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"UNITED ESSENTIAL HARMONY": THE PURITAN PERCEPTION OF
EDWARD TAYLOR

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

PH.D.

1979

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"UNITED ESSENTIAL HARMONY": THE PURITAN PERCEPTION
OF EDWARD TAYLOR

by

Mary Sue Willis

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by


Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

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WILLIS, MARY SUE. "United Essential Harmony": The Puritan Perception of Edward Taylor. (1979) Directed by: Dr. Robert O. Stephens. Pp. 255

Contrary to much modern opinion, the American Puritans, in the words of Edward Taylor, expected their doctrine to yield "United Essential harmony." This study is an attempt to find the harmony of which Taylor spoke in terms of some of his more prominent metaphors. An exploration into Taylor's figures appears appropriate, since he himself claimed the "Metaphoricall" mode of Scripture as his own "truth Speaking form." The five chief figures to be examined here are called in this study the hygienic, the erotic, the organic, the domestic and the forensic. The first four can be found more definitely in Taylor's Preparatory Meditations and Taylor's occasional poetry, and the last in Taylor's long poem, Gods Determinations.

Taylor's "hygienic" figures are an exposition of New England preparationism, which required man to admit his sinful condition in terms of disease and degradation. The purposes of such description, however, were not ultimately to denigrate man but to set forth God's grace as correspondingly great and to show how, by his confession, man could assist the Lord in the preparation of the grounds of his own salvation.

As man showed great deficiency in the hygienic mode, in the terms of the divine romance of redemption, the Soul appeared similarly unequal to the seeking heavenly Lover. By Taylor's Puritan interpretation of conversion, however, the Soul possessed "inherent" qualities

that made her attractive to her Lord and worthy of his rescue. Furthermore, as the Lord displayed his love for her, he also "raised" every faculty and capacity of her nature so that she became a suitable Bride for him.

The divine-human union signified by the Marriage of the Lamb in conversion was expected to yield fruit "answerable" to the grace of God. This could be accomplished when the Christian joined the Almighty in an invisible and eternal Covenant which Taylor and other Puritans often described in terms of a great living plant. The parts of this organism were so inextricably bound together that, once fused, they could never be separated. The members, whether Head, branches or fruit, "fed" each other in endlessly reciprocal relations.

Not only was the Covenant an external and invisible relation, but it was also for Edward Taylor and other New England believers an open and visible way of life. The Supper of the Lord as celebrated by Taylor manifested the dignity and significance of the temporal and human existence of the Christian by the very common and ordinary symbols of the table, the garment and the counterpane.

In the cosmos of Taylor's Gods Determinations, the poet showed in dramatic detail how order first was established on the heavenly plane before it moved to earth. Such apparently opposite qualities of the Divine Nature as God's Justice and his mercy actually became "friends" in order to bring about the salvation of fallen man. Elect man, however, was not to be removed immediately from the earth but must achieve harmony within his own life while still remaining in an imperfect world. The best way of doing so, the Christian learned, was to

enter a coach provided for him by the Lord. This divine vehicle was the visible church, the local manifestation of God's kingdom on earth. The wise Christian who entered it could be "coacht" along, gradually improving his praise to the Lord while traveling an equable "middle way" between the earth and glory.

Taylor held forth these ideals of glory until the very end of his life. His last valedictory verses affirmed once more the perfect equipoise of God's nature and prophesied a final harmony for those of his persuasion, those who clung to the New England Way of seventeenth-century Puritanism.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The student approaching the poetry of Edward Taylor for the first time is probably aware of the impression "pundits and philosophers" conveyed to Perry Miller when he began his study of the New England mind, that "Puritanism is the source of everything wrong, frustrating, and crippling in American culture,"¹ or of the conception of scholars like Richard Chase that "the American imagination, like the New England Puritan mind itself, seems . . . less interested in incarnation and reconciliation than in alienation and disorder."² In this circumstance, it is perhaps startling to hear Edward Taylor's claim that the "upshot" of his doctrine is "United Essential harmony."³ A question proposes itself as a natural subject for investigation: how much order, and of what kind, did Puritanism bring to the literature of one of its own adherents--in this case Edward Taylor? This study will be an attempt to answer the question.

Edward Taylor would seem to be a likely figure to study in connection with a question of balance in Puritanism. Born about 1642, the year of the outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, near the Civil War battleground of Edgehill in Sketchley, Leicestershire, he grew to maturity in a time when, as Louis Martz says, were released "the powerful energies of English Puritanism, long constricted by the fierce struggle for survival."⁴ He grew to young manhood during the

mid-century years of Cromwellian rule, with the full flowering of Puritanism in Britain. His was a family of strict dissenters who taught him early the tenets of the Puritan doctrine in agreement with the Westminster Confession. The mother, especially, and an older sister imbued him with the need for repentance of sin and faith in Christ.⁵

Schooling for Taylor meant a further indoctrination into the faith his family had embraced. He was taught by a nonconformist schoolmaster and may have attended Cambridge University, great stronghold of Puritan thought since the 1560's, although it has never been possible finally to confirm his enrollment there.⁶ Whether he attended Cambridge or not, scholars agree that he did attend a dissenting academy: St. Andrew's or Coventry or Sheriffshales, or possibly Nettlebad in Oxfordshire.⁷ In any case, he would have absorbed the thought of the great Puritan divines who so influenced Puritan England during the latter decades of the sixteenth century and fired the spirits of the men who were later to settle New England.⁸

As with his schooling and his beginnings in a profession, Taylor's migration to the New World closely followed the classic pattern set by such founders as John Winthrop, Richard Mather, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker. In 1662, following the passage of the Act of Uniformity, Taylor lost a teaching position either at Cambridge or Bagworth, Leicestershire.⁹ He may have felt, as had Richard Mather before him during the impositions of 1633, that life under the conditions then being required by the restored monarchy would not allow him to serve Christ, his King, as he would desire, and, after some time of hesitation and reflection, he embarked on his voyage to the New World to

April, 1668.¹⁰

Taylor's swift immersion into the life of the Massachusetts Bay Colony upon his arrival there on July 4 is an indication of how well his spirit merged with that of the New England leadership. Armed with letters of introduction, he first approached Increase Mather, son of Richard Mather, three years older than he and already a power in the colony, and John Hull, the mint-master and the wealthiest man in New England.¹¹ After a week, he went to Cambridge to see Charles Chauncy, president of Harvard College, and by July 22 was enrolled as an advanced student at the institution which had been created to give the churches of New England the learned ministry they required.¹²

Harvard meant for Edward Taylor a continuation of the theological studies he had begun in England. At the Massachusetts school, he would have learned the same "arts" demanded for the young minister in England: logic, which was meant to inculcate correct patterns of thought; rhetoric, which taught classical modes of expression; and ethics, which taught morals believed to be discernible in the natural universe. He also probably studied further the methods of Peter Ramus, whose system was much used as the basis of Puritan sermon structure, and learned the approved modes of disputation, debate and declamation dear to the hearts of learned dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic.¹³ Taylor did well at Harvard, being named "Colledge Buttler" as an undergraduate serious in his studies and "scholar of the house" during his last year.¹⁴

So trained, Taylor appears to have been well equipped to serve as a Puritan pastor, though it was only with the greatest reluctance that Charles Chauncy agreed to let him go when the call came to the wilderness pastorate at Westfield, Connecticut, in 1671. The college president had thought so well of Taylor's abilities as a scholar that he had intended to keep him on at Harvard as an instructor after his graduation.¹⁵

Taylor kept in touch with Chauncy, with whom he had formed close ties, as he also did with Increase and Samuel Mather and Samuel Sewall. The newcomer from England must have had a talent for friendships, for he maintained warm bonds with all these influential men during their common lifetimes. Of all his Harvard friends, however, Taylor seems to have remained closest to Samuel Sewall, the Massachusetts jurist of broad talent and influence. Sewall was his roommate for two years at the College, and after Taylor reached Connecticut, the two kept up a lifelong correspondence that showed the depth of their affection and their mutual interest in many matters at home and in England touching the new Puritan kingdom they were both, in their own individual ways, so wholeheartedly dedicated to building.¹⁶

Through books Sewall sent him, both works by his contemporaries and accounts of church councils and state affairs in Massachusetts and in England, Taylor would have been kept abreast of the issues of his times.¹⁷ Thus equipped with appropriate learning and kept informed by his Massachusetts friends, Taylor took up his Westfield post, where he labored almost until his death in 1729. It could be said that Taylor

in some sense reenacted the history of the mother colony, as he formed his own "Church-State" (the two entities were one in the original colonies), judged the civil cases, acted as physician to the sick and led his congregation in worship on Sundays. His stubborn strength kept the little community alive through wilderness privations, disease and Indian wars. Karl Keller speculates that the outpost would have been lost if Taylor had not insisted upon remaining with his flock in Westfield, against all discouragement, until the population grew and the colony was established on the frontier.¹⁸

In all this, Taylor acted in complete concord with the leadership of the mother colony. Aside from the Stoddardean controversy in which he took the official position of the New England Way, there was nothing to mar his good relations with colleagues of the Connecticut Valley or with his loved friends in Boston and Cambridge. The harmony was so close that Samuel Sewall once wished it to continue for eternity, as he stated in his diary in 1676: "Taylor came . . . and sat with me. God grant we may sit together in heaven." More than fifty years later, Sewall voiced the same desire after Taylor's death: "I humbly pray that Christ may be graciously present with us all Three /Samuel Mather, Taylor and Sewall/ both in Life and in Death, & then we shall safely and comfortably walk through the shady valley that leads to Glory."¹⁹

Larzer Ziff has drawn interesting contrasting portraits of Taylor and his old friend Sewall by which he shows Sewall as really a man of his times and Taylor a reactionary, still clinging to the seventeenth century. To the extent that Sewall did "turn the corner,"

so to speak, into the new century and adopt, however unconsciously, the progression from inviolable doctrine to "sensible religion" and from salvation to psychology, Ziff is right. But in that Taylor clung vociferously to the New England Way of the early seventeenth century, he, and not Sewall, becomes the more choice representative of the Puritanism that gave this country birth.²⁰

The main outlines of Taylor's life (and there have never been more than a few solid biographical facts) were known from the moment of his rediscovery in 1937, at least sufficiently to have placed him in the New England Puritan setting and to have called for his treatment in terms of his milieu. Yet he was such a rare bird singing in the wilderness that his harmonies seemed incomprehensible in the light of what was then generally known about seventeenth-century Puritanism.²¹ His poetry was so much finer than the relentless rhythms of Michael Wigglesworth or the quaintly sincere couplets of the Tenth Muse, Ann Bradstreet, that critics felt themselves at a loss to deal with him in the same ways.²² Hence the rush was soon on to explain him in terms other than those of his Puritan faith.

This introductory chapter will examine somewhat chronologically the various critical explanations of the Taylor corpus from his discovery by Thomas H. Johnson to the present. It will then attempt to place him in his historic and theological context as a New England Covenant Puritan. Finally, it will try to find clues in Taylor himself as to the inspiration and method he claimed in his pursuit of harmony.

Far Journeys: The Search for a Taylor Poetic

Thomas H. Johnson, his twentieth century discoverer, probably gave the first impetus to the far-ranging critical attempts to understand Taylor in Johnson's 1937 article by finding Taylor's figurative equations like those of the English metaphysicals: "His fertility in image-making, tenderness, rapture, and delicacy, as well as intense devotion, ally the staunch Puritan with 'the sacred poets' of the seventeenth century," he declared.²³ From Johnson's early metaphysical direction, other critics were to take different tacks. In an influential article in 1941, later to be reprinted in his Rage for Order, Austin Warren agreed with Johnson in placing Taylor in the metaphysical school, but differentiated between early and late metaphysicals and identified Taylor with the later and more plebian "baroque" group because of his tendency, unlike Donne's, to compare the greater to the lesser, bringing heaven down to earth and leaving it "material and external as the earth." Where Donne's conceits were "poetic correlatives for inner states, ultimations to the physical senses of dialectical movement, the baroque poets would "couple disjunct worlds,--heaven and earth, animate and inanimate, but only superficially," for their heaven, Warren felt, becomes substantial and discernible on the plane of mortal existence.²⁴

Wallace Cable Brown, some four years later, seconded Professor Warren's "baroque" assessment of Taylor. Believing, however, that Taylor at his best did manage a fusion of thought and feeling, which, to Brown, was the essence of metaphysical poetry, he gave Taylor the

title of "an American metaphysical."²⁵ This discussion reached a point of some absurdity in 1948 when Sidney E. Lind picked up Brown's distinction of Taylor's poetry as "baroque" in that "its imagery is a fanciful, if brilliant, elaboration of a theme," yet in some instances "'metaphysical in the nonbaroque sense,'" and wittily pointed out that "one might presumably find in Taylor's work poetry which is non-metaphysical in the 'nonbaroque' sense."²⁶

In a pair of 1946 articles placed back-to-back in a scholarly journal, two more critics took the metaphysical platform as a departure point for still other directions. Nathalia Wright noted the dialectical balances in Taylor. "Even in the most metaphysical of his moods," she found, the poet "tended to the dramatic and histrionic in a way that contrasted with his devotional themes."²⁷ This dramatic tone she laid to Taylor's connections with the tradition of the morality play, noting that the poet was born near Coventry, where a Corpus Christi procession was still to be seen during his boyhood.²⁸ While conceding that "one cannot be sure that Taylor actually knew any of these plays," Miss Wright found parallels in plot, form and characterization between Taylor's long work, Gods Determinations touching his Elect, and the moralities.²⁹

At the same time Miss Wright was linking Taylor to the morality tradition, Willis T. Weathers was finding that "the Ben Jonson-John Donne tradition of which he is so representative an heir . . . inclined his taste to the Hellenistic school of Greek and Roman poets who were the inspirers in the Renaissance of what Professor Austin Warren terms

'baroque poetry.'"³⁰ Using Gods Determinations as her chief Taylor source, probably because it appeared first in Thomas H. Johnson's 1939 edition of The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor, Miss Weathers cited the "Hellenistic" tone, for example, of Taylor's Christ-Soul dialogues, detecting in them parallels to the Aphrodite-Eros conversations of the Alexandrine poets, and finding his pastoral touches similar to those of the Theocritan pastorals, all represented in Taylor's Westfield library.³¹

Still following the same line of thought, Miss Weathers opened out her "Hellenistic" thesis some eight years later to find Taylor also akin to the Cambridge Platonists. She believed that Taylor, like them, in "striving for a greater harmony between revealed and natural religion than Puritanism had heretofore achieved" had "readjusted the balance" between . . . the 'religion of authority' and the 'religion of the spirit' by increasing the emphasis on the personal and natural religion."³² Taylor skirted the New England mistrust of the emotional and imaginative, Miss Weathers thought, by following a Platonic ascent toward the Divine through aesthetic experience.³³ His climb she saw as akin to the "Holy Life" espoused by the English Platonists, an ecstasy in deadness to the flesh and the vanities of the world which, to them, was the equivalent of the conventional justification by faith.³⁴ She even saw Taylor's affinity with such Renaissance thinkers as those of the Ficino school as indicative that he accepted Christianity as "the culmination of a series of divine revelations to the human spirit."³⁵ Furthermore, she found "his consistent use of pagan

symbols" indication that "Taylor is making a synthesis of Calvinist-Covenant theology with the natural theology preached by such Cambridge Platonists as Henry More and John Smith."³⁶

The mining of Taylor's metaphysical vein did not end with the finding of his baroque, morality and Greek connections. It was given fresh impetus in 1960 with the publication of Donald E. Stanford's edition of The Poems of Edward Taylor and the invitation by Louis Martz in the foreword to compare Taylor to George Herbert, an invitation shortly to be taken up by an anonymous reviewer in the London Times Literary Supplement, with the result that Taylor was summarily dismissed in comparison with "that matchless poet."³⁷ Such judgments went forward at least until Charles W. Mignon in 1968 pointed out that Taylor had a "decorum" of his own and ought not to be judged by canons of taste not appropriate to his own poetic school.³⁸

One reason for the numerous attempts to align Taylor with the metaphysicals, of course, was delight in finding an American poet of such stature and an anxiety to accord him a place in an already recognized field of poets, the seventeenth century English metaphysicals. Another cause, however, was the puzzlement over Taylor's actual religious position. The taint of unorthodoxy appeared to hover about his head. What he was in the pulpit, reasoned some, was one thing, and what he was in his poetic secret heart may have been something else again.³⁹ This uneasiness was furthered by the tradition handed down through the Taylor descendants that the poet had prohibited the publication of any of his works.⁴⁰ Thus every early critic felt

it incumbent upon him to explain what there was in his works which would have been offensive to his contemporaries or inconsistent with his position as a Puritan pastor.⁴¹ Kenneth B. Murdock, Arthur Hobson Quinn and Richard D. Altick felt that Taylor's poetry would have been considered evil by his colleagues. Murdock found a mood of violence and unrepentant guilt in such poems as "Upon the Sweeping Flood" and an unacceptable eroticism which he said aroused in him "small wonder that Taylor chose never to publish these lines."⁴² Altick, too, felt that Taylor's sensuousness had been a barrier to publication: "Taylor had to express his devotional feeling in terms of the delights of earthly life. It was no doubt because he feared his contemporaries would be outraged by his frank sense of the physical that he refused to publish what he had written."⁴³

Taylor's sensuousness and the warmth of his ardor were the very elements that many critics could not align with what they knew of Puritanism. Another religious connection must be found. The commonest was to see him in line with the Anglo-Catholics, chiefly Herbert. Johnson found him "really in the tradition of Donne and the Anglo-Catholic conceitists. . . . who turned to Anglican and, perhaps, to Catholic poets for example."⁴⁴ Richard Altick believed his "intense religious emotion which carried him over into mysticism," like that "which had carried some of the great Anglican religious poets of his century."⁴⁵ Austin Warren was in the minority in his assessment of Taylor as closer in conceits to Quarles, whom Pope called "the plebians' darling" and to DuBartas in the translation by Sylvester than to the

aristocratic Donne, Carew or Lord Cherbury.⁴⁶ Some, however, were not satisfied that Taylor's warmth could be answered in the Protestant tradition, even in Anglicanism, and went on to join him to the Catholic poets. Johnson saw him like Crashaw in "seraphic exaltation and prodigality of fanciful tropes."⁴⁷ Richard Altick found "his use of richly sensuous imagery" to be "almost in the manner of the Roman Catholic poet Richard Crashaw."⁴⁸ Particularity somewhat later when the critics began to study Taylor's images in greater detail, some commentators perceived his ardor as Catholic in tone. The images of altar, censer and offerings seemed "strange in a Puritan context," evoking "a curiously Catholic response."⁴⁹ Mindele Black believed his "fervor of love imagery as elaborately sensuous as that of the artists of the Counter-Reformation" and possibly a direct or indirect borrowing from them. She felt the images from Canticles were exaggerated "for an adoration of Christ that at times becomes as richly sensuous and personal as that of the Catholic and Anglo-Catholic poets who seem to be his inspiration."⁵⁰ Especially in the poems based on the Canticles does she note that "the thirsts and meltings, flames and fires, images quite foreign to the Canticles, strongly call to mind Crashaw's Saint Teresa."⁵¹

In Total Calvinist Context: The Poet Paralyzed

The citation of all the instances above is not meant to rule out warnings from time to time from some of Taylor's most astute critics that the colonial poet must be read in the context of his own religious milieu. Thus Taylor's discoverer, Thomas H. Johnson, three times

called him "an orthodox Puritan" in the first article revealing Taylor's presence to the literary world, and Sidney E. Lind and Roy Harvey Pearce insisted that Taylor must first of all be seen as an orthodox Puritan.⁵² Objecting to what he took to be fallacious approaches by Austin Warren, Wallace Cable Brown, Nathalia Wright and Willie T. Weathers, Lind suggested the absurdity of trying to view Taylor "at one and the same time as a metaphysical, a hellenistic, and a baroque poet, as well as a poet lying directly in the tradition of the medieval morality plays."⁵³ Lind reissued in Taylor's case the same general warning he had heard from Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson that "to examine Puritan poetry without reference to the Puritan context is to misread and misjudge it."⁵⁴ In the same vein, Roy Harvey Pearce voiced his concern that

we have not been inclined to read him as a colonial poet--as a man whose work was informed by his Puritan culture, as a man whose vocation it was to set down God's Way with Man in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. We have not, that is to say, been much concerned with Taylor's work as a whole, with its very wholeness.⁵⁵

As late as 1968, Charles W. Mignon was advising against the still-continuing practice of judging Taylor by canons of decorum belonging to traditions outside the Puritan poet's own cause and purpose, chiefly by the metaphysical: "If we are to see Taylor for what he is we must distinguish him from such a poet as Herbert. To see him primarily as a metaphysical is to ignore Taylor as a poet of the Puritan Covenant of Grace, and this would be an undeserved distortion of his real value as a poet."⁵⁶

Yet while such discerning and careful critics as Lind, Pearce and Mignon were finding the mote in their fellow critics' eyes, they were failing to perceive the beam in their own. So even while accusing Nathalia Wright of having "erred in simple logic" in her identification of Taylor with the morality tradition and calling Wallace Cable Brown's "baroque-metaphysical" treatment of Taylor a "critical parlor-game," Lind may have committed an equal error of his own by setting up prejudicial standards of judgment. Taylor must be regarded, he said, as

at best a mediocre poet, as he was doomed to be, whatever his inherent gifts by reason of his station in life. He was a Puritan churchman in a New England colony during the rigid years of theological authoritarianism. . . . Westfield, Connecticut, was a frontier community. The scholar or critic who elevates the poet beyond the limits of such a culture is indulging in empty rhetoric, despite skillful expression or elaborate documentation."

He then set up what, if followed, would have been a remarkable guideline for any future investigator who might have attempted an appreciative approach to the poet's work: "It is this conclusion which must of necessity be accepted as the basis of any further exploration of Puritan artistic production."⁵⁷ Roy Harvey Pearce had no lower estimate of Taylor's orthodoxy but a little higher opinion of him as a poet. Still, he saw the poet as reflecting a static Puritan culture, attempting no new discoveries, exempt from paradox and content, so to speak, to report the truths already available to him on the surface of his available universe. It was a stance which, as Pearce saw it, "inhibits the act of composition, and ultimately the act of the

poem itself."⁵⁸

Other critics who acknowledged Taylor's orthodoxy also saw it as a poetic handicap. The London Times Literary Supplement reviewer of 1961 found Taylor "utterly trapped in the Bible" and thought it "a pity Taylor did not raise a poetic eye from the pages of the Prophets to observe the real wilderness about him."⁵⁹ Charles Mignon, following the course laid out by Lind, Pearce and the Times critic, insisted that because Taylor's orthodoxy dictated a clear mirroring of human depravity, "poetry for Taylor is a function of conscience, but it is a Puritan will-paralyzed conscience."⁶⁰ Then, even though he himself had warned against making invidious comparisons, Mignon stressed the "inhibiting qualifications" of Taylor's Puritanism as against the freedom and range provided by the Anglicanism of a poet like Herbert.⁶¹ The same note was being touched as late as 1975 when William J. Schieck found Taylor's "creative impulse . . . restrained by orthodoxy," his poetic self so dwarfed that "only in an unobtrusive way may he slip himself into an insignificant part" of his poetic picture.⁶²

And so it went. Taylor's orthodoxy, though more and more granted by careful students, served mainly to restrict or cripple his art in their eyes. Perhaps the reason was similar to the reason Taylor's "heterodox" critics could not fully appreciate his work: they saw it through a clouded scrutiny. Many confounded Taylor's seventeenth century Puritanism with pure, unadulterated Calvinism as dispensed straight from the hands of John Calvin himself in the Basel, Switzerland, of 1536. Accordingly, while Donald E. Stanford recognized

Taylor's orthodoxy, he confused the issue by saying, "My own position is that Taylor was an orthodox New England Congregationalist in full agreement with the Calvinistic dogma defined by the Westminster Assembly, particularly in his determinism and in his obsession with original sin."⁶³ Charles Mignon agreed with Stanford that Taylor must be seen "in a total Calvinist context," since he is "a poet of the Calvinistic covenant of grace," and "a poet of the Puritan Covenant of Grace."⁶⁴ The identification of the terms "Calvinist" with "Congregationalist" and "Covenant" reveals the critics' confusion, for the fact is that John Calvin himself had almost nothing to do with Covenant doctrine as such.⁶⁵

Taylor as a Whole, in his Wholeness: Doctrine and Metaphor

The critics who misunderstand the nature of Edward Taylor's New England Puritanism fail to take into account the sea changes that Calvinism had undergone since issuing from the great reformer in the Switzerland of 1536 till it took new shape in the England of the 1560's and 1570's and was given strong application on the shores of New England in the seventeenth century. The scholars who lump covenant theology with Calvinism fail to note the enhancements which had accrued to the position of the individual at the divine bargaining table: the attributes discovered in the human personality to make him more attractive to the Almighty, the comforts of the Covenant, the strengths to be found in the joining of the age-old line of saints and the buffering qualities of the visible church with its discipline for the wayward

and its emollients for the suffering saint. In short, these critics fail to notice that the situation of the sinner was considerably improved in his approach to the God with whom he had to do, even before, so to speak, he could be sure the Almighty had taken notice of him. He was no longer alone in a jagged, incomprehensible, warped universe with a capricious Deity. A new balance had been struck in the Covenant. Of this balance Taylor was to sing.

The God of Calvin had no such predictable contract with men as that proclaimed on the ship Arbella and in pulpits from Boston to Westfield, Connecticut. Calvinism, indeed, did speak of alienation and disjuncture. Man was separated from his God by a chasm scarcely to be bridged except at the supernatural exercise of God's grace. Furthermore, the movements of God were almost totally unpredictable. God acted in salvation at his own caprice, and men were powerless to stop him or even to anticipate in which direction he would go. In Perry Miller's words, the Almighty was "an unchained force, an incalculable essence."⁶⁶ Calvin, in fact, warned against peering too deeply into the fastnesses of God's will: "Let them remember that when they inquire into predestination, they penetrate the inmost recesses of Divine wisdom, . . . For it is unreasonable that man should scrutinize with impunity those things which the Lord has determined to be hidden in himself; . . ."⁶⁷ Thus was election, the secret of God's eternal purpose with mankind, apparently concealed from man.

This separateness was tolerable to the men of 1536 in Europe but not to the men of the last four decades of the sixteenth century

in England. In fact, by the middle of the century, a revived Pelagianism first and then more clearly, the Arminians, tried to supply answers to problems they found in Calvin's system.⁶⁸ The relation of God to man must be explained in a rational fashion, hence Jacobus Arminius explained that man's free will had something to do with the choices God made. In the process, he unduly exalted man's will, the newly rising Puritans felt. Thomas Shepard simplified the Arminian error this way: "I heard an Arminian once say, If faith will not work, then set reason a-work, and . . . though they ascribe somewhat to grace, . . . yet, indeed, they lay the main stress of the work upon a man's own will, and the royalty and sovereignty of that liberty."⁶⁹

Meanwhile an argument began to come in another direction from the Pietists, the Anabaptists and the Quakers: an emphasis that would culminate in the Antinomian crisis of 1637 and 1638 in New England: an overstress on the utter irresistibility of God's grace and man's inertness in his hands.⁷⁰ Both these heresies arose initially, said the newly appearing Puritans, because of an imperfect conception of God. They hastened to correct the misconception by their insistence that he was a perfect balance of all perfections.⁷¹

It would be an oversimplification to say that Puritanism arose as an answer to the opposing extremes of Arminianism and Antinomianism, but there is a large element of truth in that conception. As early as 1652 an English divine saw the dangers in the opposing poles and pointed out that ". . . it was not long since our great contest was against the Pealgians, who from Scriptures, pressing duty, would have

inferred a power in mans will to perform it," but now we have "to do with them who because man hath no power in himself naturally to perform it, would have no duty pressed at all." So, he concluded, ". . . we ground between two millstones."⁷² Puritanism can be conceived as taking the two half-truths of irresistible conversion and reasonable morality and joining them together in a perfect amalgam, cemented by the conception of God as the perfect balance of all attributes.⁷³ This harmonious union was accomplished largely by a group of theologians at Cambridge University in the latter decades of the sixteenth century, William Perkins, William Ames and John Preston, and the system they founded was to be called covenant theology. It was to this particular brand of what was in a loose sense still within the Calvinist structure that Edward Taylor belonged.

At Harvard Taylor would have had more deeply impressed upon him the teachings he had acquired at Cambridge or the English dissenting academy, the "discoveries" of Perkins, Ames and Preston.⁷⁴ It would have been called to his attention how Perkins advanced the faith in the very teeth of Arminian heresy by his "seed of faith" doctrine, and how he found in the Scriptures the encouragement for the individual, that if he had the tiniest shred of belief, he might "nurture" grace and actually aid Omnipotent God in bringing it to fruition.⁷⁵ He would have learned the great discovery of Ames that a cord of "covenant" promise could be traced throughout the Bible and that by it a believer could join himself to a mighty army of God-followers and surround himself with strong assurance from the Lord himself. He would have studied

and carefully marked out the covenant path in the Scriptures, distinguishing the Covenant of Works from the Covenant of Grace and tracing the latter back not simply to Christ but to Abraham.⁷⁶

He would have known the further development of the Covenant in the elaborate exegesis of Preston or perhaps that of John Wollebius, whose work followed Ames' as texts in the Harvard curriculum, breaking down the Puritan understanding of God's economy into the most minute and compendious analysis.⁷⁷

The bundle of doctrine worked out by the Cambridge theologians had become the spiritual equipage of those stalwarts crossing the ocean in the Great Migration of 1630 and the pattern for the new theocracy they were to found.⁷⁸ Of covenantal equipage, too, was Edward Taylor in his crossing in 1668. He was bound to those men of the first New England generation through reading and study and other more or less definable ways. His library at Westfield showed, in addition to basic texts of theology (the works of Augustine and Calvin, for example, and Ames' second great work, De Conscientia), works of exegesis and argument by John Cotton, approved books of meditation by the likes of Thomas Doolittle and Samuel Willard, sermons by Peter Bulkley and homilies and works on philosophy and natural history by the Mathers.⁷⁹ Perry Miller has shown how closely the New Englanders followed their fathers of the earliest Puritan decades in England in their teachings and how the ministers of the colonies began to turn as readily to the works of Thomas Shepard and Thomas Hooker, Cotton and Bulkley, as they had to those of Luther and Calvin, Ames and Preston.⁸⁰

Edward Taylor probably had the closest link with the founding fathers through an indirect association with Thomas Hooker. James Fitch, father of Taylor's first wife, Elizabeth, had spent seven years under the instruction of Hooker, and it was perhaps through his father-in-law that Taylor became acquainted with Hooker's doctrine on preparatory meditation.⁸¹ Taylor was to find, with Hooker, that the Lord would accept an approach to himself through self-abasement and humiliation. Taylor's second wife, Ruth Wyllys, was the granddaughter of John Haynes, who accompanied Hooker to Connecticut and became that colony's first governor. The younger man was probably familiar with Hooker's preaching, and though the styles of the two men varied considerably, Taylor's doctrine was not far different from that of his predecessor in the Connecticut Valley.⁸²

Taylor's leadership of the Westfield congregation through years of difficulty was to be the ultimate test for him of that same doctrine. From 1671, when he took the Westfield charge, until its organization eight years later, he waited with his tiny flock through Indian wars and discouragements of several kinds, for the propitious moment of confirming approval from his ministerial peers. When the time for organization came, he made the required "relation" of his experience in full conformity to the Westminster Confession and the Cambridge Platform of 1647 and preached a sermon, "A Particular Church is God's House," which was a masterly outlay of Congregational polity to be properly demonstrated in "visible" Puritan church life. As Norman S. Grabo says, "Taylor's theology and church polity were so conventional"

that "more orthodox he could not be." Then through the remaining forty-six years of his ministry at Westfield, he steadfastly maintained those same tenets in the face of all opposition and innovation.⁸³

Challenges and oppositions there were to be of many kinds, and Edward Taylor responded to none more valiantly than to the doubts raised about that teaching for which he had crossed the Atlantic and moved to the Connecticut frontier. Research has some time ago erased the notion of Taylor's quiescence in the face of the theological issues of his times. Far from being quietly content to stand by on the frontier, hoping simply to make his influence count, as Perry Miller once suggested, Taylor plunged into the struggles.⁸⁴ Under the volatile conditions of a developing community, with a new generation coming on, questions must be settled, as Taylor determined, on the basis of a staunch adherence to the faith once received by him as a lad in Leicestershire.⁸⁵

More and more as the century rolled along, Taylor found himself taking up the role of apologist in such matters as the defense of the "Halfway Doctrine" and in opposition to such heterodox notions as Solomon Stoddard's open-door Lord's Supper policy. Nothing so strongly asserts his devotion to the Covenant Way as his joint labors in this regard with Increase Mather, whom Perry Miller calls "the dominating figure among the second generation." If his connection with Thomas Hooker of the first American generation shows his tie with the founders, and his friendship with Samuel Sewall shows his harmony with the general body politic of New England, his close association with Increase Mather

demonstrates a theological stance never far removed from the position of the ruling elders in Boston and Cambridge.⁸⁶

The interesting thing, from the standpoint of this study, about Increase Mather's pulpit and pamphlet confrontation of Stoddard from his position in Boston and Taylor's tandem effort from his outpost in Connecticut is that both were appeals to the past. In one of his better-known replies to Mather, entitled "Concerning Ancestors," Stoddard wrote: "As the renown of those Reformers is a bulwark against those errors that were exploded by them, so we find ourselves embarrassed by their mistakes."⁸⁷ Increase Mather and Edward Taylor did not so feel, but continually harked back to the safety of the position of their fathers.

Taylor's connections with all these men--Hooker, Cotton and the Mathers--is intriguing when one calls to mind the point made by Perry Miller that there were "intimate connections" among the first English exponents of Covenant theology (Perkins, Ames, Preston and Richard Sibbes) and "ascertainable relations of almost all the school with one or more of the New England divines; . . . including Cotton, Hooker, Shepard, and Bulkley," so that "there is evidence for asserting that they constituted a particular school."⁸⁸ But for the temporal accident of his birth in a later generation than theirs, Taylor might have made an ideal member of that first sturdy vanguard. As it was, he became a sort of prophet born out of due time, continuing their doctrine till the very end of the seventeenth century and even beyond. Richard Sibbes, noting the spread of covenantal orthodoxy in the Great

Migration of 1630, declared, "The Gospel's course hath hitherto been as that of the sun, from east to west, and so in God's time may proceed yet further west."⁸⁹ Taylor's trek, some forty years later, to the westernmost boundaries of the English settlement with that selfsame Gospel proved Sibbes a farther-seeing prophet than he himself perhaps could have realized. This Gospel, this doctrine, made of Taylor not only a Puritan preacher of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but a poet to be intensively studied in the twentieth.

The examination of Taylor's poetry from a doctrinal standpoint bring to it a wholeness that nothing else can. The fact has been that the more that is known of the actual Puritanism from which the poet operated, the more appreciation has been afforded his work in its totality, the more harmony has been discovered. False impressions about New England belief and practice have been corrected and greater breadth and insight have been found in Taylor's work as a result. For example, it has been revealed that Puritan preachers were not averse to using an illustration of ardor when it suited their purpose.⁹⁰ Passion and warmth have not been found to have been out of place in their pulpits, and in Puritan allegory, altar fires and images of sacrifice have been shown not at all "strange in a Puritan context," as Mindele Black once thought.⁹¹ Studies of Puritan diction, sermon structure, devotional pattern, typology and allegory, to name a few, have been extremely helpful to students of Taylor. But still, we have not been able to see him in that "wholeness" Roy Harvey Pearce called for until we have begun to see him in his doctrine.⁹²

Taylor himself provided the suggestion for such a study in the title, written in his own handwriting, which he gave his devotional poetry: Preparatory Meditations before my Approach to the Lords Supper. Chiefly upon the Doctrin preached upon the Day of administration.⁹³ The words "chiefly upon the doctrin" seem especially significant here. Therefore, whether sermon preparation preceded the composition of the poems or followed it, as Norman Grabo and Thomas M. Davis debated,⁹⁴ if we take the poet's own words for his intention, the doctrine should have chief consideration in any interpretation of his meanings.

As to the method for approaching the doctrine, Taylor again provided the cue. Metaphor was to him the chief vehicle for conveying truth. His recognition of the value of metaphor preceded the Preparatory Meditations. He saw it as the means by which the bond between persons could best be expressed. "If I borrow beams of Some Sparkling Metaphor to illustrate my Respects unto thyselfe," he wrote to his future wife, Elizabeth Fitch, "I know not how to offer a fitter comparison."⁹⁵ It was, as he saw it, the ideal mode for imparting heart-verbatimies: "This form of Speech is a truth Speaking form, Conveying the thoughts of the heart of the Speaker unto the hearers," he once said.⁹⁶ He assumed the very highest authority for his use of the metaphor. The logic of Petrus Ramus which he studied at Harvard taught him that the world itself was a metaphor of divine reality and that the Scriptures had been set forth in the same imagistic manner. "All Languages admit of Metaphoricall forms of Speech," Taylor found, and

"the Spirit of God abounds in this manner of Speech in the Scripture and did foreshew that Christ Should abound in this Sort of Speech" (C, p. 273).⁹⁷ To Taylor, Christ himself became, through his incarnation, the supreme metaphor. Twice in the Christographia, the poet refers to Christ's humanity as a pen and to his Deity as the authorial hand (C, pp. 34, 102). In this way, the Word himself provides the metaphoric union of God and the saint joined in mutual love: "Thou gildest ore with sparkling Metaphors / The Object thy Eternall Love fell on."⁹⁸ With such a confidence in metaphor, it is not surprising that the figure of speech which yokes the sublime and the ordinary was central to Taylor's verse. Since his words were to follow the Word in mediation, metaphor naturally became his most appropriate poetic device. Taylor, in celebration of the incarnation and in imitation of the Word's eternal mediation, found metaphor an ideal way to communicate the language of his heart.⁹⁹

With doctrine and metaphor emphasized by Taylor himself, it is perhaps surprising that more critics have not used these two features to interpret his poetry. One such scholar, keenly sensitive to the poet's genius, did so in his 1964 article on Taylor's "Huswifery."¹⁰⁰ Speaking of the central image in the occasional poem, Norman Grabo stated, "The full meaning of its terms is not contained in the poem itself but draws from the entire body of Taylor's writing, including his prose. Nevertheless the key is . . . the image itself."¹⁰¹ Using the "huswifery" figure as his key, Grabo proceeded in this fruitful study to discern Taylor's communion doctrine, to find its explanation

in Taylor's sermons and other writings and to relate the metaphor to the general practice of his time in the Connecticut Valley and the controversy that then surrounded the ordinance. This procedure on Grabo's part produced a full, convincing and illuminating treatment of Taylor's poem. Aside from one or two short pieces on individual poems, however, little has been done since that time to follow Grabo's lead. I would like in this study to do so, concentrating on Taylor's images as illustrative of his doctrine and taking up the cue that Taylor's doctrine can best be understood in its prose contexts as seen in the Christographia sermons and in his Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper.¹⁰² I also expect to treat the relation of Taylor's doctrine to that of his Puritan colleagues of the latter half of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth and to note how he responded to the sociological and theological issues that confronted him. In so doing, I would look especially for the harmony of doctrine which the poet said gave his work wholeness and balance.

Taylor used a multitude of images, but close inspection will show that they can be grouped in clusters. I should like to take five of these image clusters which seem to offer the most fruitful possibilities for investigation. They are what might be classified as the hygienic, the erotic, the organic, the domestic and the forensic. The first four one would expect to find chiefly developed in the occasional poems and the Preparatory Meditations, as their contemplation is personal and devotional in nature, and the last, the forensic, in Gods Determinations, since the treatment of that work is public

and hortatory in nature.

Taylor's images, taken as a whole, can be seen to follow a kind of apocalyptic story line and to unite the poetry in remarkable oneness. The study of the images individually admittedly yields the opposite impression. Thus, though some critics, like Austin Warren, have seen the multiplicity of the metaphors as having a "shattering effect" and shaking the poems apart, as incongruous, or as having a cataloguing tendency, like Whitman's lists, endless and without significance, a closer look will show each image reaching out and touching every other.¹⁰³ Seen in this way and viewed in total doctrinal context, the images together form a cosmos in which, as Taylor pointed out in one of his Treatise messages, everything demonstrates the "suitableness of one part to another: and of one thing to another" (TCLS, pp. 61-62). Taylor's metaphor, in Grabo's words, "radiates its meanings outward across the whole of his singularly unified thought"¹⁰⁴ and brings the universe of Edward Taylor's Puritan doctrine into focus in the "United Essential harmony" he claimed for it (C, p. 197).

* * * * *

A brief review of Taylor's twentieth century criticism reveals a striking lack of preparedness on the part of the scholars for appreciating a genuine poetic talent from colonial America. The rather farfetched explanations of Taylor as merely an American metaphysical or baroque poet or closely allied with the school of Ben Jonson were hardly less apt than his reading as a Hellenist or a secret Catholic. The more

accurate assessments of scholars like Roy Harvey Pearce and Donald E. Stanford that Taylor must be seen in his own social and religious milieu have been clouded, however, by their lumping of New England Puritanism with early Calvinism. Though a number of studies have contributed to modern knowledge of Puritan thought patterns, modes and genres, too little still has been done on the actual Covenant doctrine Taylor claimed as his inspiration. This study will attempt to find the balance and wholeness of his poetry in the doctrine he espoused by means of the metaphorical method he employed.

The course of this study will roughly follow Puritan religious experience, from preparation to salvation, and from integration of the elect one into the divine order and into the local congregation. Finally, it will note the effect of Covenant harmony upon Taylor himself during his closing years in the third decade of the eighteenth century.

NOTES

¹The Seventeenth Century, Vol. I of The New England Mind 1939; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), xii. This work will hereafter be referred to by its secondary title.

²The American Novel and Its Tradition (New York: Doubleday, 1957), p. 11.

³Edward Taylor's Christographia, ed. Norman S. Grabo (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), p. 197.

⁴Martz quoted in Cecelia L. Halbert, "Tree of Life Imagery in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," AL, 38 (1966-67), 29.

⁵Donald E. Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" AL, 35 (1963-64), 467-471, gives the poet's own account of his conversion.

⁶Norman S. Grabo cited "a long tradition" to the effect that Taylor attended Cambridge University in his Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 20. Karl Keller at first agreed with Grabo, but further study evidently made him change his mind. Cf. Karl Keller's "The Example of Edward Taylor," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 10, and his literary biography by the same name as the article (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975), pp. 16, 287, where he notes, "The evidence is overwhelming that Taylor did not attend Cambridge . . . contrary to tradition. . . ."

⁷Keller, The Example, p. 287.

⁸William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 91-92, 136-168; Perry Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 95-97; Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (1956; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 57-59.

⁹Grabo, Edward Taylor, p. 21.

¹⁰Ibid. For a comparison of his experience of persecution with that of his New England predecessors, see also life sketches of John Winthrop, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker in Perry Miller, ed., The

American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1956), pp. 36, 84-85, 88.

¹¹Keller, The Example, pp. 17-18; Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 13, 22.

¹²Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 75-76. Miller shows how, though Professor Samuel Eliot Morison "has shown incontestably that Harvard College was not, and was never intended to be, merely a theological seminary," a literate ministry was still the foremost aim in its founding.

¹³Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴Francis E. X. Murphy, ed., The Diary of Edward Taylor (Springfield, Mass., 1964), pp. 37-38, quoted in Keller, The Example, p. 18.

¹⁵The Diary of Edward Taylor, records Taylor as saying Chauncy's "love was so much expressed that I could scarce leave him" and that the Harvard president had told him in plain words "that he knew not how to part with mee." See excerpt, Keller, The Example, pp. 18, 287.

¹⁶Thomas H. Johnson, ed., The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor (1943; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 11-12, attributes Harvard's (and Chauncy's) special interest in Taylor to his winsomeness. Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 22-25, speculates that Harvard was feeling the prevalent cooling of religious ardor in the colony and seizing upon any likely candidate who might help to warm the spiritual atmosphere at the College. For accounts of his friendship with Sewall, see Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 23, 25, 175, and Keller, The Example, pp. 17-18, 34-35.

