

The seventeenth-century English and Scottish reception of Francis de Sales' *An Introduction to a Devout Life*

Mary Hardy

School of Divinity, History & Philosophy, King's College, University of Aberdeen, AB24 3FX UK. Email: m.hardy@abdn.ac.uk

St Francis de Sales' devotional manual, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1609), had a complex but fascinating reception history in seventeenth-century England and Scotland. Collectively, the English-language editions in this century include two translations and, perhaps most interestingly, several reformed editions. It is curious that a post-Reformation, Tridentine Catholic work, written by a French bishop dedicated to converting Protestant 'Heretiques,' would appeal to both Catholics and Protestants alike. Most of the seventeenth-century English editions were published abroad in Douai, Paris, St Omer, and Rouen, places that were home to many English and Scottish exiled communities, both lay and religious. Two of the three reformed editions were published in England, evidence of the *Introduction's* widespread readership and its importance to seventeenth-century English devotion. Finally, during James II's reign two Catholic editions were openly published, one in England and the other in Scotland.

Keywords: English recusants, Scottish penal Catholics, St Francis de Sales, Reception, *An Introduction to a Devout Life*

Protestant reception of Catholic devotional works is an area of research that, as one scholar has recently noted, 'still tends to fall between ideological cracks.'¹ Although there are some notable exceptions, scholarship has tended to adhere to confessional lines in the reception of religious texts.² Citing several examples of Catholic texts adapted for a Protestant readership, John Yamamoto-Wilson argues that the English Protestant interest in Catholic devotion was not limited to moderate or wavering Protestants, but was 'a facet of

¹ John R. Yamamoto-Wilson, 'The Protestant Reception of Catholic Devotional Literature in England to 1700,' *Recusant History* (hereafter *RH*) 32,1 (2014): 72.

² Some older works that examine the Protestant reception of Catholic works include T.A. Birrell, 'English Catholic mystics in non-Catholic circles,' *The Downside Review* (hereafter *TDR*) 94 (1976): 99–117; J.M. Blom, 'A German Jesuit and his Anglican Readers. The Case of Jeremias Drexelius (1581–1632),' in G.A.M. Janssens and F.G.A.M. Aarts, eds. *Studies in Seventeenth Century Literature, History and Bibliography* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), 41–51. More recent works include Maximilian Von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi, 1425–1650* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011) and Alexandra Walsham, 'Wholesome Milk and Strong Meat: Peter Canisius's Catechisms and the Conversion of Protestant Britain,' *British Catholic History* 32 (2015): 293–314.

mainstream Protestant culture.³ Francis de Sales' *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1609) is one such example of a devotional work that was read not only by Catholics in England and Scotland, but also expurgated, edited, and adapted for a Protestant readership throughout the seventeenth century. Due to its cross-confessional appeal in England and Scotland, Sales' work usefully illuminates the extent (and perhaps limitations) of the shared devotional and print culture of the British kingdoms.

Earlier assessments of Sales' *Introduction* have consisted solely in documenting the various editions, translators, and places of publication. A number of issues peculiar to the *Introduction*, such as a lack of surviving contemporary response to the work, have created a labyrinth of opinions regarding the editions. It is precisely the illusory material and the resulting conflicts in the interpretation of its publication history that make a study of the seventeenth-century English editions intriguing. Elisabeth Stopp, translator of Sales' letters, identifies the seventeenth-century editions as 'the most interesting as well as the least explored.'⁴ In an essay on the reception of Sales in England, Stopp devotes part of her discussion to the English editions of the *Introduction*.⁵ Touching briefly on several of their prefaces, she notes that 'except for the comments made by the translators themselves in their prefaces' there is little contemporary reaction to his works.⁶ While she does refer to most of the major editions which I shall discuss here, Stopp does not explore the differences between them.

Stopp's essays, published in the 1960s, seem not to have been widely consulted. In 1996, William Marceau published an article on the various translations of the works of Francis de Sales, effectively attempting to cover the same ground as that researched and discussed by Stopp. Although he helpfully provides a bibliography of all the editions of Sales' works published in English and listed in the various short-title catalogues, Marceau's essay lacks the research detail and depth of Stopp's work. For example, Marceau is unaware that the specification, 'last edition,' found in the Paris 1637 edition, refers to the various editions produced by Sales before his death, a reflection of his practice of constant re-editing.⁷

³ Yamamoto-Wilson, 'The Protestant Reception of Catholic Devotional Literature': 69.

⁴ Elisabeth Stopp, 'Healing Differences: The Influence of St. Francis de Sales in England,' in *A Man to Heal Differences :Essays and Talks on St Francis de Sales* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 1997), 86. This chapter of Stopp's book is the first part of a two-part article with the same title. 'Part I' first featured in *Salesian Studies* 3 (1966): 26–45. 'Part II,' which is found in *Salesian Studies* 4 (1967): 39–46, deals with the eighteenth-century legacy of Sales' *Introduction* in England, especially his influence on Bishop Richard Challoner, who published a new translation of the *Introduction*, and whose own work, *The Garden of the Soul*, was greatly indebted to the *Introduction*.

⁵ Stopp, 'Healing Differences,' 90–2; 104–7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁷ William Marceau, 'Recusant Translations of Saint Francis de Sales' *TDR* 114 (1996): 224.

Nor does he appear to be aware of the second translation of Sales' *Introduction* in 1648. He mistakenly credits 'James I [for] recalling the 1637 edition of the Yakesley translation,' and does not seem to have consulted Nicholls' 1701 expurgated edition, but relies instead on Dubois' article.⁸

Whereas Stopp, Marceau, Dubois, and others have mainly listed the various editions of Sales' *Introduction*, this article aims to offer a detailed and thorough comparison of both the major Catholic and Protestant editions. By comparing prefatory material, such as dedicatory epistles, book plates, and prefaces; textual variations resulting from expurgations; and visual evidence present in frontispieces and title pages, this article will demonstrate how seventeenth-century Catholics and Protestants understood and used Sales' *Introduction*, and will examine and discuss the implications of the adaptation of his text for Protestant devotion. In an effort to make sense of the events and extant evidence from the failed 1637 edition, N.W. Bawcutt claims that the edition's preface 'does not really tell us very much.'⁹ On the contrary, Salesian scholarship has thus far paid insufficient attention to the evidence available in the textual, paratextual and visual sources. All of these, when examined in the context of the available knowledge of the relevant religious literary history of the work, yield valuable information on its contemporary reception. This article will attempt to remedy this lack. In addition, while thus far editors have considered only the English reception of Sales, this article will consider a previously undiscovered example of the reception of his work in Scotland.

An Introduction to a Devout Life – its author, contents, and influences

In 1609, Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, published *An Introduction to a Devout Life*. The manual presents to the reader a spiritual guide to finding a relationship with God, each according to his/her own status in life, through prayer, the sacraments—in particular the Eucharist—devotion to the Virgin Mary, the examples of the saints and through the reader's own everyday life. Sales was not, of course, the originator of this genre of religious literature; his work

⁸ *Ibid.*, 225. Like Stopp's essays, Elfrida's Dubois' 'Saint François de Sales en Angleterre,' in H. Bordes and J. Hennequin, eds. *L'Univers salésien: Saint François de Sales hier et aujourd'hui. Actes du colloque international de Metz, 17–19 septembre 1992* (Paris: Champion-Slatkine, 1994) gives a general overview of Sales' reception in England, both his *Introduction* and his other works, among both Catholics and Protestants, into the twentieth century. While both Stopp and Dubois cursorily mention Sales' influence on Jeremy Taylor, Dubois had devoted an article to comparing the two authors popular works: 'Saint Francis de Sales and Jeremy Taylor: *Introduction a La Vie Devote* and *Holy Living*. A Comparison,' *History of European Ideas* 2 (1981): 49–63.

⁹ N.W. Bawcutt, 'A Crisis of Laudian Censorship: Nicholas and John Okes and the Publication of Sales' *An Introduction to a Devout Life* in 1637,' *The Library* 1 (2004): 407.

follows in the long-established tradition of devotional works, such as Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418–27) and Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (c. 1522–24). Indeed, Sales specifically aligns his work with this tradition of devotional literature, explaining that he 'neither can nor will, nor indeed should' write 'anything different from what has already been published by [... his] predecessors on this subject.'¹⁰ Like the earlier works, Sales' *Introduction* offers guidance for an examination and transformation of the interior self. Such transformation is to be achieved through a reliance on God and the purging of sin, considered in the first part of the work; and prayer and virtues considered in the second and third parts respectively. The fourth part posits solutions for avoiding temptation, while the final part encourages a continued devout resolution.

Although Sales adopts the traditional literary model of the genre in common with the earlier authors of spiritual manuals, he intends his *Introduction* for a different audience. Whereas earlier manuals were composed for '[p]ersons wholly withdrawn from the world,' i.e. those called to religious vocations, Sales' intention is to instruct those living in the world: in towns, in families, or at court. Henri Brémond identifies Sales' approach to the devout life as part of a movement he calls 'devout humanism,' which is 'before all else a school of personal holiness,' a method 'effective and wholly directed towards the practical side.'¹¹ Sales is interested in a method of devotion suitable for those living an ordinary, secular life, and who, according to Sales, 'may fly through the flames of earthly lusts without burning the wings of the holy desires of a devout life.'¹² Devotion is attainable by all, priest and layman alike, because devotion is a 'spiritual agility and vivacity by which charity works in us'¹³ and is strengthened by pious mental exercises, such as 'daily mental prayer [...], examination of conscience, inward recollection,' and the practise of virtue.¹⁴ Thus, devotion relies more on the right interior disposition than on the presence of cloister walls.

