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MORAL DIVINITY WITH A TINCTURE OF CHRIST?

**An interpretation of the theology of
Benjamin Whichcote, founder of
Cambridge Platonism**

Paul Miles Davenport

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CAMBRIDGE PLATONISM

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PROEFSCHRIFT

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in de godgeleerdheid aan de Katholieke
Universiteit te Nijmegen, op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus Dr. G. Brenninkmeijer,
hoogleraar in de faculteit der sociale
wetenschappen, volgens besluit van de
Senaat in het openbaar te verdedigen
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Writing a thesis is much like running a marathon race, an impossible feat unless the "loneliness of the long distance runner" is made bearable by the support of others. Like every thesis writer, I have a host of supporters to thank and fear that many will be left out in this necessarily brief expression of gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

I have long had a predilection for the thought of the Cambridge Platonists. It was several years ago as a lecturer in English Literature that I first made their acquaintance mainly through the writings of the Cambridge Professor of English and self-confessed "inveterate trespasser" in other fields, Basil Willey.¹ Therefore it was no coincidence that I chose to do a study of Whichcote's theology for my doctorate. Moreover, having noted that the subject of my "doctoraal" paper, Gotthold Lessing, showed a good deal of spiritual kinship with the founder of Cambridge Platonism, it was quite consciously that upon completion of the Lessing project I journeyed to England to pursue the Enlightenment in its English roots.

It is difficult to know exactly why one finds a particular theology attractive but I must say something by way of justification of a rather esoteric topic. I recall listening to a Salvation Army speaker on the streets of London and what he said affords perhaps a clue to my choice of topic. He said that he had not come to talk about a God who would dramatically change a man's life, who would suddenly replace fear and loneliness with security and joy but rather of a God who--if allowed to enter into ones life--would make ones sorrows a little less sorrowful and ones joys a little more joyful. Sorrow would not be banished nor would joy be untinged with sadness but the whole spectrum of human experience would be raised a few tones to a new pitch of intensity and awareness. This unexpectedly modest claim struck a responsive chord not only in myself but, judging from the stillness with which they listened, in many among that street-corner audience. Some perhaps found that such a sermon glossed over sin and diminished God in an effort to make religion attractive to sceptical audiences. Others, including myself, would rather think that to bring God thus close

to human life is to locate Him where He is and wills to be. Whichcote, who realized that an exaggerated claim for the God of salvation only detracts from the goodness of the God of creation, might well have preached that sermon.

Certainly there is such a reality as sin but a magnified consciousness of ones failings cannot constitute a solid foundation for the love of God. In personal relationship insight into failure and inadequacy comes only in the measure on the experience of love. I can only begin to grasp the magnitude of my sinfulness in and through my knowledge of the perfectly selfless way in which God loves me. A theology which numbers sin among its first principles therefore is building on a basis which cannot support the weight of the interpersonal character of the divine-human relationship of the Christian revelation.

Furthermore, a theology which places sin very near the center of its speculations is a theology which tends to cast a shadow of suspicion over human nature. In such systems, the purely religious nature of sin is easily forgotten and sin mingled with the ontological structure of man. "Spiritual progress" thus comes to have the connotation of somehow rising above that tainted human nature by aspiring to an anatural supernaturality.

But Catholicism has undergone an incredible metamorphosis in the past decade and such recollections are as dated as an "ex cathedra" pronouncement from Rome. Yet while a new mentality has dawned theology's task of theoretically grounding and clarifying the emergent outlook is far from complete. Much remains to be done before a properly positive evaluation of human desires and deeds will have been accorded and the reality of sin will have been fitted into its proper perspective. It is in the cause of a theology that would bring to the fore the long obscured doctrine of creation in an attempt to clarify the goodness that belongs to man and the universe in virtue of their created being,

that this study is enlisted.²

But before proceeding any further it is time to introduce Benjamin Whichcote and his followers since it is by no means to be taken for granted that these obscure Cambridge theologians of the seventeenth century are well known to the reader.

Very little is known of Benjamin Whichcote, born in 1609 of an "ancient and honorable family" until he entered Emmanuel College, the "seminary of Puritans", at the age of seventeen in 1626. The young student made a good impression on at least one of his teachers, viz., his tutor Anthony Tuckney, who disclosed to Whichcote later in their famous exchange of letters that "from your first coming to Cambridge I loved you: as finding you studious and pious, and very loving and observant of me."³ He completed his studies in due course, receiving his B .A. in 1630 and his M.A. in 1633, and was shortly thereafter elected a Fellow of Emmanuel College. As a tutor, Whichcote was known as "a candid hearer of sermons" whose "judgment was highly revered, though there was no fear of his censure."⁴ Judging from the number of distinguished students whom he instructed among whom were John Smith, John Worthington and Samuel Cradock, his reputation as an excellent tutor was probably well deserved. On March 5th, 1636 Whichcote was ordained both deacon and priest "which irregularity" remarked Salter, the eighteenth century editor of his aphorisms, "I know not how to account for in a prelate so obnoxious to the ruling power both in Church and State."⁵ That same year he was given the appointment which became the vehicle par excellence of his widespread influence, viz., the Sunday Afternoon Lectureship at Trinity Church, Cambridge.

Besides his care of the college, he had a very great influence upon the University in general. Every Lord's day in the afternoon, for almost twenty years together, he preached at Trinity Church, where he had a great number not only of the young scholars, but those of great standing and best repute for learning in the University his constant and attentive

auditors. And in those wild and unsettled times contributed more on the forming of the Students of the University to a sober sense of Religion than any man in the Age.⁶

In 1640 Whichcote gained his Bachelor of Divinity degree and in 1643 became the pastor of a small parish in Somersetshire where he married Rebecca, the widow of Matthew Cradock, former governor of Massachusetts. About the marriage little is known except that they had no children. Then, amid the turmoil of civil war Whichcote was recalled to Cambridge where he was made Provost of King's College, from which post his friend Dr. Samuel Collins had been dismissed for political reasons. It is typical of the new Provost that he provided the needy Dr. Collins with a portion of his stipend all the while he retained the Provostship. That he was able to retain it for so long and that he rose to become the Vice-Chancellor of the University is remarkable considering his independent attitude with regard to the Puritan authorities and is perhaps the best indication we have of the esteem in which the man was held. Whichcote refused to take the Covenant imposed on all adult Englishmen by the powerful Westminster Assembly with its purpose of banishing popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy and schism from English soil. In those intolerant times Whichcote walked apart from the crowd, as we read in one of the most important contemporary accounts of the man, from the pen of Bishop Burnet.

Whichcote was a man of rare temper, very mild and obliging, and a great friend to liberty of conscience; for the credit he had with some who had been eminent in the late times he made no other use of than to protect good men of all persuasions.⁷

Elected Vice-Chancellor of the University in November of 1650 Whichcote appears to have capably combined his pastoral work with that of administration. But in 1660 his long and fruitful career at the University came to a sudden end when he was replaced as Provost of King's by order of Charles II.

The last chapter of his long life took place in London in the active parish ministry, first at St. Anne's Blackfriars

and then at St. Lawrence Jewry. At St. Lawrence he preached twice a week and enjoyed "the general love and respect of his Parish; and very considerable and judicious Auditory, though not very numerous, by reason of the weakness of his voice in his declining age."⁸ As Whichcote would have been only in his late fifties that "weakness of voice" was probably due more to recurrent ill health than old age. From the correspondence of one of his former students, John Worthington, we learn that Whichcote was afflicted over a prolonged period in the 1650s with a "quartan-ague", or in more modern terms a malarial condition.⁹ But he remained an active minister of the Church of England until his death in 1683 on the occasion of a visit to Ralph Cudworth's home in Cambridge.

As to the question why such an apparently important figure has received so little recognition the answer probably lies in the fact that the power of his personality was channeled chiefly into a life of action and spiritual leadership which left him little opportunity for literary expression. All the writings that he left behind besides some important letters are the sermons given in the course of discharging his considerable pastoral responsibilities. Even the sermons were not written out in full but delivered from notes which were afterward expanded and edited by those with more leisure. In the past decade something of the recognition due Whichcote has been rendered but much remains to be done before the full stature of the man is known and duly appreciated. The great seventeenth century scholar John Tulloch, writing in 1874, would be pleased to know that his call for a re-evaluation of Whichcote has at least begun.

It is strange that he should have been so little known and studied; but the obscurity which has overtaken him is not without some relation to his very greatness, and the silent way in which he passed out of sight after the Restoration after he had done his work at Cambridge.... He was careless of his own name.... He possessed the highest magnanimity of all--a magnanimity extremely rare--of forgetting himself in the cause which he loved, and rejoicing that others entered into the results for which he laboured. It is all the more

necessary, therefore, that we should endeavour to do some degree of justice to his name and opinions--to bring before us as complete an image as we can of the man and his academic and theological activity. Standing as he does at the fountainhead of our school of thinkers, it is especially important to catch the spirit of his teaching, and to present it in its historical and intellectual relations.¹⁰

The meager information we have about Whichcote seems like a great deal when compared with the little that is known of his disciple, John Smith. This lack of information is partly due no doubt to the premature death which cut Smith's career short just as it was approaching the beginning of a brilliant rise if the quality of the few discourses that he left behind are any gauge of the man's potential. Born in 1618 of a humble family (his father was a "small farmer" in Northamptonshire) Smith nevertheless managed, with the help of financial support from Whichcote, his tutor, to complete his studies at Cambridge. He received the B.A. degree in 1640 and the M.A. in 1644 and shortly afterward was appointed a Fellow of Queen's College. It was at Queen's where he was made responsible for a course of religious instruction that he composed the discourses which constitute his only writings and chief claim to fame. Through the funeral oration delivered by his friend John Worthington,¹¹ himself sometimes considered a Cambridge Platonist, one gains the impression that Smith, like Whichcote, was an extraordinary religious personality universally admired both for his intellectual ability and his personal piety. Of the Discourses Willey has written that "this volume is likely, I think, to outlive many of the more formal treatises by these authors (the other Cambridge Platonists)."¹² The power and remarkable beauty of Smith's writings with their fusion of word and meaning has impressed almost every student of Cambridge Platonism, including the famous Matthew Arnold who singled out one of the discourses for this tribute: I have often thought that if candidates for Holy Orders were simply, in preparing for their examination, to read

and digest Smith's great Discourse on the Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion...and nothing further except the Bible, we might have, perhaps, a hope of at last getting, as our national guides in religion, a clergy which could tell its bearings and steer its way....¹³

Dean Inge, himself a noted Platonist, has described Smith's Discourses as "the best University Sermons that I know."¹⁴

One does not always find agreement with regard to the remaining members of the Cambridge Platonist school. Generally included are Henry More (1614-1687), Nathanael Culverwel (1618-1651) and Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688). Sometimes the list is lengthened to include such figures as Joseph Glanvill (1638-1680), Peter Sterry (1613-1672) and John Norris (1657-1711) but there are elements in the writings of these latter which situate their thought somewhat beside the main thrust of Cambridge Platonism.

Tuckney, who figures prominently in this study, should also be briefly introduced. Born in 1599 in Lincolnshire this precocious youngster entered the University of Cambridge at the age of fourteen, took his B.A. three years later, and at the ripe old age of twenty-one became an M.A., in 1620. Thereafter he tutored at Emmanuel until 1627, the year after Whichcote began his studies there, and then left Cambridge after receiving his B.D. to engage in the active ministry. Upon the convening of the Westminster Assembly Tuckney was named one of its members and left the country parish he was serving and with his family moved to London where he obtained a parish. In 1645 he was appointed Master of Emmanuel College and three years later moved to Cambridge when he became the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Until he was dismissed at the Restoration for his nonconformity Tuckney served the University with distinction and was conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity along with Whichcote in 1646. Besides his term as Vice-Chancellor he served as Master of St. John's and Regius Professor of Divinity. Tuckney was known as a theologian of strict and undeviating adherence to Calvinist orthodoxy but as a man of understanding and kindness.

NOTES: INTRODUCTION

1. Especially Willey's The Seventeenth Century Background (New York: Doubleday, 1953) and Christianity Past and Present (Cambridge: University Press, 1952).
2. See E. Schillebeeckx, "Christelijk Antwoord op een Menselijk Vraag?," Tijdschrift voor Theologie, Vol. I (1970), pp. 1-22.
3. Benjamin Whichcote, Moral and Religious Aphorisms, To Which are Added Eight Letters Which Passed between Dr. Whichcote and Dr. Tuckney, ed. Samuel Salter (London: 1753), p. 36. Henceforth to be referred to simply as Letters.
4. John Tillotson, A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Dr. Benjamin Whichcote (London: 1698), pp. 22, 33.
5. Letters, p. xviii.
6. Tillotson, Sermon, p. 24.
7. Gilbert Burnet, History of His Own Times, abr. Thomas Stackhouse (Everyman's Library: London: Dent, 1906), p. 44.
8. Tillotson, Sermon, p. 25.
9. In H.R. McAdoo's The Spirit of Anglicanism (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), pp. 148-49.
10. John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century (2 Vols.; reprint of 2nd ed., Edinbrugh, 1874; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), II, p. 46.
11. Appended to Smith's Select Discourses of which Worthington was the editor.
12. Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 143.
13. Ibid., pp. 143-44.
14. Ibid., p. 144; cf. Inge's Bampton Lectures of 1899 Christian Mysticism (London: Methuen & Co., 1899), pp. 286-96.

CHAPTER 1

THE DENIGRATION AND REHABILITATION OF NATURE

I. NATURE UNDER FIRE

The opening attack: Luther vs. Erasmus

At the root of the life of "religious reason" depicted in Whichcote's sermons is found his novel image of the divine-human relationship. In his fundamental concepts of God and man are found Whichcote's answer to a debate whose outcome signals the beginnings of the modern religious outlook.¹ The basic question to which Whichcote's theology addresses itself and to the solution of which in a modern sense his thought and personal example constituted a significant contribution is the question about which Luther and Erasmus had clashed, viz., the matter of human freedom.

From the one side came the call of the Reformation, inspired by the deeply-rooted conviction of its leaders that man must be abased that God get the glory; from the other echoed the gentle voice of humanism and the Renaissance speaking of the goodness of human nature and the nobility of man as the glory of God. While there were many forces at play in the process of the evolution of the mentality which became the "answer" to that "question" not the least important factor was the theological theorizing which accompanied that evolution. Much more than a matter of merely academic interest, these two vastly different visions of God and man were part of a complex of factors contesting for men's minds and hearts and a place in the sun in the shape which human freedom would impart to the future.

Near the source of this theological and theoretical side of the "debate" was Luther's stand against the Church. That his break with Catholicism had to do with deeper matters than current ecclesiastical practices is clearly stated in De Servo Arbitrio, his massively effective reply to Erasmus's Diatribes seu Collatio de Libero Arbitrio in which he

congratulated "the Diatribe" for having at least aimed at the relevant issue by attempting to rebut Luther's denial of free will.

I give you hearty praise and commendation on this further account--that you alone, in contrast with all others, have attacked the real thing, that is, the essential issue. You have not wearied me with those extraneous issues about the Papacy, purgatory, indulgences and such like--trifles, rather than issues--in respect of which all to date have sought my blood (though without success); you, and you alone, have seen the hinge on which all turns, and aimed for the vital spot.²

Touching as it does on the two strains of feeling that have ever been part of man's relationship with the gods or with God, viz., a "sense of virtue" and a "sense of sin", it is little wonder that free will became the "essential issue." The Church had long managed to accomodate both these "senses" but the Reformation brought that inconsistent comprehension under fire and around the rock-like figure of Luther these two basic strains of religious experience were polarized into Faith and Works.³

What is the relationship between the grace of God and human nature? Can man as man make an approach to God or has sin so blinded him that his every step is bound to lead away from rather than nearer to his maker? And, an interconnected question: When grace is granted does it then come as a power which enhances human nature's innate dynamism, or rather as a force which curbs or even suppresses that inner mechanism while creating beside it a quasi independent structure of "supernatural" virtue? Sometimes in peaceful exchange, more often in bitter polemic, this question has been debated down through the centuries of Western Christendom. Already in the New Testament a negative and a positive position in regard to man's aptitude for grace appear to confront one another. On the one hand the central messag of Jesus' preaching, i.e., his call to "repent for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand" contains the implicit premise that man is capable of moving away from sin and toward God. On the other hand, St. Paul appears to deny this ability and to condemn human

efforts after righteousness as the height of hypocrisy. Concerned with combatting the pride of the Jews in their religious priveleges and desircous too of correcting what he considered to be the undue importance the Hellenists attached to reason and philosophy Paul made much of the imperfection of these prized prerogatives, often polemically exaggerating their negative aspects in order the stronger to state his case.⁴

Yet what Paul is opposing in his sustained polemic against human effort is not every will and work of man but only that kind of activity which would appropriate to itself the forgiveness and approval which only God himself can bestow. Thus what is involved here is not an absolute opposition between human activity and divine grace but rather a contrast of a relative order, viz., between a certain kind of conduct and grace--that kind of conduct into which the Galatians lapsed once they had tasted of Paul's brand of religion with its hard demands, viz., their former ways of trying to justify themselves by means of meticulous conformity to the observances of the Law.⁵ It is man's age-old tendency to clutch after home-made security that Paul was aiming at in his assault upon human efforts after righteousness.

That Paul tended to identify that self-sufficient posture with the whole regime of the Law as such is understandable in view of the circumstances of his apostolate. "Judaizers" dogged Paul's missionary trail seeking to undo his every evangelizing effort by insisting upon the irreplaceable importance of the Law. Under such pressure the infant Christian church was constantly threatening to re-enter the Judaic womb which had given it birth.

That judaizing spirit was again very much in evidence in the Church of Martin Luther's Germany of the first decades of the sixteenth century, where the mentality of "works" was being busily fostered by zealous salesmen of indulgences. What proved a panacea for the multitude failed to procure the peace for which the sincere and conscientious monk, Martin

Luther, so ardently sought. The mechanism of that "works" mentality was for him a treadmill leading to emptiness and exhaustion.⁶ But it was not long before the study of the Bible led Luther to an understanding of the gospel which released him from that treadmill and armed him with the courage to oppose the whole established Church in the name of his new-found freedom.

Just as Paul's assault on human endeavour was directed against a special kind of human activity so did Luther's polemic against man's pretensions to righteousness have a particular and well-defined target in view, viz., the Church's doctrine of congruous merit with its claim that unaided human effort could favorably dispose God to the granting of grace.⁷ Luther did not tarry however at the level of particular doctrines; what concerned him primarily were the broad principles implicit in the Church's teachings. Reflecting upon his own painful striving after God's approbation Luther had arrived at certain conclusions about the basis of the divine-human relationship. De Servo Arbitrio, the fruit of that reflection, states that the human will of itself cannot move one step toward goodness but is bound either to God, to do His will, or to the devil, to perform the works of Satan.

In thus denying the liberty of man's will Luther unknowingly departed from the thought of his beloved Paul. Unlike the Apostle he generalized the object of scorn, viz., the "works" of those who would justify themselves into the level of human endeavour as such. Paul on the other hand consistently acknowledged human freedom wherever man has not purposely placed an obstacle to God's will. Paul's ultimate theological classification of mankind was not into Jew, Gentile, Greek and Christian or not even into elect and non-elect in a predestinary sense but rather simply into the two categories of those who really and inwardly respond to God and those who willfully refuse the divine call. "God has no favorites", Paul liked to say, but "He will repay each one as his works deserve."⁸ Paul condemned the abuse of freedom;

Luther denied the very existence of human freedom. Opposing the concept of free will as the fundamental source of the degenerate state into which he considered the Church had fallen Luther propounded a vision of God and man which temporarily triumphed over the emergent Renaissance point of view and quickly penetrated into the very roots of the life and culture of Europe.

By his own admission one of the finest pieces of theology he ever penned, De Servo Arbitrio is Luther's most nearly systematic statement of his thought and "the finest and most powerful Soli Deo Gloria to be sung in the whole period of the Reformation."⁹ The bulk of the book, a text by text analysis and criticism of Erasmus's Diatribes reflects Luther's determination to track down and destroy the elusive standpoint of his opponent. For his part, the eloquent Erasmus has taken advantage of the exposed flank of a thinker who dwells on the heights of the majesty of God by referring to the thorny matter of the relation of that sovereign will to evil. Luther's sure reply to such queries is to refer Erasmus to a mysterious hidden counsel of God that man must not question. If the Diatribe presses his objection as when he points to the futility of Christ's lament over Jerusalem: "If all comes to pass by necessity.... Why dost thou weary thyself with useless tears?" Luther's retort is simply to intensify the aspect of the danger of prying into that "dreadful hidden will of God." To reverence that will, writes Luther

Is not my invention, but a command grounded on the Divine Scriptures. In Rom 11, Paul says: 'Why then does God find fault? Who shall resist His will? O man, who art thou that contendest with God? Hath not the potter power?' and so on (Rom.9.19,21). And before him Isaiah said, in chapter 58: 'Yet they seek me daily, and desire to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness: they ask of me the ordinances of justice, and desire to approach unto God'. (v.2). I think these words make it clear enough that it is not lawful for men to search into the will of Majesty. Furthermore, the subject is of such a kind that perverse men are most strongly provoked to seek after that dreadful will; here most of all, therefore, is the place to urge upon them silence and reverence. In other subjects, of which we can and are commanded to give an account, we do not do this. If, however, any do

not yield to our admonition here, but persist in searching out the procedure of that will, we let him go on and, like the giants, fight with God; we watch to see what triumph he will gain, sure that he will in no way hinder our cause nor advance his own. 10

Clearly the desire to understand is not a fitting attitude before the Holy of Holies of that Will.

Thus does Luther's ultimate "explanation" of man's lack of freedom trail off into the sphere of "mystery." On the other hand Luther was convinced that his insight into the necessitating will of God covered the facts of everyday experience perfectly.¹¹ Take the case of the sinful man. See how he delights in his sin. Notice that if he is blocked on his path of evil that his will only becomes all the more bent on doing evil and that once the obstacle is removed this man will resume his way of life even more enthusiastically than before. See too the good man. Block his path to virtue and you have only succeeded in stirring up his desire for the good to greater heights. The sinner is thus "free." The regenerate soul is "free." Both are doing just what they desire, "spontaneously and voluntarily." Do not imagine that either is the unwilling instrument of a tyrannical God. There is no trace of compulsion here. To be sure God is the ultimate source of these divergent kinds of deeds. But while God is to be praised for the goodness of the virtuous He is not to be blamed for the evil of the unrepentent. At fault are the "defective instruments" which the natures of the rebellious angels and fallen man have become. It is these perverted natures which distort God's power into patterns of sin. Because divine omnipotence is all-inclusive and divine mercy is not there will necessarily be evil.

Since God moves and works all in all, He moves and works of necessity even in Satan and the ungodly. But He works according to what they are, and what He finds them to be: which means, since they are evil and perverted themselves, that when they are impelled to action by this movement of Divine omnipotence they do only that which is perverted and evil. It is like a man riding a horse with only three, or two, good feet; his riding corresponds with what the horse is, which means that the horse goes badly. But what can the rider do? He

is riding this horse in company with sound horses; this one goes badly, though the rest go well; and so it is bound to be, unless the horse is healed. 12

Grant Luther his classification of mankind into two all-embracing categories of Spirit-led and Devil-driven and he could speak easily of free will but try to place man outside those categories in a quasi neutral zone as Erasmus did and the reformer was up in arms.¹³ For Luther as for Calvin there can be no basic decision for a good or an evil way of life.¹⁴ That decision has already been taken outside and independently of the human will. Only the result of that decision concerns the will of man which must engage in a kind of ratification process. Luther modified a traditional image of human nature to sum up his position on free will: The beast (will) stands dumbly between two riders (God and Satan) with no freedom to turn to the one or the other.

So man's will is like a beast standing between two riders. If God rides, it wills and goes where God wills: as the Psalm says, 'I am become as a beast before thee, and I am ever with thee' (Ps. 73.22-23). If Satan rides, it wills and goes where Satan wills. Nor may it choose to which rider it will run, or which it will seek; but the riders themselves fight to decide who shall have and hold it. 15

The war escalated: Calvin

Luther's declaration of war on human nature was carried forward with renewed vigour by John Calvin. Calvin appears to have relished the sense of sin which marked Luther's vision. In the "prefatory address to the King of France" of his Institutes Calvin is up to his usual tactic of "giving God the glory" by removing every ground for glory in man, in this case in himself.

We indeed, are perfectly conscious how poor and abject we are: in the presence of God we are miserable sinners, and in the sight of men most despised--we are (if you will) the mere dregs and off-scourings of the world, or worse, if worse can be named: so that before God there remains nothing of which we can glory save only his mercy, by which, without any merit of our own, we are admitted to the hope of eternal salvation: and before men not even this much remains, since we can glory only in our infirmity, a thing which, in the

estimation of men, it is the greatest ignominy even tacitly to confess. 16

While Calvin presents his concept of total perversity as a theological notion it seems too much to say that this central concept is purely a "corollary of grace" in his system.¹⁷ One suspects that his tendency to dwell on a picture of human weakness and folly is more than a derivation from theological first principles.

To inculcate a suitably lowly state of mind Calvin made extensive and intensive use of the Augustinian version of the Fall and its consequences. But dissatisfied with the orthodox view of Original Sin as the lack of original righteousness because it did not "significantly enough express its power and energy" Calvin described the effects of that universal curse as an ever-active power producing the "works of the flesh" in the same way that "a lighted furnace sends forth sparks and flames, or a fountain without ceasing pours out water."¹⁸ Trent had anathematized Luther's view of concupiscence; Calvin would reinstate that vision with even more than its original vigour.

For our nature is not only utterly devoid of goodness, but so prolific in all kinds of evil, that it can never be idle. Those who term it concupiscence use a word not very inappropriate, provided it were added (this, however, many will by no means concede), that everything which is in man, from the intellect to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, is defiled and pervaded with this concupiscence; or to express it more briefly, that the whole man is in himself nothing else than concupiscence. 19

The doctrine of Original Sin is the instrument Calvin used to undermine the possibility of free will. Having established the universal and radically corrupting power of that Sin there remains nothing but to go through the motions of considering "whether, from the period of being thus enslaved, we have been deprived of all liberty; and if any portion still remains, how far its power extends."²⁰ If Original Sin is the instrument in this exercise it is Calvin's fundamental abase man-glorify God dialectic which remains the controlling insight. "Man cannot arrogate anything, however minute, to

himself, without robbing God of his honour, and through rash confidence subjecting himself to a fall" is the reminder Calvin prefaces to his investigation of possible remaining free will, thus suggesting in advance the solution to his query.²¹

To ask whether anything of free will remains after the Fall is to ask to what extent Original Sin penetrates human nature. Following Luther Calvin magnified the proportions of the Fall beyond the orthodox concept of the diminishment of man to that of a descent all the way to a sub-human state of depravity. While Luther propounded this view in terms of a kind of universal demonic possession Calvin tended to translate it into the tamer and more philosophic categories of tradition. "I feel pleased," Calvin wrote, "with the well-known saying which has been borrowed from the writings of Augustine, that man's natural gifts were corrupted by sin, and his supernatural gifts withdrawn...."²² Working more closely with tradition than the iconoclastic Luther Calvin will patiently seek its complicity in his effort to overcome from within the objections to his Lutheran vision of free will.

While subscribing to the Augustinian version of the Fall the Council of Trent had somewhat inconsistently condemned the idea of the total corruption of human nature. It is this last vestige of human goodness on which Calvin will train his powerful theological guns. That fallen man no longer enjoys the prerogative of special supernatural gifts is certain; Calvin's assault will concentrate itself on the natural endowment of human nature, the intellect and will. Though the question of that remaining free will was traditionally considered with regard to the zone of man's relationship with God Calvin thinks it important to begin with the realm of what he calls "inferior objects," which he carefully distinguishes from that of the "superior objects" of the divine realm.²³

Even though he has sharply divided "earthly things" from the proper sphere of free will it is nevertheless surprising that Calvin appears to freely acknowledge man's abilities and achievements even in that lowly sphere. An almost

schizoid tug-of-war seems to take place between the reformer's apparent admiration for the capabilities of the "natural man" and his preoccupation with removing any and every possible source of competition to the divine sovereignty.

But when he goes on to consider the capacity of reason in the realm of "heavenly things" Calvin holds a tighter rein on his tendency to admire the "homo naturalis."²⁴ This latter sphere he divides into three parts, viz., the knowledge of God, the knowledge of his paternal favour towards us, and the method of regulating our conduct in accordance with the Divine Law. With regard to the first two categories which have to do with man's ability to know God Calvin states that "men otherwise the most ingenious are blinder than moles."²⁵ As to man's moral knowledge, Calvin admits the existence of a law naturally engraven on mens' minds providing a guide to what is right but judges that the *raison d'etre* of this law is to render sinful men inexcusable. Though Calvin therefore does not agree with Plato's contention that ignorance is the root of sin neither is he prepared to grant man sound ethical insight. His conclusion is that even in this most promising sphere of natural knowledge "our reason is exposed to so many forms of delusion, is liable to so many errors, stumbles on so many obstacles, is entangled by so many snares, that it is ever wandering from the right direction."²⁶

Having established the intellect's inadequacy in the spiritual realm Calvin turned his attention to the faculty "on which the question of freedom principally turns," viz., the will. His first concern here is to refute the notion that man's natural desire for happiness proves that human nature retains free will. "Even the Schoolmen", Calvin writes condescendingly, know that "there is no act of free will, unless when reason looks at opposites." Acting on natural instinct is merely following the bent of ones nature like a brute animal and does not attain to the level of rational deliberation. This "natural desire" for happiness is nothing more than a natural inclination. The good at

which such a desire aims is a purely physical good, viz., creature comfort.²⁷

As for the Scholastic doctrine which would grant a subtle freedom to the will while pretending to uphold the primacy of grace Calvin like Luther set himself resolutely against it. St. Bernard, cited as an exponent of this view, wrote that though "good-will is the work of God" yet man "of his own nature... longs for such a good-will."²⁸ Support for this view the Schoolmen generally found in St. Paul's "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I", which they interpreted as an account of the natural man's desire for the good. But this, according to Calvin, is a false exegesis. Paul's reference to the combatant as taking "delight in the law of God after the inward man" makes abundantly clear that he has in mind one who knows the power of the Spirit, viz., regenerate man. Even Augustine himself applied this passage mistakenly to man without grace but later retracted his interpretation as erroneous.

Having denied any competence to intellect or will in the domain of the spiritual Calvin carried his polemic against free will one final step.. Too aware of the classical tradition (his first book had been a translation of Seneca's De Clementia) to pretend that there was no case for natural virtue Calvin found a way of both admitting that evidence and emptying it of possible harmful implications.²⁹ His tactic was simply to shunt the train of natural goodness off onto a side-rail of "mere nature." In this fashion natural virtues, skills and achievements were duly acknowledged but their goodness was ascribed solely to God. On the part of their human agents, all of these magnificent attainments and attributes are nothing more than vain and self-seeking ornaments. The picture Calvin paints of the natural sphere is that of a fallen world standing in sharp contrast over against the world of the Spirit of regeneration. That Spirit is also present in the unregenerate world but only in its common

"energizing" capacity which works not by leading men to God but rather by curbing corrupted appetites lest the confusion of that sinful state degenerate into total chaos.³⁰

Having shown that the goodness found in the natural sphere is to be attributed exclusively to God Calvin is ready to pronounce his final judgment concerning the scope of free will. If the goodness of the lowly natural world is nothing but selfishness in disguise what then can be said for the remnant of man's natural endowment in the sphere of "heavenly things?" What man needs for that sphere is Ezechiel's "new heart", Calvin understanding the prophet quite literally in the sense of a kind of spiritual heart transplantation. While a crude biological dualism is not in question here, Calvin is saying that in conversion everything comes from the side of God including the "will", i.e., the desire itself to be converted and conversely, that nothing is brought to this movement from the side of man.

How can it be said that the weakness of the human will is aided so as to enable it to aspire effectually to the choice of good, when the fact is, that it must be wholly transformed and renovated? If there is any softness in a stone; if you can make it tender, and flexible into any shape, then it may be said, that the human heart may be shaped for rectitude, provided that which is imperfect in it is supplemented by divine grace. But if the Spirit, by the above similitude, meant to show that no good can ever be extracted from our heart until it is made altogether new, let us not attempt to share with Him what He claims for himself alone. If it is like turning a stone into flesh when God turns us to the study of rectitude, everything proper to our own will is abolished, and that which succeeds in its place is wholly of God. 31

While Calvin's basic viewpoint on free will was that of Luther and though he even appears to intensify Luther's denial of any natural "potentia" for God, in an indirect and curious way he was moving in the direction of the Cambridge Platonists with their image of a human nature capable of freely moving toward God. While Luther was content to explain man's perversity in terms which tended to externalize the source of sin Calvin moves the cause of sin inward, identifying man himself as the prime responsible agent.³² Like

Luther Calvin can find no link between human nature and the operation of the Spirit. Aquinas held that grace builds on nature but Calvin followed Luther in asserting that no continuity exists between a corrupted first creation and the new creation of the Spirit. But in spite of such negativity about man's natural goodness Calvin's picture of human nature as an active source of evil is in a real sense a step in the rehabilitation of that nature. His interiorization and personalization of sin is a curious but real advance beyond Luther's vision of the devil-driven sinner.³³

Moreover, just as the Genevan reformer interiorized the source of evil so too did he make a beginning in that direction in his theology of the Spirit. Calvin, like Luther before him, recognized the need of an interior and affective aspect in the Christian life. To know Christ cannot be a matter of mere intellectual comprehension; beyond rational knowledge inward illumination is necessary. The Spirit of truth will provide that inner illumination.³⁴ A facile critique of reformation theology tends to contrast the forensic character of its doctrine of justification with the Tridentine teaching about a real interior holiness, thus glossing over the considerable emphasis the reformers placed on a theology of the Spirit. While Calvin's conception of the Spirit like that of Luther's remains that of a heteronomous entity (to use the language of Tillich) yet the thrust of his thought means to bring the Spirit into close contact with the human spirit.³⁵

While both Luther and Calvin thought of the divine revelation primarily as verbal--the Word of God being closely identified with the words of the Scriptures--yet combined with their insistence on the study and preaching of the Bible was their awareness that true knowledge of that scriptural truth was impossible without the interior teaching of the Spirit. It is that inward mystical strand of their thought that emerges in striking fashion in the theology of Cambridge Platonism. As Calvin interiorized the work of Satan so will

Whichcote and Smith interiorize the work of the Spirit.

An ineffectual counter-attack: Trent

In its reaction against the theology of the Reformation Trent came to the defense of a human nature so rudely dealt with by the reformers. The Council's concentration on the question of free will can be easily adduced from the Decree on Justification. Küng, reservedly conceding to Barth's objections, has written that the Council over-reacted on this point though not without cause: "The Reformers actually provoked a certain anthropocentricity in the decree on justification through their own deficient interpretation of Christian revelation."³⁶

To ascertain the Council's doctrine one can take the act of justification itself as the focal point of the decree and review the role of man in the three moments before, during and after that decisive act. Before justification, though "unclean" and "by nature children of wrath" the descendants of Adam nonetheless retain free will which "though weakened and unsteady, was by no means destroyed."³⁷ Within the act of justification itself the Council carefully carved out a place for man's active participation. The justifying process begins with "God's prevenient grace through Jesus Christ" but cannot be perfected unless man is "freely assenting to and cooperating with that grace."³⁸ In the detailed phenomenology of the justification process which follows, man is depicted as moving gradually from an initial faith through an awareness of sin to the love of God.³⁹ Finally, the Council devoted the seven final chapters of the decree to the exposition of the responsible role of man in the third moment of his freedom, i.e., after justification. Against the reformation view of justification the Council proclaimed the necessity and possibility of constant growth in holiness. Catechumens, "as soon as they are baptized" are charged with keeping "brilliant and spotless the true Christian justice they have received."⁴⁰

At this point semantic confusion has obscured an area of considerable agreement between Trent and the reformers:⁴¹ "The Council was satisfied to affirm in regard to justification a series of things which the Reformation refused to admit, preferring to attribute them instead to sanctification." The growth in justification about which the Council wrote so much is paralleled to a large extent by Calvin's affirmations about the increase in virute under the rubric of sanctification.