¹⁷Johnson, ed., The Poetical Works, pp. 201-221, gives a valuable catalog of Taylor's library at Westfield. Cf. Keller's analytical summary of it in The Example, pp. 20-22.

¹⁸Keller, The Example, pp. 52-54.

¹⁹Sewall, Diary for May 24, 1676, and July 7, 1729, quoted in Keller, The Example, pp. 288-289.

²⁰Puritanism in America (New York: Viking, 1973), pp. 255-260.

²¹Keller used a homely metaphor to describe the critical unpreparedness into which Taylor's work was introduced: "But in a way, the discovery of Taylor's writings did not so much find a skunk in the garden as point up the carelessness of much of the gardening; we were, perhaps, not well prepared for the sensuously meditative, the joyously logical, the humanistically knowledgeable, and the appropriately personable in high Puritanism, and Taylor has in part forced the adjustment." See "The Example," p. 8.

²²Wallace Cable Brown, "Edward Taylor: An American 'Metaphysical,'" AL, 16 (1944-45), p. 197, rated Taylor "the best American poet before Freneau." Richard D. Altick, The Scholar Adventurers (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 307-308, placed him foremost in the colonial period, calling his discovery "a happy development, this unlooked-for finding of poetry full of color and vivid imaginativeness in an era which was thought to have produced nothing better than the dull verses of Anne Bradstreet and Michael Wigglesworth." Kenneth Silverman, ed., Colonial American Poetry (New York: Hafner, 1968), pp. 173, 178, gave him similar preeminence. Keller, "The Example," p. 9, felt that the poet himself must have known his work was better than Wigglesworth's or Mistress Bradstreet's.

²³"Edward Taylor: A Puritan 'Sacred Poet,'" NEQ, 10 (1937), 291.

²⁴"Edward Taylor's Poetry: Colonial Baroque," KR, 3 (1941), 357-358.

²⁵"Edward Taylor: An American 'Metaphysical,'" pp. 192, 197.

²⁶Ibid., p. 194, quoted in Lind, "Edward Taylor: A Revaluation," NEQ, 21 (1948), 521.

²⁷"The Morality Tradition in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," AL, 18 (1946-47), 1.

²⁸Ibid., p. 2.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 2-3.

³⁰"Edward Taylor, Hellenistic Puritan," AL, 18 (1946-47), 19.

³¹Ibid., pp. 19-20, 25-26.

³²"Edward Taylor and the Cambridge Platonists," AL, 26 (1954-55), 1.

³³Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., p. 10.

³⁶Ibid., p. 13.

³⁷The Poems of Edward Taylor (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), xiii; "Poet in the Wilderness," rev. of The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford, TLS, 3 Feb. 1961, p. 72, and George L. Proctor, Letter and anonymous response, TLS, 17 Feb. 1961, p. 105.

³⁸"Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations: A Decorum of Imperfections," PMLA, 83 (1968), 1423-1428.

³⁹See Keller's summary of such speculations, "The Example," pp. 8, 24. Keller lists critics "for" and "against" Taylor's orthodoxy in the note, p. 24. He is in error about two of these however. Roy Harvey Pearce and Sidney E. Lind strongly asserted the poet's orthodoxy. (See my note 52 below.)

⁴⁰Thomas H. Johnson, "Edward Taylor: A Puritan 'Sacred Poet,'" NEQ, 10 (1937), 290. Cf. Francis Murphy, "Taylor's Attitude Toward Publication: A Question Concerning Authority," AL, 34 (1962-63), 393-394. Murphy points out that the report of Taylor's prohibition of publication came at least at third hand one hundred and thirty years after the poet's death and that there is no documentary evidence of it whatsoever. Cf. also Keller, "The Example," pp. 5-6, which cites a number of indications that some of Taylor's writings were meant by him for the public eye and that he either published or attempted publication of them. In the face of such conflicting evidence, a final conclusion about the matter seems impossible.

⁴¹Grabo, Edward Taylor, p. 174, gives a summary note of some of these attempts. I do not find anything "evil" in the citations from Perry Miller, however.

⁴²Arthur Hobson Quinn, Kenneth B. Murdock, et al., eds. The Literature of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951), p. 57; Murdock quotation from his Literature and Theology in Colonial New England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1949), p. 167.

⁴³The Scholar Adventurers (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 307.

⁴⁴"Edward Taylor: A Puritan 'Sacred Poet,'" p. 322.

⁴⁵The Scholar Adventurers, p. 307.

⁴⁶"Edward Taylor's Poetry: Colonial Baroque," p. 357.

⁴⁷"Edward Taylor: A Puritan 'Sacred Poet,'" p. 319.

⁴⁸The Scholar Adventurers, p. 307.

⁴⁹Mindele Black, "Edward Taylor: Heaven's Sugar Cake," NEQ, 29 (1956), 175-176.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 172.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 175.

⁵²"Edward Taylor: A Puritan 'Sacred Poet,'" pp. 299, 300, 322; Sidney E. Lind, "Edward Taylor: A Revaluation, NEQ, 21 (1948), 518-538; Roy Harvey Pearce, "Edward Taylor: The Puritan as Poet," NEQ, 23 (1950), 31-46.

⁵³Lind, p. 519.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 520.

⁵⁵Pearce, p. 31.

⁵⁶"Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations: A Decorum of Imperfection," PMLA, 83 (1968), 1428.

⁵⁷Lind, pp. 519-521.

⁵⁸Pearce, pp. 32, 40-43.

⁵⁹TLS, 3 Feb. 1961, p. 72.

⁶⁰Mignon, p. 1428.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 1426.

⁶²William J. Schieck, "Typology and Allegory: A Comparative Study of George Herbert and Edward Taylor," Essays in Literature, 3 (Spring, 1975), 81-82.

⁶³"Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" p. 467.

⁶⁴Mignon, pp. 1424, 1426, 1428.

⁶⁵For a comparison of the treatment of the origins of the Covenant by Calvin and a Puritan exegete, see the Institutes, II, viii, 21 and x, 9; and John Preston, New Covenant, p. 38, cited in Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness, p. 61. The difference in the two sets of comments upon the same passage in Genesis 17 is striking. Preston sees this as the institution of God's new contract with man, represented in Abraham. Calvin finds in it only an affirmation of the firmness of God's promises.

⁶⁶Errand, p. 52.

⁶⁷Institutes, II, ii, 1, cited in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 370. Haller's volume on Puritan history relates the ecclesiastical to the social aspects of sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Miller's Seventeenth Century gives a useful broad doctrinal account touching both Old and New England. His Errand into the Wilderness is a more compact history of the same sort and more specific in documentation.

⁶⁸The Seventeenth Century, p. 372.

⁶⁹Works, II, 283, cited in Errand, p. 57.

⁷⁰The Seventeenth Century, pp. 369-370, gives a summary of the Antinomian movement.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 373.

⁷²Ibid., p. 372.

⁷³Miller pictures the early Puritans as walking between the extremes of Arminianism and Antinomianism "in their effort to conceive of God as a perfect balance of all attributes," in The Seventeenth Century, pp. 369, 371.

⁷⁴The Seventeenth Century, Chapter IV, especially pp. 94-98, gives the intellectual and doctrinal outlook at Harvard in the early days.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 368, 372; Errand, pp. 57-58.

⁷⁶The Seventeenth Century, pp. 375-377; Errand, p. 58.

⁷⁷Errand, pp. 66-67; The Seventeenth Century, pp. 95-97, cf. also Notes, pp. 509-510, listing Harvard texts and reference books.

⁷⁸The Seventeenth Century, pp. 95, 97.

⁷⁹The Poetical Works, pp. 204-220; see also Karl Keller's summary of Taylor's theological holdings, The Example, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁰Errand, pp. 59-60; p. 50 notes that "they did not even consider him Calvin/ the fountainhead of their thought, but regarded him as one among many 'juicious divines,'" and quotes Thomas Shepard, "I have forgot what he hath wrote and myself have read long since out of him."

⁸¹The Example, pp. 44, 75.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 47, 175.

⁸³Edward Taylor, p. 29; for a summary of the "foundation" process, see pp. 28-31.

⁸⁴The American Puritans, p. 302.

⁸⁵Keller in "The Example," pp. 8, 12, suggests that "Taylor's real importance as an American poet is in his defense of the New England way of theology" and describes his life as "devoted to the hard labor of nailing down the status quo."

⁸⁶Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 30-38, gives a fairly detailed account of the Stoddardean controversy and Taylor's and Increase Mather's parts in it. Keller, "The Example," pp. 5-6, notes some of the two men's written contributions to the argument.

⁸⁷The American Puritans, p. 222.

⁸⁸Errand, pp. 59-60.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 60.

⁹⁰The Example, pp. 211-212.

⁹¹"Edward Taylor: Heaven's Sugar Cake," pp. 175-176.

⁹²Pearce, "Edward Taylor: The Puritan as Poet," p. 31.

For examples of studies in Puritan treatment of texts and contexts, see Robert M. Benton, "Edward Taylor's Use of His Text," AL, 34 (1962-63), 31-41; James T. Callow, "Edward Taylor Obeys Saint Paul," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 89-96; Donald Junkins, "Edward Taylor's Creative Process," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 67-78.

For Puritan sermon and meditation structure, see Grabo, ed., Christographia, xxxiv-xxxv; Benton and Junkins, above; Michael D. Reed, "Edward Taylor's Poetry: Puritan Structure and Form," AL, 46 (1974-75), 304-312; Louis I. Martz, The Poetry of Meditation: A Study of English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), p. 154, and The Meditative Poem: An Anthology of Seventeenth Century Verse (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1963), 485-517.

For a study in Puritan psychology, see William J. Schieck, "A Viper's Nest, the Featherbed of Faith: Edward Taylor on the Will," EAL, 5 (Fall, 1970), 45-58.

For Puritan exegesis and typology, see Thomas M. Davis, "The Traditions of Puritan Typology," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 27-47, and "The Exegetical Traditions of Puritan Typology," EAL, 5 (Spring, 1970), 11-50.

⁹³The Poems of Edward Taylor, p. 3. This study will use Stanford's 1960 of Taylor's work as its main source for the poetry for several reasons: It uses Taylor's own title. It is the first production of a complete text. It contains what I believe is the true arrangement, with the "Prologue" and Preparatory Meditations before the less important and less typical Gods Determinations touching his Elect.

⁹⁴Those arguing for composition of the Meditations after the sermon are Grabo, ed., Christographia, xxxiv-xxxv, Junkins and Benton. Those on the other side are Davis and Keller, The Example, p. 291. (See complete references in Note 92, above.)

⁹⁵Taylor letter quoted, The Example, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁶Christographia, p. 273. References to this work will be made hereafter by the letter C and the page number and included in the body of the study.

⁹⁷Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings (1938; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), I, 31; cf. Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 116-153 for full treatment of the Ramist system.

⁹⁸The Poems: Preparatory Meditations, Second Series, No. 152, Lines 7-8. Lines from Preparatory Meditations will hereafter be indicated within the text simply by a Roman numeral for series number, Arabic numerals for the Meditation number and line numbers. Quotations from Gods Determinations will be indicated by the abbreviation GD, titles and line numbers. The occasional poems will be referred to by titles and line numbers.

⁹⁹See William J. Schieck's survey of Taylor's use of metaphor in his "Tending the Lord in All-Admiring Style: Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," Language and Style, 4 (Summer, 1971), 162-177.

¹⁰⁰Norman S. Grabo, "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," PMLA, 79 (1964), 554-560.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 554.

¹⁰²Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, ed. Norman S. Grabo (E. Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1966). References to this work will be by the abbreviation TCLS and page numbers.

¹⁰³Austin Warren, pp. 362, 365.

¹⁰⁴"Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," p. 560.

CHAPTER II

THE HYGIENIC IMAGE: AQUA VITAE AND
ZION'S BUCKING TUB

At the beginning of a study of harmony in Edward Taylor's images, it is appropriate to note what Charles S. Mignon calls "a decorum of imperfection" which governed any written representation of Puritan thought.¹ This was the principle, in Thomas Hooker's words, that a man must take a "true sight of sin" before he can approach a holy God.² "Meditation of sins" must be utilized "to break the heart of a sinner." There must be a registering and remembering of sin that

gleans up and rakes together al the particulars, adds dayly to the load, and laies on until the Axletree split asunder, and the heart fails and dies away under the apprehension of the dreadfulness of evil.

The heart must be held "upon the rack under restless and insupportable pressures" so that "the sinner is forced to walk and talk with sin, to wake and sleep with it, to eat and drink his sins," until at last he can say, "we sew them all up together, we look back to the lineage and pedegree of our lusts, and track the abominations of our lives, step by step, until we come to the very nest where they are hatched and bred, even of our original corruption."³ Edward Taylor, on his part, willingly followed the Puritan pattern, speaking of "Guilt and filth" in synonymous terms, piling up horrid images of his iniquity

and tracing it to its origin and seat, the "Nest of Vipers" in the human heart.⁴

Taylor easily concurred in the duty of self-examination, pointing out in his Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper the individual's obligation which requires "the bringing of the soul under the trial of itself to see whether it is as it ought to be . . . to see that we have a worthiness of state/person."⁵ Such a self-analysis, which was unavoidably self-demeaning because it was meant to reveal a conviction of one's own sin, became the first formal element of any Puritan genre, whether sermon, typological study, meditation or poem.⁶ This configuration, in its literary expression, may have begun with the three-part sermon structure, in which a Bible passage was "opened," its doctrine "proved" and then "uses" (application) made. From the standpoint of the listener, this tripartite process would consist of self-examination, contemplation and appropriation of the doctrine. It would begin with a stirring up of his memory and imagination to recall the goodness of God toward him and his own sinfulness, continue with a rational turning over of this material in his mind and finally move the affections and will toward carrying out the doctrine in his own life.⁷ Studies of Puritan typology have detected a similar pattern in studies of Old Testament motifs: "a confession of sin or fault, an exploration of the type and an affective conclusion."⁸ It is likely, too, that the Puritan meditative structure was built upon the tripartite sermon. Richard Baxter, in his Saint's Everlasting Rest, a seventeenth century manual for meditation popular in both English and American Puritan circles, indicated as much. Soliloquy is

"a preaching to one's self," said Baxter. "Therefore the very same Method which a Minister should use in his preaching to others, should a Christian use in speaking to himself."⁹ Thus the private Puritan must always begin with a recognition of human worthlessness before any contemplation of the Divine. All of the Puritan writers advised "preparation" of the heart first of all, a large part of which consisted in pondering upon the sin to be found there.

Thomas Doolittle, whose book Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper Taylor possessed in his Westfield library, advised, "No preparation, no participation," and urged, "It is not then putting on our finer cloaths on a Sacrament day, but the trimming of our hearts, that God expecteth at our hands." Such "trimming" required a time during which Doolittle thought "it would not be unuseful nor unseasonable, to produce the Catalogue of thy sins."¹⁰ Taylor agreed, preaching in 1693, "Not to prepare is a Contempt of the Invitation; and of the Wedden. . . . It is to abide in a Sordid and filthy, wicked and Sinfull state" (TCLS, p. 23). Thomas H. Stanford has found the contrast between God's love and man's unworthiness to have been the main subject of the first forty-nine Meditations and the benefits afforded by the salvation of Christ to have motivated the intense joy with which many of the poems end.¹¹

Versed as he was, then, in Puritan literary theory and preparationist teaching, it is probably not surprising that Edward Taylor opened his official ministry at the Westfield church with a humble declaration of his own "conviction" of sin,¹² devoted the first part of his Preparatory Meditations to an account of man's unworthiness,

began many of the individual meditations the same way and placed at the first of his devotional volume his Prologue in which he identifies himself as a "Crumb of Dust" before the God of eternal glory (p, 1).¹³

Such an attitude pushed earth and sky far apart and emphasized the difference between God and man, as it was meant to do. Taylor's "baroque" commentators, especially, have noted the wide gap between God and man established by this humiliation but have failed, I think, to catch the full meaning of the poet's stance.¹⁴ For although many have noted the abject lowliness, the anguish and pain of the Puritan posture regarding sin, not so many have perceived where all this was to tend, the response it was to expect from the Almighty and the restoration in the divine scheme of things that was to be the predictable outcome.

This chapter on Taylor's hygienic images will consider their origin in English Puritan history. The metaphors of sin as disease, impairment and waste will be found to be consistent with earlier Christian, and especially, Puritan thought. Such attitudes toward iniquity will be seen to have positive values as they conformed to the doctrines set forth in New England preparationism.

"Physicians of the Soul:" The Puritan Impetus

A hygienic restoration, of course, was the aim of that first generation of Puritans in the 1560's and 1570's. The historic perspective of those who initiated the Puritan movement was that it was to be a healing and cleansing of the church and that they were to be "physicians of the soul."¹⁵ Edward Dering was an example of one not afraid to preach even before Majesty of the defilements he saw.

Early in 1570 he detailed to the Queen his unhappy picture of the church as "defiled with impropriations, some with sequestrations, some loaden with pensions, some robbed of their commodities." The present pastors, he felt, were "Ruffians," "Hawkers," "Hunters," "blind guides, and can not see . . . , dumb dogs and will not bark." Dering also did not hesitate to advise the Queen that she was responsible for applying the remedy: "I tell you this before God . . . amend these horrible abuses, and you shall not be removed for ever. Let these thinges alone, and . . . hee will one day call you to your reckoning."¹⁶ Such passages as these by Dering, calling for the cleansing of the church, soon caused their detractors to name the men of his party the "Puritans."¹⁷

Elizabeth, however, did not immediately begin to accede to the demand for purification. Acting upon sharp political sense, she merely deprived the dissenters of any overt governmental power and let them continue on their way, so long as they did not openly oppose her regime. In this circumstance, then, the preachers applied themselves to the study of the ills of individual men's souls and the search for proper remedies for these ills. "Their function was to probe the conscience of the downhearted sinner," says William Haller in his Rise of Puritanism, "to name and cure the malady of his soul."¹⁸ Men like Richard Greenham betook themselves to their own homes, where they started the work of anatomizing these soul-ailments, laying forth the results in a form somewhat like medical case-books. "He hath had," said his friend Henry Holland of Greenham, "a long time a settled disposition (as he trusteth) of God, to studie the cases of conscience, to succour the perplexed in them."¹⁹ Works like Greenham's Grave

Counsels or William Ames' Casibus de Conscientia (the latter of which was a holding of Taylor's library) inform us, in Haller's words, of the "doubts, despairs, fears, yieldings of the creature, seizures of weakness and of pride, which assailed the men who were trying to adjust themselves to the difficulties of that time," and "with what success the preacher resolved these evils of the spirit into faith."²⁰

The young men who followed such early leaders as Greenham into the schools of the prophets they set up, likewise learned to dissect their own consciences and to treat their spiritual maladies by means of their diaries and journals. They then recorded their methods for the edification of others in order that their readers might also have rules to follow daily that would conduce to spiritual health.²¹ These became the devotional manuals of the Puritan seventeenth century, works like those of Baxter and Doolittle, which were far from restrictive in Puritan eyes but offered a new freedom, as Richard Rogers was to say, "that they may be merry in the Lord, and yet without lightnes; sad and heavie in heart for their owne sins, and the abominations of the land, and yet without discouragement or dumpishness, . . ."²²

Meanwhile, the preachers were not confined to teaching the eager youths who resorted to their homes. In most cases, they were not deprived of their pulpits unless their outspokenness was felt to be disruptive to the state but were allowed to continue to stir the people to see the ills in the churches.²³ As this activity continued, they also began to reveal to their hearers individual spiritual diseases so that congregations began to take a livelier interest in sin than perhaps they had since the Middle Ages. As Haller states it,

The opportunity that presented itself to the preachers was to minister to troubled minds and cleanse stuffed bosoms. So they set out . . . to expound the psychology of sin and redemption . . . to make him /their spiritual patient/ feel worse in order to make him feel better, to inspire pity and fear in order to purge him of those passions. . . . they would make themselves physicians of the soul.²⁴

It is probably not accidental that this new "spiritual" kind of preaching rose about the same time as the Elizabethan theater of the 1580's and '90's when the ministers were competing for audiences with Thomas Kyd, Shakespeare and Marlowe, and, as may be seen in this passage from Henry Smith on the pangs of Judas, in Matthew 27: 1-4, were not averse to using the dramatists' methods.

All the furies of hell leap upon his heart like a stage.
Thought calleth to Fear; Fear whistleth to Horror; Horror beckoneth to Despair, and saith, Come and help me to torment the sinner: . . . so he goeth thorow a thousand deaths, and cannot die. . . . Thus he lies upon the racke and saith that . . . no man suffereth that which he suffereth.

The torturous picture of remorse is drawn out to a dramatic climax when God responds, "So let him lye . . . without ease, untill he confesse and repent, and call for mercie."²⁵

The custom of describing sin in the histrionic terms of sickness and the sickbed became prevalent not only among the preachers of England, but, as might be supposed, among those of New England as well. Thus while theologians like William Perkins or William Ames preached that a man must be "a meere patient in the first acte of conversion,"²⁶ and Perkins could describe "a case of conscience, the greatest that ever was; how a man may truly know whether he be a childe of God or no . . . ,"²⁷ Samuel Willard filled pages in his turn with colonial

examples, warning his readers of "those corrupt principles" which "do fill the whole man," making him "a mere lump of opposition to God and his ways" in images so immediate as to make one modern commentator, Mindele Black, feel that Willard "must often have witnessed the drama of self-searching which he describes, ministering at the bedside, so to speak, of a sick soul."²⁸

Cases of Conscience: The Sinner as
"Meere Patient"

The Puritan conception of sin as disease and dirt is particularly apt in Edward Taylor's case, since Taylor, like fellow New Englanders Gershom Bulkeley and William Hubbard, followed the not infrequent pattern for his time of serving his town in the double capacity of physician and person and could as legitimately bleed or blister a parishioner as pray for him.²⁹

Taylor's medical preparation was what would have been considered adequate for his times, when medicine was often sideline work, an avocation practiced because an individual showed an aptitude and a town had need of a physician. As Karl Keller explains, "It is not unusual that Taylor should have become a village physician. . . . Anyone with an antimonial cup and a copy of Culpeper's English Physician became a doctor."³⁰ At Harvard his studies involved natural history, logic and languages as well as theology.³¹ He early began to accumulate books of a scientific nature. His library was unusually large for the times, particularly for a frontier situation. It contained some forty textbooks on logic, medicine and science, including the standard works of Nicholas Culpeper, A Physicall directory; or a translation of the London

dispensatory (London, 1649) and The English Physitian Enlarged (London, 1666); John Woodall, The Surgion's Mate (London, 1617); and William Clowes' Book of Medical Observations (London, 1596).³² Taylor also collected cures, such as the alchemical treatments of Riverius and John Webster and the herbal and mineral cures of William Salmon.³³ His familiarity with contemporary medical jargon shows in his use of words like "catochee," "botches" and "syncopee" for such diseases as catalepsy, tumors and heart failure; "Alkahest" and "aqua vitae" for popular solvents and drugs of the times; and "pia-mater" for the membrane surrounding the brain, or simply, the brain itself (II. 67B:26; II. 26:5; II. 67B:29; II. 36:5; II. 68B:19).³⁴

Familiar as he was, then, with seventeenth century medical practice and with the long-held Puritan habit of seeing transgression in terms of disease, it is not surprising that Taylor frequently used the medical metaphors of sin as sickness and salvation as the appropriate remedy. This proclivity for couching theological ills in medical terms showed as early as 1671, his senior year at Harvard, when Taylor began issuing his elegies on important figures he had known who were now passing off the scene of the late seventeenth century.³⁵ One of his best was composed on the death of Samuel Hooker. He took the passing as a signal of the spiritual ill health of the colonies:

Mourn, mourn, New England, alas! alas!
 To see thy Freckled Face in Gospell Glass:
 To feele thy Pulse, and finde thy Spleen's not well:
 Whose Vapors cause thy Pericordium t'swell:
 Do suffocat, and Cramp thee, and grow worse
 By Hypochondrik Passions of the purse,

Affect thy Brains toucht with the Turn, till thou
Halfe sick of Preachers false, and Gospell Plow.
Such Symptoms say, if nothing else will ease,
Thy Sickness soon will cure thy said Disease.

("Miscellaneous Poems," p. 480, ll. 111-20)

Except for the couplet form and the designation "New England," it might have been Edward Dering warning Queen Elizabeth of the disease in her "Church-State" a century earlier.³⁶

Edward Taylor fit naturally into the line of the Puritans disposed to act as physicians of the soul. The effect of Taylor's medical cataloguing in the poetry at times resembles the spiritual case-books of Richard Greenham or Samuel Willard, with Taylor calling out the spiritual ills of his times as they were exemplified in his own heart. In the Meditations, he finds himself "uncleane," "all ore ugly." His breath stinks, his lungs are "Corrupted," his skin was "all botch't and scabd" and he is covered with a "Skurfy Skale" (II. 27:7, 8, 13, 14, 15). He discovers the cause of the sickness in his own human nature: "I'm sick," he cries, "my sickness is mortality" (II. 60A:7). The immediate agent is Satan: "His Aire I breath in, poison doth my Lungs. / Hence come Consumptions, Fevers, Head pains: Turns" (II. 67B: 23-24). Because of his own fallen nature and the infections visited upon his physical-spiritual frame by the devil, he has contracted a multitude of foul diseases: he is "Consumptive," he has "Wasted lungs [that can] Scarce draw a Breath of aire," and

Lythargy, the Apoplectick Stroke:
The Catochee, Soul Blindness, Surdity,
Ill Tongue, Mouth Ulcers, Frog, the Quinsie Throate
The Palate Fallen, Wheezings, Pleurisy.

Heart Ach, the Syncopee, bad stomach tricks
 Gaul Tumors, Liver grown; spleen evils Cricks.
 The Kidny toucht, The Iliak, Colick Griefe
 The Ricats, Dropsy, Gout, the Scurvy, Sore
 The Misereere Mei.

(II. 14: 1-2; II. 67B: 25-33)

He finds himself, in fact, so totally contaminated that he cries out the leper's lament, "Unclean, Unclean: My Lord, Undone, all vile" and can see himself as only "A bag of botches, Lump of Loathsomeness: / Defild by Touch, by Issue: Leproust flesh" (II. 26: 1-2, 5-6).³⁷

Yet with the listing of loathsome diseases comes a corresponding indication of treatments by which the sick one begs to be restored. These soul-treatments are probably reminiscent of the seventeenth-century doctrine of "signatures," promoted by Nicholas Culpeper, whose volumes were in Taylor's library, as we have seen. This quaint teaching held that for every ailment on earth there was a corresponding remedy in nature, "signified" as to its application by configuration, coloring or name. For instance, ferns were thought good for baldness, white pomegranate seeds for snakebite, heart treyfoyle for heart ailments, walnut shells for skull wounds and walnuts for headaches. It is likely that Taylor utilized this doctrine in his own practice, as indicated by his possession of the Culpeper and by the fat "Dispensatory" of "simples" laboriously collected and hand-copied by him, showing the curative powers of some four hundred roots, barks and oils.³⁸ He may also have raised his own "physic garden" and prepared from it many of the apothecary items he used in treatment, according to the signature of the Divine on them.³⁹

Taylor seems to be inferring the kind of answering balance to be found in the Culpeper medical practice when he speaks of "The Sparkling Plants, Sweet Spices, Herbs and Trees," in God's garden, each with its specific use: "These all as meate, and med'cine, emblems choice / Of Spirituall Food, and Physike are which sport / Up in Christ's Garden" (II. 63: 31, 43-45). With such an assortment of remedies at his disposal, God-as-physician may be expected to supply the specific in every instance. Taylor waits, then, for God to "Pound some for Cordiall powders very small / To Cure my Kidnies, Spleen, My Liver, Gaul" (II. 67B: 41-42). He expects

A sweet perfumed Rheum-Cap for my head
To free from Lythargy, the Turn, and Pain,
From Waking-Sleep, Sin-Falling Malady
From Whimsy, Melancholy Frenzy-dy.

(II. 67B: 51-54)

He asks for the Lord's "Curled Rayes" to be his

Eare Picker
To Cure my Deafeness: Light, Ophthalmicks pure
To heate my Eyes and make the Sight the Quicker
That I may use Sins Spectacles no more.
O still some Beams. And with the Spirits fresh
My Palate Ulcerd Mouth, and Ill Tongue dress.

(II. 67B: 55-60)

He wishes his "Scabs and Boils so sore, / And all my Stobs and arrow wounds" to be healed with "pledgets (compresses) soaked in God's "Spirits" (II. 67B: 61, 63, 66). Divine Wisdom will, he hopes, like a clerk in an apothecary shop appoint for him the treatment "pointed up" in "Sacerdotall Types":

How do these Pointers type thee out most right
 As Graces Officine of Wisdom pure
 The fingers Salves and Medicines so right
 That never faile, when usd, to worke a Cure?
 Oh! that it would my Wasted lungs recrute.
 And make my feeble Spirits upward shute.

(II. 14: 25-30)

"Heale mee of all my Sin," Taylor cries out and promises that "When with these Wings thou dost mee medicine / I'st weare the Cure, thou th' glory of this Sine" (II. 67B: 70-72).

A similar kind of equilibrium prevails in Taylor's understanding of the humors. The theory of the humors, the belief that human ills and quirks of personality are caused by an imbalance of bodily fluids, became popular in the 1590's, when it was employed in the theatrical characterizations of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson and also in the popular preaching of the day.⁴⁰ Taylor likely assimilated the "humorous" approach to healing from both early devotional books and medical manuals. In the theological sense, the sinner's choice in Eden had brought about an imbalance of vital elements in the soul-life of man. Taylor saw the need for the righting of the humors of the spiritual man, as in II. 14, when he asks whether God's personified Wisdom will not "Mee with its Chrystall Cupping Glasses cup / And draine ill Humours wholly out of mee?" and touchingly presents his "Case" to the Lord for his righting of upsets: "I ope my Case to thee, my Lord: mee in / Thy glorious Bath, of Sun Shine, Bathe, and Sweate. / So rout Ill Humours: And thy purges bring" (II. 67B: 37-39). The return of the spiritual elements to their proper proportion will result in the healing of a multitude of ailments:

And with the same refresh my Heart, and Lungs
 From Waste, and Weakness. Free from Pleurisy
 Bad Stomach, Iliak, Colick Fever, turns
 From Scurvy, Dropsy, Gout, and Leprosy
 From Itch, Botch Scab and purify my Blood
 From all ill Humors. So make my things good.

(II. 67B: 43-48)

Humbly he waits to have his ill humors drained off by the purging of repentance, knowing that the Gospel will act as both restorative and balm.

With the healing of sin-disease and the correction of spiritual ill-humor, one might also expect to find sin as impaired faculty and the divine restoration of faults. Such images are often likewise to be seen in the Meditations. "Hath Sin encrusted thus my heart?" asks Taylor, "And latcht my Lips? And Eares made deafe, and ditcht?" (II. 70: 13-14). "Am I denos'de or doth the worlds il sents / Engarison my nostrills narrow bore?" (I. 3: 19-20). Upon his confession of them, however, he expects that God will correct his multiple handicaps: "My Sight is dim: With Spectacles mee suite" (II. 21: 30). His taste is likewise distorted: "My Tast is lost; no bit tastes sweet to mee? But what is Dipt all over in this Dish / Of Ranck ranck Poyson: this my Sauce must bee." Yet he trusts God will "Cleare up my Right," and give him back his taste and true appetite: "In grace, I mean, that so I may partake / Of what I lost, in thee, and of thee in't" (I. 31: 20-22, 39-40).

The Puritan sense of human depravity underlies the images of sin as impairment. Perry Miller found the sense of sin as incapacity or imbalance coming to the fore especially in later seventeenth century

preaching. As he summed it up: the minister might explain sin and its effects in theological terms by saying that "man is corrupt, evil, and impotent," or in psychological terms by declaring that "the mechanism is out of gear, . . . the ideal reflex created by God is now broken into as many pieces as it has parts, . . . each part fails to perform its designated function." To New England Puritans the two accounts were identical and interchangeable. Miller further explained the Puritan sense of depravity this way: "If the preacher takes the senses, the faculties, and the passions one by one, calculates the amount of imperfection and sinfulness each contains, and adds his column of figures, the grand total will be the sum of human depravity."⁴¹ When acknowledged by the needy one, however, the impairment might be quickly corrected. Such an idea is demonstrated, for example, in the metaphor of the sick apprentice in Thomas Hooker's Treatise on True Conversion. For his full health and manhood to be complete (conversion), the ailing young man's indenture papers had to be torn up and the physician must also come and cure him, working a "real change." When this was accomplished, the servant could move about as a free man and could take up a full life of his own.⁴²

Taylor's pictures of the sinner are similarly sympathetic. He seldom dwells on sin as crime, on what the Scriptures call "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and when he does, he shows Christ as his advocate, ready to plead his case. Taylor's use of the word "case" in a blended medical and legal sense, as in II. 67B: 37, "I ope my Case to thee, my Lord," is meaningful here.⁴³ But the speaker of the Meditations is not generally the criminal before the bar and never the

spider dangled over the fire.⁴⁴ There are instead the lisping child attended by indulgent parents, the hungry man or beast, the cripple, the trapped or starving bird.⁴⁵ In short, the sinner is more a victim of his sin than a villain, and God is already predisposed to help him. However desperately sin-sick man may be, however incapacitated by iniquity, he is still an object of compassion to the God of the Meditations.

Yet although Taylor's images of sin as sickness and crippling may create sympathy in the reader, the gratuitous piling up of sin-as-waste figures may be harder to accept. Many readers will stumble over what seems the unnecessary amount of scatological imagery in Taylor. However, such thinking was inherent in his thought from his earliest writings and bears importantly upon an understanding of the harmony of his theology. Like Edward Dering, Taylor saw iniquity in terms of defilement and decay, though his view was at once wider and more personal. He diagnosed the state not simply of England but of the whole of humanity as sunk in defilement and himself as its representative as particularly degraded. Mankind in the Meditations he pictured as covered with "filth and mire, Sins juyce," so thick and deep that he sinks to his ears in it (II. 78: 14). Man lives a "life Animall," and as such is simply a receptacle of degradation: "Here is a Mudwall tent, whose Matters are / Dead Elements, which mixt make dirty trade" (II. 75: 13-15). All humanity's "pipes" he finds "but Sincks of nasty ware / That foule Earths face, and do defile the aire" (II. 75: 25-27). He is infatuated with the scent of evil, his own "Stinking Breath" fans the world, his "intraills bleed," he gives suck to demons

and discharges "Insipid Phlegm" (I. 3: 21; II. 5: 21; I. 3: 31-32; I. 9: 13). As chief of sinners, Taylor finds his own heart "fild up with filth," and himself "unclean" and "all vile" (II. 70: 12; II. 26: 1). Though aware that God demands cleanness, he must picture himself "all fould with filth and Sin, all rowld in goare" (II. 125: 12).

Taylor's depiction in the poetry of sin as dirt and refuse is perfectly consistent with his own personal experience and the account of iniquity he spread before his congregation in his sermons. In his "Spiritual Relation," the history of his conversion laid before his people upon the organization of the Westfield church, he spoke of "my life of Guilt and filth" and told them how he had early found his heart "a Prison of naughtiness, and an Akeldama of uncleanness, . . ." ⁴⁶ "All fallen Nature," he told his congregation in the first of the Christographia sermons, is "defiled by the Fall" and must be "purged and cleansed by the power of God. . . . Sin hath render'd all men Sinfull, Vile, and Abominable. Sin is an abominable thing in the Sight of God." ⁴⁷ Similarly, he frequently links sin and dirt in the poems, as in II. 14, "My heart is Fistulate: I am a Shell. / In Guilt and Filth I wallow, Sent and Smell" (II. 5-6). He asks the Lord to "purge away all Filth and Guilt" and that he "purge out Sin / From right Receivers. Filth and Faults away" (II. 14: 5-6; II. 104: 67-68).

Customarily, Taylor identifies himself with the fallen ones, in the depths of filth and sin. He evaluates his position, at the start of the poems, at least, as very low and himself as covered and saturated with evil in the images of filth:

Oh! I'm base, its true,
 My Heart's a Swamp, Brake, Thicket vile of Sin.
 My Head's a Bog of Filth; Blood bain'd doth spew
 Its venom streaks of Poyson o'er my Skin.
 My Members Dung-Carts that bedung at pleasure,
 My Life, the Pasture where Hells Hurdloms leasure.
 Becrown'd with Filth! Oh! what vile thing am I?
 What Cost, and Charge to make mee Meddow ground?
 To drain my Bogs? to lay my Frog-pits dry?

(I. 45: 1-9)

Yet the mentions of the many kinds of "sin and filth" never end simply with the sinner wallowing in the mire, for they are always followed by the idea of cleansing through salvation. When Taylor refers to dirt, he also shows the Lord as laundryman:

Then soak my soule in Zions Bucking tub
 With Holy Soap and Nitre, and rich Lye.
 From all defilement me cleanse, wash and rub.
 Then wrince, and wring mee out till thy waterfall
 As pure as in the Well: not foule at all.

(I. 40: 50-60)

Taint and decay are removed by Christ's application of grace:

Christ doth step in, and Graces Art improova.
 He kills the Leprosy that taints the Walls:
 And sanctifies the house before it falls.

(II. 75: 37-42)

Sometimes the cleansing agents are the ordinances. Taylor often uses the cutting and washing images, as in the "Zions Bucking tub" figure, above, with the ceremonial cleansings of the Mosaic law and equates the baptism of the Christian church with the circumcision under Moses.⁴⁸ More often, when identified specifically, the cleansing agent is the

blood of Christ, at times also identified with the wine of the Communion.⁴⁹ In redemption, Christ will "imbrace / Such dirty bits of Dirt" and so must "Cleaſe . . . thus with his Rich Bloods Sweet Showr" (I. 41: 35-36; II. 27: 61). The excrement that covers him, signifying his outcast state, will be washed off by the "bright Christall Crimson Fountain" of Christ's blood, which "washeth whiter than the Swan or Rose" (II. 26: 29-30).

There is yet more, however, in these images than simple pictures of filth and cleansing. In God's economy, as Taylor perceives it, sin has a positive contribution to make. Man's excremental sinfulness, though sickening to the heavens, becomes the occasion for saving purgation to arrive from above. In "Upon the Sweeping Flood," man's wrong has caused the heavens to require a "physick":

Were th' Heavens sick? must wee their Doctors bee
 And Physick them with pills, our sin?
 To make them purge and vomit; see:
 And Excrements out fling?
 We've grieved them by such Physick that they shed
 Their Excrements upon our lofty heads.

(II. 7-12)

The result of the heavenly nausea, painful to God, arrives on earth in a form beneficial to man. The "sad state" of man stirs God's "Bowells," the seat of his compassion, so that he grinds up his "deare-deare Son," who then "run/s/ out" in the form of the Bread of Life to man:

In this sad state, Gods Tender Bowells run
 Out streams of Grace: And he to end all strife
 The Purest Wheate in Heaven, his deare-deare Son
 Grinds, and kneads up into this Bread of Life,

Which Bread of Life from Heaven down came
and stands
Disht on thy Table up by Angells Hands.

(I. 8: 19-24)

The sinner is then invited to partake of the divine discharge, now in the form of heavenly nourishment and salvation:

Did God mould up this Bread in Heaven, and bake,
Which from his Table came, and to thine goeth?
Doth he bespeake thee thus, This Soule Bread take.
Come Eat thy fill of this thy Gods White Loafe?
Its Food too fine for Angells, yet come, take
And Eat thy fill. Its Heavens Sugar Cake.

(I. 8: 25-30)

In the rather revolting image of sin as earthly excrement and salvation as divine excrement, we have an example of the peculiar but purposeful circularity in Puritan thinking, a system in which God manages everything in the universe in a satisfyingly utilitarian way. To the Puritans, the process was not unhealthy and morbid, as some modern commentators have charged, but actually led to health and spiritual well being.⁵⁰ Nor is there here the "metaphysical shudder" Norman Grabo, following Professor George Williamson, thought he saw.⁵¹ It is not precisely the fear of hell which Taylor calls up, as in his image of "offal," but the fear of inutility, the Puritan horror of waste, the dread, in the Apostle Paul's words of being a "castaway," on the shelf and less than serviceable in the hands of a loved God. Just so Paul used the word adokimos to mean in some places "reprobate" and in others "castaway." The latter use appears in I Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection: lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Both senses can be seen in Taylor's dread "If off as Offal I be put," but the temporal sense prevails, as the next line and a half reveals: "if I / Out of thy Vineyard Work be put away: / Life would be Death" ("The Return," 37-39). And a few lines later, Taylor shows his belief that this will not happen, as he remembers "I've thy Pleasant, Pleasant Presence had" and promises to serve God on earth "till I sing Praise in Heaven above with thee," (II. 43, 54), indicating the poet's expectation that even his "waste," the sin, in Hooker's words, diligently "gleaned up" and "raked together" by him, would, when presented to the Lord, be transformed into fertilizer for God's vineyard and produce fruit for his glory. As Karl Keller notes in his study of Taylor's excremental imagery, "Dunghills produce gardens, excrement purges, sores bring salvation."⁵² When Taylor perceives his heart a swamp and his "Members Duncarts that bedung at pleasure / My Life, the Pasture where Hells Hurdloms leasure," he asks in the next breath, "that I may be thy Pasture fat and frim, / Where thy choice Flowers and Hearbs of Grace shine trim" (I. 45: 1-12). The garden, with manure and waste effectively arranged, can become a place of beauty and fruit.

To understand the profound hope expressed by Puritan scatological imagery, it is useful to compare Taylor's use of it to that of earlier Christian writers. Examples may be found in Augustine, in Luther and Calvin, as well as in the Roman Catholic medieval writers.⁵³ It is not necessary to enter into a detailed comparison of approach between Taylor and these earlier exponents of excremental imagery. Suffice it to point up a chief difference. Taylor's figures are not

part of a "long night of the soul."⁵⁴ He does not, like the medieval mystics, attempt to catch the spittle of consumptives nor kiss lepers' sores in order to gain merit with God. Taylor does not stay on the dunghill, nor does he revel in the mire of his sin. Instead, he notes that those "that do feare thee"

want a cure: and so do I: I'm not
 Pleas'd with my mud: Sin doth not tickle mee.

 My Sores and Sicknesses my Sorrow bee.
 I'll strive against them till I'st strive no more.

Further, he accounts himself one of "The Objects of the Sun of Righteousness," and asserts, "We both are of our sickness sick," i.e., Christ and the objects of his healing action, and "Hence shown / We both are by the argument prov'd one" (II. 67A: 43-44, 46, 49).

Taylor's assertion, that by his attitude toward sin he has proved himself one with his Lord, is important in coming to a doctrinal understanding of the harmonious hope embodied in what we have called Taylor's "hygienic" stance. The outcome is almost the exact opposite of the morbidity which many writers have associated with Puritan self-examination. Nor does the anguished fear over the threatening flames of divine retribution manifest itself here or in the autobiographical writings so much as the contrary emotion. His revelations of sin point up his hope regarding his position with God.

