

The Doctrine of Simony

Draft

The Doctrine of Simony

A Theological Retrieval and Appraisal



Conley Owens

 DOREAN
PRESS

The Doctrine of Simony: A Theological Retrieval and Appraisal

2026, Conley Owens

Published by Dorean Press

Cover, background: Gratian, *Decretum*, Hainaut, ca. 1280–90; Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Ms. W.133, foll. 86v–87r—the historiated initial on 87r opening *Causa* 1, on simony.

Cover, foreground: Liberale da Verona (attributed), *Simon Magus offering St Peter money for the power of conferring the Holy Spirit*, ca. 1470–75, egg tempera on panel; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, PD.21-1961.

To the extent possible under law, Conley Owens has waived all copyright and related or neighboring rights to *The Doctrine of Simony: A Theological Retrieval and Appraisal*. This work is published from the United States. <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>



Unless otherwise indicated, translations, including those of Scripture, are the author's own.

*For Andrew and Jon,
without whom my arms would have fallen long before the sun.*

Þou þat sellest þe worde of God,
Be þou berfot, be þou schod,
Cum nomore here.
In principio erat verbum
Is þe worde of God, all and sum,
Þat þou sellest, lewed frere.

Hit is cursed symonie
Eþer to selle or to bye
Ony gostly þinge;
Þerfore, frere, go as þou come,
And hold þe in þi hows at home
Til we þe almis brynge.

Goddis lawe ȝe reuerson,
And mennes howsis ȝe persen,
As Poul beriþ wittnes.
As mydday deuelis goynge abowte
For money lowle ȝe lowte,
Flatteringe boyþe more and lesse.

—*Anonymous, fifteenth century*

Contents

Preface	xiii
Abbreviations	xv
Introduction	i
I HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
1 A Brief History of Simony	7
2 The Need for Retrieval	37
II THE DEFINITION OF SIMONY	
3 Something Spiritual	53
4 Something Annexed to a Spiritual Thing	71
5 To Buy or Sell	87
6 An Earnest Desire	107
III MINISTERIAL MAINTENANCE	
7 Gifts	125
8 Giving	139
9 Receiving	151
IV SCRIPTURE AND SIMONY	
10 The Forefathers of Simony	163
11 Scripture Proofs	177

V THE CENSURE OF SIMONY

12 Sin and Repentance 193

13 The Heresy of Simony 209

VI ANALYSIS

14 Spiritual Words 225

15 Mediated Obligation 241

16 Present Danger 255

Conclusion 269

Appendix A: The Layman’s Complaint 271

Glossary 273

Bibliography 275

Scripture Index 301

Index of Authorities 307

Subject Index 313

Preface

Providence carries our lives, liberties and concernments in its hand every moment. Your bread is in its cupboard, your money in its purse, your safety in its enfolding arms; and sure it is the least part of what you owe, to record the favours you receive at its hands.¹

—*John Flavel*

The providence that has brought this work into being is remarkable. I owe it to the Lord to recount his mercies, and perhaps in some measure I owe this to the reader as well.

I was born into a Christian family that emphasized generosity, and multiple sermons from my childhood on the topic of heavenly treasures left an indelible mark on me. In high school and college, a larger philosophy about the ownership of ideas reinforced this posture toward possessions when I encountered the free and open source software movement, where I interacted personally with some of the more notable thinkers in the field of free licensing, including Richard Stallman and Lawrence Lessig. Completing my higher education, I continued in that world professionally, working on the Android Open Source Project, on Chromium, and in Google's Open Source Programs Office.

I was introduced to Reformed theology during an internship in 2006 and came to affirm the doctrines of grace the following year. I did not immediately make a diligent study of the matter, but upon

¹ Flavel, *Divine Conduct*, pp. [210–11].

moving to California, I found a church—the same one I now pastor—that challenged me to grow in that tradition. Studying through the Log College and Seminary, I was required to write a thesis but given the freedom to take the time needed since the school operates without a semester schedule. This presented me with the opportunity to answer questions that had formed at the intersection of my interests in theology and intellectual property law. From this was born my thesis on *the dorean principle*,² which I rewrote as a book of the same name and published in 2021.³

Of the responses it received, the one that most resonated with me was the concern to see this principle echoed by theologians of former generations. I also wanted much more than the scattering of quotations I had managed to produce from the pages of historical writings. However, as I followed the trail of citations, it became evident that what I sought was largely inaccessible, hidden away in Latin theology under the title of *simonia* (simony). Technology soon bridged that gap. Not only have online archives of historical works grown immensely, but the recent availability of large language models to the public has enabled sourcing, transcribing, and translating worthwhile works on the subject at a scale previously unimaginable. What is more, this study has become possible at the very time that interest in retrieval is growing.

In all this, the hand of God is evident. I have neglected countless details in this brief chronology, but even the few recorded here show a discernibly divine influence that has prepared me for the present task. Calls to labor in untilled soil often come out of season so that another would enjoy the harvest, and so it may be in my own case. But in the unfathomable kindness of God, I sense that the church is ripe for this moment as well.

² The dorean principle: *in the context of gospel proclamation, accepting support as anything other than an act of co-labor compromises the sincerity of ministry.*

³ Owens, *Dorean Principle*.

Abbreviations

Sigla

- 2LBCF.** *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, cited by chapter and section.
- ACO.** Eduard Schwartz and Johannes Straub, eds. *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1914–1974.
- C.** Gratian, *Decretum*, cited by causa, quaestio, and canon. Text in Friedberg, vol. 1.
- CO.** G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss, eds. *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*. 59 vols. Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke, 1863–1900. Volumes 29–87 of the *Corpus Reformatorum*.
- CSEL.** *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. Vienna, 1866–.
- Extravag. comm.** *Extravagantes communes*. Text in Friedberg, vol. 2.
- Friedberg.** Emil Friedberg, ed. *Corpus iuris canonici*. 2 vols. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1879–1881.
- GCS.** *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig and Berlin, 1897–.
- JL.** Philipp Jaffé. *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*. 2nd ed., revised by S. Löwenfeld and others. Leipzig: Veit, 1885–1888.
- Mansi.** Giovanni Domenico Mansi, ed. *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*. 31 vols. Florence and Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1759–1798.
- MGH.** *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Hanover, Berlin, and Munich, 1826–.

PG. J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca*. 161 vols. Paris, 1857–1866.

PL. J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina*. 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1864.

PS. René Graffin, ed. *Patrologia Syriaca*. 3 vols. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1894–1926.

SHC. *Second Helvetic Confession*, cited by chapter.

ST. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, cited by part, question, and article.

WA. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 127 vols. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1883–2009. The *Tischreden* and *Briefwechsel*, cited as WA TR and WA Br.

WCF. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, cited by chapter and section.

WLC. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, cited by question.

X. *Liber extra (Decretalium Gregorii IX compilatio)*, cited by book, title, and chapter. Text in Friedberg, vol. 2.

Locators

a. *Articulus*, the article of a question.

A, B, C... A segment the edition itself marks off: a band of a Migne or Mansi column, a section within a chapter in Hus. E.g., PL 76:1091B, 9.A–D.

ad. The reply to a numbered objection—ad 3 answers arg. 3. Before a decretal it points instead at the chapter a commentator is glossing. E.g., ad X 5.3.24.

arg. *Argumentum*, an objection standing at the head of a question.

c., cc. Canon, the chapter of a canonical collection.

can. Canon, of a council.

cap. *Caput*, a chapter.

col., cols. Column, in an edition that numbers columns rather than pages.

concl. *Conclusio*, the master's determination, or one of the numbered theses he divides it into. E.g., concl. 2.

corp. The corpus, the body of an article, where the master answers in his own voice.

d., D. *Distinctio*.

d.a.c., d.p.c. *Dictum ante canonem, dictum post canonem*—Gratian's own comment, standing before or after the canon it is numbered by.

disp. *Disputatio*, a disputed question.

dub. *Dubium*, a doubt appended to a question.

fol., foll. Folio, cited by leaf, side, and column. E.g., fol. 147rb is leaf 147, recto, second column; v is the verso.

hom. *Homilia*, a homily.

lect. *Lectio*.

lib. *Liber*, a book within a larger work.

Mand. *Mandatum*, a mandate of the *Shepherd* of Hermas.

n., nn. Following a coordinate, the edition's own note rather than its text. E.g., PL 76:1091n3, 8:24n.

no., nos. The number an edition gives its pieces: a letter in a register, an entry in the *Tischreden*. In a printed commentary, the numbered *nota* of the lecture. E.g., ad X 5.3.34, no. 5.

p., pp. Page; inside a structural locator, *pars*—IV, d. 20, p. 2 names the distinction's second part, and II, p. 10, c. 2 the tenth part of a book.

P., Inq., Tract., S., Q., T., C., A., probl. The chain of divisions in the *Summa Halensis*—*pars, inquisitio, tractatus, sectio, quaestio, titulus, caput, articulus, problema*.

prol. *Prologus*, the prologue.

q. *Quaestio*.

qc. *Quaestiuncula*, a question within an article.

quaest. *Quaestio*, marked off by an edition as a division of its own.

rat. *Rationes*—the arguments of a question taken together: ad rat. replies to them as a set, where ad 3 answers one of them.

s.c. *Sed contra*, the argument set against the objections.

s.v. *Sub voce*, under the word—the entry or lemma being glossed.

serm. *Sermo*, a numbered sermon.

sess. *Sessio*, the session of a council.

sig. The printer's signature, by which a book with no foliation is cited.
E.g., sig. q5vb.

sign. *Signum*, a numbered "Sign" of William of Saint-Amour's *Collectiones*.

sol. *Solutio*, the part of an article in a *Sentences* commentary where the master answers in his own voice.

tit. *Titulus*.

tr. *Tractatus*, a treatise within a summa.

un. *Unicus*, *-a*, *-um*—the sole member of a division, where there is only one. E.g., q. un. is the one question of that distinction.

§, §§ A numbered paragraph inside a canon or a chapter. E.g., C. 1, q. 1, d.p.c. 24, § 1.

Introduction

“There is hardly one sin in the world, whose nature is less known, and whose heinousness is less considered, than the sin of simony.”¹ These words began the review of a work of retrieval similar to our own, and they are truer now than they were when they were composed over three and a quarter centuries ago. Simony once numbered among the most discussed sins in the Christian tradition. It featured prominently in canonical legislation from the patristic period through the Middle Ages, received ample treatment from nearly every major scholastic theologian, and entered the confessional standards of the Reformation. Yet today, it is virtually forgotten. Most Christians have never heard the word, and those who have tend to regard it as a relic of medieval corruption with no bearing on the modern church.

In the face of such ignorance, we must begin our study as have those before us, with the assumption that simony exists. Scripturally, this approach is warranted: though some may regard the transgression of Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24), from whom the sin takes its name, as impossible to reproduce after the era of the apostles, biblical narrative is given as an example to instruct disciples against temptations that continue to ensnare men in every age (1 Cor. 10:6; 2 Tim. 3:16). Methodologically, this approach is necessary: the serious study of any topic presupposes a real object.² However, our starting assumption is

¹“Review of The Anatomy of Simon Magus,” 502.

²“On account of the contagion of this disease, the Church must guard against it all the more warily. In treating simony, then, one must presuppose that it exists.” Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (2:1–4).

not an axiom; we will demonstrate both the existence and prevalence of simony in due course, once we have sufficiently mapped out its boundaries.³

Simony is *an earnest desire to buy or sell something spiritual or something annexed to a spiritual thing*.⁴ This precise formulation comes from Thomas Aquinas,⁵ though all its constituent parts had been well established by his time.⁶ Later schoolmen typically adopted it without modification. Even John Wycliffe, who quibbled with multiple features of the phrasing, granted that its sense must be defended.⁷ Post-Reformation English treatises render it directly.⁸ We will therefore proceed with this received definition.

The present work is an exercise in historical theology, which is to be distinguished from theological history. Several histories from the past century address the practice of simony,⁹ but consideration of its attendant theology is typically incidental. A number of short articles summarize the doctrine, and some larger works explore narrow aspects of it, but none brings the matter together into a unified account.¹⁰

³ Adopting the same strategy, the Puritan Henry Burton conceded that he “may seem to usurp the mathematician’s privilege, in begging a *suppositum*, that such a thing there is, as simony.” Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 1.

⁴ “*studiosa voluntas emendi et vendendi aliquid spirituale vel spirituali annexum*.”

⁵ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1.

⁶ E.g., Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de poenitentia*, lib. I, tit. I, § I (p. 2); Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 2 (p. 88a).

⁷ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 2 (14:13–15, 23–28). Translating Wycliffe’s treatise, Terrence A. McVeigh reported that “Throughout the second chapter Wyclif seems to have Aquinas’ exposition of the subject before him.” Wycliffe, *On Simony*, 61n1.

⁸ E.g., “Simony is an earnest desire of buying or selling any spiritual thing, or that which is annexed to that which is spiritual.” Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 2.

⁹ The fullest narrative history remains Weber, *A History of Simony in the Christian Church*, though it reaches only to Charlemagne and treats the practice rather than the doctrine.

¹⁰ The literature divides among studies of particular periods, e.g., Meier-Welcker, “Die Simonie im frühen Mittelalter”; canonistic analyses, e.g., Leinz, *Die Simonie*; and discrete questions. On the term *simoniaca haeresis*, see Leclercq, “Simoniaca heresis”; Rosé, *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque?*. On the validity of simoniacal orders, see Gilchrist, ‘*Simoniaca haeresis*’; West, “The Simony Crisis”. On simoniacal entry into religious life, see Lynch, *Simoniacal Entry*.

Accordingly, we intend to supply what is lacking and present a historical theology of simony that is comprehensive in scope without pretending to be exhaustive in detail.

Though our method is historical, it will not be neutral, as we will proceed from decidedly Reformed convictions. This is necessary since true neutrality is impossible. But more importantly, commitment to a governing perspective is prerequisite for such a work to bear any real fruit. Retrieval should be conducted for the benefit of the church rather than for its own sake, and this requires a framework both sound enough to support an honest reading of the history and congenial to a people eager to take up what is recovered under its guidance. The Reformed tradition furnishes just that. This commitment will inform which sources we consider and in what measure. It will likewise shape our conclusions and subsequent analysis.

Our inquiry is divided into six parts. Part I addresses historical considerations, both the history of the doctrine of simony and our approach to historical theology and retrieval. Part II expounds the definition of simony, clause by clause: something spiritual, something annexed to a spiritual thing, to buy or sell, and an earnest desire. Part III turns to ministerial maintenance, setting the boundaries of licit exchanges in the gift, giving, and receiving. Part IV gathers and presents the biblical passages that earlier generations most frequently adduced to establish and reinforce the doctrine. Part V considers the censure of simony, both the nature of the sin in general and its ancient classification as a species of heresy. Part VI offers several focused analyses of the historical doctrine in light of present circumstances.

While the doctrine of simony may not be widely known or understood today, there is no reason it must remain so. Moreover, we have every reason to expect that its retrieval would bring substantial blessing. The Protestant Reformation itself began in a dispute over the sale of spiritual things. What new reformation awaits the church if she learns again to discern this sin in its present forms?

Part I

Historical Considerations

A Brief History of Simony

No comprehensive history of simony exists.¹ Published historical investigations are limited to particular ranges of history and often focus on political controversies and sociological implications. Such an approach does little to trace how the doctrine itself took shape or to aid in our own theological development.

What follows is a brief survey of the history of simony, designed to cover the rough clusters of sources that we will consult in subsequent chapters. While other treatments may focus on the institutional dimensions of simony, our approach will de-emphasize these in favor of highlighting the most significant theological influences. We may divide these influences historically into four broad streams: the church fathers, the medieval canonists and schoolmen, the Reformers and their precursors, and the English divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Church Fathers

The early patristic era produced many affirmations of the principle that grace must be offered freely, but fewer treatments of simony as

¹ In 1952, Hans Meier-Welcker observed “The absence of a ‘history of simony,’ indeed of any monographic historical investigation comprehensively treating its nature and its significance in society and the Church.” Meier-Welcker, “Die Simonie im frühen Mittelalter,” 61. While this is a dated assessment, it still rings true in the twenty-first century.

a discrete problem. The fathers frequently referenced the behavior of Simon Magus in Acts 8 when addressing the spiritual dangers of avarice, but before the conciliar legislation of the fifth century, extended discussion of the buying and selling of holy things as such remains limited, though not altogether absent.

Regarding financial transactions in ordinations, several handfuls of examples may be cited. As early as the second century, Tertullian's description of the Christian assembly includes a pointed remark on the integrity of its leadership that suggests an awareness of such corruption elsewhere: "Approved elders preside, having obtained that honor not by purchase but by testimony; for no thing of God is obtained by price."² Basil of Caesarea confronted the problem more directly, rebuking those who took money from candidates for ordination, contending that those who sell the free gift of God are stripped of its grace, as though sold to Satan themselves.³

Church councils began to address simony early on. Even before the trinitarian debates of Nicaea (325), the Synod of Elvira (305) forbade any fee associated with baptism.⁴ The second canon of the Council of Chalcedon (451) addressed commerce in ordinations and established specific penalties:

If any bishop has performed an ordination for money and has sold a thing which is not acquired except by grace, and for money has ordained a bishop or provincial bishop or presbyter or deacon or any of those who are counted among the clergy, or for money received has appointed a steward or defender or doorkeeper or anyone of this kind for the sake of shameful gain—whoever is proved to have done this shall be in danger of losing his own rank; and he who is ordained shall derive no benefit from the ordination which proceeded through a commercial transaction, but shall be a stranger to the dignity or office which was entrusted to him for money.

² Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, cap. 39 (p. 200).

³ Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 53 (p. 339).

⁴ *Synod of Elvira*, can. 48 (PL 84:307B).

And if anyone is seen to have acted as a go-between in such shameful and wicked dealings, he too, if he is a clergyman, shall be degraded; if a layman or monk, let him be anathematized.⁵

This would become the cornerstone of all later canon law regarding the matter.

However, it is with Gregory the Great that the theological treatment of simony gathered force. Gregory was the first to apply the term *simoniacus* to the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices, coining the expression *simoniaca haeresis* (“simoniacal heresy”) that would dominate subsequent discourse.⁶ He first used the term on March 11, 591, in a homily on the Gospels,⁷ but he developed the moral consequences of this sin in a letter to the bishops of Gaul in 599.⁸ For Gregory, simony is a corruption and heresy “condemned in its very origin by apostolic detestation.”⁹

Without Gregory’s influence on theology, in the words of one biographer, “the evolution of the form of mediaeval Christianity would be almost inexplicable.”¹⁰ Nor is his authority confined to the medieval period. The Reformers generally respected “Pope Gregory” as the last of the legitimate bishops of Rome.¹¹ John Calvin cited him extensively—and favorably—throughout his *Institutio*, more than any other save Augustine.¹² Yet for all the breadth of his influence, in hardly any area was Gregory’s legacy more pronounced than in that of simony, where the vocabulary and conceptual framework he established would dominate the discourse for over a millennium.

⁵ *Canones concilii Chalcedonensis*, can. 2 (ACO II.2.2, 125).

⁶ Rosé, *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque?* 204–5.

⁷ Ibid., 205; cf. Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 17.13 (pp. 109–10).

⁸ Rosé, *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque?* 213; see Gregory I, *Ep.* IX.218.

⁹ Ibid., IX.218 (2, 206).

¹⁰ Dudden, *Gregory the Great*, 1, p. vi.

¹¹ E.g., Calvin, *Institutio*, 4.17.49; Turretin, *De Necessaria Secessione*, disp. 7, § 15 (p. 155).

¹² Little, “Calvin’s Appreciation of Gregory,” 146.

The Medievals

After the time of Gregory the Great, Christianity increasingly spread outward from the cities into the countryside. Whereas churches near urban centers were typically founded directly by the diocese and supported from its own resources, the rural churches that now multiplied across the West owed their existence to nobles who built them upon their estates.¹³ This often entailed a proprietorship attended by a measured control over ecclesiastical functions, especially the selection of church officers, whether by direct appointment or privileged recommendation. Such recommendations would come to be known as *presentations*. The broader authority bound up with direct ownership and associated endowments would be called the *right of patronage*. By the eighth century, the vast majority of parish churches across Western Europe had come to be treated as the private property of the wealthy on whose estates they stood.¹⁴ It was also in the eighth century that the seventh ecumenical council, the Second Council of Nicaea (787), decreed its own penalties on simony before quoting Chalcedon's canon 2 in full.¹⁵

The problem intensified in the ninth century with the dissolution of the Carolingian dynasty. As the protection of property devolved upon local magnates, even bishoprics and abbeys ceded the eminent domain of their estates to lay protectors in exchange for security. Though debated in modern scholarship, this has traditionally been described as the rise of "feudalism."¹⁶ Regardless, the general regime of lay ownership over churches grew steadily, and along with it financial negotiations in ecclesiastical positions. By the end of the tenth century, simony was endemic. Offices were routinely bought and sold like any

¹³ Wood, *The Proprietary Church*, 10–11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 437. Wood's account revises the classic thesis of Stutz, *Die Eigenkirche*, which framed the *Eigenkirche* as a distinctively Germanic legal institution that displaced Roman ecclesiastical norms; cf. Wood, *The Proprietary Church*, 1–2.

¹⁵ *Concilium Nicaenum II*, can. 5 (Mansi 13:421E).

¹⁶ Saltet, *Les Réordinations*, 173–74.

other asset, and those who acquired them recouped the outlay by charging for blessings, ordinations, and sacraments.¹⁷

In the early eleventh century, there arose a number of concerted movements against simony.¹⁸ As concerns grew, they reached the highest levels of imperial power, capturing the attention of Henry III. At the Council of Pavia in October 1046, en route to the synod of Sutri and his coronation in Rome,¹⁹ Henry summoned the archbishops and bishops of his realm and addressed them:

I begin to speak to you in mourning, you who have been set in the place of Christ in his Church, which he himself espoused and redeemed by the price of his own blood. For just as he, by his free goodness, deigned to come from the bosom of God the Father through the Virgin to redeem us, so he gave charge to his own, sending them into the whole world, and said: *Freely you have received, freely give*. For you, corrupted by avarice and cupidity, who ought to confer these things by the Lord's blessing, are cursed, according to the most sacred canon, for this kind of transgression in giving and receiving. For my own father, too, for the peril of whose soul I greatly fear, exercised this same damnable avarice excessively in his lifetime. Therefore, whoever among you knows himself contaminated by this stain ought, by the provision of the canons, to be barred from sacred ministry. It is therefore perfectly clear that, on account of this offense, various calamities have come upon the sons of men, namely famine and pestilence, and also the sword. For indeed every ecclesiastical order, from the highest pontiff down to the doorkeeper, is weighed down by the price of its own damnation; and, according to the Lord's own word, in all things spiritual robbery is rampant.²⁰

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, 174–76.

¹⁸ See Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, 97–98.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 62–63; Meier-Welcker, “Die Simonie im frühen Mittelalter,” 84.

²⁰ Raoul Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, 5.5.25 (pp. 133–34).

This speech would set the trajectory of the church for centuries. In the near term, the threat of widespread calamity on humanity itself would furnish the imperial government with theological cover for intervention in ecclesiastical affairs. Beyond this, theologians, canonists, and church authorities would continue to engage the matter with a focus unparalleled by any other time in history.

The Simoniacal Orders Controversy (1046–1060)

By the autumn of 1046 the papacy itself was in disarray, with three rival claimants: Benedict IX, Sylvester III, and Gregory VI. In December Henry III presided alongside Gregory VI at the Synod of Sutri, and on the twentieth of that month, Sylvester was condemned as an intruder into the Holy See and deposed. Henry expected Gregory to formally ascend, but Gregory adjudged himself removed when it emerged that he had purchased the pontificate from Benedict. A Roman synod three days later declared Benedict deposed in turn, leaving the see vacant. On 24 December 1046, Suidger of Bamberg, who had accompanied Henry from Germany, was elected Pope Clement II. The following day, Christmas, he was consecrated and crowned Henry as emperor.²¹

The following month, January 1047, the new pope convened a Lateran synod with Henry in attendance—a natural continuation of the reform program inaugurated at Sutri. There, a question was raised: though innocent of simony themselves, what was to be done with the clergy that a simoniac had ordained? Clement concluded that those who had knowingly received orders from a simoniac were to perform forty days of penance and thereafter continue in the office they had received.²² Clement died in October of that year, but the importance of his judgment would become apparent soon after.

In February 1049, Leo IX was elected pope. Generally regarded as laying the groundwork for the Gregorian reform, he immediately took up, at the Lateran synod of April 1049, the question of those

²¹ For the synod and the accession of Clement II, see Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, 62–63.

²² Peter Damian, *Liber gratissimus*, p. 499.

whom simoniacs had ordained. Leo first declared all such ordinations null, but the priests of Rome and many bishops protested that simony was so prevalent that this would leave the basilicas devoid of ministry. After long debate, Clement's earlier judgment was recounted, at which point, Leo relented and withdrew his sentence.²³

Yet Leo did not let the matter rest. The question came up again in the next Lateran synod (1050).²⁴ After this, at the Synod of Vercelli (1050), the pope went as far as to re-ordain such priests, implying that their former ordination was invalid. Being rebuked there, he asked forgiveness, but then being reproached at Rome for yielding, he fell back into the same practice.²⁵ At the Lateran synod of 1051 he begged the assembly to pray for divine guidance on the matter.²⁶

This appeal led Peter Damian to publish the letter known as *Liber gratissimus* (1052), arguing for the validity of orders for those ordained *gratis* by simoniacs. Five years later, Humbert of Silva Candida wrote against this view with *Libri tres adversus simoniacos* (1057), arguing against any legitimacy to the spiritual activities of simoniacs, requiring that any ordained by them be deposed or ordained anew.²⁷

Although this question grew acute in the eleventh century, it was not entirely new. For one, Gregory the Great had already concluded that such ordinations were legitimate.²⁸ More famously, the debate was, in substance, a replay of the Donatist controversy of the fourth and early fifth centuries. Under persecution, some clergy had handed over their Scriptures, an act signifying the renunciation of the faith, and the Donatists insisted that sacraments administered by these *traditores* were void, and that those baptized or ordained by such men must

²³ Ibid., p. 499.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 390. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 390–92n9.

²⁵ Berengar of Tours, *De sacra coena*, 40–41. Cf. Peter Damian, *De privilegio Romanae ecclesiae*, p. 237; Michel, “Die folgenschweren Ideen des Kardinals Humbert,” 80n73.

²⁶ Peter Damian, *Liber gratissimus*, p. 392.

²⁷ See Whitney, “Peter Damiani and Humbert” for an overview of literary debate.

²⁸ E.g., “just as one who has been baptized once ought not to be baptized again, so one who has been consecrated once in the same order cannot be consecrated again.” Gregory I, *Ep.* II.45 (p. 145).

receive the rites anew. This rigorist position may be labeled “Cyprianic,” after Cyprian of Carthage, to whose writings the Donatists appealed. Augustine, whose view ultimately prevailed, argued the contrary, locating the efficacy of the sacraments in the work rather than the worker (*ex opere operato* vs. *ex opere operantis*, in the terminology of later schoolmen).

Though the debate did not subside immediately afterward, we may mark the Lateran synod of 1060 under Nicholas II as granting its ultimate resolution with its second canon, which permitted those ordained *gratis* by simoniacs to remain in the orders they had received.²⁹ This measure was granted as a temporary dispensation, and the canon forbade any successor to make a rule of it,³⁰ but it would be preserved by the primary authoritative compilation on simony written in the twelfth century.³¹

It is possible to overstate the level of controversy on this matter. While there was certainly debate over the practical handling of those ordained by simoniacs, evidence of thoroughgoing rigorism outside of Humbert is scant. No other canonist followed him explicitly in his conclusions.³² Moreover, evidences for a rigorist movement preceding

²⁹ “But concerning those who were ordained by simoniacs not for money but *gratis*: since the question has long been debated at length, we loose every knot of doubt, so that we may allow no one to be in any further uncertainty on this head. Since, then, this poisoned plague has so far taken root by now that scarcely any church can be found which is not corrupted by the disease in some part, those who up to now have been consecrated *gratis* by simoniacs we permit to remain in the orders they have received, not so much by the strictness of justice as out of regard for mercy, unless perhaps some other fault arising from their life stands against them contrary to the canons.” *Concilium Lateranense posterius*, can. 2 (p. 550).

³⁰ “For so great is the multitude of such men that, since we cannot maintain the rigor of canonical force over them, it is necessary that for the present we incline our minds, by way of dispensation, toward the pursuit of a merciful accommodation. Yet by the authority of the holy apostles Peter and Paul we forbid altogether that any of our successors should ever take or set up for himself or for anyone else a rule out of this our permission, since it was not the authority of the ancient fathers that promulgated this by way of command or concession, but the overwhelming necessity of the time that extorted it from us by way of permission.” *Ibid.*, can. 2 (p. 550).

³¹ C. 1, q. 1, c. 107, § 2.

³² Gilchrist, ‘*Simoniaca haeresis*’, 234.

Sutri have been substantially discredited by more recent scholarship.³³

The Investiture Controversy (1076–1122)

Eventually, attention turned upstream, from simony itself to the lay influence at the root of its spread. The focal point became *lay investiture*: the authority of a civil ruler to appoint clergy, symbolized by his bestowal of the ring and staff that marked the conferral of office. The matter reached its crisis point under Gregory VII, who sought to reverse this claim to authority. Cataloguing the principles of what would come to be known as the Gregorian reform in his *Dictatus papae* (1075), he claimed that the pope alone held universal authority, with the power to depose not only bishops but even emperors.³⁴

Concern over lay investiture had already surfaced before Gregory, even among several of the aforementioned parties. When Leo IX, then Bruno of Toul, was selected as pope by Henry III in 1048, he accepted only on the condition that his election be confirmed by the clergy and people of Rome.³⁵ Likewise, the third book of Humbert's *Adversus simoniacos* argued that lay investiture not only encouraged simony but was itself inherently simoniacal. To bestow the ring and the staff presupposes possession of the pastoral authority they symbolize; in conferring them by the power of the sword, the civil ruler imposes the invested man into the clergy by violence.³⁶ Like Gregory, Humbert saw the true nature of authority reversed, and it was ultimately contention over papal supremacy that led him to excommunicate the patriarch Michael Cerularius, triggering the Great Schism of 1054.³⁷ Whether his

³³ The *Epistola Widonis*—conventionally dated to around 1031—has often been adduced as evidence that anxiety over simoniacal ordinations ran deep, well before Sutri. It appears to have entered circulation only in 1074–1076 (Gilchrist, *The Epistola Widonis*, 58), and the letter itself may only date to around 1060 (West, “The Simony Crisis,” 252).

³⁴ Gregory VII, *Reg.* II.55a.

³⁵ Gilchrist, “Canon Law Aspects,” 21.

³⁶ Humbert of Silva Candida, *Libri tres adversus simoniacos*, 3.6; cf. Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy*, 89–92.

³⁷ Gilchrist, “Canon Law Aspects,” 27–28.

theology lay directly behind Gregory's campaign remains unproven,³⁸ but the two were associates before Gregory's papacy, and the parallels between the *Dictatus papae* and Humbert's work are pronounced.³⁹

January 24, 1076, marks the formal beginning of the investiture controversy.⁴⁰ On that date, Henry IV convened a synod at Worms, at which a majority of the German episcopate renounced their obedience to the pope. From this assembly, Henry dispatched a letter to Rome calling on Gregory to resign.

Gregory responded at his own Lenten synod the following month. On February 22, he excommunicated Henry through a prayer to St. Peter, deposing him from the kingship and releasing all Germans and Italians from any past or future oath of fidelity sworn to him. It was at this same synod, a few days earlier—sometime between February 14 and 20—that the word “simony” (*simonia*) itself may have made its first appearance, in the excommunication of one Hermann, bishop of Vienne.⁴¹ Henry responded in kind on March 27, sending an expanded version of his letter that now greeted its recipient as “now not pope but false monk” and concluded, “descend, descend, to be damned through the ages.”⁴²

However, Gregory's offensive proved decisive. With German princes already moving to elect a successor in his place, Henry had little choice but to seek reconciliation. He secretly crossed the Alps—avoiding hostile German dukes who wanted to prevent his reinstatement—and, in late January 1077, presented himself as a penitent before Gregory at the castle of Canossa, where after three days he was absolved. The king who had set out to depose the pope now submitted to him and became, in effect, a servant of the church.⁴³ With the political ground

³⁸ Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy*, 92.

³⁹ Gilchrist, “Canon Law Aspects,” 38.

⁴⁰ Some have concluded that Gregory instigated the controversy by a decree against lay investiture in 1075, but the evidence that investiture was addressed there is limited. See Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, 106–7; Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy*, 120–21.

⁴¹ Rosé, *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque?* 203n9; cf. Gregory VII, *Reg.* III.10a (p. 269), though the apparatus reports it as a correction from the adjective *simoniaca*.

⁴² Henry IV, *Heinrici IV. epistola*, no. 62 (pp. 110–11).

⁴³ Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy*, 123–24.

secured, Gregory issued additional decrees in 1078 and 1080 forbidding any cleric from receiving symbols of authority and clergy from a layman.⁴⁴

Much more transpired before the controversy ran its course—Gregory excommunicated Henry a second time in 1080, Henry installed the antipope Clement III and marched on Rome, and Gregory himself died in exile at Salerno in 1085—but the details lie beyond our present concern. The dispute reached a more durable end at the Concordat of Worms (1122), where Henry V renounced investiture with ring and staff. From a Protestant perspective, exchanging civil authority over the church for papal supremacy hardly represents clear progress, yet by stripping nobility of the power to appoint church officers, the end of lay investiture effectively mitigated the most explicit forms of simony.

The Classical Period of Canon Law (1140–1234)

Of course, as rights of patronage continued, simony through lay influence continued as well, as did many other forms of simony. However, these former controversies had whetted an appetite for institutional reform and likewise produced an expanding body of canon law addressing the matter. This ushered in the classical period of canon law.

The beginning of this period is marked by the completion of Gratian's *Decretum*, conventionally dated to ca. 1140.⁴⁵ This accomplishment has earned Gratian the accolade “father of canon law” for drawing conciliar legislation and traditional pronouncements into a single, dialectically arranged compendium. The very first *causa* of the work is a long and dedicated body of judgments on simony, signaling the centrality of the topic.

From this point, canon law as a discipline underwent a formalization, giving rise to dedicated guilds and a regulated practice with

⁴⁴ Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, 107.

⁴⁵ More recent scholarship has shown that the *Decretum* circulated in at least two recensions, complicating older assumptions about its composition; the conventional date nonetheless remains the standard reference point. See Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum*, 3–4.

educational requirements and oaths of admission.⁴⁶ This professionalization brought wider recognition of simony and stronger measures against it. Religious societies, which had previously been lax on the matter, began to enforce rules against payments for entry.⁴⁷ In the thirteenth century, even hospitals—themselves organized as religious societies—sometimes required of entrants an oath that they had not obtained their place by simony.⁴⁸

Less than a century after the *Decretum*, Gregory IX commissioned a new compilation, the *Decretales*, undertaken by Raymond of Peñafort and promulgated in 1234. Designed to be the official compilation of papal decrees, it would remain in force among Roman Catholics until 1918. It came to be known as the *Liber extra* since its contents functioned as an addition to Gratian's *Decretum*. Only the third title of the fifth book is dedicated to simony,⁴⁹ but it attracted a substantial body of commentary, ensuring its formative influence on the subject.

By many accounts, the *Decretum* and the *Liber extra* form the bookends of the classical period of canon law. They became the foundational reference points for virtually all subsequent treatments on the subject of simony, whether scholastic, proto-Reformer, Roman Catholic, or Protestant. Even when citing earlier authorities on the topic—Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, etc.—authors often did not quote them precisely as recorded directly in their works, but as transmitted by these two compendiums. Alternative end dates for the classical period have been proposed to accommodate later developments, as significant works of canon law continued to appear, most notably the *Liber sextus*, commissioned by Boniface VIII and named as the work following the five books of the *Liber extra*. None of these, however, treated simony with similar depth, and more importantly, none had similar impact on the study of the topic.

⁴⁶ Brundage, *The Practice of Canon Law*; Brundage, *Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession*, 283–343.

⁴⁷ Lynch, *Simoniack Entry*, 147–69.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴⁹ X 5.3.

The Rise of the Universities (1150–1215)

The schools that emerged in the Middle Ages featured such a diversity that the notion of the medieval university resists definition.⁵⁰ Under sufficiently broad parameters, there were dozens,⁵¹ though only a handful—Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and a few others—dominate the historical literature. We might center the definition on the existence of a guild of masters and/or students.⁵² These exercised political influence over the university and were typically organized into “nations,” subgroups reflecting the region of origin of their members.⁵³ The term that came closest to our modern concept of a university was *studium generale*, though it did not become a technical expression until the fourteenth century.⁵⁴ From the late thirteenth century, papal or imperial endorsement was required to achieve this status.⁵⁵

The curriculum of medieval universities began with the seven liberal arts: the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). Upon mastering this preparatory foundation, students could advance to one of the three higher faculties: medicine, law (both canon and civil), or theology. Our interest lies with theology—the “queen of the sciences”—since this is where the doctrine of simony was most fully developed. This focus entails a geographic distinction as well: while canon law had its seat at Bologna, where both Gratian and Raymond of Peñafort had taught, much of the theological work that concerns us came out of Paris and its English offshoot, Oxford. It is at these centers in particular that scholasticism thrived and where the greatest minds flourished who would give simony its doctrinal articulation, such as Thomas Aquinas (Paris) and John Wycliffe (Oxford).

⁵⁰ Verger, *Patterns*, 45.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 62–65 provides a list.

⁵² Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 32; Haskins, *The Rise of Universities*, 5.

⁵³ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 84–90.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

It was likewise at Paris that Peter Lombard completed his *Sententiae* (ca. 1155–57),⁵⁶ a work consisting principally of categorized pronouncements compiled from church fathers. It functioned as a systematic theology textbook, and through the rest of the Middle Ages, theological training in the universities consisted largely of lectures on the *Sentences*, with the most accomplished theologians producing their own commentaries on it. With over a thousand known commentaries, it stands as the most frequently analyzed work of Christian literature outside the Bible itself.⁵⁷ This concentration came at the expense of direct engagement with Scripture, drawing criticism early on⁵⁸ and more pointedly in the Reformation. Martin Luther, himself having lectured and commented on the *Sentences*, once affirmed the judgment that Peter Lombard was the greatest theologian, adding that he was likewise a great man and “had he chanced upon the Bible, he would without doubt have been the greatest.”⁵⁹ However, for our purposes, such reservations about Lombard’s work are neither here nor there. His value to the development of the doctrine of simony lies less in his method than in the long tradition of commentary on it that he set in motion. By treating the topic in distinction twenty-five of the fourth book of his *Sentences*, he ensured that generation after generation of schoolmen would be obliged to address it in turn.

The organic development of the universities complicates attempts to date their origins,⁶⁰ but for any given institution, one can trace a series of formal benchmarks. For example, the University of Paris received its first royal charter from Philip Augustus in 1200, and its

⁵⁶ The *Sententiae* are variously dated. The range here follows the reconstruction in Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 55.

⁵⁷ Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book*, 14; cf. Stegmüller, *Repertorium*.

⁵⁸ Janin, *The University in Medieval Life*, 53.

⁵⁹ Luther, *Tischreden*, no. 192 (WA TR 1, 85:15–20). Calvin made a similar remark regarding the paradox of Lombard’s wisdom and blindness, Calvin, *Institutio*, 3.15.7. Anthony N. S. Lane has catalogued forty-five explicit citations of Lombard in Calvin and thirty-four implicit—seventy-five and fifty-nine if each component of a multiple citation is counted separately, Lane, *John Calvin*, 159, 165, 175–87. Lane notes that most of these uses are negative, but includes some examples of positive citations as well, *ibid.*, 160, 171.

⁶⁰ Rüegg, *Themes*, 6–7; Verger, *Patterns*, 45ff.

first papal privilege bull from Gregory IX in 1231. Perhaps 1215 gives us the most interesting markers to consider. In that year, Robert of Courson promulgated his statutes for Paris, the first regulations to designate the *studium a universitas*,⁶¹ and the Fourth Lateran Council explicitly sided with Lombard on a trinitarian debate, thereby securing the *Sentences* as the standard for theological education.⁶²

The Regulation of Academic Fees (1179–1215)

Medieval universities shaped the doctrine of simony not only in providing the academic arena for its formation, but also in supplying an illuminating case study in the economy of religion. At the leading schools, different mechanisms of support yielded correspondingly different institutional forms. The school at Bologna was largely student-run because the masters took their pay directly from the students.⁶³ The *commune*, the corporation of citizens that governed Bologna, eventually took over the burden by salarizing the doctors out of civic funds.⁶⁴ The school at Paris, by contrast, evolved a magisterial governance because financial leverage centered around *inception*, that ceremony by which a newly licensed teacher was formally incorporated into the guild of masters.⁶⁵ These primary mechanisms, however, hardly exhausted the financial picture. Any medieval university drew on a variety of revenue streams.⁶⁶

The sale of teaching licenses was a primary point of contention. The *licentia docendi* demonstrated an academic proficiency that permitted one to instruct others in the schools. Though contemporaries did not broadly label the sale of teaching licenses “simony,” some have termed it *scholastic simony* on account of the similarity to simony in

⁶¹ Baldwin, *Paris, 1200*, 211.

⁶² See Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 119.

⁶³ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 65–66.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 66–67.

⁶⁵ Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, 1.284–87; cf. Post, *Alexander III, the Licentia Docendi*, 266.

⁶⁶ See Gieysztor, *Management and Resources*, 133–36 for a detailed overview.

ordinations.⁶⁷ The shared appeal to Matthew 10:8 is also notable.⁶⁸ Alexander III repeatedly prohibited the sale of teaching licenses, but did so most widely in the Third Lateran Council (1179), canon 18.⁶⁹ *Liber extra*, 5.5, *De magistris*—two titles after 5.3, *De simonia*—would be dedicated to this topic. Alexander had first taken up the cause on March 16 of 1166 or 1167,⁷⁰ and almost three decades earlier, canon 17 of the Council of Westminster (1138) had condemned the similar practice of a master's letting his school out to be taught in by another.⁷¹

Alexander connected the sale of teaching licenses to a broader principle that knowledge itself should not be sold.⁷² In the aforementioned canon 18 of Third Lateran, Alexander also required that cathedral schools staff a beneficed master in order that he may provide free education to the clergy and the poor.⁷³ The conviction behind this demand was already current and would soon harden into a common dictum: "Knowledge is a gift of God, therefore it cannot be sold" (*scientia donum Dei est, unde vendi non potest*).⁷⁴ By Alexander's decree, schools such as the one at Paris—then the cathedral school of Notre-Dame—were, at least ostensibly, free of charge.⁷⁵

Alexander's mandate, however well-funded in other regions, came up against the limits of available resources in Paris. Alexander's hand

⁶⁷ Post, *Alexander III, the Licentia Docendi*, passim.

⁶⁸ E.g., "what is acquired by the gift of heavenly grace ought not to be put up for sale, but ought to be made available freely to all, that what is written may be fulfilled: 'Freely you have received, freely give.'" Alexander III, *Ep.* JL 12096 (PL 200:840B–C).

⁶⁹ *Third Lateran Council*, can. 18 (Mansi 22:228A–B).

⁷⁰ Post, *Alexander III, the Licentia Docendi*, 258n15; cf. Alexander III, *Ep.* JL 11329 (PL 200:440D).

⁷¹ *Council of Westminster (1138)*, can. 17 (Mansi 21:514A).

⁷² E.g., "men suitable and lettered [must] be permitted to govern schools without any molestation or exaction whatsoever, lest knowledge should hereafter seem to be set out for a price, that knowledge which ought to be bestowed upon each man freely." Denifle and Chatelain, eds., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, pars intro., no. 4; cf. X 5.5.3.

⁷³ *Third Lateran Council*, can. 18 (Mansi 22:228A).

⁷⁴ See Post et al., "The Medieval Heritage" for an extensive survey of the tradition. Even in the early twelfth century, Peter Abelard reflected on having resorted to living off his students' voluntary gifts with a degree of embarrassment. Abelard, *Hist. calam.* 26–27.

⁷⁵ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 81; Verger, *Teachers*, 151.

was forced to make special exceptions for the Chancellor of Notre-Dame in 1174, and the problem was so persistent that Innocent III was still fighting the issue in 1212 and 1213.⁷⁶ Accordingly, the question fell to the Parisian scholars, who weighed not only which academic fees were morally unbecoming but, more pointedly, which crossed the line into simony. The most pronounced deliberations issued from Peter the Chanter and his circle, culminating primarily in Robert of Courson.⁷⁷ Robert, as we have already seen, would go on to serve as the papal legate who gave the University of Paris its first statutes in 1215. While not all of his conclusions made their way into those rules of operation, it is reasonable to suspect that they would have been especially respected on this account.⁷⁸

The Parisians conceded that knowledge itself could not be sold, but contended that the labor of teaching could be. This was further qualified, however, by the subject matter. While the labor of teaching the liberal arts could be sold lawfully, the labor of teaching theology could not, since theology is divine truth, and to sell such a spiritual thing is simony. The same restriction extended to moral philosophy, which they likewise classed as divine truth. In these cases, one who had no income was permitted to receive voluntary donations from his students, but any already benefited by the church for the sake of instruction committed simony if he accepted any further donation from his students.⁷⁹ Though scholars of the civil law at Bologna showed little corresponding interest in theology,⁸⁰ they reached comparable conclusions for their own discipline.⁸¹ They maintained that law was itself a divine science, no less sacred than theology.⁸²

⁷⁶ Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 1.122–23; cf. Baldwin, *Paris, 1200*, 183.

⁷⁷ See Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 1.124; cf. Baldwin, *Paris, 1200*, 184.

⁷⁸ See Kennedy, “Robert Courson on Penance,” 292.

⁷⁹ See Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 1.124–27; cf. Baldwin, *Paris, 1200*, 184.

⁸⁰ Post et al., “The Medieval Heritage,” 207.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 206, 206n32.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 209n43.

Canon 11 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) recorded that Alexander's decree had been but little observed, and accordingly reiterated and extended it.⁸³ Even with this renewed insistence, the provision of benefices for free instruction continued to fall short of enforcement well into the thirteenth century and beyond.⁸⁴ The fate of the decree, however, need not detain us. This episode in history concerns us because it accounts for what would appear in writings on simony in the centuries that followed, echoes of the doctrinal conclusions forged in the premier theological institution at the turn of the thirteenth century.

The Secular-Mendicant Controversy (1253–1300)

The opening of the thirteenth century saw the rise of a new form of religious life. Francis of Assisi, having renounced his family's wealth, first withdrew as a hermit but soon embraced what came to be called the "apostolic life" (*vita apostolica*), a life of itinerancy and evangelism modeled on Christ and the apostles. In 1209, he went with his small party to Rome and secured a formal approval from Innocent III. Around the same time, Dominic of Caleruega gathered a band of preachers to confront the Cathars, also known as the Albigenses, a dualist sect in southern France. The communities that grew up around these founders styled themselves not as monks but friars (that is, brothers). Francis's followers became the Order of Friars Minor, Dominic's the Order of Friars Preachers. To the Franciscans and Dominicans would be added the Augustinians and the Carmelites.⁸⁵

These were similar to the monastic orders that preceded them, but differed on account of their mendicancy. Not merely swearing off personal property, they abandoned communal property as well. The poverty of these new orders could not abide by the vow of stability that characterized Benedict's Rule. Rather than keeping to themselves, working remotely in a monastery, the friars took to the cities both

⁸³ *Fourth Lateran Council*, can. 11 (Mansi 22:999B–C).

⁸⁴ Post, "Masters' Salaries and Student-Fees," 196–98.

⁸⁵ For a larger overview of the friars, see Lawrence, *The Friars*.

on account of their mission to preach and their need to beg.⁸⁶ The friars sourced charity primarily through their religious activity. For example, one who gave alms to them might expect them to give prayers on account of the charity. Their preaching likewise was attended with calls for alms either before or after. Remarking how this formalized mendicancy had normalized the practice of begging, one nineteenth-century scholar wrote, “Many a man who would have been ashamed to dig was not ashamed to beg.”⁸⁷

The friars quickly made their way into the universities. On August 15, 1217, Dominic dispatched seven of his followers to Paris to establish a priory devoted to study and preaching. The Franciscans followed, more gradually, in the years thereafter.⁸⁸ Within decades they had attracted some of the greatest minds of the age, such as Bonaventure among the Franciscans and Thomas Aquinas among the Dominicans. So successful was their recruitment that wealthy families grew reluctant to send their sons to the schools at all, lest they be lost to the mendicant orders.⁸⁹ Their advance was reinforced by papal privilege. In 1231 Gregory IX required bishops to grant the friars an almost unlimited freedom of action for the sake of their pastoral mission, effectively erecting a parallel hierarchy alongside the secular clergy.⁹⁰ Because they were permitted to preach, hear confessions, etc., they often even had their own churches that competed with the parish churches. Their advance in the university was so great that by 1254, the secular masters at Paris would hold only three of the fifteen chairs in the faculty of theology.⁹¹

Such gains bred friction, as did the independence with which the friars operated within the university. Since their vows committed them to a life apart from the world, immersion in the secular arts was for them incompatible with their religious calling, and so they trained

⁸⁶ Szittyá, *The Antifraternal Tradition*, 7–8.

⁸⁷ Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, 3.407.

⁸⁸ Lawrence, *The Friars*, 130.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁹⁰ See *ibid.*, 152. “Secular,” in this context, refers to the parish priests and bishops who served in the world, as distinguished from those living under a religious rule.

⁹¹ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 92.

within their order, circumventing the arts faculty.⁹² They likewise bypassed the inception by which the masters regulated admission into their own ranks and declined to swear the oaths that would bind them to the statutes of the university.⁹³ In 1252 the secular masters at Paris attempted a statute capping the number of mendicant chairs,⁹⁴ but matters boiled over in March of the next year, when a student was killed in a clash with the town watch. The secular masters called a strike to compel redress from the civil authorities, but the friars refused the oath and continued lecturing.⁹⁵ The dispute was carried to Rome in 1254, where Innocent IV revoked nearly all of the distinct privileges enjoyed by the mendicants. However, he died sixteen days later, and his successor Alexander IV reversed this judgment within a fortnight of his election and decided the university dispute in the friars' favor the following April.⁹⁶ The Parisian conflict was reproduced, on a smaller scale, at Oxford and Cambridge.⁹⁷

The antifraternial movement swiftly took on an apocalyptic framing. This partly had to do with the contemporary anticipation of the year 1260,⁹⁸ but was also brought on in 1254 by a Franciscan who himself had claimed that his order heralded a third age of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹ In 1256, William of Saint-Amour, a leading secular master of theology at Paris, gave the antifraternial cause its founding text in *De periculis novissimorum temporum* ("Concerning the Perils of the Last Days"). Its final and most influential chapter enumerated forty-one signs of false apostles,¹⁰⁰ and the twentieth of those signs intersected his two primary contentions with the friars: their mendicancy and want of a proper office. He condemned begging from those to whom one

⁹² Lawrence, *The Friars*, 133–35; cf. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 93.

⁹³ Janin, *The University in Medieval Life*, 82.

⁹⁴ Lawrence, *The Friars*, 154.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 154; Szittyá, *The Antifraternial Tradition*, 11, 14; Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 92.

⁹⁶ Szittyá, *The Antifraternial Tradition*, 15–16.

⁹⁷ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 93.

⁹⁸ See Rev. 11:3; 12:6.

⁹⁹ Szittyá, *The Antifraternial Tradition*, 26–28; Lawrence, *The Friars*, 154.

¹⁰⁰ The precise count varies across editions; the numbering followed here is that of the 1632 *Opera omnia*.

preaches as simony; a pastor may receive from his flock with authority, but the friars have no such claim.¹⁰¹ The mendicants had appealed to the biblical principle that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14).¹⁰² Yet for William, it was not merely the performance of labor that makes a worker worthy; without formal standing none is granted the authority to make such a request. This consideration of church office represented a substantial development over previous approaches to the doctrine of simony.

William's work was met with ample resistance. Thomas Aquinas responded that same year with *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* ("Against Those Who Attack the Worship of God and Religion"), devoting a whole chapter to defending the friars' reception of alms.¹⁰³ Alexander IV condemned *De periculis* in October, and because William posed an obstacle to the reconciliation of the warring parties at the university, he was forbidden in August of the next year to return to Paris.¹⁰⁴

Though this dealt a blow to the movement, the vocabulary and framing of *De periculis* would furnish the controlling categories of anti-fraternal polemic for the remainder of the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁵ Beyond the many dedicated treatises against the friars, this rhetoric also worked its way into celebrated literature, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.¹⁰⁶ John Foxe would later reproduce William's signs of false apostles in his *Acts and Monuments*.¹⁰⁷ The movement spread across Europe, and popular sentiment soured to the point that the friars suffered a number of physical attacks.¹⁰⁸ The institutional

¹⁰¹ William of Saint-Amour, *De periculis*, cap. 14, signum 20 (pp. 64–65). See Chapter 9, pp. 156–57.

¹⁰² See, e.g., Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*, VII.39 (p. 285).

¹⁰³ Aquinas, *Contra impugnantes*, II, cap. 39 (pp. 56b–58a).

¹⁰⁴ See Szittyá, *The Antifraternal Tradition*, 17.

¹⁰⁵ See *ibid.*, 4–5. For the view that this influence has been overstated, see Geltner, *William of St. Amour's De periculis*.

¹⁰⁶ For the extent of such literature, see Szittyá, *The Antifraternal Tradition*.

¹⁰⁷ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 4.319–22.

¹⁰⁸ For a catalog of the various incidents, see Geltner, *The Making of Medieval Antifraternalism*, 48–50, 140–53.

dispute itself ended in a measured settlement, Boniface VIII's *Super cathedram* (1300), which curtailed the friars' privileges, conditioning them on the approval of local bishops.¹⁰⁹

But William's cause outlived the legal compromise. Late in the next century, it found a champion in John Wycliffe. Many of Wycliffe's works were explicitly titled as polemics against the friars, but even his other writings frequently mentioned their errors and identified their begging as simony. One famous anecdote records that four doctors—one from each of the mendicant orders—visited Wycliffe when he fell deathly ill in 1379. At his bedside, they urged him to retract his attacks while there was still time, but he raised himself up and answered, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the worst deeds of the friars."¹¹⁰ In 1382, a council in London drew up charges of heresy and errors against the Oxford master, recording as a final point his identification of the friars' begging as simony.¹¹¹ When a major earthquake interrupted the proceedings, Wycliffe read this as the earth crying out where the faithful would not and took to calling it the "Earthquake Council" (*concilium terraemotus*).¹¹² He continued writing against them until his peaceful death on the eve of 1385,¹¹³ and his followers, the Lollards, carried on his campaign against the simony of the friars.

The Sale of Indulgences (1184–1517)

The origins of indulgences are obscure, and several theories have been proposed.¹¹⁴ What seems clearest is that indulgences grew out of the bishop's discretionary power to commute canonical penance,

¹⁰⁹ Extravag. comm. 3.6.2.

¹¹⁰ Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrum Maioris Brytanniae*, 469.

¹¹¹ Specifically, the article charged Wycliffe with holding that both the giver of alms and the begging or preaching friar who received them were excommunicate, but this has been interpreted as a summary analysis of Wycliffe's condemnation of the friars' begging as simony, Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi zizaniorum*, 282; cf. Howard, *The Life and Reign of King Richard*, 43.

¹¹² Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi zizaniorum*, 272–73, 283–85.

¹¹³ Howard, *The Life and Reign of King Richard*, 43.

¹¹⁴ For a representative if dated overview, see Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, 3–9.

substituting another pious work for whatever confession prescribed. The Council of Clermont (1095) granted what came to be known as the first plenary indulgence, in which Urban II decreed that service in the First Crusade would be reckoned “in lieu of all penance.”¹¹⁵ If one form of service could substitute for another, a gift of money was no great leap, particularly since funding the crusade became a much desired form of service. In 1184, that substitution took a concrete form. Henry II of England and Philip Augustus of France jointly assessed a graduated tax for the relief of the Holy Land,¹¹⁶ and the bishops of Normandy attached an indulgence to those who paid.¹¹⁷

At the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) the practice was both centralized and formalized. Canon 60 barred abbots from issuing letters of indulgence, canon 62 limited what prelates might remit, and canon 71 gave money payments a recognized place in the system, admitting to a share in the crusade remission all who would contribute “suitably” from their goods.¹¹⁸ By the middle of the thirteenth century, indulgences had become almost exclusively financial.¹¹⁹ In 1300, Boniface VIII instituted the Jubilee to be celebrated every hundred years, offering a plenary indulgence to pilgrims at Rome. The windfall was so great that successive popes repeatedly shortened the interval and, from 1390, dispatched commissioners to sell the jubilee indulgence at home for the price of the foregone pilgrimage, exploding the sale of indulgences across Europe.¹²⁰

Several theological developments reinforced the growth of this practice. At this time, the notion of purgatory had transitioned from

¹¹⁵ *Council of Clermont (1095)*, can. 2 (Mansi 20:816E).

¹¹⁶ Rates ranged between one part in two hundred forty and one part in one hundred, varying by the kind and amount of one's wealth and paid over three years, Mitchell, *Taxation in Medieval England*, 118.

¹¹⁷ For the text of the ordinance, see Lunt, “The Text of the Ordinance,” 240–42. For a general overview, see Cazel, “The Tax of 1185”.

¹¹⁸ *Fourth Lateran Council*, can. 60 (Mansi 22:1047); can. 62 (Mansi 22:1049–51); can. 71 (Mansi 22:1067C–D).

¹¹⁹ Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, 61, 179 makes this judgment by examining the financial assumptions of the scholastic theologians in their discourses on indulgences.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 65, 199.

a purification that takes place in this life to a distinct location in the next,¹²¹ sharpening demand for such a remission. Additionally, papal grants began omitting the condition of contrition,¹²² implicitly reducing the transaction to a simple sale.¹²³ In 1343, Clement VI gave definitive papal sanction to the doctrine of the treasury of merit (*thesaurus meritorum*), giving legitimacy to the effectively limitless supply of indulgences.¹²⁴ Finally, in 1476, Sixtus IV extended indulgences to the dead for the first time, transforming such purchases into a matter of filial duty.¹²⁵

The schoolmen generally defended this practice, employing a number of arguments for its validity and absolving it from charges of simony.¹²⁶ Their chief explanation distinguished the sense in which the money given by a parishioner was the cause of the granting of the indulgence. Indulgences, they held, were not granted in exchange for the money considered as a gift, but on account of the giver's good will.¹²⁷ On this reasoning, the money counted not as payment but as alms. Of course, these justifications did not impress all of that time. For example, Wycliffe and Jan Hus frequently identified the sale of indulgences as simony.¹²⁸

The sale of indulgences reached its height when it was employed to fund the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Julius II issued the bull *Liquet omnibus* in 1510, which Leo X inherited, ultimately granting its most notable commission, that of Albert of Mainz in

¹²¹ For one commonly referenced accounting, see Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 168, 173, 237, which places its emergence between 1170 and 1200.

¹²² For example, in 1253, Innocent IV offered plenary indulgences to those who contributed to the seventh crusade without expressing any condition of contrition or confession, Innocent IV, *Planxit hactenus*.

¹²³ See Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, 62–63.

¹²⁴ Extravag. comm. 5.9.2 (cols. 1304–6).

¹²⁵ Sixtus IV, *Salvator noster*, fol. 3v; cf. Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, 345–46.

¹²⁶ See *ibid.*, 96–97 for an overview of arguments. He remarked that the potential classification of indulgences as a species of simony “was a point which naturally troubled the pre-Reformation doctors not a little.” *Ibid.*, 97.

¹²⁷ E.g., Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Indulgentia, 5.

¹²⁸ E.g., Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 2 (15:24–26); Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 4.G.

North Germany. A 20,000 gulden fee had been imposed for the pallium of Mainz, and Albert secured his unanimous election to the archbishopric in 1514 by promising to pay the fee himself, which he did through borrowing from the Fuggers, the Augsburg banking house. They, in turn, had arranged with the pope to receive half the proceeds of the St. Peter's indulgence in Albert's territories. The bargain was concluded in 1515 and executed in 1517, when Albert engaged the Dominican Johann Tetzel as his commissioner. Tetzel operated with a notoriously bald mercantilism, his campaign later being summarized in a rhyme: "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, / The soul from purgatory springs."¹²⁹ In short order, this preaching would provoke the Protestant Reformation.¹³⁰

The Reformers

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar and professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, sent his letter of remonstrance to Albert of Mainz, enclosing his ninety-five theses. While we lack the space to rehearse the oft-repeated details of this momentous event and those that would follow, it suffices to say that Luther's challenge succeeded. The St. Peter's campaign collapsed in Germany, and the movement it occasioned would in time sever much of Northern Europe from Roman jurisdiction. The charge of simony left a lasting mark on Protestant confessional writing as well. For example, the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) condemned the pope's "simony and his simoniacal indulgences."¹³¹ Even in the wake of the Reformation, Rome herself conceded that its practice had grown simoniacal. Pius V wrote in 1570 that among the other scandals of the indulgence trade "there also reeks the wickedness of simony."¹³²

¹²⁹ Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 78; cf. Luther, *Ninety-Five Theses*, th. 27 (WA 1, 234).

¹³⁰ For an overview of these events, especially as they relate to the details of indulgences, see Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, 387–90.

¹³¹ SHC 14.

