

Building Devotion

History, Use, And Meaning In “John Buck’s Book”
(Newberry Library C 696.083)

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ABSTRACT

This article details the contents of a personal eighteenth-century devotional anthology, owned by one John Buck. By exploring the histories of the texts contained within, as well as Buck’s own marginal notes, the author attempts to sketch a possible portrait of Buck, theorizing the ways in which he may have put these texts to use in the maintenance of his personal piety. Ultimately, this paper concludes that Buck stands out as an example of disciplined piety in a religiously turbulent time, with his own practices signaling the developments of Methodism and “polite religion” as the century progressed.

IT IS NOTHING NEW TO SUGGEST THAT TEXTUAL STUDIES GOES beyond examining a work within its original historical context in an attempt to uncover an elusive “originary” meaning or an “authoritative” interpretation of the text. Largely following the work of Jerome McGann, we have carefully attended to the reality that texts are themselves social constructions, as much products of their reception and transmission as their creation (McGANN 1983). The anthology is a particularly interesting example of this process. Frequently, we forget that anthologies are collections of works which have been lifted out of their original circumstances and arranged according to another set of editorial intentions. In such circumstances, one can attend to one text among others, tracing its history and recreating the circumstances of its reception and creation, all as part of the ongoing act of interpretation. However, as Neil Fraistat has demonstrated in his study of Romantic poetry, this approach actually bifurcates the process of interpretation insofar as the anthology itself, and the circumstances of its collection and editing, produce a unique work and

reading experience with its own set of hermeneutic possibilities (FRAISTAT 1986).¹

While there are overwhelming opportunities to consider these dynamics in modern anthologies, edited and packaged with specific purposes, it is rare indeed to examine an artifact which represents an organic and highly personal process of anthologization and the changes in meaning which occur during that process. One artifact at the Newberry Library Chicago, however, provides such an opportunity. Catalogued as a copy of Thomas Becon's *Pomaunder of Prayer* (c.1560), Case C 696.083 is, in fact, a large private devotional book comprised of the Becon text, three Pseudo-Augustinian texts produced by Thomas Rogers and printed in 1634 and 1635, and the manuscript notes of an eighteenth-century owner, as the first such note informs us: "John Buck. His Book. Se^{pt} y^e 2d 17th". Thus, C 696.083 (hereafter called "John Buck's Book") is comprised of texts from three distinct historical striations, all of which run together along the common thread of demonstrating and negotiating an evolving Protestant Christian identity over a space of nearly two centuries.

Not only is this artifact fascinating on its own, but it provides a unique opportunity to speak to recent discussions of the role of devotional literature in the formation of Protestant piety, such as that conducted in Mary Patterson's *Domesticating the Reformation*: "Owing . . . to the deeply personal nature of devotion", says Patterson, "the way a devotional guide's substance was received was mutable, as any spiritual experience that it yielded was uniquely curved to the specific contours of each individual who picked it up" (PATTERSON 2007, 33). As such, this paper considers the original historical moments of the texts contained within "John Buck's Book", and ultimately considers the purposes they may have served in their deliberate collection into a private piece of eighteenth-century devotional literature. I demonstrate that the portrait of Buck which emerges stands against a general consensus of low religious morale in the early eighteenth century, instead revealing a first step in the emergence of the politically and socially powerful force of "polite religion" which would become definitive of English religion during the Romantic period.

1. Fraistat says, "A fundamental assumption of such an approach is that the decisions poets make about the presentation of their works play a meaningful role in the poetic process and, hence, ought to figure in the reading process" (3). This intertextual approach also applies to the anthology in general, whether it is an authorial collection, an editorial one, or, as is the case of "John Buck's Book", an independent undertaking done for personal use and purposes.

Thomas Becon's *Pomaunder of Prayer* (c.1560).

While much work has been done on the figure of Thomas Becon (c.1511–1576), little has been said critically about the *Pomaunder*, though it can be considered at minimum a “steady seller” of the English Reformation, with its popularity indicating perhaps an even higher status.² At least five separate printings are accounted for between the years of 1561 and 1578, with the text enjoying a new edition every two years, except for a gap between the 1567 and 1578 editions.³ All of these were printed by John Day (c.1522–1584), a famous English printer based in London who specialized in the production and dissemination of Protestant propaganda during the English Reformation. While no date is indicated on the printing in “John Buck’s Book”, comparing this version of the *Pomaunder* to other editions identifies it most closely as a 1567 printing.⁴ Conspicuously absent from this printing of the *Pomaunder* but present in previous editions is a dedication to Anne of Cleves, in which Becon encourages the former queen and instructs her that “God delighteth in nothing more than in the invocation of his blessed name, and in the sacrifice of thanksgiving for his benefits” (BECON 1844, 74). Because this dedication is written to Anne assuming that she is still very much alive (wishing her “the fauor of God, long lyfe and continuall health”), it might be assumed that the *Pomaunder* itself was written well before her death in 1557. However, Becon also includes “A prayer for the Queens Maiestie” dedicated to Elizabeth I who did not ascend the throne until 1558, a year after Anne of Cleves’ death. According to Patterson, Becon revised many of his works during the summer of 1559 before the royal license of a folio edition was granted to Day in 1560. So the *Pomaunder*, with its anachronistic dedication to Anne even as it featured a prayer for Queen Elizabeth, was likely a part of that grouping, and this doubled paratext shows the book’s history across different generations of royalty (PATTERSON 2007, 98).