The "Spiritual Relation" gives a rather detailed treatment of Taylor's experience with sin and his theology of it, which are identical. Fear manifests itself, but it is the fear of sin, not of hell:

Feare: . . . I am not altogether a Stranger thereto, though I never /felt/ such an high degree as to be terrified at the thought /of/ God's wrath: yet . . . my life of Guilt and filth hath made me to stande in some degree of feare; and be affraid of being over taken with Sin.⁵⁵

The negative emotions most strongly called up are those of anger and sorrow toward sin. A closer examination of his life before conversion may bring about greater understanding of his feelings. The story of his pre-conversion state with its rehearsal of his boyhood sins has about it a curiously flat, perfunctory quality, perhaps because Taylor here is recounting something that had taken place some time ago, and then simply at the behest of others. This is the only account we have of his particular iniquities, spelled out in detail--lying, Sabbath-breaking and disobedience to parents--and the history seems remarkably mild.⁵⁶ So, too, in the Meditations, Taylor seldom refers to "sins" as crimes, especially not the lateral kind, toward his fellow man, but rather to "sin," in the singular, toward his God. He does not recoil at the breaking of the Ten Commandments but only of the "One," the "first and great commandment," to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 10: 37). Sin in the particular does not move him. Sin in the abstract, as against his God, calls forth his own wrath. Of anger he says, "I have been acquainted with anger on this account even unto hatred of Sin, and myselfe as overcome by it, . . ."⁵⁷ Here is not the unrepentant defiance Kenneth Murdock thought he saw, but sorrow that at first he could not grieve:⁵⁸

Sorrow: . . . although I found my heart so hard that I could not grieve, yet it had the impression of grief upon me to bring /it/ to lie low on this very account. And the very thought of Sin afflicted my heart with Sorrow.⁵⁹

The sorrow he felt, again, was not grief because of the divine punishment to be visited upon him nor anxiety regarding his eternal state, but chiefly because of offense toward a loved one, coldness toward his God. Of "Humiliation," he notes:

Yet this not without a deep sen^{se} of that which is ground of Humiliation. Oh the sight of /it, / oh a lost State, oh a deceitful heart, neglect of Christ, deadness in duty, /lov/e of vanity and the like: how did and do these Stare in my face /whe/n I have thought a Sin mortified, oh how it hath broke forth like /whe/n under a new temptation: . . . and I finde with the Apostle Phil. 3:8 all things of mine dung and dogs meat. . . . I saw my heart . . . a Prison of naughtiness, and an Akeldama of uncleanness, . . .⁶⁰

Neither here nor anywhere else does Taylor show himself as unrepentant or as rebel except in retrospect, and then he shows remorse at an attitude he has long since forsaken. This, I believe, reveals something fundamental: not that he takes sin lightly but that he hates it and has already turned his heart from it.⁶¹ The statement does not declare that he is delivered from sin, either, because, as he says here and in the Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, we shall never be delivered from sin as long as we are in the body, but that he has already formed a permanent attitude of enmity against it as something abhorrent, dirty, dislocating--something to be utterly repudiated and left behind (TCLS, p. 152). He has, in fact, assumed the same posture toward sin as had his God. The taking of this attitude guarantees

in Taylor's mind an acceptance from God, "both," as he has said in the poetry, "by the argument" against wrong "proved one" (II. 67A: 49). He did not go so far as to call this step "efficacious," as Stoddard was fearful of doing, but he made it plain that at least it was a first step toward redemption.⁶²

The Hygienic Hope: New England Preparationism

For a really adequate understanding of the confidence to be associated with Taylor's repudiation of sin, however, it is profitable to recur to the history of what Perry Miller and others have called the "morphology" of Puritan conversion.⁶³ Preparationism developed as early Puritan theologians began to modify the emphasis upon divine inducement and to place greater stress upon voluntary human participation in the early stages of conversion. This Covenant compromise, developed at the close of the sixteenth century, came in for special attention and testing in New England during the times of the Stoddardean controversy.⁶⁴

Preparation as originally defined was a process by which the sinner, while still in a state of nature, was brought to realize his own utter inability and to recognize his complete dependence upon God's free grace for salvation, distinct from any desert or capacity on his own part. During this process, the soul's natural faculties of understanding and volition were helped along by the influence of the Holy Spirit while the individual read the Scriptures, attended preaching services and thought on doctrine as applied to his individual state--all as yet before the influx of saving grace. Preparation was a negative process in that it destroyed the soul's natural inclination to rely on

itself for salvation. Only when this tendency had been thoroughly trounced would the soul be ready to depend wholly on Christ for redemption.⁶⁵

Various stages in this process were distinguished by different divines, but their order and effect were much the same. Going far beyond Calvin, William Perkins, whose sermons and lectures were highly influential in the development of Puritan theology, identified ten stages in an individual's progress toward saving faith. The first four were preparatory and began with his attendance on preaching, often accompanied by some outward disaster that was calculated "to breake and subdue the stubbornness of our nature." When a man had been made sufficiently amenable to the divine will, he could then be brought to a knowledge of the law, that is, a general recognition of good and evil. He could then be brought to an awareness of "his own peculiar and proper sins." This understanding led to the fourth stage, which Perkins called a "legall feare," but which was labeled by later Puritans "conviction" of sin or "humiliation." In this stage, the individual could be expected to reach the end of his own resources and to despair of salvation. Since this stage of the process was so vital, it received a great deal of attention from later divines and was often further subdivided. John Preston, another of the very influential early theologians, particularly emphasized the importance of humiliation.⁶⁶

Thomas Hooker, likewise, stressed humiliation, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, and was in the broad stream of seventeenth century Puritan thought in doing so. Like Thomas Shepard and like Edward Taylor, for example, among American Puritans, he defined

contrition as the moment of awareness when a man perceived his sin. Humiliation came next, when he submitted to God and was separated from his self-trust and pride. Like other preparationists, Hooker taught that contrition and humiliation were not in themselves saving graces but preliminary steps, and that although God removed all resistance, he did not do so without man's consent. The period of preparatory meditation on sin and depravity "softened" or "broke" the heart and forced man to a realization of his need for grace.⁶⁷ Solomon Stoddard would write in a similar vein of "Conviction," and Taylor would refer to "Contrition" and "Humiliation" as subdivisions of "Aversion from sin."⁶⁸

In both Edward Taylor's "Spiritual Relation" and in his "Profession of Faith," offered as part of the ceremonies marking the formal establishment of his church at Westfield in 1679, he set forth "Conviction," "Contrition" and "Humiliation" as successive stages contributing to the "Aversion from sin" which must come ahead of the actual attainment of faith in Christ. Recognition of sin (conviction) preceded an awareness of sin's dangers and a desire to be free of sin (contrition), which in turn was followed by the recognition of the utter inadequacy of his efforts to reform before he was finally willing to rely on Christ's redemptive power.⁶⁹ The more abstract "Profession" displayed even stronger confidence in the effectiveness of the steps that preceded faith than did the "Relation." Taylor actually included the phases leading up to faith in the entire process of regeneration, designating the whole "effectual calling":

Effectual-Calling is the Regenerating Work of the Spirit of God in the means of Grace upon the Soule, whereby the Soule turning from Sin, is inseperably joy n 'd unto Christ in a new Covenant, this regenerating work of Effectual Calling therefore consists in Conviction/
Repentance/.

Conviction is the first work of the Spirit in effectual Calling, on the Soule, which upon the understanding, is called Illumination & in the Will, & Affections is properly called Conviction.

Repentance is the next work in Effectual Calling carried on upon the Soule whereby the Soule turns from Sin unto God: & it consists in Aversion from sin & Reversion to God.

Aversion from Sin is the first part of Repentance consisting in the turning of the Soule from sin in its preparation for God by the work of Contrition, & Humiliation⁷⁰

The help offered by the Spirit to man's natural faculties in the early stages of conversion was thus presented as savingly gracious, rather than simply as a "common" spiritual influence, though grace may not show itself in any saving act before the act of faith.

A similar blending of the concepts of preparation and effectual conversion may be noted, moreover, in the Foundation Day sermon that Taylor preached on the same occasion:

To prepare for it is the way to have a glory of it. The greater preparation for it, the greater glory will be present in it, . . . Oh! how glorious a presence would alwayes here appeare, if wee did but alwayes appeare here duellie prepared. For our preparation consisting in the graces of the Spirit, oh we by preparing should stir up those shining spangles of the Divine image upon our soules that they being such a presence well pleasing to God that God would in Christ give forth an answerable glory upon the same that would fill his house with glory.⁷¹

One could hardly imagine a greater emphasis upon the return Taylor hoped for his preparation than in the "answerable glory" he awaits here.

Taylor, following the Covenant line, placed much more weight upon the preliminary phases of conversion as a basis for assurance than Solomon Stoddard was to do, and, given this foundation for his assurance, would both require and strive to develop such assurance in those he invited to attend the Lord's Supper. Stoddard, on his part, objected that no man had grounds for assurance until he could claim to have "performed one act of Saving grace."⁷² Stoddard thought it dangerous and wrong to promise any kind of assurance to those making preparation. Humiliation "might, indeed it must, precede faith"--but it was not faith and formed "no part" of effectual conversion.⁷³ In fact, Stoddard explicitly warned young ministers against giving too much encouragement to penitents simply because they appeared thoroughly prepared:

It is no wayes fit to tell a man that God will show mercy to him . . . there is no promise the Scriptures made to such persons; . . . he is to be told, that he is in Gods Hands, God is at liberty to do as he will with him, and that he must wait upon God to open his eyes, and shew Jesus Christ unto him.⁷⁴

Stoddard thus reverted to the "first principles" of Calvinism and discarded the progress in understanding made by the covenant theologians as to the efficacy of the individual's preparation. (The adjective "efficacious" was to be a key term in the controversy.) The distinction between the positions taken by Stoddard and Taylor is subtle but important. Stoddard said that humiliation was not efficacious. Taylor,

on the other hand, by defining the entire process of regeneration, specifically including the phases which led up to faith as "effectual calling" and lumping "conviction" with "repentance" and "aversion from sin" with "reversion to God," said that it was.⁷⁵ The visual connotations are even stronger than this summary makes them, for, as indicated on the preceding pages, Taylor bracketed together these experiences, making them in effect the two sides of one coin. He thus followed in the historic covenant tradition, assuming in his hygienic repudiation of sin the position required by Perkins, Amos and Preston in "the first act of conversion," that of the "meere patient," and calling out to Physician-God, "Heale mee of all my Sin" (II. 67B: 70).⁷⁶ It was a lowly position indeed but one assured of response from the Great Restorer, who must by his nature answer the call for health and help.

The Body: God's Alembick

The study of the history of preparationism must also include some attention to the specific seat of the healing and restoring action, and this concept is also appropriate to a consideration of the hygienic imagery of Edward Taylor. I am referring specifically to the terms "flesh" or "body" which appear often in the figures of disease and health. Over these terms the commentators have demonstrated a confusion as to Puritan feeling in general and Taylor's in particular. Kathy Siebel and Thomas M. Davis, for example, point to Taylor's treatment of Philippians 3: 19-21 in Meditation II. 75, as showing his "contempt for the body."⁷⁷ This understanding of Taylor's attitude toward the body is an inaccurate one. His use of the term "flesh" can better be understood if one considers the Pauline interchange of it

with the phrase "the old man" or with the idea of the sinful nature which persists in man even after salvation, as in Romans 8. Nowhere, in fact, does Taylor say that the body itself is evil. When he rebukes the flesh, he does so only insofar as it is a synecdochic term for the outer manifestation of man's fallen nature. With this understanding, Taylor warned his congregation that "so long as the body is in thee, so long thou wilt have the inclination unto unwarrantable things vexing of thee" (TCLS, p. 152). By the time of this utterance, the flesh had long since become a shorthand expression for man's fallen condition, in which the body now demonstrated an unfortunate misalignment with the soul. Taylor, as did other Puritan ministers, spoke severely of the flesh in the sense of this misalignment, in order to encourage his people to seek a more appropriate coordination between body and soul. Grace could resolve the conflict between flesh and spirit and restore the body to its proper place. Since the soul, a "Bird of Paradise," had been "put in / This Wicker Cage (my Corps) to tweedle praise," then each one touched by the Lord could "live up unto God's Word in soul and body" (II. 75: 55-58; TCLS, p. 189).⁷⁸

"The body of sin," then, the diseased and disgusting flesh of the unredeemed Adam nature, Taylor indeed regarded with contempt:

Here is a Mudwall tent, whose Matters are
 Dead elements, which mixt make dirty trade.

 . . . Guts, Garbage, Roteness.
 And all its pipes but Sincks of nasty were
 That foule Earths face, and do defile the aire.

(II. 75: 13-14, 22-23)

Yet the body, at first "Nature's Alembick," a novel filled with excrement and disease, through divine action can be transformed into a jeweled cabinet, prepared to show forth God's grace:

Nay Shining Angells in an holy fret
 Confounded are, to see our Bodies Vile
 Made Cabinets of Sparkling Gems that far
 Outshine the brightest shining heavenly Star.
 Mudd made with Muscadine int' mortar Rich,
 Dirt wrought with Aqua Vitae for a Wall
 Built all of Precious Stones laid in it, Which
 Is with leafe gold bespangled, 'maizes all.

(II. 75: 3-10)

Through "Gods Electing Love," the body as receptacle (various terms are used, as "case," "alembick," "warehouse") now becomes a container for divine treasure and the redeemed one promises, "If thy free Grace doth my low tent perfume / I'll sing thy Glorious praise in ery room" (II. 75: 59-60).

This same circularity can be seen in II. 60, where the imagery of the pipe (a favorite metaphor of Taylor's) is employed. The body-pipe, filled with sewage, may be cleansed and made a channel of the water of life and simultaneously a musical instrument for praise of the Lord:

Lord, oynt me with this Petro oyle. I'm sick.
 Make mee drinke Water of the Rock. I'm dry.
 Me in this fountain wash. My filth is thick.
 I'm faint, give Aqua Vitae or I dy.
 If in this stream thou cleanse and Chearish mee
 My Heart thy Hallelujahs Pipe shall bee.

(II. 60B: 37-42)

The body, thus purified and made ready for divine grace, obtains in the poet's view a very high place indeed, the place, in fact, that God intended for it in the beginning. So prepared, Taylor dares to compare it to Christ's body. In I. 42, he states, "Thy Body is a Building all like mine, / In Matter, Form, in Essence, Properties" (II. 31-32). Taylor points out early in the corresponding sermon that the body of Christ "is a building 2 Cor. 5: 1, as well as ours and the materials must be had" (C, p. 11). And even earlier, in the opening of the text, he indicates that the word for "body," used in this instance as "a Synechdochy," as it had before the entrance of grace represented "the body of sin" can now "import Compleate Human Nature in both the Essentiall parts and properties thereof (C, p. 8). The body so raised is ready to be joined to Christ.⁷⁹

In Meditation II. 51, Taylor further develops the idea of the body in a message on Ephesians 1: 23 ("Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"). First he says that the church is filled with Christ, then that she is the fullness of Christ:

Whom thou has filld with all her fulness, shee
Thy fulness is, and so she filleth thee.

Oh! wondrous strange! Angells and Men here are
Incorporated in one body tite.
Two kinds are gain'd into one mortase, fair.
Me tenant in thyself, my Lord, my Light
These are thy body, thou their head, we see
Thou filst them first, then they do fill up thee.

(Lines 23-30)

Sermon X states that the church is the ecclesiastical fulness which resides in Christ. In the last stanza of Meditation II. 51, we see

the corresponding doctrine:

Am I a bit, Lord, of the Body? Oh!
 Then I do claim thy Head to be mine own.
 Thy Heads Sweet Influence let to mee flow.
 That I may be thy fulness, full up grown.
 Then in thy Churches fulness: thou shalt be
 Completed in a Sense, and sung by mee.

(C, p. 74; II. 51: 43-48)

Now glorified, the "body of sin has become a body ready to be joined to Christ's body. In such a state, one is prepared to go beyond the "first acte" of conversion, in which the sinner takes the place of a "meere patient." He is ready now for the courtship of the Lamb, the spiritual dalliance that so enthralled the heart of Edward Taylor.

* * * * *

It is appropriate to start a study of Puritanism with a discussion of self-abasement since this willing humiliation was required as a first step in any Puritan approach to God. The call for admission of need had actually been present since the early days of the Puritan movement when dissenting divines viewed the state church as requiring purification and healing. Edward Taylor, like the English Puritans and his own New England brethren, viewed sin as sickness, impairment and refuse. They took such an outlook not as a sign of despair, however, but as a manifestation of hope since the Puritans, especially in the New England doctrines of preparationism, also took the Lord to be the divine Doctor, ready to apply the medicines of salvation when called upon to do so. Thus the Puritan view of the body was a wholesome and positive one. As a metonym for the whole nature of

man, it could, once cleansed and healed, become the receptacle of supernatural grace. So purified, it could be joined to Christ as his Bride.

NOTES

¹This plan of Puritan procedure was set forth by Charles W. Mignon in "A Principle of Order in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 110-116. The expression "a decorum of imperfection" was coined by Charles W. Mignon in his article, "Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations: A Decorum of Imperfection," PMLA, 83 (1968), 1423-1428.

²See excerpts from Hooker's sermon "A True Sight of Sin," in Perry Miller, ed., The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1956), pp. 152-164.

³Excerpts from Thomas Hooker's Application of Redemption (London, 1657), pp. 208, 212-213, 219, 221, 271, are given in Louis L. Martz' Foreword to The Poems of Edward Taylor (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), xxiii-xxiv."

⁴Donald E. Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" AL, 35 (1963-64), 471; Taylor, The Poems of Edward Taylor, I. 40: 5. All references to Taylor's poetry are to the First and Second Series (indicated by Roman numerals) and to the numbered meditations and line numbers, except when titles of poems are given, as found in the Stanford edition cited in Note 3.

⁵Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, ed, Norman S. Grabo (E. Lansing, Michigan: State Univ. Press, 1966), p. 201. Subsequent references to this work will be made within the body of the text by the initials TCLS and page numbers.

⁶Mignon, "A Principle of Order in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," pp. 110-116, seems to have been the first critic to enunciate this theory which he argues persuasively is applicable to all Puritan literature.

⁷Mignon, "A Principle of Order," p. 111, gives this three-part analysis. Cf. Michael D. Reed, "Edward Taylor's Poetry: Puritan Structure and Form," AL, 46 (1974-75), 304-312.

⁸Robert Reiter, "Poetry and Typology: Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations, Second Series, Numbers 1-30," EAL, 5 (Spring, 1970), 119.

⁹Richard Baxter, The Saints Everlasting Rest (London, 1688), p. 585, quoted in Reed, "Edward Taylor's Poetry: Puritan Structure and Form," AL, 46 (1974-75), 304-312.

¹⁰Thomas Doolittle, Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, quoted in Donald E. Stanford, Edward Taylor (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1965), pp. 16-17. Cf. Mindele Black's summary of Doolittle's, Cotton Mather's, Thomas Goodwin's and Samuel Willard's preparationist approaches, in her article "Edward Taylor: Heavens Sugar Cake," NEQ, 29 (1956), pp. 168-169. She finds Goodwin and Willard similar but warmer in feeling than the first two.

¹¹Stanford, Edward Taylor, p. 17.

¹²Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" pp. 467-475.

¹³See Stanford's Appendix 2, "Manuscripts," item 33, for the position of this poem in his edition of The Poems of Edward Taylor.

¹⁴See Austin Warren's analysis of the baroque treatment in his article "Edward Taylor's Poetry: Colonial Baroque," KR, 3 (1941), 357-358.

¹⁵William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), p. 33.

¹⁶Haller, p. 13.

¹⁷Haller, pp. 3-5, 33. Haller's entire first chapter, pp. 3-48, is given to a broad outline of the background of Puritanism, going back as far as Chaucer's parson, but the use of the name "Puritan" he dates roughly as beginning with the protests of Thomas Cartwright at Cambridge in 1570.

¹⁸Haller, p. 27.

¹⁹Haller, pp. 27-28.

²⁰See the listing of Ames' work in The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (1939; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1943), p. 211.

²¹Haller, pp. 23-28, gives a brief history of the rise of Puritan devotional manuals.

²²Rogers' Seven Treatises, quoted in Haller, p. 37.

²³Haller, pp. 14-21.

²⁴Haller, p. 33.

²⁵Haller, pp. 21 ff., gives a history of "spiritual preaching"; see p. 32 for an analogy of the preaching with Elizabethan theater, p. 34 for the quotation from Smith.

²⁶Quoted from John Fry, The Clergy in their Colours (London, 1650), in Perry Miller, The Seventeenth Century, Vol. I of The New England Mind (1939; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), p. 368. References to this work of Miller's will be indicated by the secondary title hereafter.

²⁷This is the full title of Perkins' A Case of Conscience, cited from his 1595 work by Black, p. 163.

²⁸Black, p. 163.

²⁹Perry Miller, From Colony to Province, Vol. II of The New England Mind (1953; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), p. 349.

³⁰Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975), p. 65.

³¹Keller, The Example, p. 60.

³²Sluder, p. 266.

³³Keller, The Example, p. 62.

³⁴Charles W. Mignon, "The American Puritan and Private Qualities of Edward Taylor: Diction in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," American Speech, 41 (1966), 249-251, interestingly discusses Taylor's medical terms and their etymology.

³⁵Norman S. Grabo, Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 118. Pages 115-135 give Grabo's estimate of Taylor's elegies, which, he believes were the best of this genre in the American seventeenth century.

³⁶There is an aspect of the elegies that argues for the health of Taylor's outlook in quite another way than from the spiritual standpoint. That is, their very baldness and crudity. Besides simply

showing seventeenth-century fearlessness at facing unpleasant facts, Taylor's unsqueamish approach demonstrates, as Karl Keller notes, "a sense of human balance and normalcy of sensibility of the sort that one enjoys (much more fully, to be sure) in Shakespeare," The Example, p. 193.

³⁷I am indebted to Karl Keller for pointing out a number of the Taylor references to sin as sickness and for many of Keller's findings in the chapter "The Images of Salvation," The Example, pp. 190-206.

³⁸Keller, The Example, p. 67, shows Taylor's possession of the Culpaper; p. 68 gives the source of the theory of signatures as Paracelsus (the Swiss physician, Theophrastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541).

³⁹Donald E. Stanford, Edward Taylor, Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 52 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1965), p. 8, says, "At Westfield, he raised bees, kept cattle and horses, cultivated vegetables." Keller, The Example, p. 67, speculates, "The many references to herbs for medicine in his poems suggest that he may have kept a 'physic garden' and that he used herbs from it for cures. . . ."

⁴⁰"Appendices," No. 3, "The Humors," Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1948), p. 1632.

⁴¹Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 256-257.

⁴²Quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 27.

⁴³Taylor's use of the word "case" is an example of his fondness for punning and the many-layered metaphor. The word here combines a medical and legal sense and will also, on occasion, show the meaning of display-cabinet for divine grace. Cf. Sargent Bush, Jr., "Paradox Puritanism, and Taylor's Gods Determinations," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 48-66, for a discussion of Taylor's characteristically Puritan use of the pun.

⁴⁴An editorial comment in Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings (1938; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), I, 289, is: "It is only with the next century that men are bluntly told how God abhors them and holds them over the pit of Hell as one holds a spider."

⁴⁵Black, p. 174, cites Taylor's "appealing, child-like figures" in "Meditations" 33, 38 and 112 (2) in The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor, ed. Thomas H. Johnson; and 144, 147, 178 and "Meditation" 37

in Thomas H. Johnson, "Some Edward Taylor Gleanings," NEQ, 16 (1943), 288.

⁴⁶Stanford, "Edward Taylor's "Spiritual Relation,"" pp. 471-472.

⁴⁷Edward Taylor's Christographia, ed. Norman S. Grabo (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 11, 14, 20. Further references to this work will be made by the initial C and page numbers within the body of the text.

⁴⁸Cf. II. 70. See Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 31, 56-57, for the Halfway Covenant stance on baptism and Taylor's correlation of the Old Testament cutting and washing images with the Christian sacraments.

⁴⁹Kathy Siebel and Thomas M. Davis, "Edward Taylor and the Cleansing of Aqua Vitae," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 102-109, show numerous applications of the aqua vitae in purgative and medicinal images, most of them linked to the redeeming blood of Christ.

⁵⁰See, for example, the comment in Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards, Backgrounds of American Literary Thought (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 49, on the Puritans' "unhealthy degree of self-questioning and inward torment." Cf. Haller's statement in The Rise of Puritanism, pp. 36-37, that "The Puritan preacher proffered to a multitude in his own age what seemed enlightenment and a new freedom. He proffered the means to a more active and significant life, a means of overcoming fears, . . ."

⁵¹Norman S. Grabo, "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," PMLA, 79 (1964), 559.

⁵²Keller divides his treatment of Taylor's scatological imagery into three sections: "Barnyard and swamp imagery, toilet images, and the language of bodily disease," in The Example, p. 201. Many of Taylor's excremental images and my inferences are drawn from this work, pp. 199-206.

⁵³Keller, The Example, pp. 193-206, gives a comparative study of excremental imagery from the Bible through Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Bunyan, Milton and Edward Taylor.

⁵⁴Keller, The Example, p. 206, effectively makes the point that Taylor's "pervasive excremental imagery does not at all constitute the mystic's 'dark night of the soul' or 'Way of Purgation,' as Norman Grabo implies, following the lead of Evelyn Underhill." Cf. Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 49-66, and Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness (New York,

1955), xiv, 136-137, 204, 414, 425, for treatments aligning Taylor with the self-punishing mystics.

- ⁵⁵Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" p. 471. Square brackets in the "Relation" show Stanford's conjectural readings where the manuscript had eroded.
- ⁵⁶Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" pp. 470-471.
- ⁵⁷Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" p. 472.
- ⁵⁸Kenneth B. Murdock, Literature and Theology in Colonial New England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1949), p. 167.
- ⁵⁹Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" p. 472.
- ⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 472.
- ⁶¹See Grabo's discussion of the mildness of Taylor's reproofs of sin in his Introduction to the Christographia, xxviii-xxix ("the heat of hell's fire rarely scorches his rhetoric"), which Grabo attributes to Taylor's temperament, "too optimistic to dwell comfortably upon the negative consequences of his doctrine," but which I believe may be more consistently explained as harmonizing with Taylor's teaching that the elect will join the Lord in repudiating their own sin. Cf. his self-reproof, C, pp. 392-393, "But goe toe, Soule, is it thus with thee alas!" which is more a lament than a condemnation, as is true in the poems.
- ⁶²Solomon Stoddard, A Treatise Concerning Conversion (Boston, 1719), p. 3, cited in David L. Parker, "Edward Taylor's Preparationism: A New Perspective on the Taylor-Stoddard Controversy," EAL, 11 (Winter, 1976), 261.
- ⁶³Perry Miller, "Preparation for Salvation in Seventeenth-Century New England," Journal of the History of Ideas, 4 (1943), 253-286; Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 66-69; Norman S. Pettit, The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 158ff.
- ⁶⁴Parker, pp. 259-260, gives a concise history of the origin of preparationism.
- ⁶⁵Parker, pp. 259-260; cf. Pettit, p. 18.

⁶⁶William Perkins, Workes, II, 13, given in Morgan, Visible Saints, p. 67; John Preston, The Saints Qualification (London, 1633), pp. 6, 31, and A Liveles Life (London, 1635), pp. 54-56, cited in Morgan, Visible Saints, p. 69. The Westminster Confession of Faith (Inverness, Scotland: Publications Committee, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1976), XV. iii, stipulates: "Although repentance be not rested in, of any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it" (XV. iii).

⁶⁷Hooker, so summarized in Pettit, p. 18.

⁶⁸Solomon Stoddard, The Safety of Appearing at the Day of Judgment, in the Righteousness of Christ (Boston, 1686), p. 205, quoted and summarized in Parker, pp. 260, 275; Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" pp. 471-472.

⁶⁹Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" pp. 471-472; Edward Taylor, "Profession of Faith," Westfield Church Records, Westfield, Mass., pp. 45-46, cited in Parker, pp. 262-263.

⁷⁰Edward Taylor, "Profession of Faith," pp. 45-46, in Parker, p. 262.

⁷¹This passage from the original version of the sermon is quoted from the manuscript contained in the Westfield Church Records, pp. 87-100, in Parker, p. 263.

⁷²Solomon Stoddard, The Tryall of Assurance (Boston, 1698), p. 3, quoted in Parker, p. 263.

⁷³Stoddard, A Treatise Concerning Conversion, p. 3, quoted in Parker, p. 261.

⁷⁴Solomon Stoddard, A Guide to Christ. Or, the Way of Directing Souls that are under the Work of Conversion (Boston, 1714), p. 86, cited in Parker, p. 261.

⁷⁵Parker's valuable article, pp. 259-278, consults numerous original manuscripts as well as many modern studies and draws a number of appropriate conclusions about the Taylor-Stoddard controversy. It is surprising, however, that Parker takes the position he does, that "Taylor, far from being theologically conservative as he is often described, is--in relation to preparation, at least--actually more liberal than Stoddard, . . ." What Parker appears to have overlooked

is that Taylor was a thoroughgoing Covenant theologian, and that Covenant doctrine was itself "liberal" in many of its aspects as compared with Calvinism. Stoddard, on the other hand, was moving close to original Calvinistic positions, especially in the matter of preparation, although his Lord's Supper policy was itself an innovation. Cf. Perry Miller's assertion that Stoddard's radicalism "abolished the covenant entirely, and prepared the way for American Puritanism to return to its 'primitive passion,'" in The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry, pp. 221-222.

⁷⁶Quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 368.

⁷⁷Kathy Siebel and Thomas M. Davis, "Edward Taylor and the Cleansing of Aqua Vitae," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), p. 103. To be fair to Siebel and Davis, it must be noted that they recognize that "the body . . . is described as 'Nature's Alembick,' a receptacle for the preparation of such medicines as aqua vitae," yet they confuse the issue, I believe, in failing to distinguish in the references to the body the figurative meanings from the physical, as they do clearly with the aqua vitae image.

⁷⁸Many of these inferences are drawn from William J. Schieck's chapter, "Like a Golden Lanthorn Trim: The Human Body," in Schieck's book, The Will and the Word: The Poetry of Edward Taylor (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1974), pp. 27-48. This useful volume is a collection of Schieck's essays on Taylor's Puritan psychology.

⁷⁹In this elevation of the body, Taylor was willing to go beyond Calvin, who taught that Christ's humanity was somehow subsumed into his Godhead, once he ascended to his Father:

This the great Calvin affirms tho' he also saith that the vaile being removed we shall see God openly reigning in his Majesty. Christs Humanity shall be no longer the Medium which detains us from any Sight of God beyonde it; yet he saith, he shall not thus abdicate the Kingdom from himselfe, but in Some manner as it were reduce it from his Humanity unto the glorious Godhead. Hence the Kingdom remains according to Calvin with the Person in the Deity.

This explanation Taylor did not hesitate to follow with his own demurrer: "But why the Humanity of the person in personall Union to the Godhead should be deprived of it, in which the Mediatory Offices were carried on, I see no proof nor reason" (C, pp. 412-413).

CHAPTER III

THE EROTIC IMAGE: THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE

There may seem to be a long step between the sickbed of Edward Taylor's hygienic harmonies to the marriage bed of the erotic ones, but the student of Taylor's imagery will soon discover that this is not the case. Indeed, many of the figures of healing and cleansing have elements of the erotic in them, so that the two kinds of images are almost inseparable. For instance, in "The Reflexion" the suppliant asks, "Had not my Soule's thy Conduit, Pipes stopt bin / With mud, what Ravishment would'st thou Convay?" and prays that

Graces Golden Spade dig till the Spring
Of tears arise, and cleare this filth away.
Lord, let thy spirit raise my sighings till
These Pipes my soule do with thy sweetness fill.¹

One soon comes to see, furthermore, that the healing of vast disorder by the orderly God of the universe is often a prelude to a kind of cosmic marriage of disparities.

Sometimes the distance between God and man is so magnified as to make the proposed marriage seem an absurdity. In Meditation I. 1, for example, the Lord is "infinity" and Taylor as representative of sinful mankind is "Finity." The poet longs for the Golden City, jasper walled, "with Pretious Stones, whose Gates are Pearles most clear / And Streets Pure Gold, like to transparent Glass," but finds he is a "poore Snake, . . . scarce mudwalled in" (I. 23: 3-14, 12).

In relation to his royal Lord, he does not even assume the part of a slave, but asserts, "I am to Christ more base than to a King / A Mite, Fly, Worm, Ant Serpent is," yet before the poem is finished, he is rejoicing that "Christ doth Woove" his "backward Clay" (I. 23: 31-32, 38-39). Often these unions resemble the harmonies of the grotesque represented in the hygienic figures, as in the mismatch proposed here:

Shall Mortall, and Immortall marry? nay,
 Man marry God? God be a Match for Mud?
 The King of Glory Wed a Worm? mere Clay?
 This is the Case. The Wonder too in Bliss.
 Thy Maker in thy Husband. Hearst thou this?

My Maker, he my Husband? Oh! strange joy!
 If Kings wed Worms, and Monarchs Mites wed should,
 Glory spouse Shame, a Prince a Snake or Fly
 An Angell Court an Ant, all Wonder would.
 Let such wed Worms, Snakes, Serpents, Divills,
 Flyes,
 Less Wonder than the Wedden in our Eyes.

(I. 23: 21-30)

The unheard of grace implied in such unions was to call forth Taylor's continual praise: "Oh! matchless love, laid out on such as Hee! / Should gold wed dung, should stars woo lobster claws, / It would no wonder, like this wonder, cause" (II. 33: 16-18). However preposterous the match might appear, the suppliant is always assured before the end of a poem that such a union is the will of the Lord and that it promises to be eternally harmonious.

At times these universal unions are expressed in terms of a more cosmic than comic cast, as in the "bit," "ball" and "mite" representations of man seen alongside the configurations of God's omnipotence and majesty. In such pictures, God's might is deliberately

emphasized at the expense of any greatness or significance in man, as in the rhetorical question that begins the fine Prologue to the Meditations:

Lord, Can a Crumb of Dust the Earth outweigh,
 Outmatch all mountains, nay the Chrystall Sky?
 Imbosom in't designs that shall Display
 And trace into the Boundless Deity?
 Yea hand a Pen whose moysture doth guild ore
 Eternall Glory with a glorious glore.

(P, 1-6; cf. II. 48: 19-21)

Yet, as with the suggestions of the absurd marriages, the human seeker is always at length assured that God actually requires man's weakness and insignificance and that in the Lord, man's insufficiency will become "might." Taylor played up the disparity as useful to the Lord in deliberately punning language.

If thy Almightyness, and all my Mite
 United be in sacred Marriage knot
 My Mite is thine: Mine thine Almighty Might.

(II. 48: 19-21, 37-39)

So it is that in a way akin to the curative processes of the preceding study, both parties to the Marriage Supper are to be ultimately satisfied.²

Yet although comic figures, with their denigration of mankind, and the cosmic figures, with their intrinsic dignity, might have been acceptable to Taylor's latter-day critics as typical of Puritan thought, some have wondered if Taylor's work might not have been considered "evil" by his contemporaries and hence banned from publication by its author.³ Richard D. Altick, for example, praised Taylor's gifts but

guessed that "they were not of the kind of which his fellow Puritans could have approved" because of the poet's frank expressions of physical love.⁴ Kenneth Murdock also felt that Taylor's readers could not have conceived of the poetry as "sexually innocent" and, speaking with Arthur Hobson Quinn and others, found a strong conflict between Taylor's "Puritanical dread of encouraging the 'Sensuall Appetite'" and a remorse that "he had yielded sometimes to the affections 'hankering' after 'Carnall things.'"⁵ Other critics, like Mindele Black, have noted that religious mystics have long used the erotic themes but felt that Taylor could not have found his sensuous strain within the Puritan tradition and must have resorted to the Catholic, or at least the Anglo-Catholic tradition. For even though Black quotes from several erotic passages in Puritan divines, she reasons that Taylor simply used his "copious allegorization" in such passages in the Meditations as an "escape" and that his rapturous expressions were "borrowed" from the Catholic mystics, since such feeling could not have come naturally from a Puritan pen, more used to "austere or hortatory sentiments."⁶

Abundant evidence from studies of seventeenth century preaching and devotional literature, however, has been uncovered to show that Taylor would not have had to go outside Calvinist and Puritan tradition to find erotic expression of doctrinal truths. This chapter will examine some Protestant and Puritan devotional and homiletic material to show that Taylor was actually consistent with his own Puritan tradition in using the images of human passion. As Taylor imaginatively employed them, the figures resemble a kind of romantic scenario, with the Lord as handsome lover, and Soul as shy, unpolished maiden held

under bonds. When the divine Prince rescues and elevates her, she becomes his worthy consort at last in a Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Doctrinal nuances at every stage serve not only to glorify the Lord but to raise the status of humanity as his beloved.

Images of Ardor from Puritan Preachers

John Calvin himself at times described grace in terms of "a fordible seizure, a rape of the surprised will"⁷ and the Lord's Supper as a conjugal embrace:

We embrace Christ by faith, not as appearing at a distance, but as uniting himself with us, to become our head, and to make us his members. . . . He also makes the very flesh in which he resides the means of giving life to us, that, by a participation of it, we may be nourished to immortality. Here, then, we enjoy peculiar consolation, that we find life in our own flesh. . . . We know /we/ can not otherwise be effected than by entire union of both body and spirit with us.⁸

Taylor would not actually have had to go far back among his own predecessors to find similar examples. Thomas Goodwin, the English devotional writer of The Heart of Christ in Heaven, spent pages describing Christ's intimate affection, showing that "Christ is love covered over with flesh, yea, our flesh." Goodwin revealed passionate dialogues between Christ and his followers which could be characterized as paeans of pure rapture.⁹ A New England parallel is to be found in Samuel Willard's Some brief sacramental meditations, where the believer is invited to follow Christ from the garden to the tomb and to fly deep into the bosom of love. One may note the erotic overtones in such passages as these on the Lord's Supper:

And if thou longest after Spiritual relief, and feelest thine own emptiness, how sweet will a Christ be to thee? With what delight wilt thou feed upon him? . . . Come then, Oh, my Soul! to the Table, for this Living Bread. . . . Drink, and drink again. . . . Behold here is a Fountain of it; the Gospel Conduits run with this Wine; Come then, and take thy fill. . . . Inebriate thy self then with these Rivers of his pleasures.¹⁰

Cotton Mather called the Supper "A Love-Feast" and declared that "we should have a Love-fire at it."¹¹ Samuel Mather, on his part, said the Supper was

a Commemoration of the greatest love, which cannot be done as it ought to be without the reciprocation of our most ardent and intense Love. . . . If we love Christ as we ought, he is our all. . . . If we do not come to enjoy him, and lie in his Embraces, we do not come with a right design, nor can we expect to profit.¹²

John Cotton once characterized the "delights" of Canticles as

an allusion to the marriage-bed, which is the delights of the Bridegroom, and Bride. This marriage-bed is the publick worship of God in the Congregation of the Church as Cant. 3. 1.

The "publick Worship of God" he called "the bed of loves: where . . . Christ embraceth the souls of his people, and casteth into their hearts the immortal seed of his Word and Spirit, Gal. 4:19. 2."¹³

In all these instances, then, we may see that Taylor had ample precedent within his own tradition for celebrating by figures the divine dalliance and the marriage union of the Lord with sinful mankind. The images of love were in fact his favorites, beginning with Meditation I and running like a thread throughout the Preparatory Meditations. The Canticles was his favorite book of the Bible, being the basis of some 76 of the Meditations, with the Gospel of John a

close second.¹⁴ The figure of marriage was, in fact, a very satisfactory one to designate various important aspects of doctrine. Said he in the Christographia:

All Union being a making One of Severall, lyeth in joyning things together. Our Lord Styles marriage Union a joyning together. Matth. 19.5. So the Mystically Union is a joyning the Soule and Christ together. 1 Cor. 6. 17. and So this Personall Union, is a joyning the Godhead, and Manhood together.¹⁵

At six-week intervals, Taylor contemplated these unions as he readied himself for the regular sacrament-day celebrations of his congregation. The 217 "Preparatory Meditations," beginning with the "What hath thy Godhead, as not satisfide / Marri'de our Manhood, making it its Bride?" of Meditation One, abound in references to the divine courtship and marriage and its many eternal implications. It appears, then, that although some twentieth century critics have insisted that Taylor's passion and warmth of feeling were borrowed and that he was more at home in what they believed were the stiffer and grimmer expressions of Puritanism, the poet's evident enjoyment of the erotic strain and his adeptness in employing it would argue otherwise.¹⁶ Actually, the story line of medieval romance was perfectly suited to Taylor's doctrinal requirements and proved in his hands a most appropriate instrument by which to express the elevation of sinful mankind to be the Bride of Christ in the ultimately harmonious Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

In Eden's Park: Christ's Courtly Love

When we read of Christ in terms of lilies and roses, as in II. 76, we can believe we are in the realm of the baroque sonnet:

Meethinks thy smile doth make thy Footstoole so
 Spread its green Carpet 'fore thy feet for joy.
 And Bryers climb in t'bright Rose that flows
 Out in sweet reechs to meet thee in the sky;
 And makes the sportive Starrs play Hide-and-Seek
 And on thy bodies Glory peeping keep.¹⁷

(Lines 19-24)

More often in Taylor, however, we can perceive the outlines of an ancient story line, as in I. 29:

My Shattred Phancy stole away from mee,
 (Wits run a Wooling over Edens Parke)
 And in Gods Garden saw a golden Tree,
 Whose Heart was All Divine, and gold its barke: . . .

(Lines 1-4)

The reference to the park, the fertile garden and the tree with its golden bark, disclose the understanding of Taylor and his compatriots that the divine pursuit of mankind began at the very dawn of creation in Eden, had not ceased until his day and would not end until "the Lord's Day." In this context we find suitable the appearance of the handsome hero-prince, the humble but desirable maiden in distress, the wooing, the banter, the "daunger" and drawing-back and, finally, the happy conclusion in the royal wedding.

We can immediately identify the prince as the Son of God and the maiden as fallen mankind, but a question arises as to how the lowly human race can be prepared to be the bride of such a One and how all

will be carried out to the satisfaction of the order-loving mind of the Divine Suitor. As will be seen, however, the medieval story line is made to order for the balancing requirements of Puritan doctrine.

A clue for the required balance may come in a study of Puritan courtship, particularly Edward Taylor's own. Puritan love must display a high degree of fitness and order. In an extravagant letter Taylor wrote to Elizabeth Fitch, his wife-to-be, he centered in the midst of an acrostic an equilateral triangle, symbolizing the eternally equal Trinity, and within its three sides, a ring to show that "love . . . must bee, / Trvely confind within the Trinitie." Another letter pointed out that though "Conjugall Love ought to exceed all other, yet it must be kept within bounds too."¹⁸ Perry Miller also notes the Puritan concern for order and suitability between prospective marriage partners. He records that the early colonists took their time in arranging weddings. Appropriate mates must be found, particularly for children of good families: ". . . certain classes, ministers' children, for instance, or those whose education was longer pursued, sometimes were well along in their twenties before they assumed the responsibilities of marriage." The reason was that "properly qualified suitors were not always at hand," and such suitable mates must be found before the marriage could have the approval of the families or the church.¹⁹ Samuel Sewall recorded Taylor's memories of courtship days, showing the poet's own concern for finding a suitable wife:

July 15, 1698. Mr. Edward Taylor comes to our house from Westfield. Monday July 18. I walk'd with Mr. Edward Taylor upon Cotton Hill, thence to Becon Hill, the Pasture, along the Stone wall: As came back we sat down on the great

Rock, and Mr. Taylor told me his courting his first wife,
 . . . Has God answered in finding out one Godly and fit for
 me, and shall I part for fancy?²⁰

His letters to Elizabeth Fitch also show his anxiety to be a proper suitor. He used "Loves Hyperboles," exaggerated as they were, because in this way he had found a "fitter Comparison to set out my love by, . . ." ²¹

In the courtship of the Lamb, the beauty, the goodness and the power appear to be all on the side of the Divine Lover as he sweeps from the heavens in his fiery chariot, "Heavens sparkling Courtiers" in his van. He is "this sight which flings / Seraphick Phancies in Chill Raptures high" (I. 20: 1-2, 19). The human Soul, on her part, appears to have nothing to offer. She sees herself as a "bit of clay" or "ball of dirt," as "black" or "Sunburnt" like the Shulamite, or "rusty" and uncouth in his presence (II. 143: 2, 5; II. 69: 7, 13; II. 12: 31). In terms of the radical difference between them, then, the postures assumed by the lovers are appropriate and suitably resemble the stances taken by the personae of the Petrarchan sonnets, but with Soul addressing her Lord in a reversal of the lord-to-lady roles of the love poetry. Though occasionally Christ appears in the place of the desirable virgin, more often his love-aspect is that of the warrior-king of Canticles, coming "terrible as an army with banners," and the Soul takes the place of the maiden whom he actively seeks. So while Taylor most often uses the first person pronoun, sometimes representing his personal devotional impulses and sometimes representing those of elect mankind, to simplify the discussion in this chapter, third person will be used for "Soul," to indicate both the individual seeker and the

corporate church as the Bride of Christ. This is consistent with Taylor's doctrinal stance, as both Norman S. Grabo and William J. Schieck have noted. Schieck says that Taylor's "I-hood" is never lost, though it appears in the context of religious history.²² Grabo notes that

We cannot . . . rely on Taylor's use of the first person pronoun as reference to himself alone. Even in those meditations where the representative quality is not obvious, we may not suppose that it is absent. What Taylor claims for his own experience is at the same time the collective experience of all the elect through all time.²³

Taylor so claims in II: 133:

Whom Christ espouseth is his spouse indeed,
 His spouse or bride no single person, nay,
 She is an aggregate so doth proceed
 And in it sure and can't be stole away.
 And if you thus be members made of me
 He'll be your bridegroom, you his spouse shall be.

