

Thomas Goodwin
(1600~1680)
on the Christian Life

By
Paul Ling-Ji Chang

Foreword By
Dr. William S. Barker

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680) on the Christian Life

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To

My Dear Wife, Carol Hsu Chang,
Hsiung-Shih & Chao-Shih Chang, My Parents,
And Sam C. S. & Paula Hsu, My Parents-in-Law,
who all helped me to finish my PhD studies.

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) on the Christian Life



Thomas Goodwin, 1600-1680

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Foreword

The American Puritan Cotton Mather, writing about the two stalwart Independents of an earlier generation, said: “If you would see sound doctrine, the works of an Owen have it for you. You have a Goodwin who will place you among the children of light, and will give you the marrow of the doctrine which is according to godliness. He often soars like an eagle; perhaps, you would have been content, if sometimes a little more concisely.”

In the resurgence of both scholarly and popular interest in the English Puritans there have been thorough studies on John Owen. While there has been recognition of the important influence of Thomas Goodwin, provision of a comprehensive analysis of his theology and piety has been needed. Paul Chang’s doctoral dissertation supplies with this sort of analysis of Goodwin’s doctrine of the Christian life.

The study of Goodwin on the Christian life helps to tie together his distinctive teachings on the sealing of the Holy Spirit and on the latter-day glory in the context of his ecclesiology and hermeneutics. Affirming the Scriptural foundations that are basic to Reformed and Puritan theology, Goodwin’s unique insights stimulate us to a more profound and exalted understanding of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Chang has served the church well in guiding us to a fuller

Foreword

appreciation of Goodwin's thought on the Christian life.

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Reformation Day, 2001

The three were fond of reasoning, but from different principles and different manners. [Thomas] Goodwin reasoned from his experience; [John] Owen from his critical and devout knowledge of Scripture; [Richard] Baxter from the fitness of things. ... Goodwin well interpreted Scripture by the insight of a renewed heart--Owen, distrusting his own experience, by the patient and prayerful study of words and phrases. ... All were great preachers: Owen preached earnestly to the understanding, Baxter forcibly to the conscience, Goodwin tenderly to the heart.

Rev. Robert Halley, D. D.
Principal of Independent New College, London
On Thomas Goodwin with the comparison of
John Owen and Richard Baxter
Quoted from Halley's *Memoir of Thomas Goodwin, D.D.*
In *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* 2:xlvii
Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861

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Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

On the Christian Life

J. I. Packer once said that the redwood groves of the Avenue of the Giants in northern California reminded him of another breed of giants—the English Puritans between 1550 and 1700. One of the most towering spiritual giants was Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680), who really overtopped other “trees.” Anthony à Wood, an Oxford historian, presented Thomas Goodwin and John Owen as “the two Atlases and Patriarchs” of Independency in the 1650s. He once was called one of “those living and walking Bibles.” In the eyes of Robert Baillie, he was the leading one of the “Five Dissenting Brethren” and a troublemaker who “would rend the kirk.” William Haller thinks of Goodwin as “the most decisive figure and the great disturber of the Westminster Assembly.”

After three hundreds years, in the days of Perry Miller and William Haller,¹ there has been a renaissance of Puritan studies of both the old and the New England Puritans. Among them John Owen

¹ Haller published his seminal work upon British Puritanism, *The Rise of Puritanism*, in 1938. M. M. Knappen published his *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism* in 1939. Perry Miller published his *New England Mind* in 1939.

(1613~1683), the great Independent theologian, captivates much attention of scholars and merits many dissertations specifically/primarily or partially,² because of his profound theological thinkings. Compared with Owen, Goodwin receives much less attention. Only three Ph.D. and one Th.M. dissertations are specifically devoted to the study of Goodwin so far.³

But on the other hand, the comparable paucity of dissertations should not lead us to be pessimistic of the scholarship in Goodwinian study. Thomas Goodwin as a leader in Puritan theology and in the Independency movement cannot be neglected by many dissertations in these fields. So we still see not a few dissertations or books which partially discuss one aspect of Goodwin's thought or another.⁴ Besides there are some articles studying the theology of Goodwin.⁵

As to the reprint of Goodwin's works, the earliest two volumes of the twelve Nichol's standard edition were reprinted by the Banner of Truth.⁶ After so many major or entire works of numerous less influen-

² There are at least fifteen dissertations devoted to the study of Owen specifically from 1942 to 1998. As to theses on him partially, there are many more.

³ See the bibliography for full titles. Three Ph.D. dissertations are: Brown (Drew, 1950), Carter (Edinburgh, 1961), Fienberg (Chicago, 1974). The Th.M. thesis is McNally (WTS, 1972).

⁴ See bibliography for full titles. Fulcher (1963), Gilsdorf (1965), Strickland (1967), Zimdars (1967), Ehalt (1969), Poe (1982), Petersen (1985), Paul (1985), Burgess (1986), Eaton (1989), Won (1989), Ball (1990).

⁵ See bibliography. Hudson (1955), Wilson (1962), Dallison (1969), Toon (1970, 1972), Fienberg (1974, 78), Cook (1981), Freer (1981), Harrison (1981), Walker (1983).

⁶ I.e. vol. 6 (*The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 1979) and vol. 8 (*Justifying Faith*, 1985) by Banner of Truth.

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tial Puritans, such as Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, David Clarkson, John Flavel, John Howe, John Newton, Thomas Shepard, George Swinnock, Thomas Brooks, Thomas Boston, (not to mention the more influential ones, such as John Owen, Richard Baxter, Richard Sibbes, John Bunyan,) had been reprinted for so many years, Joel R. Beeke's plea for reprinting Goodwin's complete works was answered by Tanski Publications in May 1996 in the long run.⁷ It is also a joy to all Puritans' lovers!

Now I will review Goodwinian scholarship briefly. So far the finest and most comprehensive dissertation on Thomas Goodwin is no other than Stanley P. Fienberg's "Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine." (Chicago, 1974) The strength of Fienberg lies in his studies on Goodwin's Independency or ecclesiology. Independency is a hot point in the research of the Puritan Revolution, 1640~1660.⁸ Yet Fienberg delves into Goodwin's biblicism and es-

⁷ See Joel R. Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith*. Ph.D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1988. pp. 319-20, n. 4.

⁸ E.g. John Paul **Burgess**, "The Problem of Scripture and Political Affairs as Reflected in the Puritan Revolution: Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Goodwin, John Goodwin, Gerrard Winstanley." (Chicago, 1986). Yet more dissertations, articles or books pay attention to Puritan eschatology: **Clouse** (London, 1957), **Cohen** (Indiana, 1961), **Christianson** (Minnesota, 1961), **Gilsdorf** (Yale, 1965), **Dallison** (1969), **Toon** (1970), **Murray** (1971), **Payton** (Westminster, 1975), and **Petersen** (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985). As to Goodwin's Independency, Rembert Byrd **Carter**, "The Presbyterian-Independent Controversy with special reference to Dr. Thomas Goodwin and the Years 1640 to 1660." (Edinburgh, 1961) **Ehalt** (Claremont, 1969). R. G. **Bradley**, "Jacob and Esau Struggling in the Wombe: a Study of the Presbyterian and Independent Religious Conflicts 1640~1648 with particular reference to the Westminster Assembly and the Pamphlet Literature." (Kent University, 1975) Robert S. **Paul** makes an effort to document and replay vividly the "Grand Debate" in the Westminster Assembly. (1985) It is a great loss if we miss the

chatology to see why and how Goodwin reconstructed the traditional Puritan doctrine of Church government. Fienberg asserts that “the [Presbyterian-Independency] controversy should not be explained simply in terms of resulting issues. Historians have ignored another, perhaps more significant dimension, that of scriptural hermeneutics.”⁹ He summarizes the difference between those two parties:

The Independents had a more literal understanding of the doctrine of man’s reliance on *Christ and a millennial eschatology*. Presbyterians believed the Independents’ biblicism ignored prudence and important Old Testament injunctions and that their eschatology failed to recognize the dangers which then beset the Church.¹⁰

So the *essence* of the controversy is nothing but these hermeneutical factors. Those issues such as ecclesiastical decentralization and liberty of conscience are but *results*.¹¹ Fienberg’s contribution to Goodwinian study lies in his undertaking a new hermeneutical and eschatological approach to fathom Goodwin’s pre-understanding in theology.

magnum opus of Geoffrey F. **Nuttall**, *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640~1660*. (1957) A comparative study with another contemporary Goodwin (John Goodwin) will be beneficial to more understanding of Thomas Goodwin. There are two dissertations with John Goodwin as the main character, one by **Strickland** (Vanderbilt), another by **Zimdars** (Chicago) of the same year, 1967. Besides, there are several articles contributing to our perception of Goodwin’s Independency: **Powicke** (1932), **Hudson** (1939, 1955), **Kirby** (1964), **Yule** (1965), **Harrison** (1981), **Walker** (1983). See bibliography for full titles.

⁹ Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin’s Scriptural Hermeneutics and the Dissolution of Puritan Unity.” 32-33.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49. Italics mine.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33, 49.

Preface

Fienberg is but one of the examples. Thanks should go to Fienberg as well as many scholars for their efforts in interpreting the thought of Thomas Goodwin. In the last three decades they all—especially A. R. Dallison (1969), Peter Toon (1970, 1972), Stanley P. Fienberg (1974, 1978) and David Walker (1983)—consecutively made breakthroughs in our understanding of Goodwin from the perspective of the seventeenth-century British millenarianism.

So far is the first step of Goodwin's research. As to thorough applications of this pre-understanding, it needs and anticipates further works. Of Goodwin's whole works in Nichol's twelve-volume edition, only half of Volume Three is designated to eschatology and Volume Eleven to ecclesiology; while the rest of them (over ten volumes) are works upon the Christian life. In the past years almost all theses and articles in this regard only concentrated on Goodwin's idiosyncratic doctrines—intuitive assurance and the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Obviously his spiritual garden still needs a lot of works. A dissertation, "Thomas Goodwin on the Christian Life," to comprehend all *ordo salutis*, an equivalent of Dr. Sinclair Ferguson's *John Owen on the Christian Life*, has long been anticipated. May this dissertation initiate more and better research upon Thomas Goodwin in this respect.

Though Goodwin is not so great as Augustine, who is said to be like the Alps and makes readers easily lost in the high mountains, yet a reader of Goodwin still needs a theological and spiritual guide to tour him/her through the seventeenth-century grove of Thomas Goodwin. This dissertation also serves as such a guide.

Recent Goodwinian scholarship has revised our understanding of Goodwin and his context in the light of the seventeenth-century British millenarianism. From this new orientation Chapter I (Life and Age)

delineates the great Puritan as exhaustively as the extant documents make it possible. Chapter II (The Latter-Day Glory) introduces Goodwin's apocalyptic outlook, which dominates all his life and thoughts. His *Revelation* is a must-read without which one cannot look out from Goodwin's perspective. It is absolutely not wise to divide Goodwin's works into apocalyptical and spiritual. The former is his frame of mind and the latter is his way of living. If one stands in the latter-day glory of Goodwin's eschatology, then the reader will reap beyond what he/she can imagine.

Chapter III (Covenant Theology) offers us his frame of reference in which he wielded his spiritual insight and theological prowess. Here the reader will find how his scheme of covenant determines his soteriology. He put all stakes on the *eschaton*. Eden was entirely past and hopeless to him.

The first three chapters give us a bird's-eye view of the Goodwin grove. Then we enter into the grove which is basically his doctrines of the work of the Holy Spirit. Eight chapters—from Chapters IV to XI—cover the *ordo salutis* of the Puritan theology. Goodwin was active both in Westminster and Savoy. He also participated in the drafting of both confessions. So comparing these two with each other will lead one to the nuances in Goodwin's mind. Goodwin always tried to let the latter-day glory shine in his soteriology.

Effectual calling, together with regeneration, comes to the fore. This doctrine displays the sovereignty of God the most. It is also the most important doctrine for the end-time new reformation. Then in the Reformed *ordo salutis* is conversion—saving faith and repentance.

Preface

For him “faith is the greatest adventure in the world.”¹² Faith and sight are not in confrontation, but exercising one’s faith prepares a soul into the latter-day glory. The passivity of his doctrine of repentance is understood in his covenantal scheme. As a matter of fact repentance is active as much as faith is. So repentance should be also a greatest adventure of any man. Justification and sanctification make Goodwin very unique in the Reformed tradition. He mirrors the beauty of Calvin’s theology which has long been tarnished in the transmission. Among all the doctrines in view, adoption is the most heavenly one, full of eschatological fervency. This doctrine makes his eschatology very salient. Goodwin interpreted perseverance primarily from the intercession ministry of the ascended Christ. So it becomes a heavenly scene, not a struggling one upon earth only any more. He also tied adoption to assurance of salvation as Calvin did. Hence these two doctrines are inextricably tied together. Assurance becomes the channel through which we can experience the fullness which the Spirit of adoption can bring to us.

The doctrine of assurance of salvation would not be complete without the doctrine of the sealing of the Holy Spirit, because the latter makes his intuitive, immediate assurance his most idiosyncratic doctrine. In the history of the doctrine of the sealing of the Spirit no one can surpass Goodwin in this regard. Goodwin was a consistent theologian—both in church polity and Christian life. The latter-day glory shines in his Christian life as much as in his church polity. He deserves to be hailed as *the theologian of the latter-day glory*.

¹² Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin, D. D.* 12 vols. Edited by John C. Miller. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861~67; reprint by Tanski Publications, May 1996.) 8:562.

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680) on the Christian Life

The best way to look at a redwood is to let itself impress you with what it looks like. So I quote Goodwin's words profusely to let him speak to you in a more direct and affectionate way. May you enjoy the shining of the latter-day glory through reading him.

Finally I wish to express my thanks to those scholars who have helped me in different ways: to Dr. William S. Barker who directed me both in my Ph.D. courses and in the my dissertation; to Dr. D. Clair Davis who not only has long been my mentor since my first day at Westminster Theological Seminary, but also initiated me into the Puritans' world in my graduate studies; and to Dr. John D. Hannah who as the external reader of the dissertation indeed exposed me to more in-depth thinkings from a different perspective.

Paul Ling-Ji Chang
Holmdel, New Jersey, U. S. A.
April 11, 2001

Chapter I

Life & Age of Thomas Goodwin

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680), the renowned Independent, was called by his admirer, Thankful Owen, one of “those living and walking Bibles.”¹ In the eyes of the Scottish Commissioner, Robert Baillie, his contemporary Presbyterian rival in the Westminster Assembly, Goodwin as the leader of the “Five Dissenting Brethren” was a trouble-maker who would rend the kirk, though Baillie at another time admitted that “It were a thousand pities of that man; he is of many and excellent parts.”² For the same reason William Haller would comment

¹ TG 1:xxix. Except special notification, Goodwin means Thomas Goodwin, not John Goodwin, a contemporary Arminian Puritan of Thomas Goodwin; nor his son, Thomas Goodwin, Jr. According to Benjamin Brook, there was another Thomas Goodwin of South Weald in Essex at the same time. This Goodwin died in his prime on the day after the death of the Lord Protector, i.e. September 4, 1658. See Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 3 vols. (London: James Black, 1813; reprint, Morgan, PA: *Soli Deo Gloria*, 1994.) 3:300-303. From now on all Goodwin’s works will be quoted from the 12-volume Nichol’s edition (1861~1866) except specified otherwise. And all the quotations will be footnoted by TG m:n. (These two figures mean volume and its pagination.)

² Edited by David Laing, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*. Undated letters of Baillie to Scotland, 1643. (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1841.) 123. Quoted from Robert S. Paul, “Worship and Discipline: Context of Independent Church Order in the Westminster Assembly.” in *The Divine Drama in History and Liturgy*.

about Goodwin that he was “the most decisive figure and the great disturber of the Westminster Assembly.”³ Nevertheless, Edmund Calamy (1671~1732)—the Nonconformity historian—would rather balance the above view by saying that “Dr. Goodwin was not so narrow minded as some have represented him.”⁴ Another contemporary in his late years, Anthony à Wood, the Oxford historian, presented Goodwin and Owen as “the two Atlases and Patriarchs” of Independency.⁵ That was the heyday of Puritans in power. According to Brian Freer, “Goodwin was a monumental figure who played a vital part in the development of Puritanism at a crucial time.”⁶ If you only let him guide you to the bosom of the Most High through his many expositions of the Bible, you would agree with Cotton Mather that “He often soars

Edited by John E. Booty. (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984.) 159. See also Graham Harrison, “Thomas Goodwin and Independency.” in *Diversity of Gifts*. (The Westminster Conference, 1981.) 23, 42.

³ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938.) 75. Interestingly, Goodwin is the last divine in Haller’s “Spiritual Brotherhood.” 82. Haller does not mention John Owen in this work. However, he does many times in his *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955; Columbia Paperback Edition, 1963.)

⁴ Edmund Calamy, *The Nonconformists’ Memorial: being an account of the lives, sufferings, and printed works, of the two thousand ministers ejected from the Church of England, chiefly by the Act of uniformity, Aug. 24, 1666*. 3 vols. (London: Printed for J. Harris, 1775~1777; reprint by London: Button and Son, and T. Hurst, 1802~03. 3 vols.) 1:240.

⁵ Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*. (London, 1721.) 2:738. Quoted by Anthony Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” *The Gospel Magazine* (1969): 316-331; reprint in *Evangelical Quarterly* 58 (1986): 53.

⁶ Brian Freer, “Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan.” in *Diversity of Gifts*. (The Westminster Conference, 1981.) 7.

like an eagle.”⁷ Stanley P. Fienberg finds that there are three aspects of this great Puritan, namely, a Puritan pastor, Independent leader and architect of the Cromwellian settlement.⁸

His Life

Without the Independency movement the course of the Puritan Revolution must have been rewritten. Without Thomas Goodwin Independency must have redefined itself and on that account would not have exerted so much influence upon those tumultuous years as it did. But Goodwin was in the long run *a* son of the British milieu! He was created in his space-and-time. He also responded to it *conscientiously* and *biblically*.

I. Early Years (1600~13)

Birth

Thomas Goodwin was born prematurely as the eldest son to Richard and Catherine Goodwin of Rollesby near Yarmouth, Norfolk, England on October 5, 1600.⁹ However, providence saved him and

⁷ James Reid, *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982.) 1:341, Quoted from William Barker, *Puritan Profiles*. (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Mentor, 1996.) 77, 92.

⁸ Stanley P. Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974.) ii-iii. By far Fienberg is the best interpreter of Thomas Goodwin.

⁹ TG 2:ix, li-iii. There are two memoirs collected in Nichol’s edition of Thomas Goodwin’s works. One is his own (TG 2:li-lxvii) as complemented by his son (TG 2:lxvii-lxxv), and another by Robert Halley (TG 2:ix-xlvi). Goodwin’s part, strictly speaking, is not an autobiography *per se*. It is indeed, as his son said, “a testimony of difference between common grace ... and that special saving grace” (TG 2:lxvii). The theological reflection was done at the very end of his own life. For he said since his conversion in 1620, he had been practicing Dr. Preston’s plain-style preaching

preserved him even up to eighty years old, which was rare in that time!

¹⁰ His parents are described as pious. But the only reference to his parents by Goodwin was on his own deathbed concerning his mother. He said that the covenant of grace “hath taken hold on me; my mother was a holy woman.” (2:lxxv)¹¹

To understand how Goodwin became a Puritan Fienberg references three factors: geographic locale, family training and education.¹² Robert Halley finds several things contributing to the “prevalence of Puritanism in the eastern counties.” Because a large of number Dutch Reformed exiles were forced to flee to the nearest maritime counties of England, the natives probably absorbed their skills, such as dyeing silk and worsted, as well as their Presbyterian principles. These principles would be troubling to the bishops of the diocese. In 1583 John Whitgift (c. 1530~1604) became the archbishop of Canterbury and began to enforce strict laws against the Puritans. It is recorded that one hundred and twenty-four out of two hundred and thirty-three non-

for “these threescore years.” (TG 2:lxv) This retrospection almost concentrated around his conversion and assurance experience from 1620 to 1627. Halley’s biography is of high quality and quite informative.

¹⁰ As to longevity, Goodwin was hardly surpassed by other Puritans except by Lawrence Chaderton (1537~1640), Robert Browne (1550~1631), John Eliot (1604~1690), Increase Mather (1639~1723), Solomon Stoddard (1643~1729), etc. Cf. Professor William Barker’s “A Chronological Chart of Reformed and Puritan Divines.”

¹¹ I.e., TG 2:lxxv. For the sake of convenience, every entry regarding the primary source, including the two biographies collected in his works, of Thomas Goodwin will be notified with its volume: pagination in the text without a footnote, except when an explanation is needed.

¹² Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” 3.

conformist ministers were from the diocese of Norwich. Halley concludes that “there can be no doubt that they were influenced by the evangelical principles which so generally prevailed in their neighbourhood.”¹³

The pious parents must have followed the manner of Puritans of their age in educating their son, making him acquainted with the scriptures from infancy. They also dedicated him to the ministry in his early boyhood. (2:lxiv, xi)

Slighter workings of the Spirit

Goodwin tells us that he “began to have some slighter workings of the Spirit of God” from the age of six years. He would weep for sins, had flashes of joy upon thoughts of the things of God, and was affected with love to God and Christ. At that time he thought it was grace, for he reasoned that it was not by nature. (2:lii, xi) In his seventh year he was once reprov'd sharply by a servant. The servant “laid open hell-torments” to him. He could weep for his sins when he could weep for nothing else! He wept privately between God and himself and turned to the wall in imitation of the weeping style of Hezekiah. He concluded that he was not a hypocrite, for he thought that “whatever is more than nature must be grace.” (2:lvii-lviii, lii)

He found that he “was weak, and was overcome again” by sins. In his younger time, he said, “God was to me as a wayfaring man, who came and dwelt for a night, and made me religious for a fit, but then departed from me.” The fit is like “in a great frost ... a particular thaw only where the sun shines.” But the presumption of a natural heart will

¹³ TG 2:ix-xi. Halley also enumerates John Robinson (c. 1575~1625; once beneficed in Norfolk), Robert Brown (c. 1553~1633) and Henry Barrow (d. 1593) as examples.

take not only “these lighter impressions and slighter workings” as true grace, “but more grace than” his relations. (2:lviii, xii) In contrast with later grace of true conversion, “This shewed how far goodness of nature might go, as well in myself as others, to whom yet true sanctifying grace never comes.” (2:lii)

II. Christ’s College’s days (1613~19)

Goodwin entered into Christ’s College at age toward thirteen on August 25, 1613. By then Cambridge is said to be a “nest of Puritans” and “flourished in a fulness of all exercises of learning.” There were two hundred scholars. (2:li) Goodwin as “the smallest if not the youngest in the whole university,” found the town of Cambridge still filled with the power and influence of the preaching of William Perkins (1558~1602), which was maintained by six of his followers at Christ’s, despite the fact that Perkins had been dead for ten years. Williams Ames (1576~1633) was forced to quit Christ’s College in 1610.¹⁴ Paul Baynes, the successor of Perkins, though silenced by Dr. Harsnet, chancellor to Archbishop Bancroft (1544~1610; archbishop, from 1604), for his nonconformity, “continued to preach as he had opportunity, until his death in 1617.” Richard Sibbes preached at Trinity Church and John Preston (1587~1628) was Fellow of Queens.

Three fellows

Mr. Bently, Mr. William Power and Mr. Joseph Mede¹⁵ were all fellows of Christ’s. “Mr. Bently, a man living in the daily expectation

¹⁴ TG 2:lviii-lix. See also Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:405.

¹⁵ TG 2:xiv. Mede was spelled as Meade in Goodwin’s *Memoir*. As to Paul Baynes, see Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:262. Mede’s first name, Joseph, is mistakenly given by Haller as William, see Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 269.

of death from apoplexy, seems to have deeply impressed the mind of the youth by his holy life and consistent conversation.” (2:xiv, lix)

Though only mentioned once concerning his “apocalyptic researches” in Halley’s *Memoir*, the intellectual, hermeneutical and hence theological influence of Mr. Mede (1586~1638) upon Goodwin was far beyond measure. Born at Essex, Mede became a pupil to Mr. Daniel Rogers at Christ’s in 1602. Subsequently he became professor of Greek in the same college. He was a most accomplished tutor, constantly requiring the attendance of his pupils in the evening. He would ask them what doubts they had and then solve them before lodgings and night prayers.

“In addition to being one of the greatest biblical scholars the English Church has ever produced, Mede demonstrated his universal interests by being a philosopher, botanist, astronomer, and a pioneer Orientalist.” His encyclopedic knowledge which encompassed fields as wide as astronomy, politics and history, etc., helped him to become a millenarian Biblical scholar. Because of his erudition he had been twice invited by Bishop James Ussher of Dublin to assume the position of provost of Trinity College, yet he remained at Christ’s College until his death in 1638.¹⁶

His monumental work, *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1627; ET: *Key of the Revelation*, 1642), even before the 1640s shed his premillennialism that anticipated the saints in power.¹⁷ Fienberg is convinced that

¹⁶ Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:429-34.

¹⁷ J. D. Douglas, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Revised ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.) 646. Mede’s work was written in Latin. The English translation was issued by order of the Long Parliament in 1643. We should not understand the term “premillennialism” by today’s definition. Mede did

“It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that Goodwin’s first exposure to millennial thought was from Mede.”¹⁸ The three apocalyptic expositors mentioned by Goodwin—Thomas Brightman (1562~1607), Tempest Wood, and Joseph Mede—were all from Cambridge!¹⁹ Their eschatological schemes were variant; however, they shared the same ideal—the pursuit of the latter-day glory. That the concept of latter-day glory grasped Goodwin and formed the core of all his thoughts can be best retraced to this context. It was a Cambridge scene!

If Mede is the dawn for Goodwin, then Mr. Power is his nightmare! The latter providentially happened to be Goodwin’s tutor during those six years at Christ’s. He seemed to be a loner at Cambridge, disliked by other fellows in John Milton’s time. Having being “suspected by many of being a Jesuit in disguise, ... he was ejected from his fellowship” during the visitation of the Earl of Manchester in February, 1644. “Goodwin says little of his tutor; probably he could say nothing

assert Christ will come from heaven *physically* to earth at the beginning of the millennium. But He will return to heaven till the end of it. Because of this Mede is worthy of the title, the father of modern premillennialism.

¹⁸ Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin” 176. He also says that “the person who first exposed Goodwin to millennial ideas was probably Joseph Mede when they were both at Christ’s College.” Ibid., 182. Fienberg also identified “Mr. Wood” as Mr. Tempest Wood. Wood was also a graduate of Christ’s College and corresponded with Mede in the 1620s on millennial expositions. Goodwin acknowledged Wood as the expositor of the latter-day glory he first encountered.

¹⁹ As to the biography of Thomas Brightman, see Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:182-83. For details see next section: Background of British Chiliasm—Thomas Brightman. As to Wood, Goodwin mentioned him at least once at TG 3:154. Fienberg says that he must be Tempest Wood, who was born in 1575, received his education at Christ’s College, and then became the vicar of Lavington, Lincolnshire in 1601. He sent his ‘Elaborate Meditations’ on Revelation to Mede during the 1620s and had a long relation with him. See Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin” 182.

good of him” (2:xiv-xv) Paul E. Brown accepts the suggestion of Robert Halley that Goodwin chose to leave Christ’s for Catherine Hall in order “to get away from Mr. Power.”²⁰ However, Haller gave credit to him by remarking that “Goodwin’s later judgment no doubt approved what Mr. Power had done” to him.²¹

Whitsunday rejection

On Easter 1614 Goodwin received the sacrament first time. In those days every Saturday night the college student listened to the teachings of the *Catechism*. (2:lii, lix) John Preston was noted for his Catechetical lectures at Queen’s.²² Goodwin examined himself by all the signs given in *Ursinus’ Catechism* as a preparation for it. He thought that he found all of them. He confidently received it with the singing of Psalm 103. After it he felt cheerful and judged infallible all tokens of God’s love to him. He frequented the preaching of Sibbes and enjoyed reading Calvin’s *Institutes*. He said, “Oh, how sweet was the reading ... How pleasing was the delivery of truths.” But on the next ensuing Whitsunday, he was forbidden by his tutor, Mr. Power, to receive the sacrament before all college due to his little stature.²³ More humiliating was that he was obliged to leave out of his seat in the college chapel.²⁴

²⁰ TG 2:xviii. See Paul Edward Brown, “The Principle of Covenant—The Theology of Thomas Goodwin.” Ph.D Dissertation. Drew Univ., 1950. p. 11.

²¹ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 76.

²² Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:354.

²³ TG 2:lii. Goodwin looked on Mr. Bently, a dear child of God, with joy as one with whom he should live for ever in heaven when he prepared to the sacrament.

²⁴ TG 2:lii, lviii, lix-lx. In his retrospection the old man in his eightieth year reiterat-

Then he “left off praying ... desisted from going to hear Sibbs any more ... no more studied sound divinity.” In turn he pursued a flirtation with the new mode of “high applause” of Arminianism, because this doctrine suited his “off and on” religious experience.²⁵ He also turned to Dr. Richard Senhouse of St. John whose “vain-glorious eloquence ... did exceed all men in.” For “it is the eminentest farrago of all sorts of flowers of wit that are found in any fathers, poets, histories, similitudes, or whatever has the elegency of wit in it.”²⁶ The style of preaching and the system of theology are correspondent to the way of the stirrings of the Spirit in Goodwin’s heart. He never fell into drunkenness or whoredom. But he lusted for “ambition of glory and praise.” He therefore took the pattern of Senhouse as his model, “resolving to have preached against those at Lynn and their way.” But he ambivalently wanted to hear Mr. John Rogers of Dedham who could trouble his conscience. He did.²⁷

ed the story of rejection *thrice!* It sounds like what Moses was feeling when he was rejected by God into the long-desired promised land.

²⁵ TG 2:liii, xvi; cf. lviii.

²⁶ TG 2:lxiv; cf. xvii.

²⁷ TG 2:lx, xvi. This Rogers was a kinsman of Richard Rogers of Westfield. Three times Richard provided books and money to John for him to study at Cambridge. But John sold the books and spent all the money to lead a vicious life until the third time the grace of God changed his heart. John became a vicar in 1592. Later he moved to Dedham and stayed there until his death in 1636. John Rogers’ gift lay in his delivery with a peculiar gesture and elocution. See Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:421–22. Halley quotes in his *Memoir* a vivid, lengthy anecdote from John Howe, a student of Magdalene under Goodwin. This anecdote shows how Goodwin’s conscience was pierced during his visit at Dedham. This anecdote is also retold in many books. See TG 2:xvii–xviii. As to the date of the anecdote, I think it more probably happened before his conversion, if it did happen at all.

In his sixteenth year (1616) Goodwin attained his B. A. with high reputation. But his own retrospection concentrated upon his pre-regeneration struggles. While there was a Synod of Dort convened in Holland from November 1618 to May 1619, Goodwin had his own judgment from his experience: “the Arminians in the wrong.” He observed that those godly classmates could practice strict religious principles constantly “without falling away and declining,” while once the sacrament was over, he “returned to a neglect of praying, and to ... [his] former way of unregenerate principles and practices, and to live in hardness of heart and profaneness.” In this up and down God suffered him to fall away and made him know “grace is a thing surpassing the power of nature.” (2:lix, liii, lii)

III. Sound Conversion (1620~33)

He moved to Catherine Hall in 1619. In addition to having “no reason to care for his unhappy tutor,” Halley surmises another reason that “Possibly he expected to obtain earlier promotion where scholars were rare.” (2:xviii) If so, he was not disappointed, for he commenced his M. A. and was elected a fellow and lecturer in the Hall in 1620. But the most memorable thing was his incidental conversion in October. On his way to join a party at Christ’s, passing St. Edmund’s Church, he was pressed by his companion to hear a funeral sermon by Thomas Bainbridge, Master of Christ’s, on repentance from Luke 19:41-42. Under the sermon he felt that he was “struck down by a mighty power.” (2:liv; cf. 2:xx) He could not go to the party as planned. So he returned to Catherine. From his conversion till his acquiring of full assurance seven years later (1620~1627), Brian Fleer distinguishes his pilgrimage into three stages: the initial conviction,

the long process and the time of faith.²⁸ The conversion of Goodwin is too extraordinary to forget. He recorded, “This was on Monday the 2d of October 1620, in the afternoon.” (2:liv)

Conviction (1620)

Goodwin recalled his ensuing experience after the shock at the St. Edmund’s funeral,

The Grosser sins ... came in upon me... as being unseasonable at first; and ... still more and more, and higher and higher: and I ... was passively held under the remembrance of them, and affected, so as I was rather passive all the while in it than active, and my thoughts held under, whilst that work went on.²⁹

He compared “this new sort of illumination” with “natural conscience”: the latter “more readily sees chairs and tables ... than flies and motes” in the dark whereas the former “gave discovery of my heart in all my sinnings, carried me down to see the inwards of my belly” Now God made him see the “root and ground” of all his sinnings. (2:lv) Moreover, he began to detest himself without any dispute.

Mr. Price was an instrument of God to help Goodwin in his conversion. (2:xxi) In the eye of Goodwin he was the “holiest man” that he ever knew. The holy Mr. Price, using Lawrence Chaderton’s preaching, compared the detestation to such an experience as “the sun ... shined upon a dunghill”. (2:lvi) With this new discovery he considered Romans 5:12 and gained further light from the Bible. He

²⁸ Freer, “Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan.” 10-12.

²⁹ TG 2:lvi; cf. xix-xx.

concurred in the pronouncement of St. Paul in Romans 7:18a. He had gone to bed for some hours, but awakened in meditation. He then “rose out of bed ... and solemnly fell down on [his] knees before God.” For God the Son “did on my own accord assume and take on me the guilt of that sin.” (2:lvii)

To illustrate the difference before and after regeneration, he suggested “if you take a piece of ice ... and strike it against a stone, ... you shall not have a spark.” For “there is not the least spark of the glory of God in the heart of man unregenerate.” But “take a flint, and strike it against steel or iron, and you shall have sparks struck out.” (2:lxvi)

Holy war

Now he “found two contrary principles, of spirit against flesh, and flesh against spirit.” This opposition of Spirit against flesh is different from that of conscience against a lust. The dichotomy of Spirit and flesh is “the new work of grace in a man’s heart.” The Spirit “not only contradicted and checked, but made a real natural opposition, such as fire does to water.” Goodwin learned this not by reading, nor through hearsay, “but, as Austin did, I perceived it of myself, and wondered at it.” Finally he proclaimed that “this combat ... is proper and peculiar to a man that is regenerate.” (2:lxiv)

Professor Haller remarks that once after the seven-year long, dark tug-of-war Goodwin transposed his spiritual trial into the pulpit. This is his sermon *A Child of Light*, preached in 1628. He vividly described “what happened in the sinner’s heart.”³⁰

³⁰ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 144. For analysis of *A Child of Light*, see Chapter XI below, The Assurance of Salvation.

Assurance (1627)

Mr. Price was also an instrument of God in leading Goodwin “to the full enjoyment of peace and assurance of faith in Christ.” (2:xx-xxi) By then Mr. Price was the preacher at King’s Lynn, whither his parents had removed from Rollesby.³¹ Since his conversion Goodwin “maintained a great intimacy of Christian friendship ... by letters and discourse” with him. He could “pour into his bosom his spiritual complaints” and Mr. Price “poured the balm of the gospel into his wounded soul ... to heal and comfort it.” Mr. Price played the role of counselor to Goodwin as Staupitz did to Luther. He turned both the wounded heart of Goodwin and his twisted mind to Christ alone.

In the assurance experience he heard God speaking a “word of promise” to him *immediately* through Ezekiel 16:1-6. (2:lxii) It was so vivid. He likened himself to the dead child in this passage—“dead ... from my nativity, and from thence ... heap of actual sins, that were the continual ebullitions of original sin.” No eye pitied him, nor could help him. But

as God there, in Ezek. xvi., on the *sudden*, —for it is spoken as a *speedy* word, as well as a *vehement* earnest word, for it is doubled twice, ‘yea, I said unto you, Live,’—so God was pleased on the *sudden*, and as it were in an *instant*, to alter the whole of his former dispensation towards me, and said of and to my soul, Yea,

³¹ TG 2:lxii. Goodwin knew Mr. Price before his conversion, for the latter’s drastic conversion from profligacy was well-known in the university. Besides, Goodwin’s parents had moved to King’s Lynn where Mr. Price was the lecturer there. Goodwin ever mentioned that after his rejection by Mr. Power, he was against “those at Lynn.” For his un-Senhouse style of preaching Mr. Price could be objected to by Goodwin at that time. But now he changed.

live; yea, live, I say, said God: and as he created the world and the matter of all things by a word, so he created and put a new life and spirit into my soul, and so great an alteration was strange to me. (2:lx. Italics mine.)

