealthy woman. Tom lives in London making the world a better place wherever he goes, and while sinfully liaising with Lady Bellaston, his heart is motivated by love for his fellow person. In London, Tom's sins in being a 'kept Fellow' in the words of Richardson are at their height, and yet they are unable to corrupt his heart.<sup>30</sup> Tom is left to his own devices in deciding his morality and actions, which leads him into prison and the real possibility of death. Once he has repented and the truth is discovered, his charity ultimately leads to his redemption and restoration as the temporal and spiritual heir of Allworthy.

Tom's role as the Good Samaritan develops over the course of the novel. From his earliest appearances he is contrasted with his half-brother Blifil which comes to full fruition when Tom's identity and Blifil's treachery are finally revealed. As Richard Dircks makes clear, 'Blifil is the one genuinely evil person in *Tom Jones*, and his character is unrelieved either by compensatory virtues or by

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<sup>30</sup> Richardson to Astrea and Minerva Hill, 4 August 1749, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, p. 320.

human suffering that might have mitigated his conduct'.<sup>31</sup> This quotation is exemplified in the freeing of Sophia's bird. Blifil releases the bird, claiming that to free it is an act of Christian charity, 'every Thing hath a Right to Liberty; nay, it is even unchristian; for it is not doing what we would be done by' (*TJ*, p. 160, paraphrasing Matthew 7. 12). This is the closest Blifil comes to quoting the Bible. Blifil did not consider Sophia's feelings for the bird while claiming Christian charity, 'But if I had imagined Miss *Sophia* would have been so much concerned at it, I am sure I would never have done it'. While the reader begins to see Blifil's point of view, he undercuts his claims of mercy by stating he saw the bird carried away by a hawk, a fact that could have been concealed, and which increases Sophia's anguish (*TJ*, p. 160). While hidden behind seeming childhood innocence, the seeds of Blifil's later character delighting in the pain of others are sown in this early episode, just as Tom's willingness to endanger himself to alleviate suffering is also evident, climbing a tree to try and recapture the bird. Blifil's use of the concept of Christian charity here is not necessarily wrong, but the way the narrator presents it sits uneasily with the reader. Blifil's character is disturbing precisely because he uses supposed charity and honesty to inflict pain on others. Of all the figures who misuse Christianity, he is the most pernicious; as the legitimate heir of Allworthy, he has the real potential of doing damage.

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<sup>31</sup> Richard J. Dircks, *Henry Fielding* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1983), p. 97.

As Blifil ages, he becomes more unpleasant. The narrator reports Blifil's musings on his potential marriage to Sophia, where his thoughts are not only of money but also relishing the idea he will make both Tom and Sophia miserable: 'the rivalling poor *Jones*, and supplanting him in [Sophia's] Affections, added another Spur [besides money] to his Pursuit, and promised another additional Rapture to his Enjoyment' (*TJ*, p. 346). His arrogance leads him to believe Sophia's heart can be won from Tom. His actions are shielded by a mask of religious hypocrisy, something for which Fielding had no tolerance. As Patrick Reilly highlights:

Fielding's target [in *Tom Jones*] is not the sins that are seen, the gross and glaring offenses like drunkenness and fornication, but the unseen and far worse sins that sometimes fester behind fastidious facades: pride, envy, spite, malice, meanness — those prim sins that have the astonishing capacity to disguise themselves as virtues.<sup>32</sup>

Reilly here highlights many of the seven deadly sins of which Blifil is most guilty, yet the veneer of Christianity which overspreads him makes them seem virtuous to other characters in the novel. Tom's sins are, to Fielding, superficial, stemming from an excess of well-meaning rather than any form of malice, whereas Blifil's are the reverse. When he thinks he has been victorious he cannot resist informing Tom of his exile with more than an undercurrent of glee. Blifil states 'I cannot conclude this [letter] without offering you my Advice, as a Christian, that you would seriously think of amending your Life; that you may be assisted with Grace so to do' (*TJ*, p. 330). The use of 'Grace' here reminds the reader of the doctrine of salvation by grace, preached by George Whitefield and

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<sup>32</sup> Patrick Reilly, *Tom Jones: Adventure and Providence* (Old Tappan, NJ: Twayne, 1991), p. 74.

contrasting Fielding's Latitudinarian scheme of morality. Everything Blifil does is for himself and if that should cause misery to one of his fellow creatures, all the better. He is the antithesis of Tom, who lacks self-control but possesses an abundance of other redeeming features that will ultimately earn him his reward.