(Lines 25-30)

The poet thus corroborates the representative nature of the speaker of these very personal love poems.

The Warrior Lover and the Desirable Maiden:
 Irresistible and Inherent Grace

In the entrance of the Divine Lover, Taylor sets forth the majesty of the courtly tales and the awesome Reformation teachings of divine sovereignty. The King comes before Soul (mankind as Shulamite) like a champion touting his triumphs, or as David victorious into Jerusalem:

David in all his gallantry now comes,
 Bringing to tende thy Shrine, his Royall Glory,
 Rich Prowess, Prudence, Victories, Sweet Songs,
 And Piety to Pensill out they Story;
 To draw my Heart to thee in this brave shine
 Of typick Beams, most warm. But still I pine.

(II. 12: 13-18)

Soul peeps out at the Divine Lover passing by and is almost overwhelmed at the prospect of his beauty and majesty:

I threw Zion's lattice then an eye,
 Which spi'd one like a lump of glory pure
 Nay, Cloaths of gold, buttons with pearls do lie
 Like rags of shooclouts unto his he wore.
 Heaven's curtains blancht with sun and stars of light
 Are black as sackcloath to his garments bright.

(I. 12: 7-12)

The King comes as from battle, his robes dyed ("pinckted") in the fight, yet this sign of struggle for her only enhances his glory in Soul's eyes:

Pluck back the curtains, back the window shuts:
 Through Zion's agate window take a view
 How Christ in pinckted robes from Bozrah puts,
 Come glorious in's apparel forth to woo.

(I. 12: 25-28)

In the images of the Lord's processions before the astonished eyes of the Soul, the impression of awesome force or drawing power is implicit. This is necessary to express the all-important Puritan doctrine of irresistible grace. The Puritans, following Calvin, taught that the Almighty must of necessity take the initiative in salvation. The Lord's irresistibility shows in such terms as "rusht," "dazzling"

and "brave shine" (I. 12: 5; II. 9: 1; II. 12: 17), as if some unpredictable force were to enter unannounced but make its appearance and impression indelibly known. The "overpouring" attentions of the Warrior-King are perfectly suited to the "Augustinian strain of piety," as Perry Miller calls it, by which the Puritans believed that grace had to be a "marvellous strong work, when the Spirit of God comes to act things contrary to nature."²⁴ Since man instinctively wishes save for himself, if salvation be necessary, the Soul must be brought by an "irresistible power" to "resigne it selfe to the good will of God." "Grace is absolute and supernatural," said Perry Miller, summing up Thomas Hooker's teaching on the matter, "a holy kind of violence."

A child may have

the most towardly natural disposition . . . advantaged by the most likely way of education . . . yet till the heart be changed and over-poured by a work of supernatural grace, the life will alwayes be found barren of any good fruit, void of holiness, and sincere obedience.²⁵

These lines from Hooker calling for God's indomitable attentions correspond perfectly to Taylor's request in II. 12, when the Soul asks the Lord to come and "me scoure," with the double meaning intended in the pun: "Wipe off my Rust, Lord, with thy wisp me scoure, / . . . and Quavers poure / My Cursing Strings on, loaded with thy Praise" (II. 12: 31, 33-34).

On her part, however, Soul cannot receive the advances of the Lord fully or immediately, though she may welcome them, but draws back with feints and blushes:

Dull, Dull indeed! What shall it e're be thus?
 And why? Are not thy Promises, my Lord,
 Rich, Quick'ning things? How should my full Cheeks blush
 To find mee thus?

(II. 12: 1-4)

The Soul's indecision is reiterated by such lines as these in "Let by
 Rain":

Ye Flippering Soule,
 Why dost between the Nippers dwell?
 Not stay, nor goe. Not yea, nor yet Controle.
 Doth this doe well?
 Rise joyny'ng when the skies fall weeping
 Showers.
 Not O're nor under th'Clouds and Cloudy
 Powers.

Not yea, nor noe;
 On tiptoes thus? Why sit on thorns?

(Lines 1-8)

The actual reason for Soul's timidity is her realization of her own
 inadequacy:

Then Grieve, my Soul, thy vessell is so small
 And holds no more for such a Lovely Hee.
 That strength's so little, Love scarce acts at all.
 That sight's do dim, doth scarce him lovely see.
 Grieve, grieve, my Soul, thou shouldst so
 pimping bee,
 Now such a price is here presented thee.

(I. 12: 31-36)

Only in such masterful action can the Lord come and accomplish the
 salvation of his Beloved from her condition of helplessness and in-
 eptitude.²⁶

Yet the human soul is not altogether passive to the process of redemption and is given a role that is both active and dignified. To understand the part the individual plays, one must have with the doctrine of irresistible grace a grasp on the concomitant teaching of inherent grace, i.e., that Christ lifts the soul to himself in redemption, but that the soul still retains its human identity with all its original powers and capacities. As Thomas Shepard stated it, God does not work upon the believed "as upon blocks or brute creatures," propelling them by an immediate influence, because believers are rational creatures.²⁷ And Thomas Hooker, who preached perhaps more insistently than any other the degradation of sinful man and the soul's helplessness to attain salvation in its own strength, yet also preached that the yearned-for salvation was not altogether a new faculty in the human heart, but was instead "an assisting power," dealing with the capacities already there. Grace must sweep away the obstructions of sin and then "the coast is now clear that reason may be heard."²⁸

His Glory Smites Her Eyes: The Light of Reason

To follow the role of the reason in the Puritan concept of regeneration, one can do no better than study the eye and sight metaphors, the "fyn looking" which is a primary part of the love story in Edward Taylor's Meditations. We noted how Soul is dazed and overcome at the sight of the King in glorious procession and draws back from too full a gaze, yet one true sight guarantees a hunger for more, and she is drawn to a greater and greater illumination, for, as Edward Taylor expressed it, "if Christ's Glory over kiss thine Eye, / Thy Love

will soon Enchanged bee thereby" (I. 12: 29-30). The reason of man, here represented by the sight, is in this way recognized and brought into play as having a primary and significant part in the drama of redemption. The Puritan understanding of the importance of man's rational powers runs counter to Calvin's teaching on the subject, which was that conversion is not dependent on the functioning of the intellect but is a suprarational experience brought about by transcendent grace.²⁹ Taylor was probably aware of Calvin's doctrine on the matter but apparently was not persuaded to the great reformer's viewpoint.³⁰ Instead, Taylor joined other orthodox New England Puritans in maintaining the older tradition of Augustine, which held a high regard for the rational faculty and the will of man and estimated their roles to be crucial in salvation.³¹

Taylor's treatment of "light" shows that he held with other Puritan New Englanders that, despite the fall and even before regeneration, man could still discern some truth from the created universe.

As Thomas Hooker put it:

The light of nature, remaining in Adams posterity, since the lapse; is so little as that it is not to be mentioned the same day, with what it was in Adam, before the fall. The light of nature, consists in common principles imprinted upon the reasonable soul, by nature: inclining man, to assent unto some naturall, and manifest trueths upon the representation of them; without waiting for any prooffe; that is, as it were by instinct, without argument.³²

Taylor agreed. He taught that originally Adam possessed both "common knowledge;" stemming from sensory perception, and "saving knowledge," whereby the mind could perceive from within by its own powers (C, pp. 208-209). This lower kind of wisdom, the inheritance of fallen

mankind, Taylor also called "Created Wisdom" and represented in the poetry by the metaphors depicting a clouded vision or a "peeping" sort of activity, one that would not reveal much but would to a small extent contribute a desirable illumination. Thus Soul could not at once bear the full sight of the Lord, but could glance out of the window at him or watch him reflected in her looking glass:

Lord, let thy Dazzling Shine refracted fan'de
 In this bright Looking Glass its favour lay
 Upon mine Eyes that oculated stand
 And peep thereat, in button moulds of clay.

(II. 9: 1-4)

However, Taylor held, again with other Puritan theologians, that men's "bodies Eyes are blind, no sight therein / is Cleare enough" (II. 147: 31-32).³³ The faint light granted fallen mankind would by no means have been enough to bring a soul to Christ. The Puritans believed in an order of illumination, what John Preston called a "three-folde kinde of Truth": on the first level there was natural truth within the heart of man; on the second, there was common knowledge that a natural man could acquire from theologians and books; on the third was spiritual knowledge. All men had the first; all might gain the second; but only grace could give the third. Yet only on that final level could redemption be secured.³⁴

In comparison with the divine light of Christ, which must enter and "overpoure" the soul for salvation to take place, even

Solomons Sight was made thro' muddie Cracket glasses of
 defiled nature, and therefore tho' it might See deeper thro'
 the Sides of naturall Corpuscles, than other mere men; yet
 the wisdom that is fisht in these rivers, and brought in

with it unto the Intellectual treasury, was but foggy and fragmentous, in comparison to that which Christs holy Soule was fortified withall. It was pure light without any Scrap of darkness. Bright Sunshine without any never so small a cloud. (C, p. 208)

Yet because Christ possesses the wisdom which is the end of all knowledge, the intellect, especially that of the elect, shows an inherent affinity for his: "Thou art top full of Grace and truth wherby / The Object art of Intellects the Seate / In us and of our Wills, therein to 'ploy" (II. 158: 61-63).

The "feeding" of the reason meant the reawakening and restoration to the highest powers of the intellect and all those faculties associated with it. Book-learning, especially if it pointed up right doctrine, was definitely to be pursued. Thus Taylor, along with his Puritan colleagues, eschewed the anti-intellectualism of the likes of Gortonites. Early on in the New England settlement, the Puritan authorities had known that they must deal with Samuel Gorton whose teachings would have undermined the Puritan understanding of a reasonable redemption by his attacks on their reliance upon learning: "You know not, neither can you, with all your libraries give the interpretation of the light of God . . . but have lost it in the wilderness."³⁵ When the rulers excluded Gorton from the Massachusetts colony, they were repudiating also the anti-intellectual impulse that had activated such groups as the Quakers, the Shakers and the Enthusiasts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was such an attitude as was represented in the doggerel of Thomas Maule, the Salem Quaker:

Humane Learning I have not,
 God doth to me afford
 His Teaching by his Spirit good
 To understand his Word.³⁶

Taylor, with the Puritans, held that the restoration of reason meant that the understanding was also to be reinstated. Reason restored by grace would never be contrary to good sense. Said Taylor's father-in-law, James Fitch:

Reason in a believer is a means to let in a light and good beyond Reason, that as the senses are means to present Reason in things to the Reason of man, although Reason is above Sense, so Reason is a means to present a divine good unto Faith, though that divine good is above Reason.³⁷

Taylor agreed that faith never instructs contrary to reason:

The Christian Faith cannot abide at least
 To dash out reasons brains, or blinde its eye.
 Faith never blindeth reasons Eye but cleares
 Its Sight to see things quite above its Sphere.

(II. 108: 27-30)

Because of their emphasis on reason, Taylor and his conservative colleagues were also to resist the "New Lights" movement which was already beginning to make inroads into the religious consciousness of New England before the death of Taylor.³⁸ These men (called "Old Lights" by the opposing party) were stubbornly to resist the drive to lay reason aside and be swayed unduly by emotion. In this respect, at least, the conservative guard would have had little in common with the wildfire emotionalism that would sweep the American frontier in the mid-eighteenth century.³⁹

Her Heart Fetched: The Will Released

With all their stress on right reason, however, the Puritans did not consider it an end in itself. Taylor, like Thomas Shepard, would have shuddered at the dry rationalism of the Arminian who could say, "If faith will not work it, then set reason awork."⁴⁰ The elevation of reason was by no means the culmination of conversion, but it assured that the soul's other faculties would also follow in the restoration. The process of conversion could not continue unless, simultaneously with, or inevitably following after the lifting of the reason, the will of man were also to be brought to acquiescence. The connection between the intellect and the will in this regard must be carefully maintained. Perry Miller shows an unnamed Puritan minister as making this distinction when the divine maintained: "It is true, saith the understanding, and therefore that beleeves it; but it is worthy to be received saith the will, therefore that comes in, takes and accepts it."⁴¹ The clearing away of obstructions to sight is like the first "fyn looking" of the love story, but the picture must enter the heart as with an arrow and the will and affections respond. Soul, knowing this, cries out

Lord let these Charming Glancing Eyes of thine
 Glance on my Souls bright Eye its amorous beams
 To fetch as upon golden Ladders fine
 My Heart and Love to thee in Hottest Steams.

(II. 119: 25-28)

She asks that his "Golden Beames pierce through mine Eye, knowing that a "sticking" into the deeper parts will be necessary before she can be properly "grac'd":

Thou Lightning Eye, let some bright Beames of thine
 Stick in my Soul, to light and liven it:
 Light, Life and Glory, things that are Divine;
 I shall be grac'd withall for glory fit.

(I. 16: 25, 13-26; cf. also II. 119: 25-28)

The descent of Christ's love-arrow into the heart means also that the will is reached. As John Cotton put it:

By the heart you must not understand, that fleshly part of the body which is the seate of life. . . . But it is meant the will of a man, which lyes in the heart, for as the understanding lyes in the head or braine, so the will is seated in the heart.⁴²

Taylor would have concurred. There is ample evidence that he used the terms "heart" and "will" interchangeably.⁴³

Yet, although "Christ's Glory . . . kiss" Soul's eye and penetrate into her heart, she generally is pictured as not being able to respond as she would. There are hindrances to be overcome. Her will is bound to such a degree that although she yearns for the Lord's "Ambient Charms," she is unable to answer his wooing (II. 86: 3; II. 123B: 43-45; II. 142: 36). Like a princess in a fairy tale, Soul finds herself surrounded by a thicket of brambles or a "Lake . . . frozen ore with ice" or in a "Dungeon State" (I. 48: 3; II. 53: 1-2; II. 77: 1). "Hells Inkface Elfe" has placed her under a "strange Charm" which has "enchramp" her "Heart with spite / Making my Love gleame out upon a Toy" (I. 33: 7-8, 23). Sin has rusted her heart's door, and her love "crincht in a Corner lies / Like some shrunk Crickling: and scarce can rise" (I. 42: 11-12). Sin has so weakened the will that it is now "the very Soile / Where Satan reads his Charms,

and sets his Spell" (I. 40: 9-10); cf. also I. 43: 11). Sin now threatens to robe her in a "Winding Sheet," and she feels that none on Judgment Day "more naked stay / Nor dead than I" (I. 25: 11-12).⁴⁴

Christ does not leave his beloved one to perish in this way, however. His "beamings . . . Calcine all these brambly trumperys" and make "a bonfire of my Stack / Of Faggots" (I. 48: 21, 23-24). He breathes upon the frozen lake of her affection with his sweet spicy breath until his "Doctrine melt/s" her "Soul anew" (II. 53: 4, 43). His "Love like to hunger'll breake through strong Walls. / Nay brazen Walls cannot imprison it" (II. 39: 7-8). Christ comes to release the captive and "unscrew Loves Cabinet" (I. 25: 3). Soul implores, "Then let thy Loveliness, Lord, touch my heart. / And let my heart imbrace thy loveliness" (II. 97: 49-50). Christ breaks the spell of sin and sets the captive free by casting an enchantment of his own. The heart, tapping "True Loves Veans" and turning to Christ as "The Object of All Love, begins to undergo transformation, fulfilling the promise that "if Christ's Glory ever kiss thine Eye, / thy Love will soon Enchanted bee thereby" (I. 36: 72; II. 127: 45; cf. also II. 115: 44; II. 158: 61-66; C, p. 30).

One can gain a fuller understanding of the importance of the will's response by studying the ear metaphors, which are often keyed to this particular aspect of the conversion romance. Because the will is the faculty chiefly engaged in the response to God's general and particular callings, Taylor associated this faculty with the hearing imagery. Just as the eye represents reason, the will may be said to serve as its spiritual ears.⁴⁵ As the reason is "Souls piert Eye,"

the will is the "Circumcised Eare" (II. 125: 37; cf. also GD, pp. 406-407). During regeneration, the will, as was the reason before it, is lifted. The Soul now perceived "dropped" into her "Eares delight / Saying Return, Return my Shulamite" (II. 146: 27). As the will of the saint-to-be responds to the music of the Lord's call, it is assured of finding harmony within the divine symphony. Failure to hear, in turn, indicates that the Soul was not of the chosen: "Every Soule that will not heare him is destroyed. How should it otherwise choose?" (C, p. 70). The assertion of God's perfect will by the Soul is actually the spell Christ uses to break the charm of Soul's "Dungeon State" (II. 77: 1). The elect must be freed from that bondage unnaturally imposed upon it, for "nature fault would finde / Were not thy Will, my Spell Charm, Joy, and Gem" ("Upon Wedlock, and Death of Children," 11). Since Soul's imprisonment arose from her rebellion against God's will, the realignment of her will with his assures that she has now entered his "Sea of Electing Grace and Love" (C, p. 305).⁴⁶

While regeneration progresses, it is important to note that the identity of the will is never denied, but rather enhanced and brought into its own. One seventeenth-century preacher explained it in this way:

As the soul, in the bodily eye, causeth it to see, and, in the ear, causeth it to hear, and, in the tongue, causeth it to speak, . . . so the spirit, in the mind, . . . causeth it freely to choose and cleave unto Christ and to God, in such a manner and way of working, as is suitable to its nature. . . .⁴⁷

John Preston affirmed a similar idea when he stated that ". . . Nature, the strength of nature, affections, or whatsoever they be, are like the

wind to drive the ship, thou mayst retain them, only godlinesse must sit at the Sterne." Once grace has entered the soul, he taught, it becomes "second nature" in the same way "as to play on a Lute, or any other Art, . . . so in this, it is planted in the heart, as the senses are, it is infused into the Soule, and then we exercise the operations of it; so that it is another Nature, it is just as the thing that is Naturall."⁴⁸

Preston's idea of the retention of the will is shown to have a significant part in the "closing" of conversion, or the marriage contract between the Soul and her Lord. Though espoused (elected) from eternity, Soul itself makes a choice of betrothal: "With all your Soul endeavour allwayes then / To be espoused in heart to Christ" (II. 133: 37-38). She prays, ". . . make my Heart loaded with Love ascend / Up to thyselfe, its bridegroom" (II. 115: 5-6). In Taylor's imagery, then, there is no "holy rape." The will is not forced nor unduly coaxed but gently led and wooed. The "ravishment" takes place only upon the Soul's willing surrender. The Soul is "inravisht with thy Beauty's glorious glee," when "Christ doth come and take thee by the hand, / And to himselfe presents thee pleasantly / A glorious bride" (II. 134: 9, 24-26).⁴⁹ Soul herself joins in the symbolic rites that unite her to Christ. In Meditation II. 71, Taylor described the sacramental feast "Where Saints are Guests and Angells waiters are" (line 24). Mixing metaphors of Christ as sacrifice, food and drink and spiritual Bridgroom at a wedding supper, Soul notes her desire for him: "Oh! Dove most innocent. O Lamb, most White / A spotless Male in prime," and asks, "Lord make my Faith feed on it heartily /

Let holy Charity my heart Cement" and promises, "When with this Paschall bread and Wine I'm brisk / I in sweet Tunes thy sweetest praise will twist" (II. 71: 7-8, 37-38, 41-42). In this context, the union of the soul with Christ is seen to be made willingly by both parties at the end of a process of mutual deference, gladly yielded by both. Christ never imposes himself upon his elect ones, but "must waite their will" (GD, p. 395). This understanding underlies the experience described in Taylor's "Spiritual Relation," in which he slowly came to love of Christ:

As for Love I can assert that I have been bound in this cord. Oh the outgoing of this Affection whether enriched by the Sanctifying grace of the Spirit called Love, or no, I say not, but hope it. Oh how it went breaking after Christ and longing for him, oh those inward heart panting/s/, and musing/s/ can testify: So its working after the Grace of Christ, and wayes of Christ I can say that although its more Sensible at one time than another, yet when ever I search for it, it is at hand.⁵⁰

Or, as Taylor stated it in another place, "Weddens are the conclusions made of the greatest love and richest affections which are to be found between persons."⁵¹

The marriage metaphors of Edward Taylor and similar passages from contemporary Puritan preachers and writers call into question such interpretations of the Puritan outlook on the human will as Charles S. Mignon's "decorum of imperfection" by which he believed that all of Puritan art, including Taylor's own, was governed by a "will-killing decorum" which constantly cancelled out or paralyzed any true artistic accomplishment.⁵² The facts of local history would seem to prove otherwise, too. It was specifically a crisis of the will that the

little colony of Massachusetts Bay dealt with in the Antinomian controversy. No more could the colonists tolerate the teachings of Mistress Anne Hutchinson than those of the Gortonites, for they knew her doctrines were a basic threat to their own. No more could they deny the integrity of the human will than they could the significance of eternal election. Mistress Hutchinson had taken the teachings of John Cotton, her minister, who had written that the faith of Christians "is not grounded upon the sight of their sanctification but is revealed in an Absolute Promise of free grace"⁵³ and concluded that she would trust only in the divine promise and not heed the stipulations, that "to be solicitous about sanctification and inherent grace is too troublesome" Mistress Hutchinson thus wrested Cotton's teachings to mean that when the Holy Spirit invaded a soul in conversion, that human soul was so submerged in the divine as to become inert and the human will negated. The Puritans taught otherwise. The union of the Soul with God in conversion was based, they held, on mutual stipulation. By agreement, God gave up his "unconfined prerogative" and "voluntarily obliged himself in the threatening annexed to his own Command." It then followed, that there should be a contract entered into freely by both parties in which "by the one we are bound to God and by the other God is bound to us."⁵⁴

Sparks of Heavenly Fire: Affections Warmed

The exaltation of the will which accompanies its down-laying assures also the "raising" of the affections in the full circle of salvation: "Make thou mee thine that so / I may be bed wherein thy

Love shall ly" and "my down laying of myselfe I see / For thee's the way for mee to blessed wealth" (II. 79: 51-52, 66-67). The yielded Soul, made "fit" for "Christ's Bed" finds that Christ will "Cover thee with's White and Red," in a beautiful image of both the protective and overshadowing crucified body and the Lord's Supper which figures it (II. 134: 41-42). The yielding of man's will to the Lord brings forth the moment in which the divine Lover himself finds fulfillment. He has been "Heartsick" for humanity and now may "in Rapid Flashes" "bleed out o'er Loveless mee" (I. 14/15: 5, 6). The Lord "coms tumbling" on man and sends love

in golden pipes that spout
In Streams from heaven, Oh! what love like this?
This comes upon her, hugs her in its Arms
And warms her Spirits. Oh! Celestial Charms.

(II. 142: 33-36)

Now, though the Soul's affections have been cool and unmatching of the divine, she finds that Christ's "bellows" blowing on her "coal" can warm her to intense response:

Oh! blow my Coale with thy blesst Bellows till
It Glow, and send Loves hottest Steams on thee.
I shall be warm; and thou mine arms shalt fill
And mine Embraces shall thy Worship bee.
I'le sacrifice to thee my Heart in praise,
When thy Rich Grace shall be my hearty Phrase.

(II. 6: 49-54)

Or, as he would state it in another place,

My heart was made thy tinder box
My 'ffections were thy tinder in't

Where fell thy Sparkes by drops.
 Those holy Sparks of Heavenly Fire that came
 Did ever catch and often out would flame.

("The Ebb and Flow," lines 2-6)⁵³

These lines from "The Ebb and Flow" make it clear that the faculties so raised are the affections or emotions.

Bridegroom and Bride Arrayed: A Principle
 of Exchange

With the raising of the affections, inherent grace is fully established, and conversion has come full circle, since the Puritans taught that "Meer knowledge and discourse cannot draw the heart to trust and hope in God, except it hath a rellish of his goodness." The "relish" which crowns the consummation excites holy desires, whereas the same appearance of goodness, presented without the seasoning would be rejected by the passions. A Puritan preacher traced the sequence of conversion this way:

The understanding, being illightened and fully convinced,
 closeth with God, in Christ, as the first Truth, and the
 will chooseth him as the chiefest good, the affections rest
 satisfied with him alone, and the whole soul placeth all its
 happinesse in its injoyment of him and conformity to him. . . .
 The whole soul, in all its faculties and affections, answereth.⁵⁶

The rapture of the lines on the human-divine consummation make clear the height the human Soul has reached and delineate the precise doctrinal method for its parity with the divine required by such a union. The means of such advancement can actually be found outlined in the same principle of exchange Taylor had set forth in his love letter to Elizabeth Fitch. Protesting his unfitness as a suitor for Elizabeth,

he had nevertheless claimed the use of "Love's Hyperboles" because, as he pleaded, "I know not how to offer a fitter Comparison to Set out my Love by, than to Compare it to a Golden Ball of pure Fire rolling up and down my Breast, from which there flies now and then a Spark like a Glorious Beam from the Body of the Flaming Sun." He could offer this extravagant tribute because "I borrow the beams of Some Sparkling Metaphor to illustrate my respects unto thyselfe by, for you having made my breast the cabinet of your affections (as I yours mine), . . ."57 Taylor "borrows" from her love to perfect his own praise, but the motion must go through his own breast, which he has afforded her as a receptacle for her affection.⁵⁸ Likewise, Christ has assumed the human frame and glorified it thereby. He then in exchange offers mankind his own divine nature.

In the union established between God and men in the erotic imagery, the closer the intimacy becomes, the clearer becomes the evidence of correspondence between the two. The beauty of Jesus as Love appears most apparent in the moments of intensest ecstasy. As the long catalog of sensuous descriptions in the Second Series shows, he is "all o're lovely" (II. 115: 37). His "Charming Glancing Eyes" send forth on Soul their "amorous beams" (II. 119: 25-26). His lips drop "myrrhie Juyce" that sanctify by "Grace . . . powered out" (II. 121: 15, 25). Her "Chil'd Spirits" are "into raptures put" by his hands that "hand" his "Spouse up tenderly / To his Bride Chamber of Eternall joy" (II. 122: 23, 47-48). Particularly in the union pictured by the Lord's Supper does the "enraptured" Soul see Christ in his "Elementall Frame," virile and powerful, "The top of beauty,"

beside whom there never was "So Beautiful a piece of manhood frame" (II. 99: 25, 32). The loveliness described here, after which Soul yearns, is not simply the physical depiction of Christ adapted for a love scenario, as Mindele Black sees it, nor even the metaphoric virility yearned for by Taylor, as perceived by Karl Keller,⁵⁹ but that beauty enshrouded in "Humanity so brave / so beautiful" (II. 99: 31-32): "Rich Personated Deity most bright, / Milk white Humanity by God begot / Dekt with transplendent Graces shining Light" (II. 127: 31-33). Christ is thus described as robing and actually adorning himself with the body of his saints.

The elect Soul, on her part, does not come far behind. For in the next breath after the description of Christ as "Dekt" with graces and "Sparkling Operations without Spot," we find that his Beloved are included in the motion: "All Gods Elect, Angells and Saints all Thine" (II. 127: 34-35). In fact, the cataloguing of Soul's glories as beautified by Christ is worthy of the passages exalting the Bridegroom. Her beauty is now unsurpassed:

Thou fairest of the Fairest kinde alive
 Thy Beauty doth ascend above Compare
 Thy Shining face Super Superlative
 Like to Jerusalem most comely fair.
 Thy brightness and thy Comeliness shinst like
 Most Happy Brides the bravest Beauty bright.

(II. 134: 1-6)

She, too, has become "Terrible as an Army with banners" because of the "Beams" of "Sparkling Glory like as Moses Face" (II. 135: 3, 5). Her "sharp lookes / Gild o're the Objects of thy Shining Eyes" (II. 143: 31-32). Her "Neck is like a Tower of Ivory / . . . Noting thy Pretious

Faith which Pillar like / Bears up the golden Head: and joyns it to Herselfe thy Body mystick, thy delight" (II. 151: 5, 7-9). "And thus dekt up" she is attended by the lords and ladies of heaven, who are "Enravisht at her Sight" (II. 143: 49-51). As Christ robed himself in her flesh, she has taken on spiritual robes provided for her:

Thy Spouses Robes all made of Spirituall Silk
 Of th' Web wove in the Heavens bright Loom indeed,
 By the Holy Spirits hand more white than milk
 And fitted to attire thy Soule that needs
 As th' morning bright's made of the Suns bright rayes
 So th'Spirits Web thy Souls rich Loom o're layes.

Soul keeps her modesty, however, for she is conscious that she is "Thus gloriously fitted in brightest Story / Of Grace espoused to be the king of glory" (II. 143: 37-42, 47-48).⁶⁰

The final significance of these metaphors of union, so far as the ultimate purpose of this study is concerned, is to show that in the Puritan understanding of conversion, a satisfying parity has been struck in which, to use the words of John Preston, though

he God is in heauen, and wee are on earth; hee the glorious God, we dust and ashes; he the Creator, and we but creatures; yet he is willing to enter into Couenant, which implyes a kinde of equality betweene vs.⁶¹

This astounding possibility is guaranteed by Christ's incarnation, as Taylor makes clear in the Christographia: "Human nature is advanced as nigh to Deity in its union unto the Deity in the person of the Son of God, as created nature can be" (C, p. 44). Taylor knew the answer to his own rhetorical question in II. 49: "Can I a graceless member be of thee, / While that thy hand's a Spring of Grace?" and was able to

pray with assurance, using a figure similar to that of his love letters:

I empty, thou top full, of Grace! Lord take
 A Gracious Cluster of thy glorious grace
 And busk it in my bosom, Sweet to make
 It, and my life: and gracious, in thy face.

(II. 49: 37-38, 31-36)

Thus it is that in the Christographia, immediately after Taylor sets forth the glory of Christ's humanity, he exclaims over his own possession of divine nature:

Oh! admirable. Give place ve holy angels of light, ye sparkling stars of the morning. The brightest glory, the highest seat in the kingdom of glory, the fairest colors in the scutcheon of celestial honor, belong to my nature and not to yours. I cannot, I may not allow it to you, without injury to mine own nature, and indignity and ingratitude to my Lord, that hath assumed it into a personal conjunction with his divine nature and seated it in the trinity. (C, p. 44)

In the Meditation accompanying Sermon III of Christographia, which further expounds this doctrine, the position of redeemed human nature is equally exalted:

You holy angels, morning stars, bright sparks,
 Give place: and lower your top gallants. Shew
 Your top-sail conjues to our slender barks:
 The highest honor to our nature's due.
 It's nearer Godhead by the Godhead made
 Than yours in you that never from God strayed.⁶²

(II. 44: 37-42)

As some readers have been put off by the sensuality of the descriptions of Christ's body, some likewise are surprised at the

seeming presumption of these claims.⁶³ The orthodoxy of Taylor's claim does not seem so much in question, perhaps, when compared to a similar statement by Increase Mather, considered by many the epitome of New England Puritanism. In a sermon on John 1: 14, Mather reasons that because of Christ's humanity, "we may become humbly familiar with the Lord Jesus, and with God through Him He is become our near Kinsman. . . . That which does belong properly to the Person of Christ is ascribed to either nature," and "Humane Nature is Dignified above any Created Nature."⁶⁴ Taylor himself carefully shows that it is on the "wings" of the Lord he mounts up: "Then I shall fly up to thy glorious Throne / With my strong Wings whose Feathers are thine own" (I. 20: 41-42). Furthermore, he carefully qualifies his boasts this way: "O! dignified humanity indeed: / Divinely person'd: almost deified" (II. 44: 25-26). The "propriety" of such claims has been established, as must needs have been by such a quintessential Puritan as Taylor, through the Spiritual Marriage of Christ and his Bride, in which there is an exchange of properties but the retention by each of separate identity and dignity:

I'm Thine, Thou Mine! Mutuall propriety:
 Thou giv'st thyselfe. And for this gift takst mee,
 To be thine own. I give myselfe (poor toy)
 And take thee for thine own, and so to bee.
 Thou giv'st thyselfe, yet dost thyselfe possess,
 I give and keep myselfe too neretheless.

Both gi'n away and yet retained aright.
 Oh! Strange! I have thee mine, who hast thyselfe,
 Yet in possession Thou hast mee as tite,
 Who still enjoy myselfe, and thee my wealth.
 What strang appropriations hence arise?
 Thy Person mine, Mine thine, even weddenwise?

(II. 70: 19-30)

Such a union of joy and mutual fulfillment is bound to bear fruit, as seen in the small allegory of II. 80, in which every element is given its doctrinal equivalent. The grace of eternal life is the "kirnell choice" which Christ "dropt . . . in the Soule," and, explains the physician of Westfield:

Its Heart and Soule of Saving Grace outspred
And can't be had till Grace be brought to bed.

The Soule's the Womb. Christ is the Spermadote
And Saving Grace the seed cast thereinto,
This Life's the principall in Grace's Coate,
Making vitality in all things flow,
In Heavenly verdure brisking holily
With sharp ey'de peartness of Vivacity.

(II. 80: 26-27, 29-30, 31-36)

As the fruitful union of the erotic imagery asserts itself, it is frequently mingled with the imagery of music:

Lord, make me th' Vally where this Lilly grows
Then I am thine, and thou art mine indeed.
Propriety is mutuall: Glorious shows
And Oderif'rous breath shall in me breed,
Which twisted in my Tunes, thy praise shall ring
On my Shoshannim's sweetest Well tun'de string.

(II. 69: 37-42)

* * * * *

The romance Taylor traced in the lines cited above by no means ruled out the practical implications of a heavenly marriage. The Bride could expect continual cleansing and anointing of herself as in the hygienic mode, but here, as a compliment to her husband, following the expectations of the Shulamite in Canticles (Cant. 1: 3, 4: 7, 5: 5;

Meditations II. 115, II. 133). She also could expect to produce "much fruit" as every good Puritan wife did. John Dunton records how a Boston maiden objected to his notion of Platonic love, declaring, ". . . whene'er I love, I will propose some End in doing it . . . You must Excuse me therefore . . . if I declare my self against it, and oppose real Fruition in your Platonick Notion."⁶⁵ By producing spiritual fruit, the newly joined member of Christ might assure to herself a place of honor in an ancient line. She might also know the comforts of a kind of heavenly domesticity. Her contributions to the new and harmonious relations would greatly add to her sense of never-failing participation in the divine order to which she now belonged. The union of Christ and his beloved is bound to produce eternal fruit and essential harmony.

NOTES

¹The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), "The Reflexion," lines 15-18. Lines from Preparatory Meditations will hereafter be indicated within the text simply by a Roman numeral for series number, Arabic numerals for the Meditation number and line numbers. Quotations from the occasional poems will be shown by titles and line numbers, as here. Quotations from Gods Determinations will be indicated by the abbreviation GD and page numbers.

²Joel R. Kehler, "Physiology and Metaphor in Edward Taylor's 'Meditation Can. 1: 3,'" EAL, 9 (1975), 315-324, shows the overlay of hygienic and erotic images, for example, in one particular meditation, in which the word "mammary" can be interpreted as the olfactory system, the lungs; the nipple of breast, with sexual imagery, generation and lactation also indicated; and "a base repository for all that is unwholesome and fleshly," and needing of healing and cleansing" (pp. 135-318).

³Norman S. Grabo cites the "myth" that Taylor's poetry would have been considered evil by his contemporaries in his Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 174.

⁴The Scholar Adventurers (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 307.

⁵Literature and Theology in Colonial New England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1949), p. 168; Arthur Hobson Quinn, Kenneth B. Murdock, et al., The Literature of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951), p. 57. See also my statement of the inconclusiveness of the tradition regarding Taylor's prohibition of publication, Introductory Chapter of this study, pp. 11-12 and notes 39-43.

⁶Mindale Black, "Edward Taylor: Heaven's Sugar Cake," NEQ, 29 (1956), 166-167, 170-171.

⁷John Calvin quoted in Perry Miller, The Seventeenth Century, Vol. I of The New England Mind (1939; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), p. 56. This work by Miller will hereafter be referred to by its secondary title.

⁸Calvin, Institutes, 4: xvii. 1-10 cited in Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press,

1975), pp. 210-211.

⁹Goodwin, The Heart of Christ in Heaven Towards Sinners on Earth, Or, a Treatise demonstrating the gracious Disposition and Tender Affection of Christ in his Humane nature now in Glory, unto his Members under all sorts of Infirmities, either of sin or misery (London, 1647) 43, summarized and quoted in Black, pp. 168-169.

¹⁰Willard, Some brief sacramental meditations, preparatory meditations, preparatory for communion at the great ordinance of the supper (Boston, 1711), pp. 12-13, quoted in Black, p. 170.

¹¹Cotton Mather cited in Murdock, Literature and Theology, p. 164.

¹²Samuel Mather, A Compleat Body of Divinity (Boston, 1726), pp. 876-879, cited in Keller, The Example, pp. 211-212.

¹³John Cotton, A Brief Exposition with Practical Observations (London, 1655), p. 209, cited in Keller, The Example, pp. 308-309.

¹⁴Murdock, Literature and Theology, pp. 163-164, gives these figures; cf. also Norman S. Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 80-81, which shows how thirty-nine consecutive meditations in the Second Series deal with the Canticles, Taylor's favorite book, and that Taylor's work became increasingly passionate as he grew older, concentrating almost exclusively on the Song of Songs from the age of seventy until his death.

¹⁵Christographia, ed. Norman S. Grabo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 78-79. References to this work will be made hereafter by the letter C and the page number and included in the body of the study.

¹⁶Black finds with E. I. Watkins that (quoting Black) "this /fervid/ side of Puritan devotion, as opposed to the theological, was not a genuine Protestant development but an influx of direct or indirect borrowings from Catholic spirituality." She cites Watkins' Catholic Art and Culture (London, 1947), in her article, p. 168.

¹⁷Cf. also "The Reflexion," in which Christ is pictured as Sharon's bloom, closing up his beauties in sweet leaves, as if half-ashamed to be seen.

¹⁸See a replica of Taylor's love-acrostic, in Keller, The Example, p. 168 and quotations from his letters, pp. 44-45 of the same work.

¹⁹Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings (1938; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), II, 389.

²⁰Diary of Samuel Sewall, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 5th per., I (1878), 481-482, cited in Keller, The Example, p. 44.

²¹Taylor's letter cited in Keller, The Example, p. 45.

²²The Will and The Word: The Poetry of Edward Taylor (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1974), p. 155.

²³Edward Taylor, p. 80.

²⁴See Miller's chapter, "The Augustinian Strain of Piety, in The Seventeenth Century, pp. 3-34.

²⁵Thomas Hooker quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 27-28.

²⁶In this context, then, the militant sort of action is appropriate, Mindele Black to the contrary, and fits well the tone of a love poem, as when the warrior-lover comes riding in Canticles or in such knightly tales as Troilus and Cressida. Cf. Black's statement that Christ's love lullaby in God's Determinations is "quite inconsistent" with the military theme, in her article, p. 172.

²⁷Shepard quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 202.

²⁸Hooker quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 202.

²⁹Schieck points out a number of sight-as-reason metaphors in his Chapter I, "Reason and Nature," pp. 3-26. Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Ford L. Battles (London: SCM Press, 1961), 3.2, cited in Schieck, The Will and the Word, p. 4.

³⁰Thomas M. Davis agrees with this judgment in his article, "Edward Taylor and the Traditions of Puritan Typology," EAL, 4 (1970), 32.

³¹See a good summary of the teachings of Augustine and the American Puritans on the reason in Schieck's footnotes, pp. 5-7, The Will and the Word.

³²Hooker quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 30.

³³One may recognize a kinship here to the requests in Chapter I of this study for grace's new spectacles for dimmed eyesight and "Ophthalmicks pure," pp. 15 and 17, and II. 67B: 56-58; II. 21: 30 of Taylor's Meditations.

³⁴Preston cited in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 30.

³⁵Gorton quoted in Larzer Ziff, Puritanism in America: New Culture in a New World (New York: Viking, 1973), p. 95. See Ziff's discussion of the wider issues of the Gortonite controversy, pp. 94-99.

³⁶Maule, Preface to Truth Held Forth and Maintained (New York, 1695), quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 371.

³⁷Fitch, The First Principles of the Doctrine of Christ (Boston, 1679), p. 4, quoted in Schieck, The Will and the Word, p. 22.

³⁸Schieck, The Will and the Word, p. 25.

³⁹Schieck, The Will and the Word, p. 25, cites to this effect Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765.

⁴⁰Shepard quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 372.

⁴¹Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 282.

⁴²Cotton, The Way of Life (London, 1641), p. 127, quoted in Schieck, The Will and the Word, p. 49.

⁴³See Schieck's explanation of the pivotal role of the will in his Chapter III, "A Viper's Nest, the Featherbed of Faith," pp. 49-90, esp. p. 57. See also the quotation from Cotton, The Way of Life (London, 1641), p. 127, that "the heart or will of a man, is that whereby we chuse or refuse a thing."

⁴⁴Schieck, pp. 64-65, points out a number of these "enchantments."

⁴⁵Schieck's book, p. 83, shows how the will is associated with hearing imagery.

⁴⁶The Westminster Confession of Faith (Inverness, Scotland: Publications Committee, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1976), IV. 2, states, ". . . He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, . . . after His own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it: and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, . . ." and IX. 1, "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good, or evil."

John Winthrop's speech to the General Court, 1645, quoted in Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings, I, 206-207, also makes liberty to be found in willing submission to God's law: "There is a twofold liberty, natural . . . civil or federal. . . . The exercise and maintaining of this liberty /i.e., the natural/ makes men grow more evil, and in time to be worse than brute beasts: . . . The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal, it may also be termed moral, . . . and it is a liberty to that only which is good, just, and honest. . . ."

⁴⁷Quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 282.

⁴⁸Preston quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 200.

⁴⁹Winthrop in the General Court address equates "federal" or "moral" liberty with a bride's submission to her husband: "This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority; it is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. The woman's own choice makes such a man her husband; yet being so chosen, he is her lord, and she is to be subject to him, yet in a way of liberty, not of bondage; and a true wife accounts her subjection her honor and freedom, and would not think her condition safe and free, but in her subjection to her husband's authority. Such is the liberty of the church under the authority of Christ." (See Note 44 for complete citation.)

⁵⁰Donald F. Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" AL, 35 (1963-64), 474-475.

⁵¹Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, (E. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966), p. 17.

⁵²"Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations: A Decorum of Imperfections," PMLA, 83 (1968), 1427-1428.

⁵³Cotton quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 390.

⁵⁴See an account of the Antinomian fever in Perry Miller, ed., The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1956), pp. 48-50, and Winthrop's record and response, pp. 50-59; William Ames quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 383.

⁵⁵Black, p. 175 notes interestingly the unusualness of Taylor's fiery images, usually reserved for the devil's machinations, in the love-passages where they are "quite foreign to the Canticles." Perhaps so, but they appear quite appropriate in describing the lifting of the affections. Cf. also Christ's lightning-like chariot and his fiery arrows of love, in I. 20: 8, 13; I. 16: 25, 33-36; II. 119: 25-28.

⁵⁶Quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 282-283.

⁵⁷Taylor's letter quoted in Keller, The Example, pp. 44-45.

⁵⁸See examples of Taylor's "cabinet" imagery in II. 119 and I. 25.