This is the best passage to illustrate the idiosyncratic doctrine of Goodwin: the *immediate* sealing of the Spirit. I italicize those words to make his experience of *immediacy* salient. The *immediacy* is not immediate revelation, but a direct, instant, vehement, sudden, passive experience of God’s grace through the written word of God. However, it is also a *gentle whisper*. In 1641 he preached to his first-gathered congregation this doctrine through the exposition of Ephesians 1:13. In 1658 this doctrine was ultimately codified into the *Savoy Declaration*.

What are “these instructions and suggestions ... immediately from God” to him? He recalled sixty years later in his *Memoir*, that “God took me aside, and as it were privately said unto me,”

Do you now turn to me, and I will pardon you all your sins though never so many, as I forgave and pardoned my servant Paul, and convert you unto me, as I did Mr. Price, who was the most famous convert and example of religion in Cambridge.

After a year he expressly told Mr. Price of “these two secret whispers and speeches of God”. In the end of his life he still defended his experience of immediacy with five confirmations.³²

The significance of Mr. Price’s appearing at this moment lies primarily in that his theology—giving high priority to Christ alone

³² TG 2:lxii-lxiv. The Fourthly in this passage should be the fifth point.

over the traditional syllogism³³—strengthened indeed the newly-acquired experience of immediacy in Goodwin. A counter letter from Goodwin to Mr. Price concludes this point: “I am come to this pass now, that signs will do me no good alone; I have trusted too much to habitual grace for assurance of justification; I tell you *Christ is worth all.*” The good syllogism will be misused by carnal men in two senses: first, they would believe on Christ “with joy and ravishment” in their carnal state. For they deceive themselves by signs. It is “common deceit.” Second, it keeps men “from going to Christ actually” and hence becomes a “hindrance” to Christ conversely. Incidental to this, Goodwin’s doctrine of sanctification was also changed accordingly.³⁴

William Perkins ever identified ten stages in his morphology of conversion. The first four—attendance of the ministry of the word, knowledge of law of God, awareness of sins, and legal fear—are preparatory and then are succeeded by promise of salvation in the mind, a spark of saving faith in the heart, combat of Spirit and flesh, assurance of salvation, evangelical sorrow and new obedience.³⁵ If we use this

³³ A syllogism has three parts: the major proposition (which is “light” or “law”), the minor proposition (which is “witness”), and the conclusion. A practical syllogism runs in this way. One asks himself, “Do I have eternal life?” The light from the Scriptures is “Whoever believes in Christ shall not die, but live.” The witness is “I believe in Christ.” Then a judgment concludes: “Therefore, I shall not die, but live.” Puritans also used syllogism to procure their assurance through sanctification or Christian experience. They detected “fire” from “smoke.”

³⁴ TG 2:1xx. Cf. several letters of Mr. Price to Goodwin are opened in the *Memoir* by his son. 2:lxviii-lxix. Italics mine. Cf. 2:lx where he said that the counterfeit grace was ever a “gaudy tulip” to him.

³⁵ Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1963.) 68-69. Morgan quotes from William Perkins, *Works*, II, 13.

morphology only as a reference, we can confirm: (1) For the first seven years at Cambridge (1613~1620) Goodwin had been in the first four preparatory stages;³⁶ (2) he was converted in 1620; and (3) another seven years elapsed before he experienced the full assurance of salvation in 1627. Since he was struck down by God in conversion, he had ever been busy in searching out the signs of grace and diverted from Christ for seven years! Now through the immediate work of the Spirit he was captivated by God with joy unspeakable. Finally a child of light walked in darkness no more!

Assurance is the greatest case of conscience. Mr. Price walked through it and then helped Goodwin pass through it. Now it was Goodwin's turn to help others through it. "His sermons being the result of these, had a great deal of spiritual heat in them, and were blessed by God to the conviction and conversion of many young scholars, who flocked to his ministry" His son was proud to say that his father had been "blessed by God as an instrument of ... conversion." (2:lxviii) It is significant that several earlier printed works of Goodwin are centered on the motif of assurance. These are *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness* (1628), *The Acts of Justifying Faith* (1630) and *Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians* (1641). In 1628 he was elected as the Lecturer of Trinity Church. What a scenario as Goodwin preached those two series of contagious messages to the young scholars at Trinity. How eager he was to share this most crucial truth to his first congregation that he gathered in London in 1641, is shown by his 53 page-long exposition of the sealing of the

³⁶ Goodwin said that "It was almost seven years ere I was taken off to live by faith on Christ, and God's free love" TG 2:lxviii.

Spirit in Ephesians 1:13-14.

A new preacher

Conversion for Goodwin included his method of preaching the word of God. Preston had opposed the flaunting sermon style of Dr. Senhouse. The great maxim in Goodwin's sermon of humiliation was that "of all others, my master-lust was mortified." (2:lxv) Halley points out, "By his master-lust he meant no immoral propensity ... but his desire to obtain distinction and honour by eloquent preaching." Before his conversion he considered the Senhouse style to be "flowers" and "diamonds." Upon his conversion Goodwin has set God's glory as his "resolved end" and his heart "did soon discover ... the unprofitableness of such a [i.e. flaunting] design." He came to this resolved principle: "... preach wholly and altogether sound, wholesome words, without affection of wit and vanity of eloquence." He confessed at the end of his life that for "threescore years" he had preached what he "thought was truly edifying, either for conversion of souls, or bringing them up to eternal life." (2: lxv, xxi-xxi)

Since then the influences of Sibbes and Preston became evident.³⁷ In 1625 he was licensed to be a preacher of Cambridge. He had to subscribe three articles: the affirmation of the supremacy of the King over all matters ecclesiastical, the accordance of the *Book of Common Prayer* with the word of God and the authority of the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. Upon the sudden death of Dr. Hills, he succeeded in obtaining the appointment of Dr. Sibbes as the new master of Catherine. Upon the death of Preston in 1628, Goodwin was chosen to succeed him as the Lecturer of Trinity Church. The Bishop of Ely at first re-

³⁷ Freer, "Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan." 9-11.

fused to admit the recommendation of the Duke of Buckingham. Goodwin did not make any concession of agreeing to not preach on some controversial topics of divinity. But he was admitted eventually. “Of all Preston’s disciples,” Professor Haller calls him “the most important” one.³⁸ In 1630 he proceeded to his B. D. In 1632 he was presented by the King to the vicarage of the same church. He “most zealously, laboriously, and successfully devoted his time and strength to promote the spiritual interests of the townsmen and the ... scholars” (2:xxiii-xxiv)

Goodwin was but one of the examples of the spiritual brotherhood. Professor Haller says, “Their function was to probe the conscience of the downhearted sinner, to name and cure the malady of his soul, and then to send him out strengthened and emboldened for the continuance of his lifelong battle with the world and devil.”³⁹ He chooses Thomas Goodwin to “conclude this account of typical leaders among the Puritan preachers.”⁴⁰ Starting from Richard Greenham and John Dod through many great divines to Goodwin, “truly the spiritual brotherhood ... had not reformed the church, but they had accomplished something of perhaps even greater consequence.” The greater task is setting forth the Christian faith as *the* way of life.⁴¹ It is a reformation “from within.”⁴²

³⁸ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 75. Upon his death Preston trusted his sermons to Goodwin and Thomas Ball. They published them the next year. 168.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 82. Or in Goodwin’s term: “spiritual lawyer skilled in soul-work.” TG 3:319.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 81. Cf. “Now it is Christ’s coming into the hearts of men is the foundation of all his kingdom, for it brings in willing subjects.” TG 6:515.

IV. Exposure to Millenarianism (since 1621)

To fully understand Goodwin we have to unravel the significance and the impact of the contemporary British apocalyptic literature upon him. *An Exposition of Revelation* (1639) was the first series of sermons he preached on this locus. In this work his hermeneutical lens was obviously adjusted. When he preached on Ephesians 1:21 in 1641 to his London congregation, he adopted a millenarian scope to open the implication of the “World to Come.”

When and Why

Now we will explore the question of when Goodwin was exposed to the millenarian view. Thankful Owen said that the Ephesians sermons were preached “after his return” from Holland and “about forty years ago,” before they were published in 1681. So the date is 1641, immediately after Goodwin’s return from Holland. (1.xxx-xxxi)⁴³ Goodwin said he had examined the scriptures relating to the millennium “for these twenty years” when he preached upon Ephesians 1:21-23. (1:521) Therefore we can safely say that he started to research things relating to millenarianism as early as 1621, not long after his conversion. Do not forget that Mr. Mede, the able theologian of eschatology, had been on the same campus. It would not have been hard for Goodwin to come into contact with this new idea concerning the last things, if he desired. Fienberg thinks this assumption is reasonable.⁴⁴

Another clue to Goodwin’s earlier exposure to millenarianism is one passage from his *The Return of Prayers*. This work was published

⁴³ Please consult Appendix I, Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680).

⁴⁴ Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin” 176.

in 1636, the same year as that of *A Child of Light*. These two works were among his earliest publications. He taught that some returns of our prayers may fall out in our time: such as “the calling of the Jews, the utter downfall of God’s enemies, the flourishing of the gospel, the full purity and liberty of God’s ordinances, the particular flourishing and good of the society and place you live in.”⁴⁵ If we compare this with the answer given to Q191 of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, we find in the catechism was a typical Puritan hope while the prayer of Goodwin was a millenarian Puritan hope. In addition to the calling of Jews, the destroying of the satanic power and hastening the second coming of the Lord, Goodwin’s prayer was obviously tinged with a millenarian hue, though he must have avoided using the millenarian wording, in his implication of a *flourishing* period of time. It seems that his millennial thought had taken form before 1636.

This raises another question: why did Goodwin become interested in and go to study the new British chiliasm? What is the motivation to drive him to it? The key to these questions lies in his peculiar doctrine, namely, that of the sealing of the Spirit. What is the key thought of Thomas Goodwin? Commenting on the latter-day glory in the thought of Goodwin, Anthony Dallison notes that “the subject of the latter-day glory was ... a doctrine which supplied ... the Congregational way with a powerful motive for reformation and a glorious hope for the future.”⁴⁶ The answer to the search for his key thought would be

⁴⁵ TG 3:365. Also quoted by Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope*. (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth, 1971.) 102.

⁴⁶ Anthony Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 58 (1986): 54.

“the latter-day glory.”⁴⁷ His study of the new chiliasm came to interplay with his struggling search for the assurance of salvation. His experience of the immediacy of the sealing of the Spirit in 1627 has a double meaning. He must have evaluated this experience in the light of his newly-understood apocalyptic literatures. What he experienced was but the dawn of the glory as a merit of the resurrection of Christ. The immediacy of the sealing of the Spirit is but the inception of the coming brighter glory in the future millennium.

Importance of the eschatology

His pursuit of the latter-day glory not only enhanced his preliminary experience of the immediate work of the Spirit, but also provided the clue to why he would develop a precise, delicate and complicated scheme of the book of the Apocalypse, and what drove him to promote his ideal of Independency as the *jus divinum* way to reform the English church, though with some religious toleration, first upon the floor of the Westminster Assembly, then to the Long Parliament directly. David Walker’s insight into Goodwin is, “The controversy between Goodwin and the Presbyterians may be viewed as a debate between the law of nature and the immediate action of the Holy Spirit.” In the same vein he points out that the difference in church polity lies in their eschatology:

The Presbyterians’ eschatology was an eschatology of judgement, but Goodwin’s doctrine of the last things was directed towards that renewal of humanity which was begun at Christ’s Resurrection, and would culminate in His Second Coming.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See Chapter II below, The Latter-Day Glory.

⁴⁸ David Walker, “Thomas Goodwin and the Debate on Church Government.” *Jour-*

The alleged “renewal of humanity” is no other than the fruit of the sealing of the Spirit in the elect’s heart. From the light of Ephesians 4:30 we are sealed until the last day. Today “the full payment and possession is deferred,” and we “wait for the redemption of the body.”⁴⁹ The sealing of the Spirit in the present-day was deemed by Goodwin to be the earnest of the full and ultimate latter-day glory. His deep conviction that his time was very close to the rise of the latter-day glory made him exceedingly optimistic, different from many other divines, towards the attainment of the sealing of the Spirit.⁵⁰

It is meaningful that the year in which Goodwin was assured with joy unspeakable coincided with the year Mede published his *Clavis Apocalyptica* and Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588~1638) his *Diatribes de mille annis Apocalypticis* (*The Beloved City*, English translation in 1643) as well. By this year (1627) the apocalyptic writing of another favorite author of Goodwin, Thomas Brightman, had been published for several years. Goodwin’s *Revelation* (1639) was his work on this subject.

Anthony Dallison’s article (1969), Stanley Fienberg’s dissertation (Chicago, 1974), David Walker’s article (1983) and others make up

nal of Ecclesiastical History 34 (1983): 99.

⁴⁹ TG 1:261. Cf. “... such a supernatural principle, as an optic glass, added to supernatural light, to help it to see further into another world” TG 7:57. Sealing as the “supernatural principle” enhances our faith as the “supernatural light” and equips us to see “another world.”

⁵⁰ In contrast, Cotton Mather admitted in colonial times, that “there are very *Few*, very *Few*, among us, that enjoy a strong Testimony of the Holy SPIRIT” Perkins and Beza impressed us with the same idea that the sealing is rare, so try good works as assurance at first. See Chapter XII below, The Sealing of the Spirit.

for the negligence of past studies of Goodwin in this sphere. If we lose sight of his eschatological perspective, what we then have is but a partial, tarnished, even biased, and hence unreal view of Goodwin. Latter-day glory forms the soul of Goodwin's theology. Eschatology had been integrated into his way of thinking and shaped the frame of his system. An admirer and devotee of Goodwin, Alexander Whyte (1836~1921), highly appraises his works except his *Revelation*.⁵¹ On the third volume of Nichol's edition of Goodwin, Whyte says,

Goodwin's *Three Cases* are as lastingly valuable to me as his *Revelation* is worthless. Goodwin warns his readers that some of them may find his *Revelation* somewhat 'craggy and tiresome.' And I am fain to confess that I am one of those readers. The true key to the Book of Revelation had not been discovered in Goodwin's days. And, therefore, I thankfully accept his offered permission to leave his *Revelation*.⁵²

Let us not put asunder his eschatology and all of his other *loci*, when we try to understand him. We may still relish his latter-day glory even if we cannot accept his apocalyptic outlook.

V. Persuasion of Independency (1633~41)

The year of 1633 is probably the critical year for Goodwin, for he became an Independent in that year. What is the Independency held by

⁵¹ It is Alexander Whyte who prepared the index for Nichol's complete works of Thomas Goodwin. See G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1923.) 118. For Whyte, Goodwin is "the greatest pulpit exegete of Paul that has ever lived." *Ibid.*, 97.

⁵² Alexander Whyte, "Thomas Goodwin." from *Thirteen Appreciations*. PDF version from Fire and Ice Sermon series at www.puritansermons.com. p. 6.

Goodwin? We may compare the chapters of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* regarding the doctrine of the church with those of the *Savoy Declaration*. The latter revised the chapter *Of the Church* of the former to a large scale and also omitted the chapters *Of Church Censures* and *Of Synods and Councils*, of which Williston Walker says as “one of the most important omissions in the Savoy.”⁵³ The Independents repudiated the concept of a national church and favored the “gathered church” principle. The key of the kingdom lies upon the congregation itself, not the higher hierarchies.

Influence by Cotton

Prior to his departure for New England in 1633, John Cotton, confronted by Goodwin and others, conversely convinced them of the “the congregational way.”⁵⁴ The role of Cotton in Goodwin’s conversion into “the Congregational Way” is corroborated by the fact that in 1644 Cotton trusted the printing of his *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven* to the hand of Goodwin and Philip Nye. Goodwin said that the Congregational Way is the “very middle-way” between Brownism and the Presbyterian-government in the foreward to this work.⁵⁵ Robert Baillie also attributed the Independent persuasion of Goodwin to John Cotton. He lamented that

Master Robinson did derive his way to his separatist congregation

⁵³ Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 400.

⁵⁴ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*. 1:264-65. Philip Nye and John Davenport were with him. Also quoted by Freer, “Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan.” 12-13, and Barker, *Puritan Profiles*, 72.

⁵⁵ John Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven and Power thereof, according to the Word of God*. Foreword by Goodwin and Nye. (London: M. Simmons, 1644.) 7.

at Leyden, a part of them did carry it over to Plymouth in New England; here Master Cotton did take it up and transmit it from thence to Master Thomas Goodwin who did help to propagate it to sundry others in Old England first, and after to more in Holland, till now by many hands it is sown thick in divers parts of this kingdom.⁵⁶

Baillie's work was published in 1645, the year when the debate on church government between the Independents and the Presbyterians was very heated. According to him, it was John Cotton who passed the idea of Independency to Goodwin. And then Goodwin propagated the idea to the other "dissenting brethren" while they were in Holland. If it was only because John Cotton's preaching pierced the heart of John Preston that Cotton Mather called his maternal grandfather, John Cotton, "a spiritual father unto one of the greatest men of his age,"⁵⁷ how much more would Cotton be called the great father of Goodwin because he persuaded Goodwin into his Congregational Way.

In 1633 William Laud became the Archbishop of Canterbury. As a result the supervision of preaching became much stricter. Many godly Puritans suffered only for the sake of the liberty of their conscience, not to mention a minister with the Independent persuasion like Goodwin. He resigned his lectureship at Trinity as well as his fellowship at

⁵⁶ Robert Baillie, *A Disuasive from the Errours of the Time*. London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1645. Quoted from Halley, *Memoir*. TG 2:xxiv. However, three years later Cotton countered Baillie that he denied his convincing Goodwin into his church way. He ascribed it to the working of the Spirit. John Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*. 1648. Pp. 23-24. Quoted from Fienberg, "Thomas Goodwin" 85.

⁵⁷ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*. 1:261.

Catherine Hall in 1634, and moved to London. (2:xxiv)

Little has been recorded about the next five years at London except Goodwin's marriage in 1638 to Elizabeth Prescot. She bore a daughter, Elizabeth, to Goodwin probably in 1639 and died in 1649.⁵⁸

Dutch Experiment

After Laud successfully suppressed most of the lectureships, he enforced more severe measures to achieve the uniformity of religion and even extended them to Scotland. Some ministers fled to New England and some to the Low Countries. Goodwin chose the latter where he would have frequent opportunities to confer with Philip Nye (c. 1596~1672), Jeremiah Burroughs (1599~1646), William Bridge (c. 1600~1671) and Sidrach Simpson (c. 1600~1655) —who were later called with Goodwin the “Five Dissenting Brethren” in the Westminster Assembly. In 1639 Goodwin first came to Amsterdam. Soon he and Nye moved to Arnhem to assist the newly-founded English congregation of Pastor John Archer. There they served as teachers from 1639 to 1641. The size of the church was about one hundred persons. A contemporary English man, Mr. Robert Crane, has left to us a letter which happened to sketch how the church met on Sundays, including weekly communions!⁵⁹ In addition, the church had certain innovations, such as anointing the sick with oil, laying on of hands for healing, solo singing, and ‘prophesying’ (after-sermon questions from the congrega-

⁵⁸ TG 2:xxiv, lxxii. Their daughter was married to John Mason and died two years before Goodwin's death.

⁵⁹ Paul E. Brown, “The Principle of Covenant—The Theology of Thomas Goodwin.” 23-25. If that is the church served by Goodwin and Nye, then the observation of Mr. Crane confirmed the practice of the weekly communion at Arnhem.

tion). Even the holy kiss was on their list of discussion items. The new measures were done, they claimed, according to the New Testament.⁶⁰

An important event that occurred while the brothers were staying in Holland was the case of calling the Synod of Rotterdam. The Rotterdam Church was gathered by Hugh Peter (or Peters, 1598~1660) according to the Congregational pattern probably on or before 1632. William Ames was briefly one of her co-ministers, dying in 1633.⁶¹ About 1636 Samuel Ward succeeded Peter as the pastor.⁶² William Bridge joined this church when he migrated to Holland in 1638. Bridge was re-ordained as a teacher of the church by Ward. Soon Simpson also arrived at the same church and he “stood for the ordinance of prophesying to be exercised in that church.” Bridge objected to this. Then Simpson left the church and started a new church with some families of the same persuasion. Ward sympathized with those who left and hence disagreed with Bridge. It turned out that Ward was

⁶⁰ Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord*. 90. This information was fortunately kept by the detractor of Independency, Thomas Edwards, in his *Antapologia*. Also quoted by Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*. 226-30. As to anointing the sick, see TG 11:461. See also Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans*. 54, 245.

⁶¹ Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 3:352. William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*. Translated with an introduction by John Dykstra Eusden. 9-10.

⁶² Samuel Ward was born at Haverhil in Suffolk, educated in Sydney College, Cambridge and then chosen fellow there. Afterwards he became minister to a church at Ipswich in Suffolk. In 1634 he was prosecuted in the high commission court, in 1635 suspended and then put into prison. After release, he retired to Holland. Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:452-55. However, Robert S. Paul warns us that “There are no less than eight ‘Samuel Wards’ listed in Venn’s *Book of Circulations and Degrees* between 1588 and 1659.” Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apologeticall Narration*. 98. Obviously there are some inconsistencies in Brook’s record of Samuel Ward.

deposed from his position as pastor! Jeremiah Burroughs took his place. The schismatic congregation grew apace by defections from the old one. Bitterness grew between Bridge and Simpson. Ward and Bridge even wrote against each other. At this moment Goodwin and others stepped in and called a synod to reconcile the schism.⁶³ “Ward was restored in the summer of 1641, the congregation concluding it had been hasty and both sides confessing their sins.”⁶⁴

However, Robert S. Paul ascribes the healing to providence. “The whole unhappy incident was terminated by the change of conditions in England which enabled the exiles to return home.” His judgment may be right. For after returning to England Bridge settled in Yarmouth to “avoid the capital and leave it to his erstwhile colleague and recent ‘thorn in the flesh,’ Sidrach Simpson.”⁶⁵ Later in January 1643 Goodwin cited this case in *An Apollogeticall Narration* to show how the Independent churches could make use of a synod for advice and consultation.⁶⁶

Another distinction of this experimental Independent church was the millenarian teaching among them. At this stage Goodwin was still under the influence of Mede. He shared a quasi-premillennialism with

⁶³ Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 98-100.

⁶⁴ Barker, *Puritan Profiles*. 73. The record by Brook that Ward “does not appear to have long survived these painful trials, but died in Holland, most probably about the year 1640” (see Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 2:454) is obviously in conflict with that of Sprunger in his *Dutch Puritanism*, 169-70, 228. Brook’s is less reliable. That Geoffrey Nuttall nominated John Ward for this case here seems incorrect. See his *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way*. 11.

⁶⁵ Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 100-101.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

Archer. To this congregation Goodwin preached his *Revelation* in 1639 and his most controversial *A Glimpse of Syons Glory* on a fast-day eve before returning to London in the very beginning of 1641.⁶⁷

VI. Puritan in Power (1641~60)

With the opening of the Long Parliament, Laud was impeached and all the exiles were welcomed home.

A chiliast-Independent

Goodwin came back to London and gathered a church at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East. To this congregation he preached his *Ephesians* in 1641. On April 27, 1642 he was invited to preach to the House of Commons. His sermon was titled "Zerubabel's Encouragement to Finish the Temple" upon Zechariah 4:6-9. It was full of apocalyptic zeal by which he inflamed the Parliament to engage in a full-fledged further church reformation. This reformation would succeed Calvin and Luther, and renovate doctrines, church worship, and church government according to the standard of the New Testament. The eminent magistrates and ministers were to be the two olive trees which supply oil to the light of the church. He dared not say that the "killing of the two witnesses" was yet to come, but he declared that

we know it not how long, it may be a good while unto it, and, in the mean time, we may yet enjoy a summer of the gospel, and an harvest of a better reformation, a little time of which ... were worth a world This killing shall be but a civil death And so the same persons shall rise again, and enjoy the fruit of their former labours, and ascend into a greater glory.

⁶⁷ As to the details, see Chapter II below, *The Latter-Day Glory*.

He condensed his exposition of Revelation into this sermon. He urged the MPs, “Purge and reform the temple, though you die for it in the doing of it.”⁶⁸ He used the apocalyptic signs in the Bible as a guide to the times. On August 22, 1642 the first Civil War broke out. On June 12 of the following year he was elected as a member to attend the Westminster Assembly.⁶⁹

A disturbing debater at Westminster

The scene at the Assembly had drastically changed after the *Solemn League and Covenant* with Scotland on September 25, 1643. The first article of this document laid down its key points. Both sides—England and Scotland—should endeavor to preserve the reformed religion in four aspects—doctrine, worship, discipline and government—among the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland “according to the Word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches.” From then on the divines worked on the *Form of Church Government*, the *Directory for Public Worship*, the *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* in order.⁷⁰ The phrase—

⁶⁸ TG 12:126. The whole sermon covers TG 12:104-27.

⁶⁹ The maneuver of Philip Nye might be accredited for the calling of all the “Dissenting Brethren” into the Assembly. Very soon after his arrival, Nye was presented by the later Earl of Manchester, Edward Montagu, to a living. Ironically this Earl was to be “the chief presbyterian protagonist in the army and in the Parliament against Cromwell and the Independents.” Nye must have dissembled his real views or deliberately minimized his differences with the Presbyterians. Montagu was responsible for Nye’s nomination. Robert S. Paul thinks that this “may account for the fact that almost all those who had served as ministers in the associated congregation of Arnheim and Rotterdam found seats in the Assembly.” Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 91.

⁷⁰ Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 72. For the completion dates for the documents, see Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin below.

“according to the Word of God”—is what Robert S. Paul calls “the loophole left for the Independents to win religious toleration.” It was negotiated by Nye.⁷¹

“Now, with the Scottish commissioners present, it was directed to take up the question of church government.”⁷² Before long, by the end of January 1644, Goodwin was recognized as the leader of the Independency minority among the Westminster Divines. He had contributed with distinction to the Assembly, for “his own shorthand notes filled fourteen volumes,”⁷³ in addition to his playing the main role in “the Grand Debate.” Among the Assembly the Independents were but a minority. There were only the “Five Dissenting Brethren,” and at times William Carter, William Greenhill, Joseph Caryl, Peter Sterry, John Green and John Phillips could be counted in their fold. Among the members of the House of Commons, only four of them were Independents. Goodwin and his colleagues “perceived that the longer they could hold the assembly in debate the more they could count on the support of powerful forces outside.”⁷⁴ So Goodwin, together with the other four, did their best to debate upon the floor of the Assembly. He alone “made 357 speeches in the debates of the Assembly from August 4, 1643 to November 15, 1644, more than any other member and

⁷¹ Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 92.

⁷² William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*. 103.

⁷³ TG 2:xxx. By the time the son of Goodwin wrote the *Memoir*, he said that those 14 volumes “are preserved in Dr. Williams’ Library in Redcross Street.” Now we know that they are extant no more. William Barker laments for the loss, “since our other sources of information on the Assembly ... all wrote from a Presbyterian perspective.” See his *Puritan Profiles*. 74.

⁷⁴ Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in Puritan Revolution*. 124.

twice as many as all but six of the other members of the Assembly.”⁷⁵ For this Robert Baillie said of Goodwin that “It were a thousand pities of that man, I hope God will not permit him to goe on to lead a faction for rending of the kirk.”⁷⁶

However, in January 1644, the “Five Dissenting Brethren” broke their secret agreement with the Presbyterians that both sides confine their debates to the Assembly. They thought that their odds lay in appealing directly to the Parliament and the public. So they published their famous *An Apologeticall Narration* to assert their cause. Anthony Wood suggested that it was actually written by Goodwin and Nye alone.⁷⁷ To make their cause more clear they published John Cotton’s *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* at this critical moment. (John Owen was won over by their propaganda in 1646!)⁷⁸ In March 1645 the Independents were required by the Presbyterians to present their conception of church government in writing. For this Goodwin took six-month leave from the Assembly, yet it was not presented in September. Instead they presented *A Copy of a Remonstrance Lately Delivered into the Assembly* only to protest their unfair treatment. The result of Goodwin’s work, which demonstrated fully his thinking about “the Congregational Way”, was not seen until 1666 when it was published under the title *The Constitution, Right Order, and Government of the Churches of Christ*.

⁷⁵ Barker, *Puritan Profiles*. 70.

⁷⁶ Baillie, *Letters ...* II:123.

⁷⁷ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*. II:504. Quoted from Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apologeticall Narration*. 85.

⁷⁸ Peter Toon, *God’s Statesman: the Life and Work of John Owen*. (Exeter Devon, England: The Paternoster Press, 1971.) 24, 185.

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) on the Christian Life

Providence seemed to make their dream come true. The ascendance of Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army made the toleration of religion feasible. The Protector settled the Cromwellian State Church after 1649 in that way. Before this the future of Independency was gloomy Goodwin in 1647 had once almost been moved by the invitation of John Cotton to remove to New England. He had put his valuable library on board. But at last the entreaty of beloved friends prevailed. So he still remained in London. (2:xxx1)

Work at Oxford

Fienberg indicates that during the 1650s, Goodwin was the most trusted of the clergy by the Protector. These ten years were the most busy time in his life. His involvements primarily appeared in four major areas: President of Magdalene College, Oxford and Visitor to the University; the Cromwellian State Church; Jewish readmission; the Savoy Conference.⁷⁹

On June 8, 1649 he was appointed as the president of Magdalene College, Oxford. Before assuming the new position he married again to Mary Hammond who bore to him two sons, Thomas Goodwin Jr. and Richard. (2:xxxii, lxxiii) In his *Memoir* Goodwin opened his heart to us:

I took my leave for my whole life of all ecclesiastical preferments: and though afterwards I was President of Magdalene College, my great motive ... was the fair opportunity of doing good in my ministry in the University, and that it might be my power to bring

⁷⁹ Fienberg, "Thomas Goodwin" 269. Fienberg painstakingly reconstructs the story of Goodwin after 1650 from many primary sources in Part III (pp. 265-352) of his dissertation.

Chapter I Life & Age of Thomas Goodwin

in young men that were godly, both fellows and students, that serve God in the ministry in after-times. ... I had for some years after ... serious and hearty acknowledgement from several young men, who had received the light of their conversion by my ministry ... in ... Cambridge. ... and what the success has been at Oxford, I leave to Christ till the latter day. (2:lxvi)

The seven years (1627~34) as a lecturer at Cambridge subsequent to his experience of the immediacy of the sealing of the Spirit were his old happy days, because he was in a position to lead young men into the same spiritual joy. Now he had the same opportunity in his new appointment. While he was at Oxford for ten years, he also gathered a church. He wanted the college to know the importance of things spiritual. The church consisted of many learned and godly men, such as Thankful Owen, President of St. John's, successor of him at this church; Francis Howell, Master of Jesus College; Theophilus Gale, Stephen Charnock, and many others. (2:lxxiii) In those days Thomas Goodwin and John Owen harnessed Oxford together by preaching alternately on Sunday afternoon sermons at St. Mary's Church. They were eulogized as "those living and walking Bibles." (1:xxix) Robert S. Paul says of him, "No seventeenth-century head of a college entered into his duties with more seriousness or with deeper pastoral concern."⁸⁰

Goodwin was an "active, pleasant, genial, and even occasionally facetious man." But he was caricatured by a young visitor of Magdalene as a person "with half-a-dozen nightcaps." He might wear two to three caps to protect his head. The criticism that he had "religious ter-

⁸⁰ Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 86.

ror in his countenance” was exaggerated and based on a misunderstanding. For Goodwin usually examined whether his students were in the state of grace, inquired of further works of the Spirit in their hearts and reminded them whether they had prepared to die. Anthony Wood remarks that “all those that were to enter into that Fraternity were openly to make confession of their sins.”⁸¹ John Howe, a non-Independent student, witnessed the loving embrace and liberal catholicity of Goodwin. On December 22, 1653, Goodwin was conferred the degree of D. D. of Oxford University.⁸²

In addition to his presidency at Magdalene, he was appointed into the Board of Visitors of Oxford in 1652. Oxford had been very loyal to the king. During the Civil War, Charles I made it his capital. Parliament recovered Oxford on June 24, 1646, and then organized the Board of Visitors to ensure the University’s loyalty to the Parliament. After the execution of King Charles I a new Board was needed. Five of the eight members of the 1652 Board reflected the political change. The five Independents were John Owen, Jonathan Goddard, Thomas Goodwin, Francis Howell and Thankful Owen, the admirer of Goodwin. Under their guidance, Oxford became a center of morality, godliness and piety with promotion of academics at the same time. Conversion of souls also drew the attention of the educators. We can still immerse ourselves with Goodwin’s ideas of education by reading his sermons preached at the University during those days.⁸³

⁸¹ Wood, *Fasti Oxoniensis*. II:104. Quoted from Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogetical Narration*. 86.

⁸² TG 2:xxxii-xxxv. The Oxford students dubbed him “Dr. Nine Caps.” See Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogetical Narration*. 89.

⁸³ *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation*, vol. 6 of Nichol’s edition, was actu-

A Christian Statesman under Cromwell

The ideal of the Independents was to set up a preaching ministry nationwide. They pursued religious liberty for all the saints, embracing Independents, Presbyterians and Baptists, but not for sectarians such as Quakers, Socinians, Levelers, etc. Arminians would also be denied in their list. For their toleration was as far as orthodox Calvinism allowed. During the era of the Commonwealth they were opposed on two fronts: a more tolerant and liberal Cromwell and his army on the one hand, and a Presbyterians-predominant Parliament on the other. Goodwin and his party had a better chance siding with the former rather than the latter.

During the Protectorate years Goodwin was one of the most prominent Christian statesmen. This gave him the opportunity to implement his ecclesiastical ideal. He was involved in two crucial Independent documents: *The Humble Proposals* (1652) and *The Principles of Faith* (1653). *The Humble Proposal* was drafted by an Independents-based committee in 1651~52 and presented to the Rump Parliament in February 1653. This *Proposal* was intended to settle “right constituted churches” and to prevent the growth of “sects” which would be a threat to church, state and society. But the dissolution of the Rump in April prevented its implementation. Nevertheless, its spirit indeed influenced the later Cromwellian settlement.

On December 16, 1653 the *Instrument of Government* was passed

ally Goodwin’s sermons at Oxford. Fienberg advises us to read passages on TG 6:157, 415, 462, 484, 519, etc., and notifies us of the concept of the college education in Goodwin’s mind. For Goodwin, the university was first and foremost for the conversion of souls and training of preachers of the gospel. See Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin . . .” Chapter IX, THE VISITATION OF OXFORD, 270-92.

by the Parliament. Clauses XXXV-XXXVIII of it dealt with religion, proposing a liberal measure of toleration. All sorts of Christian faiths were protected except Popery, Prelacy and those professions leading to licentiousness. Hence Quakers, Socinians and Arminians were all accepted. The Independent divines countered it with *The Principles of Faith* in April 1654, which was almost the same as the *Principles of Christian Religion* in *The Humble Proposals* except adding an article on the resurrection of the dead and strengthening the article on the authority of the Bible. As the Parliament was dismissed on January 22, 1655, the Lord Protector did not make a final decision on the limits of toleration.