Sales' approach to devotion focuses upon the interior life and his method in the *Introduction* draws on the work of many other noted

¹⁰ Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, John K. Ryan, ed., (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1953), xxv. For this section I have chosen to use Ryan's translation which is 'based upon the traditional translations of John Yaworth [*sic*] and the English priests of Tournai College and upon the text of the original French work as established by Dom. B. Mackey in the definitive Annecy edition. The attempt has been made to give a complete and accurate English rendition' (Editor's Introduction, xiii). The 'traditional translations' Ryan refers to are the two that are produced during the seventeenth century, which are analysed in this article.

¹¹ Henri Brémond, *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France: From the Wars of Religion Down to Our Own Times*, trans. K.L. Montgomery, 3 vols (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1928), 1: 15.

¹² Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1953), xxv–xxvi.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴ Pierre Janelle, *The Catholic Reformation* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963), 199.

spiritual writers. Much like Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, Sales' *Introduction* draws his reader's attention to 'the necessity of a guide for beginning and progressing in devotion.'¹⁵ Neither is one's pursuit of holiness to be a solitary journey; in nearly every chapter Sales commends his reader to a saint, the Virgin Mary, or one's guardian angel. Saints offer examples of virtue, such as St Catherine of Siena's insistence on praying despite obstacles.¹⁶ Sales also points to the particular behaviour of some saints—such as the extreme asceticism of St Paula (347–404 AD)—as examples of that which should be avoided.¹⁷ In addition to playing an important role in Sales' spiritual guidance, his suggestions for saintly imitation or avoidance provide a pertinent and useful point of comparison between the Catholic and Protestant editions.

Sales was born just four years after the end of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), and the decrees and reforms of Trent form the doctrinal context in which Sales composed the *Introduction*. In its thirteenth session on 11 October 1551, the Council issued a decree concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist, affirming the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, giving conciliar approval to the scholastic term 'transubstantiation' and affirming the excellence of the Eucharist over the other sacraments.¹⁸ Like one's bodily dependence on food, the Council stated, the Eucharist 'should be received as the spiritual food of souls [...] and as an antidote, whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins.'¹⁹

The Eucharist is central to Sales' *Introduction*. At the end of the second part of the *Introduction*, effectively the middle of the work, Sales devotes several chapters to the Eucharist and the Mass. Echoing the Council, Sales calls the Eucharist 'the sun of all spiritual exercises,' 'the centre of the Christian religion, the heart of devotion, and the soul of piety.'²⁰ Sales affirms the Eucharist's power to strengthen the soul's resolution to devotion so that 'it is almost impossible that [one] should be poisoned by any kind of evil affection.'²¹ Eucharistic graces are necessary for both the pursuit of virtue and for conquering temptation—topics covered in the earlier and later parts of the *Introduction*. The Eucharist is both the figurative 'heart of devotion,' and the centre of Sales' work, on which the rest of his method depends. The ordering of chapters centred around the Eucharist not only reveals the primary focus in Sales' *Introduction*, but points to a Tridentine influence.

¹⁵ Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1953), 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75–6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁸ *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent*, trans., Rev. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 77.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1953), 83–4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

The Tridentine influences are clear in the *Introduction*, and there are others. One of the most important is Sales' humanist training, central to his formation, which he received at the Jesuit Clermont College in Paris in 1580–88. Although Sales' father had intended that he should be trained in law, Sales decided otherwise. Stopp reconstructs the education Sales would have received at Clermont, the object of which 'was expressly to Christianize the humanism, that is to apply the principles and spirit of the Counter Reformation to the upbringing and education of the young, making the two great pagan cultures of the ancient world serve the faith.'²² Recalling his time at Clermont, Sales capitalises on the focused nature of his education; he wrote that it was there 'that [he] first applied [himself] to the humanities and then to philosophy [...] and [his] task was made all the easier and more fruitful because this university was so addicted [...] to philosophy and theology.'²³

The works of Aristotle were at the centre of Sales' philosophical education at Clermont. Sales' vision of virtue is very much akin to Aristotle's idea of moral virtue as a learned mean between extremes, as found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Much like Aristotle, Sales encourages his readers to consider their particular station and duties in order to determine the mean in a given situation. When discussing the virtue of proper association with others, for instance, Sales warns that '[t]o seek association with others and to shun it are two extremes equally blameable in the devotion of those that live in the world [...] To protest that we love him [our neighbour] we must not fly his company. To testify that we love ourselves we must dwell with ourselves.'²⁴ Aristotle's doctrine of the mean also seems to be the guiding principle of Sales' vision of the devout life in general. Like Aristotle's understanding of moral virtue, which is practised differently by each person, Sales claims: 'Devotion must be exercised in different ways by the gentleman, the workman, the servant, the prince [...] and the married woman. Not only this, but the practice of devotion must be also adapted to the strength, the employment, and the duties of each one in particular.'²⁵ For Sales, there is not just one path to devotion. For example, the devotion of a married woman depends on her vocation, its specific demands, and her disposition.

Although much more could be said about the content of the *Introduction*, the importance of the examples of the saints, the sacraments, and the Aristotelian approach to the moral life are all pivotal in discussing the cross-confessional reception of the *Introduction* in England and Scotland. These topics are emphasized,

²² Stopp, *A man to heal differences*, 25.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1953), 196.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

downplayed, or expurgated in the respective seventeenth-century editions of the text.

The English and Scottish Catholic reception of the Introduction

When discussing early modern English Catholics, historiographers have troubled over how to accurately describe their identity. In his attempt to define England's Catholic population, Edward Norman prefers to proceed negatively; while they were 'recusants' for not conforming to the Protestant faith, they 'did not develop sectarian qualities [...], did not deviate from orthodoxy, and did not, above all, quietly slide back into a comfortable acquiescence with the new order.'²⁶ Although Anglicanism was England's established religion, John Bossy argues that the Catholic community 'had come to some sort of *modus vivendi* within itself and with the overwhelmingly Protestant society it lived in [...] and proved able to endure.'²⁷ Although they were a small and persecuted community, they found innovative ways of continuing to worship and practise their faith together. English Catholics tended to form communities, based either around geographical locations such as Fleet Street, the Inns of Court, and the London prisons, or on groups devoted to reading spiritual works or reciting specific prayers, such as rosary sodalities.²⁸

Many scholars of early modern Catholicism have pointed to the importance of reading material to the survival of the faith of recusant Catholics.²⁹ Since it was illegal to print Catholic material in England and Scotland, Catholic books such as primers, catechisms, Bibles, and the like were either printed 'from [the] twenty-one secret presses in England'³⁰ or imported from English and Scottish Catholic communities on the continent.³¹ The effects of the penal laws resulted in Catholicism becoming an underground religion in England and Scotland. It was during the sixteenth and seventeenth

²⁶ Edward Norman, *Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1.

²⁷ John Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570–1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), 11.

²⁸ Lisa McLain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical Innovation & Lived Experience Among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559–1642* (London: Routledge, 2004), chapter five.

²⁹ John R. Watts, 'Roman Catholicism in Scotland: Late Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,' in Colin MacLean and Kenneth Veitch, eds. *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*, 14 vols, 12, *Religion* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2006), 153; J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London: Blond & Briggs Ltd., 1976), 191–2; Michael Mullet, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558–1829* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 71; Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 244.

³⁰ Robert Miola, ed., *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33.

³¹ J.M. Blom, *The Post-Tridentine English Primer* (The Netherlands: Catholic Record Society, 1982), 34.

centuries that ‘the lay Catholic community was sustained by manuals of prayers and litanies in [...] many different arrangements.’³² For example, primers ‘became the most popular book of private devotion for non-monastic religious communities and for the laity.’³³ It is no wonder that Sales’ *Introduction*, with its focus on interior recollection and sacramental grace, would resonate with English and Scottish Catholics. Wherever there were Catholics, whether at home, in prisons, in trade, or in the legal profession, many different types of Catholic books could be found, such as ‘breviaries, catechisms, psalters, primers, manuals, the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, martyrologies, and hagiographies, in addition to spiritual works such as Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ* and [other] pastoral works.’³⁴ The devotional literature read by English and Scottish recusants was suited to their needs, at a time when they were forced to turn their devotional practices inward, both physically and mentally.

At the beginning of James VI/I’s reign Catholics hoped that he ‘would act to further their interests,’ but were disappointed when James re-established Elizabeth I’s legislation against Catholics. More than twenty Catholics were executed for their faith during his reign.³⁵ In 1606, after the Gunpowder Plot, James enforced an Oath of Allegiance to separate moderate Catholics from the potentially subversive. Although he passed acts prohibiting the printing and importing of Catholic primers, rosaries, etc., the *Introduction*, in French, allegedly appeared in England during James’ reign, well before the first English translation of the work. King Henry IV and Queen Marie de Medici of France are said to have admired Sales’ preaching at court so much that Marie sent a jewelled copy of the *Introduction* to James I, who enjoyed the work immensely and read it frequently.³⁶ If this account of James is true, then it is certainly a strange one, and somewhat out of character. Perhaps even more surprising, in conjunction with this story, is the fact that James ‘gave his direct support to the most ambitious scheme for corporate polemical activity among English Protestant divines ever devised: the founding of Chelsea College [founded in London in 1609] as an institution for the systematic production of anti-papal polemic.’³⁷ If the anecdote of James and the *Introduction* is true, then it is likely to

³² John Seward, J. Morrill, M. Tomko, eds. *Firmly I Believe and Truly: the Spiritual Tradition of Catholic England, 1483–1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 134.

³³ Blom, *Post-Tridentine English Primer*, 3.

³⁴ McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, 249.

³⁵ Glenn Burgess, R. Wymer, J. Lawrence, eds. *The Accession of James I – Historical and Cultural Consequences* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), xiii.

³⁶ Allan Ross, *St Francis de Sales and the Introduction to the Devout Life* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1925), 40. Ross does not give source for this story. This same story is quoted, without reference, by other authors, including Dubois and Stopp.

³⁷ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32.

be the earliest example of the ability of Sales' writing to appeal to readers across English confessional lines.