2. “[Ian] Green defines a ‘steady seller’ as a book that sold well enough to warrant five editions” (PATTERSON 2007, 22).
3. All comparisons made here between the *Pomaunder* in “John Buck’s Book” and other editions are conducted using the facsimiles archived at Early English Books Online.
4. The unique border illustrations of John Buck’s *Pomaunder* correspond to those of other 1567 copies, as does the author portrait dating 1553, the absence of the dedication to Anne of Cleves, and the inclusion of the “The vij. Pfalmes of the Prophet Dauid”.

These difficulties in dating the *Pomaunder* not only problematize its history, but also an easy reading of the text within Becon's larger corpus as an early modern English reformer. According to Rainer Pineas, Becon's rhetorical ethos and his strategies as a Reformation propagandist changed as the throne of England changed hands, and so his polemics can be seen to evolve and adjust accordingly. During the reign of Henry VIII, for instance, Becon's attack on the Catholic church was oblique and only vaguely referenced contentious doctrines while couched in ambiguous language which would have been understood by his contemporary Reformers, if no one else (PINEAS 1965, 208). When Edward VI took the throne, an emboldened Becon made more direct attacks against Catholic doctrines and practices. Beginning at the reign of Mary I, during which Becon fled to the Continent, his writings take on a markedly misogynistic tone and his use of Biblical stories is intended to encourage other Protestants to persevere under the knowledge that women rulers (such as Mary) also attracted divine disfavor, thereby "[casting] doubt on the necessity of being loyal to Mary" (PINEAS 1965, 213). Finally, during the reign of Elizabeth I and until his death, Becon polemically utilized sermons and secular history to undermine Roman authority. Through all of these periods, Becon alternately glossed and attacked notions of salvation through good works, but consistently admonished Protestant Christians to do good works and behave uprightly so as to undermine Catholic polemics which draw attention to Protestant moral failings.

Because of Becon's flexible and highly varied rhetorical self-presentation, it is even more difficult to characterize the *Pomaunder* without knowing the specific dates surrounding its original composition. While contextual evidence suggests that the *Pomaunder* is originally a creation of the Marian Becon and emended by the Elizabethan Becon, the text itself does not deliver up a definitive picture one way or the other. The dedication at the beginning encourages the religious observance of daily prayer in a way which is not dissimilar from traditional Catholic behavior. However, the prayers within the *Pomaunder* are also geared towards producing a very Protestant view of Christ as sole mediator of human salvation. For instance, in "A Prayer vnto God the sonne", Becon proclaims, "by thee are we reconciled to God the father . . . by thee haue we free acceffe vnto the glorious throne of Gods maiestie, and by thee are we brought in through faith vnto his grace, wherin we stand and reioyce" (BECON c.1560, 3b). Here, and elsewhere, any mention of saintly or clerical mediation between the supplicant and God is conspicuously absent. Additionally, in a prayer "For the true vnderstanding of Gods word", Becon encourages contact with

the Biblical texts unmediated by any priest or teacher, praying only to be “taught by thy holy fpirite, which alone is the Scholemaster to lead the faithful into all truth” (21b).

As a devotional text, then, and as a receptacle of early modern Protestant identity, the *Pomaunder* is meant to draw attention to the supplicant’s unmediated access to God and Scripture. With Becon being at the center of much political turmoil, and addressing his prayer book to Anne of Cleves who was similarly caught up in those politics, the *Pomaunder* can also be read as serving a polemical function, working to maintain the Protestant identity of one of the most influential women in sixteenth-century England. This is especially true if the *Pomaunder* was penned during the reign of Mary I and, with it, Anne’s politically necessary conversion to Catholicism. However, within “John Buck’s Book”, this political context is largely lost due to the absence of the preface in the 1567 printing. Here, the presence of the *Pomaunder* demonstrates a Protestant Christian devotional attitude which values the direct experience of God and an unmediated sense of prayer and scripture-reading, which will be discussed further in due course.

A Private Talk (1634), Augustine’s Prayers (1635), and the Manuall (1635).