Goodwin was one of the “principal architects of the two pillars of the Cromwellian Church settlement, the Commission for the Approbation of Publique Preachers and the Commission for the Ejecting of Scandalous, Ignorant and Insufficient Ministers and Schoolmasters.” They were popularly called the Triers and Ejectors. Thirty-eight commissioners as Triers were named and invested with power to recruit ministers for the lectureship. Oxford and Cambridge were the dominant force on the board. From Oxford came John Owen, Thomas Goodwin and Thankful Owen. They cared for orthodoxy and godliness, never raising the question of church government. According to the study of Naomi Feldman Collins, there were an estimated 5,518 approbations and one out of ten was rejected. Fienberg collects an unpublished letter by Goodwin at the end of his dissertation, in which letter Goodwin justified his approval of an Episcopal minister, Peter Samway. The work of the Ejectors was much harder. They accomplished little. According to Collins, only seven clergy were ejected in

Essex, four in Wiltshire and four in Lancashire.⁸⁴

Jewish readmission

On July 18, 1290, Edward I signed a royal decree which expelled Jews from his kingdom. New expulsions occurred in Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella banished the Jews from their territory in 1492. The Reformation did not bring a new fate to the Jews until a drastic change in the doctrine of eschatology developed in the years in 1550~1650. It might have origination with Theodore Beza, who favored the interpretation of the “Israel” in Romans 11: 25-26 as the literal restoration of Jews. This view, negating that of Augustine and the great reformers, planted a seed which led to a redefined eschatology. The influential *Geneva Bible* followed Beza in its annotations on Romans 11. Besides, the birth of Hebrew studies in Protestantism introduced the literal prediction of the Old Testament as taught by many rabbis.⁸⁵ The contemporary political pressure of the Turks and the religious crisis due to the papacy naturally paved the way for the commentators to re-interpret the significance of much symbolic language used in Revelation.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ This section has heavily relied on Chapter X, CHURCH AND STATE of Fienberg’s dissertation. See his “Thomas Goodwin . . .” 293-318. Peter Toon calls for attention in 1971 that “Little seems to have been written on them [triers] in recent years.” See his *God’s Statesman*. 92, n. 4. But in the same year someone answered the call! Naomi Feldman Collins presents her Ph.D. dissertation to Indiana University, 1971, “Oliver Cromwell’s Protectorate Church Settlement: The Commission for the Approbation of Publique Preachers: The Triers and the Commission for the Ejecting of Scandals, Ignorant, and Insufficient Ministers and Schoolmasters.” Fienberg makes use of her results to refine his story of the Cromwellian Settlement. See Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin . . .” 301, n. 1.

⁸⁵ Peter Toon, “The Latter-Day Glory.” in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel*. Edited by Peter Toon. (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1970.) 23-24.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-22.

Brightman and Mede both believed Revelation 16:12 paves the way for the conversion of the nation of Israel. Peter Toon points out that

The Hebraic and Judaical tendencies in England thought and theology reached their zenith by 1650 and it is in this ‘prophetical’ context, whilst not forgetting the economic factors of Jewish immigration, that the debate on the readmission of Jews and the mission of Menasseh ben Israel in 1655 must be set.⁸⁷

It is conceivable that the earliest British proponents of readmission of Jews into England from 1614 to 1644 were Baptists or Independents, for only they held the millenarian view. After Pride’s Purge, the winter of 1648~1649, the new constitution once considered a resolution in favor of toleration for all, including Jew, Turk and Papist. But the Council of Officers did not support it and then the Rump Parliament only limited the toleration of religion to the Christian professions except the papist. From then on Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel pounded the door of readmission for his people. There was a new expulsion of Jews in Northern Europe. His apocalyptic view exhibited in his book *Hope of Israel* (1650) quickly caught the attention of the millenarian Puritans. The Rabbi argued from Daniel 12:7 that “When the Jews were dispersed to all corners of the earth, the Messiah would come to restore them to the land of Israel.” Menasseh had been convinced that the American Indians were indeed the descendants of the lost tribes of Israelites. So now Jews were dispersed everywhere except Britain. The corollary was easy: once England readmits them, the end time is come. You Puritans have your latter-day glory and we

⁸⁷ Peter Toon, “The Question of Jewish Immigration.” in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel*, 115.

Jews are restored to our homeland. Fienberg comments, “Strangely enough, they were compatible with Puritan eschatological hopes.” In 1651 Goodwin published a sermon on Ephesians 2:14-16. It was preached at St. Mary’s, Oxford.⁸⁸ In it he called for the unity of Jews and Gentiles. He did not mention anything apocalyptic, but he did pave the way for readmission of Jews into England. In the same year, he accompanied Cromwell to Holland. Fienberg speculated that Goodwin “probably met Menasseh on the Lords’ state visit to the Netherlands in 1651.”

Politics and finance may also have been the factors inducing Cromwell to consider a change of policy regarding Jews. On December 4, 1655 a conference of twenty-eight notable men was convened at Whitewall to consult a petition from Amsterdam, *The Humble Address of Menasseh ben Israel*. Goodwin, Owen, Nye, Joseph Caryl, Peter Bulkeley, Hugh Peter, and Peter Sterry were all invited. The Protector did not push through this case for he knew a favorable time was not yet come. However, in February 1658 Cromwell gave informal assurance of his protection to a small community of Iberian Jews. The issue of the admission of Jews reached its culmination two hundred years after the death of Cromwell when Baron de Rothschild took his seat in the House of Commons as a London M.P.⁸⁹

This case revealed sufficiently that the “latter-day glory” belief of the Independents, including Goodwin, “outweighed all fears of social

⁸⁸ TG 2:359. These sermons are very similar to the one under the title: *Reconciliation of All People of God, Notwithstanding all their Differences Enmities*. TG 5:463-478. Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin” 322, 362.

⁸⁹ Toon, “The Question of Jewish Immigration.” 125.

dissolution of a Christian State.” It also shows that their eschatological worldview in 1640s basically did not change in 1650s.⁹⁰

Savoy Synod (1658)

The national scenario changed a lot with the Protectorate. Before the winter of 1648~49 the Independents had to supplicate for the toleration of religion from the Presbyterians-dominant Parliament. Their strategy was delaying any settlement as late as possible. Now with the ascendance of the Protector they not only shared a political equality with the Presbyterians, but also enjoyed a greater degree of personal favor with Cromwell. Williston Walker judiciously points out that the “Independents received educational and ecclesiastical livings at the hands of the government, the tenure of which ... was not always very consistent with Congregational principles.”⁹¹ As Congregationalism grew nationwide, the Independent leaders desired to define their own doctrinal and ecclesiastical position. Another consideration came from the fact that rising various sectaries and radicals frequently sheltered themselves under the name of Independency. Through such a synod as they wanted to convene, the Independents could clear themselves for the cause of the true gospel.

Still with fresh memory of the heated “Grand Debate” in the Assembly just a few years ago, the Lord Protector was “naturally reluctant to summon a meeting which might possibly increase that friction between Presbyterians and Congregationalists”⁹² He only gave

⁹⁰ This section heavily relies on Chapter XI, JEWISH RE-ADMISSION of Fienberg’s dissertation. See his “Thomas Goodwin” 319-328.

⁹¹ Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 345.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 346.

consent in an informal way. Nevertheless, the announcement letters were sent out from Henry Scobell, the clerk of the Council of State on June 15, 1658. To the sorrow of the two hundred participants of the Savoy Synod, the Lord Protector died on September 3, usually the victory day for him.⁹³ On September 29 all the representatives of 120 churches met at the Savoy Palace. They decided to “draw up a new symbol on substantially the same lines” as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. John Owen and five Westminster veterans, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, Joseph Caryl, and William Greenhill were chosen as the Committee to prepare the desired confession.

Formerly on June 20, 1648, the Long Parliament adopted the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, with the omission of Chapter XX, § 4 (relating to the punishment of heresy, etc.); Chapter XXIV, § § 4 (in part), 5, 6 (on divorce); Chapter XXX entire (on church censures); and Chapter XXXI entire (on synods and councils).⁹⁴ Actually the Committee of The *Savoy Declaration* simply did more largely what Parliament had begun. Besides the Savoy divines amended phraseology of some chapters. Significant changes were that they rewrote Chapter XV on Repentance, defined the nature of the law given to Adam in Chapter XIX, added a new Chapter XX (*Of the Gospel, and of the extent of the Grace thereof*) which is intensely Calvinistic, in no way antagonistic to the Westminster Confession; and enhanced § 5 to Chap-

⁹³ Goodwin, together with John Owen, Peter Sterry and Joseph Caryl were among the six clergy who ministered to the Lord Protector upon his deathbed. Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apologeticall Narration*. 88 n 29.

⁹⁴ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 6th edition. Revised by David Schaff. 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1931; reprint by Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990.) 1:758-59.

ter XXVI (*Of the Church*).⁹⁵ To the surprise of the representatives they discovered a unanimity among them even without previous consultations. On October 12 the *Savoy Declaration* passed.⁹⁶ Though Owen played the leading role at Savoy, Goodwin still had his theological contribution—the last contribution in public—in many places.⁹⁷

The *Savoy Declaration* was adopted at a Massachusetts Synod in 1680 and at Saybrook in 1708. It became a standard and a landmark for Congregationalism.⁹⁸

VII. After the Restoration (1660~80)

After the Restoration in May 1660, Goodwin was ejected from Oxford and moved to London. He pastored the same congregation he gathered at Oxford, for a great part of its members followed him to London. They used a meeting-house at Fetter Lane until it was burned in the conflagration of London in 1666. The church passed on. When Robert Halley wrote a *Memoir* for him in the nineteenth century, the church still existed under a pastor.

“Killing of the witnesses”

In a certain sense the prophecy of Goodwin had been fulfilled. He entered into the time of so-called “killing of two witnesses.” After the restoration of Charles II the Cavalier Parliament installed a series of religious policies in order to recover the old order before 1640. The

⁹⁵ Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*. (Swengel, PA: Reiner Publications, 1973.) 78.

⁹⁶ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:832.

⁹⁷ I will discuss them when occasions arise in later chapters.

⁹⁸ Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 350-351.

promise of the king in his Declaration of Breda on April 4, 1661 very soon evaporated. Liberty of religion was not issued even to the Presbyterians supportive of the king. Four consecutive acts under the name of Earl of Clarendon ensued. The first act of the Clarendon Code was the Corporation Act in 1661 which required all holders of municipal office to renounce the *Solemn League and Covenant*, to take the communion of the Church of the England and to swear oaths of allegiance to the supremacy of the king. Then the Act of Uniformity was passed on May 19, 1662. It demanded that all ministers be ordained in the Church of England and make public confession of the Prayer Book before the Feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1662. On that day about two thousand ministers were ejected from their ministry and livings. The pressure was not lessened. The old Conventicle Act was also invoked to suppress the faithful ministers in 1664. The act forbade a conventicle of more than five people who were not members of the same household. The most ridiculous act was the last one, the Five Mile Act in 1665, which forbade all nonconformist teachers and preachers to go within five miles of their former parish or a corporate town! Teaching at a school was also barred.

From the summer of 1665 till 1666 a bubonic plague spread in London and accounted the deaths of nearly 70,000 people in a population of about half a million. On September 2 to 5, 1666, the Great Fire of London destroyed four-fifths of the city. "It was generally held that the Plague and the Fire were God's judgements upon the land for the harshness of the government's attitude to Nonconformity."⁹⁹ In June 1667 the Earl of Clarendon was unjustly blamed for the successful

⁹⁹ Toon, *God's Statesman*. 131.

Dutch attack. Despite the failure of impeachment of him, he was still forced into exile to France.¹⁰⁰ Two indulgences were issued by Charles II in 1669 and 1672.

In the dreadful fire of 1666 Goodwin lost above half of his library with the worth of five hundred pounds. The providence of God miraculously preserved his commentaries and divinity books while other well-kept books were conversely burned. After the conflagration he confessed that “as he loved his library too well, so God had rebuked him by this affliction.” (2:1xxiv) He poured out his reflections into his sermons, *Patience and its Perfect Work*. On 1660s Rodney L. Petersen comments that “Some lost the old hope, some continued to spiritualize it, some took it overseas.”¹⁰¹ The aging Goodwin must have taken his own prophecy in a more spiritual way.

Soaring like an eagle

Since the Restoration Goodwin led a quiet life,¹⁰² submissive to the king. No longer being involved in politics, he gave his whole time to pastoral duties and theological works. While John Owen associated himself with those surviving statesmen of the Commonwealth, he kept close to learned theologians, such as Moses Lowman, Theophilus Gale,

¹⁰⁰ Upon the fall of the Earl of Clarendon, Richard Baxter voiced that “it was a notable providence of God that this man that . . . had dealt so cruelly with the Nonconformists should thus by his own friends be cast out.” Baxter, *Reliquiae*. III:20. Quoted from Toon, *God’s Statesman*. 131-32.

¹⁰¹ Rodney L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days: Use of Two Witnesses in Revelation 11: 3-13, in Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.) 216.

¹⁰² Two letters dated 1675 of Goodwin to a preacher at Norwich shows that he was sometimes active in helping other churches when he was 75. TG 11:541-46.

Stephen Charnock, and Thankful Owen. He read much and spent time in prayer and meditation. Though his reading covered widely, yet he studied the Bible most. He had a very good collection of books and commentaries. He read and thought. Comparing with other authors, he sometimes “discovered those truths which are not to be found in other authors.” (2:lxiii-lxxv, xlvii-xlviii) The truths were not merely a speculative pleasure, but life and food of his soul. Cotton Mather said of him, “He often soars like an eagle.”¹⁰³ His books still affect us today and bring us soaring with him into the bosom of God on high.

He must have spent most of his time in editing his own works. The Lord graced him with longevity which was rare in his days. He lived up to eighty healthily until “a fever seized him.” After several days he went to be with the Lord without suffering a sickness too long. That is a double grace. Goodwin was a prolific author. He had published many of his devotional works as early as 1636. Before his death he trusted his complete works to the hand of Thankful Owen and James Barron. The first set was printed in five volumes in 1681~1704 by his son, Thomas Goodwin, Jr. Among his complete works several masterpieces should be noted, such as *The Kingdom of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ* (222 pages), *A Discourse of Election* (498 pages), *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* (522 pages), *Of the Creatures and the Condition of Their State by Creation* (128 pages), *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* (593 pages),¹⁰⁴ *Of Gospel*

¹⁰³ Reid *Memoir* I:341.

¹⁰⁴ That Joel Beeke says that Goodwin’s exposition on assurance in TG 8:376-79 was preached in 1642, “just after his return from Holland!” implies Beeke’s dating of this work was published, or preached, around 1642. See Joel R. Beeke, “Personal Assurance of Faith: English Puritanism and the Dutch ‘Nadere Reformatie’: From Westminster to Alexander Comrie (1640~1760).” 343. But Beeke does not offer any

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Holiness in the Heart and Life (207 pages), etc. They were all published posthumously. Combined with those works published before his death, all of them form an amazing and prodigious body of divinity, presenting the Puritan theology of the mature period at its best as experiential, systematic and eschatological. Goodwin was endowed by God with twenty more quiet years to write and to edit them. Now they become the greatest legacy of him to the Christian church.

Swallowed up in God

Upon his deathbed he desired to enjoy a full and uninterrupted communion with God:

I am going to the three Persons, with whom I have had communion: they have taken me; I did not take them. I shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; all my lusts and corruptions I shall be rid of, which I could not be here; those croaking toads will fall off in a moment. ... My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided? No, I have the whole of his righteousness. ... Christ cannot love me better than he doth; I think I cannot love Christ better than I do; I am swallowed up in God.

His last words to his sons were “Now I shall be ever with the Lord.” He really lived out the doctrine he cherished most: the doctrine of assurance.¹⁰⁵ He could “sail to Glory ... in the red Sea of Christ’s precious Blood.” (12:131) He was peacefully “swallowed up in God” on

proof to support his dating. Cf. my Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin, and Chapter V, Saving Faith.

¹⁰⁵ References of this section are from TG 2:xxxviii-xli, lxxiii-lxxv except notified otherwise.

Feb. 23, 1680.¹⁰⁶

His Chiliastic Background

Robert G. Clouse says that “there are at least two periods in the history of the age ... when millennial teaching has been widely believed by Christians. In the first of these, the first through the third centuries, ... the second great period of millennial teaching, the period of the seventeenth century.”¹⁰⁷ Scholars try to unravel the apocalyptic heat during the British Civil War. Having found “no evidence to support the notion that they entered into England via clandestine survivors of continental revolutionary Anabaptism,” a Baptist scholar, Brian G. Cooper, admits that “there was an academic rediscovery of the millennium as a theological exegetical concept; literal chiliasm began to be respectable again. Thomas Brightman, John Henry Alsted and Joseph Mede are the key figures in this process.”¹⁰⁸ These three were all staunch Reformed scholars. Their millenarianism did not derive from anything apocalyptic of the Late Medieval or Anabaptism. Rather, they were modifiers of the Reformers’ views of the Apocalypse.

¹⁰⁶ In his epitaph it is recorded that “HE DIED FEBRUARY 23RD, 1679, IN THE EIGHTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.” So are his memoirs, TG 2:xli, lxxv.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Gordon Clouse, “The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Thomas Brightman and Joseph Mede.” *Bulletin of Evangelical Theological Society* 11 (1968):181-2.

¹⁰⁸ Brian G. Cooper, “The Academic Re-Discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the 17th Century.” *The Baptist Quarterly* 18 (1960):351. Cf. Clouse quotes and confirms Professor Martin Schmidt’s words: “the connection between the Continental Anabaptists and the English Independents has never been proven.” Robert G. Clouse, “Johann Heinrich Alsted and English Millennialism.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1957.) 190.

A Reformed Phenomenon!

Different from the Late Medieval interpretation, all the Reformers identified the Pope as the beast or the antichrist in the Revelation.¹⁰⁹ Addressing Emperor Charles V in 1544, Calvin dauntlessly declared in his treatise *De necessitate reformatandae ecclesiae* that “he [the Pope] is Antichrist” Calvin used apocalyptic Bible verses thus far.¹¹⁰ The process of the world in his eye is perpetually going in the direction of corruption and degeneration. There is no possibility of a flourishing earthly kingdom at all except the imminent eternal kingdom. Calvin also denounced that the calculation of the end-time will “unwittingly become the instrument of Satan” So according to the research of David Foxgrover Calvin rejected the thought of the millenarianism altogether.¹¹¹

But bible scholars “attempted to find a prediction of the Refor-

¹⁰⁹ It is not a focus of this dissertation to study in depth what was the attitude of the magisterial Reformers toward the book of the Apocalypse and other apocalyptic literature of the Bible. Interestingly Luther, since being eulogized as the ‘angel’ in Rev. 14:6 by his colleague Johann Bugenhagen at his funeral service on Feb. 22, 1546, had long been thought of as a prophet by later Lutherans. Both Luther and Calvin had the consensus that the Pope is the beast of the Apocalypse, the Johanne antichrist or alternatively the man of sin in 2 Thess. 2:3. See Jaroslav Pelikan, “Some Uses of Apocalypse in the Magisterial Reformers.” 74-92. As to the individual eschatology of Calvin, see Kenneth Yeaton, “Aspects of Calvin’s Eschatology.” *Churchman* 100 (1986): 114-28; 198-209.

¹¹⁰ John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958.) Quoted from Jaroslav Pelikan, “Some Uses of Apocalypse in the Magisterial Reformers.” 87.

¹¹¹ David Foxgrover, “Calvin as a Reformer: Christ’s Standard-Bearer.” in *Leaders of the Reformation*. Edited by Richard L. DeMolen. (Cranbury, NJ: Associated Univ. Press, 1984.) 183-86, 193.

mation in the Apocalypse, thus putting some of the Augustinian teaching in doubt.”¹¹² Theodore Beza, for instance, adopted the literal interpretation of the *Israel* in Romans 11:25-26 as the restored Jews in the future. This view, negating that of the great reformers and Augustine, planted a seed to redefine the Reformed eschatology. Following Beza the influential *Geneva Bible* spread Beza’s teaching by putting it in its note of Romans 11. Besides, the birth of Hebrew studies in Protestantism introduced the literal prediction of the Old Testament by many rabbis.¹¹³

The contemporary political pressure of the Turks and the religious crisis from the papacy naturally also paved the way for the commentators to re-interpret the significance of many symbols in Revelation.¹¹⁴ Robert G. Clouse observes that

After losing the southern Netherlands and southern Germany, Protestantism was driven out to the periphery of Europe In fact, many have argued that Protestantism owed its survival to the rivalry between Spain and France, the two major Catholic nations of Europe. Such a dismal view of the chances for the survival of the reformed Church caused many people to look to the prophetic passages of Holy Scripture for comfort.¹¹⁵

Such was Heinrich Bullinger. When he preached the Revelation from Zürich in 1554~1556, he told his audience that “England has seen the

¹¹² Robert G. Clouse, “The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Thomas Brightman and Joseph Mede.” *Fides et Historia* 13 (Fall, 1980):182.

¹¹³ Toon, “The Latter-Day Glory.” 23-24.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-22.

¹¹⁵ Robert G. Clouse, “Apocalyptic Interpretation.” 34.

beginning of a severe persecution ...” and “the Lord sees these things and has predicted in this text that they would happen now.”¹¹⁶ In other words, the Marian expatriates were urged to decipher their fate from the Apocalypse. He indeed brought England unabashedly into the book of the Apocalypse prophetically.

Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*

The most powerful proponent of apocalyptic history of England in the sixteenth century must be no other than John Foxe (1516~1587). Goodwin assessed that his “*Book of Martyrs* is chiefly a story of church affairs, and the conflicts of it with Antichrist, in England;” not of the civil affairs. (3:25) The structure of his *Acts and Monuments* runs roughly similar to the chronology outlined in Foxe’s commentary of Revelation, *Eicasmī seu meditationes sacram Apocalypsim*.¹¹⁷ Slightly delving into the scheme of Foxe’s Revelation helps us to understand whence came the inspiration of Thomas Brightman. Foxe said that the millennium has passed between two persecutions. The first persecution started from the ministry of Jesus (A. D. 30) till A. D. 324, the year when Constantine the Great became the sole emperor. The span of the first persecution was 294 years. So the millennium ended about A. D. 1300. Then ensued the outbreak of the second persecution. Satan was loosed. There were ten phases in this period of the second persecution and the tenth was the ascendance of Philip II as the King of Spain and Flanders (1556)! Now the first part of the sixth trumpet (Revelation 9:14-21), which was fulfilled in the Turkish threat, was over. He included the prophetic ministry in Revelation 10 as its

¹¹⁶ Rodney Lawrence Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days*. 179-80.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 194.

latter part and recognized the ministry as “the restoration of the gospel in Wyclif, Hus, Jerome of Prague, Luther, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Melancthon, and Calvin,” who all fought “the papal Antichrist.” Foxe thought the second period should last as long as the first one, namely 294 years. (So the end time would be A. D. 1594!) But on the other hand, he admitted that “the specific time of this end to history is unknown.” He believed that “soon after the restoration of gospel preaching, the Day of judgment will come.”¹¹⁸ Later we will see how Brightman modified Foxe’s scheme and set up a second millennium in the future. Foxe finally broke loose the bond of Augustine by interpreting the millennium for a thousand years literally.

No wonder Rodney L. Petersen concludes that the efforts of John Foxe “are furthered by Thomas Brightman, Joseph Mede, and Thomas Goodwin.”¹¹⁹ Under such circumstances the three seventeenth-century scholars—Brightman, Alsted and Mede—made some exegetical breakthroughs as to become millenarian.¹²⁰ If we browse Goodwin’s

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 182-84.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 179. Cf. 202.

¹²⁰ Iain Murray makes a summary of four views on unfulfilled prophecy among main-line Puritans: (1) No calling of Jews and no golden age. Spokesman was Richard Baxter. (2) The dominant view, inheriting Peter Martyr and William Perkins, was that conversion of Jews is a sign of end-time. No golden age. (3) After the conversion of Jews there is a physical appearing of Christ at the beginning of the millennium. Physical resurrection. Proponents were Alsted, Mede, the Fifth Monarchy, etc. (4) Like the second view, some asserted a flourishing long period of time will be ushered in after the calling of Jews. Christ comes only at the end of it. No physical resurrection during the millennium. This was the official stance of the *Savoy Declaration*. Independents usually held this view. See Murray, *The Puritan Hope*. 52-53. (Goodwin was once of the third view like his colleague John Archer at the Arnhem Church. He later changed to the fourth view except that he believed in physical resurrection in the millennium.) The word “millenarian” includes the last two views.

Revelation, we will not miss his mentioning two apocalyptical authors—Thomas Brightman (1562~1607) and Joseph Mede (1586~1638)—*passim*. He once appraised the former as the “worthy instrument of God.” We might be disappointed that another contemporary and important author—Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588~1638) was never cited by Goodwin. Actually Goodwin cited Alsted’s work at least once but he misunderstood it to be Mede’s.¹²¹

Thomas Brightman (1562~1607)

Thomas Brightman was born at Nottingham in 1562.¹²² He received his education at Queen’s College, Cambridge and became a fellow there. Then through the recommendation of Sir John Osbourne, he assumed the rectorate of Hawnes in Bedfordshire in 1592. He remained at this post until his sudden death in 1607. He studied the Greek New Testament diligently, always carrying it and reading it through every fortnight. Being a staunch Calvinist, he advocated for a

We may use the word “premillennial” to connote the third view; however, we should bear in mind that modern premillennialism was an anachronism. *Chiliasm* is an equivalent word for *millenarianism*.

¹²¹ As to Brightman, see TG 3:3, 90, 94, 111, 138, 153-55, 157, 185, 201-2 (here he also mentioned Finch); 12:78; etc. Goodwin’s appraisal of Brightman, see 12:78, if Goodwinian authorship of this article is founded. As to Mede, see 3:78, 103-4, 108, 133, 154 (here he also mentioned Graserus, Matthias Hoe, Mr. [Tempest] Wood), 184-7, 193, 196, 202; 4:524; etc. As to Alsted, TG 2:44 (But Alsted’s *Diatribes* was wrongly attributed by him to Mede). So Alsted should be counted at least once!

¹²² Unless indicated particularly, in this section I am in debt to the following documents: Brian G. Cooper, “The Academic Re-Discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the 17th Century” (1960); Robert G. Clouse, “The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Thomas Brightman and Joseph Mede” (1968) and “Apocalyptic Interpretation of Roman Catholicism in Seventeenth Century England” (1980); Peter Toon, “The Latter-Day Glory” (1970).

church reform along the English Presbyterian line. Having felt constrained to confute Jesuit scholars, Francis Ribera of the University of Salamanca and Robert Bellarmine (1542~1621), he wrote his most famous work *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* about 1600. The book was first printed not in England because of his offensive comment about the Church of England. In his work this Church is the lukewarm Laodicean Church of Revelation 3:14-21.¹²³

Brightman unraveled sequences of symbols of Revelation—seven letters, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials—*historically*. Of more significance is his scheme of *two* millennia in Revelation 20:1-6. The first millennium covers from A. D. 300 to 1300 and the second, from A. D. 1300 to 2300. The seven letters spanned the church history down to the Reformation times. The Lutheran Church is the virtually dead Sardis for her consubstantiationism, England is the half-reformed, lukewarm Laodicea, while Geneva, together with other Reformed churches, is the Philadelphia. All seven seals were fulfilled as far as Constantine. His acceptance of Christianity as the imperial religion brought in peace, which was signified by the silence in heaven of Revelation 8:1. Then ushered in was the first millennium in which the seven trumpets blew one by one. The sixth one was fulfilled by the invasion of Turkish Ottomans in A. D. 1300. It meant that Satan was loosed at the end of the first millennium. The Papish power unveiled by the two beasts in Revelation 13 also came into play in this period.

¹²³ Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 182-83. In view of the evident banishment of Brightman, which was only mentioned by one biographer, and of the fact that his works were published abroad posthumously, Brian G. Cooper surmises that Brightman might have been exiled abroad in his final years. But it is not well-documented, ungrounded and misunderstood. See Brian G. Cooper, “The Academic Re-Discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the 17th Century.” 357, n. 4.

With the unleashing of the Satanic power at the end time of the first millennium, the Antichrist became much more forceful because of its having both religious and civil authority. Now the Protestants were struggling with the Antichrist. The seventh trumpet announced the good news: the ascendance of Queen Elizabeth in 1588, who launched her kingdom to root out the “Romish superstitions.” Another good news was that the first resurrection inaugurated the new millennium. It was the revival of evangelical preaching started by men like John Wyclif, etc.

Now we will see the modification of Foxe’s scheme. Foxe’s millennium is still partially in the sense of an Augustinian *realized* millennium, despite a literal one thousand years assigned to it. Now Brightman made a decisive break away from the old scheme by adding another millennium to be unfolded in the future! In the beginning of the second millennium the Queen poured out the first vial upon the beast which initiated the divine seven-vials retributions upon it. Brightman betrayed a secret to his audience that his age had run up to the fourth vial. He also admitted that searching the future out is “the more difficult.” Nevertheless men would and should await to see three things accomplished: mass conversion of Jews (the sixth vial), destruction of Turks and the beast (the seventh vial) and the dawn of the latter-day glory of the second millennium (the New Jerusalem). “More important of all ... Brightman believed this process could be dated.” He predicted that in the last half of the seventeenth-century men would see these three things accomplished.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Brian G. Copper, “The Academic Re-Discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the 17th Century.” 353-54.

The importance of Brightman's apocalyptic message to his people in the first half of the seventeenth century was so evident that it needed no further explanations. "He set forth the notion of the imminent millenary reign of the Saints on earth."¹²⁵ His audience was as wide as involved Independents and Presbyterians, MPs and the socially depressed. This influence had been in the long run accumulated into a gigantic social force to transform the whole of England. But for those true Puritans, the attraction was the latter-day glory, which characterized their millenarianism. Despite all his erudition, Brightman's transitional commentary between two types of eschatology was destined to be eclipsed by the work of two next generation millenarian theologians, Johann Heinrich Alsted and Joseph Mede.

Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588~1638)

Not mentioning the name of Alsted in Goodwin's works does not mean that the latter did not read him. At least Goodwin was influenced by him through Joseph Mede. Alsted was the first real millenarian theologian in the seventeenth century. John Henry Alsted (1588~1638) assumed the mantle of Brightman the prophet for the turbulent age—an age in turn leading to a British civil revolution. He was purely a son of German Reformed tradition. After graduating from the Academy of Herborn, through the patronage of the Count of Nassau, he went on an academic journey to Marburg, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Strassburg and Basle. Afterwards he returned to his alma mater to be a teacher in 1608. His fame grew through his publications and teaching. When the Synod of Dort (1618~1619) was called, he was selected to represent his area. On his return he was promoted to the rector of the academy.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 356.

In 1626 he succeeded John Piscator as the senior professor of theology. In logic he was a Ramist. He left an *Encyclopedia septem tomis distincta* (1630) as a landmark for his achievement in this field. Puritans learned from it. The devastating war affected Herborn in 1626. The conditions of the academy were severely weakened, its endowment was cut off and the source of students was very limited to Herborn and its immediate neighbors. In 1629 he made a difficult decision and answered the call from Prince Gabriel of Transylvania. He moved and died there in 1638.

His earliest eschatology, *Methodus Sacrosanctae Theologiae* (1614) set up his hermeneutical principles: Scripture, history and experience. His later “interest in future events and Biblical numerics” can be detected through brief expositions of Revelation and Daniel. In his *Theologia Prophetica* (1622), he expounded the first vial as the outpouring of fury upon German provinces from the Papists for their following the Reformers’ doctrines. Remaining vials are divine reactions against the beast. The greatest departure is his treatment of Revelation 20. He interpreted it literally and posited it in the future. Martyrs of Christ will resurrect physically in the beginning of the millennium and reign with Christ in heaven during the thousand years. Not like Brightman before him, there is only one millennium and it is in the future. We have no clue to determine whether Alsted was influenced by Brightman. Alsted was proved to be an independent thinker in this regard even if he had been exposed to Brightman’s works.

Why would he depart from his Reformed orthodoxy and espouse millenarianism? No doubt the Thirty-Years’ War caused him to ponder the totality of things in general and to reflect the apocalyptic Bible passages in particular. By his three principles in hermeneutics he natu-

rally arrived at millenarianism in the end.

In 1627 his full-fledged and definitive premillennial outlook was displayed in his epoch-making book, *Diatribes de mille annis Apocalypticis* (ET: *The Beloved City*. London, 1643). He applied Ramism and its charts to his Bible studies in apocalypics. He tried to comfort the war-stricken Germany just as St. John revitalized the morale of the persecuted church at the end of the first century by writing the Apocalypse. He analyzed Revelation into seven visions diachronically. The **fifth vision** was seven vials. The first three vials had been poured from the Reformation to A. D. 1625, the year of writing *Diatribes*. Another four vials were pending until 1694, the year of the inauguration of the millennium.¹²⁶ (Goodwin had almost the same tone!) A prelude to the millennium would be the calling of Jews. Different from Brightman, his attitude to dating was quite affirmative. The **sixth vision** is the millennium proper in Revelation 20, lasting till A. D. 2694. The first resurrection, different from Brightman again, is a physical one. Magog and Gog of Revelation 20:7-10 were also posited to the future, near the end of the millennium. The **final vision** is the blissful new heaven and earth recorded in the last two chapters of the Bible. In 1628 he made use of astronomical evidences to reinforce his calcula-

¹²⁶ According to Alsted the secret lies in Dan 12:11-12. The date from which the calculation is based is the destruction of the last temple by Prince Titus in A. D. 69. The abomination would be there till A. D. 1359. Then the Lord raised the preachers to demolish the beast till it collapses completely. Adding 1335 of Daniel 12:12 to 1359 will get the end of the future millennium, i.e. A. D. 2694. So back from this year, we have A. D. 1694 to be the inception of the millennium. See R. G. Clouse, "The Rebirth of Millenarianism." in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology, 1600 to 1660*. Edited by Peter Toon. (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1970.) 51.

tion of 1694 and the interpretation of those tropes in his *Thesaurus Chronologiae*.

Diatribes was translated into English as *The Beloved City* in the right time, 1643! What an influence Alsted could exert on Puritans in those turbulent days!¹²⁷

Joseph Mede (1586~1638)

Having the biographical knowledge of Mede above, now we delve into his millenarianism. Joseph Mede, knowing the eschatology of Alsted,¹²⁸ in 1627 published his monumental work, *Clavis Apocalyptica*, with an extension in 1632. Three voices partition the Apocalypse into three divisions. They are in Revelation 1:10; 4:1; and 10:8. The first voice which brought in seven letters and the second voice which involved seven seals were past. The vials ushered by the third voice were much more contemporary. In his scheme the letters, the seals, trumpets, and seals are historically consecutive. He claimed his discovery: the key to unlock the Apocalypse is the synchronism of the prophecies. The most important synchronism is 1260 days, 42 months and three-and-a-half times. So many things involved can be synchronized, such as the beasts, the woman fleeing to the wilderness, the two

¹²⁷ This section I am in debt to R. G. Clouse, "Johann Heinrich Alsted and English Millennialism" (1969), his "The Rebirth of Millenarianism" (1970) ; and Brian G. Cooper, "The Academic Re-Discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the 17th Century." As to the attacks on *Diatribes* from two Scots, Thomas Hayne and Robert Baillie, see Clouse, "Johann Heinrich Alsted and English Millennialism." 199.

¹²⁸ Mede mentioned Alsted in his work. He admitted that the idea of a future millennium came from Alsted. See *The Works of Joseph Mede* (ed. J. Worthington, 1672), 600. Quoted by R. G. Clouse, "The Rebirth of Millenarianism." 60. Robert Baillie spoke of this acquaintance, see his *Disuasive*. 224. Quoted from R. G. Clouse, "Johann Heinrich Alsted and English Millennialism." 200.

witnesses and so forth.

Only in the synchronic structure can the meaning of the seven vials be understood. The first vial was fulfilled when the forerunners like the Waldensians, Albigensians, Wycliffites, and Hussites began to preach against the beast. Luther came when the second vial was poured out. The third vial matched the reforming Queen Elizabeth. The rest of the four vials will throw down the papal power altogether. Then the Jews will repent into Christianity. In his 1632 edition of *Diatribes* he, through the encouragement of the works by Alsted, clearly stated a future millennium bounded by two resurrections. He also stressed that the martyrs will resurrect bodily, but the presence of Christ is spiritual. However, Mede thought, in the beginning of the millennium Christ will come down to gather the Jews and to settle His kingdom for a brief moment only. Christ's millennial throne is still in heaven.

It is not an exaggeration for Robert G. Clouse to claim that Mede is the father of premillennialism in the English-speaking churches.

If we compare Mede's scheme with Goodwin's, we can find that the latter mostly followed the former to open the book of Revelation. Goodwin adopted the concept of synchronism. He also believed that his age is up to the fourth vial and the last killing is not yet. I am convinced that on the eve of returning home from Holland, probably in January 1641, still in Goodwin's mind was the brief appearing of Christ *physically* at the inception of the millennium. That is why we encounter a trace of Median quasi-premillennium in *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory*. No wonder Fienberg remarks that "Goodwin seems to

have been influenced more by Mede than by Brightman.”¹²⁹

Short Conclusion

Understanding the formation of British chiliasm on the eve of the Civil War and its progress is crucial to a right interpretation of Goodwin. As Stanley Fienberg argues, the confrontation upon the floor of the Westminster Assembly actually came from the drastic difference of the eschatology of the Independents from that of the Presbyterians.¹³⁰ But in the case of Goodwin it should go further: the growth of his doctrine of eschatology went approximately at the same time with his maturity in the experience of the immediacy of the Holy Spirit. Not even like his contemporary Puritans, the real driving force for Goodwin to pursue a “millenarians-friendly” church polity, was not “saints in power,” but the purely spiritual “latter-day glory.”