Just four years after its first publication in French, an English edition of the *Introduction*, translated by 'I.Y.' or John Yaxley, was printed in Douai in 1613 (see Figure 1).³⁸ In his dedicatory epistle, Yaxley expresses his concern for the spiritual life of his English Catholic countrymen; he claims that he has translated it for the benefit of those who 'in our poor distressed country, which more than any other country standeth in need of such good books for counterpoison against so many venemous writings, as worldly and fantastical heads do daily publish.'³⁹ Yaxley's 'venemous writings,' probably refers to the considerable output of religious polemic in England encouraged by James I, such as Andrew Willet's *Synopsis Papismi* (third edition published in 1600), which argued that it was 'the duty of all the Church of England [...] to unite against the common enemy—the Church of Rome.'⁴⁰ At the very least, Yaxley's preface demonstrates an awareness of the widespread anti-Catholic polemic in England.

Yaxley's edition is dedicated to Anne Roper (1587–1648), daughter of Sir William Roper and great-granddaughter of Sir Thomas More (1478–1535).⁴¹ In his epistle, he says that Anne is particularly suited to be the recipient of the *Introduction* because of her relation to that 'glorious progenitour, that excellent true states-man, & learned coucellor, england's honour, faithes zealous champion, and Christs constant martyr, Sir Thomas Moore.'⁴² Yaxley's reference to More is something to note; More was a strong proponent of Renaissance humanism and composed his own devotional works. As a public figure who maintained his piety, More exemplified 'the practise of devotion and Christian perfection' outlined in Sales' *Introduction*.⁴³

Yaxley's mention of More's martyrdom is also related to the question of early modern Catholic identity. On one hand, More was associated with the late medieval, hierarchical, English Church when English Catholic identity was bound to a visible institution. There has been

³⁸ According to Elisabeth Stopp, Dom Mackey (the editor of Sales' works) identified 'I.Y.' as a 'John Yaworth, O.S.B., by others, on insufficient evidence, as John Yakesley or John Yates.' *A Man to heal differences*, 90. All other authors refer to 'I.Y.' as Yakesley or Yaxley.

³⁹ Francis de Sales, *An introduction to a devotte life Composed in Frenche by the R. Father in God Francis Sales, Bishop of Geneua. And translated into Englisg [sic], by I.Y.* ([Douai:] Iohn Heigham, 1613), the epistle dedicatorie

⁴⁰ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 13; 14.

⁴¹ The author has not been able to find any bibliographical information concerning Ann Roper. Pearl Hogrefe has demonstrated that the relationship between the Ropers and the Mores existed long before the marriage between William Roper and Margaret More joined the two families in 1521. 'Sir Thomas More's Connection with the Roper Family,' *Modern Language Association* 47 (1932), 529. In fact, between 1553–58, William Roper composed a hagiographical biography of Thomas More which circulated in manuscript form until it was eventually published in 1626. Miola, *Early Modern Catholicism*, 31.

⁴² Sales, *An introduction to a devotte life* (1613), the epistle dedicatorie.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

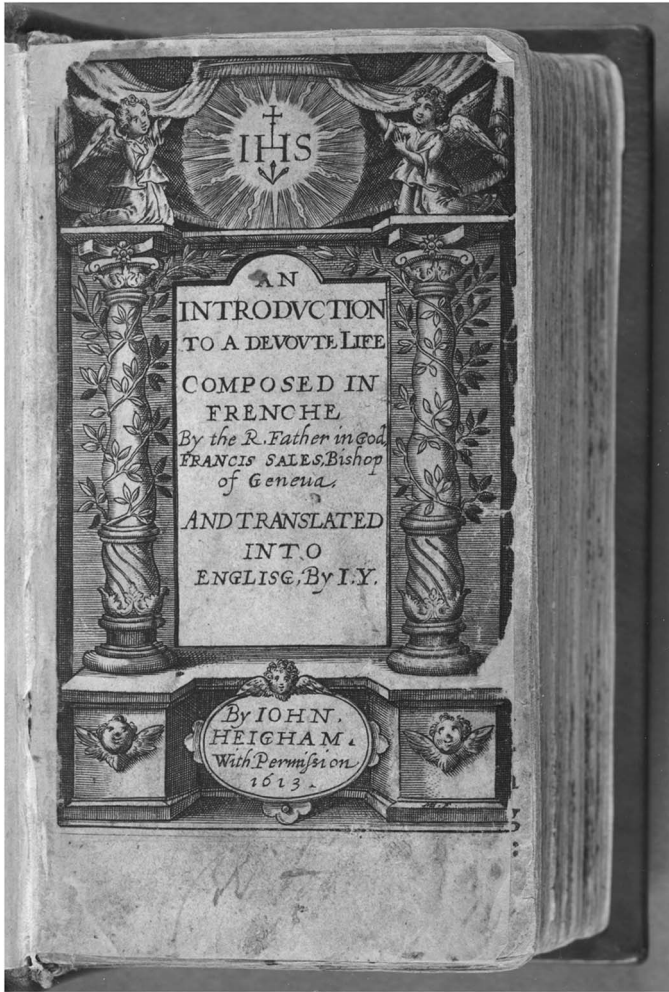


Figure 1. *An introduction to a devovte life Composed in Frenche by the R. Father in God Francis Sales, Bishop of Geneva. And translated into Englisg [sic], by I. Y. [Douai] Iohn Heigham. 1613.* Image courtesy Huntington Library, 23249.

much debate over whether post-Reformation English Catholicism was a continuation of the medieval Church, or whether it was something entirely different, that is, a product of the Counter Reformation.⁴⁴ Whether or not they were imbued with a Counter Reformation ethos, English recusant Catholics maintained an identity 'by building new connections to the *universal* Catholic Church by identifying themselves as the heirs of ancient traditions, particularly those of persecution and martyrdom.'⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Michael Mullet neatly summarises this debate in *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558–1829* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 1–26.

⁴⁵ McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, 238.

For English Catholics, Yaxley's reference to More's martyrdom ought to be considered in light of the growing popularity of English martyrologies, such as John Wilson's *The English martyrologe conteyning a summary of the lives of the glorious and renowned saintes of the three kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland* (St Omers, 1608). Collections of the stories of martyrs were often found in recusant book collections and were meant to inspire them to persevere in their faith for the promise of eternal glory.⁴⁶

In addition to the preface and dedication, the 1613 edition also includes, at the very end, an added paratext entitled 'The Communication of Doctovr Thaulervs with a poore beggar,'⁴⁷ 'a short tract that has always been traditionally associated with English translations of the *Introduction* for some reason which has never been explained.'⁴⁸ In their annotated catalogue, Allison and Rogers note that the tract was translated by Yaxley from Tauler's *Colloquium theologi et mendici*.⁴⁹ The anecdote recounts the story of a learned man who asks to learn the way of virtue from a beggar. Readers of the story are meant to identify with the doctor and be inspired by the poor man's piety. This tract touches on a few principles in the *Introduction*, such as interior devotion and the periodical separation of oneself from society to establish a personal relationship with God. The beggar points to the interior nature of devotion, claiming that God's kingdom is 'in my Soul,' and attributing the perfection of his virtue to 'silence [...] and my lofty Meditations, and the Union I had with God.'⁵⁰ The language in this tract is similar to that used to describe mystical prayer. Mystical theology was popular among the publications of English Catholics, such as Augustine Baker's *Sancta Sophia* (1657), which 'encourage[d] the lay person to attempt the prayer of contemplation, or mystical union.'⁵¹ Although Sales' *Introduction* does not fall into the mystical category, it does have a few elements that are reminiscent of mystical prayer, such as the practice of placing oneself in the presence of God.

English Catholics seem to have found something in Sales' writing congenial to their situation; the 1613 edition went through several reprints in the following decade—in 1614, 1615, 1617, and 1622.⁵²

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁷ Dr. John Thauler was a fourteenth-century Dominican friar.

⁴⁸ Elisabeth Stopp, 'The Influence of St. Francis de Sales in England, Part II,' *Salesian Studies* 4 (1967): 41.

⁴⁹ A.F. Allison and D.M. Rogers, *The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation between 1558 and 1640*, Volume 2 – Works in English (Hants: Scolar Press, 1994), 173.

⁵⁰ Francis de Sales, *An introduction to a devovte life Composed in Frenche by the R. Father in God Francis Sales, Bishop of Geneua. And translated into English by I. Y.* (Iohn Heigham, 1614), 'The Communication of Doctovr Thaulervs with a poore beggar.'

⁵¹ Miola, *Early Modern Catholicism*, 271.

⁵² For bibliographic information of these editions see the appendix.

The only significant textual differences between these early reprints are the result of Sales' continued editing before his death in 1622. The Paris-published 1637 edition, marked as the 'last edition,' reflects Sales' final edits of the text.⁵³ For example, Sales added the chapters on friendship in one of the later editions of the text. Mellinghoff-Bougerie has pointed to the manuscript evidence that is suggestive of the 'care with which Francis de Sales worked on the text of this work during the four key phases of its reaction and publication: 1609–10, 1610–12, 1616, and 1619 (the so-called "definitive" edition).'⁵⁴

In the hiatus between the 1637 edition and the new English translation of 1648, the English Catholic community had experienced several positive changes. Between 1623 and 1631 the English Catholic Church came back under the care of two successive bishops—William Bishop and Richard Smith—who established a return to episcopal rule.⁵⁵ By 1630, the seculars, Jesuits, and Benedictines had independently secured missions in England.⁵⁶ The persecution of Catholics had eased by 1631 and peace between Charles I and Henrietta Maria in 1633 yielded a period of clemency toward the Queen's co-religionists. It even became popular at court to convert to Catholicism.