¹³² Pius V, *Quam plenum*, § 1 (p. 801).

Many regard the Reformation as a battle over the nature of the gospel and rightly so. Yet two details tether our present topic to the Reformation as more than an incidental thread of its narrative. The first is that—as we have seen—simony prompted the Reformation. Even ignorant of the three-way financial arrangement orchestrated by Albert and the Fuggers,¹³³ Luther targeted his objection at the sale of spiritual things, later identifying the sale of indulgences as “simony proper” (*simonia propria*) in comparison to other forms nominally labeled as simony by canon law.¹³⁴ The second is that the notion of simony cannot be cleanly separated from the matter of the gospel. For Luther, simony was a denial of the gospel, and not merely one among others. It was the root from which all false religion grew. He spelled this out most clearly in his lectures on Genesis:

But one may see how wretched and how dangerous a thing it is to have fallen away from the chief doctrine of justification by faith apart from works. For once it is obscured and extinguished, the whole world becomes simoniacal. Thus even the Turks strive to appease God with their own works and to buy spiritual things for money and for merits. Therefore this simony exists in name only, like the simony described in canon law. For they redeem nothing and obtain nothing by price and by merits. But that zeal and will has driven its roots deep into the human heart by which every man is naturally a simoniac, by which he would wish God to be one who would be appeased by human works and merits, to whom he could throw up: “I have done many things; I have fasted much; look upon these things, and sell me salvation and eternal life.” But God neither acknowledges nor hears such workers of iniquity. And he sets forth his will in the apostolic doctrine: “By grace and freely [*gratia et gratis*] you have been justified, apart

¹³³ Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, 392.

¹³⁴ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 281:37–42); cf. *ibid.*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 424:5–6).

from all works" [Eph. 2:8–9]. Once that grace is taken away, there is no longer any distinction between the Turk and the Pope, heathen and Jew; all are simoniacs and goat-milkers, *Bockmelker*.¹³⁵

Beyond his dedicated treatments in his lectures on Genesis,¹³⁶ Luther made passing comments about simony throughout his works.

Ironically, writings on simony dwindled after the Reformation. The overwhelming victory over the outward, financial practices of simony entailed the decline of its associated doctrine. Theological inquiry rarely survives the abuses that summon it.

The English Divines

All the same, the waning of interest in the doctrine of simony was gradual. Luther's conclusions carried over into the English Reformation. The sale of indulgences was still regarded as simony,¹³⁷ and the identification of works-righteousness as a form of simony was repeated frequently through the subsequent century.¹³⁸

This relation between simony and the gospel was also stated conversely. As many have playfully remarked that we are saved by works, Christ's works, John Donne preached the same in the language of

¹³⁵ Ibid., 25:31–34 (WA 43, 423:32–424:4). See also Luther, *Operationes in Psalmos*, 13 (WA 5, 397:10–39). The pejorative at the end comes from the legend that nightjars—a kind of nocturnal bird—suck milk from the udders of goats, withering the udder and blinding the goat (see Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*, 10.56). While their Latin name (*caprimulgi*) literally means "goat-milkers," Luther repeated it with his own German translation in order to provide the gendered "buck-milkers." In other words, the simoniac is quixotically parasitic.

¹³⁶ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4; 25:31–34 (WA 43, 277:31–283:28; 419:30–430:18).

¹³⁷ For example, William Guild devoted an entire chapter to papal "spiritual merchandise or simony," cataloguing the sale of indulgences among the offenses. Guild, *Antichrist*, 137, 144.

¹³⁸ E.g., Harsnett, *A Cordiall for the Afflicted*, 448. Works-righteousness is "the worst simony in the world," Joseph Caryl wrote. "Better offer literal money for those gifts of the Holy Ghost, than this figurative money for the favor of God in the pardon of sin." Caryl, *Exposition of Job*, 7:20 (2, pp. 666–67).

simony. Christ in our nature “merited the Holy Ghost, purchased the Holy Ghost, bought the Holy Ghost, which is a sanctified simony.”¹³⁹ Elsewhere, meditating on the establishment of the Church, Donne employed the same conceit: Christ “desired a Church, and he purchased a Church, but by a blessed way of simony.”¹⁴⁰ Others used the term with reference to ministers who preached at their own expense. Francis Rous wrote of Paul that “he feeds his sheep sometimes at his own costs, and with an holy simony buys the work of his own ministry.”¹⁴¹ Thomas Cooke, defending the endowments of bishops, commended the ancient founders who gave their substance to the church, “with a holy kind of simony, to purchase for them the gifts of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁴²

The sale of spiritual things remained a live concern in England for some time. The fortieth canon of the Church of England (1604) required an oath against simony from every candidate for ecclesiastical office, declaring the buying and selling of spiritual functions “execrable before God.”¹⁴³ But the considerations of simony among the English divines rarely approached the depth of the schoolmen. These writers were the heirs of a doctrine sufficient for their purposes. The ecclesiastical controversies of their own day required more legal application than theological refinement.

Simony also entered English discourse from a different and less orthodox direction. Quakers, Anabaptists, and other radical dissenters were willing to apply the label of simony to any regular ministerial stipend. When the more established figures addressed simony, they frequently did so in the course of refuting such radical derision—named or unnamed—rather than by way of a positive presentation.¹⁴⁴

The issues themselves evolved substantially over time. With Rome removed, indulgences were no longer a concern, and the old preoccupation with commerce in ordinations gave way to disputes over the

¹³⁹ Donne, *LXXX Sermons*, serm. 28 (p. 280).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., serm. 37 (p. 369).

¹⁴¹ Rous, *The Heavenly Academy*, 80–81.

¹⁴² Cooke, *Episcopacy Asserted*, 24.

¹⁴³ Church of England, *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical*, can. 40.

¹⁴⁴ E.g., Brown, *Quakerism*, 407–8.

buying and selling of rights of patronage.¹⁴⁵ Later centuries would see the advent of different financial controversies in the church. But by then, the vocabulary of “simony” and its theological categories had largely fallen out of use, even when the underlying concerns remained the same. For example, in the Church of Scotland in the 1830s, James Begg wrote a treatise against pew rents, imposed fees whereby congregants secured their seats in worship.¹⁴⁶ Though he constructed similar arguments to those who had addressed simony before and appealed to many of the same verses, he completed his work without once employing the term.

Conclusion

The arc is one of rise and fall. The church fathers affirmed the principle that grace must be given freely; the medievals gave that principle its fullest theological and legal elaboration. But after the Reformation, at least among Protestants, the doctrine received progressively less systematic attention. The Reformers wielded it as a weapon against Rome, the English divines applied it to the controversies of their own parishes, and as the most egregious abuses were corrected, the urgency faded. By the time the early modern period came to a close, simony had ceased to be a subject of detailed theological reflection.

Yet the doctrine of simony addresses more than the gross corruptions that occasioned it; the commercialization of spiritual things did not disappear with the Reformation but only changed shape—sometimes subtler, sometimes not. The chapters that follow attempt to recover what has been lost, drawing on the four streams surveyed above.

¹⁴⁵ See Willis, *Simony: In Two Parts*, 21–24.

¹⁴⁶ Begg, *Seat Rents*.

The Need for Retrieval

One might suppose that if the church has managed without a particular doctrine for centuries, perhaps it was never essential to begin with, but this line of reasoning confuses neglect with obsolescence. The doctrine of simony is a case in point. From the time of Gregory the Great through the scholastic era, it was one of the most discussed sins of the Christian tradition. It occupied entire sections of the great legal compilations and was treated at length by most major scholastic theologians. For over a millennium, the doctrine of simony was a standard feature of Christian moral theology.

The Reformers inherited the doctrine and applied it vigorously against Roman corruption. The Second Helvetic Confession condemns the pope's "simony and his simoniacal indulgences," employing Peter's malediction, "Thy money perish with thee."¹ The Church Order of Dort names it among the principal offenses warranting suspension or deposition from office.² The Westminster Larger Catechism lists simony among the sins forbidden by the second commandment.³ The doctrine of simony was, in short, important enough to be codified into the confessional standards of the Reformed tradition.

Today it has passed out of memory. It receives the occasional historical or sociological treatment but little doctrinal consideration. It is

¹ SHC 14.

² Synod of Dort, *Church Order*, art. 80.

³ WLC Q. 109.

studied as one might study the dodo—with academic interest in how it lived, but no practical expectation of encounter. John T. Noonan, Ninth Circuit judge and legal historian, observed that “neither bribery nor its subspecies simony have today the consistency, the stability, the exigency of a true moral concept.”⁴ This is not because all the problems have been resolved; it is because the framework for discerning them has lapsed. Now is the time to retrieve the doctrine of simony.

Yet several questions naturally arise before such an undertaking. What confidence can we have in our sources? How do we approach a retrieval of such breadth? And what does the doctrine, once retrieved, have to offer the present age?

The Value of Retrieval

Some object that works of retrieval prioritize the words of men over the word of God by exalting historical theology over systematic theology, doctrine drawn from Scripture itself. Yet such concerns are misguided. To listen to the words of men is not to prioritize them, and the two disciplines cannot be neatly ranked since each feeds into and refines the other.

Two works we will return to throughout serve as examples for us: Henry Burton’s *A Censure of Simonie* (1624) and *The Anatomy of Simon Magus* (1700), an anonymous treatise.⁵ In some respects, these works differ substantially. The former was written by a notable Puritan, the latter by an unknown conformist. The former is an attempt at direct application of the doctrine from ancient sources. The latter, on account of being authored at a later time when the doctrine had fallen into further decline, goes about the task by way of a more thorough reconstruction. Both are exercises in retrieval in their own right and demonstrate a willingness to dig deeply into neglected patristic and medieval sources to make application in their own time.

⁴ Noonan, *Bribes*, 690.

⁵ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*. *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*.

Embracing Wisdom

Many suppose that the words of men necessarily corrupt what would otherwise be a pure reception of Scripture. But we are no *tabula rasa*; we come to Scripture already shaped by traditions and assumptions, whether we recognize them or not. God has intended that we be people who are shaped not only by the word directly, but also by elders—both in office and age—those who have blazed the trail ahead of us and are able to share what they have seen (Heb. 13:7). For example, who would advise that those who have not read the Bible for themselves should absent themselves from the preaching of the word? The Bereans first heard Paul, then searched the Scriptures to test what he taught (Acts 17:11).

Scripture itself commends the practice of looking backward. Moses instructed Israel: “Remember the days of old; consider the generations past. Ask your father, and he will tell you, your elders, and they will inform you” (Deut. 32:7). Bildad repeats the charge: “Please inquire of past generations and consider the discoveries of their fathers. For we were born yesterday and know nothing; our days on earth are but a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you, and speak from their understanding?” (Job 8:8–10).

John Owen captured this conviction in an ordination sermon: “Let us take heed in ourselves of any inclination to novel opinions, especially in, or about, or against such points of faith as those wherein they who are gone before us and are fallen asleep found life, comfort, and power.”⁶ From there, he proceeded to explain that its danger is not merely error but “indifferency,”⁷ a loss of zeal and watchfulness. Indeed, when we encounter questions to which we do not know the answer, our first instinct should be to ask whether those who came

⁶ Owen, *The Duty of a Pastor*, 459.

⁷ “Who would have thought that we should have come to an indifferency as to the doctrine of justification, and quarrel and dispute about the interest of works in justification; about general redemption, which takes off the efficacy of the redeeming work of Christ; and about the perseverance of the saints; when these were the soul and life of them who are gone before us, who found the power and comfort of them? We shall not maintain these truths, unless we find the same comfort in them as they did.” Ibid., 459–60.

before us have already answered them. But perhaps more importantly, when we find saints of old addressing questions we have not thought to ask, we should consider why they thought them worth asking rather than immediately dismissing them as dated concerns.

Burton and the Anatomist exemplified this disposition. The Anatomist diagnosed the loss of the doctrine itself as a symptom of cooled affection: “when that primitive fervor began to decay, and the spirit of the world to take hold of the lukewarm clergy, then began Simon Magus again to set up the head.”⁸ Burton made the same diagnosis: too many “have chosen the place of the ministry, but not the zeal.”⁹ Decay in doctrine is mutually linked to a decay in devotion; to recover the one is to recover the other.

Rejecting Error

A book that draws so heavily on medieval sources will naturally raise questions for Protestant readers. If the doctrine of simony was developed primarily by theologians operating within the Roman system they reject, what confidence can we have in their conclusions? The concern is understandable but overstated. An examination of the proto-Reformers demonstrates that their theology on the topic was nearly identical; their main difference was that they were willing to apply it to the Roman institution. Likewise, we will see that inasmuch as the Puritans addressed the topic, they echoed scholastic distinctions.

The Reformers themselves did not regard medieval theology as uniformly corrupt. Likening it to Christ’s acceptance of Jewish theology in the midst of Pharisaical corruption, Martin Luther conceded, “under the papacy there is much that is Christian and good—indeed, all Christian good exists there and has come down to us from there.”¹⁰ John Calvin rejected accusations of novelty, claiming that Reformed doctrine is ancient, belonging to Christians by a “right of recovery” (*postliminii iure*).¹¹ Francis Turretin defended the same principle

⁸ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 7.

⁹ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 76, quoting Bernard of Clairvaux; cf. *ibid.*, 79.

¹⁰ Luther, *Von der Wiedertaufe*, WA 26, 147:13–15.

¹¹ Calvin, *Institutio*, Praefatio.

when he distinguished “the substance of the faith from the corrupting accidents.”¹² William Perkins popularized the notion of being a *Reformed Catholic*, one who “holds the same necessary heads of religion with the Roman Church, yet so, as he pares off and rejects all errors in doctrine.”¹³

The purpose of retrieval is not to accept every ancient conclusion uncritically or to permit the cultural pressures of their own time to set our agenda today. Some points of general consensus among ancient writers are in error; the defenses of indulgences as anything other than simony are a conspicuous example. But even where the answers fail, the lines of inquiry remain valuable. Those who have gone before identified problems, drew distinctions, and worked out implications that we have simply ceased to consider. We should be more concerned that we might remain ignorant of the questions they were asking than that we might be misled by their answers.

It is also important to distinguish what we are retrieving from medieval sources. We are not after the premises of their deliberations, their assumptions about the nature of sacraments and orders, etc. We are interested in the application of their doctrine of simony to those premises. For example, that they restricted the sale of consecrated vessels is informative to us not because we should conclude that plates and cups can be made holy but because granting that premise for the sake of argument reveals principles about commerce in things that truly are.

Our chosen exemplars embodied this discriminating posture. Burton grounded his definition in “the testimony of the whole church from the primitive age thereof till this present.”¹⁴ The Anatomist similarly sought to demonstrate the heinousness of the crime of simony “by the judgment of the Catholic Church, and joint suffrages of many fathers together.”¹⁵ Neither author approached these sources uncritically, but they repeatedly appealed to canonists, schoolmen, and papal pronouncements. Burton justified his approach: “the church

¹² Turretin, *Institutio*, 18.10.10.

¹³ Perkins, *A Reformed Catholike*, ¶3v.

¹⁴ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 2.

¹⁵ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 114.

of Rome itself (though now the mother and nurse of abominations) hath cried out against this sin. For we must put a great difference between the now church of Rome and that which it hath been formerly, and that even within these three or four hundred years.”¹⁶ The pre-Reformation tradition is a heritage to be sifted, not quarantined.

This same principle holds further afield. Medievalists and other historians have produced valuable work on simony as a matter of historical curiosity, or even with Romish sympathies, yet their labors prove serviceable to ends they did not envision. As Solomon observed, God has given the sinner the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases him (Eccles. 2:26). Egypt lies open to plunder.¹⁷

Our Approach

Many historical works accumulate detail without a definite end. They fall short of being exhaustive yet are beyond exhausting. A work of retrieval requires more discipline. To that end, we must decide where to focus our attention and acknowledge the constraints on our scope, whether self-imposed or imposed by circumstance.

Areas of Emphasis

The topic of simony is vast, branching into a great number of subtopics, each with its own tangle of distinctions and disputed cases. To treat each of these with equal care would either swell the work into monstrous volumes or, kept to a readable length, neglect the concerns that matter most. Therefore, we cannot let the historical literature itself dictate where the weight of our study falls. The subjects that claimed the most ink are not necessarily the ones that most require our present attention. Our aim is to be comprehensive in scope but

¹⁶ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 48.

¹⁷ See Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, 2.40.60. Augustine’s accounting for the use of pagan philosophy applies at least equally to secular history.

not proportional in attention. Several priorities will govern what we address and what we leave aside.

First, our priorities will be informed by Reformed and Protestant convictions. While engaging the medieval sources critically, we will take our cue from the Reformers and proto-Reformers when they differ from others on substantial matters. We will not waste time entertaining positions that run counter to our own tradition, such as the legitimacy of indulgences or mendicancy. Those who object to retrievalist programs on the grounds that they take their marching orders from thinkers laboring within a corrupted system will find no reason to object here.

Second, our priorities will be informed by present circumstances within the Reformed tradition. Luther voiced frustration that the question of the legitimacy of a simoniac's ordinations had amassed "wagonloads—indeed, seas of books," while weightier simoniacal abuses drew no comparable scrutiny.¹⁸ The same instinct must guide us. Some simoniacal practices of the past have no living counterpart in the Reformed tradition: the indulgence trade, the sale of the pallium, or the purchase of masses for the dead. Others appear extinct yet persist by modern analogy; payments for entry into religious societies and monastic approaches to sustenance relate to the associations and parachurches of our day. Still others persist in near-identical form, even growing in weight, especially that which relates directly to payments for instruction in the word of God. Our aim, then, is to render the doctrine of simony in the shape best suited to present use, not to reproduce its premodern contours.

Sources

Many efforts in theological retrieval focus on a single historical theologian—recovering the thought of a single thinker on a single topic. The task before us is different. The doctrine of simony has received so little attention that we do not have the luxury of drilling down into any one author; we must first establish a baseline by assembling the counsel of

¹⁸ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 280:22–24).

many voices. To proceed with such a broad scope carries the danger of selective bias, but it has the corresponding advantage of seeing past any misleading, idiosyncratic perspectives. Where a broad consensus emerges across diverse sources, we can have greater confidence in our conclusions. Yet, as with areas of emphasis, the quantity of sources requires a prioritization.

First, we will take a special interest in the church fathers. As the closest witnesses to the apostolic age and a shared inheritance the Reformers themselves relied on, they carry distinctive weight. The vocabulary of *simony* came into common use after their time, but to require explicit use of the term would be to silence the very sources from which the doctrine was later distilled. We will therefore apply a lower bar for inclusion to patristic sources than to those who came afterward, expecting from later writers more explicit engagement with the doctrine.

Second, among the medieval sources, we will prioritize the schoolmen over the canonists. While the distinction has been described as arbitrary,¹⁹ the canonists were chiefly concerned with what could be adjudicated, but our concern does not revolve around human courts. Since this is a work of theological retrieval and not of historical sociology, our ultimate concern is with what constitutes simony before God rather than established church order. We will bring in the canonists where their conclusions are frequently taken up by the theologians, but the theological tradition, not the legal, will govern our discourse.

Third, we will prioritize proto-Reformers over other medieval sources. Though less dialectical in nature, Wycliffe and Hus produced some of the longest treatments of simony ever written, and we will engage them accordingly. Because Hus used Wycliffe's treatise as a starting point for his own, translating portions totaling roughly one-eighth of it into Czech,²⁰ we will be especially interested where he departed from his English predecessor. The identity of William of Saint-Amour as a proto-Reformer is debated, but we will prioritize his contributions on the topic as well.

¹⁹ So Gilchrist, '*Simoniaca haeresis*', 210.

²⁰ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 172.

Fourth, we will disproportionately feature Reformation and post-Reformation authors as we have opportunity, for we should value our own tradition. That said, because they were not confronting the same institutional abuses that had prompted the medieval treatments, Puritans and other Protestant divines wrote comparatively little on simony. Where such voices can be found, we will foreground them.

This prioritization of our own tradition extends to the exclusion of Counter-Reformation sources. Not that they diverge from other sources we will be examining; on the contrary, the Council of Trent and the works of Leonardus Lessius, Francisco Suárez, and the like only further corroborate our findings. But our goal is to recover a doctrine from within our own theological stream. Post-Reformation authors occasionally appealed to Counter-Reformation sources on the topic, but these instances are limited and most often function as *syncretism*, suggesting the rhetorical question “if even Rome understands these things, why don’t we?”

Within this Protestant emphasis, we will give particular attention to English sources. In both language and digital availability, these are the most accessible resources to us today. But more importantly, the English-speaking Reformed tradition is the immediate lineage to which we are most directly accountable.

Limitations

Even with these priorities in place, an account of the sources requires acknowledging several limitations. The body of writing on simony has reached us unevenly, shaped by both the vicissitudes of history and the realities of our own time.

Genre shaped how much was written on simony and what form it took. The confessors’ manuals (*summae confessorum*) and kindred penitential handbooks gathered the doctrine into compact treatments. Medieval theology was conducted largely through commentary, which accounts both for the wealth of writing on simony in some forms and its scarcity in others. That is, many of these writings are preserved in commentaries on standard texts: the *Decretum*, the *Liber extra*, and the *Sentences*. The doctrine therefore comes down to us not as it might

have been organized in a freestanding treatise but as it was distributed across the questions those compilations happened to raise. When the *loci communes* model later supplanted the *Sentences* tradition, simony had no place among the standard heads of doctrine. The shape of our evidence is thus partly an accident of pedagogical convention.

Furthermore, not everyone who championed the doctrine of simony did so in a capacity that has survived well in print. Reputations of zealous reformers reach us through chroniclers and biographers even when their own words do not. Those whose writings survive are not necessarily those who were most eager to address institutional corruption.

Even where the works survive, accessibility varies. Some works have not been scanned or reprinted. Some manuscripts have been scanned and published, but never transcribed out of medieval shorthand or put into print. This is the case for many of the writings of the early masters at Paris. While we will consult these in some measure, we will lean on secondary-source reports of their contents for fuller use. More is available each year, but several important witnesses still survive primarily in manuscript.

Similarly, copyright restricts access to materials that would otherwise be prime for retrieval. Much of the Lollard corpus, for example, has been well edited in modern critical editions but remains too recently published to be freely available in a digital form that would permit broad consultation. We will make use of Wycliffe and Hus, whose major works were published in their surviving editions many years ago, but the broader proto-Reformer tradition of vernacular preaching and polemics against simony will likely prove a fruitful area of research at a later time.

Taking note of these constraints appropriately tempers whatever the emerging patterns seem to suggest. The absence of treatment on a given question may say more about the medium of transmission than about its historical relevance. We will draw our conclusions from what is available, while remembering that much remains in the archives.

Application for Today

Many who read Acts 8 suppose that Simon's sin is one few others—if any others at all—will ever commit. Both Burton²¹ and the Anatomist²² begin their works with the observation that those nominally aware of the historic doctrine frequently regard themselves as free of such dangers. This may be especially true in our own times, when the corruption that exists takes subtler forms than in former days. Many evangelicals consider themselves protected from temptation to the sin since they operate in an environment relatively clear of institutional bribery. However, the corruption known as “simony” reaches further than these shallow notions, and where sin is poorly understood, it will be poorly avoided. As the Anglican divine Jeremy Taylor observed, “Most men choose the sin, if it be once disputable whether it be a sin or no.”²³

Therefore, our study will frontload definition and exploration before attempting to address any modern concern directly. The ultimate goal is to develop practical applications for our own time, but considerable exposure to the doctrine must come first in order to establish the expertise by which any diagnosis can be made. This is, of course, the ordinary way of retrieval studies—to understand a historical doctrine

²¹“For in the opinion of many, simony hath lost its being, *in rerum natura*, as being long ago antiquated, and out of date, dead and buried with Simon himself. And if (as Chrysostom saith) the gift of giving the Holy Ghost was peculiar to the apostles, so that not even Philip baptizing gave the Holy Ghost withal; for this gift was proper only to the twelve: and if simony be surnamed of Simon the sire, and Simon's sin was about the buying of the Holy Ghost: then that gift ceasing, and Simon being deceased, where is there left so much as the name of simony, to lend a title to our intended treatise?” Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 1.

²²“Many who have read these words [of Acts 8], think it an easy matter to wipe off the guilt of simony from themselves, supposing that there is no simony, but the offering to buy the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, which they deem to have been the peculiar fact of Simon Magus, which none, or few else, can ever stumble upon. But how superficially they pass over the text, and that they either do not, or are not willing to understand the same, may easily appear to any who looks more narrowly into, and more seriously considereth the matter contained therein.” *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 11–12.

²³ Taylor, *The Flesh and the Spirit*, fol. 136.

in its own right before bringing it to bear on the present—but it is notable that the same need was felt by those who handled the doctrine in past generations. Burton observed it with an analogy to civil law: charges do little to convict apart from terms of the offense.²⁴ Likewise with divine law, clarity of conscience requires clarity of definition.

Making contemporary application will then entail following the implications of this doctrine beyond their traditional limits to logical conclusions that have not been previously articulated. This is the task of a truly reformational theology. Wycliffe and Hus were among the first to turn the doctrine of simony against the sale of indulgences. Luther spoke of “true simony” to express dissatisfaction with Rome’s limited conception of the sin and apply the doctrine to its whole system of works righteousness.²⁵ Burton produced a catalog of commonplace ecclesiastical arrangements, labeling them simoniacal though they were not then admitted as such.²⁶ As each of these expanded the doctrine’s reach in his own day, we intend to do the same in ours.

Such endeavors have a tendency to stir up more than a little resistance. Peter Damian reported that when the eleventh-century monk Romuald introduced this doctrine to those who had been ordained for money, they plotted to kill him because up until that time, scarcely anyone knew it was a sin.²⁷ In 1494, a Carmelite friar was found murdered in his bed with twenty wounds after preaching against simony.²⁸ Jan Hus was burned at the stake on a number of charges, but in his own assessment as well as popular opinion, it was primarily for his

²⁴ “The Germans have very good laws to punish drunkenness, but they find it very hard to define what drunkenness is. So in England, we have good laws to punish adultery, but we find a great difficulty in convincing any of committing the act of adultery. So it may be said of simony. First therefore let us see what simony is.” Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 1.

²⁵ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 419:30–430:18).

²⁶ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*.

²⁷ Peter Damian, *Vita beati Romualdi*, cap. 35 (PL 144:986C–D).

²⁸ The friar was Adam of Genoa, who had preached at Rome against the simony of Alexander VI. Malipiero, *Annali veneti*, 318; cf. Burckhardt, *Civilisation of the Renaissance*, 155.

preaching against accepted practices that he identified as simony.²⁹ It may seem melodramatic to recount these events as though we do not live in a time of bountiful brotherhood and exceptional liberty, but it would be naïve to suppose that a modern application of the doctrine of simony would be met with universal gratitude. Faithful theology is not measured by its reception; truth remains truth whether it is welcomed or resented. *Magna est veritas et praevallet*—truth is great and prevails.

Conclusion

If the foregoing has dwelt on what has been lost, let us close by considering what stands to be gained. The goal here is not to add one more item to the list of sins to avoid. The law, in its third use, is given to guide the redeemed in grateful obedience. To retrieve a neglected doctrine is to recover a rule of life.³⁰ A recovered doctrine of simony supplies a framework for thinking clearly about the relationship between money and ministry, commerce and the things of God. Where these distinctions have been lost, confusion reigns; but where they are restored, we are taught and equipped to glorify God in the things he has freely given.

²⁹ “Everywhere there are enemies in plenty, both Czech and German, who seek my death: [...] For it touches both the pope and the cardinals when one preaches against pride, against avarice, and especially against simony.” Hus, *Postilla*, 114.G; cf. Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 38–40n62. See also Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 87. Before it dissolved, Maurice of Prague warned the Council of Constance that “the common opinion of the people, although false and heretical, cries out that Jan Hus was sentenced by the council as though it had judged him as severely as the Savior judged the simoniacs, against whom he, though condemned, had preached most vehemently.” Maurice of Prague, *Consilium de Ecclesiastico Statu*, 870.

³⁰ WCF 19.6; 2LBCF 19.6.

Part II

The Definition of Simony

Something Spiritual

Many modern readers know “simony” as a term for the purchase of church office and so may be surprised to learn its classic definition is much broader. Rather than eclipsing every other category, commerce in ordinations falls under the same heading as the sale of sacraments, of prayer, of preaching, and of teaching, which together receive comparable attention.

Pre-Reformation works supply many definitions to this effect, but we may make an initial demonstration from an early Protestant work. In his *Loci*, the Lutheran scholar Johann Gerhard contended against the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine on the nature of ordinations. Bellarmine argued that ordination must be a sacrament since selling ordination would be simony, but according to Gerhard, this is an insufficient proof since simony is constituted not merely in the sale of sacraments but in the sale of *any spiritual thing whatsoever*.¹ In the words of one Lollard preacher, if one sells “any ghostly [spiritual] thing, he errs and doth simony.”²

If simony pertains to any spiritual thing, what exactly constitutes a “spiritual thing”? To answer this, we will first lay the necessary foundations by examining the distinctions theologians developed to identify a spiritual thing, and then put those foundations to work by surveying the concrete categories to which they have been applied.

¹“*cujusvis rei spiritualis*” Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 23.3.12.150.

² Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 5.468.

Distinctions

We must now proceed according to the scholastic maxim: *qui bene distinguit, bene docet*—he who distinguishes well, teaches well. These distinctions mark the boundaries of definition for spiritual things.

Created vs. Uncreated

First, the term “spiritual” is not a synonym for “immaterial.” Even ideas themselves are spiritual in the broader sense of being immaterial, and yet if there is any sin in trafficking in such things, it belongs to a different category of concern. For example, it is sinful to provide a civil judgment for a bribe, though such an activity is not strictly sacrilegious.

Rather, in the definition of simony, a thing is “spiritual” insofar as it is a supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit. Parallel vocabulary from soteriology is instructive: we speak of our union with Christ as being “legal” and “spiritual.” The former most immediately effects our justification as our identity with Christ is forensically declared by the Father, and the latter most immediately effects our sanctification as our ingrafting into him is organically wrought by the Holy Spirit. Both these unions are spiritual as regards their immateriality, but only the latter is termed “spiritual” on account of the Spirit’s agency.

The schoolmen distinguished that which is of the Holy Spirit (*a spiritu increato*) from those things of men and angels (*a spiritu creato*).³ The former includes saving graces, while the latter encompasses the natural endowments and products of the rational soul. For this reason, in the passage mentioned earlier, Gerhard observed that when any spiritual thing is sold, the Holy Spirit himself is regarded as sold.⁴

Right vs. Fact

Speaking carefully of the ability to engage in commerce requires a distinction between authority and power. In rejecting the sale of

³ See Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 318b).

⁴ Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 23.3.12.150.

spiritual things, that they “cannot” be sold, theologians often intend to repudiate the morally permissibility of buying or selling that thing. However, they sometimes they intend a denial of even the possibility of the transaction. Such a thing cannot be sold by right (*de jure*) or in fact (*de facto*).⁵

This is the case with all spiritual things, most properly speaking. Whether things of the uncreated Spirit or things of created spirits, such cannot be transferred from one person to another. They are not subject to mechanisms of manipulation, physical or otherwise, that would enable such an exchange. Neither virtues, nor knowledge, nor any kind of grace actually transmits from one to another when money changes hands. As Martin Luther remarked, “in reality simony is impossible, but in pretense it is most common.”⁶

This requires us to expand our definition of “spiritual things” beyond those things which are properly spiritual in themselves. Otherwise, Simon Magus himself escapes the charge of simony. Not only did the sorcerer fail to purchase the gift of the Spirit because of Peter’s obstruction, he also failed because nothing of the Spirit, strictly speaking, may be bought in any sense, either ethically or metaphysically. When Peter denied that Simon could buy the Spirit with money (Acts 8:20), he did not merely rebuke his activity but declared it futile. Such an exchange is impossible.

Essence vs. Cause

Something may be spiritual either by essence (*per essentiam*) or by cause (*per causam*). Things like grace and virtues are themselves spiritual things and cannot be properly sold. However, other things like the sacraments are identified as “spiritual” on account of their spiritual effects. These, having an outward physical presence, can be sold.⁷

⁵ E.g., Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 318b).

⁶ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 282:8).

⁷ Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 1, ad 3; Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. *Simonia*, 1; Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 318b); Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, sol. (p. 93a). John Major dismissed these categories in his earlier edition but

For example, someone who sells an ordinance such as baptism is not capable of selling the grace of baptism itself but, by selling the act of baptizing, commits simony. While Peter accused Simon of desiring to traffic in the Holy Spirit, Simon specifically sought to buy—and presumably sell—the physical act of laying on hands.

To Protestant ears, the notion of causing a spiritual thing may suggest the conferring of grace *ex opere operato*, on account of the work itself, but this is not intended by the distinction. Rather, it speaks of causes in a more abstract sense as those things which are instrumental in bringing about an effect. The Reformed followed the schoolmen in affirming this distinction between essence and cause in its application to simony.⁸

No simoniacal purchaser buys something that is spiritual in itself. Rather, he intends to buy some outward operation of a minister as a “sacramental cause of a spiritual reality.”⁹ The point in describing the cause as “sacramental” is not to imply that the only thing that could be sold would be a sacrament, properly speaking. The point is that the purchase occurs in order to receive some grace of the Spirit.

Some might regard the sale of things that are spiritual by cause to be either a lesser form of simony or not simony at all on account of the fact that corporeal signs are not themselves spiritual but one step removed from spiritual things. On the contrary, because outward signs can actually be sold unlike grace itself, it is the worst form of simony.¹⁰

Principle vs. End

A related distinction applies to spiritual *actions*. An act may be called spiritual either as to its principle (*ex parte principii*, its source), when it belongs to someone from a spiritual gift or office, or as to its end (*ex*

set them out as the common account in his later one. Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145va); Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 183ra).

⁸ Ames, *Conscience*, 5.229.

⁹ Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 3, ad 3.

¹⁰ “Indeed, this is the worst kind of simony” Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166a).

parte finis, its purpose), when something spiritual is attained by means of it. For example, a minister's work of administering the sacraments or teaching the Bible is spiritual as to its principle since it proceeds from a spiritual office. However, the teaching of the liberal arts is spiritual only as to its end, in the transmission of truth.¹¹

These two categories carry different consequences for commerce. In acts that are spiritual as to their principle, no one may contract to receive anything for performing them without simony. In acts spiritual only as to their end, one may buy and sell the acts themselves because they are not inherently spiritual. For example, one may guiltlessly sell the act of teaching the liberal arts for a price, but it would be simony for one holding ministerial office to sell his service by charging for the act of reading Scripture or arranging for the administration of a sacrament by contract.¹²

Applications

The foregoing distinctions may risk leaving an overly abstract impression of "spiritual things." To give the category concrete shape, we will survey principal examples of those things to which the label has been applied.

Sacraments

As already observed, sacraments are spiritual things. The prohibition against charging for the sacraments is among the oldest and most frequently repeated injunctions in the history of the church. As early as the Synod of Elvira (ca. 305), clergy were formally forbidden from accepting a fee for baptism.¹³ In the fifth century, Gelasius I prohibited requesting compensation for baptism or confirmation.¹⁴ The Eleventh

¹¹ See Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2; Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

¹² Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 4; Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

¹³ *Synod of Elvira*, can. 48 (PL 84:307B).

¹⁴ Gelasius I, *Ep.* 14.5; cf. C. 1, q. 1, c. 99.

Council of Toledo (675) affirmed this ban and extended its prohibition against such solicitations to ordinations and the conferring of chrism.¹⁵

Thomas Aquinas devoted an article to the question of “whether it is always unlawful to give money for the sacraments,” handling a number of objections to the thesis.¹⁶ The early Protestant Thomas Becon drove the point home by contrasting the sale of the Lord’s supper with the nature of its institution: “Whereas Christ at his supper gave the sacrament of his body and blood freely to his disciples, ye sell your masses, and make merchandise of the sacrament, as the costardmonger doth of his costards and of his other fruits.”¹⁷

Ordinations

The sale of ordinations was the most prominent form of simony in patristic and medieval writings. This focus should hardly be surprising given that such activity carries great potential for corruption. If one is willing to sell an ordination, he has no reason to withhold it from unqualified men. If one is willing to purchase his ordination, he cares not for true honor and would as readily corrupt the word and sell the sacraments. One may even conclude that “of all other kinds of simony, this is the most pernicious and damnable.”¹⁸

The Apostolic Canons—a fourth-century work of Syrian origin—declares, speaking in the voice of the apostles, “If any bishop obtains possession of that dignity by money, or a presbyter or deacon, let him be deposed, both he and the one who ordained him, and let him be cut off entirely from communion as well, as Simon Magus was by me, Peter.”¹⁹ Similarly, the Council of Chalcedon (451) stipulated that when money changes hands for an ordination, the ordained must forfeit the purchased rank and the ordainer stands to lose his own.²⁰

¹⁵ *Eleventh Council of Toledo*, c. 8 (PL 84:461D–462B); cf. C. I, q. I, c. 101. Chrism frequently appears in canonical lists of things forbidden to sell. X 5.3.8, 16, 21, 36; C. I, q. I, cc. 101–2, 105–6.

¹⁶ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 2.

¹⁷ Becon, *Displaying of the Popish Mass*, 283. A “costard” is a type of apple.

¹⁸ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 47.

¹⁹ *Canones apostolorum*, can. 29 (p. 572).

²⁰ *Canones concilii Chalcedonensis*, can. 2 (ACO II.2.2, 125); cf. C. I, q. I, c. 113.

Gregory the Great persistently fought against purchased ordinations, and in a homily delivered at the Lateran on March 11, 591, he made his first known use of the term “simoniacal heresy”: “I speak in grief to you who are bishops, because we have learned that some of you make ordinations for payment, sell spiritual grace, and heap up temporal gains from others’ iniquities at the cost of sin.”²¹ At the beginning of the classical period of canon law, Gratian devoted eight consecutive canons to simoniacal ordination, appealing primarily to Gregory the Great’s letters and homilies.²² At the end of that period, the *Liber extra* opened its *De simonia* with Gregory’s synodical prohibition and returned to the question of ordinations repeatedly throughout its forty-six chapters.²³

Canon law also addressed the orders that paralleled formal offices of the church. Entry into religious life—profession in a monastery, in a mendicant order, or in a house of canons—was deemed simony if it was granted for a price.²⁴ For universities, similar laws governed admission into the ranks of masters. Because authority to teach in a university should be granted on merit alone, the sale of teaching licenses (*licentia docendi*) was banned,²⁵ but in the case of theological teaching licenses, imposed fees were additionally labeled simoniacal.²⁶

These concerns extend to the resignation of an office. The medieval canonists addressed this in some measure, concluding that those who would renounce their title for a sum are guilty of simony.²⁷ The seventeenth-century clergyman James Metford summarized the position: a resignation is only lawful provided one makes “no corrupt bargain,

²¹ Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 17.13 (p. 109).

²² C. 1, q. 1, cc. 113–20.

²³ X 5.3.1, 5, 18, 20, 22, 35, 37, 39, 45.

²⁴ C. 1, q. 2. Lynch, *Simoniacal Entry* provided an exhaustive history of the question.

²⁵ See X 5.5.3.

²⁶ E.g., Huguccio of Pisa, *Summa decretorum*, D. 37, c. 12 (fol. 48rb); cf. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 2.83n50. Peter the Chanter took the charge further, applying it to licenses in the liberal arts as well on the ground that the arts prepare for theology. *Ibid.*, 1.123; 2.83n51.

²⁷ E.g., “if a pact goes before [...] that resignation is simoniacal.” Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.8 (fol. 70rb).

nor reserve no pension; for that would make the resignation unlawful both in law and conscience; as the canonists generally conclude.”²⁸ Early in English Protestantism, William Tyndale observed hypocrisy in the matter, lamenting those who would claim that “it is simony to sell a benefice (as they call it) but to resign upon a pension and then to redeem the same, is no simony at all.”²⁹ In his estimation, those who would make such arguments were “crafty jugglers and mockers with the word of God.”³⁰

Later literature more frequently addresses the notion of a *bond of resignation*, which established financial penalties for clergymen who would not resign when requested by their patron.³¹ Simon Degge observed that the difference between such a bond and outright payment is negligible: “for what difference is there between a bond expressly to pay money, and a bond to resign, which is to pay money, if the patron say, either pay me so much or resign, when all the world knows in such a case the parson must pay the money, or resign and be undone?”³²

Marriage and Burials

Both marriage and burials frequently featured in lists of things for which charging would constitute simony.³³ But it is not enough to know that medieval writings forbade selling such things; we must also know why they did so. The common pre-Reformation view of marriage and burials was sacramental; matrimony itself was regarded as a sacrament, and last rites were a series of sacraments administered to the dying. If these proscriptions were motivated by their sacramental nature, then we do not observe anything more than we have already with baptism and communion. However, if they were motivated by something more, then the nature of spiritual things may be further elucidated.

²⁸ Metford, *A General Discourse of Simony*, 79.

²⁹ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, fol. 27r.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 27r.

³¹ See Willis, *Simony: In Two Parts*, 123–25.

³² Degge, *The Parson's Counsellor*, 50.

³³ E.g., X 5.3.8, 9, 29, 42; Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 7.H; Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, fol. 77r.

Regarding marriage, scholastic theologians acknowledged that marriage is established in nature itself, and therefore reciprocal transactions made in its context—whether for a dowry, a civil officiant's fee, or the like—may be perfectly licit.³⁴ However, in the ceremony of Christian marriage, there is something spiritual that is given. While the literature addresses the sacramental nature of marriage, almost always the remarks turn to the distinct notion of the blessing of nuptials. On account of selling that spiritual blessing, the priest who would officiate for a price commits simony.³⁵ For example, Bonaventure, defending the practice of a dowry as being non-simoniactal, explained, “the spiritual character consists principally in the priestly blessing.”³⁶

Regarding burials, concerns often centered on the sale of the plot rather than the sale of funeral proceedings,³⁷ but canonists consistently asserted that any religious service associated with an internment should be performed freely.³⁸ Those religious burial services forbidden from sale include more than that which might be considered sacramental, extending even to activities like reading a psalter.³⁹

Those who would refuse to perform burial services without payment, essentially holding a body hostage (*funus arrestare*), were plainly labeled simoniacs.⁴⁰ One instance of this, recounted repeatedly in

³⁴ E.g., “Marriage is not only a sacrament but also an office of nature. [...] on the side on which it is an office of nature, nothing prevents accepting a price for marriage.” Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 2.

³⁵ E.g., “on the side on which it is a sacrament, [...] he commits simony who exacts money for the blessing of those marrying.” Ibid., IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 2.

³⁶ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 26, a. 2, q. 2 (p. 669). Later, he wrote, “grace is not given in the same manner as in the other sacraments, [...] unless perhaps by reason of the added blessing, which would make the seller simoniactal.” Ibid., IV, d. 30, a. un., q. 3, ad 3 (p. 711).

³⁷ This will be addressed in the next chapter, pp. 75–76.

³⁸ Among others Hostiensis made the distinction of the use of the term “burial” (*sepultura*) to refer to the plot of land and the services performed in the process; the latter may not be sold. Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, ad X 3,28 (fol. 387rb). The English antiquary Henry Spelman invoked Hostiensis in the seventeenth century to argue that burial services must be given freely. Spelman, *De Sepultura*, 18–20.

³⁹ Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, ad X 5,3 (fol. 535ra).

⁴⁰ E.g., Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 321a); cf. C. 13, q. 2, c. 12; Gregory I, *Ep.* VIII.35.

later literature, is the story of Giovanni Maria Visconti, the fifteenth-century Duke of Milan. While riding recreationally, he overheard a great weeping and lamentation inside the house of a poor woman. Upon inquiry, he discovered that she was widow and the primary source of her distress was that the corpse of her husband still lay before her eyes on account of the fact that the priest had refused to perform the burial service apart from payment. The duke commanded that the avaricious clergyman dig a deep pit and, upon its completion, had him tossed in ahead of the body of the deceased, burying the living along with the dead.⁴¹

Excommunication and Absolution

The church's power to bind and loose—to discipline and restore—is spiritual. To sell the exercise or suspension of that power is therefore simoniacal. Activities wrongly exchanged for a fee may include concealing sin, restoring without due penance, or even restoring with due penance.⁴² John Wycliffe observed that imposing an annual fine to punish sinners is an especially damnable simony.⁴³ Likewise, it is simoniacal to pay for an offense to be punished less severely.⁴⁴

This prohibition extends to the domain of ecclesiastical visitation, the formal process by which a bishop inspected a parish or diocese for needed corrections. To require or give money for this process was regarded as simony, although theologians and canonists had some allowance for fees to be required for the visitor's board and lodging.⁴⁵

Prayer

Given our established distinctions, prayer is spiritual on a number of counts: principle and end,⁴⁶ essence and cause.⁴⁷ Its efficacy derives

⁴¹ See Castiglione, *Ricordi*, 119. This appears to be the earliest telling in print.

⁴² X 5.3.14, 24.

⁴³ Wycliffe, *De blasphemia*, cap. 10 (153:21–30).

⁴⁴ E.g., Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320b).

⁴⁵ Ibid., IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320b); Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 3.

⁴⁶ See Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 2.

⁴⁷ See Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 3, q. 2, ad 8 (p. 387).

from spiritual devotion, and its aim is a spiritual effect. Therefore, “prayer must not be made for money, but for God and on account of good affection.”⁴⁸ Wycliffe described those who trade in prayers as “dull-witted merchants trading in shadows, as the sun is sinking toward evening.”⁴⁹

The practice of giving alms to the poor so that they will pray for the giver was common in the Middle Ages. The schoolmen occasionally provided justifications for this in their writing, similar to those given for indulgences: the money is not a payment in exchange for prayer, but a gratuitous benefaction intended to move them to pray freely out of charity.⁵⁰

However, this line of logic was rejected by the proto-Reformers and Reformers. Wycliffe described such pretexts as a mockery of God.⁵¹ In his *Decades*, Heinrich Bullinger spoke of the monks and priests who would defend taking a fee to pray as “word-jugglers.”⁵² If one has faith and charity he will pray freely, and if he does not, his prayers are empty.⁵³ Such men “with a false show deceive the stupid crowd” making their unrighteous prayers, but even if they were righteous, “they were nonetheless neither to be sold nor to be bought.”⁵⁴

Preaching

Preaching is a spiritual thing. Therefore, the sale of sermons or the activity of preaching as such is forbidden. This has been the judgment of theologians from the early church to the Reformers. The literature raises fewer grievances against the sale of preaching than against other forms of simony, but still does so in abundant measure. And with minimal variation, the response has been that ministers must not charge for the proclamation of the word.

⁴⁸ Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320b).

⁴⁹ Wycliffe, *De oracione*, cap. 3 (347:13–14).

⁵⁰ E.g., Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 2; Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 2.

⁵¹ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 7 (86:12–28).

⁵² Bullinger, *Decades*, V.5 (fol. 311v).

⁵³ Ibid., V.5 (foll. 311v–312r).

⁵⁴ Ibid., V.5 (fol. 312r).

The early church spoke on the matter directly on a few occasions. The *Didache* warns of prophets who would expect payment for their message,⁵⁵ and the *Shepherd of Hermas* warns that one who charges for his prophecy has an earthly spirit rather than the divine Spirit.⁵⁶ The schoolmen arrived at similar judgments. John Major, a Scottish master at Paris, appealed to Matthew 10:8 in his assertion that “it is simoniacal to accept anything for preaching.”⁵⁷

The proto-Reformers concurred on this point.⁵⁸ Jan Hus numbered preaching among the spiritual gifts the devil counsels priests to sell, casting the trade as a satanic inversion of Matthew 10:8.⁵⁹ Attributed to Wycliffe, a sermon on the same text reads, “For Christ says thus: You took of God freely, and therefore give freely your labor to the people; and then it shall be meritorious—and otherwise it is simony. And here the begging of preachers is forbidden by God, since it is a hidden selling of the preaching of God’s word.”⁶⁰

This prohibition was maintained by the Reformers. Luther argued that “True simony, therefore, is commerce exercised in the Word of God, in the Sacraments, in the Church, and in the Saints.”⁶¹ He commented to this effect often throughout his works, and in surprising places. On Psalm 104:12 (“they sing among the branches”), he

⁵⁵ *Didache* (*Doctrina duodecim apostolorum*), 11.4–6, 12.

⁵⁶ “He takes payment for his prophesying, and if he does not receive it, he does not prophesy. Can a divine spirit, then, take payment and prophesy? A prophet of God cannot possibly do this; the spirit of such prophets is earthly.” Hermas, *The Shepherd*, Mand. 11.12.

⁵⁷ Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 148ra). The word he used for “accept” (*capere*) might suggest a demand rather than a passive reception, but in context, he was constructing an *argumentum a fortiori* to forbid selling a church office. The argument from the lesser to the greater against all reception in exchange for church office only works if he forbade all reception in exchange for preaching.

⁵⁸ E.g., William Swinderby, Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 5.468.

⁵⁹ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 7.H.

⁶⁰ Wycliffe, *Sermons*, serm. LXIV (1, p. 200). Elsewhere, another work attributed to Wycliffe speaks similarly: “he bade not only preach to men that gave to them, but to all manner of men, without respect of persons. And so, in a quiet manner, Christ forbade simony and begging and covetousness to all his preachers. For as they freely took their knowledge from God, so should they freely deal it to the people.” Wycliffe, *Of the Seven Deadly Sins*, cap. IX (p. 130).

⁶¹ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 422:10–11).

remarked that preachers ought to preach without charging because “even the little birds sing for free.”⁶²

The English heirs of the Reformation likewise identified the sale of preaching with the sin of Simon. As Thomas Manton said, “the true simony” is “to huck out the gospel and sell our holy things.”⁶³ Ralph Cudworth made a similar point in completing William Perkins’s commentary on Galatians. Appealing to Proverbs 3:15 (“she is more precious than rubies”) and Acts 8 (Peter’s admonition of Simon Magus), he wrote that the sale of the preaching of the word is condemned by virtue of its pricelessness.⁶⁴ Other seventeenth-century English divines identified the sale of the word of God as simony, often with explicit mention of the context of preaching.⁶⁵ Some spoke even of a simony that occurs when someone preaches with exceptional effort for the sake of praise or preferment, their spiritual labor being exchanged for the temporal praise of man.⁶⁶

Teaching

How far the foregoing proscriptions reach depends on how we interpret the vocabulary of “preaching” and “the word of God.” Taken narrowly, they govern only the formal that activity which takes place in a worship service or distinctly evangelistic encounters, but many authors seemed to apply these terms to doctrinal instruction more generally. Regardless, some authors were explicit in their condemnation of the sale of teaching.

As early as the third century, Clement of Alexandria counted “the distributing of both teachings [*διδασκαλίας*] and money to those in need”

⁶² Luther, *Dictata super Psalterium*, 103 (WA 4, 182:28–30).

⁶³ Manton, *Sermons upon the Eleventh Chapter*, 13, 456.

⁶⁴ “the graces of God exhibited unto us in the preaching of the word are so precious that they cannot be valued at any price, all earthly things a man can desire, are not to be compared to them, as the wise man saith; therefore Peter said to Simon Magus, ‘Thy money perish with thee, because thou thinkest that the gift of God may be obtained by money.’” Cudworth, *The Supplement*, 537.

⁶⁵ E.g., Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, 4.19.2.34 (p. 119).

⁶⁶ E.g., Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 42; Boston, *A Soliloquy on Man-Fishing*, 48–49.

among the sacrifices the true Christian offers.⁶⁷ In the following century, Aphrahat the Persian opened his *Demonstrations* by committing himself to freely teach the one who requests it.⁶⁸

Medieval writings directly identified the sale of doctrinal instruction as simony.⁶⁹ According to Geoffrey of Poitiers, the one who teaches theology for a price sells the word of God and falls under the curse of Jeremiah 48:10 (“Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord fraudulently”).⁷⁰ As was noted in the first chapter, this was first fully expressed by Robert of Courson in his *Summa*.⁷¹ There, he contended that not only theology, but all moral philosophy proceeds from the Spirit of wisdom, and therefore constitutes simony just as selling Scripture itself.⁷² A century later, Peter Paludanus relayed this as the received opinion, distinguishing between that which comes

⁶⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, VII.7.49.5 (GCS 17, 37:7–9).

⁶⁸ “For the things you have asked of me were given freely, and freely they are received as well; and if anyone who has them wishes to withhold them from one who asks, whatever he refuses to give is taken away from him. Whoever receives freely ought to give freely.” Aphrahat, *Demonstrationes*, I.1 (PS I.1:6); cf. *ibid.*, 10.8 (PS I.1:460–64).

⁶⁹ A minority identified the sale of any teaching as simony on the claim that knowledge is immediately a gift from God and that the Holy Spirit teaches all truth (John 16:13), William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tr. 21 (foll. 229vb–230ra).

⁷⁰ “Concerning the master who teaches for the sake of pence, it is asked whether he falls under this curse [the malediction of Jeremiah 48:10, under discussion in the surrounding questions]. We say that if he does not act out of avarice or vainglory, he does not. But of theologians it is said otherwise, since they are *publice persone*—public persons—and their lecturing bears witness to the truth. Therefore, since they are teachers of the word of God, it is not lawful for them to teach for a reward, lest they be found sellers of the word of God. [...] Whence in Micah [3:11] the Lord, recounting other sins, says: ‘Their priests taught for hire.’” Geoffrey of Poitiers, *Summa*, fol. 39va; cf. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 2.86n69.

⁷¹ “As to what Solomon says—‘Do not sell wisdom, doctrine, or understanding’—we say that he is speaking of the understanding, doctrine, and wisdom of spiritual or moral things, which proceed from the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. These things cannot be sold, as we have said before, by right.” Courson, *Summa*, 10.3 (fol. 47va); cf. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 2.86n70.

⁷² “If anyone with this as his principal end consigns spiritual or moral things to a temporal use so as to gain advantage thereby, then just as simony is committed by the sale of manna—which signifies sacred Scripture—so also is simony committed by the sale of the flour carried in their cloaks from the land of Egypt, which signifies the

from man's spirit and that which comes from the Holy Spirit. Though one cannot sell knowledge itself, one can charge for the *act* of teaching. However, when it comes to matters of theology—revelation that arises only from the Spirit—one cannot charge.⁷³ Peter Auriol explained this distinction:

But if we take a freely given grace [*gratia gratis data*; i.e., a spiritual gift]—for example preaching, teaching, and the like—either it will be taken with respect to the intrinsic act, and here no sale takes place, for I cannot sell you the habit of my knowledge; or it is taken with respect to the extrinsic act—for example the projection of the voice, the movement of the body, and the like—and thus in such things a sale does indeed fall out and have its place; and in this way teaching, counsel, testimony, and the like are sold, and all of these turn out to be sinful.⁷⁴

While this prohibition on the sale of doctrinal instruction was only occasionally stated so directly, it is intimated frequently by others who specifically excepted instruction in the liberal arts from those things which must not be sold, for, “even the Gentiles are permitted to teach such arts.”⁷⁵ In each of these cases, the prohibition of merchandising theology, the queen of the sciences, is simply presumed by the explicit permission to engage in commerce with her handmaidens.⁷⁶

In the fifth book of the *Liber extra*, titles three and five contain the bulk of detail on this topic. As one seventeenth-century resource

moral teachings of the philosophers.” Courson, *Summa*, 10.4 (fol. 47va); cf. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 2.86–87n71.

⁷³ “But there are other acts for which it is lawful to receive [payment] for labor, such as for teaching and other spiritual things from a created spirit. But for teaching itself, some say that it is not simony, because it is not by relation to the Holy Spirit, but to the human spirit; others say that it is. But regarding theology, it is seen as simony.” Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320b).

⁷⁴ Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166a).

⁷⁵ Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

⁷⁶ E.g., Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 8; Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

summarizes, it forbids as simony “masters and preachers to teach for money.”⁷⁷ A number of commentators on these titles allowed the unbeneficed master to receive a voluntary gift for his teaching, while warning that he should not exact a fee from the poor or the clergy of his own church.⁷⁸

For Wycliffe, not only did proper imitation of Christ require teaching freely,⁷⁹ but the sale of teaching was a “nearer and more hateful simony” than the sale of church office.⁸⁰ In a vernacular treatise on the seven deadly sins that has been attributed to him, we see this same contention:

But men that should be professors of the science [knowledge] of God sin many ways about this science. As some men hide this treasure and deal it not about; and yet, the more that it is dealt, the more it increases. And this is much more sin than to hide gold. [...] And so, with begging, and pride of their speech, they sell God’s word, as one would sell an ox. Nevertheless, Christ teaches that, since his science is freely given to him, it should be freely dealt. And because the telling of God’s law would most profit his Church, the fiend is full busy to hinder this ghostly [spiritual] profit.⁸¹

The Reformers were consistent with the proto-Reformers on this point. For Luther, teaching freely was the necessary antithesis to the “Satanic audacity” of offering forgiveness of sins at a price.⁸²

⁷⁷ Ridley, *A View of the Civile and Ecclesiasticall Law*, 76.

⁷⁸ E.g., Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 3, q. 2 (p. 386b); Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, ad X 5.5 (fol. 542v).

⁷⁹ “The faithful ought to be mindful that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and in imitation of Christ to give freely and generously spiritual teaching.” Wycliffe, *De fundacione sectarum*, cap. 2 (p. 21).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, cap. 11 (p. 56).

⁸¹ Wycliffe, *Of the Seven Deadly Sins*, cap. III (p. 123).

⁸² In the context of simony, Luther wrote, “But this is not lawful, and the Pope with Satanic audacity established this trade. We are commanded to teach, console, [and] absolve all who receive and believe; and they all receive from us freely, according

Conclusion

The term “simony” embraces far more than commerce in ordinations. While the several scholastic distinctions keep it from applying too broadly to anything immaterial, they do not prevent it from applying to manifold ordinances and activities: sacraments, the blessing of marriages, funeral services, absolution, prayer, preaching, and teaching. Wherever the Holy Spirit works or his instruments of grace are administered, there stands a spiritual thing that cannot be exchanged for money.

to the saying: ‘Freely you have received, freely give.’” Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 282:23–26).

Something Annexed to a Spiritual Thing

Our definition of simony forbids the buying or selling of anything “annexed” to a spiritual thing. Given that we are using the exact definition of Aquinas, a couple of notes on our translation of the phrase “*spirituali annexum*” may be helpful.

First, the more literal rendering of the Latin is not “something annexed to a spiritual thing,” but simply “a spiritual annex,” as we will occasionally use throughout this chapter. The “annex” in this context refers to the object to which the spiritual thing has been joined. The fact that this annex is “spiritual” identifies it as having been joined with a spiritual thing.

Second, a number of translations use the word “connected,” but more traditional ones—as ours here—render it “annexed.” This is to be preferred not only because it is the etymological cognate of the Latin term (*annexum*), but also because it better captures the sense. To be connected might suggest some kind of loose association or juxtaposition, but to be annexed describes a joining together of two into that which becomes functionally one.

For example, many nations are connected to other lands in various geographical and political senses, but when a nation annexes a territory, that region joins with the nation in such a way that one cannot attack it without attacking the nation itself. It is similar with spiritual annexes. One cannot sell something annexed to a spiritual thing without selling

the spiritual thing itself. Thus, both are regarded as simony.

Distinctions

Once again, several distinctions will help us understand the notion of a spiritual annex.

Annex vs. Cause

In the preceding chapter, we distinguished between the essence of spiritual things and another thing which functions as its cause. In some ways, this may seem to be identical to the notion of an annex. Indeed, Wycliffe found the term “spiritual things” to be sufficient, preferring not to add on “spiritual annexes” since they are conceptually similar.¹ However, he appears to be unique in this regard.

The vast majority of theologians who addressed the topic considered the notion of spiritual annexes to be a helpful category.² These are distinguished from causes of spiritual things in that an annex is one step removed from the notion of a cause. In the words of Aquinas, “some things are spiritual in their own right, such as the sacraments and other things of this kind; however, certain things are called spiritual from the fact that they adhere to such things.”³

For example, consider a minister who would provide and officiate baptism freely but only upon purchase of a baptism certificate. The baptism itself is the cause of a spiritual benefit, but the certificate has been joined to baptism, its purpose and value being determined thereby. Baptism is therefore a spiritual thing while the certificate is a spiritual annex.

¹ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (3:8–13).

² E.g., Ames, *Conscience*, 5.229.

³ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 6.

Dependent vs. Directed

It may appear at first that there are many things annexed to spiritual things that may be sold without charge of simony. For example, church property—whether the land, or the building, or furniture, etc.—is all connected to the worship of God.

However, there are two modes of annexation, one being of more consequence for charges of simony. Something can be annexed to a spiritual thing by being “dependent” (*dependens*) on that thing, or by being “directed” (*ordinatum*) to that thing.⁴ In the case of church property like the land, building, or furniture, these things are merely directed to spiritual things. That is, they are being used for the purpose of worship, etc., but these may be bought and sold so long as it is not for reason of the spiritual.⁵ Other things are annexed as dependent on a spiritual thing, such as the work of opening the temple doors (Mal. 1:10).⁶ While this activity is itself merely physical, its importance and value are entirely dependent on sacred activity inside. Furthermore, to access the altar, one must go through the doors, so it would be forbidden to charge for the opening of the doors. On this point, many appealed to a decretal ostensibly of Paschal I:⁷ “just as the soul does not live corporeally without the body, whoever sells one of the two, without which the other cannot be had, leaves neither of them unsold.”⁸

Presupposing vs. Preceding

Aquinas offered an additional way to distinguish annexation by dependence or direction by specifying that the second form features a

⁴ Ibid., II-II, q. 100, a. 4; Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1.