Blifil's use of religiosity is, throughout *Tom Jones*, especially malevolent. The source of only one biblical paraphrase in the episode with the bird he rather prefers to use biblical principles to inflict pain on others. He informs Allworthy that Bridget has died against the advice of the doctor because it is honest to do so despite, in fact because of, the potential consequences. He will not sully himself by seeing Tom alone in his confinement after breaking his arm. He is prepared to twist the truth in placing Black George beyond the charity of Allworthy as he sees him as unworthy. He is constantly described as being in league with the Devil (*TJ*, pp. 657, 875, 878), and his malevolence is disguised behind a veneer of piety and sobriety. Fielding's choice not to have Blifil quote the Bible seems to be a conscious one. Mirroring Tom in his lack of quotation, he provides the counterbalanced morality to Tom's charitable goodness. Blifil is the archetypal religious hypocrite, devoid of the Bible but more than willing to use religion for his own ends.

As Clarissa's family represent the Pharisees of the New Testament in Richardson's novel, Blifil's depiction is reminiscent of a biblical Pharisee. Patrick Reilly argues thoroughly and convincingly for reading *Tom Jones* as Fielding's

exploration of eighteenth-century Pharisaism and the hypocrisy associated with this movement in the New Testament. As Reilly states, 'in *Tom Jones* Fielding set out to scrutinize, to appraise and evaluate, the various forms and manifestations of Pharisaism'.<sup>33</sup> Blifil is the archetypal Pharisee as depicted in the New Testament. Righteous overmuch, intolerant, and focussed on the minutiae of sin rather than the overarching principles of religion, he is despicable. He will not risk his cleanliness in acts of mercy, refusing to be alone with the sinner Tom on his sick bed; this places him in the position of the Pharisee praying in the temple 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as others are' (Luke 18. 11). Fielding's hatred of hypocrisy is amply evident in *Tom Jones* to the extent that his wicked characters are wicked *because* they are hypocrites. Hypocrisy poses the greatest threat to the positive resolution of the narrative. Allworthy's human inability to perceive it leads to Tom's tragic exile which only providence can make right.

In summary, *Tom Jones* exemplifies the importance of charity above religious profession in salvation. The Bible is unexpectedly a tool in the hands of the wicked. Allworthy has taken the Bible and its teachings to heart to such an extent that he embodies the Christian duties Fielding held most dear: charity and kindness. Tom, the moral child of Allworthy, has imbibed these principles and acts as a Good Samaritan, lacking the Bible, but his actions speak to his Christianity manifest at the end of the novel. The characters claiming religion,

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<sup>33</sup> Reilly, p. 32.

by contrast, use the Bible and religion for selfish and hypocritical reasons and are ultimately discovered and punished with death at the hands of providence, obscurity and disownment. Fielding uses the Bible as a tool to indicate to the biblically literate reader how despicable Captain Blifil and Thwackum are, who quote but do not live the biblical message. Fielding provides a model for using the Bible appropriately in the narrator, who is sparing of details for dramatic effect yet assures the reader of positive resolutions. Understanding the use of biblical references in *Tom Jones* leads to an appreciation of various characters' potential to undermine the novel's comic nature. Using Scripture to argue against charity, for lustful covetousness and utilising religious principles to inflict pain on others, Captain Blifil, Thwackum, and Blifil are pernicious to such an extent that they threaten the comic tone of the novel.