The discussion of Becon’s *Pomaunder* is not complete without mentioning that John Day, in later editions of the prayer book, included in place of the dedication a selection of meditations attributed to St. Augustine in the form of *S. Augustines Manuall* at the end of the volume. However, in “John Buck’s Book”, this section, as well as the “Letany”, is cut off from the *Pomaunder*, which ends abruptly after page 55 and after which follows only four out-of-place pages of the *Manuall*. Based on the border illustrations, this copy of the *Manuall* is later than the edition of the *Pomaunder* to which it is attached, as the adornments of saints, Old Testament figures and the names of God are most similar to those of the 1578 printing.

Immediately following the partial selection from *S. Augustines Manuell* included after Becon’s *Pomaunder* begins a book with a prodigious title: *A Pretious Booke of Heavenly Meditations: Called, A private Talke of the Soule with God*.⁵ The work is credited to Thomas Rogers, with an epigraph quot-

5. . . . Which, who so zealously will use and peruse, shall feele in his minde, an unspeakable sweetness of the everlasting happinesse. Written, as some thinke, by that rev-

ing Psalm 119:113 — “I hate vaine inventions, but thy Law doe I love” — and printing is credited to “F.K. for the Company of Stationers” in London, 1634. The *Private Talk* extends to 198 pages, after which begins *A Right Christian Treatise, Entituled S. Avgvstines Prayers*.⁶ This book also sports an epigraph quoting 1 Thessalonians 5:17 — “Pray, continually” — and is likewise printed by F. K. for the Company of Stationers, London, 1635. The *Prayers* themselves account for 209 pages, after which begins *The Psalter which St. Augustine composed for the use of his Mother: Englished for a most generall commoditie* spanning for 15 pages before ending with a table of contents. This begins the final book of the codex, *Saint Augustines Manuall*.⁷ The *Manuall* likewise sports the 1 Thes.5:17 epigraph and is also printed in London by F.K. in 1635.

Altogether, these texts make up a triptych of (wrongly attributed) Augustinian works, translated by the Elizabethan clergyman Thomas Rogers, with a print history tied closely to that of Becon’s *Pomaunder* and embroiled in at least as much controversy. Dating back to the thirteenth century, the texts of Pseudo-Augustine, passed down as *St. Augustine’s Meditations and Soliloquies* before being divided in various ways, were apocryphal texts compiled by Augustinian scholars. Working from Augustine’s *Confessions* as well as his earlier *Soliloquies*, these scholars imitated Augustine’s soliloquic style of inner-discourse, incorporating materials from other early Church Fathers as well as scripture. The resulting texts were an astounding work of literary criticism; Renaissance scholar Julia Staykova praises the final curated work saying that it “is certainly apocryphal but it is not a phoney. Rather, it is a masterpiece of collective Augustiniana which stands at one remove from Augustine’s authentic work but continually reverts to it through habits of quotation, emulation, and reader response” (STAYKOVA 2012, 151).

While the *Meditations and Soliloquies* were well-curated, they did not find their way into the popular mind until the advent of print technology, specifically through Day’s printing of the *Manuall* appended to later editions of

erend and religious Father Saint Augustine; and not translated onely, but purified, and with most ample, and necessary sentences of holy Scripture adorned.

6. . . . *Published in more ample sort than yet hath beene in the English tongue: purged from divers superstitious Points, and adorned with manifold places of the S. Scripture: By Thomas Rogers. Whereunto is annexed Saint Avgvstines Psalter. Translated and quoted by the same Tho. Rogers.*
7. . . . *Containing speciall, and picked Meditations, and godly Prayers. Drawne out of the Word of God, and Writings of the Holy Fathers, for the exercise of the Soule. Corrected, Translated, and Adorned by Tho. Rogers.*

Becon's *Pomaunder*. Utilizing his position as a monopolist in the industry and capitalizing upon the already strong popularity of the *Pomaunder*, Day first attached a selection from the apocryphal text to the 1558 printing of Becon's text, and did so again in 1561, 1567, and 1578. As the text gained popularity, Day began publishing the *Augustania* separately as *Godly meditations made in the forme of prayers. Certaine select prayers gathered out of S. Augustines meditations. (Saint Austens manuell)*, and a further edition in 1577, *Newly printed, corrected, and compared with an ancient copye*.