⁵ See Astesanus of Asti, *Summa de casibus*, VI, tit. 55, q. 1 (fol. 165r).

⁶ C. 1, q. 3, d.a.c. 1.

⁷ The passage is in fact excerpted from the *Epistola Widonis*, an anti-simony polemic of the eleventh century. Canonists transmitted it as a decretal of Paschal I, Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 1:357n24; the true identity of its author remains uncertain, West, “The Simony Crisis”.

⁸ E.g., C. 1, q. 3, c. 7; Lombard, *Sent.* IV, d. 25, c. 4 (p. 910); Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4; Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25.

temporal ordering. Those things which are directed toward a spiritual thing precede it. For example, the land a church is built on precedes its use for the congregation. A pastoral salary, on the other hand—inasmuch as it truly is for honor of clergy—presupposes the spiritual office. It is conceptually dependent on the office since any who receive it become clergy and any who become clergy receive it.

The Puritan William Ames described annexes as things so adjoined to a spiritual function or office that they “go before, accompany, or follow after it, that they can no ways be separated from it.”⁹ However, his description of variable ordering does not undermine the other. In speaking of things which might go before a spiritual thing, he did not refer to an independent existence, but that which might be received before the performance of a spiritual service.

Applications

In the literature, a number of examples make repeated appearances to illustrate the nature and boundaries of annexation. While a number of the assumed premises may not be agreeable to a Protestant audience, the important thing to note is the application of the principles of annexation to the premises rather than the premises themselves.

Consecrated Things

Among the most frequently discussed applications of annexation is the case of consecrated things: vessels, buildings, and land that have been blessed and set apart for sacred use. Because these things are directed toward holy purposes, they are annexed to spiritual things, constraining the terms under which they may be appropriately sold.

Church vessels that are consecrated (for example, chalices and trays for the Eucharist) may not be sold. However, the material that composes them may be sold for a proper cause.¹⁰ Breaking them first,

⁹ Ames, *Conscience*, 5.229.

¹⁰ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4, ad 2; Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 315r); John of Freiburg, *Summa confessorum*, I, tit. 1, q. 16 (fol. 2vb).

in order to desecrate them, was typically recommended to guarantee that they are being sold as merely material things.¹¹ On this point, many appealed to Ambrose, who practiced the same.¹² He enumerated three purposes—redeeming captives, building churches, and enlarging burial grounds—for which “it is lawful to break, melt down, and sell even the consecrated vessels of the church.”¹³

Church buildings and land function similarly to consecrated vessels. They are directed toward holy purposes such that upon consecration, they may not be sold. However, properly desecrated, they may be sold. Aquinas explained, “It is also lawful now to sell or buy the land where a church formerly stood, in a case of necessity: just as was said concerning the material of sacred vessels.”¹⁴ The implication seems to be that just as with vessels, the church would need to be destroyed in order for the material and land to be sold. English writings maintained a concern over the sale of church property, but the debate ceased to be framed in terms of simony but rather in terms of sacrilege.¹⁵

Burial grounds—a cemetery or tomb—are likewise directed toward a sacred use. If unconsecrated land is sold for the purpose of being put to holy use, it is permitted. If the land is sold at a certain value on account of it being holy, it is simony.¹⁶ Abraham’s purchase of the tomb of the patriarchs from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23) provided a common example for consideration among the schoolmen. Because Abraham bought the land as an ordinary piece of ground, and Ephron sold it as an ordinary piece of ground, no simony was committed, though it could not be made subject to sale afterward.¹⁷ The burial site temporally precedes its use for burial, having its own value apart

¹¹ Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4 (fol. 150r); Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, sol. (p. 93a).

¹² Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum*, 2.28.136 (pp. 167–68).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.28.142 (p. 170); cf. *ibid.*, 2.28.143 (p. 170).

¹⁴ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4, ad 3.

¹⁵ E.g., Warner, *Church-Lands Not to Be Sold*, ch. 5 (pp. 15ff.).

¹⁶ See Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 3, ad 2.

¹⁷ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4; Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 147ra); C. 13, q. 2, c. 12–13.

from any interment. Protestants who addressed the matter concurred with this judgment.¹⁸

Benefices and Tithes

Two closely related applications of annexation are benefices and tithes. A benefice is an income attached to a spiritual office: the salary of a minister, potentially attended by other benefits. Tithes are the funds given by the people that are dedicated to the good of the church. These notions overlap since a benefice is typically constituted of tithes. Each is annexed to something spiritual, but on different grounds and in different ways.

A benefice is annexed to an ecclesiastical position, and it is annexed by dependence: one cannot buy the rights to the income without buying the office.¹⁹ In such an exchange, the spiritual office and the material sustenance have been so joined together that to trade in the one is to trade in the other. Commerce in benefices was condemned as simoniacal by both the medievals and later theologians.²⁰

Tithes, on the other hand, are annexed to spiritual things on account of being dedicated to God and set apart for sacred purposes.²¹ Theologians and canonists frequently objected to selling tithes,²² a

¹⁸ “Must Abraham therefore be called a Simoniack, since a burial place is among sacred things, and the buying or selling of sacred things is called Simony? But we have heard that the field that was bought was a secular thing, subject to an earthly lord. And the selling of a field is altogether a civil transaction. Therefore, Abraham did not sin when he bought the field and established a tomb there; otherwise, whatever is bought by Christians for necessary uses would be simoniacal—bread, meat, wine, all of which are turned to the use of the saints—which is absurd.” Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 420:26–34). He continued by affirming the canon law and theologians who rejected selling such things as cemeteries after having been established for a sacred use. *Ibid.*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 420:35–40). See also, Spelman, *De Sepultura*, 2–4.

¹⁹ See Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145v).

²⁰ Quoting Gratian, Burton wrote, “Simony is committed both in respect of orders, and in respect of the benefice itself.” Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 2; cf. C. 1, q. 3, d.a.c. 1.

²¹ See Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4, ad 3; William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 114); *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 21.

²² E.g., Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4; cf. C. 1, q. 1, c. 3.

sale that redirects them from their proper purpose for the sake of money. Being annexed by direction rather than dependence, it may seem that there would be a way to dissolve that annexation, but this never appears to be entertained, perhaps on account of them not merely being dedicated for a particular use, but actually having been given to God.

The authors at issue here wrote under an established church, where the term “tithes” refers to funds compelled by civil law rather than given voluntarily. In other words, they are functionally a tax imposed by the civil magistrate. Since the agency in such dedication of resources is thereby complicated, this matter was debated extensively, at least in the English system. John Milton was arguably the loudest opponent of all such compulsory support for ministry, denouncing it as simony.²³ Wycliffe had similarly maintained that tithes ought to be voluntary and withheld from unworthy clergy.²⁴ Ironically, in his defense of an imposed tithe, Thomas Hall observed that independent churches were more prudent in ensuring their own ministers were sufficiently provided for than those who relied on public funds.²⁵

The Right of Patronage

When land carrying a right of patronage was sold, that right naturally transferred to the new owner. In other words, by purchasing the property, the buyer also acquired the power to nominate the cleric who would hold the associated office or benefice. On this question, the schoolmen typically concluded that such real estate transactions were not necessarily simony. The right of patronage was seen as a non-essential feature of the property. One who buys the land—so long as his intent is pure—does not attempt to purchase the right of

²³ Milton, *Hirelings*, 66–67.

²⁴ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 5 (56:3–4).

²⁵ Hall, *Sal Terrae*, 107–8.

patronage.²⁶ However, many only arrived at that conclusion after substantial deliberation and hesitation.²⁷

On this point, the proto-Reformers differed. If the property comes with such spiritual powers, it cannot be sold apart from being divested of those associated privileges.²⁸ Wycliffe went as far as to suggest the abolishment of all rights of presentation, observing that the primitive church operated by congregational suffrage. While patrons should still exist and grant their endowments to the church, men should be appointed to church office by an election among the laity.²⁹

Regardless, this practice continued into the English Reformation, only to be opposed by some later Anglicans.³⁰ In English ecclesiastical law, the operative right flowing from patronage, that of presenting a clerk to a vacant benefice, was termed an *advowson*. Part of the cause for concern was because the complexities of this mechanism permitted the Puritans to significantly advance their influence.³¹ At the instigation of John Preston, the Feoffees for Improvements pooled funds to purchase advowsons and install Puritan lecturers, ministers who preached outside of the primary services of the church. The saleable advowson entered its sunset in 1898, as a series of restrictions curtailed the transfer and use of the right of patronage.³²

Certificates

Ceremonies of spiritual significance, such as ordinations or baptisms, often came with a certificate or letter of confirmation. These documents are annexed to the spiritual act they serve by dependence. The certificate only has meaning in light of the ceremony, and acquiring the certificate is necessary in order for the ceremony to be recognized

²⁶ E.g., Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4; Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4 (fol. 150r); William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tr. 21 (fol. 230ra–230rb).

²⁷ See esp. Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146vb).

²⁸ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 8.F; Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 3 (36:5–16).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, cap. 3 (36:19–30).

³⁰ “Simony,” 286; *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 29, 34.

³¹ Willis, *Simony: In Two Parts*, 127–46. See also, Kirby, “The Lay Feoffees”.

³² *Benefices Act 1898*. This process was completed only when the sale of advowsons was abolished altogether by the *Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986*.

as actually inducting someone into church membership or church office. Therefore, it is simony to charge for such certificates or anything pertaining to the certificates: ink, paper, the labor of producing it, etc.

In a synodal address in July 595, Gregory the Great provided this foundational prohibition:

Following the ancient rule of the fathers, I decree that nothing is ever to be received for ordinations, neither from the giving of the pallium, nor from the delivery of documents, nor from that which a new pretense born of ambition has devised under the name of a writing-tablet. For in ordaining a bishop, the pontiff lays on his hand; the minister reads the Gospel lesson; and the notary writes the letter of confirmation. And just as it is not fitting for the pontiff to sell the hand he lays on, so neither should the minister or the notary sell his voice or his pen in the ordination. Therefore for ordination, or for the pallium, or for documents and the writing-tablet, I entirely forbid the one who is to be ordained or who has been ordained to give anything. If anyone presumes to exact or seek anything under the name of profit from the aforesaid things, he shall be subject to guilt at the strict judgment of Almighty God.³³

This passage became the standard authority on the subject. Many subsequent authors who addressed fees for ordination documents made reference to this letter.

This prohibition was nonetheless widely flouted. Wycliffe gave a picture of fees exacted for ordination: “the clerk of the pontiff who inscribes the name of the candidate, the barber even if he has not shaved the candidate—which is more astonishing—and the one presenting letters dimissory will not get them back until the tax has been paid to the devil, so that when all the simoniacal takings of the lesser ministers are collected, in the bishop’s annual ordination there accumulates a

³³ Gregory I, *Ep.* V.57a.5 (1, 364:23–365:8); cf. X 5.3.1; C. 1, q. 2, c. 4.

great heap of simony amounting to many pounds.”³⁴ After appealing to the passage from Gregory, he explained that “infinite excuses could be fabricated” that one does not purchase a spiritual thing, apart from recognizing that “an exchange is made regarding the temporal thing annexed to it.”³⁵

Books

Books are likewise annexed to spiritual things. Often, the schoolmen spoke of them similarly to consecrated things, subject to the same rules.³⁶ Other times, they were described in relation as annexed merely to things of the human spirit.³⁷ Rarely was the distinction between natural science and theology discussed in the context of concerns around the sale of books, but occasionally it was addressed indirectly.

Richard of Middleton is representative: “Concerning things annexed to spiritual things with reference to the human spirit, it can be said that things annexed to teaching of natural philosophy—such as schools, books, and similar things—can be sold as far as common law is concerned, unless the church supplied such things to a teacher for the instruction of clerics; in that case, he would not be permitted to exact any price for them.”³⁸ Richard positively asserted that the books “annexed to teaching of natural philosophy” (*annexa doctrine physice*) may be sold. He seemed to be operating on the assumption that this describes all books, implying that different rules may apply to books of theology. However, it is not clear what these rules would be; perhaps they are the same as his stated rules on books dedicated by the church for the education of clergy, treated as consecrated things with the aforementioned constraints.

³⁴ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 6 (78:10–17).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, cap. 6 (79:19–24).

³⁶ E.g., Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, sol. (p. 93a).

³⁷ E.g., Major, *In Sent.* (*red. A*), d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146ra); Major, *In Sent.* (*red. B*), d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 183rb).

³⁸ Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 3, q. 3 (p. 388a).

Several of the English Reformers commented on the sale of books as well, albeit not frequently in the context of defining simony.³⁹ In identifying books as only being holy in a sense of being directed to a particular use, the Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs likened it to special days of thanksgiving or fasting: they are made holy by their use, not by any inherent property. The day has no inherent holiness and is set apart by man for God rather than directly by God himself. Similarly, the paper that makes up a book has no inherent holiness.⁴⁰ The Puritan Benjamin Needler used books as an illustration to explain the financial maintenance of ministers. The gospel cannot be put to sale, but Bibles can because you are not selling the truth but the cover, paper, and binding. Similarly, when one supports a minister, he is not buying the truth that the minister gives.⁴¹

All of the foregoing addresses the sale of physical books as annexed to theological doctrine rather than sale of their contents or the labor involved in their authorship. Such concerns over the sale of theological training were implicitly addressed in the previous chapter under the heading of *Teaching*, but by way of demonstration, consider one historian's summary evaluation of the author's ethos through the time of the Reformation:

Until the middle of the eighteenth century it was considered bad manners to write for remuneration instead of for reputation. Up to that time only a few writers had

³⁹ The historian Thomas Fuller explicitly rejected that selling books constituted simony, giving examples of several famous theologians who doubled as their own publishers, Fuller, *The Church-History of Britain*, 8.36 (p. 36).

⁴⁰ With days of thanksgiving or fasting, "there is a holiness in them when out of their use, as in ministers etc., but there no more holiness in days and times set apart by man for God, than there is holiness put upon the paper which the Bible is printed upon; the printer takes out so many reams of paper from his heap, and sets them apart to print the Bible; now will any man think this paper is more holy than the rest." Burroughs, *Hosea* 4–7, 661.

⁴¹ "But is it not a wicked thing to set the gospel to sale? Yes, without question: but pray mark, you say sometimes you have bought a Bible; the truth is, a Bible in some sense cannot be said to be bought; what then do we buy? I answer, you buy the cover and the paper, and the binding, and the printing, but the Bible itself is God's gift: So people do not buy the gospel, nor ministers sell it." Needler, *Genesis*, 136–37.

ever received a fee from their publishers; and if they received it they were anxious to hide the fact. Erasmus, for instance, was deeply hurt when some Italian colleagues hinted that Aldus Manutius had paid him for a book; and he violently defended himself against similar insinuations on the part of Hutten and others. Luther never received so much as a farthing for his hundreds of books and pamphlets. Thomas Murner, the Roman Catholic pamphleteer, seems to have been the first to receive a fee for his *Geuchmatt* in 1514.⁴²

An especially notable example can be found in the life of Luther. In 1539, the printers of Wittenberg offered him a supplemental salary that would have tripled his annual income, all merely for the opportunity to be the first to publish his new works; exclusive rights did not exist at the time. Luther rejected the offer; he would not, he said, sell his grace. Remarking on how God had amply provided so that he never needed to resort to such measures, he continued, “I have all my life never sold a single copy [of my writings] nor held a lecture for a fee; and I mean to take that boast with me into the grave, God willing. Having food and clothing, I shall be content.”⁴³

Price as a Discernment Mechanism

Frequently, the cost of something would be used to either discern or remove doubts of annexation. While true annexation is fundamentally a matter of dependence, whether one can be had without the other, the price often makes the nature of the relationship evident. For the lesser form of annexation—temporal objects directed to spiritual uses—costs beyond the value of the material thing indicate that the spiritual thing is intended in the sale. In the words of Thomas of Strasbourg, “the sale of that which is annexed to a spiritual thing does

⁴² Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, 145.

⁴³ Luther, *Tischreden*, no. 4690 (WA TR 4, 431:27–432:11); cf. Pettegree, *Brand Luther*, 279.

not constitute simony unless it is sold insofar as it is annexed—that is, if in the sale regard is had to the spiritual thing, and on account of such annexation the temporal thing is sold more dearly.”⁴⁴

Numerous examples can be given. This applies to the cost of consecrated vessels matching the cost of the metal that composes them,⁴⁵ consecrated water being sold at the same price as regular water,⁴⁶ land with the right of patronage being sold at the same rate as any other land,⁴⁷ etc. Wycliffe asserted that excessively high prices for blessings and consecrations indicate that it is the spiritual thing that is being sold rather than any effort on the part of the bishop.⁴⁸ Hus observed the same regarding steep and widely varying prices for letters confirming an ordination.⁴⁹

Positive Law Simony

A second way annexation can be considered beyond those already addressed is in terms of positive law (*ius positivum*). That is, can temporal things be annexed to spiritual things merely by human

⁴⁴ Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, ad 5 (fol. 150v); cf. ad 4; Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, sol. (p. 93a).

⁴⁵ Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 315r).

⁴⁶ Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 5, q. 3 (p. 91a).

⁴⁷ Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 315r); Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 4 (p. 317a).

⁴⁸ “Nor is it valid to say that the bishop’s bodily labor in this is more valuable than so much labor of a layman, because this would have no color [plausibility] except on account of the spiritual thing annexed; and consequently, since so excessive a price is taken on account of it, it seems that principally it is the spiritual thing that is being sold so dearly.” Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 6 (74:32–75:4).

⁴⁹ “But if one were to insist that the document must be paid for, then I say: a letter costs two pennies; why then must one pay two kopy, another five, another four? No one can truly say that the paper, or the wax, or the writing costs so much; and they give nothing beyond those things except spiritual power. How then can it truly be said that they do not sell that power for money? And that the letter is not so costly is proved by the fact that when he receives it, he afterward throws it in a corner or in the mud.” Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 7.B.

regulations?⁵⁰ We might restate the question using several distinctions, such as the difference between something that is intrinsically wrong (*malum in se*) vs. extrinsically wrong (*malum prohibitum*). However, the typical scholastic approach on this topic was to contrast things prohibited because they are simoniacal (*prohibita quia simoniaca*) vs. things simoniacal because they are prohibited (*simoniaca quia prohibita*).⁵¹

The general consensus is that the laws of the church do not have the power to make something simony. A number of discussions on this go back to Durandus of Saint-Pourçain. Within a larger discussion on the matter, he wrote, “the prohibition of the law does not change the natures of things so as to make what is temporal spiritual or vice versa; therefore where there is no simony from the nature of the thing, there cannot be simony from the prohibition of the law.”⁵² A minority willingly acknowledged a second species of simony merely by church law, though categorically lesser.⁵³ For example, the confessors’ manuals determined that positive law simony required a pact to incur guilt, rather than being established by the will alone.⁵⁴

The most comprehensive English-language treatment of this question appears to exist in a tract written by John Cawley, Archdeacon of Lincoln, after his conviction for simony for letting out his archidiaconal jurisdiction to a layman under a yearly pension. Cawley marshaled Durandus and others to defend himself, arguing that his offense was only wrong because it was prohibited (*malum prohibitum*), not prohibited because it was wrong (*prohibitum quia malum*).⁵⁵ Further, he saw his penalty as a continuing tyranny of Rome that managed to

⁵⁰ Some historians have framed the term annexation as chiefly addressing this category of human regulation. E.g., Leinz, *Die Simonie*, 11–12, 39.

⁵¹ E.g., Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 185vb).

⁵² Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 5 (fol. 318r).

⁵³ E.g., “another is simony from the prohibition of the church [...] such as the exchange of some temporal thing annexed to a spiritual.” Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta*, VI, q. 26 (fol. 247v); “this chapter [ruling that penance suffices without restitution] is to be restricted to simony prohibited by the constitution of the church.” Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.46 (fol. 83rb).

⁵⁴ E.g., John of Freiburg, *Summa confessorum*, I, tit. 1, q. 5 (fol. 1va).

⁵⁵ Cawley, *Nature and Kinds of Simony*, 2–3.

work its way into the assumptions of the English Church.⁵⁶ Later, upon petition, he was reinstated by the crown.

Luther decried the expansion of the definition of simony merely on the basis of human law: “And now to the Papists ‘spiritual goods’ means revenues, taxes, buildings, towns, and territories, which are entirely political things.”⁵⁷ He considered these things to be “a most perverse abuse and horrible blindness in Canon law in the disputations about simony.”⁵⁸ He further glibed that while the Pope was guilty of violating his own laws in seizing physical properties, “our teaching frees him from his own books and decrees and absolves him from the crime of simony.”⁵⁹ On this count, Luther offered a consolation: “we absolve the Pope from this crime according to the true definition, in which he has entangled himself by his own law: because he does not sell spiritual things—properly so called—for he does not have them.”⁶⁰

Conclusion

The category of spiritual annexes extends the prohibition of simony beyond the sale of spiritual things themselves to include temporal things so joined to them that one cannot be sold without the other. As we have seen, annexation principally comes in the mutually exclusive categories of being annexed by way of dependence or by way of direction, although some have argued for a third category in positive law simony. Standard examples of spiritual annexes include consecrated things, benefices, land with rights of patronage, certificates, and books. In each case, the central question is whether the temporal thing was so bound with a spiritual thing that the latter could not be acquired apart from the former.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 280:11–12).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 23:3–4 (WA 43, 280:16–17).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 23:3–4 (WA 43, 280:42–281:2).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 23:3–4 (WA 43, 281:6–8).

To Buy or Sell

Because Simon Magus sought to purchase the gift of the Spirit, some associate simony particularly with the sin of *buying* the Holy Spirit.¹ However, all serious treatments of the matter affirm that simony is committed in both selling and buying. On this point, many referred back to fifth-century pope Gelasius I and his epistle to the bishops of Lucania, Bruttium, and Sicily, whose twenty-fourth chapter declares, “both giver and receiver alike are caught in the damnation of Simon.”² Peter Lombard wrote, “both the givers and the receivers are called simoniacs, and both are struck by the same sentence.”³

Referring to older sources, perhaps going back to Chalcedon, canon 3 of the Second Council of Braga (572) describes “the ancient decree of the fathers” as saying “cursed be the giver and receiver.”⁴ Henry Burton cited this canon favorably⁵ and elsewhere wrote that sellers “are as deep in simony, as buyers.”⁶

In this chapter, we will first examine the symmetry and asymmetry between buying and selling, considering the relative gravity of each. We will then turn to cases where the buyer may be entirely innocent

¹ See Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, arg. 1 (fol. 150r).

² Gelasius I, *Ep.* 14.24 (p. 375). cf. C. 1, q. 1, c. 6.

³ Lombard, *Sent.* IV, d. 25, c. 2 (p. 909).

⁴ *Concilium Bracaraense secundum*, c. 3 (PL 84:571C–D).

⁵ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 52.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 31. In support, he cited Ecclesiasticus 27:2 (“As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones; so doth sin stick close between buying and selling.”).

even while the seller is guilty. From there, we will consider the simoniacal nature of withholding spiritual things, whether by silence, false teaching, or refusal to minister. Finally, we will survey the broader circle of guilt, tracing the ways one may participate indirectly in the sin.

Relative Gravity

Wycliffe identified selling and buying as two sides of one coin. Referring to them as “gehazia” (*gesia*) for selling and “simon” (*simonia*) for buying,⁷ he refused to grant primacy to either: “And these two poisons, the new and the old, follow one another as correlatives, and each embraces the name of the other.”⁸ The twelfth-century master Hugh of St. Victor spoke similarly when he remarked, “the followers of these, as they are not diverse in error, are not distinguished in damnation.”⁹

Further, Wycliffe took issue with this definition of simony since it speaks of “buying and selling” rather than “buying or selling.” Wycliffe acknowledged that the art of Latin definitions is not to speak disjunctively; that is, they tend to use “and” (*et*) in listing matters rather than “or” (*vel*). As such, one might technically be cleared of charges because he has only bought or only sold. Wycliffe’s solution was to simply use the word “exchange” (*commutacio*) to remove ambiguity.¹⁰

On one hand, these statements affirming a symmetry of action are unobjectionable; no simoniacal transaction can occur without both seller and buyer. However, if they are to be taken as statements of gravity, as though each mode of transaction is equally heinous, there are reasons to regard the sale of spiritual things as worse than the purchase of spiritual things. In the words of Bonaventure, “A bishop

⁷ See Chapter 10, pp. 165–67 for more on this label for selling.

⁸ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (2:11–13).

⁹ Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, II, p. 10, c. 2 (PL 176:477D).

¹⁰ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (3:2–8). Note that because the English language does not suffer from the same idiomatic expectation, we have taken the liberty to render Aquinas’s definition disjunctively as “buying or selling.”

who sells sins more gravely than a subject who buys.”¹¹ Returning to Gregory’s influential fourth homily on the gospels, he observed that Simon sought “to more wrongly sell what he had wrongly bought.”¹² Similarly, Basil of Caesarea wrote in his fifty-third epistle, “He who through ignorance wants to buy is less guilty than he who sells the gift of God.”¹³ While the focus of this statement is on the culpability associated with one’s understanding, it likewise demonstrates an association between culpability and sale. The seller of a spiritual thing is far more likely to be aware that the sale is illicit than the purchaser. Further, as the schoolmen argued, the seller gives what he does not own, and what he has been commanded to give freely (Matt. 10:8; 1 Cor. 4:1).¹⁴ The purchaser does not labor under the same obligations as the minister.

Licit Purchases

While the buyer may be less guilty than the seller, he may also be completely innocent. This occurs particularly in the case of a spiritual good that is being wrongly withheld from a purchaser. In such a case, the purchaser essentially pays a ransom. In typical scholastic writings, such a purchaser is said to “redeem vexation” (*redimere vexationem*), or perhaps more idiomatically in English we might say that he buys off the harassment.

A number of discussions on this notion point back to Innocent IV’s *Commentaria* on the decretals.¹⁵ Admitting that the seller is guilty in a simoniacal exchange, he entertained the question of whether the buyer must be:

However, to a layman whom it is clear has no jurisdiction—if he despoils him of a church, or would cause him

¹¹ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, dub. 3 (p. 657).

¹² Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 4.4 (p. 25).

¹³ Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 53 (p. 339).

¹⁴ See Chapter II, p. 184.

¹⁵ See, e.g., the later discussion in Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.24 (fol. 75ra).

to be shunned *de facto* as though excommunicated—or even to a cleric who does not claim he acted by right, but by force, it is permitted to give [a payoff]. Because he gives nothing for a spiritual thing, but only for vexation, which it is permitted to redeem.¹⁶

The preceding text had dealt with a situation where the oppressor was a superior, but here the oppressor is one without real church authority but has some mechanism of defrauding a bishop. Innocent used this case because it is clear that nothing spiritual is being bought, since the lay person has nothing spiritual to sell. The one who pays him is only buying off the harassment.

Aquinas described a similar dynamic. Before one acquires a right to a bishopric, “it would be simoniacal to buy off the opposition of adversaries with money.”¹⁷ However, if he has already acquired the right, “it is lawful to remove unjust impediments by means of money.”¹⁸ In summary, it would be wrong for someone unqualified for a spiritual office to purchase that office. However, for someone who is qualified for that office and unjustly kept from it, it is not necessarily wrong to remove that injustice by means of payment. We might make an analogy in terms of human trafficking. While it would be wrong to buy humans as chattel, no one would fault a man for ransoming a kidnapped family member. The kidnapper is guilty in the sale, but the ransomer is innocent.

In his gloss on Matthew 10:8, John Major argued that this principle can be applied not only when the purchaser himself is being kept from something he has a right to, but any time it would keep the seller from some evil action: “It is licit to give money to a man so that he abandons his vice or accommodates himself to virtue.”¹⁹ If it may be permissible to pay an elector to elect an unsuitable bishop, then it may

¹⁶ Innocent IV, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.24 (fol. 500r).

¹⁷ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 2, ad 5.

¹⁸ Ibid., II-II, q. 100, a. 2, ad 5; cf. Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 7.

¹⁹ Major, *In Matthaeum ad Literam Expositio*, 10:8 (fol. 41rb).

be permissible to pay him to elect a suitable one.²⁰ Redeeming the vexation distinguishes itself from bibery in that it uses money to turn the wicked away from injustice.

This exemption for “redeeming vexation” continued with Protestant authors. To include a Puritan example, Ames concurred, “Neither [is it properly simony] if any thing is given by him, which hath a certain and undoubted right to the spiritual function, for the avoiding of unjust troubles.”²¹ Luther himself defended the concept,²² going so far as to encourage ruling Protestant authorities to give to the pope a yearly sums of thousands of crowns “that the shedding of blood and other scandals might cease, and the Gospel could be spread in peace.”²³ He added, “This is no simony but the redemption of vexation.”²⁴

Two examples are repeatedly offered as case studies for this dynamic: Jacob’s birthright and baptisms unjustly withheld. Following the exemption through both, we will also examine how prudence must govern its use.

²⁰ “Therefore I can licitly give money to someone so that he does not elect an unsuitable person, [since] I have an acquired right to this. And then, speaking consequently, it seems it must be conceded that I can give money to an elector so that he elects a suitable person. And of two demonstrated [candidates], namely a more suitable and a less suitable, I can give money not to elect the less suitable, holding that he sins by electing the less suitable, because I can remove this man from sin. And where one alone would be suitable, I can give money to elect this suitable one, because if the benefice is given to another, the collator or elector sins, and by giving it to this maximally suitable one he does not sin: therefore I can buy him the benefice.” *Ibid.*, 10:8 (fol. 41rb).

²¹ Ames, *Conscience*, 5.230.

²² “Now if I wanted to bargain with the Pope thus: ‘I will give you so many thousand gold pieces yearly, and you let me freely and sincerely preach the Gospel.’ Would that be simony? No. For I am not buying what I already have, namely the legitimate use of the sacraments, the sincere doctrine of the Gospel, of faith, of hope, of the expectation of the life to come, all of which have been granted to me even against the Pope’s will and without his authority. I only seek, by offering a thousand gold pieces, to redeem that vexation.” Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 425:12–19).

²³ *Ibid.*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 425:21–24).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 425:24).

Jacob's Birthright

In Genesis 25:29–34, Esau sells his birthright to Jacob. While the birthright itself may be composed of physical inheritances, there is a spiritual quality associated with primogeniture, the right of the first-born, the firstborn serving as priests until the days of Aaron (Exod. 13:2; Num. 3:11–13).²⁵ Because of this, it seems that there may be nothing wrong in selling or buying spiritual things.

The common response at this point was that Jacob was free to purchase the birthright because it was owed to him.²⁶

Luther took issue with these discussions, describing the idea of simony in Genesis 25 as the “fantasies” of “sophists,”²⁷ but his solution differed little. Where the medievals spoke of Jacob being due the birthright by divine election, Luther contended that it was forfeit on account of Esau’s contempt.²⁸ Lecturing on the same passage years later, he added that there was no transaction of a spiritual thing at all, the birthright being on this account already transferred into

²⁵ This is most commonly discussed among the medievals, but for a Puritan example that addresses Jacob and Esau, see Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 57.

²⁶ E.g., “The right of the firstborn was due to Jacob by divine election, according to that of Malachi 1[:2], ‘Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.’ And therefore, Esau sinned by selling the birthright; Jacob, however, did not sin by buying, because it is understood that he [merely] redeemed his own vexation.” [Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 4; cf. Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 3.] Some argued that Jacob should be understood as disinclined to purchase the birthright, only speaking of it this way to persuade his wicked brother to comply. ^[E.g., “Although he said to his brother, ‘Sell me your birthright,’ he understood it as ‘Give me the birthright, which in your judgment is through a sale.’” Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 147rb).]

²⁷ “That the sophists say this sale is simony, we do not care. They say Jacob did not sin, but Esau did because he sold spiritual goods; but these are fantasies.” Luther, *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose*, 45 (WA 14, 330:1–3).

²⁸ “Esau would have sinned even if he had given it away for free, he who rather ought to have expended his life for the dignity of the primogeniture given by God. Therefore, the despiser is despised; trifling with the gift of God, he loses it. Rightly, what the brother despises, Jacob claims for himself—whether by ambush, by price, or for free.” *Ibid.*, 45 (WA 14, 330:25–28).

Jacob's hands.²⁹ Though dismissing the label of "simony," Luther still spoke of Jacob's stew as a "redemption of vexation."³⁰ In describing a hypothetical bargain with the pope, he claimed, "I am not buying; I am merely throwing a morsel and red lentils at my adversary."³¹

Baptisms Held to Ransom

Though it does not appear directly in Lombard's *Sentences*, the schoolmen addressed this question on the fifth distinction of book four. In the context of having asserted that heretics are indeed able to administer legitimate baptisms, the question arises for simoniacs. If the wicked administrator of the sacrament is not just any kind of heretic but a simoniac, would one be able to legitimately receive baptism? If the recipient of baptism were to pay the administrator, he may potentially engage in simony himself, invalidating the work since wicked men cannot receive a legitimate baptism.

Often, the same answer is given at this point, albeit with additional caveats. One who pays to be rid of the priest's harassment does not engage in simony, even though the seller does.³² The additional caveats arise from the aforementioned conclusions about the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the work. If baptism can be administered by so many, it should be easy enough to find someone else to do the work. In the case of a parent for a child, even the parent could perform the baptism himself.

Others insisted that because simony is so great a sin, the baptism of the Spirit—or a baptism of true desire—suffices in such a condition,

²⁹ "It is not a real transaction, because the birthright is already beforehand in Jacob's hands, and Esau has been stripped of it. With Jacob is the possession, but without the name. With Esau is the name without the possession." Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 425:25–28).

³⁰ Ibid., 25:31–34 (WA 43, 420:13–16).

³¹ Ibid., 25:31–34 (WA 43, 425:19–20). Shortly thereafter, he described Jacob giving the stew as "throwing Cerberus a sop" *ibid.*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 425:30–31).

³² See Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 5, a. 1, ad quaest. 2 (p. 106a); William de Vaurouillon, *In Sent.* IV, d. 5 (fol. 228r).

and no one should pay a simoniac for baptism.³³ However, it also appears that works coming to this conclusion do not consider the category of a payment designed to redeem from unjust opposition. John Duns Scotus had perhaps the most thorough discussion of this problem, considering both sides, but ultimately deciding such a baptism could not be purchased.³⁴ One commentator noted that he did not speak in “the mode of the ancients” by employing the phrase “redeeming from vexation,” suspecting that this justification does not apply in this case of particular difficulty.³⁵

The same principle of removing impediments was extended from the case of one’s own baptism to the case of another’s coming to the faith at all. The canonist Panormitanus perhaps gave the fullest summary, acknowledging that authorities had divided, but he ultimately concluded that one may financially assist in the process if the potential convert already has sufficient motivation to convert. He illustrated it with the observation that “many Jews have amassed great wealth through the depravity of usury and fear coming to the faith because they would have to restore all that was wrongfully taken.” One may licitly help such a convert make restitution since the payment clears an obstacle to embracing the faith rather than making a simoniacal appeal to cupidity.³⁶

The Rule of Prudence

The category for redeeming vexation is genuine, but as we have seen with baptism, it is narrower than it may at first appear. It is not a blanket license, but requires prudential judgment to weigh the good the payment secures against the harm it entails: complicity in another’s sin, perpetuation of an evil custom, and scandal on the church. Thus, we observed that Scotus declined to speak “in the mode of the ancients.”

³³ See Biel, *Collectorium*, IV, d. 5, q. 1 (sig. g2va); Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 3, q. 1, ad 8 (p. 385b).

³⁴ Scotus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 5, q. 2 (16, p. 518).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, d. 5, q. 2 (16, p. 518).

³⁶ Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.9 (fol. 70vb).

Perhaps it is for this reason that Wycliffe spoke of buying and selling as so certainly symmetric. Hus followed after him. Both were concerned not so much with how to live in spite of corruption as with how to confront it directly. Surveying the landscape of his own day, Hus judged that one who qualified to hold office should never pay a fee to enter, and continued proleptically:

But immediately you will object to this: "If this is how it ought to be, then no one should give money, and the officials will not allow it; if everyone did this, no one would be a parish priest." To this I say that if everyone did so, the officials would have to admit them whether they liked it or not.

But you say again: "If I do not give money, another will." To this I say that if you wish to excuse yourself by that argument, then even the executioner, the bailiff, and the harlot will excuse themselves; for each of them says: "If I am not the executioner or the bailiff, another will be; if I am not a harlot, another will be."

You may yet say: "But others commonly give money." And I answer that others commonly sin, yet that does not mean you should sin.

You may yet say: "But it is an ancient custom." And I say that an evil custom, the longer it endures, the greater punishment it incurs from God, as I shall demonstrate later. And I marvel why we do not keep the older and good custom of the holy apostles, which they received from Christ, when he said to them: "Freely you have received, freely give." And why do they not fear the blessing of St. Peter, which he gave to Simon, saying: "Your money perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money."³⁷

On one hand, Hus's rhetoric is stark, painting in black and white. He called the purchase a sin without pausing to qualify, and nowhere

³⁷ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 7.B.

did he affirm the category of redeeming vexation. Yet neither should we presume he meant to deny it altogether. Each answer to each objection is, in effect, a step in this exercise of prudence. That Luther, a self-declared Hussite,³⁸ later commended such purchases need not imply a theological divergence from his forerunner. Rather, life on different sides of the Reformation required different strategies for faithfulness.

Withholding Spiritual Things

Beyond the strict categories of buying and selling where something spiritual is exchanged, what about those times when a spiritual thing is withheld? If a minister refuses to give freely what he has freely received (Matt. 10:8), he violates this command no less than if he had sold it.:footnote[“Were he to take anything for the use of his spiritual power, this would amount not to letting out his labor—which he is bound to render as a debt of the office he has undertaken—but to selling the very use of spiritual grace.” Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 3.] The withholding of spiritual things for material gain is therefore itself a species of simony.

No pressure should be brought to bear on those unwilling to give “through the withholding of spiritual things that are owed, for that would have a certain appearance of selling.”³⁹ Or more directly, “If a minister or pastor of the Church were unwilling to teach you about the forgiveness of sins and the benefits of the Gospel, and refused you absolution unless you redeemed it from him for a hundred gold pieces—that would be simoniacal.”⁴⁰ This is true even in extreme conditions. William Vorilong presented the question: “If a curate has nothing in the parish to live on, can he withhold divine services?”⁴¹ Ap-

³⁸ Writing to Georg Spalatin in 1520, Luther confessed, “we are all Hussites without knowing it.” Luther, *Briefwechsel*, no. 254 (WA Br 2, 42:22–25).

³⁹ Ibid., II-II, q. 100, a. 3.

⁴⁰ Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 281:27–29).

⁴¹ William de Vaurouillon, *In Sent.* III, d. 3, q. 2 (fol. 164r).

pealing to canon law, he answered, "It is said that he cannot; otherwise he would be considered a simoniac."⁴²

First, we will demonstrate this prohibition by way of the particular example of false teaching. Afterward, we will qualify the nature of the obligation to give rather than withhold, which does not apply equally to all outside the office of minister.

The Example of False Teaching

A clear case in point for this is the nature of false teaching. Selling false spiritual things is recognized as simony as surely as selling true ones. Protestants and medievals alike admitted this, although often indirectly. For example, Protestants, though identifying indulgences as false, typically regard their sale as simony.⁴³ Among the medievals, the frequent appeal to the simoniacally distributed false priesthood of Jeroboam demonstrates the same.⁴⁴ Hus used 2 Peter 2:3 ("in their greed they will exploit you with false words") in his description of a distinct class of simoniacs who are liars.⁴⁵ Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 2:17 ("peddle the word of God") is frequently applied to this effect.

However, *The Anatomy of Simon Magus* puts it precisely, dividing simony into two categories. While the latter is setting to sale what is true, making it vendible, the former is that simoniacs speak lies: "either for their advantage and gain, they obtrude falsehood and error for truth, and minister to people corrupt, instead of wholesome food; so selling for upright, what is but sophisticate and counterfeit."⁴⁶ Such men are "bribed [...] to smother the truth and counsel of God."⁴⁷

The minister who "obtrudes" falsehood necessarily withholds truth. The one who "smothers" it does likewise. Though he has received the

⁴² Ibid., III, d. 3, q. 2 (fol. 164r).

⁴³ See Chapter 1, pp. 28–31.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 10, pp. 174–75.

⁴⁵ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 3.B.

⁴⁶ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 76.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 77.

truth freely and ought to give it freely, he necessarily hides it when he dispenses lies.

The Qualification of Obligation

Of course, not *every* act of withholding a spiritual good is simoniacal; for one to be guilty on this front, there must be the obligation to “freely give,” which is typically established through spiritual office. In the words of John Major, “It is a general rule, and from natural law, that a man does not acquire ownership of money through an act he is bound to perform freely.”⁴⁸ Frequently, this was the reason given for why one must not withhold the word or sacraments.

The schoolmen gave the example of a judge to demonstrate this,⁴⁹ especially going back to the words of Augustine: “a judge ought not to sell a true judgment, nor a witness true testimony; but an advocate may sell his just advocacy, and a jurist his true counsel.”⁵⁰ This conclusion was deemed sound because the judge and witness must perform their roles, but the advocate and jurist are not so bound.⁵¹ Accordingly, in matters of spiritual judgment, as in the ecclesiastical courts, such a sale of judgment is simony.⁵² Outside of ecclesiastical courts, such judgments are not truly spiritual in the sense of being derivative of divine revelation, so cannot strictly be called simony.⁵³

The application to the pastoral office is not that someone outside of it would be permitted to charge for the same activities a minister might perform, but that those outside are certainly not obligated

⁴⁸ Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 5 (fol. 187va).

⁴⁹ E.g., Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 319b).

⁵⁰ Augustine, *Ep.* 153.6.23 (CSEL 44, 423:5–7).

⁵¹ E.g., “A judge is bound by his office to render judgment; likewise anyone who is subject to a court is bound to give true testimony. But an advocate is not bound to lend his advocacy to a case, nor a jurist to give counsel.” Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 9.

⁵² E.g., “For the advocate selling just advocacy does not sell justice, which is spiritual, but his own act; and the same must be said of the counsel of a jurist. But a judge selling a true judgment commits simony, if he is a spiritual judge; otherwise he does not commit simony, but sins gravely.” *Ibid.*, IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 9.

⁵³ See Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 315r).

to give freely in the sense of positively giving. The literature also discusses whether a judge could charge for travel expenses to arrive. Some answered “yes”⁵⁴ and others “no.”⁵⁵ These questions, of course, seem to have a bearing on the pastor’s office as well.

Indirect Participation

The tradition of moral theology recognized that one could be guilty not only as the principal agent of any sin but also as an accessory. The schoolmen enumerated nine ways of being complicit in another’s sin, summarized in a widely known mnemonic couplet:

*Iussio, consilium, consensus, palpo, recursus, Participans,
mutus, non obstands, non manifestans.*⁵⁶

That is: command, counsel, consent, flattery, harboring, partaking, silence, not hindering, and not disclosing. These were understood to apply to any sin whatever. English authors likewise treated them as a general framework.⁵⁷

Therefore, while the principal agents of any simoniacal exchange are the buyer and the seller, any mediator is likewise implicated.⁵⁸ No author applied all nine modes of indirect participation systematically to simony, but two abbreviated catalogs are worth considering. One is provided by Wycliffe and Hus, and the other is found in the anonymous *Anatomy of Simon Magus*.

⁵⁴ E.g., *ibid.*, IV, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 315r).

⁵⁵ E.g., Peter the Chanter, Noonan, *Bribes*, 176.

⁵⁶ E.g., Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 62, a. 7; Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 15, q. 26 (fol. 96ra).

⁵⁷ E.g., Adams, *Commentary on 2 Peter*, 437–40; Ames, *Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, 305. “Men may be accessory many ways, by commandment, by counsel, by consent, by partnership, by receiving, by silence when a man ought to speak [...]” Perkins, *Galatians*, 99.

⁵⁸ See Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.8 (fol. 70rb).

Wycliffe and Hus's Six Ways

While he introduced these categories more generally elsewhere,⁵⁹ Wycliffe applied six modes of consent to the sin of simony, presenting them in a couplet similar to the one above.

*Consentit operans, defendens, consilium dans Ac aucto-
risans, non iuvans nec reprehendens.*⁶⁰

That is: one consents by aiding, defending, counseling, authorizing, not helping, and not reproving. He went on to give some description of these in the subsequent paragraph.⁶¹

Hus took this application of the framework and expanded it in the ninth chapter of his own treatise. While critical editions do not typeset it accordingly, he seemed to have intended a similar couplet in Czech:

*pomocí, obranú, radú, potvrzením, nepomocí a netresk-
táním*⁶²

“So that people may guard against simony on every side,” Hus wrote, “we must further know that everyone who consents to simony sins thereby and shares in simony.”⁶³ He then considered each of the six in turn.

By aid: One is guilty of simony “by interceding, brokering among simoniacs, or otherwise providing occasion, whether by letters, by messages, by lending money, by holding their case in court, or by other means.”⁶⁴

By defense: Many incur the guilt of simony by defending it, either excusing all who have not been condemned by human courts or at other times obfuscating the nature of the payment, claiming that it is

⁵⁹ Wycliffe, *De officio regis*, cap. 4 (pp. 68ff.).

⁶⁰ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 8 (98:19–20).

⁶¹ Ibid., cap. 8 (98:21–99:8).

⁶² Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 9.A.

⁶³ Ibid., 9.A.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 9.A.

made for labor rather than any spiritual thing. However, such defenses are typically not absent direct participation in the sin since they are often offered “because they themselves run the same course.”⁶⁵ From there, Hus gave a running commentary on Matthew 23:2–8 along with other comments on passages in the gospels, describing the pride, hypocrisy, and love of honor among the masters of his day, extending his exposition of this mode of participation longer than the other five combined.⁶⁶

By counsel: One partakes of simony by devising ways for the buyer or seller to accomplish a simoniacal exchange. Hus described a great company of such advisors at the papal court, “who devise [...] all manner of wondrous tricks, and all so that the pope and they may gather more money and the buyers may give more,” though hoping that many were not like this.⁶⁷ He added that “to describe all these devices, even just those I know of, would take far too long.”⁶⁸

By confirmation: All are partakers who assent to simony. Hus placed particular blame on “the powerful kings, princes, and lords, bishops and other dignitaries, who ought to suppress it.”⁶⁹ He rejected the excuse of one in a position of power who would claim disinterest in the affairs of clergy. A prince who was slandered, robbed, or cuckolded would take vengeance at once, yet simony is a far greater offense since it is against the Holy Spirit himself.⁷⁰

By not helping: Following the preceding concerns, one who has power to prevent his neighbor from sinking in sin toward damnation should act to prevent it. Hus illustrated the point with an analogy: “anyone who sees a person drowning in water and, being able to help, does not help, would be guilty of that person’s death.”⁷¹

By not reproving: When one is silent regarding simony, he participates in the sin of simony. On this point, Hus appealed to Romans 1:32

⁶⁵ Ibid., 9.A.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9.A–D.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 9.E.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 9.E.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 9.F.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.F.

⁷¹ Ibid., 9.G.

(“not only those who do such things are worthy of death, but also those who consent to those who do them”) and Isidore as cited by Gratian: “Whoever consents to those who sin and defends another who is sinning shall be accursed both before God and before men, and shall be punished with the most cruel punishment.”⁷²

Hus concluded his treatment with an adaptation of a parable originating from Wycliffe’s introduction of these six categories in *De Officio Regis*.⁷³ Substantially elaborating on Wycliffe’s analogy, Hus described a city that a certain king had established and recaptured from enemies at the cost of his own life. If someone then handed that city over for money against the king’s will, the guilt would extend not only to the one who surrendered it and the one who received it, but also to the broker, the scribes of both parties, the messengers, the sureties, the negotiators, the money lender, the one who supplied the paper for the documents, the community that submitted willingly, and the watchman who did not cry out—in short, everyone who could have helped prevent it. “So it is with simony” because the city that falls victim is that people “whom the Savior himself created and, fighting at the cost of his own life unto death on the cross, liberated from the devil.”⁷⁴

The Anatomist’s Four Ways

Asserting that one may be either a principal agent or an abettor,⁷⁵ the Anatomist provided four categories of indirect participation: advice, approbation, connivance, and patronization.⁷⁶

By advice: One incurs the guilt of simony “by promoting of a simoniacal design, in becoming a mediator, or secret agent; either by advice and counsel, or by transacting betwixt the parties, or in behalf of either of them, in any condition, compact, or payment of

⁷² Ibid., 9.H; cf. C. II, q. 3, c. 100. See Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 1:671n1050 for parallel transmissions.

⁷³ Wycliffe, *De officio regis*, cap. 4 (67:28–68:2).

⁷⁴ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 9.H.

⁷⁵ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 38.

⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, 64–72.

money; or by using any sinister devices for that effect.”⁷⁷ On this count, Ezekiel is instructed to prophesy against those who devise mischief and give wicked counsel (Ezek. 11:2–4).⁷⁸ Likewise, Jezebel’s secret transactions to deliver Naboth’s vineyard to Ahab brought down the same judgment upon her as upon Ahab himself (1 Kings 21:23).⁷⁹ It is on this ground that Chalcedon decreed so severely against mediators in simoniacal bargains⁸⁰ and canon law voided a simoniacal election even when the one elected was ignorant of the payments made on his behalf.⁸¹

By approbation: “Consent or approbation renders a man guilty of the sin to which he consents.”⁸² On this point, the Anatomist appealed to Psalm 50:18 (“When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him.”)⁸³ and Paul’s own confession in Acts 22:20, that “he was *consenting* to the shedding of the blood of that proto-martyr Stephen.”⁸⁴ “And, is not he then guilty before God,” asked the Anatomist, “who, seeing one as a thief and a robber, climbing up into the sheepfold of Christ by simoniacal means, yields his consent thereto?”⁸⁵

By connivance: One incurs the guilt of simony “when being privy thereto, he winks thereat, or forbeareth, according to his place and calling, either to oppose himself thereto or to censure the same.”⁸⁶ As God threatens those who hide their eyes from child sacrifice (Lev. 20:4), punished Eli for conniving at his sons’ wickedness (1 Sam. 2; 3:13–14), and rebuked Thyatira for suffering Jezebel (Rev. 2:20), so he does to

⁷⁷ Ibid., 64.

⁷⁸ See *ibid.*, 65.

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 65.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 66; cf. *Canones concilii Chalcedonensis*, can. 2 (ACO II.2.2, 125).

⁸¹ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 66–67; cf. X 5.3.27.

⁸² *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 67.

⁸³ Ibid., 67.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 67–68.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, 68–69.

those who wink at simony.⁸⁷ As Solomon said, “Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul” (Prov. 29:24).⁸⁸

By patronizing: Patronizing occurs when one “takes part with simoniacal persons, and bears them out, either by countenancing them in their sin, or by pleading for them, or by setting himself out to justify and defend them therein.”⁸⁹ One who does so, the Anatomist said, espouses the interest of Satan as well as of Simon and “stands upon his side against God.”⁹⁰ In demonstration, he brought to bear a number of Scripture proofs: adapting the words of Jerubbaal’s father to the men of his city (Judg. 6:31), the Anatomist asked: “Will ye plead for Simon Magus? Will ye defend him?”⁹¹ Such a thing is also like helping Ahab (2 Chron. 19:2)⁹² or siding with the poor for an evil cause (Exod. 23:3).⁹³ One should expect severe wrath if he strengthens the hands of evildoers (Jer. 23:14–15).⁹⁴

Conclusion

The sin of simony does not attach to one side of the transaction alone. Both buyer and seller stand condemned, though not equally. The seller—who has received freely and is commanded to give freely—typically bears the greater guilt. The buyer—who may act from ignorance or even from genuine need—may bear less guilt, or in some cases, none at all. When he merely “redeems vexation,” he does not technically buy a spiritual thing, but a temporal thing.

Yet the symmetry of the sin should not be lost in these qualifications. The transaction requires two parties, and each willingly shares in its corruption. Hus’s insistence that the office-seeker should always decline to pay underscores how narrow the exemption for redeeming

⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, 69.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 71–72.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

vexation truly is. Even when redeeming vexation to obtain what is rightfully his, the buyer may become complicit in perpetuating an injustice. Sometimes, prudence requires refusing to participate at all.

The case of withholding extends the logic still further. By virtue of his office, the minister is obligated to give freely. When he is called to offer truth, he may neither be silent nor offer lies. When other spiritual service is called of him, he must give.

Nor does the circle of guilt end with the principal parties. The tradition recognized that one could be complicit in simony through indirect participation: by counseling, defending, brokering, conniving at, or simply failing to oppose a simoniacal transaction. Both Hus and the Anatomist cataloged these modes of complicity at length, and both arrived at the same conclusion: silence and inaction in the face of simony are themselves forms of consent. The sin radiates outward from buyer and seller to implicate all who had power to prevent it and did not.

An Earnest Desire

Simony is an “earnest desire” (*studiosa voluntas*) to commercialize spiritual things, but the English rendering of this phrase varies across sources. Some have rendered it as a “deliberate will” or “express will.” Thomas Aquinas explained that *voluntas* indicates that simony is a matter of the will rather than a matter of the intellect, and that *studiosa* indicates choice (*electio*).¹ That is, there must be a willful desire for the exchange, not just a rational appetite for spiritual things exceeding that of temporal things. For this reason, the medieval works on simony routinely responded to Daniel 4:27² (“redeem your sins with alms”) as a stock objection.³ Gregory the Great’s gloss on Matthew 4:18–22 (“Immediately they left their nets and followed him”) that “the kingdom of God is worth as much as you have”⁴ often attends this consideration as well.⁵ Answering that “buying” is a metaphor for merit and does not authorize commerce in spiritual things, they conceded that these two authorities demonstrate the propriety of recognizing the surpassing

¹ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 2.

² Vulgate, Dan. 4:24.

³ E.g., Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 3, ad 1 (fol. 315r); Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1, arg. 1; Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146rb).

⁴ Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 5.2 (p. 28).

⁵ All three works just cited quote it alongside the Daniel text. It is also quoted apart from that text, as at Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 1, q. 4, arg. 5 (pp. 647–48) and Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, arg. 3.

value of spiritual things, and, in that sense, desiring to make such an exchange.⁶

In other words, the qualifier of “earnest” (*studiosa*) indicates that in order for this “desire” (*voluntas*) to be sinful, it must proceed from the will as a choice. There is no sin in recognizing that the things of God are to be valued more than money and that such an exchange, if it were lawful, would be to one’s benefit (Prov. 23:23). The sin is in a desire that discounts those matters which undermine its lawfulness. By way of illustration, we might observe that “lust” is not in recognizing female beauty or even in the desire for sexual intercourse upon lawful conditions, but in the earnest desire (*ἐπιθυμῆσαι*) that does not fully appreciate such qualifications (Matt. 5:28).

On both of these counts, Wycliffe preferred the phrase “inordinate willing” (*inordinata volicio*).⁷ First, “inordinate” (*inordinata*) indicates that it is a disordered will, rather than a rightly ordered will that makes licit exchanges for spiritual things. He gave several examples: we are to “buy without money” (Isa. 55:1), teachers are to receive a temporal stipend in the context of their instruction (1 Cor. 9:11), the giving of tithes, offerings, etc.⁸ Second, “willing” (*volicio*) indicates that there must be an act of the will but does not require any extrinsic act (*actus extrinsecus*). While he acknowledged that this is all almost certainly intended by *studiosa voluntas*, he believed that *inordinata volicio* disambiguated the matter.⁹

At least Wycliffe’s second concern—if not his first—is justified in light of some alternative definitions that have been offered. Some medievals proposed that *studiosa voluntas* be taken to mean “a desire carried through to effect.”¹⁰ However, such proposals seem to belong more to canonical jurisprudence than moral theology. For example,

⁶ E.g., *ibid.*, II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 3; Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 2 (14:31–15:4, 15:11–12).

⁷ *Ibid.*, cap. 1 (2:13–16).

⁸ *Ibid.*, cap. 1 (2:16–30).

⁹ *Ibid.*, cap. 1, 2 (2:36–3:2, 14:31–32).

¹⁰ Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 2, q. 1, ad 1 (p. 382b); cf. Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 1, ad 1; Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, ad 2 (foll. 150r–v).

Richard of Middleton offered this definition because although the desire to buy or sell spiritual things is itself a sin, “it nevertheless does not oblige one to renounce or restore the thing acquired.”¹¹ He set this reading alongside the alternative of a desire that is “not one that comes over him unawares [*subreptoria*], but one he chooses [*eligens*].”¹²

However, this is not the most common understanding of the phrase, nor does it seem to be Aquinas’s. In responding to the objection that his definition is unenforceable on account of it being based on an internal movement of the heart, he wrote, “It must be said that as regards God, the will alone makes a simoniac; but as regards the external ecclesiastical penalty, he is not punished [...] but must repent.”¹³

Our own English rendering of *studiosa voluntas* as “earnest desire” has been chosen on two counts. First, it reflects Wycliffe’s concern to choose words that describe an activity of the will without requiring an extrinsic activity. To the modern English reader, “deliberate” may exclude the first motions of sinful desires, and “express” may go even further in altogether excluding that which is inward (*actus interior*). The sin with which we concern ourselves is not one that is only committed when it has been “expressed” in some outward deed. One who earnestly desires to buy or sell spiritual things is one who truly would prefer to make such an exchange over and against considerations to the contrary. Second, this rendering is the one chosen by both Burton¹⁴ and the Anatomist,¹⁵ whose model for retrieval we have followed thus far. Apart from any reason to the contrary, it seems right to continue in their pattern.

The frameworks in which theologians have understood “earnest desire” are varied. However, as we have seen with Wycliffe and Aquinas, this diversity existed primarily in terminology rather than substance; there tended to be more alignment in frameworks over time. As such,

¹¹ Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 2, q. 1, ad 1 (p. 383a); cf. Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 1, ad 1.

¹² E.g., Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 2, q. 1, ad 1 (p. 383a); Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 1, ad 1.

¹³ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 6, ad 6.

¹⁴ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 2.

¹⁵ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 25, 39.

while we will attempt to provide a meaningful survey that includes earlier sources, we will largely rely on later sources in particular to develop our understanding of the earnest desire of simony in its various degrees of expression and involvement. We will also consider several justifications from motive that have been offered in defense of simoniacal exchanges and the answers given by the schoolmen and canonists. Finally, we will consider the earnest desire in hating simony that must stand against the earnest desire of simony itself.

Taxonomies of Expression

This notion of an earnest desire may be considered from various vantage points. Primarily, one may view it from the aspect of its degree of expression in several stages or its character in several modes.

On this front, two taxonomies developed. These taxonomies overlap considerably, but their distinction lies in their emphasis. The first asks how far the desire has been carried out—from internal desire through attempt to completed deed. The second asks what form the transaction has taken—whether it remains hidden, takes shape in an agreement, or actually results in an exchange.

A Taxonomy of Stages

Simoniacal desire is expressed in several stages. Sometimes, these are enumerated relative to the individual himself, as he expresses his simoniacal will. While not specific to the topic of simony, this feature of human behavior is often discussed by the pairing of “affection” (*in affectu*) and “effect” (*in effectu*). For example, John Major concluded his original treatment of simony with the observation that “simony resides in the affection [*in affectu*] and in the effect [*in effectu*].”¹⁶

One need not be capable of executing the deed for his desire to be simoniacal. Major also spoke of a “conditional simony” (*simonia conditionalis*) where one would like to commit simony upon certain

¹⁶ Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 149ra).

conditions (having enough money, etc.).¹⁷ Furthermore, it need not be a positive desire to sell, but could be a negative desire not to give freely. In other words, it may be a matter of nolitio (*nolitio*) rather than volition (*volitio*).¹⁸

The Anatomist added a middle stage of endeavor (*in conatu*). While the notion of an effect would technically include all such outward actions, the threefold division makes explicit that guilt attaches not only to desire and completed deed but also to the attempt itself, even an unsuccessful one. Simon Magus's offer was rejected by Peter, yet he was condemned for it. One may therefore be guilty of simony *in affectu*, *in conatu*, or *in effectu*.¹⁹

LATIN	ENGLISH	MEANING
<i>in affectu</i>	In Affection	Desire
<i>in conatu</i>	In Endeavor	Attempt
<i>in effectu</i>	In Effect	Execution

After explaining each category, the Anatomist went on to describe the various mechanisms by which simony may come to full fruition.²⁰

A Taxonomy of Modes

However, more frequently, simoniactal expression is subdivided according to the character of the attempted or completed exchange. These modes of simony are *simonia mentalis*, *simonia conventionalis*, and *simonia realis*.

¹⁷ Ibid., d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb).

¹⁸ "There is some simony that is not a volition nor a habit of it. This is evident: if someone were to have this resolution, 'I do not wish to give a benefice without money,' such simony is a nolitio, but it is equivalent to a volition." Ibid., d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb).

¹⁹ See *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 38.

²⁰ Ibid., 45ff. We will take this up in Chapter 7.

LATIN	ENGLISH	MEANING
<i>simonia mentalis</i>	Mental Simony	Desire
<i>simonia conventionalis</i>	Conventional Simony	Agreement
<i>simonia realis</i>	Real Simony	Execution

This threefold taxonomy was a relatively late formulation. Panormitanus, writing in the first half of the fifteenth century, was among the earliest to set it out in his commentary on the decretals. He stated “simony is threefold,” then continued to define mental and conventional simony, leaving the third without any explicit mention.²¹ These categories were not more fully developed until later by Counter-Reformation theologians.²² Regardless, later Protestant authors adopted their terminology.²³

Additionally, earlier authors tended to use these terms as either mutually compatible or even cumulative. When used in the latter sense, they functioned similarly to the aforementioned categories of *in affectu/in effectu*. That is, simony begins as *simonia mentalis* and continues by possibly being attached to a pact or coming to fruition in a successfully executed exchange. For example, John Major affirmed that “all simony is mental.”²⁴ In the broadest, mutually compatible sense, something labeled “simony” could be any combination of these. Mental simony is anything that is not done in ignorance but carries a simoniacal intent, conventional simony could be any simoniacal exchange involving a pact,²⁵ and real simony is simply any simoniacal exchange that comes to full fruition.