For all the anthropocentricity of the decree and its apparent repudiation of the theology of the reformers it is the similarity of outlook rather than the differences which strike one who looks back from the vantage point of our post-polemical , ecumenically-minded age. What the Council affirmed about an indispensable human freedom under grace appears as mere notations in the margin of a statement substantially in line with the vision of the reformers. It is, after all, a Decree on Justification in which justification is depicted in terms of an act and that of a decisive nature. While man is assigned a certain measure of freedom in and around this all-important act this free will is dwarfed by the massive unfreedom implicit in the perspective common to the Council and its opponants. Stepping back from the details of the document to take in the big picture of its sweep and direction what one beholds is an image of radical transformation--less abrupt and therefore more credible than that of the reformer's vision but nonetheless sharing the discontinuity inherent in that vision.⁴²

While the points of emphasis of the decree derive mainly from scholastic theology the framework which the Council Fathers shared with the reformers remained Augustinian. That framework is that of Augustine's stark contrast between a fallen and sinful man and the richly endowed soul of the justified Christian.⁴³ For an "honest, unprejudiced understanding of the doctrine of justification" the Council declared,

It is necessary to admit that all men had lost innocence

in the sin of Adam. They became unclean. And (according to the word of the Apostle) they 'were by nature children of wrath', as the council taught in its decree on original sin. So completely were they slaves of sin and under the power of the devil and of death, that neither the power of nature for the Gentiles nor the very letter of the Law of Moses for the Jews could bring liberation from that condition. And yet their free will, though weakened and unsteady, was by no means destroyed. ⁴⁴

The affirmation of a damaged yet integral free will appears as an awkward after-thought which blends badly with the image of man which precedes it. The traditional Adam-Christ parallel of that Augustinian tradition emerges explicitly in chapter three: "Truly, men would not have been born without justice except that they were born children of Adam's seed....So likewise they would never have been justified except through rebirth in Christ."⁴⁵ This parallelism is taken up again in chapter four in which justification is defined as a "passing from the state in which a man is born a son of the first Adam, to the state of grace and adoption as sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour."⁴⁶

The point at which the Council appears to most dramatically diverge from the reformers' view, viz., that of the "preparation" for justification, in which the freedom of an active role is assigned to man, hardly constitutes a substantial departure. The decree talks about the "necessity for adults to prepare themselves for justification" and depicts man's active role in connection with a special "prevenient grace". Human cooperation is thereby joined to the peninsula of justification rather than to the mainland of man's life. The unjustified man is allowed the "freedom" of being able to reject God's gratuitous call but any positive movement toward grace is precluded.⁴⁷

Because it shares in the abrupt character of justification which marks the reformers' vision the Council's image of God's prevenient grace takes on the aspect of a transcendent intervention in the darkness of man's sinful helplessness. But by at least affirming a remnant of free will

and especially by emphasizing an active and responsible human role as a constitutive element of justification itself the Council Fathers testified however imperfectly to an authentic Catholic tradition of man's freedom for God. As Küng pointed out, it is this tradition which distinguishes the Church's mind from that of the reformers in a fundamental way.⁴⁸ For that to which their imperfect affirmation of free will points in an all too Augustinian synthesis is a whole dimension of grace and freedom which the reformers had denied, viz., the grace and freedom of God's mercy. If things were as badly off as the reformers would have them then there could be no justification at all: There would be no one to justify since man would have long since extinguished the race. But the Old Testament is not only nor primarily the story of human faithlessness and divine wrath; it concerns above all the merciful God who places a staying hand in the way of man's mad race to chaos, and with infinite patience leads his people into ways of life and peace. Rooted in the biblical witness to God's loving-kindness (hasid) this tradition testifies that the pre-regenerate sinner is not the depraved creature depicted by the reformers but a being sustained in the hands of divine mercy and already experiencing the knowledge and love of God though not yet in the perfect "Abba, Father" relationship inaugurated by Jesus. This deeply biblical and patristic which proclaims that all of creation has ever been bathed in the light of God's redemptive purpose has recently been receiving a long overdue re-examination.⁴⁹

Summing up the significance of the Council's statement about man's freedom one would not be unjust in judging that although a blow for freedom was struck it failed to reach the root of the problem. The emergence of the powerful Jansenist movement is an indication of that failure. Meanwhile, in their apologetic push to win England back to the Church post-Tridentine Catholic theologians were outdoing the reformers' polemic against "reason" with their claim that the

proliferation of sects in Protestant England proves that the "carnal reason" of fallen man needs the guidance of an infallible teaching authority.⁵⁰

II. NATURE ON THE REBOUND: THE OPPOSITION OVERREACHES ITSELF

A Chaplain is Persecuted

Switching the scene to the England of the period shortly before Whichcote's birth and to the very University where he laboured so fruitfully one can take the measure of that ongoing free will debate in the particular form in which it confronted Whichcote. First we will look at the unattractive phenomena of the smugness of the "saints", an outlook which Puritanism tended to foster and one which reveals the other side of the coin of the unfreedom of the natural man of that creed's theology. In making this brief study of the English scene, it will be useful to provide a sketch of the lines which the English Reformation followed in its break from Rome.

The Church of England had come a long way since Henry VIII won the title "Defender of the Faith" from a grateful Leo X in 1521. By way of the prolonged series of negotiations which Henry carried on with the German reformers and despite the King's motivation--for political rather than theological gain--considerable draughts of Lutheran thought found their way into the Church of England.⁵¹ Shortly thereafter Calvin's star began to rise in England, boosted by his growing international reputation and especially by returning Marian exiles, many of whom had sojourned in Geneva. Though by no means looked upon with royal favor the exiles were tolerated by Elizabeth. Supplemented by emigrant Dutch and French Calvinists these zealous churchmen founded strong and flourishing congregations in the London area. At the theoretical level, the thought patterns of Calvin gained in circulation and acceptance with the help of such mediators as

Bullinger and Beza. It is generally acknowledged that, in the words of Schaff, "the ruling theology of the Church of England in the latter half of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century was Calvinistic."⁵²

While a form of Calvinism came to be the common theology of the English Church in the Elizabethan era the temper of its adherents varied greatly. While the majority of the Church's Bishops and divines saw no mandate in Calvinism's message to alter the "status quo", a growing segment of the Church wielded their Calvinism like a hammer with which they would destroy and then rebuild the Church according to what they considered the only valid norms.⁵³ To these zealots the compromise Elizabethan settlement was not satisfactory: The reform of the Church along Calvinist lines must continue to the very end. To one of the moderate Calvinists and contemporary members of the "establishment" the gradual advance of that aggressive form of Calvinism looked like this:

At the beginning, some learned and godly preachers, for private respects in themselves, made strange to wear the surplice, cap, or tippet: but yet so that they declared themselves to think the thing indifferent, and not to judge evil of such as did use, them. (He seems to mean Grindal, Sandys, Parkhurst, Nowel, and others, 1562.) Shortly after rose up other, (Sampson, Humfrey, Lever, Whittingham, &c.) defending that they were not things indifferent, but distained with antichristian idolatry, and therefore not to be suffered in the Church. Not long after came another sort, (Cartwright, Travers, Field, &c.) affirming that those matters touching apparel were but trifles, and not worthy contention in the Church, but that there were greater things far of more weight and importance, and indeed touching faith and religion, and therefore meet to be altered in a church rightly reformed. As the Book of Common Prayer, the administration of the Sacraments, the government of the Church, the election of ministers, and a number of other like. Fourthly, now break out another sort, (the Brownists,) earnestly affirming, and teaching, that we have no church, no bishops, no ministers, no sacraments; and therefore that all that love Jesus Christ ought with all speed to separate themselves from our congregations, because our assemblies are profane, wicked, and antichristian. Thus have you heard of four degrees for the overthrow of the state of the Church of England. Now lastly of all come in these men, that make their whole direction against the living of bishops and other ecclesiastical ministers: that they should have no temporal lands or jurisdiction. 54

Such a build-up of tensions which the temporizing policies of Elizabeth contained but hardly cured could no longer be suppressed. In the controversy centering around William Barrett at Cambridge University in the last years of the century that escalation of opposition reached a dramatic climax, the divergent viewpoints polarizing around the head of the unfortunate young chaplain of Gonville and Caius Colleges. Barrett preached a sermon on April 29, 1595, at Great St. Marys which dealt with the "dogma" of assurance, a doctrine dear to the hearts of many an anxious Calvinist. Since 1580 the prominent Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity Peter Baro had led a fight against the rigid Calvinism of Whitaker and Perkins. Now the uncompromising utterances of his disciple Barrett brought that debate to the climatic point which, according to Porter, formed the watershed "between the fall of Calvinism and the rise to dominance of Arminianism."⁵⁵

The brunt of Barrett's sermon was an attack upon assurance, the idea that once regenerated one can never fall away from grace, a notion Barrett labelled a "desperate presumption." The sermon contained the following points: That no one may be so bolstered up "by certainty of faith" that "he can of necessity be assured of his salvation"; that Christ in praying "for thee, that thy faith fail not" was praying not for all the elect but only for Peter; that the gift of perseverance is not certainly given but is rather dependent upon our individual behaviour; that true justifying faith is not to be rigidly differentiated from other forms of faith; that no one can know with certainty that his sins have been forgiven him; and "against Calvin, Peter Martyr and the rest", that the decree of reprobation is due to God's foreknowledge of sin. Finally, the shocked auditory were treated to a personal attack on Calvin himself as a man whose pride exalted him above God.⁵⁶

In the storm of protest that ensued sixty Cambridge dons signed a petition denouncing not only the sermon but also the unrepentant manner in which Barrett delivered the Recantation.

In the Recantation Barrett had been made to acknowledge a distinction between a temporary, and therefore feigned, faith and "that saving faith whereby sinners apprehending Christ are justified before God forever."⁵⁷ Further he was made to affirm that those who are justified by that immutable faith ought to be "certain and assured of their own salvation, even by the certainty of faith itself."⁵⁸ Moreover the young chaplain was forced to confess that he believed "concerning the doctrine of election, and reprobation, as the Church of England believeth and teacheth in the book of the articles of faith, in the article of predestination."⁵⁹ Finally Barrett had to retract his bold words against Calvin.

The last Court of Appeal to whom both parties applied was John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury. Though at the outset Whitgift showed preference for the theological position of Barrett the persuasive personality of Whitaker, the Calvinist Professor of Divinity, combined with the Archbishop's own desire for peace at the University resulted in a settlement favorable to the anti-Barrett camp. The rigidly Calvinistic tenor of their thought is reflected in Whitgift's Lambeth Articles which Tulloch has characterized as "the most memorable exception" to the "fair and conciliatory doctrinism of the Church of England in the century of the Reformation."⁶⁰

The hapless Barrett was summoned to submit to a second recantation. Whether he ever did is not recorded. It is known that he soon after left Cambridge for foreign lands and became a Roman Catholic, thereby doubtlessly vindicating the worst suspicions of his erstwhile opponants.

While Barrett undoubtedly shared the Calvinist first principles of his opponants as did his mentor Baro yet within the kingdom of that theology there were obviously many mansions.⁶¹ In his assault on the notion of assurance Barrett exposed the diversity of rooms the rambling house of Calvinism contained.

The matter of assurance had been in the air ever since

Luther's relocation of the theological center of gravity of the Christian's confidence from Romish "works" to "faith alone." But Luther and Calvin were more nuanced on the matter of the assurance this justifying faith brings than were many of their disciples. Breward rightly cautions against equating the Calvinism of Elizabethan Puritanism with the theology of John Calvin.⁶² It was a cheap version of Calvin that our Cambridge dons were defending. The only assurance Calvin would allow was that of those crushed in spirit and looking steadfastly to God. Calvin's acute awareness of man's tendency to pride prevented him from granting any other but this assurance as consolation to those who imitate Christ's perfect submission to the Father. Here was a distorted view of the doctrine of election that Calvin would have undoubtedly rejected. It belonged to the French reformer's basic theological perspective to keep men from the twin dangers of the pride that inflates and the sloth that renders irresponsible, both of which extremes appear to be implicated in this Puritan idea of assurance. There is moreover a dimension of Calvin's thought which absolutely precludes the kind of clairvoyance this notion of assurance implies. But as that "attentive Calvinist" Thomas Hobbes noted, Calvin's idea of the divine inscrutability was often forgotten by English Puritans.⁶³

Having indicated that the Puritan concept of assurance was untrue to Calvin's thought one can understand nonetheless the possibility of such a distortion. Had not the master at least implied that once man was regenerated he was saved forever? Granted faults and failings would dog his tracks but such things bear the character of a salutary spiritual exercise rather than a life or death struggle. Even Whichcote will at one point uphold a distinction between real sinners and the just who may falter but who cannot truly sin. The thrust of his thought however is an implicit denial of such cast-iron categories. Whichcote had laid aside the concepts of Puritan Calvinism and taken up the more open model

of man implied in his often repeated saying "man has himself as he uses himself." But a half century earlier theological thought was still bound to the conceptual patterns of the hardened Calvinism of Beza, Bullinger and others.

Things were not yet ripe for major reconstruction. Barrett was working within the system against one of its main tendencies, viz., the domination of the divine will and the corresponding derogation of human endeavour in the spiritual sphere. His contention that regenerate man is not so bound by that Will that he is unable to fall from grace constitutes a call for more freedom within a theology whose preoccupation with divine power leaves man little breathing space. The pendulum had started its swing away from Luther's "let God be God!" to the more anthropocentric theology of Cambridge Platonism.

A Country is Persecuted

The next and last scene in this brief sketch of the England of Whichcote's time may appear quite unconnected with the foregoing but is in reality only another manifestation of the same underlying spirit of the reigning religious outlook. The Barrett affair revealed something of the lack of freedom implicit in that outlook; the events surrounding the Puritan Revolution will also show that lack of freedom, i.e., that domination of the divine will, this time in the zeal and imposition of religion which characterized the whole period.

Haller has done well to point out the difference between the still deep waters which constitute the soul of Puritanism and the unruly currents which are popularly identified with the essence of that movement. In fact, the more spectacular phenomena of the militant crusader or the holy separatist belong more to the periphery of Puritanism and manifest the decay rather than the strength of the movement. At the heart of Puritanism and the source of its incredible power was a small band of dedicated men who in spite of the turbulency of the times stuck single-mindedly to their consuming goal of simply

preaching the word of God. In word and deed these men proclaimed the ideal of godly living among a morally confused and dispirited populace.⁶⁴

The ideal of godliness they embodied was the Pauline figure of the man armed with the breastplate of faith and fighting valiantly against the forces of evil.⁶⁵ One can readily see how their favorite images of warfaring and wayfaring, while intended primarily for application to the spiritual life of the individual, could easily lend themselves to broader meanings at a time when the gains of the Reformation were being menaced by a reinvigorated Catholicism. But these itinerant preachers were crusaders only in a figurative sense, and while broader meanings tended to creep into their message, their first aim was the religious one of conversion.

Though Puritanism was an activist, politically and even militarily involved religion, at its center--the eye of the storm--was a deeply religious vision. Sartre has described the human condition as absurd; Puritanism, sensing the same incongruity in things, but thinking in Christian categories, interpreted man's situation in terms of sin and salvation. To the Puritan, this incongruity was a source of anguish. In an otherwise beautiful and smoothly running universe, man was the one creature "out of joint", a foul stain on the otherwise spotless robe of God's creation.

But coupled with this acute sense of sin was an even stronger awareness of God's grace--a fact which gives the lie to the popular image of Puritanism as a gloomy and negative creed. Peering into the depths of its vision, one can discern saints Paul and Augustine on their knees, struck down by the force of a divine illumination. Above the note of anguish sounds the chord of joy in hearts which have experienced the uplifting power of the divine presence.⁶⁶

The contrast-experience of conversion is the central reality of Puritanism.⁶⁷ The depths of sinfulness and heights of grace known in that experience is the source and explanation of the energy and power of the Puritan movement. The

soul which had been granted that vision of the depths of human depravity and the gratuity of the divine rescue could never be the same again. Armed with that penetrating insight into the corruption which lay just beneath the apparently innocent surface of life the Puritan knew himself to be a man with a mission. His clear-cut task was to make war upon the sin which he saw all around him and to lead others to the all-important conversion experience. And if, as happened in English Puritanism, that conversion insight was fortified by the vivid images of the Book of Revelation then the world had better be on its guard!⁶⁸

All of the violence which surfaced at the tail end of the Puritan movement can be seen in latent form in that violent act of conversion. All of the tension implicit in the theology of the Reformation comes to expression in the dramatic character of that event. In the conversion experience the Puritan soul was granted an insight into the heart of reality as preached by two generations of reformation divines.

Conversion is an act rather than a process because from bad nature to good nature there can be no gradual transition. Moreover conversion is decidedly a divine act since even the best actions of a corrupt nature are nothing more than disguised self-seeking. The dramatic character of conversion is a result of the resistance of souls in the grip of Satan. Its once-for-all decisiveness is a result of the divine power which effects the removal of the sinful soul from Satan and into the realm of grace.

While the human subject of conversion is more object than subject in the act itself, once converted an amazing change takes place. Passivity is replaced by restless activity. After the well-known Pauline-Augustine pattern, a life of sin is suddenly transformed into a life of inspired activity. The Puritan Thomas Goodwin is a typical case. Goodwin had sought peace of mind by way of "works" but like Luther found that all was not well within. He fell into such despair that he was on the point of abandoning altogether

his spiritual odyssey. But God had other designs on Thomas Goodwin and in the typical setting of a Puritan sermon the young student was suddenly seized in the grip of that powerful Will and not released until he had glimpsed the complete corruption of his soul and heard the words of divine forgiveness. After that we see Goodwin preaching throughout England, opposing Laud, leading a congregation in Holland, and then back in England leading the Puritan Independents at the time of the Westminster Assembly and finally seeking to institutionalize his Puritan convictions as the strict president of Magdalen College at Oxford.⁶⁹

As in the case of Goodwin, it was the conversion experience that gave the Puritan the conviction that he was raised above the mire of the reprobate multitude to join the ranks of a breed apart. To the converted "saint" there could be no turning back: From now on his consuming concern was to cleave to that merciful God. But while his eyes were fixed on heaven there remained the matter of suitable deportment during the brief interval of his earthly pilgrimage. Both Haller and Miller have pointed out the aspects of Puritan theology which kept the convert's spiritual battle from becoming a merely individualistic affair. Doctrines like that of providentially given "talents" were the means by which Puritan preachers "drove their flocks out into the world" with the purpose of being "useful" to the community at large. Millenarianism would specify and intensify that general this-worldly orientation.

In the hotted-up atmosphere of that widespread millenarian perspective, the logic of the Puritan's conversion experience led him into one of two paths. He would either remain in the "world" in order to combat and overcome its evil or he would separate himself from the "world" to form segregated communities of "saints." Either way he would be ratifying that sovereign divine will which had raised him above the darkness of the common herd into the light of God's select company. While both reactions are basically alike

in their attitude toward the non-elect it is the path of power followed by a faction of English Puritans which is the more relevant to our purpose.

It was in the Puritan quest of power that the Lutheran-Calvinist polemic against the natural man came to its clearest and most tragic expression. While one has to take many factors into consideration in trying to explain how loyal Englishmen could raise the sword against their fellow countrymen and engage themselves in the unprecedented act of killing their King, (English monarchs had been murdered before but never as monarchs), explanations of that Revolution in purely socio-economic terms have failed to discern the very soul of the Puritan movement. At bottom, it was a case of the "saints" seeking to realize in political and ecclesiastical structures what they knew in their regenerate hearts, i.e., that they alone were the predestined leaders of the nation.

Recent scholarship of high quality has advanced the thesis that not just the fanatical fringe but the mainstream of Puritanism was possessed of a millenarian dream.⁷⁰ William Lamont has brilliantly argued that throughout the first half of the seventeenth century the untiring Puritan machinations for power operated under the rubric of the eschatological images of the Book of Revelation. Lamont distinguishes between a first and centripetal phase in which the theology of history of Foxe's Book of Martyrs⁷¹ balanced the revolutionary potential of its promise of "godly rule" by designating the monarchy and hierarchy as providential agents to establish that rule, and a second centrifugal stage in which the dream was retained but the Foxean agent designate dropped.

Thus when by 1641 the King and hierarchy had been discredited, the Puritans turned increasingly to the prophecy of Thomas Brightman rather than to Foxe for their inspiration. Though vague Brightman's designation of a "godly people" as the agent divinely intended to bring about the

millenarian Kingdom appeared to apply clearly enough to the Puritan leaders themselves, and provide a convenient biblically warranted rationale for the "root and branch" campaign by which they would extirpate the hated hierarchy and completely reorganize the Church.

Another factor contributing to make zeal and the imposing of religion fashionable was the opposition of the establishment. Thwarted by those in authority, the Puritan poured his reforming energies into a propagandizing campaign by which he would gain support for his political-religious aspirations. Puritans took their message to the people with an eye to "organizing the opposition" for the day when they would be strong enough to freely refashion England according to their inspired blueprint.⁷² Thus did the England of the first half of the seventeenth century witness a politico-religious movement of unparalleled power. Throughout the countryside ubiquitous Puritan divines spread the revolutionary message. At the same time the nascent press poured forth tracts, treatises and pamphlets proclaiming the Puritan cause, the inundating volume of which can be ascertained by the output of a Prynne.⁷³

Sharpened by the prospect of an imminent realization of the "rule of the saints" but bottled up by the non-cooperation of the anglican establishment, the reforming instinct was diverted into a kind of massive political campaign. In their inspired conviction that their cause, i.e., the cause of the Reformation, was God's cause, Puritan preachers and writers were pressing to bring about the realization of that divine purpose.⁷⁴ Whether they would have been equally zealous for the gaining of souls had they been given a free hand to put things into eschatological order is an interesting matter for speculation. More pertinent is the fact that in the straitened circumstances of a suppressed minority their proselytizing efforts knew no bounds.

Whichcote followed Acontius in attacking this apparently noble aim of reforming ones less fortunate brethern.⁷⁵

Whichcote saw the arrogance of those who considered themselves on the side of the angels in a theological schema which allowed no grey area between the good and the bad to be the arch vice of the age. But one can understand how the regenerate Puritan, invested with such spiritual power and prerogatives, and standing over against a world of sinful blindness, would be tempted to condescension. Some had worse temptations and succumbed to the tendency of an angel of light to forego the rules of merely human morality in pursuit of their heavenly goal. Lamont has noted the prevalence of an ethic that subordinated the morality of individual actions to the ends of attaining the greatly longed-for "godly rule".⁷⁶ Whichcote saw it and scored the distorted values of those who made religion a means rather than an end in itself.⁷⁷

For all its power the Puritan movement in England did not last long beyond the zenith of its victory in the Civil War. Though they won their fight against the King they lost the war of their ultimate objective, viz., the establishment of the "godly rule". Part of the reason which brought the high-flying Puritans down to earth was the puncturing of their millenarian balloon. When their opportunity finally came to lay before the nation their design, the Puritan elite of the Westminster Assembly could do no better than fritter away their chance in endless debate. Disillusion set in when men who considered themselves privy to the will of God began to realize that despite their every effort the incarnation of that divine purpose appeared as distant as ever. With the failure of successive providential agents to achieve the requisite national reform the disenchanted saints quietly abandoned their eschatological hopes or joined fanatical groups like the Fifth Monarchy Men. William Prynne's words reflect the tired mood of the let-down Puritan.

For my part, I have seen so much experience in the world, that I dare trust none with my own or the Kingdoms safety but God alone... we have seen such strange Mutabilities and perfidiousnesse in men of all sorts since our troubles that

we cannot trust neither the King nor Prince, City nor Countrey, this Generall nor that Generall; this Army, nor those that went before it, and yet our selves who are jealous one of another, treacherous one to another, distrustful of all.

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Another factor which brought down the Puritan movement was a weapon which Puritanism itself had provided.⁷⁹ Along the way in their struggle for power it was not only the Puritan who changed. If the Puritan finally caught a glimpse of his fallible humanity he also revealed to the "natural man" something of his dignity. The descending movement of the enthusiast's fall to earth is matched by the ascending movement of the many ordinary mortals who reached for the fire which the Puritan gods offered so liberally. Had the would-be rulers not become strangers to one another it remains doubtful whether they would have been able to impose their design on a populace religiously come-of-age. The mushrooming divergence of opinion about the goals Puritanism had once taken for granted convinced Cromwell that a policy of religious toleration was the only tactic that could hold things together. From the famous debates of his soldiers at Putney the contribution of one John Wildman may be taken as reflective of the amazing degree of theological sophistication which the ordinary Englishman had come to possess. According to Wildman the words of the man who claims to speak for God must accord with the Word of Scripture.

In spiritual matters he must show its conformity with scripture, though indeed it is beyond the power of the reason of all the men on earth to demonstrate the scriptures to be the scriptures written by the Spirit of God, and it must be the spirit of faith in a man himself that must finally make him believe whatsoever may be spoken in spiritual matters. The case is yet more difficult in civil matters; for we cannot find anything in the Word of God of what is fit to be done in civil matters. But I conceive that only is of God that does appear to be like unto God--to practise justice and mercy, to be meek and peaceable. 80

Under the impact of an intensive Puritan propagandizing campaign, the equivalent of an extensive theological training, the once docile masses had gained a self-awareness and power

of articulation which would prevent them from being imposed upon by anyone--including their Puritan mentors!

In Wildman's conclusion that "that only is of God that does appear to be like unto God" we see an ordinary man's statement of the hermeneutic principle which the Cambridge Platonists would orchestrate with a rich variety of instruments from the Greek and Christian traditions, viz., the theme of likeness to God. Both Whichcote and Smith saw religion primarily as a life to be lived in imitation of a divine pattern. In our own time when the pressure of world events tends to reveal the irrelevance and emptiness of mere formulae, the Church is rediscovering that a Christian witness in deed carries more credibility than rows of documents. A hitherto exceedingly speculative Catholic theology has begun to recognize the lived-out Christian life as the fundamental reality of the Church and the ultimate source of her teaching. Orthopraxis, it is being said, is the key to orthodoxy, or, in the words of St. John to which John Smith often had recourse: "If any man will doe his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."⁸¹

But how could the rise of the natural man follow upon a message about an elect few? Haller, who has given his best attention to the sermons of the era rather than to the theological treatises, has convincingly shown that Puritans were "Calvinists with a difference."⁸² The concepts are Calvin's but the accents were not. The context in which the Puritan preacher framed his message was that of a spiritually hungry populace and Puritanism's need of power. From this there came a Calvinism which was more than a mere recital from the Institutes or any other single work. The great concern of the preacher was for effectiveness in an urgent situation. Puritans used their inherited Calvinism as a handy formulation but turned that theology of predestination into a message of hope. Where the sharp distinctions of Calvin's thought were upheld there were other forces at work smoothing down the harsher aspects of the French reformer's influence.⁸³

Since the Puritans conceived of the secular as a sphere apart they applied the principles governing the spiritual zone to it only by way of analogy. As the hold of dogma weakened however the analogous nature of the application tended to go unheeded. So, for example, the doctrine of the equality of all believers (while implying originally their superiority to the non-elect) exerted a great deal of influence on the growth of universal egalitarianism. By a kind of osmosis, a new concept of man was emerging: The image of the regenerate man as projected by Puritan propaganda was coming to be common property of the average Englishman. The priveleges of freedom and self-determination attributed to the elect, preached "in season and out", overflowed the weakened dikes of the distinction between elect and non-elect and flooded the English countryside.⁸⁴

Though little read in his own time Milton's polemical writings afford a good example of how the Puritan tendency to exalt the common man at the expense of those in authority resulted in a backlash which ultimately undermined their own hopes. Indeed, more than in many of the contemporary Puritan leaders momentarily bedazzled by the prospect of power, the Puritan millenarian dream lived pure and strong in Milton. Once an aspirant to the priesthood, Milton had come to despise the ways of the established Church, and decided to dedicate his talents to the Puritan cause as a kind of poet-prophet.

His Puritan colleagues must have wondered whose side he was on however when his attacks against bishops began to border on anti-clericalism and his arguments for the equality of priest with bishop, based on the doctrine of the common priesthood of all believers, came close to eradicating any distinction between lay and priestly castes. Milton's idea of the powers of the layman appeared to render ministers superfluous. His preachers are simply men whose charismatic

gifts are recognized and approved by the people's chosen representatives.

His belief in the transparency of the Bible was at the same time a faith in the capacity of the common man to perceive revealed truth. Clarity being of the essence of truth in Milton's conception, the more significant a truth the more plainly it would appear to human understanding. The Bible was an open book which had moreover foretold of "an extraordinary effusion of God's Spirit upon every age, and sexe, attributing to all men, and requiring from them the ability of searching, trying, examining all things, and by the Spirit discerning that which is good."⁸⁵ Whichcote shared this confidence in the clarity of truth and the capacity of the common man.

It is in this perspective of the failing confidence of the Calvinist Puritan and the growing self-esteem of the natural man that Cambridge Platonism made its appearance in the mid seventeenth century. Whichcote and Smith will hitch their wagon to the rising star of the belief in nature and reason reflected in Milton's position. The breach between the realms of nature and grace was gradually closing. The Reformation's assault on human nature was faltering and the forces of nature were gathering for a counter-attack. In this situation Whichcote and Smith played the role of peacemakers, seeking to reconcile both sides. While granting nature her dignity and rights the Platonists would retain revelation and show how it perfects that natural realm. It was their conviction that the God of nature and the God of grace is one.

A century after Luther and Calvin had waged war against nature under the banner of grace the pendulum was swinging back with a vengeance. As nature had been denigrated in the name of religion now men were beginning to discard revealed religion for a new religion of nature. A new revelation was being heralded for which no preacher was necessary. One could dispense with those contentious interpreters of the Bible with their contradictory reports.⁸⁶ The God of nature has left his

footprints throughout creation that all may know Him. Lord Herbert had written of a complete natural religion innately knowable. The cool winds of deism were stirring. That they were confined to the proportions of a spectacular squall and did not as is popularly thought become a full-blown gale is due in part to the moderating and mediating thought of Whichcote and the Cambridge Platonists. It was their timely tack to confirm the rightness of natural religion while showing that it needed the truth of revelation as its completion. For "meer naturalists" as Whichcote called the adherents of natural religion the leader of the Platonists had a genuine sympathy. "These are persons," he said, "which a man would compassionate as soon as any men in the world... they are catholick; they entertain all that ever was in the world from God, all that hath any foundation at all from God." But having praised their sincerity he went on to add a gentle word of advice:

You do well as far as you go; you do well to entertain all that God hath laid the foundation for; you do well to follow the light of reason; but do you think that God can do no more: Do you think that God did all at once? I do not blame these men, as all the world blames them; I do not blame these men, that they are very slow of faith, that they will not believe further than they see reason; for nothing is more impotent than to be light of faith... My exhortation is to these persons: be as punctual, as compleat in your moral righteousness, as is imaginable; the more you are so, the more you glorify God: yet still acknowledge the grace of God, make use of Christ's mediation; let all be by him recommended to God; let the perfume of the angel of the covenant be put to your righteousness. For if there were a law that could give life, God would not have declared himself in Christ Jesus: after-obedience doth not make recompence for a former neglect. 87

III. NATURE CHAMPIONED: CAMBRIDGE PLATONISM

Foreshadowings of a new Mentality: Wm. Perkins

Luther and Calvin knew what they were doing. Luther in his passionate and Calvin in his systematic way were each trying to show the centrality of grace in the Christian life. To accomplish this purpose they felt that they must oppose what they considered to be the proud pretentiousness of the human spirit. Three quarters of a century later, in an England which had imbibed heavy doses of this doctrine, a very influential English theologian gave the Reformation teaching a new twist. Standing midway between the origins of the Reformation and the age of Whichcote, William Perkins can be conveniently seen as a link connecting the theological development which spans these two periods. Like the head of Janus, Perkins' theology looks in two directions, backwards to the reformers and forwards to Whichcote and the Cambridge Platonists. Perkins the divine championed a rigid Calvinism while the thought of Perkins the pastor moved along lines which led away from Geneva. While the harshness of his formal theology roused even his fellow Calvinists to protest and elicited a rebuke from the Dutchman Arminius, the more flexible divinity of his practical writings gained a large and devoted following.⁸⁸

In "A Trestise Tending Unto a Declaration Whether a Man Be In the Estate of Damnation or in the Estate of Grace", Perkins the pastor can be observed tailoring his Calvinism to fit the mood of the times.⁸⁹ Through his mouthpiece Eusebius Perkins addresses Timotheus who frankly admits to knowing nothing of the dramatic heights and depths of the Calvinist dialectic. Eusebius, who has himself experienced a full-blown conversion is at pains to convince his friend that his lack of a strong sense of either sin or grace should not prevent him from believing. The candid Eusebius admits that his own faith is "ever fought against with doubting and ever assailed with desperation" from which disclosure

Timotheus is quick to conclude that the "flesh" in his friend is "like to a mighty giant" and the "spirit" is rather "like to a little child", a state of soul with which he can readily identify. When the discussion then moves to the topic of the "means" to "strengthen the spirit" a subtle but important shift has taken place: Accomodating his message to the Timotheus's of his time, Perkins has reduced the dimension of "sola fide" to a level of acceptable imperceptibility and turned to works as the way to make that "spark of faith" more real. Luther and Calvin had sung the praises of God's justifying grace; Perkins is muting that melody. In fact one could say that he was apologizing for a doctrine that had become a stumbling-block to his contemporaries.

The novelty of Perkins' position must not be exaggerated. While Luther and Calvin had denied spiritual fruitfulness to human effort before justification they did depict the human spirit as profitably active upon the reception of God's forgiveness. That teaching is retained in the practical writings of Perkins but a shift takes place. To those who could not feel the dramatic extremes of the conversion experience Perkins reduced the impact of justification to the scarcely perceptible proportions of a "mustard-seed". This "some little portion of faith or repentance" thus ensuring his orthodoxy, Perkins went on to recommend a hardy Christian life of active striving--not of course to obtain the divine favor--as the way to evince to oneself the genuineness of one's election. In effect the message he preached amounts to affirming that everyone belonged to, or could belong to, the divinely favoured few. All that a man must do is to activate the grace which Perkins implied was present and latent within. In his formal writings Perkins denied the least aptness of human nature for salvation but what he took away with his right hand he replaced with his left.⁹⁰ While he did not fail to strictly distinguish between nature and supernature the movement of his practical thought tends

to bypass such distinctions in its thrust toward the common man of his congregations. His shift of accent from Lutheran faith to works while remaining within the Lutheran-Calvinist perspective came out as follows:

Mark then: though as yet thou want firm and lively grace, yet art thou not altogether void of grace, if thou canst unfeignedly desire it: thy desire is the seed, conception or bud of that which thou wantest. Now is the springtime of the ingrafted word, or the immortal seed cast into the furrows of thy heart. Wait for a while, using the good means to this end appointed and thou shalt see the leaves, blossoms and fruits will shortly follow after. 91

Like Calvin Perkins inculcated introspection but unlike the reformer the Puritan divine directed his listeners' eyes to the light of a "spark of faith" within rather than to the darkness of a corrupted soul. Calvin's conviction was that consciousness of one's complete corruption would tear men away from their self-sufficiency and pride and turn them around to reliance on the Saviour. More than half a century later Perkins chose to dilute this bitter theological medicine. Many reasons for this change could be found but undoubtedly one of the weightiest is the essentially demanding nature of the French reformer's theology.

Not that the change occurred suddenly and definitively with Perkins. The old saw that says that many a divine who is Calvinist in his study is Arminian in the pulpit contains a good deal of truth. Perkins is presented as symbolic of a change which came about gradually. Within the confines of Calvinist theology Perkins was doing what many others were doing, viz., accentuating the positive and hopeful side of that theology. Though a goodly dose of the reformer's idea of personal wretchedness as a springboard to the love of God remains--that Goliath of "flesh" which threatens to crush the David of "spirit"--it is rather by the positive means of fanning to flame the spark of grace within that the Christian is to know God.