His Hermeneutics

Similar to Alsted’s hermeneutical principles—Scripture, history and experience—there are two principles guiding Goodwin’s expositions, namely, gradualness in redemptive history and experience in matching the Scriptures.

Gradualness

In Goodwin’s works we encounter the “concept of degree” quite often. For instance, all the seals, trumpets and vials themselves were treated as degrees of God’s judgment. In the first four vials he saw three degrees of church reformations. The last three vials are the three increas-

¹²⁹ Stanley Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin” 183.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

ing degrees of the latter-day glory. Again in the “world to come” or the millennium proper, there are still four degrees leading to its climax, until the fullness of the church is completely recovered in the eternity and God is all and in all. Dallison pinpoints that

perhaps the most significant strand in Goodwin’s thought is his teaching on the ‘gradual recovery’ of church purity. ... throughout the centuries a gradual process of recovery of pure doctrine and pure church government was taking place, until finally in the millennium the original purity of the New Testament churches would be fully restored.¹³¹

A hope was provided to Goodwin in the coming millennium of the Apocalypse whereas its standard lay in the past New Testament Church of Acts. He was deeply convinced that now in the latter days the original and pure church would be recovered degree by degree. This was the way Goodwin interpreted the Bible, especially the passages leading to the end.

This “gradual recovery” principle was clearly presented in *An Apologeticall Narration* in January 1644. The Dissenting Brethren publicized their three controlling principles:

First, the supreme rule *without us*, was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles. Our consciences were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulnesse of the Scriptures, that there is therein a compleat sufficiencie ... to make the Churches of God perfect ... if the directions and ex-

¹³¹ Anthony Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 58 (1986):59.

amples therein delivered were fully known and followed.¹³²

Here we see that for them the standard was the primitive Apostolic New Testament Church revealed and practiced in the Bible. They humbly confessed that in case of not having “a cleare resolution from Scripture ... wee stil professedly suspended, until God should give us further light” Then they continued to share their next not less important principle to the Long Parliament and the people:

A second Principle ... was, Not to make our present judgment and practice a binding law unto ourselves for the future. ...we kept this reserve ... to alter and retract ... what ever should be discovered to be taken up out of a mis-understanding of the rule¹³³

This principle, Robert S. Paul comments, “is reminiscent of Pastor John Robinson’s famous aphorism in his sermon to the departing Pilgrims, ‘the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his holy Word.’ Was this a conscious reflection of Robinson?”¹³⁴

As the new light from the Bible was revealed to them, they would put it into practice. Hopefully their church reform could *gradually* approach the purity of the perfect Apostolic Church. Under this principle a more literal approach to interpret Revelation 20 was feasible. For such a new interpretation dovetailed with the spirit of the gradual-recovery principle.¹³⁵ Therefore the *progressive* interpretation of histo-

¹³² Edited and introduced by Robert S. Paul, *An Apollogeticall Narration*. 9.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 37-38. See also Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin ...” 237-78, for a quotation of Robinson’s sermon.

¹³⁵ Anthony Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.”

ry unto the millennium of the Independents was radically different from that of the Presbyterians. The rupture of the Grand Debate in the Westminster Assembly was doomed from the very beginning. Fienberg is right when he contends that the dissolution of the Puritan unity was “very much the result of different scriptural hermeneutics.”¹³⁶

Experience

To understand Goodwin a deeper knowledge of his life is indispensable. “He wrote as he felt.” Halley observes that “His experience found expression in all his practical works, and exerted a powerful influence over his theology.” (2:xlvi) When we read his works about temporary faith, natural conscience, we can see his own story shadowing over them. He was preaching about what had ever happened to himself. He had been struggling for saving faith and assurance seven years respectively; when we read his works upon these topics, we can feel his tears, conflicts, fears and joys. Without the knowledge of his life, we will reap much less. Not only does his pilgrimage experience reverberate in lines, but also “his character appears in every page” of his works. (2:xliv)

After his conversion he started to sense “two contrary principles” fighting against each other in his heart “as fire does to water.” This is

The Evangelical Quarterly 58 (1986):56.

¹³⁶ Stanley Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin’s Scriptural Hermeneutics and the Dissolution of Puritan Unity.” *Journal of Religious History* (Australia) 10 (1978):33. By the same persuasion the weight of the authority of the Old Testament was much lighter to the Independents than to the Presbyterians. As the time drew so near to the end, the examples from the Old Testament could not convince or even address the Dissenting Brethren.

the typical experience of dichotomy of Spirit and flesh. Of course we can read it in Romans 7 and Galatians 5. But Goodwin said that “I found not by reading, or hearing any one speak of it, but, as Austin did, I perceive it of myself, and wondered at it; for I may say of this combat, that it is proper peculiar to a man that is regenerate.”¹³⁷ To enhance the biblical precision he “kept a constant diary ... of observation of the case and posture of his mind and heart toward God, and suitable, pious, and pathological meditations.” His sermons were often the results of his diary. They “had a great deal of spiritual heat in them, and were blessed by God to the conviction and conversion of many young scholars, who flocked to his ministry.” (2:lxviii) Actually this principle of interpreting the Bible had long been characterized by the spiritual brotherhood from the time of their patriarchs, such as Laurence Chaderton (c. 1538~1640), Arthur Hildersam (1563~1632) and John Dod (c. 1549~1645).

Professor William Haller takes Goodwin as an example to show how Puritans “commonly labored to escape from abstract to imagistic methods of presenting doctrine.” *A Child of Light* was Goodwin’s *Pilgrim Progress*, “not explicitly autobiographical.” In his own life he saw truth in images. “In plain language ... he gave ... time ... more to the vivid description of what happened in the sinner’s heart.” Fused with the Scripture, his experience was found as an “image of truth,” and “images ... tended to fall into allegory.”¹³⁸ Such a plain sermon as this easily induces resonance from its audience. Let Robert Halley

¹³⁷ TG 2:lxiv. We are convinced that Goodwin did not mean we do not have to read the Bible. What he meant is that practical theology is experiential. Doctrine to him was not something dull, but something alive.

¹³⁸ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 143, 95.

elaborate more:

The three were fond of reasoning, but from different principles and different manners. Goodwin reasoned from his experience; Owen from his critical and devout knowledge of Scripture; Baxter from the fitness of things. ... Goodwin well interpreted Scripture by the insight of a renewed heart—Owen, distrusting his own experience, by the patient and prayerful study of words and phrases. ... All were great preachers: Owen preached earnestly to the understanding, Baxter forcibly to the conscience, Goodwin tenderly to the heart. (2:xlvii)

Only utterance from a heart can reach another's heart.

Chapter II

The Latter-Day Glory

Fienberg uses three aspects to interpret Thomas Goodwin, i.e. a Puritan pastor, an Independent churchman and an apocalyptic.¹ Among the three the last one could be the most decisive. It is the concept of latter-day glory which dominates his hermeneutics. It is the new hermeneutics that steers the course of his Independent church polity. Besides these two areas—eschatology and church polity—Goodwin’s general theology seems quite similar to that of the Westminster divines. However, if we carefully compare the *WCF* (1647) with the *Savoy Declaration* (1658), their variations usually offer the apertures from which we can understand how the latter-day glory influenced the theology of Goodwin, who was one of the drafters of the latter. Because his concept of the latter-day glory also affects his doctrine of the Christian life, I will examine his eschatology first.

As early as 1621 Goodwin had started to undertake his exegetical work of the Revelation in the steps of Alsted, Brightman and Mede.²

¹ Stanley P. Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” iv-v.

² See Chapter I, Thomas Goodwin & His Age—His Life—IV Exposure to millenarianism. See also Anthony R. Dallison, “The Latter-Day Glory in the Thought of

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680) on the Christian Life

His doctrine of the latter-day glory is found basically in four main sources: (1) *An Exposition of Revelation*, preached in 1639 when he co-pastored a congregation with John Archer at Arnhem, Holland.³ (2) *A Glimpse of Syons Glory, or The Churches Beautie Specified*, preached during a fast-day in Holland in 1641 and then printed in the same year. (12:79, 62) But the authorship of Goodwin is suspected by some scholars. (3) Sermons XXXIII and XXXIV on Ephesians 1:21-22 and 22-23 of his *An Exposition of Ephesians*, preached in 1641. These two sermons were also singled out to print under the title: *The World To Come; or, The Kingdom Of Christ Asserted* and published in the interest of the radical Fifth Monarchy men without Goodwin's permission.⁴ (4) Two sermons preached before the House of Commons: *Zerubabel's Encouragement to Finish the Temple* on April 27, 1642;⁵ and *The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms* on Feb. 25, 1646.⁶

Thomas Goodwin." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 58 (1986):55.

³ Goodwin in TG 3:103 mentions the late navy defeatment of Spain in 1639. So his *Revelation* cannot be earlier than 1639. Another dating comes from TG 3:89 when he mentions that it has been 20 years since the German War (1618~48) broke. But the most precise dating comes from TG 3:57 where it says it is 186 years since the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453. (186+1453=1639.) His son also mentioned in the preface to his father's work that the year of writing the *Revelation* was 1639. TG 3:xxviii.

⁴ The two sermons span 35 pages while the *World to Come*, an abridgment of the former, only does 17 pages. I will not use the latter abridged work.

⁵ John Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*. (Princeton University Press, 1969.) 257.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 268. See also Dallison, "The Latter-Day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin." 54-55. But TG 12:60 of the Nichol's edition (1864) dates the sermon in 1645, which seems to be a printer's error.

The Eschatology in His *Revelation*

Among the five documents listed above, *An Exposition of Revelation* displays his doctrine of eschatology most fully. I will construct his frame of eschatology basically from this work. To explicate Goodwin's eschatology I have prepared a chart to show how he arranged and synchronized the passages of Revelation.⁷

For him the book of Revelation from chapter six constitutes a series of prophecies leading to the end time. It is composed of two divisions, namely the seal-prophecy (Revelation 6-11) and the book-prophecy (Revelation 12 to the end). From Revelation 5:1 he deemed that these two divisions are primarily one integral prophecy in the hand of God. The little book of Revelation 10:8 is the same but "opened" one of Revelation 5:1. (3:17-18) The seal-prophecy covers the first six seals and the first six trumpets. It is the external interpretation of the human history while the book-prophecy is the internal one. So Goodwin also said that the latter one is a distinctive, or new prophecy. For it speaks of the inner conflicts between the beast and the church especially in the end time. In his *Revelation*, he spent most of his efforts in the exposition of the book-prophecy. There are two aspects in the book-prophecy, namely, the beast-aspect, which covers Revelation 16-18, and the church-aspect, which is the main body of the book-prophecy. The most favorite part for Goodwin is Revelation 11, though it falls in the seal-prophecy. For Revelation 11 synchronizes with the fourth and fifth vials. (3:79)

Goodwin thought that

⁷ See Appendix II, Chart of Revelation's Synchronism of Thomas Goodwin.

the right ordering and ranking of the particular visions of this book in both prophecies in their due times, either of succession after each other, or their synchronising or falling out together at the same time, is the chief key of interpretation.... (3:79)

By this the grand scheme of his *Revelation* is as follows. The seventh seal is the seven trumpets. (3:18) All of the seals and trumpets are successive one by one historically. (3:19) But the seventh trumpet is not the first six vials. It is a synchronism with the seventh vial. After the six trumpets are the six vials successively. The last three vials, which he even dated from 1650~56 to 1690~1700, fall into the latter-day glory before the millennial kingdom of Christ. Ultimately comes the eternity. Obviously he is a chiliast.

The purpose of his interpretation was to “inquire and find out under which of these constellations our own times do fall, and what is certainly yet to come.” (3:78) In many places of his exposition he found his age is the last age, the age of the expiration of the papist beast! The Revelation in his hand is like “a compass and a chart in sailing over this sea, that we may know still where we are.” (3:17) Once he was convinced of the nearness of the end time, he gave urgent warnings to the church and his countrymen. (3:20)

The first six seals have been fulfilled. They record how the Lamb led the primitive church to fight against the heathenism of the Roman Empire before Constantine the Great. It roughly covers the first four centuries. At the same time Revelation 12:1-12 of the book-prophecy comments on this period of history from the perspective of the true church.⁸

⁸ See TG 3:65-66. The male child of Rev. 12:5 for Goodwin is “a Christian emperor”

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The first six trumpets have also been fulfilled in the downfall of both the Western Roman Empire by the Goths and the Eastern Roman Empire by the Saracens and Turks in the Medieval times. It is an external description of how the Roman Empire was destroyed at last. However, the ecclesiastical Rome arose when the political Rome declined.⁹ Goodwin counts the Pope Innocent I as the rise of the biblical beast and the date is A.D. 406. (3:73) In contrast the book-prophecy reveals that the true and spiritual significance of the Medieval history lies in the emergence of the true church, the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1-5, and her first separation from the popery in Revelation 14:6-7.

Then comes the most intriguing doctrine of Goodwin's three-fold reformations. He said,

Now to sum up all. As ... in the 14th chapter containeth the *first reformation* and separation of the church from Antichrist in several degrees, and the 11th chapter containeth a *second reformation* of the church within itself from the profane mixture; so this 19th chapter contains a *third reformation* ... for the marriage of the Lamb¹⁰

The First Reformation

Goodwin also called the first reformation "the first separation

who is Constantine.

⁹ See TG 3:66 on Rev. 12:13-17.

¹⁰ TG 3:82. Italics mine. Here we should be alerted that we should not to understand that the three chapters treat the three reformations respectively. Actually Rev. 14 also treats the second and even the vintage aspect of the third reformation. Rev. 11 is the chapter where Goodwin concentrates on the exposition of the third reformation while it also touches the first two reformations.

from the popery,” of which there are three degrees. He accordingly divides Revelation 14:6-13 into three passages, namely, 14:6-7, 8, 9-13. They correspond to three angels respectively. The first degree led by the first angel was Peter Waldo and the Waldensian movement. Goodwin said their preaching “was the foundation of that whole separation from the Pope that follow first laid.” (3:87)

The second degree led by the second angel was the forerunners’ movement by John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, preceding the Sixteenth-Century Reformation. Goodwin synchronized this degree with the first vial. (3:88, 101)

The third degree led by the third angel is recognized as Martin Luther. To the amazement of many, Goodwin does not count Luther into the Great Reformation, but the “more vehement than the rest” in the first separation from the popery. A possible reason why he did so might be that he perceived a the high percentage of the unregenerate in the Lutheran churches. He ever complained

the best congregations of the first Reformation consisting of many more apparently bad than good, and many of those churches having none but men unregenerate ... of Protestants not one of a hundred are true worshippers. (3:126-27)

However, he highly appraised Luther’s work by saying that “after Luther’s preaching ... whole nations were rent from him [Pope], as England, Sweden, Scotland, &c., and his sea lessened by a third part and more.” Sea signifies the nations controlled by the Pope. So he synchronized the second vial with this degree. (3:88, 102)

The Second Reformation

This is the harvest of Revelation 14:9-13. For Goodwin the real

Reformation is that “glorious peace and sunshine of the gospel which followed after those persecutions in Germany, England, &c., for sixty years and upwards.” He described it as “a glorious time of summer.” In addition to the effective preaching of gospel, the Christian magistrates also contributed to the evangelical harvest by “using their power for him [Christ]”. (3:88-89) Goodwin mentioned Calvin and his Reformation once. (3:93) It seems that Goodwin ascribed *the* Reformation to Calvin. But the Reformed churches in his eye still needed a new reformation.¹¹

The Third Reformation

The third reformation is the goal, and hence the most elaborate part, of Goodwin’s exposition of Revelation. He also called it “another reformation”, “a new reformation”, “a reformation of that reformation.”¹² There are three groups of people in Revelation 11:1-2, namely, the godly “two witnesses” typified by the inward temple, the established Protestant churches typified by the outward court, and the Gentiles who represent the heathenish papal power.¹³ Obviously Goodwin spiritualized this passage in the trail of his contemporary apocalyptic writings. According to Revelation 11:1-2 there is an urgent call for a new reformation. For God has long been displeased and angry with three defects of the current reformation: (1) the carnal and unregenerate Protestants in the outward court;¹⁴ (2) the association of

¹¹ TG 3:124, “these reformed churches are outward courts”

¹² TG 3:93, 123. Cf. 127, 131, and 128, respectively.

¹³ TG 3:125 (the inward temple); 126-27 (the outward court); 127 (Gentiles). Goodwin called Papists heathenish because their idolatry disqualifies them as the outward court.

¹⁴ Goodwin complained of his time, “Protestants not one of a hundred are true wor-

the two witnesses with the carnal Christians; (3) the mixture and imperfection of the inward temple. So the godly should begin to “make a new reformation ... more answerable to the pattern in the mount.” (3:123) Therefore the third reformation will continue the separation from the popish influence in the former two reformations and bring in a total and comprehensive separation from all the defilement of the popery.

For this reason the eschatological “two witnesses” have no interest at all in amending the existent church, nor in establishing a church under the current ecclesiastical structure. Their only burden is to gather the new-reformation church. For only this work can hasten the coming of the last trumpet. They will abandon the outward court to the Gentiles. Let the papal power trample the old Protestant states. In the last age, according to the prophecy, the Roman Catholic faith and influence will have a revival. And they will claim back some of the territories which were lost to the cause of Protestantism in the Reformation age. The vintage of Revelation 14:17-20, though a dark side of the fourth vial, reveals itself to be a work of God no less than did the bright-side, the new reformation. These two works happen synchronously. Goodwin said,

as this new reformation made way for their ruining the outward court, so the Gentiles’ winning more upon the outward court doth further this new reformation; God carrying these two works at once. (3: 131)

shippers.” TG 3:127. To his surprise, Protestants “in doctrine [i.e. justification] profess to trust in Christ alone by faith only, ... yet practically their hearts run the way of all flesh before them.” TG 6:314. Therefore, in spirituality, doctrine and worship they were all defective.

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Goodwin even recognized the “vintage” as what is called the German Thirty-Years’ War (1618~48) later. When he preached this message in 1639, the war had been underway for twenty years. So he took the year of 1618 as the beginning of the fourth vial. (3:203)

The Fourth Vial

The duration of the two witnesses is the same as that of the beast. Both are 1260 days or prophetic years. (3:73) The only weapon for them to engage themselves in the spiritual warfare is the fire in the proclamation out of their mouths. So at this time the godly “may enjoy a summer of the gospel, and a harvest of a better reformation, a little time of which (if it were to be bought) were worth a world.”¹⁵ They receive vision and power from God to proclaim the pure gospel. The reed to measure the inward temple is no other than the word of God. This is the only and infallible standard. By this Goodwin criticized that the church reformers had not reformed to the end.¹⁶ Hence in their state-church, the carnal and unregenerate nominal Christians could use the sacraments. Now in the last age the godly have to choose the “Congregational Way.” Only the regenerate can have the confirmation and then the access to the Lord’s table. They are concerned with not only the pure doctrines, but also the order of worship, the administra-

¹⁵ TG 12:126. This is in the third reformation. Goodwin has ever used similar dictions to describe the second reformation. See TG 3:88-89.

¹⁶ Goodwin says, “these reformers, who erected that temple ..., having committed this error, to lay an outward court unto it.” The “inner temple” should not be mixed with the “outward court.” Hence he continues, “John there bearing the persons of the godly of his age, —are bidden to measure that temple anew, as not fully conformed to the pattern, and to cast out the outward court. And so it contains a further reformation of the temple” TG 3:83-84.

tion of sacraments and the way of church polity. Goodwin deliberately instilled this concern to the Parliament.¹⁷ Only reforming in this way can they be counted as the two witnesses, and then act in this eschatological age as the angels to pour vials one by one till the beast is finally destroyed and the millennium is ushered in. Rodney L. Petersen reflects that

the text offered a powerful vision that called forth historical justification for Independency. It lent legitimacy to those who felt compelled to separate themselves from other Christians who appeared to compromise the moral vision of a true church.¹⁸

They believed that the power of the keys now rested at their hand. But Goodwin was humble to confess that “yet many a hypocrite ... may scape and crowd into this inward temple still,” because men’s judgment often errs. He expected that “under the New Jerusalem, shall none of these enter.” (3:128)

Goodwin’s colleague, William Bridge, shared the same view. He said that not the church government of England, nor that of Scotland or others, but the Independent one is the “form of God’s house, prescribed by God himself.” He averred that “all the relics ... of Babylon be quite removed.” If not, “the dead ordinances of man’s inventions” was like a corpse tied to the God-appointed “living ordinances.” The congregational way is the “*Jus divinum*.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Goodwin preached the sermon, *Zerubabel’s Encouragement to Finish the Temple*, to the House of Commons on April 27, 1642 in this way. TG 12:117-118.

¹⁸ Rodney Lawrence Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days*. 212.

¹⁹ William Bridge, *Babylon’s Downfall*, preached probably on April 4, 1641, to the House of Commons. *The Works of the Rev. William Bridge, M.A.* (Thomas Tegg,

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Having confirmed that he was in the last age, Goodwin then inquired where the new reformation would take place and who were the eschatological “two witnesses.” He admitted the glory of the “first age reformation” in Europe; however, his country, England, had “since been abundantly the more fruitful of ‘saints, faithful, called, and chosen’.” He even said, the special interest of England would be the “*magna charta*.”²⁰ He indeed mentioned about the New England churches and hoped that they shall “keep the saints from the overgrowing corruptions and defilements from the [papal] power.” (3:130) However, from his exposition of Daniel 11:45 he only identified England as the country “between the seas.” Reinforced by the history of England down from Wycliffe, he confirmed that the new reformation in the last age had taken place in England! Goodwin observed his own situation and said,

It is wonderful to me to see how exactly this vision, in the whole series of it, represents the present face, the affairs, stirrings, and alterations now aworking in the churches of Europe; the type and the antitype so fully answering and suiting each the other. (3:124)

Goodwin sensed how jealously God was working towards the spiritual interest of England. He observed,

as the shorter time Satan hath, the more is his rage, so the shorter time Christ hath, and the nearer he is to the possession of his kingdom, the more is his zeal for his saints, and indignation

1845; reprint by *Soli Deo Gloria*, 1989.) 4:300-1. As to the date, see Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 277-8.

²⁰ TG 12:57. This is his sermon, *The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms*, to the House of Commons on Feb. 25, 1646.

against his enemies. (12:54)

The Spirit of God will work out “many concurrent acts of providence.” (12:108) He even called that “all states ... accordingly comply with this interest of Christ.”²¹

As to the identity of the “two witnesses,” he understood them to be eminent ministers and magistrates. “Through all ages they had opposed Antichrist.” (3:142-43) Goodwin urged, with apocalyptic fervor, Parliament to assume the role of being the godly magistrates and hence to reform the church in full scale—not only in the worship of God, the ordinance of the sacraments, but also in church government. (12:117-118) This reform will strike the papists fatally. Then a complete downfall of the one-thousand-year reign of the popery will be ushered in. William Bridge in his timely sermon compared Parliament to “a quiver so full of chosen and polished shafts for the Lord’s work.” Now this was their opportunity to reform the church. Otherwise, their “sin and guilt will be greater than ever it was.”²²

But Goodwin did not say that the new reformation is a perfection. For though today the reed is straight, yet it is applied by men, and there may be deception. However, someday there will be a golden reed to measure the New Jerusalem, and no hypocrite will enter. (3:128) This is where the Independents differed from those radicals in the days of the Puritans’ Revolution. He solicited people to distinguish saints from those zealous “damnable heresies”. He only pleaded for the liberty of the saints. (12:57)

²¹ TG 12:54. Cf. “the greatest interest of all states ... lies in their usage of the saints.” TG 12:51-52.

²² William Bridge, *Works* 4:305-6.

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Stimulated by the powerful preachings of the two witnesses, the popish party, far from repentance, hates them more than before. The time of scattering the power of the holy people has come as ordained by the Lord in Daniel 12:7. For three and a half prophetic years they will be suppressed by the beast. Goodwin explained that this is the death of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. This is the last killing. Though some of them are even martyred by literal death, yet the slaughter is basically a spiritual, civil death, namely, “a taking away all power from them of prophesying ... a silencing of ministers, and deposing magistrates and men ... putting them from their places, shutting their shops, burning their books, &c.” (3:164) He predicted that after banishment from their own nation, they will flee to those nations “who are of their own religion and party, for succor and shelter.” But the reality of being among a nation whose language makes them strangers “is but of the nature of a grave.” (3:173) Obviously, as pointed out by Fienberg, Goodwin depicted the picture by speaking of his own experience. The papist party seemed no other than the Laudian episcopate.²³ If this was what was in his mind, he had reason to convince himself that the hour was almost the fifth vial!

The Fifth Vial

Just as the death of the two witnesses puts an end to the fourth vial, so their resurrection commences the fifth vial. “This resurrection ... shall be a rising of ... these witnesses ... or ... their successors standing up in their cause.” (3:181) Goodwin indicated that “those last

²³ Fienberg, 193-94. William Laud, then the Archbishop of Canterbury since 1633, was imprisoned by Parliament in 1641 and executed for treason in January 1645. Laud admitted the Church of Rome as a true church in the 1620s.

afflictions ... are the immediate forerunners of the greatest happiness and good....” (3:167) This resurrection should not be understood as a bodily one, which awaits till the thousand years. But this one is the dawning of the ensuing glory. The preachings of the revived godly now will be ten times more vehement than before. The papal system will be completely exterminated in this vial. Therefore the end of the fifth vial can be inferred as 1666, the end of the 1260 years of the beast.

Goodwin commented that the earthquake of Revelation 11:13, which shall accompany or usher in this rising of these witnesses, means “a great concussion or shaking of states, politic or ecclesiastical.” (3:186) Once he even declared that now it is the fifth vial. (3:154) For he perhaps intimated that the Puritans’ Revolution in his age might be the eschatological shaking! Revelation 18, a funeral song of the beast, provides us a detailed description of the last judgment of the beast.

When Is Now

Goodwin’s sermons upon *Revelation* were preached in 1639. He deemed his own tumultuous age as unmistakably the very last age! It is very crucial for him to know in which vial he was precisely.²⁴ “Especially the fourth and fifth [vial], being those that concern these times” might be his time. But he did not indicate clearly which one was. (3:97) His equivocation is clearly displayed in his *Revelation*. He spoke out two different opinions even in facing pages!²⁵ It depended

²⁴ That is his purpose in studying the prophecy of the book of Revelation. See TG 3:78.

²⁵ Notice these two sentences: “we being now but under the fifth vial;” in TG 3:154

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on how one interpreted the death or the suppression of the godly two witnesses. He admitted that “It is the greatest controversy ... whether it be past or no.” (12:126)

It was clearer three years later when Goodwin preached to the house of commons on April 27, 1642. He said, “I dare not say that this killing is as yet to come.”²⁶ So it is safer to say that according to Goodwin’s interpretation, the age of the Puritans’ Revolution was still at the fourth vial while it drew quite close to the fifth one. For the last suppression of the godly is not yet. We can see the sense of urgency in the heart of Goodwin. He had seen God to “do that in a few years he hath not done in an hundred years before.” He warned that “We are now within the whirl of it.” (12:54)

The Sixth Vial

The sixth vial is poured upon the Turks so that “the kings of the east, the Jews” can come back to possess their own land as prophesied in Isaiah 11:13-14. (3:97) The conversion of Jews had long been a great topic for Puritans. It was Beza who led the exegetical breakthrough of Romans 11:26. So the conversion of Jews becomes the very sign of the end time. Their last call into salvation signifies the last age. Goodwin, basing upon Romans 11:15, pointed out that it is also a kind of resurrection.

With the Jews’ final call as prophesied in Romans 11:26, now emerge all four kinds of saints of whom the coming new kingdom of

and “Now we are yet but under the fourth vial.” In TG 3:155. The later voice seems stronger. For at another place he has “proved that another far greater slaughter of them is yet to come.” TG 3:203.

²⁶ The sermon title is *Zerubabel’s Encouragement to Finish the Temple*, TG 12:126.

Christ is made up. They are the eastern and western Christians, Jews and other Gentiles. They all “become one fold under one shepherd for a thousand years.” (3:28-29; also see 3:209-210)

After much consideration Goodwin held that the ascension of the two witnesses falls also in the sixth vial. So their ascension marks the end of the beast and the beginning of the sixth vial. Ascension here does not mean the rapture, but “a condition more honourable and glorious than ... before, ... an obtaining of new power, freedom, and glory.” (3:182-83) This is not the new heaven and new earth. But the dawning of that glory begins here. “So glorious shall the condition of these witnesses be, ... that it shall justly be counted a heaven” (3:193) “The church after this rising ... shall within a while be raised up unto, and quietly enjoy as those in heaven do” (3:183) So he compared the ascending into a spiritual heaven to “a new heaven and a new earth” after the first physical resurrection of the kingdom of Christ. (3:193)

So this short span of time is “to be made famous by two so glorious resurrection of Jews and Gentiles at once, when the Jews’ long scattering, and the witnesses among the Gentiles’ last scattering, should both end together!” This is the latter-day glory. But he went further to say that “how harmonious ... in one day” these two resurrections will happen together! Goodwin exclaimed “such is that revival.” So he concluded that “both these typical resurrections are in the end to be swallowed up by a more real and more glorious resurrection, which shall begin that New Jerusalem and kingdom of Jesus Christ.” (3:201) Jeremiah Burroughs thought that the conversion of Gentiles is “but the first fruits” of the promises made to Abraham. By Romans 11:26 he asserted that “the accomplishment of them is yet certainly to come,

when ... the Jews be converted.”²⁷

Not like the threatening interpretations of most apocalypics, Goodwin’s exposition always makes us see the beautiful and spiritual works of God in the last woes and vials. “These vials ... are the signs of that glorious holy of holies ... or ... the sign of the New Jerusalem.” (3:92) As he stressed from Revelation 15:8, the temple, namely the true church upon the earth, is full of the *glory* till the end of all the vials. The latter-day glory not only inaugurate splendor of the New Jerusalem, but also nurture her till her consummation.

The Seventh Vial

Goodwin spoke sparingly on this very last vial. He said that in this last stage all opposite powers will gather against the converted Jews and the Gentile Christians, but “Christ himself comes, and makes but one work of it, and with his own hand from heaven destroys them.” (3:209) What are the opposite powers after all the first six vials? They are “the whole power of Satan all the world over” upon the air, “the relics both of Turk and Pope, and of all the church’s enemies throughout the world”. Christ Himself and His armies will overthrow them as recorded at Revelation 19:11-18. (3:97) Will Christ come *to the earth*? He did not say that. For he only said that the hand of Christ is *from heaven*. So this coming is a spiritual coming, not a physical one.

²⁷ Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea*. (Printed for R. Dalwman, 1643~51. 4 vols. Completed by Thomas Hall and Edward Reynolds, revised by and corrected by James Sherman. Edinburgh : J. Nichol, 1863; reprint of Nichol’s edition by Morgan, PA: *Soli Deo Gloria*, 1989. One volume.) 29, col. 2. Burroughs even said that “God will have a very glorious church there, especially in Jerusalem ... as Zech. xii. 6.” 32, col. 1.

Conjectures of the Dates

Now I will introduce Goodwin’s calculation of the end time. There are two datings. The first dating is A. D. 1666 as the expiration of the popery. How did he get this date? He deciphered the mysterious number 666, not as a number of someone, but as “the time or term of his [beast] ending; which is spoken in reference to the time allotted him for his reigning.” (3:72) He continued to contend that “Now of the thousand is not mentioned, as in vulgar phrase among the Greeks and the Hebrews” So the expiration date is “1666 after Christ.” (3:73) From Revelation 13:5 he said that the 42 months of the whole beast’s rule is equivalent to 1260 days. Revelation 12:6 echoes the figure. It is also the space of the days of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3. (3:72) “These are not solary days ... but the prophetical days; as in Daniel a day is put for a year” (3:120) So subtracting 1260 from 1666, it comes to A. D. 406. That is the reason why Goodwin recognized Pope Innocent I as the rise of the biblical beast. (3:73-75)²⁸ The expiration year of the popery is also the year of the resurrection of the eschatological “two witnesses”. Then his long-awaited latter-day glory would be ushered in!

William Bridge came to the same result in his calculation of the end time in spite of a different approach. He based his calculation on Revelation 17:12. He started by recognizing the year of A. D. 406 as

²⁸ Innocent I assumed the papacy in A. D. 401 and died in 417. He argued that “the Western bishops had an obligation to follow the Roman Church because they belonged to churches formed through the agency of Peter.” His high view of the papacy was propagated at a time when the Roman power was collapsing rapidly. During his see, Alaric sacked Rome. See *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Edited By J. D. Douglas. Revised ed. 509.

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the year “Brittany and these nations fell off from the Roman empire to be a kingdom standing by itself.” Then by adding 1260 prophetic years to 406, he said, “surely the end of the time we must needs be about.”²⁹

The second important dating comes from Daniel 12:11. (3:156-57) Goodwin took Julian the Apostate as the one who did the things predicted in Daniel 12:11.³⁰ From the year A. D. 363 when the spiritual and Christian sacrifice was taken away by Julian the Apostate, he calculated two dates, roughly 1655~56 (or precisely 1653 by adding 363 to 1290) for the beginning of the fifth vial and 1700 (rounded off by adding 363 to 1335 taken from Daniel 12:12) for the inception of the millennium. He understood them as two posts. And

in the interim of that intermediate space of time between 1650 or '56 and 1700 shall follow the orderly performance of those things which are to end and consummate all before the glorious kingdom of Christ. As first ... the end of Antichrist's reign; and then the destruction of the Turkish empire; after which shall

²⁹ William Bridge, *Works* 3:355-56.

³⁰ Julian the Apostate (c. 331-363), a nephew of Constantine the Great, twice escaped the executions which ensured undisputed succession of Constantine's sons. He first received education from Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia. Then he listened to Libanius the philosopher, and having been awakened to the glories of classical Greece, was won over to the old gods. Hence has the nickname “the Apostate.” Trouble in Gaul forced Constantius II (337-360) to make him Caesar in 355. When Constantius II died, he was proclaimed by his troop Augustus in 360 and acknowledged as the sole ruler in 361. He immediately issued an edict of universal toleration, ordered the restoration of the old cultus, i.e. reopening the temples and reviving the sacrifices. Later he began a policy to persecute Christians. He soon died in 363. See *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 555.

begin the great resurrection ... falling out about 1700, which is the consummation of all. (3:198)

The span of these 45 years covers the last three vials.

Jeremiah Burroughs came to the same conclusion as Goodwin, because he adopted Brightman's view as Goodwin did. So the latter-day glory would dawn about 1650! The date was dovetailed by another calculation from 2 Thessalonians 2:7. He said, "When the power of Roman empire is taken out of the way, then shall that wicked one be revealed." Then he made a conclusion that "the time cannot be distant, but that in the present century the latter days shall come."³¹

Goodwin, however, confessed that such conjectures "have often failed and deceived others." So he always yielded to "further light and second considerations." He was also convinced of the fact that "The day and year of the accomplishment of these great matters are hid from us." However, he contended that "we are at the verge, and ... within the whirl of that great mystery of Christ's kingdom" (3:204) He warned that "the killing and rising of the witnesses, and also the calling of the Jews, may fall out sooner than we are aware of." (3:205) So Christians should watch for it at any rate.

Several years later when he preached his *Ephesians*, he became more cautious at this point. Upon his exposition of the "in the ages to come" of Ephesians 2:7, he maintained that it is the same as the *world* to come, "only one is plural and the other is the singular." To the question "when shall this be accomplished," he answered that "We see none of this, it is hidden to us." (2:274) Goodwin did not provide any

³¹ Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea*. 201, col. 1.

date as before. He avoided unfounded conjectures; however, he still held the conviction of the latter-day glory.