But later usage of the terminology converged on a mutually exclusive sense.²⁶ Mental simony referred specifically to those completed

²¹ Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.14 (fol. 72rb); cf. Suárez, *De Religione*, cap. 41, n. 2 (p. 565).

²² See *ibid.*, cap. 41 (p. 565).

²³ E.g., Ames, *Conscience*, 5.230; Anonymous, *An Essay Against Simony*, 23.

²⁴ Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145va).

²⁵ E.g., Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.14 (fol. 72rb).

²⁶ E.g., Ames, *Conscience*, 5.230; Anonymous, *An Essay Against Simony*, 23; Stillington, *Bonds of Resignation*, 29. Francisco Suárez gave some account of the evolution here. Suárez, *De Religione*, cap. 41, nn. 2–4 (pp. 565–66).

exchanges which were outwardly licit and could not be certainly discerned as simoniacal by external actions.²⁷ Conventional simony referred to simoniacal pacts that had not been completed. Real simony referred to outwardly simoniacal exchanges that had been completed.

Of course, the point of these categories was primarily to demonstrate guilt beyond outwardly simoniacal exchanges. Therefore, the category of “real” simony was employed the least²⁸ and “mental” the most. Those actions of mental simony are simoniacal only by intent (*in foro interiori*). So it is said, “intention makes a man a simoniac.”²⁹ For example, one who purchases a property with an attached right of patronage may or may not do so for the sake of the advowson, but the one who does is guilty before God.

“Conventional” simony fell between the two in frequency of use. Such agreements need not be verbal; they may be established by mutual understanding alone.³⁰ Nor does the attempt need to result in an exchange; Simon Magus failed to make any agreement with Peter, yet was condemned for it.³¹ As the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) declared, even those who so much as endeavor (*moliuntur*) to secure an ecclesiastical office with money are unfit for the priesthood.³²

Beyond mere instruction and exhortation, this taxonomy was employed to distinguish corresponding penalties. Mental simony requires penance alone since the ecclesiastical forum cannot judge hidden intentions.³³ Conventional simony and real simony could result in

²⁷ Ibid., cap. 41, n. 3 (pp. 565–66).

²⁸ As already seen with Panormitanus.

²⁹ *Intentio facit hominem simoniacum*; Glossa ordinaria ad X 5.3.34 (p. 1159). The Anatomist attributed this quote to Bernardus Compostellanus. *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 39.

³⁰ See Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146ra).

³¹ See *ibid.*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb).

³² *Fourth Council of Toledo (633)*, c. 19 (pp. 278–79).

³³ See Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (foll. 145va, 149ra); Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.20, 29, 34, 38 (foll. 73v, 74r, 76r, 79v, 80r, 80v, 81r).

deposition,³⁴ and any completed simoniacal exchange required restitution.³⁵

Insufficient Motivations

Since simony resides fundamentally in the will, it would seem to follow that one may be able to excuse a simoniacal transaction so long as the underlying motivation is innocent. Medieval theologians therefore found it necessary to counter a number of justifications in which one pointed to pure motivations that contained no malice. However, one need not have malicious intent for his desire to be simoniacal. An earnest desire to buy or sell spiritual things is simoniacal even if it forms out of ignorance or weakness.³⁶ Objections to the contrary reduce to a form of pragmatism rejected by the schoolmen and canonists.

To Raise Sufficient Resources

While many exchanges of spiritual things were for private gain, some had the purpose of maintaining a spiritual work. In particular, monasteries and collegiate churches often had limited resources, and the admission of new members placed real financial burdens on the community. Many therefore justified charging for entrance into the society, claiming that if financial impartiality in admissions were maintained, “then all religious houses would perish, because so many would be placed there that their goods would not suffice; and this seems unfitting.”³⁷ Such practices were common. In part, their extent may be gauged from Thomas of Strasbourg’s observation that “certain nuns of Germany” very explicitly demanded temporal goods from those

³⁴ See “a simoniac is to be deposed [...] simony [...] renders him unfit for the execution of his office.” *Ibid.*, ad X 5.3.6 (fol. 69vb).

³⁵ E.g., “in conventional simony a man is bound to restore such spiritual or temporal things unlawfully received.” *Ibid.*, ad X 5.3.34, no. 5 (fol. 80ra).

³⁶ See Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. *Simonia*, 1; cf. Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 2, q. 1, ad 1 (p. 383a).

³⁷ Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, quaest., s.c. 1 (p. 92b).

who would enter their community.³⁸ Wycliffe complained of a related practice among the friars, who sold laymen letters of confraternity, ostensibly granting a share in the merits of the order's masses and prayers for an annual fee. He argued that it went hand in hand with their preaching for money, both being simony.³⁹

The canon lawyers and schoolmen gave the same answer at this point: no community may exact a fee for entrance into religious life, but if funds are truly lacking, it may decline to receive those it cannot sustain.⁴⁰ However, if non-contractual, it may receive some gift in order to expand its capacity and admit a new member.⁴¹

In the literature, there is some discussion around the degree to which it is acceptable to present the financial need in a way that would not be manipulative or coercive. In general, it is acceptable to state the requirement in cases of need, but apart from this it is not considered right to ask anything.⁴² John Major recommended permissible communication with a set form of words: "Brother, we cannot comfortably feed more than we have; if it please you to enter this community, bring a portion from which you may be sustained."⁴³ In all of these accounts, necessity (*necessitas*) may account for requiring money, but a contractual arrangement (*pactum*) that charges for admission and gives it in return may not.⁴⁴

³⁸ Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2 (fol. 150v). See also Groote, *De simonia ad beguttas*, 16–18; Lynch, *Simoniacal Entry*, 220–21.

³⁹ Wycliffe, *De apostasia*, cap. 2 (36:22–30).

⁴⁰ For relevant canon law, see C. 1, q. 2; X 5.3.8, 19, 30.

⁴¹ E.g., "When the possessions of a religious house do not suffice to sustain more persons, then something may be required of one who wishes to serve God in that place—not as a price of religion, but so that the monastery may have the means to provide for him; and therefore simony is not committed. But if he can be received without burden to the church, it is simoniacal to require anything for his reception." Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 7; cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 4; Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2 (fol. 150v).

⁴² E.g., Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 3, q. 2, ad 6 (p. 386b).

⁴³ Major, *In Sent.* (red. A), d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 148ra).

⁴⁴ E.g., "To receive [someone] under an agreement (*sub pacto*), especially where the house has no need, is openly simony. To the argument [that the money is the cause] it must be said that [the payment] is not the cause of granting [admission]; rather, necessity extorts [payment], for they would gladly grant [admission] freely,

While religious societies provided a common case study, the principle was not confined to them. An actual lack of financial capacity could justify withholding some spiritual benefit until the need was met, but a commercial exchange was not permitted, regardless of how much it may seem advantageous to the work being done. Wycliffe offered the solution to any who consider some noble work financially impossible apart from making commerce out of it: "But first, before men commit simony, they should labor with their hands, or go to another people, or sooner starve in the body."⁴⁵

To Practice Charity

Another attempted justification of motive is to practice charity (almsgiving). That is, some have posited that it may be acceptable to sell spiritual things in order to give the proceeds to the poor. Gratian identified the error with this line of reasoning: it is objected that "sinister beginnings often reach happy outcomes."⁴⁶ Jacob reached the blessing through supplanting, a crop that is sown by a leprous hand is nevertheless harvested clean, a beautiful offspring is born from an adulterous union, and so too money that is acquired through simony has a happy outcome when it is distributed to benefit the poor, "but none of these things defends the simoniacs."⁴⁷ And employing the words of Gregory, he summarized: "Committing the sins of the simoniacal heresy under the pretext of almsgiving must be strictly avoided. For it is one thing to give alms on account of sins and quite another to commit sins on account of almsgiving."⁴⁸

Puritan writers concurred. Henry Burton recorded that people made similar objections in his own time, claiming to use for a charitable purpose money received for preferment.⁴⁹ To answer this objection,

and so that [need] is why they have an eye to [money] in conferring it." Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad quaest. (p. 94b).

⁴⁵ Wycliffe, *Sermons*, serm. LXXXIII (1, p. 284).

⁴⁶ C. 1, q. 1, d.p.c. 24, § 1.

⁴⁷ C. 1, q. 1, d.p.c. 24, § 1.

⁴⁸ C. 1, q. 1, c. 27, § 2; cf. Gregory I, *Ep.* IX.218 (2, 207:24–27).

⁴⁹ "Another objection doth here cross my way on the patron's behalf, Sir, you need not be so rigid against giving and receiving for a spiritual preferment: for, for

he appealed to Gratian, as cited above,⁵⁰ and further described such charity as no different from the purchase of the field of blood with Judas's blood money.⁵¹ John Downname was no less severe, describing those who give alms out of money gotten by simony as "much more abominable" than those who give out of money gotten by oppression.⁵² As with the wages of a prostitute (Deut. 23:18), the ill-gotten gain of simony may not be offered to the Lord.⁵³

To Encourage Charity

A less common but related justification is that of encouraging charity. Rather than laundering simoniacal proceeds through almsgiving, this argument holds that the sale of spiritual things encourages good works, since it induces the purchaser to give.

Albert the Great presented this objection for charging for entry to a religious society: "Further, it is not evil to induce men to give alms; therefore if they induce [them] to bestow an alms by receiving a man whom they otherwise would not receive, it is not evil; therefore

my part, I have a good intent to convert such money to some charitable use, as to bestow it in alms, etc." Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 65.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 65–66.

⁵¹ "Like the high priests' charity, who with Judas treason-money, by some called simony, bought, forsooth, a field to bury strangers in. But for all this charitable work, by divine ordination (as Lyra saith) the field got such a name, as could never be washed off. For it is called, the field of blood to this day. Matt. 27:8." Ibid., 66.

⁵² "But much more abominable are their alms, who spoil the Church by simony and sacrilege, and taking into their possession the portion of Levi, which is consecrated unto God, think to please the Lord, and as it were, satisfy for their sin, by giving some small alms to the poor, or keeping good hospitality of the spoils of the Church. And that not only for the time past, but with a resolution to continue still in their sin, paying these pittances to the poor, as the price or penalty of their sacrilegious wickedness: but unto these may be well fitted the saying of the Holy Ghost. Prov. 21:27. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: How much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" Downname, *The Plea of the Poore*, 67.

⁵³ "If the hire of an harlot, or price of a dog, might not be consecrated unto God, because they were an abomination unto him, then neither may we offer that which we have gotten by stealth and robbery [...] Whereby it appeareth that men cannot lawfully give alms out of those goods which they have gotten by theft and rapine, bribery and extortion, simony and usury, dicing and unlawful gaming." Ibid., 64–65.

it is not simony.”⁵⁴ Albert did not answer this objection directly, but effectively dismissed it on the ground that the sale of spiritual things is wrong regardless of motive. A house may count the devotion a man’s generosity shows toward it among his qualifications for entry, but his reception on account of his gift may never take place by way of agreement.⁵⁵

The objection therefore fails on its own terms: a payment made in exchange for some spiritual benefit is not charity but commerce. True almsgiving should be motivated by good will, but an exchange by agreement corrupts the nature of the good works by attaching a contractual reward. On this point, one canon reasoned, “For we have never read that the Lord’s disciples, or those converted by their ministry, enticed anyone to the worship of God by the intervention of any payment.”⁵⁶ Generosity may and should be motivated by divine reward (Prov. 19:17; Heb. 11:6), but this is granted in indeterminate timing and apart from human contract (Matt. 6:3–4).

Simony in the sale of indulgences and prayers provides a clear example of how such purchases are contrary to charity. The one who purchases an indulgence under the pretense of almsgiving offers no real sacrifice since he seeks to secure a benefit from man. While many of the schoolmen did not see inconsistency in defending these practices,⁵⁷ Protestants and proto-Reformers highlighted the hypocrisy. As Peter Martyr Vermigli remarked of the religion of Rome, “With their indulgences they corrupt good works: for they take away from alms their proper end, the glory of God. They say they are given so that punishments may be taken away.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, quaest., s.c. 2 (p. 92b).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad quaest. (p. 94b); Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 4.

⁵⁶ C. 1, q. 2, c. 2.

⁵⁷ For indulgences, see Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 20, p. 2, a. un., q. 4, ad 1 (pp. 536–37); for prayers, see Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 2.

⁵⁸ Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 3.8.37 (p. 612).

To Uphold Custom

Another attempted justification was custom (*consuetudo*), which in canon law can carry legal force. One may reason that a longstanding practice cannot be simoniacal, for if it were, it would have been corrected long ago. Furthermore, to uphold the customs of the church would appear to be a worthy objective that warrants participation in the transactions they require. *Liber extra* disabused its reader of this notion in many chapters,⁵⁹ which we will now here consider.

The Council of Tours (1163) explained the basic principle: “The passage of time does not diminish a sin, but aggravates it.”⁶⁰ The Third Lateran Council (1179) addressed those who pleaded long custom for charging to enthrone bishops and abbots, install priests, bury the dead, bless those marrying, or confer other sacraments. It called them “blinded by greed” and warned that anyone who persisted would “have his portion with Gehazi.”⁶¹

In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Innocent III addressed a creative evasion. Certain suffragans had been exacting payment for chrism. Hoping to elude the archbishop’s correction, they did not cease but merely moved forward the timing of the payment and renamed it: first “chrismals,” then “paschals,” and finally “mid-Lenten customs.” Innocent responded that renaming the payment does not absolve from guilt. Such deception is to “cloak simony under an honest name,” but “God is not mocked.”⁶²

⁵⁹ X 5.3.8, 9, 16, 19, 21, 36, 39. John Major likewise addressed this issue at length, Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 4 (foll. 186ra–187rb).

⁶⁰ *Council of Tours (1163)*, 6 (Mansi 21:1178); cf. X 5.3.8.

⁶¹ “Many think that this is permitted to them, because they consider that longstanding custom has given it the force of law, not sufficiently paying attention—since they are blinded by greed—to the fact that crimes are all the graver for how long they have held the unhappy soul bound. [...] If anyone shall presume to act against this, let him know that he will have his portion with Gehazi, whose deed he imitates by exacting a shameful reward.” *Third Lateran Council*, 7 (Mansi 22:221–22); cf. X 5.3.9.

⁶² “Gaping after shameful gain and saying in their hearts, ‘There is no God,’ they cloak simony under an honest name, as though by changing the name the guilt and the penalty would be transferred. But God is not mocked, according to the apostle, nor will such followers of Simon—even if they perhaps evade temporal [punishment] in the present—escape eternal punishment in the future, since neither

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) was especially direct. It identified the practice of defending simoniacal exactions by appeal to custom and gave the definitive rejoinder: “We utterly reject this custom, which ought rather to be called a corruption.”⁶³ While a custom may have the force of law, corruption cannot.⁶⁴ This same council ordered that laypeople who undermined pious customs of giving out of “the haven of heretical depravity” should be restrained.⁶⁵ Yet the same canon prohibited clerical exactions.

Righteous Indignation

It is not sufficient merely to abstain from the earnest desire to buy or sell spiritual things; one must actively hate simony. As Gregory the Great admonished, “whoever does not burn vehemently to amend this crime out of regard for his office, let him not doubt that he will have his portion with him from whom this defiling outrage first arose.”⁶⁶ In binding the duty to the office one holds, Gregory indicated that those in greater positions must exhibit a greater passion against the sin. Yet that is not to suggest that those who hold no particular office have no responsibility to burn against simony. The duty is measured

will the respectability of a name cloak the malice of the crime, nor will a word be able to abolish guilt.” Innocent III, *Reg.* II.96 (208:4–9); cf. X 5.3.36.

⁶³ “Some endeavor to defend this baseness and depravity by a custom long observed. Wishing therefore to abolish so great an abuse, we utterly reject this custom [*consuetudinem*], which ought rather to be called a corruption [*corruptela*], firmly decreeing that for these things—whether to be conferred or already conferred—no one presume under any pretext whatsoever to exact or extort anything. Otherwise both the one who receives and the one who gives such a wholly condemned price shall be condemned along with Gehazi and Simon.” *Fourth Lateran Council*, 63 (Mansi 22:1051C); cf. X 5.3.39.

⁶⁴ A *corruptela* does not bind. Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 4 (fol. 186vb).

⁶⁵ *Fourth Lateran Council*, 66 (Mansi 22:1054); cf. X 5.3.42.

⁶⁶ Gregory I, *Ep.* XII.9 (2, 357:3–5). This is most frequently cited in the form that carried into canon law: “Whoever, therefore, does not burn vehemently against the simoniacal and neophyte heresy [the promotion of those who are not qualified (1 Tim. 3:6)] according to the station of his office, let him not doubt that he will have his portion with him who first committed this defiling outrage.” C. 1, q. 1, c. 5; cf. Wido, *Widonis monachi epistola*, 5:10–13.

by capacity: inasmuch as one has a voice against this sin, he must proportionally have the heart to use it in earnest.

While many works on simony quote this remark from Gregory, the *Anatomy of Simon Magus* stands out as one that not only does so,⁶⁷ but returns to emphasize this same point repeatedly. For example, the Anatomist wrote, “If the heinousness and impiety of this sin of simony were seriously considered, it could not but beget a perfect detestation and abhorrency thereof, in the heart of any true Christian.”⁶⁸ A lack of disgust proceeds from too little meditation on the sin, or from no conversion at all. Again, he exhorted the reader, “Wherefore I beseech you, if ever any man shall henceforth come to tempt you to such a simoniacal bargain, by the offer of money, or any bribe, let your indignation evidence your abhorrency of such a sin, and your detestation of such a person; and say to him as Simon Peter said to Simon Magus, ‘Thy money perish with thee.’ And I’m sure the reward of such honest zeal shall meet you in heaven.”⁶⁹

Conclusion

Simony not only exists in a completed transaction, but in various stages as it extends from an internal earnest desire to outward expression and execution, from mental to conventional to real. Canon law may penalize only what is outward and adjudicable, but before God the will alone suffices to make a simoniac.

Nor can an innocent motive excuse the earnest desire to buy or sell spiritual things. The justifications examined above—sustaining a religious community, supplying alms, encouraging charity, upholding custom—were each answered by the schoolmen and canonists. A pious end does not alter the nature of a simoniacal exchange. Genuine necessity may limit whether a community can take on the burden of more members, and voluntary giving is permitted if it is not suggestive

⁶⁷ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 70.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 188–89.

of an exchange, but no goodness of intention converts the sale of spiritual things into something lawful.

Finally, because the sin consists in a desire, the remedy also lies in the heart. It is not enough to refuse simoniacal bargains; one must hate them, each according to his capacity.

Part III

Ministerial Maintenance

Gifts

Exchanging anything for a spiritual thing makes one guilty of simony, whatever the thing exchanged. It might be objected that Simon offered money (Acts 8:18), not other things. However, many things can be measured in money, so exchanging spiritual things for these counts as simony.¹

The matter is plain enough, but this has not kept many from supposing that certain things may be offered in exchange for spiritual things regardless. In a relatively extreme example, Blaise Pascal contended with the Jesuit casuistry that would permit selling spiritual things so long as money was offered as a “motive” rather than a “price.”² That is, so long as the amount exchanged is not truly proportional to the spiritual thing, it is permissible. Since spiritual things are by definition priceless, this would mean that any exchange for a material thing is permitted. In this framework, Simon himself is cleared of simony.

How simony is committed therefore depends on what is exchanged for the spiritual thing and may be discerned by the quality or circumstances of the gift.

¹ See Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 4 (fol. 315r).

² Pascal, *Les Provinciales*, 174, 187.

The Gregorian Triad

Almost all discussions on this matter go back to Gregory the Great, who classified gifts into three kinds. In commenting on Matthew 10:8, he quoted the Latin text of Isaiah 33:15 (“He who shakes his hands free from every gift”) to observe that it speaks of “every gift” (*omni munere*) rather than merely “a gift.” At this point, he exhorted the hearer to reject three classes of gifts in divine matters:³

LATIN	ENGLISH	DESCRIPTION
<i>munus a manu</i>	a gift of the hand	material things or rights of pecuniary value
<i>munus a lingua</i>	a gift of the tongue	praise or commendation
<i>munus ab obsequio</i> ⁴	a gift of service	service or obsequious conduct

These distinctions were embraced by many who touched on the subject afterward, including Gratian,⁵ Thomas Aquinas,⁶ Bonaventure,⁷ John Wycliffe,⁸ Peter Martyr Vermigli,⁹ and even later divines like William Ames¹⁰ and James Durham.¹¹ These categories appear not only in works on simony but also in writings on related ethical topics like bribery and usury. Many of the works that feature the triad directly attribute it to Gregory’s homily, remarking on the relevance of both Isaiah 33:15 and Matthew 10:8.

³ Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 4.4 (p. 25). This triad is unrelated to the later development of the *munus triplex*, the threefold office of Christ.

⁴ Writers who quoted Gregory’s sermon listed *munus ab obsequio* first as he did, but those who restated the triad usually placed it last as ordered here.

⁵ C. 1, q. 1, c. 114.

⁶ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 78, a. 2; II-II, q. 100, a. 5.

⁷ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, dub. 6 (pp. 658–59).

⁸ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (3:32–4:8).

⁹ Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 2.8.14 (p. 250).

¹⁰ Ames, *Conscience*, 4.67–68.

¹¹ Durham, *A Practical Exposition of the X. Commandements*, 409–10.

Writing in 1909, Nicholas Weber reported, "Subsequent ages have brought no addition to this interpretation of the material price."¹² More than a century on, his verdict needs no revision.

Speech and Service

Gifts of the hand, being material things or rights of pecuniary value, need little definition, but the other two members of the triad are not as easily recognized. We will here examine several examples that recur throughout the literature.

Formal Commendations

There are various gifts of the tongue. Some of these are more obviously of financial value, such as commendations to high positions. For example, one who commends another to an ecclesiastical position gives the gift of the tongue in exchange for a spiritual honor, even though the honor is bestowed on another.¹³ If such an entreaty is made on behalf of one who is unworthy, it constitutes simony.¹⁴

However, a commendation made on behalf of a worthy person is not thereby simoniacal. If words tend toward alleging a man's fitness rather than toward securing the office for him, then such words are only a secondary cause of the appointment.¹⁵ A truthful commendation is right to give and right to be desired.¹⁶

¹² Weber, *A History of Simony in the Christian Church*, 199.

¹³ Recall that simony became entrenched through the right of presentation. See Chapter 1, p. 10.

¹⁴ E.g., "And this is to be understood of the case where that spiritual thing is obtained by entreaties on behalf of an unworthy person." Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166a).

¹⁵ The same passage continues: "For otherwise, if it is obtained for a worthy person, and it is not given principally for the sake of the entreaties but secondarily, in this way simony would not be committed. Hence caution should be applied here, so that the entreaties do not tend directly toward obtaining the thing for the person, but toward alleging his sufficiency [his qualifications], so that they may thus be rather words of allegation and testimony than words of begging and beseeching." Ibid., IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166a).

¹⁶ See also Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 147va).

The same is true in the opposite direction, where spiritual things are given in order to secure a commendation. For example, Henry Burton spoke of “sermon simony,” in which a man about to purchase a benefice preaches a showpiece sermon to win the patron’s commendation, which then satisfies his own conscience that he has preferred a worthy man.¹⁷ But if he preaches with the desire to sincerely demonstrate his capacities and so receive a truthful commendation, and that desire is only a secondary cause of his preaching, he is innocent.

Praise and Flattery

Some gifts of the tongue are less obviously of financial value. For example, can mere praise constitute a simoniacal exchange even though it does not result in any financial advantage? John Chrysostom asked and answered, “For what, though you give no money, but instead of money employ flattery, and contrive many things, and use much scheming? May your silver perish with you!”¹⁸ Augustine similarly concluded that exchanging spiritual things for praise was its own sort of commerce: “those who seek such things are selling.”¹⁹

Not only is it wrong to flatter one’s way to some spiritual thing or into some ecclesiastical office, but it is also wrong to give any spiritual thing in order to be flattered. This occurs when one rightly gives a deserved church position, but does so for the sake of praise,²⁰ or when a minister preaches for the sake of approval.²¹ In either case, he exchanges a spiritual thing for a temporal thing. Furthermore, those who do such a thing call attention to themselves rather than Christ. In doing so, they do not preach Christ, but themselves (cf. 2 Cor. 4:5).²²

¹⁷ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 41–42.

¹⁸ Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Acta apostolorum*, 3.5 (PG 60:41).

¹⁹ “For what does it profit to acquire in this age any temporal and transitory thing whatever, whether it be money, or the pleasure of the belly and the throat, or honor in human praise? [...] My brethren, those who seek such things are selling. For even that Simon wished to buy the Holy Spirit for this reason: because he wished to sell the Holy Spirit.” Augustine, *Tractatus in evangelium Ioannis*, 10.6 (PL 35:1469).

²⁰ See Fuller, *The Holy State*, 98.

²¹ See Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad 1 (p. 93b).

²² See *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 82–83.

Though one ought not perform spiritual labor for temporal honors, he may do so for a good name in the kingdom of heaven. As Albert the Great remarked, “the fame of the saints rests in spiritual things.”²³ The underlying concern is not that spiritual labor should lack all motivation but that its motivation must exclude what may be received from man rather than God.

Personal Favor

Personal favor, a gift of service, is not to be given for the sake of any spiritual thing. This may sound difficult to discern or enforce, but in a number of situations, personal favor shows itself plainly. In more extreme cases, explicit oaths of fealty might be given in exchange for spiritual things.²⁴

Harder to discern is the case where someone might ordain or give spiritual things out of a pre-existing partiality. One might argue that nothing is exchanged in this case, but what is “given” by the recipient of the spiritual thing is a continued respect in the context of that relationship. The motivation for the minister here is some unspoken obligation that discounts the demands of justice, especially in an ordination or benefice. Albert the Great explained that “‘Selling’ and ‘buying’ are not taken so strictly in the definition of simony; rather, it is called a *sale* whenever any price whatever causes spiritual things to be given—‘price’ being taken in a broad sense for every temporal thing that is the whole and sole cause of the giving.”²⁵

The most common concern on this front is partiality that would be shown toward family. The *Liber extra* counted it simoniacal for a priest to act “out of respect for any person, or of consanguinity, or of familiarity.”²⁶ Occasionally this language was grounded in James 2:1

²³ “To the next it must be said that popular praise has nothing spiritual in it; on the contrary, it is more temporal even than time itself, because it is thinner, and dissolves into the air. But the fame of the saints rests in spiritual things, and therefore it is spiritual.” Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad 2 (p. 93b).

²⁴ See X 5.3.17.

²⁵ Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad 3 (p. 93b).

²⁶ X 5.3.14.

("Do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons"),²⁷ especially on account of Augustine's application of the passage to ecclesiastical honors.²⁸ John Calvin remarked that within the papacy, not even one in twenty attains the priesthood apart from a simony evoked by kindred, affinity, parental influence, or obsequiousness.²⁹ Often, benefices functioned as dowries,³⁰ and English sources referred to such presentations as "smock simony."³¹

Some schoolmen qualified their concerns on this point. While the canons speak with rigor on kinship in conferral, Aquinas distinguished between the one who gives a spiritual thing seeking to obligate the receiver and the one who hopes for some voluntary benefit from the receiver. The former he regarded as simoniacal, the latter carnal but not simoniacal.³² Albert the Great spoke similarly, even permitting kinship as a factor, so long as it was not the primary cause of the giving of any spiritual thing.³³ For appointment to an office, kinship

²⁷ E.g., Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, IV, q. 8, a. 4 (p. 82); Groote, *De simonia ad beguttas*, 14–15.

²⁸ "Nor indeed, in my judgment, is it to be thought a light sin 'to hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons,' if we refer that distinction between sitting and standing to ecclesiastical honors. For who could bear that a rich man be chosen for a seat of honor in the Church, while a poorer man, better instructed and holier, is despised? But if he is speaking of everyday assemblies, who does not sin here—if indeed it is a sin—except the one who within himself so judges that the richer the other man, the better he appears to him? For this is what he seems to have meant by saying: 'Have you not judged within yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts?'" Augustine, *Ep.* 167.18 (CSEL 44, 605:10–606:3).

²⁹ Calvin, *Institutio*, 4.5.6.

³⁰ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 42.

³¹ E.g., *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 60; Douglas, *The Diaries*, 184.

³² "For if the prelate intends to oblige the man to whom he gives the ecclesiastical benefice to make some recompense to himself or to his blood-relations, the intention is simoniacal, for he intends a kind of tacit sale. But if he does not intend to oblige him, but intends that the man should of his own accord make temporal recompense to him or to his own, the intention is indeed depraved and carnal, but not simoniacal." Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, V, q. 11, a. 3 (p. 116); cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 2.

³³ "[For such an exchange to be problematic] kinship must be the cause and the reason for giving. For if goodness of life were the cause and kinship a concurrent cause, it would not be simony, since kinship is something bodily and derived from the flesh." Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad 3 (p. 93b).

may only be a secondary consideration, concurrent alongside genuine merit.

Qualities and Circumstances

One might suppose a gift may be excused on account of its quality or circumstances. Once again, we will examine several examples of these considerations that frequently appear in the writings of medieval theologians and canonists.

Spiritual Things

Does simony only occur when temporal things are exchanged for spiritual things, or is it simony when spiritual things are exchanged for spiritual things? While the language of theologians tends to center on temporal things, gifts of service may indeed be spiritual services.

One might object that simony requires an unequal exchange—a temporal thing given for a spiritual one—and that exchanging like for like should be permissible. Occasionally, this was affirmed in some measure, such as the case of exchanging posts with the approval of a superior,³⁴ or agreeing to pray for one another.³⁵

However, there is reason to reject as simoniacal even the exchange of spiritual things for spiritual things.³⁶ Commenting on the exchange of benefices, Peter Paludanus remarked “it is a wonder how an exchange should be less simoniacal of itself than a sale.”³⁷ Pelbartus of Temesvár, writing in Hungary a generation before the Reformation, explained it with the scenario of two agreeing to baptize each other. The prices of these baptisms could be compared, if they were salable things, but they are not, and in the matter of spiritual things they cannot be exchanged

³⁴ E.g., Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, cap. 40 (PL 205:133B); Innocent IV, *Commentaria*, ad X 3,19.5 (fol. 394v).

³⁵ E.g., Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 147vb).

³⁶ E.g., “commutation in spiritual matters seems not much unlike buying and selling, and [seems] to constitute simony.” Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, cap. 40 (PL 205:132D).

³⁷ Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 4 (p. 315b).

by contract.³⁸ It is unlawful “both because a thing is bought from one who is not its owner, and because it is contrary to the nature of grace that it be sold for any price whatsoever.”³⁹

The primary concern behind simony is the undermining of the nature of grace as a gift of God, not the desire for material things. Even exchanging spiritual things has that potential.

Delayed Things

Simony may be committed whether a temporal thing is given before, during, or after the conferral of the spiritual thing. One might suppose that offering money after an ordination is a mere gratuity rather than a simoniacal exchange, but this reasoning does not hold.

Basil of Caesarea wrote to bishops under his authority: “They think that they commit no sin, because they receive the money after and not before the ordination. But to take is to take, whenever it happens.”⁴⁰ Gratian, quoting Tarasius of Constantinople, affirmed that scripture and canon alike condemn the exchange regardless of its timing: “For to receive is to receive at whatever time.”⁴¹ This maxim is the Latin equivalent of Basil’s Greek.⁴²

Indirectly Given Things

Indirect exchanges of temporal things for spiritual things are likewise forbidden. This is manifest in the example of commendations. As John Major put it, “it is the same thing to give money to the bishop

³⁸ Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 2.

³⁹ Ibid., IV, s.v. Simonia, 2.

⁴⁰ Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 53 (p. 339).

⁴¹ C. 1, q. 1, c. 21. Immediately before this, Tarasius wrote, “The twenty-ninth canon of the holy apostles, and their Acts, and the third and fourth book of Kings pronounce wholly alien from the priesthood anyone who at any time gave or received money, whether before the laying on of hands or after the laying on. For to receive is to receive at whatever time.”

⁴² Cf. Migne’s facing Latin in Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 53 (PG 32:398B).

and to give it to someone else so that he may petition the bishop on one's behalf."⁴³

Some religious societies (e.g., monasteries and collegiate churches) would admit new brothers only if they brought sufficient wealth. They struck no bargain, but would stall the decision in order to weigh the circumstances to see if they might bring much. Albert the Great described this as happening every day.⁴⁴ Against the scheme of leaving the inquiry to someone else, he argued that "it makes no difference whether one does it himself or through another where the whole cause of the conferral of the prebend is the expectation of temporal gain."⁴⁵

If the ultimate cause of the exchange of a spiritual thing is the expectation of some reciprocal action, simony is committed regardless of how many hands the payment passes through and how many parties stand between. Each participant is responsible for his own involvement, though an ignorant beneficiary would be personally innocent.⁴⁶

Small Things

One might assume that the sin of simony requires a substantial or profitable exchange, but even the smallest gift suffices. A penny spent to purchase a spiritual thing is no less simoniacal than a fortune, and the one who exchanges spiritual things for temporal is guilty even if he does so at a loss.

While canon law was willing to distinguish between magnitudes of gifts for the sake of adjudication, no such distinction exists in the forum of conscience.⁴⁷ Wycliffe responded to this justification by observing that God does not "weigh what or how much of his goods

⁴³ Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146va).

⁴⁴ Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, quaest. (p. 92b).

⁴⁵ Ibid., IV, d. 25, a. 5, quaest. (p. 92b). He continued, "because by whomever it is done, they expect this in return for the conferral; therefore simony is committed in whatever way it is done." Cf. *ibid.*, IV, d. 25, a. 5, sol. (p. 93a).

⁴⁶ See John of Freiburg, *Summa confessorum*, I, tit. 1, q. 8–9 (foll. 1vb–2ra).

⁴⁷ "For although, as regards the presumption of law, a distinction is drawn whether [the gift] be large (which is plausibly likely to move the heart) or small, of which this is not plausible [...] nevertheless, as regards conscience, whether it be small or great,

his servant has consumed, but in what manner and by what means he has sought them.”⁴⁸ Jan Hus described it as analogous to the widow’s mites: “Nor is the simony excused by the fact that sometimes only a little is taken; for since the poor widow, as the Savior testifies, gave more than all the others, having given two copper coins, because she gave out of such great devotion: likewise a priest or scribe who takes a penny or two out of great desire will be struck down by great simony.”⁴⁹

Simony is measured by the avarice in the transaction, not by the wealth that changes hands. This is not to say that the one who judges himself free of greed is innocent, because such greed is made manifest through an exchange, and one who is free of it “shakes his hands free from every gift” (Isa. 33:15).⁵⁰ For example, addressing whether hospitality toward clergy is necessarily simony, John of Freiburg explained that small measures are acceptable, but any agreement or corrupt intention undoes this.⁵¹

While many were willing to acknowledge the harm caused by large amounts changing hands, the occasional judgment was that small gifts entail a greater divine offense. Writing of ordination, Burton observed, “Of all other kinds of simony, this is the most pernicious and damnable: yea, the less a man giveth or receiveth in this respect, it is an argument of the less esteem he makes of so holy and excellent a calling.”⁵²

Voluntary Things

Theologians and canonists who addressed the topic of simony in detail generally concluded that things offered voluntarily (*voluntarie*) or

if a spiritual thing is bought or given for it, it is simony.” Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 321a).

⁴⁸ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 8 (107:9–11).

⁴⁹ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 5.F.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, 2.D.

⁵¹ John of Freiburg, *Summa confessorum*, I, tit. 1, q. 11 (fol. 2rb); cf. Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, ad X 5.3 (foll. 535vb, 536ra).

⁵² Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 47.

spontaneously (*spontanee*) do not count as simony.⁵³ Because the gift is not the cause of the giving of the spiritual thing, no simoniacal exchange takes place. The one who gives the spiritual thing does so for selfless reasons, and the one who gives something in return likewise has some honest motivation.⁵⁴ The exchange is non-contractual; nothing is given out of obligation or designed to establish any obligation.

Many discussions on this point go back to two texts of canon law. The first text is the fifth canon of the Council of Rome (595). Various things such as notary fees had been annexed to ordinations in order to escape the appearance of simony. This led Gregory to forbid all money exchanging hands in the context of an ordination, except if given out of unprompted gratitude. Regarding this exception, he wrote, “But if the one who has been ordained, not by agreement, nor under compulsion, nor upon request, after receiving his documents and pallium, wishes to offer something to anyone of the clergy solely for the sake of gratitude, we by no means forbid this to be accepted, because his offering brings no stain of guilt, since it did not proceed from the self-seeking of the recipient.”⁵⁵

The second is the eighth canon of the Eleventh Council of Toledo (675). It applies the same principle beyond ordination—to baptizing, confirming, and chrism—and restricts what may be received according to the receiver’s motive, so the giver’s willingness does not settle the matter on its own.⁵⁶

⁵³ E.g., C. 1, q. 2, c. 4; Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320a); Ames, *Conscience*, 5.230.

⁵⁴ See Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 5, ad quaest. (p. 94b).

⁵⁵ Gregory I, *Ep.* V.57a.5 (1, 365:8–11); cf. X 5.3.1; C. 1, q. 2, c. 4.

⁵⁶ “Whatever is bestowed through the conferring of invisible grace ought in no way to be sold for monetary profit or for any rewards whatsoever, as the Lord says: ‘What you have freely received, freely give.’ And therefore, whoever henceforth, established in the ecclesiastical order, receives any rewards or prices voluntarily offered out of this kind of ambition—whether for baptizing and confirming the faithful, for conferring chrism, or for promotions of ranks—indeed, if, with the local bishop’s knowledge, any such thing is perpetrated by his subjects, that same bishop shall be subject to excommunication for two months, because he both concealed evils he knew about and failed to apply the necessary correction. But if, without his knowledge, any one of his people should think that he may accept anything for the aforesaid matters: if he is a presbyter, he shall be punished by three months’ excommunication; if a deacon,

While these are artifacts of canon law, describing what may or may not be formally penalized, they appear affirmatively as examples in writings of theologians whose aim was to describe moral behavior.⁵⁷ From Gregory the Great to the English casuists, those writers allowed for some category of gratitude by which one might give to a minister, even in the context of having received some spiritual thing. In this light, voluntary gifts are welcome because they are not contractual, establishing no obligation between giver and receiver, and so they do not reduce the spiritual thing to an article of commerce.

However, cautions are frequently given about this being offered in any way that would be deceitful or arouse suspicion of simoniacal intentions. For example, the *Glossa ordinaria* on the *Decretum* calls a gift “fraudulent” when the giver says he would have given it anyway.⁵⁸ Aquinas, having affirmed voluntary gifts, immediately added this caveat: “In all these things, however, one must carefully guard against whatever has the appearance of simony or cupidity, according to that word of the Apostle, 1 Thessalonians [5:22]: ‘Abstain from every appearance of evil.’”⁵⁹

English authors echoed the same concern. Ames wrote, “Neither is it properly simony, when somewhat is given out of mere gratitude, not by any agreement tacit, or expressed, direct, or indirect. [...] Howsoever in these we must beware of deceit, and the very appearance of evil is to be avoided.”⁶⁰ Similarly, Richard Baxter warned, “Nor may you show gratitude by any scandalous way, which seemeth simony.”⁶¹

four; while a subdeacon or cleric serving these covetous desires shall be punished both by an appropriate beating and by the excommunication that is due.” *Eleventh Council of Toledo*, c. 8 (PL 84:461D–462B). Gratian transmitted the clause about gifts as an exception, “unless voluntarily offered.” C. 1, q. 1, c. 101.

⁵⁷ This includes even small gratuities, like tips. Major spoke of it being acceptable if “one gives a douzain [*duodecimum*, a small coin] to the doorkeeper so that he may gain entrance to speak with the bishop.” Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146va).

⁵⁸ *Glossa ordinaria* ad C. 1, q. 1, c. 115.

⁵⁹ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 2, ad 4.

⁶⁰ Ames, *Conscience*, 5.230.

⁶¹ Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, 4.19.2.33 (p. 119).

Even in the early church, some refused gifts of gratitude entirely. On this count, Patrick refused small ornaments.⁶² Likewise, Jerome recorded that Hilarion refused any gift after healing a possessed man, asserting, “If I take these things, I too shall offend God, and the legion will return to you.”⁶³

Conclusion

The scope of gifts that may constitute a simoniacal exchange is broader than one might first suppose. Gregory’s triad—gifts of the hand, gifts of the tongue, and gifts of service—captures that full range. Not only money, but even praise and favors count as the temporal price of a spiritual thing. The timing and directness of the exchange are immaterial; simony is committed whether the gift precedes or follows the spiritual thing and whether it passes through one hand or many. The amount matters as little: a penny is no less simoniacal than a fortune. A spiritual thing may itself stand as the price of another. Though canon law and theologians alike spoke permissively of voluntary gifts, they drew that exception narrowly, since even voluntary things may have the appearance, potential, or settled intention of simony.

⁶² “I have tried in some measure to keep myself safe, even for the Christian brethren, and the virgins of Christ, and the devout women who used to give me of their own accord little gifts, and would cast some of their ornaments upon the altar; and I would give them back to them again. And they were scandalized at me because I did this. But it was for the hope of eternity that I guarded myself cautiously in all things, so that unbelievers might not catch me, or the ministry of my service, on any pretext, and that I might not give them occasion, even in the smallest matter, to defame or disparage me.” Patrick, *Confessio*, 49 (p. 22). In the next paragraph, he insisted that he conducted baptisms and ordinations without the slightest hope of receiving anything.

⁶³ Jerome, *Vita Hilar.* 18 (PL 23:37C).

Giving

The foregoing chapters have established that simony consists in buying or selling spiritual things—or things annexed to them—for any kind of temporal gift. This definition is comprehensive, yet Scripture is equally clear that God’s ministers are to be materially supported. Christ himself declared that “the laborer is worthy of his wages” (Luke 10:7), a principle which Paul repeated in 1 Timothy 5:18. The funding of ministry is not merely permitted—it is commanded.

A tension therefore presents itself. If every exchange of temporal things for spiritual things is simoniacal, how can the church fund its ministers without falling under that condemnation? When a congregation pays its minister’s stipend, it gives temporal things to one who administers spiritual things and on account of such spiritual labor. The exchange would appear, on its face, to have the structure of simony.

The resolution of this apparent difficulty occupied a substantial portion of the theological literature on the topic from the patristic period onward. Part of the answer lies in distinguishing the *mode* of provision—the relationship between the temporal thing given and the spiritual thing received. Not every flow of money from laity to clergy constitutes a purchase, and the theologians labored to articulate exactly why.

What is given to a minister may be regarded in four ways: as charity (*eleemosyna*), as the price of the product (*pretium operis*), as the price of the labor (*pretium laboris*), or as the sustenance of the laborer

(*sustentatio laborantis*).¹ The primary consideration distinguishing licit gifts from illicit payments is whether they are given in exchange for spiritual things or in support of the one who provides them. We will consider each in turn.

As Charity

First, one might give to a minister of God as an act of almsgiving. This notion has been rejected since the early days of the church. For example, John Chrysostom concluded from Matthew 10 that Christ forbade his disciples to go about as “beggars”² and regarded others as their “debtors.”³ Augustine remarked that a minister’s provisions are “not a matter of mendicity, but of authority.”⁴

Medieval theologians formalized this distinction. The minister’s stipend flows from due justice rather than charity, though he receives of alms given to the church.⁵ Gabriel Biel offered a *reductio*: A gift given not in view of a person’s need but on account of an obligation to some office or labor is not alms, but a stipend or a wage. Otherwise every tribute given to kings and princes would be alms, and so would every wage a man earns for the support of his own life and station—and consequently all such laborers would be beggars.⁶

Later authors concurred.⁷ Thomas Hall, who addressed the matter at length, spoke starkly: “Our stipends, therefore, are wages, not alms. Woe to those ministers who expect their support from the people’s goodwill alone! Such goodwill will become ill-will; such nourishment will become stinginess; this something will soon become nothing.”⁸

¹ For examples of how these categories were synthesized for later English audiences, see *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 92; Ames, *Conscience*, 5.230.

² Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaeum*, hom. 33 (PG 57:587).

³ Ibid., hom. 35 (PG 57:608).

⁴ Augustine, *De opere monachorum*, 15.16 (p. 558).

⁵ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 187, a. 4. The context of this citation is a defense of the religious (here the friars), but for our purposes it is sufficient to note Aquinas’s application of this principle to secular clergy.

⁶ Biel, *Collectorium*, IV, d. 16, q. 4 (sig. ff3rb).

⁷ E.g., Bullinger, *Decades*, V.10 (foll. 38or–v); Turretin, *Institutio*, 18.28.8–12.

⁸ Hall, *Sal Terrae*, 101.

This conviction extended even to those who could comfortably support themselves and their families from their own patrimony. They should not be denied their stipends.⁹ Though they may choose to charitably give them away in their own capacity, they ought not refuse them either, “lest they appear to seek the glory of some exceptional sanctity or burden their poorer colleagues with resentment, and lest the people, enticed by this exemption, nourish their avarice to the great disadvantage of successors and the peril of the whole church.”¹⁰

As the Price of the Product

Second, things might be given as the price of the product (*ut pretium operis*), the product being the spiritual thing itself.¹¹ Of course, we have already seen this argued extensively, but the legitimacy of such payments is frequently inferred from certain scriptural passages that would appear to suggest them.

For example, the argument regularly turns on the apostle Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 9:14 (“those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel”). Thomas Aquinas handled the objection that this passage justifies accepting temporal things in exchange for spiritual things: “It must be said that stipends are due to preachers for the sustenance of their livelihood, lest they be forced to abandon the word of God and become occupied with procuring necessities for themselves; however, they are not due to them as if they were a price for the preaching.”¹² In his *Summa theologiae*, he offered both at greater length, and there added this succinct statement:

⁹ E.g., Keach, *The Gospel Minister’s Maintenance Vindicated*, 89–91. Ralph Cudworth wrote to the same effect: “Again, hence I gather, that those that labour in the word and doctrine, may lawfully take wages, albeit they have sufficient of their own to maintain themselves.” Cudworth, *The Supplement*, 543.

¹⁰ Turretin, *Institutio*, 18.28.13.

¹¹ The range of technical vocabulary used here is fairly narrow, but occasionally, “*spiritualium*” (“spiritual thing”) is used instead of “*operis*,” and sometimes instead of “*pretium*,” “*merces*” from the term for “hire” in Luke 10:7.

¹² Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, arg. 5 & ad 5.

“To preachers, temporal things are due for the support of those who preach, not for purchasing the preached word.”¹³

The command to freely give is not abrogated by the laborer being worthy of his food (Matt. 10:8–10); the two are reconciled by this very distinction. The wages of the worker are not the price of the product.

As the Price of the Labor

Third, things might be given as the price of the labor (*ut pretium laboris*), to pay the laborer in exchange for his work. At least at first glance, this appears to be what is required by phrases like “the laborer is worthy of his wages” (Luke 10:7; 1 Tim. 5:18), and indeed, some spoke of the selling of labor as being the proper mode of exchange.¹⁴ But rarely did any of these weigh another mode against it, and the few who did raised difficulties with the sale of labor.

Labor as a Spiritual Thing

These theologians pointed out that the matter at issue in Acts 8 and elsewhere is not one of moderation. Nor is it one that permits a meaningful distinction between the labor and the product. Simon Magus could not absolve himself of charges of the sin which bears his own name by claiming he was not looking to purchase the Spirit, but only Peter’s labor of laying on hands. The causes of spiritual things are precisely what a simoniac sets out to buy.¹⁵ William Swinderby forbade priests to “sell by bargaining and covenant his ghostly travail” (spiritual labor), claiming that any who does “errs and doth simony.”¹⁶

Spiritual labor is itself a spiritual thing, and therefore cannot be sold.¹⁷ As Aquinas wrote of acts that are spiritual in their principle,

¹³ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 2.

¹⁴ E.g., Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 1, q. 4 (p. 648); Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis*, III, P. 2, Inq. 3, Tract. 2, S. 2, Q. 1, T. 1, D. 5, C. 2 (pp. 644–45); Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 23:3–4 (WA 43, 282:38–42).

¹⁵ See Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 3, ad 3. See Chapter 3, pp. 55–56.

¹⁶ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 5.468.

¹⁷ E.g., “not only can the aforesaid spiritual things not be sold, but neither can the labour” Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166b).

“no one can in any way hire out his acts without simony.”¹⁸

The Excuse of Selling Labor

John Wycliffe’s language on the point admits of more than one reading,¹⁹ but Jan Hus, working from Wycliffe’s treatise, gave what is possibly the most complete treatment. Against those who would make such a justification for charging for their services, he wrote,

But here they have Simon’s little cap with which they cover themselves, saying commonly that they sell the bodily labor, but not the blessing or the consecration; and also that they take money for food, but not for consecration. But that excuse is like the greedy alewife who serves the food and then charges only for the beer, in that one payment more than covering both the meal and the drink. That excuse is also like the tale one writer tells, of a greedy lord who came to the annual fair. Then a servant told him that in that town the innkeepers at table give very fat geese for free, but beef and veal and other dishes they charge more dearly. So the lord commanded his servants to eat the freely given food, and he himself would eat the coarser fare to which he was accustomed. And when dinner was over and the account was made, the veal was reckoned so dear that the free geese proved costly after all! Likewise the simoniacs wish to deceive the people of God with this answer, saying that they

¹⁸ Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, sol.; cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3.

¹⁹ In his treatise on simony, Wycliffe argued for “inordinate willing” rather than “earnest desire,” in part because he believed it seemed right to exchange the work for a modest stipend, Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (2:13–28). However, this notion of “exchange” is not spelled out in terms that clearly indicate a sale, and elsewhere he denied that preachers may charge for their work. “And here Christ teaches openly that men should not buy this office, nor take any reward from the people for laboring thus in Christ’s name; for then they would impute to Christ that he sold the preaching of his word and gave leave to commit simony—and both these are blasphemies.” Wycliffe, *Sermons*, serm. LVIII (1, p. 177).

sell the labor, but give the blessing, consecration, or confirmation for free! Therefore against this cunning the holy ordinance says: "Those who buy bodily things and do not buy spiritual things should by no means be called simoniacs." And immediately it continues: "But the answer is that not only those who take spiritual things for money, but also those who take for money bodily things that are annexed to spiritual things, are called simoniacs."

So says the ordinance, so that you may understand that the labor of preaching, celebrating Mass, consecrating, anointing, baptizing, hearing confession, and distributing the body of the Lord—that labor is so joined with the spiritual, that is, with God's power and office, that it may not, and cannot rightly, be sold for money. Although people ought to sustain the priests in that labor, the priests ought not to sell that labor or set a price on it; for otherwise every case of simony could be excused by saying: "I am selling the labor!" Therefore the Lord God says through the prophet Malachi: "Who is there among you who would shut the doors and kindle my altar for nothing? I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand." Here Gratian, who compiled the decree [i.e., the *Decretum*], says that to shut the doors is not the office of the holy sacrifice, but it pertains to the spiritual office.²⁰ Therefore the excuse by which they defend themselves, saying that they sell the labor, is not valid.²¹

Giving four examples, Hus continued to demonstrate that those who claim to sell labor in spiritual things are selling something more. First, the bishop charges more for the same labor than one who does

²⁰ The idea here is that shutting the doors of the temple is a bodily act, but is annexed to spiritual things, since it is only by the doorkeeper that one would have access. See C. 1, q. 3, d.a.c. 1.

²¹ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 5.D; cf. *ibid.*, 9.A.

the same work. Second, the craftsman who makes the altar does greater labor than the one who blesses it, but the bishop who blesses it requires more than the carpenter or mason. Third, the bishop's endowment already provides for his labor, yet he requires a second pay upon service. Fourth, the same consecration costs less from a poor bishop than from a rich one.²²

Almost all of this discourse—from the excuse itself, to the parable of the geese, to the citation of Gratian, to the four additional arguments—is translated directly from Wycliffe,²³ with three notable alterations. First, Hus did not include Wycliffe's preface to the parable, which frames the abuse as a matter of degree: money "inordinately" collected, "excessive" fees, sacramentals sold "so dearly."²⁴ Second, Hus did not translate Wycliffe's sarcastic compromise on the bishop's blessing: "Either, then, let him give it for nothing, or let him sell it justly for a fair price [...] a halfpenny."²⁵ Third, Hus pulled forward Wycliffe's closing clause—that otherwise any simony whatever could be excused—between the parable of the geese and the Malachi passage, making it the ground of a direct prohibition of selling spiritual labor for any price.²⁶ In other words, Wycliffe's arguments showed that contemporary bishops sold spiritual things and not, as they claimed, mere labor, but stopped short of saying that the labor itself may not be sold. Hus took the line of reasoning and set down as a rule what Wycliffe had left standing as an inference: charging *anything* for spiritual labor necessarily sells spiritual things.

Labor Inseparable from Its Product

Some schoolmen also observed that economic reality does not permit us to divorce product and labor so cleanly in transactions. Peter Paludanus explained the issue:

²² Ibid., 5.D.

²³ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 6 (74:3–76:13).

²⁴ Ibid., cap. 6 (73:12–74:2).

²⁵ Ibid., cap. 6 (75:24–29).

²⁶ Ibid., cap. 6 (74:26–27).

For who would ever buy the labor of a worker, except for the fruit of the work? No one. And therefore it is ridiculous to say that ministers can sell their labor [*labor*], where they cannot lawfully sell their work [*opus*]: if therefore an ecclesiastical minister dispensing sacred things receives anything, he does not receive it as the price of the work or of the labor, but as the sustenance of the minister.²⁷

The problem with a model of giving that posits a purchase of labor is that it necessitates an obligation between the giver and the receiver. The receiver becomes servant to the giver, undermining the spiritual worker's duty to the Lord with a conflict of interest (Gal. 1:10). Thus, nothing should be given to any minister "by way of obligation and contract, but only by way of necessary assistance."²⁸ The one who receives is not bound to the giver as though his labor had been bought, and the one who gives does not owe the minister as a payment for what he has received. Either would bear the mark of a "contract." Instead, the giver is bound to render temporal things by a natural obligation of justice to support the minister in his work.²⁹

Regarding the notion of wages in Luke 10:7 and 1 Timothy 5:18, the Westminster divine Anthony Tuckney³⁰ remarked on the danger of interpreting the term to entail a simoniacal exchange of money for labor and pointed to the corrective offered in the previous verse of Paul's epistle. Addressing ministers, he acknowledged the scriptural language of "hire" or "wages," but rejected the idea that this funding functions as wages between the people and the minister, binding the

²⁷ Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 319a). See also *ibid.*, IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320a–b); Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent. (red. C)*, IV, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 315r); contra, Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 183rb).

²⁸ Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166b).

²⁹ See *ibid.*, IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166b).

³⁰ Tuckney chaired the Westminster Assembly committee that framed the Larger Catechism's exposition of the Ten Commandments, where question 108 names "the ministry and maintenance thereof" among the duties required by the second commandment. WLC Q. 108.

latter to the will of the former who makes the payment. All such sentiments are “base simoniacal chafferings.”³¹

As the Sustenance of the Laborer

Fourth, things might be given for the sustenance of the laborer (*ut sustentationem laborantis*).³² What is given to the spiritual worker, financial or otherwise, should be given in order to sustain him.³³ The people do not give as clients or employers purchasing labor.

Augustine explained this dynamic in a sermon on Ezekiel 34, first speculating that Paul may be indicated by the innkeeper of Luke 10:35, who is repaid at the Lord’s return for whatever he spends beyond what he was given.³⁴ He continued to explain that what a minister receives is not a price “as though the gospel were for sale,” because then they would “sell a great thing for a trifle.”³⁵ Instead of ministers selling, “let them receive from the people the sustenance [*sustentationem*] their need requires, and from the Lord the reward of their stewardship.”³⁶ The reward for their labor does not come from the people; they must “look for their reward nowhere but where the people look for their salvation.”³⁷

Sustenance was not understood as bare subsistence. Proper maintenance included a significant measure of honor pertaining to the

³¹ Tuckney, *Sermon* 38, 645.

³² Once again, there is some variation in the used vocabulary. Sometimes “stipend” (*stipendium*) is used instead of “sustenance” (*sustentationem*), and sometimes “minister” (*ministri*) instead of “laborer” (*laborantis*).

³³ E.g., “to receive or to give something for the sustenance of those who minister spiritual things, according to the ordinance of the Church and approved custom, is lawful.” Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 3; cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 100, a. 2, ad 2; Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2, ad 2 (fol. 150v); William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tr. 21 (fol. 227rb).

³⁴ Augustine, *Sermones*, 46, cap. 2 (PL 38:272).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46, cap. 2 (PL 38:273).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46, cap. 2 (PL 38:273); cf. *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 92ff.

³⁷ Augustine, *Sermones*, 46, cap. 2 (PL 38:273).

dignity of the person in his office.³⁸ The word “honorarium” has come down to us from the Latin *donum honorarium*, designating a gift designed to honor rather than to function as a wage.

Especially in the seventeenth century, a number of works made this distinction between “wages” (*merces*) and “honor” (*honorarium*), asserting that, properly speaking, ministers do not receive the former but the latter.³⁹ We have already observed that Anthony Tuckney required qualification for the term “wages” in 1 Timothy 5:18 in order to avoid simoniacal implications. He continued by observing that in the previous verse, “The Apostle would lift us up to higher thoughts, when he calls the Church officers’ maintenance, not wages but honour.”⁴⁰

³⁸ Peter Auriol seemed to have this in mind when he wrote, “For if [the giver’s principal regard] were for the dignity and sufficiency of the person, granted that it were somehow drawn from the service [rendered], it would not be a species of simony.” Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166a–b).

³⁹ For example, the English clergyman William Sclater contended, “my portion be not *merces*, but *honorarium*.” Sclater, *The Question of Tythes Revised*, unnumbered, 5 pp. after p. 33. John Cooke, a Puritan legal scholar, wrote of ministers among several professions to which this principle applies, marginally offering the Latin phrase, *non mercenarium sed honorarium* (“not as wages, but as honor”), Cooke, *The Vindication of the Law*, 3.

⁴⁰ “All thy grace, wisdom, ability to dispense the Word and other ordinances, to govern the church, etc. are God’s gifts, which he never betrusted thee with to enjoy, or make a market of for thyself, thine own gain or applause, but for the glory of thy Master, and the service of his spouse: and therefore although the labourer be worthy of his hire, Luke 10:7. yet neither be thou on the one side ever so mercenary, as to account thy maintenance such an hire of thy labour as which thou aimest at, and puttst off the ordinances of God for: no, in this sense freely thou hast received, and therefore freely give.

“Nor let the people be ever so mean as to think, when they have paid their pittance they have bought you for slaves, and like good chapmen have made a fair purchase of the Word, and the rest of God’s ordinances, which they hereupon claim as their due, and in case, though by their own default, they come short of, you shall fall short of yours. But how unworthy are such base simoniacal chafferings of thee, as thou art either a minister, or Christian? something akin to Judas selling, and the Jews buying of Christ for thirty pieces of silver: and a goodly price, wherewith I was prised at of them, saith the Lord, Zech. 11.13. The Apostle would lift us up to higher thoughts, when he calls the Church Officers maintenance, not wages but honour, 1 Tim. 5.17. to be freely honorably allowed, not as a recompense of their labour, but as an honorable

The Particular Baptist Benjamin Keach made a similar observation, rejecting such a “base” exchange and preferring the notion of “honor.” Remarking that New Testament ministers are to receive after the pattern of the Old Testament priests (1 Cor. 9:13–14), he pointed out that such funds granted to ministers are not direct payments, but given “as gifts due to the Lord, and to them from him.”⁴¹ Keach expanded on the same distinction to explain that the minister’s stipend is not to be regarded as “base” wages but as “honor” because the people do not actually pay them as an employer might. Instead, they give to the Lord, and the Lord gives his wages to his own workers; the Lord is the employer to whom the minister is bound.

Conclusion

The prohibition of simony does not leave ministers destitute. Temporal things may and ought to be given to those who provide spiritual things, but the mode of the exchange is decisive. What the people give is neither charity to a beggar, nor the price of a product, nor wages owed to a hired laborer, but the maintenance of one whom the Lord has set apart to serve them. Their giving is directed ultimately to God, and from God the minister receives his support. The minister’s

testimony of our love and respect, not as the price of the Gospel, and all that either we mean to give for it, or the ministers should look at in dispensing of it.” Tuckney, *Sermon* 38, 644–45.

⁴¹ While the application is Keach’s own, he did so by quoting Henry Ainsworth: “They were not (as Mr. Ainsworth noteth) to receive it after a base or servile manner, but as gifts due to the Lord, and to them from him: the Hebrew canons (saith he) show the Israelites were to give them their portion with honour; and it was unlawful for the priests or Levites to snatch away the heave-offering, or the tithes; yea, saith he, if they did but ask their portion with their mouth it was unlawful. [...] He saith again, the priest might not violently take the gifts, nor ask them with his mouth, but he received them when they were given him with honour.” Keach, *The Gospel Minister’s Maintenance Vindicated*, 107–8. In other words, while the people owe material support to ministers in one sense, because the priests had no right to demand or take provisions by force as one might with their own property, such things cannot be said to be owed to ministers by the people in the most immediate sense.

stipend is therefore not *merces* but *honorarium*—a recognition of the dignity that belongs to the office.