Benjamin Whichcote: "The defender of Good Nature"

Whichcote's response to the free will question went beyond the pastoral solution of Perkins. Like the Puritan Perkins Whichcote inculcated a kind of "from grace to grace" program of the Christian life. But while the status of the "initial deposit" of grace is ambiguous in Perkins thought it is clearly situated in Whichcote's theological scheme. Stepping outside the confining world of Puritan divinity, Whichcote drew on his rich store of classical learning to come up with a fresh approach to an ever burning question.⁹² In the preface to his edition of a selection of Whichcote's sermons, Lord Shaftsbury wrote admiringly of how that famous Cambridge divine stood apart from the prevailing currents of his age. Referring on the one hand to Hobbes and his followers and on the other to Puritan Calvinists Shaftsbury described those prevailing currents as a conspiracy to denigrate the goodness of human nature.

Thus, one party of men, fearing the consequences which may be drawn from the acknowledgement of moral and social principles in human-kind, to the proof of a Deity's existence, and, another party fearing as much from thence, to the prejudice of revelation; each have in their turns made war (if I may say so) even on virtue itself: having exploded the principle of good nature; all enjoyment or satisfaction in acts of kindness and love; all notion of happiness in temperate courses and moderate desires, and, in short, all virtue or foundation of virtue; unless that, perhaps, be called merit or virtue which is left remaining, when all generosity, free inclination, publick spiritedness, and every thing else besides private regard, is taken away. 93

It was against this denigration of human nature that "the preacher of good nature" as Shaftsbury called him made his stand. But let us attend to Whichcote's own thoughts on the subject. To his mind the whole debate raged around a false problem. What had happened was that the "two great things of God" have been placed in an "odious, and in an ev-vious competition":

I mean, the primary and original goodness of God, that is the perfection of his nature, and which makes him tender and compassionate to us; and the other, the happy interposition,

mediation, and intercession of our blessed Lord and Saviour, which was a voluntary undertaking on man's behalf, which doth further procure grace, favour and acceptance. Now here is the thing, divide between these two; and what you attribute solely to one, you take away wholly from the other. (2, 77)

Whichcote's response to this apparent dilemma is not to "oppose God's gift, as original of nature, nor his gifts of grace; nor put in competition the good disposition of God, and his readiness to compassionate". (2, 79) The following important passage may be read as an "apologia pro theologia sua": Read "I" for "some" and "they". It is Whichcote himself who would uphold the theological significance of the realm of nature.

Consider God as the author of nature, consider him also as the giver of grace. All that we have refers to God, upon one of these accounts, or other. If some attribute to him that as the author of nature which others do as the giver of grace; however it is God that is acknowledged, and God as original, and it doth infer an equal engagement upon us to God; and they do not thereby lessen, neither is it their intention to abate, or lessen the grace of God, or to free men from engagement and obligation to God; when they distinguish upon this account, the gifts of nature, and the gifts of grace; acknowledging God upon both accounts, the founder of intellectual natures, the investor of human nature with faculties, capacities and abilities; and the giver of it, the upholder, maintainer of it; the director of it: and then (applying himself to the necessity of the lapsed case of man) reinforcing, recovering, restoring him by a super-addition of grace. It is God in both cases; God universally that is acknowledged; in both cases acknowledgment is made, and observation given to the direction of wisdom. (2, 75-76)

What Whichcote is spelling out here is his radical re-evaluation of the doctrine of creation, a doctrine obscured if not banished by the exaggerated version of Original Sin bequeathed by Augustine and inflated by the Reformation. Against that position Whichcote held that the realm of creation had not been completely ruined nor the light of its divine origin snuffed out because of Adam's sin. Whichcote's creation-affirming creed, the "gospel" he so effectively preached is summed up in the following passage quoted at

length because of its quintessential character.

They are not to be blamed or looked upon as neglecters of God's grace, or undervaluers of it, or to abate it in the least, who vigorously and with all imaginable zeal, call upon men to use, employ, and improve the principles of God's creation.... I find that some men take offence, to hear reason spoken of out of a pulpit, or to hear those great words of natural light, of principles of reason, and conscience. They are doubtless in a mighty mistake, for these two things are very consistent, as I shall shew you by and by, and there is no inconsistency between the grace of God, and the calling upon men carefully to use, improve and employ the principles of God's creation, and the telling men they shall meet with no discouragement from God, forasmuch as he will not leave them, till they first leave him. And indeed this is a very profitable work to call upon men to answer the principles of their creation, to fulfill natural light, to answer natural conscience, to be throughout rational in what they do; for these things have a divine foundation. The Spirit in man is the candle of the Lord lighted by God, and lighting men to God. It is from God by way of efficiency, and to God finally. (1, 370-71)

With Whichcote the whole setting of theology is shifted away from the noisy world of theological controversy to the quiet inner world of the soul. The soul is the beginning and end of the Christian life; God is known through it or not at all. As Cassirer has pointed out, the central motif of Whichcote's and the Cambridge Platonists' thought is a Plotinian vision of man as a kind of plastic soul which, while potentially all things, has no fixed nature, its being depending rather on its attitude.⁹⁴ Thus while man is a "compound" in whom "heaven and earth as it were meet" man will become that which he orientates himself to. On the one hand, there is a spiritual capacity in man which if properly used can draw him to godliness: "Man in respect of his mind, is qualified to converse with angels, and to attend upon God.... he is the image of God"; on the other hand there is a carnal side to human nature which can drag man down: "Now in respect of his lower parts, he is apt to sink down into sensuality and brutishness like the beasts that perish." (2, 196)

Unlike Luther's "beast" between two riders Whichcote's Plotinian soul is not "dumb" but can choose its "rider". Indeed, the stronger pull of his predominantly spiritual nature

shows him the right way. Gone is the determinism of Reformation theology: Here everyone is placed on the same footing--tilted delicately but definitely heaven-ward. Here is neither hidden divine will nor irresistible transcendent forces angelic or demonic. Here "every man hath himself as he useth himself" and "men are more what they are used to, than what they are born to". (1, 43) Radically breaking with the prevailing religious outlook, Whichcote would spare his contemporaries the task of witch hunting or rather would direct them within to the eradication of their own inner demons. "Godly" men have wreaked enough havoc in the world; now is the time for man to put the house of his own soul in order.

Whichcote call to self-government is no easy charge as man has been given a troublesome body. Indeed so great is this task that it is understandable that man "fell" and that God--who knows our weakness better than we ourselves--provided for that almost inevitable event. While there can be no doubt but that man in Whichcote's theology is fallen man yet though "marred" in his principles it is an even more significant principle of Whichcote's thought that "he has not thereby become a stone." While acknowledging the fact of fallenness Whichcote avoids playing upon this fact as a foil to a transcendent deity but prefers to stress the positive factors of the compassion of God and the remaining spiritual capacity of man.

Whichcote refused to join the chorus of those denigrating human nature. Picking up where Puritan theology tended to leave off, i.e., with the question of the spiritual capacity of nature, Whichcote answered that question with a bold affirmative. And while his optimism about the religiousness of the "natural man" goes beyond that of a traditional natural theology yet he retained a large place for Christian revelation in his theological constellation.

Adopting the soul perspective of Whichcote's theology, John Smith rallied to the side of his master in defense of

"good nature". Like Whichcote Smith has distanced himself from the spirit and forms of Puritan divinity, and in the ten discourses which constitute the complete literary output of his short life, the Platonic cast of Whichcote's theology has received added warmth and colour.

Following Whichcote Smith viewed the soul as Plotinian and plastic but with a definite orientation God-ward.⁹⁵ God has imparted that impulse to the soul because he is the perfectly good deity of Plato (and Christian revelation) whose first desire for his creation is that it share as fully as possible in the abundance of the divine life. And because God's wishes are ever measured by his wisdom that Self-communication is done in measure and degree. Thus man the self-determining one can participate in this divine communication in his own self-moving way by dint of a miniature", a microcosmos, of the macrocosm of God's revelation in creation. It is by means of an inner "copie" that man can orientate himself in the world and find his way back to the "divine original" of all things.

Neither did God so boundlessly enlarge the appetite of Souls after some All-sufficient Good, that so they might be the more unspeakably tortur'd in the missing of it: but that they might more certainly return to the Originall of their Beings. And such busie-working Essences as the Souls of men are, could neither be made as dull and senseless of true Happiness as Stocks and Stones are, neither could they contain the whole summe and perfection of it within themselves: therefore they must also be inform'd with such Principles as might conduct them back again to Him from whom they first came....And so we come to consider that Law embosom'd in the Souls of men which ties them again to their Creatour, and this is called the Law of Nature; which indeed is nothing else but a Paraphrase or Comment upon the Nature of God as it copies forth it self in the Soul of Man.⁹⁶

Though the fall has left that inner "Law of Nature" less clear and legible than at first" Smith's acknowledgement of sin does not lead him to abandon the soul perspective of his Platonic theology. With Whichcote the soul remains the primary "locus theologicus" of Smith's thought. The supplementary revelation which sin makes necessary bears directly on

the needs of that sin-weakened soul. Regeneration does not entail the extinction of the flickering "candle" of fallen man's spirit but rather a snuffing up of it to full flame. "It is a fond imagination", Smith wrote, "that religion should extinguish reason; whereas religion makes it more illustrious and vigorous; and they that live most in the exercise of religion shall find their reason most enlarged."⁹⁷

In his discourse "The Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion" which might have been subtitled "The Psychological Phenomenology of Grace" Smith depicted the harmonious impact of grace upon the soul. Grace, or "true religion" as Smith prefers to call the divine communicated life, comes not as the tumultuous force of the Calvinist conversion experience but rather as a restoring and healing power which "enlarges all the faculties of the soul." Far from doing violence to human nature, grace gently rectifies the soul's inherent powers enabling them to move easily to their proper object. Repudiating a "mechanical religion" of Calvinist voluntarism Smith followed Whichcote in locating the springs of the knowledge and love of God in a divinely recreated and sustained dynamism within man.

True Religion does not consist in a meer Passive capacity, in a sluggish kind of doing nothing, that so God himself might doe all; but it consists in life and power within.... Every thing as it partakes more of God, and comes nearer to him, so it becomes more active and lively, as making the nearer approaches to the Fountain of life and virtue. A Good man doth not only then move, when there is some powerfull impression and impulse upon him; but he hath a Spring of perpetual motion within. When God restores men to a new and divine life, he doth not make them like so many dead Instruments, stringing and fitting them, which yet are able to yield no sound of theselves; but he puts a living Harmony within them. ⁹⁸

Unlike the "holy violence under compression" of the Puritan soul, Smith sees the state of soul under the impact of grace as the serenity of a man "at peace and unity with himself."⁹⁹

But if grace adapts itself to man so must man adapt himself to grace. Fallen man has "not thereby become a stone"

but must be "up and doing", i.e., he must actively make use of the present measure of grace which an ever faithful God holds out. In his key discourse "Concerning the true Way or Method of attaining to Divine Knowledge" Smith lays down the lines his active ideal of holiness follows.

In that discourse Smith distinguishes between a sterile purely intellectual quest for God and an effective method which begins with interior purification. Discursive knowledge, no matter how subtle, remains ambiguous. More significant than what a man says is his intentionality, the spirit in which his words are uttered. Below the noisy surface of man's articulating activity is the heart of the matter and if that heart is not purified man's every external activity will bear the stain of that impurity. With Whichcote and Jesus Smith points back to a fundamental zone from which arise the good and evil "fruits" of human activity. Smith is pleading for the reuniting of "Truth and Goodness" in a vision which sees truth not in function of human ingenuity but as a facet of an undivided divine "Life" which stands in correlation to the "Soul", i.e., the whole man in his spiritual capability. Unless the whole man is in the process of being purified even his loftiest speculations will reflect his impurity. "Agitur sequitur esse" and for Smith the "esse" of Christian life is a "living principle of holiness within". "Such as Men themselves are, such will God himself seem to be."¹⁰⁰ With Whichcote Smith realized that it is how a man holds himself with regard to the God within rather than what he may hold of Him intellectually that is ultimately determinative of a man's image of God.

On the other hand, Smith's harangue against "meer Speculation" should not be construed as a denial of the cognitive moment in religion. What he was opposing is theology done in a hair-splitting and contentious spirit with an eye to power or prestige. God has furnished man with "radical principles" of knowledge so that he is able to attain

goodness. If man will but foster those seeds of knowledge he will gain an ever deeper insight into divine truth. Like Whichcote Smith did not deny the doctrinal aspect of religion but insisted with perhaps even more vigour than his former tutor on the primacy of holy living. Knowledge of God grows only with a growth along all the fronts of virtuous living.

Indeed to those who will "plant their tree by the waters of life" Smith promises a lofty and intimate knowledge of God. Where Whichcote only intimated Smith expands poetically on the mystical intimacy God grants to purified souls. Though he does not fail to append an allusion to the obscuring effects of the "dark Medium" of man's embodied condition yet the heights of divine knowledge available to man in his present state appear to border on the Beatific Vision itself. The "true Metaphysical and Contemplative man", rising Above his own Logical or Self-rational life, pierceth into the Highest life: Such a one, who by Universal Love and Holy affection abstracting himself from himself, endeavours the nearest Union with the Divine Essence that may be, uniting the center to the center, as Plotinus speaks; knitting his own centre, if he have any, unto the centre of Divine Being.

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While such an exalted union is assigned by Smith only to the fourth and highest category of his division of mankind into ranks according to their knowledge of God yet this is no case of spiritual elitism. A comparison with Calvin's four-fold division with its radical gap separating the fourth regenerate class from the rest brings out by way of contrast the substantial continuity of Smith's classification.¹⁰² Here is difference in degree rather than in kind. Smith's division is not a metaphysical description of cast-iron categories but rather a rhetorical device pitched in the key of encouragement. In the light of his underlying vision of the soul, one can see that his highest category is open to all. Smith has espoused Whichcote's view of an harmonious continuity between the realms of nature and grace.

As with Whichcote Smith's great concern is not with the limitations imposed upon man by an unaccountable divine will-- Smith too had rejected the Calvinist frame of reference-- but rather with the unaccountability of the man who in spite of his marvelous capacity for a "higher life" wilfully ignores that call to sink into a self-made hell of sensuality and selfishness. The aim of his theology was the practical one of helping men to avoid that dire possibility by holding out to them the active and optimistic ideal of holiness of his distinguished master. Whichcote's rallying cry had become Smith's as well: "Up then and be doing; and the Lord will be with us. He will not leave us nor forsake us, if we seriously set our selves about the work."¹⁰³

One of the great changes on the theological scene of our time has been the displacement of the negative view of nature of Reformation theology by a positive approach to that realm. This more open attitude toward the world is clearly reflected in the documents of Vatican II. It is a curious but sad fact that the barriers which stand between the Church and the world are more often erected by the Church and her theologians than arise from the world itself.

Reacting against that negative posture, Edward Schillebeeckx has called for a modification in the method of the so-called "correlation theology". While agreeing with its aim of making theology relevant to the concrete "situation" of contemporary man, Schillebeeckx objects to a conception of that situation in terms of a question to which the Christian revelation is the direct and exclusive answer. There is a missing link in such correlating which turns revelation into a kind of "deus ex machina". To reduce the realm of nature to a question about God is to falsify the perspectives of a universe buoyed up by the power of the irreversible divine intention of salvation. The grace of revelation enters the world not as a vacuum but rather as the abundance of a life that God ever gives and man already knows albeit imperfectly, as the perfection of the Law rather than as its

destruction, and, in the words of Whichcote as the "restoration, and further confirmation of all the principles of God's creation." (1, 388)

As it should be in a world which God sustains despite its deflection from his purpose, there exist already human answers to human questions, and human solutions to human problems. To fail to see the goodness of those groping human endeavours is to skip over a whole dimension of God's grace, to slight the basic goodness of creation and the compassion of God. Of the transcendentalist viewpoint which tended to do just that, and which dominated the first half of this century Schillebeeckx recently wrote:

It is difficult to see the sense of the theological approach that begins by saying nothing about God's creative activity and after establishing the meaninglessness of human history would suddenly avert to the doctrine of creation but then only within the framework of soteriology. It is certainly a part of the task of theology to clarify the radical finitude and sinfulness of the structures of human existence, but not less must the goodness which belongs to the world originally and by virtue of creation be elucidated. 104

NOTES: CHAPTER ONE

1. See below, chapter 4.
2. Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, trans. J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston (London: James Clark, 1957), p. 319.
3. See e.g., W.E.H. Lecky, The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe (London: Longmans Green, 1913), pp. 354-56. As to the inconsistency of the Church's comprehensiveness in this, see John Oman, Grace and Personality (Fontana ed., 1962), pp. 39-43.
4. E.g., in I Cor. 1, 17-25; Rm. 7, 1-6. (All biblical references are to the Jerusalem Bible).
5. Gal. esp. 3, 1-5.
6. Luther, Bondage, pp. 313-14.
7. Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians in Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 113-14. Cf. Richard Laurence, History of the 39 Articles (The Bampton Lectures of 1804; London: 1805), Sermon IV, passim.
8. Rm. 2,6 and 11. In this whole passage (1,18-2,29) it becomes plain that Paul's condemnation of pagan and Jewish society is a generalization not intended to include every individual. Exception is clearly made for "those who sought renown and honour and immortality by always doing good" (2,8), a possibility open both to pagans who "are led by reason to do what the Law commands" and to the Jews who "really trust in the Law" (2,14 and 17). Luther was aware of possible objections to his interpretation of St. Paul, and was careful to exegetically ground his position. See Bondage, pp. 273-78.
9. E.G. Rupp, The Righteousness of God quoted in Packer and Johnston's introduction to Bondage, p. 41.
10. Luther, Bondage, p. 177.
11. Ibid., pp. 102-104.
12. Ibid., p. 204. My underlining to call attention to the ontological tenor of Luther's image.
13. Ibid., pp. 143-56.
14. See Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation, eds. E.G. Rupp and P.S. Watson (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), Watson's introductory essay "The Lutherean Riposte", passim.
15. Luther, Bondage, pp. 103-104.
16. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (London: James Clarke, 1962), I, p. 5. Note: Henceforth quotations from the Institutes will be cited by reference to book, chapter, chapter subsection, and the volume and page number of the Beveridge edition.

17. T.F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), p. 85.
18. Calvin, Institutes, 2.1.8, I, p. 218.
19. Ibid., 2.1.8, I, p. 218.
20. Ibid., 2.2.1, I, p. 222.
21. Ibid., 2.2.1, I, p. 223.
22. Ibid., 2.2.12, I, p. 233.
23. Ibid., 2.2.13, I, p. 234.
24. Ibid., 2.2.18-25, I, pp. 238-45.
25. Ibid., 2.2.25, I, p. 238.
26. Ibid., 2.2.25, I, p. 243-44.
27. Ibid., 2.2.26, I, p. 245.
28. Ibid., 2.2.6, I, p. 228.
29. In "The Sources of Calvin's Seneca Commentary" Ford Battles shows that Calvin's knowledge of the classical tradition, though not as extensive as his erstwhile reputation would have it, was nevertheless considerable. In John Calvin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 38-66.
30. Inst. 2.2.17, I, p. 237; 2.3.3, I, pp. 251-52.
31. Ibid., 2.3.6, I, p. 255.
32. Calvin's divergence from Luther on this point can be ascertained from Calvin's explanation of the causality of Original Sin. His careful internalization of that sin is pre-saged in his preliminary remark: "As the act which God punished so severely must have been not a trivial fault but a heinous crime, it will be necessary to attend to the peculiar nature of the sin which produced Adam's fall, and provoked God to inflict such fearful vengeance on the whole human race." Inst. 2.1.4, I, p. 212. Cf. Luther, Bondage, p. 204.
33. Not that Calvin did away with the idea of Satan's influence in sin; that remains strong but there is nonetheless a tendency to internalize the source of sin and make man the fully responsible cause of the evil he perpetrates. Cf. Inst. 2.1.4, I, pp. 212-13; 2.1.9-11, I, pp. 218-20.
34. Ibid., 2.2.20, I, p. 240; 3.1.1-4, I, pp. 462-66. Cf. Luther, Bondage, pp. 73-74.
35. Inst., Book III, passim, but esp. chapter 1. "To communicate to us the blessings which he received from the Father, he must become ours and dwell in us." (3.1.1, I, p.463.)
36. Hans Kung, Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection (London: Burns & Oates, 1964), pp. 101-102.

37. Denziger's Enchiridion Symbolorum, 29th ed. as translated and compiled in The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation (St. Louis: Herder, 1961). D 793, p. 230.
38. D 797, p. 232.
39. D 798, pp. 232-33.
40. D 800, p. 234.
41. Ch. Moeller, "Theologie de la Grace et Oecumenisme" in Kung, Justification, p. 257.
42. John Randall has characterized this agreement of reformer and Council as "a medieval reaction against the growing naturalism and humanism that was increasingly to mark the modern age." In The Making of the Modern Mind (Cambridge, Mass: Houghton Mifflin, 1940), p. 145.
43. D 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792 which is recapitulated in the first chapter of decree on justification, D 793. Cf. Piet Schoonenberg, Man and Sin: A Theological View (London: Sheed and Ward, 1966). pp. 153, 157-68.
44. D 793, p. 230.
45. D 795, p. 231. 46. D 796, pp. 231-32.
47. D 797, p. 232.
48. Kung, Justification, pp. 170-71.
49. See, e.g., Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, esp. paragraph 3; A. Hulsbosch, God's Creation: Creation, Sin and Redemption in an Evolving World (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), esp. chapters 4-6.
50. Perry Miller, New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U. Press, 1967), p. 70.
51. E.G. Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), chap. VI, esp. pp. 112-18. Cf. Richard Laurence, Bampton Lectures of 1804 History of the 39 Articles, Sermon II, passim.
52. In C.D. Cremeans, "The Reception of Calvinistic Thought in England," Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. XXXI, (Number 1, 1949), p. 82. See also V.H.H. Green, Religion at Oxford and Cambridge (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 107.
53. See e.g., Tulloch's characterization of the two outlooks in his Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the 17th Century, Vol. I, pp. 60-71. Ian Breward has rightly cautioned against a facile distinction between "puritan" and "anglican" in the English Church of the Elizabethan period. In The Work of William Perkins (The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics 3; The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), pp. 14-17.

54. From Bishop Thomas Cooper's Admonition to the People of England (1589), written in reply to the Marprelate tracts, a series of satirical Puritan tracts attacking Episcopacy and published in 1588-89. Quoted by Richard Hooker in Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (London: Everyman's Library ed., Dent, 1907), pp. 93-94. The parenthetic information is supplied by Hooker.
55. Correction: Green (not Porter), Religion at Oxford and Cambridge, p. 125. Cf. H.C. Porter, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), pp. 277-87.
56. Porter, Reformation and Reaction, pp. 335, 344. Cf. Green, Religion at Oxford and Cambridge, p. 123.
57. Porter, Reformation and Reaction, p. 315.
58. Ibid., p. 320.
59. Ibid., p. 321.
60. John Tulloch, Rational Theology, Vol. I, p. 43.
61. Peter Baro (1534-99), Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge from 1574-1596. Baro's more lenient Calvinism is apparent in the dedication of his book A Speciall Treatise of God's Providence especially to the "ungodly". While his emphasis throughout the book is in the spirit of Calvin on the encouraging and consoling aspects of the doctrine of Providence Baro tended to go even further in that positive direction in his insistence that grace is offered to all men and that sin is a result of man's deliberate refusal of that offer. His position on the matter of "assurance" was clearly more in the line of Calvin than of Calvinism, as is evident in the epilogue, pp. 373-74.
62. See footnote 53. Cf. B. Hall's essay "Calvin against the Calvinists" in John Calvin, pp. 25-30. Hall points out how on the matter of assurance the English brand of Calvinism moved away from the objective standpoint of the master to a more subjective foundation of certainty of election.
63. William Lamont, Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603-1660 (London: MacMillan, 1969), pp. 129, 175.
64. William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Harper & Row, 1957) pp. 17-21.
65. Ibid., pp. 33-34, 150-51.
66. Perry Miller, New England Mind, chap. 1, esp. pp. 8-9.
67. Alan Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England (London: U. of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 2.
68. See below, pp. 43-44.
69. Simpson, Puritanism, pp. 2-5. Cf. Haller, Rise of Puritanism, pp. 75-79.

70. From a growing list: William Lamont, Godly Rule; Puritans, the Millenium and the Future of Israel, ed. Peter Toon, (London: James Clarke, 1970), esp. the editor's "The Latter-Day Glory" and R.G. Clouse's "The Rebirth of Millenarianism"; William Haller, Foxes's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation (London: Cape, 1963); M. Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966); and Hugh Trevor-Roper's "The European Witch-Craze" in his Religion, The Reformation and Social Change (MacMillan, 1967).

71. Real title: The Acts and Monuments of Matters Happening in the Church, 1563. Popularly known as Foxes's Book of Martyrs.

72. Haller, Rise of Puritanism, pp. 84-85; 116-17; 154.

73. William Prynne (1600-69), Puritan controversialist, who wrote more than two hundred pamphlets, many "of inordinate length". See William Lamont, Marginal Prynne: 1600-1669 (Studies in Political History; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963).

74. The court sermons of John Preston afford an excellent example of the eschatologically fired, politically pointed preaching of Puritanism. See Christopher Hill, Puritanism and Revolution (London: Panther Books, 1968), pp. 234-66.

75. Haller, Rise of Puritanism, p. 196. Whichcote, Works (see below, footnote 87), 2, 293-94, 390.

76. Lamont, Godly Rule, pp. 163-82.

77. Works, 3, 248-49.

78. William Prynne, The Substance of a Speech (London: 1641) in Lamont, Godly Rule, p. 181.

79. See William Haller's Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution (London: Columbia U. Press, 1963), pp. xii-xiii; Haller's Rise of Puritanism, p. 82; and A.S.P. Woodhouse's Puritanism and Liberty (London: Dent, 1950), pp. 46, 80-81.

80. In Woodhouse's collection of source materials, Puritanism and Liberty, p. 108.

81. John Smith, Select Discourses, ed. John Worthington (London: 1660), p. 9.

82. Haller, Rise of Puritanism, esp. pp. 83-87.

83. See Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, pp. 70-93.

84. Ibid., pp. 80-81.

85. John Milton, quoted by Haller in Liberty and Reformation, p. 46.

86. Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (Penguin ed., 1962), pp. 13-18.

87. Benjamin Whichcote, The Works of the Learned Benjamin Whichcote, D.D. (Aberdeen:1751), Vol. 2, pp. 313-14. This is the third and final complete edition of Whichcote's sermons and to my mind the best though the fact that all editions were published posthumously and there are no extant manuscripts precludes a definitive judgment. In quoting Whichcote from this point on, an abbreviated form will be used, viz., volume and page number, with the reference being placed at the end of the quotation itself rather than in footnote form.
88. See Breward, Perkins, pp. 85-90, 99-113 and also Porter, Reformation and Reaction, chap. XII.
89. In Breward's collection, pp. 353-85.
90. See, e.g., his formal treatise A Golden Chain (first published in Latin under the title Armillæ Aurea, 1590), esp. the diagram of first page in which Perkins' strict supralapsarian position is eloquently reproduced. The treatise, complete with diagram can be found in Breward, Perkins, pp. 169-260.
91. From "A Grain of Mustard Seed" in Breward's collection, p. 399.
92. Concerning Whichcote's broad but critically selective knowledge of the classical tradition, see C.A. Patrides' introduction to The Cambridge Platonists (The Stratford-Upon-Avon Library 5; London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp. 1-8.
93. The Third Earl of Shaftsbury in his preface to The Works, pp. vii-viii.
94. Ernst Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1953), pp. 25-28.
95. See esp. his "Discourse of the Immortality of the Soul" and the interconnected discourse "Concerning the Existence and Nature of God". Under the traditional rubric of the soul's immortality Smith deals with the matter of man's inherent capacity for God by refuting materialist views of man (probably with Hobbes in mind). Having established the immortality of the soul, this spiritual view of man is made the starting point for the "Existence" discourse's exploration of the nature of God which is at the same time an exploration of the infinite character of man's spiritual capacity. In John Smith, Select Discourses, pp. 53-160.
96. Smith, Discourses, pp. 150-51.
97. Ibid., p. 377.
98. Ibid., p. 458.
99. Cf. Ibid., pp. 104-105 with Puritan soul in Simpson, Puritanism, p. 6.
100. Ibid., p. 5.
101. Ibid., p. 20.
102. Calvin, Inst., 3.14.1-21, II, pp. 73-89.

103. Smith, Discourses, p. 439.

104. Edward Schillebeeckx, "De Correlatie Method," Tijdschrift voor Theologie, Vol. I (jan.-febr.-maart, 1970), p. 17. My translation.

CHAPTER 2

NATURE IN DEFENSE OF RELIGION

I. PLATONISTS' CONCEPT OF NATURE NOT IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES?

Unscientific view of Nature?

True Philosophy can never hurt sound Divinity. Christian Religion was never bred up in the Peripatetick Schook, but spent her best and healthfullest years in the more Religious Academy, amongst the primitive Fathers; but the Schoolmen afterwards ravished her thence, and shut her up in the decayed ruines of Lyceum, where she served an hard servitude, and contracted many distempers: why should she not at last be set at liberty, and suffered to breath in a free air? let her alone be Mistress, and choose her Servants where she best likes; let her old loving Nurse the Platonick Philosophy be admitted again into her family; nor is there any cause to doubt but the Mechanick also will be faithful to her, no less against the open violence of Atheisme, than the secret treachery of Enthusiasm and Superstition, as the excellent works of a late learned Author have abundantly demonstrated. (Simon Patrick, A Brief Account of the new Sect of Latitude-Men Together with some reflections upon the New Philosophy, 1662)

The above phrase about "Mechanick" philosophy has been underlined by this author because, while the passage is often quoted in works about the Cambridge Platonists, attention is generally drawn to the reference to "Platonick Philosophy". That the Platonists made a significant use of the "Mechanick" or "New Philosophy" has only recently received some recognition, an oversight undoubtedly due in part to Cassirer's influential study of the Cambridge school.¹

Cassirer has characterized the work of the Cambridge Platonists as a failure.² He sees them as "isolated theorists" trying to "halt the wheel of time" but "condemned from the outset to impotence against the energy of the Puritan masses." Cassirer views the Platonists as hopelessly out of step with the forward march of the main force of the age, viz., the

"spirit of progress" or "spirit of practical activity" as he calls it. It is this spirit which unites the puritan and the empiricist in their "worldly" activity while the Platonists concern with the world is rather impractical and mystical.³

Cassirer considers the base of the power-thinking common to a Hobbes and a puritan revolutionary to be an absolute divine will. For Hobbes as for Puritanism that sovereign will demands strict obedience.⁴ He credits the Platonists with resisting this kind of command morality and attempting to displace it with the concept of the innate quality of truth and morality.⁵ While he judges that their impact on contemporary was almost nil Cassirer has high praise for their thought considered "purely in its relation to ideas."⁶ At that nebulous level the Platonists are interesting and significant because of their witness to "a certain important line of thought" which had been submerged in the Reformation but was to triumph again in Kant, viz., Platonic idealism.⁷ The Cambridge Platonists' contribution to this Platonic chorus of praise for the goodness of God and man's freedom was unfortunately all but drowned out by the dogmatic fury which surrounded them, according to Cassirer's view.

While acknowledging the Platonists' interest in contemporary scientific developments and their friendly relations with certain notable men of science Cassirer's handling of their philosophy of nature is mainly concerned to contrast its unscientific quality with the new scientific standards.⁸ Lacking the basic tool of the new science, viz., mathematics, "they found themselves, as it were, adrift without rudder or compass on the swift stream of empirical knowledge."⁹ Referring especially to More's penchant for the bizarre Cassirer's conclusion with regard to the meaning of Cambridge Platonism's relationship to the new philosophy is almost purely negative.

Hence we have the strange spectacle that the Cambridge Platonists, who in the sphere of religious doctrine stood for the inalienable prerogative of reason, renounce and betray

reason just at the point where they undertake an explanation of nature. Though they were rational in respect to religion, they are mystic and cabbalistic in respect to nature. 10

Moreover, it is precisely this incompetence in regard to science which Cassirer sees as "the real systematic weakness of this school and the historical explanation of its ineffectiveness in its own time."¹¹ Because of their ignorance of and reaction against "l'esprit geometrique" Cassirer places the Platonists on the far side of the watershed which separates modern from medieval philosophy.¹² While sympathetic to the Platonists, Cassirer reserves most of his praise for Leibnitz whom he sees as being able to work from within the new mathematical perspective rather than merely criticizing it from without. Cassirer's conclusion is that of the two streams of Platonism proceeding from the Renaissance it was the mathematical line of Kepler, Galileo and Leibnitz which wins the day while the mystical line of Ficino, Pico and the Cambridge Platonists comes to a dead-end.¹³

While the main lines of his thesis appear sound, Cassirer's negative observations concerning the relationship of the Cambridge Platonists to empiricism are not entirely accurate, at least not in the case of the leader of the school, Benjamin Whichcote. Contesting Cassirer on this point may seem a waste of energy since most of his remarks appear to center around Cudsworth and More but because he has chosen to generalize his conclusions to take in the whole school, exception must be taken.

Surely the fact that Whichcote was not a skilled mathematician does not preclude his appreciating or even utilizing the general approach of the new science. If one distinguishes as one must between the basic approach of a science and the conceptual or arithmetic tools which it employs, it is conceivable that a theologian like Whichcote could apply the new science's spirit of precision even more rigorously in his theologizing than a full fledged empiricist in his scientific work. It is odd that Cassirer's judgment of the

Platonists does not receive the same leniency as his estimation of da Vinci: "Leonardo's formulation of individual laws of nature may sometimes be vague and ambiguous; but he is always certain about the idea and the definition of the law of nature itself."¹⁴ Surely the same can be said of Whichcote: i.e., that though his grasp of individual laws of nature may have been below par, his sure feeling for the idea of the law of nature itself enabled him to skilfully correlate his theology with the underlying vision of the new science. Fontenelle's eulogy of "l'esprit geometrique" is aptly applicable to the mediating theology of Benjamin Whichcote.

L'esprit géométrique n'est pas si attaché a la géométrie, qu'il n'en puisse être tiré, et transporté à d'autres connoissances. Un ouvrage de morale, de politique, de critique, peut-être meme d'éloquence, en sera plus beau, toutes choses d'ailleurs égales, s'il est fait de main de géomètre. L'ordre, la netteté, la précision, l'exactitude, qui règnent dans les bons livres depuis un certain temps, pourraient bien avoir leur première source dans cet esprit géométrique, qui se répand plus que jamais, et qui en quelque facon se communique de proche en proche à ceux même qui ne connoissent pas la géométrie. 15

To ascertain whether the relation of Whichcote's thought to that new outlook was negative or positive one must begin by at least reviewing the main features of that world-view. For it was no less than that: a new way of looking at the world rather than merely some new information about the world. Bronowski has pithily described that change in outlook as having moved "from a world of things ordered according to their ideal natures, to a world of events running in a steady mechanism of before and after."¹⁶ Man had shifted his gaze from an extrinsic world of ideal types to the thing itself seen as a self-moving, self-explanatory entity.

The subtle difference between Aristotle and Plato on the point of nature's self-movement became the basis for the Renaissance's rejection of the Aristotelian, and endorsement of the Platonic view of nature. While Aristotle had agreed with Plato in ascribing formal and final causality to the informing idea he diverged from the thought of his former master

in assigning the efficient cause of motion also to idea or form, thus making motion the exclusive product of the ideal forms. Holding a more transcendent view of the forms, Plato nevertheless ascribed a certain autonomous efficient causality to material realities. His tendency to see motion in terms of mathematical structure was quite in keeping with the aspirations of the new philosophy.¹⁷ On the other hand, quite out of keeping with the new world-view, which considered movement a normal thing and the natural function of material bodies, everything that moved in the Aristotelian cosmos required a mover. "A universe constructed on the mechanics of Aristotle", Butterfield has written, "had the door halfway open for spirits already; it was a universe in which unseen hands had to be in constant operation, and sublime Intelligences had to roll the planetary spheres around."¹⁸ While Aristotle's universe is far from motionless yet because he conceived of perfection in terms of immutability, rest rather than movement is the norm.¹⁹

Aristotle had conceived of the basic stuff of reality as composed of four distinct elements, viz., fire and air, earth and water, each of which possessed its own unique properties. An even more important qualitative difference in the makeup of things was the great distinction between the heavenly spheres above and the earth below. Like a kind of demi-urge and by virtue of their supposed perfection, these heavenly bodies exercised a decisive control over lower realms. Now the new science would replace all this mysterious diversity with a simple, measureable homogeneity of created matter. All of created being is virtually the same in the eyes of the new science, i.e., all is subject to the same laws, and object of the same intelligibility.