Following Day's printings, the texts were taken up by Thomas Rogers (1553–1616), a clergyman in the Church of England who "made his name as a prolific author, translator and a passionate apologist of the Reformed Church" (STAYKOVA 2012, 153). Collaborating with the printer and bookseller Henry Denham, Rogers produced a deliberately edited and emended translation of the Pseudo-Augustine intended to bring the Church Father in line with Protestant ideology and theology. This work began in 1578 in response to Day's unedited printing, and the Rogers edition was so popular that Denham's press continued to produce new editions until 1600 when the Stationer's Company took over and continued producing editions until 1640, placing Rogers' Pseudo-Augustine "at the frontline of the devotional publications of his time" (STAYKOVA 2012, 154).⁸ It was not long, of course, before Rogers' Pseudo-Augustiniana became a site of continued Protestant-Catholic tensions, as he was not only explicit about his project of "purifying" Augustine, but he also had to navigate his own evident doubts about the authenticity of the works. Ultimately, Rogers' Pseudo-Augustine was wildly successful despite Catholic counter-productions, but his text still represents the difficult navigations of a Protestant reformer unable to claim authority from tradition, instead claiming authority *over* tradition by allegedly restoring textual integrity to one of the great Fathers of the Church (STAYKOVA 2012, 163). Early-modern scholar Nandra Perry remarks that, "Rogers' ability . . . not just to assert the current utility of a pre-Reformation text, but also to appropriate it . . . marks his act of translation as a locus of cultural meaning that merits further attention" (PERRY 2005, 366).

One point which ties Becon and Rogers together in uncanny ways is how each of them was, in their respective historical moments, at the forefront of not only championing a Reformed ideology but also navigating and defining a moral religious identity which was still in process. Becon, for his part, helped negotiate an emerging Lutheran identity through the careful navigation of Protestant rhetoric and anti-Catholic polemics through ever-changing political climates. Meanwhile, even as a staunch Calvinist,

8. Staykova lists a total of twelve consecutive editions for the text.

Rogers did not come into conflict with the Catholic Church as much as with the influence of secularism in the construction of popular identity. Perry describes the way in which Rogers reacted to the role of *imitatio* in the public conscious of Elizabethan England, and the ways in which various figures, from Christ to Cicero, were seen as exemplars of proper living.⁹ For Rogers, this attention to imitation produced two kinds of heresy: an imitation of secular heroes, or an imitation of Christ without proper reverence for his radical difference from all other human persons. Rather, in Rogers' mind, the texts of Scripture, opposed to the emulation of any one individual, provided the only prescription for proper living.

Such is the attitude which Rogers expressed in his translation of Thomas a Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* (1580), and this attitude shows through in his translations of Pseudo-Augustine as well. Rogers frames his translations in a deliberately moral way, noting in the dedicatory of the *Pretious Booke* that he is offering his translation "to offer cause of deeper contemplation to the zealous Christian", and that the prayers in the book are "able to make even him who is farthesft from Christianity, to occupy his minde with holy and deepe Meditations". Likewise, Rogers explains his excisions in terms of moral piety, saying that "I fould have cooled the zeale, even of the fstrongest, when thinking to proceede to holy Meditation, they fould find fuch ftumbling blockes of error caft in their way". Further, by underscoring the need to emend such a pillar of Christian thought, Rogers continues his resistance to *imitatio* culture by presenting Augustine's contemplative life as an ongoing and imperfect one. By then glossing his words with Scripture rather than illustrations (such as those in Day's *Manuall*) wherever possible, Rogers advocates a religious identity which is rooted in individual, personal acts of textual interpretation, inner reflection and dialogue, and ultimately a definition of good as it is found in the Christian Bible, made available to the individual through personal study and the mediating work of the Holy Spirit—though heavily mediated at the outset by Rogers himself, of course.

A (Possible) Portrait of John Buck.

At this time, we can do little more than speculate about the owner of "John Buck's Book", though several key details can be gleaned. The artifact itself resembles similar artifacts of early eighteenth-century piety described by W. M. Jacob: "A few of the better and middling sort kept diaries in which they

9. For a more extensive discussion, see PERRY 2014.

recorded some of their inner thoughts and their prayers, and also noted the activities of other people” (JACOB 1996, 93). Situated between the Revolution of 1688 and the Evangelical Revival of the mid to late eighteenth century, “John Buck’s Book” provides a unique and personal window into these first two decades of the new century, a period which has rarely been the subject of close study in its own right. Even then, such studies as have been conducted tend to reproduce a reading of the period which argues the low religious morale of laypeople, the high political influence of the Anglican clergy, and a rampant moral deficiency across the board.

However, more recent scholarship has argued against this consensus and opened up space for reimagining a more vibrant religious culture between the years of 1700 and 1740. Brent Sirota, for instance, has recently examined the Occasional Conformity controversy as evidence that Anglican faithful of the period deeply valued not only dogma but a sense of religious communion and zeal which was put at risk by “the ecclesiological flexibility which is the true hallmark of religious modernity” (SIROTA 2014, 105). Likewise, Giglielmo Sanna traces “The Eighteenth-Century Church of England in Historical Writing” to account for historical and ideological biases against accounts of Anglicanism during that period and, while not overturning them, does open up a space for a more generous reading of “a time when Church and State were so closely related that the welfare of the former could not be promoted but by advancing the interest of the latter” (SANNA 2007, par.6.2). Ian Green earlier laid much groundwork for these re-readings in his extensive survey of print and devotional culture in early modern England, referring to a “rising curve of interest and commitment rather than a reaction against what has tended to be seen as a trough in the fortunes of the established church and mainstream dissent”; a curve based on the peak sales of various texts on prayer, meditation, and godly living at the turn of the eighteenth century (GREEN 2000, 303). Thus, the movement and interests which would erupt into the Evangelical Revival and eventually Methodism were not so much breaks with the past as they were intensifications of already-present attitudes.