A World to Come

Early in 1639 Goodwin expounded in his *Revelation* that at the seventh trumpet the fifth monarchy prophesied in Daniel 7:14 will come true. “This shall be a kingdom that shall not be administered by deputies, and by a delegated power; but by Christ the king’s immediate rule and government.” It is the “mystery” of Roman 11:25. He also denominated the kingdom the “New Jerusalem, and kingdom of the saints, and the first resurrection.” The *loci* of interpretation lie in Revelation 21-22. (3:155) So for Goodwin the “New Jerusalem” in Revelation 21-22 is not only an interpretation of the eternity in the future, but by degrees starts the millennium. The very feature of this kingdom is the immediate rule of Christ Himself from heaven.

Another great point of this kingdom is the physical resurrection of the saints as recorded in Revelation 20:5-6. (3:193; 1:522)

What is the World to Come

Now I will examine Sermons XXXIII and XXXIV of Goodwin on Ephesians 1:21-22. He preached these eschatological masterpieces in 1641. Diachronically these two sermons connect his *Revelation* and expound his views of the millennium, which is only skirted in the exposition of his *Revelation*. Dissatisfied with former explanations and then diverted by Beza out of “the common road,”³² he said,

³² Beza thinks it is “somewhat too harsh” if we interpret the world to come as heaven. Therefore Beza seeks out another interpretation. Goodwin gives the credit of the new interpretation to Beza by saying that “indeed it was Beza that did first begin that in-

There is a special world, called the world to come, appointed for Jesus Christ eminently to reign in; ... God did not content himself to bestow this world upon Christ ... But he appointed a special world on purpose for him, between this world and the end of the day of judgment—the day of judgment itself is part of it, if not the whole of it, —wherein ... Christ shall reign As this present world was ordained for the first Adam, and God hath given it unto the sons of men, so there is a world to come appointed for the second Adam, as the time after the day of judgment is God the Father’s in a more eminent manner, who then shall be all in all. (1:506)

What a bold diversion from the thousand-year-old Augustinian tradition! St. Augustine spiritualized the millennium as the whole period of the New Testament church. So after the church age comes the eternity directly. But the world to come, according to Goodwin, is not heaven, neither eternity, but a “special world,” in distinction from this present world. It still has the substance of the Adamic world. But God restores to it “a glory which Adam could never have raised it unto.” (1:518) However, the world to come still sounds much like the ultimate City of God of Augustine: same substance, new form. Here is a new scheme of eschatology.

Apology of this World to Come

Goodwin enumerated three interpretations of the “world to come”: heaven in contrast to earth, the eternity, and the literal millennial kingdom of Christ. “The world to come” of the third sense is by then a new

terpretation that I read of, ... that he diverteth out of the common road” See TG 1:508.

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concept. He explained why there is such a kingdom as this before he expounded what it is. As to the first interpretation—heaven, Goodwin did not say much, only quoting Beza’s word that “it is somewhat too harsh.” (1:500) Goodwin did not construe this world and the world to come as a dimensional contrast of earth and heaven, but as a diachronic progression.

Neither is it the eternity. He presented two senses of the kingdom. Firstly “there is a natural kingdom due to Jesus Christ as he is God” in which His “natural dominion ... remaineth for ever.” (1:502) So in this sense the world to come could be referred to as the eternity. However, there is another sense of kingdom, namely, the “dispensatory kingdom.” Jesus in this kingdom is “considered as Mediator between God and his Church.” The second Person God was “chosen out to execute the office of Mediator.” The kingdom is conferred to Christ as “a reward of his obedience.” By John 5:22-23 Goodwin said, “this kingdom is in a more especial manner appropriated to Jesus Christ ... till the day of judgment; ... after the day of judgment it is appropriated more eminently unto God the Father.” (1:503) Therefore the world to come is not for eternity, but for a “season”.

Goodwin would rather interpret it from the doctrine of election. “In election there were two great designs involved”:

... consider him as he is Mediator ... *considered under imperfection*, either of sin or misery, or any other want, till his Church shall be complete. Or ... consider him as he is a Head of his Church made complete and *fully perfected* in all parts and in all degrees. (1:504)

Now the church still remains imperfect, so we need the Mediator to intercede for us “to destroy enemies, to put us out of danger of death

and condemnation.” The enemies include the fallen angels. (1:512) When one day the final sentence is passed, the work of Christ as a Mediator will cease and He will present us to the Father as described in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, the favorite text for Goodwin to defend *the world to come*. His mediatorial kingdom ceases accordingly as well. (1:505) So God’s glory is more greatly enhanced in this way than if Christ’s mediatorial kingdom had not been. (5:103; 9:332)

As a matter of fact, either interpreting from the view of “dispensatory kingdom” or from the view of election, Christ is always the center. In the above two interpretations the christology of Goodwin is implied. He then continued his interpretation of the world to come from the perspective of christology explicitly. He said, two worlds correspond to two Adams.

As God appointed a world for Adam, and put all things under him, though not under his feet; so God appointed a world for the second Adam, his son Christ Jesus, and Adam’s world was but the type of this world to come. (1:518)

Based on Romans 8:19-22, he continued that this world does groan for a restitution from sins. This restitution is the world to come. (1:517) As man groans for the glory, so does the creation for the world to come. As God engrafts the new nature on the old human nature, so He renews the same world into the world to come for the second Adam. “For the substance of the same world shall be restored to a glory which Adam could never have raised it unto, the same world was lost in Adam.” (1:518) Then the world to come is a necessity designed by God to display the glory of His Son specifically. After the last judgment the Son in turn will make the Father in a more eminent manner by delivering the new world to Him. In the new world God shall be all

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in all. Anthony Dallison is right in saying that “the key to Goodwin’s peculiar interpretation ... is his deep Christological interest.” The world to come for Goodwin is the only way which “would manifest the full glory of Christ ... before the world.”³³

Burroughs, Goodwin’s dear colleague, might be of help here for us to appreciate the insight of Goodwin’s interpretation.

Because Christ in the latter days shall be fully honoured in his *kingly* power; they shall look upon him not only as Prophet and Priest, but as *King*. ... but in the latter days, when God shall call home his people, (the Jews,) then Christ shall be fully honoured in his *kingly* office.³⁴

Now we see the mind of the Independents. For them a millennial kingdom is a theological must for our Mediator to fulfill His last and third office, the office of a King. By the same reason Burroughs continued to assert that

That kingly rule which Christ has for the present, is on his Father’s throne; he is not yet on his own, but reigns conjointly with the Father; but there is a time in which Christ will have a throne himself ... and with him the saints shall reign.³⁵

This was their apology of the world to come.³⁶

³³ Dallison, “The Latter-Day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” 57-58.

³⁴ Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea*. 196, col. 1. Italics mine.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 196, col. 2. Burroughs based this on Goodwin’s favorite text, 1 Cor. 15:24, to express his comment.

³⁶ Just before he presented the “world to come” in Sermon XXXIII, Goodwin mentioned it as “a new world” in Sermon XXV upon Eph. 1:19-20 of the same work. He

Four Degrees of the World to Come

Goodwin contrived to explicate the meanings of the world to come. There are degrees of the coming of the world to come. (1:518) As the old world was perfected in six days, so is the new world to come in four degrees (1:519).

The First Degree (till the fifth vial)

The first degree of it consists of throwing down the heathenism—the first day’s work, and throwing down the popery—the second day’s work. (1:520) Actually Goodwin had elaborated them in his *Revelation*. They are the works of the first six seals and the first five vials respectively.

The Second Degree (last two vials)

For the second degree God “will never rest till he hath brought all the world, that is, the generality of men, to be subject to him.” (1:520) First is the final call of the Jews. Then more Gentiles will be awakened into the latter-day glory. The order of their conversions should be noted. He argued from Romans 11:15b (“what shall their fullness be but life from the dead?”) that the final call of Jews will usher in a worldwide spiritual awakening of Gentiles! Goodwin called it “a brave

said,

If God should reveal by me infallibly, as he did speak by the prophets and apostles, that he would make a new world to-morrow, it were as hard a thing for God to work this faith in you, as for him to make this world; he might make this world upon the same rate as he would work the faith in your hearts.

As he used the subjunctive mood to present his idea, so he did not take it *infallibly*. He recoiled somehow. He admitted the hardship to believe this “new world.” See TG 1:373.

world, ... one shepherd and one sheepfold.” This glorious church of Jews and Gentiles will flourish on earth for a millennium. (1:521). This is what Goodwin expounded as the sixth vial in his *Revelation*. So far the first two degrees are but preparations for the world to come *per se*.

But another preparation should also be mentioned in this degree, namely the Armageddon of the seventh vial. Goodwin mentioned it elsewhere: God will exterminate “the whole power of Satan all the world over,” which includes “the relics both of Turk and Pope, and all the church’s enemies throughout the world.” They will be “mustering up all their forces against the newly-awakened church of Jews and Gentiles from all corners. This is the last war. The anti-Christian forces will be “overthrown by Jesus himself and his armies,” which is detailed in Revelation 19:11-21.³⁷

Before the first resurrection of the third degree, Goodwin talked about the sealing up of Satan into the bottomless pit. (1:511, 522; 2:45)

The Third Degree (the millennium proper)

In the third degree “to make this new world the more complete, he [Christ] will bring part of heaven down to it.” To prevent any controversy Goodwin here deliberately clarified the nature of the reign of Christ. He confessed that it is vague in the past twenty years. But now he could answer well that it is not personal.

³⁷ But note that “vials” are the concept found in Revelation. Goodwin’s *Revelation* (Holland, 1639) was preached with a conviction of Mede. He believed Christ will come down *personally* to defeat His enemies. In *Ephesians* (London, 1641) Goodwin had changed this conviction. Christ only comes *spiritually* till the end of the millennium. Details see below.

It is not that Christ himself shall come down—that is the old error of some—to reign at Jerusalem.... But that under Christ, reigning in heaven, —for certainly his court is there, and that is his temple, and he sitteth there both over this world and that to come, —yet that under him part of heaven shall come down and rule this world, to make the glory of it so much the more complete, to put down Adam’s world (1:521)

The millennium for Goodwin is basically a *spiritual* kingdom without excluding materialistic or physical blessings. In the same vein Bridge also thought this coming is not the personal coming of the Lord at the judgment day, but the “appearing in the clouds ... to set up his kingdom ... before that great day” as it is read in Daniel 7:13-14.³⁸

Goodwin connected Revelation 20:1-6 with this degree. Hence this degree is the millennium proper. Against Augustine the first resurrection is not spiritual, but physical. (1:522) He repeated what he asserted in *Revelation* two years ago (1639). He said that “... a resurrection ... is called ‘the first resurrection,’—that is, the first physical rising of the bodies of the saints” (3:193) In *Ephesians* he still held the bodily resurrection of saints as his predecessors—Alsted and Mede—did. Goodwin argued “when they [soul and body] are united they have a better condition than the glorifying of their souls simply.” God rules that He will take a higher degree to do it, so He awards the saints the first resurrection. (1:524) At another place, based upon Romans 8:23, Goodwin consistently said that “the reward which we shall

³⁸ Bridge, *Works* 4:409. See also 4:410. He thought the saints are to be reigning with the Lord in the clouds during the thousand years, too. For he said that “I do not see how the saints can spare him out of heaven so long.” 4:409.

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receive at the latter day, will be the salvation both of soul and body.” (4:331) The latter day connotes the beginning of the millennium, not the end of it. All saints are resurrected to be kings and priests. (1:523-24) To make kingship salient he presented a lively picture of “saints in power.” They will reign in the millennial kingdom over earth with Christ from heaven. (1:511) In the end they will judge with Christ over the universe. (1:523) The will of God will be done upon earth as in heaven through the reign of the saints. The Lord’s Prayer is ultimately answered.³⁹ This doctrine, however, was aptly utilized by radicals and converted into political purpose. It indeed had been thus in the sectarian movements during the interregnum. This doctrine was not accepted by the *Savoy Declaration* whose newly-added Section V of Chapter XXVI carried almost all characteristic doctrines of the Independent eschatology except this one.

Who are the physically resurrected saints? They were faithful Christians under the Roman heathenism (seal stage) and Popery (trumpet or vial stage). (1:522) Goodwin did not state clearly whether all or only the elite will be resurrected. From the fact that they are “coming forth fresh and anew out of the sea of glass; ... growing purer and purer, until they become a bride fully prepared for their Lord and King,” (3:93) and there is a “general resurrection both of just and unjust,” (1:525; cf. 1:522) the first resurrection *seems* more possibly to be a kind of elitism. A clearer view, however, may be obtained from the consideration of his gradual principle. Goodwin presented three degrees of the state of glory: (1) the souls of men separate from his body; (2) the soul and body are “first joined in Christ’s visible king-

³⁹ Matt. 19:28 and Luke 19:18 are fulfilled at this time.

dom;”⁴⁰ and (3) the soul and body, “when Christ shall have given his kingdom to his Father, when God shall be all in all.”⁴¹ For if God by grace endows the third and highest degree to all, he would not spare the second degree! Then we know the first resurrection—the second degree of glory—is for all as well as for the elite.

Just as the presence of Christ in this kingdom is spiritual, so the abundance in it is spiritual as well. He confuted the idea of a sensual, materialistic and Jewish ceremonial millennium by appealing to the witness of church fathers, especially Tertullian (before his conversion into Montanism) and Augustine. (1:523)

Satan will be “shut up and restrained from tempting the elect, and from deceiving and enraging the world against the elect” (5:296) This binding of Satan for a millennium explains partially the tranquility of this period. “All heathenism, superstition, error, and whatsoever else, shall be rooted out of the world That is a glorious world.” (1:525) During it Satan will not be destroyed, but bound. However glorious this world is, there will still be natural death and the dead will be sent to hell in the long day of judgment for their unregeneracy. (1:525)

Goodwin also calls the millennial kingdom “a new heaven and a new earth.” He alleged that in term of its substance the heaven is still “the old heaven, that was made from the foundation of the world.” It is

⁴⁰ In TG 1:440 Goodwin clearly said that the great work of physical resurrection will happen at the latter day, i.e. when Christians are ushered into the millennial kingdom, not at the end of it.

⁴¹ TG 7:37-38. But when he gave a brief delineation later, Goodwin skipped the second degree, only presenting two of them. TG 7:40.

even also the heaven “in which we shall for ever be with Christ after the day of judgment.” Its newness only lies in the new righteousness which reigns there and makes the world subject to Christ. (1:523) Goodwin did not deviate from the spirit of the Augustinian eschatology indeed.⁴² The concept of gradualness controls the interpretation of Goodwin from the beginning to the end. This concept dovetails with the sovereignty of God. The degrees of recovery originate from God and are controlled in His hand, too.

Other than mentioned above, Goodwin said less. But *A Glimpse of Syons Glory* compensates his reticence. Unfortunately, this work itself causes much controversy among scholars due to its *personal* reign of Christ in the millennium.

The Fourth Degree (the last judgment)

The fourth degree is the long day of the last judgment. After the millennium Satan will be “let loose again” for a while to put men in trial. At last Satan is “cast into that lake where he is chained down for ever.” (2:45; cf. 1:522)

“To honour this new world” God and Christ will come to earth personally. Then there is the general resurrection in distinction from the first resurrection in the inception of the millennium. All the rest of mankind are resurrected to the last judgment. The judgment work is “a greater service than all his preaching, the examining of the accounts of all the world, and convincing of all mankind, and sending them speechless to hell” It will appear to last for “a long day.” (1:525)

⁴² Goodwin quotes Augustine’s words that “if you grant only spiritual delights to come from heaven ... that may be tolerated.” TG 1:523. Despite a new scheme, Goodwin thinks, his eschatology could be “tolerated” by Augustine!

Saints will share the judgment with Christ.

The result of the last judgment is the second death. Goodwin says that it is the

original, the fountain of curses; whereas the death of the body and all miseries of this life, are but the streams. This is the pure curse, without mixture, ... the immediate and proper subject of this curse is the soul and spirit. (5:271)

This “death” is the last enemy to be destroyed. After having subjugated all His opponents, Christ will deliver His mediatorial kingdom to God the Father. He will subjugate Himself to God as well. Then “God shall be in all, and Christ himself shall be subject.” (1:525)

A Glimpse of Syons Glory

Now I will treat the authorship of a controversial pamphlet, *A Glimpse of Syons Glory*. If Goodwin is the author, then the apparent conflict between *A Glimpse* and *An Exposition of Ephesians* must be settled. The main conflict lies in that *A Glimpse* teaches the *personal* reign of Christ in the inception of the millennial kingdom (12:70) while his *Ephesians* censures such a position as an error. (1:521)⁴³ From the text of Revelation 19:6 and the political context of the convening of the Long Parliament, the author of *A Glimpse* underscored that the Lord will reign *personally* after the present dark hours. He supported his interpretation with some other Scriptures. By Zechariah 12:10, the author asserted, they will literally see the pierced Messiah.

⁴³ William Haller says that “Goodwin ... did not ... look for the immediate inauguration of Christ’s kingdom on earth” *The Rise of Puritanism*, p. 397, n. 32. Iain Murray comments that “Goodwin’s words are hard to reconcile with ... ‘A Glimpse of Zion’s Glory’” *The Puritan Hope*, p. 273, n. 29.

It is not a spiritual looking, nor a looking at the judgment day. By Matthew 26:29, the Lord will take the new sacrament with Christians on earth. By 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Christ must come down to destroy the antichrist. By Revelation 20:1-6, the millennial reign must be on earth, not in heaven. (12:70-71) He also appealed to some other Old Testament texts to espouse his idea of the millennial reign. (12:71-72) So the *personal* reign of the Lord is the “analogy of faith.” (12:70) To prevent his readers from feeling strange about his standing, he appealed to the Church Fathers, Justin Martyr and Lactantius (A.D. 240~320), for confirmation. (12:71)

Arguments Against the Authorship of Goodwin

Disregarding the contentions before 1900, I only collect several arguments against the authorship of Goodwin raised in the twentieth century. Four candidates of Goodwin’s contemporaries other than himself have been nominated as the author of this pamphlet. (1) William Kiffin could be the printer at most, but was impossible to be the author. (2) Hanserd Knollys is championed by William Haller as the author.⁴⁴ But this has proved much less tenable. John F. Wilson simply cites the fact that having been in New England since 1636 Mr. Knollys returned to London in December, 1641.⁴⁵ He was not in Holland by then. (3) T. G(lover), another “T. G.” was suggested by S. W. Carruthers as the author.⁴⁶ But the death of this “T. G.” before 1636 evidently rules him out of the candidacy.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ William Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*. p. 396, n. 32.

⁴⁵ John F. Wilson, “A Glimpse of Syons Glory.” *Church History* 31 (1962): 68.

⁴⁶ S. W. Carruthers, ‘Addenda and Corrigenda’ to the *McAlpin Catalogue*, Vol. 5.

⁴⁷ John F. Wilson, “A Glimpse of Syons Glory.” *Church History* 31 (1962): 67.

(4) Jeremiah Burroughs, Goodwin's colleague since his exile in the Dutch land, was suggested by H. M. Dexter as the author.⁴⁸ Actually as early as 1654 Nathaniel Holmes said this in his *The Resurrection Revealed*. This view is favored by a recent able Goodwinian scholar, Stanley P. Fienberg.⁴⁹ His basic reason against Goodwin as the author is that "Goodwin was in England when this sermon was preached. He returned in 1640, but the title page of this pamphlet gives the date when the sermon was preached as 1641." The date of Goodwin's return from Holland is not so certain. What we know is that the opening of the Long Parliament on November 3, 1640 enabled him to return with some hope. His return was in the winter of 1640~1641. It could be January of 1641. No exact date was ever given. The fact that the sermon was preached in 1641 as revealed in the text itself (12:79) and printed in the same year as stated on the title page can never be a convincing evidence against the Goodwinian authorship.

Then Fienberg gives six "higher criticisms" to advocate Burroughs' authorship. Notice that the authorship of Burroughs lacks any support from the "textual criticism." Fienberg's judgment seems too subjective. He loses sight of the similarity and congeniality between these two Independent divines. It is illegitimate to include *A Glimpse* into the authorship of Burroughs only because some elements in *A Glimpse* are found in other works of Burroughs and not in those of Goodwin. For Goodwin spoke of the millennium quite reservedly after

⁴⁸ H. M. Dexter, *Congregationalism As Seen Through Its Literature*, bibliographical appendix, no. 736. N.Y., 1880.

⁴⁹ Stanley P. Fienberg, "Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine." p. 211, n. 1.

the break of the Puritan Revolution. *A Glimpse* will be his only work on the millennium *per se*, if it is his.

Burroughs was exposed to the influence of the eschatology of Mede as much as Goodwin was. According to Burroughs, some people think that “Christ is the Head of the church ... even personally, so as to rule the world in a glorious manner, personally.” Their reasoning is “in his person he shall exercise his kingly power and office” as He did in His priestly and prophetic offices. Burroughs commented,

Which opinion ... I suppose generally you are not able to bear yet ... and though out of modesty I shall for the present forbear, yet out of conscience I dare not altogether deny it, but so we will leave it, to see what truth may be in it. We must expect to have light let in by degrees.⁵⁰

In another place Burroughs continued to express the same tone,

The glorious presence of Christ among the saints shall be displayed. Let it be personal, or what it will, we determined not, but thus far we may confidently affirm, that there shall be a more glorious presence of Jesus Christ among his people, than ever yet was since the beginning of the world.⁵¹

Burroughs’s attitude toward the *personal* reign of Christ in the inception of the millennium is at most *consent*, but never *contention*. His attitude was obviously much weaker than that of *A Glimpse*. What he underlined is the *spiritual* effect of the personal coming of Christ. This is a forceful internal evidence against the authorship of Burroughs.

⁵⁰ Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea*. 44, col. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 52, col. 1.

Burroughs's case is negated.⁵²

All of the above arguments against Goodwin are not convincing. The case of Goodwin as the author is accordingly enhanced.

Arguments For the Authorship of Goodwin

Anthony Dallison and R. G. Clouse both argue for the authorship of Goodwin. They all reconcile the conflict by proposing that Goodwin probably followed Mede's eschatological mode. But they differ in details. Dallison reconciles it by equating the millennium with the "long day" of judgment.⁵³ Then the *personal* reign of Christ is the reign toward the close of the millennium. Until then Christ only reigns *spiritually* with the resurrected saints on earth.

R. G. Clouse implies that Goodwin in this time might still adopt Mede's view: "Christ may come to earth for a brief moment to set up the kingdom and gather the Jews to Himself," yet His royal throne and kingly residence are still in heaven.⁵⁴ With such an orientation in mind, Clouse explains that Goodwin would naturally underline the personal

⁵² From a study of three sermons preached by Burroughs in 1645, one year before his death, A. R. Dallison points out that Burroughs has undergone a move to a "less clear" position as to the *personal reign* of Christ in the millennium, due to his "unwillingness to have ... associated with ... the Fifth Monarchy men" Dallison, "Jeremiah Burroughs (1599~1645): A Theology of Hope." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978):93.

⁵³ Anthony R. Dallison, "The Authorship of the Glimpse of Syons Glory." in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology, 1600 to 1660*. Edited by Peter Toon. (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1970.) 133. See also his "The Latter-Day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin." 62-64.

⁵⁴ R. G. Clouse, "The Rebirth of Millenarianism." in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology, 1600 to 1660*. Edited by Peter Toon. 62, 60-61.

reign of Christ just before the inauguration of the millennial kingdom. During the stay at Arnhem the more radical millennialism of his associate, John Archer, the co-pastor, might help us to understand why Goodwin would adopt such a disparate notion. Being an “outright chiliast,” Archer was convinced that “Christ would visibly return to set up His kingdom *circa* 1700 and then withdraw to heaven until Judgment.” We can hear some of the tone of Archer in *A Glimpse*. Obviously Archer was a disciple of Mede. He published his *The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth* in 1642, a pamphlet preoccupied with the material and temporal aspects of the millennium.⁵⁵ In either reconciliation *A Glimpse* represents a milestone in the development of Goodwin’s eschatology.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Fienberg, 205-206.

⁵⁶R. B. Carter maintains, if Goodwin is the author of this pamphlet, then there is new light shed upon the relation of eschatology to ecclesiology in the Independents. *A Glimpse* reads in the end: “... you are beginning this despised work ... Certainly, the communion of saints and independency of congregations God will honour. And this work is a foundation ... and will continue till the coming of Christ.” TG12:79.

By this Carter has many reasons to conclude,

the Synodical-Congregational dispute ... was much more than an argument about Church government.... It was an entire theological point of view as applied specifically to the concept of the Church and influenced by eschatological preconceptions.

See Carter’s dissertation, “The Presbyterian-Independent Controversy ... with Special reference to Dr. Thomas Goodwin.” 294-295.

John Wilson also observes a similar point. He points out that the significance of the authorship of Goodwin does not lie in the conflict between *A Glimpse* and Goodwin’s *Ephesians*, but in that “then the elaborate distinctions within the Civil War Puritan brotherhood may have to be reviewed.” John Wilson, 66. R. B. Carter explains the implication of these distinctions.

But both Dallison and Clouse have not provided proof texts from Goodwin’s own writings to substantiate their views. Here I raise another defense for the authorship of Goodwin and at the same time reinforce their views. The apparent conflict between *A Glimpse* and *An Exposition of Ephesians* can be settled *diachronically*. *A Glimpse* was a fastday sermon in the beginning of 1641. *An Exposition of Ephesians* was preached by Goodwin in the same year. There is a possibility for Goodwin to undergo a change in his view of eschatology.

Internal evidences

If we retrace back to his earlier work, *Revelation* (1639), we can find some of his millennial thoughts quite similar to that of *A Glimpse*: (1) While briefly summing up all the book, Goodwin said that before He delivers up His kingdom to God the Father, 1 Corinthians 15:24-25, Christ will do two things: “*first*, in putting down all opposite rule and power ... and, *secondly*, in a **visible** taking the kingdom to himself and his saints, which makes the fifth monarchy” (3:27, bold mine.). The first stage is to putting down all enemies through seals, trumpets and vials. The second is to take the fifth monarchy of Daniel 2. Or establish the kingdom after the vials. It is the last vial. The visibility here does not necessarily imply the personal involvement of Christ. But it can be construed in that way. (2) Again, of Armageddon Goodwin said that “The relics both of Turk and Pope ... are to be overthrown by Jesus Christ **himself** and his armies; as you may read at large in the 19th chapter” (3:97, bold mine.) It seems that Christ will come down to the earth and engage Himself in the last battle, if not for the whole millennium. Here we may interpret the presence of the Lord spiritually, not literally. But it is more natural to understand Goodwin on this point literally. Note that the passage deals with the seventh vial of

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Revelation 19:11-21. (3) In his exposition of the seventh vial Goodwin said that in the battle of Armageddon “Christ **himself comes**, and makes but one work of it, and with his own hand from heaven destroys them.” (3:209, bold mine.) It is much like the voice of Mede! (4) The most obvious passage in *Revelation* talking about the personal reign of the Christ is no other than the words: “we of this age do indeed stand in the midst of the times of these vials, and so may see how much of Christ’s train is gone before, and what is to come hereafter, **himself being to come** in the rear of all.” (3:92-93, bold mine.) The “in the rear of all” should not be interpreted in the rear of the millennium, but in the rear of all vials. When we read the words—“himself being to come”, the natural comprehension prefers the personal coming to the spiritual coming.

With the above four entries in *Revelation*, we observe that in the seventh or last vial, that is the battle of Armageddon, Christ Himself, together with all His angelic hosts, will come down from heaven *physically* and *personally*, to destroy the relics of all opposing forces on earth. By this I confidently make a conclusion that in 1639 Goodwin was still in the vein of Mede at this respect.

If we accept such a Goodwin in 1639 as described in his own *Revelation*, we will not be surprised at the personal-reign-of-Christ view in *A Glimpse* in the beginning of 1641. Though the author of *A Glimpse* promoted the personal reign of Christ, he still had his reservations. He confessed in commenting on Revelation 19:6 that he “will not fully determine of the manner of his personal reigning” (12:70) before he appealed to another four scriptures as “the analogy of faith.” After his arguments the author yielded concessively by saying that

If they did not believe that Christ himself should come personally

to reign, yet [they should believe that] he [Christ] shall with his saints reign in a glorious manner, and the church shall be so raised up in the world outwardly as to be above all the men of the world in outward glory. (12:71)

It seems that the author did not insist on what he promoted. What he stressed is the revealed latter-day glory.

Then in 1641 Goodwin in his *Ephesians* pointed out that Christ “will bring part of heaven down to” the new world. He knew that “this ... is more controverted.” He then confessed “for these twenty years I have not known well how to answer.” Now he clearly stated his own position: the reign of Christ in the world to come is in heaven. The assertion of Christ’s earthly reign at Jerusalem is “the old error of some.” (1:521) This is the mature view of Goodwin if we think he formerly also had share in “the old error.” However, I have to indicate that sometimes Goodwin’s phraseology is liable to cause misunderstanding. In the same work, his *Ephesians*, Goodwin argued the reason for a mediatorial kingdom by saying that

he [Christ] should have the kingdom appropriated unto him for a season, that he should draw all men’s eyes to him, and have all the glory and honour as it were in a more immediate manner, because he veiled his Godhead in obedience to his Father (1:503)

From the words he used, such as “eyes”, “more immediate”, and “veiled,” one might mistake that Goodwin speaks of a *personal* coming of the Lord at the inception of the millennial kingdom. But if understood from the context of the same work, it can only mean a *spir-*

itual coming of the Lord!⁵⁷

External evidences

Other than the above internal witnesses, we have a very forceful external witness from a noted contemporary of Goodwin, Robert Baillie. He said that “common report without any contradiction declares [it] to be *Thomas Goodwin*.”⁵⁸ Were Goodwin not the author, Baillie would not attack him as the author. Moreover, according to A. R. Dallison, “next to Thomas Goodwin, Burroughs received from Baillie the most detailed attention of any of the millenarians mentioned in the *Disuasive*.”⁵⁹ Burroughs was also a highly probable candidate for this case. But the fact that Baillie did not ascribe the authorship to Burroughs enhances Goodwin’s authorship. Then we have stronger reason to receive Baillie’s witness in this issue.

Five years after Baillie’s book, Joseph Hall published his *The Revelation Unrevealed concerning the Thousand-Yeares Reigne of the Saints with Christ upon Earth* to refute John Archer and Joseph Mede in 1650. He also mentioned that Goodwin committed the same error as them in his *A Glimpse of Syons Glory*.⁶⁰ This was a testimony as

⁵⁷ In TG 9:332-333 Goodwin uses the word, “immediate”, to specify the glory from God the Father. Only when the last judgment is over and the eternity comes in, God the Father “will ... unveil his own glory immediately, which shall therefore be all in all.” Immediacy here bespeaks a kind of spiritual intimacy, without physical implication.

⁵⁸ R. Baillie, *A Dissuasive from the Error*. 79-80. Quoted from John Wilson, 68.

⁵⁹ Dallison, “Jeremiah Burroughs (1599~1645): A Theology of Hope.” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978): 87. Obviously Baillie must have had the knowledge of the newly released first three chapters of Burroughs’s *An Exposition of Hosea* in 1643.

⁶⁰ A. R. Dallison, “Contemporary Criticism of Millenarianism.” in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology, 1600 to 1660*. Edited by

strong as Baillie's.

The "persistent tradition which maintained that the sermon was actually preached by Thomas Goodwin," John Wilson judges, seems to be the best and tenable view so far.⁶¹

A reconstruction of the 1640~41 winter

Now we may construct the picture of *A Glimpse* as thus: Goodwin might be still convinced of Mede's view on the eve of the convening of the Long Parliament in November, 1640. He might call for a fastday and preach this sermon in the tradition of their exiled Congregational Way in Holland in the very beginning of 1641, probably January. Afterwards he returned to England. Somehow a copy of this sermon came to the hand of William Kiffin, who set it for publication without the permission of Goodwin in the same year.

Perhaps Goodwin ... got wind of this pirating of the sermon and it was possible to force Larner to re-set the title page ... so that neither Goodwin's initial nor the indication that it had been preached in Holland would appear on it. But a few of the copies with original title pages reached circulation, and one of these is preserved in the Library of Emmanuel College.⁶²

The move of not printing Goodwin's name might have been in pursuance of the broader peace between the Independents and the Presbyterians. In the ensuing years Goodwin changed his more radical chiliasm into his later moderate view.

Peter Toon. (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1970.) 108-10.

⁶¹ John F. Wilson, "A Glimpse of Syons Glory." *Church History* 31 (1962): 68.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 71-72.

The Millennium in *A Glimpse*

Beyond the idea of a *personal* reign of the Lord, the author's description of the phenomenal millennial kingdom in fourteen points indeed added lots of hues to the millennium: (1) The church is free from all troubles. (2) There will be a confluence of Jews and Gentiles flowing together into the church. (3) The church, different from today, will be most pure. For all hypocrites shall be cast out from her. The millennial church is described in Revelation 21:9-22:17. (4) There shall be an abundance of prophecies and promises fulfilled. (5) An abundance of mysteries of godliness will be cleared. (6) The gifts of saints will be raised. (7) The graces of the saints shall be enlarged, though not so full as afterwards in the highest heaven. (8) The true religion, especially the congregational way, shall be honoured. (9) The presence of Christ shall be exceedingly glorious in the church to an extent that there may be no ordinances. (10) Risen martyrs and worthies will add glory to the church. (11) "There shall be a perfect union of all." The distinction of Calvinists and Lutherans is no more. (12) The whole universe is recovered. (13) All prayers ever put up for the church shall be answered. (14) All glorious titles of the church in the Old Testament will be fulfilled. (12:73-78) Goodwin said little about the millennial kingdom *per se* in his works. If *A Glimpse* is from his pen, then the above fourteen points do enrich us with knowledge of the Goodwinian millennium.

Asked when it will happen, the author said, "this shall be open to us." (12:74) But finally in the vein of Brightman, Alsted and Mede, he said, the millennial kingdom will be here by 1650 and gradually consummates in 1695. (12:78-79) The depiction and the dating of the millennium are all in line with the thought of Goodwin.

We may add something to our understanding of the millennium of Goodwin by taking a glance at Burroughs's "the day of Jezreel."⁶³ The exposition of Hosea 1:11 by Burroughs gives us a nine-fold description of the millennium in his mind. I categorize them under the numbered points of *A Glimpse*: (1) "There shall be the deliverance of the churches from woeful affliction." He urged the young men that they might "live to see all the glory of this great day."⁶⁴ (2) This is the "day of calling home the people of God," i.e. the Jews. For God has forgotten all sinful past of them "because of the lustre and glory of that great day." It will also be the "riches of the Gentiles, the riches of all the world." Romans 11:12. Nations will "flock to the church ... as the sands of the sea."⁶⁵ (3) The new heaven and earth is not the kingdom of heaven hereafter, but "speaks of a state of the church in the world." Hence the church upon earth in the millennium will be as pure as new creation.⁶⁶ (4) He addressed the first resurrection, that of the saints, as a fulfillment of the prophecies by the citation of Daniel 12:2-3.⁶⁷ (6) The gifts of saints will be raised in such a way as the allusion of Zechariah 12:8 that "the weak shall be as David, and they that are as David shall be as the angel of God."⁶⁸ (7) The day will "bring refreshing to

⁶³ We should not be surprised by the similarity between Burroughs and Goodwin. Their congeniality helps us to understand both the chiliastic mindset of the Dutch-exiled Puritan group collectively and each one of them individually.

⁶⁴ Burroughs, *Hosea*. 51-52. See 9th point - (1) & (2) of Burroughs's "the day of Jezreel."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, see 2nd point, p. 50; 8th point, p. 51; and 9th point - (6), p. 52.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, see 6th point, p. 50.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, see 3rd point, p. 50.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, see 9th point - (4), p. 52.

all the saints.” Acts 3:19.⁶⁹ (9) “The glory of God shall exceedingly appear, wherein God shall ... as it were in his robe.” He even said with confidence that the presence of Christ is *personal*, though he would not determine it.⁷⁰ (11) Burroughs confessed that Puritans in his days agreed in fundamental points, but disagreed as to what they thought of as “indifferent things,” i.e. church discipline and ceremonies. However, “God has a time to gather all his churches together, that there shall be a universal peace amongst his churches.”⁷¹ (12) There will be restitution of all things, Acts 3:21. He could not confirm Lactantius’s interpretation that “the rocks ... should issue forth honey,” but he thought that there shall be “a wonderful change of all things,” literal “fruitfulness of the earth, ... and external glory in the creatures.” Like Goodwin he also called this new order “the world to come.”⁷²

Eternity

In eternity the new world has come to its ultimate perfection. (1:520) After the last judgment all the impurity and sin are judged and thrown into hell, so the perfection is the pure perfection, while the world to come “shall have yet a further perfection.” (1:520) Goodwin speaks rarely about the eternity. Eternity is characterized by the *per-*

⁶⁹ Ibid., see 4th point, p. 50.