In response to these movements in London, there was some discussion in Rome of the appointment of one of the King's subjects as a cardinal. Although he never became cardinal, a Scotsman, George Conn, came to London in 1636 as papal envoy 'with the purpose of exploring the ground for effecting a reconciliation.'⁵⁷ During his stay, Conn opened a chapel in Long Acre, which drew such a large congregation that eight Masses a day were needed. Conn and Charles enjoyed several discussions on religion during which Charles lamented the break with Rome, intimating that he wished that James I's Chelsea College might devote itself to the study of Christian reunion.⁵⁸ During this era of relative toleration for Catholics in England, a new translation of Sales' *Introduction* was produced. Although Thomas Clancy points out that the overall output of Catholic publications was in decline during these years due mainly to the Anglo-Spanish war (1625–30) and the death of one of the most important and productive English Catholics of this period, John Heigham,⁵⁹ the new translation of the *Introduction* can be

⁵³ Stopp, *A man to heal differences*, 90.

⁵⁴ Mellinghoff-Bougerie, 'Four Centuries of Editions of the *Introduction*,' 4.

⁵⁵ Bossy, *English Catholic Community*, 49.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁷ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 306.

⁵⁸ For an older, but more detailed discussion on George Conn, his influence on Charles, and his reception in London see Gordon Albion, *Charles I and the Court of Rome: A study in 17th Century Diplomacy* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1935), 117–426.

⁵⁹ John Heigham (c. 1568–1634) and John Wilson were 'prominent figures in the recusant book trade in the first decades of the seventeenth century.' Heigham started out in Douai as a translator, publisher, and bookseller of English recusant books. Blom, *Post-Tridentine*

seen in light of a ‘rise of the school of piety associated with Bishop Francis de Sales’ and ‘a shift towards translations from French.’⁶⁰

In 1648, the English priests at Tournai College at the University of Paris translated and published *A New Edition of the Introduction to a Devout Life*. Stopp has pointed out that the new translation is ‘more taut and literal, but it has also lost some of its freshness and charm.’⁶¹ Indeed, consider the following description of devotion from the 1613 and 1669 editions respectively. In the first we find:

True and liuely deuotion (my Philotheus) presupposeth in our harts the loue of God: nay rather it is nothing els[e] but a certain perfect and high degree of the true loue of God: for whe[n] we consider the loue of God, as the thing that beautifieth our soules, and maketh them louely in the eyes of his maiestie, then do we call it heauenly grace: and because this self same loue of God, yf it be true and vnfained loue, giueth vs strength & force to do good workes, it is called charity: but when it growes to that degree of perfectio[n], that it not only strengtheneth vs to do well, but also vrgeth vs vehemently to do good works diligently, frequently, and feruently, then it is properly called deuotion.⁶²

Whereas in the 1669 reprint of the 1648 translation, we find a reduced version of this description:

True and lively devotion (O Philothea) presupposeth the love of God: nay rather it is nothing else, but a true love of God, yet not every sort of love: for, in as much as the love of God adornes our soules, it is called Grace, making us acceptable to his divine Majesty; in as much as it giveth us strength to do good works, it is called Charity: but when it is arrived at that degree of perfection, wherein it causeth us not only to do well, but also to work diligently, frequently and fervently, then it is called Devotion.⁶³

The 1669 reprint of this new translation includes a revealing frontispiece and three interesting prefatory texts (see Figure 2). The reprint’s frontispiece reflects Sales’ recent canonization, in 1665; facing the title page is a picture of Sales in bishops’ garb, his arms crossed, with eyes gazing upwards, and surrounded by clouds. Jules Chambelland points out that on the occasion of Sales’ beatification in 1661 and canonization in 1665, ‘the cult of his iconography greatly intensified. The features of the new saint were depicted everywhere in paintings, decorative frescoes, stained glass windows, engravings, statues.’⁶⁴ Perhaps the portrait of Francis in the 1669 edition was meant to serve a similar purpose to that of a holy card, that is, a small saint’s picture intended for private devotional purposes.

English Primer, 39; 60. Heigham was responsible for publishing at least three of the first English editions of Sales’ *Introduction*.

⁶⁰ Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Britain*, 258.

⁶¹ Stopp, *A man to heal differences*, 92.

⁶² Sales, *An introduction to a devoute life* (1613), 31.

⁶³ Francis de Sales, *A New Edition of the Introduction to a Devout Life*, (n.p. [London] 1669), 3–4.

⁶⁴ Jules Chambelland, ‘St. Francis de Sales and His Portraits’ trans. Alexander T. Pocetto, *Annales Salesiennes* (1937), 5.

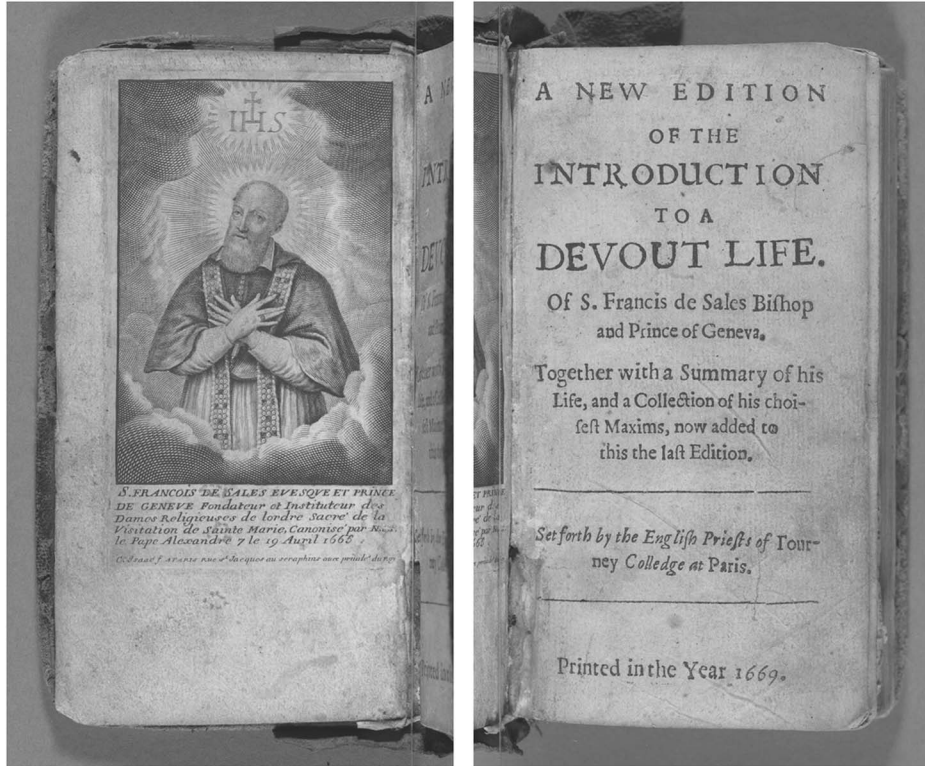


Figure 2. Frontispiece and Title Page of *A New Edition of the Introduction to a Devout Life*. [London] [s.n.] 1669. Image courtesy Houghton Library at Harvard University, FC6.F8646.Eg648ib.

The three new prefatory texts, a summary of Sales' life, a preface, and a dedicatory epistle (in the 1669 edition), offer an understanding of how Sales' life was transmitted to the English. In the summary of Sales' life there are several details worthy of attention. Firstly, the author mentions that Sales went to the 'College of Clermont; under the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus [...] where he gained, equally Learning and Virtue.'⁶⁵ It is perhaps surprising to read such an unabashedly positive account of the Jesuits and the merit of their education when the English crown was so suspicious of the missionary order. The other aspect of his life considered to be worthy of note is Sales' labour in the 'Conversion of Heretiques [...] by his learned Sermons, as by his Catechismes, and charitable conferences [...] that in less than two or three years, he extyrpated [...] that Heresy, which in threescore and ten years had taken deep root there.'⁶⁶ While it is true that Sales devoted much of his time to the conversion of Protestants, Kleinman points out that Sales 'was willing to use all means short of physical coercion for [Protestantism's] extirpation' and that the number of converts was likely exaggerated.⁶⁷ Perhaps this vision of the newly canonized Sales, presented as a model missionary, was meant to imply that England might be similarly evangelized by his *Introduction*. It is nonetheless striking that such details of Sales' life would have been included in an edition meant for an English, albeit Catholic, readership in a country where Protestantism was the established religion.

The new preface of the 1669 reprint seems to draw attention to the expurgations in the Protestant editions. After making mention of the former, 1613 translation of Sales, the English priests claim that their motivation for retranslating it was that 'it fell into the hands of some, who enlarging the Authors style by many unnecessary Paraphrases, have in divers places confounded his sense.'⁶⁸ It is likely that the editors refer to the pirated edition of Sales' text published in 1616. This expurgated edition, discussed below, would have appeared to Catholic readers as having confounded Sales' original intention. The English priests state that their translation is an attempt to return to Sales' true sense and as 'near to the life, as the two Languages will meet,'⁶⁹ with a more literal translation of the text, while more faithful to the *Introduction's* original theological orientation.

The Tournai priests also stress the interiority of Sales' *Introduction* and hope that it will offer some inner consolation to English Catholics.

⁶⁵ Sales, *A New Edition of Introduction* (1669), A summary of the author's life.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Ruth Kleinman, *Saint Francois de Sales and the Protestants* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1962), 82.

⁶⁸ Sales, *A New Edition of Introduction* (1669), the preface.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

In their 1669 epistle – dedicated ‘To the most Honourable, Noble and Renowned Catholics of his Majesties three Kingdoms’ – the priests capitalise upon the interiority of Sales’ method. They declare that Sales is particularly qualified to write about interior devotion and his work will surely lead a dedicated reader to piety because the ‘virtue, piety and devotion which he both practised, and taught to others, were [...] solidly grounded in his heart and soul;’ they were ‘interior, Christian and divine.’⁷⁰ Returning to the interior nature of devotion later in the epistle, the priests claim that ‘[w]hosoever aspires to this happy quality of being truly virtuous and devout must live an interior life for *regnum Dei intra vos est*.’⁷¹ According to the priests, interior devotion was not only Sales’ path to holiness, and a testimony to the merit of his work, but also the means to true happiness in life.