⁵⁹I am indebted to Keller. The Example, pp. 215-216, for pointing out this catalog. Black cites Taylor's "passionate, almost physical interest in the human Christ" for "copious allegorization," pp. 168, 171; Keller is closer to the truth when he discerns that "it is not so much ecstatic transcendence, however, as it is . . . a metaphor for his /Taylor's/ desire to be godlike," The Example, pp. 215-216. Both perhaps miss a main point here, that Taylor was interested in identifying Christ as a human being.

⁶⁰Keller, The Example, p. 215, is wrong in attributing these passages to Christ. The "spouse" here is the same as the Bride of the Canticles and other Christian literature.

⁶¹Preston, New Covenant, pp. 330-331, quoted in Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (1956; rpt. New York: Harper, Row, 1964), p. 64.

⁶²The evident rapture in the love-passages might call for a more balanced interpretation of Taylor's emotional and poetic attitudes than has been accorded him in such treatments as Mignon's (see Note 50, above) and Donald E. Junkins' in his article, "Should Stars Wed Lobster Claws: A Study of Edward Taylor's Poetic Practice and Theory," EAL, 3 (Fall, 1968), 88-98, in which he devotes a long passage to Taylor's "anguish." Perhaps not enough has been said about what Keller, in The Example, p. 173, calls "Taylor's fun with language," "his delight in his subject, the Lord's Supper," and perhaps we should ask with Keller, "Why shouldn't he talk to himself in the happiest language

he knew?" More studies might be done on Taylor's familiarity with fun and games, such as Robert D. Arner's "Edward Taylor's Gaming Imagery: Meditation I. 40," EAL, 4 (1969), 38-40.

⁶³See Norman S. Grabo, "Introduction" to Christographia, xxvii-xxviii, in which he says that Taylor's Sermon I shows "Christ's human nature . . . Once purified and joined /to the Godhead/ all mankind is honored in the deed--both the regenerate and the sinful." Grabo believes Taylor is in this way different from his colleagues.

⁶⁴Increase Mather, The Mystery of Christ Opened and applied in Several Sermons, Concerning the Person, Office, and Glory of Jesus Christ (Boston, 1685), pp. 88-89, cited in Grabo, Edward Taylor, p. 73.

⁶⁵Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 214.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIC IMAGE: THE TREE OF LIFE

When Edward Taylor wrote of Christ as the "Spermadote" "dropt" into the willing womb of the human soul, he was moving close to the very heart of Puritan thought, to what William Ames, and Perry Miller after him, would call the "marrow" of Puritan divinity.¹ In so doing, he would bring to light a great system of belief by which the Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found they could be connected eternally and harmoniously to the Almighty God. For while today Puritans are often pictured as men wracked by neurotic anxiety or driven almost to distraction by fear of eternal torment, the literary record shows that by the early decades of the seventeenth century, they had discovered an orderly plan in the universe and a way in which they could become a part of it.²

At the basis of this plan was a system called "covenant theology," which taught that the Lord had made himself known to man by means of stated and knowable contracts, in which each party contributed a desired and needed good to the other. The first, the Covenant of Redemption, was not directly arranged with man but among the Persons of the Trinity in eternity. By it, the Son offered, and the Father received through the Spirit, his offer to die for the sins of the human race.³ The second, the Covenant of Works, between God and Adam, required that Adam keep the law of God and empowered him to do so by the

moral nature which God had implanted within him at creation. Adam failed, however, and broke the Covenant and simultaneously his right to the promises of God.⁴ The Lord then found it necessary to establish a new covenant with Abraham, and, although it was not entirely carried into force until many centuries later, the Covenant of Grace was actually established at the point when the Lord promised to bless Abraham and his seed. As the Puritans discerned the story, the Lord, casting about for a new and better way after Adam had broken the Covenant of Works, came upon Abraham, to whom could be "imputed" righteousness because of his simple faith in God. With him the Lord began a new line, to be made up of all those following after Abraham who could claim the same heart-belief in the righteousness to be provided by Christ.⁵ On those terms, the Puritans of New England claimed to be under the Covenant of Grace. "We are the children of Abraham; and therefore we are under Abraham's Covenant," claimed Peter Bulkley of Concord, Massachusetts.⁶

These contracts, or covenants, were often explained in legal terms, as was convenient for the Puritan expositors, since many of them were trained in the law as well as in theology.⁷ Just as conveniently, the preachers used the divinely symbiotic processes of nature to set forth the reciprocal relationships of the Covenant.

Said Edward Taylor:

Natural things are not unsuitable to illustrate supernaturals by. For Christ in his parables doth illustrate supernatural things by natural, and if it were not thus, we could arrive at no knowledge of supernatural things, for we are not able to see above naturals. . . .

God hath a sweet harmony of reason running throughout the whole creation (TCLS, p. 43).

Taylor often chose the "sweet harmony" of a great living plant to set forth his understanding of the everlasting Covenant of Grace of which he felt himself and every believer an integral part. This study will examine Covenant doctrine as set forth in the organic imagery of Edward Taylor. The figures of the plowed field and the seed may be expected to show the initial workings of Covenant grace in the individual soul. The boughs and the fruit should demonstrate growing interdependence between the Lord and his members. The great tree, the last image, should present the highest development of the New Covenant, with its roots in the divine nature and its topmost boughs reaching eternity.

"My Sandy Soile: Thy Vital Seed"

Covenant theology developed simultaneously with the Puritan movement as the divines felt called upon more and more to explain the inexplicable God of John Calvin. The basis of the system lay in a key which they thought they had discovered, as Perry Miller said, "in the apparent lawlessness of nature,"⁸ that God had chosen to deal with man upon the basis of equality, that, despite the great disparity between them, the Lord had determined to major upon the affinity with himself which he had placed within man at creation. The Puritans never ceased to rejoice that while the Lord did not choose to deal with animals in this way, nor angels, he did take this course with man.⁹ So Edward Taylor, like every true Puritan believer, could in effect push angels

aside: "You Holy Angells, Morning-Stars, bright Sparks, / Give place," since "The highest honour to our nature's due. / Its neerer Godhead by the Godhead made / Than yours in you that never from God stray'd"

(II. 44: 37-38, 40-42). Having found that basis of affinity as within the good pleasure of God from creation, the theologians soon began to discover the means through which the Lord by the Covenant tied himself to his beloved human creatures by unbreakable cords of a living relation.

Appropriately enough for an organic idea, these ministers found initiation into the Covenant in terms of the very earth that would yield seed. The concept was very near that of the "hygienic" mode developed in Chapter I of this study, in which the soul was required to cast up in the form of excrement its sin.¹⁰ As the individual brought before the Lord "Waggonloads" of iniquity till the "Axletree split asunder," the Lord would spread about the "offal" and transform it into gardens.¹¹ When Edward Taylor saw that "My Heart's a Swamp, Brake, Thicket vile of Sin," he also believed that the Lord would somehow use his offering of sinful waste "to make mee Meddow ground . . . Where thy choice Flowers, and Hearbs of Grace shine trim" (II. 45: 2, 8, 12). This offering up of confessed wrong as waste and manure, taught by such preparationists as Richard Baxter and Thomas Hooker, was very close to the positive aspect of the same thought urged by Covenant theologians, that the soul could be broken up and prepared for the coming of the Lord even before he was in sight.

It is not known precisely by whom Covenant doctrine was first developed, but several scholars credit William Perkins with setting it

forth among the English Puritans in a rudimentary and cursory way.¹² The genius of this conception was embodied in a sermon called "A Graine of Mustard Seed." By this teaching, man provides the faith and the Lord the grace needed to begin the process of salvation. Perkins, as Perry Miller stated it, "whittles faith down almost, but not quite, to the vanishing point." In fact, Perkins taught that even before faith could be found in the individual, the seeker could put himself in an attitude of receptivity.¹³ New Englander Thomas Hooker agreed with him:

If ever you thinke to share in the salvation that Christ hath purchased . . . if you would have him dwell with you, and doe good to you, either prepare for him, or else never expect him.¹⁴

Such preparation often took the form of a breaking up or a plowing of the soul in readiness: "If the soule be broken and humbled, he will come presently."¹⁵ Sometimes the individual was pictured as doing the plowing himself. Sometimes he called upon the Lord for help in it. Edward Taylor, noting that his soul-field was fallow and unfruitful, called out:

My gracious Lord, I would thee glory doe:
 But finde my Garden overgrown with weeds:
 My Soile is sandy; brambles o're it grow:
 My Stock is stunted; branch no good Fruits breeds.
 My Garden weed: Fatten my Soile, and prune
 My Stock, and make it with thy glory bloome.

(II. 4: 3-6)

The Puritans pictured the Lord as the Eternal "Seedlip" or Sower, eagerly passing to and fro, looking for the prepared soul. Thomas Hooker promised, "Christ is marvellous ready to come, only he

watcheth the time till your heart be ready to receive and entertain him. . . ."16

In this process of preparation, the individual was far from passive. Though God was depicted as taking the initiative in establishing a covenant with man, man must arouse himself to respond to the Lord's overtures. The preachers, in urging preparation, used such active verbs as Taylor's in his Christographia: "Labour," urged Taylor, "to get an implantation. . . . O! what then should our endeavours be that we may obtain an Implantation into Christ Jesus Strive to derive Life from Christ. . . ." (C, pp. 197-198, 262). Man must, in fact, show the receptive spirit of the bride in Taylor's Meditation II. 80: "That I may by lifes streames in Holy Strife / Conquour that death at whose dead Looks I start" (lines 45-46). Man could so "strive" through taking advantage of the "means" God offered him in the preaching of the Word, in prayer and in the counsel of the saints.¹⁷ Though God still preserves in "secresie" the mysteries of his election, the Puritans taught that "they who live under such means, . . . and never come to the knowledge of the Truth, . . . are inexcusable. . . . God requires no more of any man than either he doth know, or might have knowne."¹⁸ The Puritans thus nicely balanced the demands of the Arminians that man be allowed to "do" something, with the teaching of the Reformers that the Lord must always be the prime mover in redemption.¹⁹

The actual coming of faith in this depiction is very hard to determine, but William Perkins and his school make it synonymous with the merest evidence of sincere desire for the Lord. Perkins found that

Rahab, the heathen harlot of Canaan, for example, possessed "a seed and beginning of lively faith" when she had only "conceived the resolution with herself, to join herself to the Israelites and to worship the true God."²⁰ Like Perkins, Taylor saw the beginnings of grace as miniscule:

Grace is the Pearle, the Mother Pearle of Pearles
 In which this Pearle of Life is kirknell choice.
 Christ dropt it in the Soule, which up it ferles
 A Lignum Vitae's chip of Paradise.
 Its Heart and Soule of Saving Grace outspred
 And can't be had till Grace be brought to bed.

(II. 80: 25-30)

At this point, an interesting phenomenon appears. The offering from man at each stage of his Covenant relationship with God is so instantaneously received and returned by God that the contribution of each partner becomes inseparable and almost indistinguishable from that of the other. So the seed of saving faith was interchangeable in the thinking of these Covenant thinkers with the seed of grace. Perkins could speak in one breath of Rahab's "seed of lively faith" and in the next of her having "excellent seeds of grace, namely a purpose of heart to cleave to Christ."²¹

It is appropriate that the "seed of grace" be so closely linked with faith, because, in Covenant doctrine, the Covenant of Grace sprang from God's dealings with faithful Abraham. According to this belief, after God had discarded the Covenant of Works with Adam because of the first man's failure, he discovered a man through whom he could begin a new line and a new relationship. Though faulty, Abraham possessed a sincere faith in God which God could use to make up the gap left by the

broken law,²² Abraham endured several tests of faith, but the most severe and significant was his persevering trust that God would grant him a son through whom the Lord would bless the world. This was not to be Ishmael, the child born to his handmaid, Hagar, but Isaac, born supernaturally to Sarah, when both parents were long past child-bearing years.²³ The seed of grace must be of this latter type. Taylor, in his request for the seed, was careful to distinguish the false from the true: "Then, my Blest Lord, let not the Bondmaids type / Take place in mee. But thy blesst Promisd Seed" (II. 4: 25-26). Isaac was a "seed" born, so to speak, of equal parts of faith and grace. Taylor mingled the two in the lines above when he made grace the pearl "Christ dropt . . . in the Soule," but also stipulated that spiritual life "can't be had till Grace here the Soul-Bride be brought to bed" (II. 80: 27, 30). Alone, man could produce no life pleasing to God:

I have no life in mee: no life Divine.
The Spirituall Life, the Life of God, and Grace
Eternall Life, obtain in me no place.
.

The Spirituall Life, and Life Eternall View
Is none of mine. . . .
If thou give unto me no vitall Seed?

(II. 81: 40-42, 45-46, 48)

But in the "Holy Strife" of man's faith and God's grace, the seed was bound to come to life. Grace and faith are so intermingled in the spiritual life produced that they can be perceived as nurtured by either partner. Taylor feels no inconsistency when he addresses in Meditation II. 2 the seed growing within his heart:

Come shine, Deare Lord, out in my heart indeed
 First Born; in truth before thee there was none
 First born, as man born of a Virgin's seed:
 Before or after thee such up ne'er sprung.
 Hence Heir of all things lockt in natures Chest;
 And in thy Fathers too: extreemly best.

(II. 2: 19-24)

He asks that he himself be born a "Babe" of God: "Make mee thy Babe,
 and him my Elder Brother. / A Right, Lord grant me in his Birth Right
 high. / His Grace, my Treasure make above all other" (II. 2: 37-39).

Life, nourished equally by the human soul and the divine
 nature, will grow. William Perkins gave it as a sure sign that if a
 true seed had been planted, it would increase:

The foresaid beginnings of grace are counterfeit unless they
 increase. . . . The grace in the heart is like a grain of
 mustard seed in two things: first, it is small to see at the
 beginning; secondly, after it is cast into the ground of the
 heart, it increaseth speedily and spreads itself.²⁴

As Taylor saw it, the instant the kernel of grace fell, it was assured
 of divine life: "This Life's the principall in Graces Coate . . . In
 Heavenly verdure brisking holily / With sharp ey'de peartness of
 Vivacity" (II. 80: 33-36).

"Thy Grafft and Fruits Shall Beare"

As the seed imagery speaks of the beginnings of Covenant Grace,
 the branch tells of its growth in history and in the individual life.
 The ingrafted branch, in fact, reveals more of the interrelationships
 between God and his people than did the seed. This sense shows the
 mutual commitment of Covenant teaching. The grafting image was popular
 at the time of Taylor and was used by such English metaphysicals as

George Herbert and Francis Quarles.²⁵ It was also a popular image among Puritan writers for doctrinal reasons. The Cambridge Platform of the New England Puritans, for example, refers to baptism as "a sign and seal" to the one baptized "of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting unto Christ."²⁶ The term implies the fusion of two unlike stocks, with benefit to both. By this concept, mankind was torn off from the life of God when Adam sinned. In I. 29, Taylor thinks of himself as represented in Adam, "a Withred Twig . . . Writh off by Vice" (lines 9-10). To be rejoined to God, he must give up any dependence on the Adam- or natural-life. Said Thomas Shepard, ". . . thou canst not be ingrafted into this . . . [Christ] unless thou beest out, and cut off too from thy old root."²⁷ But to find favor with God again, man must be not only thoroughly cut off from the old life but fused with the life of God. So Taylor will ask, "Yet if thy Milke white-Gracious Hand will take mee. / Thou'lt make me then its Fruite, and Branch to spring" (I. 29: 11-13). Then in a curious reversal of his graft image, he also asks that pardon, in the shape of a twig, be grafted back into his soul: "Then take a pardon from thy Store, and twist / It in my Soule for help. 'Twill not be mist" (I. 36: 59-60). In doubling back the image, he is twice linked with God. The doctrinal implication of the reversal here helps to answer, at least in part, the objections from some critics that the "meaning is confused, . . . at odds with the imagery," as Ursula Brumm complained.²⁸ The demands of the Covenant that each partner contribute a mutually complementary element to the pact are reinforced by the grafting image.²⁹ This type of rapid shift in image is also consistent with Scriptural imagery, as,

for example, when the Messiah is pictured in Isaiah 53 as a branch out of dry ground, a shepherd, a sacrificial lamb, a condemned prisoner and a vindicated warrior. Especially in an organic relationship, the contributions are so intermingled that they cannot be extricated from one another, but rather show forth various aspects of one living creation.

The grafted branches show mutual sacrifice. In I. 30, Christ is the branch wrenched off:

But yet thou stem of Davids stock when dry
 And shriveled held, although most green was lopt
 Whose sap a sovereign Sodder is, whereby
 The breach repared is in which its dropt.
 O Gracious Twig! thou Cut off? bleed rich juyce
 T'Cement the Breach, and Glories shine reduce?

(I. 30: 13-18)

In Taylor's Greek-English pun, Christ, the Savior-Soter cut off in youth, provides his blood as sacred solder to bind on the new branch.³⁰ Both the Lord and the individual believer must make total commitment in order for the graft to "stand."

The mutual ingrafting of the soul and Christ is indicative also of the "sealing and "bonding" of the Covenant. The believer's commitment is compared by John Cotton to the willing "binding" of a subject or servant to his master:

If we give our selves to be bound to this service, if we come to God, submit our selves to him in all things, to do with as hee pleaseth, and as shall seem good in his sight, submitting our selves to be ruled and squared by him in all things, hee shall have our whole hearts to do with what he will; here is the Covenant made up betweene God and a good Christian.³¹

The commitment must be completely voluntary, like the mutual commitment of individuals in a social covenant. Thomas Hooker called such willingness the "sement" that soldered together all communities, whether political or ecclesiastical:

. . . for there is no man constrained to enter into such a condition unlesse he will: . . . and he that will enter, must also willingly binde and ingage himself to each member of that society to promote the goode of the whole, or else a member actually he is not.³²

The sense of self-giving must be part of a growing relationship with Christ.

As a reward for his trust and self-surrender, the believer might expect that the Lord would also give himself in return. John Cotton expressed it in the strongest terms: ". . . we require this back againe of God, that as we give up our selves a sacrifice to him . . . the Lord Jesus Christ might be imputed to us."³³ John Preston declared that the Lord's bond is unbreakable: "You may sue him of his own bond written and sealed, and he cannot deny it," and advised that the believer persist until the Lord delivered his assurance: ". . . when faith hath once gotten a promise, be sure that thou keepe thy hold, pleade hard with the Lord, and tell him it is a part of his Couenant, and it is impossible that he should deny thee . . . for it is part of his couenant."³⁴ As the "bonding" ideas apply to the grafting image, so do also such terms as "seal" and "knit." "If ever thou art in covenant with God, and hast this seale in thy soul, that there is a change wrought in thee by the covenant, then thy election is sure," promised Preston happily, and Thomas Hooker echoed that in the Covenant

the soul "is inseparably knit to Christ."³⁵ Few statements of the eternal security of the believer could be more certain than John Cotton's. Once in the Covenant, it "doth remain sure and firm," he promised. "If we be henn'd in within this Covenant, we cannot break out."³⁶ Edward Taylor would also sound the sense of firm binding granted the child of the Covenant:

Yet I shall stand thy Grafft, and Fruits that are
Fruits of the Tree of Life thy Grafft shall beare.

I being grafft in thee there up do stand
In us Relations all that mutuall are.

(I. 29: 17-20)

The grafting, besides bringing manifold assurance of eternal salvation, reveals a multi-sided relationship to the Lord:

I am thy Patient, Pupill, Servant, and
Thy Sister, Mother, Doove, Spouse, Son, and Heir
Thou art my Priest, Physician, Prophet, King,
Lord, Brother, Bridegroom, Father, Ev'rything.

(I. 29: 21-24)

As in the Canticles, when Solomon calls his bride "my sister, my wife," the association with the Lord is so close and meaningful that one delineation will not describe it all, so Taylor calls up every familial and social tie to indicate it. Related to the Lord, he also finds himself connected with a vast family of others:

I being grafft in thee am grafted here
Into thy Family and kindred Claim
To all in Heaven, God, Saints, and Angells there.

I thy Relations my Relations name.
 Thy Father's mine, thy God my God, and I
 With Saints, and Angells draw Affinity.

(I. 29: 25-30)

John Cotton said that the Lord, "distinctly considered," meaning in the explicit bonds of the Covenant, "giveth himself to Abraham and to his seed."³⁷ Since the term "seed" could be applied to all who placed trust in Christ, its use meant that each one who joined the Lord in salvation could also claim instant kinship to all others in the Abrahamic line. This was appropriate to the Puritan tendency, for among the Puritans the lone life was not to be desired. Though sometimes praised for their rugged individualism, they actually made family and community life their norm. They took seriously the words of the Psalmist that "God setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68:6). Said Perry Miller, "The lone horseman, the single trapper, the solitary hunter was not a figure of the Puritan frontier; Puritans moved in groups and towns, settled in whole communities, and maintained firm government over all units."³⁸ Taylor sometimes expressed the loneliness of a pining lover, or a lost or helpless child, as in I. 34, and II. 146, but such longing was filled for him in the household of God. The believer, according to Taylor, could claim to be of the royal blood line, for "It descended from Abraham, through Isaac, Jacob, and then through the loins of Judah, the royal tribe; and in that tribe from David, Solomon, and the rest of the kingly race" (TCLS, p. 205).

Yet although God had since Abraham dealt with succeeding generations only by and through the Covenant of Grace, he had taught

his children his plan in an ever-opening way, from the days of Genesis to the present. William Ames may have been the originator of this conception of progressive revelation, thought by some to have been his chief contribution to Puritanism.³⁹ He taught that from the time of the patriarchs there had been one and the same Covenant, "yet the manner . . . of administring this new Covenant, hath not alwayes beene one and the same, but divers according to the ages in which the Church hath been gathered."⁴⁰ And while other divines sometimes drew up charts of the stages of revelation different from Ames', all agreed that God had allowed the understanding of his Covenant to grow with time. He first administered it through conscience, then through the prophets and ceremonies, now through Christ, preaching of the Word, and the sacraments. ". . . Dr. Ames saith well," Buckley wrote, echoing a common interpretation of Galatians 3 and 4, "the Church was then considered . . . Partly as an heire, and partly as an infant."⁴¹

Because of this conception of the Covenant as a single, yet ever-growing system, equally applicable to the patriarchs and to himself, Taylor could have no difficulty in considering himself a "Relation" to "thy graceful Family" and in referring to Noah, to Abraham, Moses and Aaron, to David and finally to himself in almost identical terms (I. 29: 39-40). He had joined the whole family of God and was moving in the central mainstream of God's Covenant life.

As in the seed imagery, the believer was particularly tied to Abraham and Isaac, in the branch image, he is "now grafted in thy Olive tree / The house of Jacob" (II. 16: 37-42). The house of Jacob, or Israel, was the usual name for God's People in the Old Testament,

and became the line through which the kings, and later Christ, succeeded. When Taylor became part of "The House of Jacob, tun'de to thee, my King," he carried the sense of belonging to Israelitish history further. He could recall events, as in memory: "A Bond Slave in Egyptick Slavery / This Noble Stem, Angellick Bud, this Seed / Of Heavenly Birth, my Soul, doth groaning ly" (II. 22: 7-8). He could follow the People of God into the wilderness and participate with them in a Feast of the Tabernacles. There he could see the leafy tents as Christ incarnate, "the burning Sun . . . buttond up in a tobacco box" (II. 24: 2, 4).

Thy Godhead Cabbin'd in a Myrtle bowre,
 A Palm branch tent, an Olive Tabernacle,
 A Pine bough Booth, An Osier House or tower
 A mortall bitt of Manhood, where the Staple
 Doth fixt, uniting of thy natures, hold,
 And hold out marvels more than can be told.

(II. 24: 13-18)

The recognition of such "types" enabled him to see himself as well as Christ tabernacling in the wilderness. He perceived that Christ was living in him even while he lived in Christ. He asked, ". . . wilt / Thou tabernacle in a tent so small?" and found, "Wonders! my Lord, Thy Nature all with Mine / Doth by the Fest of Booths conjoined appeare" (II. 24: 20-21, 25-26).

The advantage to the individual of these relationships was obvious. Not so clear, perhaps, was the advantage to the Lord. Yet the nonconformist preachers were fond of exulting in the Lord's desire for man's fellowship that brought about such ties:

Oh the depths of Gods grace herein . . . that when he /man/ deserves nothing else but separation from God, and to be driven up and downe the world . . . as dried leaves, fallen from our God, that yet the Almighty God cannot be content with it, but must make himself to us, and us to himselfe more sure and neer then ever before.⁴²

The Lord, as the Puritans saw him in Covenant relation, also needed his people for "fulness" and fruit. Edward Taylor was careful to show that the fulness emanated first of all from God. In an effort to show how completely prepared Christ was to be the Savior of mankind, he devoted six sermons of the Christographia to the fulness of Christ's wisdom, Godhood, life, power, grace and truth. In these messages, however, he stressed another aspect: that the church itself was Christ's fulness:

. . . every true believer . . . is a Fellow Citizen with the Saints. He is of the Household of God. He is a member of the Body of Christ, and so hath Christ for his Head. Nay He is one that goes to the filling up of the Lord Jesus Christ, and makes to the Compleating of him . . . it is cleare that every member puts in his modicum to the fulness, and so far as this Modicum makes, he makes to the fulness of the Body . . . and to the Compleating of Christ (C, p. 318).

John Cotton had assured believers that once in, they could not break out of the Covenant. Taylor, on the other hand, showed that the Lord was determined not to lose a part of his body:

. . . not one member of this Church shall perish. Christ should want of his fulness then: A man may have a finger or toe rot off: may lose an Arm, a leg, or a Thigh. But Christs body cannot lose its least member in its mysticall Nature, for then Christs body would not be intire, but incompleteate, and imperfect, the which cannot bee: and therefore the Security of Saints is firm (C, pp. 319-320).

Taylor also stated this thought in his poetry:

Whom thou hast filld with all her fulness, she
 Thy fulness is, and so she filleth thee.
 Oh! wondrous strange! Angells and Men here are
 Incorporated in one body tite.
 Two kinds are gain'd into one mortase, fair.
 Me tenant in thyself, my Lord, my Light
 These are thy body, thou their head, we see
 Thou fillst them first, then they do fill up thee.

(II. 51: 23-30)

Bereft of even one "branch," Christ would lose his symmetry. This could not be. The members had a positive duty to be full. A shriveled or deformed member would speak slightly of Christ himself. "But its a Shame for any member of this body to be in a dwindling State," said Taylor, pointing out that "a dwarfe was not admitted to the Sacred Function of the priesthood Lev. 21. 20. Much less may any appeare as a dwarfe in Christs Body" (C, p. 329). Each part of the divine plant helped to give it desired extent:

Its grown unto the highst Degree above
 All Stuntedness, or stately Stintedness.
 The Soile is faultless, and doth give it Strength.
 The Plant doth beare its fruit of largest length.

(II. 31: 27-30)

It was with fruit as with fulness. The Puritans believed that fruit must emanate from the Lord and return to satisfy him. Dr. Perkins had given as "a certain note" that grace must "grow up and increase . . . to a great tree and bear fruit answerably."⁴³ Other Puritans also called for fruit. Thomas Shepard taught that if any man excused himself by saying that Christ must work for him and would not himself "bring forth fruit to him," that man had shown his scorn for the Covenant and had thereby rejected it.⁴⁴ Taylor noted

that "the branches that never beare fruite . . . shall be taken away. Joh. 15. 2" (C, p. 262).

The kind of fruit that would be "answerable" to Covenant requirements was a matter of some concern to the formulators of Covenant doctrine. While the Arminians urged good works as a means of bringing about salvation and the Antinomians taught that neither the law nor its works had any place in salvation, the Puritans sought the middle way of incorporating the moral law into the very fiber of the grace transaction.⁴⁵ The fruit thought to be pleasing to the Lord must first be an inward work on his part. Outward works, however virtuous, would not in themselves prove sufficient. The grafting image itself indicated that there must be a cutting off from dependence upon dead works or the ties of the former life. Taylor warned his hearers:

Many bless themselves in their imaginarie Intrest in Christ. This lies onely in an Externall implantation, that is not made by any Cutting them, as grafts, off from their Naturall Stock; but onely in an Externall Profession of, and baptismal dedication to him. But these are the branches that never beare fruite and so are taken away. Joh. 15. 2 (C, p. 262).

Ultimately, as Thomas Shepard had insisted, there must be a cutting away and an uprooting from the original nature, or "thou canst not be ingrafted into this Olive [Christ]. . . ." ⁴⁶ The symbolism of the grafted olive, the Scriptural source of much of the grafting imagery, is particularly appropriate here, because it stood for the wrenching away of the individual from the failed Covenant of Works and his attachment to the New Covenant through faith in Christ. As Paul explained to his Gentile correspondents in Romans 11: 17-18, 20:

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. . . . Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou, standest by faith

With his understanding of this passage as evinced in I. 29 and II. 16, it is no wonder that Taylor urged the saving implantation that would send strength into every leaf and twig and bring forth the right fruit.

Taylor did not expect to be one of "those branches that never bear fruit." In his "Spiritual Relation" after discerning "all things of mine dung and dogs meat" and his heart "a Prison of naughtiness," he found that "Faith absolutly taken whereby the Soule is united unto Christ savingly" brought "Its Concomitants, as Love, Gal. 5. 6, Hope Rom. 5. 5. Joy or delight" He left to others to adjudge the merits of his public service but founds these fruits of the Spirit gave him "a certain expectation oft Steadying me," like an "Anchor that is fixt within the vaile."⁴⁷ He knew the answer to his own rhetorical question: "Shall I now graffed in thy Olive tree / The house of Jacob bramble berries beare?" (II. 16: 37-38). Instead, truly joined to Christ, he expected both graft and fruit to "stand":

And grafft mee in this golden stock, thou'lt make mee.

Thou'lt make me then its Fruite, and Branch to spring.
 And though a nipping Eastwinde blow, and all
 Hells Nympts with spite their Dog's sticks thereat ding
 To Dash the Grafft off, and it's fruits to fall,
 Yet I shall stand thy Grafft, and Fruits that are
 Fruits of the Tree of Life thy Grafft shall beare.

(I. 29: 12-18)

The production of olives proved one a member of the olive tree, a type of the New Israel: (II. 65: 41-42). As corroboration of assurance, however, the fruit of the Christian life was also to bring delight to the individual and the Lord. Joy is more nearly associated with the grape than the olive in Taylor's work. The vine as well as the olive was employed by Covenant thinkers in connection with the grafting figure, and Taylor so used it in II. 144: 7, where he referred to himself as "a grafted Branch in th' true true Vine," following John 15 (cf. II. 16: 37). It was a positive duty of the Christian to rejoice because of his membership in the vine:

You are a member of his Body, a branch of his Vine Stock, and
 What can be more refreshing than this? Here all the Fulness,
 and Excellency of Grace is yours. Hence ariseth unspeakable
 delight . . . This Christ is my Christ forever and ever.
 I will rejoyce and be glad in him (C, p. 258).

Though he pictured himself as the grape-bearing branch of the vine, he also at times asked to be fed from the fruit produced:

Oh! fill my Pipkin with thy Blood red Wine:
 I'le drinke thy Health: To pledge thee is no Crime.

 Let thy Choice Caske, shed, Lord, into my Cue
 A drop of Juyce presst from thy Noble Vine.
 My Bowl is but an Acorn Cup, I sue
 But for a Drop: this will not empty thine.
 Although I'me in an Earthen Vessells place,
 My Vessell make a Vessell, Lord, of Grace.

(I. 28: 9-10, 18-24)

The fruit of the vine brings him pleasure:

Here I attempt thy rich delightfull Vine
 Whose bowing boughs buncht with sweet clusters, ripe
 Among the which I take as Cordiall wine
 This Bunch doth bleed into my Cup delight.

(II. 113: 7-12)

Again he thinks chiefly of the pleasure his "grafted Branch" will bring the Lord. He hopes that his "Spirituell Vines . . . shall . . . with perfumed joys thee gratiate" and promises "Then Spirituell joyes flying on Spicy Wings / Shall entertain thee in thy Visitings" (II. 144: 32-36). At times Christ becomes the gardener and both "feeds" his fruit and enjoys it. Or Christ and his beloved, like the pair in Canticles, can drink the cup together. As Taylor claimed for the Covenant Vine in II. 131: "Here then is Entertainment sweet on this. / Thou feedst thyselfe and also feedest us" (lines 30-31).⁴⁸

"The Tree of Life Whose Bulk's Theanthropie"

From time to time the Puritans were urged by their preachers to contemplate the Covenant. William Preston had called it "one of the main points in Divinitie" and made it his chief contribution to Puritan thought to expound all of Scripture in the light of the Covenant of Grace. He urged, ". . . you must know it, for it is the ground of all you hope for, it is that that euery man is built vpon, you haue no other ground but this, God hath made a Couenant with you, and you are in Couenant with him."⁴⁹ The New Englanders had, if anything, made it even more central. Affirmed Peter Bulkley, "Whatsoever salvation and deliverance God gives unto his people, his setting them free from this misery, he doth it by vertue of, and according to his Covenant."⁵⁰

Edward Taylor saw it in terms of the "great tree" of Perkins' dictum and his own quest for the plant of "the highst pitch, Good, Greate, and Longe" (II. 31: 24). At times he saw the great Tree of Life with its roots in the Divine Nature, like a vast, unfathomable ocean:

I drown, my Lord. What though the Streames I'm in
 Rosewater be, Or Ocean to its brinckes
 Of Aqua Vitae where the Ship doth swim?
 The Surges drown the Soul, oreflowd, that sinks.
 A Sea of Liquid gold with rocks of pearle
 May drownd as well as Neptune's Fishy Well.

(II. 46: 1-6)

Contemplation on the fulness of Christ's Godhead, he says, "My Filberd cannot hold. / How should an acorn bowle the Sea lade dry?" (II. 46: 7-8). Such a reaction was also appropriate to Puritan belief which taught that "there be some depths" in the Lord "fitter to be admired, than comprehended."⁵¹ In language with which Edward Taylor was probably familiar, Thomas Shepard had taught that the glory of God neither men nor angels could know: "their cockle shell can never comprehend this sea."⁵²

Still, Christians were enjoined to think on the Covenant, "The Covenant of redemption or the new covenant, as also the covenant of grace," to take its depth and height, so to speak, and test its age (TCLS, p. 207). In II. 31, Taylor as individual believer finds a tree very like that of ancient myth:

Its said H * * * * * doth enjoy
 A Tree of Gold whose Root is deemd t' have birth

At Centre of the Earth whose Spirits fly
Ore all its body blossoming on the earth.⁵³

(II. 31: 1-4)

The tree of legend

Is but a Toade Stoodle bowre compar'd to thee
My blessed Lord, whose tent of Humane mould
Shines like Gods Paradise, Where springs the tree
Of Pure, Pure Love that doth thy friends enfold
In richer Robes than all those Leaves of gold.

(II. 31: 8-12)

This tree goes deeper than the "Centre of the Earth," originates in Paradise of "Humane mould" and bears "its fruite of largest length" (II. 31: 3, 9, 10, 31). It also bears apples, like those of Hesperides or Eden: "All golden apples; ripest grace that springe" (II. 161A: 18). It is indeed an ancient tree, at least coexistent with that of the Garden of Eden, yet different from it:

Not like the tree that once in Eden grew
Amongst whose fruits the serpent old soon lops
And in his very teeth the poison threw
Into our Mother Eves her sorry Chops.

(II. 161A: 19-24)

Taylor emphatically contrasts the effect of this tree of God's Covenant: "That tree of Life god's Paradise within / That healing fruite brings forth to heale 'gainst sin" (II. 161B: 23-24). Wonder at this tree answers some questions and asks more:

Walking, my Lord, within thy Paradise
I finde a Fruite whose Beauty smites mine Eye
And Taste my Tooth that had no Core nor Vice.

An Hony Sweet, that's never rotting, ly
 Under a Tree, which view'd, I knew to bee
 The Tree of Life whose Bulk's Theanthropic.

And looking up, I saw its boughs all bow
 With Clusters of this Fruit that it doth bring.
 Nam'de Greatest LOVE. And well, for bulk, and brow,
 Thereof, of th'sap of Godhood-Manhood spring.
 What Love is here for kinde? What sort? How much?
 None ever but the Tree of Life bore such.

(II. 33: 1-12)

Here again in the trunk of the great Tree is represented the rod of Moses' authority, Aaron's rod that budded, the "Rod of David's Root, Branch of his Bough," the "Gracious Twig," "lopt" off, as in Isaiah's prophecy, to offer "sovereign Sodder," the "Golden Stock" (I. 30: 25, 27, 14-15; I. 29: 41). Now it has become a great bulk, with the name of God-man, "Theanthropic." The fruit itself has the familiar, yet imponderable, name of Love. In his mystic vision, the fruit begins to talk. It sees "sinfull Man the Object of this Love" and that "Justice will its Object take away / Out of its bosome, and to hell't convey." It takes "steps" to answer Justice:

Hence in it steps, to justice saith, I'll make
 Thee satisfaction, and my Object shine.
 I'll slay my Humane Nature for thy sake
 Fild with the Worthiness of thy Divine
 Make pay therewith. The Fruit doth sacrifice
 The tree that bore't. This for its object dies.

(II. 33: 19, 24, 25-30)

Taylor is verging close to the eternal Covenant of Redemption here when he reflects on the love that can answer Justice on its own ground. In some of the literature of the times, indeed in Milton and in Taylor's own Gods Determinations, Mercy and Justice confront one another in the

eternities.⁵⁴ Taylor urged contemplation on the transaction:

The covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son. For the Son would not lay down His blood if His Father had not accepted of it instead of ours. . . . It is satisfying blood. It hath made satisfaction unto the justice of the law for the transgressions thereof in thy hand. . . . Whatever justice required, He accomplished" (TCLS, pp. 204-205).

In the rather legal terms of a court agreement, it seems easy to talk of Justice and Mercy so. But in the terms of the Tree and its Fruit, it is more difficult: "An Higher round upon this golden scale / Love cannot Climbe, than to lay down the Life / Of him that loves, for him belov'd . . ." (II. 33: 31-32). The believer can only fall back in amazement once more: "Oh! matchless Love, Laid out on such as Hee! / Should Gold Wed Dung, should Stars Wooe Lobster Claws, / It is no wonder, like this Wonder, cause" (II. 33: 16-18).

The Covenant of Grace could explain many things. It could answer hyper-Calvinists that human nature was not so far gone but that God could raise and redeem it. It could satisfy the arguments of Arminians and Quakers that though man within himself could not produce the works of righteousness, God within him could. It could show how man in the universe was not alone in his search for God but was surrounded by the whole Body of Christ, of whom the church in heaven and on earth was named. But some mysteries, like this greatest one, of divine love, it could not explain. There was only one response appropriate. In II. 161A, Taylor had made the golden apple tree the epitome of love, following the text, Canticles 2: 3, "Thou art as Apple tree 'mong the sons of man." He pictured Solomon as the type of divine love. The individual's love to the Lord's is "a bubbe too

small . . . My Love alas is but a shrimpy thing." Yet he knows the Lord requires it of him: "And shall I then presume thee to obtain / If I should rob thee of so small a grain" (II. 161A: 3, 7, 11-12). Standing outside the Tree, he could only admire it. But when he re-joins the Tree, so to speak, when he remembers that "I being grafft in thee . . . With Saints, and Angells draw Affinity," he is not so hesitant to offer up his song:

My Lord, what is it that thou dost bestow?
 The Praise on this account fills up, and throngs
 Eternity brimfull, doth overflow
 The Heavens vast with rich Angelick Songs.
 How should I blush? how Tremble at this thing,
 Not having yet my Gam-Ut learnd to sing.

(I. 29: 19, 31-36)

The believer, joined to the Lord, could be sure his harmonies, still imperfect, would be acceptable. Though the "essence" of divine love might not be fully known, he was sure that its fruits could provide him with sustaining food for the present: "Then I shall have rich spirit-uall food for all / Occasions as they essences do still" (161A: 27-28). Praise could be perfected in heaven:

Thou tree of Life that ever more doth stand
 Within the Paradise of God and hast
 The Promise to him gi'n whose happy hand
 Doth overcome, shall of it eate and tast.
 Lord feed mee with this promisd food of Life
 And I will sing thy praise in songs most rife.

(II. 161A: 35-40)

* * * * *

The Puritans of the seventeenth century, particularly those of the American branch, were not satisfied to leave the Almighty locked in his impenetrable fastnesses of mystery. Instead, they discovered a system, Biblically based, whereby they might deal with the Lord on clear and equable terms. This arrangement was known as the Covenant of Grace. It could be stated in legal terms, or just as satisfactorily, in the language of growing things. Edward Taylor, like many another preacher and theologian of his day, was fond of showing that the contribution of the human member of the Covenant was absolutely required for the growth and prosperity of the whole organism of grace. Conversely, by union to Christ, the great "bulk" or trunk, and his vast family, each member enjoyed an infinite extension of his own significance. Through "the Puritan's sense of the living process" in the Covenant, he could, in Perry Miller's words, experience the "pulsating energy . . . continuously pumped through creation's heart." 55

NOTES

¹The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), II. 80: 31, 27. All references to Taylor's poetry are to the First and Second Series (indicated by Roman numerals) and to the numbered meditations and line numbers, except when titles of poems are given as found in the Stanford edition. Hereafter lines from the poems will be so indicated within the text of the chapter.

Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (1956; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1964), uses "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity" as the title of his third chapter, pp. 48-98, after William Ames' Medulla Sacrae Theologiae (1632).

²See, for example, the citation of the "unhealthy degree of . . . inward torment" among the Puritans, which could "reduce them to a state of neuroticism," in Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards, Backgrounds of American Literary Thought, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1952), p. 49.

³See Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper (E. Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 204-205, for the poet's treatment of this subject. This work will be referred to by its initials, TCLS and by page number of the material cited and such references will be included in the body of the chapter hereafter.

⁴See Miller, Errand, pp. 60-61 for a short treatment of the Covenant of Works, and Perry Miller, The Seventeenth Century, Vol. I of The New England Mind (1939; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), pp. 384-385 for a slightly longer treatment.

⁵For full treatments of the Covenant of Grace, see Miller, Errand, pp. 48-98, and The Seventeenth Century, pp. 365-397. See especially Errand, p. 61, for the way in which Miller believes the Puritans discovered the covenant idea in Genesis 17.

⁶Peter Bulkley, The Gospel-Covenant, or the Covenant of Grace Opened (2nd ed., London, 1651), 27, in Miller, Errand, pp. 60-61.

⁷See in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 374-376, his interpretation that "the concept was essentially legal" and his discussion of the backgrounds of some of the Puritan leadership in the law and in politics.

⁸Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 376.

⁹Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 202, cites Thomas Shepard to the effect that God does not work upon believers "as upon blocks or brute creatures."

¹⁰Cf. Chapter I of this study, pp. 1, 27-28.

¹¹Excerpts from Thomas Hooker's Application of Redemption are given in Louis L. Martz' Introduction to Taylor's Stanford edition, xxiv.

¹²See Miller, Errand, pp. 57-58, for a summary of Perkins' contributions and a discussion of his wide influence in Ian Breward's Introduction to William Perkins, ed. Breward (Appelford, Berkshire, England: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), pp. 1-126; in regard to his teachings as to the smallness of the beginnings of grace, see pp. 94-95.

¹³Miller, Errand, p. 58; cf. "A Graine of Mustard Seed," Works (Cambridge, 1626), p. 637, ff., p. 58, in Errand.

¹⁴Hooker, Soules Implantation (London, 1637), p. 47, in Miller, Errand, p. 87.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Taylor attributes the term "Seedlip" to Augustine in Christographia, ed. Norman S. Grabo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 452. References to this work will be indicated hereafter by the letter C and the page numbers and indicated in the body of the study; Hooker quotation, Ibid.

¹⁷See Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 287-292, on the Puritans' use of outward means.

¹⁸John Preston, Saints Qualification (London, 1633), p. 223, in Miller, Errand, p. 86.

¹⁹Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 378-379.

²⁰Perkins, p. 404.

²¹Ibid.

²²See Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 377-378.