Keeping this last point especially in mind as we look deeper into the person of John Buck, we are not without significant data which can be used to produce a preliminary portrait of the man, much of which corroborates these more recent and generous readings of early eighteenth-century piety. Buck’s commentary on the texts themselves is incredibly sparse; the only clear example is on the first page proper of *Augustine’s Prayers*, where Buck writes, commenting on the overall theme of the work, “Perfecting Holiness in the fear of God”. However, Buck also bound his copies of Becon and the

Rogers Pseudo-Augustine with blank leaves of paper which he numbered and used for note-keeping. While these notes have little to do with the actual texts, rather being proverbs or sayings attributed to others, they can still be compared to the attitudes presented in the anthologized texts to get a sense of Buck's values and character, as well as insight into why and how he may have utilized the *Pomaunder* and the Pseudo-Augustinian triptych for his personal devotional use.

The amount of space which Buck actually filled compared to that which he made available with blank leaves is little and sporadic, as it appears that several times he flipped open to a random leaf and recorded a thought, either from memory or from what he may have been reading at the time. His notes are here reproduced, edited, and in order with their leaf numbers:¹⁰

- All have errors that have least,
But the shortest are the best.
A saying of King Charles the 1st of blessed memory (1).¹¹
- He that when rising up forgets to pray,
Bids not himself good morrow nor good day.¹²
Divine Herbert (3).¹³
- 1 As he that to serve God neglects the duties of his calling is a religious truant,
2 So he that to follow the duties of his calling, and wholly neglects the service of God, is a profane drudge.
Dr. Scott (7).¹⁴
- Perfecting Holiness in the fear of God. (*Prayers*, p.1)

10. The numbers provided here are the numbers inscribed on the leaves which flank the Becon and Rogers texts. Please see Appendix 1 for a description of these leaves in relation to the rest of the artifact, and please see Appendix 2 for direct transcriptions of Buck's notes. I am deeply grateful to Drs. Edward Wheatley and James Knapp for their help in deciphering his handwriting.

11. King Charles I of England (1600–1649). The phrase “of Blessed memory” reveals Buck as a Royalist sympathizer, and therefore likely of Tory political leanings.

12. It is worth noting, as an orthographic note, that here and elsewhere Buck seems to have no interest in “crossing his T's”, so to speak.

13. George Herbert (1593–1633), Anglican priest and metaphysical poet.

14. Reverend John Scott (1639–1695), clergyman, devotional writer, and Anglican polemicist. This quote comes from Section III of his writings on the Christian life: “Concerning the second part of the Christian warfare; with a particular account of the duties thereunto appertaining” (1826, 263).

- Kilkenny in Ireland enjoys these blessings ==
 1- Fire, without Smoke,
 2- Air, without Fog,
 3- Water, without Mud,
 4- Earth, without Bog. (25)
- Man is a weak & fallible creature,
 and even princes are not to be
 relied on, but God's promises like
 Mount Zion stand fast forever more
 Dr. Hornick. (44)
- The first step to virtue, as the
 moralist tells us, is to avoid vice
 1720 Dr. Altham Friday September
 the 2nd Fast Day for the fire
 at St. Bo. Bishopsgate (48).¹⁵
- Those that would be famous & sublime,
 Must at humility begin to climb,
 And such as would renowned writers be,
 Must be content to learn by ABC (49).
- Remember man thou art but Dust,
 And unto Dust return thou must.
 So that the soul may soar on high;
 Learn not to live, but learn to die. (50)
- Shame is the guardian of innocence.
 Dr. Trapp
 Shame is the punishment of vice.
 Dr. Supton. (52)
- Bounty is more commended than imitated,
 Courtesy and humility are marks of gentility,
 Accommodate yourself with useful qualifications. (67)

15. September 2 was established as a Fast Day in the Church of England to commemorate the Great Fire of London (1666). Comparing this to the front page of "John Buck's Book" (dated 20 September 1711), it appears this sermon was delivered nearly nine years to the day after Buck had his book bound, and that the binding of the book itself may have been related to this commemoration. Though nearly half a century from the event, such a commemoration may also coincide with the ever-present awareness of death which Jacob says characterized eighteenth-century religious attitudes (JACOB 1996, 103ff).

From these notes, it is clear that Buck is in many ways personally continuing the precedent of moral uprightness laid down by Becon and Rogers. Like Becon, Buck maintains an attitude which calls for daily prayer and the constant consideration of moral action (3, 7). Like Rogers, Buck is careful not to ascribe too much power to figures he might emulate, but rather works to remind himself of his own moral power, capacity, and obligation as a Christian (44).