The 1669 reprint of the new translation would have been read during Cromwell’s commonwealth and Charles II’s reign. These times were filled with mixed blessings for Catholics. On the one hand, during the Interregnum, attendance at church was no longer compulsory. On the other hand, Catholicism was associated with royalism and political subversion, especially after the Popish Plot. Although Charles II attempted to tolerate both Catholics and Protestant dissenters, parliament passed the Test Acts in the 1670s to remove Catholics, who refused to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance from civil and military office and to re-establish penal laws. This led to a sharp persecution of Catholics during the Exclusion Crisis. During these decades, the chapter of English secular clergy failed to set up an effective episcopal regime. John Bossy summarizes this period of stagnation in English Catholicism: ‘[I]t got through the Interregnum in tolerable shape, but gained little or nothing from the relatively favourable climate of the Restoration.’⁷² In the light of these policies and changing attitudes, interior devotion was probably the safest way for Catholics to practise their faith and avoid punishment.

In 1685 when James II succeeded to the throne, his reign issued in a ‘last appearance of the ghost of an English Catholic Church restored.’⁷³ Although James was deposed within three years, the Catholic Church made a few positive advances during his reign. In 1685, Bishop John Leyburn was appointed England’s vicar-apostolic. Unlike the previous vicars-apostolic in the 1620s, the 1680s reassignment of the post was lasting. Policies regarding Catholics were generally more favourable than they had been throughout the seventeenth century. Catholics were appointed to important positions, including military, political, and university positions. A Jesuit, Edward Petre, was James’ confessor and

⁷⁰ Sales, *A New Edition of Introduction* (1669); the epistle dedicatorie.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Bossy, *English Catholic Community*, 280.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 78.

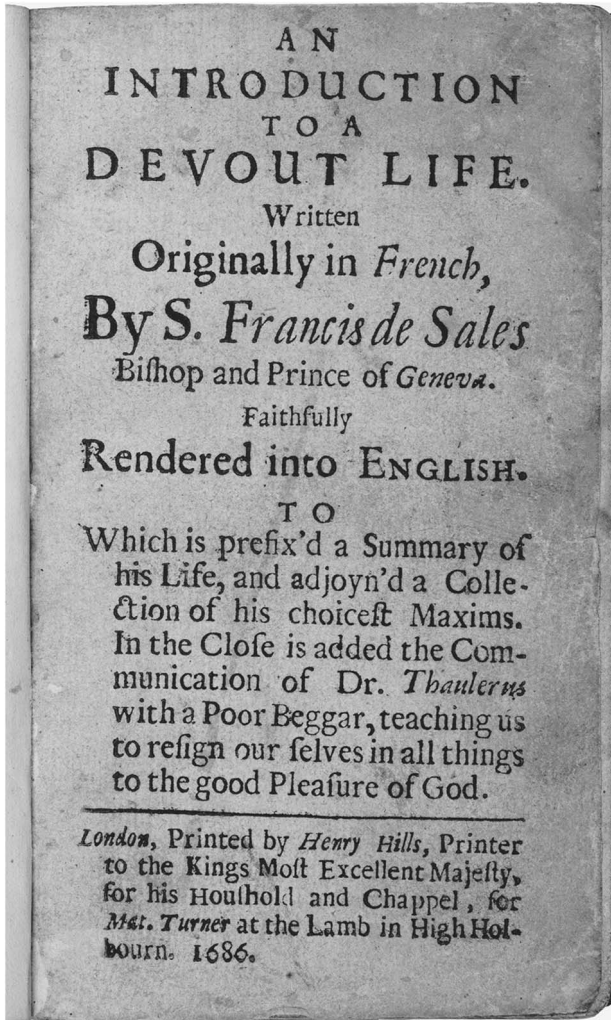


Figure 3. *An Introduction to a Devout Life*. London. Henry Hills. 1686. Image courtesy Aberdeen University Library, BCL D3657.

a Privy Councillor. For the first time, Catholic printing presses were unfettered, and James' reign saw an outpouring of Catholic books, including openly printed Catholic editions of Sales' *Introduction* in England and Scotland.⁷⁴ In 1686, James commissioned an edition of the *Introduction* 'for his Household and Chapel (see Figure 3).'⁷⁵

Geoffrey Scott has pointed out that 'Jesuit books of devotion and the works of Francis de Sales were familiar to the English court

⁷⁴ Blom, *Post-Tridentine English Primer*, 41.

⁷⁵ Francis de Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (London: Henry Hills, 1686).

in London.⁷⁶ I would argue, however, that the inspiration for James II's edition was a sermon delivered to the court by a Benedictine priest on the feast day of Francis de Sales in January of 1685/6. In this sermon, Fr. Ellis praised the sanctity of Francis de Sales, and strongly exhorted his audience to read Sales' works and follow his method of devotion, warning 'if you desire to imitate [them] they are most excellent directions; but if you will not they are your Sentence and Condemnation.'⁷⁷ James seems to have taken this advice seriously, for it was out of the 'Introduction to a *Devout Life*, that he drew the Rules of his Conduct [...] he never passed a day without reading a Chapter' from Sales' writings, for he believed 'there was no purer Doctrine, nor more conformable to the Gospel, than that of this great Saint.'⁷⁸ In fact, James' own pious compositions, written at the end of his life in exile, were clearly influenced by Salesian devotion. For example, in a 1704 publication of *Pious Sentiments of the late King James II*, James includes a near replica of Sales' idea that devotion can be practised by 'Men of all Qualities, all States, and Professions in the World' since 'to live in the World, in that State of Life to which God has call'd us, cannot be an Obstacle to our Christian duties.'⁷⁹ Indeed, Sales is the only author whom James quotes directly.

It is likely that James's 1686 edition of Sales' *Introduction* was the inspiration for another edition published the following year in Scotland. During James' reign, the Chapel at Holyrood Palace was restored, a Catholic printing press was started, and a Jesuit school was opened in Edinburgh. In 1687, an edition of Sales' *Introduction* was printed at the Holyrood press and dedicated to James Drummond, Earl of Perth and Lord High Chancellor of Scotland.⁸⁰ Perth and his brother, the Earl of Melfort, close friends of the king, had converted to Catholicism upon James' accession to the throne and were 'effectively in charge of governance within Scotland.'⁸¹ Perth was actively involved with the Holyrood press; he was entrusted with £100 to 'be disposed of by him towards the payment of the pryces and defraying

⁷⁶ Edward T. Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689–1718*, with contributions by Edward Gregg, Howard Erskine-Hill and Geoffrey Scott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 251.

⁷⁷ *The Fifth Sermon Preach'd before the King and Queen, in Their Majesties Chappel at St. James's, upon the Feast of S. Francis Sales Jan. 29 1685/86. By the Reverend Father Dom. Ph. Ellis, Monk of the Holy Order of S. Benedict, and of the English Congr. Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty* (London: Henry Hills, 1686), 21–2.

⁷⁸ *The Memoirs of King James II. Containing an account of the transactions of the last twelve years of his life: with the circumstances of his death. Translated from the French original* (London: D. Edwards, 1702), 6.

⁷⁹ *Pious Sentiments of the late King James II of Blessed Memory. Upon Divers Subjects of Piety. Written in his own hand, and found in his cabinet after his death* (London, 1704), 2.

⁸⁰ Francis de Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life. The Last Edition.* ([Edinburgh: Holyrood Press, James Watson] 1687).

⁸¹ Aonghus MacKechnie, 'The Earl of Perth's Chapel of 1688 at Drummond Castle and the Roman Catholic Architecture of James VII,' *Architectural Heritage* 25 (2014): 116.

the other charges in the dispersion of the books.⁸² It is unclear who chose the selection of books to be published by the Holyrood press, but judging from the timing of Perth's conversion, it seems reasonable that he might have been influenced by James' devotional tastes.

The preface of this 1687 edition is interesting for several reasons, not least because it draws attention to the Protestant usage of Catholic books of devotion. The unidentified author of the preface celebrates Perth's conversion to the one, true Catholic faith. Besides an appeal to apostolic succession and referencing many scriptural passages, one of the arguments that the preface's author makes in favour of Catholicism over Protestantism is that the Catholic Church 'has always had a Body of Men Eminent, both in Learning and Sanctity,' such as Francis de Sales, whose *Introduction* has moved many to conversion.⁸³ After listing some of the most popular Catholic devotional books by Kempis, Granada, Drexelius, and Persons, the author points out that all these books have been 'Re-printed by Protestants, and those which were not in our Native Tongue, Translated into it: Wherefore? But because they thought such Sentiments were fit to purifie from Sin the Hearts of Men.'⁸⁴ The argument that Catholicism is the true religion continues with the following syllogism: 'If then these Writers [...] had received the Spirit of God, were not they Men of God? And if they were Men of God, was not their Religion true?'⁸⁵ Thus, in addition to the holiness of devotional authors, the effectiveness of their inspired works—which is attested to by the fact that they are read by Protestants—is a testament to the Catholic authors' true religion.

The English Protestant reception of the Introduction

Helen White claims that the beginning years of the seventeenth century in England 'were years of crisis, years in which the spiritual entity of a whole period was being forged.'⁸⁶ Like arguments over the nature and governance of the post-Reformation Catholic Church, there were similar debates within the Church of England over the relationship between the State and ecclesiastical authority and the shape of ecclesiastical government. The English monarch was considered to be a servant of God and defender of the faith, a role that James I particularly relished.⁸⁷ While the Church of England

⁸² W. Cowan, 'The Holyrood Press, 1686–1688,' *Edinburgh Bibliographic Society* 6 (1904): 87.