²³Note, for example, Taylor's treatment of the Ishmael and Isaac story of Galatians 4 in II. 4.

²⁴Perkins, p. 405.

²⁵Cecelia L. Halbert, "Tree of Life Imagery in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," AL, 38 (1966-67), 22-24.

²⁶Cited in Ursula Brumm, "The 'Tree of Life' in Edward Taylor's Meditations," EAL, 3 (Winter, 1968), 73.

²⁷Shepard, Works, ed. John Albro (Boston, 1853), I, 164, in Thomas Werge, "The Tree of Life in Edward Taylor's Poetry: The Sources of a Puritan Image," EAL, 3 (Winter, 1968), 200.

²⁸Brumm, p. 79.

²⁹This was the understanding of a legal contract or compact, as cf. Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 375, "A promise calls for some future good, a law for some performance, but a covenant calls for both."

³⁰Brumm, p. 80, points out this play on words.

³¹Cotton in Covenant of Free Grace (London, 1645), pp. 19-20, in Miller, Errand, p. 85.

³²Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline (London, 1658), I, 50, in Miller, Errand, p. 90.

³³Cotton, Christ, the Fountaine of Life (London, 1651), p. 32, in Miller, Errand, p. 72.

³⁴Preston, The New Covenant, or the Saints Portion (London, 1629), p. 477, in Miller, Errand, p. 72.

³⁵Preston, Life Eternall, or, A Treatise of the Knowledge of the Divine Essence and Attributes (London, 1631), II, 84, in Miller, Errand, p. 71; Hooker, The Soules Exaltation (London, 1638), p. 8, in Miller, Errand, p. 72.

³⁶Cotton, The Covenant of Gods Free Grace, p. 18, in Miller, Errand, p. 72.

- ³⁷Cotton, A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace (3rd ed., London, 1671), p. 6, in Miller, Errand, pp. 65-66.
- ³⁸Miller, Errand, p. 143.
- ³⁹Miller, Errand, p. 69.
- ⁴⁰Ames, Medulla Sacrae Theologiae (London, 1643), p. 170, in Miller, Errand, p. 69.
- ⁴¹Bulkley, Gospel-Covenant, p. 188, in Miller, Errand, p. 69.
- ⁴²Preface to Bulkley, Gospel-Covenant, or the Covenant of Grace Opened, in Miller, Errand, p. 65.
- ⁴³Perkins, p. 405.
- ⁴⁴Shepard, Works, II, 224, in Miller, Errand, p. 87.
- ⁴⁵See Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 365-373, for the Puritan attempts to balance the extremes of Arminianism and Antinomianism.
- ⁴⁶Shepard, Works, I, in Werge, p. 200.
- ⁴⁷Donald E. Stanford, "Edward Taylor's 'Spiritual Relation,'" AL, 35 (1963-64), 473-474.
- ⁴⁸Brumm, p. 79, finds this mutual feeding particularly inconsistent, but it is consistent with the expectations of the Lord as shown in Miller, Errand, pp. 82-85, and Scriptural passages showing the Lord as divine husbandman, who cultivates his vineyard and returns to enjoy the fruits of it.
- ⁴⁹Preston, The New Covenant, p. 351, in Miller, Errand, p. 60.
- ⁵⁰Bulkley, Gospel-Covenant, p. 27, in Miller, Errand, p. 60.
- ⁵¹Thomas Hooker, Works, III, 35, in Miller, Errand, p. 97.
- ⁵²Thomas Shepard, Works, I, 14, in Miller, Errand, p. 52.
- ⁵³Asterisks indicate erosion in the original manuscript.

⁵⁴Cf. Book III, Paradise Lost, "A Dialogue between Justice and Mercy," in Gods Determinations, pp. 391-398.

⁵⁵Miller, The Sevanteenth Century, p. 33.

CHAPTER V

THE DOMESTIC IMAGE: THE TABLE, THE GARMENT,
AND THE COUNTERPANE

While Edward Taylor discerned that "grace in the soul is called a seed of God . . . the new creature," he also saw that "when things are come into their essence, . . . the means ordained of God for the nourishing and strengthening of grace is styled bread, meat, and milk, which plainly holds their grace is not strengthened after the same way that it is produced."¹ He concluded that the life of earth and the life of heaven were in complete harmony with one another. Neither need be denied. Indeed, each could nourish and enhance the other:

But I've thy Pleasant Pleasant Presence had
 In Word, Pray're, Ordinances, Duties; nay
 And in thy Graces, making me full Glad,
 In Faith, Hope, Charity, that I do say,
 That thou hast been on Earth below with mee.
 And I shall be in Heaven above with thee.²

Had Taylor's twentieth century critics understood from the first the Puritan principle Taylor enunciated here, they might not have felt so much "shock," as Austin Warren did, for example, at Taylor's comparisons of "the greater to the less, . . . the wildest and grandest objects into familiar properties of the chamber, the hearth, the barnyard."³ They would have known that Taylor's "fondness for colloquial diction and homely imagery" did not derive simply, as Donald E. Stanford

guessed, from the metaphysical poets or from "the necessity of preaching to a semiliterate farmer congregation."⁴ They would not have assumed, as Roy Harvey Pearce did, that by the use of these homely and familiar objects, Taylor "concerns himself with just so much human experience as will make communication possible."⁵ Had they understood Puritan dogma, rather, these writers might have known that the "curious domestications," as Mindele Black called them, were actually apt expressions of an important facet of Puritan dogma, its outerness, its dailiness, its downright comfortable familiarity.⁶ The "comfortable effect" of the doctrine, particularly of the American founders like John Cotton, had assured the Puritans that the Almighty could be enjoyed in the here and now.⁷ They had come to know that the experience of grace must be externalized, that the church itself must become a body of "visible" saints and that by their meaningful materiality, the ordinances could sustain the spiritual life of believers still on earth.

The heart of this materiality could have been observed in the service the Puritans called the Lord's Supper, since it reflected openly what they believed about the movement of God upon the individual heart, about conversion, about worship and about the maintenance of daily life as well as preparation for the life to come. This philosophy involved, inevitably, what they taught about the "means." Though grace could be manifested apart from the usual course of nature, generally it did not do so. "It is true," said the Puritan preacher, "the Lord can work above meanes, we know also God can appoint other meanes for to call the soule, but . . . we must not looke for revelations and

dreames, . . . but in common course Gods Spirit goes with the Gospell, and that is the ordinary meanes whereby the soule comes to be called."⁸

As the preached Word was often the means by which a soul came to God, the sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper, became the channel through which spiritual life could be sustained. The right order must be preserved. William Ames had explained of the material elements, "though those doe morally concurre and operate in the preparation of man to receive this grace, yet they doe not properly confer the grace by themselves, but the spirit which worketh together with them."⁹ By them, said Thomas Hooker, God moves "according to the Rules of Wisdom, and the right order of causes and means . . . these are the conduits to convey this water of life."¹⁰ Edward Taylor was to use similar language:

Each Ordinance, and Instrument of Grace
 Grace doth instruct are Usefull here;
 They're Golden Pipes where Holy Waters trace
 Into the Spirits spicebed Deare,
 To vivify what withering were.

(Gods Determinations, "The Soule Seeking," 16)

Such channels of grace must be esteemed, but not too much. In this connection, Puritan paradoxes abound. Believers must "Wait upon God in his Ordinances with thirsting souls: It will not be in vain." They were enjoined to "use the meanes," but to remember that "there is no meanes under heaven will do it." In their eagerness to preserve the ordinance in its purity, they were willing to migrate to the New World, yet they admonished themselves and their brethren concerning the

outward meanes, ". . . while you enjoy them, trust not in them."¹¹

Edward Taylor once contemplated the vineyard of this world apart from God's presence and found the thought unendurable:

If off as Offal I be put, if I
 Out of thy Vineyard Work be put away;
 Life would be Death: my Soule would Coffin'd ly,
 Within my Body; and no longer pray
 Oh! that thou wast on Earth below with mee:
 But that I was in Heaven above with thee.

But reflection on the outer confirmations as well as the inner graces provided by his faith made him know "That thou hast been on Earth below with mee. / And I shall be in Heaven above with thee" ("The Return," 37-42, 47-48).

As Perry Miller says, perhaps only a Puritan could have comprehended such an outlook.¹² The study of the Supper on Edward Taylor's terms, however, can help a twentieth century student to comprehend the Puritan viewpoint. True to Puritan understanding, Taylor employed "the ordinary meanes" to explain the deep truths of the Supper. This study will show how he used the Table and its elements to illustrate the way the inner life of the spirit could strengthen and give meaning to the outer life. The Garments, or "Adjuncts" as he called them, he employed to demonstrate how Christian faith must be shown visibly before the world. And by the legal-domestic image of the checkered Counterpane he placed the elect individual in the center of God's time and space.

The Table: "Spirits Chymistrie"

On a May day in 1690, Edward Taylor drew a word-picture to show his "true sight" of the Lord's Supper in the waning years of the seventeenth century:

Am I thy Child, Son, Heir . . . yet gain
 Not of the Rights that these Relations claim?
 Am I hop't on thy knees, yet not at ease?
 Sunke in thy bosom, yet thy Heart not meet?
 Lodgd in thine Arms? yet all things little please?
 Sung sweetly, yet finde not this singing sweet?
 Set at thy Table, yet scarce tast a Dish
 Delicious? Hugd, yet seldom gain a Kiss?

(I. 37: 29-36)

One can hardly imagine a more homelike picture than this of the petulant child on his father's knee or waiting somewhat sulkily for his Supper. Yet Taylor's purpose was not simply a "domestication" of the divine but an opening out of a true doctrine of communion.

Taylor's doctrinal aims were twofold, negative and positive. A wrong teaching concerning the Lord's Supper must be eradicated, and a right one set forth. The wrong doctrine emanated from his erstwhile Harvard colleague and now neighbor, Solomon Stoddard, pastor of the influential church of nearby Northampton. Stoddard had preceded Taylor to the Connecticut Valley by a few months, in 1672, and had soon after begun publicizing his desire to change the Puritan practice of the Lord's Supper. Discouraged by the declining rate of conversion, Stoddard by 1679 had chosen to meet the problem in a new way. He hit upon the tactic of inviting all sincere, "non-scandalous" persons under his ministry to partake of the Lord's Supper.¹³ Preparation of the heart was for him, as we noted in Chapter I, not efficacious.¹⁴

The inward call of God, he believed, "prevails immediately upon the heart."¹⁵ This being the case, why might there not be a sudden and effective call of the Lord while the Supper was in progress? The Supper itself might thus become "a converting ordinance," and none might have to wait for conversion in order to enjoy its benefits. The spiritual "harvests" of souls Stoddard had begun to draw in by the execution of his philosophy were to him and to some others in the region self-vindicating. "Stoddardeanism" began to sweep across the Connecticut Valley.¹⁶

Not all of Stoddard's colleagues were persuaded to his viewpoint, however. Edward Taylor, for one, could not agree, since he was thoroughly committed to the polity of the New England Way, so called, which had been hammered out by the founders in the 1630's and 40's.¹⁷ Taylor found it "lamentable" that such a "Popish error . . . should bud and blossom among us in New England" (TCLS, p. 68). Taylor's congregation, founded at Westfield in the same year his neighbor began his variant practice, must be protected, he felt. His efforts to refuse the false teaching engaged Taylor's polemic energies over a period of some thirty years.¹⁸ His poetic efforts in the same direction lasted even longer, until the end of his life in 1729. "And this rich banquet makes me thus a Poet," he wrote once (II. 110: 24).

In confronting Stoddard's teaching, Taylor felt it necessary to show what the Supper was not. It could not be a converting ordinance:

Food though its ne're so rich, doth not beget
 Nor make its Eaters; but their Lives mentain.
 This Bread and Wine begets not Souls; but's set

'Fore spirituall life to feed upon the Same
 This Feast is no Regenerating fare
 But food for those Regenerate that are.

(II. 106: 49-54)

Food cannot of itself produce life, but when the spark of life is present, food can nourish and sustain it.¹⁹ The order must be preserved here in the spiritual life as in the natural:

To Eat's an Act of Life that life out sent
 Employing Food. Life's property alive
 Yet acts uniting with foods nourishment
 Which spreads o're nature quite to make it thrive.
 Life Naturall and Spirituall Life renewd
 Precedes their Acts, their Acts precede their food.

(II. 106: 55-60)

The sulky child at the table has only to assert his living relation to his father to gain access to the meal:²⁰

Why? Lord, why thus? Shall I in Question Call
 All my Relation to thyselfe? I know
 It is no Gay to please a Child withall
 But is the Ground whence Priviledges flow,
 Then ope the sluice: let some thing spoute on me.
 Then I shall in a better temper bee.

(I. 37: 37-42)

But to put himself and the saints in a better temper, Taylor must not only show what the Supper was not but present it in a way that would make it immediately appealing and available to his hearers. The meal he presented must often have resembled the material meals his parishioners took, but its tangibility actually goes back to earliest Protestant belief when Thomas Cranmer, first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, who was to formulate the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book

of Common Prayer, went to the stake, rejecting the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and affirming that Christ was present in the Supper "really" and "effectually" but not "corporeally."²¹ Later, other Protestants would make similar assertions, but some did not take such severe steps away from Catholic teaching as did the Puritans in the Westminster Confession:

The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him, crucified, as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.²²

The Puritan founders, too, were fond of describing the Supper and the eating of it in very earthy terms:

Bread is Sweet to him that is Hungry, and he feeds on it with great content. And if thou longest after Spiritual relief, and feelest thine own emptiness, how sweet will a Christ be to thee? with what delight wilt thou feed upon him? Wine is the blood of the Grape, . . . Drink, and drink again Inebriate thy self then with these Rivers of his pleasures.²³

Such precedent gave Taylor ample scope to present the sacred meal in a manner that would, so to speak, bring it down to earth.

One familiar with Taylor's method would anticipate that he would present a favorite figure in a variety of ways. With the foods of the holy Supper, however, he seems to outdo himself. The bread might be either "Childrens Bread" or "Angells bread of Heavens wheat," offered as "golden altar shew bread gloriously" (GD, "First Satans Assault," 4; II. 60A: 2; II. 157A: 22). It could be either "Mannah, . . . Yea. Heavens Good Cheer" or the seventeenth century dainty,

"sugar cake":

Did God mould up this Bread in Heaven, and bake,
Which from his Table came, and to thine goeth?
Doth he bespeake thee thus, This Soule Bread take.
Come Eate thy fill of this thy Gods White Loafe?
Its Food too fine for Angells, yet come, take
And Eate thy fill. Its Heavens Sugar Cake.

(I. 8: 25-30)

On an even more mundane level, the word "biskit," as prepared in a colonial "backhouse" comes into play: ". . . Bisket of the Spirits Backhouse best / Emblems of Sanctifying Grace most high / Water and Bread of spiritual life up dresst" (II. 149: 32-34). Biscuit alone would be "dry," and the saints must have drippings in which to sop it. Christ provides the "Wisdoms rost meat rost in graces sops / Whose Dripping, Saints their biskit in't do sop" (II. 157B: 29-30). The Old Testament sense of the glorious "drippings" from off the altar is paired with the homey touch of diners dredging their bread in gravy.²⁴

As with the bread, Taylor could often describe the second element of the Supper in plebian ways. When in the erotic vein, he could accompany the wine with "Seraphick Phancies in Chill Raptures high," but this element in Taylor's hands could also indicate a heartiness more consonant with daily life (I. 20: 2). In fact, he often seemed to enjoy discussing the second element in terms of succulent meat. In this way, the bread and "drink" are frequently mingled, as in II. 157B, in which Christ, the paschal lamb, provides the liquid to accompany the bread of the Supper:

This Meate and Drink is best ten thousand fold
Of th' Paschall Mutton the fattest of the Flock

Cookt up by Grace in Chargers all of Gold.
 This Banquits Fare, it's Christ himself, the Rock
 In Wisdoms rost meat rost in graces sops
 Whose Dripping, Saints their biskit in't do sop.

(II. 157B: 25-30)

One could by a study of the foods mentioned and the description of the methods of preparation get a fair idea of a menu of the period, admittedly for a special occasion. Flour would be sifted, dough mixed, "whelmed down" and kneaded for biscuits or rolled into pie shapes for tarts and "pasties" on the high dresser of the backhouse (II. 157A; I. 8; II. 51; II. 82; II. 49). The deer would be shot, dressed and spitted over an open fire, later to be served in trenchers, or diced and combined with sweets for pies (II. 159; II. 91; II. 71). There would be sweets of raisins and minced pies, the foamy beer or the creamy syllabub as drink (II. 15; II. 159; II. 156).

The doctrinal equivalents are ever present and important, of course. Christ was "needed" ("kneaded") by grace (I. 8). He was tested ("rost") by the fires of justice and "plumb't" with grace (II. 71). He became the burnt offering whose sacred oil fell from off the altar (I. 5). Christ was the "deer" (Taylor often addresses him as "Deare Deare") of the Lord plucked from the paradisaal "park" and the Lamb of God "speared" over the fires of hell for mankind (II. 159). Taylor manages an amazing doctrinal compression without ever straying far from the hearthside.

Yet we do Taylor's metaphors and his Puritan teaching an injustice if we believe that his major purpose was to stimulate the spiritual appetite by arousing the physical. He himself saw this

possibility and rejected it:

What feed on Humane Flesh and Blood? Strang mess.
 Nature exclaims. What Barbarousness is here?
 And Lines Divine this sort of Food repress.
 Christs Flesh and Blood how can they bee good Cheer?
 If shread to atoms, would too few be known,
 For ev'ry mouth to have a single one?

(II. 81: 13-18)

He quickly explained that "Some other Sense makes this a metaphor":

This feeding signifies, that Faith in us,
 Feeds on this fare, Disht in this Pottinger.
 And drinks this Blood. Sweet junkets: Angells Fare.

(II. 81: 21-24)

Only with the spiritual sense can one apprehend these very earthy metaphors.

Taylor was careful to remember the strictures of the Westminster Confession, above, that the elements themselves remain "outward" or material ("still truly and only bread and wine") and that they are received "really and indeed" by faith. Taylor's full statement on the matter, quoted in part at the beginning of this chapter, sheds further light on his conception:

So is grace said to be introduced in the soul in the language of the scripture. Hence the soul in which it is, is said to be begotten again . . . and grace in the soul is called a seed of God . . . and also it is said to be created. . . . But now when things are come into their essences, . . . strengthening grace is styled bread, meat, and milk (TCLS, pp. 42-43).

There must the prerequisite spiritual life before it can be fed from without. Likewise, the reader of the metaphors must read them through

the eyes of faith before he can "truly, yet sacramentally only" ingest them. Taylor must have experienced and expected the strong infusion of faith necessary for this Puritan suspension of unbelief. Otherwise, his images would have been as repugnant to him as they have been to critics who do not understand the "other Sense" of his metaphors.²⁵

To understand his method, it is instructive to look at what Kathleen Blake has discovered in her article on Taylor's "non-transubstantiating metaphor." She believes that a technique Helen White sees in Crashaw can be found in Taylor also. We might coin the term "brutalizing" from her discussion of the "brutality" with which Crashaw treated his figures. Blake believes that sometimes Taylor's figures are so strong that they cannot bear the usual weight of metaphor. They force the reader, unless he is to set the images aside altogether, to "spiritualize" them first. After this, he can put them back again into their original material "cases," so to speak.²⁶ Only in this way can Christ, for example, as "my Souls Plumb Cake" be other than ludicrous or horrendous. Taken in the spiritual sense first, Christ can be received as "plump'd with Grace," in the triple meanings of being complete, fruitful and aligned with the divine expectations of Saviorhood (II. 81: 56; II. 71: 17; II. 159: 51).

Taylor's use of this particular kind of metaphor provides unusual depth to the unions he affects. From this standpoint, the bread becomes a counter for the earthly existence of Jesus, and the wine, his divine presence. That is why, I believe, Taylor was generally unwilling to speak of one element, the bread or the wine, alone, and why, when he mentioned one, he usually hastened to combine

it with the other. Only when "the Spirits Chymistrie" acts upon the "Biskit" does it become "spirituall life up dresst" (II. 149: 31-32, 34). Neither could be meaningful alone. "He's not partable," Taylor had said when discussing Christ as faithful husband. "Who hath him hath him all (II. 133: 8). So in the Supper, he would request, ". . . let my food a whole redeemer be" (II. 108: 50).

As with the Savior, so with his follower. In the Supper, the broken body and the shed blood must be reunited by faith. In II. 5, Taylor describes man as lying like a "Shell" at the foot of the Brazen Altar and asking to be made "thine Altars Drippen pan / To Catch the Drippen of thy sacrifice" (lines 22, 27-28). The flesh is empty without the filling of the spirit, but filled with it, "The Drippen, and the meate are royall fair. / That fatten Souls" (II. 5: 35-36). A similar passage shows how "the Naturall Life the Life of Reason too / Are but as painten Cloths to that I lack / The Spiritual Life (II. 81: 43-44).²⁷ Without the spiritual, human life would be meaningless. With the infusion of the spiritual, however, even everyday experience takes on divine intensity:

Thou are Continually a Coming, its true,
 In Providences Some, that scowle and lower,
 That Thunder sharp and fiery lightening spew.
 Yet Roses Some, and Mary golds out shower.
 Thou comst in Ordinances too: and dost
 The golden gifts give of the Holy Ghost.

(II. 91: 25-30)

The acceptance of each day's fare as needful for a whole feast made the Supper a meal for all seasons:

Hence loade my Trencher with thy Flesh Divine:
 Its Angells foode. My Soule doth almost sink:
 And press thy Grape into my Cup: Rich Wine.
 Lord make thy Blood indeed, my dayly drinke.
 When with thy Fare my Vessels fill to th' brim,
 Thy Praise, on my Shoshannims, Lord, shall Ring.

(II. 91: 37-42)

Taylor had said that when the Supper was "Spiritually wise mixt with my soul, . . . life shall be mentain'd and thrive / Eternally when spiritually alive" (II. 81: 57, 59-60). The language is remarkably like that of Samuel Willard when explaining to sinners the eternal life in terms of present human existence: "There is a great deal goes to the eternal life of a soul, and thou has none of it; . . . thou wantest the promise which is the support of the soul here in this life."²⁸ With the introduction of faith, the earthly life can also become eternal. It need not be transcended but only celebrated. The interpenetration implied in the "Flesh Divine," above, makes this possible.²⁹

The Garment: "Adjuncts Shining Round About"

After Edward Taylor had whetted the saints' appetites for the heavenly-earthly Supper, "the richest dainties of gospel provision," he was sure that they would be willing to assume the robes of salvation, the "Adjuncts" of the holy meal (II. 108; TCLS, p. 48).

The sense of outerness implied by such a term as "Adjunct" dates back to one of the oldest ideas in Puritanism, the conception of "visible" sainthood. In the early days of the movement, nonconformist ministers in England began to insist that believers must make themselves known by a public account of their conversion experiences before they

could partake of the Lord's Supper. The Westminster Confession was to stipulate that "Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements, . . . feed upon Christ crucified, . . . present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses."³⁰ This concept was so valuable to the Puritans who were to settle America, that, in Edward Taylor's words,

. . . the old and new Nonconformists . . . deserted episcopal governments and suffered persecution, loss of their public ministry, poverty, imprisonment . . . to avoid such mixt administrations of the Lord's Supper; and to enjoy an holy administrating of it to the visibly worthy was that that brought this people from all things near and dear to them in their native country, to encounter with the sorrows and difficulties in the wilderness. . . .³¹

The effect of the open confession was thought to be so "comfortable" that the "relation," as the statement of conversion was called, became a standard requirement for full church membership when the Puritans began to constitute their congregations in the New World.³² The principles of visibility were crystallized at mid-century in the Cambridge Platform, during the American period Karl Keller called "high Puritanism." They were largely reenacted by the Synod of 1662 in a document dubbed by its detractors the "Halfway Covenant," with the new stipulation that not only the children but the grandchildren of visible saints might now have the privilege of baptism. But access to the Lord's Supper was not enlarged. Only full members, those who had declared themselves in a relation, were offered rights to the Lord's Table.³³

From Edward Taylor's first days in Westfield, he had felt it necessary to defend the relation because Solomon Stoddard, as part of

his campaign to change the observance of the Supper, wanted to do away with the public account as a prerequisite to it. Stoddard did not believe, as did Taylor and the more traditionally orthodox Puritans, that one could reach assurance of salvation in this life. He also was dubious even of the "probable hope" that Taylor and the Mathers said would be sufficient.³⁴ Further, Stoddard felt that the relation was an unnecessary obstacle in the way of many sincere but shy persons who might have benefited from the Supper otherwise.³⁵ Taylor replied that God's ways must not be changed to suit man's "timerousness" or "Pride of heart." "If this was Good arguing," he said, "then we might bring Gods Laws to mans Will, & make them Suite every man: or as a Taylor doth the Cloath, Cut out of the Piece a garment that he fits to the back of his Customers."³⁶ Christ alone has determined the qualifications for attending his feast: "Which are its robes it ever more doth ware? / These Robes are Adjuncts shining round about / Christs golden Sheers did cut exactly out" (II. 108: 1-6). Steadily maintaining the garment image, in his Treatise and in many of the Meditations, Taylor showed how the garment of salvation must be worn outwardly to the feast of Christ.

The word "Huswifery" gave an especially down-to-earth touch to Taylor's discussion of the soul's visibility. As he used it, the term was one that could mean either cloth-making or housekeeping.³⁷ The parable of the wedding garment in Matthew 22: 1-14 he found made to order for his explication of the saint's proper appearance at the Lord's Table: "There is a gospel wedden garment required as absolutely necessary in all those that do approach unto the gospel wedden feast"

(TCLS, p. 28). Without it, the soul would be "naked" in the sight of the Lord, and "spiritual nakedness is damning . . . (TCLS, p. 37).

Since the clothing was of such supreme importance, Taylor set out to define it succinctly: "Nay in one word, this wedden garment is nothing below a sanctifying work of the spirit upon the soul . . . the robe of evangelical righteousness constituting the soul complete in the sight of God" (TCLS, p. 29). The construction of the garment was in two sections, so to speak, as neat in its finished appearance as the melange of the meal which the saints were to partake.³⁸ "Now this evangelical righteousness," he explained, "consists in: Imputed righteousness" and "Implanted righteousness" (TCLS, p. 30). He showed first how Christ put together his own garment and then how the saints would follow his example. The clearest "series" describing Christ's garment is I. 41 to I. 51, though other Meditations illuminate this passage.³⁹

The garment of imputed righteousness is most clearly shown in I. 41. The first stanza of the Meditation presents Christ in a somewhat formless manifestation as the center of the angels' admiration, but "Shining dark or White." Then in a phrase reminiscent of Pilate's "Behold the man," Taylor presents him in glorified human form:

The Magnet of all Admiration's here.
 Your tumbling thoughts turn here. Here is Gods Son,
 Wove in a Web of Flesh, and Bloode rich geere.
 Eternall Wisdoms Huswifry well spun.
 Which through the Laws pure Fulling mills did pass.
 And so went home the Wealthy'st Web that was.

(I. 41: 5, 6-12)

Taylor explained imputed righteousness as "the righteousness of Christ's active and passive obedience made ours by God's imputation, and our own . . . called the righteousness of God by faith. . . . Hence Christ is made of God unto us righteousness, and He is become our righteousness by faith" (TCLS, p. 29). The garment of imputed righteousness appears at first examination a highly abstract and theoretical piece of "cloth." Indeed, the legal sense prevails. By a transaction made in eternity among the Persons of the Trinity, Christ's promised sacrifice became in the mind of God the perfect accomplishment of righteousness by his elect. As Norman S. Grabo points out, this doctrine is closely related to that of the "hypostatical" union of Christ's human and divine natures in eternity.⁴⁰ Taylor had explained in Christographia: "Human nature is advanced as nigh to Deity, . . . as created nature can be . . . unto a personal conjunction with his divine nature and seated with it in the trinity" (C, pp. 60-61, 44). Yet all of this divinely legal transaction could not be carried into effect until Christ put on an earthly body.⁴¹

Christ's assumption of human flesh is the logical reverse of the picture seen in the emblems of the Supper. There man lay empty as a shell waiting for the "Drippen" of "thine Altars Drippen pan" (II. 5: 22, 27-28). Now, with Christ, the case is the opposite. Meditation II. 42 bears the theme of Heb. 10. 5, "A Body hast thous prepared mee." The weaving of earth was required to carry out the design of "Eternall Wisdom." Though salvation was implicitly complete from everlasting, it had to be spun out on the human loom. The spirit needs the flesh as a vehicle for enactment as much as the flesh needs

the spirit. Said Taylor, ". . . the Godhead is made flesh, or fleshed" (C, p. 79).

In II. 128, Taylor goes out of his way to make the flesh not just a covering for Christ but his highest adornment:

My Deare-Deare Lord, my Heart is Lodgd in thee:
 Thy Person lodgd in bright Divinity
 And waring Cloaths made of the best web bee
 Wove in the golde loom of Humanity.
 All lin'd and overlaide with Wealthi'st lace
 The finest Silke of Sanctifying Grace.

(Lines 1-6)

In II. 56, Taylor beheld Christ "a Tree of Perfect nature trim / Whose golden lining is of perfect Grace" (II. 56: 19-20). Yet in the image of Christ as the Ark of Covenant, he became a wooden casket overlaid with gold (II. 31: 7, 12; II. 29: 43). In Taylor's thinking, apparently, Christ, before his incarnation possessed his divine nature as a golden lining, but upon his assumption into heaven at the completion of his mediatorial function, he turned his garment inside out, so to speak, indicating that he had transformed humanity itself into gold. That Christ actually adorned himself with the human robe, that he was richer when he returned to heaven as a result of earth's experience was a purely Puritan notion. Calvin had taught that Christ no longer retained his human nature once he returned to the Father.⁴² But Taylor saw no reason "why . . . the Godhead should be deprived of it [the human nature], in which the Mediatory Offices were carried on, I see no proof or reason" (C, pp. 412-413).

The fine working that produced the wealthy lace and gold cloth of imputed righteousness can be better understood when we examine what

Taylor had to say about the second element of the wedding garment. As Taylor had divided his whole explanation of the garment itself in half, he also subdivided his treatment of implanted grace into halves: "Implanted righteousness, the sanctifying graces of the Spirit communicated to the soul. . . . are to be considered as to their essence / exercise" (TCLS, p. 29). Implanted righteousness, in its essence, has to do with cleansing and whiteness: "Hence me implant in Christ, that I may have / His Blood to wash away the filth in me" (II. 70: 37-42). The Treatise declared that "Implanted righteousness" meant "the garment of the saints that are washed and made white, or whitened in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7: 14) . . ." (TCLS, p. 29). Once the sinful soul, the "Ball of Dirt" is robed in "The Whitest Web in Glory, . . . Full in thy mill by hand," the inner beauties of its essence should appear on the outside (I. 46: 15, 29). From implanted grace, "such sweet Exhalations rise / As shall my Soule deck with an Holy guise" (II. 70: 41-42). When the elect Soul has come into its essential purity, he is entitled to wear the garment of Christ himself:

This Web is wrought by best, and noblest Art
 That heaven doth afford of twine most choice
 All brancht, and richly flowerd in every part
 With all the sparkling flowers of Paradise
 To be thy Ware alone, who hast no peere
 And Robes for glorious Saints to thee most deare.

(I. 46: 31-36)

This robe, which the Savior presents his elect ones, is more beautiful than any other because, as Taylor shows, it was openly "wrought" on the human scene.

With the "fulling" of I. 46: 29, above, Taylor comes to the second half of the implantation doctrine, its exercise. As in the Supper, the essence of grace must be present first, before it can be fed from without. So here, too, with the garment, the essence must be established first, but when it is, it must be exercised. Inner purity is not enough. It must be manifested outwardly. The conception of "fulling" or bleaching can be found in both imputed and implanted grace, with the law and the ordinances both "pure Fulling mills" (I. 41 and II. 70).⁴³ There is something else in this expression of fulling, however, and that is the simple sense of "making full." The doctrine of imputation included "His grace accepting of Christ in our stead for the fulfilling of the law . . . (TCLS, p. 29). Christ's "filling full" of the law while on earth made his redemptive garment complete.

The Christian could expect implanted grace, when "exercised," to yield "complement and acceptance . . . efficiency or fruits, all effected in our life and conversation" (TCLS, p. 30). In Christographia, Taylor made clear what he meant by Christ's "fruits":

It /grace/ extends itself over, and thro' every Action of Christ . . . His Sacred Actions were as a Rich Paradise of all Sweet and pretious Flowers, and Fruits Sending out a Sweet perfume every way to God, and men of all Spirituall Grace" (pp. 242-243).

The "sparkling flowers of Paradise," the "Wealthi'st lace" and the "brancht, and richly flowerd" work reflected the patient toil, the intense struggle and endurance of a productive Christian profession (I. 46; II. 128). Such "overlays" and "extensions" were not mere frills

but the required finish of the saint's garment. "But now," said Taylor, "both put together [i.e., imputed and implanted grace, grace in essence and in exercise] make up this wedden garment in which the soul stands complete before God" (TCLS, p. 30).

The Meditations using the garment motif show the significance of visibility as derived from Christ's saviorhood. The meaning of the clothing figure in the life of the individual Christian, however, emerges more clearly in Taylor's short occasional poem, "Huswifery." Here each stanza is a capsule of the salvation experience. Though each uses a different phase of the weaving process, each shows approximately the same experience of grace planted inward and worked outward. The first shows the spinning of the thread:

Make me, O Lord, thy Spinning Wheele compleate.
 Thy Holy Worde my Distaff make for mee.
 Make mine Affections thy Swift Flyers neate
 And make my Soule thy holy Spoole to bee.
 My Conversation make to be thy Reelee
 And reele the yarn thereon Spun of thy Wheele.

The stuff of life must emanate from the Lord himself, from the essence of the Word, but it must be spun on the wheele, spool or reel of the individual soul. Actually, the "Worde" itself has two meanings. It is, of course, a title for Christ and stands for his divine nature in eternity, as in John 1: 1. On the other hand, it is very often associated with the outer "means" of which the individual must take advantage in order to advance himself toward salvation. In a sense, the spinning is "Compleate" from the first line, yet its last aspect is the "Conversation," the manner-of-life on which the yarn is reeled.

The second stanza shows the thread or twine woven into a rich fabric:

Make me thy Loom, then, knit therein this Twine:
 And make thy Holy Spirit, Lord, winde quills:
 Then weave the Web thyselfe. The yarn is fine.
 Thine Ordinances make my Fulling Mills.
 Then dy the Same in Heavenly Colours Choice,
 All pinkt with Varnisht Flowers of Paradise.

Again, the construction is of the Lord, but the human soul cooperates. The Lord weaves and applies the heavenly tints, but the bleaching and dyeing require the vigorous involvement of the soul-fabric. The "pinking," rosy coloring or cutwork, of the last line, produces the lacy flowers of Meditations I. 41 and 46, above, but, if anything, shows greater struggle. David's "Pinckted Robes from Bozra," "died" in the blood of battle, made him supremely desirable in the eyes of his beloved (I. 12: 3, 27). Hardship and conflict were not to be shunned but sought after as highest adornments. Though God plans from eternity, he requires the reeling out of his will. Patient endurance there must be, but combat also. In one sense, the garment is "complete" from the first willing surrender of the wheel, but until there can be the whirl of the wheel, the lift of the loom and the stab of the needle, the garment of life is not finished.

The last stanza shows the finished garment. The thread has been spun, the fabric woven and the cloth stitched and adorned:

Then cloath therewith mine Understanding, Will
 Affections, Judgment, Conscience, Memory
 My Words, and Actions, that their shine may fill
 My wayes with glory and thee glorify.
 Then mine apparell shall display before yee
 That I am Cloathd in Holy robes for glory.

All the faculties are garbed with grace, as in Puritan conversion. Words and actions, though not usually listed in the usual catalog of faculties, are also to be "raised" in Taylor's understanding. Yet in an important sense, the garment is not complete until it is "adjuncted" to the individual wearer.

The Lord's Supper constantly reminded Puritan believers that their faith must be open and active as well as inner and private. "There is an invisible covenant," said Taylor, "and this is made between God and the soul, in the work of conversion," but "There are visible seals, and therefore there must be visible covenants To the Lord's Table is requisite therefore a visible covenant it's never to be administered in private" (TCLS, p. 197).

John Cotton once preached a famous sermon called "Christian Calling" in which he enunciated this principle: "We are now to speak of living by faith in our outward and temporal life. . . . Not only my spiritual life but even my civil life in this world, all the life I live is by the faith of the Son of God." Only when the individual has learned to place proper value on even the "means" that the Lord has given him is he ready to live the God-approved life. When, said Cotton, "his heart is not set upon these things, he can tell what to do with his estate when he hath got it."⁴⁴ He would have agreed with Taylor that once the outward and temporal and the inward and spiritual are sewn together as seamlessly as the garment Christ wore, the saint may "apply" the robe and sit down comfortably at the Lord's Table:

What Royall Feast Magnificent is this,
I am invited to, where all the fare
Is spic'd with Adjuncts (ornamentall bliss)

Which are its robes it ever more doth ware?
 These Robes of Adjuncts shining round about
 Christs golden Sheers did cut exactly out.

(II. 108: 1-6)

The Counterpane: "I Encentered Bee"

The individual Puritan believer who took the Lord's Supper according to the means prescribed by Edward Taylor had found a way to assert his identity in time and space. He did not ask to drown in the sacramental cup, as did some of the metaphysical and Counter-Reformation poets. Richard Crashaw, for example, asked once "that in one draught, Mortality / May drinke it selfe up, and forget to dy," and in another instance, requested:

By all of Him we have in Thee;
 Leave nothing of my Self in me.
 Let me so read thy life, that I
 Unto all life of mine may dy.⁴⁵

The Puritan Taylor, on the contrary, found in the holy meal a way to discern his personal selfhood in God's universe: "I drink the Drink of Life and weare Christe Web / And by the Sun of Righteousness am led" (II. 10: 29-30).

The positive emphasis on self in Taylor was not always so apparent to his critics. His earliest twentieth century readers judged him more often by his practice of "meiosis," as Charles W. Mignon, called it, or his self-diminishment.⁴⁶ Yet some, even from the first, saw him otherwise. Mindele Black noticed the tone of "confident familiarity" in his devotional address to the Deity and the "intense intimacy," which she thought strange in a Puritan, with which he

climbed "into Christ's dove-streaked downy bosom."⁴⁷ Thomas M. Davis was struck with the personal nature of Taylor's typology, by which the poet became "so closely identified with the Bible type he was representing that the centuries vanished" and Taylor invested "the type with a reality which is not found in other commentators."⁴⁸ Other knowledgeable writers, like Norman S. Grabo and William J. Schieck found that Taylor never lost his selfhood, though Grabo found it strongest when he conceived of "'human nature' not as an abstraction but as the distinguishing quality of himself."⁴⁹ Thus in I. 8, he could trace in his own person the career of the whole human race:

I kening through Astronomy Divine
 The Worlds bright Battlement, wherein I spy
 A Golden Path my Pensill cannot line,
 From that bright Throne unto my Threshold ly
 And while my puzzled thoughts about it pore
 I find the Bread of Life in't at my doore.

(Lines 1-6)

From being a spectator, the speaker has suddenly become the center of the action, for, as he admits, the "cage" was his own body:

When that this Bird of Paradise put in
 This Wicker Cage (my Corps) to tweedle praise
 Had peckt the Fruite forbad: and so did fling
 Away its Food; and lost its golden dayes;
 It fell into Celestiall Famine sore:
 And never could attain a morsel more.

(Lines 7-12)

Similarly, in II. 77, he is Adam as Paradisall bird, "tuning Pearcht" on high, soon "down . . . headlong" falling and in more anthropomorphic terms at the end, begging his Lord to draw him from the "Pit" to "twang

thy Praise" (lines 13, 16, 25, 40). By the simple process of eating, he lost heaven, and by eating again, it will be restored to him. Said Taylor once: ". . . we are not to understand an attendance on the wedden supper as spectators" (TCLS, p. 60). The self is not consumed in Taylor but always the consumer. For it to have been otherwise would have been the same kind of "Popish error" of which he accused Stoddard (TCLS, p. 68).

The "time" of the emergence of the self may be more difficult to establish, though in the prose writings it is certain that Taylor shows himself as a preacher coming forth in the fulness of time for God's purpose. Those who have made careful comparison of the prose contemporaneous with the poems have found remarkable parallels in themes, imagery and even diction.⁵⁰ But much of the prose has been lost, and even if it were all available for study, it would not necessarily have much bearing on the temporal quality of Taylor's work, for the poems are largely interchangeable with one another, with the themes, the persona, the action pretty much the same throughout the two series. Perhaps the best clue to the time can be found in Taylor's careful dating, however. Almost every Meditation is preceded by his notation of the day and month of composition, on the eve of Lord's Supper observances. He began with July 23, 1682, and continued almost to the end of his life, writing the last of the 217 Meditations in February, 1723.⁵¹ Like Thoreau, he did not read the Times, but the eternities, but he read them in the present. The moment of the composition of each poem, whether it gave the whole sweep of divine drama or pinpointed the life of a fly, celebrated the state of his soul before God. It was

all he had, he seemed to say, but it was of everlasting significance. The coming of the Lord's Supper at regular six-week intervals presented him with these supreme moments.

As with time, there is in Taylor a strong sense of place, if that word "place" is understood as the poet understood it. He wrote the word "Westfield" along with the date on many of his poems, and he thought of his church there as "the Habitation of the Lord."⁵² His pronounced dialect and his lowly colloquialisms also serve to anchor his work in the Leicestershire township or the New England frontier, yet one must agree with the Times Literary Supplement critic that "the poems can be searched for evidence that Taylor knew where he was geographically but there is little to be found."⁵³ Studies in Taylor's diction have revealed only a few scattered references to things exclusively American.⁵⁴ Karl Keller was probably accurate when he stated in a 1969 essay, "From his poems one could not . . . really reconstruct his personal life in Westfield, nor the daily Puritan life, nor an attitude toward time and place."⁵⁵ The life of the poems lies further inward than that: "The Table, Benches Chairs and Cushens and / Their Table cloaths and Napkins all of Grace / The drinking Cups and Trenchers all at hand" (II. 159: 33-35). Taylor's "inscape" was furnished in the paradoxically Puritan way, with vividly present "externals." The scene of the Supper is the clearest one in Taylor.

Yet there is a kind of landscape in Taylor, which the London commentator saw. Though he missed Taylor's value in thinking it "a pity Taylor did not raise a poetic eye from the pages of the Prophets to observe the real wilderness about him," he was right that "the landscape

Taylor saw" was the world of the patriarchs, the scene of their march from Egypt to Canaan.⁵⁶ Surely an abstract and remote world! But Taylor's sacramental Puritan eye transformed it from the wild and exilic land into a place of perfect familiarity and personal significance.

Meditation II. 58 is the poem that best shows the symmetry of Taylor's wilderness. The poem reverts to the institution of the Hebrew Passover, which the Puritans believed was fulfilled in the sacrificial death of Christ and regularly commemorated in the Lord's Supper. By the pledge of the Passover, God set his people on their path to the Promised Land:

By open Covenant God Israel takes
His onely Church: and select peoples makes.

Gives him his Laws and ordinances just.
Erects his Worship, open fellowship
Holds with him in the same wherein he must
In the desert through various Changes trip
Some very sweet, some of a bitter hande,
Untill they Come to keep in Canaans land.

(Lines 101-108)

Through the Lord's open Covenant and fellowship, even the harsh "changes" of his journey took on a pattern of beauty and design:

Through interchanging Course, like miracles,
The Diaperd Encheckerd works must goe
Of Providences, Honycombs and Stings
Till here within Celestiall Canaan sings.

(Lines 117-120)

A dictionary showing seventeenth century meanings helps one understand this passage more clearly. "Diaperd Encheckerd" patterns were regular and repeated interlocking forms of light and shade used in stone reliefs,

heraldry and court brocades of the period.⁵⁷ Through a right understanding of the Lord's visible pledge in the Supper, the Wilderness of Sin became the patterned "Huswifery" of heaven.