*Tom Jones* provides an alternate interpretation of the idea of virtue, where charity and good heart earn salvation and reward in contrast to Richardson's pious heroines whose focus is on religious profession. While Fielding praised *Clarissa*, Richardson did not repay the compliment. He denied having ever read *Tom Jones*, and as the nature of his criticism remains somewhat nebulous, this is perhaps true. He makes no mention of the sexual encounter at Upton, for example, an episode which would undoubtedly earn Richardson's disdain. In a letter to Astrea and Minerva Hill responding to their praises of *Tom Jones*, Richardson lambasts it:

I must confess, that I have been prejudiced by the Opinion of Several judicious Friends against the truly coarse-titled Tom Jones; and so have been discouraged from reading it. — I was

told, that it was a Rambling Collection of Waking Dreams, in which Probability was not observed: And that it had a very bad Tendency. And I had Reason to think that the Author intended for his Second View (His *first*, to fill his Pocket, by accommodating it to the reigning Taste) in writing it, to whiten a vicious Character, and to make Morality bend to his Practices. What Reason has he to make his Tom illegitimate, in an Age where Keeping is become a Fashion? Why did he make him a common — What shall I call it? — And a Kept Fellow, the Lowest of all Fellows, yet in Love with a Young Creature who was tramping [*sic*] after him, a Fugitive from her Father's House? — Why did he draw his Heroine so fond, so foolish, and so insipid? — Indeed he has one Excuse — He knows not how to draw a delicate Woman — He has not been so accustomed to such Company — And is too prescribing, too impetuous, too immoral, I will venture to say, to take another Byass [*sic*] than that a perverse and crooked Nature has given him; or Evil Habits, at Least, have confirm'd in him. Do Men expect Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles [Matthew 7. 16]? But, perhaps, I think the worse of the Piece because I know the Writer, and dislike his Principles, both Public and Private, tho' I wish well to the *Man*, and Love Four worthy Sisters of his, with whom I am well acquainted. And indeed <sup>should</sup> admire him, did he make the Use of his Talents which I wish him to make; For the vein of Humour, and Ridicule, which he is Master of, might, if properly turned, do great Service to the Cause of Virtue.<sup>34</sup>

Here, Richardson criticises the nature of providence in the novel, stating it is too obvious; the illegitimacy of Tom; the fact that he was a 'kept fellow'; the character of Sophia; and finally a personal assassination of Fielding, accusing him of not using his talents for moral fiction, preferring the amoral instead. After this tirade, Richardson claimed that if he did read *Tom Jones*, he would be fair: 'But [Fielding's] Judges, by whom I have been govern'd, are perhaps too severe. I am sure I am disinterested enough, if I do read it, to give it (to the best of my Judgment) its due Praises, as well as Censure'.<sup>35</sup> Whether this would be the case or not remains a matter for speculation.

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<sup>34</sup> Richardson to Astrea and Minerva Hill, 4 August 1749, in *Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family*, pp. 320–21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

While many objections to *Tom Jones* are elucidated in the quotation above, it appears that as far as Richardson was concerned, *Tom Jones* was so immoral it was undoing the work he saw himself as having accomplished. By writing novels about moral exemplars, Richardson thought he had changed the reading public's taste from licentious literature to fictional devotional literature, replete with biblical references and Christian concepts to edify readers and lead them on the path of virtue. With the publication of *Tom Jones* and its popularity (10,000 copies sold in nine months) this work was, in the eyes of Richardson, undone.<sup>36</sup> The reading public was prepared to accept a character who is imperfect in ways Richardson could not tolerate, undercutting his redeeming features of charity and goodwill, of which I think Richardson would approve. While writing a novel placing entertainment over overt moral instruction, Fielding's efforts provide a morally edifying story warning readers of the dangers of a misquoted Bible and of hiding sin behind religious hypocrisy. The moral of virtue rewarded is again seen in Tom whose charitable goodness triumphs over the hypocritical Pharisees of the novel and earns him his ultimate earthly rewards.

