

## **The Optics of Octonaires**

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### **Abstract**

Josuah Sylvester's translation of Antoine de la Roche Chandieu's *Octonaires* (1583) is worth pausing over as a contribution to Anglo-French Protestant poetics. Sylvester's version (first printed 1621) re-titles Chandieu's collection of eight-line verses *Spectacles*, which recalls Jean Calvin's image of the spectacles of Scripture (in the first book of the *Institutes*). It also includes a distinctive woodcut image of the eyeglasses themselves. The new imagery stresses how Chandieu's poems distill a Calvinist way of viewing the world, one which attunes minds to perceive the world's transience, and denigrates human perception to insist on the need for the Protestant imagination to interpret the world around us.

Keywords: Protestant poetics, vision, emblems, word and image.