While these general conclusions are certainly useful in drawing a preliminary sketch of Buck, his most informative note proves to be the one on page 48. This note is unique in the amount of information that it provides, being the only note in which Buck records a specific date—2 September 1720, on a fast day commemorating the Great Fire of London (1666)—and a specific location, which proves to be St. Botolph-without-Bishopsgate in London, a parish which was heavily damaged in the fire and was in fact condemned not long after the writing of Buck's note. The parish remains active even into the present day and maintains a record of its rectors reaching back to 1300, including the name of one Roger Altham who was rector from 1701–1729, precisely the time frame in which Buck's note was made.¹⁶ Roger Altham is then the same “D^r: Altham” quoted by Buck, and it is not unwarranted to suggest that the specificity of Buck's note indicates that he may have attended Altham's sermon on that day, and may even have been a regular parishioner at St. Botolph.

These details provide an additional avenue to pursue in sketching Buck's own sense of religious identity, insofar as we are also able to explore the more well-documented religious sensibilities of his pastor. Altham's tenure as rector is recorded in several places, and fragments of his preaching still survive which suggest that he held deeply conservative High Church attitudes for his time. One of his surviving sermons, entitled “Relative and Inherent Holiness, both required to the true Worship of God”, encourages personal morality in very strong terms: “Though this spiritual Worship be of difficult Consideration, and as difficult Attainment in the full Perfection of it, under this imperfect and corrupt State of Nature we are now engaged in; yet let us, with sincere and upright Minds, endeavour to compass as much of it as we can” (ALTHAM 1728, 20). Such statements as this place Altham within what John Walsh calls the “holy living” tradition which

16. “The Rectors: The Parish and Ward Church St. Botolph without Bishopsgate”. History of the Building, *Parish and Ward Church St. Botolph without Bishopsgate*. Website. I am also indebted to Mhairi Ellis, Administrator at St. Botolph Bishopsgate, for their direction and assistance.

encouraged moral excellence and spiritual asceticism among the laity, though often through “alarmingly high” standards (WALSH 1994, 25). One can also see many remnants of Thomas Rogers’ navigation of *imitatio* in Altham’s sermon, which stresses the necessity of holy living while also being conscious of its ultimate futility. Altham’s sermon also draws comparisons between the moral self and the rich adornments of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, an analogy made even more appropriate by the fact that this sermon was preached to commemorate the re-consecration of St. Botolph after ongoing repairs to salvage the building from damage done during the Great Fire, repairs which Altham himself had overseen. Thus, as a clergyman, Altham builds his religious identity upon morality, community, and even place of worship as a unique and inseparable foundation which W. M. Jacob says was a central features of early-eighteenth century devotional Anglicanism (JACOB 1996, 3ff).

If we believe that John Buck was indeed one of Altham’s parishioners, this also helps make sense not only of Buck’s religious identity, but of the ways in which he may have appropriated the Becon and Rogers texts into his own sense of personal piety. Evidently, Buck stands against the common assertion that the early eighteenth century was a time of moral poverty and harsh anti-clericism within the Church of England. He evidently paid significant attention to his rector, and Buck’s royalist sympathies, indicated by his note on Charles I “of Bles^d memory” (1), likely lead to agreements between himself and Altham in Tory politics (JACOB 1996, 26). However, the degree to which Buck was likely influenced by Altham is most clear in that Buck seems to have been very much involved in the “holy living tradition” as well; all of his notes are geared toward morality and proper conduct, and the one common thread which binds the Becon and the Rogers texts together is that they were mobilized around the importance of personal morality as central to personal piety. This may also explain the apparent excision of the *Day Manuall* in favor of Rogers’, as the latter was not only emended for a conservative Protestant ideology and audience but was also explicitly framed in moral and *contra imitatio* terms which would have made it more useful to a “holy living” mindset.

Thus, Buck appears to have surrounded himself with influences which encouraged a personal asceticism in his own life. This is especially interesting, considering the significant attrition rate of those who tended to participate in the holy living tradition. According to Walsh, “There was a certain joylessness in the call to a regime of unrelenting worship, closet devotion, introspection, and asceticism; it conveyed an anxiety-inducing severity” (WALSH 1994, 26). Whether or not this is true of Buck himself, he certainly does not indicate any sort of weariness in his own notes, though