*Tom Jones* was Fielding's first full-length novel written independently of Richardson's work, yet still aware of Richardson's influence, as is evidenced by the comparative points from *Clarissa* in the final third of *Tom Jones*. The novel is a presentation of morality as Fielding would have it, where good hearts win

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<sup>36</sup> Beverly Trescott Mueller, 'The Depiction of Religion in Eighteenth-Century English Literature from Swift to Johnson' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Marquette University, 1999), p. 240.



out over hypocritical religiosity and, while characters are imperfect, they are exemplary of charitable Christianity. The Bible is used most notably as a source of references for the wicked to misinterpret and misuse, blackening the characters in a way made less conspicuous by a lack of biblical knowledge in a modern audience. The comic nature of the novel is undermined by the serious perniciousness of their mistreatment of the sacred text. Appreciation of the misquotation and misrepresentation of religion gives a reader insight into the darker aspects of the narrative, adding a sense of seriousness into what would otherwise be an almost wholly comic novel. The biblically unaware central figure Tom represents the Good Samaritan, someone who lives the teachings of Jesus without biblical knowledge; a heathen doing the work of God. While no references exist to point the modern reader to this interpretation, an eighteenth-century reader familiar with this famous parable would most likely notice the aura of Tom's goodness as paralleling the Good Samaritan, showing that right action does not necessarily come from learned religion but is rather innate. The omnipresent narrator uses biblical references in a way Fielding would have them used in literature, and in a similar way to Richardson, enriching certain points in the narrative by apt comparisons with biblical stories and characters. The narrator's use of the Bible in this way affords a biblically literate reader an insight into the epic nature of the battle between goodness and hypocrisy manifested within *Tom Jones*.

Fielding's emphatic praise of *Clarissa* was counteracted by Richardson's hatred of *Tom Jones* based on second-hand reports of intolerable moral laxity. As the

authors' works diverged from one another, their conversation and responses to one another ceased and gave commentators, modern and contemporary, fuel for dividing themselves into either Richardson's or Fielding's camps. However, on a moral level Richardson and Fielding agree that virtue will be rewarded, differing only in their ideas of what constitutes 'virtue'.

## CONCLUSION

At the end of *Clarissa* (1748), Anna Howe writes of how the saintly central character lived her life. She states that Clarissa's 'first *THREE morning hours* were generally passed in her study, and in her closet-duties' (C, p. 1470). No indication as to what constitutes 'closet-duties' is offered; it is assumed the reader knows what these would be. Without knowledge, a modern reader may be forgiven for assuming this reference is secular. What 'closet duties' refers to, however, is daily Christian devotions. Reading the Bible and perhaps a sermon, free prayer, and formal prayer as published in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* and other works, devotions form an important part of the Christian experience. Manuals such as William Dawes' *The Duties of the Closet* (first published 1695 but reprinted through the eighteenth century) and Oliver Heywood's *Closet-Prayer: A Christian Duty* (1794) highlight the eighteenth-century understanding of 'closet duties'. Not only does Clarissa perform daily devotions, but, according to Anna, she kept Sunday 'as it ought to be kept' (C, p. 1471). Again, no explanation of how a Sunday ought to be celebrated is offered. Richardson assumes that his reader knows how to keep a Sunday piously without further explanation. This thesis has addressed the use of biblical references in the novels in question and concluded that their use is significant if one seeks to understand the novel's imagery and morality in the light of how an eighteenth-century reader, more likely familiar with the Bible, may have viewed these texts.