Receiving

The previous chapter showed that ministers may rightly receive support (*sustentationem*) from those they serve. It is important that it be given for his sustenance rather than as a price of his labor because “in every sale the price is taken as the end,” and if the spiritual laborer receives “as the principal end of his work, he commits simony.”¹ A non-simoniactal reception of material things depends on whether his primary purpose in ministry is service to the Lord.²

However, we need not forbid *all* financial motivation in ministry. A minister is above reproach in the matter “if he has God as the principal end in such an act and looks to such distributions secondarily.”³ For the one who operates with these rightly ordered motives, “it is clear that he is not selling the spiritual act, and thus he does not commit simony, nor does he sin.”⁴

Scholastic sources frequently observe that it is acceptable to preach “for money” in the sense of preaching to encourage generosity for charitable collections.⁵ Similarly, one may give something “for” (*pro*)

¹ Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

² “And thus any bishop, curate, or priest who accepts that state [of ecclesiastical dignity] chiefly on account of honor or temporal advantage is a simoniac and a heretic, and he continues in that heresy as long as he keeps that state and is unfit for his office.” Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 2 (17:7–11).

³ Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII, q. 6, a. 1 (p. 175).

⁵ E.g., Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4; Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 320b).

a spiritual thing so long as the preposition means “on account of” (i.e., in supportive devotion) rather than “in exchange for.”⁶ More germane to our concerns, however, a minister’s service may be conditioned upon the supply of sufficient funds. But this may only function as a secondary motivation rather than a primary one. A minister must be enabled by material things rather than driven by them.⁷ In the pithy saying that came down from Augustine, we ought to eat that we may evangelize, not evangelize that we may eat.⁸

Given the presence of additional and even financial motives, the right mode of giving (for sustenance) does not by itself vindicate the one who receives. His innocence depends on his rightly ordered motives. The desire for money must remain secondary and never rise to a primary position such that others would give way on its behalf.

For this reason, canonists and theologians offered four tests of a minister’s intent: the financial burden on the congregation, his rejection of positions, his transferring of positions, and his want of a proper office. Each could provide evidence of a ministry driven by simoniacal ambition.

Financial Burden on the Congregation

If a minister who has enough for himself receives from the poor, it demonstrates that his objectives in ministry are simoniacal. Such men, Aquinas wrote, “would be bound not only to desist from accepting alms, but also to give their own goods, if they had any, for the support of the poor.”⁹

Under different circumstances, this does not forbid the financially self-sufficient from receiving a salary. On a first reading, one canon in Gratian’s *Decretum* appears to forbid any independently wealthy

⁶ See John of Freiburg, *Summa confessorum*, I, tit. 1, q. 10 (fol. 2ra).

⁷ See also, Turretin, *Institutio*, 18.28.12.

⁸ “*Neque enim, verbi gratia, ideo debemus evangelizare, ut manducemus; sed ideo manducare, ut evangelizemus.*” Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte*, 2.16 (PL 34:1292). E.g., Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146rb).

⁹ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 187, a. 4, ad 1.

minister from taking a stipend from the church,¹⁰ but later theologians interpreted the restriction narrowly. Aquinas responded to those who would use this to prohibit the rich from taking any stipend, asserting that it applies only in times of need, when the church could not otherwise care for the poor.¹¹

The Reformed maintained the same balance between overburdening a congregation and financially neglecting its ministers. In describing what kind of pay might be “simoniacal” or “mercenary,” Francis Turretin warned against salaries burdensome to a congregation,¹² though he held that independently rich ministers should be supported rather than left to labor at their own expense.¹³

Rejecting Positions

If a minister declines a position because the stipend is smaller than he had hoped, this too may demonstrate simoniacal intention. Of course, a position could simply not come with a sufficient stipend

¹⁰ “It is fitting that clerics whom the goods of their parents and relatives do not assist be sustained [*sustentari*] by the stipends of the Church. But those who can be supported by the goods and wealth of their parents, if they accept what belongs to the poor, certainly commit sacrilege, and by the abuse of such things, they eat and drink judgment upon themselves.” C. 1, q. 2, c. 6. This is attributed to Jerome’s name, but the passage is apocryphal. “*Caput incertum*” Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 1:409, n68; cf. *ibid.*, 1:784, n730; “*Apocryphas illas esse dubium non est*” Hinschius, ed., *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae*, xcvi.

¹¹ “It must be said that those authorities are to be understood in a time of necessity, namely, when the poor could not be helped otherwise.” Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 187, a. 4, ad 1; cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 185, a. 7, ad 3.

¹² “Indeed, if no wage were owed to them for the work they do [...] then it would not be lawful to bargain for stipends, and such a stipulation would be base and simoniacal. But, because they are owed most justly by the prescription of God and Christ, it is lawful to bargain for them [...] nor in this is there any blemish or stain or suspicion of a mercenary spirit, provided they are moderate, not so large as to burden the flock, and sufficient for the honorable support of the pastor and his family.” Turretin, *Institutio*, 18.28.12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.28.8; 18.28.13.

to support the minister,¹⁴ but his rejection of the position is further evidence bearing on his motives.

Concern over one who would reject a calling was most clearly stated by authors in the Reformed tradition. For example, Thomas Boston warned those that “close with no call upon the account of stipend.”¹⁵ In his judgment, “This is direct simony; selling the gift of God for money.”¹⁶ Alluding to a number of relevant passages in sequence, he continued decrying this sin: “Let their money perish with themselves that will adventure to do so. Such are buyers and sellers, that God will put out of his temple. Such are mere hirelings, working for wages; and too much of Balaam’s temper is to be found there.”¹⁷

If the purpose of the stipend is maintenance to uphold the minister and his proper dignity, but not more, a man who haggles over the figure has some other purpose in view.

Transferring Positions

Canon law routinely prohibits ministers from transferring between posts on their own initiative, particularly when that transfer is from a lesser see to a greater one. The earliest conciliar legislation on this point comes from the Council of Nicaea (325), which decreed that “neither bishop, nor presbyter, nor deacon should pass from city to city.”¹⁸ From there, many councils included similar laws, from the Synod of Antioch (341)¹⁹ to the Council of Sardica (343)²⁰ and beyond. Eventually, this prohibition made its way into the *Liber extra*:

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, 18.28.8; 18.28.13.

¹⁵ Boston, *A Soliloquy on Man-Fishing*, 49. He continued, “Woe is me if a stipend should be that which would engage me to a place.” See also Keach, *The Gospel Minister’s Maintenance Vindicated*, 105–7.

¹⁶ Boston, *A Soliloquy on Man-Fishing*, 49.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸ *Council of Nicaea* (325), can. 15 (p. 18).

¹⁹ *Synod of Antioch* (341), can. 21 (p. 86).

²⁰ *Council of Sardica* (343), can. 1 (p. 88).

For there are some who resign their prebend and renounce their right, in order that they might obtain a greater prebend, or that from this they might acquire a certain sum of money—which is indeed contrary to honor, and without doubt contains simoniacal depravity. Therefore, you should hold as a general rule that exchanges of prebends cannot lawfully be made, especially where a pact has preceded, which, concerning spiritual things or things annexed to spiritual things, always contains the stain of simony.²¹

The schoolmen approved these canons as readily as the jurists.²² The proposed remedy in these laws is not to forbid all transfers; superiors may still reassign clergy for necessary reasons. Rather, it is to strip the individual minister of the initiative because self-directed movement so readily becomes a vehicle for covetousness. The theme that runs through these sources, even when “simony” is not expressly mentioned, is suspicion of simoniacal ambition.²³

Want of Office

A final indicator of simoniacal motivation is the absence of a proper call. If a minister’s right to maintenance flows from his ordination and office rather than from a commercial transaction, then one who claims maintenance without ordination has no right to it at all. His receipt of it is, at best, irregular and, at worst, evidence that gain rather than service is his object.

²¹ X 3.19.5; This framing is Urban III’s extension of a canon from the Council of Tours (1163) beyond the ecclesiastical position itself to the prebend funding it. cf. *Council of Tours* (1163), 1 (Mansi 21:1176B–C).

²² For example, Aquinas cited this prohibition positively to the same effect, Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 5.

²³ E.g., Henry of Ghent judged it a mortal sin to leave a people in great need of preaching for one that needed it less “on account of more abundant victuals expected elsewhere.” Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta*, VII, q. 19 (fol. 271v).

Augustine and Monks

In *De opere monachorum* (On the work of monks), Augustine distinguished between physical labor and spiritual labor, speaking of the natural exchange of the former for physical food, but reserving to “all evangelists and ministers of the word of God” the authority “to live by the gospel, performing only spiritual works.”²⁴ Paul refused funds at Thessalonica, Augustine explained, so that by his example “those might be restrained who, though not so ordained in the church, deemed the like to be due to themselves.”²⁵ He returned to the point later, objecting to monks who claimed the right to live by the gospel without holding any ordained office: “But these brethren of ours rashly arrogate to themselves, as far as I can judge, an authority of this kind. For if they are evangelists, I confess, they have it; if ministers of the altar, dispensers of the sacraments, they rightly do not arrogate this authority to themselves, but plainly claim it as their due.”²⁶

William of Saint-Amour and the Friars

In the thirteenth century, William of Saint-Amour developed Augustine’s argument in order to apply it to the new mendicant orders, the friars.²⁷ Glossing Augustine’s remarks, he wrote:

The false [preachers], even though they are not so ordained in the Church that they can live from the Gospel [...] nevertheless wish to live from the Gospel, receiving their sustenance from those to whom they preach, as if they were their evangelists or ministers of their altar. [...] If they do not hold these offices in the churches of those from whom they receive, they do not have the authority to take sustenance from them either. For it is

²⁴ Augustine, *De opere monachorum*, 7.8 (p. 543).

²⁵ Ibid., 3.4 (p. 537); cf. 2 Thess. 3:6–12.

²⁶ Ibid., 21.24 (pp. 569–70). Augustine’s “evangelists” (*euangelistae*) denotes the commissioned role of Ephesians 4:11 (cf. Acts 21:8), not merely one who evangelizes.

²⁷ William acknowledged the centrality of *De opere monachorum* to his project in the prologue of the *Collectiones*, William of Saint-Amour, *Collectiones*, prol. (p. 125).

certain that sustenance from the Gospel is owed only to those who preside ordinarily in governance and teaching by the dignity of their office, and who are bound to the care of souls by the duty of their office.²⁸

He went on to interpret the various phrases in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 as indicating pastoral office rather than similar labor apart from the office,²⁹ then concluded, "Therefore those who do not have the dignity or the proper office of governing souls cannot claim sustenance as owed to them."³⁰ He objected to their reception of alms, but found especially heinous their insistence on it as an imposition of duty: the false preachers "not only receive food from those to whom they preach if it is offered to them, but also sometimes importunately demand it, although it is not owed."³¹ He identified all such reception as manifest simony.³²

In *De valido mendicante* (The able-bodied mendicant), William asserted that none should be given to those who beg before or after their preaching.³³ Only a teacher who holds the apostolic authority—a bishop or one he has sent—is owed a share by those he teaches,³⁴ and what such a man asks he asks by that authority and not as a beggar.³⁵

²⁸ Ibid., D. 4, sign. 41 (pp. 457–58).

²⁹ "We beseech you, brothers, that you know (that is, that you show yourselves to know, namely by the furnishing of sustenance) those who labor among you. Gloss: In your governance and teaching. And who are set over you. Gloss: By dignity. And this, in the Lord. That is, by the ordination of the Lord. And who admonish you. Gloss: By the duty of their office." Ibid., D. 4, sign. 41 (p. 458).

³⁰ Ibid., D. 4, sign. 41 (p. 458).

³¹ Ibid., D. 4, sign. 41 (p. 458).

³² "If therefore any preachers (whose canonical vocation or mission is not established) should, as a regular practice, receive from their hearers such gifts as are described above, they seem to be in the occasion of avarice; they also seem to preach for the sake of gain, not for the salvation of souls. And if they should, as a regular practice, ask or cause to be asked for such things, whether in their preaching, or before their preaching, or after it, hoping to find them more easily on account of their preaching, they seem to commit simony." Ibid., D. 4, sign. 40 (p. 456).

³³ William of Saint-Amour, *De valido mendicante*, 85.

³⁴ Ibid., 87.

³⁵ William of Saint-Amour, *Collectiones*, D. 1 (p. 156).

William therefore tied proper financial support to mission.³⁶ Sustenance is owed by “the people to whom they preach as their own charges,”³⁷ that is, “those whom he feeds as a flock, or whom he cultivates as a vineyard.”³⁸ To gather support beyond that boundary is to “make prey of congregations not their own.”³⁹ Regarding those preachers who visit a congregation, William determined that the proper source of their support was conditioned on their commission. If some prelate would send a preacher to visit, then he should likewise fund him.⁴⁰ He allowed an exception where such a visit met a specific need, and then only on judicial inquiry or at the parish priest’s own request.⁴¹ He regarded the contrary rule as untenable, since “if an unlimited number of persons had the authority of preaching in any given church, every church would owe unlimited procurations, which is absurd to say.”⁴²

The Protestant Reception

As noted in Chapter 1,⁴³ William’s positions were far from universally adopted within the prevailing institutions, but they found purchase among proto-Reformers and also those Reformers who continued to feel the need to respond to the mendicants. Addressing the friars’ encroachment on parish ministry, John Wycliffe observed that “a benefice and its corresponding office inseparably follow each other.”⁴⁴ Elsewhere, he identified their collection of funds through a counterfeit

³⁶ “They must take their expenses in different ways, according to the different missions.” Ibid., D. 1 (p. 154).

³⁷ Ibid., D. 1 (p. 153).

³⁸ Ibid., D. 1 (p. 156).

³⁹ Ibid., D. 4 (p. 466).

⁴⁰ “Those sending them must furnish necessities to those they send, or assign them prebends from which they may be competently sustained in the office committed to them.” Ibid., D. 1 (p. 153); “those bishops themselves—not the priests nor the lay faithful—ought to furnish them with the necessities of life.” William of Saint-Amour, *De periculis*, cap. 2 (p. 26).

⁴¹ William of Saint-Amour, *Collectiones*, D. 1 (p. 154).

⁴² William of Saint-Amour, *De periculis*, cap. 2 (p. 26).

⁴³ See pp. 27–28.

⁴⁴ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 8 (107:20–21).

office as simony.⁴⁵ William Tyndale adopted these arguments in *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, speaking of those who would ask for money for labor in the word outside of the office of a preacher as being robbers of widows.⁴⁶ John Calvin contended similarly, lamenting that the collation of benefices, formerly joined with ordination, had become wholly separate,⁴⁷ and that those who have no work or income but the sale of Masses have no legitimate office to perform.⁴⁸

Even after the mendicant orders ceased to be a live controversy for them, Protestant theologians continued to recognize that the office, not merely the actual work, legitimized ministerial maintenance. Matthew Poole, arguing against the congregationalist notion of a “gifted man” (i.e., a congregationally approved lay-preacher), built his argument on a shared foundation: only those who hold the office may be paid for it.⁴⁹ He further contended that to fund all those who are gifted and do the work in some measure “would be both absurd and impossible.”⁵⁰ Holding the office without doing the work incurred the same charge of simony. Ministers who receive a stipend but do not do the work of preaching “are by strong presumption deep simonists.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ “The sixth abuse of the friars is the simoniacal collection of temporal goods through the office of preaching carried on in this counterfeit way.” Wycliffe, *Triologus cum supplemento Trialogi*, lib. IV, cap. 34 (p. 368).

⁴⁶ “Likewise doeth a Christian man give to his brethren and robbeth them not as friars and monks do. [...] They preach (sayest thou) and labor in the word. First I say they are not called and therefore ought not for it is the curate’s office.” Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, fol. 126v.

⁴⁷ Calvin, *Institutio*, 4.5.6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.5.9.

⁴⁹ He offered a syllogism: “All Scripture-Preachers may challenge maintenance: But all gifted men (though preaching) cannot challenge maintenance, Therefore they are no Scripture-Preachers.” Poole, *Quo Warranto*, 114.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵¹ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 43.

Conclusion

A minister whose primary end is gain rather than service corrupts an otherwise licit arrangement. The tradition therefore supplied four diagnostic tests: the financial burden placed on a congregation, the rejection of a position for its stipend, the transfer to a more profitable one, and the absence of a proper call. Each may expose whether a minister's true master is the Lord or his own appetite.

Part IV

Scripture and Simony

The Forefathers of Simony

The class of transgression at the center of our investigation existed long before Simon Magus or the events of Acts 8. In the words of John Major, “this plague was in the church before it was called simony.”¹ It existed before the New Testament church and afflicted the Old Testament people of God at least as far back as their wicked prophets.²

Writers on this topic rarely committed themselves to an individual or specific instance as the origin of simony, but the reality of this sin being an ancient evil led many to regard certain figures from Scripture as the forefathers of simony. These names recur across the literature, though rarely collected into a single list. However, Jan Hus provided an orderly collection and an extended discussion of each. After de-

¹ Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb). One work dedicated to the topic frames it thusly: “Not but that the crime had got footing in the world long before, and was known to the Jews by the name טלימא, and by the Arabians טלם *Talm*, says Schindler; and both from טלם *fraudavit expilavit*. The Greeks knew it by the name Περὶβολος. And the Latins by the word *Ambitus*. Which I note, to show ’tis a moral evil, and was troublesome to all nations and religions. But this bold Chapman’s offer, purchased not the grace of God, but disgrace of turning his name into sin, by which he will be justly infamous to the last gasp of time.” Metford, *A General Discourse of Simony*, 2–3.

² E.g., “This is evident: it existed in the time of Elisha, and even before him among the wicked prophets; and the church existed then, which began with righteous Abel. But it did not have this specific name before Simon Magus in the eighth chapter of Acts.” Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb).

scribing Simon and Gehazi as the chief among these,³ he listed Balaam, Jeroboam, and Judas.⁴ These constitute the pedigree of simony, because simoniacs are those “who, as sons with those evil fathers before them, pull on their boots.”⁵

The figures theologians of the past held up as simony’s exemplars show how they understood the sin. What follows is a survey of each, ordered by frequency of appearance in the literature.

Simon Magus

Simony’s namesake, Simon Magus, is the figure most often named in association with the sin. Having seen the Spirit given through the apostles’ laying on of hands, he offered them money for the same power (Acts 8:18–19). Peter answered, “Your silver perish with you, because you have thought to obtain the gift of God with money” (Acts 8:20). This apostolic rebuke was applied to all who would engage in the same form of commerce. Most treatments of simony invoked Simon to identify him as the paradigmatic buyer of spiritual things, even if only briefly.

A number, however, related the extrabiblical tradition of Simon’s later career and demise in some detail, usually without qualification or skepticism. For example, James Metford provided a concise introduction that records several ancient sources: “Simony is so called from Simon Magus, that famous Samaritan born at Gitton, mentioned in Acts 8, who came to Rome in the reign of Claudius Caesar (says Eusebius) where he was worshipped in an image (says Just. Martyr) between the two bridges of Tiber, with this inscription, *Simoni*

³ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 3.A. This is the standard conclusion. See below, pp. 165–67.

⁴ “Know that just as from Simon they are called Simoniacs or Simonites, so from Gehazi they are called Gehazites, from Balaam Balaamites, from Jeroboam Jeroboamites, and from Judas Judites.” Ibid., 3.B.

⁵ Ibid., 3.A. He further wrote, “But if you wish to name them rightly, call them: heirs of Gehazi, Simon, Balaam, and Judas.” Ibid., 3.B.

Sancto Deo; yea the Samaritans and many others also, adored him saith Irenaeus.”⁶

The tradition extends beyond his cult in Rome. A widely circulated legend, originating in the *Acts of Peter* (ca. 180–200) and retold by later authors, relates that Simon attempted to prove his divinity by flying over the city. In this account, Peter prays to Christ,⁷ and Simon is cast down, breaking his leg in three places and subsequently dying from his injuries.⁸ This legend, while not connected to the sin of simony proper, nevertheless contributed to the infamy of the name. Simon’s fall became a popular subject in Christian art, depicted in paintings, frescoes, and illuminated manuscripts.⁹

Gehazi

Treatments that begin from the name itself rarely stop at Acts 8 without calling attention to the parallel text of 2 Kings 5. While Simon sought to purchase the gift of the Spirit, Gehazi sought to sell the gift of the Spirit, receiving two talents of silver and two changes of clothing from Naaman after he was miraculously cured of leprosy. The prophet Elisha rebuked his servant, transferring to him the leprosy of Naaman (2 Kings 5:20–27).

Gehazites as Sellers

Gehazi is typically presented not merely as a forefather of simony, but as an Old Testament counterpart to the New Testament figure. Where Simon represents buyers, Gehazi represents sellers. The pairing

⁶ Metford, *A General Discourse of Simony*, 2.

⁷ In the *Acts of Peter*, Peter alone is present. Later retellings add Paul. See *Acts of Peter and Paul*, 75–76 (p. 210).

⁸ *Acts of Peter*, 32 (pp. 83, 85). The legend is retold by Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses*, 6.15 (1, p. 176), Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica*, 2.28 (CSEL 1, 83), and the Funk, ed., *Apostolic Constitutions*, 6.9 (pp. 319–21), among others.

⁹ E.g., Gislebertus’s historiated capital at the Cathédrale Saint-Lazare, Autun (ca. 1125–45); *Initial D: The Fall of Simon Magus* from the Stammheim Missal, Hildesheim (ca. 1170); Benozzo Gozzoli’s predella panel in the Royal Collection (1461–62); and Pompeo Batoni’s altarpiece for St. Peter’s (1746–55).

is ancient. In Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* (ca. 390), Hilarion rejects gifts given in the context of miracle working: "Have you not read what befell Gehazi and Simon? One of them accepted a price, the other offered it, so that the former might sell the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the latter might buy it."¹⁰ In the words of Albert the Great, "What Gehazi sells, Simon seeks to procure."¹¹

Buyers and sellers took their names accordingly. As Peter Lombard wrote, "Those who wish to procure priceless grace for a price, in the likeness of Simon Magus, are properly called simoniacs; and those who receive a price for sacred ministry, in the manner of Gehazi, ought to be called Gehazites."¹² This naming scheme runs throughout the literature.¹³

Why, then, is the sin denominated by Simon rather than Gehazi? The scholastic answer is that, while Gehazi only sought to sell, Simon attempted to buy in order to sell. The text does not state this explicitly; the inference rests on Simon's asking for the power to lay hands on others (Acts 8:19). In the words of Thomas Aquinas,

Simon Magus wished to buy spiritual things so that he might later sell them; and therefore his purchase implicitly contained a sale as well. And on account of this, in ordinary speech, both the buyer and the seller are called simoniacs. Yet if we wish to speak precisely, the buyers are called simoniacs, and the sellers Gehazites, because Gehazi wished to sell spiritual things.¹⁴

¹⁰ Jerome, *Vita Hilar.* 18 (PL 23:37C).

¹¹ Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 6, ad 1 (p. 95b).

¹² Lombard, *Sent.* IV, d. 25, c. 2 (p. 909).

¹³ E.g., Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, ad X 5.3 (fol. 534rb); William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 113); Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia; Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (2:9–11).

¹⁴ Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 1, ad 4. See also Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia; Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb); Thomas of Strasbourg, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, ad 1 (fol. 150r); Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 6, ad 1 (p. 95b).

In the seventeenth century, Henry Burton added his own explanation based on an English pun: “But Simon hath obtained to bear the bell, and to carry the name away for both; sith the money so given and taken becomes Sin-money, bearing the image and superscription of Simon.”¹⁵

Simoniacs as Lepers

Because of Gehazi’s punishment (2 Kings 5:27), simony is frequently associated with leprosy. While writings often made remarks to this effect without reference to any source, many went back particularly to Ambrose,¹⁶ who wrote:

You have the Lord’s command and the prophet’s example: freely to receive, freely to give; not to sell the ministry, but to offer it; for God’s grace is not appraised by a price, [...] Leprosy quickly follows a shameful reward, and ill-gotten money stains both body and soul. “You have received money,” it says, “and from it you shall possess a field, a vineyard, olive groves, and flocks; and the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your seed forever.” You see that the doer’s act condemns the heir’s succession; for the guilt of selling a mystery is unattonable, and the heavenly vengeance for [selling] grace passes on to posterity. In short, the Moabites and others shall not enter [the assembly] even unto the third and fourth generation¹⁷—namely for so long (to interpret it simply) until a succession of many generations might abolish the guilt of the doers.

But since those who have transgressed against God in the error of idolatry seem to be punished unto the

¹⁵ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 31.

¹⁶ E.g., Humbert of Silva Candida, *Libri tres adversus simoniacos*, 1.16 (p. 128); C. 1, q. 1, c. 14; Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 52.

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 23:3 reads “tenth” in the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Vulgate. Ambrose’s “third and fourth” is the formula of Exodus 20:5, on the idolaters he sets against Gehazi’s seed two sentences later.

fourth generation, certainly the sentence seems harsher by which the seed of Gehazi is condemned forever by prophetic authority for the greed of possessing—especially since our Lord Jesus Christ, through the washing of regeneration has given the remission of sins to all—unless you understand the “seed” to be of vices rather than of birth. For just as those who are children of the promise are reckoned as good seed, so also those who are children of error are reckoned as bad seed. For even the Jews are from their father the devil, certainly not by succession of the flesh, but of crime. Therefore all the covetous, all the greedy possess the leprosy of Gehazi along with their riches; and with an ill-gotten reward they have gathered not so much an inheritance of wealth as a treasury of crimes, for eternal punishment and brief enjoyment.¹⁸

If the punishments for idolatry only fall to several generations, but Gehazi’s seed is afflicted forever, then the offspring in mind must be spiritual rather than physical. All who follow in Gehazi’s sin contract his disease.

Associations between leprosy and the sin of Simon existed in patristic literature, but these became exceptionally frequent in the Middle Ages with both the development of the notion of simony and with the actual widespread presence of pestilence across Europe.¹⁹ Due to the latter, the medievals often regarded leprosy as more than a metaphor for simony—a literal form of divine retribution on the simoniac.²⁰

The idea that the simoniac will inherit Gehazi’s punishment is likewise recorded in canon law. The Third Lateran Council (1179) said that the simoniac “will have his portion with Gehazi, whose deed he

¹⁸ Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii sec. Lucam*, 4.52–54 (CSEL 32.4, 164:16–166:11).

¹⁹ See Grigsby, *Pestilence*, 42.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, 87–88.

imitates by exacting a shameful reward.”²¹ Gratian wrote that “He who ordains for a price confers leprosy, not an office.”²²

The imagery is common enough, but the proto-Reformers seized on it and drew out its implications. John Wycliffe opened his work on simony by describing it as a leprosy that cannot be cured apart from a miracle,²³ and from there, the remainder of his work is replete with this language. Comparing Gehazi and the pope, he took the matter further:

Leprosy, I say, according to the saints mystically signifies simony, because just as no disease is more infectious than this, more deforming for dissolving unity and form, or more horrible for cohabiting because of the stench or voice, so is the simoniacal heresy. For no sin is more infectious than this, since the simoniac infects first himself, secondly the one above him who confers [the office], and thirdly the people below him, to whom he administers ecclesiastical sacraments, indeed he infects the people on all sides by consent. And as to the second [point], it is clear that he excessively dissolves the unity of the members of the church, since those whom he ought to unite with Christ according to the form of the gospel, he separates and deforms according to the law of the devil. And this is the reason why it is called heresy, which is interpreted “division.” So no monster is more deformed before God, even if he seems to be the head of the church. Whence Aaron is expressly reprovéd and Miriam his sister was struck with leprosy as is clear in Numbers 12[:10]; “Behold,” it says, “Miriam appeared white with leprosy like snow.” And consequently Aaron entreats Moses on her behalf, that she may not become as one dead and as a stillborn child that is cast out from its mother’s womb.

²¹ *Third Lateran Council*, 7 (Mansi 22:222A); cf. X 5.3.9.

²² C. 1, q. 1, c. 14.

²³ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (1:21–2:2). Hus added these same thoughts, Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 2.B.

For such people are cast out before God out of mother church, even if they seem to rule her. And as to the third [point], it is clear that every faithful person should shudder at this leprosy more than at the devil himself; indeed their reputation infects many, they emit the voice of an asp and not of a trumpet; and therefore they were appointed under the old law, as is clear in Numbers 5, to remain outside the camp as men not to be endured.

But the whiteness of the leprosy signifies the whiteness of hypocrisy, by which they feign holiness in the eyes of the faithful; and from the first simoniac pope²⁴ even to the last of this generation, all are struck almost irremediably by this leprosy. And thus it makes unworthy those who were previously worthy; it does not promote but condemns, and more grievously than Gehazi, in that, like another god, [the simoniac] blasphemously justifies a more dangerous sin against Christ, and thus he steals from the goods of the church, not his own, most sacrilegiously, like the chief antichrist.²⁵

This association continued beyond the Reformation, later authors making similar observations and speaking of “the leprosy of simony.”²⁶

Judas

Beyond Simon and Gehazi, Judas is most frequently presented as the forefather of simoniacs. Gratian placed him between Gehazi and Simon, observing that he “sold the redeemer of all” and died

²⁴ Wycliffe identifies John XXII (r. 1316–34) as the first simoniac pope, Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 5 (58:14–30).

²⁵ Ibid., cap. 5 (61:8–62:9).

²⁶ E.g., Burton, *Israel's Fast*, 29; Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, 2:333.

without redemption, because one cannot retain what he has sold.²⁷ The comparison is not merely that Judas is greedy as simoniacs are greedy or even that Judas devalues spiritual things as simoniacs devalue spiritual things. Rather, the repeated point is that Judas is guilty of selling Jesus as simoniacs are guilty of selling Jesus.

This notion of trading in the things of God being the equivalent of selling Jesus is an ancient one; the word “christmonger” (χριστέμπορος) appears in Christian writings going as far back as the *Didache* (c. 50–120).²⁸ Writings associating Simon and Judas also date back to the early centuries of the church. In his homilies on Matthew, John Chrysostom preached, “Let no Judas, therefore, approach this table, let no Simon; for both of these perished on account of avarice.”²⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem called Simon “a second Judas.”³⁰ However, with the development of a formal notion of simony, the identity of Judas with those who traffic in spiritual things became more frequent and pronounced.

William Peraldus pushed the comparison beyond equivalence, arguing that simoniacs are worse than Judas:

It ought to suffice for such men that Christ was sold once for their sins. These sellers seem to be worse than Judas in these five [ways]: They sell him immortal and now glorified whom Judas sold mortal and in a state of humility: an insult offered to a knight is greater than one offered to a squire. Nor do they sell him only once like Judas, but more than a hundred times. They sell him for an even smaller price than Judas. They also believe him to be God, which Judas did not believe when he sold [him] for thirty denarii. Judas also, when he was

²⁷ C. I, q. I, c. II. At this point, Gratian quoted whom he believed to be Gregory of Nazianzus, but is likely Alger of Liège, Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 1:360n109.

²⁸ *Didache (Doctrina duodecim apostolorum)*, 12. See also Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1.3 (PG 82:889).

²⁹ Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaicum*, hom. 50.4 (PG 58:508).

³⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses*, 16.10 (2, p. 216).

penitent for this sin, led by penitence, returned the thirty silver pieces for which he had sold Christ: but simoniacs cannot be brought to penitence, so as to restore what they gained through simony.³¹

Examples exist among English authors as well. The royal chaplain Sampson Price called simoniacal patrons “heirs to Judas, whose Latin goeth no farther than *Quid dabis* [What will you give?].”³² As the English preacher Thomas Adams wrote, “when Judas is the patron, Simon Magus must be the priest.”³³

Allusions to and citations of the parallel text in Zechariah 11:4–13 indicate that this identification of Judas with simoniacs is further motivated by the typological connections.³⁴ Like Judas, the prophet is given thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12; Matt. 26:15), which is cast into the temple (Zech. 11:13; Matt. 27:5) and ultimately given to a potter (Zech. 11:13; Matt. 27:7). Zechariah plays the part of a shepherd who is put in charge of sheep that will be slaughtered, and these are his wages. If one might hesitate to compare Judas to a mercenary pastor, Scripture itself compares him to a shepherd for hire by way of shared images.

Balaam

Balaam, the prophet of Yahweh hired by Balak to curse Israel (Num. 22–24), is commonly regarded as an early simoniac. In fact, the Christian legend regarding Simon’s flight and fall, recounted above, may itself indicate an understood association with the Old Testament figure. In extrabiblical Jewish tradition, Balaam was a sorcerer who possessed

³¹ William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 109). Wycliffe appealed to Peraldus to make the same point. Wycliffe named the author “Parisiensis”—William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris—following a misattribution common in his day. Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (11:18–22; 8:24n).

³² Price, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 30.

³³ Adams, *Commentary on 2 Peter*, 451.

³⁴ E.g., Metford, *A General Discourse of Simony*, 40; Tuckney, *Sermon* 38, 645.

the power to fly but fell to earth at the prayer of Phinehas.³⁵ The legend of Simon's flight and fall runs the same course point for point: both sorcerers fly, both are brought down by the prayer of a chief antagonist,³⁶ both fall to injury and die. The similarity between these two indicates that early Christians took to heart the New Testament authors' depiction of Balaam as the prophet who loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11).

Some considered Balaam to be the first simoniac. For example, Hugh of St. Victor devoted a chapter to the "authors of simony" and traced its genealogy back to Balaam.³⁷ Regardless of whether they identified him as the first, many identified him as a simoniac, particularly on account of his willingness to sell the gift of prophecy for money.³⁸ Major, observing that Balaam wanted to sell the gift of prophecy, considered whether the sin might be named "balaamy" (*balaamia*) rather than "simony" (*simonia*).³⁹

Hus labeled "Balaamites" those simoniacs "who preach for money and for the sake of money, like those swindlers who grant indulgences for money."⁴⁰ From Peter's description of false teachers in 2 Peter 2:1–15, he cataloged eight marks by which the sons of Balaam may be recognized.⁴¹ Hus invited the reader to apply these marks to the clergy

³⁵ See *Bamidbar Rabbah*, 22.5; Buber, ed., *Midrash Tanchuma*, Balak 23; Zohar, 3:193b. For a summary presentation of these traditions, see Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 3.410–11.

³⁶ Peter rebukes Simon (Acts 8:20–23) while Phinehas stops the plague ultimately caused by Balaam's counsel by his zealous action (Num. 25:7–13; 31:16).

³⁷ "The contagion of the simoniacal heresy sprouted long ago in Balaam, who, when the price of divination was offered, set out to curse the people of God." Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, II, p. 10, c. 2 (PL 176:477C).

³⁸ E.g., Peter Damian, *Liber gratissimus*, c. 14 (p. 406).

³⁹ Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 182vb).

⁴⁰ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 3.B.

⁴¹ "Recognize them, for he says: [first,] they shall be liars; second, they shall introduce sects after them and shall be false teachers; third, they deny the one who bought them; fourth, they shall be fornicators, whose fornications many shall follow; fifth, through them the way of truth shall be blasphemed; sixth, with feigned words in covetousness they shall make merchandise of people and profit from them, for they have a heart practiced in covetousness; seventh, they have forsaken the right way and follow the way of Balaam; eighth, he grants them indulgences, saying that they

of his own day: "Those in whom one finds these marks are certainly the ones Saint Peter means."⁴² Later, he gave a number of other tests for discerning Balaamites, largely focused on the temptations they would lure people into,⁴³ and offered up an imprecation against them: "O Lord! Will you fight these Balaamites with the sword sharp on both sides, the sword of your mouth?"⁴⁴

English writers likewise appealed to Balaam as a proto-simoniatic. The Lollard tract *The Lanterne of Liȝt* (ca. 1409–15) invokes the name of Balaam repeatedly, likening Balaam to Gehazi⁴⁵ and accusing merchandizing priests of beguiling the people "with the foul sin of Balaam."⁴⁶ Later authors continued to name Balaam alongside Gehazi and Simon as the scriptural archetypes of the simoniatic.⁴⁷

Jeroboam

A further Old Testament forefather is Jeroboam, the king of Israel who split the kingdom and "filled the hand of whoever desired it, and he became a priest of the high places" (1 Kings 13:33). The connection to simony is, in part, motivated by the rendering of the Vulgate, which translates the Hebrew idiom for consecration literally as "fill the hand" (*implebat manum suam*). On this account, Latin theologians routinely interpreted the phrase as a financial transaction, Gregory's *munus a manu*.⁴⁸

The comparison asserts an analogy not only in the sin of contemporary simoniacs and the sin of Jeroboam but in their destruction. Jeroboam was destroyed because he made two golden calves and "second,

are sons of cursing, and that their judgment does not cease and their damnation does not sleep, that is, does not delay." Ibid., 3.B.

⁴² Ibid., 3.B.

⁴³ Ibid., 3.G.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.H.

⁴⁵ Swinburn, ed., *The Lanterne of Liȝt*, 120:26–34.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 84:32.

⁴⁷ E.g., Godolphin, *Repertorium Canonicum*, 556–57; Metford, *A General Discourse of Simony*, 61; *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 112–13; Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 58.

⁴⁸ E.g., William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 113).

because he bestowed the priesthood over those calves for money.”⁴⁹ The thrust of these observations is *a fortiori*: “If the selling of the priesthood of idols was thus avenged by the Lord, how will the selling of the true priesthood be avenged?”⁵⁰ Wycliffe prophesied “that wars shall continue [...] as long as this plague of simony endures,”⁵¹ and then, turning to Jeroboam, concluded, “He who thus avenged the selling of the priesthood of idols must therefore avenge the selling of the priesthood of Christ.”⁵² Hus applied the same reckoning to his own generation and closed with a prayer: “Those who thus take money and make bishops and priests, or grant others benefices, are followers of Jeroboam, and God grant that they not be destroyed as he was.”⁵³

Burton applied this name to the Pope, calling him “that grand Jeroboam of Rome,” who “for base bribes, admits into the priesthood the basest of the people.”⁵⁴ He further contended that the corruption of Israel under their king indicates that simoniacal corruption inevitably corrupts the whole people: “What other ministry can be expected in a church, where simony reigneth, than such as was under Jeroboam?”⁵⁵

Conclusion

These five figures form a composite portrait of the simoniac. The chief two, Simon and Gehazi, represent buyer and seller. Beyond that, Judas trades in Christ, Balaam trades in the word, and Jeroboam trades in

⁴⁹ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 8.A.

⁵⁰ William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 113). See also Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 8.A; Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 148ra).

⁵¹ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (9:24–26).

⁵² *Ibid.*, cap. 1 (10:4–6).

⁵³ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 3.D.

⁵⁴ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 50.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 103. He quoted the pseudo-Ambrosian *De dignitate sacerdotali* to the same effect: “What wonder is it if [King Jeroboam] alone made the entire Israelite nation sinful? [...] In a priesthood vitiated by the corruption of simony, you search in vain for a pious and upright people.” *Ibid.*, 96.

the priesthood. Theologians across many centuries returned to the same handful of names. Where the gifts of God are treated as articles of commerce, the same sins recur and the same judgments follow.

Scripture Proofs

Beyond the *loci classici* of Acts 8 and 2 Kings 5, theologians of past generations have centered on several other passages of Scripture to demonstrate the immorality of trafficking in spiritual things. The breadth of this scriptural witness was recognized early. In the third century, Cyprian compiled at the request of one Quirinus a book of biblical testimonies, including one heading “That the grace of God ought to be without price.” Under this rubric he gathered Peter’s rebuke of Simon Magus (Acts 8:20), the dominical command “freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8), Christ’s denunciation of the merchants in the temple (John 2:16), Isaiah’s call to come and buy without money (Isa. 55:1), and the apocalyptic promise of the water of life freely given (Rev. 21:6).¹

This chapter takes up the passages the medieval tradition most often employed in the service of the doctrine of simony, taking each in turn before weighing them together in the conclusion. While theologians adumbrated the figure of the simoniac from the narrative passages covered in Chapter 10, we will here address those scriptural texts which more directly supplied the doctrinal grounds on which his trade was condemned.

¹ Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum*, 3.100.

Matthew 10:8—Freely Give

The most frequently referenced verse on the topic of simony is Matthew 10:8, cited more often than Acts 8 or 2 Kings 5. In a detailed analysis of Gregory the Great's corpus of homilies and letters, one scholar concludes that the famous coiner of the term *simoniaca haeresis* almost never appealed to Acts 8 but appealed far more often to Matthew 10:8.²

Medieval quotations demonstrating the importance of this verse to the topic of simony could be multiplied *ad nauseam*, and many have already been provided, but perhaps here it will suffice to include the words of the *Glossa ordinaria*, which says that in this verse, Christ “condemns the perfidy of the simoniacal heresy.”³ Throughout the schoolmen, not only was the dominical command the chief text on simony, but admonition against simony was perhaps the chief application of the dominical command.

This pattern continued into the early years of the Reformation, though with less consistency. Luther opened his annotations on Matthew 10:8 by naming simony among the vices the verse forbids, and went on to urge, “let us gladly and freely serve him and teach the people.”⁴ While he did not mention simony by name, Calvin made

²“In the texts of Gregory the Great, the most astonishing feature is the almost total absence of Simon Magus and of the text of the Acts of the Apostles among the biblical justifications proscribing the *simoniaca heresis*. [...] In Gregory's writings, Matthew 10:8 (“Freely you have received, freely give”) is, in fact, used much more often than the episode of Simon to proscribe the *simoniaca heresis*.” Rosé, *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque?* 210–11.

³ *Glossa ordinaria* ad Matt. 10:8 (PL 114:118A).

⁴“He prohibits the vice of avarice, simony, and ambition, that is, so that they might teach sincerely, not for the sake of glory, gain, or favor, but freely for the sake of God. For he knew there would be wicked men in the future who would say and do all things for the sake of profit. Therefore, he forewarns them so diligently, that they might sincerely care only for the Kingdom of God.

“The words are to be weighed: ‘Freely you have received, freely give.’ He admonishes us to consider how unworthy we were of so great a ministry; and so, mindful of our unworthiness and of his infinite mercy, let us gladly and freely serve him and teach the people.” Luther, *Annotationes in aliquot capita Matthaei*, 10:8 (WA 38, 496:1–8).

similar comments, arguing that “no one will be a sincere minister of his word and a dispenser of grace unless he is prepared to bestow his labor freely,” and adding immediately that “all mercenaries unworthily corrupt and profane the sacred office of teaching.”⁵

The children of the English Reformation often denied either that this verse was to be taken as an imperative to more than the first apostles or that it regarded more than the working of miracles.⁶ This sentiment is often expressed in their contentions with Anabaptists, Quakers, and others who would use this passage to condemn ministerial salaries.⁷

However, they did not absolutely deny its contemporary application and employed it routinely when directly addressing simony. For example, Ralph Cudworth asserted that the command to freely give in Matthew 10:8 is especially to be understood of the working of miracles, but in that very same discourse, argued that the word of God should not be put to sale because “that which God hath given freely, ought not to be sold basely.”⁸ He likewise connected the activity to simony, appealing to Peter’s condemnation of Simon Magus.⁹

A few directly opposed the limits. The Anatomist wrote, “I shall not say with some, that these words of our Saviour do relate, not to the preaching of the gospel, but to those gifts of working miracles [...] nor that these words were intended only for the apostles, and not for the ordinary ministers of the Church.”¹⁰ In providing rules of interpretation, Jeremy Taylor reasoned from the maxim of Matthew 10:8 to explain why it would apply universally, to ministers of any era:

Thus it was also in the first mission of the disciples (above spoken of) in which the body of precepts was temporary and relative; but yet when our Blessed Lord had inserted

⁵ Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, Matt. 10:8 (CO 45:276).

⁶ E.g., Keach, *The Gospel Minister’s Maintenance Vindicated*, 105.

⁷ See Hall, *Sal Terrae*, 134–36; Prynne, *A Gospel Plea*, 35–36; cf. Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4.293.

⁸ Cudworth, *The Supplement*, 537.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 537.

¹⁰ *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 88.

that clause [*freely ye have received, freely give*] we are not to conclude it to be temporary and only relating to that mission, because it is placed in a body of relative commandments: for there is in it something that is spiritual, and of an eternal decency, rectitude and proportion; and we are taught to separate this from the other by the reproof which fell upon Simon Magus, by the separate nature of spiritual things, by the analogy of the Gospel, by the provisions which upon other accounts are made for the clergy and the whole state ecclesiastical, upon the stock of such propositions which provide so fully, that they cannot be tempted by necessity to suppose God left them to be supplied by simoniacal intercourses.¹¹

So long as things of the Spirit are freely received, they must be freely given. God has not ceased to give them freely, so the obligation has not lapsed with the apostles.

John 2:16—The Dove Sellers

Many medievals applied the narrative of the temple cleansing to the topic of simony, either explicitly or by way of allusion. Often, rather than introducing their own statements on the matter, they would quote patristic theologians to the same effect. These references go back particularly far, including comments from figures such as Origen¹² and Ambrose.¹³ With some recurrence, the medievals would

¹¹ Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium*, 2.542. The bracketed clause is original. See also Ames, *Conscience*, 5.229.

¹² “And I think that the word about those who sell the doves fits those who hand the churches over to bishops or presbyters or deacons who are greedy for base gain, tyrannical, ignorant, and irreverent. This is why Matthew and Mark named the chairs of those who sell the doves alone, which they say were overturned by Jesus.” Origen, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei*, 16.22 (GCS 40, 549:22–550:5); cf. C. 16, q. 7, c. 9.

¹³ “But why he overturned the chairs of those selling doves, I do not understand according to the letter; for the bird-sellers could not claim for themselves the dignity of any honored seat in the market. For what prerogative of dignity is there in doves? Yet

quote Augustine on the matter: “the dove is not for sale.”¹⁴ But most frequently they bolstered this point by referencing the interpretation of Gregory the Great:

We know indeed from the Gospel what our Redeemer did by his own act: that he entered the temple and overturned the chairs of those selling doves [Matt. 21:12]. For to sell doves is to receive a temporal advantage from the Holy Spirit, whom Almighty God, consubstantial with himself, bestows upon men through the imposition of hands. And from that evil, as I said above, it is already indicated what follows: that the chairs of those who presumed to sell doves in the temple of God fell by the judgment of God. And this error, clearly, spreads with increase among those under them. For the man who is brought to sacred honor is himself, too, already tainted at the very root of his promotion, and is the readier to sell to others what he bought. And where is that which is written: “Freely you have received, freely give” [Matt. 10:8]? And since the simoniacal heresy was

the form of the Lord’s baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended as a dove [Luke 3:22], gives warning—by the figure of merchants of this kind cast out of the temple—that those who traffic in the grace of the Holy Spirit cannot have fellowship in the Church of God. For ‘freely,’ he says, ‘you have received, freely give’ [Matt. 10:8]. Finally, to Simon, who thought the gift of sanctifying could be conferred upon him for a price, Peter replied: ‘May your money,’ he says, ‘perish with you; because you think you can obtain the grace of God with money. There is no part or lot for you in this faith’ [Acts 8:20–21].” Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii sec. Lucam*, 9.19 (CSEL 32.4, 444:25–445:11).

¹⁴“Simon [...] supposed the apostles to be traders of the sort the Lord drove out of the temple with a whip. For such he himself was, and he wished to buy what he might sell: he was of those who sell doves. For the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16). Who then are those who sell doves, brothers, but those who say, ‘We give the Holy Spirit’? For why do they say this, and at what price do they sell? At the price of their own honor. They receive temporal chairs [seats of authority] as their price, so that they themselves are seen to be selling doves. Let them beware of the whip of little cords. The dove is not for sale: it is given freely, because it is called grace.” Augustine, *Tractatus in evangelium Ioannis*, 10.6 (PL 35:1469–70).

the first to arise against the holy Church, why is it not weighed, why is it not seen, that the man who ordains another for a price, by promoting him, brings it about that he becomes a heretic?¹⁵

Gratian included this passage in his *Decretum*,¹⁶ along with many others to the same effect.¹⁷ Later medieval writers, such as Wycliffe and Hus, also followed Gregory on this point.¹⁸

In these readings from Ambrose on, the doves represent the Holy Spirit on account of his appearance at Christ's baptism,¹⁹ and the sellers of doves are those who trade in spiritual things for temporal gain. The chairs or seats (*cathedra*) represent the temporal honors that simoniacs receive as the price of their trade. Christ overturning them (Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15) represents their certain judgment. The *Glossa ordinaria* consolidated these points in its comments on Matthew 21:12.²⁰

Modern readers committed to the singular sense of Scripture—as affirmed in the Westminster and Second London Baptist confessions²¹—may find these patristic readings difficult to accept. To some, the identification of the doves with the Holy Spirit and the chairs with temporal honors may resemble the kind of allegorical exegesis that the Reformers sought to restrain. However, William Whitaker—himself a critic of the fourfold sense (*quadriga*)—distinguished: “These things we do not wholly reject: we concede such things as allegory, anagoge, and tropology in scripture; but meanwhile we deny that there are many and various senses. We affirm that there is but one true, proper and genuine sense of scripture, arising from the words rightly

¹⁵ Gregory I, *Ep.* V.58 (1, 369:14–25).

¹⁶ C. 1, q. 1, c. 117.

¹⁷ C. 1, q. 1, c. 23 (Jerome); C. 1, q. 3, c. 8 (Urban II, quoting Augustine); C. 1, q. 3, c. 9 (Alexander II); C. 1, q. 3, c. 11 (Bede); C. 1, q. 7, c. 5 (Leo IV).

¹⁸ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (4:25–5:20); Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 2.D; cf. Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 17.13 (pp. 109–10).

¹⁹ Origen considered the doves to represent the faithful. Origen, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei*, 16.22 (GCS 40, 550:20–24).

²⁰ *Glossa ordinaria* ad Matt. 21:12 (PL 114:153B).

²¹ WCF 1.9; 2LBCF 1.9.

understood, which we call the literal; and we contend that allegories, tropologies, and anagoges are not various senses, but various collections from one sense, or various applications and accommodations of that one meaning.”²²

The application of Christ’s temple cleansing to the problem of simony need not be taken as a second “sense” of the text to be dismissed out of hand. It is better read as a legitimate accommodation of the one literal sense: Christ drove out those who profaned the temple with commerce, and simoniacs profane the church in an analogous way. The fathers and medievals after them did not mystically read meanings into the text so much as unfold the entailments of Christ’s zeal for the temple, especially as informed by images invested with significance elsewhere in Scripture.²³

Indeed, Protestant and Puritan authors would continue applying the temple cleansing to simony. John Trapp, glossing Zechariah 14:21 (“there shall be no more the Canaanite”), noted that the Vulgate rendered the word “merchant,” which he identified as “the simoniac, the church-chopper, such money-merchants as Christ whipped out of the temple.”²⁴ Christopher Ness, in a four-volume work given to the interpretation of types, wrote, “So this sorcerer, unsound Simon, hath given the execrable name to that abominable sin of simony, wherewith both the laws of God and men do brand all those that barter for spiritual benefices. N.B.”²⁵ This sin is forbid, Lev. 25:34. The Levites’ portion and patrimony was not to be sold, etc. The sellers of doves (in which form the Spirit descended, Matt. 3:16) our Lord did whip out of his temple twice.”²⁶ Elsewhere, Ness described himself as “abhorring to destroy the literal sense of the Holy Scriptures by wanton allegories, as some have done, from the frothy exuberances of their own addle

²² Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture*, 404.

²³ For a hermeneutical model of how such typological connections can be drawn with exegetical restraint, see Clowney, *Preaching Christ*, 32.

²⁴ Trapp, *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, 605. Trapp preferred the rendering “Canaanite,” granting that the Canaanites “were indeed great merchants.”

²⁵ *Nota Bene* (“Note well”).

²⁶ Ness, *A Compleat History and Mystery*, 4:361.

brains.”²⁷ Even those grounded in the literal sense of Scripture could acknowledge the application of the text to the sin of simony.

1 Corinthians 4:1—Stewards of the Mysteries of God

In any legitimate commercial transaction, the owner of a thing must authorize the sale. In the case of spiritual things, men are not owners, but ministers. That is, they are stewards who are bound by the directives of God, the divine proprietor of all grace.²⁸

Most commonly in arguing this point, the schoolmen cited 1 Corinthians 4:1 (“Let a man so account us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God”).²⁹ This apostolic self-description undermines any claim of ownership or authority that would permit commerce in spiritual things. As “mysteries,” they are matters that have been revealed by God and are freely given.

Peter Paludanus put the argument in syllogistic form. Major premise: A sale is illicit when the seller is not the owner but only a minister authorized to dispense a thing. Minor premise: A prelate is not the owner of spiritual things but only a minister appointed to dispense them. Therefore, his sales are illicit. In support of the minor premise, he cited 1 Corinthians 4:1, 1 Peter 4:10, and Matthew 10:8.³⁰

As the owner of his storehouse of gifts and graces, God has made it clear how his ministers must steward them. They must be used to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10), and they must be given freely (Matt. 10:8). The sale of spiritual things is therefore forbidden.

²⁷ Ness, *A Crystal Mirror*, 70.

²⁸ See Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, corp.; Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 2; Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 146ra). “It is not in man’s power to sell them, seeing he is not Lord over them, but steward and dispenser of them.” Cudworth, *The Supplement*, 537.

²⁹ Calvin appealed to this verse as the divine complement to ancient canons on simony. Calvin, *Institutio*, 4.5.9.

³⁰ Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (pp. 318b–319a).

Romans 11:6—Graceless Grace

The very word “grace” (*gratia*) denotes what is freely given. To attach a price to grace is not merely to misuse it but to nullify it, for a grace that is purchased ceases to be grace at all. The simoniacal exchange is therefore incoherent as well as immoral: it requires that one and the same thing be gratuitous and non-gratuitous at once. As Romans 11:6 (“if it is by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace is no longer grace”) confirms, grace that is given on the basis of some exchange is no longer grace.³¹

Paludanus again developed the point in a syllogism. Major premise: A contract is illicit in which the nature of the thing is repugnant to the nature of the contract. Minor premise: This is the case in the sale or purchase of a spiritual thing because they are an accessory to grace whose nature is to be freely given. Therefore, a contract in spiritual thing is illicit as it is repugnant to buying and selling.³² Repugnance here describes contradictory natures. Grace is repugnant to exchange because it ceases to be grace upon exchange.

What then is exchanged in a simoniacal transaction? Gratian opened the question with a canon he ascribed to Leo the Great: what the simoniac has to give is not the Spirit of truth but the spirit of lies.³³ The simoniac therefore does more than take an unjust price; he promulgates deception. In the case of ordinations, he promises the Spirit of truth but gives the spirit of lies. In any case, he ostensibly offers grace but can only give a semblance.

³¹ See Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 2; Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 1, q. 4 (pp. 647–48); Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1.

³² Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5 (p. 319a).

³³ “If grace is not given or received freely, it is not grace. Simoniacs, however, do not freely receive; therefore they do not receive the grace which is especially at work in ecclesiastical orders. But if they do receive, they do not have; and if they do not have, they can give to no one, either freely or not freely. What, then, do they give? Surely what they have. And what do they have? The spirit of lies, without a doubt. How do we prove this? Because if the Spirit of truth (as the Truth itself, from whom he proceeds, testifies) is received freely, then without a doubt that which is not received freely is proved to be the spirit of lies.” C. 1, q. 1, c. 1.

Micah 3:11—The Example of the Prophets

In rejecting simony, the schoolmen appealed to the example set by the prophets. Before a consideration of particular prophets, they usually anticipated the objection that the prophets did charge, giving the examples of payments prepared by Saul and the wife of Jeroboam. Their answer began from Micah 3:11 (“her priests teach for a price, and her prophets divine for money”).³⁴

Part of the reason for this structure is that the tradition frequently—either explicitly or implicitly—refers back to Jerome’s commentary on Micah 3:9–12 to handle the cases of the distinct prophets. His exposition touches a number of passages relevant to our study, but we will limit ourselves to those comments most frequently recited by later theologians.

And let it not disturb anyone, that which we read in the first book of Kings, that Saul, wishing to go to Samuel, said to his servant that he could not go to him because he did not have a price to offer for the prophecy, and the servant answered: “Behold, there is found in my hand a fourth part of a shekel of money, and I will give it to the man of God, and he will declare to us our way” [1 Sam. 9:8]. For it is not written that Samuel accepted it, or that they offered it: but rather they are fed by the prophet, and invited to a meal. But suppose he did accept it; what he took is to be reckoned alms for the

³⁴ E.g., “It does not seem that one falls into any sin by selling a gift of the Holy Spirit, because it is said in 1 Kings 9 [1 Sam. 9:8] concerning Saul, and 3 Kings 14 [1 Kings 14:3] concerning the wife of Jeroboam, that both brought a price to the holy prophets for a prophetic manifestation; and it is established that prophecy is a gift of his: therefore, etc. [...] But to the objection that it is not a sin to sell on the example of the prophets, it must be said that no prophet who was good and holy sold the gift of prophecy, but only the wicked, as such are expressly rebuked in Micah 3[11–12]: Her judges judged for bribes, and her priests taught for hire, and her prophets divined for money; and below: For this reason, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, etc.” Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 1, q. 4 (pp. 647–48). See also C. 1, q. 1, d.p.c. 22; Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2.

tabernacle rather than a fee for prophecy. For a shekel has twenty obols, and a fourth part of a shekel is five obols. And therefore, if our priests wish to sell prophecy, and set forth doves on their chairs—the doves the Lord overturned with a whip [John 2]—let them accept five obols, not the prices of estates. This same thing applies also in the third book of Kings, that the wife of Jeroboam, her son being sick, proceeds to Ahijah the man of God, bringing him loaves and raisins, and a small vessel of honey [1 Kings 14:3]. For it is said what she carried with her, and yet the prophet is not written to have accepted it: indeed, since he both rebuked her and predicted the coming mourning. Granted, those who had been accustomed to go to soothsayers (since there were many diviners and soothsayers in Israel) may by a bad habit have supposed the same of the prophets too, and may have wished to offer holy men what they were accustomed to offer diviners; and granted that Scripture merely reports what they intended. Even so, it does not say that they dared to offer it, or that the prophets accepted it.³⁵

On Jerome's reading, Scripture nowhere records a prophet accepting payment; it merely narrates what supplicants intended to bring, not that they offered it or that the prophets received it. Even if Samuel had taken what was offered, he would only have done so as receiving alms for the tabernacle rather than as a fee for prophecy. Subsequent writers on simony overwhelmingly adopted this line of reasoning, treating Jerome's argument—and authority—as decisive.³⁶

³⁵ Jerome, *In proph. min.* In Mich. I, 3:9–12 (cols. 471–72).

³⁶ See e.g., C. 1, q. 1, d.p.c. 24; Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 4; Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, ad 3. For an example of one who cites Gratian, see Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 53. For an example of one who makes the same argument with no citation, see Major, *In Sent. (red. A)*, d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 147vb).

Few expanded on this analysis, but Girolamo Zanchi, having cited Jerome and followed him closely, went on to answer a further objection that Saul and others brought gifts to the prophets because they knew that they were approaching God and must bring some show of gratitude. Yet, we see that other prophets refused gifts and sometimes accepted them, as with Elisha toward Naaman and the Shunammite woman. These are distinguished because in one he recognized a sale and for the other he recognized that there was no sale, but a desire to meet his needs. “Thus it remains firm: to give and accept gifts for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and for spiritual things, as a wage for such spiritual things or for profit, is mere Simony, and it pertains to the irreverence, contempt, and overthrow of divine worship.”³⁷

Proverbs 23:23—Sell Not Wisdom

English translations of Solomon’s verse render it as a paired imperative: “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23:23). The Vulgate keeps both imperatives but attaches the notion of sale directly to wisdom and its companions: “Buy truth, and do not sell wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (*veritatem eme, et noli vendere sapientiam, et doctrinam, et intelligentiam*). Modern readers typically take the verse as a warning against parting with wisdom once acquired, but the medieval tradition, reading the Vulgate, more often heard in it a prohibition on charging for wisdom in the first place.³⁸

Some, like William of Auxerre, extended the prohibition to knowledge of every kind, the liberal arts included: to buy or sell any science whatsoever is simoniacal, the gravity of this sin being proportional to the nobility of the discipline.³⁹ Others felt the force of the verse keenly

³⁷ Zanchi, *Tractatus de redemptione*, IV.17.4 (col. 500).

³⁸ In dividing up the several categories of spiritual things, Peraldus wrote, “Some are called spiritual because by them the Holy Spirit is possessed, as knowledge and virtue are. For by knowledge he is possessed insofar as he illuminates, and therefore knowledge is forbidden to be sold. In Proverbs 23[:23] it is said: ‘Do not sell wisdom, teaching, and understanding.’” William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 114).

³⁹ William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tr. 21, cap. 3, q. 2 (foll. 229vb–230ra).

enough to defend the practice of the schools on a careful distinction: masters did not sell wisdom itself, but only the labor of teaching it, which could be remunerated like any other work.⁴⁰ Others were more explicit in narrowing the verse's application, concluding from it a prohibition specifically on charging for theological or moral instruction, where the subject matter is most plainly spiritual.⁴¹

Even apart from this more extreme reading, the principle that what is permissible to buy is permissible to sell required that the first clause of the verse ("buy truth") be understood coordinately. Since Proverbs 17:16 says that the fool cannot buy wisdom though he has riches, the purchase cannot be made with money; it is a "spiritual purchase," and its price is the seeking, since wisdom offers itself to whoever will have it.⁴² Wisdom is only to be bought with wisdom, and the fool cannot buy it "because he does not have it."⁴³

Conclusion

Beneath the variety of passages surveyed here, two concerns recur. The first is the gratuity of grace; what God gives without price cannot be received, held, or transferred on any other terms. The second is the limited authority of the minister; he handles what is not his to sell.