⁸³ Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1687), dedicatory epistle.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Helen C. White, *English Devotional Literature, Prose, 1600–1640* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1931), 21.

⁸⁷ James Doelman, *King James I and the Religious Culture of England*, (Montrose: Standard Press, 1970), 15.

worked to settle issues of governance and authority, there were also questions of a more theological nature, which concerned tradition and the relationship of the Church of England to the Roman Church and other continental reformed churches.⁸⁸

The question of tradition was expressed in debates over the true Church's visibility and in the controversy over theological 'fundamentals' and 'circumstantials.' Did Anglican doctrine, as expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles, fundamentally or only circumstantially differ from Catholic doctrine? Did the Anglican Church descend from the Catholic Church, was it a reformed version of Catholicism, or was it substantially different? There were various and conflicting opinions for all these questions. Among the more Puritan opinions, Catholicism was seen as 'the creator of a type of religion that deliberately falsified and debased Christianity.'⁸⁹ The author of the *Abridgement or Survey of Poperie* (1606), Matthew Sutcliffe, believed that Catholicism was the sum of 'all those errors and corruptions in doctrine both concerning faith and manners.'⁹⁰ Similarly, in his trial, Archbishop Laud defended his claim that Catholicism differed from the Protestant faith in 'circumstantials,' not in 'fundamentals,' arguing that it was 'circumstantials' that made all the difference and 'in religion do quite destroy the foundation.'⁹¹

This controversy over 'fundamentals' and 'circumstantials' is especially pertinent when discussing reformed editions of Sales' *Introduction*. If one could identify the Catholic errors of doctrine, or 'circumstantials,' one could theoretically purify a text for Protestant readership. Indeed, this is the motivation often given by editors of reformed Catholic devotional texts. Commenting on the phenomenon of the Protestant translation of Catholic books, Ryrie observes that 'Protestantism was much better equipped than Catholicism to be devotionally omnivorous, and that Catholic materials were much better suited to cross-confessional adaptation than Protestant ones.'⁹² The editing work involved in transforming a Catholic text into one suitable for a Protestant readership mostly required cutting out of doctrines and language that were particularly Catholic, and did not usually include 'adding explicitly Protestant doctrines to the text.'⁹³ This process of expurgating unacceptable doctrine and language was certainly how the various editors dealt with Sales' *Introduction*.

⁸⁸ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁹¹ Reid Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2–4.

⁹² Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 286–7.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 288.

Sales' *Introduction* was not the first Catholic work to be reformed for Protestant readers. The tradition was at least as old as the First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549), an adaptation of the Catholic prayer book reflecting Protestant changes to the liturgy and to ancient prayers.⁹⁴ Later in the sixteenth century, as continental Catholic devotional works were translated into English, Protestant editors published reformed editions of the same texts. In 1581, Thomas Rogers published a reformed edition of St Augustine's devotional meditations; he added marginal scriptural passages and selected passages for omission, lest his readers 'should find such stumbling blocks of error cast in their way.'⁹⁵ Like Rogers, the Protestant editors of the *Introduction* and other Catholic works would identify 'stumbling blocks' or 'circumstantial' of belief and expurgate them from the text.

Although there are many examples of Protestant adaptations of pre-Reformation devotional works, more curious and problematic is the fact that English Protestants were also reading reformed editions of post-Reformation Catholic works, such as Sales' *Introduction*. Robert Miola has argued that the widespread conversion and reversion that characterised mid-seventeenth century England, as well as the 'religious accommodation and interchange' in polemic and devotional works at least partly explains why 'Protestants read and published Catholic devotional works.'⁹⁶ Whereas White ascribes the adaptation of Catholic devotional works to a Protestant 'spirit of toleration,' these adapted works—by their prefatory material, textual changes, and omissions—significantly change a particularly Catholic idea of devotion, as seen in reformed editions of Sales' *Introduction*.⁹⁷

In his 1616 epistle to the first reformed edition of Sales' *Introduction*, William Burre (c.1597–1622) also ascribes a 'spirit of toleration' to Protestant adaptations of Catholic works (see Figure 4). Burre says that his edition, like the reformed faith, refuses nothing that can be made 'conformable to the true faith,' 'not that we want of our own, [...] but that they may understand that wee refuse nothing from the which is sound and undefiled.'⁹⁸ Although Towers calls it 'highly expurgated,' the 1616 bowdlerised edition of Sales' work reflects only the first round of cuts made to the text during the seventeenth century. Burre's edition expurgates material that was not conformable to the Protestant faith as expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles. For example, the 1616 edition excludes two significant chapters from Part II: chapter fourteen, on the Mass, and sixteen, on the invocation of the saints. The Thirty-nine

⁹⁴ White, *English Devotional Literature*, 46.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁹⁶ Miola, *Early Modern Catholicism*, 27.

⁹⁷ White, *English Devotional Literature*, 98.

⁹⁸ Francis de Sales, *An Introduction to a devout Life: Leading to the way of Eternity* (London, 1616), dedicatory epistle.

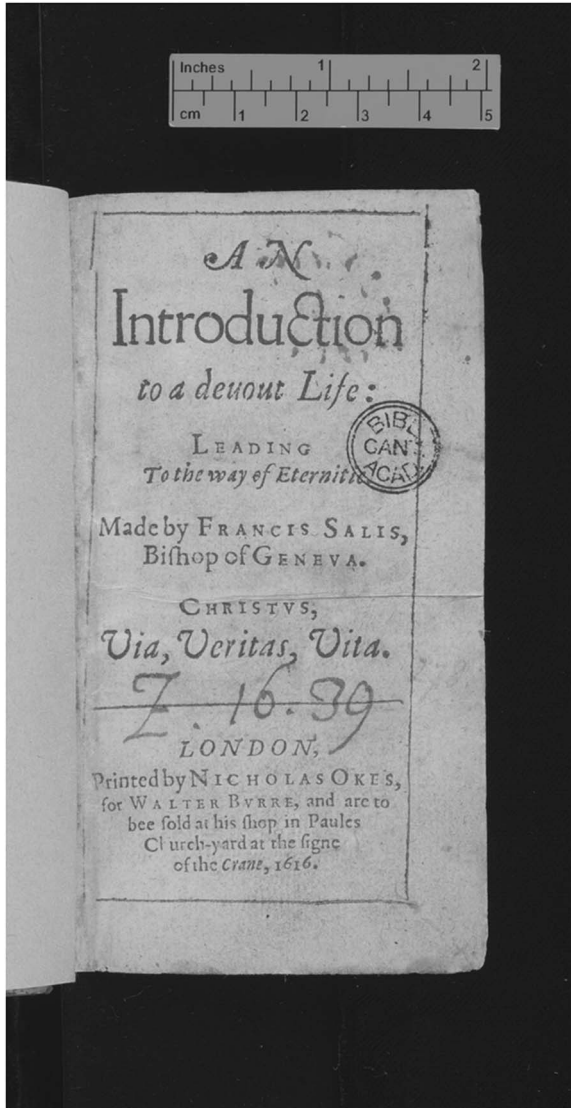


Figure 4. *An Introduction to a devout Life: Leading To the way of Eternitie*. Made by Francis Salis, Bishop of Geneva. *Christus, Via, Veritas, Vita*. London. Nicholas Okes. 1616. Image courtesy Cambridge University Library, Keynes.F.3.5.

Articles deemed the ‘worship’ of saints idolatrous practice while transubstantiation was determined as unacceptable doctrine. Thus, chapters and references to the Eucharist and saints were excluded from this reformed edition of the *Introduction*. As demonstrated above, the sacrifice of the Mass and the examples of the saints are pivotal to Sales’ method and approach to devotion. Though he makes it seem as if Sales’

work was effortlessly brought into allegiance with Protestant teaching, Burre's 1616 edition redacts two chapters upon which the *Introduction's* method depends.

The added Latin inscription on the title page hints at an adaptation of Sales' 'interior' devotion to a more Protestant 'private' devotion. The inscription, '*Christus, Via, Veritas, Vita,*' which translates to '*Christ, The Way, The Truth, The Life,*' is semantically associated with the reformed edition's extended title, 'An Introduction to a devout Life: Leading to the way of Eternity.' It seems likely that the Latin paraphrase from the Gospel of John 14:6 is an affirmation of the Protestant understanding that salvation comes through Christ alone, and that recourse to angels or saints is extraneous and wrong. As was seen, Burre's editing work also emphasised a devotion that is not just interior, but seemingly more 'private,' one that is free from other spiritual individuals. Such a 'private' devotion is expressed in the titles of other contemporary Protestant devotional works, such as Edward Wettenhall's *Enter into thy closet, or A method and order for private devotion* (1666). Similarly, works by Archbishop William Laud and Lancelot Andrewes focus on private devotion.⁹⁹ There is a difference of emphasis between Sales' devotion, which stresses a spiritual retreat into one's soul while in the midst of worldly distractions, and a reformed sense of piety, which seems to require a literal closing off of one's physical self in order to be alone, both physically and spiritually, with God. Interestingly, this 1616 edition also includes 'A Communication between D. Thaulerus, and a poore Beggar.' Although I have argued that this tract offers a mystical vision of prayer, Burre could have interpreted it as worthy of keeping for another reason. Mysticism was something that Protestant editors of Catholic texts were wary of. Indeed, both Dodwell (editor of the 1673 edition) and Nicholls (the editor of the 1701 edition) praise Sales' *Introduction* specifically because it does not 'run into the Mystical stuff of Teresa, Blossius, Sancta Sophia, &c. though Sales has a little of it too which I have left out.'¹⁰⁰ Rather, I believe Burre kept the tract as a further expression of a private devotion, one between God and man, without recourse to angels or saints.