⁷⁰ Ibid., see 1st point, p. 50; and 9th point - (3), p. 52.

⁷¹ Ibid., an exposition of the day of Jezreel, though not included in the nine-fold description of it. p. 36.

⁷² Ibid., see 5th point, p.50; 9th point - (5), p. 52 (Goodwin would be quite cautious in this respect.) and 7th point, p. 51.

sonal presence of Christ, the *perfection* of the new world and the *immediacy* of the glory of God. (9:332-35)

An Evaluation

Dallison appraises that “Goodwin gave a full-orbed description of the latter-day glory of the Church in the millennial kingdom . . .”⁷³ The lifetime effort of Goodwin in this area was recognized by the Savoy Synod.

Recognition in Savoy

If we compare the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Savoy Declaration*, we shall easily find the last section of Chapter XXVI (*Of the Church*) of *Savoy* is an addition, having no corresponding passage in *WCF*. It reads,

As the Lord is in care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own glory; so, according to his promise, we expect that in the latter days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broken, the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.⁷⁴

This latter-day glory section echoed the eschatology of Goodwin. If analyzing it by Goodwin’s *Revelation*, we find that these Independents

⁷³ Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” 64.

⁷⁴ Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 396. See also Philip, and David S. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3:723.

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brethren now were eagerly anticipating the “latter-day glory” revealed in the last three vials: in the fifth, “Antichrist being destroyed;” in the sixth, “the Jews called;” in the seventh, “the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broken” at the battle of Armageddon. After the “signs of that glorious holy of holies ... or ... the sign of the New Jerusalem” (3:92) comes the long-awaited millennium. “It is not that Christ himself shall come down... But that under Christ, reigning in heaven, —for certainly his court is there, and that is his temple, and he sitteth there both over this world and that to come, —yet that under him part of heaven shall come down and rule this world, to make the glory of it so much the more complete” (1:521) Though *Savoy* did not use any apocalyptic terms, such as vials, the millennium, etc., yet the millenarian ideas were proclaimed here: “the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.” Evidently the doctrine of a first *bodily* resurrection was deleted here. But I think it was not hard for Goodwin. For the first resurrection is more spiritual than physical in his eschatology. Reticence of the physical aspect could prevent the accusation of being radical, which was one of the most important goals of this synod; and on the other hand reap the effect of emphasizing the spiritual aspect, which is the marrow of the latter-day glory. By the year of 1658, after the efforts of all the Independents for one generation, the doctrine of the latter-day glory was ultimately codified into the first confession of Independency.

Promote God’s Sovereignty

But we have to say that Goodwin at the same time made efforts

indeed to promote God’s sovereignty,⁷⁵ not ignoring the responsibility of man in the great task of God at all. In his exposition of the vials, he repetitively motivated Christians to seek holiness and purity in the new church reformation. For doing these was tantamount to hastening the coming of the latter-day glory. The Cromwellian Settlement was to implement his primary burden in evangelism. The *Savoy* divines added Chapter XX (*Of the Gospel ...*) to explain their sense of obligation in this task.

Keep the Lord’s Coming a Reality in life

But his conjecture of the date of the end-time proved to be a great failure. Once having known the liable deception of conjecture, (3:204) Goodwin should have abandoned it promptly. Only in his later *Ephesians* (1641) and *Sermons at the House of Commons* (1642, 1646) is his maturity in this regard displayed. Different from the other four “Dissenting Brethren,” Goodwin lived a long life up to eighty years and had more chances to see the fallacy of dating. In contrast John Owen displayed such maturity at his renown parliamentary sermon—*The Shaking and Translating of Heaven*—on April 19, 1649. After this sermon Oliver Cromwell sought him to serve as chaplain for the Irish expedition. Owen told his audience that “For the [specifics of the] personal reign of the Lord Jesus on earth, I leave it to those with whose discoveries I am not, and curiosities I would not be, acquainted.”⁷⁶

Related with conjecture is Goodwin’s stirring up of nationalism

⁷⁵ Anthony R. Dallison proposes four directions of Goodwin’s contributions in relation to eschatology. I am in debt to him in using these four *titles* of directions below. See Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” 64-67.

⁷⁶ John Owen, *Works* 8:259.

in his millenarianism. In searching where the new reformation would take place, he found it was England! (3:124) But it was also another kind of conjecture. As late as 1646 Goodwin preached to the House of Commons in the same tone as before that “THE SAINTS OF ENGLAND ARE THE INTEREST OF EUROPE.” This special interest was the “*magna charta*” of England. (12:57) Christopher R. Smith points out that “Owen’s eschatology was national without being nationalistic.” Owen preached to the Parliament on October 13, 1652 that “To dream of setting up an outward, glorious, visible kingdom of Christ ... in England, is but an ungrounded presumption.” What a reminding in such a high tide of the Protectorate!⁷⁷ These conjectures are very fatal to the health of the doctrine of the Lord’s second coming. To let the true latter-day glory shine in, the clouds of conjectures have to be cleared away first.

If we turn to Goodwin’s cases of conscience for something like Richard Baxter’s *A Christian Directory*, we will be disappointed. Do not expect social ethics from him. Fienberg observes that “Goodwin often has little to say on questions of practical ethics beyond the vague injunction” Since Goodwin paid attention to “grace within” and “motives behind morality.”⁷⁸ Another reason might be his devaluation of the covenant of works in Eden.⁷⁹ However, Fienberg painstakingly searches all his volumes and fortunately finds not a few ethical teachings like pearls scattered from a small necklace.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁷ Christopher R. Smith, “‘Up and be Doing’: The Pragmatic Puritan Eschatology of John Owen.” in *Evangelical Quarterly* 61 (1989): 339-40.

⁷⁸ Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” 74, 79.

⁷⁹ For details, please see Chapter III, Covenant Theology.

⁸⁰ There are teachings on sanction of social duty, concept of vocation, respect of

busy public life of Goodwin as a successful Christian statesman during the Interregnum virtually impersonated his unspoken ethics. Perhaps Goodwin can be also appraised of upholding the “Validity of Present Vocations” as Owen is.⁸¹

Exalt the Kingship of Christ

Goodwin’s apology for the “world to come” was that “God appointed a world for the second Adam.” (1:518) That is the only way to “manifest the full glory of Christ” as Anthony Dallison maintains.⁸² “But that under Christ, reigning in heaven, —for certainly his court is there ... yet that under him part of heaven shall come down and rule this world, to make the glory of it so much the more complete, to put down Adam’s world ...” (1:521) This was the best picture Goodwin ever presented to his audience. The world to come is basically for the kingship of the Lord.

Link the Latter-Day Glory to Soteriology

As Goodwin “introduced the Independent platform into his eschatology,”⁸³ so he also integrated the doctrines of the Christian life into his ecclesiology. His pursuit of a pure “inner temple” anticipates a

academy, wealth and poverty, high and low social ranks, marriage, family, sexual ethics, etc. Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” 74-79. The most ethical book among Goodwin’s volumes must be his *Of Gospel Holiness* in TG 7:129-336. He discussed evangelical obedience in this work in its *principles*, not in its *practical details*.

⁸¹ Christopher R. Smith, “‘Up and be Doing’: The Pragmatic Puritan Eschatology of John Owen.” 347-49.

⁸² Dallison, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” 57-58.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 64, 59.

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special kind of *ordo salutis* to implement the agenda of the new reformation. His exposure to millenarianism after his conversion in 1620, his seven-year-long pursuit of the immediacy of the Spirit and finally experiencing of it in 1627, and his persuasion into Independency as the calling of reforming the Church of England in 1633 were interrelated. Eschatology, ecclesiology and soteriology for Goodwin were interwoven into one cord. The latter-day glory is the predominant force shaping them all. The way of the link of the latter-day glory to his doctrine of the Christian life is *through* his peculiar doctrine of the church polity. Only when the influence of the latter-day glory is recognized in the formation of his ecclesiology, will we see how it permeates into his soteriology and affects it.

Below is an example showing how Goodwin's millenarian outlook affects his later church reformation agenda. His agenda of reforming the church appeared first in his *On Repentance*, a solemn fast sermon upon Zephaniah 2.1-3. (7:543-76). The date is 1628. (2:359) He called for a national repentance, (7:544) for Christ loathes nothing more than a nation that has once received pure religion and then has become corrupted. (7:546) England is such a nation. His nation received the first Reformation in the past. Then under "Queen Mary's fires" there were also martyrs of the truth of gospel. But they became but a memory only. (7:547) Now the fallen state of her worship of God is the "cause of all those other distempers." (7:545) His agenda for reforming the national church is as follows: to purge the popish practices, such as altars, crucifixes and indulgences which Jesuits left among them; to deal with those "reformed religion" pretenders; and to confront those ignorant persons, apostates and even atheists with the preaching of the gospel. (7:546)

But after eleven years, Goodwin renewed his agenda in the new light of his exposition of *Revelation*. The three defects he identified in the current reformation included the elements of his former agenda.⁸⁴ But his point of view had undergone a drastic change. Now he examined the status of England from an apocalyptic perspective. The Independents, including him, were endeavoring to “make a new reformation ... more answerable to the pattern in the mount.” (3:123) His strategy was changed accordingly. He had no interest in converting the existent national church any more. His new focus was to gather true worshippers with pure holiness. That is the only way that Christians could hasten the coming new age of the latter-day glory. This was Goodwin’s conviction.

Obviously the millenarian agenda involves a fresh emphasis on and a new orientation of soteriology. It is inconceivable to say that Goodwin’s doctrine of the Christian life would be the same before and after his adoption of the new apocalyptic lens. Salvation in the new scheme is not an individual scene only, but also a collective vision for ushering in the glorious millennium. It is not only for a distant eternity, but also for an imminent “world to come.” It is not wrought in a passive agenda in which a Christian is just waiting with patience. Now it is to be wrought in an active agenda in which any Christian should engage himself with urgency. The fact that this agenda is essentially a kind of spirituality makes growth in grace to be his main concern. Above all soteriology is oriented to a new ultimate goal, that is, the latter-day glory. Goodwin’s *ordo salutis* is indeed shaped in the new

⁸⁴ I.e. those which had long angered God are: (1) the unregenerate Protestants were the majority; (2) the carnal state of Christians; (3) the mixture and imperfection of the “inward temple.” See TG 3:123.

eschatological light.

Another example is the doctrine of reconciliation. Compare A *Sermon on Ephesians II.14-16* (2:361-90) with *Sermon XII* (on Ephesians 1:10) of his *An Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (1:184-205). The former sermon was very probably preached early in the 1620s⁸⁵ while the latter sermon was done in 1641. The former sermon treats the doctrine of reconciliation between Gentiles and Jews in a regular way. But the latter sermon mentions the reconciliation of Ephesians 2:15 and then indicates the eschatological implication of the reconciliation between Gentiles and Jews. Goodwin used Isaiah 11:9, 54:5 and Daniel 7:14, 27 to show that the Fifth Monarchy will ensue. (1:191-92) Here we see how Goodwin directed his doctrines to the eschatological hope.

The third example is the case of the doctrine of regeneration. In the *ordo salutis* regeneration comes to the fore. For it is not only the inception of the individual salvation, but also the first step of the new reformation for Goodwin. He dedicated one volume of his works, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation*, to this doctrine while he was in his busiest years at Oxford in the 1650s. Regeneration is the very foundational doctrine responsible for the appearing of the eschatological “two witnesses.” He could not put too much emphasis upon this doctrine. The fact that he preached 522 pages in length conveys his conviction that regeneration appears more important only when it is

⁸⁵ Goodwin preached on Eph. 2:14-16 twice. Another sermon is collected in TG 5:463-78 under the title *Reconciliation of the People of God by Christ's Death*. The latter one should be the one preached at St. Mary's of Oxford in 1650s. The former one is undated, but may be a sermon in his early days for it was collected with those sermons of the 1620s by his son. See TG 2:359.

evaluated in the end-time frame of mind. There were many Puritans in his day publishing their works on this doctrine. Only the Presbyterian Stephen Charnock could be a rival with him in this regard. But the latter's book is still 187 pages shorter than Goodwin's in length.⁸⁶ If we further compare their contents with each other, their difference can only be interpreted as that between a Presbyterian and an Independent!⁸⁷

Related to the doctrine of regeneration is that of sound conversion. So saving faith also has its eschatological emphasis and hue. He devoted his extensive work, *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*, predominantly to saving faith.⁸⁸ To pursue a church as holy and without blemish, he preached pervasively on growth in grace and gospel holiness.⁸⁹

But his doctrine of most concern was no other than that of assurance of salvation. For the immediate assurance makes sure a godly man belongs to the “inward temple”, not to the “outward court,” provides the dynamics for the new reformation, and most importantly links the godly to the imminent sunshine of the latter-day glory.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Robert P. Martin, *A Guide to the Puritans*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997.) 195-97.

⁸⁷ Details, see Chapter IV, Effectual Calling below.

⁸⁸ Part II of this work, *Of The Acts of Justifying Faith*, was written in Latin in 1630. Part I must be works as early as that of *A Child of Light*, i.e. 1628. For both works appeared almost to be the same exposition upon the name of God in Exo. 34:6. Cf. TG 8:11-108 (Chapter III-XI, Book I, Part I of *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*) with TG 3:25-30 (in *A Child of Light*).

⁸⁹ Details, see Chapter V, Saving Faith.

⁹⁰ Details, see Chapter XI, The Assurance of Faith.

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Another convincing reason for us to foresee the modification of doctrines in a chiliastic way by Goodwin is that almost all his published works were preached or written after his persuasion of the new millenarian congregationalism in 1633.⁹¹

So in our next chapters we will examine the setting of the covenant theology first and then the *ordo salutis* to see both Goodwin's doctrine of the Christian life and its implication in the light of the latter-day glory.

⁹¹ Only three works are before 1633. See Appendix I, Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin. These three works are really free from the influence of his millennialism.

Chapter III

The Covenant Theology

The covenant theology becomes the mark of and also the key to the Reformed theology, especially the Puritan theology.¹ B. B. Warfield says, it is the “architectonic principle of the Westminster Confession” and also the “most commodious mode of presenting the corpus of Reformed doctrine.”² The covenant as a theology is quite different from that as an idea. “Covenant” is a biblical concept which we can encounter from Genesis to Revelation. So the idea of covenant is found almost in every dogmatic system. But here our concern is the covenant theology by which a theological system is framed and construed. The Reformed theology grew as its covenant theology did as well. The latter becomes the mark of the former. If we want to understand what is Puritanism, we have to examine its covenant theology.

As John Dykstra Eusden indicates, William Ames was the water-

¹ This chapter is an improvement of my former study, “The Covenant Theology from Bullinger to Goodwin with Emphasis on the Covenant of Works.” under Dr. D. Clair Davies in Fall, 1992, at Westminster Theological Seminary.

² B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*. 56. Cf. Sinclair B. Ferguson: “Federal in its [WCF’s] basic structure.” See his “The Teaching of the Confession.” 29.

shed of the development of the covenant theology. After him covenant theologians formed roughly two schools: one stressing more the conditionality of the covenant, and the other, its absoluteness.³ Goodwin was in the second school, one of the theologians of covenant theology in the late period.

The growing pangs of the Reformed theology were all displayed in the development of its covenant theology. To date, there are still unresolved problems in interpreting how it formed in history. To examine Goodwin's covenant theology, we still have to face this series of unresolved problems: What were its sources? What was its origin? Were there two traditions—Geneva on the one hand, and Zurich and the Rhineland on the other hand? How did the covenant of works come into being? What is the relation between the covenant of works and the Mosaic laws? What kind of role did Ursinus and Olevianus play? Was it more indigenous or more foreign to England? I will turn to Augustine at first.

St. Augustine, A Possible Source

Some scholars explain why the federal concept was thwarted by the realism of Augustine. It is true that when the realistic interpretation of original sin prevails, the rise of the federal theology will be suppressed. Against J. Wayne Baker's view,⁴ Peter Lillback contends that

³ William Ames, *Medulla theologica (The Marrow of Theology)*. 1623. Translated with an introduction by John Dykstra Eusden. (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968; reprint by Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1983.) 53.

⁴ J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition*. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1980.) 20. Cf. Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism: Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.) 15.

“It is ... clear that Augustine taught a bilateral covenant”⁵ Moreover, Augustine’s expositions of Eden anticipated the covenant of works. The tree of knowledge was but a test of Adam’s obedience to God’s word. Before man’s fall his immortality is mutable. If he obeyed God’s word, he would have been awarded with eternal life, which was immutable. Unfortunately, Adam failed. He was thus under conditions in Eden. Augustine assigned an eschatological dimension to the conditions of Eden. The concept of covenant was implicit here in Augustine’s mind. For in the same section he said, “from the tree of life was a kind of sacrament.”⁶ There is another passage in *The City of God*, explicitly making a short reference to a prelapsarian covenant with Adam: “But the first covenant, made with the first man, is certainly this”⁷ David A. Weir comments that the idea of a prelapsarian covenant was shown in Augustine, “but it was not utilized ... until the second half of the sixteenth century.”⁸

Zurich, A Sure Origin

As to the origin of the covenant theology, it should be ascribed to the Anabaptist Controversy in Zwingli’s days. He employed the idea of “covenant” to defend infant baptism. But it was Heinrich Bullinger (1504~1575) who developed the idea of covenant into a theology. Af-

⁵ Peter Alan Lillback, “The Binding of God: Calvin’s Role in the Development of Covenant Theology.” (Ph.D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985.) 69-73.

⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God*. 13.20.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.27. Weir says, “N. Diemer is the only modern scholar who has noted the existence of this passage.” See David A. Weir, *The Origin of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Thought*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.) 13.

⁸ Weir, *The Origin of the Federal Theology*. 101.

ter the sudden death of Zwingli at Kappel, Bullinger was elected in the end of 1531 to assume the ecclesiastical leadership of Zurich. He had to deal with Leo Jud, Schwenckfeld and Anabaptists. In July 1532 he debated with the Anabaptists upon three topics—church, state, and discipline—at Zofingen. Charles S. McCoy comments,

It was within the context of this continuing debate about church, state, and Christian discipline that Bullinger wrote *The One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God*, apparently in October and November 1533.⁹

In this work Bullinger affirmed that there was only one covenant of God and the covenant was conditional.¹⁰ After its publication the covenant became “the central motif of his theology,” being “the major organizing principle” in many of his works from 1534 to 1575. Under the creative influence of Bullinger, a new federal movement had flowed into the Reformed territory. On this account Bullinger was by no means less important than his predecessor, Zwingli.¹¹ The scholarship of last decades has recovered the pertinent position in the Reformed thought due to him. McCoy and Baker highly appraise Bull-

⁹ McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 18-19.

¹⁰ For the English translation of Bullinger’s *The One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God*, see Lillback, “The Binding of God.” 498-527. For a brief exposition of it, see McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 99-138.

¹¹ But G. W. Bromiley incorrectly introduces Bullinger:

Nowhere in these extensive writings do we find any great originality of thought, or in fact the desire for it. But everywhere we see clear evidence of a judicious and scholarly mind which is able to give lucid and balanced expression to doctrines already commonly received and taught.

LCC, vol. 24. *Zwingli and Bullinger*. 1953. Edited by Bromiley. 45.

inger's *The One and Eternal Covenant* as "the fountainhead of federalism."¹²

One Reformed Tradition With Two Poles

Now almost all scholarship has recognized that Zurich and the Rhineland formed another Reformed tradition in distinction from the Geneva tradition.¹³ Among them I will mention the provocative article of Leonard J. Trinterud in 1951, entitled "The Origins of Puritanism." This is the second influential article in the field of the covenant theology since Perry Miller's seminal monograph, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," in 1935.¹⁴ Bierma summarizes Trinterud's arguments in four countering propositions of Geneva vs. Zurich: (1) unilateral vs. bilateral covenant; (2) absoluteness vs. conditionality of it; (3) God's sovereignty vs. man's responsibility in it; (4) fulfillment vs. non-fulfillment of it.¹⁵ Bierma finally in 1983 proposes his refutation,

¹² McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 11.

¹³ E.g. Heinrich Hepppe recognizes Ursinus and Olevianus as the originators of the German federal theology in 1857. See his *Dogmatik des Deutschen Protestantismus*. 1:139-204. See also G. Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund im alteren Protestantismus, vornehmlich Johannes Cocceius*. 1923. pp. 36-82. We can find more in Lyle D. Bierma, "Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?" 305-10.

¹⁴ Miller's article was first published in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 32 (1935): 247-300. He reworks the thesis into "less aggressive formulations" in "The Covenant of Grace." in his edited *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939.) 365-397. But he collects the original document into his edited *Errand Into the Wilderness*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956.) 48-98.

¹⁵ Bierma, "The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevian." (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1980.) 25. Quoted in McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 26. But I make them in more concise terms.

“Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?”¹⁶ He examines four figures, i.e. Zwingli, Bullinger and Olevianus on Zurich/ Rhineland’s side, Calvin on Geneva’s side. His conclusion reads as follows,

there were no substantial differences in the way the covenant was understood in Zurich-Rhineland and Genevan theological traditions. ... these disagreements [between Geneva and Zurich] cannot be traced to fundamentally different views of the covenant. What scholars from Trinterud to Baker have failed to realize is that all the sixteenth-century Reformed covenant theologians — Zwingli, ... Perkins, etc. — recognized both a unilateral and a bilateral dimension to the covenant of grace within the context of a monergistic soteriology.¹⁷

Having included both Geneva and Zurich covenant traditions “within the context of a monergistic soteriology” in the sixteenth century, the mainstream of the Reformed theology “flowed into the seventeenth century well between these two poles.” Therefore, for Bierma, there has been only one Reformed tradition with two poles, instead of two contrasting traditions.¹⁸

In the same year Lillback contributed another significant article,

¹⁶ See *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 304-321.

¹⁷ Bierma, “Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?” 320-21.

¹⁸ Weir should have included or considered Bierma’s “Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?”, *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 304-321, in his 1990-published book, though his submittal of it in 1984 as a dissertation to St. Andrews might not have been in time for him to read Bierma’s work. To my surprise he did not. Weir should reply to what Bierma contends in this article before the former can securely posit himself in the two-traditions theory.

“Ursinus’ Development of the Covenant of Creation: A Debt to Melancthon or Calvin?” to interpret the origin of the covenant theology. Then he integrated this article into his 1985 dissertation, “The Binding of God: Calvin’s Role in the Development of Covenant Theology.” Obviously Lillback steps further than Bierma. According to Bierma, Calvin did not conflict with the Zurich/Rhineland tradition. For we can find in one tradition another pole which was emphasized by the other tradition. We indeed find the concepts of conditionality and bilateralness in Calvin’s idea of the covenant. But Lillback maintains this in a more positive way. Calvin, according to Lillback, might have helped the later covenant theologians develop the more mature two-covenants theology with his *concepts* of a prelapsarian covenant and the conditionality of the covenant, despite their being in seed forms. Weir collects both of Lillback’s works and mentions them in his book. His comment on Lillback is that “he makes larger claims in his introduction and conclusion than he can back up.”¹⁹ It is true, Calvin did not construct his theology by the principle of covenant as the *WCF* did. His *Institutes* followed the pattern of the Apostles’ Creed. But it is justifiable to say that Calvin provided the *conceptual materials* for later theologians to set up a double-covenant theology. In this sense Calvin is claimed to be included among the federal theologians. Lillback concludes, “The divide between Calvin and the Rhinelanders on this question must be torn down, for it is simply historically in error.” This conclusion echoes Bierma’s assertion. Lillback admits that Calvin is not the inventor of the covenant theology (Zwingli is), nor the builder of its first popular model (Bullinger is). Yet he claims,

¹⁹ Weir, *The Origin of the Federal Theology*. 32.

Calvin is the first of the early theologians to interpret the covenant concept into the entirety of his theological system. ... Not only did Calvin use the covenant extensively, ... he also provided the foundation upon which another generation of Reformed scholars could build the federal system.²⁰

Recognition of only one tradition prevents us from many erring interpretations of the development of Reformed/covenant theology.²¹

Thus far we have come to the most critical step in the development of the two-covenants theology, the formulation of the covenant of works. Now we will turn to this prelapsarian covenant. Both Augustine and Calvin have paved the way for its emergence. It still needs a historical occasion to come into being.

The Origin of a Prelapsarian Covenant

In the 1930s Perry Miller published the most influential thesis,

²⁰ Lillback, “The Binding of God.” 496-97. Then we will not be misled by Weir. Lillback even compliments Calvin as “the great architect of the covenant theology”!

²¹ Especially the Kendall school, such as W. H. Chalker (1961), Holmes Rolston, III (1972), R. T. Kendall (1976), A. N. S. Lane (1979), and M. Charles Bell (1985), etc., fail to recognize the truth of only one tradition. This school has a consensus that the *WCF* was influenced by the conditional Bullingerianism and hence deflected from the pure doctrine of sovereign grace. The conditionality of the covenant of grace, for them, is foreign to Calvin. However, against the Kendall school, to keep the tension between two poles — sovereign and human — is biblical, not an Arminian synergism. The Bible chooses the *via media*, and keeps the balance. So did Augustine, Zurich, Calvin, the Palatinate and the *WCF*. To find fault with Bullinger is equivalent to finding fault with Calvin. The two-traditions concept is the basic fallacy. From the fact that all Kendall school authors are posterior to Trinterud’s article in 1951 and as a consequence the fruits of Trinterud’s two-traditions concept, I infer that clarification of only one tradition in covenant theology seems to be very crucial to Reformed studies.

“The Marrow of Puritan Divinity.”²² On the one hand it stimulated scholarship back to the Puritan legacy. But on the other hand it contains many myths about Puritan thought. As to the origin of covenant theology, Miller’s portrayal distorts Calvin, Puritans and the Bible itself. He says, God is a terrible force, an incalculable being, to be feared more than loved. Calvin’s predestination paralyzes the human morality. What is worse is that it deprives believers of assurance by the whip of an angry and whimsical God. Then Miller presents his fundamental thesis that Puritan theologians developed the covenant theology as a device to rectify the deficiencies of Calvin’s system. In the covenant God is confined, caged or even “chained” so that man can “bargain” with Him and gain assurance, too. His words and concepts are so aggressive and offensive that many responses are entailed.²³ John von Rohr points out six fallacies in two areas, both in Calvin and in the Puritans.²⁴ Miller grounds all his arguments upon his manipulated concept of God. So no wonder his humanism has to caricature Calvin’s Christian humanism, and the covenant of grace becomes such a wise device in his hand as to tame a mythical God.

Zacharias Ursinus (1534~1583)

However, Miller hits half of the correct answer. The origin of the covenant of works actually related to Calvin’s double predestination,

²² See footnote 14 above.

²³ See John von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace*. (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.) p. 19, n. 69. He cites, beyond his own, works by Bogue, Breward, Cherry, Emerson, Hall, Marsden, McGiffert, Moller, Pettit, Stoeber, and Toon. See also Francis T. Butts, “Perry Miller and the Ordeal of American Freedom.” Dissertation, Queen’s Univ., 1980. Butts, “The Myth of Perry Miller.” 1982.

²⁴ Von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace*. 17-21.

the newly-raised doctrine. The predestination controversy in Calvin's life, according to Weir, forms the background and scenario against which Ursinus "first proposed, in 1561 and 1562, the idea of a prelapsarian *foedus naturale* with Adam."²⁵ Early in 1857 Heinrich Heppé tries to explain the origin of the German federal theology in this way: The double-covenant structure, he proposes, is an orthodox "softening" of Bezan hyper-scholasticism and High Calvinism.²⁶ Weir assumes this interpretation by exploring the context of Ursinus about the 1560s. To be sure, the predestination controversy was actually a series of debates centered on theodicy. It was started by Albertus Pighius in 1542 who attacked Calvin's views, including predestination. Then Jerome Bolsec in 1551, Jean Trollet in 1552 (?) and Sebastian Castellio in 1554 consecutively debated with Calvin. Calvin did not alter his high view of double predestination to the end. The controversy lasted until 1563~1564, the years of the deaths of Castellio and Calvin, respectively. Weir judges that under such a scenario Ursinus, a student of Calvin, once holding the latter's high view of God's sovereignty, came to solve the problem of theodicy by finding a prelapsarian covenant of creation and hence made Adam inexcusable.²⁷

Weir justifies his theory by appealing to the fact that after spending seven years with Melancthon at Wittenberg, Ursinus visited Castellio of Basel, besides Calvin of Geneva²⁸ and Bullinger of Zurich, at

²⁵ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 87.

²⁶ Heinrich Heppé, *Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus im sechzehnten Jahrhundert*. 1:152.

²⁷ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 64-87.

²⁸ Lillback strongly relies upon this connection to assert his theory that Ursinus was influenced by Calvin. Then the confirmation of a prelapsarian covenant was partially

the height of the controversy on his study trip in 1557~58.²⁹ To reinforce this argument another fact was utilized that Castellio was the “only Protestant ... to change the word *testamentum* to *foedus*.”³⁰ But the most substantial evidence falls on the statements from Ursinus’ *Major Catechism*. In Question/Answer 10-13, 36, we learn that (1) Ursinus identified a prelapsarian covenant, the covenant of creation. (2) Its condition, the divine [moral] law, is the same as that of the covenant of grace. (3) The use of *man* instead of Adam implies that the covenant binds *all* mankind. (4) The covenant of creation was out of the goodwill of God in order that man could attain the promised eschatological perfection. (5) He also juxtaposed the covenant of grace with that of creation.³¹ Thus Weir concludes,

The prelapsarian covenant in creation does not mitigate the decree of God respecting the Fall; it merely explains it more fully. ... thereby Ursinus left Adam and Eve without excuse when they broke the covenant. He further realized that the prelapsarian covenant binding Adam and all his descendants left the entire human race without excuse.³²

Weir derives the rise and the significance of the Ursinian cove-

accredited to the Genevan tradition. However, views of both Castellio and Calvin are not exclusive of each other. For Ursinus could have benefitted from both sides. Probably that is the reason why he impartially visited both.

²⁹ Derk Visser, “Zacharias Ursinus, 1534~1583.” in *Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland and Poland 1560~1600*. (New Haven, 1981.) 123-24.

³⁰ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 106, 58-51.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 102-104.

³² *Ibid.*, 108-109.

nant in creation from the context of the predestination controversy, which was centered at Geneva. But Robert Letham confirms the position of Ursinus through another consideration. He observes that since the Reformation, there was a stress on the unity of the covenant of grace, especially at Zurich. Then a correlative insistence was evident on the unity of law. This naturally led to construing the decalogue in covenantal terms. The reasoning is thus: if the law of creation was one with the later Mosaic moral law and if the latter was framed in covenantal terms, then it should not be taken as a surprise to conceive the creation order as also a covenant.³³

Apparently, by 1560 only a step remained before the creation situation itself was defined as a covenant, and a covenant characterized by law at that.... Ursinus took that step in his *Summa theologiae* of 1562³⁴

The time was 1561 or 1562, the first stage of the covenant of works as Weir defines it. McCoy says that Ursinus was the first covenant theologian “to name the covenant of nature and locate its origination before the fall.”³⁵

³³ Robert W. A. Letham, “The *Foedus Operum*: Some Factors Accounting For Its Development.” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14 (1983): 460, 463.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 463. According to Weir, the conception of a prelapsarian covenant is the cause, while according to Letham the link between the law of creation and the Mosaic moral law is. Probably they were mutually cause and effect in the mind of Ursinus. For both arguments are justified in the historical context. See the more specific research of M. McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam: The Making of the Covenant of Works;” in which he tells a different tale: “Moses, not Adam, holds initial pride.” 134. McGiffert favors Letham’s view.

³⁵ McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 36.

Chapter III The Covenant Theology

But Weir seems deliberately to leave the view of covenant in Ursinus' *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* untouched, for that view is diametrically opposite to that of the *Major Catechism*. He notices the fact that Ursinus might intend different uses of the *Major Catechism* (for students of theology) and the *Heidelberg Catechism* (for all). The former was theological and apologetical, Weir explains, while the latter, pietistic and pastoral.³⁶

Can this simple explanation meet the challenge of Derk Visser, another scholar of Ursinus? Visser claims,

The use of Ursinus's *Catechesis Major* as the inspiration for subsequent covenant of works theories departs from his teachings, ... as they have been ... edited in the *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* In his *Commentary*, ... Ursinus simply and unambiguously says "there is only one covenant" though with two appearances, (i.e. the old and the new).³⁷

Visser points out that Ursinus "never published the *maior* and if his deathbed wish had been observed, it would have been burned." He concedes that Ursinus did conceive "the creation covenant of 1562," yet he thinks that Ursinus did not depart from the traditional covenant

³⁶ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 108.

³⁷ Derk Visser, "The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987): 532. The quotation of Ursinus is from his "Is the Covenant One, or More?" in *The Commentary*, 1563, trans. by G. W. Willard, 98-99. Ursinus extensively expounded on "The Creation of Man" (27-29), "The Image of God in Man" (30-32), "The Fall and the First Sin of Man" (33-35) — topics in which we expect he would have discussed a prelapsarian covenant, but he did not. Weir collects this article in his book, but he does not respond to Visser's challenge in a convincing way. See Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 34.

theology.³⁸ So he enquires “why Ursinus apparently abandoned his concept”³⁹ Nevertheless, Ursinus at least found something very important in the development of double-covenant theology. This even Visser admits. It needs another work to find out the conflict between the *Major Catechism* and the *Heidelberg Catechism* with respect to the prelapsarian covenant.⁴⁰

Kaspar Olevianus (1536~1587)

After Ursinus we enter into what Weir calls “the second stage,” from 1584 to 1590. During these years, Ursinus’s students and younger colleagues started to utilize his new idea and developed it.⁴¹ Now we turn to Olevianus. Bierma says, scholars have “drawn a rather confusing and at times contradictory picture of his doctrine of the cove-

³⁸ Visser, “The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus.” 533, 537.

³⁹ Ibid., 533. Bierma raises this question. See his “The Covenant theology of Caspar Olevianus.” 79ff.

⁴⁰ As to Visser’s answer, see “The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus.” 533-44. From Visser’s view, Ursinus’s active delivering his new idea to his students after 1562 appears no more than Weir’s imagination. Weir says: “Ursinus taught this idea to a whole generation of students at the Collegium Sapientiae, the University of Heidelberg, and the Casimirianum at Neustadt an der Hardt.” Weir concessively adds: “but the idea remained dormant until 1584 ...” Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 109.

So far my picture is thus: Ursinus indeed found the covenant of creation and put it into the *Major Catechism* in 1561~62. Yet for some reason he did not use this idea unto death. (Abandoned it?) Nor did he fervently teach it to his students, though he might mention it when they were brain-storming with one another. And certainly some of students had copies of the *Major Catechism*, though the teacher prohibited its publication and even wished it to be burned at his deathbed! After his death some students or colleagues continued to develop it to maturity.

⁴¹ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 109.

nant and its place in the early history of Reformed covenant thought.”⁴² For example, the appraisal of McCoy is obviously different from that of Weir.⁴³ So are those of Trinterud, Heppe, and Baker.⁴⁴ The disagreement may arise, based upon Bierma’s research, from the fact that there are many covenants in Olevianus’s works. In addition to the covenant of grace, Bierma discovers at least five covenants! They are the covenant of creation, the legal covenant, the covenant with the Devil, the covenant with creatures, and the pretemporal covenant.⁴⁵ The latter three, making their first appearance in Reformed theology, represent the expansion of covenant thinking beyond the covenant of grace to include also the doctrine of the fall, special providence, and the eternal plan of salvation, respectively.⁴⁶

The first two covenants reveal the legacy of Ursinus. Yet Olevianus developed them. If we at the same time look up other synonymous terms of the covenant of creation, such as primary covenant, covenant

⁴² Bierma, “Covenant or Covenants in the Theology of Olevianus?” 228.

⁴³ McCoy and Baker say that “he [Olevianus] not only utilized the covenant as the central concept of his thought, but also deployed it more extensively as the principle by which to organize his entire theological system.” See McCoy and Baker, *Foundationhead of Federalism*. 38.