A welcome implication of the new world-view were the apparently clear and easily comprehensible concepts it held out. If the details were not always fully accounted for yet the twin convictions engendered by the new science were the machine-like lawfulness of the universe and reason's ability

to understand and account for that order.²⁰ Little wonder then that Aristotle and Aristotelian Scholasticism came in for some hard knocks: Teaching men to learn the truth about nature by contemplating ideal essences that tradition appeared to form an obstacle to the all-important business of investigating the "real truth" of nature's inner structure.

Finally, while Aristotle had been the "first great empiricist" yet in the framework of his cosmology matter was seen as an element of potentiality, non-form and unintelligibility. In his world of becoming where everything is striving to attain its ideal form, matter constitutes the negative aspect of potentiality, the not-yet of the to-be.²¹

Whichcote's reaction to the emergent immanentist view of nature was to accept its challenge in a radical way. Not for him the cheap tactic of complaining from the sidelines nor acquiescence in the easy alternative of preaching the kind of "mystery" religion a Bacon was recommending. It is within the framework of a truly self-moving world that Whichcote elaborated his theology. Whichcote combined the teleological viewpoint of Aristotelianism with the structural viewpoint of empiricism in a vision of a world in which everything moves towards its end by dint of proportionate principles of self-movement. In Whichcote's theology, grace is of a persuasive rather than a coercive quality, working in and through rather than beside or against man's self-moving dynamism. To his own question whether it is "reasonable, that God having made intelligent and voluntary agents should force them, and make them do either this or that; so or so; whether they will or no?" Whichcote's answer is an eloquent "no".

God hath made us of natures to be otherwise dealt withal. God draws with the cords of a man, viz. persuasion and instruction; and if God draws, it is expected we should follow him. God works with us, and it follows that we should work out the affairs of our salvation with care and diligence. (1, 26-27)

At the center of Whichcote's self-moving world is an

indispensable "reason". It was his bold proclamation of the capabilities of this spiritual power of man which more than anything else upset his Puritan colleagues at Cambridge. In their exchange of letters Tuckney vainly tried to bring Whichcote off from that tack by convincing him of the unquestionable authority of Scripture and the subservient role of reason.²² But the Puritan way of "giving God the glory" by subjecting reason to the revealed Word was not Whichcote's way and the controversial Vice-Chancellor continued to uphold the cultivation rather than the subjection of reason as the proper method of doing homage to God.

For to whom doth God declare, but to intelligent agents? What doth God give his commands to, or his counsels, but to the intelligent agent, and the reason of man? So that you see reason hath great place in religion; for reason is the recipient of whatsoever God declares; and those things that are according to the nature of God, the reason of man can discover. It is either the efficient or the recipient of all that is called religion, of all that is communicated from God to man. The natural knowledge of God is the product of reason. And if things be declared as the counsel of God's will and product of his pleasure, reason receives them; the resolutions of his will for our further direction, are proposed and communicated to reason. And in both these ways we are taught of God.... By the former we know that God is, his nature, what he is: by the latter; what God would have us to do, and what he enjoins as fit to be done by us, in order to our future happiness. So here you see the use of mind and understanding in the way of religion. God teaches us in his creation, in giving us such faculties; he teaches us further, in the resolution of his will; because he satisfies us in what he doth impose upon us. (3, 183)

Nor was Whichcote's immanentist viewpoint confined only to human nature; the truth of reason answers to a prior and objective God-given "truth of things".²³ His constant insistence on the objectivity of truth was aimed no doubt partly at the voluntarist ethic of Thomas Hobbes.²⁴ The author of the widely read and almost equally widely denounced Leviathan saw morality as a human creation.²⁵ In Hobbes's bourgeois vision of human nature the basic drive of "felicity" or "continuall success in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth" corresponds to no divinely given order

but rather to a chaotic "State of Nature" greatly resembling Darwin's "nature red in tooth and claw". In that "naturall condition of mankind" which Hobbes describes as an all-out war of "every man against every man", ordinary moral standards are meaningless.

Nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice. Force, and Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinall vertues. 26

To avoid the total chaos of a "condition" which he felt his contemporaries were incarnating on the battle fields of the Civil War, Hobbes's solution was the creation of an all-powerful State. By persuading men that there was nothing under their feet but a slippery slope to utter ruin Hobbes would drive his contemporaries forward to the solid ground of the State (the Leviathan) as the sure source of peace and security. Whichcote's answer to that pessimistic picture of the "homo homini lupus est" ethic was an optimistic image of nature in which divine truth and goodness are so vividly present in creation that only the self-blinded cannot see.

The idea that Whichcote and Smith as the "pre-scientific members" of the Cambridge school were only peripherally concerned with Hobbesism is inaccurate. The concept of nature they employ so prominently stands in obvious contrast to that of Hobbes.²⁷ "But I must do right to the maker of our nature" Whichcote said, "and therefore declare that

man, if he be right, and have not abused his nature, but is as God brought him into the world, and hath done himself no wrong, is a mild, meek, gentle, calm, lvoing creature, fitted for conversation. I am sure many are so, and have been so from the beginning, and grow more so; and if any find it otherwise, I will say he may be ashamed of himself." (4, 375)

And again:

For folly and inconsideration are the causes of the great depravation and apostacy of mankind. There is nothing baser and more unbecoming mankind, since the beauty and excellency of human nature consists in the perfection of reason and understanding, than to neglect the use thereof, and chuse and prefer the condition of beasts. Men are vicious, and act

like beasts, because they are wilful, careless, unreasonable, incogitant, inadvertent; not considering the rules and measures of nature, and of reason; for human nature is indued with rational self-reflecting faculties; able to discern the essential differences of good and evil, and to observe what things conduce to its happiness or misery. It is most natural and easy for these faculties to embrace, and pursue those objects, which are most agreeable to them. (1, 131-32)

And finally, a more explicit expression of Whichcote's opposition to the author of Leviathan: "Wherefore, we may detest and reject that doctrine which saith, that God made man in a state of war." (4, 213)²⁸

But to return to Cassirer's critique, it must be said that his claim that the Platonists had regressed to the animistic view of nature from which the new science was struggling to free itself may be true of Henry More but is misleading when generalized to include Whichcote and Smith.²⁹ More's mystic extravagances constitute a distinct divergence from the "sober sense of religion" inculcated by Whichcote and his disciple. The Whichcote-Smith cosmos is characterized by the machine-like orderliness so highly esteemed by the new science. Significantly, Whichcote's allusions to the "caelestial spheres" refer to their archetypical harmony rather than to any superiority to, or determining influx on, the world. That traditionally redoubtable influence has been reduced to the level of exemplarity: To whomever will but consider, the regular motion of those heavenly bodies is an excellent lesson in harmonious converse.³⁰ Additional examples of the orderliness that should mark human relationships are to be found in the "inferior world" of sub-human being. As in the case of the heavenly bodies above here too all is harmony and mutual accomodation. Indeed, the whole creation of God is mutual and beneficial: there is nothing that is, though it be devoid of the perfection of reason and understanding, but it hath, as its dowry, a disposition and fitness to accomodate the universe, to some necessary use and purpose. (2, 222) 31

Unlike the writings of More which are filled with every manifestation of "spirit" that came to his hearing (including

cases of witchcraft) there reigns an eloquent silence with regard to the miraculous in the writings of Whichcote and Smith.³² Order rather than disorder is the foundation-stone of their apogetic. "For a miracle a man may call in question many ways", Whichcote said, "but if any man produces an argument taken from the reason of things, it will stay upon the understanding, and will convince and satisfy: and the more a man thinks of it, the more he will be assured." (3, 172) Whichcote held God's power up for bewonderment only in conjunction with the divine wisdom as displayed, for example, in the harmony of creation, but more especially in the rationality with which God draws the disoriented human heart back into the sphere of truth and goodness. To Whichcote the divine power is a controlled passion for righteousness rather than a force for omnipotent and arbitrary actions. The very pinnacle of divine power he sees in God's "general good will" and readiness to forgive.

It is very true, no true majesty without goodness: yea I dare say it, it is the greatest act of power to commiserate and pardon; for other acts of power subdue things without, but he that doth commiserate and pardon, subdues himself, which is the greatest victory. General good will, and universal love, and charity, are the greatest, both perfections and acts of power. To be ready to forgive, and to be easy to be reconciled, are things that are grafted, not in the wilderness of the world, but in the most noble and generous natures. They are under the fullest communication of God that give themselves up to acts of clemency and compassion, and are forward to relieve, and to do good, to pardon and to forgive. (1, 32)

Another important respect in which Whichcote's view of nature agrees with the emergent view of the new science and correlative with his emphasis on nature's orderliness is the easy intelligibility of nature. Like Descartes, Whichcote upheld the luminous quality of truth but unlike the French philosopher he did so without dividing matter from mind. To the leader of the Platonist school as well as to his disciple Smith that luminosity flows from the perfect harmony of a creation designed and sustained by a God

of reason. Having resisted the prevailing theology's emphasis on sin Whichcote and Smith could present nature's truth as still intelligible if somewhat dimmed by the fall. And because that truth is identical at bottom with goodness rather than sovereignty, it is truth-communicated rather than truth-mysterious. Clarity rather than mystery is the measure of God's revelation. There where He has most perfectly communicated Himself is fullness of intelligibility rather than height of "mystery". While the perfection of the Beatific Vision is impossible in man's present embodied and sinful condition, it is only sin that can blind man to "the glorious evidence and power of divine truth".³³ Between the proud dogmatic certainty and the increasingly corrosive scepticism of the age, Whichcote stood at the side of the new science's humbly optimistic attitude toward truth.³⁴

To conclude this defense of Whichcote's view of nature, a more global view of things is in order. There is a significant analogy between the shift from the qualitatively heterogeneous universe of Aristotelian-Scholasticism to the quantitatively homogeneous world of the new science and the shift in theological viewpoint from Reformation divinity to the thought of Benjamin Whichcote.

In that pre-scientific model of the universe were to be found not only the irreducible diversity of Aristotle's basic elements but the larger difference between the "crystal spheres" above and the realm of earth below. Creation was seen as a "Golden Chain", the upper reaches of which teemed with angels while the lower levels were viewed as the habitation of Satan and his legions.³⁵ Earth was not the proud center of that pre-Copernican world but rather the lowest level of the emanative chain, hell coinciding precisely with the earth's center.³⁶ The ordinary way to cope with such a world in which all movement was seen as the expression of a transcendent will was a matter of will over will, or magic.

The fascinating story of the forces moving man beyond the confines of that world-view is only beginning to be learned.³⁷ Of the known factors only a few will be mentioned here by way of illustrating that story. It was the unlikely combination of a new star, a comet, a genius's determination to demonstrate the "music of the spheres" and the discovery of the telescope which helped bring the immutably perfect upper spheres into the orbit of our supposedly imperfect and corruptible sub-lunary world.³⁸ Meanwhile, at the other end of the chain, Bacon was launching his influential attack on the idea that the study of nature was a "forbidden knowledge". Among others, Thomas More and Montaigne had lent their eloquent pens to the articulation of the Renaissance's gentler feeling for nature but it was the aggressive Bacon more than anyone else who helped reclaim the demon haunted dregs of creation for science.³⁹ According to Bacon, it was Adam's dabbling in theology rather than in natural science that brought about the fall. Beside the Bible Bacon held up nature as the second priveleged repository of the divine revelation which God has set before man as a challenge to his ingenuity.

While the bitter polemic against the old cosmology tended to outstrip the progress in the positive construction of an alternative nonetheless a succession of distinguished "new scientists" such as Gilbert and Ray chipped in the solid contributions which were gradually filling in the symmetrical lines of a new world-view. The goal of the erratic course which led men away from the medieval cosmology has been alternately praised as the foundation of modern civilization and damned as the end of the age of belief. Without falling into the empassioned categories of that debate one can describe what took place in that change of perspective as a shift from a qualitatively diverse to a quantitatively unified world.

Science had discovered a material world in a quite special sense: a world of dead matter, infinite in extent and permeated by movement throughout, but utterly devoid of ultimate qualitative differences and moved by uniform and purely

quantitative forces. The word 'matter' had acquired a new sense: it was no longer the formless stuff of which everything is made by the imposition upon it of form, it was the quantitatively organized totality of moving things. 40

Now the transcendental world of Calvinist theology paralleled that displaced world-view. As in that world where the operative forces were irreducibly diverse and therefore more or less immediately dependent on the will of Him who made them so, the ultimate forces in Calvinist theology were seen as irreducible and qualitatively different, and directly dependent on the divine will. There is a parallel too between the homogeneous universe brought about by the discoveries of the new science and the unified world of Whichcote's theological vision. As the new science levelled the protruding peaks of diversity of the old cosmology so did Whichcote break down the mysterious diversity inherent to the structure of the prevailing religious outlook.

While it is untrue to say that Whichcote's world-view belongs on the side of the ancients because of a fixed and static character, it is undeniable that he employs concepts peculiar to that kind of cosmology. One must distinguish between the matter and form of his vision. His use of the Neoplatonic chain of being is not rigid for his central link in that chain, viz., man, is potentially all things. It is this radical mobility of Whichcote's image of man that levels the fateful diversity of Calvinist divine decrees. As in the new world of the new science there is nothing man cannot know so in Whichcote's religious world there is virtually nothing of which man is not capable. To be sure, a certain duality remains--there are "dangers without and within" which would seduce man away from the pursuit of the good--but it is no match for the capacity of a grace-empowered human nature to do what it wills. But Whichcote's own words can best express the wide-open and defatalized character of his theological world-view. "Men are more what they are used to" he said, "than what they are born to; for custom is a second nature. Every man hath himself as he useth himself." (1, 43)

And from Socrates (I believe) this characteristic quotation: "We have had those that have said; by my bodily temper and constitution I am so and so; such are my difficulties and temptations: yet, through the power of my mind, all these things are subject to my reason." (4, 254) Finally, about the "impotency of our nature vitiated by the fall" Whichcote had this to say:

We are naturally impotent through guilt contracted. It is matter of lamentable experience: and it becomes us to be sensible of it. But we must not so far extend it, as to say a man is thereby become a stone. For in the confidence that God is with us, we may go on, and defy the devil, and the whole world. (2, 350)

An impractical approach to Nature?

Of Cassirer's faint praise for the Cambridge men the most misleading of all his compliments is that by which he contrasts the practical spirit of puritanism and empiricism with the lives and thought of the Platonists described as one of the last schools of thought to represent "the spirit and ethos of pure contemplation."⁴¹ In the thought of Whichcote and Smith such an orientation away from the practical is not verifiable. On the contrary, in the fundamental thrust of their theologies toward an ideal of practice these men were in tune with the mentality of their age. "Human knowledge and human power meet in one" wrote Bacon, "for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and that which in contemplation is as the cause is in operation as the rule."⁴² Contemplation, in other words, is the passive obedience to nature which leads to the active domination of nature in "operation". If this subordination of contemplation to action is an "inversion of values" which "once and for all separates the modern from the medieval age" then Whichcote and Smith belong on the side of the moderns. But again, let us try to catch the authentic accents of Whichcote on this matter.

Wherefore, if we profess religion, let us do such things,

by virtue of the spirit of religion, which others can neither do, nor counterfeit, that men may say that God is in us, of a truth; and let the world have evidence and experiment, that religion in us is reason, and signifies something, by our transformation, and transfiguration, and heavenly conversation; let men have experience of the fruits of our religion. (2, 201. My underlining.)

Religion is not satisfied in notions; but doth indeed, and in reality, come to nothing, unless it be in us not only matter of knowledge and speculation; but doth establish in us a frame and temper of mind, and is productive of a holy and virtuous life. (4, 190)

Therefore give me religion...that doth attain real effects, such as are worthy what we mean by religion. (3, 271 My underlining.)

Though certain passages from Whichcote and Smith read in isolation would appear to recommend a Plotinian other-worldly ideal of holiness, when such excerpts are seen in the light of the Platonists' three-dimensional ethic that impression of world-flight vanishes.⁴³ Not as if one could restore the balance by weighing the two "horizontal" duties of rectitude toward oneself and rectitude toward one's fellow man against the "vertical" duty of godliness. The basic ground for the active and this-worldly character of their concept of religion is rather that the duty of knowing God which they inculcate is at bottom a duty of imitation, or copying out on the human level, the divine perfections.

Because for them religion is in the first place a dynamic divine life, it is primarily something to be lived-out and only secondarily something to know. "Here I indeed to define Divinity", Smith wrote, "I should rather call it a Divine life, then a Divine science, it being something rather to be understood by a Spiritual sensation, then by any Verbal description".⁴⁴ To Smith, God "best discern'd by an Intellectual touch of him: we must see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and our hands must handle the word of life, that I may express it in S. John's words."⁴⁵ Similarly, Whichcote would outfit the Christian with an experience of God in His "moral perfections" rather than with God's "metaphysical perfections". These latter, such as

God's "omnipotency, eternity, ubiquity" men can "admire and adore" but "cannot comprehend". Of the indispensable moral perfections, it is an experiential familiarity with the holiness and faithfulness of God that forms the irreplaceable foundation for "gospel knowledge" and remains the immoveable basis of man's relationship with God.

For if so be you do not give God credit and faith, because of his approved and known faithfulness to you; you are not in a disposition to receive from him, any gospel truth; for all gospel truth doth depend upon this, God's faithfulness. And if we be not made to know this, that God is faithful, or if we have not proof and assurance of his fidelity, we shall no more trust him, than we shall trust his creatures. Of such a necessity is it, to settle the moral part of religion: for the other parts of religion depend upon the resolution of the divine will, and contain the promises of the gospel, they all depend upon this. (2, 53-54)

II. TUCKNEY'S CRITIQUE: WHICHCOTE'S CONCEPT OF NATURE IN CONFLICT WITH ORTHODOX VIEW OF GRACE

The rational framework of Whichcote's theology

Having vindicated Whichcote's concept of nature from the strictures of Cassirer and shown it to be in tune with the spirit of the age and therefore an apt apologetic tool, one must go on to confront another critique. The objections of Whichcote's colleague at Cambridge, the Calvinist theologian Anthony Tuckney, have to do with the orthodoxy of Whichcote's "Moral" or "Naturall" divinity. Before investigating Tuckney's critique, it will be necessary to take a global look at the "natural" or "rational"⁴⁶ character of Whichcote's thought.

In an age of dogmatic fury and theological scare tactics Whichcote's theology has the distinction of being based primarily on the authority of the intrinsic credibility and convincing power of truth. With no other weapon would he join the melee of theological controversy than the quiet voice of reason. Against a growing belief in power Whichcote persuasively presented Christian faith as an ideal of truth.

Distancing himself from the authoritarian stance of Calvinist dogmatism and infallible Romanism Whichcote pursued the reason orientated anglican theology of comprehension heralded by Hooker.⁴⁷ His confidence that truth will prevail without a policy of oppressive uniformity such as Laud was conducting is reflected in his image of an ideal pastor.

We do declare, that the teachers of the church ought not to be dictators, or masters of mens faith; but helpers of mens faith; for they are not to make religion, but to shew it. They do not take away the key of knowledge from the people, as our Saviour chargeth the Pharisees, Luke xi.52. Or as St. Austin (Augustine) saith, they do not command faith in men, upon peril of damnation, to shew their superiority, or to practise as governors: but they do appear in the good office of direction, and giving men counsel. 'Tis not pride of ruling and shewing power, but out of compassion to lead people into the way of truth, and to recover them out of error and mistake. (1, 178-79)

From the testimony we have concerning Whichcote's life and character, it is fair to think that the secret of the profound influence that he exercised on his contemporaries derived from that gentle compassionate kind of leadership.⁴⁸

Whichcote's is a preached theology which does not dwell on philosophical distinctions but in a rare excursus into metaphysics--for which he asked his auditory's indulgence--he aims at better clarifying truth's practical implications by exposing its divine foundations.⁴⁹

At bottom truth stems from a perfect correspondence of things with their pre-existent divine ideas. "Things are true" as they do exist of their principles, and as they are answerable to the idea of them in the divine mind pre-existent to them: for this is the manner of working of an intelligent agent, to do things according to a preconceived apprehension of his mind. (3, 370)

The truth of this God-given objective zone of reality which he calls the "truth of things" is guaranteed by an all-wise and omnipotent creator and can be simply taken for granted.

Corresponding to the "truth of things" and the second element of the correlation which constitutes the basic structure of reality within which Whichcote frames the divine-human relationship is the "truth of our apprehensions". God has

seen to the metaphysical truth of things; it is man's responsibility to conform himself in mind and conduct to that objective "state of things". Not so easy this, as the following somewhat rhetorical passage indicates.

And here is the occasion of all the evil that breaks in upon mortals, that we do not conceive of things as they are, but that all men (except some few) either worship the idol of some particular imagination, or the idol of popular superstition; they either follow private imagination of their own, or general mistakes; and he is a man of a thousand, that can rise up and quit himself of these two idols. (3,371)

Despite its name the "truth of our apprehensions" is not a purely rational kind of knowledge. As has been indicated⁵⁰ Whichcote's theology is supported by a broad biblically slanted epistemology. The "truth of our apprehensions" is both the agreement of the mind with the "truth of things" and the agreement of the affections and actions--indeed of the whole temper and spirit of a man--with the tenor of ones understanding. "Our judgment and apprehension", Whichcote maintained,

are to be conformable to the reality and existence of things; and when our affections and actions are suitable to such a judgment and sense of our minds, we are then in the truth, and never else: the first belongs to a man's understanding, and that speaks him an able man, a man of judgment, a man of sense and experience; and the latter speaks him a good man; and indeed if mens actions comply not with the sense of their judgments, there will be self-condemnation and no peace at all within.... (3, 371-72)

At the level of "truth of our apprehensions" Whichcote distinguishes between a "natural" and a "moral" point of view, and dismisses the former with the comment that while such knowledge is "of great use in the life of man, and tends to the enlarging man's understanding" yet it is "not the concernment of religion and conscience." Knowledge from the standpoint of right and wrong on the other hand is necessary rather than merely useful, for it is "the concernment of conscience and the business of religion, and is every bodies charge; for both a good state here, and a future good state hereafter depends upon it." (3, 373) Not that Whichcote would simply dismiss

the viewpoint of the new science; like Pythagoras and Plato before him, the Platonist's vision of truth as one and divine embraces both the religious and the scientific points of view. Like the Stoa however Whichcote has chosen to single out the religious and ethical aspect of truth in order to provide moral guidance in a time of confusion. That the geometric structure of his truth-as-religion concept is complementary rather than antipathetic to the truth concept of the new science should become obvious in the course of the present analysis.

Once inside Whichcote's perspective on truth as moral there is one final distinction to be taken account of.

There is in divinity, a distinction of truth that is of main and principal concernment; that is, the distinction of truth in respect of its emanation from God, who is the father of truth; for all truth is a ray, and a beam from God....Now God communicates himself to us two ways. In the moment of the creation; and that we call truth of the first inscription, or the light of God's creation, or the principle of natural conscience, the true issue of reason....The second emanation of truth, is the truth of after-revelation. For such is the great goodness of God, that having fallen, he doth reveal to him upon what terms he will receive and pardon sinners. (3, 120-21)

Thus, while all truth is one and divine one can distinguish from the viewpoint of its "emanation" two kinds of truth, viz., "truth of first inscription" and "truth of after-revelation". Before turning to Tuckney's critique let us look briefly at these two moments of truth.

"Truth of first inscription" Whichcote describes as having to do with "matters fixt, unalterable, unchangeable, indispensable". Further, these "matters" he identifies as three duties, viz., "to live piously towards God; to use justice between man and man; and sobriety and temperance as to himself", which sum up the law of nature. These "matters fixt" designate both the religious structure of objective reality and the corresponding religious structure of human subjectivity. Thus on the one hand objective truth is divided into the three all-inclusive categories of God, self, and fellow man, while on the other hand the inner world of a "good mind" is broken down into the three correlative

duties of piety or righteousness toward God, sobriety or rectitude in respect to oneself, and justice or rectitude with regard to ones fellow man.

In sharp contrast to the "truth of first inscription" with its necessary and immutable aspect is the "truth of after-revelation". Whereas the "truth of first inscription" has the nature of God or the reason of things as its rule and issues in "matters fixt", the "truth of after-revelation" is measured by the will of God or of him "that hath right" and issues in "things that are of a mutable and alterable nature" which may be "discharged, and abated" by the authority that imposed them. (2, 62-63) On the side of natural truth is the permanence and finality of what he calls the "principles of everlasting righteousness":

These are principles of everlasting righteousness, of unchangeable truth and goodness: and of this I may say, that it is not a law that is subject to any power whatsoever: 'tis a law against which there can be no exception or abatement: 'tis a law of its own nature; it is that which is according to the nature of God; and that is the law of heaven. (2, 62)

"Truth of after-revelation" on the other hand is a realm of provisional and subordinate truth. After-revelation is that truth promulgated "upon the ill accident of sin, and the foul miscarriage of mortals, in departing from the rule of right", which will endure only as long as the realization of its purpose requires. These "institutes" exist not "aeterna jura" but only at the pleasure of God.

As the great institution of circumcision, which began in the Days of Abraham; as also the whole Mosaical dispensation. Nay the gospel-manifestation shall in great part expire when our Saviour shall deliver up his mediatory kingdom to God his father and become subject to God, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor.xv. (2, 63)

From this brief survey of the basic categories of Whichcote's theology one need not be a Puritan to espy the heavily rational inclination of our author's thought. It is little wonder then that his Calvinist colleagues became upset and that Tuckney objected to the views of his former student.

The Whichcote-Tuckney debate: Nature vs. Grace?

Tuckney and Whichcote exchanged eight letters during the early sixteen fifties while Whichcote was Vice-Chancellor. The occasion was the discomfiture of Tuckney and several of his colleagues at the University concerning the unorthodox flavour of Whichcote's theology. One can be thankful for the preservation of the letters wherein one can see Whichcote carefully defining his position in relation to the dominant Calvinist divinity.⁵¹

Sharply questioned about the "power of reason to judge of matters of faith" Whichcote explicitly dealt with the distinction between faith and reason which, for the most part, is handled implicitly elsewhere in his writings. Apparently referring to a discussion period following upon Whichcote's Commencement speech "De Certitudine et Dignitate Christianae Religionis" the intrepid Tuckney accused the Vice-Chancellor of reducing faith to the level of reason.⁵²

But that our faith should be ultimately resolved in rationem rei, ex parte objecti; and that ex parte subjecti, ratio humana should be summus iudex which was expressly asserted by you in your answer to my arguement: as I then said, it was new, so now I think it very strange divinity. 53

It is not until the third letter, after having appeared to concede Tuckney his objection, that Whichcote began to expose the strategy of his rational theology. Having obtained the admission that the object of faith is never against reason Whichcote would go a step further and say that whatever is said to be *de fide* must also be according to reason! It was against the "Antinomians", by which he meant Christians who under cover of the Lutheran principle of justification by faith alone were living lives of unrepentant sinfulness, that Whichcote aimed this strategy. He would measure the so-called faith of the "Antinomians" by the touchstone of a down to earth rudimentary natural morality. If a Christian's conduct does not measure up to the necessary and immutable "truth of things" entailed in that ethic then he cannot be said to be a Christian.

While the strategy of Whichcote's apologetic reflects a theological spirit distinctly different from that of Tuckney, the two contestants did share a common terminology and an apparent area of conceptual agreement. Both distinguished between natural and revealed truth and can agree on the negative proposition that the sphere of faith is not contrary to the sphere of reason. But in the next step, i.e., in their positive evaluation of the faith-reason relationship, their positions diverge. Tuckney believes that faith transcends reason; Whichcote is convinced that faith restores and improves reason. Both speak of the transcendence of the realm of faith but each means something different by that term. The central issue in question then is the meaning of transcendence or, as Tuckney more concretely put it: "Our present dispute is about the power of Reason to judge of matters of Faith".⁵⁴

Tuckney's mistrust of Reason

Tuckney thought of himself as a "Steward under his Lord" bound "earnestly to contend for" the preservation of truth from the taint of reason. Behind this self-image lurks the deep-seated mistrust of reason which English Puritanism had imbibed from Reformation theology. Thus while Tuckney tactfully begins his argumentation by conceding the indispensable role of reason yet he goes on to so insist on the transcendence of faith as to empty his concession of meaning.

And as the Apostle speaks of "a spirit of wisdom and revelation" so we conceive that to our right understanding such mysteries, ex parte subjecti, he must be a spirit of wisdom; and so ratio must be divinitus illuminata: and, ex parte objecti, a spirit of revelation; and so objectum must be revelatum. And this revelation must be of the formality of the object, which is understood and believed; and so, by this illumination of the understanding and revelation of the object, the discerning faculties is fully regulated in its apprehensions of these mysteries....⁵⁵

One might well wonder what meaning the "necessity of reason in faith" can have when it is thus "fully regulated". In spite of Tuckney's polite approval of certain of Whichcote's

dicta about natural theology and lumen naturale it quickly becomes obvious that his is the viewpoint of Reformation theology with its division of reality into two distinct realms, viz., grace and sin. However hard Whichcote might try to show how "the spirit in man" and the Spirit of God could work together, for Tuckney the absolute power of God and radical sinfulness of man left little room for the operation of reason beside the workings of grace. His strong sense of sin made every activity on man's part appear as somehow against, or in competition with, divine activity. As for Whichcote's favorite phrase "the spirit in man is the candle of the Lord" Tuckney irritably remarked that "that saying...so over-frequently quoted, makes nothing to that purpose (of designating the capacity of reason with regard to faith)...relating to the searching of our own, or, as Piscator conceives, of another's heart and actions; not of divine truths".⁵⁶ Commenting on the fact that some interpreters of the phrase see the competence of the "spirit in man" extending beyond the human realm and into the divine, Tuckney is quick to add that they

explain themselves to mean that Grace, which out of his love he reveals by his word; and infuses by his spirit: and so "the spirit of a man" is, as it were, naturaliter capax divinae illuminationis; so being by the spirit illuminated, we deny not but it can perceive the things of God; which otherwise it cannot: In these things especially, however there is a spirit in a man; yet the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. 57

Of all the points debated in the letters, the one perhaps most revelatory of the deepest attitudes of both Tuckney and Whichcote in the matter of faith and reason is the principle which Whichcote calls the first principle of Protestantism, viz., cuilibet Christiano conceditur iudicium discretionis. The good Protestant Tuckney does not attempt to reject the principle; indeed he is very much at ease with it when contrasting it with the first principle of "Popery", viz., iudex infallibilis visibilis in rebus fidei. "A true believer should not be a brute, but have something above a

Collier's faith" Tuckney wrote,

implicitly to believe, whatever the Pope and his church says: no, he is to be among those open minded ones, and it is a part of the ingenuousness of his spirit, as he is a man, especially as a Christian, to search, and with the judgment of discretion to judge, whatever the best men suggest. 58

Brave words these, but quickly followed by an exaltation of the authority of Scripture that leaves reason with no other function than humble submission. Tuckney's "judicium discretionis" is limited to the purely human level; before the absolute truth of the revealed word it enjoys no real competence. Referring to a passage from Acts (Acts 17,11) about the open-mindedness of the Jews at Beroea who "welcomed the word very readily" and daily "studied the scriptures to check whether it was true" the limitations of Tuckney's concept of "open-mindedness" become very clear.

But you will please to observe, what is there said; 'they searched the scriptures, whether those things were so': by which it appears that the scriptures were the rule by which they judged of the doctrine delivered to them: so that what the scripture or divine testimony of God held out, they without dispute believed and judged, not it; but man's doctrine by it. 59

Practically the only function Tuckney assigns to reason with regard to the truths of faith is an examination of the testimonia of scripture, viz., the prophecies and miracles. These, according to the Calvinist divine, are the proper criteria for judging the truth of God's word. It is with these extrinsic criteria that the Christian's judicium discretionis can busy itself but not with the intrinsic content of the revealed truths themselves in Tuckney's scheme. 60

Tuckney's final words on this subject are a recapitulation of what he had publicly professed about it on the occasion of the Exercise for his Doctor's Degree in divinity. What he said then was that with regard to the "supernatural mysteries of faith" reason

1. was never able to find them out at first; 2. when revealed, not able fully to comprehend them; must not be such a judge of them, as to arraign them at it's bar: so as, if they be either really above it, yea or seem to be contrary to it, to reject them; as, in the matter of God's decrees,

is too frequent with Arminians and others: or so as lastly to resolve them either in rationem rei, ex parte objecti; or in rationem nostram, tanquam summum judicem, ex parte subjecti. 61

The reference to "Arminians" who would disqualify the faith of Calvinists like himself on the ground that predestinary decrees constitute materia Deo indigna is probably aimed at Whichcote, and the last category, of those who exalt reason at the expense of the "supernatural mysteries" is clearly directed at the Vice-Chancellor.⁶²

Whichcote defends his position

Despite his apparent concessions Tuckney's ultimate argument is to relegate everything that his opponant has said about the capacity of the "spirit in man" to the infra-grace level. "True", Tuckney wrote, "the understanding cannot rightly judge otherwise, than the thing is: veritas rei being regula veritatis intellectus. But our present dispute is about the power of Reason to judge of matters of Faith".⁶³ That this highhanded dismissal of the "candle of the Lord" constituted an attack upon the very nerve center of Whichcote's theology is evident from the empassioned response quoted here for its revelatory quality. "But our present dispute is about the power of Reason to judge of matters of Faith", Whichcote recalls his opponant's painful words, and proceeds to unburden himself:

Did you ever find me leaving God out, or not acknowledging Him principal, original; and the creature mere vanity, dividedly from him; a lie, in contradiction to him? I have declared the quality and fitness of the principle, as from God, in the hand of God; "the candle of the Lord": Res illuminata illuminans. With all my heart and soul I acknowledge and assert (and wholly depend thereon,) the holy Spirit's superintendence, conduct, presence, influence, guidance, government of man's mind, in the discerning of the things of God.. .. I experimentally know it, I thank God, to be true; I have witness of it within me; it is my sufficiency, it is my strength, it is my security: God with me is All in All.... I always consider and so express, the mind of man in conjunction with the good spirit of God. I abhor and detest from my soul all creature-magnifying self-sufficiency. 64

In fairness to Tuckney it must be said that despite this eloquent protestation Whichcote was rarely as explicit as he is here about the "sub Deo" character of "the spirit in man".

In a calmer moment Whichcote will disclose the rational basis of this cry of faith. Tuckney's desire to reduce the flame of the "candle of the Lord" Whichcote sees as a tampering with the very foundations of the divine-human relationship. In the first place such a weakening of the natural principle reduces man's capacity to sin and therefore his responsibility to repent--an argument which should have appealed to Tuckney. But Whichcote's main objection is that in thus diminishing man one diminishes at the same time the God who created, and who saves him. While he counts it a "true sacrilege, to take from God; to give to the creature" yet I look at it, as a dishonouring God, to nullify and make base his works; and to think He made a sorry worthless piece, fit for no use when he made man. I cannot but think of a noble able creature; when I read ad imaginem et in similitudinem Dei: or if, in statu lapsu, it be as nothing then you vilify the restitution by Christ.... 65

As for the "judicium discretionis" principle, Whichcote spells out just how the "spirit in man" is sub Deo and yet retains its proper form of activity. Distinguishing between judicare as an "authoritative act" and a "perceptive and apprehensive act", Whichcote singles out the latter as the sense which pertains to judicium discretionis. The objective, non-manipulable aspect of knowledge precludes the possibility that reason could authoritatively command truth either on the natural or on the revealed level. But precisely in its interaction with that objective data in the apparently passive act of conformity with the real, the dynamism of reason comes into play. The judicium of reason consists in its obedience to being based on its capacity to be ruled by the otherness of reality.