The modern reader will find these arguments uneven in their force. The dominical command of Matthew 10:8 and the stewardship language of 1 Corinthians 4:1 carry their weight on the surface of the text, and the definitional argument from Romans 11:6—that purchased grace ceases to be grace—asks nothing of the reader beyond the meaning of the word. The application of the temple cleansing requires more of the reader to consider the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the particular images recorded. Jerome's observations about the prophets rely on the didactic undercurrent of Micah 3:11, but also

⁴⁰ E.g., Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 2, ad 8. The distinction is taken up in Chapter 8, pp. 142–47.

⁴¹ E.g., Courson, *Summa*, 10.3 (fol. 47va).

⁴² Prov. 4:7; Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis*, II-II, Inq. 3, Tract. 8, S. 1, Q. 3, T. 2, C. 4, A. 3, probl. 2.

⁴³ William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tr. 21, cap. 3, q. 2 (foll. 229vb–230ra).

a pointed omission in the text: the gifts brought to Samuel and to Ahijah are recorded where their acceptance is not. The argument from Proverbs 23:23 rests on a literal understanding of “sell,” on a figurative understanding of “buy” in the same verse, and in part, on the Vulgate’s particular wording.

Regardless of the force of any single text, the cumulative case represented by the tradition is substantial. Read together, these passages testify that spiritual things are not for sale.

Part V

The Censure of Simony

Sin and Repentance

Having defined simony and surveyed its many forms, we will now consider its moral weight and consequences. Theologians have ranked simony among the gravest of sins. The question of repentance is correspondingly severe. What must the simoniac do, and what may he hope for?

Gravity and Effects

Throughout the relevant literature, simony ranks among the gravest of all sins, both in its aggravations and effects. While not all theologians agreed, many spoke of simony simply as the greatest of all sins. Beyond the common observation that Simon is the first of all heretics, the canonical *locus classicus* for this claim stands in the *Liber extra*: “in comparison, other crimes are reckoned as practically nothing”;¹ it is “a plague that surpasses other diseases in its magnitude.”² This often serves as the standard point of departure for later treatments. For example, William Peraldus began with the above statement in presenting eight things that make simony detestable and twelve insults that simony inflicts upon God.³

¹ X 5.3.32.

² X 5.3.6.

³ William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (pp. 108–13).

Other authors likewise developed extensive catalogs of the ways in which simony is uniquely grievous. In addressing simony, William of Saint-Amour cataloged five harmful effects on the preacher who sells the word of God: essentially, he blinds himself with the gifts he takes and makes himself a slave to those who pay him.⁴ On similar grounds, simony has been associated with various judgments. Henry III declared it manifest that because of simony, famine, pestilence, and sword had come upon the sons of men.⁵

Many recorded execrations of its effect on the church at large. Wycliffe put it sharply: "Simony, therefore, is the cause why a great part of what is called the Church lies scattered and dead."⁶ Henry Burton devoted an entire chapter to "the miserable fruits and effects of simony," beginning with these words: "The effects and fruits of simony are no less miserable, than the censures are grievous, and the punishments thereof intolerable. For as Simon is the father of all simonists, so simony is the mother of all mischiefs in the church."⁷ These writers traced the church's disorders back to avarice in holy things.

A Two-Table Offense

Occasionally, theologians have asked whether simony is a first table or second table offense. That is, is it a wrong committed against God or man? Generally, it is concluded that simony is a sin against both tables. William Ames captured both dimensions together, condemning the exchange of "a holy and spiritual [thing] for a temporal."⁸ First, holy things are polluted by worldly temporal contracts, since "it is against the religion and reverence which is due to holy things."⁹ Second, according to Matthew 10:8, "it is injustice to sell those things which

⁴ William of Saint-Amour, *Si quis diligit me*, §§ 11–15 (186:14–187:6).

⁵ Raoul Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, 5.5.25 (pp. 133–34). The speech is quoted in Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁶ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (14:9–10).

⁷ Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 93.

⁸ Ames, *Conscience*, 5.229.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.229.

are to be bestowed on free cost.”¹⁰ Simony transgresses both religion (first table) and justice (second table).

Two arguments will demonstrate this: Aquinas on the first table and Alexander of Hales on the second. As with most discussions of the matter, these two address the two-table nature of simony in considerations of the eighth commandment (“you shall not steal”),¹¹ where simony is typically categorized along with usury.¹²

The First Table

If simony is treated under the command not to steal, this raises the question of how it could be regarded as matter pertaining to the first table of the law. Aquinas remarked on this in his *Quodlibet* where he handled the question of whether offenses against the first table are greater than offenses against the second table. In particular, he responded to the objection that the second table is greater than the first because simony is the greatest offense and, as a species of avarice, is a second table offense.

This hypothesis fails, Aquinas contended, because simony is not exclusively a violation of the second table. The man who commits it “behaves irreverently toward sacred things, in which he touches upon the sins which are against the precepts of the first table.”¹³ While simony was often regarded as the greatest sin, Aquinas denied that it may be regarded so in any absolute sense. However, he pointed out that the reason it is considered so great is precisely because of its connection to the first table, being a profaning of holy things.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5.229.

¹¹ In medieval literature, this is the seventh command, following the traditional Augustinian enumeration.

¹² E.g., Biel, *Collectorium*, IV, d. 15, q. 3 (sig. q5vb).

¹³ Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, V, q. 10, a. 2, ad 2 (p. 114).

The Second Table

Conversely, Alexander of Hales responded to the opposite notion, that simony is only a first table violation.¹⁴ He proceeded as Aquinas, framing the objection as a false dichotomy that acknowledges one offense without the other. When it comes to selling or buying a priceless, divine thing “an injury is committed against God and it is a sin against the worship of God and against the first precept of the first table.”¹⁵ But when it comes to receiving temporal things, which cannot be justly possessed by the recipient, “one sins against this [the eighth] commandment.”¹⁶

Alexander distinguished between the exchange (“selling or buying”) of the spiritual thing and the exchange (“receiving”) of the material thing. The first is a first table offense, since God has exclusive ownership over divine things. However, in the case of the material thing, one has wrongly received something that someone else should instead have. This constitutes a second table offense.

Alexander grounded this assertion of an unjust deprivation in Augustine’s maxim that “everything that is wrongfully possessed is another’s.”¹⁷ He continued from there to make the direct connection to the sin of theft: “that is, it is to be reckoned as another’s property. And in this way, in this respect, simony is theft, inasmuch as it is drawn to the special name of sacrilege.”¹⁸ One may ask who has been stolen from, given that the purchaser willingly parts with his money. But Augustine spoke of a more general wrong being done to the faithful, to whom belong all things. While this idea is present in other passages

¹⁴ The objection: “And since simony consists in selling or buying a spiritual thing, or something annexed to a spiritual thing, and since by this an injury is committed against God in itself, not against the neighbor, it seems that simony is forbidden among the precepts of the first table, not the second. Therefore it is not forbidden by this commandment.” Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis*, III, P. 2, Inq. 3, Tract. 2, S. 1, Q. 2, T. 7, C. 5, A. 4, n. 1 (p. 569).

¹⁵ Ibid., III, P. 2, Inq. 3, Tract. 2, S. 1, Q. 2, T. 7, C. 5, A. 4 (pp. 569–70).

¹⁶ Ibid., III, P. 2, Inq. 3, Tract. 2, S. 1, Q. 2, T. 7, C. 5, A. 4 (pp. 569–70).

¹⁷ Ibid., III, P. 2, Inq. 3, Tract. 2, S. 1, Q. 2, T. 7, C. 5, A. 4 (p. 570); Augustine, *Ep.* 153.6.26 (CSEL 44, 426:9–10).

¹⁸ Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis*, III, P. 2, Inq. 3, Tract. 2, S. 1, Q. 2, T. 7, C. 5, A. 4 (p. 570).

(Prov. 13:22; Eccles. 2:26; 1 Cor. 3:21), he remarked on a Septuagintal addition to Proverbs 17:6, “To the faithful is the whole world of riches; but to the faithless not even a penny.”¹⁹ In other words, if both parties are wrong, then the money still counts as being “stolen,” belonging to the faithful.

Simony is a first table offense because it transgresses God’s statutes regarding worship and spiritual things. It is a second table offense because it disenfranchises the godly.

Associated Corruptions

While simony is associated with a constellation of other corruptions,²⁰ two in particular are worth examining. The first is a direct consequence as sin begets sin: the commercialization of the ministry corrupts the word itself, whether by natural incentive or by divine judgment. The second is sodomy, an analogous corruption of nature for simony’s corruption of grace.

False Doctrine

Among the corruptions attending simony, its connection to false doctrine is the most pronounced consequence. When the ministry of the word is motivated by money, the word itself is corrupted. Theologians have identified two aspects of this phenomenon, the natural and the supernatural. On one hand, corruption flows from human incentives, and on the other hand, on account of simoniacal dealings, God himself takes away truth and permits it to be replaced by error.

The association is ancient. In the second century, Irenaeus declared broadly that “all who in any way adulterate the truth, and do harm to the preaching of the Church, are disciples and successors of Simon the

¹⁹ Augustine, *Ep.* 153.6.26 (CSEL 44, 426:4–6).

²⁰ For an overview of the medieval rhetoric against simony, see Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, 117–20.

Samaritan magician.”²¹ While Irenaeus was not here speaking explicitly of selling the word, his observation establishes a pattern: the spirit of Simon stands behind every corruption of Christian proclamation.

The *Shepherd of Hermas* (ca. 100–160) provides a natural explanation for why the paid prophet corrupts his message. Hermas contended that one who requires payment to prophesy attaches to the empty people, “speaking emptily, according to their desires; for he answers the empty with empty things.”²² The prophet for hire gravitates toward those willing to pay, who are themselves empty vessels. Having no substance of their own, they readily receive whatever the prophet supplies because such a prophet supplies whatever his audience desires to hear. An empty vessel might otherwise be broken, but, put with other empty vessels, it finds itself in agreement with them.²³ The prophet requiring payment necessarily follows money rather than truth.

Jerome offered a more striking explanation that operates on a supernatural plane. Commenting on the mercenary prophets of Micah 3:11, he wrote, “But the Prophets of Jerusalem also used to divine for money, not knowing that prophecy is one thing and divination is another; for never in the Scriptures is ‘divination’ taken in a good sense. ‘There shall be no augury in Jacob,’ it says, ‘nor divination in Israel’ [Num. 23:23]. Indeed, they seemed to themselves to be Prophets, but because they were receiving money, their prophecy became divination.”²⁴ Jerome made this remark immediately before likening prophesying for money to the offer of Simon Magus. The implication is not merely that mercenary preachers tend toward falsehood through natural incentive, but that the prophetic character of their utterance is exchanged for divination through divine judgment.

We have already remarked on how frequently later authors referenced Jerome on this passage.²⁵ Later writers repeated the same thoughts. In the very same passage where William of Saint-Amour

²¹ Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus haereses*, I.27.4 (p. 274).

²² Hermas, *The Shepherd*, Mand. 11.13.

²³ Ibid., Mand. 11.13.

²⁴ Jerome, *In proph. min.* In Mich. I, 3:9–12 (col. 471).

²⁵ See Chapter 11, pp. 186–87.

quoted Jerome to this effect, he gave the complementary natural explanation. Preachers may not receive large gifts “lest by this they burden their listeners; or lest the Gospel become hateful; or lest the preachers themselves lose the freedom of rebuking.”²⁶ Gifts function as bribes. The preacher who accepts them becomes obligated to his benefactor and can no longer rebuke freely. Here the explanation turns back from the supernatural to the natural: the word is corrupted by human constraint; the preacher says what his patron wishes to hear rather than what God has given him to say.²⁷

English divines recognized the same connection. Henry Burton described simony and sacrilege as having different immediate effects but working together to one ultimate ruin: “both together cause prophesyings to fail, the people to perish, and idolatry to spread itself.”²⁸ To sell the word corrupts it as much as failing to fund it takes it away.

Simony turns ministers into merchants (a natural corruption) and causes prophecy to fail (a supernatural one). As Jerome observed centuries earlier, the mercenary prophet’s word ceases to be prophecy at all.

Sodomy

In Chapter 10, we discussed the association of simony with leprosy.²⁹ Medieval literature links simony to sodomy as well. This association is less prevalent than that of leprosy, but it still constitutes a recognizable strand of the tradition.

Consider the Summoner and the Pardoner of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. They are both simoniacs. Though it is his duty to call parishioners to appear before the archdeacon’s court, the Summoner turns a blind eye for a fee: for a quart of wine he lets a man keep

²⁶ William of Saint-Amour, *Collectiones*, D. 4, sign. 40 (p. 453).

²⁷ Paludanus made a similar comment in his discourse on simony: “One must not make the collection of money the end of preaching, like those who ‘estimate godliness to be a gain’ [1 Tim. 6:5], preaching for no other purpose than to collect money; and to get it they even fabricate indulgences and compose many lies in their preaching.” Paludanus, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 5, concl. 2 (p. 320b).

²⁸ Burton, *Israel’s Fast*, 29.

²⁹ See pp. 167–70.

his concubine for a year.³⁰ The Pardoner sells indulgences brought from Rome and a bag of feigned relics, accruing more wealth in a day than a poor parson earns in two months.³¹ Both possess features that reinforce the picture of their spiritual corruption. Chaucer described the Summoner as leprous, with a disgusting visage, red and purulent;³² the Pardoner's effeminate behavior and relationship with the Summoner are suggestive of sodomy. The Pardoner is a beardless man with a high-pitched voice who sings a love song while the Summoner carries the bass; the narrator declines to say whether he is "a gelding [castrated horse] or a mare."³³ Chaucer chose marks that already carried this sense: the Summoner's leprosy manifests his simony,³⁴ and the Pardoner's suggested sodomy does the same.³⁵

One scholar wrote, "Not merely does an analogy exist between simony and leprosy, between simony and sodomy, but an identification. The simoniac is a leper; the simoniac is a sodomist."³⁶ Peraldus explained the reason for this association:

The second thing that makes simony detestable is that it is a spiritual sodomy. Just as in bodily sodomy he who is the work of nature acts against nature, so in simony he who is the work of grace acts against grace, because he has been redeemed by grace. And just as on the day of judgment the sodomite will be struck speechless according

³⁰ Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, 649–58 (pp. 19–20).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 686–706 (p. 21). "The grossest form of simony was exactly what the Pardoner does: the selling of indulgences." Patterson, "Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch," 664.

³² Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, 623–33 (p. 19).

³³ *Ibid.*, 672–91 (pp. 20–21).

³⁴ "The Summoner's leprosy identifies him as an established threat to society because he is a simoniac." Grigsby, *Pestilence*, 87.

³⁵ "We can now infer that the Pardoner may be thought to be a mare—a sodomite—because he is a simoniac." Patterson, "Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch," 666; "if the Pardoner is indeed a sodomist, this would be a perfect sign of his 'character' as a simoniac." Vance, "Chaucer's Pardoner," 736–37.

³⁶ McVeigh, "Chaucer's Portraits of the Pardoner and Summoner," 58.

to the meaning of his name,³⁷ because he was an enemy of nature, which had made him—for as far as in him lies, the sodomite destroys the human race—so the simoniac will be struck speechless, who was an enemy of the grace by which he had been redeemed. And just as under the natural law sodomy is judged either the greatest sin or one of the greatest, because it is against nature, so in the time of grace, under the evangelical law, simony is judged the greatest sin, because it is properly contrary to grace. For properly it acts against that word of Matt. 10: “Freely you have received, freely give.” Whence simoniacs are rightly signified by the Sodomites who wanted to break down the doors of Lot, of whom it is said in Gen. 19: “And they were now on the point of breaking down the doors of Lot,” etc.³⁸

Wycliffe affirmed this judgment, adding this simple explanation: “For just as in bodily sodomy seed is lost against nature, the seed from which an individual of the human race would be formed, so in that [spiritual] sodomy the seed of the word of God is cast away, through which a spiritual generation in Christ Jesus would be created.”³⁹ The seed of the word of God is to be given freely, but the simoniac ministers fruitlessly.

Repentance

James Metford summarized the canonical and casuistical position concisely: “you are bound in conscience to resign whatever is so

³⁷ Jerome gives the meaning of the name as “cattle, silent, or blindness, or their likeness.” Jerome, *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum*, De Genesi, S (PL 23:828). Peraldus’s point is that the sodomite will fittingly have nothing to say in his own defense at the judgment.

³⁸ William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 108).

³⁹ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (8:27–30).

gotten, and to make restitution of what profits you have received.”⁴⁰ These obligations are treated at length by the schoolmen.⁴¹

While the doctrine of simony encompassed the sale and purchase of all kinds of spiritual things, the bulk of the medieval material available on repentance from simony consists of legal code regulating orders and benefices. Therefore, we will begin by outlining the categories of simoniacal ordinations before covering associated matters.

Categories of Simoniacal Ordinations

In canon law and the writings of the jurists, the question that recurs most is the matter of ordinations, either ones that occur simoniacally through a purchase or those that are administered by one who is himself a simoniac. Within these works, such problematic ordinations fall in one of three categories. One can be ordained

- simoniacally by simoniacs,
- simoniacally by non-simoniacs, or
- non-simoniacally by simoniacs.⁴²

The first category is of the most obvious sort. The second occurs when one may have his ordination arranged by a purchase of which the administrator is unaware. In the final category, no simony is committed in the ordination, but the ordainer is later found to be a simoniac on other grounds. Certain writings still label such a man a “simoniac” though he is not guilty of *actual* simony: “it is not the guilt of the crime that makes them simoniacs, but the ordination by a simoniac.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Metford, *A General Discourse of Simony*, 155.

⁴¹ E.g., Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 7 (foll. 189rb–190rb).

⁴² This threefold distinction originates from the Lateran synod of 1060, *Concilium Lateranense posterius*, can. 5 (p. 551); cf. C. 1, q. 1, c. 107; Lombard, *Sent.* IV, d. 25, c. 3 (p. 909).

⁴³ C. 1, q. 1, c. 107.

Restitution

Those who obtained an office by simony were to be deposed from the office and deprived of the benefice.⁴⁴ Nuns who had obtained entry by simony were to be expelled from their monastery “without hope of restoration” and thrust into a place of stricter rule “to do perpetual penance”; the same canon extended the rule to monks and other religious.⁴⁵

The one non-simoniacally ordained by a simoniac may remain in his office.⁴⁶ This required a laying on of hands to signify their reconciliation⁴⁷ and was only granted due to “the necessity of the times.”⁴⁸ None should willfully be ordained by one he believes to be a simoniac, but one ignorantly ordained in such circumstances may keep his position.⁴⁹

These penalties apply only to conventional simony. For mental simony, no restitution or resignation can be required.⁵⁰ Sources that state the exemption go on to insist that the absence of restitution does not make mental simony any less sin; one does not clear himself of transgressions against God’s law simply by evading the laws of man.⁵¹

⁴⁴ E.g., “deposed perpetually from the ministry of the altar.” X 5.3.11; “remove them [...] from the churches so acquired.” X 5.3.13. Panormitanus reconciled the two: “a simoniac holding a benefice is not deposed from his order when he is not convicted by way of accusation, but is deprived of the benefice simoniacally acquired.” Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.13, no. 2 (fol. 71vb).

⁴⁵ See X 5.3.40.

⁴⁶ Those who address this point frequently cite *Concilium Placentinum*, can. 3 (Mansi 20:805).

⁴⁷ “If anyone is ordained by simoniacs, [...] he is not re-ordained, but is reconciled by the imposition of hands of a catholic bishop.” Honorius Augustodunensis, *De offendiulo*, c. 51 (p. 56).

⁴⁸ *Concilium Lateranense posterius*, can. 5 (p. 551); cf. C. 1, q. 1, c. 107.

⁴⁹ See X 5.3.35.

⁵⁰ For the category, see Chapter 6, pp. 112–14. E.g., “they are not held liable for simony of this kind.” X 5.3.46; “in mental simony the sin can be abolished by penance alone.” Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.34, no. 5 (fol. 80ra); cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 6, ad 6.

⁵¹ E.g., “nevertheless before God and in the truth of the matter he is a simoniac.” Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 3 (fol. 185va).

Moreover, Peter's sentence against the seller stands: "your silver perish" (Acts 8:20). The one who purchased a spiritual thing by simony has no right to the return of his money.⁵² The Puritan William Attersoll echoed many before him when he presented the dilemma and conclusion: "No restitution is to be made to the giver, that deserveth justly to lose whatsoever he hath given; neither ought the receiver to retain it, because he can lay no just claim and title unto it: so that it ought to be bestowed upon godly and holy uses."⁵³ This raises the question of what those holy uses might be.

Almsgiving

Almsgiving is no justification for simony.⁵⁴ However, the question of what may be done with such ill-gotten (*illicite acquisitum*) funds is another question. Some permitted them to be given to the poor, others argued that they may not.

For example, Bonaventure offered two categories of ill-gotten wealth:

1. Wealth wrongly exchanged; ownership transferred (e.g., prostitution) and
2. Wealth falsely exchanged; no ownership transferred (e.g., theft, simony, usury).⁵⁵

In the case of a wrongful exchange, one may give alms, though not as an offering. However, in the case of a false exchange, the transfer of ownership is a fiction. Just as with theft, the money may not be kept, and no alms can be made of it. Therefore, Bonaventure required that the wealth of simony be restored rather than permitting it to be given as alms.⁵⁶

However, Aquinas offered a third category:

⁵² See Burton, *A Censure of Simonie*, 38; cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 6, ad 1; X 5.3.33.

⁵³ Attersoll, *Commentary on Numbers*, 326.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 6, pp. 116–17.

⁵⁵ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 15, q. 1, ad rat. (p. 371).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, d. 15, q. 1, ad rat. (p. 371).

1. Wealth unjustly taken (e.g., theft and usury),
2. Wealth unjustly taken for something unjustly given (e.g., simony), and
3. Wealth lawfully acquired, but out of an unlawful act (e.g., prostitution).⁵⁷

For the first category, restitution must be made. But for the latter categories, alms may be given so long as they are not given as an offering. As with the wages of a prostitute (Deut. 23:18), they cannot be given as an offering, but they may, and indeed ought to, be given as alms.⁵⁸

Aquinas and Bonaventure are representative of the range of positions within the tradition. There was agreement that a simoniac seller cannot keep the money, but whether it should be returned to the buyer or given as alms was not a matter settled with certainty. Ultimately, most concluded that it must be given to the church.⁵⁹

Forgiveness

Later canon law excommunicated the offender. The English canonist John Godolphin summarized: “The canon law [...] excommunicates all simoniacs to that degree as not to be absolved but by the pope himself, nor by him till at the point of death.”⁶⁰ The propriety of such regulations is generally affirmed by the schoolmen.⁶¹

Of course, proto-Reformers and Protestants rejected any framework that hinged absolution on an earthly head of the church. Beyond the illegitimacy of the pope’s authority, the particular claim regarding simony is ironic. Among Wycliffe’s “errors” condemned at the Council of Constance is the charge that “the pope does not dispense from simony, nor from a rash vow, since he is himself the chief simoniac.”⁶²

⁵⁷ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 32, a. 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., II-II, q. 32, a. 7, ad 2.

⁵⁹ Suárez, *De Religione*, cap. 60, n. 8 (p. 656).

⁶⁰ Godolphin, *Repertorium Canonicum*, 556; cf. Extravag. comm. 5.1.2 (col. 1289).

⁶¹ E.g., Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.4, no. 5 (fol. 69vb); Major, *In Sent. (red. B)*, d. 25, q. 7 (fol. 189va).

⁶² *Council of Constance (1414–1418)*, sess. 15 (Mansi 27:749C).

Instead, we may inquire regarding the availability of divine forgiveness. Peter gave Simon a qualified command to repent “if perhaps” (*εἰ ἄρα; si forte*) his intention may be forgiven (Acts 8:22). This conditional is taken by many as an indication that forgiveness for simony is exceedingly difficult to obtain.⁶³ Wycliffe argued that to be cleansed of simony requires an “extraordinary miracle.”⁶⁴

This difficulty of forgiveness is not on account of any miserliness in God but on account of the ensnarement of the sin and man’s weakness to turn from it. Peraldus compared the simoniac to a fish in a trap: he cannot easily exit the way he came (repent), and the only other way out is by being caught. Because he does not easily renounce what he has taken, he has one foot in hell.⁶⁵

Several likewise noted that many exposed simoniacs profess repentance but withhold what they ought to give in true repentance.⁶⁶ In recounting the life of the hermit Romuald of Ravenna, Peter Damian remarked on his difficulty restoring simoniacs to repentance: “For that poisonous heresy, especially in the episcopal order, is so hard and so set against being converted—forever promising, forever putting it off from one day to the next and deferring it to a time still to come—that a Jew could sooner be brought to the faith than a heretical brigand could be fully roused to repentance.”⁶⁷ The simoniac professes to repent but perpetually defers his conversion to a tomorrow that never comes.

Conclusion

Simony is a sin against both tables of the law, offending God by profaning what is holy and offending man by defrauding the faithful. Its gravity is attested across centuries of Christian witness, from the

⁶³ E.g., William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (pp. 112–13).

⁶⁴ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (1:24–2:1); cf. *ibid.*, cap. 2 (24:10–13).

⁶⁵ William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum*, 2.7 (p. 112).

⁶⁶ E.g., “there are many who say they repent, yet retain what they have taken.” Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 3.8.38 (p. 613). While Vermigli spoke of sin more generally, he pointed out the difficulty of restoring ill-gotten goods in light of Peter’s admonition.

⁶⁷ Peter Damian, *Vita beati Romualdi*, cap. 35 (PL 144:987A).

canonical judgment that other crimes are “practically nothing,” to Wycliffe’s lament that it leaves a great part of the church “scattered and dead.” Not even the pope stood exempt from its reach.

The weight of the sin makes repentance all the more urgent. The simoniac must resign what he has wrongly obtained, restore what he has wrongly received, and seek divine forgiveness for what no human penalty can fully address. The tradition insisted on the difficulty of that repentance, but equally on the mercy of the Lord.

The Heresy of Simony

From the fathers to the medievals and beyond, a number of authors spoke of simony as a species of heresy. Earlier sources tend to do so without qualification, including Peter Lombard's *Sentences*¹ and Gratian's *Decretum*.² This identification goes back to Gregory the Great, who frequently spoke of "simoniacal heresy" (*simoniaca haeresis*).³ In the homily where he first used the term, he proclaimed,

But our Redeemer overturned the seats of those selling doves, because he destroys the priesthood of such traffickers. Hence the sacred canons condemn the simoniacal heresy and command that those who seek a price for conferring orders be deprived of the priesthood. The seat of those selling doves is therefore overturned when those who sell spiritual grace are deprived of the priesthood, whether before the eyes of men or before the eyes of God.⁴

¹ Lombard, *Sent.* IV, d. 25, c. 5 (p. 910).

² C. 1, q. 1, c. 21.

³ See Rosé, *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque?* 206, 235–38 for a map and a table of Gregory's use of the term in his correspondence.

⁴ Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia*, 17.13 (pp. 109–10).

Moreover, the fathers and medievals regarded Simon Magus as the first of all heretics⁵ and the father of all heresies. Cyril of Jerusalem called him “the inventor of all heresy.”⁶ Irenaeus referred to him as the one “from whom all heresies originate.”⁷ Simony is not only the first of all heresies, but the foremost of all heresies,⁸ and therefore is more damnable than other heresies.⁹

Later schoolmen qualified this identification in some measure, and also sought to answer the question of whether the pope could himself commit the sin of simony.

The Basis of the Identification

On what basis did theologians of previous generations identify simony as a heresy? The discourse centered around three contentions: the simoniac prices what is priceless, he makes the Spirit a servant, and he blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Pricing the Priceless

Lombard spoke of the sin of simony as the activity of putting a price on a priceless grace.¹⁰ Because many of the schoolmen addressed simony in the context of commenting on Lombard’s *Sentences*, this description appears repeatedly. Many made the same observation

⁵ Though he includes in his description of them more than the commerce of the Spirit, Augustine referred to the “Simonians” (*Simoniani*) as being the first in a catalog of eighty-eight heretical groups, Augustine, *De haeresibus*, I (PL 42:24); cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 1.

⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses*, 6.14 (I, p. 174).

⁷ Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus haereses*, I.23.2 (pp. 246–47); cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica*, II.13.6 (GCS 9.1, 136:8–9).

⁸ “*primos et precipuos hereticos*” Deusdedit, *Contra invasores*, cap. II, 17 (p. 335); cf. C. I, q. 7, c. 27; Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (4:18–24). Gratian and subsequent authors wrongly ascribe the passage to “*Pascalus Papa*”; see Friedberg, ed., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I:437n387.

⁹ C. I, q. 1, c. 21.

¹⁰ “*impretiabilem gratiam pretio conducere*” Lombard, *Sent.* IV, d. 25, c. 2 (p. 909).

without using that exact phrase.¹¹ For example, in making this point, Thomas Aquinas appealed to Proverbs 3:15 (“she is more precious than all riches, and nothing that is desired can be compared with her”).¹² Peter Auriol spoke of it as a sin against religion because, “the priceless [*impreciable*] and incommensurable [*inaequabile*] is given for something that can never match it—take a sacrament, which the whole world cannot equal, nor even the least degree of spiritual things.”¹³

In the words of the *Glossa ordinaria*, “Spiritual gifts are cheapened by a price.”¹⁴ It is on this count that some have described it as a spiritual harlotry,¹⁵ selling what should be given in the context of true love. Though not explicitly invoking the name of Simon or the label of “simony,” Augustine explained the problem well:

[The Word] is priceless [*nullius pretii*], because it surpasses all things. For a thing for sale is either matched by its price, or is inferior to it, or exceeds it. When anyone buys for as much as a thing is worth, the price equals the thing bought; when for less, the thing is inferior to it; when for more, it exceeds it. But nothing can be made equal to the Word of God, nor in any exchange be inferior to it, nor superior.¹⁶

In canon law and scholastic theology, the phrase “pricing the priceless” was not a mere description of the activity of simony but supplied

¹¹ E.g., Pelbartus, *Rosarium*, IV, s.v. Simonia, 2; Cudworth, *The Supplement*, 537; Ames, *Conscience*, 5.229.

¹² Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, corp..

¹³ Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166b).

¹⁴ “*Dona spiritualia pretio vilescunt*” *Glossa ordinaria* ad Matt. 10:8 (PL 114:118A).

¹⁵ For example, the philosopher, scientist, and proto-Reformer Nicole Oresme made this analogy while preaching to Urban V on Christmas Eve, 1363. Oresme, “*Sermo coram papa et cardinalibus*,” 198–99, 222. This sermon, proclaiming the corruption of the papacy directly before the pope (*coram papa*), was referenced later by a number of works, and Foxe translated it whole into the *Actes and Monuments*, Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 5.415.

¹⁶ Augustine, *Sermones*, 117, cap. 1 (PL 38:661–62).

the basis for its condemnation. By his attempted commerce, the simoniac makes a comparison between the Spirit and wealth, functionally denying the pricelessness of the Spirit. Frequently, this is characterized as a denial of grace, such as in the words of Bonaventure: “This is manifest heresy, and this is what Simon Magus thought. For such a person errs in faith, because he believes that grace is not grace.”¹⁷

This concern of pricing the priceless is not diminished, but heightened from a Protestant perspective. With the recovery of *sola gratia* during the Reformation, the false gospel of grace on the basis of works became a chief concern. In this vein, Martin Luther went further, labeling all works-righteousness a form of simony, since it would make grace something exchanged for merit.¹⁸

Making the Spirit a Servant

The Second Council of Nicaea (787) restored the veneration of images, and with it the communion between Constantinople and Rome. Bishops who had conformed under iconoclasm were charged with having bought their sees, and Tarasius, the patriarch of Constantinople and president of the council, granted some of these a swift restoration. This cost him monastic support in the east, and a report of his laxity reached Rome. Tarasius answered the charges with a letter to the pope, which he published in the acts of the council itself.¹⁹ It carries the following argument:

For the impious heresy of Macedonius and those around him—the attackers of the Holy Spirit—is more tolerable [than simony]. For those men, in their raving, confess the Holy Spirit to be a creature and a slave of God the Father and the Son; but these men make that same Holy Spirit their own slave. For every master sells what he has

¹⁷ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 1, q. 4 (p. 648).

¹⁸ “Every man is naturally a simoniac [...] he would wish God to be one who would be appeased by human works and merits.” Luther, *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 423:32–424:4). The passage is quoted in Chapter 1.

¹⁹ Price, *Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea*, 54, 629–31.

if he wishes, whether a slave or anything else of those things he possesses. Similarly, he who buys, wishing to be the master of what he has bought, acquires it through the price of money. Thus, those who carry out this iniquitous transaction disparage the Holy Spirit, sinning equally with those who blasphemed, saying that Christ cast out demons by Beelzebub. And, to speak more truly, they are compared to Judas the traitor, who sold Christ to the Jews, the killers of God.²⁰

We might parallel the Macedonian heresy mentioned by Tarasius to Arianism, but instead of making the Son a creature, it makes the Spirit a creature. Yet simony is even worse by this analysis: it makes the Spirit to be so low a creature that he becomes the slave of man. This argument was recorded by Gratian,²¹ and others repeated it after him, affirming that simony is a sin against the Spirit.²²

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

While many addressed simony as a sin against the Holy Spirit, John Wycliffe and Jan Hus following after described it in a more elaborate Trinitarian framework. For them, simony is not only a heresy, but one of three categories of heresy that map to the persons of the Trinity in the nature of their offense. This categorization appears to be unique to them,²³ but Wycliffe explained that Apostasy is a sin against the Father, who binds the bride of Christ to himself; Blasphemy is a sin against the Son, who is the power and wisdom of God; and Simony

²⁰ As recorded in Deusdedit, *Collectio canonum*, 4.15 (p. 407).

²¹ C. 1, q. 1, c. 21.

²² E.g., Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 2 (p. 166b); Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 9.F; *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*, 113.

²³ Other Trinitarian models exist to describe simony. Robert Holcot described simony as selling the power of the Father, charging for a testimony as selling the truth of the Son, and doing good works for praise as selling the holiness of the Spirit; Holcot, *In librum Sapientiae*, lect. 132 (sig. Fir–Fiv).

is a sin against the Holy Spirit, who orders the peace of the house of God.²⁴

This accords with the quote from Tarasius as found in Gratian's *Decretum*, where he also described simoniacs as sinning equally with those who blasphemed by accusing Christ of casting out demons by Beelzebub. Wycliffe and Hus pressed these charges to the fullest extent, insisting that simony must be categorized as sin against the Holy Spirit, that which "cannot be forgiven in this world or the next."²⁵

Qualifications

Following Gregory the Great and the testimony of canon law, the medievals were virtually unanimous in identifying simony as heresy. However, the theologians of the eleventh century introduced qualification that carried through the following centuries.²⁶ For example, in his commentary on the *Sentences*, Aquinas handled the argument that heresy must be a belief rather than an action, and began by conceding the point.²⁷ In the strictest sense, simony is not necessarily a heretical belief because it often is not a belief at all. Accordingly,

²⁴ "Now, there are three more famous kinds of heresy: namely Simony, Apostasy, and Blasphemy. Nor are these mutually exclusive, since the species of the vices, like those of the virtues, are interconnected. However, their rationales are distinguished: Apostasy is generally according to the principle by which man strays from the religion of God. Blasphemy is according to the principle by which one slanders the power of God. But Simony is according to the principle by which one strives to break apart the ordering of God. And thus, through this threefold nature, the whole Trinity is offended: God the Father, through apostasy—he who, according to religion pure and undefiled, powerfully binds the bride of Christ to himself; God the Son, who, since he is the power of God and the wisdom of God, is blasphemed daily through the second heresy; and God the Holy Spirit, who, since out of supreme kindness he wisely orders his house in peace, is provoked by simoniacal depravity contrary to his ordination. For the simoniac, resisting the Holy Spirit, strives blasphemously to dissolve this benign order and thus peace." Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (1:3–20); cf. Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 2.A–B.

²⁵ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 1 (1:21–23); Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 2.B.

²⁶ Gilchrist, 'Simoniaca haeresis', 216.

²⁷ The argument: "Every heresy is against some article of faith, about which a correct opinion is not held. But a simoniac can hold a correct opinion concerning all

Aquinas elsewhere judged that the sin of simony is not necessarily the unpardonable blasphemy of the Spirit.²⁸

Among the medievals, even those willing to speak of the heresy of simony without qualification on some occasions admitted the qualification at others. For example, Wycliffe granted that this use of the label “equivocates,”²⁹ and elsewhere, he described some simoniacs as being able to repent,³⁰ though he had identified simony as the unpardonable sin. Similarly, Hus opened by sorting the senses in which a man may be called a heretic, counting the one who holds an error by deed alongside the one who holds it by word.³¹

From the eleventh century and onward, theologians and canonists managed to offer this objection without rejecting centuries of canonized tradition by explaining two senses in which simony may be labeled a heresy: the similarity of the action and the enormity of the crime.

The Similarity of the Action

Aquinas continued in the same article to defend his position, arguing that simoniacs are called heretics on account of the similarity of their actions and formal heresy. He wrote, “A name is given to a thing in two ways: in one way without qualification [*simpliciter*]; in another on account of a likeness of action [*propter similitudinem actus*].”³² Therefore, “simoniacs are not heretics properly and strictly speaking, since they do not hold any false opinion; but they are called heretics on account of a similarity of action, because they act as if they believed

the articles of faith. Therefore, it is not a heresy.” Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 2, s.c..

²⁸ “Not everyone who sins by choice sins against the Holy Spirit; but only he who chooses sin through contempt for those things which usually hold men back from sinning.” Aquinas, *ST II-II*, q. 100, a. 1, ad 2.

²⁹ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 2 (24:38–25:1).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, cap. 2 (24:10–13).

³¹ Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 1.C.

³² Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 2, sol..

the gift of the Holy Spirit could be possessed with money: which belief would be heretical.”³³

Aquinas also compared it to the disparity between one’s outward profession of religion and the faith that resides in his heart: “simony is called a heresy according to an outward profession, because in the fact that a man sells the gift of the Holy Spirit, he in a certain way professes himself to be the lord of the spiritual gift; which is heretical.”³⁴ By his actions, the simoniac professes the heresy of a salable Spirit, but the typical simoniac is a false professor of this heresy, not truly believing it in his heart. He does not formally embrace the heretical ideas of Simon Magus but materially expresses them.³⁵ Jeremy Taylor made a similar argument, explaining that in Simon Magus it was a “false opinion” but that “his followers are rather noted of a vice.”³⁶

In the seventeenth century, John Donne appealed to this distinction in the midst of an English controversy. After the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, James I imposed the English Oath of Allegiance (1606), which identified as heresy the notion of papal authority to depose the crown. However, many Roman Catholics insisted that they could not take the oath because it belonged only to the pope to pronounce a doctrine heretical. Donne made an effort “to deliver them of that scruple”³⁷ and assure them they could call heresy that which “is not itself necessarily heresy, properly understood” with an analogy to simony. Simony has been called a “true and undoubted heresy,” not because it inherently is, but because it begets or accompanies heresy.³⁸

³³ Ibid., IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 2, sol.

³⁴ Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 1.

³⁵ See also Albert the Great, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 3, ad 2 (p. 90b); Innocent IV, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.5 (fol. 498v).

³⁶ Taylor, *Σύμβολον Θεολογικόν*, 947.

³⁷ Donne, *Pseudo-Martyr*, 372.

³⁸ Ibid., 387. He continued, “So that we see, such acts as beget or accompany heresy, are called heresy in this mild acceptation, which our law gives it. From which sense the Fathers did not abstain in using that word; for Tertullian says, that no man will doubt to call Adam’s transgression heresy, since by his own election, he adhered rather to his own will, than to God’s. And in another book he says, not so much newness, as truth doth convict things to be heresies, for whatsoever tastes against truth, is a heresy, though it be an ancient custom. And so says St. Augustine (if their

The Enormity of the Crime

Beyond similarity of action, the schoolmen offered a second reason for calling simony a heresy: they are functionally equivalent in the courts of the church. Simony is so grave an offense that it merits the same ecclesiastical punishment as heresy: deposition from office and excommunication. Panormitanus concluded that “on account of the enormity of the crime it is called heresy.”³⁹

Some made this point along with similarity of action. For example, Bonaventure spoke of the simoniac who does not truly believe his heresy, that he “is not strictly a heretic, but nevertheless is called a heretic by the saints, either because he acts in the manner of a heretic, or because, like a heretic, he is cast out from the service and worship of God on account of his enormous crime.”⁴⁰ Sorting the senses of the word, Gabriel Biel granted that every simoniac is a heretic “since he is excommunicated and a perverter of sacred things,” subsequently observing that the simoniac is called a heretic “by a certain likeness [...] because he acts as if he held the contrary of the faith.”⁴¹

These two qualifications—the similarity of the action and the enormity of the crime—stand together rather than as alternatives. The label of “heretic” applies to the simoniac both because his conduct professes heretical opinions and because he should functionally be treated as one.

The Pope and Simony

In the Roman system, the supreme pontiff is the source of the church’s law rather than a subject of it, leading some to conclude that he could not commit simony at all.⁴² By and large, those theologians and

own men cite him truly) that schism is called heresy, not that it is heresy, but that it disposes to heresy.” Ibid., 387–88.

³⁹ Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.5, no. 1 (fol. 69vb).

⁴⁰ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, a. 1, q. 4, concl. (p. 648).

⁴¹ Biel, *Collectorium*, IV, d. 13, q. 2, a. 3, dub. 1 (sig. m6vb).

⁴² E.g., “the pope, according to some, cannot commit simony.” Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, arg. 7.

canonists who treated the issue determined that he could indeed be guilty of the heresy of simony.⁴³ Aquinas called the contrary opinion “erroneous,” saying, “If the pope were to accept a gift in exchange for something spiritual, he would commit simony just like any other man; because it was under Peter, whom the pope succeeds, that the vice of simony first received its condemnation in the New Testament.”⁴⁴ If Peter himself condemned simony, no successor can be exempt from that standard.

The exemption was also argued from ownership: if the goods of the church are the pope’s own, then in taking them he receives nothing from another, and no sale occurs. Aquinas denied the premise. “Although the property of the Church belongs to the pope in a certain way, it is not his to possess in every way, like the personal property he has on hand.”⁴⁵ A pope who gave spiritual things for the temporalities of a church would therefore be selling them as surely as to a layman.⁴⁶

John Major put the matter flatly: “The Supreme Pontiff can commit simony just like anyone else: this is evident. This entire definition can apply to him just as to another: hence Peter recoiled from Simon Magus, lest he fall into it.”⁴⁷

A Qualification for Positive Law Simony

In Chapter 4, we addressed whether one could commit simony by commerce in otherwise non-spiritual things whose sale is forbidden by the church.⁴⁸ For those who would answer “yes,” this complicates the question of whether the pope can be guilty of simony. If he is the highest authority, do such laws apply to him?

⁴³ E.g., Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 3 (p. 167a).

⁴⁴ Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2; cf. Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 100, a. 1, ad 7.

⁴⁵ Aquinas, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2.

⁴⁶ “Now, there is no doubt that one would commit simony if he were to give something spiritual to his debtor in order to recover what is owed to him; and so, in the matter at hand, the pope would not be excused from simony if (far be it) he were to give spiritual things in exchange for the temporal goods of the churches.” Ibid., IV, d. 25, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2.

⁴⁷ Major, *In Sent.* (red. A), d. 25, q. 1 (fol. 145vb).

⁴⁸ See pp. 83–85.

Panormitanus reported finding none who addressed the question but a single cardinal who inferred a flat exemption for the supreme pontiff.⁴⁹ He ultimately concurred that the pope would not commit simony in matters of positive law, because he is not thereby bound. All the same, he judged that the pope “ought nevertheless to abstain.”⁵⁰ The other party in that transaction is not covered by the exemption. He “is not safe as regards God,” and where a prohibitory constitution stands, he incurs the penalty the pope escapes—as a subject who gambles with the bishop who decreed excommunication for gambling incurs it, though the bishop “could not be bound by his own constitution.”⁵¹

For those who reject the category of positive law simony altogether, the question is moot. The pope incurs the guilt of simony identically to anyone else, without regard to church law.⁵²

Positive Accusations of Simony

For many, this was not a theoretical possibility but an observable reality. Dante depicted simoniacs in the eighth circle of hell, stuck upside down in holes while their feet are set ablaze. In particular, simoniac popes are stacked, each subsequent one pushing the others further down.⁵³ When Dante arrives, Nicholas III mistakes him for Boniface VIII, the pope at the time of the poem’s fictional setting in 1300: “Are you already standing there, are you already standing there, Boniface? By several years the writing lied to me.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ “I have not expressly found this question examined by the doctors, except that the lord Cardinal here says simply that he does not commit simony [...] since the title to a benefice seems to be of positive law, and the pope uses that law, and in such matters is not bound.” Panormitanus, *Commentaria*, ad X 5.3.1, no. 6 (fol. 69rb).

⁵⁰ “In other benefices not carrying the exercise of an order, the pope would not commit simony, because in them it is prohibited only by positive law, by which the pope is not bound; he ought nevertheless to abstain.” Ibid., ad X 5.3.1, no. 8 (fol. 69rb).

⁵¹ Ibid., ad X 5.3.1, nos. 8–9 (fol. 69rb).

⁵² E.g., Auriol, *In Sent.* IV, d. 25, q. un., a. 3 (p. 167a).

⁵³ Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, Inferno XIX (pp. 543–46).

⁵⁴ Ibid., Inferno XIX (p. 544).

Wycliffe and Hus likewise charged the office of the bishop of Rome with being steeped in simony.⁵⁵ Wycliffe argued that if the pope cannot commit simony, then he is the Antichrist, because he has made himself higher than God.⁵⁶ Hus said much the same in a letter to the rector of the University of Prague, describing himself as “the Goose” who must beat her wings against the wings of Behemoth and against the tail that covers “the abomination of the beast of Antichrist.” Identifying the pope as the head of Isaiah 9:14–15 that the Lord will destroy, he offered a vivid image: the beast is a greater abomination than the exposed harlot who is “publicly ready for anyone who wished to fornicate with her” because he is “prepared to sell whatever anyone wishes to buy in spiritual matters.”⁵⁷ He continued, “and he sells what he does not possess.”⁵⁸

For these proto-Reformers, the point of contention was not so much whether a pope *could* commit simony but whether the reigning pope *had*. Of course, the later Reformers spoke along these lines as well. Luther remarked that simony is the very soul of the pope; he cannot be purged of it, but if he could, all that would remain would be the bishop of Rome.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The identification of simony rests on three arguments: the simoniac prices the priceless, makes the Spirit his servant, and blasphemes him. The upholding of this charge in light of necessary qualifications falls into the theological and the juridical. The simoniac professes by his conduct that the gifts of God are subject to human commerce, and his crime is so grave that it warrants the same ecclesiastical punishments as heresy.

⁵⁵ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 3 (27:9–40:13); Hus, *O svatokupectví*, 4.

⁵⁶ Wycliffe, *De simonia*, cap. 3 (28:3–15).

⁵⁷ Hus, *Korespondence a dokumenty*, letter 52, p. 154.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, letter 52, p. 154.

⁵⁹ Luther, *Vorlesungen über I. Mose*, 25:31–34 (WA 43, 422:28–33).

On both grounds the schoolmen and the Reformers found the bishop of Rome no exception. The answers ranged from “yes he can” to “yes he has.”

Part VI

Analysis

Spiritual Words

While theologians of the past addressed simony in preaching and teaching, their primary concerns revolved around the issues of their own day. Accordingly, the literature dwells on simony in ordinations more than on any other kind. For many, questions regarding charging for the preached or taught word were often more theoretical than practical.

This was especially the case in the time after the Reformation. John Godolphin demonstrated this reality in his survey of canon law on simony when he declined to wade through the details of “whether it be simony in ecclesiastics to take money for sermons or theological doctrines,” having no desire to “abuse the reader in perplexing him with exotic questions.”¹ This is not to say that none after the Middle Ages addressed the matter, but such occurrences were increasingly rare.

In our own day, a different picture appears. Simony in ordinations has all but ceased to be a present danger among Protestants, and related matters such as systems of patronage hardly arise, even in established (i.e., national) churches where the practice had once been common. Yet the sale of theological instruction now turns over enormous sums. Between Christian books and seminaries alone, theological educa-

¹ Godolphin, *Repertorium Canonicum*, 557–58.

tion is a multibillion-dollar industry.² It remains, then, to apply the framework developed in the preceding chapters to this primary sort of commerce in spiritual things that exists today.

Simony in Words

Despite the medieval use of Proverbs 23:23, the clearest demonstration of biblical teaching as spiritual words comes to us from the pen of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:13 (“And this is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words”). The precise meaning of the final phrase “πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συνκρίνοντες” remains debated. While each word presents its own difficulties and the exact meaning of each shades the final rendering, the primary issue hinges on the gender of the first word. If the first word is taken as masculine, it signifies applying spiritual truths to spiritual people. If it is to be taken as neuter, then it entails setting them in spiritual words or fitting them to spiritual matters. In either case, the teacher speaks words taught by the Spirit.

The subject of biblical teaching, whether it be distilled or synthesized into other formats, is ultimately the Scripture as given by the Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Furthermore, though it may have reached him through the work of other men, it is at last revealed to the teacher by the Spirit, by whom he is able to comprehend the thought of God (1 Cor. 2:10–11). The learner, on his side, takes it in not by his natural capacities alone but by spiritual discernment, since “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God [...] because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). The contrast Paul drew between the spiritual and the natural is not a contrast between the material and immaterial aspects of the human rational mind, but between the operations of the Spirit and the unaided faculties of man. The godly teacher’s proper hope, then, is to be made by grace an instrument

² On religious-book sales, see Milliot, “Publishing Industry Sales”; on seminary revenues, Association of Theological Schools, *2025–2026 Annual Data Tables*, Table 4.6.

through which the Spirit himself works upon the hearer. Such teaching is spiritual in both of the senses earlier distinguished: it is of the uncreated Spirit (*a spiritu increato*), and, as it produces a spiritual effect, it is spiritual by cause (*per causam*).³ To set a price on it therefore meets the definition of simony, differing in essence not at all from Simon's original proposal.

The chief objections that the tradition has raised against simony all apply to the case of biblical teaching. We will examine three of those here, and in each, respond to a potential counterargument against prohibiting its sale.

Stewardship of the Word

In any legitimate sale, the seller must have a proper authority to conduct the transaction. If one owns the thing, he can decide of his own accord; if one is a steward, such a sale needs to be authorized by the owner. As we have seen from 1 Corinthians 4:1 ("Let a man so account us as ministers of Christ and stewards [*οἰκονόμους*] of the mysteries of God"),⁴ the one who teaches God's word is a steward rather than an owner. Adam was charged to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over it (Gen. 1:28), and from that grant flows the authority by which men buy and sell the goods of the earth as their own. The content of biblical teaching, however—whether it be the bare words of Scripture or the doctrinal truths contained therein—was not given as part of nature or committed to man under this kind of dominion. These mysteries may only be possessed under a stewardship, which entails an ongoing accountability to the master who has delegated their administration as well as a strict prohibition against transacting with his goods.

Paul revisited this truth in 1 Corinthians 9:17 ("If my preaching is voluntary, I have a reward. But if it is not voluntary, I am still entrusted with a stewardship [*οἰκονομίαν*]"). Many have interpreted this as a contrast between a minimal requirement Paul was under and his

³ See Chapter 3, pp. 55–56.

⁴ See Chapter 11, p. 184.

chosen approach of going above and beyond.⁵ However, the apostle considered it unthinkable to do anything less (1 Cor. 9:15–16). To preach the gospel for a price is to do so “unwillingly” (1 Cor. 9:17), the labor being compelled by contract. Because such a man transacts with the master’s goods as an owner rather than as a steward, he forfeits all reward of stewardship. Thus, Paul presented the gospel free of charge (1 Cor. 9:18).

Paul acknowledged a minister’s right to receive. Moreover, he did not absolutely reject funds on account of the gospel in Corinth; he repeatedly spoke of his intentions of coming for such purposes (1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16).⁶ Instead, his commitment, as stated here and elsewhere, was to never exchange his teaching for a price (2 Cor. 2:17; 11:7, 12).

In fact, it is that stewardship that makes one fit to live of the gospel; to accept a price for one’s teaching is to forfeit the grounds by which one can rightly receive material support in any measure. Consider Paul’s appeal to the Old Testament priesthood in 1 Corinthians 9:13 (“those who serve at the altar partake of its offerings”). The priests received from the Lord as their inheritance precisely because they did not possess an inheritance of their own (Num. 18:20). To take ownership over that which one was given to steward forfeits that reward the Lord offers for such service. The laborer is worthy of his wages, but the work that God has given is not unspecified; it is the work of stewardship. For this reason, the priests were forbidden to teach for a price (Mic. 3:11).

One might counter that Paul spoke of “preaching,” not teaching more generally. Yet the concern over stewardship does not lie in the kind of activity, but in the thing that is offered. Those things of the Christian faith that are preached in sermoniac fashion remain just as much “mysteries of God” as those things of the Christian faith that might be taught. Thus, while there may be factors that

⁵ E.g., “the one is a thing commanded, whereas the other is an achievement of my own choice.” Chrysostom, *Homiliae in epistolam ad Corinthios priorem*, hom. 22.3 (p. 261).

⁶ The word “send” (πομπέω) used in each of these verses implies a material equipping, Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 873.

make charging to hear preaching in the formal worship of God more reprehensible, compared to the sale of biblical teaching, nothing differs in the violation of one's own status as a steward.

The Grace of the Word

Typically appealing to Romans 11:6 (“And if by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace is no longer grace”), medieval theologians contended that simoniacal transactions undermine the grace they ostensibly communicate. Requiring some payment—whether of the hand (*munus a manu*), the tongue (*munus a lingua*), or service (*munus ab obsequio*)—violates the nature of the gift by subjecting it to the terms of a commercial transaction. This is as true for biblical teaching as it is for the sacraments or church office. The “word of his grace” (Acts 14:3; 20:32) is not only the word *about* the grace of God, but is a word that is given *by* the grace of God. A teaching of free grace must itself be free of charge or it runs the risk of communicating a different gospel.

Paul spoke of the understanding of biblical teaching as “freely given” (1 Cor. 2:12), and this is precisely what Jesus appeals to in Matthew 10:8 as the grounds for the proclamation of the kingdom being given freely to others. What has been graciously received must be graciously given. To fail to do so suggests it was never graciously received in the first place. Similarly, the one who is forgiven much loves much, and to love little exposes a lack of forgiveness (Luke 7:47).

It may be objected here that those who charge for biblical teaching—especially of the more advanced or specialized variety—do not charge for the gospel. In fact, almost all of these would give the gospel for free to any who ask. Yet, this objection presumes a distinction the apostles rejected. The gospel should not be seen as introductory or separable from other truth in the course of proper biblical teaching.

First, apostolic teaching regards Christ crucified as the essence of all true teaching. Paul knew nothing among the Corinthians except Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), yet in Acts 20:26–27 told the Ephesians that he would have blood on his hands had he shrunk from declaring the whole counsel of God. His point in 1 Corinthians 2 is

not to confess a failure that renders him guilty, but, as we have already seen, to demonstrate the nature of true biblical teaching as residing in the power of the Spirit rather than the wisdom of man. Similarly, to the Colossians, he summarized the nature of his teaching with the phrase “him we proclaim” (Col. 1:28). Jesus himself instructed the apostles that to understand Scripture rightly it must be interpreted concerning himself (Luke 24:44–45). Rightly proffered, doctrinal teaching communicates the gospel.

Second, when the apostles distinguished between levels of instruction, using the terms “milk” and “meat,” they did not isolate the gospel to one or the other. The author of Hebrews called his audience to move beyond the milk (Heb. 5:12), giving examples of these elementary doctrines of Christ: repentance, faith, washings, laying on hands, resurrection, judgment (Heb. 6:1–2). These are things that relate in some ways to Christ, but the particular instance of “meat” that prompted his comments was the relation between Christ and Melchizedek, the superior nature of his priesthood that guarantees an eternal salvation (Heb. 5:10; 7:1–28). Similarly, when Paul chided the Corinthians for not being ready for solid food (1 Cor. 3:2), he confessed no failure of his own to provide advanced teaching beyond the gospel, but charged them with a failure to receive the full teaching of the gospel. The notions of “flesh” and “merely human” in 1 Corinthians 3:3–4 are designed to contrast with the mind of the Spirit in the preceding chapter of the epistle, where he already demonstrated that the full understanding of spiritual truth hinges on the work of the Spirit. The “solid food” is nothing other than the essential message of Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).

Third, such a distinction between introductory teaching that must be graciously given and advanced teaching that may be sold suggests that the Spirit’s work is only required to understand the former. If 1 Corinthians 2 were not enough to demonstrate otherwise, John taught that the anointing of the Spirit teaches “all things” (1 John 2:27). The one who claims to distinguish his own theological instruction from the gospel in order to absolve its sale from charges of simony must likewise assert that it lies outside that which the Spirit would teach. While we may concede that John did not employ the term “all

things" (πάντων) to include every range of secular expertise, the term cannot be narrowed so as to exclude any area of biblical revelation or Christian faith.

The Pricelessness of the Word

The chief ground on which the tradition identified simony as heresy was that it puts a price on that which is priceless.⁷ As Simon believed the gift of God could be purchased with money (Acts 8:20), the simoniac confesses by action that God's immeasurable gift is not immeasurable. This same observation applies to the teaching of the word. The word of God is more desirable than gold and better than many thousands of pieces of gold and silver (Ps. 19:10; 119:72), and wisdom is more precious than rubies such that nothing compares (Prov. 3:15).

Some may object to a broad prohibition on the sale of the teaching of the word of God that it fails to distinguish between that which is necessary in the Christian life and that which is optional. This distinction seems to factor into how one should value a thing. Things like baptism would be wrong to sell because they are necessary, but not all need additional theological instruction, especially at the higher academic levels. Yet if the core crime of simony is the activity of placing a price on the priceless, this distinction between necessary and optional is irrelevant. Both produce spiritual development in the believer and therefore both are priceless.

Yet if we are to entertain the necessary/optional distinction for a moment, we will see how quickly it breaks down, depending on what is meant by "necessary." First, one may refer to that which is required for the Christian life. It is true that advanced theological education is not needed in an absolute way by anyone, but neither is baptism. Baptism is normative and beneficial in the Christian life, but those who find themselves providentially hindered from baptism will not find themselves without salvation.

⁷ See Chapter 13, pp. 210–12.

Second, one may refer to that which would be unavailable elsewhere—e.g., “you don’t have to come here for theological instruction, you have other options.” Once again, the same is true for baptism, and it is on this count that many of the schoolmen directed a man to seek the sacrament elsewhere rather than pay the priest who withheld it. Yet while the rightly practiced baptisms of true churches are identical in benefit, teaching differs from teacher to teacher. On this point, theological instruction is actually *less* interchangeable than baptism.

Third, one may refer to those activities that are required for a church to be faithful. Indeed, churches must baptize, and they are under no universal obligation to begin higher-level academic institutions, but how would such a distinction apply to other varying functions of churches? Those who would make such an argument would likely recoil at the idea of charging for a midweek prayer meeting, though it is an optional activity of the church, subject to the discretion of the leadership.

The Scope of Application

Having identified the sale of biblical teaching as a species of simony, we may now consider where this prohibition bears on contemporary practice. The examples below do not exhaust potential application, but they do cover a number of the more common venues where spiritual teaching is presently offered for sale.

Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling is a form of teaching where one applies the truths of Scripture to the personal life of another. Distinguished from something like Christian therapy, where Christian principles may be applied but Scripture teaching is not the essence of the counsel, biblical counseling seeks to give that which is priceless. Beyond the simple fact that wisdom is “more precious than rubies” (Prov. 3:15) and the law is “better than thousands of pieces of gold and silver” (Ps. 119:72), many who have received biblical counseling have personally found it to be invaluable.

None can appeal to the fact that the Bible is already available; presumably, such counsel is sought because understanding is lacking. Furthermore, it would be misguided to justify commerce in counseling by claiming to place the price on time rather than instruction. If the counselor is called to “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all patience and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2), then both time and teaching must be given graciously. How can the counselor who charges by the hour be said to exhort with all patience?

Christian Conferences

Falling under the same restrictions are Christian conferences. By Christian conferences, we have in view those gatherings whose essence is biblical preaching or teaching, not events with a merely Christian slant or cultural veneer. Additionally, these restrictions do not apply to third parties who may levy their own incidental charges (for example, a toll for a bridge to reach the conference), and they do not apply to other factors that may limit attendance (such as a lack of space). However, regarding attendance at the conference itself, to charge for admission is to charge for access to priceless teaching.

It may seem that such charges could be warranted since the venue is a physical thing rather than a spiritual one. However, James’s prohibition of special seating should give us pause (James 2:1–4). Though he may have in mind worship services proper, his application to them extends from a universal principle that Christians should not show partiality in holding out the faith (James 2:1). A faithful application of this precept does not permit the finance-based partiality that admits to an in-person space those willing to pay and requires others to sit at home, potentially watching online.