their relatively small number compared to the number of blank pages he bound may indicate an inconsistency in his devotional life. What is certain, however, is that Buck's notes and evident ideological agreement with his minister present us with a figure that runs counter to claims that the early eighteenth century was a time of low religious morale and personal immorality. Indeed, John Buck's forays into "holy living" can be seen as lived examples of what would become the "reasonable religion" of Romantic Anglicanism, demonstrating a personal piety "rooted", as Jasper Cragwall says, "in emotional and aesthetic habits, rather than positive doctrinal claims" (CRAGWALL 2013, 57). Such a view is further supported by the ways in which Buck's "holy living" agreed with the teachings of Altham, indicating that, far from harboring anti-clerical sentiment, Buck saw his minister as "gesturing toward the immovable Church behind the fallible man", which Cragwall says "result[ed] in a Christianity almost Catholic in its commitment to the bureaucracy of the soul" (62). In the face of many one-dimensional representations of the period, Buck presents us with an artifact which reflects the returning power of the Church of England to the social sphere in the form of reasonable Christianity, even as early as the first decade of the eighteenth century. More so, his anthology demonstrates that even texts which were once considered radical and subversive could be repurposed for the project by which rationality "swapped spiritual mystery for social mystification", and served in the maintenance of this new, conservative identity (CRAGWALL 2013, 60–61).

Conclusions

In *Domesticating the Reformation*, Patterson describes the ultimate goals of devotional literature in Early Modern England as being "to develop personal (and reformist) devotion to Christ and the new English church's way of worshipping him, the best means to which was fermentation in biblical teachings" (PATTERSON 2007, 41). Furthermore, "their emphases truly do lie on *devotion*" and the practice of Christian fundamentals towards the true "end of worship" (42). In disseminating this literature, the English reformers utilized print technology "to forge a practical lay theology, a devotion . . . to be followed and lived out in the home and scenes of daily life", their aim being "to disseminate the Protestant scriptural message so as to inform a person's spirituality beyond the realm of the newly politicized English *ecclesia*" (PATTERSON 2007, 53). In some cases, these small and comparatively inexpensive devotional texts may have been the new laity's first or only exposure to scripture, and so the reformers undergirded their

message with a strong emphasis on the moral renovation of the individual person so as to better receive the theological message, which was foundationally a new message of grace through faith alone. All of these elements and more can be seen in the Becon and Rogers texts, which go to great lengths not only to guide their audiences into the mindset of the new theology but to encourage proper moral conduct as well.

In the hands of an eighteenth-century Anglican such as John Buck, it is frankly remarkable that his selected texts continue to do much of the same work for which they were originally intended, as the moral prerogatives of Becon's and Rogers' texts continued to inform Buck's personal piety in significant ways. During a time in which individual religious beliefs were broad and heterodoxy was common (JACOB 1996, 112ff), Buck clung to a set of texts which advocated a strict, if highly conservative, Reformed orthodoxy. As the presence of Rogers' Pseudo-Augustine indicates, this orthodoxy is rooted in an ideologically revised history of the early church, and further Buck seems to have largely preferred classical Reformed and Anglican texts to any of the readily-available theological works of his own time, save the influence of his own pastor. However, as they appear in "John Buck's Book", these texts remain divorced from their own historical and political moments, and the historical differential between Buck and his devotional texts is underscored by the ways in which he uses these once radical and controversial books in the maintenance of a highly conservative Anglican identity in a time when new calls for reform were about to burst forth in Revival.

As the locus of so many varied yet related historical moments, Buck's anthology is an incredible find and worthy of further study. As a personal devotional artifact of a deeply misunderstood and volatile time in England's religious history, "John Buck's Book" corroborates a number of recent challenges to the standard narrative of personal piety in early eighteenth-century England, and provides a living example of personal editing practices and the appropriation of past texts into a new and still-evolving religious identity.

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Appendix 1: Artifact Description

C 696.083 is a small anthology of devotional texts ranging from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, contained in the Newberry Library's rare book collection. The codex is bound in distressed leather, with buckles built into the front and back covers, the covers measuring about 9.53 cm × 6.20 cm. The paper leaves are in generally good condition, though they show signs of significant use. Leaves measure about 9.3 cm × 5.59 cm after accounting for marginal loss during restoration and binding.

The provenance of the manuscript is marked by a sticker on the inside front cover, indicating that it was previously part of the collection of Reverend George Richard Mackarness (1823–1883), an Episcopalian bishop. The title page is decorated in faded red ink, with the words “John Buck / His Book” prominently displayed in the center. A faded date below the name appears to read “Sept. the 20th 1711”. A number of manuscript leaves follow, hand-ruled in black ink and numbered, also by hand, from 1 to 10. Leaves 1, 3, and 7 contain hand-written manuscript notes in faded black ink (See Appendix 2).

Opposite page 10 is a printed portrait of Thomas Becon, dated 1553 in the leftmost margin, which signals the beginning of Thomas Becon's *Pomaunder of Prayer*, “Imprinted at London by John Day”. The pages of the *Pomaunder* are numbered on the right-hand pages from 2 to 54. Following page 54 of the *Pomaunder* are what appear to be two pages of *S. Augustines Manuell* taken from a different edition of the *Pomaunder*. These pages of the *Manuell* are numbered A.i. and A.ii.