For a judging discerning faculty is wholly regulated in its apprehensions a ratione objecti, sive a qualitate materiae: nam intellectus nullum habet libertatem circa suum objectum; non facit rem aliter se habere, sed percipit rem ut est; et concipit secundum imaginem receptam: hoc est, judicat. Atque veritas, a parte intellectus, consistit in conformitate

cum veritate rei. 66

What Whichcote means when he insists on judicium discretionis as the right of every Christian is nothing more and nothing less than the task of conformity with the "truth of things". Such a task, in a world where men prefer to see things as they would like to have them rather than as they really are, where "all men (except some few) either worship the idol of some particular imagination, or the idol of popular superstition" constitutes an ideal as Christian as it is Platonic.

Does Whichcote extend this exercise of judgment to the sphere of revealed truth itself? Did Whichcote, in other words, intend to include revelation within his all-embracing category of the real (res) thus making it subject to the scrutiny of reason as Tuckney feared? The answer is yes but whether Tuckney's objections are accurate remains to be seen. But let Whichcote answer the question in his own words.

I do not think, that to ingenuity and indifferency, tempers, which qualify to a reception from God; as carnality and designing do indispose: any article of Christian faith seems to be materia Deo indigna: and should it, it would not be in a man's power to believe it as from God, while it so seems; though a man should struggle with himself never so much. A man cannot think against the reason of his mind: that of necessity must be satisfied. 67

Revelation itself is made subject to reason's rules; only when its truths accord with the tenor of (a good) man's mind can they be embraced in "belief". Then too this competence of reason comprises the duty--insisted upon by Whichcote, resisted by Tuckney--of rejecting an article of faith which is repugnant to its sense.⁶⁸

It is that negative barring function of reason that Tuckney resisted at every turn. At stake was his Calvinist faith in a sovereign predestinating deity. That faith is not opposed to reason he could cheerfully concede but when Whichcote moved from non contra rationem to secundem rationem thus bringing faith into a real relation with reason, Tuckney's creed had suddenly become extremely vulnerable.

No wonder then that Tuckney insisted upon the transcendence of faith over reason.

But Whichcote would not allow his opponant his invocation of "mystery" as the last word. Transcendence is a brightness which enlightens rather than blinds. Certainly God's communications to man transcend his understanding "far beyond the transcendency of the sun, not wrapt-up in clouds, to my sight", wrote Whichcote,

but this transcendency lies in amplitudine et plenitudine ob-
jecti; non in contradictione rationis: (Nos sumus Deo et felici-
tati nostrae omnino impares:) and in this case I may be most illuminated, in respect of my self, when I least comprehend the object. Quidquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis recipi-
tur: the bucket, most filled in the sea, yet least contains the ocean. 69

In the fullness of revealed truth Tuckney sees the overwhelming of reason and the necessity of faith; in the same fullness Whichcote perceives the fullfilment of reason.⁷⁰ Both men are right in the sense that both have logically followed their theological first principles, Tuckney the radical corruption of reason of his Puritan Calvinism, Whichcote the unlimited potential of reason of his Platonic and Christian divinity.

Underlying his concept of transcendence as clarity and the linch-pin which holds together faith and reason in Whichcote's vision is his idea of God. Quoting Bonaventure, Whichcote would link together the spheres of "things necessary" and the provisional determinations of God's will by the divine rationality: "Credendum est, voluntatem Dei, etiam in occultissimis, esse rationabilissimam". What is meant by rationality here is the goodness of one who works according to the "reasons of things", particularly the "ratio" of His weak and needy creatures. To Whichcote, divine revelation is not like a stone which God hurls into the world nor a lightning flash blinding all who behold; it is rather a word addressed to fallen man and delicately attuned to his "marred principles", a message adapted to man both as to content and communication so that it can be received and understood as "Good News". Addressing himself to Tuckney's dictum that

"Deus... in rebus fidei supernaturalis, rationem contemnit"
Whichcote distanced himself from that unbending God-figure,
and disclosed his concept of a God of persuasion.

I would rather say, non vocat rationem ad consilium than contemnit rationis captum. God indeed consults not with us; but with his own wisdom and goodness; (we being patients and under his cure;) for the invention contrivance and provision of remedy: yet God proposes with respect to our understandings; viz. what they can receive, what they are able to bear. And indeed, the matter which he does propose, viz. expiation of sin, in the blood of Christ; and our renovation by Him, into his divine spirit; are things grateful to man's mind: and... as it were, expected. 71

Whichcote's whole active concept of holiness, i.e., that man is to be "up and doing" for though fallen he has not "thereby become a stone" is implicated in this configuration of revelation. On the one side stands fallen man who, despite his diminished spiritual vision, can nevertheless know both that he is sinful and that God is compassionate; on the other a God whose will to save is measured by a wisdom that adapts that will to the lowly circumstances of man's condition. The very non-Calvinistic lines which follow from this are that man looks out for forgiveness and God extends that expected pardon in terms fitted to man's anticipation.⁷² "Of the grand articles of Christian faith", Whichcote wrote,

a man may truly say... that to one acquainted with his own state and condition, and considerative of God's goodness, the matter of those articles revealed is rather a matter expected, as becoming God, Godlike than either contrary to reason, or unworthy of God. I believe, in the true use of understanding, a serious and considerative mind would be apt to think that either God would pardon sin to penitents who reform absolutely or else would propose a way in which-- and terms and conditions on which he would forgive and be reconciled: God being duly looked upon as the fountain and original of goodness. So that, when the revelation of faith comes; the inward sense, awakened to the entertainment thereof, says eureka it is, as I imagined, the thing expected proves; Christ, the desire of all nations.... 73

Lest this line of thought appear overly optimistic one should note that Whichcote accords this kind of expectation neither to an abstract "human nature" (he recognized no such entity) nor to fallen man in general, but only to those who,

though fallen, respond to the "light" remaining to them and thus rise above the pull of self-will to the level of conformity to the demands of the "truth of first inscription".⁷⁴ Only in such souls does the "candle of the Lord" shine brightly enough to reveal their sinful insufficiency and point the way to a placable God. Only in this dynamic and demanding sense is revelation secundem rationem. The happy hope of God's forgiveness rises on the horizon of reason only where there is truly reason, i.e., only in the "true use of understanding" of the man who nurtures the life of the "spirit" within.

While the Whichcote-Tuckney correspondence ended with mutual expressions of respect the main reason for its termination was an escalation of feeling which could no longer be contained. It must be said that in these letters Whichcote does not always measure up to the "godly" reputation that he has generally enjoyed.⁷⁵ Even though the currents of anti-Whichcote feeling at the University were much stronger than Tuckney's politeness allows yet one feels that the Vice-Chancellor should have been more "above it all". But in the letters he appears prone to take personal offense and downright touchy at times.⁷⁶ Despite his pleas for tolerance the forbearance of Whichcote himself seems to wear rather thin on occasion. But it must be said that Tuckney, for all his expressions of respect, strikes a paternalistic pose in the letters, thus giving good reason for Whichcote's irritation. That Tuckney still thought of himself as the tutor and Whichcote as his pupil, an attitude which comes through in the several lengthy passages of advice he offers the Vice-Chancellor, must have been painful to Whichcote.

That the end of the correspondence marked by no means the end of the differences between them is evident from the Commencement speech delivered by Tuckney the following year in which the new Vice-Chancellor openly assailed Whichcote's theology. "Salvation is only by Christ", Tuckney began not by a philosophical faith; or the use of right Reason, or a virtuous morality, too much now-a-days admired and cried up. As of old, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple

of the Lord. So now, the Candle of the Lord, the Candle of the Lord. I would not have that Candle put out, I would have it snuffed and improved as a handmaid to faith, but not so (as when the Candle is set up) to shut the window, wither wholly to keep out, or in the least to darken the Sunshine, as it is with men's eyes, who can read better by a candle in the night, than by day-light.... Whatever Nature and Morality may be to others, yet to us let Christ be all in all. Nor let us be Deists, but Christians; let us not take up in such a Religion, as a Jew, or Turk, or Pagan, in a way of Nature and Reason only may rise up unto, but let us indeed be what we are called Christians, Christians.... Not a philosophical dull Morality, but the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus... not that Candle light, but the Sun of righteousness, that will guide our feet into the way of peace. 77

All of the fears of Tuckney, apparently quite muted in his exchange of letters, now pour out with a vengeance. According to the new Vice-Chancellor, Whichcote's theology constitutes a philosophical pseudo faith and a dangerous rival to real Christian belief.

Is Whichcote's notion of reason and nature antipathetic to Christian faith as Tuckney claimed? The following section concerning the Platonist's concept of religion as nature or "natural religion" is presented as the first part of an answer to that accusation. The second and final part of the answer will be dealt with in the section after that, on Whichcote's Christology.

III. THE PRO-GRACE CHARACTER OF WHICHCOTE'S CONCEPT OF NATURE

Nature as Image of God

While Tuckney's fears that Whichcote's notion of nature is only loosely connected with Christ may be true--that question will be dealt with in the following chapter--yet it is necessary to begin by investigating the foundations of that notion. To recall the roots of the realm of nature in Whichcote's thought, it was said that truth is divided into the objective "truth of things" and the subjective "truth of our apprehensions". Now the "truth of things" is nothing more than the conformity of created beings with the ideas according to which God fashioned them. One of those creations is a creature whom God intended to know and love things as He himself does. To this end, He made man true, i.e., He endowed him with the godlike capacity of knowing the truth and doing the right. Man was in other words made "in the image and likeness of God".

In becoming the image of God--for it is primarily an ideal and a goal--the "truth of things" constitutes the indispensable term of reference. The equation "imitation of God" does not involve a direct relation with the deity but an indirect analogical relation of: as God is related to His ideas so should man relate to the created counterparts of those ideas. More specifically, as God shows a perfect knowledge and love of those eternal "reasons" in His creation and conservation of them, so should man try to conform himself perfectly to them in his thought and action. To ensure that man is able to realize this lofty end, God has made the "truth of things" and the mind of man as a pair of perfectly matched correlates, fashioned to fit each other like hand in glove. Moreover, Whichcote further intensified the magnetic character of this objective-subjective harmony by placing it all in the context of a teleological universe.

God has created a universe in motion, pulsating with a powerful teleological beat. At every level of the "great

chain of being" is a proper end to which each species tends. It is "truth metaphysical" and guaranteed by God that each creature has been endowed with principles commensurate with its end. As has been pointed out, Whichcote's emphasis on the immanence of these principles of motion places him in line with the Platonic outlook adopted by the Renaissance and the new science. In the spirit of the age, Whichcote looked to the immanent makeup of things as the locus of meaning. He turned to the thing itself in his search for theological significance just as the new science was seeking the explanations of things in their geometric structure rather than in extrinsic considerations.⁷⁸ His attempt to extend the emergent concept of nature to include a religious dimension constituted a vastly significant but little known contribution to Restoration religion.

As has been said the truth of things is not ready-made but implies a "motion", metaphysical truth consisting in the perfect proportion between the principles of a created being and its divinely conceived end. Thus on the creaturely side of creation, truth is to be realized in via, i.e., in the movement of a being to its proper end. Whichcote saw the source of this teleological drive within things themselves and called it nature in a sense that goes back to Aristotle and beyond. More precisely, he adopted a traditional division of creation according to the perfection of the principle of motion into the ranks of inanimates, sensitives and rationals. At the lowest level, inanimates move to their end by the "force of nature"; sensitives tend to their ends by the "guidance of sense" while man directs himself to his end by the "apprehension of the reason of things". (3, 91-92) The apologetic bearing of this teleological cosmology momentarily shows through in Whichcote's amusing insistence on the idea that while there is a perfect proportionality between the other levels of being and their ends, God has created an even more perfect proportion between man and his end. "Our

deformity is more", Whichcote said, "because our perfection is more... and we were made more sufficient to our connatural acts, than either sensitives or inanimates to their proper acts".

(3, 92)

Making allowance for that apologetic intent which will be dealt with more fully later, it is nonetheless evident that the concept of nature in question here is a lofty one. Its prime analogate is nothing less than the divine nature itself in the perfection of God's relationship with His ideas. In creation this "nature" reappears at a creaturely level, incarnated in the harmony of a universe in which each order of being tends unerringly to its proper end--with that one obvious and apologetically convenient exception. Unique among the creatures in this regard is man, whose end it is to reproduce the divine nature in a special way. Little wonder then that Tuckney, who subscribed to the Westminster Assembly's declaration that the "light of nature" is bright enough to render man inexcuseable in his sin but affords no positive knowledge of God, harboured such deep suspicions concerning Whichcote's view of nature.⁷⁹

The natural foundation of the "life of religion":

Realizing one's "image"

But Tuckney was wrong to relegate Whichcote's divinity into the "dung heap" of philosophy. Even at this "natural" level of his thought and independently of any consideration of the fall and redemption Whichcote's conception of human life is profoundly religious. To complete his picture of man's harmonious relation to the truth a phenomenological portrait of Whichcote's view of human life as an orderly progression toward the full realization of man's divine potential is in place here. Along the lines of the thought of the early Hellenistic fathers Whichcote saw man's likeness to God as a goal towards which he is to move under the gentle guidance of the Spirit by way of a lifetime of gradual spiritual growth.⁸⁰

At this point, before reproducing that phenomenology, exception must be taken to the position of Lichtenstein who has designated Whichcote along with the other Platonists as contributing to the decline of the "numinous aspect of religion" which took place in the England of the Restoration.⁸¹ That Whichcote's concept of the distinctly divine quality of revelation is not that of Puritan Calvinism with its "wholly other" God is certain. But distinction need not mean contrast. It is misleading to state that Whichcote belongs to the category of religious personalities known as the "once-born" meaning that he had little understanding of the darker side of life and the necessity of spiritual struggle, together with a weakened sense of sin. The analogous character of man's God-likeness, and the necessity of an unremitting quest to realize that analogous stature are fundamental aspects of Whichcote's view of the divine-human relationship. It is not that Whichcote failed to uphold the transcendence of things divine--the God who fulfills rather than overwhelms human reason is truly transcendent--that contributed to a decline of the numinous but rather the age's failure to heed the profoundest level of the Platonist's thought. That other aspects of his theology did contribute to a weakening of the sense of the divine is true but that fact is more of a commentary on the spirit of an age sick of the excesses of a religious revolution than on the spirit of Whichcote's theology.

We can begin that phenomenological portrait of the life of "natural" religion with Whichcote at the "age of reason" by which he probably meant the Stoic age of reason, viz., fourteen years old, a time when a young man first begins to form concepts of right and wrong, in the view of that philosophy.⁸²

We are to be doing our duty to God, ourselves and others, as soon as we come to the use of reason and understanding; for motion of religion doth begin with reason; and so soon as a man is able to make use of reason and judgment, he ought to put himself upon motion of religion, for we are as capable of religion, as we are of reason; and indeed no man can use his reason as he ought but religion will be predominant with him, and over-rule all his motions. (1, 37)

Whichcote showed little enthusiasm for the dramatic inbreakings of the Puritan God. He emphasized the importance of a solid religious training early in life and faithful adherence to the guidelines of that education to virtue. Steady progress is the rule, death-bed repentance is something one must by no means count on. In a comparison of which Lessing made significant use at the other end of the Enlightenment, Whichcote likened the first stages of the life of religion to a teacher-student relationship.⁸³ Until he is mature enough to judge for himself the merits of what he is being taught the young "student" must trust his teacher. Whichcote stresses however the provisional and temporary nature of the trusting stage.

Every man as a learner must believe, and give credit to his teacher, but yet let him not depend upon his teacher more than needs must, nor no longer than need require: for you ought not to think that you must be in the state of a learner all the days of your life. A child must believe what is told him at first, that this letter is so called, and that two letters put together spell so much; but after a while he comes to see the reason thereof as well as his teacher; and will not be content always to be in the state of a child; but will, as he ought, use the privilege of his nature, and the judgment of discerning, and see with his own eyes. (1, 155-6)⁸⁴

On the other hand an implicit faith, such as that espoused by Catholicism and by many within the Protestant fold as well, is wholly unacceptable. When a man refers himself in an absolute and permanent way to another in that most weighty matter of religion this attitude of credulity can only be condemned as the worst form of irresponsibility.

If the age of reason marks the dawn of the "motion of religion" the day of that motion lasts as long as life. Religion is not to be relegated to the death-bed nor postponed until old age. The prime of life when man is vigorous and well is the time for religion.⁸⁵ The plain fact of the matter is that growth in religion is no easy process but can only be gained slowly, gradually and over an extended period. Fitting oneself for eternity requires a life-time of preparation.

For how can men get knowledge all in a moment? Is the time of sickness a time for men to learn? when men should come to

practise, is that a time to be taught? when men are put upon the very last nick of acting. Or to get themselves released from long and naughty habits all on a sudden; and the faculties released from such inclinations; when as the prophet tells us, that it is next to washing the blackmoor white, for men that have been accustomed to do evil, to do well. So that we deal honestly and uprightly with men, telling them, as they expect to be happy hereafter, in this state to acquaint themselves with necessary knowledge, and to get themselves discharged from all naughty habits, which will not be easy to do upon a sick-bed; especially if men have long abused themselves, through ill use, custom, and practice. (1, 181)

Whichcote's insistence on the time of life by which he meant the time of healthy active life as the kairos for "motion of religion" brings to mind one of Bonhoeffer's leading thoughts. Bonhoeffer turned away from existentialist philosophy's preference for peripheral situations such as anxiety and sickness as "loci theologici" par excellence to recommend relocating theology in the "center of life" where man is strong and able. In the first decades of this century, Reformation theologians made much theological hay of the rather gloomy intuitions of existentialists like Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre. In the past decade however a strong reaction has set in against this pessimistic line and Bonhoeffer's call for a more positive approach has been heeded.⁸⁶

"Motion of religion" which begins with the age of reason and grows with the persistent application of reason, reaches its mature stage when a kind of synthesis has taken place. Religious maturity is attained when the "reason of the thing" has become the "reason of the mind". The man of mature religion who has built upon the firm foundation of personal insight is the very antithesis of the "drudge", i.e., the person for whom religion remains a foreign entity which is carried about as a burden. Characteristic of mature religion is the spontaneity and joy of the man whose relationship to God is inward or personal. Mature religion is a matter of "right reason" or reason righted. When, by virtue of constant effort, the "reason of the thing" in which is found God's revealed truth has become the reason of man's mind then there are no

longer two principles but one. When the prejudices and false biases which fill the mind have been emptied out and a man's reason is in conformity with that objective sphere of the "truth of things" then has "motion of religion" reached its perfect phase.

In the state of religion, spirituals and naturals join and mingle in their subjects; so that if a man be once in a true state of religion, he cannot distinguish between religion and the reason of his mind; so that his religion is the reason of his mind, and the reason of his mind is his religion. They are not two things now; they do not go two several ways, but concur and agree; they both run into one principle, they make one spirit, make one stream. The effects and products of his reason and religion are the same, in a person that is truly religious; his reason is sanctified by his religion, and his religion helps and makes use of his reason; so that in the subject it is but one thing; you may call it, if you will, religious reason, and reason made religious.... (4, 147)

Summing up: Nature's kinship with divine truth

From the "age of reason" to the age of "religious reason", this has been an account of the gradual ascent to religious maturity of Whichcote's concept of "natural religion". Two aspects of the "natural" character of this conception should be brought out before proceeding. First, though this image of (human) nature implies a different God concept than that theology which views God in contrast with nature, nonetheless the regular influence of a God is obviously involved here. Secondly, in the context of the persuasive tone of Whichcote's preached theology natural religion is depicted as natural by no means in the sense of an account of an existing state of affairs but is held up rather as an ideal to which men must be exhorted to return by way of repentance for their sins.⁸⁷ Therefore, contrary to Tuckney's suspicions, what Whichcote meant by nature is by no means a realm devoid of deity but from both the above-mentioned points of view, a sphere pointing profoundly to God--to the God of creation and the God of reconciliation.

Summing up the dialogic structure of Whichcote's vision of nature with regard to man, one sees on the one side the created

counterparts of the divine ideas, viz., the "truth of things", and on the other the created counterpart of the divine personality, viz., the "spirit in man". One sees moreover that these created correlates are drawn powerfully toward each other by the teleological drive which informs all of creation. Likeness calling to likeness, the human spirit moves toward truth with all the desire and delight of the Platonic soul emerging from the darkness of the cave into the light of its true sphere. Little wonder since it is nothing less than the harmony and joy which marks His relationship with uncreated Wisdom that God wants to share with his created "image".

Truth is a-kin to man's mind, so that you may say, as Adam did of Eve, thou art bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, Gen.ii.23. So saith the mind of man of truth. Thou art near of kin to me; or as increated wisdom speaks to God, so truth speaks the same language to man's soul, I was with thee as one brought up with thee, I was daily thy delight, Prov. viii. 30. Truth is so near to the soul; so much the very image and form of it that it may be said of truth; that as the soul is by derivation from God so truth by communication. No sooner doth the truth of God come into the soul's sight, but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance: which tho' they have been by some accident unhappily parted a great while; yet having now thro' the divine providence happily met, they greet one another and renew their acquaintance as those that were first and ancient friends. If truth doth but appear, the soul resigns up it self to it; nothing is more natural to man's soul than to receive truth from any person. (3, 17-18)

Nature as Natural Revelation

"Theologia naturalis?"

At a time when the finality of the Kantian critique of natural theology's "proofs" of the existence of God have been questioned and the certainties of post-Kantian science have given way to doubts, the theology of a seventeenth century divine who saw God revealed in creation may not appear as objectionable as a few decades ago. What might prove objectionable however, even to those open to such a line of thought, is the detail and clarity Whichcote ascribes to that cosmological revelation.⁸⁸ In comparison with Reformation theology, the Catholic theological tradition has been consistently

optimistic about the apologetic value of a theologia naturalis. But even the most optimistic have drawn a line between the cosmic revelation of God and His revelation in sacred history. The First Cause to which Thomas concludes in his "five ways" is only identified with the Christian God by an act of faith. Schillebeeckx represents the traditional Catholic viewpoint in this matter when he writes that without grace "man reaches God only in and through creation, actually as something belonging to creation; that is to say, as the absolute principle of its being."⁸⁹ Taking his cue from the classical tradition, and especially from the natural theology of such thinkers as Cicero and Aristotle, Whichcote goes beyond the readiness of the Catholic tradition to see God in creation with his affirmation of a cosmic revelation which holds out to man the possibility of a personal relationship with God.

The content of Whichcote's natural revelation

But what was precisely Whichcote's idea of that primordial level of truth where creation and mind are in harmony? Having meditated over a prolonged period on the Pauline notion that God allows man to see His perfections in the "visible works of His creation",⁹⁰ Whichcote came to identify those revelatory works as a hierarchy of clearly defined configurations of creation, each with its plainly intelligible moral imperative. Creation speaks to man of God and the words that it utters are "be sober, righteous, and godly".⁹¹

What creation calls for is a right relationship toward oneself, or sobriety, right relationship toward one's fellow man, or righteousness, and right relationship toward God, or godliness. Ironically, for biblical support of this natural ethic Whichcote mainly relied on a text from Paul's epistle to Titus which Calvin had repeatedly used--though with a difference of emphasis deeply revelatory of the divergence between their theologies.⁹² Referring to Titus 2, 11-12, Whichcote identified his ethical imperatives with the

duties of living "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" of that Pauline text.

Sobriety he makes the first moral duty and prerequisite for the other two. "Religion begins at home", Whichcote affirmed, "it's first operation is upon our affections; he that governs not himself, is not capable to do his duty to God or man." (2, 210) Sobriety is divided into two parts, as it refers to the mind, and to the body. With regard to the mind sobriety is called modesty or humility and implies awareness of one's creatureliness. Opposed to this virtue is the vice of arrogance or esteeming oneself "above what is meet." With regard to the body, sobriety means moderation or governing our bodies "as the mansions of our souls, and as tools and instruments of virtue." Opposed to temperance is the vice of self-indulgence which ruins health and makes the body an unwilling subject of the mind.

Righteousness in the strict sense as opposed to the broad sense by which he sometimes designates the whole moral part of religion is a quality of relationship to fellow man. In his recommendation of this virtue Whichcote approaches the sublimity of the New Testament's agape in his insistence on equity, the attitude of going beyond the requirements of legal justice and taking all of the individual circumstances of a case into consideration and then adding an ample measure beyond what those circumstances demand.⁹³

The third requisite virtue in the realm of natural religion is godliness, the habit which concerns itself with man's duty to God. As is the case with the foregoing virtues, the detailed breakdown of this virtue into several parts reflects the clarity which Whichcote ascribed to natural revelation. In a discussion of the minimum measure of knowledge necessary to make a man good, from which he would excuse none "but infants, and idiots" Whichcote already included the notions that "there is a God; and that we all ought to reverence, adore, and worship him." The comprehensiveness of the more typical longer list makes one wonder about the necessity

of a revelation in Christ. For such a list comprises a program of no less than eight attitudes man owes to God, each of which is based on a naturally known "apprehension" of the deity. Because of the importance of this "program" it is here quoted in full. Godliness comprises these eight constitutive parts:

1. Reverence and regard of the divine majesty. Now this depends upon great and worthy apprehensions of the divine excellencies and perfections, and doth express itself by prostration before God, sense of our inferiority and distance.
2. Submission to him, and obedience to his commands. And this is founded in the relation that we stand in to him: this is our state, and God's due, if he be our maker. If he have dominion, title and property to us; then are we his peculiar, and we owe him all submission and obedience.
3. Reference of ourselves to him, and dependance upon his pleasure; for we are best in his hands. This doth suppose placing a trust, affiance and confidence in him: otherwise we shall never refer ourselves to him.
4. Love and delight in him, harmony and complacence with him. This will make us acquiesce in him; and what is more lovely than the first and chiefest good? And God is the first and chiefest good.
5. Thankfulness to him, for his benefits, free communication and influence; and this is advanced by our sense of our unworthines, and a sense of our incapacity to make a just retribution.
6. Since he hath been faithful to thee in all time past of thy life, trust him for the time to come.
7. Since he is the center of thy soul, rest in him; for the center is the place of rest.
8. Since he is thy utmost end; subordinate all things to him.

(2, 231-32)

As is the case with sobriety and righteousness the things of godliness are all part of the easily known truth of natural religion. We are not yet in the realm of revelation stricto sensu!

And when thou hast done all this, then I do assure thee, that thou art a godly person; and art gone beyond those heathen virtues that fall short of religion. And yet when thou hast done all, I can still assure thee, thou hast not gone one step beyond true reason, and hast done no more than what exactly becomes a moral agent; and none can give an account of the use of his reason, either to God or himself, if he be

a stranger to these instances of piety, or devotion to God.
(2, 232)

Innatism?

It must be obvious by now just how optimistic Whichcote was about the possibility of personal relation with God at the level of "nature". Despite his emphasis on the objective character of truth one wonders about the verisimilitude of such a transparent truth when one thinks of the opaqueness of the material world. Indeed, one is tempted to dismiss Whichcote's dicta about the incarnate locus of truth and man's task of conforming to it and with Cassirer to lump him with the many innatists of the age.

But duty is not yet virtue nor is the desire for happiness holiness. The quest character of the "image of God" is very real in Whichcote's thought and must be counted a good indication of the incarnate quality of his concept of truth. While Whichcote's version of natural religion is connatural to the human spirit, it is not innate in the sense that Lord Herbert's was.⁹⁴ Whichcote made a careful distinction between the fundamental drive in man and the "moral duties" of which natural religion is constituted. The desire of happiness "tho' it be the foundation of duty, that basis...upon which the law is founded; yet it is not properly a moral duty, about which men have a liberty of acting: they must do so; nor can they do otherwise." (3, 329) The "moral duties" on the other hand, while closely connected with the finality of man's "natural principle" as means to end, are not identical with it and therefore can only be induced by persuasion.

Whichcote's view of the neutrality of the human spirit--hardly compatible with an innatist conception of the mind--is the terminus a quo of man's quest for the truth. The mind of man, Whichcote affirmed, is a "tabula rasa" awaiting the impressions which the aspirations of man will bring it, for "our souls become like in form and shape...to that with which it is in conjunction." (2, 160 cf. 3, 215)

Qualifying the radical openness of that concept and a factor which gives added urgency to the quest is the bipolarity of human nature. In Whichcote's conception, man is not purely plastic but his potentiality is sharply divided into a spiritual and a bestial potency. In the tradition of the Platonic vision of man as a charioteer pulled by two horses, Whichcote sees man as a "compound" in whom "heaven and earth as it were meet".⁹⁵ It is this bipolarity, this specific difference of the Plotinian plasticity of Whichcote's view of the soul, which makes of man's necessity to pursue the truth a "test".

And this is our trial, in this state; whether by the weight of body, we will suffer ourselves to be depress'd, and sink downward by minding earthly things, and so take our portion here, and fall short of God; or, whether by the reason of our minds, we will mount upwards, mind heavenly things, converse with God by heavenly meditation, and make choice of the things that are most excellent, whereby we shall naturalize ourselves to the employment of eternity. (4, 254)

But one must not exaggerate this aspect of Whichcote's image of man. "Test" as it functions in his thought does indicate something of the seriousness which he ascribed to the quest character of the spiritual life; it has little in common however with the Calvinist conception of the Christian life as a test, with its emphasis on the normality and positive significance of adversity. While seeing meaning in the obstacles man must overcome Whichcote prefers to accentuate the positive fulfilling qualities of goodness and virtue. The test image as he employs it is a pointer to the reality and power of evil, and a warning to be on guard against it. While human nature has more affinity to good than to evil yet the balance is delicate and the possibility real that man thwart his "natural principle" and bring himself into an "unnatural estate". While God has generously provided for him, non-use and neglect of his capacity for goodness can result in the diminution and even the loss of his power of moral judgment.

Thus the "test" is eminently fair: Nothing more is

required than that man become what he is in virtue of his nature. Unless he wilfully the authentic orientation of that nature he will connaturally move into a right relationship with himself, with God and with his fellow man. Connaturally, not automatically: There remains the necessity of activating his latent powers, of "using" and "improving" nature. Yet because of the proximity of the truths of natural religion to the foundational truth of his being, to spurn such truths is the height of folly for the demands of natural religion are the demands of "right reason" itself.

Natural religion was the very temper, complexion, and constitution of man's soul in the moment of his creation; it was his natural temper, and the very disposition of his mind; it was as connatural to his soul, as health to any man's body; so that man forc'd himself, offered violence to himself and his principles, went against his very make and constitution, when he departed from God, and consented to iniquity. It is the same thing in moral agents, to observe and comply with the order and dictates of reason, as it is in inferior creatures, to act according to the sense and impetus of their natures. It is the same thing with the world of intelligent and voluntary agents, to do that which right reason doth demand and require, as it is in sensitives, to follow the guidance of their senses, or in vegetatives, to be according to their natures. This is concluded universally by all moralists. It is as natural for a man, in respect of the principles of God's creation in him, to live in regard, reverence, and observance of Deity; to govern himself according to the rule of sobriety and temperance, of prudence and moderation; to live in love, and to carry himself well in God's family; this, I say, is as natural for him, as for a beast to be guided by his senses, or for the sun to give light, the fire to give heat, heavy things to fall downwards, light things to be carried upwards. (3, 52-53)

Making allowance for the rhetorical exaggeration by which he has raised the connaturality of natural religion to the level of man's "natural principle" one can discern here both Whichcote's tendency to accentuate the capacity of human nature and the apologetic purpose behind his "natural religion" conception.

Proximate they are: The "laws" of natural religion "have a deeper foundation" than the Law of Mount Sinai itself. Long before He engraved the Ten Commandments "God made man to them, and wrought his law upon mens hearts" so that "the things

thereof are the very sense of man's soul, and the image of his mind". (3, 21) But this and other images of a substantive kind are intended to express the affinity of these truths to human nature rather than to identify them as given innately. Each of the truths of natural religion has an objective foundation which man is to discover by using his God-given principles. The "reasons of things" is however so akin to "right reason" that at the mature stage of religious development they have become so identified that man "cannot distinguish between religion and the reason of his mind; so that his religion is the reason of his mind, and the reason of his mind is his religion." (4, 147) This union is not a denial of the objective aspect of truth but an overcoming of that otherness in spiritual communion.

IV. THE PASTORAL AND APOLOGETIC CONTEXT OF WHICHCOTE'S CONCEPT OF NATURE, NATURAL RELIGION

The context

It was one of Whichcote's cardinal convictions that the Calvinist idea of faith was harmful. Men who are told that they are justified in the eyes of God without having contributed to that justification in any way are more liable to use that free forgiveness as an excuse for moral laxity than they are to see it as a call to prayer and mortification.⁹⁶ If God has been thus arbitrary in singling them out they too have a certain warrant to act arbitrarily. One of the chief ways in which they did so was in the exercise of a "zeal" which would impose their creed upon others.⁹⁷ Behind this fanaticism Whichcote saw the visage of Calvin's sovereign God. It was his great concern to supplant this idea of God with a vision of a rational, accountable God. To this purpose he opposed the pardon-repentance schema of Calvinist theology with a repentance-pardon concept of the Christian life.⁹⁸

The whole thrust of the rational framework of his theology is to urge repentance by showing that God's forgiveness can only take place in conjunction with a real change of heart. The way that he articulated that recommendation was by depicting God as a deity who acts according to reason and press the inference that his created "image" should do the same. Now to man in his "marred" state, acting rationally could only mean turning away from the power of sin to begin using his reason rightly. The strong Platonic strain in Whichcote's "imitation of God" theology is subordinate to the gospel call for repentance.

The Apologetic Syllogism

Major premise: God is rational

Our method will be simply to follow Whichcote through the premises to the conclusion of the syllogism which runs like so many girders through his discourses, viz., God is rational; man is the image of God; man should act rationally. Having done so, a further section will show how the whole syllogism points up the need for repentance and the gospel.

God is rational. Against the image of the double-willed deity of Puritanism⁹⁹ Whichcote depicted God as an eminently open and accountable being. One of the main tenets of Calvin's doctrine of God was that "He dwells in light inaccessible." Beyond the God of the Bible there is an Augustinian hidden God who remains essentially unknowable. Whichcote forthrightly rejected this idea of a revealed and a hidden divine will, and affirmed that God has fully disclosed himself to man. God is not mocking man; his gospel promises are to be taken at their word. He is ready to help all who turn to him in repentance. To maintain the notion of a hidden will in God is to do him a grave injustice. It is the device of "crafty men" whose devious minds would make the deity over into their own image.¹⁰⁰

Whichcote was concerned to de-fatalize the horizon of

the Christian life. This he did by showing a straight-line relationship between what a man does and his resultant "reward". As a man sows so shall he reap. There are no eternal predetermining decrees.¹⁰¹ Everything is above board and out in the open; the "test" has not been "rigged". Success depends not on fate but purely on the will of the player. If a man uses his God-given talent and takes advantage of the ever-present divine assistance he will inevitably reach the goal. Heaven is not a place to which the elect are transferred at the end of life; it is rather primarily a state attained in this life by the man who cooperates with grace. Neither is hell a punishment awaiting untold multitudes of reprobates; it is rather a state brought on by the self-destructive character of sin and already beginning in this life.

Some think that the hellish state is the sole product of omnipotency and sovereignty, the effect of God's power; and they think of God that he useth his creatures as he will; giving no account of any of his matters to principles of reason and righteousness. These are injurious apprehensions of God, and dishonourable to him, and are disclaimed by him every where in scripture; and God owns no such power, neither doth he look upon it as a privilege, nor doth he cloath himself with such a prerogative. (3, 106)

Much of what Whichcote thought about God's rationality can be gathered in the negative context of his exonerating divine behaviour from the charge of arbitrary and unaccountable dealings with men. Since this wilfulness was nowhere more keenly felt than in the divine wrath and punishment Whichcote devoted considerable attention to preaching a picture of God's moderation in that area. Sin and suffering he ascribed for the most part to human causality. God is as a good parent who does all he can to prevent his child from sinning, and if his preventive efforts are in vain does all within his power to repair the damage. The divine power is circumscribed however by the divine rationality. Having created man with the desire and capacity for freedom nothing, not even the tragic self-violation which foolish men inflict upon themselves by their sins, will cause God to interfere

with that created mechanism of liberty.