The notion of annexation offers further clarity here. Because the nature of a conference is *live* teaching, the physical space is not annexed to the spiritual thing by mere direction (*ordinatum*) but by dependence (*dependens*).⁸ Just as a benefice presupposes the office it pertains to, so a conference space presupposes the conference. The

⁸ See Chapter 4, p. 73.

distinction between dependence and direction may not be intuitive; considered differently, we might observe that the money of a benefice could have been put to another purpose, as could a conference venue. However, just as the grant of a benefice secures an office that cannot be had without it, presence in the conference space during the event secures a fullness of teaching that cannot be had without that access. Other teaching may pre-exist the medium that communicates it, being perfectly captured and reproduced without loss elsewhere, but this is not the case with live teaching. Recall that teaching is a spiritual activity that extends beyond the transmission of raw propositions (1 Cor. 2:13), so we should not discount these details of access as incidental.

Seminary Education

No degree of academic sophistication exempts seminaries from the prohibition on the sale of biblical teaching. Seminary tuition is therefore simony on the ground used by the masters at Paris when they argued that the labor of teaching theology could not be sold. Just as they distinguished, we should not include the liberal arts; even Greek and Hebrew are not spiritual things that must be given freely. Likewise, Bible colleges that offer a Christian slant to the humanities need not fall under this regulation, save in those courses that teach the word of God and what arises from it.

Scholarship programs do not resolve the difficulty. They do not extend to every student, and the very requirement to apply for relief is itself a kind of price. Neither does the common mechanism of having churches pay on behalf of their members who attend. As we have seen, payments on behalf of another still fall under the purview of the doctrine of simony.⁹

As conceded with conferences, a seminary need not admit all who apply; while a finance-based partiality is prohibited, other forms of partiality may be acceptable. As concerns around simony in office are designed to exclude poorly suited officers, a seminary would be

⁹ See Chapter 5, p. 103.

wise to admit only the best-qualified candidates, or even to restrict admission to students belonging to a particular roster of churches. Regarding additional financial limitations on an institution, we may observe the conclusions of medieval theologians on the same concerns with respect to religious societies.¹⁰ Should the burden of a student's presence exceed what the institution can absorb, it may gate entry upon his ability to provide for his own space. What it may not do is gate entry upon the willingness to pay for the teaching itself.

Theological Books

The prohibition on the sale of biblical teaching extends to theological and devotional literature. The material, printed volume is not the spiritual thing under consideration. Rather, the words that compose the teaching are. Access to digital editions of theological texts is typically sold at a premium that neither the cost of electronic transmission nor any value the distributor adds in formatting or otherwise can account for.

For physical books, the notion of annexation is once again helpful here. In this case, the printed volume is annexed by direction (*ordinatum*). The essence of the spiritual thing in the book is the words, which are separable from the physical ink and paper, perfectly reproducible elsewhere. This distinguishes books from Christian conferences as treated above. Live teaching is defined by that space wherein it is given, but the written word may be losslessly copied and distributed, even by an independent third party. Therefore, the physical volume might be sold as a purely material thing.

This does not, however, dismiss every concern raised by the sale of a physical book. The price set on the bound volume may demonstrate a sale of a spiritual thing. As indicated by the schoolmen about consecrated vessels, a high price may indicate a simoniacal transaction since it suggests that the thing is not being sold for itself, but for the sake of its annexation, much as Hus remarked on substantial fees for ordination certificates.¹¹

¹⁰ See Chapter 6, pp. 114–16.

¹¹ See Chapter 4, pp. 82–83.

The Advent of Copyright

Having considered these applications, we ought to reflect on what has changed to so increase the sale of biblical teaching in our own day. Many factors might be catalogued, but a primary catalyst appears to be the advent of modern copyright. While there had previously been the occasional regulation of the press that restricted the printing of certain works to certain stationers, the Statute of Anne (1710) was the first law that vested a general proprietary right over the text in the author himself. Before, authors of theological works had been financially supported by their own churches or patrons. As we saw with Martin Luther, he never received money for his works and even refused to sell a guarantee of first access.¹² However, the Statute of Anne opened a legal mechanism for royalty schemes by which the author could sell the final product rather than rely on others to support the production of it. What Luther declined as unconscionable, later authors accepted as default. While this only directly accounts for books in our previous list of examples where teaching is sold today, it is not hard to imagine how the sale of ideas themselves would normalize the sale of the same in any given medium.

Considered in the medieval categories, copyright provides a legal mechanism by which spiritual things may be annexed to temporal things. Recall the right of patronage: when law ties a right of presentation to the ownership of land, a spiritual thing is annexed to a temporal thing such that selling one sells the other.¹³ The same happens with a printed book. The one who sells a printed book with “All Rights Reserved” does not merely sell the paper but the right to access its contents, since access by any other route, such as reading from a copy a friend has reproduced, could be subject to litigation. In our established technical terms, this converts the book from a directed annex into a dependent one. No longer are the paper and ink merely directed toward the *use* of reading spiritual words; annexed to them is the *right* of reading spiritual words. In this scenario where rights

¹² See Chapter 4, p. 82.

¹³ See Chapter 4, p. 78.

transfer with the printed volume, simony is not discerned merely by price as discussed previously; the transaction is inherently simoniacal, at least in regard to the seller.¹⁴

The Prevention of Alterations

One supposed advantage of copyright is the prevention of alterations. While corruptions may always be introduced—with or without legal grounds—both Scripture and the Reformed tradition require the adaptation of divine revelation. Namely, Paul instructed the Colossians, “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16). The Westminster Confession appeals to this verse to justify Bible translation,¹⁵ and it does not require a stretch from there to see how it would also motivate additional arrangements, such as Calvin’s explanation for setting the Psalms to meter.¹⁶ On similar grounds, the Second Helvetic Confession remarks that the preaching of the word of God is the word of God.¹⁷ If the word of God commands adaptations of itself for the sake of pedagogical utility, and it retains power (authority and efficacy) in the process, then that which is derivative of it must be subject to the same, lest the human author sacrifice the authority of his teaching, conceding it to be merely of human wisdom rather than a transmission of divine truth which must

¹⁴ See Chapter 5, pp. 89–91.

¹⁵ “[the Scriptures] are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner.” WCF 1.8.

¹⁶ “For the rest, we must remember what St. Paul says: that spiritual songs cannot be well sung except from the heart. Now the heart requires understanding. And in this (says St. Augustine) lies the difference between the singing of men and that of birds. For a linnet, a nightingale, a parrot will sing well, but it will be without understanding. Now the proper gift of man is to sing knowing what he says: after the understanding must follow the heart and the affection, which cannot be unless we have the canticle imprinted on our memory, that we may never cease from singing.

For these reasons this present book—even on this account, besides the rest that has been said—ought to be singularly commended to everyone [...].” Calvin, *Preface to the Genevan Psalter*, CO 6:171–72.

¹⁷ SHC 1.

be propagated. The use of copyright to restrict the alteration of theological resources does not so much guard the word as it commodifies the very obedience it requires.

The Prevention of Plagiarism

Another supposed advantage of copyright is the prevention of plagiarism. While Christians have always contended for the truth, this wrangling over credit, especially in theological works, is a modern development. The synoptic gospels were given to us in just such a form, authors borrowing from each other without specific attribution (Luke 1:1–2). Chrysostom witnessed the rise of a contrary instinct and lamented that any would compare to a thief the preacher who uses another man's words without credit.¹⁸ Recall that Hus translated large passages of Wycliffe's earlier work word for word, with no particular acknowledgment.¹⁹

Waiving the Right

Even after the advent of copyright, many Christians have noted the negative impacts and made efforts to either partially or wholly waive these rights.²⁰ To cite one notable example, Loraine Boettner placed such a notice on the copyright pages of his books. While the wording in some works differ slightly, in *Studies in Theology*, it reads:

Any one is at liberty to use material from this book with or without credit. In preparing this book the writer has received help from many sources, some acknowledged

¹⁸“If any preacher should chance to weave into his own discourses some part of what others have labored to produce, he incurs greater reproach than those who steal money. Often, when he has taken nothing whatever from anyone but lies under mere suspicion, he suffers the fate of one caught in the act.” Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio*, 5.1 (PG 48:672–73).

¹⁹“Hus is indeed guilty of such a practice, for as a matter of fact he seldom mentions Wyclif by name.” Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 12. See Chapter 2, p. 44.

²⁰ See Jore, *Christian Commons*.

and many unacknowledged. He believes the material herein contained to be a true statement of Scripture truth, and his desire is to further, not to restrict, its use.²¹

At least some others followed suit.²² More recently, some Christian authors have begun adopting public domain dedications.²³

Large Language Models

A further consideration has arisen in our own generation. Large language models—the artificial intelligences increasingly consulted on every subject, theology included—gather their information from the texts available to them, which is to say, predominantly from texts that are free. From an outside perspective, what any particular training corpus contains is not known, but a work restricted by copyright is almost certainly less likely to be included than one that is not, all else being equal. Therefore, whatever picture of Christian doctrine such a system synthesizes comes disproportionately from those who have made their teaching freely available. If Christ commanded his disciples to teach all nations, and the nations now mediate much of their inquiry through tools fed on open text, a new reason has been added for the Christian to forgo the control copyright affords.

Conclusion

Theological education, teaching the word of God, falls under the various concerns of the medievals who wrote on simony: it fails to recognize man's stewardship of the mysteries of God, it undermines the nature of grace, and it prices the priceless. This applies to various forms of biblical teaching, from conference tickets to seminary tuition

²¹ Boettner, *Studies in Theology*, 4; cf. Boettner, *The Millennium*, ii; Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 4.

²² E.g., Reisinger, *God's Will, Man's Will and Free Will*, Author's Note.

²³ Most notably, Creative Commons Zero is a public domain dedication that provides a license fallback in jurisdictions that do not permit a full waiving of rights. See Owens, *Dorean Principle*, 129–30.

to theological book prices. Arguably, the problem as it exists today arose from the legal innovation of copyright in the eighteenth century. Regardless, the history of practices around theological teaching does not testify to a commerce that has been forever accepted by Christians, but one that has only been tolerated in recent centuries, requiring a new address, appealing back to the foundations of older sources.

Biblical teaching, properly taught, is not a matter of human wisdom but that which is taught by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13). To sell such a spiritual thing is simony. The dilemma it poses to the would-be seller of theological instruction is therefore unavoidable. Either he confesses his guilt before God, or he concedes that what he sells is merely the wisdom of man. The word is manna from heaven, and those who hoard it by withholding it from all but those who pay will find their surplus to be rot (Deut. 8:3; Exod. 16:20).

Mediated Obligation

The financial maintenance of ministers rests on an obligation of a peculiar kind. On the one hand, Scripture speaks of a real duty that a people owe their ministers: “Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches” (Gal. 6:6). On the other hand, the one who gives is said to give not finally to the minister but to the Lord. Christ promises a reward to him who receives a prophet because the one who does so receives Christ himself (Matt. 10:40–42). Additionally, the giver who supplies the laborer “sows to the Spirit” rather than to the flesh (Gal. 6:8). The obligation between a people and their minister is therefore genuine but not direct. It is mediated by their mutual obligation to the Lord.

The present author has elsewhere attempted to account for the reality of this mediated obligation, distinguishing licit from illicit giving with the terms *ministerial co-labor* and *ministerial reciprocity*.¹ While they lack the established authority of the technical vocabulary we have covered in previous chapters, these categories have the potential to simplify a number of the more difficult questions former generations sought to resolve. After briefly establishing this mediated obligation along with the distinction between co-labor and reciprocity, we will demonstrate how they may resolve several of the issues where either agreement or clarity seemed to be lacking.

¹ Owens, *Dorean Principle*.

Co-labor and Reciprocity

This mediated obligation may be pictured as a triangle where people give to the Lord who then gives to his own ministers. This arrangement is pictured the most directly in Numbers 18 where that which is given to the Lord is given to his priests (Num. 18:8). Because the Lord is the priests' inheritance, they receive from him (Num. 18:20). Paul appealed to this dynamic in explaining the New Testament minister's financial support (1 Cor. 9:13–14). In fact, every other analogy that Paul employed in the same passage—soldiers, vinedressers, shepherds, oxen—operates the same way. None of them receive out of a direct obligation due from that which yields its fruit. The citizens pay taxes to the king by giving to the soldier, and the ox receives grain from the owner as it treads; the vine and the flock owe nothing to anyone, the arrangement being their owner's. This accords with the foundational passages of Matthew 10:10 (“the laborer is worthy of his food”) and Luke 10:7 (“the laborer is worthy of his wages”). These do not picture the commercial transaction of a vendor and his customer, but of a worker and his employer. In each of these passages, the employer who supplies pay for his laborers is the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:38; Luke 10:2). The one who provides these things, the giver, is himself of the harvest; that which is owned has its duties to the owner of the field.

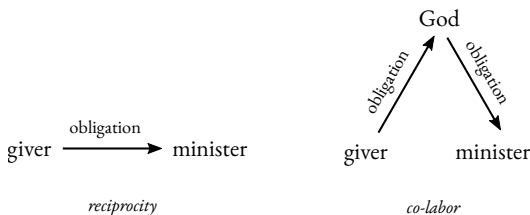


Figure 15.1: Reciprocity vs. Co-labor

The term *ministerial co-labor* refers to the activity that occurs

when this dynamic is executed with a proper inward disposition. Both the minister and giver operate with a felt obligation to God, and as each receives—whether it be a spiritual thing or a temporal gift—he understands it as ultimately coming from God. “Co-labor” is a fitting term because in this model, the giver and minister work alongside each other for the same master, accomplishing the same purpose of advancing the work of ministry. *Ministerial reciprocity* refers to any breakdown in the activity of co-labor. When the minister or giver operates with a sense of direct obligation to the other, or either receives as though the other is the ultimate source of the blessing, a transaction occurs in which God does not have his proper place. At some level, at least one party treats the exchange as a form of direct reciprocation. For example, Hophni and Phinehas bypassed the notion of mediated obligation when they demanded the sacrifices *before* they were offered to the Lord rather than waiting until after (1 Sam. 2:12–17).

This distinction accounts for what might appear to be inconsistencies in Paul’s financial policy. He refused hospitality in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8). He received it in Philippi, however, after Lydia demonstrated her disposition as a servant of the Lord (Acts 16:15; Phil. 4:15). He never received payment from the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:15, 18; 2 Cor. 11:7–9), but he planned to come to them in order to receive their support (1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16). In each, he refused reciprocity but accepted co-labor. A number of other apparent discrepancies may be catalogued with the same resolution.²

Reframing the Tradition

With these distinctions in hand, we may revisit some of the questions we explored in earlier chapters. The categories of co-labor and reciprocity will help us to understand matters where we may otherwise struggle to articulate our concerns. In particular, we will look at three questions: the sense in which a minister’s maintenance may be called wages, how mental simony may be discerned, and the problem of the mendicant orders.

² See *ibid.*, 74.

Understanding Ministerial Wages

In Chapter 8, we surveyed several ways one might regard what a minister receives. To construe it as pure charity does not accord with Scripture's insistence on the laborer's worthiness; to construe it as the purchase of his spiritual products would be manifest simony. Many then concluded that those who give pay a minister for his labor; yet we noted a strain of the tradition that found even this formulation in need of correction. Spiritual labor is a spiritual thing, so its sale does not escape the charge of simony. As was observed,³ no one who pays a laborer truly desires the labor itself, but the thing that labor produces. In terms of modern economic theory, we might frame these medieval observations as a subjective theory of value contending with a labor theory of value.⁴ Those who denied that one rightly should give to a minister as a purchase of his labor argued instead that one ought to give for his sustenance.

Alternatively, we might ask whether a ministerial stipend is for the worker or the work. The question so posed, however, turns on an ambiguity in one word. The preposition "for" carries two distinct senses: it may mean "in exchange for," as in the price one pays for a purchase, or it may mean "in support of," as in a financial contribution to a campaign. The notion of mediated obligation supplies clarity here. To give in support of the worker is co-labor; to give in exchange for the work is reciprocity. Both may be called wages as both are in some sense payment for labor; but in the one model, the wages issue from the Lord while in the other they come directly from a human client.

This was precisely the concern of Hus, Paludanus, Durandus, and others who objected to any simple formula of selling labor.⁵ Tuckney and Keach, for their part, granted that a minister's maintenance might

³ See Chapter 8, pp. 142–47.

⁴ A labor theory of value holds that a good is worth the labor required to produce it, so that price tracks the quantity of work that went into a thing. A subjective theory holds that worth lies in the estimation of the one who values, so that the same good is worth different amounts to different people and nothing at all to one who has no use for it.

⁵ See Chapter 8, pp. 142–47.

be called wages, yet denied that it could be called *base* wages.⁶ What is this distinction but a recognition of the mediated shape those wages must take? In each case the aim was the same: to deny that a people stand in direct reciprocity with their minister.

Discerning Mental Simony

Several of the thornier cases considered in previous chapters came down to questions of mental simony.⁷ When outward sales of spiritual things were uncertain, canon law imposed certain regulations as protective measures. Where such sales were absent, theologians described features of the conscience that might betray a simoniacal disposition. The distinction between co-labor and reciprocity offers clarity for both of these, anchoring a myriad of heuristics for the detection of simony that might otherwise remain disconnected.

Consider the place the medieval writers gave to the existence of a “pact.” On the one hand, there is some utility in the notion, because in a pact direct obligations are formed between men. Typically, the giver exchanges directly with the minister, and the minister binds himself in direct obligation to an individual, acting under compulsion rather than eagerly (1 Pet. 5:2). On the other hand, it does not take much creativity to identify pacts that seem perfectly acceptable, such as that agreement by which a pastor agrees to care for a congregation as they financially provide for him. Rightly understood, this latter pact places minister and congregation under no immediate obligation to each other; it holds each to account in their respective duties to God (that is, co-labor). The minister will continue to labor in the service of God so long as he is able by their support and the people will offer to God by supporting his minister so long as that minister is faithful in the work.

The tradition named marks by which a licit gift is known, each conceived as antithetical to a pact: it is offered spontaneously (*spontanee*),

⁶ See Chapter 8, pp. 148–49.

⁷ See Chapter 6, pp. 112–14.

voluntarily (*voluntarie*), and only out of gratitude.⁸ But each, however useful for outward discernment, leaves the underlying question unasked. To give spontaneously is to give without prior agreement, but one may spontaneously give out of a felt obligation to the minister as the source of the spiritual things in which he labors. The same applies to the notion of voluntary giving. The Corinthians, after all, were already supporting other teachers and would have given to Paul voluntarily in exchange for his preaching (1 Cor. 9:11–12), but he never entertained the transaction (1 Cor. 9:15, 18; 2 Cor. 11:7, 12). Apart from specifying its object, gratitude fares no better. Is the gratitude to man as the immediate source of the spiritual thing or to God? Paul's interaction with the Philippians is instructive here, as he identified their gift in Philippians 2:30 as a due service to him, and in 4:18 as a sort of payment to him but a sacrifice to God. Their relationship is one of partnership, co-labor (Phil. 1:5). Thus, while the epistle was occasioned as a letter of thanks, Paul said remarkably little by way of gratitude toward the Philippians rather than to God.⁹

The insufficiency of these categories shows plainly in the modern practice of “suggested donations,” wherein one who receives some spiritual service—typically a form of teaching—is prompted to spontaneously and voluntarily give out of gratitude. Yet, in specifying a value to the recipient himself, a price is essentially set on the service provided. The justification of encouraging charity differs little from the rationale once offered for indulgences.¹⁰ This is not to say there is no room for specific pastoral guidance in giving, but categories of co-labor and reciprocity have the capacity to frame the giving as a partnership rather than a direct exchange.

Medieval writings on simony analyzed a number of scenarios with a consideration of whether anything spiritual is given with the hope of some benefit in return. This approach to identifying simony is, once again, insufficient apart from the distinction between mediated and

⁸ See Chapter 7, pp. 134–37.

⁹ For this reason, scholars have described Paul's epistle to the Philippians as a “thankless thanks.” See Peterman, ““Thankless Thanks””.

¹⁰ See Chapter 5, pp. 28–31.

direct obligation, co-labor and reciprocity. For example, mutual exchanges of spiritual benefit were alternately permitted or forbidden,¹¹ yet justifications between the two were often lacking. Considering the examples surveyed, why should an agreement to pray for each other be reckoned licit, and an agreement to baptize each other not? While we might offer our own objections on the proper administrators of baptism, using the categories of co-labor and reciprocity, the difference is simply that mutual prayer is generally understood as a shared partnership in serving the Lord, while the other arrangement suggests an exchange of spiritual services. In 2 Corinthians 9:13–14 the apostle Paul even commended charity with an eye to the prayers the recipients will offer on the giver's behalf, regarding the scheme as a form of partnership (*κοινωνία*).

Medieval theologians likewise attempted to articulate the senses in which preaching for the sake of a good commendation might be distinguished from the simoniacal motivation of receiving man's praise.¹² A commendation is not a price, since the esteem a hearer gives is not his to withhold as payment; it is granted in a shared service to God.

Categorizing Mendicant Support

In Chapter 9, we traced William of Saint-Amour's insistence that sustenance from the gospel is owed only to one who holds church office, particularly from those under his care.¹³ Apart from a special commissioning, one has no right to such support, and even to request it is an act of simony. Some readers may find it difficult to determine whether William's position truly arises from a contextual understanding of the passages to which he appealed or whether he demanded more than they will allow. However, his arguments are in substance an appeal to the biblical notion of mediated obligation. Those who have been properly commissioned by the church as ministers or evangelists may require support as an act of co-labor, while the mendicants may only do so as reciprocity.

¹¹ See Chapter 7, pp. 131–32.

¹² See Chapter 7, pp. 128–29.

¹³ See pp. 156–57.

The simony of the mendicants may be considered by how it collapses each side of the triangle of obligation. First, it communicates giving as a reciprocal exchange, such that the hearer gives directly rather than to God. Of course, the friars explicitly denied such a thing, but as their opponents observed, to request money before or after preaching is effectively to suggest an exchange of temporal things for spiritual.¹⁴ The call for support suggests hearers are immediately obligated to the preacher on account of receiving the message preached. Second, the practice of the mendicants completely bypasses the second half of mediation, where God gives to his minister. If God himself really is at the center of this triangle, mediating financial support, we must have a sufficient account for his desire for these funds to be granted to the one who receives. He commanded that priests receive from the altar and that ministers receive from the people whom they serve (1 Cor. 9:13–14), but named no one else to be provided for similarly. If the New Testament minister receives after the pattern of the Old Testament minister, then he may not take that office to himself autonomously or by virtue of the approval of a different institution (Heb. 5:4).

One commissioned by the church, such as an evangelist, receives his funds from those who send him. This follows from both ends of the triangle once again. To receive from those he is sent to would be to suggest reciprocity, but if those who wish to send him bear his costs, they give to God by provisioning a servant with whom they co-labor. The apostle John observed the same dynamic: evangelists are worthy of support when they do not receive from those to whom they are sent, and those who support them become fellow workers for the truth (3 John 7–8).

Modern Concerns

We have seen how the notion of mediated obligation untangles questions that former generations answered with the doctrine of simony. But the benefit runs the other way as well: the older doctrine can

¹⁴ See Chapter 9, pp. 156–57.

remedy misunderstandings of mediated obligation that are distinctly modern.

While other issues might be raised, we will address two in particular, one institutional, the other semantic. First, what do these things mean for parachurch institutions, especially those that would charge for teaching? Second, given that we mean to regulate finances surrounding instruction in the word rather than other charitable activities, how should we then speak of “ministry”?

The Rise of the Parachurch

Parachurch organizations, designed to perform ministry tasks outside of the government of any particular church, have a long history.¹⁵ At the turn of the eighteenth century, Thomas Bray founded both the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1698) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701), associations respectively designed to distribute Christian literature and send, equip, and maintain missionaries.¹⁶ Over the following century, Britain produced several missionary, Bible, and tract societies, and American counterparts were soon modeled after them.¹⁷ In the 1960s, several forces combined to create an explosion of these institutions.¹⁸

In erecting structures of their own that remain outside any meaningful governance by the church, these institutions bear a marked resemblance to the mendicant orders.¹⁹ This similarity naturally extends to their fundraising. A local church depends on the weekly giving of the saints; the parachurch organization, lacking any such congregation, must cultivate a distinct generosity among its supporters or else resort to sales. Such organizations are various,²⁰ and many of

¹⁵ See Scheitle, *Beyond the Congregation*, 19–32; White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 35–58; Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*.

¹⁶ Scheitle, *Beyond the Congregation*, 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22–23.

¹⁸ Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 115; White, *The Church and the Parachurch*, 55–58.

¹⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 25.

²⁰ For a breakdown into sectors see Scheitle, *Beyond the Congregation*, 60–61.

them raise no more concern than any other charity, but those designed to perform the church's primary functions of preaching and teaching are open to the objections William of Saint-Amour and John Wycliffe raised against the friars.

Applied to our own day, the antifraternal arguments yield a surprising implication. Parachurch organizations are forbidden not only to charge for teaching and preaching but even to receive gifts voluntarily given on account of such activity. That is, unless those within these institutions are actually commissioned by their own churches they do not qualify as the sort of laborer that is worthy of his wages, authorized to receive from the Master. Those who minister have a right to receive from the altar (1 Cor. 9:13–14), but those who have no formal ecclesial office have not been entrusted with any such stewardship. And even if such a man does indeed labor under a proper calling (e.g., a pastor teaching in a seminary), he should be supported by his own church, or those that would truly partner with that church, rather than soliciting funds from those whom he serves.²¹

None of this settles the appropriate shape of a calling or commission; even within the Reformed tradition, that question has a number of answers. Neither does it settle what sorts of donation-supported organizations may rightly assist the church in her work. Regardless, whoever seeks to do justice to the nature of mediated obligation must wrestle with the nature of these institutions, especially insofar as they are designed to establish those who would be materially sustained on account of spiritual labors. The church is a pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), and no other institution has been appointed to it.

The Vocabulary of Ministry

The concerns of mediated obligation relate to the notion of ministry, that stewardship of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1). The word “ministry,” however, has grown ambiguous in contemporary use. Our own day has seen an increasing number of movements blending the secular and the sacred, and the term now stretches over nearly any

²¹ See Chapter 9, pp. 157–58.

endeavor undertaken with a Christian intention, whether it be the labors of a pastor, charity to the poor, or the operations of a Christian-branded bike shop. Rather than referring to a definite stewardship of spiritual things, “ministry” now names little more than a pious purpose.

Exegetically, the question primarily comes down to the proper rendering of Ephesians 4:12, which describes the purpose for which Christ gave the church its apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers: “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.”²² Two translation decisions determine whether “ministry” here names the work of these officers or the work of all believers. First, should we render the three tasks as a coordinate series or remove the first comma, binding the work of ministry to the saints rather than to the officer? Second, should we render *καταρτισμός* “perfecting” or “equipping,” which implies a preparation for some further activity (that is, ministry)?

The latter choices for each decision are recent novelties. Chrysostom, a native speaker of Greek, assigned all three works to the officers themselves,²³ and all older translations whether English or otherwise seem to be agreed on the matter.²⁴ Westcott and Hort were perhaps the first to punctuate the Greek text to indicate ministry as the activity of all believers, omitting the comma after “the saints” (*τῶν ἁγίων*),²⁵ but from about 1940 the reading was promoted by the ecumenical lay-ministry movement, and later especially by the World Council of Churches’ Departments of the Laity and Evangelism and by D. T. Niles.²⁶ Despite receiving pushback since 1980,²⁷ almost every major English Protestant version since 1960 has both removed

²² πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

²³ Of the officers of the church, “each one edifies, each one perfects, each one ministers.” Chrysostom, *Homiliae in epistolas ad Galatas et Ephesios*, hom. 11 (p. 218).

²⁴ See Barcellos, “The Christian Ministry in the Church,” 7–8.

²⁵ Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Eph. 4:12.

²⁶ Barth, *Ephesians*, 479n265; cf. Mayes, “‘Equipping the Saints?’” 9. For the slogans related to this movement, see Gordon, “‘Equipping’ Ministry in Ephesians 4?” 69.

²⁷ See Barcellos, “The Christian Ministry in the Church,” 21–22.

the first comma and traded “perfecting” for “equipping” or a near synonym.²⁸

All of this would be irrelevant if the newer reading could be maintained on the text’s own terms. However, to carry it, three things must be shown at once: that the parallel purpose clauses take different implied subjects, that *καταρτισμός* is properly translated “equip,” and that *ἔργον διακονίας* denotes not acts of service in the general sense but the Christian ministry itself.²⁹ None of these have been demonstrated. T. David Gordon judges the lay-ministry reading “so contrary to the natural grammar of the passage, and so strikingly contrary to the teaching of the remainder of the NT, that we cannot account for its popularity on the basis of careful Biblical study.” Its appeal must instead be credited to “the egalitarian, anti-authoritarian, populist Zeitgeist.”³⁰ What presents itself as exegesis is—at least in part—a remaking of Christianity in the image of the age.

We may reframe this modern confusion with the triangle of mediated obligation. For any activity performed by man for some benefit to another, we may regard it in one of two ways. First, we may regard God as the special source of that benefit, rendering the recipient directly obligated to God. Second, we may regard God as no more the source of that action than of any other, in which case the recipient is directly obligated to man. Once every earnest endeavor is “ministry” and every believer a “minister,” we must descend into either legalism or license. If “ministry” equally describes the administration of the Lord’s supper as well as it does a Christian travel agency, then either one must offer for free all work accomplished with noble intentions or it may all be sold. Modern Christianity has drifted toward the latter, treating more as salable and withholding less from sale. This is the natural result of expanding the definition of “ministry” so that it

²⁸ The first edition of the Revised Standard Version (1952) was the last major version to render the three phrases as coordinate; the New American Standard Bible (1960) dropped the comma. See *ibid.*, 8–9.

²⁹ See Gordon, “‘Equipping’ Ministry in Ephesians 4?” 70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 77, appealing to the work of Nathan Hatch, Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*.

marks off nothing in particular. As the saying goes, if everything is holy, nothing is holy.

The doctrine of simony helps here by providing the category of spiritual things. Distinguishing between things of created spirits and things of the uncreated Spirit, we may identify what benefits render man directly obligated to other men or directly obligated to God. Even apart from restoring a narrow conception of the word “ministry,” this distinction restores the triangle where it should be, identifying man’s reception of supernatural gifts from God through one who stewards these blessings.

Conclusion

The obligation between a people and their minister is genuine but mediated. Within this framework, giving in relation to the ministry of the word may be categorized as either co-labor or reciprocity. These categories help us to understand issues raised by the older writings on simony: ministerial wages are properly co-labor, mental simony may be discerned by reciprocal cues, and mendicant support essentially functions as a form of reciprocity, even when posturing as co-labor.

Similarly, when combined with the historical doctrine of simony, this framework helps us to understand matters of our own time. Parachurch organizations designed to establish teachers of the word encourage a reciprocal fundraising similar to that practiced by the mendicant orders. Additionally, the twentieth-century inflation of the term “ministry” flattens the triangle of obligation and removes the categories by which the doctrine of simony was able to flourish, and by which it may be able to flourish once again.

A doctrine of simony recovered in these terms not only restores the discernment older generations possessed but yields a refined clarity. More than that, it may be established so as not to be lost again. Combined with the notion of mediated obligation, the doctrine of simony may be employed to positively describe the nature of ministerial maintenance rather than merely confront contemporary ills. As such, it has the capacity to outlast any corruption it eradicates.

Present Danger

Previous generations often regarded simony as one of the greatest dangers of their own day. To what degree do these concerns apply today among evangelicals? The recovery of a doctrine should end in proper use, and proper use requires an updated assessment of its present application. In some ways we have provided that in the last two chapters, but points of inquiry remain.

First, we should consider the difficulties of discerning and acknowledging modern simony. Second, we should consider the gravity of simony and its cure.

The Difficulty of Discerning Modern Simony

Modern simony is difficult to discern on account of both the subject and object. As regards the subject, we have lost important categories; as regards the object, the common offenses have shifted greatly from what they once were. In either case, a robust doctrine of simony is the remedy.

Missing Categories

In the appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell described the formation of “Newspeak,” a version of English so pared of its vocabulary that it rendered sophisticated thought impossible. By this,

the totalitarian regime that imposed the language became invincible. If one lacks the words to *describe* evil, he tends to struggle to even *identify* it. Orwell's scenario was a fiction of his own making, but this phenomenon of language and cognition has been identified by scientists in various empirical studies. For example, compared to a speaker whose language features a word for a particular shade of color, a speaker whose language features no similar word experiences more difficulty quickly distinguishing that shade from its neighbors.¹

So it is with the doctrine of simony. Once its vocabulary is lost, the sale of spiritual things may go entirely undetected. Recovering the vocabulary of simony, as we have done here, is therefore a first task. The varieties of spiritual things (by essence and by cause)² together with their annexes (by direction and by dependence)³ allow us to identify the spiritual side of the exchange. The Gregorian triad (the gift of the hand, the tongue, and service)⁴ identifies the temporal. And this is only the core vocabulary of the exchange itself. Beyond it lie the modes of exchange, and within these, the various modes of giving and receiving.

There is almost certainly room to recover and develop further vocabulary still. Yet given the breadth already covered, the greater part of the work that remains may be not expansion but refinement, sharpening of the categories already in hand. The sharper our vocabulary of simony grows, the better our ability to discern it becomes.

Shifting Offenses

Former appearances of simony have largely receded from view. Commerce in ordinations, sacraments, indulgences, relics, the right of patronage, etc. is rare. This is not to say that the old forms are extinct. They survive in some measure in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, and even among Protestant churches reports of things like baptism fees are not entirely unheard of. The battles fought by

¹ See Winawer et al., "Russian Blues Reveal Effects".

² See Chapter 3, pp. 55–56.

³ See Chapter 4, p. 73.

⁴ See Chapter 7, pp. 126–27.

former generations against the manifestations of simony in their own day were largely won.

Yet simony is protean.⁵ We have observed how the advent of copyright has permitted people to sell biblical teaching itself in a way that was formerly impossible,⁶ and recent phenomena like the formalization of biblical counseling have created more opportunities for commerce in spiritual things.

As the pace of technology quickens, so does the transformation of simony. Digital media have opened new channels for monetizing doctrine, and the platforms that facilitate this introduce their own complexities. Advertisements and revenue sharing—sometimes not even optional—do not have the appearance of a direct sale, but involve their own sorts of exchanges. Our culture has multiplied the ways a spiritual thing may be annexed to a material thing, and with them the occasions for confusion. Some are plainly innocent; while the practice continued,⁷ no Alaska Airlines customer could reasonably understand his airfare as a purchase of a verse on a prayer card. Others, such as theology cruises, require more consideration.

The changing nature of simony is nothing new. For example, in Protestant England the prevalent form of simony had shifted from the sale of orders to corruption in the collation and provision of benefices, simoniacal ordination having grown rare as simoniacal dealing in benefices grew frequent.⁸ A new era yielded a new manifestation of the sin, but established doctrine furnished the means to identify and proscribe it. Regarding this phenomenon, one nineteenth-century professor of civil law observed, “The view of the ancients and moderns has been invariably the same, and that the former have principally

⁵“Among all the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, no little fox is more wicked or more cunning than simony. For, as a certain author [Horace] says, ‘By what knot do I hold Proteus as he changes his aspect?’ so we may say: by what knot shall we hold simony—that most cunning little fox, manifold in face, thousand-shaped in habit, and almost always unlike not only the other little foxes but even unlike itself, to such a degree that, while it ruins the vineyards of Christ, it is sometimes seen in the very guise of the vinedresser?” Gerhoch of Reichersberg, *Liber de simoniacis*, 268:27–38.

⁶ See Chapter 14, p. 236.

⁷ The Alaska Airlines prayer card tradition lasted thirty years and ended in 2012.

⁸ See Willis, *Simony: In Two Parts*, 21–22.

inveighed against simony of the one description, the latter against simony of the other description, arises not from any different view taken by the church as to the nature of the offence, but from the change of discipline which change of times and manners has rendered necessary.”⁹

Proper definitions keep simony from passing unrecognized when its appearance changes. When these foundations erode, hard-won ground is easily lost. The house swept clean of one form of the offense may have seven more return in its place, so that the last state is worse than the first. This threat of invasion is effectively mitigated with a proper doctrine of simony resident in the church.

The Difficulty of Acknowledging Modern Simony

Regarding modern simony, the difficulty of acknowledgment at least rivals, if not exceeds, the difficulty of discernment. People are easily governed by competing authorities though they may regard themselves as unbiased judges. We might break these down into two primary categories: the authority of other men and the authority of self-interest.

The Weight of an Implied Consensus

Common practices among relatively elite ranks suggest to onlookers a studied consensus, and their propriety is often assumed on account of this implied authority. Such customs form from a variety of factors and often go without ever being subjected to serious scrutiny. Such is the case with modern simony. Because the sale of spiritual teaching saturates the Christian landscape, it exerts a kind of hegemony. The participants in this commerce include not only false teachers and charlatans but men of unquestioned devotion, so challenges to it are often regarded as malicious attacks against the pillars of the church.

We might partition those affected by this phenomenon into three groups. First, there are those who practice or endorse the sale of

⁹ Joseph Phillimore, as quoted in Phillimore, *The Ecclesiastical Law*, 1103–4.

spiritual teaching with obstinacy. Like the priests of Micah's day, they presume upon the mercy of the Lord on account of the ubiquity of the practice. Second, some are uncertain on the issue, but withhold firm judgments against the sale of spiritual teaching on account of an apparent consensus to the contrary. Third, there are those who have concluded yet hold their tongue for fear of opposing the masses.

In any of these cases, the doctrine of simony exposes the artificiality of this authority. First, recall that the medievals arrived at conclusions that directly rejected such appeals to authority. They recognized the pervasiveness of the sin, and even those who respected Rome were forced to conclude that its highest bishop could not be guaranteed to be free from the stain of simony.¹⁰ Second, simply the use of technical terms and categories demands a reasoned response that mere practices do not provide. Third, an ancient tradition reframes the whole notion of consensus, widening it from one generation of the faithful to many.

Conflicts of Interest

Many struggle to approach the question honestly because the answer is of significant personal consequence. Upton Sinclair famously quipped, "It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!"¹¹ The claim is not that such men knowingly suppress the truth but that such interest works quietly upon the judgment, making the most convenient conclusions appear the most likely.

This interest governs one's reading of Scripture. In Chapter 8, we observed that those who promote the sale of spiritual things often employ 1 Corinthians 9:14 in their defense.¹² Paul established a minister's right to financial support in the first fourteen verses, yet this is only the initial premise of the apostle's discourse. The weight of

¹⁰ See Chapter 13, pp. 217–19.

¹¹ Sinclair, *I, Candidate for Governor*, 109.

¹² See pp. 141–42.

the argument falls on its remainder and Paul's refusal to use that authority (1 Cor. 9:15, 18).¹³ Those who appeal to the passage commonly stop at the premise. Contending against seat rents in the nineteenth century, James Begg observed the same selective quotation from his opponents, remarking that they "always *halt in the middle* of the apostle's statement with an evident design."¹⁴

Many are hesitant to identify the sin where it may interfere with their present activities or even require repentance for past ones. In the fourteenth century, this was directly highlighted by the popular *Epistola Luciferi*, a satire penned in the guise of "Lucifer prince of darkness," addressed to the prelates of the church, thanking them for their faithful service to his kingdom.¹⁵ Therein, the devil observes that corrupt clergy cannot speak out against simony because she is their mother: "We commend to you our very dear daughters, Pride, Avarice, Fraud, Luxury, and the others, especially Lady Simony, who has made you and suckled you with her own breasts and nourished you. And you shall not call her simony or sin, because you own everything."¹⁶

This interested blindness is not restricted to previous centuries. Today, though it is rarely suggested, the idea that seminary tuition or theology text royalties should be regarded as illicit is precluded as an intolerable conclusion. Even apart from those with a financial stake in institutions that sell biblical teaching, nearly everyone within the church has benefited in some way from them, and has among them friends, mentors, or benefactors. Few are willing to indict those they love and who have served them well.

So long as the sale of spiritual teaching is treated as a matter of practical judgment of wisdom, proportion, or taste, interest will always find room to maneuver; such judgments are endlessly negotiable.

¹³ See Chapter 14, pp. 227–28.

¹⁴ Begg, *Seat Rents*, 20.

¹⁵ The letter was composed around the turn of 1352, and has been attributed to a number of candidates. See Schabel, "Lucifer princeps tenebrarum," 127–29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 132, translating the critical Latin at *ibid.*, 171. An English version of the letter was printed by John Foxe among the Lollard writings annexed to the trial of Walter Brute, Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 5, 503.

Principle keeps the matter from being diffuse and demands a consistency that resists, at least in some measure, personal bias. A recovered doctrine of simony provides that principle and forces the issue.

The Gravity of Modern Simony

We have already surveyed how previous generations spoke of simony and weighed it against other sins.¹⁷ However, we have yet to provide our own assessment of these conclusions, especially as they relate to the sale of biblical teaching today.

Heresy

As we saw in Chapter 13, simony was long regarded as a heresy. The charge began with Gregory the Great, whose label of *simoniaca haeresis* was maintained by later generations. The implicit claim that a price could be placed on a priceless grace was regarded as a fundamental denial of the faith. Does this same reasoning apply to modern simony? And is “heresy” even the proper category to apply here?

God’s word is clear that divine revelation is priceless. When the psalmist spoke of the law of God’s mouth as being worth more than thousands of pieces of gold and silver (Ps. 119:72), the idea is not that it is worth slightly more, but that it cannot be weighed against them at all. Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing can be compared with her (Prov. 3:15). To sell Scripture—or that teaching which is derived from it—is therefore to put a price on that which is priceless. Moreover, biblical teaching of the word of God does not merely describe him, but communicates the Infinite One himself. It would be manifest heresy to deny God’s *eternity* or *immensity*—that he transcends both time and space—because it ascribes creatureliness to the Creator. This is precisely what takes place in idolatry (Isa. 40:18, 25). Therefore, to treat divine revelation as salable is to treat God himself as salable, valued along with creation.

¹⁷ See Chapter 12.

Heresy is at bottom a denial of the gospel, and the sale of biblical teaching functions as such a denial. Though this may not be obvious at first, it follows from two observations made in Chapter 14. First, right biblical teaching—whatever its scope—necessarily communicates the gospel.¹⁸ Second, the proclamation of the gospel is not a mere vessel for its message; the “word of his grace” (Acts 14:3; 20:32) is itself given by that grace.¹⁹ To borrow Marshall McLuhan’s famous phrase, the medium is the message.²⁰ It is not merely that the word of God *ought* to be offered “without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1; cf. Rev. 21:6; 22:17), but that what is offered for a price must be something other than the gospel. This is not to claim absolutely that no one could learn the saving message through paid instruction, only that such understanding comes *despite* the sale, not on account of it.

Moreover, it is the unpardonable sin, even as Wycliffe and Hus observed.²¹ Consider the two kinds of temporary faith described in Scripture, especially as delineated in the parable of the sower with the rocky soil and the thorny soil. The rocky soil falls away on account of difficulty (Matt. 13:21; Luke 8:13), while the thorny soil falls away on account of the pleasures of this life (Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14). It is this second failure that Hebrews 6:6 marks as impossible to renew to repentance, speaking of the land that “bears thorns and thistles” (Heb. 6:8). The distinction is further demonstrated in Peter and Judas, the former corresponding to the rocky soil and the latter to the thorny. Peter denied his Lord out of fear but was later restored; Judas delivered him up out of greed and perished. The simoniac sins in the manner of Judas.

All of this requires qualification.²² Simony exists in outward action, typically without the inward conviction that would make it heresy in all the aforementioned senses. The idea of a practical heresy is not foreign to Scripture, which even speaks of the fool who says in his heart “There is no God” (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). This is not a settled creed of

¹⁸ See pp. 229–31.

¹⁹ See p. 229.

²⁰ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7.

²¹ See Chapter 13, pp. 213–14.

²² See Chapter 13, p. 216.

atheism but a practical disregard of divine judgment. Though Judas was the son of perdition, Simon Magus himself received the hope of forgiveness at the words of Peter (Acts 8:22). Regardless, the sin of simony remains a grave danger as does any sort of heresy. Even those who outwardly commit it play with fire.

The Greatest Sin

A number of theologians identified simony as not only a great sin, but the greatest sin.²³ In part, this is carried by the aforementioned comments on simony's relation to the unpardonable sin. Those who would count the things of this earth as having a value comparable to Christ such that he could be traded for them "crucify again to themselves the Son of God" (Heb. 6:6).

Not all who sell holy things truly intend to prize the world above their Lord, but the severity of the expression remains. Whatever the inward reservation, no deed declares a knowing and culpable devaluation of the gospel more plainly than fixing a literal price on it. Thus, Scripture names the love of money a root of all kinds of evil and places the service of mammon in direct competition with service to the Lord (1 Tim. 6:10; Matt. 6:24). In the sale of biblical teaching, a man places Christ below material things in the plainest terms the choice can take.

Alarm over the sale of religion tends to settle on those who actively promote false teaching.²⁴ The profiteering of prosperity preachers, for example, is frequently singled out for special condemnation, yet our findings here should lead us to question this judgment. We must resist the urge to weigh sin only by the harm done to man and not by the offense given to God. The false teacher's lies are a separate matter. On that narrower question of the sale itself, pricing what is worthless is a mote beside pricing what is priceless. We should not be quick to suppose that Demetrius the silversmith sinned more grievously in selling false gods (Acts 19:24) than did Judas in selling the true

²³ See Chapter 12, pp. 193–94.

²⁴ See 2 Pet. 2:1–3.

God. After all, the New Testament regards Balaam as chief among deplorable mercenary prophets (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11), but all his words were true (Num. 22:38; 23:12).

Epithets

The charge of heresy and its associated rhetoric are only a sample of the language the ancients turned against simony. One seventeenth-century minister writing on the topic reported, “I could amass many other sharp invectives of the fathers against this crime; but I forbear, lest this article swell to too great a bulk.”²⁵ Few today have the palate for this sort of rhetoric, but modern sensibilities aside, we must ask whether there is truth to some of the more severe appellations, especially in regard to the sale of biblical teaching. Two we examined in Chapter 12 warrant revisiting: leprosy and sodomy.

As for “leprosy,” the standard observation was of its contagion: as one simoniac ordained another, the corruption of office perpetuated itself.²⁶ The concern may seem to weaken once the doctrine is applied to the sale of biblical teaching, but in practice it is no different. Those raised into ministry under men who sell their teaching learn to sell in turn. A large bulk of training for ministry in our day takes place in seminaries where professors are funded by tuition rather than by churches. Implicitly, those designed to serve as role models endorse the sale of biblical teaching. Beyond the seminaries, the local church often redirects its members to parachurch ministries that charge those seeking instruction. When those so raised take up the work of teaching, they commonly practice—or at least condone—what was modeled for them. Moreover, we should heed Ambrose’s argument: biblical patterns permit and perhaps even require understanding Gehazi’s curse as applying to those who follow him in his sin rather than his physical descendants.²⁷

To revisit the rationale behind the label of “sodomy,” as the sodomite perverts natural acts, the simoniac perverts gracious acts; one spills

²⁵ Gordon, *Reformed Bishop*, 98.

²⁶ See Chapter 10, pp. 167–70.

²⁷ See Chapter 10, pp. 167–70.

the seed of the body, the other spills the seed of the word.²⁸ While this rhetoric is the least likely to survive modern scruples, it applies strikingly well to the varieties of simony that exist most commonly today. A teacher labors at great pains over the word, develops his teaching, and then places it behind a paywall, undermining the spiritual fruitfulness that might have resulted.

Before dismissing the use of such rhetoric, we should remember that Peter was willing to pronounce maledictions against Simon: “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money” (Acts 8:20), and Christ was willing to overturn tables on account of commerce in the house of God. Those who stand in a position to correct teachers who sell their instruction must be prepared to “rebuke them sharply” (Titus 1:13).

The Cure for Modern Simony

Having considered the danger, what is the remedy? The twin needs of the hour are zeal and knowledge, or more specifically, zeal according to knowledge.

Zeal

Recall the admonition of Gregory the Great: whoever does not “burn vehemently” against simony according to his station will have his portion with Simon.²⁹ The Lord calls his people, and most especially his ministers, to vigorously oppose the sale of spiritual things. Not only are we to take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but we are to expose them (Eph. 5:11). Many biblical passages may be added to reinforce this point.³⁰

This zeal requires a courage that is necessarily at odds with the fear of man. Many believed but refused to follow Jesus because they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes

²⁸ See Chapter 12, pp. 199–201.

²⁹ C. 1, q. 1, c. 5.

³⁰ E.g., James 4:17; Lev. 5:1; Ezek. 33:8; Prov. 24:11–12; Rom. 1:32.

from God (John 12:42–43). Ultimately, this requires a love of God so great that it could even be said to imply a hatred of man (Ps. 139:21; Luke 14:26). But such a posture is the only kind of true love for man, since love “does not rejoice in unrighteousness” (1 Cor. 13:6).

By zeal, Christ cleansed the temple, and it is by zeal that he will continue to cleanse the temple of his church. He calls his people to share in this righteous indignation (Ps. 119:53).

Knowledge

Proper zeal exists and operates according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2). The doctrine of simony supplies that knowledge, appropriately directing zeal. Tyndale observed the need for expertise, mixing the figure of fleecing the flock with that of wolves in sheep’s clothing: “The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar scrapeth, and the pardoner pareth, we lack but a butcher to poll off the skin. [...] What other thing are these in a realm save horseleeches [...] and those wolves which Paul prophesied should come and should not spare the flock, Acts 20 chap. And which Christ said should come in lambs’ skins, and bade us beware of them and judge them by their works.”³¹

Where doctrinal knowledge is lacking, practical judgments will fill the gap. This errs in at least two ways. First, it focuses on the most obvious offenders, which are not even necessarily the worst offenders. Consider our earlier comparison between those who would sell false teaching and those who would sell true teaching. The latter is in some ways a greater offense, but those focused on the practical will primarily, if not exclusively, direct their attention to the former. Second, it will permit practical concerns to excuse sinful behavior if they cannot be immediately answered. Many will excuse the sale of teaching because they cannot say how teachers might otherwise be supported. Pragmatism cannot be permitted to trump principle, and pragmatic compromises in the things of God do not typically render

³¹ Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, foll. 77v–78r.

the desired results since he who is sovereign over the outcome will not be mocked (Prov. 11:24; Gal. 6:7).

Many think of knowledge as primarily tempering zeal, but right understanding *generates* zeal. The one who can name a sin is far more capable of burning against it than one who cannot. It is only the ones who study the law deeply who can know its breadth (Ps. 119:96), becoming aware of those things to which it speaks. This is especially true with regard to mental simony, since inward sins are the ones that most often elude the conscience (Rom. 7:7; Matt. 5:21–22, 27–28). Many justify peddlers of the word on the basis of a supposed sincerity, not realizing that a man who holds out his faith to those who pay and withholds it from those who cannot necessarily reveals an ulterior motive (2 Cor. 2:17; James 2:1, 9–10).

We have made initial steps in providing a right understanding here, but possibly our historical survey has raised more questions than it has settled. Several matters we encountered deserve fuller treatment than they have received in our analysis. We have not commented on modern practices of financial exchanges in weddings and funerals, though these were frequently addressed by the medieval theologians and canonists. Medieval and Reformed concerns about pastoral salaries have likewise been left unapplied to our era. Even some things to which we have given a closer examination—such as the anti-fraternal approach to addressing simony—deserve dedicated treatments. The further recovery of the doctrine of simony will be a great blessing to the church, offering the knowledge necessary to direct righteous zeal.

Conclusion

A recovered doctrine of simony aids in discerning the sin, giving a vocabulary and principles which allow us to identify it despite its changing nature. That retrieval likewise aids in acknowledging the sin by mitigating the competing factors that would commend silence. Even in its modern forms, simony may be regarded as a practical heresy, counted among the chief sins, and even targeted with the same rhetoric used by saints of the past.

While such commitments and strategies may seem less than genteel, the difficulty may be navigated by a zeal that is according to knowledge. Right understanding both directs and generates right zeal, that same zeal by which Christ cleansed the temple of commerce in the days of his earthly ministry.

Conclusion

Simony is *an earnest desire to buy or sell something spiritual or something annexed to a spiritual thing*. The doctrine was affirmed in principle by the fathers, defined and elaborated by the medievals in theology and law, wielded by the Reformers, and then slowly forgotten as the grossest abuses were corrected. In the foregoing sections, we considered the definition of simony, examining the nature of spiritual things, the circumstances of their exchange, and the desire that itself constitutes the sin. We also explored the boundaries of licit and illicit giving, revealing the shape of the minister's proper maintenance: from the people he receives honor rather than a price for his service or labor; from God, his true employer, he receives wages. Then, we surveyed how the tradition grounded its case in Scripture and classed the transgression as a species of heresy. To buy or sell a spiritual thing is to put a price on the priceless and undermine the very character of grace. Lastly, we built on this foundation to analyze the simony that exists in our own day and identify what may be done about it.

Along with those who have attempted to honestly analyze the condition of the church in their own day, we must acknowledge that we have presented a bleak picture in demonstrating the prevalence of commerce in spiritual things.¹ Simony plagued the medieval church, and it remains the leprosy of the twenty-first-century church. Insofar

¹ One nineteenth-century Anglican clergyman wrote, "That the statements I have laid before you present a melancholy view, through a long period of the Church, of that corruption, which, even in holy things, has so constantly exhibited its baneful form, we must confess." Willis, *Simony: In Two Parts*, 25.

as her denizens continue to tolerate the sale of biblical teaching with self-assurance, they invite the same destruction that caused Jerusalem to become a heap of ruins (Mic. 3:11–12), yet she will be saved at the last (Rev. 20:9).

The path of repentance will not be easy. Sometime around the feast of Bartholomew in August 1540, Luther's wife Katharina joked that he should begin charging his students. The doctor rejoined, "For thirty years I have taught and preached for free. Why would I now, in my decrepit old age, begin to sell anything?"² For many it will be the opposite: they have taught at a price for decades; why should they now change their ways? While many of the present generation may not catch this wave of reform, the body of Christ will grow into the full stature of Christ, and on the basis of this precious and very great promise we have a certain hope that this corruption within her will be greatly diminished before he returns.

A recovered doctrine of simony adds immediacy to that hope. Much remains to be done, and many areas remain unexplored, but perhaps this initial effort will supply the equipment by which we may begin charting the murky waters that lie before us.

May the Almighty grant repentance to the wicked in order that they may, if possible, be forgiven the intent of their hearts and set free from the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

² Luther, *Tischreden*, no. 5187 (WA TR 4, 704:18–23).

Appendix A

The Layman's Complaint

The epigraph of this book is known to scholarship as “The Layman’s Complaint.” The earliest copy appears in a fifteenth-century hand in a manuscript of *Pore Caitiff*, a fourteenth-century devotional work associated with the rise of the Lollards.¹ *Pore Caitiff* itself, “like most English compositions of the time,” was “once ascribed to Wycliffe.”²

ORIGINAL³

Dou þat sellest þe worde of God,
Be þou berfot, be þou schod,
Cum nomore here.
Inprincípio erat verbum
Is þe worde of God, all *and* sum,
6 Ðat þou sellest, lewed frere.

Hit is cursed symonie
Eþer to selle or to bye
Ony gostly þinge;
Perfore, frere, go as þou come,
And hold þe in þi hows at home
12 Til we þe almis brynge.

MODERNIZED

Thou that sellest the word of God,
Be thou barefoot, be thou shod,^o
Come no more here.
In principio erat verbum^o
Is the word of God, all and some,^o
That thou sellest, lewd^o friar.

It is cursed simony
Either to sell or to buy
Any ghostly^o thing;
Therefore, friar, go as thou come,
And hold thee in thy house at home
Till we thee alms bring.^o

¹ Utley, “The Layman’s Complaint and the Friar’s Answer,” 141.

² Allen, “Some Fourteenth Century Borrowings,” 4.

³ As provided in Utley, “The Layman’s Complaint and the Friar’s Answer,” 144, with normalized capitalization, italics representing expansions of abbreviations, and supplied punctuation.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Goddis lawe 3e reuerson,
And mennes howsis 3e persen,
As Poul berip̃ wittnes.
As mydday deuelis goynge abowte
For money lowle 3e lowte,
18 Flatteringe boype more <i>and</i> lesse. | God's law ye reverse,
And men's houses ye pierce, ^o
As Paul beareth witness.
As midday devils ^o going about,
For money lowly ye lout, ^o
Flattering both more and less. ^o |
|--|---|

2 Be thou barefoot, be thou shod. Some friars went barefoot to demonstrate their vow of poverty.

4 *In principio erat verbum.* "In the beginning was the word," John 1:1 in Latin. This was a standard greeting of the mendicant friars.

5 All and some. Part and parcel.

6 Lewd. Ignorant.

9 Ghostly. Spiritual.

11–12 Hold thee in thy house at home / Till we thee alms bring.

An inversion of the mendicant program: the friar is to stay home, and the alms he would beg for never come.

14 Men's houses ye pierce. An allusion to 2 Timothy 3:6 in the Wycliffite Bible.

16 Midday devils. A personification of the sin of acedia, the neglect of duty.

17 Lout. Bow.

18 More and less. Rich and poor.

Glossary

Advowson. The right to present a candidate to a vacant benefice.

Benefice. A church office endowed with an income.

Canon. (1) A rule enacted by a council or other church authority. (2)
A member of a cathedral or collegiate chapter.

Canonist. A specialist in canon law.

Chrism. Consecrated oil, used in baptism, confirmation, and ordination.

Clerk. A clergyman.

Collation. Conferral of a benefice by the bishop himself, where no patron presents.

Collegiate church. A church served by a chapter of canons but not the seat of a bishop.

Curate. The clergyman with the actual charge of a parish.

Dispensation. A relaxation of a canon in a particular case.

Endowment. A permanent fund supporting a church or ecclesiastical office.

Feoffee. A layman holding property in trust for a parish or religious body.

Glossa ordinaria. The standard medieval commentary on a text: the Bible, the *Decretum*, or the Decretals.

Impropriation. A benefice whose tithes are held by a layman, who pays the clergyman serving it.

Indulgence. A remission of the temporal penalty due for sin, in whole (*plenary*) or in part.

Pallium. The woolen band sent by the pope to a new archbishop.

Parson. The clergyman holding a parish benefice.

Pension. A yearly charge reserved out of a benefice's income.

Prebend. The share of a cathedral's or collegiate church's revenues allotted to a canon.

Preferment. Appointment or promotion to an ecclesiastical office.

Prelate. A bishop or other high ecclesiastical dignitary.

Presentation. The patron's nomination of a clergyman to the bishop for a vacant benefice.

Right of patronage. A landowner's authority over the church on his estate, of which the *advowson* is the operative right.

Vicar. The clergyman holding a parish benefice whose great tithes belong to another.

Bibliography

- Abelard, Peter. *Historia calamitatum*. In *Petri Abaelardi opera hactenus seorsim edita*, edited by Victor Cousin, Charles Jourdain, and Eugène Despois, vol. 1, 3–37. Paris: Durand, 1849.
- Acts of Peter*. In *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, edited by R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, vol. 1, 45–103. Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1891.
- Acts of Peter and Paul*. In *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, edited by R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, vol. 1, 178–222. Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1891.
- Adams, Thomas. *A Commentary or, Exposition upon the Second Epistle General of St. Peter*. London: Richard Badger for Jacob Bloome, 1633.
- Albert the Great. *Commentarii in IV Sententiarum*. Edited by Auguste Borgnet. Opera omnia 29–30. Paris: Vivès, 1894.
- Alexander III. *Epistolae et privilegia*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 200, 69–1320. Paris: Migne, 1855.
- Alexander of Hales. *Summa theologica*. Edited by Collegii S. Bonaventurae. Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1924–1948.
- Allen, Hope Emily. “Some Fourteenth Century Borrowings from ‘Ancren Riwe.’” *The Modern Language Review* 18, no. 1 (1923): 1–8.
- Ambrose. *De officiis ministrorum*. Edited by Johann Georg Krabinger. Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1857.
- . *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*. In *Sancti Ambrosii op-*

- era*, edited by Karl Schenkl, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 32, pars 4, 1–528. Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1902.
- Ames, William. *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*. London, 1639.
- . *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*. London: Edward Griffin for Henry Overton, 1639.
- The Anatomy of Simon Magus: or, the Sin of Simony Laid Open*. London: Printed by W. Bowyer for Charles Brome, 1700.
- Anonymous. *An Essay Against Simony Tending to Shew the Impiety and Deserved Punishment of Those Who Make the House of God an House of Merchandice*. London: Printed for R. Clavel, 1694.
- Aphrahat. *Demonstrationes*. In *Patrologia Syriaca, pars prima, tomus primus*, edited by Jean Parisot, *Patrologia Syriaca*, vol. 1. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1894.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*. In *Doctoris angelici divi Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, vol. 29, 1–116. Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1871. Composed 1256.
- . *Quodlibet*. Editio tertia Taurinensis. Vol. 5. Turin: Ex Officina Petri Marietti, 1921.
- . *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*. Vol. 13. Venice: Joseph Bettinelli, 1750.
- . *Summa theologiae*. Leonina ed. Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1895–1899.
- Association of Theological Schools. *2025–2026 Annual Data Tables*. Pittsburgh: Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, 2026.
- Astesanus of Asti. *Summa de casibus conscientiae*. Edited by Bartolomeo Bellati. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen de Gherretzem, 1478.
- Attersoll, William. *A Commentarie upon the Fourth Booke of Moses, called Numbers*. London: William Jaggard, 1618.
- Augustine. *De doctrina Christiana*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 34, 15–122. Paris, 1841.
- . *De haeresibus*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 42, 21–50. Paris: Migne, 1845.
- . *De opere monachorum*. In *Sancti Aureli Augustini opera*,

- edited by Joseph Zycha, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 529–596. Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1900.
- . *De sermone Domini in monte*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 34, 1229–1308. Paris: Migne, 1845.
- . *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis episcopi epistulae*. Edited by Alois Goldbacher. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 34, 44, 57, 58. Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1895–1923.
- . *Sermones*. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Vol. 38. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1865.
- . *Tractatus in evangelium Ioannis*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 35, 1379–1976. Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1902.
- Auriol, Peter. *Commentarius in libros Sententiarum*. Rome: Ex Typographia Aloisij Zannetti, 1605.
- Bainton, Roland H. *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950.
- Baldwin, John W. *Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- . *Paris, 1200*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Bale, John. *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris Brytanniae, quam nunc Angliam et Scotiam vocant, Catalogus*. Basel: Ioannes Oporinus, 1557.
- Bamidbar Rabbah*. Vol. 2. Vilna: Romm, 1925. Midrash Rabbah on Numbers.
- Barcellos, Richard C. “The Christian Ministry in the Church: Its Reasons, Duration and Goal, and Practical Effects (Ephesians 4:11–16), with Special Emphasis on Verse 12.” *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* 3 (2016): 5–38.
- Barth, Markus. *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4–6*. Anchor Bible 34A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974.
- Basil of Caesarea. *Epistolae*. In *Patrologia Graeca*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 32, 219–1112. Paris: Migne, 1857.
- . *Letters*. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1926.

- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Baxter, Richard. *A Christian Directory*. London, 1673.
- Becon, Thomas. *The Displaying of the Popish Mass*. In *Works of Thomas Becon*, edited by John Ayre, Parker Society, vol. 3, 251–286. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844.
- Begg, James. *Seat Rents Brought to the Test of Scripture, Law, Reason, and Experience*. Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1838.
- Benefices Act 1898*.
- Benengar of Tours. *De sacra coena adversus Lanfrancum*. Edited by A. F. Vischer and F. Th. Vischer. Berlin: Haude und Spener, 1834.
- Bernardus Parmensis. *Glossa ordinaria in Decretales Gregorii IX*. Venice: Apud Iuntas, 1615.
- Biel, Gabriel. *Collectorium circa IV libros Sententiarum*. Tübingen: Johann Otmar, for Friedrich Meynberger, 1501.
- Blumenthal, Uta-Renate. *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.
- Boettner, Loraine. *Studies in Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1985.
- . *The Millennium*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984. First published 1957.
- . *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974. First published 1932.
- Bonaventure. *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*. In *Opera omnia*, vol. 8, 233–330. Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1898.
- . *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*. Opera omnia 4. Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1889.
- Boston, Thomas. *A Soliloquy on the Art of Man-Fishing*. In *The Distinguishing Characters of True Believers*, 1–56. Edinburgh, 1773. Written ca. 1699–1700; first published posthumously.
- Brown, John. *Quakerism the Path-way to Paganism*. Edinburgh:

- John Cairns, 1678.
- Brundage, James A. *The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession: Canonists, Civilians, and Courts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- . *The Practice of Canon Law*. In *The History of Courts and Procedure in Medieval Canon Law*, edited by Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington, History of Medieval Canon Law, 51–73. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016.
- Buber, Solomon, ed. *Midrash Tanchuma*. Vol. 3. Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1885.
- Bullinger, Heinrich. *Confessio et Expositio Simplex Orthodoxae Fidei*. Zurich: Froschauer, 1566.
- . *Sermonum Decades Quinque*. Zurich: Christoph Froschauer, 1552.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilisation of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*. Translated by S. G. C. Middlemore. Vol. 1. London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1878.
- Burroughs, Jeremiah. *An Exposition with Practical Observations Continued Upon the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Chapters of the Prophesy of Hosea*. London: Peter Cole, 1650.
- Burton, Henry. *A censure of simonie, or a most important case of conscience concerning simonie briefly discussed not altogether perhaps unparallell for the meridian of these times*. London: William Stansby for Edmund Weaver and John Smethwick, 1624.
- . *Israels Fast, or a Meditation upon the Seventh Chapter of Iosuah*. London, 1628.
- Calvin, John. *Epistre au Lecteur*. In *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, edited by Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Reuss, vol. 6, 165–172. Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke et filium, 1867.
- . *Harmonia ex tribus Evangelistis composita, Matthaeo, Marco et Luca*. In *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 45. Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke, 1891.
- . *Institutio Christianae Religionis*. 1559.
- Canones apostolorum*. In *Didascalía et Constitutiones apostolorum*, edited by Franz Xaver Funk, vol. 1, 565–593. Paderborn:

- Schöningh, 1905.
- Canones concilii Chalcedonensis*. In *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, edited by Eduard Schwartz, vol. II.2.2, 124–132. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1936.
- Carpenter, Joel A. *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Caryl, Joseph. *An Exposition with Practical Observations upon the Book of Job*. London, 1643–1666.
- Castiglione, Sabbà da. *Ricordi di Monsignor Sabba da Castiglione, Cavalier Gierosolimitano*. Venice: Paolo Gerardo, 1560.
- Cawley, John. *The Nature and Kinds of Simony Discussed*. London, 1689.
- Cazel, Jr., Fred A. "The Tax of 1185 in Aid of the Holy Land." *Speculum* 30, no. 3 (1955): 385–392.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. In *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, edited by Walter W. Skeat, vol. 4. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894.
- Chrysostom, John. *De sacerdotio*. In *Patrologia Graeca*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 48, 623–692. 1862.
- . *Homiliae in Acta apostolorum*. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Vol. 60. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1862.
- . *Homiliae in Matthaeum*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca* 57–58. Paris: Migne, 1862.
- . *Sancti Patris Nostri Joannis Chrysostomi Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Interpretatio Omnium Epistolarum Paulinarum per Homilias Facta, Tomus II: Homiliae in Epistolam ad Corinthios Priorem*. Edited by Frederick Field. Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1847.
- . *Sancti Patris Nostri Joannis Chrysostomi Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Interpretatio Omnium Epistolarum Paulinarum per Homilias Facta, Tomus IV: Homiliae in Epistolas ad Galatas et Ephesios*. Edited by Frederick Field. Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1852.
- Church of England. *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall*. London, 1604.
- Clement of Alexandria. *Stromata*. Edited by Otto Stählin. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 17.

- Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1909.
- Clowney, Edmund P. *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.
- Cobban, Alan B. *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization*. London: Methuen, 1975.
- Concilium Bracarense secundum*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 84, 569–576. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1862.
- Concilium Lateranense posterius*. In *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum, Tomus I (911–1197)*, edited by Ludwig Weiland, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges, 549–551. Hannover: Hahn, 1893.
- Concilium Nicaenum II*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovan Domenico Mansi, vol. 13, 1–758. Florence: Antonio Zatta, 1767.
- Concilium Placentinum*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Joannes Dominicus Mansi, vol. 20, 803–816. Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1775.
- Cooke, John. *The Vindication of the Law*. London: Matthew Walbancke, 1652.
- Cooke, Thomas. *Episcopacy Asserted*. London: Tho. Fawcet for Nath. Butter, 1641.
- Council of Clermont (1095)*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 20, 815–918. Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1775.
- Council of Constance (1414–1418)*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 27, 519–1240. Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1784. Council held 1414–1418.
- Council of Nicaea (325)*. In *Canones apostolorum et conciliorum saeculorum IV. V. VI. VII.*, edited by Hermann Theodor Bruns, vol. 1, 14–19. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1839.
- Council of Sardica (343)*. In *Canones apostolorum et conciliorum saeculorum IV. V. VI. VII.*, edited by Hermann Theodor Bruns, vol. 1, 88–105. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1839.
- Council of Tours (1163)*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 21, 1167–1186.

- Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1776.
- Council of Westminster (1138)*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 21, 507–518. Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1776. Legatine council held at Westminster, December 1138; Mansi heads it Concilium Londoniense.
- Courson, Robert of. *Summa*. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 14524.
- Crosby, Thomas. *The History of the English Baptists*. London, 1740.
- Cudworth, Ralph. *The Supplement, or, Continuation of the Commentarie upon the Sixth Chapter*. In *A Commentarie or Exposition, upon the Five First Chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians*, edited by Ralph Cudworth, 476–662. Cambridge, 1604.
- Cushing, Kathleen G. *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.
- Cyprian. *Ad Quirinum (Testimoniorum libri tres)*. In *S. Thasci Caecili Cypriani Opera omnia, pars I*, edited by Wilhelm Hartel, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, vol. 3, pars 1, 35–184. Vienna: C. Geroldi Filium, 1868.
- Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catecheses*. Edited by W. C. Reischl and J. Rupp. Munich: Lentner, 1848.
- Dante Alighieri. *La Divina Commedia*. In *Le opere di Dante: testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, edited by Michele Barbi et al., 481–836. Florence: R. Bemporad e figlio, 1921.
- Degge, Simon. *The Parson's Counsellor, with the Law of Tithes or Tithing*. London, 1676.
- Denifle, Heinrich, and Émile Chatelain, eds. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*. Vol. 1. Paris: Delalain, 1889.
- Deusdedit. *Die Kanonessammlung des Kardinals Deusdedit*. Edited by Victor Wolf von Glanvell. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1905.
- . *Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquos scismaticos*. In *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti*, edited by Ernst Sackur, Monumenta Germaniae

- Historica, vol. 2, 300–365. Hanover: Hahn, 1892.
- Didache (Doctrina duodecim apostolorum)*. In *Patres apostolici*, edited by Franz Xaver Funk, vol. 1, 2–37. Tübingen: Laupp, 1901.
- Donne, John. *LXXX Sermons*. London: Richard Royston and Richard Marriot, 1640.
- . *Pseudo-Martyr*. London, 1610.
- Douglas, Sylvester. *The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas (Lord Glenbervie)*. Edited by Francis Bickley. Vol. 1. London: Constable, 1928. Diaries kept 1793–1823; the entry cited is of 28 February 1801.
- Downname, John. *The Plea of the Poore, or a Treatise of Beneficence and Almes-deeds*. London: Printed by Edward Griffin for Ralph Mabbe, 1616.
- Dudden, F. Homes. *Gregory the Great: His Place in History and Thought*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905.
- Durandus of Saint-Pourçain. In *sententias theologicas Petri Lombardi commentariorum (Redactio C)*. Lyon: Gaspar Portonaris, 1560.
- Durham, James. *A Practical Exposition of the X. Commandements with a resolution of several momentous questions and cases of conscience*. London, 1675.
- Eleventh Council of Toledo*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 84, 451–466. Paris: Migne, 1862.
- Eusebius of Caesarea. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Edited by Eduard Schwartz. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 9, pars 1. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1903.
- Extravagantes communes*. In *Corpus iuris canonici, vol. 2: Decretalium collectiones*, edited by Emil Friedberg. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1881.
- Flavel, John. *Divine Conduct: Or, the Myserie of Providence*. Edinburgh: John Cairns, 1681.
- Fourth Council of Toledo (633)*. In *Colección de cánones y de todos los concilios de la Iglesia de España y de América*, edited by Juan Tejada y Ramiro, vol. 2, 262–291. Madrid: Imprenta de D. Anselmo Santa Coloma y Compañía, 1850.
- Fourth Lateran Council*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 22, 981–1068. Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1778.

- Foxe, John. *Actes and Monuments*. London: John Day, 1583.
- Friedberg, Emil, ed. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1879–1881.
- Fuller, Thomas. *The Church History of Britain: From the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year 1648*. London, 1655.
- . *The History of the Worthies of England*. London: Printed by J. G., W. L., and W. G., 1662.
- . *The Holy State*. Cambridge, 1642.
- Funk, F. X., ed. *Apostolic Constitutions*. Vol. 1. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1905.
- Gelasius I. *Epistolae*. In *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae*, edited by Andreas Thiel, vol. 1, 285–483. Braunsberg, 1868.
- Geltner, Guy. *The Making of Medieval Antifraternality: Polemic, Violence, Deviance, and Remembrance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . *William of St. Amour's De periculis novissimorum temporum: A False Start to Medieval Antifraternality? In Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, edited by Michael F. Cusato and Guy Geltner, 105–117. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Geoffrey of Poitiers. *Summa*. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 3143.
- Gerhard, Johann. *Loci Theologici*. Edited by Eduard Preuss. Vol. 6. Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1863–1875.
- Gerhoch of Reichersberg. *Libellus de eo, quod princeps mundi huius iam iudicatus sit*. In *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti*, edited by Ernst Sackur, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 3, 239–272. Hannover: Hahn, 1897.
- Gieysztor, Aleksander. *Management and Resources*. In *A History of the University in Europe*, edited by Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, vol. 1: Universities in the Middle Ages, 108–143. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Gilchrist, John T. “Canon Law Aspects of the Eleventh Century Gregorian Reform Programme.” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 13, no. 1 (1962): 21–38.
- . ‘*Simoniaca haeresis*’ and the Problem of Orders from Leo IX

- to Gratian. In *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Boston, 12–16 August 1963*, edited by Stephan Kuttner and J. Joseph Ryan, *Monumenta Iuris Canonici*, Series C: Subsidia, vol. 1, 209–235. Vatican City: S. Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus, 1965.
- . *The Epistola Widonis, Ecclesiastical Reform and Canonistic Enterprise 1049–1141*. In *Authority and Power: Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on His Seventieth Birthday*, edited by Brian Tierney and Peter Linehan, 49–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Ginzberg, Louis. *The Legends of the Jews*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909–1938.
- Glossa ordinaria*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 114, 9–750. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1879.
- Godolphin, John. *Repertorium Canonicum; or, An Abridgment of the Ecclesiastical Laws of this Realm, Consistent with the Temporal*. London: Printed by S. Roycroft for Christopher Wilkinson, 1678.
- Gordon, James. *The Reformed Bishop*. London, 1679.
- Gordon, T. David. “‘Equipping’ Ministry in Ephesians 4?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 1 (1994): 69–78.
- Gratian. *Decretum Gratiani*. Edited by Emil Friedberg. Vol. 1. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1879.
- Gregory I. *Homiliae in evangelia*. Edited by Hugo Hurter. *Sanctorum Patrum Opuscula Selecta*, Series Altera 6. Oeniponte (Innsbruck): Libreria Academica Wagneriana, 1892.
- . *Registrum epistolarum*. Edited by Paul Ewald and Ludwig M. Hartmann. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Epistolae 1–2. Berlin: Weidmann, 1891–1899.
- Gregory IX. *Liber extra*. Edited by Emil Friedberg. Vol. 2. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1881.
- Gregory VII. *Das Register Gregors VII*. Edited by Erich Caspar. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Epistolae selectae. Berlin: Weidmann, 1920.
- Grigsby, Bryon Lee. *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature*. Routledge, 2004.
- Groote, Geert. *De simonia ad beguttas*. In *Quellen und Forschungen*

- zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik, edited by Rudolf Langenberg. Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1380.
- Guild, William. *Antichrist Pointed and Painted Out in His True Colors*. Aberdeen, 1655.
- Hall, Thomas. *Tò ἀλας τῆς γῆς, sive Apologia pro Ministerio Evangelico*. Frankfurt: Samuel Browne, 1658.
- Harsnett, Adam. *A Cordiall for the Afflicted: Touching the Necessitie and Utilitie of Afflictions*. London, 1638.
- Haskins, Charles Homer. *The Rise of Universities*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957.
- Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Henry IV. *Heinrici IV. epistola Gregorio VII. missa*. In *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum, Tomus I (911–1197)*, edited by Ludwig Weiland, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges, 110–III. Hannover: Hahn, 1893.
- Henry of Ghent. *Quodlibeta*. Edited by Alfonso de Villasanta. Paris: Josse Bade, 1518.
- Hermas. *The Shepherd*. In *The Apostolic Fathers*, edited by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, 291–483. London: Macmillan, 1891. Written ca. 100–160.
- Hinschius, Paul, ed. *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni*. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1863.
- Holcot, Robert. *Super Sapientiam Salomonis*. Paris: Georg Wolff, 1489.
- Honorius Augustodunensis. *De offendiculo*. In *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti*, edited by I. Dieterich, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 3, 38–57. Hanover: Hahn, 1897. Written ca. 1123.
- Hostiensis. *Summa aurea*. Lyon, 1537.
- Howard, Robert. *The Life and Reign of King Richard the Second*. London: M. L. and L. C., sold by Langly Curtis, 1681.
- Hugh of St. Victor. *De sacramentis Christianae fidei*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 176, 183–618. Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1880.
- Huguccio of Pisa. *Summa decretorum*. Vatican City, Biblioteca

- Apostolica Vaticana, MS Arch. Cap. S. Pietro C.114.
- Humbert of Silva Candida. *Libri tres adversus simoniacos*. In *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti*, edited by Friedrich Thaner, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 1, 95–253. Hannover: Hahn, 1891.
- Hus, Jan. *M. Jana Husi Korespondence a dokumenty*. Edited by Václav Novotný. Prague: Komise pro vydávání pramenů náboženského hnutí českého, 1920.
- . *O svatokupectví*. Edited by Václav Novotný. Prague: J. Otto, 1907. Composed ca. 1413.
- . *Postilla*. In *Mistra Jana Husi Sebrané spisy české*, edited by Karel Jaromír Erben, vol. 2, 1–434. Prague: Bedřich Tempský, 1866.
- Innocent III. *Die Register Innocenz' III.* Edited by Othmar Hageneder, Werner Maleczek, and Alfred A. Strnad. Vol. 2. Rom–Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979.
- Innocent IV. *Commentaria super libros quinque Decretalium*. Frankfurt am Main: Martin Lechler, for Hieronymus Feyrerabend, 1570.
- . *Planxit hactenus non paululum Mater Ecclesia*. In *Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, edited by Tomás Ripoll and Antoine Brémond, vol. 1, 231–233. Rome: Hieronymus Mainard, 1729.
- Irenaeus of Lyon. *Adversus haereses: Libri quinque*. Edited by Ubaldo Mannucci. Bibliotheca Sanctorum Patrum, series secunda: Scriptores Graeci Antenicani, vol. III Pars I. Rome: Forzani et Socii, 1907.
- Janin, Hunt. *The University in Medieval Life, 1179–1499*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008.
- Jerome. *Commentarii in prophetas minores*. Edited by Domenico Vallarsi. Venice: Apud Guilelmum Zerletti, 1768.
- . *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 23, 815–904. Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1883.
- . *Vita S. Hilarionis*. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Vol. 23. Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1883.
- Johannes Teutonicus. *Glossa ordinaria in Decretum Gratiani*. Venice:

- Apud Iuntas, 1615. Revised by Bartholomaeus Brixiensis, ca. 1245.
- John of Freiburg. *Summa confessorum*. Lyon: Jacobus Saccon, 1518.
- Jore, Tim. *The Christian Commons: Ending the Spiritual Famine of the Global Church*. 2nd ed. Distant Shores Media, 2016.
- Keach, Benjamin. *The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated*. London, 1689.
- Kennedy, V. L. "Robert Courson on Penance." *Mediaeval Studies* 7 (1945): 291–336.
- Kirby, Ethyn Williams. "The Lay Feoffees: A Study in Militant Puritanism." *The Journal of Modern History* 14, no. 1 (1942): 1–25.
- Lane, Anthony N. S. *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, Vol. 2. *Receptio Patristica* 4. Leiden: Brill, 2026.
- Lawrence, C. H. *The Friars: The Impact of the Mendicant Orders on Medieval Society*. rev. ed. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.
- Le Goff, Jacques. *The Birth of Purgatory*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*. Vol. 3: Indulgences. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, 1896.
- Leclercq, Jean. "Simoniaca heresis." *Studi Gregoriani* 1 (1947): 523–530.
- Leinz, Anton. *Die Simonie: Eine kanonistische Studie*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1902.
- Little, Lester K. "Calvin's Appreciation of Gregory the Great." *Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 2 (1963): 145–157.
- Lombard, Peter. *Libri IV Sententiarum*. Edited by PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae. 2nd ed. Vol. 2. Ad Claras Aquas prope Florentiam: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1916.
- Lunt, W. E. "The Text of the Ordinance of 1184 concerning an Aid for the Holy Land." *English Historical Review* 37, no. 146 (1922): 235–242.
- Luther, Martin. *Annotationes in aliquot capita Matthaei*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 38, 447–667. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1912.
- . *Briefwechsel*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Otto Clemen, Weimarer Ausgabe,

- vol. 2. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1931.
- . *Dictata super Psalterium*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4, 1–462. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus, 1886.
- . *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimarer Ausgabe, 233–238. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus, 1883.
- . *Operationes in Psalmos*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 5. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus, 1892.
- . *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose, gehalten 1523 und 1524*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Georg Buchwald, Weimarer Ausgabe, vol. 14, 92–488. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus, 1895.
- . *Tischreden*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimarer Ausgabe. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1912–1921.
- . *Von der Wiedertaufe an zwei Pfarrherrn*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by E. Thiele and O. Brenner, vol. 26, 137–174. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1909.
- . *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*. In *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by O. Reichert, vol. 43. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1912.
- Lynch, Joseph H. *Simoniackal Entry into Religious Life from 1000 to 1260: A Social, Economic, and Legal Study*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976.
- Major, John. *In Matthaeum ad Literam Expositio*. Paris: Jean Granjon, 1518.
- . *In quartum Sententiarum (redactio A)*. Paris, 1509.
- . *In quartum Sententiarum (redactio B)*. Paris: Jodocus Badius Ascensius, 1516.
- Malipiero, Domenico. *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500*. Edited by Francesco Longo and Agostino Sagredo. Archivio Storico Italiano 7. Florence: Viesusseux, 1843.
- Manton, Thomas. *Sermons upon the Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. In *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton, D.D.*,

- edited by Thomas Manton. London: James Nisbet, 1873.
- Maurice of Prague. *Consilium de Ecclesiastico Statu in Concilio Constantiensi Mature Emendando*. In *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense concilium*, edited by Hermann von der Hardt, vol. 1, 860–874. Frankfurt and Leipzig: In officina Christiani Genschii, 1697.
- Mayes, Robert J. H. “Equipping the Saints? Why Ephesians 4:11–12 Opposes the Theology and Practice of Lay Ministry.” *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 24, no. 4 (2015): 7–18.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- McVeigh, Terrence. “Chaucer’s Portraits of the Pardoner and Summoner and Wyclif’s *Tractatus de Simonia*.” *Classical Folia* 29 (1975): 54–58.
- Meier-Welcker, Hans. “Die Simonie im frühen Mittelalter.” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 64 (1952): 61–93.
- Metford, James. *A General Discourse of Simony*. London: Printed for Joseph Lawson, 1682.
- Michel, Anton. “Die folgenschweren Ideen des Kardinals Humbert und ihr Einfluß auf Gregor VII.” *Studi Gregoriani* 1 (1947): 65–92.
- Milliot, Jim. “Publishing Industry Sales Saw Modest Gains in 2024.” *Publishers Weekly* (2025).
- Milton, John. *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church*. London, 1659.
- Mitchell, Sydney Knox. *Taxation in Medieval England*. Edited by Sidney Painter. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951.
- Needler, Benjamin. *Expository notes, with practical observations; towards the opening of the five first chapters of the first book of Moses called Genesis*. London: T. R. and E. M. for Nathanael Webb and William Grantham, 1654.
- Ness, Christopher. *A Compleat History and Mystery of the Old and New Testament*. London, 1696.
- . *A Crystal Mirror, or, Christian Looking-Glass wherein the hearts treason against God and treachery against man, is truely represented, and thoroughly discoursed on and discovered*. London,

- 1679.
- Nicolaus de Tudeschis (Panormitanus). *Commentaria in IIII et V Decretalium libros*. Lyon, 1546.
- Noonan, John T. *Bribes: The Intellectual History of a Moral Idea*. New York: Macmillan, 1984.
- Oresme, Nicole. "Sermo magistri Nicolay Oresme coram papa et cardinalibus." *Revue Mabillon* 19 (2008): 191–229.
- Origen. *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei*. Edited by Erich Klostermann and Ernst Benz. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 40. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1935. Commentary composed ca. 246–248.
- Owen, John. *The Duty of a Pastor*. In *The Works of John Owen*, edited by William H. Goold, vol. 9, 452–462. London and Edinburgh: Johnstone & Hunter, 1851. The sermon dates from 1682.
- Owens, Conley. *The Dorean Principle: A Biblical Response to the Commercialization of Christianity*. Dublin, CA: FirstLove Publications, 2021.
- Paludanus, Peter. *Commentarius in libros Sententiarum*. Salamanca: Andreas à Portonariis, 1552.
- Particular Baptist Assembly. *A Confession of Faith Put Forth by the Elders and Brethren of Many Congregations of Christians (Baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country*. London: Benjamin Harris, 1677. Popularly dated 1689, from its public-endorsement edition.
- Pascal, Blaise. *Les Provinciales; or, The Mystery of Jesuitisme*. London: Richard Royston, 1658.
- Patrick, Saint. *Confessio*. In *Libri Sancti Patricii: The Latin Writings of St. Patrick*, edited by Newport J. D. White. London: S.P.C.K., 1918.
- Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986*. Church of England Measure 1986 No. 3.
- Patterson, Lee. "Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch: Psyche and Clio in Medieval Literary Studies." *Speculum* 76, no. 3 (2001): 638–680.
- Pelbartus Ladislaus of Temesvár. *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*. Hagenau: Heinrich Gran for Johann Rynmann, 1508.

- Perkins, William. *A Commentarie or Exposition, upon the Five First Chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians*. Edited by Ralph Cudworth. Cambridge, 1604.
- . *A Reformed Catholike*. Cambridge: John Legat, 1598.
- Peter Cantor. *Verbum Abbreviatum*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 205, 23–370. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1855.
- Peter Damian. *De privilegio Romanae ecclesiae (Acta Mediolani)*. In *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, edited by Kurt Reindel, MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit 4,2, 228–247. Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1988.
- . *Liber gratissimus*. In *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, edited by Kurt Reindel, MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit 4,1, 385–509. Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1983.
- . *Vita beati Romualdi*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 144, 953–1008. Paris: Migne, 1867.
- Peterman, Gerald W. “‘Thankless Thanks’: The Epistolary Social Convention in Philippians 4:10–20.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (1991): 261–270.
- Pettegree, Andrew. *Brand Luther: How an Unheralded Monk Turned His Small Town into a Center of Publishing, Made Himself the Most Famous Man in Europe—and Started the Protestant Reformation*. New York: Penguin Press, 2015.
- Phillimore, Robert. *The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England*. Vol. 2. London: Henry Sweet, 1873.
- Pius V. *Quam plenum*. In *Bullarum, diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum Romanorum pontificum, Taurinensis editio*, edited by Aloysius Tomassetti, vol. 7, 799–801. Turin: Sebastiano Franco, 1862.
- Pliny the Elder. *Naturalis historia*. Edited by Wernerian Club. Vol. 1. London: George Barclay, 1847.
- Poole, Matthew. *Quo Warranto; or, A Moderate Enquiry into the Warrantableness of the Preaching of Gifted and Unordained Persons*. London, 1659.
- Post, Gaines. *Alexander III, the Licentia Docendi, and the Rise of the Universities*. In *Anniversary Essays in Mediaeval History by*

- Students of Charles Homer Haskins*, edited by Charles H. Taylor and John L. La Monte, 255–277. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929.
- . “Masters’ Salaries and Student-Fees in the Mediaeval Universities.” *Speculum* 7, no. 2 (1932): 181–198.
- Post, Gaines, Kimon Giocarinis, and Richard Kay. “The Medieval Heritage of a Humanistic Ideal: ‘Scientia donum Dei est, unde vendi non potest.’” *Traditio* 11 (1955): 195–234.
- Price, Richard. *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea* (787). Translated Texts for Historians 2. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020.
- Price, Sampson. *The Beauty of Holiness: or The Consecration of a House of Prayer*. London, 1618.
- Prynne, William. *A Gospel Plea (Interwoven with a Rational and Legal) for the Lawfulness & Continuance of the Antient Setled Maintenance and Tenths of the Ministers of the Gospel*. London: T. Childe and L. Parry for Edward Thomas, 1660.
- Raoul Glaber. *Les cinq livres de ses histoires*. Edited by Maurice Prou. Paris: A. Picard, 1886.
- Rashdall, Hastings. *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*. Edited by F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden. new ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.
- Raymond of Peñafort. *Summa Sancti Raymundi de Pennafort Ordinis Praedicatorum Summa*. Edited by Honoratus Vincentius Laget. Verona: Ex Typographia Seminarii, apud Augustinum Carattonium, 1744.
- Reisinger, Ernest C. *God’s Will, Man’s Will and Free Will*. Pensacola, FL: Chapel Library, 1998.
- “Review of *The Anatomy of Simon Magus*.” *The History of the Works of the Learned* 2, no. 8 (1700): 502–507.
- Richard of Middleton. *Commentarius in libros Sententiarum*. Vol. 4. Brescia, 1591.
- Ridley, Thomas. *A View of the Civile and Ecclesiasticall Law*. London: Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1607.
- Rosé, Isabelle. *Simon le Magicien hérésiarque? L’invention de la simoniaca heresis par Grégoire le Grand*. In *Aux marges de*

- l'hérésie*, edited by Franck Mercier and Isabelle Rosé, 201–238. Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017.
- Rosemann, Philipp W. *Peter Lombard*. Great Medieval Thinkers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- . *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard's Sentences*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2007.
- Rous, Francis. *The Heavenly Academy*. London: Robert Young for John Bartlet, 1638.
- Rüegg, Walter. *Themes*. In *A History of the University in Europe*, edited by Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, vol. 1: Universities in the Middle Ages, 3–34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Saltet, Louis. *Les Réordinations: Étude sur le sacrement de l'ordre*. Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1907.
- Schabel, Chris. "Lucifer princeps tenebrarum ... The Epistola Luciferi and Other Correspondence of the Cistercian Pierre Ceffons (fl. 1348–1353)." *Vivarium* 56, no. 1–2 (2018): 126–175.
- Scheitle, Christopher P. *Beyond the Congregation: The World of Christian Nonprofits*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Sclater, William. *The Quaestion of Tythes Revised*. London: John Legatt, 1623.
- Scotus, John Duns. *Quaestiones in quartum librum Sententiarum*. In *Opera omnia*. Paris: Apud Ludovicum Vivès, 1894.
- Shirley, Walter Waddington, ed. *Fasciculi zizaniorum magistri Iohannis Wyclifcum tritico*. Rolls Series. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858.
- "Simony." *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* 30, no. 60 (1841): 254–297.
- Sinclair, Upton. *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. Originally published 1935.
- Sixtus IV. *Salvator noster*. In *Summaria declaratio bullae indulgentiarum ecclesiae Xanctonensi concessarum*, edited by Raimund Peraudi. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, 1487. Bull of Sixtus IV, 1476; DH 1396–1398.
- Spelman, Henry. *De Sepultura*. London: Robert Young, 1641.

- Spinka, Matthew. *John Hus: A Biography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- . *John Hus and the Czech Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941.
- Stegmüller, Friedrich. *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*. Würzburg: Schöningh, 1947.
- Steinberg, S. H. *Five Hundred Years of Printing*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2017.
- Stillingfleet, Edward. *A Discourse Concerning Bonds of Resignation of Benefices, in Point of Law and Conscience*. London: J. H. for Henry Mortlock, 1695.
- Stutz, Ulrich. *Die Eigenkirche als Element des mittelalterlich-germanischen Kirchenrechtes*. Berlin: H. W. Müller, 1895.
- Suárez, Francisco. *Opus de Virtute et Statu Religionis*. Operis de religione tomus primus [-quartus] ... Auctore P.D. Francisco Suarez. Editio novissima. Lugduni: Sumptibus Iacobi Cardon, 1608–1625.
- Sulpicius Severus. *Chronica*. Edited by Karl Halm. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 1. Vienna, 1866.
- Swinburn, Lilian M., ed. *The Lanterne of Light*. Early English Text Society, Original Series. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1917.
- Synod of Antioch (341)*. In *Canones apostolorum et conciliorum saeculorum IV. V. VI. VII.*, edited by Hermann Theodor Bruns, vol. 1, 80–87. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1839.
- Synod of Dort. *Church Order of the Synod of Dort*. Arnhem: Jan Jansz., 1619.
- Synod of Elvira*. In *Patrologia Latina*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 84, 301–308. Paris: Migne, 1862.
- Szittyá, Penn R. *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Taylor, Jeremy. *Ductor Dubitantium, or the Rule of Conscience in all her general measures*. London, 1660.
- . *Σύμβολον Θεολογικόν, or a Collection of Polemical Discourses*. Third Edition Enlarged. London: R. Norton for R. Royston, 1674.

- . *The Flesh and the Spirit*. In *XXV Sermons Preached at Golden-Grove*, fol. 125–138. London: E. Cotes for Richard Royston, 1653.
- Tertullian. *Apologeticum*. In *Apologeticum et Ad nationes libri duo*, edited by Franz Oehler, 1–268. Halle: Eduard Anton, 1849.
- Theodoret of Cyrus. *Historia ecclesiastica*. In *Patrologia Graeca*, edited by J.-P. Migne, vol. 82, 881–1280. Paris, 1864.
- Third Lateran Council*. In *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 22, 210–467. Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1778.
- Thomas of Strasbourg. *Commentaria in IIII libros Sententiarum*. Genoa: Apud Antonium Oerium, 1585.
- Trapp, John. *A Commentary or Exposition upon the XII. Minor Prophets*. London, 1654.
- Tuckney, Anthony. *Sermon 38*. In *Forty Sermons upon Several Occasions*, 644–647. London: J. M. for Jonathan Robinson and Brabazon Aylmer, 1676.
- Turretin, Francis. *De Necessaria Seccessione Nostra ab Ecclesia Romana, et Impossibili cum Ea Syncretismo*. In *Francisci Turretini Opera*, vol. 4, 3–203. Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1848. Disputations first collected Geneva, 1687; the seventh, the Antichristi demonstratio, had appeared separately in 1673.
- . *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae*. Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1847.
- Tyndale, William. *The Obedience of a Christian Man*. Antwerp, 1535. First published 1528.
- Utley, Francis Lee. “The Layman’s Complaint and the Friar’s Answer.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 38, no. 2 (1945): 141–147.
- Vance, Eugene. “Chaucer’s Pardoner: Relics, Discourse, and Frames of Propriety.” *New Literary History* 20, no. 3 (1989): 723–745.
- Verger, Jacques. *Patterns*. In *A History of the University in Europe*, edited by Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, vol. 1: Universities in the Middle Ages, 35–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . *Teachers*. In *A History of the University in Europe*, edited by

- Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, vol. 1: Universities in the Middle Ages, 144–170. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Vermigli, Peter Martyr. *Loci Communes*. London, 1583.
- Warner, John. *Church-Lands Not to Be Sold*. London, 1648.
- Weber, Nicholas Aloysius. *A History of Simony in the Christian Church, from the Beginning to the Death of Charlemagne (814)*. Baltimore: J. H. Furst Company, 1909.
- West, Charles. “The Simony Crisis of the Eleventh Century and the ‘Letter of Guido.’” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 73, no. 2 (2022): 229–253.
- Westcott, Brooke Foss, and Fenton John Anthony Hort. *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. Cambridge: Macmillan, 1881.
- Westminster Assembly. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Edinburgh: Evan Tyler, 1647.
- . *The Westminster Larger Catechism*. London: A. M., 1648.
- Whitaker, William. *A Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists, especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849.
- White, Jerry E. *The Church and the Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*. A Critical Concern Book. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1983.
- Whitney, J. P. “Peter Damiani and Humbert.” *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 1, no. 3 (1925): 225–248.
- Wido. *Widonis monachi epistola ad Heribertum archiepiscopum*. In *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti*, edited by Friedrich Thaner, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 1, 5–7. Hannover: Hahn, 1891.
- William de Vaurouillon. *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*. Venice: Bonetus Locatellus, for Lazarus de Soardis, 1502.
- William of Auxerre. *Summa aurea in quattuor libros Sententiarum*. Paris: Philippe Pigouchet, 1500.
- William of Saint-Amour. *Collectiones catholicae et canonicae scripturae*. In *Magistri Guillelmi de Sancto Amore opera omnia*, III–487. Constance [Paris], 1632. Composed ca. 1266.
- . *De periculis novissimorum temporum*. In *Magistri Guillelmi de Sancto Amore opera omnia*, 16–72. Constance [Paris], 1632.

- Composed 1256.
- . *De valido mendicante*. 1255.
- . *Si quis diligit me*. In *The Opuscula of William of Saint-Amour: The Minor Works of 1255–1256*, edited by Andrew Traver, 179–190. Münster: Aschendorff, 2003.
- William Peraldus. *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum*. Paris: Petrum Billaine, 1629.
- Willis, William Downes. *Simony: In Two Parts*. 2nd ed. London: Rivingtons, 1865.
- Winawer, Jonathan, Nathan Witthoft, Michael C. Frank, Lisa Wu, Alex R. Wade, and Lera Boroditsky. “Russian Blues Reveal Effects of Language on Color Discrimination.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 19 (2007): 7780–7785.
- Winroth, Anders. *The Making of Gratian’s Decretum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Wood, Susan. *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Wuthnow, Robert. *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Wycliffe, John. *De fundacione sectarum*. In *Polemical Works in Latin*, edited by Rudolf Buddensieg, Wyclif Society, vol. 1, 1–80. London: Trübner & Co., 1883.
- . *De oracione et ecclesie purgacione*. In *Polemical Works in Latin*, edited by Rudolf Buddensieg, Wyclif Society, vol. 1, 337–354. London: Trübner & Co., 1883.
- . *Of the Seven Deadly Sins*. In *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, edited by Thomas Arnold, vol. 3, 119–167. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871.
- . *On Simony*. Translated by Terrence A. McVeigh. New York: Fordham University Press, 1992.
- . *Sermons*. In *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, edited by Thomas Arnold. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869.
- . *Tractatus de apostasia*. Edited by Michael Henry Dziewicki. Wyclif Society. London: Trübner & Co., 1889.
- . *Tractatus de blasphemia*. Edited by Michael Henry

- Dziewicki. Wyclif Society. London: Trübner & Co., 1893.
- . *Tractatus de officio regis*. Edited by Alfred W. Pollard and Charles Sayle. Wyclif Society. London: Trübner & Co., 1887.
- . *Tractatus de simonia*. Edited by Sigmund Herzberg-Fränkel and Michael Henry Dziewicki. London: Trübner & Co., 1898.
- . *Dialogus cum supplemento Dialogi*. Edited by Gotthardt Lechler. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869.
- Zanchi, Girolamo. *Tractatus de redemptione: De primi hominis lapsu, de peccato, et de lege Dei*. In *Operum theologicorum tomus quartus*. Geneva: Stephanus Gamonetus, 1613.
- Zohar. Vol. 4. Izmir: Hevra Kaddisha Press, 1862.

Scripture Index

- Genesis
1:28, 227
19, 201
23, 75
25, 92
25:29–34, 92
- Exodus
13:2, 92
16:20, 240
20:5, 167
23:3, 104
- Leviticus
5:1, 265
20:4, 103
25:34, 183
- Numbers
3:11–13, 92
5, 170
12, 169
18, 242
18:8, 242
18:20, 228, 242
22, 172
22:38, 264
- 23:23, 198
25:7–13, 173
- Deuteronomy
8:3, 240
23:3, 167
23:18, 117, 205
32:7, 39
- Judges
6:31, 104
- 1 Samuel
2, 103
2:12–17, 243
9:8, 186
- 1 Kings
9, 186
13:33, 174
14:3, 186–87
21:23, 103
- 2 Kings
5, 165, 177–78
5:20–27, 165
5:27, 167
- 2 Chronicles
19:2, 104

- Job
 8:8–10, 39
- Psalms
 14:1, 262
 19:10, 231
 50:18, 103
 104:12, 64
 119:53, 266
 119:72, 232, 261
 119:96, 267
 139:21, 266
- Proverbs
 3:15, 65, 211, 231–32, 261
 4:7, 189
 11:24, 267
 13:22, 197
 17:6, 197
 17:16, 189
 19:17, 118
 21:27, 117
 23, 188
 23:23, 108, 188, 190, 226
 24:11–12, 265
 29:24, 104
- Ecclesiastes
 2:26, 42, 197
- Isaiah
 9:14–15, 220
 33:15, 126, 134
 40:18, 25, 261
 55:1, 108, 177, 262
- Jeremiah
 23:14–15, 104
 48:10, 66
- Ezekiel
 11:2–4, 103
- 33:8, 265
 34, 147
- Daniel
 4:24, 107
 4:27, 107
- Micah
 3, 186
 3:9–12, 186
 3:11, 186, 189, 198, 228
 3:11–12, 270
- Zechariah
 11, 148
 11:4–13, 172
 11:12, 172
 11:13, 172
 14:21, 183
- Malachi
 1, 92
 1:10, 73
- Ecclesiasticus
 27:2, 87
- Matthew
 3:16, 181, 183
 4:18–22, 107
 5:21–22, 27–28, 267
 5:28, 108
 6:3–4, 118
 6:24, 263
 9:38, 242
 10, 140, 201
 10:8, 22, 64, 89–90, 96, 126,
 177–79, 181, 184, 189, 194,
 211, 229
 10:8–10, 142
 10:10, 242
 10:40–42, 241

- 13:21, 262
 13:22, 262
 21:12, 181–82
 23:2–8, 101
 26:15, 172
 27:5, 172
 27:7, 172
 27:8, 117
- Mark
 11:15, 182
- Luke
 1:1–2, 238
 3:22, 181
 7:47, 229
 8:13, 262
 8:14, 262
 10:2, 242
 10:7, 139, 141–42, 146, 148, 242
 10:35, 147
 14:26, 266
 24:44–45, 230
- John
 1:1, 272
 2, 187
 2:16, 177, 180
 12:42–43, 266
 16:13, 66
- Acts
 8, 8, 47, 65, 142, 163–65,
 177–78
 8:9–24, 1
 8:18, 125
 8:18–19, 164
 8:19, 166
 8:20, 55, 164, 177, 204, 231, 265
 8:20–21, 181
 8:20–23, 173
 8:22, 206, 263
 14:3, 229, 262
 16:15, 243
 17:11, 39
 19:24, 263
 20, 266
 20:26–27, 229
 21:8, 156
 22:20, 103
- Romans
 1:32, 101, 265
 7:7, 267
 10:2, 266
 11:6, 185, 189, 229
- 1 Corinthians
 2, 229–30
 2:2, 229–30
 2:10–11, 226
 2:12, 229
 2:13, 226, 234, 240
 2:14, 226
 3:2, 230
 3:3–4, 230
 3:21, 197
 4:1, 89, 184, 189, 227, 250
 9:11, 108
 9:11–12, 246
 9:13, 228
 9:13–14, 149, 242, 248, 250
 9:14, 27, 141, 259
 9:15–16, 228
 9:15, 18, 243, 246, 260
 9:17, 227–28
 9:18, 228
 10:6, 1

- 13:6, 266
 16:6, 228, 243
 2 Corinthians
 1:16, 228, 243
 2:17, 97, 228, 267
 4:5, 128
 9:13-14, 247
 11:7-9, 243
 11:7, 12, 246
 Galatians
 1:10, 146
 6:6, 241
 6:7, 267
 6:8, 241
 Ephesians
 2:8-9, 33
 4:11, 156
 4:12, 251
 5:11, 265
 Philippians
 1:5, 246
 2:30, 246
 4:15, 243
 Colossians
 1:28, 230
 3:16, 237
 1 Thessalonians
 2:9, 243
 5:12, 157
 2 Thessalonians
 3:6-12, 156
 3:8, 243
 1 Timothy
 3:6, 120
 3:15, 250
 5, 148
 5:18, 139, 142, 146, 148
 6:5, 199
 6:10, 263
 2 Timothy
 3:6, 272
 3:16, 1
 3:16-17, 226
 4:2, 233
 Titus
 1:13, 265
 Hebrews
 5:4, 248
 5:10, 230
 5:12, 230
 6:1-2, 230
 6:6, 262-63
 6:8, 262
 11:6, 118
 13:7, 39
 James
 2:1, 129, 233
 2:1-4, 233
 2:1, 9-10, 267
 4:17, 265
 1 Peter
 4:10, 184
 5:2, 245
 2 Peter
 2:1-3, 263
 2:1-15, 173
 2:3, 97
 2:15, 173, 264
 1 John
 2:27, 230
 3 John
 7, 248

Jude

11, 173, 264

Revelation

2:20, 103

11:3, 26

20:9, 270

21:6, 177, 262

Index of Authorities

- Abelard, Peter, 22
 Acts of Peter, 165
 Acts of Peter and Paul, 165
 Adams, Thomas, 99, 172
 Albert the Great
 In Sent., 2, 55, 75, 80, 83, 93,
 114, 116, 118, 128–30, 133, 135,
 166, 216
 Alexander III, 22
 Alexander of Hales, 142, 189, 196
 Ambrose, 75, 168, 181
 Ames, William
 Conscience, 56, 72, 74, 91,
 112, 126, 135–36, 140, 180,
 194–95, 211
 Marrow of Sacred Divinity, 99
 The Anatomy of Simon Magus,
 38, 40–41, 47, 76, 78, 97,
 102–4, 109, 111, 113, 121, 128, 130,
 140, 147, 174, 179, 213
 Aphrahat, 66
 Apostolic Constitutions, 165
 Aquinas, Thomas
 Contra impugnantes, 27
 In Sent., 55–57, 61–63, 67,
 73, 75, 90, 92, 98, 107, 115,
 141–43, 151, 166, 185–87, 189,
 215–16, 218
 Quodlibet, 57, 67, 130, 151, 195
 Summa theologiae, 2, 58, 63,
 72–76, 78, 90, 92, 96, 99,
 107–9, 115, 118, 126, 130, 136,
 140, 142–43, 147, 152–53,
 155, 184, 187, 203–5, 210–11,
 215–18
 Astesanus of Asti, 73
 Attersoll, William, 204
 Augustine
 De doctrina Christiana, 42
 De haeresibus, 210
 De opere monachorum, 140,
 156
 De sermone Domini in monte,
 152
 Ep., 98, 130, 196–97
 Sermones, 147, 211
 Tractatus in evangelium
 Ioannis, 128, 181

- Auriol, Peter
 In Sent., 56, 67, 127, 142, 146,
 148, 211, 213, 218–19
- Bale, John, 28
- Bamidbar Rabbah, 173
- Basil of Caesarea, 8, 89, 132
- Baxter, Richard, 65, 136
- Becon, Thomas, 58
- Begg, James, 35, 260
- Benefices Act 1898, 78
- Berengar of Tours, 13
- Biel, Gabriel, 94, 140, 195, 217
- Bonaventure
 Apologia pauperum contra
 calumniatorem, 27
 In Sent., 61, 89, 107, 118, 126,
 142, 185–86, 204, 212, 217
- Boston, Thomas, 65, 154
- Brown, John, 34
- Bullinger, Heinrich, 63, 140
- Burroughs, Jeremiah, 81
- Burton, Henry
 A Censure of Simonie, 2, 38,
 40–42, 47–48, 58, 65, 76,
 87, 92, 109, 117, 128, 130, 134,
 159, 167, 174–75, 187, 194,
 204
 Israels Fast, 170, 199
- Calvin, John
 Harmony of the Evangelists,
 179
 Institutio, 9, 20, 40, 130, 159,
 184
 Preface to the Genevan Psalter,
 237
- Canones apostolorum, 58
- Canones concilii Chalcedonensis,
 9, 58, 103
- Caryl, Joseph, 33
- Cawley, John, 84–85
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, 200
- Chrysostom, John, 128, 140, 171,
 228, 238, 251
- Church Order of the Synod of
 Dort, 37
- Clement of Alexandria, 66
- Concilium Bracarense secundum,
 87
- Concilium Lateranense posterius,
 14, 202–3
- Concilium Nicaenum II, 10
- Concilium Placentinum, 203
- Confessio et Expositio Simplex
 Orthodoxae Fidei, 31, 37, 237
- A Confession of Faith Put Forth
 by the Elders and Brethren
 of Many Congregations of
 Christians (Baptized upon
 Profession of their Faith) in
 London and the Country, 49,
 182
- Constitutions and Canons
 Ecclesiasticall, 34
- Cooke, John, 148
- Cooke, Thomas, 34
- Council of Clermont (1095), 29
- Council of Constance (1414–
 1418), 205
- Council of Nicaea (325), 154
- Council of Sardica (343), 154
- Council of Tours (1163), 119, 155
- Council of Westminster (1138), 22

- Courson, Robert of, 66–67, 189
 Cudworth, Ralph, 65, 141, 179,
 184, 211
 Cyprian, 177
 Cyril of Jerusalem, 165, 171, 210
 Dante Alighieri, 219
 Decretum Gratiani, 14, 17, 57–59,
 61, 73, 75–76, 79, 87, 102,
 115–16, 118, 120, 126, 132, 135–36,
 144, 153, 167, 169, 171, 180, 182,
 185–87, 202–3, 209–10, 213,
 265
 Degge, Simon, 60
 Deusdedit, 210, 213
 Didache (Doctrina duodecim
 apostolorum), 64, 171
 Donne, John, 34, 216–17
 Downname, John, 117
 Durandus of Saint-Pourçain
 In Sent. (red. C), 74, 83–84,
 98–99, 107, 125, 146
 Durham, James, 126
 Eleventh Council of Toledo, 58,
 136
 An Essay Against Simony, 112
 Extravagantes communes, 28, 30,
 205
 Fasciculi zizaniorum, 28
 Fourth Council of Toledo (633),
 113
 Fourth Lateran Council, 24, 29,
 120
 Foxe, John, 27, 53, 64, 142, 211,
 260
 Fuller, Thomas, 81, 128, 170
 Gelasius I, 57, 87
 Geoffrey of Poitiers, 66
 Gerhard, Johann, 53–54
 Gerhoch of Reichersberg, 257
 Glossa ordinaria, 178, 182, 211
 Glossa ordinaria in Decretales
 Gregorii IX, 113
 Glossa ordinaria in Decretum
 Gratiani, 136
 Godolphin, John, 174, 205, 225
 Gordon, James, 264
 Gratian. *See* Decretum Gratiani
 Gregory I
 Ep., 9, 13, 61, 79, 116, 120, 135,
 182
 Homiliae in evangelia, 9, 59,
 89, 107, 126, 182, 209
 Gregory VII, 15–16
 Gregory IX. *See* Liber extra
 Groote, Geert, 115, 130
 Guild, William, 33
 Hall, Thomas, 77, 140, 179
 Harsnett, Adam, 33
 Henry IV, 16
 Henry of Ghent, 84, 155
 Hermas, 64, 198
 Holcot, Robert, 213
 Honorius Augustodunensis, 203
 Hostiensis, 61, 68, 134, 166
 Hugh of St. Victor, 88, 173
 Huguccio of Pisa, 59
 Humbert of Silva Candida, 15,
 167
 Hus, Jan
 Korespondence a dokumenty,
 220
 O svatokupectví, 30, 60, 64,

- 78, 83, 95, 97, 100–102, 134,
144–45, 164, 169, 173–75,
182, 213–15, 220
Postilla, 49
Innocent III, 120
Innocent IV, 30, 90, 131, 216
Irenaeus of Lyon, 198, 210
Jerome, 137, 166, 187, 198, 201
John of Freiburg, 74, 84, 133–34,
152
Keach, Benjamin, 141, 149, 154,
179
The Lanterne of Light, 174
Liber extra, 18, 22, 58–60, 62, 79,
103, 115, 119–20, 129, 135, 155,
169, 193, 203–4
Lombard, 20
Lombard, Peter, 73, 87, 166, 202,
209–10
Luther, Martin
Annotations in aliquot
capita Matthaei, 178
Briefwechsel, 96
Dictata super Psalterium, 65
Ninety-Five Theses, 31
Operationes in Psalmos, 33
Predigten über das erste Buch
Mose, 92
Tischreden, 20, 82, 270
Von der Wiedertaufe, 40
Vorlesungen über 1. Mose,
32–33, 43, 48, 55, 64, 69, 76,
85, 91, 93, 96, 142, 212, 220
Major, John
In Matthaeum ad Literam
Expositio, 90–91
In Sent. (red. A), 56, 64, 75–
76, 78, 80, 92, 107, 110–13,
115, 127, 131, 133, 136, 152, 163,
166, 175, 184, 187, 218
In Sent. (red. B), 56, 80, 84,
98–99, 119–20, 146, 173,
202–3, 205
Manton, Thomas, 65
Maurice of Prague, 49
Metford, James, 60, 163, 165, 172,
174, 202
Midrash Tanchuma, 173
Milton, John, 77
Needler, Benjamin, 81
Ness, Christopher, 183–84
Oresme, Nicole, 211
Origen, 180, 182
Owen, John, 39
Paludanus, Peter
In Sent., 54–55, 61–63, 67,
83, 98, 131, 134–35, 146, 151,
184–85, 199
Panormitanus
Commentaria, 59, 84, 89, 94,
99, 112–14, 203, 205, 217,
219
Pascal, Blaise, 125
Patrick, Saint, 137
Pelbartus
Rosarium, 30, 55, 62, 108–9,
114, 132, 166, 184–85, 211
Perkins, William, 41, 99
Peter Cantor, 131
Peter Damian
De privilegio Romanae eccle-
siae, 13

- Liber gratissimus, 12–13, 173
 Vita beati Romualdi, 48, 206
 Phillimore, Robert, 258
 Pius V, 31
 Poole, Matthew, 159
 Post, Gaines, Kimon Giocarinis,
 and Richard Kay, 22–23
 Price, Sampson, 172
 Prynne, William, 179
 Raymond of Peñafort, 2
 Richard of Middleton
 In Sent., 62, 68, 80, 94, 108–9,
 114–15
 Ridley, Thomas, 68
 Rous, Francis, 34
 Sclater, William, 148
 Scotus, John Duns, 94
 Sixtus IV, 30
 Spelman, Henry, 61, 76
 Stillingfleet, Edward, 112
 Suárez, Francisco, 112–13, 205
 Synod of Antioch (341), 154
 Synod of Elvira, 8, 57
 Taylor, Jeremy, 47, 180, 216
 Tertullian, 8
 Third Lateran Council, 22, 119,
 169
 Thomas of Strasbourg
 In Sent., 75, 78, 83, 87, 108, 115,
 147, 166
 Trapp, John, 183
 Tuckney, Anthony, 147, 149, 172
 Turretin, Francis, 9, 41, 140–41,
 152–54
 Tyndale, William, 60, 159, 266
 Vermigli, Peter Martyr, 118, 126,
 206
 Warner, John, 75
 Westcott, Brooke Foss, and
 Fenton John Anthony Hort,
 251
 The Westminster Confession of
 Faith, 49, 182, 237
 The Westminster Larger Cate-
 chism, 37, 146
 Whitaker, William, 183
 Wido, 120
 William de Vaurouillon, 93,
 96–97
 William of Auxerre, 66, 78, 147,
 188–89
 William of Saint-Amour
 Collectiones, 156–58, 199
 De periculis, 27, 158
 De valido mendicante, 157
 Si quis diligit me, 194
 William Peraldus
 Summae virtutum, 76, 166,
 172, 174–75, 188, 193, 201,
 206
 Willis, William Downes, 35, 60,
 78, 257, 269
 Winawer, Jonathan, Nathan
 Witthoft, Michael C. Frank,
 Lisa Wu, Alex R. Wade, and
 Lera Boroditsky, 256
 Wycliffe, John
 De apostasia, 115
 De blasphemia, 62
 De fundacione sectarum, 68
 De officio regis, 100, 102
 De oracione, 63

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| De simonia, 1–2, 30, 63, 72, | 68 |
| 77–78, 80, 83, 88, 100, 108, | On Simony, 2 |
| 126, 134, 143, 145, 151, 158, | Sermons, 64, 116, 143 |
| 166, 169–70, 172, 175, 182, | Triologus cum supplemento |
| 194, 201, 206, 210, 214–15, | Triologi, 159 |
| 220 | Zanchi, Girolamo, 188 |
| Of the Seven Deadly Sins, 64, | Zohar, 173 |

Subject Index

- absolution, 62
- almsgiving, 204–5
- annexation
 - annex vs. cause, 72
 - dependent vs. directed, 73
 - presupposing vs. preceding, 73–74
- Balaam, 172–74
- baptism
 - held to ransom, 93–94
- benefice
 - and tithes, 76–77
- birthright, Jacob's, 92–93
- blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, 213–14
- books, sale of, 80–82
 - theological, 235
- burial, 60–62
- canon law
 - the classical period (1140–1234), 17–18
 - the *Decretum*, 17
- certificates, 78–80
- charity
 - encouraging, as a motive, 117–18
 - practicing, as a motive, 116–17
- Christian conferences, 233–34
- co-labor, 242–43
- commendation, formal, 127–28
- conflicts of interest, 259–61
- consecrated things, 74–76
- consensus, the weight of an implied, 258–59
- copyright, 236–39
 - large language models, 239
 - the prevention of alterations, 237–38
 - the prevention of plagiarism, 238
 - waiving the right, 238–39
- counseling, biblical, 232–33
- custom, appeal to, 119–20
- desire, earnest
 - a taxonomy of modes, 111–14
 - a taxonomy of stages, 110–11
- English divines, the, 33–35
- epithets, 264–65

- excommunication, 62
- false teaching
 - as an associated corruption, 197–99
 - withholding as example, 97–98
- favor, personal, 129–31
- fees, academic
 - their regulation (1179–1215), 21–24
- flattery, 128–29
- forefathers of simony, 164–75
- forgiveness, 205–6
- Gehazi
 - as a seller, 165–67
 - simoniacs as lepers, 167–70
- gift
 - delayed things, 132
 - the Gregorian triad, 126–27
 - indirectly given things, 132–33
 - small things, 133–34
 - spiritual things, 131–32
 - voluntary things, 134–37
- giving
 - as charity, 140–41
 - as the price of the labor, 142–47
 - as the price of the product, 141–42
 - as the sustenance of the laborer, 147–49
- grace
 - graceless grace, 185
- gravity
 - the greatest sin, 193–94, 263–64
- relative, 88–89
- heresy
 - the enormity of the crime, 217
 - making the Spirit a servant, 212–13
 - modern simony as, 261–63
 - pricing the priceless, 210–12
 - the similarity of the action, 215–16
 - simoniaca haeresis*, 9
- indignation, righteous, 120–21
- indirect participation, 99–104
 - the Anatomist's four ways, 102–4
 - Wycliffe and Hus's six ways, 100–102
- indulgences, sale of (1184–1517), 28–31
- investiture controversy (1076–1122), 15–17
- Jeroboam, 174–75
- Judas Iscariot, 170–72
- knowledge, as a cure, 266–67
- labor
 - as a spiritual thing, 142–43
 - the excuse of selling, 143–45
 - inseparable from its product, 145–47
- large language models, 239
- leprosy
 - simoniacs as lepers, 167–70
- marriage, 60–62
- mendicants
 - categorizing their support, 247–48
 - the secular-mendicant contro-

- versy (1253–1300), 24–28
- mental simony, 112–14
 - discerning, 245–47
- ministry, the vocabulary of,
 - 250–53
- missing categories, 255–56
- motive, insufficiency of, 114–20
- obligation
 - the qualification of, 98–99
- ordination, 58–60
 - simoniacal, categories of, 202
- papacy
 - the pope and simony, 217–20
 - positive accusations, 219–20
 - a qualification for positive law
 - simony, 218–19
- parachurch, the rise of the,
 - 249–50
- patristic period, 7–9
- positive law simony, 83–85
- prayer, 62–63
- preaching, 63–65
- presentation, 10
- price, as a discernment mechanism, 82–83
- prophets, the example of the,
 - 186–88
- prudence, the rule of, 94–96
- receiving
 - financial burden on the
 - congregation, 152–53
- reciprocity, 242–43
- Reformation, the, 31–33
- rejecting positions, 153–54
- restitution, 203–4
- retrieval
 - embracing wisdom, 39–40
 - its value, 38–42
 - rejecting error, 40–42
- right of patronage, 10, 77–78
- sacraments, 57–58
- seminary education, 234–35
- shifting offenses, 256–58
- simoniacal orders controversy
 - (1046–1060), 12–15
- Simon Magus, 164–65
 - the eponym, 1
- simony
 - the definition, 2
 - its persistence, 47–49
 - modern, the difficulty of
 - acknowledging, 258–61
 - modern, the difficulty of
 - discerning, 255–58
- sodomy, 199–201
- spiritual thing
 - created vs. uncreated, 54
 - essence vs. cause, 55–56
 - principle vs. end, 56–57
 - right vs. fact, 54–55
- stewardship
 - stewards of the mysteries, 184
- sustenance
 - of the laborer, 147–49
- teaching
 - as a spiritual activity, 65–68
- tithes, 76–77
- transferring positions, 154–55
- two-table offense, 194–97
 - the first table, 195
 - the second table, 196–97
- universities, the rise of the (1150–

- 1215), 19–21
- wages, ministerial, 244–45
- want of office, 155–59
 - Augustine and monks, 156
 - the Protestant reception, 158–59
 - William of Saint-Amour and the friars, 26–27, 156–58
- withholding spiritual things, 96–99
- word of God
 - its grace, 229–31
 - its pricelessness, 231–32
 - the stewardship of, 227–29
- zeal, 265–66