Taylor's wilderness image as the scene of significant action comes through even more clearly in II. 102, where he uses the figure of the counterpane. Here is a cunning blend of the legal and the domestic, since the word "counterpane" during Taylor's time meant not only a bedspread but the duplicate of a legal document. The co-signers of a covenant or contract would each keep a half, made on both sides of an "indentation."⁵⁸ Taylor made the Covenant of the Supper not only a formal Compact but the love-pledge of a marriage bed:

A Counterpane indented right with this
 Thou giv'st indeed a Deed of Gift to all
 That Give to thee their Hearts, a Deed for bliss.⁵⁹

(Lines 19-22)

"Ensocketted" in God's counterpane, he felt himself to be at the converging lines of revealed grace:

I encentered bee
 Within the Center of its radien lines,
 Thou glories King send out thy Kingly Glory
 In shining Institutions laid before mee.

(Lines 3-6)

God's open promise gave the Lord's "Deed for bliss" eternal firmness. Its regular repetition kept it fresh in the heart of the believer. Like the married pair, "One seale they at the Articling embrace / The other oft must be renew'd through grace" (II. 102: 23-24).

Taylor's counterpane vision is the answer to those who complain of stasis in the Meditations. Norman Grabo, for example, noted that there appeared to be little progress from one Meditation to another or indeed from the first to the last:

. . . the progress seems rather a confused one. The marriage imagery which opens the first of the Meditations supposes that the mystical union has already taken place; but thirty years later Taylor still bewails his "hide-bound heart" for resisting the loveliness of Christ and thereby suggests that the union has never been consummated.⁶⁰

To this one must answer that there is action in the Meditations, intense action, but that it is always the same action. Yet repetition does not annul the first enactment but in the terms of the counterpane, only underscores it.

Diligent spiritual motion accompanied each preparation for the Lord's Supper, for, as David L. Parker observed, Taylor thought of the service "in terms of man's activity, as well as of divine influence."⁶¹ Prerequisites were described in the familiar tripartite terms, like the form of a Puritan sermon or daily meditation. There must be baptism, "a full state of churchhood" and self-examination, or "Conviction," "Conversion" and "Contemplation" (TCLS, pp. 203-205). The self-examination itself consisted of three parts: contemplation on (1) "Our utter and eternal ruin by sin," (2) "The grace of God in accepting of the death of Christ" and the manner in which "The Lord Christ exactly attended the terms of the covenant of redemption" and (3) "The nature of the application of him thus . . . in eating and drinking the signs literally . . . and thus you see an epitome of all the covenant of grace" (TCLS, pp. 203-205). One could call this

process, greatly simplified, the inward, the upward and the outward looks. The first produced doubt toward self, the second, faith toward God and the third, mutual assurance of the soul and God by one another. As the soul rocked back and forth each time in the prescribed pattern, the movement was reassuring (TCLS, p. 188).

Doubt is not proscribed in this process, for "doubting may be an exercise in thy soul and doth not exclude faith. Yet this may be in some measure where faith is" (TCLS, p. 188). A balance or "conclusion" must be sought, however: "Fear and fitness are not inconsistent This fear of fitness is always mixt with love and esteem of God But when these are equally balanced it makes the soul most fit, as it was in Christ" (TCLS, pp. 186-187, 189).

The frequency of the Supper helps in this resolution:

But lest this Covenant of Grace should ere
 Be held by doubting Saints all Violate
 By their infirmities as Adams were
 By one transgression and be so vacate
 Its Seale is food and's often to be usd,
 To seale new pardons freshening faith, misusd.

(II. 107: 43-48)

The Lord was thought of as renewing his pledge or seal in the Supper as a specific for the saints' weakness:

He signs and seals the same afresh in this ordinance over and over again. Not in that the first seal is insufficient, but in that He would have the covenant often reviewed And also hereby He condescends to the weakness of His people's faith to seal His covenant love afresh unto them that they might not question it, and hence it is for the confirmation of all covenant benefits also (TCLS, pp. 182-183).

The saints, too, "do set afresh our seal," bringing "great benefit on this account. It is a confirming feast" (TCLS, p. 183).

Yet, though the figure is to be repeated as long as mortal life lasts, the Suppers appear something like stopping places, plateaus in the endless enchecking. Taylor continually urged his hearers to come "up" to the Supper: "Come up to this, you come up to all. For this is of the highest ascent, and attained to in the last place, as the perfecting and crowning ordinance" (TCLS, p. 183). For those of his hearers who were reluctant, this meant taking the final step of visible confession. As he described it, the Supper made this last effort worthwhile.

Here is a feast that's a feast indeed. It excels the most sumptuous and magnificent feast of the most magnificent monarch that ever breathed on earth. The guests are saints sparkingly adorned in the vestments of glorifying grace. The waiters are the all gloriously holy angels of light. The authors, the everlasting King of Glory. The occasion, the wedding and marriage of His only Son, to His bride the souls of His elect, the church of the first born whose names are written in heaven. And the entertainment itself, and this is most rich and royal, the Manna of heaven, angels' bread, the bread of life, the water of life, the fruits of "the Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). . . . It is as it were the very suburbs of glory (TCLS, p. 180).

The Halfway Covenant could only bring one part of the way, to the "suburbs" of heaven, but for the saints who could receive it, that was far enough. The "heart-ravishing melodies, musics, and songs of a spiritual nature with which Christ entertains souls hereat" must have sounded remarkably like the harmonies of heaven (TCLS, p. 180).

* * * * *

Edward Taylor once called the Lord's Supper an "epitome" (TCLS, p. 205). He might have been thinking of it as the summation of Puritan history, since it recalled the sacrifice "of all things near and dear" by the founders for their faith. He might have meant the summation in itself of the divine covenant of redemption, brought near to faith through a common meal. He might also have had in mind the outward celebration of human and temporal life, "applied" by the image of a garment. He could have meant the tracing of a pattern in his own life by the visible seal of the Supper. The holy meal meant all of these things. It was the meeting of every day's need: "This is a Common that consists of all / That Christ ere had to give. And oh! how much! / Of Grace and Glory here?" (II. 111: 36-38). It was also a glimpse into glory while one still kept one's feet on the earth:

Apples of gold, in silver pictures shrin'de
 Enchant the appetite, make mouths to water.
 And Loveliness in Lumps, tunn'd, and enrin'de
 In Jasper Cask, when tapt, doth briskly vaper;
 Bring forth a birth of Keyes t'unlock Loves Chest,
 That Love, like Birds, may fly to't from its nest.

.....

Unkey my Heart; unlock thy Wardrobe: bring
 Out royall Robes: adorne my Soule, Lord: so,
 My Love in rich attire shall on my King
 Attend, and honour on him well bestow.
 In Glory he prepares for his a place
 Whom he doth all beglory here with grace.

.....

Adorn me, Lord, with Holy Huswifry.
 All blanch my Robes with Clusters of thy Graces:
 Thus lead me to thy threshold: give mine Eye

A Peephole there to see bright glories Chases.
Then take mee in: I'll pay, when I possess,
Thy Throne, to thee the Rent in Happiness.

(I. 42: 1-6, 19-24, 37-42)

NOTES

¹Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, ed. Norman S. Grabo (E. Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 42-43. References to this work will be made by the abbreviation TCLS and page numbers within the text of this chapter.

²The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), "The Return," 43-48. All references to Taylor's poetry are to the First and Second Series (indicated by Roman numerals) and to the numbered meditations and line numbers, except when, as here, titles of poems are given, as found in the Stanford edition.

³Austin Warren, "Edward Taylor's Poetry: Colonial Baroque," KR, 3 (1941), 357.

⁴Donald E. Stanford, Edward Taylor (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1965), p. 19.

⁵Roy Harvey Pearce, "Edward Taylor: The Poet as Puritan," NEQ, 23 (1950), 43.

⁶Mindele Black, "Edward Taylor: Heaven's Sugar Cake," NEQ, 29 (1956), p. 160. It is interesting how many of the critics use this or similar terms. Cf. Wallace Cable Brown's phrase, "the domesticating of the Infinite," in his article, "Edward Taylor: An American 'Metaphysical,'" AL, 16 (1944-45), p. 190.

⁷The phrase is John Preston's but is frequently found in accounts of Puritan conversions. See Perry Miller, The Seventeenth Century, Vol. I of The New England Mind (1939; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), p. 390; Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1963), p. 98.

⁸Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 290.

⁹Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 289.

¹⁰Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 289.

¹¹Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 289.

¹²Miller, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 290-291.

¹³James Barbour, "The Prose Context of Edward Taylor's Anti-Stoddard Meditations," EAL, 10 (1975), 153. Taylor by this time was well aware of Stoddard's intention and actually shaped his ordination sermon of the same year largely to confute his ministerial neighbor, who was in the congregation at the time, as Norman S. Grabo shows in Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), pp. 31-33.

¹⁴Cf. Chapter I of this study,

¹⁵Solomon Stoddard, An Appeal to the Learned (Boston, 1709), p. 9, cited in Barbour, p. 153.

¹⁶Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 33, 38-39.

¹⁷Morgan, pp. 64-112.

¹⁸Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 31-39, has shown Taylor's overt efforts to refute Stoddard in a rather succinct study. They include: (1) Taylor's "gathering day" sermon, "A Particular Church is God's House" (1679), in which he "categorically dismissed" Stoddard's arguments. (2) His copying of the sermon into the "Public Records of the Church" and his attempt to have it published in Boston. (3) The address of a long letter to Stoddard in an effort to persuade him to desist from arousing a controversy contrary to the New England Way. (4) The gathering of eight sermons preached in the early 1690's into a long work entitled Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, and its submission for publication. Barbour, pp. 143-157, adds information concerning the last known public effort of Taylor, a rebuttal of Stoddard's pamphlet, An Appeal to the Learned, by one of his own, An Appeale Tried (1710-11). Cf. also Norman S. Grabo, "The Appeale Tried: Another Edward Taylor Manuscript," AL, 34 (1962-63), 394-400, and Norman S. Grabo, "Poet to Pope: Edward Taylor to Solomon Stoddard," AL, 32 (1960-61), 197-201.

Barbour and Donald L. Parker, "Edward Taylor's Preparationism," EAL, 11 (Winter, 1976), 259-278, discuss in greater detail than Grabo certain aspects of the controversy. Parker deals with the opening salvos, especially Taylor's concern with preparationism and Stoddard's efforts to do away with it. Barbour deals with the last phase of it, the two "Appeal" pamphlets, which he says run closely in thought and imagery to Meditations II. 102-111.

¹⁹Taylor made the same arguments in his Treatise: ". . . we are in a dead state and can do nothing. . . . Hence that doctrine is absurd, that makes him the first agent in his own conversion." Taylor

insists repeatedly that the Supper is not a converting ordinance but a "grace strengthening ordinance" (TCLS, pp. 106, 41).

²⁰Taylor's statement: "And children's bread is not to be given to such. Hence this text also (Matt. 16:26) excludes the unconverted from this ordinance in that it's children's bread by the confession of all/" (TCLS, pp. 109-110).

²¹F. E. Hutchinson, Cranmer and the English Reformation (London, 1951), pp. 144-145, 157, cited in Kathleen Blake, "Edward Taylor's Protestant Poetic: Nontransubstantiating Metaphor," AL, 43 (1971-72), 5.

²²The Westminster Confession of Faith (Inverness, Scotland: Publications Committee, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1976), XXIX. 5.

²³Samuel Willard, Some brief sacramental meditations, preparatory for communion at the great ordinance of the supper (Boston, 1711), cited in Black, pp. 169-170. "Maintain a sharp appetite unto the feast," Taylor advised in a similar vein. "It is choicest dainty that is provided. . . . Hunger and thirst after this righteousness" (TCLS, p. 213).

²⁴See Leviticus 8 and 9.

²⁵Herbert Blau, "Heaven's Sugar Cake: Theology and Imagery in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," NEQ, 26 (1953), 359, objects to Taylor's homely images because "the disparity between the things compared is too great for the mind to bridge with appreciation." Cf. Donald Stanford's objection to the "unfortunate effect" of the "Puritan tendency to invest all aspects of life with religious meaning," as, for example, in his "using an image from everyday life (such as beer) to illustrate a serious theological idea (such as grace)," in Edward Taylor (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1965), pp. 21-22. Cf. Louis L. Martz' "Introduction" to the Stanford edition of Taylor's Poems, in which he feels that "one cannot defend his excesses in developed images" as in II. 78, but shows a better appreciation when he notes "the tenacious intelligence that underlies these surface crudities: a bold, probing, adventurous intellect that deliberately tries to bend the toughest matter toward his quest for truth," xviii, xx-xxi.

²⁶Blake, pp. 19, 21, cites Helen White's "Richard Crashaw: Poet and Saint," in The Metaphysical Poets: A Study in Religious Experience (New York, 1962). Taylor's method, as Blake explains it in White's terms, is that occasionally "Taylor strains his metaphors to such a breaking point . . . to get us to abandon our human point of view from this side of the gap between earth and heaven, man and God,

sign and thing signified, to get us to take the leap of the mystic, so that we may see from the other side."

²⁷Here is inferred the Biblical approval on the "whole burnt offering," as in Psalm 51: 19, when offered with the right spirit of the offerer.

²⁸Mercy Magnified on a Penitent Prodigal (Boston, 1684), p. 150, in Perry Miller and Thomas W. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings (1938, rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), I, 288.

²⁹This is essentially a Protestant "nontransubstantiating" stance, as Blake shows, in which heaven comes down to earth but neither is lost. But the Metaphysicals, though mostly Anglican, generally follow an opposite course. Most, as Austin Warren points out of Donne, follow the technique of comparing the less to the greater, rather than Taylor's of comparing the greater to the less and having heaven "conjoined with earth" in a single dimension, cf. Warren, pp. 357-358. I see Taylor's images as more nearly "unions" than does Blake, or as interlocking and inseparable entities, with neither losing identity. This is consonant with Taylor's teaching on the Incarnation, that

Its Such a joyning them together as doth not make any essentiall alteration in the Natures joyned together Hence tho' the Godhead . . . is made flesh, or fleshed . . . it is not turned into flesh, and tho' the Manhood is united to the Word it is not made . . . the Word. They are not changed in their Natures.

This in Edward Taylor's Christographia, ed. Norman S. Grabo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 79. Further references to this work will be made by the abbreviation C and page number within the body of the chapter.

³⁰The Westminster Confession, XXIX. 7.

³¹From 1694 sermons in the Prince Collection, Boston Public Library, cited in Grabo, Edward Taylor, p. 34.

³²For a full account of the growth of this notion, see Morgan, pp. 65-112. Morgan gives the nonseparating American Puritans large credit for the development of this idea. The practice of requiring a narration of saving grace, he says, came "not from Plymouth to Massachusetts as initially supposed, nor from England or Holland as presently assumed but . . . it originated in Massachusetts among the nonseparating Puritans there and spread from Massachusetts to Plymouth,

Connecticut, New Haven, and back to England" (pp. 65-66). See p. 98 for Governor Winthrop's account of the comfortable effect of his son's account in John Cotton's Boston church.

³³Morgan, Ch. 3, especially pp. 61, 93-112, shows how the concepts of visibility were hammered out in the 1630's and 40's and given written form in 1648. For a full discussion of the "Halfway Covenant," see pp. 113-138. For a succinct discussion of both the Cambridge Platform and the Synod of 1662, see Larzer Ziff, Puritanism in America: New Culture in a New World (New York: Viking, 1973), pp. 196-198. Keller's appellation, in "The Example of Edward Taylor," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), p. 9.

³⁴Solomon Stoddard, "An Appeal to the Learned" (Boston, 1709), p. 9, cited in Parker, pp. 262, 275.

³⁵Barbour, p. 146.

³⁶Edward Taylor, "Revised Foundation Day Sermon," p. 53, cited in Barbour, p. 146.

³⁷Norman S. Grabo, "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," PMLA, 79 (1964), 554-555, shows a number of possibilities for the source of Taylor's "huswifery" image: his youth near Leicestershire, the heart of Britain's clothing industry, the commonness of the spinning wheel and loom in the homes of the era and his familiarity with theological works using the image. It is interesting that Taylor's eulogy to his dead wife included no higher praise than that "She was a neate good Huswife every inch" ("A Funerall Poem Upon the Death of . . . Elizabeth Taylor, line 94).

³⁸From the theme of righteousness in the poems of 24 May, 1691, to 26 February, 1693, Grabo speculates that Taylor was preaching upon that theme during that period. Early Treatise sermons deal especially with that theme. Cf. Grabo, "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," p. 557.

³⁹Taylor's penchant for dividing subjects in halves is very likely derived from his Ramist training, which taught that, in Perry Miller's words, "the content of every science falls of itself into dichotomies . . .," in The Seventeenth Century, p. 127.

⁴⁰Grabo, "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," p. 556.

⁴¹One should always remember that when Taylor refers to Christ's assumption of the human body, he is using the "flesh" as a metonymy of human nature. See Chapter I, pp. 30-34, notes 77-79.

⁴²William J. Schieck, The Will and the Word: The Poetry of Edward Taylor (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1974), p. 43, points this out.

⁴³E. T. Davis, "Edward Taylor and The Traditions of Puritan Typology," pp. 39-41, notes the many connections between the ordinances, especially baptism, and water or cleansing images in Taylor.

⁴⁴Cited in Perry Miller, ed., The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1956), pp. 172-173.

⁴⁵"An Apologie for the precedent Hymnes," lines 45-46, and "The Flaming Heart," lines 105-108, in The Anchor Anthology of Seventeenth Century Verse, ed. Louis L. Martz (New York: Anchor-Doubleday Books, 1966), I, 281-282. This is a revised edition of The Meditative Poem, Anchor Books, 1963.

⁴⁶Charles W. Mignon, "Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations: A Decorum of Imperfection," PMLA, 83 (1968), 1423-1428.

⁴⁷Black, p. 171.

⁴⁸Davis, "Edward Taylor and the Traditions of Puritan Typology," p. 39.

⁴⁹Grabo, Edward Taylor, p. 74; Schieck, "Man's Wildred State and the Curious Needlework of Providence: The Self in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," Tennessee Studies in Literature, 17 (1972), 129-136.

⁵⁰See Grabo's deduction in regard to the garment image, Note 38, above. Barbour notes the parallels between II. 102-111, which he calls Taylor's "anti-Stoddard Meditations" and the sermons of the two men, as well as the last exchanges of their controversy, Stoddard's pamphlet, "Appeale to the Learned," and Taylor's answer, "The Appeale Tried," in his article, pp. 144-157.

⁵¹See Stanford's note on the dating in his Introduction to the Poems, lix-lx.

⁵²Edward Taylor, "A Particular Church Is God's House," Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass., In Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975), p. 37.

⁵³"Poet in a Wilderness," rev. of The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford, TLS, 3 Feb. 1961, p. 72.

⁵⁴Black comments that Taylor's "ornate sophistication of the baroque is only a step away from the provincial, from the Warwickshire dialect or the New England colloquialism," in her article, p. 160. See also Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor, p. 58; Charles W. Mignon, "Diction in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," American Speech, 41 (1966), 243-253; Gene Russell, "Dialectical and Phonetic Features of Edward Taylor's Rhymes: A Brief Study Based upon a Computer Concordance of His Poems," AL, 43 (1971-72), 165-180.

⁵⁵Keller, "The Example of Edward Taylor," p. 11.

⁵⁶"Poet in a Wilderness," p. 71.

⁵⁷"Diaper," "Enchecker," in Oxford English Dictionary, 1971, ed.

⁵⁸"Counterpane," OED. It is interesting that the dictionary refers the word to the idea of significant patterning, as in Melville's chapter, "The Counterpane," in Moby-Dick.

⁵⁹In the only Meditation Taylor devoted exclusively to baptism, the other Puritan ordinance, which the Puritans believed fulfilled the Old Testament rite of circumcision, the quilting and bed imagery appear again. He asks: "Thy first Free Covenant, Calld not for this: / Thy Covenant of Graces Quilting kinde, / Shall it require a Seale that Cutting is?" and answered himself, "O! Lord! pare off, I pray, what ere is bad: / And Circumcise my Heart, mine Eares and Lips. / This is thy Circumcisions heart doth bed" (II. 70: 7-9, 15-17).

⁶⁰Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 82-83.

⁶¹Parker, p. 272.

⁶²Cf. Charles W. Mignon, "A Principle of Order in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 110-116; Michael D. Reed, "Edward Taylor's Poetry: Puritan Structure and Form," AL, 46 (1974-75), 304-312.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORENSIC IMAGE: THE COURT, THE COACH,
AND THE CITY

When Edward Taylor found himself "encentred" in the radiating lines of time and space, he was enunciating the essential Puritan principle that God, through the ages and from the vastest reaches to the minutest atom, has been moving toward the organization of his universe into a system of perfect order.¹ Twentieth century philosophical history has often stressed an opposing tendency in the Puritan mind, by which, in Richard Chase's words,

. . . New England Puritanism--with its grand metaphors of election and damnation, its opposition of the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, its eternal and autonomous contraries of good and evil-- . . . seems less interested in redemption than in the melodrama of the eternal struggle of good and evil, less interested in incarnation and reconciliation than in alienation and disorder.²

Yet Edward Taylor had seen the "upshot of all life in the United Essential harmony" of his belief.³ He had noted that an ordering principle activated harmony in all creation: "For there stands imprinted upon the nature of the creature a declaration of the will of God in suitableness of one part unto another: and of one thing unto another: and of the usefulness, the benefit of one thing unto another."⁴ This harmony, order and usefulness were brought about directly by the hand of the Lord: "So also in the disposal, and

management of the whole, and of each part. Hence shines God's wisdom, justice, power, goodness, glory, truth, etc."⁵

This government began at the farthest extent of the cosmos, for the Puritan had a need, as Roy Harvey Pearce discovered, for finding in the world God's order and his rule.⁶ Man must, according to Alexander Richardson, the English Puritan, "seek out and find this wisdom of God in the world, and not . . . be idle; for the world, and the creatures therein are like a book wherein Gods wisdom is written, and there we must seek it out."⁷ After finding such principles of cohesion, the Puritan must set about to use them "to guide all men in all things."⁸

This study has already noted in considerable detail the drive toward reconciliation as between the individual and his Lord, which, in a real sense, is the "essence," to use a favorite word of Taylor's, of his Preparatory Meditations. Yet, as indicated earlier in the studies of Taylor's organic and domestic images, Puritan philosophy demanded, to use Perry Miller's phraseology, "that in society all men, at least all regenerate men, be marshaled into one united array Puritans moved in groups and towns, settled in whole communities, and maintained firm government over all units."⁹

For Edward Taylor, the ultimate integration of the individual into the divine plan was his placement in the visible Covenant of the local church. It had become a kind of capstone or "epitome," of all history as Taylor and his orthodox colleagues called it (TCLS, p. 205). For it he had been willing to leave his homeland and all he held "near and dear."¹⁰ By means of visible saints' banding together in "Church

States," the kingdom of heaven might come down in one small spot. For Taylor, the high moment had come in 1679, when after eight years of waiting, he and six others had gathered to put their hands to their own church covenant and thereby to constitute a unit of the kingdom in Westfield, Connecticut. The fact could send the true Puritan into rhapsodies, as it did Taylor that day:

See What ground of joy, & praise towns have, when Christ comes to erect himselfe a Church amongst them. . . . If towns rejoyce when Noble Persons come to dwell in them, because of their Nobility, & Generosity: & because of the Good Dæd expected of them. What ground of joy then have towns when God comes & sets up house among them? makes himselfe an Inhabitant, nay an Householder among them? . . . Oh! what ground of joy, & Shouting.¹¹

As did the Westfield seven that day, any group of saints might relate their conversion experiences to one another, testify as to their reliance upon the doctrines of the founding fathers and set their hands to the articles of covenant. By so doing they could be recognized as "A State of Peace, & Goodwill among the Saints . . . under a Politicall Confederation."¹²

But the principle of visibility, such a ground of joy and shouting for the founders had, even by the time of the Westfield organization, fallen into decline. Enshrined as it was in the Cambridge Platform and reiterated by the Synod of 1662, frequently extolled from the pulpits, the ideal failed to enlist the loyalty of many "halfway" saints who had a right to it. The "problem of biology," to use Edmund Morgan's phrase, had caught up with the New England churches. Numbers of the younger generation whose parents had had them baptized and brought up in the church, desisted from becoming

full members, some out of indifference, some from fear.¹³ In addition, the whole concept of the visible Church-State was falling under heavy attack. Solomon Stoddard, as part of his campaign to broaden ecclesiastical polity, had argued that the "particular" covenant was not Scriptural:

. . . the supream Ecclesiastical Authority doth not lye in particular Congregations; if there be no National Church, then every particular Congregation is absolute and independent, and not responsible to any higher Power: this is too Lordly a principle, it is too ambitious a thing for every small Congregation to arrogate such an uncontrollable Power, and to be accountable to none on earth¹⁴

But the lordly state, the house of God, was exactly what Taylor conceived the visible church to be. Accordingly, Taylor drew up in a pictorial statement his image of the visible covenant, sure that if he could paint his picture accurately enough and in clear enough colors, he could draw those potential disciples within its gates. The work which best bodied forth this ideal was his long work, Gods Determinations touching His Elect.¹⁵

Wide divergence of opinion as to the place of Gods Determinations in Taylor's canon and its poetic value has developed since it was discovered by Thomas H. Johnson in 1937 and placed at the first of his edition of Taylor's works. A few critics, including Johnson himself, have found the poem, with its variety and its dramatic excitement, a more impressive prosodic achievement than the Meditations.¹⁶ More, like Louis Martz, have seen in it merely "a labor of versified doctrine."¹⁷ But critical opinion aside, it is appropriate that an examination of Gods Determinations stand at the end of this study,

since the long poem brings together all of Taylor's harmonizing tendencies and shows them in the largest, and most finite, applications. The work utilizes poetic patterns not seen before. Its tone, rather than being petitionary and subjective, as in the Preparatory Meditations, becomes hortatory and didactic. Its voice is now objective rather than subjective. It treats of man in his corporate relations. It deals with the human soul in terms of God's eternal economy and in the tedium of the daily walk.

Taylor did not avoid the Puritan extremes Chase spoke of, for "it was as walking between . . . extremes that orthodox Puritans generally pictured themselves," but it was as finding the middle ground of resolution between them that Taylor conceived Gods Determinations.¹⁸ In order to do this, Taylor would need many forms of dialectic, and he employed them all. His educational background stood him in good stead. He had possibly, as a boy, heard of the morality tradition of Coventry, near his birthplace, where the weaving profession of the previous century had still presented Corpus Christi plays. Elements of medieval drama are certainly involved in the poem.¹⁹ Even if Taylor was not familiar with the plays, it is likely that he knew the medieval homiletic tradition and its personification of abstract virtues and vices.²⁰ Taylor was also well versed in the moderating tendencies of Greek literature and the Aristotelian Golden Mean.²¹ At Harvard (and possibly Cambridge), he had had opportunity to debate, and he had carried his talent for argument over into playful epistolary exchanges with his college friend, Samuel Sewall.²² His lifelong practice of medicine, probably not very much advanced from early seventeenth century humor

balancing treatments, can also be found in Taylor's long work. Yet, though harmonizing influences from many sources went to make up Gods Determinations, the chief unifying power of the work was his conception of Puritan doctrine.²³

To study the order imposed on the universe in Taylor's Gods Determinations, it seems most natural to follow the outline Taylor himself gave in the full title. It naturally divides itself into three parts, as follows: (1) Gods Determinations touching his Elect, (2) The Elects Combat in their Conversion, (3) Coming up to God in Christ together with the Comfortable Effects thereof.²⁴ By following this scheme, the reader can move with the sweep of a giant pendulum from the heavenly scene, to the earth and back again. Harmony, in the Puritan conception, must first have been established in eternity. It then moves to the earth and the daily toil of God's people. Finally it inserts, so to speak, ordered people into their proper position in the heavenlies.

As with the other imagery in this study, Gods Determinations provides telling pictures for each division. Each offers a basis for understanding the doctrinal resolution of its segment. In the first division there are a Castle and a Court; in the second, a scene of Combat, and in the third, a Coach and a City. Actually, the coach is the image that carries Taylor's drama, since it appears at the end of the first section, briefly in the middle, and finally and most fully, at the end. The heavenly chariot actually embodies in itself all of the themes of Gods Determinations, as it opens its doors to God's covenanted people and winds its way toward heaven at last.

"Gods Determinations touching his Elect":
The Castle and the Court

Order in the Puritan view must be established at the widest reaches of the universe, and to bring that about, Taylor is compelled to note the profound disorder of that universe as signified by the God who is "All" and man who is "Nothing." He first considers the unlimited God in his creation:

Infinity, when all things it beheld
In Nothing, and of Nothing all did build,
Upon what Base was fixt the Lath wherein
He turn'd this Globe, and riggalld it so trim?

(p. 387)

After describing the perfection of the Lord in his creation--"Its Onely Might Almighty this did doe"--he shows how God generously shared its completeness with man:

Gave All to nothing Man indeed, whereby
Through nothing man all might him Glorify.
In Nothing then imbosst the brightest Gem
More pretious than all pretiousness in them.

(p. 388)

Man, however, does not value God's gift:

But Nothing man did throw down all by Sin:
And darkened that lightsome Gem in him.
That now his Brightest Diamond is grown
Darker by far than any Coalpit Stone.

(p. 388)

By discarding God's gift of All, Man himself becomes a "Nothing."
Taylor thus sets the stage for the seemingly impossible task the

Almighty will undertake: to make reconciliation of these two polarities, which will not be effected until the last scene of the poem.

The Castle in ruins is a favorite Puritan metaphor for Man's nothingness. The materials are still present, but the "order" has been taken away.²⁵ To begin with Taylor here, though, the Castle is still under siege, and Man faces a dilemma as extreme as the paradox in the opening statements of the Preface. In a brief couple of lines, Taylor shows Man's first spiritual dwelling place, where "unmarr'd abode his Spirits all / In Vivid hue . . . active in their hall" (p. 388). But "Sin Beat up for Volunteers" and began to lay "the fort of Life" under attack (p. 388). Since Man had scorned the protection of his divine King, he has little power to resist. Despite his best efforts to protect his "suburbs" and the "Fort of Life the Heart," he finds "the Enemies prevaile. / To scale the Outworks. . . ." He is smitten from two fronts. The devil and God himself fight against Man. He finally flees the Castle but faces "without" a worse problem:

He lookes within, and sad amazement's there,
 Without, and all things fly about his Eares.
 Above, and sees Heaven falling on his pate,
 Below and spies th'Infernall burning lake,
 Before and sees God storming in his Face,
 Behinde, and spies Vengeance persues his trace.
 To stay he dares not, go he knows not where
 From God he can't, to God he dreads for Feare.
 To Dy he Dreads; For Vengeance's due to him;
 To Live he must not, Death persues his Sin. . . .

(p. 389)

Man, represented in Adam, of course, sobs out his "Figments of Excuses" that ". . . my Mate procurde me all this hurt, / Who threw me in my

best Cloaths in the Dirt" (pp. 390, 398). Yet fallen Man also looks like a frightened child running from an unknown danger:

Then like a Child that fears the Poker Clapp
 Him on his face doth on his Mothers lap
 Doth hold his breath, lies still for fear least hee
 Should by his breathing lowd discover'd bee.

(p. 389)

We can be sure that Taylor expects a reconciliation as from a loving but offended parent when Man, who still "on his face close lies / Espying nought, the Eye Divine him spies" (p. 390).

The stage is now set for the entrance of the next two awesome figures, Justice and Mercy, who are watching from the wings. Without ado, these two "fall to debate / Concerning this poore fallen mans estate, / Before the Bench of the Almightyes Breast. . ." (p. 390). The split between these fearful personages appears to be great, as the oppositeness of their entrances suggests. Justice comes in like the personified Righteousness of a medieval morality: "Offended Justice comes in fiery Rage, / Like to a Rampant Lyon new assaild, / Array'd in Flaming fire now to engage" (p. 391). Mercy, on the other hand, "Comes as meeke as any Lamb," offering a "milkwhite Robe of Lovely Righteousness" (pp. 391, 394).

The first of the cosmic reconciliations to be effected must be between these two seemingly diametrically opposed qualities of the Almighty, for the Puritans delighted in asserting that he was the perfect balance of all positive attributes.²⁶ John Preston, who gave New England Puritans a large measure of instruction in this matter, taught that

All the Attributes of God are equall among themselves, not one higher than another, or larger than another; for if hee be simple, and there are not two things in him, then his Attributes, and his essence, and himselfe are the same; and if so, one cannot exceed another; his mercy is not beyond his justice, nor his justice beyond his wisadome.²⁷

Samuel Willard extended Preston's idea. Not only must the qualities be balanced with each other, they must positively agree: ". . . the Divine Attributes in God are not contrary one to another. There is no clashing between them; but they do perfectly agree in their Essence. . . . God is all Justice, and yet he is all Mercy too; neither does his being all just, hinder his being all merciful, or contrarily."²⁸ Yet the very "essences" here in Taylor seem totally at odds with each other: "My Essence is ingag'de, I cannot bate, / Justice not done no Justice is . . . ," says the first entity, and Mercy replies, "My Essence is engag'de pittty to show. / Mercy not done no Mercy is." Justice is ready to visit proud souls with "Red burning Coales from hell." Mercy wants simply to "revive the heart" of Man "before it breaks" (p. 391).

The two antagonists debate heatedly before the bench of God, who is never seen in his own person. Their arguments are four, offered in quick, perfectly matching objection-and-answer pairs. First the two state the requisites of salvation from their own points of view. Justice demands penance for sin: "I cannot hold off of the Rebels pate / The Vengeance he halls down with Violence." Mercy equally insists she will "put my shoulders to the burden so / Halld on his head with hands of Violence" (p. 391). Both Justice and Mercy must be enacted in the case of man, but this cannot be without the one cancelling out the other. Finally, Justice suggests a tentative way out:

"If Justice wronged be, she must take revenge; / Unless a way be found to make all friends" (p. 391). Mercy immediately steps up and offers herself for this transaction, and Justice as quickly accepts her "bond." Justice, however, then stipulates that this cannot be unless Mercy is willing to become incarnate in a human being and pay man's price on earth:

I'll take thy Bond: But know thou this must doe:
 Thou from thy Fathers bosom must depart,
 And be incarnate like a slave below,
 Must pay mans Debts unto the utmost marke.
 Thou must sustain that burden, that will make
 The Angells sink into th' Infernall lake.

Nay, on thy shoulders bare must beare the Smart
 Which makes the Stoutest Angell buckling cry;
 Nay, makes thy Soule to Cry through grieffe of heart,
 Eli, ELI SABACHT H/ANI,
 If this thou wilt, come then, and do not spare:
 Beare up the Burden on thy shoulders bare.

(p. 392)

The configurations of Mercy here are like those of Christ in the Covenant of Redemption as he offered to assume the mediatorial role even before the incarnation and his Father accepted the offer.²⁹

In the commercial terms of the poem, Mercy promises, "Before my Clients Case shall ever faile. / I'll pay his Debt, and wipe out all his Score / And till the pay day Come I'll be his baile" (p. 392).

Justice now raises a third issue: Even though Mercy pays Man's debt, Man will soon run up a new one: "If sinless man did, sinfull man will fall . . ." (p. 392). Mercy promises to take care of future sins, no matter how many. But Justice objects that such "Righteousness is merely negative"; Mercy then promises not only to forgive sin but to

imbue the redeemed with righteousness:

I will not onely from his sin him free,
 But fill him with Inherent grace also.
 Though none are Sav'd that wickedness imbrace.
 Yet none are Damn'd that have Inherent Grace,

(p. 393)

Here Mercy promises to impart the invisible covenant of Jeremiah 31: 31, 33: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Mercy will raise the faculties so that Man will naturally live a life pleasing to God. Earlier this study noted the balance of irresistible and inherent grace. Here, Mercy imparts both inherent and "adherent" grace. As an outward sign of inward grace, "he rightly shall put on / My milkwhite Robe of Lovely Righteousness." Justice can have no more objection, for, as Mercy points out, in the robe of righteousness, "the Sinner's just like thee" (p. 394).

The fourth and last part of the debate centers on a concerted plan to reach Man, now that his election has been satisfactorily worked out. Both Justice and Mercy perceive that the proud will shun them and the humble "will be too shie" (pp. 394-395). At last they agree that Justice will take the proud and Mercy the humble.

In all of this, the contention between the two never appears very great. One soon comes to see that they are not actually in opposition to one another. Justice is fiery hot against sin, but not against Mercy, though she is anxious that Mercy not violate her integrity. But the pair are not really antagonists. Mercy accedes too easily to Justice's demands, and Justice too quickly accepts her "bond." The only

real debate now is the best way to reach elect Man with the salvation rightfully his.

According to the plan devised by Justice and Mercy, Man must be made to take the course designated in Taylor's own "Spiritual Relation" and generally understood to be the proper mode of preparation.³⁰ Justice will undertake the work of conversion through application of the moral law:

Lest that the Soule in Sin securely ly,
 And do neglect Free Grace, I'le stepping in
 Convince him by the Morall Law, whereby
 He'st se in what a pickle he is in.
 For all he hath, for nothing stand it shall
 If of the Law one hair breadth short it fall.

(pp. 395-396)

Mercy sees that the soul must not utterly sink down into humiliation and offers to bring comfort to any who seem to be slipping down to that level: "When any such are startled from ill, / And cry for help, help, with tears, I will advance / The Musick of the Gospell Minsterill . . ." (p. 396). Finally, both parties are satisfied with their strategy, and the humbled soul, in prospect, is then bound over to Mercy as their debate ends. Justice is appeased when Mercy, in effect, "takes charge" of her opposing element. This pattern repeats itself in the middle section of Gods Determinations.

The scene now switches from the heavenlies back to the earthly arena. What follows in the chase is an enactment of the courtroom plan of Justice and Mercy. Besides showing the attributes of God, these two have delineated two basic characters and responses of men. The proud souls must be brought down and the humble lifted. Here all the souls

are pictured in a very "unhygienic" state. Embodied at first still in the single character Man, he comes forth in a "Lapst Estate," and in "skirts with Guilt, and Filth out peeps / With Pallid Pannick Fear upon his cheeks." "A Cripple," he "With Trembling joynts, and Quivering Lips doth Quake." "His spirits are so low they'l scarce afford / Him winde enough to wast a single word . . ." (pp. 398-400).

Like a disowned medieval Lord, "man hath lost his Freehold by his ill: / Now to his Land Lord tenent is at Will" (p. 399). He must fight against former friends at the will of his new master. On the other hand, "Some seeming Friends prove secret foes, which will / Thrust Fire i' the thatch, nay stob, Cut throate and kill" (p. 399). Worst of all, he is unsheltered against the elements of divine wrath: "He's then turned out of Doors, and so must stay, / Till's house he rais'd against the Reckoning day" (p. 399).

Because of the decision reached in the Almighty's Court, the Lord regards Man as a candidate for his help but too handicapped to receive it. The King desires to offer him house and refuge with himself, indeed to invite him to a royal feast, but perceives that "Man in this Lapst Estate at very best, / A Cripple is and footsore, sore opprest, / Can't track Gods Trace but Pains, and pritches prick" (p. 399). The view of man here is much like Hooker's figure of the sick apprentice. For him to be regenerated, there must be a double change in him. Although he was not dragged before the bar a criminal, he is still obligated by law. His Master must tear up the indenture, working a "moral change," and then the Physician must cure him, working a "real change."³¹ In a sense, Justice has, on Mercy's pledge, done

the first for Man, and Mercy is about to commence the royal cure. Since God sees Man through both these eyes, he provides him with divine transportation:

(Because they Cripples are, and Cannot come)
 He sends a Royall Coach forth for the same,
 To fetch them in, and names them name by name.
 A Royall Coach whose scarlet Canopy
 O're silver Pillars, doth expanded ly:
 All bottomed with purest gold refin'de,
 And inside o're with lovely Love all linde.
 The rest do slite the Call and stay behinde.

(p. 400)

The Coach is many things at once. Its description closely follows that of King Solomon's in Canticles 3: 9, 10.³² It is also a movable temple like the gorgeous woven Tabernacle of wilderness travel and now, a New England visible church in covenant. The riders are to be "Coacht along," achieving assurance and sanctification through their minister. There is much about the Coach-ride that makes it seem like a regular church service, as the members "sweetly sing / As they to glory ride therein" (p. 459). The Coach embodies in itself all of the previously stated imagery of this study. As it promises to carry the hapless, crippled souls to health, it is also a love bower. The kingly wood of Lebanon, as well as the colorful weavings, bring to mind the "organic" unity of God's People as they moved to Canaan. Finally, in the "Purple Canopy . . . (they spy) / All Graces Needlework and Huswifry" (p. 400). But here, as the Coach waits for all the Elect souls to enter, it also calls up Man's once-glorious home, with its silver pillars, the "Estate" God did not intend for him ever to depart. The royal vehicle also has aspects of the divine Court, just seen,

as one of the former councillors, Mercy, becomes the doorkeeper and lovingly calls Souls to "sue . . . at Mercie's doore," since "Justice in Justice must adjudge thee just: / If thou in Mercies Mercy put thy trust" (p. 398). It seems a perfect vehicle of salvation. Yet even as he draws the picture, Taylor knows that all would not get in.

Some gaze and stare. . . .
 Some peep therein; some rage therat, but all
 Like market people seing on a stall,
 Some rare Commodity Clap hands theron
 And Cheapen't hastily, but soon are gone.

(p. 400)

Some wish to work their way. They are offended by the graciousness of this way to heaven:

For when they finde the Silver Pillars fair
 The Golden bottom pav'de with Love as rare,
 To be the Spirits sumptuous building cleare,
 When in the Soul his Temple he doth reare
 And Purple Canopy to bee (they spy)
 All Graces Needlework and Huswifry;
 Their stomachs rise: these graces will not down.

(pp. 400-401)

The sight of the Coach gives some spiritual indigestion. They turn away from the grace-powered carriage. As with Justice and Mercy, the groups before the Coach are two: "All mankinde splits in a Dicotomy. / For all to ride to the feast that favour finde. / The rest do slite the Call and stay behinde" (p. 400).

Little is actually to be found in Taylor about the reprobate, yet he was no universalist, as these lines show:

But they to whom its sent had rather all,
 Dy in this Coach, then let their journey fall.
 They up therefore do get, and in it ride
 Unto Eternall bliss, while down the tide
 The other scull unto eternall woe. . . .

(p. 400)

The last line and one-half here and some scattered references in the prose works show his conviction of the lostness of those who would not be saved (Cf. "Elect and Election," in the Glossary, Stanford edition, pp. 528-529).³³ The reason he did not stress this teaching was not, as Norman Grabo indicates, because of the essential sunniness of his nature, but that nowhere did it suit his doctrinal purpose to do so.³⁴ Basically, he believed that the double offer of love and correction to the Elect would be sufficient. The Covenant of Grace, as shown in its Coach-manifestation was internally and externally so attractive that if his congregation could "spy" it with their spiritual eyes, they would desire it. And he also apparently took it for granted that all the descendants of the visible saints were potentially candidates for the kingdom, or here, the ride in the Royal Coach, and that therefore persuasion and humor were better inducements to get them aboard than scolding or invective. In any case, the lost now disappear from view, "scull/ing unto eternal woe," and Taylor concentrates throughout the rest of the poem on the first great "Dicotomy," those to whom the Coach has been sent (p. 400).

The end of the poem might come when "they to whom its sent . . . up therefore do get, and in it ride / Unto Eternal bliss" (p. 400). But as the poem unfolds, we learn that this statement is

a forecast of things to come and that most of the Elect do not get in so quickly. Further dichotomies are to be dealt with, and the chase begins. Both Justice and Mercy rush after their chosen prey. Now the Elect are hidden and must be searched out where they lie "in the lap of sinfull Nature snugg, / Like Pearls in Puddles cover'd ore with mudd. . . ." A few are not notoriously sinful, but these "are nigh as rare / As Black Swans that in milk-white Rivers are." Some, perhaps those "who suck Grace from th' breast," get into the Coach at once: "Some won come in," but "the rest as yet refuse," and the divine pursuit begins in earnest (p. 401).