Opposite the last page of the *Manuell* is the title page of *A Pretious Booke of Heavenly Meditations: Called, A private Talke of the Soule with God*, printed in London by F. K. for the Company of Stationers in 1634. Authorship is attributed to Saint Augustine. Thomas Rogers is named as the editor, who assures that the text is “not translated only, but purified also, and with most ample, and necessary sentences of holy Scripture adorned”. The *Pretious Booke* opens with “The Epistle dedicatory”, a letter from Rogers to Thomas Wilson, “Doctor of the Civill Lawes” and “one of her Majesties principall Secretaries”. Pages of this “Epistle” are numbered from A3 to A5, though numbering ceases after A5. The end of the Epistle is dated 1 January 1581. Following the Epistle is the main text of the *Pretious Booke*, with pages numbered 1 to 198.

Opposite page 198 of the *Pretious Booke* is the title page of *A Right Christian Treatise, Entitled St. Augustines Prayers*, printed in London by F. K. for the Company of Stationers in 1635 and also edited by Thomas Rogers. Again, Rogers assures that the text is “Published in more ample sort than yet hath been in the English tongue: purged from divers superstitious Points, and adorned with manifold pieces of the Sacred Scriptures”. On this page, Rogers also announces that St. Augustine’s “Psalter” is appended to the *Prayers*. The *Prayers* open with a letter “To the Christian Reader, S”. the pages of which are numbered K3 to K5, though numbering ceases after K5. The end of the letter is dated 10 June 1581. Following this letter is the main text of the *Prayers*, with pages numbered 1 to 209. A marginal note by John Buck appears in the rightmost margin of page 1 of the *Prayers*, and reads, “Performing Holiness in the fear of God”. Following the main body of the *Prayers* is “The Psalter which St. Augustine composed for the use of his Mother”, with pages numbered 1 to 15. Following the “Psalter” is an index to the *Prayers* with pages numbered V3, V4 and V5.

Following page V5b of the *Prayers* is the title page of *Saint Augustines Manuall*, printed in London by F. K. for the Company of Stationers in 1635. Like the previous texts, the *Manuall* is “Corrected, Translated, and Adorned” by Thomas Rogers. The text opens with “A Preface Unto the Reader”, spanning 7 unnumbered pages and dated 25 July 1581. Following these pages is “The Authors Preface”, consisting of 3 unnumbered pages and attributed to “A” at the end. The main text of the *Manuall* begins after the “Authors Preface”, with pages numbered 1 to 91. Following the main text is a 4-page unnumbered summary of the chapters.

After the text of the *Manuall*, the rest of the codex is filled by ruled manuscript leaves, though inconsistently numbered. Leaves 25, 44, 48–50, 52 and 67 all contain hand-written manuscript notes (See Appendix 2). The last of these leaves, numbered 73, possesses a highly decorative hand-drawn “FINIS” at the bottom. The back cover of the codex bears the seal of the Newberry Library Chicago.

Appendix 2: Transcriptions of Marginal Notes, with Corresponding Leaf Numbers

- all have errors that have leaft,
But the [shorteft] are the Best.
a saying of K:charles y^e 1s^t of Bles^d memory (1).
- He that when Rysing up forgets to pray,
Bids not himself good morrow nor good Day.
Divine Herbert (3).
- 1 as he that to serve god neglects the Duty^s of his calling is a
religious Trueant,
2 so he that to follow the Duty^s of his calling, and wholly neglects
the service of God, is a profane drudge.
D^r: Scott (7).
- Perfecting Hollyness in ye fear of God. (*S. Augustine's Prayers*, p.1)
- Kilceny in Ireland enjoy thes Bleffings ==
1- Fire, without Smoake,
2- Ayre, without Fogg,
3- Water, without Mudd,
4- Earth, without Bogg. (25)
- man if a weak & faileable creature,
and even princes are not to be
Rely^d on, But Gods promises like
Mount Zion stand fast for evermore
D^r: Hornick. (44)
- The firft step to vertu[e] as the
moralist^s tells us, is to avoide vice
1720 D^r Altham Fryday Sep^{tr}
the 2^d faft Day for the fire
at s^t:Bo:Bifhopgate (48).
- Thoes that wou^d be famous & sublime,
Must at humility begin to clim^b,
And such as wou^d Renown^d writers be,
Must Be content to learne by ABC (49).
- Remember man thou art but Dust,
And unto Dust Returne thou must.
So that the soul may soar on high;
Learn not to live, but learne to Dye. (50)

- Shame is the guardian of innoc[e]nce.
D Trapp
Shame is the punishment of Vice.
D^r Supton. (52)
- Bounty is more comend^d than imitated
courtesy, and humility are marks of gentility
Accomodate your self with useful qualifications. (67)