Thus in sin and punishment it is man and not God who acts irrationally, for it is man's highly unaccountable act of betraying all that he knows to be right that brings on these things.¹⁰² To attain this pinnacle of irrationality a man must not only resist the whole thrust of his being toward the good but he must also ignore or otherwise thwart every offer of divine assistance. That God does not step in and prevent the evil that ensues is anything but irrational. In the light of the divine goodness displayed in creation and providence God's "anger" at the irrationality and ingratitude of his creature is completely justified.

We must remember, that man by his make, is a free agent, is both intelligent and voluntary; and in this state a man is under this bar; positus in aequilibrio, else could not sin: he is counterpoised on the one side by that that is just and honest, against that that is on the other side pleasurable and profitable: and here is a man's counterbalance; looking to God, he is well directed; looking to the allurements of sense, he is tempted: the delightfulness of sense is correlative to that which is in it's nature just and holy. Now here God is taking high offence, and having just indignation against man's foolish affectation and wilful choice, whom he made intelligent and voluntary, that he should in such an unequal competition, determine himself to the worst, he doth not hinder, but leaves him to the fruit of his own ways, and saith, then let it be according to thy heart's lusts, and be filled with thy own ways, Prov. i.31. Therefore, let not any man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own hearts lust, and enticed. James i.13,14. (3, 300-301)

The fatalistic phrase "it is the will of God" with which men shrugged their shoulders and piously assigned the cause of evil and suffering to an inscrutable deity was anathema to Whichcote. It is the will of God that man be good and happy; it is the frustration of that will by wilful wickedness causes evil and its concomitant misery.

Visible not only in His restraint, the rationality of God is also revealed in the positive context of His mighty efforts to move man to the realization of his "image". Unlike the God of Calvin whose grace makes a shambles of nature

the God of Whichcote's preaching remains fully responsible for that which he has created. Because Whichcote holds on to the goodness of creation and does not sacrifice it to an exaggerated doctrine of Original Sin all of God's subsequent acts toward man appear in the light of responsibility and rationality rather than as arbitrary acts of a "merciful" deity. God still becomes angry and is moved with pity but unlike the "wrath" and "mercy" of Calvin's theism these divine emotions are shot through with rationality.

As God acts at the divine level so should man behave on the human plane. To the world's great confusion this is precisely what they were doing. According to Whichcote, zeal and imposing of religion are characteristic activities of those imbued with the notion of a sovereign deity. The fulcrum with which he would lift this dangerous variety of divine imitation to a "sober" and peaceful level was an eternal and immutable rational law. Just as God always acts in unswerving conformity to that law of his nature so should man be ever observant of the Law of Nature. If it is not weakness but rather the very perfection of God to be thus observant so is it man's perfection to observe that immutable law. It is only foolish men who desire that which is evil who think that freedom must include the ability to do what one pleases. But they are mistaken for that eternal sphere of "reason" which God observes and publishes for man's observance is not right simply because it is law but is law because it is right. Thus to vary from such a law is to lose true freedom and fall into a vacuum of ignorance and impotence. "Right gives rule to the law," Whichcote insisted, and the law doth declare what is right; and it is not a law, if it be unrighteous and unjust. This must be true of all human laws; for I am sure it is true of all the laws of God. The psalmist saith, Psal.cxix.142. That thy law is truth; that is, it is as it should be; for right is the boundary of power and privilege; for it is not power, if it be not in conjunction with right and truth; for God declares that his throne is established in righteousness, Prov. xxv.5. It is not power to be able to do that which ought not to be done; for ungoverned appetite is not power but weakness. It is

not power to do evil, but impotency, weakness and deformity. Free-will, which we so much contend for, and brag so much of, it is no absolute perfection, and we need not be so proud of it. For free-will, as it includes a power to do wrong, as well as right, is not to be found in God himself; and therefore it is no perfection in us. For this is true of God, that all his ways are ways of righteousness, goodness and truth; and there is not in him a power to do otherwise than is just and right. And if we were God-like, as we should be, the fruit of the spirit in us would be in all righteousness, goodness and truth, Eph.v.9. (1, 251)

Minor premise: Man is the image of God

To place in relief what Whichcote means by imitating God one can profitably examine his idea of the non-imitation of sin. Because God has made man in his image to sin is to act arbitrarily. To the fatalistic objection that human nature is in no condition to resist the power of evil Whichcote used strong language to affirm that the very opposite is the truth of the case; indeed that man has been so generously endowed that to sin is the height of folly.

We are very apt to lay all the fault upon our natures; but really our wills are rather to be blamed. That that undoes us, is our perverse wills, corrupt affections, stubborn hearts; and these do more harm in the world than weak heads: 'tis not so much want of knowledge as goodness. God is a great deal more known in the world, than he is either observed or loved. But this will be the world's condemnation, that where men either did know or might know, there they either grossly neglected themselves, or went against their light; that men put out the candle of God's spirit in them, that they may do evil without check or controul.... (3, 152)

By this analysis of sin in terms of intellect and will is not intended any ontological or psychological dualism, the faculties being morally neutral. Rather does Whichcote intend the basic level of man's religious being. What he is saying is simply that because man is an inherently religious being he must somehow deliberately counteract that natural tendency in order to get away from God and the call of his truth.

Whatever form it might take, the basic character of sin in Whichcote's view is irresponsibility. To sin is to "hold the truth in unrighteousness". Of all the beings in

creation the sinner is the one creature who does not respond, even though he has within a principle more proportionate to its end than those of lesser beings which nevertheless move unerringly to their appointed perfection. Sinning is not so much a matter of doing this or that as not doing. Sin is a "shift", an aversion, a shrugging off of the dignity of human nature.¹⁰³ It has little in common with the faults, and failings of those who "intend God" but who occasionally lapse. However haltingly they are at least moving in the right direction. Those who hold the truth in unrighteousness are not moving at all. The sinner would keep in bondage the truth that he is made for God. Sin is, in a word, a refusal to grow into the God-like image for which man was made. Because of the triadic thrust of truth to sobriety, righteousness and godliness, the face of sin will differ from case to case. But whether it be the intemperance of an ungoverned body, the unrighteousness of provoking one's neighbor or the impiety of denying God, sin is in every case and at bottom a deliberate and culpable irresponsibility.

The contrast between the demands of a clearly known divine truth and the whim or arrogance of the man who would deny that truth could not be greater. Sin is the funny-tragic prospect of man pitting his puny will against the infinite will of God.

Conclusion: As God is rational so should man be rational!

As God is so should man be. It has not been sufficiently recognized that Whichcote's "rational theology" was a preached theology. For all his intellectualistic approach--about which Tuckney strongly complained--Whichcote's picture of man as image of God was painted in the colours of persuasion. His message was be the image of God ; seek, search out the truth, then put it into practice.

Whichcote's technique is deceptively incisive: In insisting that it is literally the most natural thing in the world for man to be God-like, he is taking advantage of the growing prestige of "nature" as a persuasive force, to

recommend religion. He was holding up the mirror of nature proclaimed by the new science to show people just how unnatural was sin.

Nonetheless here was no pale philosophical deism, as Tuckney contended. The idea of nature is at bottom a being who knows the practices the truth perfectly. It is nothing less than God's perfect conformity to the truth that Whichcote sets up as the standard of human conduct. It is the weight of that divine model which is behind his every argument for moral betterment. His "natural theology" was preached in the key of exhortation and, though he shied away from the Reformation image of a radically corrupt human nature, the hortatory ring of his every discourse makes it evident that he believed in a fall. Occasionally, when he became explicit about the apologetic point of his preaching, that fallen condition was brought to the fore.

It is as natural for a man, in respect of the principles of God's creation in him, to live in regard, reverence, and observance of Deity; to govern himself according to the rule of sobriety and temperance, of prudence and moderation; to live in love, and to carry himself well in God's family... as for a beast to be guided by his senses, or for the sun to give light, the fire to give heat, heavy things to fall downwards, light things to be carried upwards.—How far therefore are we degenerated and fallen below the state in which God created us; since it is so rare a thing for us to comply with the reason of things! (3,53) 104

Whichcote was an astute religious psychologist. Like Calvin he was appealing to a basic level in human nature. The great difference is that whereas Calvin chose to play upon man's sense of guilt Whichcote directed his message to man's sense of virtue. Not that he was without awareness of the "shadow-side" of man. In telling his audiences of what they should be Whichcote was gently reminding them of what they now were. By holding up an image of godliness he was enabling men to take stock of how far below that standard they were living. This image of God-likeness as natural contains an enormous pressure which bears down on the head of those who would betray their native dignity. Unlike the

crushing pressure of a theology which would drive man into the arms of God however the force of Whichcote's persuasive theology is rather that of example by which man might be drawn to God. The whole weight of this imitation of God divinity is a call to repentance. Man must work out his salvation in fear and trembling but he must work it out. The "impotency of our nature vitiated by the fall" is a matter of "lamentable experience: and it becomes us to be sensible of it", Whichcote asserted, "But"--and this is the significant point at which he hurled defiance at the prevailing religious outlook--"we must not so far extend it, as to say a man is thereby become a stone. For in the confidence that God is with us, we may go on, and defy the devil, and the whole world." (2, 350)

The preaching of Benjamin Whichcote is a continuous appeal to a secret core of goodness which remains the basic truth about man despite his sin. Because he is addressing himself to fallen man his message of imitation of the divine nature is at the same time a call to repentance. For the fallen "image of God" repentance is an eminently rational course of action. In fact, in a universe which so perfectly mirrors the divine rationality man must repent or appear a very monster!

Thus does Whichcote's concept of nature and natural religion point beyond itself to the sphere of revelation. Because man is fallen the joy of connaturally fulfilling the duties of natural religion is not to be. Though something of his spiritual power remains yet without help man is scarcely able to carry out those fundamental dictates of his nature. Whichcote sees that help forthcoming from Christian revelation as a second special emanation of truth, viz., the "truth of after-revelation", the perfectly fitting measure taken by an ever rational God on the occasion of man's deflection from His original purpose.

That Whichcote's natural religion thus points beyond

itself to the realm of divine revelation is certain; that it did so in a way which failed to impress his Puritan colleagues is also certain. They judged that the Platonist's perspectives falsified the Christian message. To these Calvinists Whichcote's high estimation of nature and reason could only constitute a derogation of the glory due to God alone. From their point of view all of the Vice-Chancellor's dicta about Christ and his saving work amounted to very little. As Tuckney put it, here was "a kind of moral divinity minted, only with a tincture of Christ added."¹⁰⁵ Just what was the relation between Whichcote's concept of natural religion and his Christology will be explored in the following chapter.

NOTES: CHAPTER TWO

1. Ernst Cassirer, Die Platonische Renaissance in England und die Schule von Cambridge (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1932). Translated by James P. Pettigrove as The Platonic Renaissance in England (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1953). Thus Copleston, e.g., in his A History of Philosophy (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964), Vol. V, Part I: Hobbes to Paley, pp. 63-73 has obviously followed Cassirer's schema. H.R. McAdoo on the other hand in his The Spirit of Anglicanism follows another great Cambridge Platonist scholar, viz. C.E. Raven, whose positive evaluation of the Platonists' relationship to the new science stands in sharp contrast to that of Cassirer. See McAdoo, pp. 127-55 and esp. pp. 131-34 for his comparison of the Platonists' view of nature with that of de Chardin which concludes with the rightly optimistic remark that "despite the acknowledged inadequacy of their concept of the scientific fact noted by Cassirer, the general terms in which they formulated their ideas of nature may ultimately be as productive in other times as their view of reason was in their own." Raven has placed de Chardin in the line of Cambridge Platonism in his Teilhard de Chardin, Scientist and Seer (1962).

2. Cassirer, Platonic Renaissance, pp. 42-44; 121-22.

3. Ibid., pp. 49-51.

4. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

5. Ibid., pp. 78-80.

6. Ibid., p. 122.

7. Ibid., pp. 93-122.

8. Ibid., chap. 5.

9. Ibid., p. 131.

10. Ibid., pp. 131-32.

11. Ibid., p. 132.

12. Ibid., pp. 132-35.

13. Ibid., pp. 150-56.

14. Cassirer, The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), p. 156.

15. Fontenelle, Works, Vol. vi, pp. 67-68 quoted by Basil Willey in Eighteenth-Century Background, p. 29. Cassirer himself has pointed out that already in the seventeenth century thinkers were learning to distinguish between mathematics and an underlying geometric spirit with its manifold analogical applicability. In The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 15-16.

16. J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, The Western Intellectual Tradition (Penguin ed., 1963), p. 134.

17. See R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 84-85, 94.
18. H. Butterfield, The Origins of Modern Science: 1300-1800 (London: G. Bell, 1968), p. 7. Butterfield considers that the overcoming of the Aristotelian view of motion constituted a decisive breakthrough in the history of thought and a "scientific revolution in itself." See his first chapter.
19. Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Tradition, pp. 135-37.
20. Ibid., pp. 254-55; Willey, Eighteenth-Century Background, pp. 9-10.
21. Collingwood, Idea of Nature, p. 92; H. Baker, The Image of Man (Harper Torchbook ed., 1961), p. 57.
22. Letters, see Tuckney's second letter and esp. pp. 19-21.
23. See Works, Vol. 1, Discourse 4, esp. pp. 65-74.
24. Whichcote's polemic against voluntarism was aimed at "excluding atheism". Hobbes's reputation of being an atheist was one shared by few of his contemporaries.
25. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. C.B. MacPherson, (Penguin ed., 1968), pp. 120-21.
26. Ibid., p. 188.
27. See Robert Hoopes, Right Reason in the English Renaissance (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 178; and Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists, p. 28.
28. Cf. Works, 3, 47.
29. Cassirer, Platonic Renaissance, p. 51.
30. See Works, 4, 86.
31. Cf. Works, 4, 44.
32. See Book III of More's Antidote Against Atheism. The chapter headings are given in Patrides The Cambridge Platonists, pp. 286-87.
33. The title of a series of two sermons directed against those who "dispute against the main and principal matters of christian faith, under pretence of reason" in which the author would "deal with them with their own instrument" and demonstrate the reasonableness of christianity. Works, 3, Discourses 50-51.
34. About the scepticism, see Richard H. Popkin, ed., The Philosophy of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 11-22.
35. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 61-66; Collingwood, Idea of Nature, pp. 89-92; Butterfield, Origins of Science, pp. 17-24; Arthur Koestler, The Sleepwalkers (Penguin ed., 1969), pp. 97-102.

36. See Lovejoy, Great Chain, pp. 101-102; Koestler, Sleepwalkers, pp. 99-100.
37. Indeed it is only recently that scholars have become aware that there is such a thing as a history of science at all! See Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), chap. 1; and Bronowski and Mazlish, Western Tradition, pp. 133-34.
38. Butterfield, Origins of Science, pp. 60-67.
39. See Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, pp. 38-42.
40. Collingwood, Idea of Nature, pp. 111-12.
41. Cassirer, Platonic Renaissance, pp. 44-50. Cf. Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists, pp. 17-18; Hoopes, Right Reason, pp. 178-79.
42. Francis Bacon, Aphorisms concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of Man, 3, quoted in Popkin's Philosophy of Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, p. 90. Cf. Cassirer, Platonic Renaissance, pp. 45-46.
43. See e.g., Works, 4, 191-92.
44. Smith, Select Discourses, pp. 1-2.
45. Ibid., p. 3.
46. "Natural" and "rational" are two aspects of Whichcote's vision of truth as "Law of Nature", natural referring especially to the Law as a whole and rational referring particularly to man's participation in this all-embracing Law.
47. See Works, 3, 14; 3, 31-32. Cf. Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, pp. 176-77; 213; Bk. II, pp. 280-82.
48. James Deotis Roberts, From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968). pp. 13-16.
49. See Works, 3, Discourse 67.
50. See pp. 85-86. Cf. Works, 3, 82.
51. See The Cambridge Platonists, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 35-49. Cragg has reprinted important extracts from Whichcote's first three letters.
52. Commencement speech of 1651. Tuckney considered it an attempted refutation of his "Commencement Position" which he defended the year before.
53. Letters, pp. 20-21.
54. Ibid., p. 67.
55. Ibid., p. 67.
56. Ibid., p. 20.
57. Ibid., p. 73.

58. Letters, p. 21.
59. Ibid., p. 21.
60. It is noteworthy that in Whichcote's analysis of what he considered one of the main criteria for evaluating the truth of Scripture, viz., qualitas materiae, miracles occur last in a list of twelve items.
61. Letters, p. 75.
62. See Works, 2, 359; 3, 200.
63. Letters, p. 67.
64. Ibid., pp. 99-100.
65. Ibid., pp. 112-13.
66. Ibid., pp. 41-42.
67. Ibid., p. 101.
68. In direct confrontation with Tuckney and his Puritan adversaries, Whichcote wisely avoided applying that principle, an exercise he did carry out however in several of his discourses. See, e.g., Works, 2, 356-60; 3, 197-201.
69. Letters, p. 46. Cf. pp. 105-106, and Works, 3, 176-77; 2, 187-88.
70. A. Lichtenstein has claimed that Whichcote contributed to the diminution of the numinous aspect in religion through his emphasis on the clarity of revelation, and antipathy for obscurity. In his Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 177. For a criticism of Lichtenstein's position, see below, chapter 4.
71. Letters, pp. 104-105.
72. See Works, 3, 184.
73. Letters, pp. 101-102.
74. See, e.g., Works, 2, 188.
75. Roberts too, has questioned that reputation in his Puritanism to Platonism, p. 10 in connection with Whichcote's strenuous efforts to retain his Provostship at King's but has generally had only good words for his conduct and character.
76. See, e.g., Letters, pp. 106, 126.
77. A. Tuckney, None But Christ (Cambridge, 1654), pp. 50-51, quoted in Roberts' Puritanism to Platonism, p. 65.
78. That his thought was teleological and organic does not render it extrinsicist. He saw finality in function of the intrinsic structure of things rather than from any extrinsic viewpoint. See McAdoo, Spirit of Anglicanism, pp. 130-31.
79. In Roberts, Puritanism to Platonism, p. 47.

80. For kinship with St. Irenaeus's vision of the Christian life see The Early Christian Fathers, ed. Henry Bettenson, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 67-70. See also John Hick, Evil and the God of Love (Fontana ed., 1968), pp. 217-24 and C.A. Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists, pp. 19-23.
81. Lichtenstein, Henry More, p. 177.
82. Ludwig Edelstein, The Meaning of Stoicism, p. 36.
83. Lessing also emphasized the provisional character of this phase in his "The Education of the Human Race". There are more than incidental similarities in the two thinkers' religious outlook. The whole thrust of Lessing's thought in the "Education" tract follows the lines of Whichcote's program of growth in the "life of religion".
84. Cf. Works, 4, 337.
85. Like the production-efficiency mentality of our own day, this attitude leads one to ask about the lot of the chronically sick and debilitated. But Whichcote would not deny such categories of people a share in God's grace; it is here a matter of emphasis.
86. See, e.g., T. Ogletree's "From Anxiety to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Theological Reflection," in New Theology No. 6, ed. Martin Marty and D. Peerman, (London: MacMillan, 1969), pp. 35-65 and esp. pp. 41-46.
87. The latter point, about the preaching context, is supremely important for a good understanding of Whichcote's theology. See pp. 116-25.
88. See pp. 110-12.
89. E. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 2. Cf. K. Rahner, Theological Investigations, trans. Cornelius Ernst (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965), Vol. I, pp. 81-82.
90. Romans 1, 18-21. See Letters, p. 9.
91. From the Titus text which Whichcote saw as a summary of the duties of natural religion: Titus 2, 11-12. "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." While the text says that grace teaches man the necessity of these virtues, Whichcote viewed them first of all as the call of a natural revelation and then as "republished" by the "gospel revelation".
92. Calvin, Institutes, 1.12.4, I, p. 403; 4.1.26, II, p. 301; 3.7.3, II, p. 8; 3.25.1, II, p. 260; 3.9.5, II, p. 29. Calvin stressed the latter part of the quote, viz., "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself

for us". It is probably not a coincidence that the same text appeared prominently in the Council of Trent's Decree on Justification in the section concerning increase of justification. D 804, pp. 236-38 in The Church Teaches. Whichcote's conception of grace is far more similar to the Catholic than the Protestant position.

93. See Works, 2, 218; 2, 178.

94. Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648). Lord Herbert's emphasis on the apriori character of what he called the "common notions" of religion and his tendency to dismiss the doctrinal side of religion set him apart from Whichcote. While obviously influenced by the so-called "father of deism" Whichcote went his own way seeing truth rather as the goal of moral effort and maintaining a more positive attitude toward "doctrinals". See B. Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, pp. 128-37; cf. F. Copleston, History of Philosophy, Vol. V, pp. 53-54.

95. Works, 1, 196. Cf. 2, 160.

96. See Works, 3, 105; 3, 285; 3, 153.

97. See Works, 2, 260; 3, 127-28.

98. See Works, 1, 202-203; 2, 350.

99. In Perkin's God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will, his last work (1602) he distinguishes between God's secret will, or the will of his good pleasure, and God's revealed, or signifying will. The secret will is his sovereign eternal decree and "the first and principal working cause of all things".

100. See Works, 1, 223; 4, 347.

101. E.g., Works, 2, 359; 3, 200.

102. It is man's sinful irrationality rather than the power of God that causes death, and hell. God's part in this is not more than the reluctant ratification of the self-will of the sinner. See e.g., Works, 2, 197-200.

103. That this sloth, or acedia, lies at the root of sin has been opportunely recalled by Harvey Cox in his On not Leaving It to the Snake (London: SCM, 1968), pp. vii-xviii. This view of sin has definite Platonic overtones as well. See P.E. More, The Religion of Plato, pp. 256-61.

104. Cf. Works, 3, 92.

105. Letters, p. 39.

CHAPTER 3

WITH A TINCTURE OF CHRIST?

I. THE SETTING: REFORMATION CHRISTOLOGY

A certain extrinsicism

To illuminate the originality of Whichcote's Christology a brief survey of the Reformation Christology against which he was reacting is in order. The aim of the survey will be to touch on the inner mechanism of the reformers' thought by which the grace of Christ in the scholastic sense of sanctifying grace tends to be viewed extrinsically. It was because Whichcote judged that extrinsicism was causing a widespread disregard for basic moral principles and was furthermore behind the rise of a "spirit of persecution" raging throughout the English Church that he preached a new image of Christ, viz., a meek and mild Christ of ordinary morality.

Luther and Calvin took Augustine at his word and depicted the effect of Adam's sin in terms of complete ruination for human nature. Having left themselves with no basis for grace to build on, they depicted God's saving action in terms of a mysterious recreation. With his strong Christmysticism Luther appears to have desired a less extrinsic relationship between man and God than his doctrine of justification implies yet for want of a solid link to connect a ravaged human nature with grace he could not conceptualize that aspect of his thought. Believing there to be no insurmountable barrier between the infinite and the finite, Luther sought to present grace as a reality present and operative in the lives of men. Calvin on the other hand was not as anxious that the triumphant Saviour be brought into close contact with man.¹ Thus from the heaven to which he returned at the Resurrection, Christ sends the Spirit out across an infinite chasm to man but not even the power of

the Spirit can effect a real ontological communion between Christ and the believer.²

Because man is powerless to do anything about them, his sins if they are to be forgiven must of necessity become "Christ's own sin, or else we shall perish forever."³ The Christ of Luther saves man by becoming a "curse", i.e., by subjecting himself to the miserable conditions of a fallen race. While retaining the concept of Christ made "sin" for man, Whichcote will shift the saving power of Christ onto a more positive plane. The obedience of Christ, conceived of by the reformers in forensic terms, is transposed by Whichcote into the key of rationality. Whichcote's Christology thereby fills in the gaps of a personally orientated but imperfect reformation doctrine of Christ. Luther had turned away from the Church's preoccupation with merit to forge a living theology of personal relationship with Christ. But his powerful central intuition remained imperfectly expressed. Obviously the fruit of his own deep experience, Luther's vision of Christ is vivid and personal but his theological elaboration of the believer's relation to the Saviour is marred by categories which fail to do justice to the personal character of that vision. Christ takes away our sins--but how? Christ makes us holy--but how? Luther's articulation of the dynamics of the believer's personal relationship with Christ fall below his convictions about the same.

Working with the same Augustinian model of a radically corrupted human nature, Calvin invested much theological cash in the transforming aspect of an atemporal heaven. Calvin's believer lives literally out of himself and in the heavenly Christ. By the faith operated in them by the Spirit, believers receive benefits from the fulness of Christ's grace now but will be fully transformed when they join their Saviour in heaven. As long as human nature remains thoroughly corrupt--and neither Luther nor Luther are willing to compromise on that principle--its present receptivity is severely limited. The reformers' solution to this problem is to

offer an extrinsicist holiness in this life and the promise of total transformation in the hereafter.

Not even God's love for his elect can avoid the fact of that corrupted condition. That is why the believer must live out the life of faith amid "contraries".⁴ Calvin delighted in depicting the Christian life as a kind of negative divine logic in which the depth of divine love is to be measured by the amount of hardship he sends to the believer. Interpreted as providential trials and temptations to test and perfect the resolve of the elect, these negative experiences were made fodder for faith. Because the reality of sin was seen to perdure beyond the waters of baptism the life of faith could not be painted in overly bright colours. If the founder of Protestantism chafed under the constraint of his first principles Calvin and succeeding generations of reformers made a virtue of necessity. The negative dialectic of finding meaning in meaninglessness, hope in hopelessness, faith in doubt has become a distinctive feature of reformation theology.

Typical of that position is Puritan Calvinism with its Second Adam Christology in which Christ is depicted as the one who stands in contrast to Adam in his victory over the devil's temptations. The Combate betweene Christ and the Devill, The Christian Warfare, and Christs Combate and Conquest are just a few of the works of that theme which gave influential expression to the image of Christ as the successfully battling soul. Together with the theme of man's pilgrimage, this image "was the great device for presenting the central experience of Puritan morality, namely temptation."⁵ Such a theological tack with its apparently noble aim of urging men on to "spiritual victory" over massive obstacles that are sure to arise appears very sound yet by suggesting that the paradoxical is the normal and the contradictory the usual mode of God's action, and implying moreover that man can cope with such difficulties, seems to this author to subtly appeal to the very pride that it aims at rooting out.⁶

Luther and Calvin achieved their aim of placing grace beyond the reach of the grasping hands of man and making Christ the sole source of salvation but in so doing imparted a new meaning to the concept of salvation itself. If man could no longer pretend to merit grace neither was he in any capacity to receive it when graciously bestowed. No longer could salvation be depicted as a process in radical continuity with creation. Luther wrote of a "little faith" proper to man but could hardly anchor it solidly in his dualistically divided version of human nature. While he will say that the goal of salvation is complete liberation from sin⁷ more characteristic are statements in which sin in man verges on constituting a permanent principle of human nature.⁸ Because of that near dualism Luther's concept of salvation remains very much a forensic matter as is clear in his distinction of his viewpoint on justification from that of the "popish schoolmen".

Christian righteousness, therefore...is the imputation of God for righteousness or unto righteousness, because of our faith in Christ, or for Christ's sake. When the popish schoolmen hear this strange and wonderful definition, which is unknown to reason, they laugh at it. For they imagine that righteousness is a certain quality poured into the soul, and afterwards spread into all the parts of man.... This matter, as touching the words, is easy (to wit, that righteousness is not essentially in us, as the Papists reason out of Aristotle, but without us in the grace of God only and in his imputation; and that there is no essential substance of righteousness in us besides that weak faith or firstfruits of faith, whereby we have begun to apprehend Christ, and yet sin in the meantime remaineth verily in us); but in very deed it is no small or light matter, but very weighty and of great importance. 9

While it is certain that Luther's was no other-worldly theology yet the fact that sin bulks so large in his thought tends to edge the transforming aspect of grace almost wholly into a hereafter. Despite his exaltation of divine mercy, grace can make little headway in a world so sinful that even the souls of the elect are scarcely able to resist its power. The Christian life is viewed as a rather grim affair of constant struggle against forces which threaten to extinguish

the believer's tiny "spark of faith". Were it not for the interposition of the mediator even the believing Christian, technically still worthy of God's punishment, would be justly condemned. Under such adverse conditions the "already" aspect of salvation in Luther's sense amounts to little more than "holding one's own". True, faith in Christ gives man the ability to accept being accepted by God in spite of one's unworthiness and thus lifts one above the fruitless law of "works". From that elevated viewpoint--realizing that his acceptance does not depend on his own efforts--the believer can go on to perform truly Christian works. And yet, in a world conceived of as a seedbed of sin and unbelief the thought of Luther always returns to its center of gravity, viz., the need to believe.¹⁰

In Calvin's thought too the matter of believing is located at the summit of Christian activity. Works follow faith as a kind of natural fruit but belief itself remains the central act. The idea of a deeply rooted all-pervasive sin elaborated by the reformers in order to better highlight the work of Christ¹¹ remains part of their theological schema also after the Saviour's coming. In fact, the world appears to remain what it has ever been since Adam's sin, viz., a den of iniquity. The dualistic vision which divides the world into two camps of sinners and saints is also applicable to the heart of the believer where sin remains as deeply seated as ever. Little wonder then that faith is presented as the sum of Christian life where believing is clinging to the rock of Christ in a storm of evil.¹² Knowing his sinful condition it becomes no little feat for the believer to trust that God can overlook such unworthiness and stoop to show his mercy in Christ. To be able to believe in such gratuitous goodness is to discover the key to salvation. On the other hand, with nothing to recommend himself to God sinful man can do little else than cling to the divine mercy, believing against belief. Because faith thus appears amid "contraries" one could not be sure that he really possessed the key to salvation. Calvin

had to bend his best talents to the matter of distinguishing between an authentic God-given faith and an almost identical spurious faith.¹³ Having raised faith to such a rarified level it is little wonder that the question of assurance became the preoccupation of the English branch of Calvinism.¹⁴

Because of a kind of theological backlash the reformers' concept of grace and salvation tends to be characterized by an extrinsic and forensic quality. The emphasis on a universal and absolutely corrupting sin which lent apparent strength to their Christology from one side, worked to undermine it from the other side. A two-edged sword, such a conception of sin wounds man for Christ but in so doing cuts so deeply into human nature that man is left with only enough strength to cling to Christ's merciful hand. As such, salvation tends to mean a being saved from rather than anything more positive. Grace can save man only by doing a kind of divine violence to his nature.¹⁵

Whichcote's strategy: Salvation as reconciliation

It was against the extrinsicist view of grace and salvation that marked the religious outlook of his country-men that Whichcote developed a Christology designed to meet what he considered to be the great need of his time. He was convinced that the Christology of the reformers' justification by faith theology had become for many of his contemporaries the divine authorization of a disregard for ordinary standards of morality and a spirit of zeal or persecution. In a disclosure to Tuckney of "the secret sense of my soul" Whichcote told of how he felt called to oppose that false zeal.

I dare not blaspheme free and noble spirits in religion, who search after truth with indifference and ingenuity: lest in so doing I should degenerate into a spirit of Persecution, in the reality of the thing; though in another guise: For a mistaken spirit may conceit it self to be acted by the zeal of God. And I have observed that in former times, some, whose names and memories I otherwise honour and value their writings have been sharp and censorious, severe and keen: even to the persecution of such, whom I doubt not but God had received. And I greatly fear, that some also, in our times, do so too. And I do believe that the destroying

this spirit out of the Church, is a piece of the Reformation which God, in these times of changes, aims at: and I fear to be under the power of the anti-character to the work that God is about; and to stand disaffected to what God is doing in the world. 16

With the same sense of what the times would bear, Whichcote's approach to the "destroying this spirit out of the Church" was that of irenic indirection rather than direct confrontation. In a manner reminiscent of Aquinas's handling of certain of Augustine's ideas, Whichcote respectfully took up the justification Christology of the reformers but then subtly reinterpreted it to fit his purpose. "I profess myself", he wrote to Tuckney, "as full and clear as any one in the world in that grand point of our acceptance with God, in and through Christ".¹⁷ But there is another aspect of Christ's work, viz., that of sanctification, which is scarcely less important than his expiatory work "both being the provision of Heaven, to make us capable of happiness; and fundamentally necessary to our safety."¹⁸ Having nodded respectfully in the direction of the Calvinist Christology, Whichcote is ready to reinterpret "Orthodoxie" in terms of "Charitie".

I confess, I cannot but marvell to see you balance matters of knowledge against principles of goodness; and seem to insist on Christ less as a principle of divine nature in us than as a sacrifice for us....But certainly, if we consider difficulty or danger in relation to persons as the subjects or receivers of these great blessings from Heaven: then one is more easily understood and readily pretended while the other, as wholly contrary to carnality, is stuck at and greatly neglected. How easy to say...Christ died for me--self-flattery saying it, as well as faith--and I do fiduciam in eo collocare--the greatest sinner having least matter of self-confidence:--whereas the whole inordinate self rises up in rebellion against self-surrender into divine will and real transformation of man into the spirit image and nature of Christ! And this latter being the great demonstration of the verity of the subject's faith of the former; it may seem, that the former may be best secured, by the frequent confirmation of and much insisting-upon the latter: the former being understood once for ever, upon a full declaration and thorough consideration of it...the latter being not otherwise to be known than by being felt: which is not, save as sensuality is mortified and crucified. 19

Continuing in a more direct vein, Whichcote states that in an England where Christianity is "the religion of the

Nation, and the first point of Education, and whosoever sticks at it is looked at as a prodigy and monster" to "acknowledge Christ" is as insignificant as it is easy. But now is the time to take a further step: "Now that Christ is more known and freely professed, let him also be inwardly felt, and secretly understood as a principle of divine life within us, as well as a Saviour without us." What England needs now, Whichcote concludes his plea, is a new image of Christ "especially whereas we live in a crowd of men who indeed profess some zeal for that happy point of 'Justification by Faith' yet are sensibly degenerated into the devilish nature of malice, spite, fury, envy, revenge" is nothing other than "the certain conjunction of sanctification, holiness, and a divine nature" along with their justification faith.²⁰

In the first letter before the debate about Christ began to boil over, Whichcote had attempted to mollify his opponent with a distinction that would unite his Christ of expiation with his own Christ of sanctification under the common denominator of "reconciliation".

Christ does not save us by only doing for us without us: yea, we come at that which Christ has done for us with God by what he does for us within us. For, in order of execution it is as the words are placed in the text; Repentance, before Forgiveness of sins: Christ is to be acknowledged, as a principle of grace in us as well as an advocate for us. For the scripture holds forth Christ to us, under a double notion: 1. to be felt in us, as the new man in contradiction to the old man: as a divine nature in contra-distinction to the degenerate and apostate nature....2. to be believed on by us as a sacrifice for the expiation and atonement of sin; as an advocate and means of reconciliation between God and Man. And Christ does not dividedly perform these offices; one, and not the other. For reconciliation between God and Us, is not wrought, as sometimes it is said and pretended to be in the world, between parties mutually incensed and exasperated one against another.... 21

But despite Whichcote's efforts to find common ground by identifying his concept of repentance with the preparatoria ad justificationem "frequently determined in the schools by Dr. Ward"²² Tuckney remained uneasy about a distinction which appeared to accord a measure of spiritual ability to the corrupt nature of unregenerate man. His fears were not to be

quelled until he had himself rendered the threatening proposition harmless by reducing it to familiar Calvinist categories. To Whichcote's use of the axiom that an unrepentant sinner is an unfit subject of justification to support his position that repentance must precede forgiveness Tuckney's cautious, hair-splitting reaction is typical.

That expression of yours, of "a sinner non omnino in motu conversionis etc."; I do not well understand unless your meaning be that a sinner, qua talis, without any movings toward conversion etc.--if so; though, as I said before your αποτέλεσμα of justification, in puncto rationis, a renovation goes first; which does elicere actum fidei, by which we are actually justified: yet in hoc motu God moves first; and, in so far as Justification consists in pardon of sin, it is very considerable; whether immediate antecedenter it has for it's object a sinner, as a sinner, under the guilt and in the state of sin; though it do not so leave him: and so God properly justifies the ungodly. 23

The lines of his strategy were set. Notwithstanding the Tuckneys of the time Whichcote was determined to preach a Christ of repentance and transformation, "a principle of divine life within us....the Leaven of Heaven; sent into the world, and given to us to leaven us into the nature of God." It was his hard fought conviction that the saving work of Christ includes the transformation of man as one of its integral aspects. "Christ does not save us by only doing for us without us"--or, from the standpoint of the to-be-transformed subject, the "sum and substance of the gospel", i.e., "repentance from dead works, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" are in reality one and the same thing.