Another possible explanation for Burre's retention of the tract comes from its extended title: 'wherein is comprehended the example of a perfect man, and how wee should resigne our selues in all things vnto the good pleasure of God.' One of the themes Habsburg identifies as being linguistically emphasised more in the Protestant editions of

⁹⁹ For example, Lancelot Andrewes, *A Manual of the private devotions and meditations of the Right Reverend Father in God Lancelot Andrews* (London: Moseley, 1670).

¹⁰⁰ Francis de Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life [...] translated and reformed from the errors of the Popish edition* (London, 1701), 'Of the Rise and Progress of Spiritual Books in the Romish Church.'

Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* concerns submission and subjection to God, an expression highlighting 'the varying degrees of co-operation with [...] grace which distinguished [...] Protestants and Catholics.'¹⁰¹ This same emphasis on resigning oneself to God is also evident in the editing of chapter four of the 1616 edition, 'The necessitie of a guide to enter and goe forward in exercises of deuotion.' In the early Catholic editions we find: 'thou shalt neuer so securelie and certainly finde out the will of God, as by this late way of humble obedience, so much recommended and practized by all his deuout and faithfull seruants in formertimes,' which is then followed by several examples of saints, such as Teresa of Avila who displayed such obedience to her spiritual guide.¹⁰² In the 1616 edition, however, we find:

thou shalt neuer so securely and certainly finde out the will of God, concerning thy true deuotion, as by enquiring the law at the mouth of the learned and by humble obedience to his fatherly counsell, and godly aduice, a thing so much recommended and practised by all the deuout and faithfull seruants of God in former times, who to subiect themselues more perfectly to the will of God.¹⁰³

This revised formulation of this part of the chapter only emphasises that wise counsel ought to be sought, not that it must be sought from one person, such as a spiritual guide, during one's journey of devotion. Unsurprisingly, the 1616 edition excises the section on the saints, bringing forward the phrase about subjecting oneself to the will of God, which is also found in the original Catholic edition, but after the saints' examples. Thus, obedience and subjection to God alone, not through a spiritual guide, is the message of this reformed chapter.

Before analysing the next reformed edition, mention must be made of the recalled 1637 edition. The fact that this edition caused a national uproar is itself significant. Even with the evidence that has survived, it has proved difficult to arrive at a succinct explanation of the events surrounding this edition. The 1637 edition was entered into the Stationers' Register as 'to be printed after it hath ben perused and purged,' but was printed with all its former popish errors.¹⁰⁴ Archbishop William Laud and his group of chaplains were responsible for licensing books, ensuring that published books expressed theological content in line with Anglican doctrine. With his ceremonialist tendencies, Laud had already been accused of trying to steer England towards a Catholic revival. Thus, when the unexpurgated edition of the *Introduction* was published, Laud was a prime suspect for printing popish material. Laud, his chaplain William Heywood, and the printer

¹⁰¹ Maximilian von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi, 1425–1650: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 141.

¹⁰² Sales, *An introduction to a devoute life*, (1614), 40.

¹⁰³ Sales, *An Introduction to a devout Life* (1616), 29.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Bawcutt, 'A Crisis of Laudian Censorship,' 406.

Nicholas Okes were all charged with the *Introduction*'s popish errors. When he found out what had happened, Laud blamed Heywood and called for all copies of the book to be surrendered for suppression. Apparently, Laud did not do enough to stifle the edition because a royal proclamation was drawn up, blaming the translator and stationer, and called for all copies to be seized and burned.¹⁰⁵ The incident was not forgotten and was used against Laud in his trial.

In his article on the events surrounding the 1637 edition, N.W. Bawcutt organises the primary material from the incident in order to make sense of the conflicting accounts of who was to blame for the edition's Catholic 'errors,' but leaves it up to readers to 'make their own judgments on the plausibility of the various participants.'¹⁰⁶ Likewise, in her account of the events of 1637, Towers admits: 'accounts are so conflicting that it is almost impossible to reconstruct an accurate scenario for the licensing of this book.'¹⁰⁷ Although I cannot offer a solution to the mess of incriminating statements, letters, trial notes, and proclamations, it points to the inherent difficulty of 'reforming' a text for a different theological context. There were often confusions and errors with a supposedly 'reformed' text. For instance, there were more than ten cancelled items in the 1616 edition, some of them indicating 'offensive theological material that had not been removed but needed to be.'¹⁰⁸ In another example, Isaac Basire (c. 1608–1676), chaplain to the Bishop of Durham, marked offensive popish material in the *Introduction* with a cross before giving it to his wife.¹⁰⁹ A sufficiently reformed text for one Protestant editor or reader might be an erroneous one for another. Thus, the act of reforming a text was a matter of more complexity than simply excising a few paragraphs and chapters. It demanded rigour and vigilance in decisions about which material was to be expurgated and reformed, even the choice of individual words had to be carefully weighed. The editors of the two other reformed editions of Sales' *Introduction* express this need for attentiveness and caution when reforming a Catholic text.

Such diligent caution when dealing with Catholic texts is what motivated Henry Dodwell's (1641–1711) 1673 edition of the *Introduction*, the title of which explicitly indicates that it was for Protestant readers (see Figure 5). Dodwell was a Dublin-born scholar who received his early education in London and pursued theological study and debate. Dodwell's edition of the *Introduction*, to which he

¹⁰⁵ Charles I, 'A Proclamation for calling in a Book, entituled, *An Introduction to a Deuout Life*; and that the same be publikely burnt' (London: Robert Barker, 1637).

¹⁰⁶ Bawcutt, 'A Crisis of Laudian Censorship,' 404.

¹⁰⁷ Suellen M. Towers, *Control of Religious Printing in Early Stuart England* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003), 224.

¹⁰⁸ Bawcutt, 'A Crisis of Laudian Censorship,' 408.

¹⁰⁹ Stopp, *A man to heal differences*, 107.

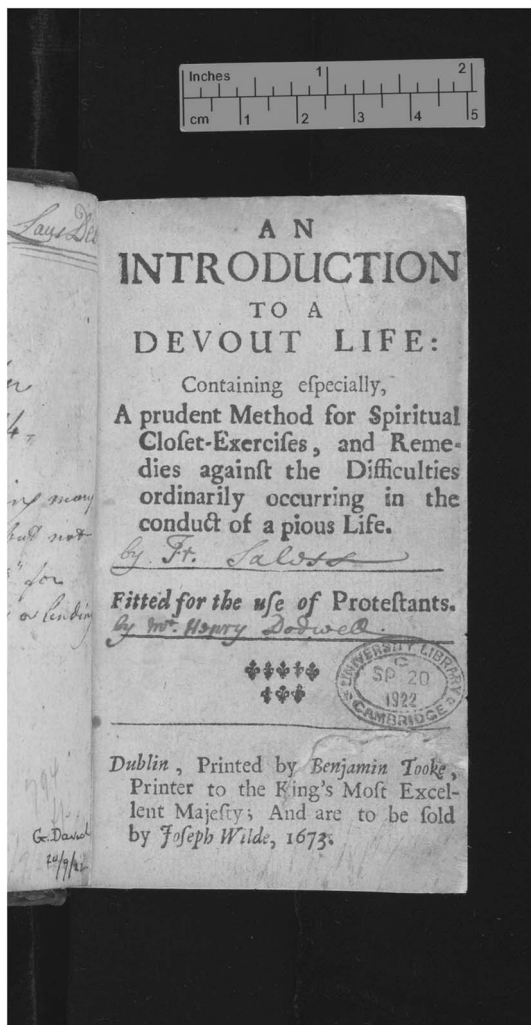


Figure 5. *An Introduction to a Devout Life: Containing especially, A prudent Method for Spiritual Closet-Exercises, and Remedies against the Difficulties ordinarily occurring in the conduct of a pious Life. Fitted for the use of Protestants.* Dublin. Benjamin Tooke. 1673. Image courtesy St John's College Library at Cambridge University, O.15.15.

affixes a lengthy preface, was one of the first publications of his career.¹¹⁰ His lengthy preface contains an apology for adapting a Catholic text and the rationale behind his edits. In it, Dodwell argues that an author's confession, such as that of Sales' affirmation of his Catholicism, should

¹¹⁰ Theodor Harmsen, 'Dodwell, Henry (1641–1711),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7763>, accessed 5 December, 2015.

not stop Protestants from making use of such works. Dodwell sees Sales' focus on interior devotion, which Protestant authors have neglected, as reason enough for reforming the *Introduction*. Although he is aware of earlier reformed editions of the *Introduction*, Dodwell means for his thoroughly scrutinised edition to be more acceptable to ordinary Protestant readers. He mentions the London 1616 edition, which he has

endeavoured to make more useful and intelligible to ordinary devout Readers [...] partly by expunging some things not so fit for the Devotional use of Protestants, which the cursory view of the Licenser seems to have overseen: not onely controverted opinions, and uncertain Histories of ill design, but also needless allusions to Popish practices, not commonly understood by vulgar Protestants [...] The Protestant Reader may also be pleased further to take notice that this old Edition followed by us was not that which was suppressed by King Charles the First, but that which in the same Proclamation is intimated to have been Licensed; and that the alterations already mentioned of this, cannot make it more, but less, offensive to him.¹¹¹

Dodwell claims to have used the edition that had been expunged in 1637 before it was published in its original, Catholic form. Thus, he uses the translation of the 1613 edition even though a new translation had already been published. Dodwell must have also consulted a Catholic edition, however, since he includes 'A Collection of the Authors choyce Maxims,' which first appears in the new translation.