The moral conversation between Richardson and Fielding is evident in their novels, and this thesis has explored the variety and nuance of their biblical references. Chapter One established Richardson's and Fielding's beliefs, arguing that both shared low-church, tolerant Anglicanism, their significant divergence being over what it meant to be 'virtuous'. For Richardson, piety; for Fielding, charity. Chapter Two began the examination of biblical references in the novels in question. It argued that *Virtue Rewarded* (1740) utilises the Bible carefully and effectively at the start of the novel, but as the novel progresses the references become less well constructed, eventually creating confusion to such an extent that their presence leads to the potential for negative alternate readings. Chapter Three reasoned that *Shamela's* (1741) world is one of inverted morality, where biblical references are abused to justify sinfulness. In *Joseph Andrews* (1742), Fielding rewrites the morality of *Virtue Rewarded* as he would have it, with the charity prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount advocated over salvation by piety. The biblical references form part of the moral argument, quoted traditionally by Adams and sullied by hypocritical characters foreshadowing its use in *Tom Jones* (1749). Chapter Four maintained that in *Exalted Condition* (1742) Richardson attempted to respond to criticism of *Virtue Rewarded*, as well as answer spurious continuations and fulfilling advice given to him by valued correspondents. Without a real literary emphasis, biblical references are primarily reserved for espousing morality, only used occasionally for literary purposes. In *Clarissa*, as explored in Chapter Five, Richardson used the Bible sparingly until the heroine's imprisonment, after which Clarissa loses herself in the words of Scripture, living and dying as a martyr in imitation of

Christ. Finally, *Tom Jones* places the Bible in the hands of the wicked. They use it to justify their amorality and attempt to convince the archetype of Fielding's perfect Christianity, Allworthy, to move away from the path of charity and mercy, adding a sense of seriousness to a comic novel. Tom represents the heathen who has imbibed the teachings of Jesus through his exemplar Uncle Allworthy, without explicit knowledge of Scripture.

These novels form a moral conversation with one another. Fielding responded to *Virtue Rewarded* overtly in *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*. Richardson retorted in writing the less successful continuation of Pamela's story, *Exalted Condition*. He then created Clarissa, a heroine who could not be accused of social climbing, receiving no earthly reward for her virtue. *Tom Jones* heralds the virtue of charity over all others, with the piety so important to Richardson's concept of virtue depicted as a mask for hypocrisy. The reports Richardson received of *Tom Jones*'s amorality caused him to condemn it vociferously, severing the moral conversation between the novelists.

My close examination of Richardson's and Fielding's novels also reveals the principal theological idea that binds the novels together: providence. In *Virtue Rewarded*, providence must be and is unquestioningly and passively obeyed, without any grand action from the heroine to save herself. Providence in *Shamela* is seemingly absent, until Fielding can no longer resist punishing the amoral Shamela and Williams for their misdeeds in the final sentence of the

novel. The strong sense of providence in *Joseph Andrews*, unlike that in *Virtue Rewarded*, requires positive action of an individual whenever it is in their power to do so. *Exalted Condition* reaffirms the Richardsonian ideal of passive acceptance of providence's plans for the world, not even allowing Pamela to express fears, but rather only accepting whatever God may will for her.

Although this same passivity is advocated in *Clarissa*, the heroine has the misfortune of acting and from this stem many of her woes. However, once she surrenders herself to passive obedience to providence, she can die a saintly death in the conviction of a wonderful afterlife. Fielding's depiction of providence in *Tom Jones* is one of total control, working seemingly hopeless situations into the victory of charitable virtue over hypocritical piety. As in *Joseph Andrews*, providence in *Tom Jones* requires action of the individual, taking Tom from the darkness of the dungeon to inheritor of Paradise Hall in the space of a few chapters as the scales fall providentially from Allworthy's eyes by a series of 'chance' events. Both authors believe in the operation of 'Providence' in the world. Whether rewarding characters in this life or the one after, the guiding hand of God, often unperceived by characters and the reader, is always at work to reward virtue.

In recent scholarship, there has been much interest in the emerging theme of gender relations and sexuality as depicted in eighteenth-century novels. While it may not appear with a cursory glance that the Bible could affect the interpretation of the novels from this viewpoint, this is not the case. In the first edition of *Virtue Rewarded*, Richardson carefully uses the story of Tamar to