To believe, there is requisite an internal disposition and preparation of the subject, as well as a divine promise to build upon....Repentance and faith in the gospel are indifferently used: he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, John 3.36. Now he doth not really believe, who doth not truly intend to do answerably. The scripture calls believing on Christ, receiving of him, John 1.12. If we receive him, then we receive him such as he is, and to such effects and purposes as God sent him for; now God sent him to bless us, in turning us from our iniquities, Acts 3.26....Faith includes an intention of new obedience. 'Tis a fair matter of belief, pardon of sin to them who repent; and sin not pardonable to impenitents; so that our satisfaction and reformation go together, strengthen and enliven each other.

II. THE RECONCILING CHRIST

A modest mediator

To overcome a "spirit of persecution" and a disdain for ordinary virtues--due no doubt not only to the extrinsicist aspect of the reformers' theology of grace but also to a concomitant denigration of the Catholic "pelagian" moral system--Whichcote preached a concept of reconciliation entailing the real inner transformation of man. Because God cannot be reconciled with man until he has laid aside his sins, justification cannot be only a transaction between Christ and the Father but must include a motion from the side of man. Now it is to elicit that motion that Whichcote's Christ comes into the world looking, one might add, rather like a mediator in a modern-day labour dispute in comparison with the all-powerful Saviour of Calvinist Puritanism.

Whichcote depicts the reconciling action of Christ as aimed at both parties at variance, viz., God and man. That he does so seems commonplace enough but constituted a radical departure from the then prevailing concept. In Calvin's theological schema the actual saving deed of Christ does not really involve a human party. Man, crippled by the fall, is a non-starter in the race of salvation. The "mediation" of Christ deals basically only with the injured deity. Mediation amounts to interposition with Christ standing between the anger of God and the object of the divine wrath.

But for Whichcote interposition can never bring about reconciliation when God is involved.

But with God there cannot be reconciliation without Our becoming God-like: for God's acts are not false, overly, imperfect; God cannot make a vaine shew; God, being perfectly under the power of goodnesse, cannot denie himself: because, if he should, he would depart from goodnesse; which is impossible to God. Therefore we must yeelde, be subdued to the rules of goodnesse, receive stamps and impressions from God; and God cannot be farther pleased, than goodnesse takes place. They therefore deceeve and flatter themselves extremely; who thinke of reconciliation with God, by meanes of a Saviour, acting upon God in their behalfe; and not also working in or upon them, to make them God-like. Nothing is more impossible than this; as being against the nature of God: which is in perfect agreement with goodnesse, and hath an

absolute antipathie against iniquity, unrighteousnesse and sin. And we cannot imagine, that God by his Will and Pleasure can go against his Nature and Being. 25

While Whichcote retained the terminology of propitiation he was at pains to point out that God never felt himself so wronged as to leave off loving his rebellious creature.

The fact that God's love for his created "image" remained steadfast means that it is man as man to whom is directed the divine saving will. Though the fall has "marred his principles" man is till very much an actor in the drama of salvation. Christ "applies himself" to the human party not as to an object but as to a free subject. In Whichcote's Christology the true notion of mediation is verified in that the Saviour deals with man as man, i.e., according to the deepest principles of a still viable human nature.

While the Christ of Calvin effects his purpose of calling the "saints" by means of the secret agency of the Spirit Whichcote's reconciler operates by way of a "moral motion", by which is meant that he acts by appeal and persuasion rather than by power. It is a "motion" in line with the rational structure of human nature. Whichcote opposed the Calvinistic idea of reconciliation as a powerful and mysterious divine action carried out without man's conscious co-operation:

For intelligent and voluntary agents are not drawn by force, but fairly persuaded. Machines are drawn by wires, and animals by sense, but intelligent and voluntary agents must be dealt withal by persuasion and fair inducements, and in a way of argument. A man cannot possibly be converted without his own act; he must of necessity understand the reason why, and give his voluntary consent. It is very true, God made us without us; and it is as true, he will not save us without ourselves. Therefore they deceive themselves that expect God should work upon them when they themselves work not: when men make application to God, then is he ready to concur with them; but not when men are asleep, lazy and incogitant.

(2, 263-64)

On the other hand Christ comes not to demand an impossible act of satisfaction but to persuade man to render that of which he is till capable, viz., an acknowledgement of his apostacy and a desire for forgiveness.²⁶ More man cannot do; more the mediator does not ask. Respectful of both parties

at variance, Christ tailors his conciliating action to the exact requirements of the case. He is above all a rational Saviour, binding himself to the truth of the dislocated divine-human relationship.

For the reconciler is to deal equally; not to over-bear either party, but in consideration of either party, he enjoins what is just and fit, and what the necessity of the case will bear; so that the parties may come off with as little wrong as may be. The necessity of the case, and the right of the party, are the two things the reconciler considers in his endeavours for peace. The reconciler's work must be, to convince the offender of his ungratefulness, and to offer something to the offended to forgive....So you see, that the reconciler is to apply himself to the state of the case, and to act as the case doth require. He may be look'd upon as a hinderer of men's rights, if in matters of difference, he takes upon him to lord it; if he doth not act fairly, and deal with both parties, he is an usurper. And the man that goes this way to work, he may chance to do more wrong to one party, it may be to both, than was first given. (2, 267-68)

Whichcote's strong sense of an objective sphere of truth or "reasons" which is so fundamental that it binds both God and man is very much in evidence here. Such delicacy on the part of the mediator doubtless seemed a dimunition of his dignity at a time when the Calvinist Christ figure was predominant but the age's growing sense of human dignity must have found Whichcote's Christology congenial.²⁷ That sense of the inviolability of the human is the premise he invoked in order to buttress his case for a non-obtrusive Saviour. According to Whichcote, anything imposed on man does violence to his dignity. "There must be free forgiveness on God's part, and ingenuous submission on the sinner's part. What is forced upon us, is insignificant. If you punish a malefactor till doomsday, there is no satisfaction." (2, 268) Neither, he might have added, does unasked for grace satisfy.²⁸

Thus Whichcote's mediator moves in a sphere between God and man, each with their own demands. That the mediator had to deal with an injured God who required satisfaction was part of the religious outlook of the age. Novel and significant is his idea that the other party to reconciliation also needed satisfying. "I dare say", Whichcote proclaimed, "the death of Christ, according to the will of God, upon occasion

of sin, is as requisite and necessary in respect of our apprehensions, and the satisfaction of our minds, as it is any way in respect of God." (2, 376) The unwonted claim that reconciliation must be "highly pleasing" not only to the offended deity but also to man must have raised many a Puritan eyebrow. Talk of indispensable human requirements before God constituted a radical departure from established opinion in a land dominated by the Calvinist dialectic of divine transcendence and human wretchedness.²⁹ Calvin had written much about the demands of Christian living and the indispensability of clinging to the Saviour but the predestinarian framework of his ethical doctrine tended to undermine the significance of the human role in salvation. For Calvin, reconciliation is an essentially divine activity, one that Christ performs single-handedly. Invested with the office of redeemer the Son of God goes about his task with admirable efficiency. Man is not consulted, only saved. The idea that this boon should be humanly desireable is deemed irrelevant.

To gain a clearer notion of what Christ does and is in Whichcote's theology it is helpful to look more closely at the two poles between which reconciliation takes place, viz., God and man. Focussing in first on God's role, one can see that in contrast to Calvin's ambiguity on the subject, Whichcote is refreshingly clear on the matter of the divine relationship to fallen man. God is the "first and chiefest goodness" who has always loved his created "image". Though this divine steadfastness appears to partake at times of the aloof and immutable aspect of the aristotelian deity, the immanent and involved character of the Christian God is generally very much in evidence.³⁰

Unlike the unmoved mover of Aristotle this God is the passionate vulnerable deity of Scripture. This God is grieved by the fall but His grief is tempered by the knowledge that human nature was prone to fail in the first place. Not that the creator like some modern manufacturer who builds obsolescence into his product, positively planned man's "breakdown", but it can be said that God laid a "very great" charge upon

man when He gave him the task of self-government--a task greater still than the calling of the angels, some of whom nevertheless fell.³¹ Less severe with man, Whichcote's explanation of the fall lends itself more readily than the Augustinian version to a harmonization with the findings of modern science but does not completely banish the suspicion that God's role is somewhat ambivalent.³² At any rate, Whichcote's intention is clear, viz., he would stress the idea that the creator's love for man has ever been steadfast. To buttress the biblical witness to this divine steadfastness he made abundant use of the Platonic theme of an unjealous and constantly good god. "It cannot be conceived that the original of being, and the fountain of goodness", Whichcote echoed Plato,

should be without designs, and thoughts, intentions, and purposes of doing good. It is irrational, to imagine that the original of all beings, and the fountain of all goodness, should be conceived to be at any time without intention, designs, thoughts, and purposes of good. For we find that malicious and mischievous dispositions, they are always hatching mischief, designing, contriving, and delighting in it, and love to effect it. Dispositions that are transcendently good, they are equally gracious, and compassionate: for that which is degenerate, cannot be more operative to ill purposes, than that which is infinitely perfect by constitution be active to good purposes. (2, 91-92) 33

Calvin's theology depicts the love of the creator turning into wrath upon the occasion of Adam's rebellion. In this dreadful state of affairs the primary significance of Christ becomes that of a priest-victim who, standing "in our place", offers himself as the suitable "propitiation" to divine justice. As Perkins put it, after the tortures at the hands of his captors Christ "became as accursed to God his Father, that is God poured upon him, being thus innocent, such a sea of his wrath as was equivalent to the sins of the whole world."³⁴ Because God's anger is a theme of far less importance for Whichcote so is a propitiating Christ. Something of the idea of propitiation remains but the emphasis shifts to a Christ who comes to sanctify man by way of an interior transformation.

Calvin's Christ reveals the wrath and the power of God.

Christ as the self-offering priest reveals the wrath of God, and Christ especially in his office of King reveals the divine omnipotence.³⁵ Calvin heightened the aspect of an injured and angry God in order to gain maximum impact for his recommendation of a merciful Saviour. To that contrast Christology Whichcote opposed his view of a Christ who enhances rather than derogates the goodness of the creator. Whichcote is at one with Calvin in affirming that Christ came because of sin but after that their paths diverge.³⁶ To Calvin the fall is an ineffable offense against God requiring full satisfaction; to Whichcote the fall is rather primarily an impediment which prevents man from carrying out the purpose for which he was created.

It is in this situation, between the changeless goodness of God and the changed condition of man, that Whichcote's Saviour comes on the scene. Less dramatically than the Calvinist Christ who virtually effects a new creation, the Platonist's reconciler seeks to lead man derailed by sin back on the track of the creator's original intention. Whichcote was at pains to point out the continuity between the divine plan for man and the saving mission of Christ.

Besides the many scriptural texts he invoked to support this point³⁷ as was his wont Whichcote resorted to rational argumentation. He utilizes a "distinction that we have in logic, that is mightily accomodate to this business", viz., of showing the continuity between the work of the God of nature and the God of grace. It is a distinction between the two "motive principles" that "do affect, dispose, and incline" an efficient cause. First, there is an interior motive principle which interiorly disposes the agent. Secondly, there may also be an external motive principle by which that inner principle is further activated and engaged. Whichcote's application of the distinction is as follows:

I will attribute one to God, and the other to our Saviour. I will make the goodness of God's nature, which is his natural perfection, that that doth inwardly affect, dispose and move him to benevolence, clemency and compassion, and to relieve lost creatures. This shall be the primary internal

impulsive motive to God, to relieve and compassionate us. Then the interposition of Christ's undertaking and performance, the satisfaction that is made to the divine will, mind, and pleasure, by his death and passion; this shall be the external, impulsive cause, which doth further promote, incline and further engage the efficient cause. (2, 77-78)

Quaint as this bit of "correlation theology" may sound, it is significant as another expression of Whichcote's attempt to heal the breach between nature and grace, and restore nature and the "God of nature" to their due stature.

The creator's constant good-will toward his creation including the rebel man is a cardinal principle of Whichcote's theology which derives ultimately from his concept of God.³⁸ According to that concept, the divine intention to stand by creation and bring it to its ultimate fulfillment follows not from the fiat of the will of God but rather from the integrity of the divine nature itself. God is at bottom a rational deity whose will and power are ever measured by His wisdom. All that God creates is fashioned according to the orderly pattern of the divine nature. Thus what He has in His wisdom created, God cannot but continue to will.³⁹ This unvarying good-will depends not on divine condescension but on the very makeup of created things, products of that creative wisdom.

In the case of man, God has made man "capable of himself", having placed him "into a relation with Himself". Invoking the Stoic principle that "God and nature do nothing in vain", Whichcote described God as rationally efficient in his every action, especially in his special providence toward man.⁴⁰

Our capacities of receiving him, God will fill; and the relation he hath put us into himself, he will answer. For we are made in the image of God; not only upon a moral consideration, but upon a natural account: as we are invested with intellectual natures, and so stand in another relation to God, than the creatures below us. For God will comply with this relation; for he doth nothing in vain. He hath not laid a foundation that he will not pursue; for he will erect a superstructure.... Now the philosophers tell us, that there is no vacuity in nature; therefore every capacity God will fill, and every relation God will answer: God and nature do nothing in vain. (2, 93-94)

Not content with merely fashioning perfect "creations", God in his rational goodness will see his creatures through to their appointed ends. More than a deistic divine clock-maker, the causality of Whichcote's God extend beyond the first fashioning of things and through the whole gamut of a creature's activity. And in the case of man that divine determination to stand by creation is especially important because, although Whichcote will say that human nature is even more perfectly proportioned to its end than other natures, in fact man is the one being whose calling exceeds the reach of its powers.⁴¹ It is this inexplicable slip-up of a master creator-craftsman which provides the opening for a divine mission which would otherwise be quite out of place. Paraphrasing Browning one could say that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's a Saviour for?" In an otherwise faultless cosmos the inherent lack of proportion between human nature and its end--aggravated in the fall--fairly cries out for adjustment. The perfect rationality of Christ's mission is ensured by the need to bring man into line with the harmony of the rest of creation.

Before proceeding to deal more directly with Whichcote's image of the fall and the fallen being on behalf of whom Christ has come one should have in mind the "natural" tenor of his divinity and, more specifically, the question whether his attempt to soften the stern countenance of the Calvinist deity might not lead him to naturalize the whole matter of the fall. Deeply implicated as this question is in Whichcote's conception of nature to grace or of fallen man to Christ, the answer will be pursued in the following section.

Whichcote's version of the fall leaves the love of God surviving Adam's affront substantially intact. Not God but the offender is changed as a result of Original Sin. Fallen man is "wounded" and "sick", his mind poisoned by "rancor and malignity". The original (precarious) harmony of his nature shattered, he is left in a state of vulnerable disarray, a prey to the pull of his now unruly passions. Almost extinguished is the light of his nature which had clearly showed

him the difference between right and wrong. Sunk in lethargy and sensuality, the dim light of his once glorious reason subject to the sway of rumour and prejudice, man has become a spiritual invalid. In a word he is "out of the image of God, his high perfection, which he was invested with in the moment of his creation: he has lost his proper perfection, hath lost more than the whole creation can repair." (1, 115)⁴²

And yet fallen man is not as badly off as some passages suggest. There is an interesting difference between Whichcote's evaluation of the fallen condition in sections dealing with the necessity of Christ's mission and in sections concerned with the danger of sin. To enhance the importance of Christ's mediation the good preacher Whichcote did not hesitate to dramatize the need of an alienated humanity.

For the condition that we are in, respectively to God. This point tells us, we are out of grace and favour, we are at a loss. And if we are so, it becomes us to know ourselves; so that we may deprecate; and we might know that. We are extremely given to self-flattery: but, none but fools would live in a lie. It is too general for men to give way to presumption, and live greatly in a lie, and abide very little in the truth, but it is not safe here, because our great concernment lies here. If we are not atheists, we must go to Christ. This point informs us, that in respect of ourselves we are at a loss. We have miscarried; how can we expect to be received? 'Tis true, we have encouragement enough by the gospel: but we must go in the way of God's direction. We having this knowledge, it will not be hurtful; since we have the knowledge of atonement made by the blood of Christ. (2, 329-30) 43

On the other hand, when warning his congregations against the danger of falling into sin (a major preoccupation of his preaching in spite of Lichtenstein) he would drive home the lesson of man's responsibility for evil and the perversion of sinning by emphasizing the capabilities remaining to man.

It is not only a state of the foulest deformity, but also of greatest violence to be without God in the world. Man contradicts his own principles, and departs from himself, when he falls off from God. No such monster in the world, or more to be marvelled at, than a man devoid of the sense of Deity; as men having no fear of God before their eyes, Rom. 3.18. (3, 181) 44

Compared with one another Whichcote's accounts of the

fallen state appear to conflict but when juxtaposed with Calvin's descriptions of the same they suddenly become clear and unequivocal. Taking into account not only Calvin's exaggerated estimation of Original Sin but also his fundamental view of human nature which sees man as a "worm" before the majesty of God⁴⁵ one readily sees that Whichcote's esteem for the race is higher on both counts. The sublime metaphysical status he assigned to human nature has been dealt with at length in a previous section.⁴⁶ At this point suffice it to recall that man is the "image of God" not only in virtue of potential moral achievement but inherently by way of ontological dignity.⁴⁷ As for the effects of the fall, in spite of occasional Calvinistic sounding utterances, Whichcote's fundamental position clearly points in another direction. Basically the Platonist relegates the fall and its consequences to a level of secondary importance. Not heredity, not even the inherited sin of Adam, but rather freedom is the determinative factor in human development.⁴⁸ "Men are more what they are used to, than what they are born to" Whichcote liked to say.⁴⁹ Furthermore, what he had primarily in mind when harping on sin was not Original Sin but the sin of those who in their freedom take complaisance in sin, pursue its pleasures, and adamantly refuse to forsake it.⁵⁰ These sinful men are different from their fellow men--he distinguished sharply between "sinners" and the good but weak) precisely because they have chosen to be so.

These men came into the world upon the same terms with other men; but they have made themselves such by abuse of themselves. And now they will tell you, they cannot do otherwise; they cannot; why? because they have contracted evil habits, by ill use, custom, and practice; and are not willing to be at the pains to work them off; which through the grace of God, and by a little violence to themselves at the beginning, they might effect. (1, 45) 51

The consequences of the fall are further relativized when Whichcote points to the beginning of the "age of reason" as the self-evident starting point for the life of religion. "We are to be doing our duty to God, ourselves and others", he claimed, "as soon as we come to the use of reason and

understanding". Whatever the impact of Original Sin it is seen as not significant enough to prevent or even postpone the natural time for the beginning of man's religious development.

By thus diminishing the proportions of the fall Whichcote was bucking a strong Reformation position.⁵² Against the Puritan assertion that Original Sin radically corrupted human nature Whichcote held that while the fall took man "off from his divine original" it did not destroy the basis of his relationship to God. That it could not is based on the fact that the foundations of that divinely intended relationship were laid in the deepest center of human nature at creation. Man may ignore or refuse the relationship but he cannot destroy it utterly without destroying himself. The perfect interiority of the creator's intention sets definite limits to the idea of a "fall". While man can fall away from a right use of that inner principle, unless his "apostasy" goes beyond that lapse by way of the self-violation of persistent personal sin that innate God-wardness will provide him with a "principle of recovery" by which he can overcome the downward drag of Original Sin. As in the realm of nature there is a "principle of recovery" by which upheavals of wind and storm are returned to calm, so in the "intellectual world" there is not lacking a natural principle for the recovery of spiritual equilibrium.⁵³ It is to that principle that Christ must apply if his work is to be effective.

III. CHRIST IN THE FALL AND RESTORATION

Foreshadowed in the Fall

The difference between Whichcote's concept of the fall and that of the reformers' is not merely one of degree, as if his version were but a pale copy of that dominant Augustinian vision. With its emphasis on the weakness of man and the understanding attitude of God, Whichcote's view of the fall has much in common with what Hick has called the "Irenaean type of theodicy".⁵³ There is a purely developmental aspect

of Whichcote's vision of the "life of religion" which bears striking resemblance to Irenaeus's view of Christian life as gradual spiritual growth.⁵⁴ With Irenaeus and the Hellenistic Fathers Whichcote locates the fall in the moral context of man's potential for likeness to God rather than in the more metaphysical context of the Augustinian tradition's emphasis on man's original exalted ontological status.

In the Platonist's conception of man's original state all was not simply divine gifts and grace. Man comes from the creator's hands in a condition of bipolarity so that already, at the level of creation, there is present the stuff from which spiritual struggle is made necessary. Even before the snake made its appearance the necessity of spiritual growth and the basic direction it must take were clear to man. It is in the created constitution of human nature rather than in sin that Whichcote primarily perceives the structure of the moral life and the subsequent structure of salvation. Original Sin is a complicating factor but does not substantially alter the fact or fundamental direction of man's "natural" moral imperative.

Paraphrasing the famous phrase from Ecclesiastes Whichcote affirmed that "man is vanity" and distinguished three kinds of "vanity", the first two belonging to the natural imperfection of man, the third the result of the "unnatural" factor of sin. We are concerned here with the first two varieties, constituting as they do the foundation of the Platonists' image of man. First then, man is vain in a "negative sense": Because he is short of divine perfection. For a creature is primary to nothing, he hath no absolute being; for he comes into being at God's call, continues in being by his maintenance and allowance, and must leave this being at his appointment. He is subject to God's pleasure, so is vain in a negative sense; in no moment of his life is he independent, neither for existence, nor in execution: for in God, we live, and move, and have our being, Acts xvii.28. (1, 114)

Secondly, man is vain in a "comparative sense", i.e., "short in perfection of some of his fellow-creatures, short of angelical perfection." (1, 115) What Whichcote has in mind here is the immaterial character of the angelic nature as is evident in his saying about the probability of the fall: "We

have a greater province to administer, than even the angels themselves; they not having so gross a body as we have, nor expos'd to so much evil as we are." (4, 171)

It is under the second rubric of man's vanity in a comparative sense that Whichcote elaborates on the less edifying side of his Platonic image of man, thereby laying down the lines not only for the kind of fall to which man will succumb but also for the kind of Saviour and salvation suitable to the remedying of such a lapsed condition. From the viewpoint of the immateriality of the angels and of glorified man Whichcote affirms that "man is here in his infancy." While certain expressions would lead one to think that this is meant dualistically, i.e., in reference to man's "materiated" condition as, for example, when he says that "in this body, the very reason of our mind is materiated, and the very sentiments of our souls (to use the common phrase) do taste of the cask",⁵⁵ closer study reveals that he has in mind a more nuanced Pauline kind of duality in which the whole man is looked at either from the viewpoint of his vulnerability to sin, or of his high spiritual potential. The point of comparison in these references is not another part of the same man but man in another state, viz., the state of glory. It is in the light of the lightsome "bodies" of that condition that he described the weakness of the "bodies" of our "state of humiliation". Note that it is both the bodily and intellectual sides of man which know that weakness in the earthly phase of human existence. Our bodies shall then be made fit instruments for our souls, whereas now, as the philosopher tells us, the body is an impediment to the mind and to all divine contemplation. Our minds are confined in the body: In this tabernacle (saith the apostle) we groan being burdened; this is the voice of all spiritually awakened souls 'Let us take our flight to heaven and see in the light of God's countenance, and forsake this low and dirty world, for here souls are hindered as to their highest operations of mind, and understanding, and the largeness of their wills and affections'. (Plato, apologia Socratis) (1, 292)

But Whichcote sees more to the fall than mere natural weakness. True to his first principles he would not make fallen man into a "stone" and thereby "make base" the work

of the creator,⁵⁶ and yet neither would he so naturalize the fall as to eliminate the element of sin and guilt. Man is not only negatively and comparatively but also privatively imperfect. "'Tis our misery to be deprived, but 'tis our madness to be deceived, befooled; otherwise we affect to know things justly as they are; why are we not willing to know ourselves?" (1, 118) Guilt has aggravated the natural weakness of the human condition.

The merit of Whichcote's moderation in the matter of Original Sin is that while retaining the guilt dimension of the fall he has connected it up congruously with a credible ontology of human nature and therefore with the doctrine of creation. It is one thing to fall from the exalted righteousness of the reformers' Augustinian Adam and quite another to fall away from the right use of one's capacity for righteousness. That which constitutes salvation in Whichcote's Greek slanted outlook is not primarily the recovery of a lost supernatural status but the recovery of the right use of the power to attain such a status. The fall did not bring the truth of things crashing down. They remain immoveable, the eterna jura of creation. The fall was a fall of man away from his ability to live in right relationship to that immutable truth, away from the power of "seeing things steadily, and whole" and into a Platonic cave of illusion and imagination. More precisely, Whichcote identified that diminished power of spiritual discernment with a principle, the product of a synthesis of biblical, Neoplatonic and Stoic elements, which he called the "Candle of the Lord", the "Light of Nature", or simply "Reason", by which man is connaturally able to move into right relationship with himself, with God and with his fellow man.

Not only the leniency of the Irenaeus view but also the Platonic-Stoic influence is evident in Whichcote's account of the "apostasy" of man. Before:

God considers that we are but finite and fallible, and consist of different materials; a divine and heavenly spirit; and a gross body. He knows that we have a great government, the ruling of sundry appetites; and must subordinate all the motions

of sense, to the dictates of reason and understanding; which is the greatest performance in the world. Yet, this human nature is put upon.... (4, 171)

After:

This is the calamity of us mortals; not that which is true, solid, real and substantial doth always take place; but that which is imaginary doth take too great place in the life of man: not that which is honest, right and good; but that which is pleasing and profitable: or rather, not things of the mind, but matters of sense, do prevail upon many men. (1, 283)

Moral divinity with a tincture of Christ? In the radical gap which separates Whichcote's view of the fall from that of the reformers and in the inevitable divergence in the concept of salvation--indeed of the whole Christian life--that such a difference implies, one begins to understand both why Tuckney posed this objection and also why the Platonist's answer failed to satisfy him. As so often is the case in theological debate, widely different sets of presuppositions were in play. Tuckney's Augustinian-Reformation theology of the fall and redemption with its strong emphasis on the lowliness of man and the power of grace was the framework--considered by the Calvinist as the revealed Word of God--in which he criticized Whichcote's conception of the relation between nature and grace. Whichcote, on the other hand, had drawn heavily on other traditions in his aim of overcoming those pervasive Augustinian presuppositions and of reconstructing Christology along lines which related to the needs of his age.

Logically enough, Tuckney's conception of the person and work of Christ stand in close connection with his first principles; likewise Whichcote's view of Christ is conceptualized in terms consonant with his very different theological framework, viz., an Irenaean-like theology of the Christian life as growth into the "image of God".⁵⁷ Whichcote transposed Christ's saving work into the Greek key of man's development into the divine image for which he was made. As such, and in striking contrast with the violent character of the operation of the Calvinist Spirit of God, the Spirit of Whichcote's theology is a Spirit working with, and within, the "spirit in man".

Every age has its own Christ figure or figures: The Enlightenment help up Christ as the wise teacher of eternal truths and our own time sees the politicization of Christ, and also the mystical Christ for those who have turned away from society to the way of meditation and harmony with nature. Whichcote was laying the theoretical foundation of a new image of Christ for the new age which was about to break in the England of the Restoration. Having noted the bad effects of the notion of a Christ turned away from man to God, Whichcote would bring the Saviour back into a more direct relationship with man and the cause of an everyday, humane morality.

To achieve this he placed his Christology in a setting that has essential reference to man and "natural morality", viz., in the category of "truth of after-revelation" with its total subordination to the "truth of first inscription".⁵⁸ The will of God is the ultimate rule of the truth realm to which Christ's work belongs and because the divine will is ever in perfect harmony with the divine mind, the created expression of that will-revelation will accord fully with the truth communication of the divine mind.⁵⁹ The perfect harmony of God's inner life is the ultimate ground of the rational and conciliatory character of Christ's work.

The ultimate expression of a series of "after-revelations" granted to men since the fall, the Christ of the "gospel-manifestation" likewise brings no new revelation in the sense of additional truths. There is but one truth and that is indivisible: The "truth of first inscription" has been immovably set in the very marrow of creation. Christ belongs to the level of "truth of after-revelation", i.e., those provisions decreed by God in view of the disrupted state of the original revelation, in order to restore man to a harmonious relation with that primordial truth. Christ reveals only in the sense that all that he does points to that original and enduring realm of truth. Indeed the whole thrust of Whichcote's Christology is back to the ground of "natural morality". Commenting on Ephesians 2.10 which states that "we

are created in Christ Jesus to good works, whereunto we were before appointed" Whichcote discloses his vision of the essentially moral and reiterative character of the gospel.

When appointed? viz. in the moment of creation, when God made the spirit in man, the candle of the Lord. So that man, by a natural faculty, did see what things are according to the nature of God; holy, pure, righteous and good: from these we are departed, by the defection; but by Christ Jesus we are again restored to all those good works, to which we were before appointed. So that the knowledge of Christ doth undo the whole work of the devil, the works of deformity, opposition and contradiction to the principles of God's creation, to the light of this candle of the Lord put into us, in the moment that he made us. This is a full place, and shews that a Christian is a restored man, according to the very plat-form of the primitive institution. He is created over again in Christ Jesus; and the workmanship of God is recovered, and restored; and the workmanship of the devil is undone, and destroyed. (2, 132)

Thus is the role of Christ not to provide a new code but a new principle by which man is enabled to carry out the irreplaceable code of creation.⁶⁰ To explicitate and confirm that relationship of Christ to creation Whichcote resorted to his favourite Titus text as a kind of exegesis of the foregoing passage.

See also that notable place to Titus, which place we may refer to, as a summary of all necessary divinity, viz. the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, Titus 2.11-12. Here are the main foundations of christian religion; all that is necessary is comprised in these two words. The first is this, that every one doth own and acknowledge his hope of salvation to be from the grace of God; not having our own righteousness: for we are justified freely by his grace, and 'tis the grace of God that bringeth salvation. Secondly, this grace that bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

(2, 132-33)

Christ is the grace of God which brings salvation, i.e., which illuminates the three-fold duty which constitutes the original and enduring call to holiness. Christ fits into this scheme not as instituting a new code but primarily as an inner principle of spiritual vision.

Smith seconded Whichcote's moral and reiterative conception of the gospel, likewise seeing Christ as a kind of divine will-power. Agreeing with his master that there was sufficient knowledge of God in the world but that the will to holiness was lacking, Smith depicted Christ's significance in terms of a "Godlike pattern of purity".

Divine Truth is better understood, as it unfolds, itself in the purity of mens hearts and lives, then in all those subtil Niceties into which curious Wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the great Master of it, would not, while he was here on earth, draw it up into any System or Body, nor would his Disciples after him; He would not lay it out to us in any Canons or Articles of Belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the World with Opinions and Notions, as with true Piety, and a Godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote an Holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right Belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with Divinity upon the doing Gods will, If any man will doe his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. 61

Moral divinity with a tincture of Christ? Besides placing the weight of his Christology squarely behind the promotion of the virtues of natural religion, Whichcote showed a sympathy and an optimism with regard to the lot of the "heathen" multitudes beyond the pale of the church remarkable for his age.⁶² Much to Tuckney's irritation, he even went so far as to cite instances of virtue from that non-Christian world as examples for Christians to imitate.⁶³ Whichcote was of the opinion that God would be just in his judgment of that great ungospelled world--he reckoned that it constituted nineteenth-twentieths of the then known world--judging it according to the norms of the natural religion which men can carry out unless they have abused their nature.⁶⁴ In reply to Tuckney's advice that he should "not so much nor so often handle such texts, as are examinable by ratio rei" Whichcote reaffirmed the natural basis on which the "heathen" world would be judged. Are not such truths of high importance, of clearest evidence and assurance, knowable lumine innato et naturali, quorum non potest esse ignorantia invincibilis? whereas de Christo there may be ignorantia invincibilis; which, as necessary as the knowledge of Christ is to Salvation, neminem damnat: the neglect and contradiction whereof damnes, where Christ doth

not--the knowledge and observance whereof necessary, where Christ comes to save. 65

Little wonder that Whichcote was the object of a whispering campaign.⁶⁶ Here was ample matter for the consternation of any serious Puritan: Christ's work seen as the reinforcement of a natural religion which already stands man in good stead with God. According to Whichcote, man can escape damnation without the help of Christ. Why then should those to whom the gospel is addressed bother to accept its demands? What difference does it make? It was questions like these that Whichcote's preaching was raising, questions which sound curiously like those being asked in our own age. From a Puritan's Calvinist perspective which Christ in his substitutionary capacity fairly fills, the Platonist's Christ of reconciliation was seen as a mere "tincture", a shadow of the real Christ.

In his refusal to denigrate nature for the sake of revealed truth Whichcote appeared to be levelling revelation. "Religion", he said (referring to revealed religion), "it brings us to God, stays us with God, and makes us to end in him. The law of nature makes it the common condition of created beings, to live, to move and to have being in God; but it is religion that gives sense and feeling of it". (4, 300) While the natural man could look for and even expect divine pardon, revelation afforded the apparently modest advantage of assurance.

And that which the scripture doth over and above reveal, is this; it gives a man assurance, that God is placable and reconcileable; and also declares to us, in what way, and upon what terms, we may be confident, that God will pardon sin, and receive a sinner to mercy, viz. upon his repentance and faith, and returning to his duty. (1, 389) 67

But this brand of assurance had little in common with the concept of assurance which Barrett attacked. To Whichcote's man of faith, belief in the gospel of God's forgiveness is the beginning rather than the end of the Christian life. By it he is charged even more strenuously than his non-Christian fellow man with the same fundamental duties,

viz., rectitude toward himself, God and his fellow man. If God will not judge by what he has not given in the case of the natural man he will certainly take into account the "gospel privileges" in his judgment of those who have heard its message.

The gospel privileges are not to give protection to sinners but are cities of refuge for penitents....spiritual dainties are not to intoxicate the head with conceit, but to establish and make a healthy constitution of soul: and what is that, but to make a man ingenuous toward God, and in religion, rational and intelligent? (3, 157-58) 68

It was with that responsibility side of the coin of "gospel privileges" in mind that Whichcote was wont to vent his anger at those who were misusing the "justification by faith" formula of the reformers to empty Christ's message of its moral content. "How unaccountable are they", he warned, "who have turned the doctrine of the gospel, or the grace of God into lasciviousness...have given such an explication of the grace of the gospel, as to set men at liberty as to morals, that is, to make void the law through faith....For the law of God's creation is no way damnified, but restored and secured by the doctrine of the gospel; yet these excuse themselves from strict morality, and conscientious living, which the better sort of heathens thought themselves obliged unto. (3, 105-106)

But if the hearer of the gospel is doubly charged with righteousness he need not fear for the ideal of holiness of Whichcote's theology is the health, strength and harmony of a restored and "elevated" human nature. To a religious outlook that looked askance at nature such an ideal could only be branded an infra-Christian "moral divinity" and the Christ whose Spirit is seen as the operative giver of this "natural" freedom as a "tincture" or mere shadow of the real Christ. Pale as it might appear to the Puritan eye, the religious ideal Whichcote so eloquently and effectively preached was none other than the authentic "man alive in Christ" morality of the deepest layer of the Christian tradition. Perhaps a no more fitting conclusion to this study can be found than to quote at length from a passage in which Whichcote gives typically powerful and beautiful expression to that ideal.

Religion⁶⁹ puts the soul in a right posture towards God; for

we are thereby renewed in the Spirit of our minds. The soul of man to God is as the flower of the sun; it opens at its approach, and shuts when it withdraws. Religion in the mind is as a byas upon the spirit, inclines it in all its motions; tho' sometimes it be jogged and interrupted, yet it comes to itself. It is a rule within, a law written in man's heart; it is the government of his spirit. We say men shew their spirit by their carriage, behaviour and words; and it is true. The good man is an instrument in tune: excite a good man, give him an occasion, you shall have from him savory speeches out of his mouth, and good actions in his life. Religion contains and comprehends in it all good qualities and dispositions of mind; it doth take in all the virtues that human nature is capable of, which are the qualifications and ornaments thereof, and which are the mind's instruments for good actions. Religion is rational, accountable, and intelligible: the difference is not more sensible between a man that is weak and strong, a man that is sick and in health, than between a man that is truly religious, and one falsly so. You may observe it, if you put them upon action. So a man that is truly religious, if you put him in motion, he will acquit and approve himself so: if he be false in his religion, you will see it by his failing and miscarriage of life. (4, 104-105)

Despiseable to the antipodal outlook of Puritan Calvinism, the „slight“ advantage that Whichcote attached to gospel faith has a peculiarly modern air and appeal about it. Not that Whichcote had fully worked out a theology of the Church as the sacrament of the world such as has emerged in our post Vatican II era but the elements of that vision are there and the thrust of his thought is moving in that direction.