⁴⁴ Heinrich Heppe, *Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus im sechzehnten Jahrhundert*. 3 vols. (Gotha: Friedrich A. Perthes, 1857.) 1:211; Leonard J. Trinterud, “The Origins of Puritanism.” *Church History* 20 (1951): 48; Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition*. 240. The above four are more in a line of thought. In contrast Weir says, “the prelapsarian covenant was not a doctrine of fundamental importance for Olevianus.... Since Olevianus’s main concern was practical piety, he did not realize the extraordinary power of the idea to which he was alluding.” Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 137.

⁴⁵ Bierma, “Covenant or Covenants in the Theology of Olevianus ?” 230.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 249.

of nature and law of creation, we will find the Ursinian idea was more enriched and personalized than before.⁴⁷ The very insight falls to the pretemporal covenant between the Father and the Son that “later became known as the *pactum salutis* or covenant of redemption,” though “the fully developed covenantal terminology is lacking.” Bierma also notices that Olevianus linked the prelapsarian covenant to the Mosaic legal covenant established at Sinai. Bierma concludes,

One must be careful ... to claim either too little or too much ... in Olevianus. Relatively minor points ... did prove to be vital first *buds* in the flowering of federal theology His covenant theology was still dominated by the *Foedus gratiae*.⁴⁸

Thus we may confidently accept the judgment of Heppel: Olevianus was the “real founder of the developed federal theology.”⁴⁹ The time was 1585.

Dudley Fenner (1558?~1587)

To explain why the Reformed theology would turn to the double-covenant theology and why the latter would flourish abruptly after 1590, Letham says, there is a “missing piece in the jig-saw,” which is

⁴⁷ Cf. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 137.

⁴⁸ Bierma, “Covenant or Covenants in the Theology of Olevianus ?” 235, 249-250. Weir displays a very reserved assessment toward Olevianus while toward Ursinus otherwise. It seems that he assesses Olevianus too little. But strangely Weir bases his assessment of Olevianus largely upon what he reads from Bierma. In the case of Olevianus, McCoy and Baker’s assessment seems to be closer to reality. Their summary of Olevianus’s covenantal contribution is pertinent. McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 38-39.

⁴⁹ Heppel, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 210. quoted from McCoy and Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism*. 38.

no other than the philosophy and, especially, the methodology of Peter Ramus (1515~1572).⁵⁰ And the early English Puritan, Dudley Fenner, was “the first to articulate the prelapsarian covenant motif utilizing the Ramistic system.” Weir comments, it is “a very important step in the history of the federal theology.”⁵¹ It is quite interesting that in the 1590s many important theologians of the covenant of *works* were English Puritans. They were Thomas Cartwright, Dudley Fenner, Josias Nichols and William Perkins.⁵² Yet the mantle of it was primarily upon Fenner.

Fenner had never been to the Palatinate. The connection between Heidelberg and him must be his teacher Cartwright. Owing to the controversy with Archbishop John Whitgift, Cartwright left for Heidelberg in 1574~75 and associated with Ursinus and Olevianus there. He adopted the federal view afterwards. As a follower of Cartwright, Fenner came to Antwerp to be with his teacher in 1575. It is very possible, Weir surmises that they “discussed the new ideas of Ursinus while in Antwerp,”⁵³ so that Fenner learned the discovery of Ursinus from his

⁵⁰ Letham, “The *Foedus Operum*: Some Factors Accounting for its Development.” 464. He backs up his observation with facts. He then concludes that “the spread of the dual covenant theology occurred in precisely those places in which Ramist methodology was strongly upheld.” 466. But he may overemphasize the influence of Ramism when he says that there was “a pressure to subdivide, and particularly to dichotomize” and then it led to the expected, the necessary juxtaposition of the two covenants. 467.

⁵¹ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 119.

⁵² McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam.” 135.

⁵³ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 119. From two facts Weir’s conjecture is highly probable. First, Fenner had submitted his *Sacra theologia* to the corrections of Cartwright. 138. Second, on Sep. 3, 1585, Cartwright published a letter to Fenner, which letter became the preface to Fenner’s work. 118. Weir repeats his conjecture

teacher. In 1584 Fenner published his first Ramistic work, *The Artes and Retorike*. In 1585 he, when he was twenty-seven, published his *Sacra theologia* after seven years' efforts of composition.⁵⁴ It was the first attempt by an Elizabethan theologian to present a systematic theology.⁵⁵ Five years later Fenner's work was quickly eclipsed by Perkins' *Armillæ Aurea*.

Now we will look at what Weir calls the “high point and the watershed of the second phase” of the Federal theology, i.e. Chapter 2 of Book IV of *Sacra theologia*.⁵⁶ Michael McGiffert rates the whole piece as “a work of originality in substance, method, and design.”⁵⁷ In the end of Chapter 2, Fenner wrote, “The covenant is twofold, the covenant of works [and the] covenant of the free promise,” with five proof texts.⁵⁸ **First**, notice that he did not use other titles, such as covenant of creation, law of creation, the primary creation, etc. After 1590 this new appellation—the covenant of works—became prevalent and replaced the old ones. McGiffert thinks that it signifies they tried to

three times, because it is very crucial. Without it the connection between England and the Palatinate covenant theologies seems less clear. 144, 147,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁵ Breward ed., *The Work of William Perkins*. 171. Cf. 24.

⁵⁶ For the English translation text, see Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 142, or McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam.” 136. The proof texts are Rom. 3:19-20; 7:7-11; 11:32; Gal. 3:22; 5:23.

⁵⁷ McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam: The Making of the Covenant of Works.” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 136.

⁵⁸ I.e. Gen. 4:7; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:8-10, 15-17; Eph. 2:12. Fenner followed the Reformed tradition, not including Hosea 6:7 as a biblical base. The Bishop's Bible favored the translation of “Adam.”

tread a new path — “from Moses to Adam.”⁵⁹ **Secondly**, notice that he identified the covenant of works with New Testament proof texts in connection with Old Testament ones.⁶⁰ Weir says, it is a contribution of Fenner. Galatians 3:10 (For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”) quotes the words from Deuteronomy 27:26, (“Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law.” And all the people shall say, “Amen!”). By this Fenner thought that “The curse was interpreted as falling upon all men, not only upon Israelites” Since “all men are disobedient to God’s law, ... therefore they have broken the prelapsarian covenant which God made with all men.” Weir recognizes Fenner as the first federal theologian who interpreted Galatians 3 in the “English vernacular.”⁶¹

Thirdly, as to the use of the covenant of works, I shall quote McGiffert’s exposition:

Fenner’s account of *foedus operum* projects the idea at two levels — the one universal and transcendent, the other biblically specific and historical. At the upper level the covenant joins forces with predestination as agent of the decrees of election and reprobation.... This does not mean that he associated the covenant of works exclusively with reprobation, in the same way that the covenant of grace ... with election. Rather ... he put *foedus operum* to the service of *both* decrees.... This versatility bonds the

⁵⁹ McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam.” 134.

⁶⁰ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 137, 144.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

covenant with the moral law in all its functions⁶²

There are two levels: the upper speaks of the universal and hence current power of the covenant; the lower speaks of the redemptive history of the Bible, especially regarding the Mosaic covenant at Sinai which was the climax in Old Testament times. Naturally we will ask: “did Fenner have the pre-fall account in view here?” It seems he did not. For all the passages are posterior to the fall. However, the inclusion of Genesis 2.17 in his basic definition of covenant revealed that the covenant of works had been a prelapsarian covenant!⁶³ Moreover, the use of this covenant in fulfilling predestination also demands a pre-fall background for it. A high Calvinist as he was, a prelapsarian covenant was designed to reinforce the double predestination by clearing the charge that God was the author of sin. Fenner claimed that it is man who broke the covenant. Therefore, a pre-fall scene was hidden in the universal level.

Fourthly, Fenner intended to put this prelapsarian covenant in a universal position so that it became a foundation of ethics to bind all man at all places in all time. **Fifthly**, Fenner’s second use of law set the path of the Puritan preparationism. Law leads the sinner to Christ as Sinai drives man to Calvary. It is similar to Calvin’s first use of the moral law. A morphology of conversion is also implied here. **Lastly**, as we have mentioned, this work was written in Ramist fashion, the first one among the Puritans. Short as his life was, yet Fenner burned

⁶² McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam.” 137.

⁶³ Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 141. cf. Gen 4:7 in *Sacra theologia* 4.1. See also McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam.” 137. It is interesting that Fenner dealt with the Edenic state in accord with Augustine’s concept in the end of Bk. 2: Two kinds of food and the sacramental tree of life.

brightly and lightened a new way.

William Perkins (1558~1602)

The year 1585 was memorable for the development of the covenant theology. One year before it the *Major Chatechism* of Ursinus was in the long run published against his deathbed wish. Ursinus's new idea of a prelapsarian covenant had been dormant for twenty-two years since 1562. Now its publication might put an end to its silence. Both Olevianus and Fenner published their covenantal works in 1585. The year is decisively the watershed for Puritan theology. After this year the covenant theology started to bloom in Puritans and furthermore became their orthodoxy as did Calvin's doctrines.⁶⁴ With this knowledge in mind we should return from Perkins to his forerunners some credits which have been conferred inaccurately by scholars. In 1590, five years after Fenner's *Sacra Theologia*, the first full-scale systematic Reformed theology in the Elizabethan age, Perkins published his renowned *Armillæ Aurea*, a more comprehensive work than Fenner's. Evidently Perkins inherited the legacy of his forerunners and assumed their mantle to preach the new doctrine to his audience.

Many scholars, who are convinced of the "two traditions theory" — one of Geneva and another one of Zurich and the Rhineland, will accord a higher appraisal to Perkins. For "in Perkins there is a *fusing* of two preceding streams of covenant thought."⁶⁵ I do not agree

⁶⁴ John von Rohr is justified that in treating the Puritans' covenant theology he starts from 1585.

⁶⁵ McKim, "William Perkins and the Theology of the Covenant." in *Studies of the Church in History*. Edited by Horton Davies. (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1983.) 94. Italics mine.

with McKim’s opinion. As I have argued above, the truth is *one* tradition with two poles. The tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, as well as the conflict between the absoluteness and the conditionality of the covenant, constantly vexes any human being or any system of dogmas. Geneva sensed it as much as did Zurich. Nevertheless, with the proposal of the new idea of a prelapsarian covenant, there must have been a readjustment between it and the covenant of grace. The unpublicizing of the covenant in creation by Ursinus till after his death might indicate that his mind underwent an agitation due to the fusion of these two covenants. The conjugation of them was completed in Olevianus and Fenner, not Perkins.

Armilla Aurea is Perkins’s principal work to expound his doctrine of the covenant: Chapter XIX (means of decree of God and decalogue), Chapter XXX (use of the law), Chapter XXXI (covenant of grace), Chapter XXXII (sacraments), Chapter XXXIII (baptism), and Chapter XXXIV (Lord’s supper). Many elements of the double-covenant in Perkins had been in his forerunners’ works. (1) For Perkins, covenant is a means of executing God’s decree. It complies with Fenner’s idea: “the common means of fulfilling predestination in the corrupt state of things: It follows of the second, to wit, of the covenant of God.”⁶⁶ Fenner had pushed the idea of covenant to the forefront. It is an *outward means* of God to execute His hidden decrees. (2) Perkins’s definition⁶⁷ of covenant is also kept in the line of Ursinus -

⁶⁶ Perkins, *Armilla*, 19 in *Works*. 1:31; or see Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 210-211. Cf. Fenner, *Sacra*, 4.1. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 141.

⁶⁷ “God’s covenant is his contract with man concerning the obtaining of life eternal upon a certain condition. This covenant consists of two parts—God’s promise to man is that whereby he bindeth himself to man to be his God, if he perform the condition. Man’s promise to God is that whereby he voweth his allegiance unto his Lord

Olevianus - Fenner.⁶⁸ (3) Not to mention the distinction of two covenants. Notice Perkins put the covenant of works expressively in the parameter of Sinai instead of Eden. Actually since Ursinus there had been such a tendency, which culminated in Fenner. As an able expositor of the decalogue, Perkins indeed procured a double portion of the spirit upon Fenner.⁶⁹

(4) That Breward deems that the link of predestination and covenant theology is Perkins's contribution may need more evaluation.⁷⁰ According to Weir, the birth of the Ursinian prelapsarian covenant was due to the Genevan predestination controversy. This link kept looming up to Fenner. Fenner averred, "The use of the covenant in fulfilling predestination is two-fold"⁷¹ But on the other hand Breward's comment may be justified in two ways. First, what Breward mentions is not "a theology of covenant," but "a covenant theology," as he argues. For Breward the covenant theology proper did not appear until after 1590. Since the idea of the covenant of grace organized the "golden chain," then the idea has matured into a theology in Perkins. So to say that the link between predestination and the double-covenant

and to perform the condition between them." *Armillia*, 19. *Works*. 1:32; or see Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 211.

⁶⁸ For Ursinus, either covenant is a "pact." Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 105. Fenner's definition is simpler than Perkins's, but the mutuality and the conditionality are already there. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 141, 140.

⁶⁹ For McGiffert's exposition of Fenner, see above. If the Kendall school want to blame Puritans, they do not have to go to the Rhineland. Fenner of their own blood was the very "culprit" who brought the covenant of works from Eden to Sinai.

⁷⁰ Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 88, 90-92.

⁷¹ Fenner, *Sacra*, 4.2. See Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. 142.

made more sense in Perkins is justified. Second, From the fact that Breward criticizes Perry Miller, we may understand that his comment intends to clear the myth of Perry Miller which had perturbed the Reformed/ Puritan scholarship for many years.

Nevertheless, Perkins undeniably contributed to covenant theology by adding some new hues. (1) He put the sacraments into the perimeter of the new theology. His predecessors paid less attention to the signs and seals of the double-covenant. Yet the covenant is implemented in the people only through its sacraments. The length of the chapters on the sacraments in *Armilla Aurea* is greater than that on covenant in general.

(2) He adds a metaphorical sense to the covenant on the divine side. God's entering into the covenant is equivalent to the mystical union between God and the believer. According to Heinrich Hepppe, the focus of the theology Perkins, a "father of Pietism," was the "mystical union of the believer with Christ."⁷² Perkins further defined this union as an act of the Holy Spirit "which gives spiritual life to all the members: *distance* of place does not hinder this conjunction because the Holy Ghost ... is infinite."⁷³ In another text he stated that the real union is made possible because the Spirit, "being by nature infinite, is of sufficient ability to conjoin those things together which are of them-

⁷² Heinrich Hepppe, *Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik in der reformirten Kirche: namentlich der Niederlande*. (Leiden: Brill, 1879.) 26. Quoted from Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in the Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988) 161-62.

⁷³ Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbol*, in *Works*. 1:300. Quoted from Mark Shaw, "Drama in the Meeting House." 48. Italics mine.

selves far *distant from each other*.”⁷⁴ The *WCF* echoed this Perkinsian concept of the covenant by maintaining that God’s dealings with man are covenantal. The classical formulation was in *WCF* 7.1:

The *distance* between God and the creature is so great, that ... they could never have any fruition of Him ... but by some voluntary condescension on God’s part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of a covenant. (Italics mine.)

David B. McWilliams reflects on this grace as a “metaphysical (creation)” grace inherent in the prelapsarian covenant in distinction from an “ethical (redemptive)” grace inherent in the postlapsarian covenant.⁷⁵ Therefore, for Perkins, considering the ontological distinction between the Creator and the creatures necessitates a covenant as well. Thus the Puritans deepened the understanding of the need of a covenant from the perspective of God’s side. But from Perkins’ definition of the decree of God as “that by which God in himself hath necessarily, and yet freely, from all eternity determined all things,”⁷⁶ Richard A. Muller at the same points out that Perkins also safeguarded the necessity on God’s side with the freedom of God in His decree to avoid any misconception.⁷⁷

(3) Probably the greatest contribution of Perkins is no more than

⁷⁴ Perkins, *Armilla*, 36. *Works*. 1:77-78; or see Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 226. Italics mine.

⁷⁵ D. B. McWilliams, “The Covenant Theology of the *WCF* and Recent Criticism.” 109-111.

⁷⁶ Perkins, *Armilla*, 6. *Works*. 1:15; or see Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 183.

⁷⁷ Muller, *Christ and the Decree*. 161-62.

his integrating spiritual assurance into the covenant theology in addition to the sacramental assurance.

The place of the covenant in God’s purposes provided a further basis for assurance. Indeed the only satisfactory cure for a wounded conscience was to prove that its owner was in the covenant of grace.⁷⁸

For Perkins the idea of the double-covenant has grown up to a scheme which comprehends all activities between God and man. As a matter of fact, he put all the works of God in a chart as illustrated in his *Armilla Aurea*. As long as you are hooked up in any ring of grace, be it “a mustard seed,” then you are secured in the golden chain and you can move on to procure more security. Assurance in man’s consciousness reveals pastorally predestination in God’s consciousness.

Nevertheless, scholars often misunderstand Perkins as a “formulator of a metaphysical structure according to which all doctrine was interpreted.” Richard A. Muller just enumerates three of them: Basil Hall, Ian Breward and R. T. Kendall. Muller finds that these three scholars do not seem to be “sufficiently cognizant of the relationship between Perkins’ theology and pietism, nor are they sufficiently aware of the christological and trinitarian developments in the thought of Perkins” Muller concurs with F. Ernest Stoeffler when the latter comments that “the difference between Perkins’ and Calvin’s perspective appears not as a hardening of the doctrine of predestination but instead as a greater emphasis on Christian life and practice.”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 89, 93.

⁷⁹ Muller, *Christ and the Decree*. 132. As to F. Ernest Stoeffler’s words, see his *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971) 55.

(4) The Perkinsian covenant is also characterized by a balance of two contrasting elements of it — human response and divine promise. Interestingly he reserved the word “testament” to define the covenant of grace.

This covenant is also named a testament, for it hath *partly* the nature and properties of a testament or will. For it is confirmed by the death of the testator.... we do not so much offer ... to God, as in a manner only to receive.⁸⁰

“He joined together two vital aspects of the covenant, a marriage which others tore asunder.”⁸¹ But after Perkins, McKim says, “an increasing divergence of these two streams became apparent.” One stream emphasized the promissory aspect of the double-covenant, represented by Ames, Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Bunyan and Ussher, whereas the other, the obligatory aspect, adhered to by Preston, Baxter, Ball, Anthony Burgess and Rutherford.

William Ames (1576~1633)

Ames is the key covenant theologian for us to understand the Stuart Puritans. He organized the theology by the principle of the covenant more thoroughly than Perkins,⁸² and the covenant theology in his hand underwent a further development.⁸³ Eusden says, “No previ-

⁸⁰ Perkins, *Armilla*, 31. *Works*. 1:70; or Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 213.

⁸¹ McKim, “William Perkins and the Theology of the Covenant.” 96.

⁸² Ames extended the idea of covenant to the church covenant, by which the Non-Separatists and the later Independents understood the church in a new way different from the Presbyterians. Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*. 1.32. or Eusden, 178-181.

⁸³ Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 90-91.

ous thinker in the Calvinist-Puritan tradition analyzed the covenant of grace with an acuteness comparable to that of the Franeker professor.”⁸⁴ The covenant theology of Thomas Goodwin was obviously influenced by him. Ames’s interpretation of the covenant of works is different from that of his predecessors. He deprived the Edenic state of its eschatological implication which had long been a tradition since Augustine. The promise of the prelapsarian covenant is but “a promise of continuing animal life, a later exaltation to spiritual life”⁸⁵ He went on to explain: “his covenant with man in the creation was, *Do this and you will live; if you do it not you shall die.*” It seems to have no probation period. Always live in the “animal life,” or the life in the level of creation.⁸⁶ The reward, for Ames, is the continuing of the same-level animal life. He did not expect too much from such a “*quid pro quo*,” a “transaction.”⁸⁷ That there may be “a later exaltation” is only construed as the covenant of grace. The distinction between the two covenants was sharper than before.

Ames did not stop there. Furthermore, he enhanced the concept of “testament” of Perkins. He increased the distinction of the old and the new Testaments. From Moses to Christ “the form of administration” of the covenant of grace still “gave some evidence of the covenant of works,” whereas from Christ onward “this testament is essentially different.”⁸⁸ So the freedom of the new administration of the

⁸⁴ Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*. Introduction by Eusden, 52.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 113 or Ames, *Marrow*, 1.10.31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 113 or Ames, *Marrow*, 1.10.31-32.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 206 or Ames, *Marrow*, 1.39.4.

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covenant of grace lies in that the church of Christ has done “away with the government of law, or the intermixture of the covenant of works.”⁸⁹ In terms of the conditions of the covenant, the old required perfect obedience of works ..., but the present covenant does not require any prior condition, but only a following or intermediate condition ... which is the proper nature of faith.⁹⁰

In this way, Ames laid the groundwork for what Peter Bulkely (1586~1659), John Cotton (1584~1652), Thomas Hooker (1586~1647) and Thomas Shepard (1604~49) were to call “the unconditional covenant of grace.”⁹¹ In Ames we observe that his altered view of the covenant of grace has extended to his doctrine of the church. He sowed the seed of thought among his generation of Puritans as to the *essence* of the double-covenant and hence that of the church. The next generation of Puritans reaped the inevitable fruits — debates between Independents and Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly, though Ames should not be held responsible for the former’s millenarianism.

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

At last I will examine the covenants of Goodwin. John von Rohr comments that Goodwin “waxed even more ecstatic as he noted particularly the covenant’s comprehensiveness.”⁹² For Goodwin, “both these knittings to God ... contain the whole design of God.” He also called them the “double knitting of God.” The first is a “common” one

⁸⁹ Ibid., 206 or Ames, *Marrow*, 1.39.9.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 151 or Ames, *Marrow*, 1.24.19.

⁹¹ Ibid., 53.

⁹² Von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace*. 10.

with all angels, including the once created-holy devils, and Adam in innocency with all mankind in him; the second is a “special” one by Christ. (1:175-176 or *Ephesians, Sermon 11.*)

Covenant of redemption

But Goodwin would like to explore the covenants deeper in the bosom of the Triune God.⁹³ In his *Christ, the Mediator*, he pervasively discussed the concept of what other theologians call the covenant of redemption. Redemption was originated from “the eternal *transactions* between God the Father and the Son.” (5:3 or *Mediator* 1.1.) Based upon 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, he expounded the significance of the preposition, *in*, which is different from *for* or *through*. “For Christ” means Christ is the meritorious cause, while “through Christ”, efficient cause. But the phrase, “in Christ,” speaks of Christ’s being the “common head,” so that God endowed us in Christ with all blessings “by way of a covenant with him for us.” (5:12 or *Mediator* 1.3.) God so loves the world that He has to save sinners. But how? God only found that His Son Christ could do it. So the Father called His Son to assume the redemptive task in eternity. Goodwin indicates to us the activeness of the Father and the passiveness of the Son. And Christ accepted the terms. (5:11-27 or *Mediator* 1.3-1.8.)

In the beginning of his *Mediator* 1.9, he averred, “The Father ... enters into a covenant with him.” But do we have an obviously clear text to speak of such a pretemporal covenant? Goodwin found the proof texts from Isaiah 49, which he called “the draught of the covenant ... betwixt Christ and his Father for us,” because the chapter is composed of plenty of covenantal language and “this very covenant

⁹³ Cf. Olevianus earlier proposed a pre-temporal covenant. See note 45 above.

bargain-wise struck up.” Also other texts: Psalm 2:7-8; 89:4,5,28,29 and Titus 1:2. From all these Goodwin concluded, “Now the phrase notes out a transaction, an endowment of all these on us, not first immediately in ourselves, but in Christ for us, and on us in him.” (5:28-30 or *Mediator* 1.9.) With this covenant in mind Goodwin comprehended the “works” and “thoughts” of Psalm 40:5 as all the promises of the Father in their eternal transaction! He justified his interpretation by the following three verses, i.e. Psalm 40:6-8. He told his congregation: “these passages ... might be enough to ... over-persuade you to come in for mercy and grace with him.” (5:33 or *Mediator* 1.11.)

For Goodwin covenant is both an obedience and a promise. It is a mutual compact. So a covenant is stronger than a promise. “if it [the pretemporal covenant] had been called a promise from God, that would not necessarily have implied Christ’s consent.” (5:140 or *Mediator* 4.1.) Only God’s swearing, or only Christ’s secret willing, or consent without being sealed, is not a covenant. When “it being called further a covenant, it doth import two: for as a mediator is not of one but two, so a covenant is always the consent of two, not of one only.” He noticed that the person, the Mediator, is even called the *covenant* in Isaiah 49:8. (5:140 or *Mediator* 4.1.)

Regarding this eternal, pretemporal covenant, Goodwin portrayed the trinitarian joy in heaven as a conclusion to it. “There was never such joy in heaven ... but further, their chiefest delights were taken up with this more than in all their works *ad extra*.” From eternity to eternity this covenantal delight is the “greatest delight” of the Trinity God.⁹⁴ Even the resurrection of Christ, a redemptive *ad extra* work,

⁹⁴ Goodwin, *Mediator* 1.11. or TG 5:31-32. Here he quoted Prov. 8.22-31 as proof

cannot exceed it! So “he [God] swore, and would not repent,” Goodwin quoted Hebrews 7:21 to demonstrate the resolution of God concerning this covenant of redemption before eternity.

Covenant of works

Now we move on to the first temporal covenant, the covenant of works. The very specific work showing his conceptions about the covenant of works is *The Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*. This work is strongly influenced by Augustine.⁹⁵ In Book 1 of *Creatures* he pointed out that the infinite distinction between God and man is so great that man has to humble himself before God. Yet at the same time, meditating on Psalm 113:5-6, he said that the great God also humbles Himself to cast an eye on the least creature upon earth. Then Goodwin even said with audacity that: “he were not God if he did not behold the least motion of every creature.” (7:16-17 or *The Creatures and the Condition of their state by Creation* 1.3.) His idea is much closer to that of Perkins when the latter said that distance will not hinder God from having a union with man. Only this divine humbling makes the covenant of nature possible. Without considering the terms of a covenant, entering into a covenant with minute men for so great a God is a matter of grace.

Before we proceed we shall consider another passage of Goodwin. “There is a double knitting ... unto God,” Goodwin said, “First, a

text. It is a pretemporal joy between Father and Son.

⁹⁵ Volume VII of Goodwin’s Works which contains *The Creatures* and *The Blessed State of Glory*, is his version of *The City of God*. If you compare his volume with Books XI-XIV, the origin of the City of God (on Eden and Adam’s fall) and Book XXII, the ultimate state of it (on the eternal beatitude), of Augustine’s *The City of God*, you will find a lot of similar thoughts, or even identical terms and statements!

common, ... the other is a special union unto God.” The *commonness* comes from the fact that all the angels, including the devils prior to their fall, and Adam with all mankind in him had the knitting in common together. (1:175 or *Ephesians* Serm.11.) But we know the common covenant cannot be construed as the covenant of works, because its objects were wider than that of the latter. Thereby we know that in his mind there was a covenant with angels. We may infer another covenant from the fact that he called the tree of knowledge a sacrament as the tree of life is.⁹⁶ Man’s fall was a kind of covenant between man and Satan! Compared with Olevianus, who had six covenants in his works,⁹⁷ Goodwin seemed to have five of them(!)— *the* two covenants, covenant in creation (including angels), pretemporal covenant, and covenant with Satan. Only the providential covenant or the covenant with creatures is not explicitly found in him.⁹⁸

The essence of the covenant of works is altogether of nature. Man is natural in creation and the covenant he stood under was but the covenant of nature. And the conditions of it are also of nature. “There was nothing at all supernatural in it.” (7:49 or *Creatures* 2.6.) Here Goodwin followed Ames very closely. Not only was there nothing supernatural at all in creation itself, but also the covenant of works provided no hope of supernatural grace as a reward. This is where Goodwin split from Augustine and held in the line of Ames. The reward of the

⁹⁶ TG 11:41 or *The Constitution, Right Order, and Government of the Churches of Christ* 1.5. Cf. “the sacrament of death” in Ames, *Marrow* 1.10.33, or Eusden, 113. Evidently Goodwin was influenced by Ames.

⁹⁷ See above, n.45.

⁹⁸ See “providential remembrance” below. For Goodwin, providence is covenantal, too.

covenant was “but the continuance of the same happy life.”⁹⁹ In other words, the reward was not a positively eschatological hope that after a period of probation God, due to the obedience of Adam, would endow him with participation in the divine communicable nature, i.e. the immutable life. It was solely a negative prevention, against the natural mutability, from falling into evil. The motto of Eden was “Do this , and thou shalt live;” Goodwin confessed what he thought about Eden: the promise is “not the translating him, in the end, unto that spiritual life in heaven, which the angels have, and which the saints shall have.” (7:49 or *Creatures* 2.6.)¹⁰⁰

So his interpretation of the tree of life upheld this line of thought, too. Two trees were two sacraments. The tree of knowledge admonished Adam of “his mutable condition” and the tree of life would seal up the promise of life. (11:41 or *Constitution* 1.5.) What kind of life? The sacrament would “seal his *constant* estate of life and happiness, if he would persist in obedience.” (10:8 or *An Unregenerate Man’s Guiltiness Before God* 1.3. Italics mine.) Being *constant* does not mean immutability, which is supernatural and eschatological, but means being constant in the same happy and natural happy life. No

⁹⁹ TG 7:49 or *Creatures* 2.6. In sharp contrast to Goodwin, Augustine’s exposition left a window to heaven. While other trees provide foods as physical nourishment, “the tree of life in the *material paradise* is analogous to the wisdom of God in the *spiritual or intelligible paradise*.” (Italics mine.) Augustine based this upon Prov. 3:18. See his *City of God* 13.20 or Bettenson’s translation (Penguin), 534. So Augustine’s Eden has hope and *eschaton*. The reward is also a justification of Adam’s natural righteousness in the covenant of works. Goodwin said, there are two kinds of justification: of debt or of free grace. Rom. 4:4. But he pointed out that a *debitum naturale* is still a gift from God. God can never owe anything to man. See TG 7:49 or *Creatures* 2.6.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. TG 5:82-83 or *Mediator* 3.3.

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wonder Goodwin would parallel the scenario of Adam's eating the tree of life to the idea of those Jews in John 6:34 who wanted to "procure a bread whereby their *bodies* might live for ever." (8:174) Commenting on the difficulty of saving faith, Goodwin remarked that the "sacrament of the tree of life" was to confirm Adam's obedience in the covenant of works. The new law of faith would have "staggered and amazed" Adam's version of faith. What was Adam's faith? His belief was "to believe that whilst he pleased God in all things he should continue in his favour, and live by doing so, and be justified by it." Goodwin said that this was Adam's "sense of God's love." Actually it was "God's remunerative justice!" (8:484)

As a consequence, he had to confess pessimistically that there was no law, either of nature or justice, between God and the creature, that could in any way oblige God to uphold and to maintain them. Thus slippery was the first union, simply considered as creaturely. (1:176 or *Eph. Serm.11.*)

It is an irony, for Goodwin, that God created a thus-far *perfect* Eden and He restricted Himself so much that God played with Satan a no-gain play. Moreover, God's stake was upon the mutable man! So it turned out a must-lose game. God did injustice to Himself. Goodwin and Ames's Eden has no *eschaton*, no hope. It is a *cul-de-sac*, no way out except sinning. If not sinning, there is no possibility of heaven. If Ames and Goodwin thought this theological scheme could enhance the glory of the covenant of grace, I would say that they risked making God the author of sin. Was it wise for them to heighten the distinction of nature and grace set up by Augustine? There was a tendency to depreciate the covenant of nature after federal theologians discovered the link of the Edenic law of nature with the Mosaic moral law. Of course,

they might opt for another alternative: to stress the perennial value of the prelapsarian law of nature through this link. But Ames and Goodwin chose the former way with an intention to make more salient the sovereignty of God in the covenant of grace.

Goodwin must have felt the anti-Augustinian singularity of his interpretation of Eden; therefore he provided five reasons to justify his views. I summarize them as follows. (1) The absolute distinction is set by 1 Corinthians 15:47-48. (2) Adam and Eden are at most types. The reality is Christ and heaven. (3) There is no such promise of eternal, immutable life in the moral law or law of nature. (4) All creatures are in accordance with their natural estate. Man is not an exception, too. Think of the falling angels in Jude 6, for they desired a higher estate and left their habitation! (5) Only Christ can give us transforming, supernatural grace. Eden did not have such a promise. Watch out for the papists, for they overestimate the potential of nature. (7:49-53 or *Creatures* 2.6.)

Goodwin's covenant of works only functions as a providential bridge to the covenant of grace. Maybe he thought that God utilized it as a trap so that God's goodwill in the covenant of grace can be accomplished through Satan's doing evil.

Covenant of grace

Despite many covenants in his mind, the principal one is no other than the covenant of grace, with which the covenant of redemption is closely associated. There are four steps in Christ's consent to undertake the redemption, i.e. from everlasting (which is the covenant of redemption), continuance unto incarnation, renewal at incarnation, performance from cradle to cross. The last one implemented the conditions of Christ in the covenant of redemption, and also brought the

covenant of grace to culmination. (5:137-38 or *Mediator* 4.1.)

The best work for us to study Goodwin's thinking on the nature of the covenant of grace is his *A Discourse of Election*, or more specifically, Chapter 4 of Book 1 of it. He selected the Noahic Covenant, based upon Isaiah 54, as a window to examine the New Covenant because it is the first covenant of grace in the Bible. Literally speaking, in the Bible, the words "grace" and "covenant" also appeared in the Noahic covenant for the first time, i.e. Genesis 6:8, 18. (9:44-45 or *Election* 1.4.1.) There are several major points of the essence of the covenant of grace.

1. Absoluteness and conditionality

Apparently Goodwin maintained the spirit of the Amesian covenant of grace in this respect.¹⁰¹ He construed Genesis 6:8-9 in its literal order, so "as Noah's personal righteousness follows as the *effect* of that grace ... thereby plainly to insinuate, that ... God did first absolutely pitch his grace upon him." As to the covenanting of Genesis 6:18,

there is no mention of *condition* on Noah's part, but only of what God by covenant would do on his; and therefore *absolutely* declareth himself, that he not only make a covenant, but establisheth it; and under this word undertakes to perform it, and bring it to a full perfection, so as whatever should be necessary and requisite on Noah's part, God at once undertakes to work in him as part of his own covenant. (9:71 or *Election* 1.4.4. Italics mine.)

Hence upon the issues of conditionality and absoluteness, he dis-

¹⁰¹ See above.

closed his view straightforwardly. He got a stronger support from Jeremiah 31 and its quotation in Hebrews 8. God’s grace is absolute. He admitted that Noah entered into the ark before God could perform His promises toward him. Yet 2 Thessalonians 2:13 tells us that God’s choosing includes the inner preparation of sanctification. So the invitation into the kingdom of God in Matthew 25:34-35 imports that God also prepares the qualification of the righteous men. Consequently he stated,

For any man to interpret the absoluteness of the covenant to be that God saves men absolutely without any requisite qualifications wrought in them, is manifestly to cast a reproach upon the grace of God itself in the doctrine of it. (9:71-72 or *Election* 1.4.4.)¹⁰²

Therefore, Goodwin did not promote the absoluteness of the covenant in sacrifice of its *conditionality*. Actually he considered, though subordinated, the latter under the former.

As Ames rejected the so-called *prior* condition, so did Goodwin. Many Puritans called faith and repentance the conditions of the covenant. To clear his stance Goodwin said, “Nor indeed are those we call conditions of the covenant on our part, as believing on Christ, turning from sin, other than necessary means of being made partakers of Christ and salvation.” (9:72 or *Election* 1.4.4.)

Like Ames he took faith and repentance as *intermediate*, not *prior* conditions,¹⁰³ *only when* they are considered as an instrumental

¹⁰² Cf. “he [God] undertakes to fulfill the conditions” see TG 5:30 or *Mediator* 1.9.

¹⁰³ Ames, *Marrow* 1.24.19 or Eusden, 151.

cause of salvation. His consideration is to safeguard the sovereignty of God's grace on one hand, and to defend against Antinomianism or Hyper-Calvinism on the other. Conditionality means that we are responsibly involved in God's covenant of grace.

2. *Stability*

Another striking feature of the covenant of grace, in contrast with that of works, is the former's "everlasting stability, sureness, fixedness, and constancy." The Word of God testifies of it: of the Noahic Covenant, Genesis 9:11, and Isaiah 54:10; of the Davidic Covenant, Psalm 89; of the New Covenant, Hebrews 6:18.