Mercy runs after the first two groups. The first quickly "Cast down their arms, Cry Quarter, Grace." The others, "Chased out of breath drop down with feare" and are soon captured. Again a division of the remainder takes place: "The rest persue, divide into two rancks / And this way one, and that the other prancks" (pp. 401-402). Justice takes the next group for her prey. She chases them with fiery rage until they run into strong "Baracadoes," where they too yield and meekly "Quarter Crave." But still one particularly stubborn and elusive group eludes both Mercy and Justice. These are "Chast in a Peninsula," where, cornered by the divine pair, they still resist, till at last they too throw down their weapons and capitulate (pp. 401-402).

"The Elects Combat in Their Conversion":
The Conflict and the Cure

Like the whole of Gods Determinations, the central section is itself divided into threes.³⁵ It is bounded on each side by a love lyric, and a similar lyric provides an interlude in the midst of

the battle. In the first part, Satan attacks the First Rank, Mercy's captives, now named "Soul." Then follows the lyric moment as Soul communes with Christ. Last, Second and Third Ranks fall to attacking themselves and each other in a manner similar to the ways Satan assaulted them earlier. A Christlike "Saint" enters to sooth their hurts and enable them to end their battle with a song.

As the middle section of Gods Determinations opens, the reader finds that the Elect, who ostensibly entered the Coach at the end of the chase, have actually enlisted in a war under Christ as Captain. Satan had stopped them at the door of the Coach with a threatening question: "What will you do when you shall squeezed bee / Betwæen such Monstrous Gyants Jaws as Wee?" They have passed the supposed dangers of Justice and Mercy, but now are "Flanckt of by him the Lord before, behinde by mee" (p. 404). The Elect perceive that a battle is at hand and call on Christ as "Our Honour'd Generall." Rest may not come immediately. There is such an apocalyptic hiatus as is found in Revelation 8. Christ does not promise instant respite but rather offers to sustain them in the fight: "Who in my War do take delight, / Fight not for prey, but Pray, and Fight / Although they slip, I'le mercy show" (p. 405).

All this was certainly consistent with the Puritan view that the Christian life is a continual warfare. The conflict should not come as a surprise, nor should it be shunned. According to Thomas Hooker, the new convert should be overjoyed that the Lord has pierced his complacency and pulled him from false security into the thick of the battle.³⁶ In fact, spiritual struggle was one phase of a growth

process prescribed by William Perkins that would lead to Christian assurance.³⁷ That is not to say that all will be engaged in the same battles or respond in the same way. Different ones will be caught up in different skirmishes. The Elect will divide and combine, separate and reunite in various groups as they answer new challenges. As the Lord has demonstrated his respect for free will in "Selecting Love" by inviting them "name by name" into the Coach, he shows his concern for human differences by supplying their varying needs in the scenes of warfare.

The setting for Combat is now wholly on the earth. Satan appears first as an Angel of Light, but when he sees his former captives now in the care of Mercy and Justice, he adopts the habit of the roaring red lion of the moralities. Nevertheless, there is something ludicrous about him, like the old Vice or Belial in the Castle of Perseverance: "Off goes the Angels Coate, on goes his own. / With Gripping Paws, and Goggling Eyes draws nigher, like some fierce Shagg'd Red Lion, belching fire" (p. 407).³⁸ He has suffered "a comic reduction," suggests John Gatta, from the fearsome roaring figure of Justice earlier, as that Virtue played approximately the same role.³⁹ Later, Satan will shrink even more as Soul calls him "thy Cur" (p. 414). The "lion" now begins to argue and debate, fuss and fume. Some gesture is being made toward keeping up the pictorial habiliments, but for the most part these are dropped. The Combat has become a subtle psychological struggle, making the central part of Gods Determinations, the warfare section, paradoxically, the quietest part.

The groups of the Elect have basically the two problems of the Puritan psyche revealed in the literature of the times. Some are "Drooping Soul/s" inclined to fear and melancholy. Others harbor "secret swelling Pride up in their hearts" (pp. 406-407).⁴⁰ The two groups, corresponding to the ones foreseen by Justice and Mercy, combine in "Poore Doubting Soule," whom Satan attacks first. He tries to sink Soul into despair by pointing out that his "Inward Man" has not changed much, that his faculties still hanker after sin:

The Will is hereupon perverted so,
It laquyes after ill, doth good foregoe.
The Reasonable Soule doth much delight
A Pickpack t'ride o' the Sensuall Appetite.

(p. 409)

The "Outward Man" is still easier to accuse: "Thy fleering Looks, thy Wanton Eyes, each part / Are Painted Sign-Post of a Wanton heart." Pride lifts up his head: "Why . . . Peacock up theyselfe above thy rancks?" (p. 410).⁴¹ Poor Soul cannot return these telling blows, especially when Satan asks about his works, "Then is this pure? is this the fruite of Grace? / If so, how do yee: You and I embrace" (p. 410). Soul does not try to answer Satan, but wisely "groans" to Christ for help (p. 414).

The first break in the battle comes with this cry to the Lord and his loving response on a mingled parental and erotic note:⁴²

Peace, Peace, my Hony, do not Cry,
My Little Darling, wipe thine eye,
Oh Cheer, Cheer up, come see.
Is anything too deare, my Dove,

Is anything too good, my Love
To get or give for thee?

(p. 414)

The lyric interludes, as here, indicate a resolution of a problem and a kind of consolidation or growth in what has been learned to that point. Christ now shows that a chase is still going on, as he speaks of the battle in pastoral terms. He is the Shepherd, of course, and Satan is the sheep dog who helps him corral the flock:

If in the severall thou art
This Yelper fierce will at thee bark:
That thou art mine this shows.
As Spot barks back the sheep again
Before they to the Pound are ta'ne,
So he and hence 'way goes.

(p. 414)

As Mercy "took charge" of Justice earlier, Christ here shows that the Lord "uses" Satan for his purposes. Since God will forgive wrongs repented, sins can actually have the indirect effect of drawing the Christian closer to him: "A God like me . . . Doth hate all Sins both Greate, and small; / Yet when Repented, pardons all. / Frowns with a Smiling Face" (p. 417). The Lord, like a mother hen, lavishes soul with love:

My Chick, keep clost to mee.
The Poles shall sooner kiss, and greet
And Paralells shall sooner meet
Than thou shalt harmed bee.

(p. 415)

"Doubtful Soul," now named "Noble Soul," accepts Christ's comforts and enters the waiting Coach, promising praise, "Which as a Traveller I bring, / While travelling along thy wayes" (p. 421).

Soul, apparently the First Rank of Mercy's captives, disappears from the scene and is not heard from till he reenters later as Saint. The weaker Second and Third Ranks have become the objects of Satan's wily strategy. His first weapon is scorn. He twists Scripture to make it appear that salvation is not freedom but slavery: "Your Faith's a Phancy: Fear a Slavery." He even questions the existence of God:

What is that fancide God rowld O're the tongue?
 Oh! Brainsick Notion, or an Oldwife Song!
 That He should wholly be in e'ry place
 At once all here, and there, yet in no space.

(p. 424)

As rapidly, he insinuates doubt as to other Christian doctrines: "Did God such principles infuse as egge / The Soul from him into Eternall plague" (p. 424). Moving then to the possibility that there is, after all, a God, Satan places doubt as to whether Second and Third Ranks belong to the Lord or to himself. By their behavior, they have proved that they still belong to Satan:

Thou lov'st mee more than God thou seem'st to own.
 Hence was it not for these, it plainly 'pears
 Thy God for servants might go shake his ears.
 For thou to keep within my booke dost still
 Ungod thy God not walking by his Will.

(p. 425)

The last taunt particularly stings Second and Third Ranks: "This Language of thy heart doth this impart / I am a Saint, if thou no Sinner art" (p. 425).

Utterly cast down, the Second and Third Ranks begin a chorus of moans in antiphonal quartets, each group trying to outdo the other in complaint. The Second Rank bemoans their sins:

There's not a Sin that is not in our Heart.
 And if Occasion were, it would out start.
 There's not a Precept that we have not broke.
 Hence not a Promise unto us is spoke.

(p. 427)

The Third Rank answers:

Its worse with us. Behold Gods threatenings all;
 Nay Law, and Gospell, on our Heads do fall.
 Both Hell, and Heaven, God and Divell Do
 With Wracking Terrours Consummate our Woe.

(p. 427)

As the saints attack and accuse themselves, they call to mind the explanation of Hooker as to the complexity of the inner warfare:

In the Saints the Controversy is between every faculty and it selfe, between the understanding and it selfe, betweene the whole Soule, as it is compared with it selfe, there is something good in every part of it, and something ill, and these two contend . . . you shall finde variety of graces in them, some of them of such diversity and opposition one to another, that in nature the like temper is not to be found in one person at the same, and in the same business.⁴³

The tossing back and forth, as between the ranks here, could cause an observer to wonder, as Perry Miller did, why the Puritan divines could feel that they were offering any more peace than the Roman priests, for

"in practice he who was justified by faith was taken from the rack of fear only to be strapped to the wheel of doubt."⁴⁴ With Second and Third Ranks there is not only the fear-pride hazard but the pulls as between true faith and presumption.

In any case, the Ranks are so battered that they must call for outside help. As Soul did earlier with Christ, the last two groups turn to "Gods People," embodied in a single character, "Saint." The Second and Third Ranks, now combine as "Soul" and "Counsell Grave" from the mature Christian (p. 433).⁴⁵

At this point the Combat scene comes to resemble more nearly a field hospital as Saint, the soul-physician, applies his cures to the battered Ranks. The passage might be Taylor's own De Casibus Conscientia. All the subtleties of spiritual weakness are laid out and the treatment prescribed. With considerable skill, Saint doctors the fallen. The new Soul appears as fearful as the first character by that name. Saint recalls that the devil once frightened him, but he has found the lion largely defanged:

I thought as you, but loe the Lyon hee
Is not so fierce as he is feign'd to bee.
But grant they swim, they'l swim quite away
On Mercies main, if you Repenting stay.

(p. 434)

Saint also pooh-poohs some of Soul's "sins":

That's not thy Sin: thou didst not thus transgress,
Thy Grace-outbraveing sin is bashfulness.
Thou art too backward. Satan strives to hold
Thee fast hereby, and saith, thou art too bold.

(p. 434)

The actual sin is the fear that keeps him from taking his full dosage of grace.

Soul now expresses the belief that if he were as far advanced along the heavenly path as some others, his troubles would be over: "But if I had but this or that Degree, / Of all these Graces, then thrice Happy mee!" Saint explains that grace must grow, that Soul could not bear it if given all he wanted at once: "You think you might have more: you shall have so, / But if you'd all at once, you could not grow." He promises that Soul will be filled "by drops" so that he may not "Cast a Drop away" (p. 441).

Besides showing Soul the need for patience in his Christian growth, Saint also teaches Soul to recognize Satan's tactics: "When God Calls out a Soule, he Satan subtilly / Saith God is kinde: you need not yet forsake / Your Sins." After the elect Soul sins, though, Satan tells a different story: "Great Sins are Small, till men repent of Sin: / Then Small are far too big to be forgi'n" (p. 445). Saint urges Soul not to give his enemy the benefit of misplaced faith: "Why give you Credit to your deadly foe?" (p. 443). Saint then points out a weapon of the devil in "Uncharitable Cariages of Christians." As an ultimate piece of Satan's arsenal, "When these assaults proove vain, the Enemy / One Saint upon another oft doth set / Uncharitable Christians inj'rous are . . ." (p. 448). One arrow is the critical spirit that professes not to see grace in a brother: "He by Reflections harsh wounds thus in heart. / Pough! Here's Religion! Strange indeed! Quoth hee. / Grace makes a Conscience of things here that bee" (p. 448). The uncharitable Christian chides a weaker brother for neglecting his

daily business to serve God, yet if the latter spends too much time at his temporal work, he is "soon scourgd then with whips of Worldliness." So does the Uncharitable Soul "with Satan take a part" (pp. 448-449).⁴⁶

In all of this Saint points up the Puritan dilemma which has kept Soul from entering into the full blessings of the Covenant. It originates, he says, with Satan: "The Faithfulls Faith, he stiles Presumption great, / But the Presumptuous, theirs is Faith Compleat" (p. 446). Satan's attack began at conversion:

When God awakes a Soule he'l seeke to thrust
It on Despare for want of Grace or get
And puff't with Pride, or in Security hush't
Or Couzen it with Graces Counterfet.
Which if he can't he'l Carp at Grace, and raile
And say, this is not Grace, it thus doth faile.

(p. 447)

Saint has urged all along the way, as Christ did before, the path of moderation. He shows how Satan tries to trick the unwary into dangerous extremes. The Soul must not give over self-examination, since "Sins are flaws" in that "thrice . . . noble Gem," man's heart. Once confessed, they may be instantly forgiven, however, and bring the Lord's love. Over-scrupulosity must also be avoided since the devil will attribute his own faults to the hyper-conscientious: "These faults are his, and none of thine / So far as thou dost them decline" (p. 417). So he is to repent--"If thou repent. My Grace is more"--but still keep up his spirits--"Whilst that thy Noble Sparke doth keep / Within a Mudwald Cote" (p. 417).

Taylor began Gods Determinations with Puritan extremes, but in the middle section, where he speaks with the voice of the Puritan pastor and undertakes the cure of souls, he counsels the middle way. To veer too far in any direction is to fall into Satan's trap:

He tempts to bring the soul too low or high,
 To have it e're in this or that extream:
 To see no want or want alone to eye:
 To keep on either side the golden mean.
 If it was in't to get it out he'l 'ledge,
 Thou on the wrong side art the Pale or Hedge.

(p. 447)

Saint completes his cure with correction and compassion. The drooping Soul he lifts with affection. The puffed-up Soul he brings down with gentle sarcasm.⁴⁷ The soul-physician orders a sensible and balanced prescription:

Perform the Duty, leave th'event unto
 His Grace that doth both in, and outside know.
 Beg pardon for your Sins: bad thoughts defy,
 That are Cast in you by the Enemy.

 If wronged go to God for right, and pray
 Hard thoughted Saints black thoughted thoughts away.

 Do all Good Works, work all good things you know
 As if you should be sav'd for doing so.
 Then undo all you've done, and it deny
 And on a naked Christ alone rely.

(p. 444)

There is an almost Greek sense of balance here, but it is brought about not by an enlightened mind but by the application of Christian love and discipline.

As Saint completes his ministrations, he offers one last bit of sage advice. Life with its "Snicks and Snarls" can be a tangled mess. The keenest mind cannot unravel it, but, Saint promises:

His man's Wildred state will wane away, and hence
 These Crooked Passages will soon appear
 The Curious needlework of Providence,
 Embroidered with golden Spangles Cleare.
 Judge not this Web while in the Loom, but stay
 From judging it untill the judgment day.

Even Satan's snares become a part of the heavenly "Huswifery," always a signal of divine perfection: "If in the golden Meshes of this Net / (The Checkerboard of Providence) you're Caught / And Carride hence to Heaven . . ." (p. 449). Once more the positive elements of the Lord's nature have woven the negative strands into the divine pattern.⁴⁸

Soul appears to be ready to accept the imperfection of this life as long as he can spy "All Graces Needlework and Huswifry" in the heaven-bound Coach. As did Mercy earlier, Saint urges Soul to enter:

Fear not Presumption then, when God invites:
 Invite not Fear, when that he doth thee Call:
 Call not in Question whether he delights
 In thee, but make him they Delight, and all.
 Presumption lies in Backward Bashfulness,
 When one is backward though a bidden Guest.

(p. 450)

"Coming up to God in Christ Together with the
 Comfortable Effects thereof":
 The Coach and the City

The final cure of Saint takes effect, the struggles of the Ranks end at least for the time. But the action begins its wide sweep again, back to the heavenlies, or near them. As the Saint applied love

and discipline, the Souls now discern these two elements of reconciliation in heavenly visions. The movement alternates between beckoning apparitions from heaven and bursts of praise from the Souls still on earth. The royal Coach "swims" into view again. The Souls rejoice:

Sure Grace a progress in her Coach doth ride
 Lapt up in all Perfumes, whose sent,
 Hath suffocated sin, and nullifi'de
 Sad Grief, as in our Souls, it went.
 Sin sincks the Soul to Hell: but here is Love
 Sincks Sin to Hell; and soars the Soul above.

(p. 451)

For the first time Souls assert the value of the heavenly transportation.

After the appearance of the Coach, the Souls reiterate by a pair of songs the All-Nothing paradox of the Preface. The first song of the convinced saints is full of the conundrum-spinning of the seventeenth century and answers the "infinity" of the opening poem. Mentally shredding the world to atoms, then to "Motes" and giving each one a tongue with "songs in number . . . numberless" and those songs "as many Tunes . . . intwisting in't as many," the Souls imply an infinity of praise: "Each Tongue would tune a World of Praise, we guess / Whose songs in number would be numberless," and finally figures, "Our Musick would the World of Worlds out ring / Yet be unfit within thine Eares to ting" (p. 452). All this is based on the hypothetical "if," however, and since at last saints really have nothing more to offer than a "Lisp . . . We have no better pay," they must give that. Unlike the feeling of emptiness in the Preface, however, this small

offering brings hope and expectation. The "nothing" will be accepted (p. 453).

As in the visions of John on Patmos, Souls see the heavenly city coming down like a bride out of the skies.

Yea, like a Bride all Gloriously arraide
 It is arrai'de Whose dayly ware
 Is an Imbrodery with Grace inlaide,
 Of Sanctuary White most Faire,
 Its drest in Heavens fashion rare.

(p. 453)

The image of the City likewise is closely identified with a paradisaal garden in which it is set. The Tree of Life in the Meditations had an invisible means of support. Here the outer means are emphasized: "Each Ordinance and Instrument of Grace / Grace doth instruct are Usefull here. / They're Golden Pipes where Holy Waters trace" (p. 453). Outer strictures as well as outer means are noted:

For on the Towers of these Walls there stand
 Just Watchmen Watching day, and night,
 And Porters at each Gate, who have Command
 To open onely to the right.
 And all within may have a sight.

(p. 454)

The watchmen resemble the elders who check petitioners' "relations" to be sure that they know their doctrine and have had genuine experiences of grace before admitting them to the covenanted church.⁴⁹ Like the visible church, the garden is "fenced in / With Solid Walls of Discipline." Everything is "bankt with Knowledg right and Good," and "Bottomed with Love" (p. 454).

The City in the midst of the garden is itself "Walld in with Discipline" and "her Gates obtaine / Just Centinalls with Love Imbellisht plain" (p. 455). The passers-in must make their way between "Desire and Feare." They must give "the Word" to the gatekeepers. There is a final flurry of indecision on this last point:

Thus they are wrackt. Desire doth forward screw
 To get them in,
 But Feare doth backward thrust, that lies purdue,
 And slicks that Pin.
 You cannot give the word, Quoth she, which though
 You stumble on't its more than yet you know.

(p. 456)

Finally, however, they are able to give the all-important password as "Desire Converts to joy: joy Conquours Fear." "The Soul admiring the Grace of the Church Enters into Church Fellowship," or, in the terms of the poem, the "Coach of Gods Decree" (456, 455).⁵⁰

The Coach becomes the scene of heavenly nuptials as well as a court of law. In forensic and legal terms they seal the contract by the taking of the Lord's Supper:

They now enCovenant with God: and His:
 They thus indent.
 The Charters Seals belonging unto this
 The Sacrament.

So God is theirs avoucht, they his in Christ.
 In whom all things they have, with Grace are splic'te.

(p. 456)

As the Souls travel heavenward in their golden Coach, they finish the matchpiece to the opening All-Nothing contrast of the Preface.

Their praise is for restoration, beauty and balance as seen in the Covenant landscape. The first stanza celebrates the geometric "Knots" of the garden, holding in the riot of color and perfume. The chief merit of the "Choicest Flowers" is that they "Are Disciplined / With Artificiall Angells meet." The third stanza shows how even the showers of "Word and Sacraments" are carefully regulated. The stanzas build up, with the refrain, "Yet that's not all" concluding each. The final line of the last sestet culminates with, "Where Each is sweet'ned Songs all Praises shall / Sing all ore heaven for aye. And that's but all" (pp. 456-457). At last the broken-down castle walls of the Preface have been rebuilt. In the beginning "Nothing man did throw down all by sin" (p. 388). Here he offers his nothing and regains his all.

Yet if a kind of fixity and finality come about when Souls "enter in," so do a sense of movement and progress. In the paradisaical garden the "flowers" set here . . . by advice / . . . grow herein and so rejoyce" (p. 454). When they have reached maturity, "A Divine Hand / Doth hand them up to Glories room." The unusual picture of flowers "handed up" coincides with the impression Taylor wants to make here. A modern critic, Karl Keller, sees that Taylor has made "the entire debate over man's salvation in Gods Determinations not on a cosmic scale at all but an ecclesiastical one"; in fact, the arena is the actual Westfield church of which Taylor was pastor. This narrow setting considerably limits the poem's significance and acceptability in his eyes. Actually, Taylor makes the local setting coalesce with the cosmic, but his gestures at progress show that he did not believe

the earthly saint, even the "enCovenanted" one, had "arrived."⁵¹
 Nor did he believe one had to "ride" in the visible Coach to get to
 heaven. Taylor made it clear that some legitimate travelers go by
 foot:

Some few not in; and some whose Time, and Place
 Block up this Coaches way do goe
 As Travellers afoot, and so do trace
 The Road that gives them right thereto.

(p. 459)

The "some" who "Block up this Coaches way" may be those who sided with
 Solomon Stoddard, yet Taylor does not deny that they will arrive in
 heaven, for they have a "right" to the road. It is simply that those
 in the Coach have better travel accommodations.

Meanwhile, within the well-cushioned "Coach of Gods Usual
 Decree" the Souls "bowle and swim" happily between earth and heaven.
 Their intermediate state is by no means uncomfortable. Though still
 not perfect, Souls can sing "Diviner Harmony" than any they knew on
 earth. They can maintain patience with their own "Tunes" and those of
 others: "And if a string do slip, by Chance, they soon / Do screw it
 up again: whereby / They set it in a more melodious Tune" (p. 459).
 Keeping heaven in view, they can "in this Coach . . . sweetly sing /
 As they to Glory ride therein" (p. 459).

* * * * *

Edward Taylor made Gods Determinations the "upshot" of the main
 elements of his harmonizing doctrine. He showed in one sweep man's

loss of his soul-castle through original sin and his restoration by means of a juridical arrangement in the heavenlies between the Justice and Mercy of God. He demonstrated how the Lord, even at the time of the writing, offered refuge by means of a heavenly "Coach," the pictorial symbol of the visible church. Elect souls might enter it, but most had to pass through struggle and combat before they were ready to do so. Once inside, they must still be "coacht along." Though they did not reach heaven immediately, the walls of their carriage-church provided them security through its discipline and love. Though they have not perfected their heavenly praise--the souls confess, "I have not learn'd my Gamut yet"--they continually work to improve it by "Church Fellowship rightly attended":

I all their Acts, publick and private, nay
 And secret too, they praise impart.
 But in their Acts Divine and Worship, they
 With Hymns do offer up their Heart.
 Thus in Christs Coach they sweetly sing
 As they to Glory ride therein.

(pp. 458-459)

The saints traveling through the middle heavens, neither "too low or high," nor "in this or that extream," according to the dictum of the true saint, also sing the music of the spheres. There are numerous resonances of the creation about the gold and silver coach bowling through the skies. The moment is perhaps the clearest in Taylor for showing his Puritan confidence that those who moved within the confines of his doctrine, with its doors of discipline and its foundation of love, could come close to finding that harmony all men seek.

NOTES

¹The expression is from The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), Second Series, 102, line 3. All citations from Taylor's poetry will be taken from the Stanford edition.

²The American Novel and Its Tradition (New York: Doubleday, 1957), p. 11.

³Edward Taylor's Christographia, ed. Norman S. Grabo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 196-198. Further references to this work will be made by the abbreviation C and page numbers within the body of this chapter.

⁴Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, ed. Norman S. Grabo (E. Lansing, Michigan, 1966), pp. 61-62. References to this work will be made by the abbreviation TCLS and page numbers within the text of this chapter.

⁵Ibid., p. 62.

⁶Roy Harvey Pearce, "Edward Taylor: The Poet as Puritan," NEQ, 23 (1950), 38-39.

⁷Quoted in Perry Miller, The Seventeenth Century, Vol. I of The New England Mind (1939; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1961), p. 390.

⁸Pearce, pp. 39-40.

⁹Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (1956; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 143.

¹⁰From a 1694 sermon cited in Norman S. Grabo, Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 34.

¹¹From Taylor's Gathering Day sermon, cited in Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor (Amherst: The Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975), p. 37. The original, "A Particular Church is God's House," is in Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.

¹²Keller, p. 38. See pp. 36-38 for events leading up to the organization and procedures followed.

¹³Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 113-138, discusses the "Halfway Covenant." Pages 131-133 discuss the Puritans' commitment to infant baptism as it conflicted with the ideal of a pure church. Cf. p. 125 on the "Problem of Biology."

¹⁴Solomon Stoddard, The Doctrine of Instituted Churches Explained and Proved from the Word of God (London, 1700), quoted in Grabo, Edward Taylor, p. 32; cf. Morgan pp. 102-103, for the history of the explicit church covenant concept.

¹⁵Michael Colacurcio, "Gods Determinations Touching Half-Way Membership: Occasion and Audience in Edward Taylor," AL, 39 (1967-68), 298-314, suggests that in some way Taylor was addressing his poem to those half-way members of his own congregation in Westfield whom he believed to be among the Elect, but who had not claimed their rights as full members. The poem indicates a number of possible reasons for their recalcitrance. Thomas Johnson guesses that Gods Determinations was written in 1685 because of its position in the manuscript and the development of its lyrics, in The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 20. The theological background also suits the time of the anti-Stoddard activity of the 1690's.

¹⁶Norman Grabo, "Gods Determinations: Touching Taylor's Critics," Seventeenth-Century News, 28 (1970), 23.

¹⁷Louis Martz, foreword to The Poems of Edward Taylor, xiii.

¹⁸Perry Miller's phrase in The Seventeenth Century, p. 371.

¹⁹Nathalia Wright pointed out the possibility that Taylor saw Corpus Christi plays in "The Morality Tradition in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," AL, 18 (1946-47), 2.

²⁰Jean L. Thomas, "Drama and Doctrine in Gods Determinations," AL, 36 (1964-65), 456-62, shows that Taylor could not have seen the moralities, since they were not played after the sixteenth century, but demonstrates his familiarity with them through the homiletic tradition.

²¹Willie T. Weathers, "Edward Taylor: Hellenistic Puritan," AL, 18 (1946-47), 19-20, suggests that Taylor's battle scenes may be drawn from Homer, the ideal of the golden mean from Horace and the epigrammatic quality from Theocritus' Greek anthology, which Taylor possessed in his library.

²²Taylor's proclivity for debate shows in his earliest work, such as his college declamation in "The Topical verse of Edward Taylor," ed. Thomas Johnson, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 39 (1943), 513-514, and polemic verse, such as his answer to a "Popish Pamphlet," cited in Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 112-113.

²³John Gatta, "The Comic Design of Gods Determinations Touching His Elect, EAL, 10 (Fall, 1975), 124, cites one exchange over the Book of Revelation in which Taylor apologizes to his friend for his "greater jesting expressions." Gatta's whole article, pp. 121-143, very fully discusses Taylor's "humours," chiefly from the literary point of view and from the "humourous" treatment of such theologians as William Ames.

²⁴The Poems of Edward Taylor, p. 385. Hereafter, quotations from Gods Determinations will be from this Stanford text and will be shown by page number following their citation in the chapter.

²⁵Cf. such an example from John Preston, The New Covenant (London, 1629), p. 62, in Miller, Errand, p. 79. The Castle here is also something like a city-state, with its "Suburbs" and "Outworks" and has some resemblance to the City of God in the last part of Gods Determinations.

²⁶Cf. Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 12.

²⁷Quoted, Ibid.

²⁸Quoted, Ibid.

²⁹Cf. TCLS, pp. 204-205, 207-208.

³⁰Donald L. Parker, "Edward Taylor's Preparationism," EAL, 11 (1976-77), 264-268, points out the parallels; cf. Edward Taylor, "Profession of Faith," Westfield Church Records, Westfield Athenaeum, Westfield, Mass., pp. 45-46, cited in Parker, pp. 262-263.

³¹Cited in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 27.

³²Alan B. Howard, "The World as Emblem: Language and Vision in the Poetry of Edward Taylor," AL, 44 (1972-73), 361-362, points out this allusion. Taylor actually follows the text of Canticles very closely in these lines.

³³Willie T. Weathers, "Edward Taylor and the Cambridge Platonists," AL, 26 (1954-55), 17, says, "Despite the statement that when the

Saints have been borne away to 'Eternal Bliss' the sinners 'scull unto eternal woe,' all the Sinners are captured forthwith through the combined efforts of Mercy and Justice, and by the end of the poem have all--even Justice's recalcitrant two 'rancks'--accepted the scorned invitation." But a closer examination of the passage reveals the basic "Dicotomy" of redeemed and lost. Cf. Preparatory Meditations, II. 108, where Taylor roundly condemns universalism.

³⁴Norman S. Grabo in his Introduction to Christographia, xxviii-xxix notes that "the heat of hell's fire rarely scorches his rhetoric. . . . Taylor's temperament seems to have been too optimistic to dwell comfortably upon the negative consequences of his doctrine."

³⁵The three-part structure is used by Colacurcio, pp. 298-314. Wright, 1-18 suggests four divisions and Grabo, Edward Taylor, pp. 162-166 sees five. The author of this study prefers the tripartite division because it corresponds to the title and can also be similarly subdivided.

³⁶In Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings (1938; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, 1963), I, 283.

³⁷Says Morgan, following Perkins' steps: ". . . no sooner was faith kindled than a combat began in which the soul must fight against doubt and despair by 'fervent, constant, and earnest invocation for pardon.' This combat never ceased, but it eventually produced a feeling of 'assurance' and persuasion of mercy. Thereafter followed an 'Evangelicall sorrow,' that is, 'a grief for sin, because it is sin,' and lastly God gave a man 'grace to endeavour to obey his Commandments by a new obedience.'"

³⁸Wright, pp. 3, 18, suggests this. (She shows many parallels with the morality characters in Gods Determinations.)

³⁹Gatta, p. 132.

⁴⁰Morgan says, "Delusion continually threatened, because the assurance wrought by grace was easily confused with the false assurance or 'security' of the unregenerate," p. 69. Arthur Hildersam, Lectures upon the Fourth of John, p. 312, in Morgan, pp. 69-70, showed how "the faithfull have not this assurance so perfect, but they are oft troubled with doubts and feares. . . . But they that have this false assurance are most confident, and never have any doubts."

⁴¹Pride had even been found to enter into the required initiatory relation, as "Sometimes the candidate might entertain the church with an all too lengthy spiritual autobiography," Morgan, p. 92.

⁴²Gatta, pp. 134-135, sees this as parental. Mindele Black, "Edward Taylor: Heavens Sugar Cake," NEQ, 29 (1956), 171, finds the tone erotic.

⁴³Quoted in Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 29. Miller suggests that the introduction of grace into the soul brings to every faculty a new element by which it judges itself and thereupon begins a civil war within itself.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 53.

⁴⁵Gatta calls this character the "Pious Wise." There is actually an advance here as the Ranks are willing to call on a mature saint as well as on heaven. Such consultation, says Gatta, pp. 135-136, follows Baxter, Perkins and Ames.

⁴⁶This must surely be one of the most candid descriptions of Puritan smugness to arise from one of that faith's own adherents.

⁴⁷Gatta, pp. 134-137, shows how Saint uses the two basic treatments of amiable humor and satiric wit according to the needs of the Souls.

⁴⁸The other two most obvious times when this has happened were Mercy's assumption of Justice's task and the lyric interlude when Christ makes Satan, the roaring lion, his sheep dog. Miller, The Seventeenth Century, p. 12, shows how Puritan thinkers tended to believe that "since God must be perfection itself, the mind invests Him with the 'positive' attributes of wisdom, will, holiness, liberty, and omnipotency."

⁴⁹The actual passage into the church proved to be somewhat arduous for some. Morgan, pp. 88-89, details the procedure. First, the candidate must apply to the elders, who submitted his name to the congregation so that they might report anything objectionable about him. If there were offenses, he must repent of them and make known wrongs right. The petitioner then was required to give his actual "relation," a narrative of his conversion experience, of about fifteen minutes' length, before the congregation and respond to any questions they might raise. If the members were satisfied with his account, he then proceeded to make a "profession of faith," or a statement of the major doctrines he believed. Finally, the members voted on his admission, and if he were accepted, he signed the church covenant, becoming at last a full member.

⁵⁰One of the very real fears of the saints was that they might be coming into the church as hypocrites. Stoddard emphasized the idea that the relation was irrelevant to membership, since there was really

no way to screen out the hypocrite. Taylor simply responded that "God will severely treat /such abusers/ on the day of judgment" (TCLS, p. 56). Cf. James W. Barbour, "The Prose Context of Edward Taylor's Anti-Stoddard Meditations," EAL, 4 (Winter, 1969), 141-157.

⁵¹Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor, p. 133, finds that "the scope of the poem is diminished by this small state." This writer, however, believes Gatta grasps the significance of the setting better when he says "that for Taylor, the concrete work and worship of the Congregational saints are an embodiment of the Kingdom on earth as well as a visible prefiguration of the eschatological state," p. 138.

EPILOGUE

The last picture of Gods Determinations, that of the Covenant coach, swimming along in perfect mid-air poise, may be the most nearly complete portrait of the marvellous balance of seventeenth century American Puritanism.

This "usual Coach of Gods Decree," walled in with discipline and "bottomed" with love, was, of course, a replica of the ongoing Puritan City of God.¹ The same vision of a perfectly running and perfectly safeguarded order animated Edward Taylor as he pled with Solomon Stoddard in 1688, about the same time as the writing of Gods Determinations, not to upset the peace of New England: "I dissenting from your motions entreate you . . . whether the thing be warrantable." His letter showed his dread that Stoddard's innovations would "greatly reflect upon those that led this people into the Wilderness" and would "be grievous in the ears of Gods people in other parts of the World" who would find New England's "Apostacy in Mr. Stoddards Motions, in which Deus Prohibeat."² He and other orthodox leaders most feared the loss of the Covenant state erected by the founders with its law, discipline and harmony. It had become, as it never had been for English or European dissenters, almost their whole raison d'etre as a religious and governmental system. Hence Karl Keller appropriately notes the "epic proportions" of the debate on the maintenance of both the inward and outward Covenants in New England.³

Such a vision of preserved unity still inspired Edward Taylor during 1711 and 1712, when Stoddard was reaping yet more harvests of souls in the Connecticut Valley. Taylor's meditations of those years urged that flesh and spirit, inner and outer manifestations of faith must not be separated but joined under the eternal government of God:

My blissful Lord, thou and thy properties
 And all thy Adjuncts that upon thee thron
 Embedded altogether up arise
 And moulded up into a Splenderous Sun
 And in thy Kingly Glory out to shine
 In Zions mount, outshining Glories line.

(II. 101: 25-30)

As late as 1713, Taylor was once more reiterating his insistence that the full terms of the Covenant be met, as he continued to speak in political terms:

Also the Body Politick, the Realm
 Having its members every one possess
 These golden influences from their Helm
 Do make all golden motions ever fresh.
 Hence the 'golden Laws with Golden influences
 A golden race produce and in all senses.

Thy Golden Head a golden Kingdom hath
 To which it Golden Statutes out doth give
 And golden influences it display'th
 That make the Subjects golden lives to live,
 And by these golden Laws thy walke to hold
 Thy glorious City to, whose Streets pure gold.

(II. 118: 37-42)

The Lord's kingdom, rightly established on earth, would bring in, according to Taylor, a kind of golden age not far short of heaven itself. Such a concept was particularly appropriate in Westfield in

1713 because Stoddardean thought had by this time made inroads into Taylor's own congregation. That year Taylor found it necessary to preach on the urgent need for discipline within the Westfield ranks and to threaten to withhold the sacramental privileges from his people if they did not agree.⁴

Only a few more years were left to Taylor to guard his frontier outpost from the new "apostasy." A serious illness in December of 1720 forced him to accept assistance in the pulpit. For a brief period in the spring of 1724 he was able to resume full responsibility for pastoral leadership, but in 1725, the town voted to ordain a Nehemiah Bull, a man of very different theological persuasions, to succeed him.⁵ In 1728, Bull put to the Westfield congregation the question of "Whether such persons as come into full communion may not be left at their liberty as to the giving the church an account of the work of saving conversion, i.e., whether relations shall not be looked upon as a matter of indifferency." The church asked for six weeks to consider the issue and then "voted in the affirmative." Taylor died in 1729.⁶

Meanwhile, in Northampton, parallel events were taking place. Jonathan Edwards went in 1727 to assist his own aged and infirm grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in the pulpit. Edwards was even more willing than Stoddard, who died the same year as Taylor, to cast down the covenant walls erected by the colonial fathers, proclaiming in the 1740's that the Lord's sovereignty was unfettered by any contract or covenant whatsoever.⁷ Edwards worked with Nehemiah Bull and other leaders of the diehard congregation in the Connecticut Valley to bring them into line with his own polity of a universal church without

specific earthly ties.⁸ By 1750, only three churches in the Valley still withstood the new teaching. The Westfield church was not among them.⁹

As early as 1741, however, only twelve years after Edward Taylor's death, Jonathan Edwards had launched his revival movement with a landmark sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," warning the non-committed that

The God that holds you over the pit of Hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath toward you burns like fire . . . you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes as the most hateful venomous spider is in ours.¹⁰

Not for Edwards' congregation the cushioned covenant coach! Their suspension was to be very different from the secure mid-air passage of the churchly vehicle Taylor had offered. Edwards had thrust aside all the emoluments of seventeenth century theological findings and placed the individual back once more where John Calvin had found him: before the bench of a wrathful Deity.

Perhaps the drama of Edwards' picture etched it more deeply into the minds of succeeding generations than any milder metaphors available from earlier colonial years. Or perhaps the whole covenant system, the special genius of American seventeenth century theology, itself lasted too brief a period in the history of Calvinism to make as profound an impact. It is certain that the starker and more radical theology of early English Puritanism was reinterated in full force in Edwards' fervid eighteenth century doctrine. Either the early or the late phase may have conferred on later thinkers that apparently indelible sense of alienation and disorder.

But for Edward Taylor and the few remaining Covenant believers of the early eighteenth century, it was not so. Taylor himself may never have been aware of the final fall of the Covenant kingdom, since, as an early biographer tells us, by the time of Bull's ordination, he had become "imbecile through old age."¹¹ Dreaming through the Götterdämmerung of the Covenant system, he paid a final fitting tribute to it. He began to compose his "Valediction" shortly after his near-fatal illness in December, 1720, and revised it twice before 1725.¹² The first version of the long poem included a passage based, like the meditations, "Chiefly upon the Doctrin."¹³ He attempted to show the Divine Nature with its positive attributes in perfect accord:

. . . when we say thou'rt Holy, Just & Good,
 Goodness, justice & Holiness Understood.
 Hence thou & these the Godhead liketh well
 And with infinity run parallel.¹⁴

Yet even as he attempted this balance, Taylor realized that human understanding would make perfect praise impossible:

But pardon, Lord, if as I praise I use
 Terms which took strictly do thyself abuse.
 Which as they are considered in thee rise
 They ever call'd are thy Properties.
 But as in Covenants we ascribe them thee
 Thy attributes are call'd & Abstracts free.

(p. 50)

Having settled this theorem, he now moved in a different direction: "These things premised I now return unto / My main design, thanks on thyself t'bestow" (pp. 50-51). The second and third versions of the poem do not contain this syllogism.

The balance of doctrine Taylor now distilled into a new delicacy of design. He would leave behind even the "starry Choristers" who "at Boe peepe play" and mount to "the Angells play house overspread / With Sparkling Jaspers all ore pav'd design" (pp. 50, 53). Far above the stars, "With shining Angells" he would "Dance over your heads / Yea very soon a Galliard all Divine . . ." (pp. 52-53). At that height the heavenly bodies would move in the rhythms of a gigantic playing field. The moon would become a "silver Tennis Ball thou pendant Moon," at "Cross purpose" with the sun, "Chasing each other out at Barley breaks" (p. 53).

The poet must find a vehicle to carry him to that lofty station, however. Sun and moon would be too insubstantial: "Your golden beams, now silver tassels shall / Not be my golden ladder Rounds at all" (p. 53). Their lights would some day be extinguished: "Your lights put out, your Wicks no light can borrow / You hence a due, yet I shall rise tomorrow" (p. 53). Air itself would not serve, though it were "Cerulean . . . blew Bonnets shine / That fills up heavens Vast profundity . . . ," since "Horrid roaring Divells in thy fare . . . Thy Nasty Speech & harsh Scurrility . . . These all / A pick pack forth on thy Curld Circles side" (pp. 53-54).

There must be another chariot. It would be a coach made purely of heavenly harmonies. Any lesser noises, tunes or instruments he would leave behind: "Base Violl come not here, nor the harsh roars / Of the wide bur'd Cathedral Organs pipes" (p. 54). The "Terraqueous Globe" itself--"The Womb & Birthplace of High Meteors . . . Whose roaring noise doth tare the Skies withall / Their Structures as if to

pieces they down fall"--all such earthly and galactic tones his final chariot would leave behind (p. 54). The Covenant coach, of which this one is surely reminiscent, carried still-imperfect praise. But this last coach, lifted to a higher sphere, is a vehicle of perfect concord:

I hope to take a flight up ere't be long
 Into a purer Air by far than thine
 That never touched any bawdy Song
 Nor took the sent of sinfull lungs like mine.
 A Coach most pure of Heavenly Musick joyes
 Enravishing with sweetest Melodies.

(p. 55)

Rolling eternally through the heavenlies in his melodic chariot, the quintessential American Puritan could expect to perfect the harmonies he had attempted so long.

NOTES

¹The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed. Donald E. Stanford (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 456, 455. Passages from Taylor's Gods Determinations will be shown hereafter in the text by the abbreviation GD and the page number in the Stanford edition. Passages from the Preparatory Meditations will be indicated by Roman numerals for First and Second Series numbers and Arabic figures for individual Meditations and lines.

²The original of the letter is in the Massachusetts Historical Society archives. Cited in Karl Keller, The Example of Edward Taylor (Amherst: The Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975), p. 30.

³Keller, pp. 28-30; cf. reactions and statements from the Mathers to the same effect as Taylor's, pp. 28, 30.

⁴The manuscript of his two sermons on church discipline is in the Boston Public Library. Cited by Keller, pp. 31-32. Norman S. Grabo, Edward Taylor (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 38, when dissension threatened the Westfield church.

⁵Thomas M. Davis, "Edward Taylor's 'Valedictory' Poems," EAL, 7 (Spring, 1972), 39-40.

⁶Grabo, pp. 38-39.

⁷Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (1956; rpt. New York: Harper, Row, 1964), p. 98. Cf. Perry Miller, The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1956), pp. 221-222, which shows how Edwards took up where Stoddard left off. Says Miller, "In 1740 Edwards led New England to a reassertion of the primitive passion, but not within the framework of the ancestral covenant . . ."

⁸Keller, p. 30.

⁹Grabo, pp. 38-39.

¹⁰Cited in Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty, and E. Hudson Long, eds., The American Tradition in Literature, 3rd ed., (New York: Norton-Grosset & Dunlap, 1967), I, 252-253. Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings (1938; rpt. New York: Harper, Row, 1963), I, 289, shows how

such a stance is not characteristic of the seventeenth century but of the eighteenth.

¹¹Grabo, p. 38.

¹²Davis, pp. 38-39.

¹³See the frontispiece, p. 4, Stanford edition of Taylor's poems.

¹⁴Lines from the valedictory poem are quoted from the Davis article. This from p. 50. They will be shown hereafter simply by page number within the text.

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