NOTES: CHAPTER THREE

1. See, e.g., Inst., 3.11.23, II, pp. 58-59.
2. See below, pp. 137-38; cf. Inst., 3.2.19-20, I, pp. 486-87, and T.F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), p. 132 with footnotes.
3. Luther, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians in Martin Luther: Selections, p. 136.
4. See, e.g., Inst., 3.3.10-11, I, pp. 516-18. Oman's remark is appropriate: "Calvin found mystery and perplexity in life, but none in God", in John Oman, Honest Religion (London: The Religious Book Club, 1941), p. 40.
5. Haller, Rise of Puritanism, p. 153; see further pp. 150-160; cf. Miller, New England Mind, pp. 53-60.
6. Whichcote distanced himself from that outlook. That evils will befall the believer "we are frequently admonished", he said, but "I do not speak this, as if it were connatural to religion: for a man may decline and avoid a great deal of the troubles of this world, by the candor of his spirit". (2, 180-81).
7. Luther, Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, in Martin Luther: Selections, p. 29.
8. Luther, Preface to Romans, in Martin Luther: Selections, p. 31, where Luther writes of "our indwelling sin"; cf. his Commentary on Galatians where he writes of the Christian's "reason and the wisdom of the flesh" which must be killed daily: "And this is that daily sacrifice of the New Testament which must be offered evening and morning." In Selections, pp. 127-31.
9. Luther, Commentary on Galatians, in Selections, pp. 131-32.
10. See his Commentary on Galatians, e.g., p. 122 in Selections.
11. Wendel has written that "a mesure que Calvin apportait des retouches à son livre et que sa pensée prenait un tour plus rigide, il a accentué les passages où il soulignait la misère de l'homme. Plus cette faiblesse était grande, dès avant la chute, plus était désastreuse la condition de l'humanité après le péché, et plus Calvin pouvait insister sur L'immen-sité de la grâce qui avait permis de la régénérer." François Wendel, Calvin: Sources et Évolution de sa Pensée Religieuse (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), p. 139.
12. See, e.g., Inst., 2.15.4, I, p. 429 where Calvin delineates the "kingdom of God within" in the following terms: "Not being earthly or carnal, and so subject to corruption, but spiritual, it raises us even to eternal life, so that we can patiently live at present under toil, hunger, cold, contempt, disgrace, and other annoyances; contented with this, that our King will never abandon us, but will supply our necessities until our warfare is ended, and we are called to triumph".

13. See Inst., 3.2.12, I, pp. 479-81.
14. See P. Miller, New England Mind, pp. 49-53; W. Haller, Rise of Puritanism, pp. 90-91; cf. Whichcote, Works 3, 20 where he typically depicts faith as the clear answer to man's spiritual longings.
15. In Calvin's case, it is sufficient to take note of the (almost exclusively) negative effects of faith in Book 3, Chaps. 3-8, viz., repentance, penitence, modes of supplementing satisfaction, the Christian life, self-denial, bearing the cross. As for Luther, see Commentary on Galatians in Selections, pp. 163-64.
16. Letters, pp. 115-16.
17. Letters, p. 123. For his fuller profession of the same, cf. pp. 126-27.
18. Ibid., p. 123.
19. Ibid., pp. 123-25.
20. Ibid., pp. 125-26.
21. Ibid., pp. 13-14. Cf. Calvin, Inst., 2.16.13, I, p. 447.
22. Samuel Ward, D.D., the highly respected Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. See Letters, pp. 87-88 with footnote.
23. Ibid., p. 88.
24. Cf. Works, 3, 81-83.
25. Letters, pp. 14-15.
26. See, e.g., Works, 2, 90.
27. See W. Haller, Liberty and Reformation, pp. 256-87; Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, pp. 70-78.
28. See Works, 2, 340-1; 2, 350-51.
29. See Works, 2, 342; cf. Perkins, The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered into Six Principles, in Breward's Perkins, pp. 155-56; and P. Miller, New England Mind, pp. 14-17.
30. See Works, 2, 89; cf. 2, 86-88.
31. See Works, 2, 248. Another extenuating circumstance is the notion that man is here in his "infancy", an idea common to the early Greek fathers and recently rediscovered for its relevance to an evolutionary world-view. Cf. Works, 1, 291-92 and John Hick, Evil and the God of Love, pp. 217-24.
32. See Hick's criticism, Ibid., pp. 196-97.
33. See Plato, Timaeus, trans. and ed. John Warrington (London: Dent, 1965), p. 19.
34. William Perkins, A Golden Chain, in Breward's Perkins. p. 205.

35. See Inst., 2.15.3-6, I, pp. 427-32.
36. Cf. Whichcote, Works, 2, 101 and Calvin, Inst., 2.12.1, I, pp. 400-401.
37. See Works, 2, 74, 96-97.
38. Which has been obviously influenced by Plato's concept of a consistently caring creator. See P.E. More, The Religion of Plato (Repr., Klaus Reprint Co., New York: 1970), pp. 137-38.
39. God can leave off loving man only if he becomes "non-man" either by failing to live according to the dignity of his nature or by violating its basic principles. See aphorisms 11 and 12 in Salter's Moral and Religious Aphorisms.
40. The Stoic influence on Whichcote is obvious at several points, but especially in its conception of the immanence of the divine in nature. Cicero was probably the main channel through which this, and other Stoic notions came to Whichcote. On this point, see his De Legibus, and De Natura Deorum.
41. See below, pp. 153-56.
42. Cf. Works, 3, 371.
43. See also Works, 2, 355; 3, 67.
44. See also Works, 3, 201; 3, 17-18.
45. See, e.g., Inst., 2.6.4, I, p. 297.
46. See above, pp. 102-104.
47. See, e.g., quotation (2, 93-94), p. 148.
48. Though not the perfect freedom of the mature Christian, this is a real freedom for good that remains in man despite the fall. "But, for righteousness, love, charity, equal dealing, reverence of Deity", Whichcote can thus write, "there is the light of God's creation in some measure remaining in all men." (2, 319)
49. Works, 1, 43; 3, 295; 3, 224; 3, 339; 4, 141.
50. Referring to Original Sin Whichcote stated that "through the grace of God it is not so much what sin is, as what the demeanour of a person is after sin." (2, 251-52)
51. Note the reversibility--and easy reversibility at that!--of the sinful state. See Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists on this point, p. 38.
52. Though Hooker and the "high" anglicans avoided this line, Puritan Calvinism was true to the Reformation theology on this point, interpreting the fall as total perversion. See John F. H. New, Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558-1640 (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1964), pp. 6-10.
53. Works, 2, 181.
54. Correction: See footnote 54.

54. For Irenaeus's view of the "image of God" primarily as goal toward which an imperfect and immature newly created man must move, see Adversus Haereses, IV.xxxviii.1; IV.xxxviii.2-3; IV.xxxvii.4; IV.xxxix.1-2; IV.xxxvii.7; III.xxi.1; and Apostolic Preaching, xii, all cited by Bettenson under the heading: Man's Imperfection and Progress, pp. 67-70 in The Early Christian Fathers, ed. H. Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). Cf. Hick, Evil and God of Love, pp. 214-24.
55. Works, 1, 292; cf. 4, 319.
56. See quotation from Letters above, p. 96.
57. See footnote 54.
58. See above, pp. 89-90.
59. Not mechanically, but in virtue of Christ's perfect obedience, which our author depicted primarily in the positive light of Christ's perfect conformity to the *terna jura* of natural religion, viz., sobriety, righteousness and godliness, and only secondarily under the negative Calvinist aspect of resisting temptation and withstanding adversity. Cf. Perkins, The Golden Chain, in Breward's Perkins, pp. 203-207.
60. "The grace of the gospel is that which doth recover us: whatsoever is of foundation in the creation of God, whatsoever any man is bound to by any principle of reason, the same is reinstated and fruther settled by...the gospel." (2, 204-205)
61. John Smith, Select Discourses, p. 9.
62. Cf. e.g., Calvin, Inst., 2.6.1,4, I, pp. 292-93, 297-98.
63. See Works, 2, 313 and Letters, pp. 38, 61.
64. See Works, 3, 157; 3, 251-52.
65. Letters, p. 107. In this assertion of two seemingly separate sources of salvation one is confronted with an apparent inconsistency in Whichcote's thought. Both in his discourses and his letters Whichcote professed the absolute necessity of Christ's atoning work, and yet he appears to affirm another source of salvation in what he describes as a remnant of the "light of creation". The solution to this apparent contradiction may lie in the direction of his concept of salvation which he thought of as a kind of continuum on which the upper levels are reserved for those who hear and respond to the gospel and the lower levels, for the un-gospelled, holds out a real albeit diminished kind of salvation.
66. Besides the Letters, see Patrick's Brief Account, passim.
67. Cf. Works, 2, 204; 2, 239-40.
68. Cf. Works, 3, 105-106.
69. As he was of the opinion that the "canting" of enthusiasts prominently included the meaningless incantation of the name of Christ, Whichcote's preference for the generic term "religion" may have been calculated not only to bring out the continuity between natural and revealed religion but also to avoid the connotations of the enthusiasts' "Christology".

CHAPTER 4

THE PLATONISTS' PATRIMONY

Hoopes was right in applying Brown's account of Jeremy Taylor's view of reason to that of the Cambridge Platonists, i.e., that it is "not a narrow ratiocinative faculty, nor... a faculty at all, but the whole personality--thought, will, feeling--illuminated by the Holy Spirit."¹ Reason to Whichcote and Smith is an intellectual eye by which man both grasps reality and directs his life according to its demands. Like the "eye" to which Jesus referred as the "lamp of the body", that intellectual eye must be sound if its user is to be "filled with light".² It was on that deep level of the source of spiritual vision that the two Platonists lavished their best attention. "We find", Whichcote affirmed, "that it is in vain for anyone, to attempt to purge the stream, unless he first cleanse the fountain. You must begin at the spring-head. The heart is the principle of action. Life begins there; and motion is from thence." (4, 220)

Both Whichcote and Smith recognized a kind of knowledge that operates at a deeper level than the nominal knowledge of what they called "Orthodoxie", viz., the level of knowledge which accompanies deed. They perceived that mere intellectual knowledge was the product rather than the cause of one's conduct. "That idea which men generally have of God", Smith wrote, "is nothing else but the picture of their own complexion: that archetypall notion of him which hath the supremacy in their mindes, is none else but such an one as hath been shaped out according to some pattern of themselves".³ In a land where Christianity was "the religion of the Nation, and the first point of Education" and still men were killing each other in the name of Christ, the Platonists' strategy was to appeal to a deeper, prior layer of knowledge, viz., "natural" knowledge. While the new science was proclaiming the marvelous order of nature in the external world, the

Platonists invited their contemporaries to look within to the harmony of the inner world of human nature. "Let a man look within himself", Whichcote said,

let him awaken and excite his naturals; use, employ, and improve his faculties, he shall come to know what is good, just, fit and right. With the good God's assistance (who is universally to be acknowledged) we may come to see, know, understand and do. (3, 346)

This call to seek religious certainty in a natural inner truth became the first principle not only of deism but also of orthodox English theology of the succeeding age. Even the subsequent reaction against rational theology remained true to that principle and owes much to the Platonists' reorientation of the hermeneutic principle to a sphere of inner certainties.⁴

For all its scope and competence reason in Whichcote's view is no vaive prometheanism. His preaching of a reason strong and connaturally related to truth is rather a persuasive by which he would recommend repentance and "imitatio Christi". That "inner eye" must be purified before it can rise to the heights of its divine potential, as Smith liked to point out.

Divinity indeed is a true efflux from the eternal light, which, like the sunbeams, does not only enlighten but heat and enliven; therefore our Saviour hath, in his beatitudes, connected purity of heart with the beatifical vision (Mt. 5.8). And as the eye cannot behold the sun, unless it be Godlike and hath God formed in it, and be made partaker of the divine nature. 5

In other words, man does not enjoy "peaceful possession" of his Socratic soul. A constant struggle to dispell the mists of prejudice and overcome the pull of sensuality is the condition sine qua non of the effective operation of that power of spiritual response. Whichcote combined the Socratic discipline of self-examination and the Stoic ideal of self-government with the meekness inculcated by Jesus as the first and fundamental virtue of the Christian life. There is a "fundamental knowledge" shared by all men, but to maintain and deepen that knowledge man must retain a supple and open spirit that obediently responds to the dictates of objective reality without succumbing to the spirit of self-will that would bend

truth to suit its own purposes. "Meekness must accompany all motions in religion, or else 'tis passion, or a man's own interest." (4, 226-27)⁶

But having pointed out the lowly and dependent side of reason the Platonists went on to proclaim its consequent strength and competence. To the one who seeks truth "with a free judgment, and a sanctified mind" Smith promised an abundant knowledge:

He thus seeks, shall find; he shall live in Truth, and that shall live in him; it shall be like a stream of living waters issuing out of his own Soul.... ?

To those who submit to the discipline of inner purification, who endeavour to "shut the eyes of sense, and open...that other eye of the soul" a knowledge of God will be theirs that surpasses the discursive knowledge of "Orthodoxie" as vision transcends faith.

But how sweet and delicious that truth is which holy and Heaven-born souls feed upon in their mysterious converse with God....Before, we laid hold on him only with a struggling, agonistical and contentious reason, hotly combating with difficulties and sharp contests of diverse opinions, and laboring in itself, in its deductions of one thing from another; we shall then fasten our minds upon him with such a "serene understanding", such an intellectual calmness and serenity as will present us with a blissful, steady and invariable sight of him. 8

Whichcote was less poetic but not less optimistic about the Johannine experiential knowledge proper to the purified soul. "Of holy things, men of holy hearts and lives, speak with great assurance of truth", he argued, for there is "not only the ability of these mens parts...but there is the naturalness of the subject to their state and temper, especially of the acquaintance they have with it, and the experience they have of it: and God's blessing over and above." (2, 19)

The recent rediscovery of the Cambridge Platonists has made it clear that the roots of the rationalist religious outlook that dominated most of eighteenth century England lie at a deeper level than the Restoration and the thought of Locke. It is the Platonists themselves who stand at the very fountainhead of the new religious mentality of the "age of reason".⁹ The myriad links both personal and intellectual which

connect the Cambridge divines with the mind-moulders of the English Enlightenment have now been carefully traced and documented.¹⁰

In his provocative study of the Platonist Henry More Lichtenstein has argued that the Platonists have generally enjoyed a "good press" and that the ensuing development of theology, which he characterizes as a deterioration, has been attributed to the Cambridge men only indirectly and as a distortion of their authentic thought.¹¹ Lichtenstein himself is concerned to show that the emerging religious rationalism is not so much the result of a distortion as of an explication and elaboration of very real tendencies in the Platonist theology.¹² While one admires the sincerity with which Lichtenstein goes about "setting the record straight" yet it is not merely because of the Platonists' good reputation that one must challenge such a contention.

First of all, Lichtenstein's pessimistic evaluation of the religion of Restoration and eighteenth century England as "a century and a half in which religion is generally noted for neither profundity in thought nor vitality in feeling, an era in which the vitiating of religion's intellectual element coincided with a marked decline in the quality of religious sentiment" is, as he himself admits, somewhat debatable.¹³ The present writer is more inclined to agree with Cassirer's judgment that the roots of the Enlightenment's religious faith lie deeper than its many apparently anti-religious elements indicate.¹⁴ The popular picture of Enlightenment religion, too heavily influenced by the colourful confrontation of the philosophes with an intransigent Catholic establishment, fails to give enough weight to the quieter revolution that was taking place in England and Germany. While it is true that the social consciousness of deism was far more preached than practiced¹⁵ yet, if as Goethe said, the brilliance and vitality of an age are a measure of its faith then the religion of post-Restoration England with its remarkable flowering of culture could hardly have been

as shallow as Lichtenstein thinks.

For this was a period when the star of England fairly burst on the heavens of Europe, filling rival nations with admiration. Not even an eclipsed France could suppress her esteem:

The English think deeply; in that their mind is one with their character; delving deeply into things, and rich in ex-¹⁶perience they extend far and wide the empire of the sciences.

Newton, Locke, Berkeley, Addison, Bentley are but a few of the imposing figures crowding the canvas of this English renaissance. The sphere of letters shared the quickened climate, bringing forth such illustrious authors and poets as Dryden, Gay, Pope and Swift. The pride that causes Gosse's exaggeration is understandable.

In 1702 Queen Anne ascended the throne, and her brief reign is identified with a brilliant revival in English letters, in the hands of a group of men of the highest accomplishment and originality....Between 1711 and 1714 a perfect galaxy of important works in prose and verse burst almost simultaneously from the London presses. It was as though a cloud which had long obscured the heavens had been swept away by a wind, which, in so doing, had revealed a splendid constellation. In 1702, no country in civilized Europe was in a more melancholy condition of intellectual emptiness than England; in 1712, not France itself could compare with us for copious and vivid production....The little volume of dialogues which Berkeley issued under the title of Hylas and Philonous belongs to the annus mirabilis 1713, when Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Addison, Steele, were all at the brilliant apex of their genius, and when England had suddenly combined to present such a galaxy of literary talent as was to be matched, or even approached, nowhere on the continent of Europe. 17

It is well enough known and documented but must be mentioned in passing that this blossoming of learning and letters in England was to emanate far beyond her shores and exercise a key role in the development of the French and German Enlightenment. That the impulse behind the tremendous changes in French thought in the vital years leading up to the revolution was for an important part of English origin is undeniable. But that one effect of that influence would be a terrible clash with the established Church does not contradict the fact of the religious character of that impulse. It was

a case of one kind of religion opposing another, viz., the supernaturalistic religion of the Catholic Church against the new rationalist brand of religion and vice versa. Les philosophes were condemning one theology in the name of another rather than simply calling for the abolition of all religion as is commonly thought.¹⁸

The power of those thought waves emanating from England were to affect Germany as well. In fact, they proved so strong as to displace France as the privileged tutor of the Teutons. Long after the original impulse had spent itself on its native shores it was just beginning to work its way deep into the German mind.¹⁹ In the thought of that epitome of the Aufklärung, Gotthold Lessing, one can clearly discern the marks of the English influence. In its positive application of the new theology the Aufklärung's stance toward institutional religion was more according to the English pattern than the philosophes scorn for organized religion.

Originating in England the theology of the Enlightenment marks the dawn of a new age of religion in which religious faith is no longer seen as the product of absolute authorities--either of Church or Scripture--but of personal conviction. Kant's account of the spirit of the Enlightenment applies to its attitude toward religion as well.

Enlightenment is man's exodus from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is the inability to use one's understanding without the guidance of another person. This tutelage is self-incurred if its cause lies not in any weakness of the understanding, but in indecision and lack of courage to use the mind without the guidance of another. 'Dare to know' (sapere aude)!. Have the courage to use your own understanding; this is the motto of the Enlightenment. 19

Cassirer has shown that Kant's summation of the meaning of the Enlightenment was a correct one. Behind the transformation of religion and the daring initiatives in all fields was a whole new concept of reason. Reason was seen as free from absolute authorities and forging its own convictions.²⁰ The great movement of Enlightenment thought was away from the bonds of apriori deductive systems to the open road of inductive reasoning. The hitherto determining transcendental truths

were left behind--but not abandoned!--as man set out by way of patient inquiry to find the truth for himself.²¹

To the observer who clings to a "law and order" kind of religious ideal in which a hierarchical conception of revelation provides a neat compartment for everyone and everything, the Enlightenment spectacle of burgeoning free-thought and open attack on traditional dogma must appear as a period of regrettable regression. If on the other hand one is convinced that the only solid foundation for religious certainty is within, then the apparent antinomious and anti-religious phenomena of the Enlightenment can be positively evaluated as the necessary shaking off of the last coils of absolute religious authorities and the beginnings of a long and painful quest to re-found religious conviction on the pillars of reason. To this observer, who shares that latter positive opinion, the Enlightenment appears as the threshold of a new age. The adolescent Christianity of the Middle Ages has undergone a crisis--almost a century of religious wars and persecutions--and emerged as the young adult whose faith is founded henceforth on personal conviction.

One can deplore the fact that for the greater part of the Enlightenment that "personal conviction" was more rationalistic than fully personal, and that the affective and voluntary side of man was neglected, yet in comparison with the overall advance from an authoritarian to a personal hermeneutical principle that temporary one-sidedness is of secondary importance.

It is to that ideal of an inner and personal religion that Whichcote and his disciple Smith mightily contributed. Too much ink has been wasted lamenting the fact that the new age was unable to grasp the fullness of the Platonists' sublime vision of reason; surely of far greater significance is the import of the transmission that actually did take place.²² It is true that of their multi-dimensional view of religious reason only one side took root in the minds of their spiritual descendents, viz., the competence and quasi-autonomy of reason

in the realm of religion, and yet the momentous significance of that bequeathal has not received due recognition. The exaggerated rationalism of the infamous but relatively unimportant speculations of deism has diverted attention from the moderate and balanced rationalism of mainstream English theology of the Restoration. At the dawning of a new age it is understandable that there would be exaggerations and abuses. After centuries of submission to absolute religious authorities man had suddenly discovered that his opinion counted for something; that he had the right, indeed the duty, of seeking out the truth for himself. If seen in this light the rational "religion without tears" of Locke and the deists could be viewed more positively than it usually is as the first overconfident step of the emancipated man of the Enlightenment.

It is understandable that at the dawn of a new age in which man first realized something of the limitations of external authorities and of the scope of his individual dignity that he would show a certain reckless boldness toward the resources of religious authority that formerly held him in the bonds of tutelage. Moreover, after a long dark night of religious war it is not surprising that a certain coolness toward religion characterizes the new day. What is surprising is that the built-up resentment and anti-religious sentiment did not result in an atheistic or areligious age. That that was not the case is due largely to the conciliatory efforts of the Cambridge Platonists. At a time when English religion was poised on the edge of the precipice of decline they rallied a nation around a new conception of the Christian faith. "The Church had been quite extinct," wrote the contemporary observer Bishop Burnet, "had not a new set of men of a different stamp, who had their education chiefly in Cambridge, under Dr. Whichcote, Cudworth, Wilkins, Worthington, and More, rose up and become a great ornament to it."²³ When sectarian feuding had brought the truths of revelation into discredit and doubt, Whichcote and his disciples made them credible again. They opened up the emerging concept of nature to include a

religious dimension, thereby helping to forge the vision of "the holy alliance between science and religion" which sustained the faith of Enlightenment England.²⁴

Though all too little of the mortified and receptive side of the Platonists' rich notion of reason is evident in the rational divinity that came to dominate eighteenth century England yet the main thrust of their thought, i.e., toward a religion both personal and practical, was received and carried forward.

Lichtenstein however has depicted that ensuing theological outlook as a regressive form of religion and reluctantly but definitely pointed the finger of accusation at the Cambridge Platonists.²⁵ Disagreeing with Tulloch's positive judgment of the period, he sees the rational religion of the age as neither rational nor religious. In his view, the concept of reason central to the new outlook does not really participate in the game of religion but stands rather on the sidelines as one who makes the rules and referees. Religion itself he sees as having become mere morality, cut off from its requisite theoretical roots.²⁶ This "dehydration" of religion he traces to the Platonists' "democratic" or anti-intellectual attitude by which they taught that the essential truths of religion are few in number and easy to understand, and to their corresponding emphasis on practical morality.²⁷

It is curious that the same school which has been characterized as representing an ethos of pure contemplation should be accused of contributing to the loss of the contemplative spirit in the religious outlook of their descendents. It is the present writer's opinion that neither of these affirmations are entirely accurate. While Cassirer's recognition of the contemplative aspect of the Platonists' thought fails to give sufficient weight to the practical thrust of their theologies,²⁸ to Lichtenstein's Plotinian concept of religion the thought of the Cambridge men is one-sidedly moral and practical.²⁹ Having dealt with Cassirer's view the criticism

of Lichtenstein must be briefly challenged by questioning the sharp distinction which he makes between the theoretical and practical aspects of religion.

Modern day probings into the human body (medicine) and shou (psychology, psychiatry) bear concerted witness to the psychosomatic unity of man. Moreover, the philosophy of language has confirmed this emergent image of man with its evidence of the essential interdependence of thought and language. Man is a being who thinks and acts in concert. The Cartesian concept of man has long since been banished: the lines between body and spirit, thought and action, have become much more fluid than was formerly thought to be the case. Whichcote anticipated much modern thinking on this subject with his oft repeated conviction that the theoretical and practical aspects of morality are a naturally inseparable unity.

Doubtless there is such a thing as thoughtless action. Furthermore, there appear to be people who are engaged in a line of action for which they can offer only a minimal theoretical justification. But it is obvious to this writer that ~~the rule is~~ rather that action is thought-in-action and that a life-style gives, in virtue of its consistency, evidence of a solid if implicit theoretical moment. If ~~a~~ life-style is practically religious it can be safely surmised that the theory is not far behind.

Lichtenstein identifies the theoretical element of religion with its doctrinal aspect whereas Whichcote and Smith thought of the theoretical in terms of a prior intuitional-moral truth. While it is true that they minimized the importance of the doctrinal level of religion, it is also true that their concept of that prior inner knowledge is the lofty ideal of purity of soul that Jesus proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount. Only to those who are true to that primordial inner truth will further insight into things divine be granted. The transcendent element that Lichtenstein misses in the theology of Whichcote is very much present but in a vision of the sovereignty of good rather than the good of sovereignty.

NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

1. R. Hoopes, Right Reason in the English Renaissance, p. 166.
2. Mt. 6.22-23.
3. Smith, Select Discourses, p. 6.
4. See Cragg, The Cambridge Platonists, p. 30.
5. Smith, Select Discourses, p. 3.
6. Cf. Smith's "Discourse Concerning the True Way or Method of Attaining Divine Knowledge", passim. In Select Discourses, pp. 1-21.
7. Ibid., p. 12.
8. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
9. In view of the recent spate of books which feature the thought of the Cambridge Platonists one can truly speak of a rediscovery. Besides the works of Willey who has been something of a pioneer in this field, the following studies are all less than a decade in print.
 Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, 1934.
 Christianity Past and Present, 1952.
 G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, 1966.
 The Cambridge Platonists, 1968.
 C.A. Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists, 1969.
 H.R. McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, 1965.
 J.D. Roberts, From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England, 1970.
10. See McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, pp. 143-55. For the influence of Whichcote in particular see Roberts, Puritanism to Platonism, chaps. 1 and 10.
11. Lichtenstein, Henry More, pp. 24-25.
12. Ibid., pp. 25-30.
13. Ibid., p. 23.
14. Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, chap. 4, passim. See also, e.g., Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason: 1648-1789, chap. 9. Lovejoy has carefully pointed out that the optimism of eighteenth-century faith was a good deal more balanced and profound than is generally thought. In his Great Chain of Being, pp. 186-207.
15. See Roland Stromberg, Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), chap. XI, passim.
16. La Fontaine, "The Fox and the Grapes", quoted by Paul Hazard, The European Mind: 1680-1715, trans. J. Lewis May (Penguin ed., 1964), p. 86.
17. Ibid., pp. 86-87.

18. Even the non-religious viewpoint of a Carl Becker admits this, in his The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (London: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 28-31; 39-43.
19. See Georges Pons, Gotthold Ephraïm Lessing et le Christianisme (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1964), pp. 92-99; and Hazard, European Mind, pp. 89-90.
19. Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" in Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 163.
20. See Cassirer, Philosophy of the Enlightenment, pp. 6-14; Becker, Heavenly City, pp. 55-58; Hazard, European Mind, pp. 358-59.
21. See Cassirer, Ibid., pp. 158-59.
22. McGiffert is guilty of this in his Protestant Thought Before Kant (New York: 1929), p. 194; and Willey in Seventeenth Century Background, pp. 155, 277-78.
23. G. Burnet, History of His Own Times (abridged edition), p. 44.
24. The phrase, very appropriate, is Willey's in Eighteenth-Century Background, p. 133.
25. Lichtenstein, Henry More, pp. 24-30; 156-57.
26. Ibid., pp. 208-209.
27. Ibid., chap. IV, passim.
28. See above, pp. 84-86.
29. "For, at bottom," Lichtenstein affirms, "religion represents a relation of the individual soul towards its Maker.... Augustine in the garden, Plotinus' 'flight of the alone to the Alone,' Juan de la Cruz's waiting 'en parte donde nadie parecia'--here, one feels, lies the core of the religious experience, solus cum solo." Ibid., p. 201; cf. pp. 193-95.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

It was the determined efforts of followers and friends more so than the desire of the author himself which explains how the nearly one hundred discourses of Whichcote found their way to the printer. That this great preacher's sermons were edited by competent and conscientious men is posterity's good fortune. Though the original manuscripts are not extant and it is therefore impossible to determine the extent to which the edited versions fulfill the author's intentions, yet there is good reason to think that they are a faithful reproduction of Whichcote's thought. Besides evidence of the care and devotion with which the editors pursued their task from the testimony of themselves and others¹ there is the main evidence of the internal stylistic and doctrinal consistency of the discourses themselves. Among the several editions of Whichcote's discourses there are only negligible variations. In chronological order, they were published as follows: Select Sermons (1698) and Twelve Sermons, a second edition of the same selection (1721), edited and with a preface by the Third Earl of Shaftesbury; Several Discourses, three volumes, edited by Dr. Jeffery (London: 1701); Several Discourses, edited by the eminent divine Samuel Clarke (London: 1707); The Sermons of Benjamin Whichcote, edited by William Wishart, in four volumes (Edinburgh: 1742); and The Works of the Learned Benjamin Whichcote, D.D., in four volumes by an unknown editor (Aberdeen: 1751).

Whichcote entrusted his papers to his nephew, Mr. Benjamin Whichcote, who in turn passed them on to Dr. Jeffery, an admirer who had "the highest veneration for the deceased author" and the skills necessary to "qualify him to be a diligent, faithful and judicious editor."² Jeffery's charge--to prevent publications which might misrepresent the thought of Whichcote--was carried out perhaps too cautiously. He was highly displeased when Clarke published a volume of the late author's sermons from material transcribed by John Smith,

sermons which he had himself hesitated to publish even though he was almost certain of their authenticity. Wishart's edition was published because the Shaftesbury edition was out of print and scarce. Finally, the most popular edition of the discourses was published in 1751, in Aberdeen, Scotland. The editor, who made use of Shaftesbury's famous preface, desired to remain anonymous. This diligent editor added only a brief note assuring the reader that he had made a careful comparison of all previous publications of the sermons in his preparation of a complete edition. It is indeed so that these four volumes contain all of the ninety-eight sermons generally considered genuine, and that the text is as good as any and better than most, which is perhaps the reason that there have been published no further editions of the discourses.

Of the remaining works of Whichcote, the moral and religious aphorisms went through four editions, as follows: Moral and Religious Aphorisms, ed. John Jeffery (Norwich: 1703); Moral and Religious Aphorisms...published in MDCCIII, by Dr Jeffery. Now re-published, with very large additions, by Samuel Salter (London: 1753); Select Aphorisms, Christian Tract Society, No. XXVIII, Vol. III (London: 1821); and Aphorisms, edited by Dean Inge (London: 1930). The aphorisms are the best of the consistently quoteable Dr. Whichcote's sayings, drawn from his sermons with a view to providing a compact and attractive digest of his thought. Jeffery's publication of one thousand aphorisms together with a preface is a selection from the nearly five thousand which he had culled from Whichcote's papers. Salter used the Jeffery collection and another unnamed collection in the compilation of his edition of one thousand two hundred aphorisms, in 1753.

The important Whichcote-Tuckney Letters are undoubtedly genuine, being extant in the Sloane Manuscripts in the British Museum.³ Salter's edition of the Letters, appended to his edition of the Aphorisms, is a transcription of a copy of the Letters emended by Jeffery, which Salter has only slightly altered.

Finally, there is the question of the purportedly

authentic Θεοροουμενα Δόγματα; or, Some Select Notions published two years after Whichcote's death, in 1685, by an editor who called himself Philanthropus. The editor thought of himself as a "pupil and particular friend" of the author and was determined to see something of his thought in print. When nothing of Whichcote had been published two years after his death, Philanthropus could wait no longer and had the Select Notions printed and dedicated to the deceased author.⁴ In spite of the editor's testimony however the book is not a faithful representation of Whichcote's thought. It is possible that the Puritan hue of the Select Notions mirrors the author's thought in the early years at Cambridge before he broke with Calvinism yet it seems more probable that the admiration of the editor exceeded his comprehension of the master's teaching and that the Select Notions is simply a well-meaning misrepresentation of Whichcote's thought.

NOTES

1. See the prefaces of Shaftsbury, Jeffery, Wishart, the anonymous editor of the 1751 edition and of Salter.
2. Salter, in his preface to the Aphorisms, pp. xvi-xviii.
3. The Sloane Manuscripts, 2903-25.
4. Select Notions, pp. i-iii.

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STELLINGEN

1. Whichcote's extension of the proportions of the locus theologicus from the sphere of doctrine to that of Truth was of decisive influence in overcoming the spirit of persecution that marked Puritan Calvinism and in establishing the spirit of toleration which characterized post-Restoration England.

2. Tuckney's inference that Whichcote's theology was "a kind of moral divinity ... only with a tincture of Christ" reflects his Calvinistic bias and fails to do justice to the deeply Christian quality of the Platonist's thought.

3. Based on a too narrow view of both the Platonists', and the New Philosophy's vision of nature, Cassirer's contention that the Cambridge Platonists, "who in the sphere of religious doctrine stood for the inalienable prerogative of reason, renounce and betray reason just at the point where they undertake an explanation of nature" is seriously misleading.

E. Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England, p. 131.

4. Subject to strong qualification is Cassirer's characterization of the Cambridge Platonist viewpoint as purely contemplative and not in tune with the practical outlook of the age.

E. Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England, p. 50.

5. Lichtenstein's censure of the Tulloch view of rational theology and therefore indirectly of Tulloch's beloved Cambridge Platonists involves a misapprehension of Tulloch's viewpoint and a highly questionable concept of the place of reason in the Christian life.

A. Lichtenstein, Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist, pp. 208-14.

6. Robert's characterization of Whichcote's concept of the Fall as Augustinian is misleading because it is true only superficially, or terminologically.

J.D. Roberts, From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England, pp. 123-24.

7. The thesis of Lichtenstein that the loss of the "numinous" dimension in the religion of post-Restoration England is due largely to the influence of the Cambridge Platonists is based on an objectionable interpretation of their thought.

A. Lichtenstein, Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist, pp. 173-93.

8. Because it has become not only irrelevant to the modern problematic but also a potential obstacle to faith the traditional Catholic theologia naturalis needs a profound review.

9. Neglected by a one-sided history of science, The Cambridge Platonists' theory of "plastic nature" with its elaboration and application by Ray deserves wider recognition.

10. The theology underpinning the aim of certain Christian organizations to stamp out the habit of cursing could be profitably reviewed.

11. A theology which would exalt grace by stressing the universality and power of sin is in danger of undermining its proper foundation.

12. Speaking about God (theology), which is not based upon speaking to God (prayer), is merely a form of gossip.

13. With reference to the "wholly other" God of transcendentalist theologies, it must be said that a concept of "otherness" drawn from beyond the incarnational sphere of Christian revelation can have little in common with the Christian mystery.

14. The common notion that the religion of the English "age of reason" was a shallow rationalism more or less equivalent to deism is a "popular misconception" in need of rectification.

15. The possible connection between the widespread Dutch custom of bicycle riding and the fact that Dutchmen are one of the tallest peoples in the world is worthy of scientific investigation in view of the fact that tall people are always looked up to.



