This paper is part of a much larger overall project to identify and trace ideas about Biblical style in the later seventeenth century in England, and particularly how these ideas may have influenced the development of the English language at a crucial time when the vernacular was becoming recognized as an adequate medium for all communication. One part of my project is to map religious discourse in the period.

At the 2005 biennial congress of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric, I had reported finding what I thought were some significant differences between two well-known authors of the period: the Anglican churchman Joseph Glanvill (1636–1680) and the dissenter John Bunyan (1628–1688). These two men represent radically different religious positions. Glanvill, an establishment figure, is concerned with maintaining the Anglican church as restored in 1662, when over 1800 ordained ministers were ejected from their pulpits for refusing to conform to its canons. Glanvill is now better known as an early member of the Royal Society, investigating God’s creation in terms of the “new science” and supporting the Royal Society’s program to purge figuration from language. Bunyan, on the other hand, is a persecuted, working-class nonconformist, without university education and therefore without even a regular pulpit in 1662 from which to be ejected. He had in any case already spent two years in jail by that time for his “irregular” preaching. Bunyan is surely best known for his allegory *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the second most published book in English after the Authorized or King James Bible, but he also published other allegories as well as many sermons.¹

¹ Bunyan published sixty texts between 1656 and his death in 1688. An additional twelve items were published posthumously. Most of Bunyan’s publications were sermons and devotional works, beginning with *Some Gospel-Truths Opened* (1656). In 1678 appeared *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That which Is to Come: Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream wherein Is Discovered the Manner of His Setting Out,*
My 2005 report on these writers concerned a contrast I found in their work between narration (an account of actions taking place over time) with confession (assertion of timeless truth), a contrast that I hypothesize is one telling feature in the discursive practice of the period. In his 1670 text, ΛΟΓΟΥ ΘΡΗΣΚΙΑ: Or, A Seasonable Recommendation, and Defence of Reason, in the Affaires of Religion, Glanvill leans toward static confession when he identifies as four most important fundamentals of Christianity:

1) That there is a God of infinite perfection,
2) That we are sinners and exposed to his displeasure
3) That God is our Maker, and the Author of all our blessings, and
4) That there is Moral Good, and Evil.²

Perhaps one immediate drawback that one could find with this Latitudinarian list is that it is not particularly Christian. It nowhere mentions Christ but rather identifies tenets more broadly theistic than Christian. Those familiar with the doctrinal positions of the period will remember that Latitudinarians like Glanvill emphasized the mundane morality of Christ rather than his supernatural qualities.

But this list of fundamentals also lacks any mention of Christ’s biographical details so typical of such creedal statements as the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed. What we see in the old creeds is not only timeless statements about “God the Father Almighty” or “one holy catholic and apostolic church” but also biographical statements, i.e., narratives. The creeds tell us about a number of occurrences happening over time. By the Father “all things were made,” the Son “was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried” and so forth.