indicate the danger in which Pamela is supposed to find herself, potentially violated and cast out in hatred and disgrace. Williams' distinction between the flesh and the spirit in *Shamela* provide the excuse for the licentiousness of the central characters. In *Joseph Andrews*, The Lady Booby/Potiphar's wife parallel gives a framework for the behaviour of Lady Booby towards Joseph, linking overtly with a biblical story and inverting the eighteenth-century double standard of sexuality. The gender relations as expressed biblically and at length in *Exalted Condition* affirm the rigid duty of wifely subservience to husbands, inadvertently at the dereliction of duty to God. Clarissa becomes Christ to Lovelace, the potential means of his salvation. By her acquiescing to be his wife, Lovelace reasons Clarissa can turn him from a life of promiscuity to virtue in the act of marriage. Richardson's use of Dinah, however, provides a more accurate biblical parallel where the sin of rape cannot be expunged through marriage. Lust is biblically justified by Thwackum in *Tom Jones* as he covets his neighbour's sister. Promiscuity forms part of Tom's Good Samaritan sins, with sexually voracious women leading him astray. This is not a cardinal sin, however, but sin stemming from an excess of good nature rather than Thwackum's mean and lustful biblical justification. In each of the novels, there is at least one biblical reference or parallel that speaks into current interest about the nature of gender and sexuality in eighteenth-century novels. If acknowledged, these can only enrich the debate, providing further points of discussion.

More generally, one can conceive of the Bible as a framing device for Richardson's and Fielding's novels. There are approximately 440 biblical references in total in the novels I have discussed. While Kate Rumbold and Nancy A. Mace have adeptly investigated Shakespeare and the Classics respectively, the uses of the Bible especially in Richardson outweigh references to any other work. Even in *Tom Jones*, while there are more references to the Classics, Scripture outweighs any single classical work. The Bible is not only a work familiar to readers from which to draw references. As this thesis has shown, Scripture occupied a special place for both Richardson and Fielding. For Richardson, it is his primary source of intertextuality, quoted and alluded to frequently by his heroines as they exemplify exactly what it means, according to Richardson, to be virtuous. Similarly, the misuse of the Bible by hypocrites, Fielding's favoured use of it, is designed to indicate to the reader the serious perniciousness of these characters. Expecting more exegetical knowledge and usually presenting his references more evidently, Fielding relies on a reader to understand the traditional interpretations and contexts of his chosen verses to illustrate how far from the path of charitable virtue characters have strayed.

This thesis provides the basis for an extended investigation into the wider works of Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding. It also introduces the question of other eighteenth-century authors' use of the Bible, perhaps especially variations between the non-conformist Daniel Defoe, the theologically trained Jonathan Swift and Laurence Sterne, and often-overlooked female authors such as Eliza Haywood and Sarah Fielding among others. As I have argued, the use of the



Bible can vary between novels in a single author's canon. It is clear from just these two authors that the Bible is an influential work, acting on both a literary and moral level to enhance texts and communicate an author's theology to readers. Beyond the eighteenth century, the Bible was and is continually used by authors as a source of reference. P. G. Wodehouse, for example, uses misquotation adeptly throughout his Jeeves and Wooster novels, indicating Wooster's idiocy and attesting to the accusation of his having fraudulently won a Scripture knowledge prize in his youth. The investigation of just two authors has revealed some of the extent of the influence of the Bible over the literature of the early novel, a legacy which continues.

This thesis has contributed a reading where the Bible is at the forefront of intertextuality. The approximate 440 biblical references in these six novels alone show it to be an important work from which both authors drew frequently and for a variety of reasons. Not only does the Bible justify the morality each author wanted to convey, but it also provided literary parallels that enrich the text on an artistic level. My aim for this thesis has been to point out that the Bible should not be overlooked when attempting to read these novels as an eighteenth-century reader may have done, nor ignored in seeking to read them from a twenty-first century perspective. I hope to have aided modern readers in appreciating the pervasiveness of the Bible as manifest in Richardson's and Fielding's works of the 1740s. The Bible speaks to many interpretations of the novel. By understanding its use, a modern reader may gain not only a deeper insight into the authors' intentions both literary and moral, but also as the

examples above prove, readers' own interpretation of the novels of Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding and undoubtedly other authors, past, present and future.

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