Instead of cutting out many more chapters, Dodwell excises different ones from those that were removed from the 1616 edition, while he adapts others. For example, whereas Burre's edition excludes the chapter on the Mass, Dodwell keeps an adapted version of this chapter, replacing the 'most sovereign Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Mass' with 'the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.'¹¹² He also excises most of the paragraph on how one ought to conduct oneself through the various parts of the Mass, which would not correspond to a Protestant service. The chapter 'on the first purgation from sins' also shows Dodwell's editing hand. This chapter in the Catholic editions makes reference to the sacrament of penance as the means to rid oneself of sin and recommends that the penitent 'Seek the most able Confessour.'¹¹³ Several Catholic devotional books are listed in order to aid in the examination of conscience in preparation for the sacrament. In Dodwell's version, however, we find:

The first purgation then which we must minister to our Soul, is, to cleanse and void away the filth of sin: and the means to make this purgation, is Repentance. For the due performance whereof, take in hand some little Treatise that hath

¹¹¹ Francis de Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life containing especially, a prudent method for spiritual closet-exercises, and remedies against the difficulties ordinarily occurring in the conduct of a pious life, Fitted for the use of Protestants*, Henry Dodwell, ed., (Dublin, 1673), preface.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 120.

¹¹³ Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1686), 29–30.

been set forth to help consciences in the confession of sin to God. [The *Whole duty of Man* were a Book fit for this purpose, together with the Catalogue of sins against every Duty added in the Devotional part of it.]¹¹⁴

Dodwell replaces the sacrament of confession with ‘repentance’ and ‘the confession of sin to God’ and recommends a Protestant devotional book instead. The fact that Dodwell was a theologian perhaps made him more confident to engage with parts of the text that Burre left out entirely.

In 1701 another theologian, William Nicholls (1664–1712), edited the final reformed edition discussed in this reception history (see Figure 6). Nicholls includes ‘A Discourse, of the Rise and Progress of Spiritual Books in the Romish Church’ in his edition. In his discourse, Nicholls commends England for reforming Catholic works, as it shows an ‘honest Impartiality and Freedom and Temper, and a Love of Piety wherever it is found.’¹¹⁵ Like Dodwell, Nicholls speaks of the errors of Catholicism, which ‘as most other Errors in the Romish Church, had a good beginning’ but ‘was spoiled by their bad Additions and Superstructures.’¹¹⁶ By editing the text, Nicholls isolates and purges these ‘additions,’ or ‘circumstantial,’ leaving ‘nothing standing in this Edition, which is directly contrary to the Articles of our Church.’¹¹⁷ He hopes his editing work yields a sound and beneficial result, which ‘may now be used with Safety and Edification’ by his readers.¹¹⁸ Since this is his goal, it is unsurprising that Nicholls’ is the most heavily reformed rendition.

It is unclear whether Nicholls was aware of the earlier reformed editions; his title indicates that his edition is ‘Translated and Reformed from the Errors of the Popish Edition.’ Unlike Dodwell who claims to have used the reformed edition licensed in 1637, Nicholls uses the Catholic 1648 translation of the *Introduction*. Where the earlier editors limited their reforms of the text, Nicholls expurgates freely. He excises eleven whole chapters, almost three times as many as either Burre’s or Dodwell’s edition. The chapters that remain are highly expurgated versions of Sales’ original chapters. As well as the chapters on the Mass and on the invocation of the saints, Nicholls expurgates chapters on the necessity of a spiritual guide, the purgation of mortal and venial sins, the presence of God, receiving inspiration, confession, and the sanctity of marriage. Nicholls’ liberal editing work seems to have caused the printer some confusion because some of the chapters are incorrectly numbered.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1673), 22.

¹¹⁵ Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1701), ‘Of the Rise and Progress of Spiritual Books in the Romish Church.’

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ In the third part, the chapter numbers skip from thirty-nine to forty-one on account of removing the chapter ‘Of the honestie and chastitie of the marriage bed.’

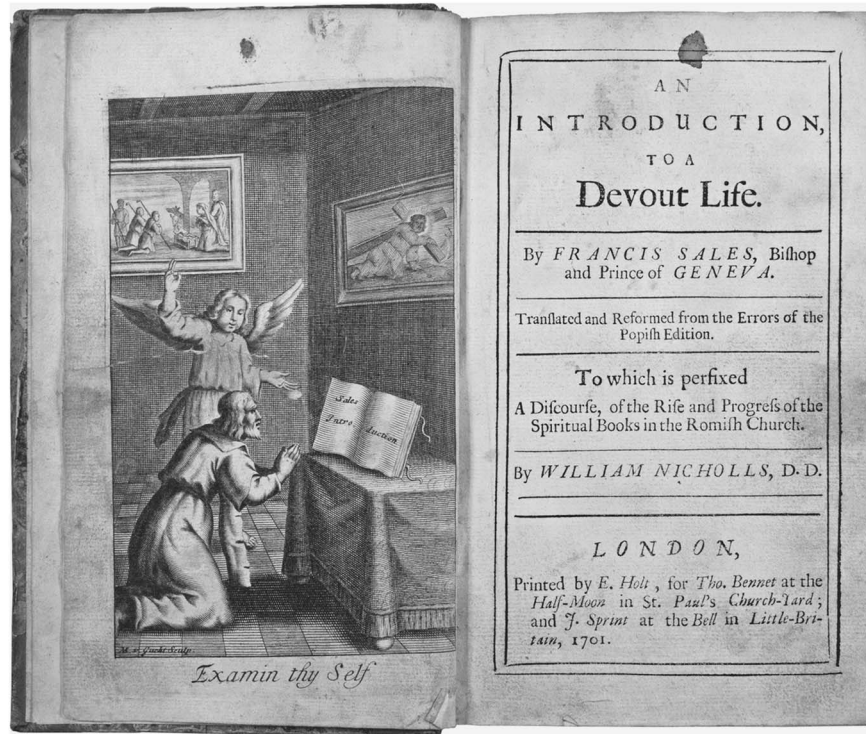


Figure 6. *An Introduction to a Devout Life*. By Francis Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva. Translated and Reformed from the Errors of the Popish Edition. To which is prefixed *A Discourse, of the Rise and Progress of the Spiritual Books of the Romish Church*. By William Nicholls, D.D. London. E. Holt. 1701. Image courtesy Aberdeen University Library, BCL D4962.

The third part of the *Introduction*, that is, the section on virtue, is one of the least reformed in all the Protestant editions. As was discussed earlier, Sales' approach to virtue and devotion reflects an influence of Aristotelian virtue ethics. The frontispiece of Nicholls' edition is an apt visual manifestation of what he and the other Protestant editors leave standing of Sales' text. Facing the title page is a picture of a man kneeling in a room with an angel pointing to a copy of the *Introduction*. On the walls of the room are depictions of Christ's birth and death. Underneath the picture is the inscription, 'Examine thy Self,' similar to the phrase carved into the Greek temple at Delphi: 'Know thyself.' For both Aristotle and Sales, examining oneself is a key step in progressing in virtue. It is Sales' treatment of the moral life that Nicholls praises so highly, as he says: 'there are to be found a great many very excellent Christian Rules for a good Life, with many curious and uncommon Reflections upon Moral Duties.'¹²⁰ All that is left after the Protestant editors' purification of Sales' *Introduction* is a Christianised version of Aristotelian virtue ethics, which is certainly integral to Sales' method, but does not do justice to his unique contribution to early modern devotion.

Conclusion

Elisabeth Stopp argues that it was during the seventeenth century 'that the foundations of St Francis de Sales' reputation in England were laid among Catholics and Protestants alike while the later centuries saw a fuller development but hardly a change.'¹²¹ There were two seventeenth-century receptions of Francis de Sales' *Introduction*, one Catholic and one Protestant. English and Scottish Catholics and English Protestants all seem to have found in Sales' spiritual direction something congenial to the needs of their communities and to their own devotional practices. For Catholics in England and Scotland, it was mainly the *Introduction's* interior devotion that suited the hostile situation in which they found themselves.

English Catholics must have rigorously taken up the practice of interior devotion; in 1688 Bishop John Leyburn admonishes English Catholics for continuing to practise their faith in such a way that the 'exercise of it hath been private and precarious, tending rather towards the preservation of it in yourselves, than a propagation of it in others.'¹²² Perhaps thinking of Sales' ecumenical efforts highlighted in several of the Catholic editions of the *Introduction*, Leyburn charges Catholics to publicly profess their faith. Interestingly, this same letter

¹²⁰ Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (1701), 'Of the Rise and Progress of Spiritual Books in the Romish Church.'

¹²¹ Stopp, *A man to heal differences*, 86.

¹²² Seward, *Firmly I believe and truly*, 246.

was reprinted in Edinburgh by the Holyrood press, suggesting perhaps that Scottish Catholics were also hesitant to openly practise their faith, even during James II's reign.

For Protestants, Sales offered a seemingly easy text to reform, one which they found congenial to cultivating a 'private' devotion and a moral guide. In 1875, Reverend Goulburn suggests disjointing Sales' *Introduction* to create a confirmation manual for English Protestants. Rather than obfuscating Sales' original design by his edits, Goulburn argues that 'a very few and obvious omissions and alterations, which would not at all touch the core of the argument, would remove everything distinctively Romish.'¹²³ Goulburn's claim is similar to that of the seventeenth-century Protestant editors of the *Introduction* who claimed to have removed the unnecessary 'circumstantial' and the undesirable Catholic 'additions' without mishandling the text or Sales' intention.

On the contrary, this comparative study of the Catholic and Protestant editions has shown that the reformed editions did indeed touch the 'core of the argument.' The reformed editions subtly transformed Sales' method from an interior to a purely private devotion, expurgating the text to such an extent that what is left in the 1701 edition is an innocuous moral guide. This comparison also revealed the problems inherent in reforming a text for a different religious context by determining the points where Catholic and Protestant theology diverge. As we have seen, the degree to which a particular Protestant editor reformed a text depended on his education, religious opinions and motivations, each time yielding a text farther from the original intention of the author.

¹²³ Rev. Edward M. Goulburn, 'St. Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life*, in *Companions for the Devout Life* (London: John Murray, 1875), 56.