The stability of the covenant of grace implies chastisements, too. Psalm 89:30-32. And God knows our frame, Psalm 130. (9:72-73 or *Election* 1.4.4.) The covenantal stability does not guarantee absence of any "distresses and extremities," yet the tenderness of God's mercies are overwhelmingly abundant. Goodwin reflected, "There is no speech ... more pathetic or passionate than this [Isaiah 54:11-12]." (9:75 or *Election* 1.4.4.)

To make sure of the stability of the covenant our Mediator confirms with two kinds of sacrifices: one before it, Colossians 1:20 once for all upon the cross; and the other after it, Ephesians 5:2 in heaven daily for us. (9:74 or *Election* 1.4.4.)¹⁰⁴

3. *Providential remembrance*

As the rainbow acted as an outward sacrament of the Noahic Covenant, so the New Covenant also has its providential remembrance to God. One is constant, Revelation 4:3; the other is occasional, Reve-

¹⁰⁴ Cf. TG 9:53 or *Mediator* 1.4.1.

lation 10:1. When we see a rainbow around God’s throne, though accompanied by lightnings and thunderings (which signify afflictions and tortures), we know that God is still “ordering and governing all occurrences that should befall this church,” and He will be faithful toward us, His covenanted people. (9:78-79 or *Election* 1.4.4.)

The second, occasional “rainbow” displays Goodwin’s millenarian hermeneutics in the Apocalypse. The special occasion is the great tribulation imposed on the faithful Christians by the eschatological beast. During the fierce persecution, the angel of Revelation 10:1, who Goodwin argued must be Christ Himself, will come down to comfort the elect. A rainbow will be on his head! (9:78-80) The Stuart millenarians, most of whom were the Independents, were deeply convinced that the millennial kingdom would dawn very soon. It would inaugurate sometime between 1650 and 1700. So the turmoils in the Civil War were none but the darkest hours before dawn. Christ would come soon, whether *spiritually* (e.g. for Goodwin) or even *physically* (e.g. for the Fifth Monarchists), to reign. Two eschatological signs they were waiting for: the repentance of the Jews and the fall of the beast—the Pope. As a millenarian Goodwin put these two concerns into his covenant theology.¹⁰⁵

4. Objects of the covenant

Now Goodwin turned to Isaiah 54:1-3 and the related passage in Genesis 9:27. Christ accomplished His redemption in Isaiah 53. An immediate consequence, according to the closest context of Isaiah 54:1-3, is the birth and the expansion of the New Covenant Church.

¹⁰⁵ See Chapter I, Life & Age of Thomas Goodwin; and Chapter II, The Latter-Day Glory.

The Japhethites are Gentiles. So God extends His grace to Gentiles. He reinforced his interpretation by an analogy drawn from the unclean animals in Peter's vision at Joppa, Acts 10:11-16, and all kinds of animals in the ark, Genesis 7:2-3.¹⁰⁶

5. *Dispensation of the covenant*

Goodwin's millenarian conviction pressed him to ponder the dispensation of the covenant of grace at the end of this age. First, he grounded his exegetical works upon Romans 11:16, where the root is Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant God entered with him in ancient days. All the branches—whether Jews or Gentiles—are separated as holy by God only because of their common root. Here we see Goodwin construing the transmission of God's grace by the covenant theology. By adopting Beza's interpretation, then, he believed that the "Israel" of Romans 11:26 is the physical Jews, not the spiritual ones, the Church. Not only did he specify the ultimate salvation of the Jews as a nation, but also he advanced a prediction of the secret date from Daniel and Revelation. The result was so urgent, for it was now! After sixteen hundred years' interruption, they should be "engrafted again," [Rom 11] ver. 25-27, and this "for their father's sake," ver. 28, and "all Israel shall be saved." ver. 26. (9:438 or *Election* 5.2.)

Moreover, he was convinced that the wild branch particularly intimates the old Roman Catholic Church.

This Paul shews to have been the ancient promise to the church

¹⁰⁶ TG 9:75-78 or *Election* 1.4.4. Besides, Goodwin preached at great length on dispensing the covenant of grace to the children of saints, mainly based upon 1 Cor. 7.14 and Rom. 11.16. See the final book of *Election*, i.e. Bk. 5 or TG 9:426-98. Actually it concerns infant baptism, a mark of the covenant theology.

of Rome; and they possessed this privilege more eminently than any other churches for four hundred years, till she began to spread herself too far into unnatural branches, to enlarge herself and to overshadow other trees, and usurping over other churches.... (9:439 or *Election* 5.2.)

Jews have second a chance, because they are a “natural” branch, whereas Roman Catholics do not, because they are intrinsically a “wild” branch.

However, the primary concern of Goodwin’s eschatology was not “signs of the times,” but the latter-day glory of the New Covenant Church. The ground is Romans 11:15, buttressed by Revelation 20:1–6. Oh! What a glory!¹⁰⁷ The Church will undergo the millennium of the first resurrection, because of the blessings brought by the national repentance of Israel. The return of the Jews signifies an avalanche of repenting Gentiles at the same time. This vision inspired Puritans to undertake evangelism fervently. This was the cause for which the Independents would even vehemently debate with their Presbyterian comrades.

Therefore, in Goodwin’s eyes two crucial apocalyptic signs also appear *explicitly* in Romans 11 as much as they are codified *implicitly* in the Apocalypse. According to the general hermeneutical principle, Romans 11 becomes for Goodwin the key to the Apocalyptic literature! And all these came out of an application of his covenant theology. The early federal theologians would not think that one day a chapter of

¹⁰⁷ Notwithstanding the failures of the Puritan revolution and the unfulfillment of the imminent millennium, Goodwin was consistent in his faith of the covenant of grace unto the end. Upon his deathbed he exhorted his son concerning the privilege of the covenant of grace. See TG 2:lxxv.

millennial eschatology would be added to the development of the covenant theology!

Short Conclusion

The historical study of the development of covenant theology from Augustine to Goodwin precipitated a more significant milestone, which is the truth of only *one* tradition of Reformed covenant theology with two poles. Thus far this truth has been proved to be an excellent theological instrument to solve the perennial paradox between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, a paradox vexing mankind since Eden. Not only that, it is also inherently a biblical theology for Goodwin to unravel the mysteries of the redemptive history from Paradise to the New Jerusalem.

His millenarian concept left an indelible modification upon Amesian covenant theology. As we have seen, he added a millennial dispensation to the covenant of grace primarily through his exegesis of Romans 11, not through that of Revelation. This revision of the traditional Puritan covenant theology offers Goodwin a modified frame of mind in which he had to readjust his version of the *ordo salutis* accordingly.

Chapter IV Effectual Calling

Goodwin once said that “God was to me as a wayfaring man, who came and dwelt for a night, and made me religious for a fit, but then departed from me.” (2:lviii)¹ The doctrine of regeneration or effectual calling is one of the most experiential doctrines to him. He laid bare what he thought upon this doctrine in one of his *opera magna*, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation*, collected as the sixth volume in James Nichol’s edition.² This work is comprised of ten books, with the doctrine of regeneration as its central message.³ In addition to it, he included in this work doctrines such as reconciliation (Book III), conscience (Book VI), temporary faith (Book VII) and conversion (Book VIII). For these doctrines are inextricably intertwined with that of regeneration, or are parts of it if it is considered in

¹ Cf. in TG 6:58 he said that “The Holy Spirit comes to some as a wayfaring man, they are not sons.”

² This work might have been preached in the 1650s. See Stanley P. Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” 278-80. See also Appendix I. Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin.

³ Cf. Robert P. Martin, *A Guide to Puritans*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997.) 196.

a broader sense.

Nowadays regeneration becomes the most conspicuous doctrine in church life. Evangelicals would like to mark themselves out as *born-again* Christians in contradistinction to others who they think are not. Not an age in church history promotes the doctrine of regeneration like ours! The British scholar, Peter Toon, observes that to many Europeans born-again is a “peculiarly American expression,” a conversion followed by some religious activism.⁴ But this is a fruit of the Reformation and Post-Reformation theologies. They made efforts to extricate and clarify this subject matter from many others. In Goodwin we can see a good example of these efforts.

Calvin & Ames

We shall go to the fountainhead of the Puritan theology, John Calvin, at first, and then to William Ames, to examine their concepts and uses of calling and regeneration.

John Calvin

In his *Institutes*, after the long chapter on faith, Calvin tackled the doctrine of regeneration in the third chapter in the book of the Holy Spirit. The chapter title reads, “Our Regeneration by Faith: Repentance.” John T. McNeill says, in the first footnote of Ford Lewis Battles’ translation of *Institutes* 3.3.1, that “In sec. 9 it [repentance] is identified with regeneration.”⁵ Ronald S. Wallace finds that “The

⁴ Peter Toon, *Born Again: A Biblical and Theological Study of Regeneration*. 9.

⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.1.1. 1559 [Latin]. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles and edited by John T. McNeill. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.) 1:592. See Footnote 1.

word ‘repentance’ is used by Calvin as almost interchangeable with ‘conversion’ or ‘regeneration.’”⁶ The way Calvin employed the word “regeneration” is sometimes vague. Regeneration for him seems to encompass the whole process of the restoration of our renewed image of God in Christ in some of his expositions. For instance, in commenting on John 3:5 he seemingly enlarged the scope of regeneration. Calvin thought that “He [Christ] used the words *Spirit* and *water* to mean the same thing. ... this water is the Spirit who cleanses us anew and ... imparts to us the energy of the heavenly life” In the end Calvin concluded that “By water therefore is meant simply the inward cleansing and quickening of the Holy Spirit.”⁷ In this sense regeneration is indeed a synonym for repentance or conversion.

But in commenting on John 1:13 he denominated *regeneration* specifically as the inception of the new life. “Faith,” for him, “is the fruit of spiritual regeneration.” So he said that “It seems as if the Evangelist puts things back to front by making regeneration prior to faith.” He made very clear that the *ordo salutis* is thus: regeneration, faith, sanctification, adoption, etc.⁸ In this sense he had successfully distinguished regeneration from other related doctrines as a new theological locus on its own. At any rate Calvin had started a new path to treat the soteriological doctrines by positioning regeneration at the forefront and hence to show the sovereign grace of God.

⁶ Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life*. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1959.) 94.

⁷ *Calvin’s Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John, Part One*. Translated by T. H. L. Parker. 4:65.

⁸ *Ibid.* 4:18-19.

Then we raise a question as to the relation between regeneration and effectual calling in Calvin's mind. He discerned two kinds of call: general and special callings. Of the latter he said that "he [God] deigns for the most part to give to the believers alone, while by the inward illumination of his Spirit he causes the preached Word to dwell in their hearts." The inward illumination of the Spirit is no other than regeneration. He knew the closeness of these two doctrines. So he said that the special calling "bears with it the Spirit of regeneration"⁹ Though he tied the two doctrines together, yet he never mixed or equated them.

William Ames

William Ames (1576~1633), the renowned Puritan who authored the theological text, *The Marrow of Theology*, used pervasively in both Old and New England, defined regeneration as "the very beginning of a new life, a new creation, a new creature." So he clearly confined regeneration to the inception of the new life, not the whole process of the recovery of it.¹⁰

As a Ramist Ames analyzed the inward calling into two parts: offering of Christ and receiving of Christ. The latter part is "properly termed calling, since God *effectually* invites and draws men to Christ, John 6:44."¹¹ So it is often called the "effectual calling." Again effec-

⁹ *Institutes* 3.24.8 or Battles" translation 2:974.

¹⁰ William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology* 2.26.19. The effectual calling is the inward calling, see 2.26.14. The title of 2.26 (Book II, Chapter 26) is "Calling." So there is no independent chapter on regeneration in *The Marrow of Theology*. Ames treated it under "calling."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.26.19. Italics mine.

tual calling is composed of two parts: passive and active. The passive part is the “process by which a spiritual principle of grace is generated in the will of man.”¹² Actually it is the regeneration proper. So Ames regarded regeneration as a part of effectual calling. The Westminster divines kept the Amesian view of regeneration and hence incorporated it into effectual calling under Chapter X, *Of Effectual Calling* in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. In the Puritan tradition regeneration is usually a synonym of effectual calling.

Opinion of Louis Berkhof

Dr. Berkhof gives us a concise, yet Reformed, conclusion regarding the complex of effectual calling and regeneration. After admitting the identification of these two doctrines in seventeenth-century Reformed theology, he calls for a careful discrimination between them.¹³ He discerns their minute differences as follows,

Regeneration ... takes place in the subconscious life Calling ... addresses itself to the consciousness, and implies a certain disposition Regeneration works from within, while calling comes from without. ... Furthermore, regeneration is a creative, a hyper-physical operation of the Holy Spirit, by which man is brought ... from ... spiritual death into ... life. Effectual calling ... is teleological, draws out the new life and points it in a God-ward direction. It secures the exercises of the new disposi-

¹² Ibid., 2.26.20-21. The active part is “an elicited act of faith in which he who is called now wholly leans upon Christ as his saviour and through Christ upon God.” See Ibid., 2.26.26.

¹³ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 4th ed. 1939. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981.) 470-71.

tion and brings the new life into action.¹⁴

Berkhof also presents an inner *ordo salutis* of the complex of calling/regeneration as follows: (1) external calling, (2) regeneration in its most restricted sense, (3) effectual calling in its persuasive or passive sense, and then finally (4) effectual calling in its active sense “secures ... the first holy exercises of the new exposition.” Up to this point regeneration in its broader sense has been complete and turns into conversion.¹⁵ His opinion is a wise guide for us to steer in a Puritan mind such as Goodwin especially when the latter tried to unravel the complexity of these two doctrines.

The Significance of *Filioque*

The essence of Book I of his *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* is devoted to demonstrating the implications of *filioque* in the Christian life. So before we delve into his doctrine of regeneration, we shall delineate the significance of *filioque* for Goodwin.¹⁶ He obvi-

¹⁴ This is a very precise and discriminative description of their comparison. See *ibid.*, 471.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Filioque* means “and from the Son.” It refers to a theological issue whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only or He also proceeds from the Son. This concept, *filioque*, was not agreed to at Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381). The Western Church first inserted it into the Western version of the Nicene Creed in a local Council of Toledo (589), and officially adopted it in 1017. But the Eastern Church never condoned it. Actually this insertion became a theological issue in the 1054 rupture of the two Churches!

The Eastern Church insisted that John 15:26 and 14:16 only mention a proceeding from the Father. Besides, they argued, *filioque* never had approval from ecumenical councils. But the Western Church countered that the Son was really involved in the proceeding of the Spirit. It is implied in John 15:26 and explicitly demonstrated

ously took the side of the Western Church by his endorsement of the doctrine of *filioque*.¹⁷ Why did he promote it so much? Because it implies spiritual richness in the indwelling of the Spirit.

Five-fold arguments for it

As the coming of Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament, so “the sending of the Spirit is entitled the “promise of the Father” in the New: Luke xxiv.49.” Goodwin admitted that the Spirit was promised in the Old Testament many times, but “Christ himself did now *de novo* ... promulge it as his promise.” Goodwin called it “that next great promise, ... the promise of promises.” This fact reinforces the truth of *filioque*. (6:8-9)

Secondly, *filioque* does justice to what Jesus did in the atonement. “Christ purchased not only all the graces of the Spirit for us, but the Spirit himself to dwell in us.” Galatians 3:13-14. The gift of the Spirit came as a promise “under the purchase of Christ’s blood.” By this reason Christ “breathed not the Spirit until after his resurrection.” John 20:22; 7:38-39. Christ definitely deserves the honor of *filioque* for He “had a virtual meritorious influence or hand” on the sending of the Spirit. (6:52)

Thirdly, Goodwin distinguished the “substantial proceeding” from the “dispensatory sending” of the Spirit from the Father. The former or the “personal proceeding” is from the Father only and it “was then ... , and is continually, and had been from eternity,” where-

in many other texts, such as Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; etc. Rather, this insertion is necessary to safeguard the vital Nicene truth: the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. See “*Filioque*” in *EDT*, 415.

¹⁷ See TG 6:3, 5, 7-10, 52, etc.

as the latter, “both from the Father and from Christ, was yet to come.” (6:5) It was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. It is clearly stated in Acts 2:33 that the Spirit is outpoured from the agency of the exalted Son. So *filioque* initiated a new dispensation in the redemptive history.

Fouthly, *Filioque* implies the exaltation of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Christ left “an extraordinary work” to the Spirit, which is the “conversion of the whole Gentile world.” That is the “raising and building of the churches of the New Testament.” (6:9) The full revelation of the gospel of Christ was “ordained for the Spirit’s glory, and reserved for his coming.” (6:10) But Goodwin found that “To believe in the Holy Ghost, and the holy catholic church ... how near they stand together in the Creed.” Obviously the Spirit’s “visible coming at Pentecost was the visible consecration ... of ... the mystical body of Christ.” (6:9)

At last, the words from the mouth of Christ in John 16:7, Goodwin expounded, imply that the Comforter “will not do these works while I am here, and I have committed all to him.” Then Goodwin extended the meaning of John 5:22-23 from the Son to the Spirit. The reason why the Son receives all the honor from men as they honor the Father is that the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. Now the Son declares, Goodwin imagined, that “I and my Father will send him, having committed all these things to him, that all men might honour the Holy Ghost, even as they honour the Father and the Son.” (6:7) So *filioque* honors the third Person by way of honoring the second Person.

Indwelling of the Spirit

Goodwin made a distinction between the gift of the Spirit as a person and the graces or the benefits from the Spirit. The person, be-

ing “greater infinitely than” the benefits, is given us by the covenant of grace. (6:52) The *mode* of the Spirit’s coming into our heart is indwelling. Goodwin gave a vivid description as follows:

The first coming of the Holy Spirit is immediately upon us, as we are in our natural condition, in our uncleaning and pollution, without any preparation to make way for his coming upon us, or into us. He doth not work grace first, and then come into a man; but he comes first and seizeth on a man, then works grace in him. (6:60)

The Holy Spirit just comes and claims the soul of an elect person to be His temple. This constitutes perhaps the strongest and most violent words against the thinking of preparationism which was prevalent among some of Goodwin’s contemporary Puritan theologians. He tied the above exposition to Titus 3:5-6, which is also a *locus classicus* of the Reformed doctrine of regeneration.

The thought of the-person-first-and-then-the-graces prevents any possibility of human preparation in advance. Goodwin asked, “What did or could the Spirit find in you, as preparatory and inviting of him thereunto?” The answer is “Absolutely nothing at all.” (6:60) For “this evil spirit must be dispossessed; and another spirit, even the Spirit of God, come in his room, and possess their hearts, and lead them into all the truth ...” The Spirit throws out the “goods and weapons” of Satan, then “mortifies corruptions, and sanctifies the heart.” (6:61) Regeneration must be an immediate action of the Spirit on the unregenerate. The Spirit “must be a regenerator ere a comforter.” (6:63)

“The third person comes as the first inmate in us, and ... the other two come in and take up their abode also.” (6:65) But Goodwin indicated that their ways of entry are different. As to the entry of Christ

into our hearts “by faith,” he remarked, “there need be preparation in our hearts for that his coming.” Actually the Spirit “himself must come to work all apprehensions and affections in us.” Basing his thought upon Galatians 4:6, Goodwin pointed out: “he cries as he comes along.” (6:62) He conceded that in the stage of saving faith, there is preparation in man’s heart.

This is his *ordo salutis*, from regeneration to conversion, or from anti-preparationism to preparationism. John Cotton shared a similar *ordo salutis* with Goodwin. Cotton had been involved in the early New England Antinomian Controversy of 1634~38. His anti-preparationism was described, vividly yet without any disdainful sarcasm, by Thomas Weld, the colony’s London agent, in 1644 as “a faire and easie way to Heaven, that men may pass without difficulty.”¹⁸ However, we should not lose sight of the fact that Goodwin also taught the Holy Spirit as being a Spirit of bondage prior to His being a Spirit of adoption. (6:63) That means that conviction of sins is a part of regeneration. It is fair, but not so easy!

Union of the Spirit and human nature

Given that the union of the Son of God and the human nature in one person is the foundation of all the redemptive work of Christ, Goodwin compared “the Holy Ghost’s indwelling in us” with that union. The results are three: lower, equal, and exceeding. (6:41)

It is lower because “the union between him [the Holy Spirit] and us is not personal,” whereas the union of the Logos and His humanity is. But our case, Goodwin said, is two persons despite its nearness,

¹⁸ William K. B. Stoeber, ‘*A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven*’: *Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts*. 11.

immediacy, and eternity. For a personal union between the Spirit and us would defile the person of Him with our sinfulness. As to the equality, both the Word of God and the Spirit came from heaven. And both unions are for forever. (6:41)

What Goodwin wanted to stress is the advantage of our union with the Spirit over the christological union. The humanity of Christ is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” Hebrews 7:26, while ours is full of defilements, uncleanness, and corruption. Goodwin termed it “a wonder of wonders, that the holy God ... should dwell in hearts so unholy and unclean, and make them his temple.” 1 Corinthians 6:19. (6:42)

Goodwin also compared the indwelling of the Spirit in us with that of Christ. From the texts of Galatians 4:6 (the Spirit being the Spirit of adoption), 2 Corinthians 1:22 (being an earnest), and John 7:38-39 (being the river of living water), Goodwin judged, all import “a nearer union than that of Christ within us.” Then we can imagine how much “contradictions” the Spirit has to endure in us! “How much ... is the author of our grace, dwelling in us?” (6:42)

As a matter of fact *filioque* facilitates the Spirit Himself into the union with human nature. Now we turn to the graces of the indwelling Spirit in us. The first grace is regeneration or effectual calling.

Effectual Calling & Regeneration

As to the theological terms, Goodwin preferred regeneration to effectual calling when he analyzed the inceptive stage of our new life. Though he was the subscriber of two confessions—Westminster and Savoy—which were liable to include regeneration under effectual calling, Goodwin unwittingly included effectual calling under regenera-

tion. He rarely treated them as synonyms. Here is a rare entry in his works which shows he did treat them as synonyms despite their minute distinctions. He said,

In handling *this* [calling] my purpose is not simply to set out the greatness of God’s grace shewn in *regeneration*, and how it exceeds ... all other works, even glory itself. I have done *this* in another place. I will retrieve nothing I then handled about *that subject*. But what I shall now treat of will be ... demonstrating that God hath shewn himself a God of all grace in each of them, in and at his *calling* of us (9:309. Italics mine.)

The first sentence shows that calling and regeneration are synonyms for Goodwin, though he barely used them interchangeably. He stated clearly that he treated them at separate places.

At another place he employed these two words together: “God’s *calling* ... is joined with the giving him any *abilities*, and a heart suited with *principles* answerable. So then ... God having by *regeneration* and faith *called* us unto a possession of glory hereafter” (6:199. Italics mine.) The enabled principles form the *spirit*, which is also regeneration. So we see calling and regeneration are joined together. Secondly, he admitted that after our regeneration we then are able to answer God’s calling, which must be the effectual calling. So Goodwin’s *ordo salutis* at this respect agrees with Berkhof’s.

Goodwin listed both calling and regeneration in the first item of his *ordo salutis* in time.¹⁹ This fact endorses the synonymy of them

¹⁹ Goodwin took effectual calling as the “first immediate fruit and breaking forth of electing purposing grace.” TG 9:277. He also ascribed the first grace to regeneration. He said that “this change the new birth makes the first, and that alone, in wholly be-

in his mind. As to his usage of them Goodwin almost talked about *calling* only when he considered the doctrines of election or perseverance.²⁰ He almost exclusively used *regeneration*, when handling topics like the new life, recovery of the new image of God, relations to faith, conversion, justification, holiness, etc.²¹ Calling is a purpose-orientation term, while regeneration, a process-orientation term. In his mind they are two aspects of a same theological locus.

Effectual calling

He related effectual calling to election in the way that the former is the “proof” of the latter. Calling is the “first entrance into thy eternity.” He likened it to a “small cranny ... to view the sun” through which you may “behold an infinite boundless ocean of grace and love ... in his divine nature.” (9:260) But on the other hand effectual calling is the “necessary consequent” of election. (9:422) In *ordo salutis* Goodwin deemed the effectual calling as the “first immediate fruit and breaking forth of electing purposing grace.” He compared the grace of God to a river which “ran under ground from eternity, and rises and bubbles up therein first, and then runs above ground to eternity.” So in his eye “a true and spiritual calling ... is the foundation of all actings of grace which afterwards do follow.” (9:277) He therefore called Christians to “stand aghast, to think that our calling is the centre of two eternities, and how there are two everlasting arms as mountains ... to grasp us then, when God’s grace by calling first takes hold

ginning that new kind, which was not before.” TG 6:410. See also TG 6:458.

²⁰ So almost all entries of “calling” appear in *A Discourse of Election* (vol. 9).

²¹ So we almost find all entries of “regeneration” in *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* (vol. 6) and in *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* (vol. 8).

on us.” (9:329) Election, calling, perseverance and eternity are chained unbrokenly like a mysterious, yet continuous river.

The calling is twofold, “one proper only to the elect; and the other more common, in several degrees of it, to non-elect.” (9:185) The one is a “mere historical faith,” while the other is “savingly called” or “truly and spiritually called.” (9:281) Goodwin also denominated them as external and internal callings. The external calling is the hearing of the gospel through which the “mystery of the will of God is made known” in an extra work of the Holy Spirit, namely, the internal calling. (1:128)

Definition of regeneration

Now we turn to his doctrine of regeneration. From the layout of *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* Goodwin seemingly used the word, regeneration, in a broader sense, at least in Book VIII where he treated the three parts of regeneration—conviction of sins, faith and conversion into holiness. That is to say that conversion is connoted in regeneration. But beyond that Goodwin usually kept the word *regeneration* in a strict sense.

Goodwin based his doctrine of regeneration upon three major apostles, namely St. Paul, St. Peter and St. John. He basically appealed to Titus 3:5-6 to construct the basics of this doctrine. He also consulted 1 Peter 1:3-5 to enhance his doctrine. Then he used John 3:5-6 to elaborate his points in it. So the doctrine of regeneration is fully apostolic to Goodwin himself.

He gave a definition of regeneration at the beginning of Book V in which he discussed the nature of it. He said:

That over and above exciting, and moving, and aiding grace unto

acts, there are inwrought and infused in the soul at regeneration, inherent and abiding principles of spiritual life, by which the soul is inwardly fitted, capacitated, inclined, and quickened unto the operations of a spiritual life. (6:167)

He made a contrast between the external, provisional grace and the intrinsic, abiding grace. Regeneration belongs to the latter. To be sure, he stressed, it is a change in the *principle* of spiritual life, not a change in life itself. Evidently this is a definition of regeneration in the stricter sense, which is more biblical than its broader sense. This definition functions as the center of his expositions of many aspects of this doctrine.

Necessity of Regeneration

Goodwin responded the Catholics that because they erred in this key doctrine, so they could not prevent a series of errors in other related doctrines. Robert Bellarmine (1542~1621), the Roman theologian,²² asserted that the first grace is but “exciting and adjuvant grace ... without receiving a new principle of life from it.” What man needs is only divine aid. Man turns to God out of his own free will. Then “God infused a habit of grace as a root” by which man does good works and becomes righteous to merit eternal life. (6:187-88) Though the Arminians confessed the doctrine of justification by faith, nevertheless, they still stuck to the free-will theory and utterly denied “any infusion of

²² His selecting Bellarmine and criticizing his popish doctrine of grace might be because the latter’s view of faith became the best statement of the Council of Trent (1545~1563). Goodwin might be also impressed by his involvement in a controversy with James I over the authority of the Roman Church in 1608. J. D. Douglas, Editor. *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Revised edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.) 117.

habits or principles abiding in the soul necessary to conversion.” (6:188) They all missed man’s necessity of regeneration because both of them did not realize man’s real state of sin.

Flesh demands the necessity

The words in John 3:6a—”That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”—maintain the miserable destiny of humankind through revealing the reality of human nature. Flesh is “taken ... strictly for the degeneration of man’s nature by the fall.” Only by a new birth can man’s nature be restored and his eternal loss reversed. (6:160) The fall of man takes his whole being into account; however, the flesh particularly points out that

the seat of the powerful workings of sin ... is the lower faculties, which entice ... the pleasures of themselves to the will and affections; which, being corrupt, ... yield and approve them suitable to the outward man; and therefore it is termed the law of members. (6:164)

The usage of the word “flesh” implies that the humanity has fallen to the very bottom of its totality. If there was any portion of it which could make us survive without any outside succor, God would not orchestrate the atonement to offer His Son upon the cross. But humanity has no way out except a rebirth as Jesus told Nicodemus.²³

An absolute necessity

From Titus 3:4-7, Goodwin observed, there are two states of man:

²³ To this point Goodwin wrote his most prodigious (vi+567-page long!) work, *An Unregenerate Man’s Guiltiness Before God, In Respect of Sin and Punishment*, which was collected into the Nichol’s edition as vol. 10.

the state of sin and the state of grace. Man is born in the former state which is a “woeful state.” So it is also called the state of nature. (6:75) We once were in that state, “serving divers lusts, and thereby obnoxious to damnation.” (6:73) Goodwin deemed that a *state* of sin is worse than *guilt* of sin, and so a *state* of nature is worse than *corruption* of nature. For once a man is in a *state* rather than a *condition*, “he needs no other sentence.” There only remains “nothing but execution.” So here we see that the sinful *state* of man makes him “instantly and immediately obnoxious to death.” (6:77) Just as the state of man in the bondage of sin doubles his misery, so the necessity of regeneration becomes not only justifiable, but also absolute. (6:75)

Implication of a new principle

Goodwin provided another, yet positive, argument to justify the necessity of regeneration. There are three things involved: a natural *faculty* of the soul, a *principle* in the faculty and the *acts* which both are ordained for. (6:192) He made his point by a metaphor as follows:

Look, as the eye, when it holds the sun, hath an immediate communion with the sun; yet if it had not ... a power of seeing, ... the eye could not be a receptive of the sun; so it is here. The understanding could not see or know him as God, ... if it were not inspired and endowed with those new principles for which we are contending. (6:190)

The eye is the faculty to see, a power of seeing is no other than its principle, while seeing itself is the act. What regeneration is ordained to do consists in endowing our soul with a new principle. Then we can see God spiritually. So here lies the necessity of regeneration: “let God infuse his likeness unto it, that is, give it a divine qualified understanding to know him and a disposed heart to love him, and instantly it runs

after him, and doth it naturally and suitably.” (6:191) This is also what 2 Peter 1:4 means a “higher sublimation of participation of the essence of God.” (6:159)

In the same vein Goodwin contended the translation of Galatians 5:17. Πνεῦμα in this verse was interpreted in the King James version as *the Spirit*, that is the Holy Spirit. But he remarked that “to lust against the flesh is our act, and not the Holy Ghost’s.” Therefore “*spirit* must be understood to be a principle in man’s nature, as well as flesh ... is.” (6:159)²⁴

Necessity in a Christian society

Goodwin advanced his case by extending the necessity of regeneration unto a corporate sense. Let us hear a jeremiad sounding at Oxford by him in the late 1650s:

We are fallen into times in which ... there are multitudes of professors, but few converts There is a zeal amongst us to advance this or that reformation in religion ... but, ... where is regeneration called for ...? We have seen the greatest outward alterations that ever were in an age, kingdoms turned and converted into commonwealths, the power of heaven and earth shaken;

²⁴ Gal. 5:17. KJV reads, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” That NKJ (“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”) follows KJV is understandable. But NASB (“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”) and NIV (“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so you do not do what you want.”) all copy KJV’s interpretation at this point.

but ... their hearts generally turn upon the same hinges ... when they came into the world. In the University of Oxford ... where do we hear (as we had wont) of souls carrying home the Holy Ghost from sermons...? ... Conversion is the only standing miracle in the church, but I may truly say these miracles are well nigh ceased; we hear of few of them. (6:157)

He averred, “If they be men, they must be born. So in the church: ... if regeneration ... goes not on, the church is not increased, nor is there a multiplication of inhabitants of the other world.” (6:158) In contrast he remembered how at former times their college has sent forth “so many bishops, deans, &c., or famous writers.” He confirmed that “her glory” due to regeneration “in God’s account was ten thousand times greater than what the flower of all other nations could pretend to.” (6:416) Regeneration falls into the most indispensable experience of a church body, a Christian society and even a Christendom. Goodwin’s jeremiad revealed the real cause of the failure of the Puritan Revolution during 1642~60.

Case of conscience: late regeneration

Goodwin was convinced that “infants are capable of all the essentials of regeneration.” The sign and seal of the Abrahamic Covenant—circumcision—was applied to all the eight-day old boy babies among God’s people. “There are some of that age, whom God ... inwardly circumcised; or else the promise and seal to them had been in vain.” Do not forget Goodwin wrote these words in the seventeenth century, when infant mortality was as high as fifty percent! (6:85) No wonder the comforting message was codified in their *Confession of Faith*.²⁵

²⁵ WCF 10.3: Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ

But Goodwin posed a case of conscience: “why God suffers his elect, grown into riper years, to continue for some time in a state of sin.” (6:88) This was an echo in his own life. He was converted as late as three days short of his twentieth birthday! He was so envious of those peers in Cambridge who had received the grace of regeneration. In fact this inquiry was on his own behalf. By and large the reason is simple: To magnify His grace, mercy, love the more, God leaves most of His elect to remain in the state of sin for some time, even in their riper years. (6:74)²⁶

Nature of Regeneration

The primary text for Goodwin to construct the nature of regeneration is John 3:6. “The new creature is ... styled *spirit*.” For it bears the near kindred and dependence of its “father”, the *Spirit*. It is elsewhere called a *spiritual man*, 1 Corinthians 2:10-15. But St. Peter would like to use another term, the divine nature, “because it is the image of the Godhead.” 2 Peter 1:4. (6:47) He thought that regeneration parallels the “creation of the first man, who was a type of what was to come: Job xxxiii.4.” So he called regeneration a “new creation” in which “the Spirit of God ... hath given me a sincere heart, an illuminated mind, put the words of life into me.” (6:49) Thus regeneration is aligned with the grace of sanctification as a “physical” or real change rather than with justification, which is only a “moral, legal, forensic

through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. *Savoy Declaration* 10.3 is completely identical with *WCF* 10.3.

²⁶ Goodwin spent five chapters to answer this inquiry! Late regeneration may (1) help and further their faith; (2) heighten their love to God; (3) inflame love of God; (4) humble them forever. See TG 6:88-116.

change.” (6:409)

The Spirit & spirit

He also connected the idea of the image of God with regeneration. In conformity to our head Christ, regeneration plays the role of forming the new creature in us. (6:50) By divine nature, it means a “higher sublimation of participation of the essence of God.” (6:153)²⁷ The new and supernatural image of God is a “more divine temper, genius, and aspiement than the image of God in Adam was.” Goodwin meant Adam’s image not in his guilt, but in his innocence. (6:161)

Then Goodwin turned his efforts in opening the theological implication of the word, *spirit*. He said that *spirit* connotes “all those gracious and heavenly dispositions and habiliments wrought in the whole soul, especially the spirit of mind.” (6:162) After regeneration the new mind is elevated to suit things spiritual. So *spirit* is characterized by the new dispositions: gracious, heavenly and spiritual. The spirit of man is the new seat of the heavenly disposition.

For Goodwin “Body is the exterior part, and soul is the inward part But spirit is the top, the highest region of the mind, which is capable of a higher intuition of things spiritual.” This does not mean Goodwin is a trichotomic. He was still a dichotomic, for he included spirit in the realm of soul, not making it independent of soul. However, he denominated *spirit* as the “highest region of the mind.” So in our

²⁷ Goodwin at the same time warned against the danger of taking this deification as a personal union between man and the Spirit. No, it is far “lower” than the personal union of the *Logos* and the humanity of Jesus. See TG 6:41. Regeneration is not a “communication of the Godhead to us, making us “God of God”” See TG 6:158. Man is not “transubstantiated” into the being of the divine nature. See TG 6:160.

salvation this part is “sanctified first and chiefly” and then termed spirit. (6:164) He made a contrast between human fall and divine grace that

The seat of ... sin ... is the lower faculties, which entice ... the will and affections; which, being corrupt ... yield ... to the outward man; and therefore it is termed the law of members. But the workings of grace are perfectly contrary. The seat of grace and its chief dominion is the spirit of the mind, termed therefore ... ‘the law of mind;’ (6:164)

As a new principle

Goodwin referred to the law of mind as *principle*. He said that “They are ... *principles* put into the soul, and each faculty of it carrying it forth to such and such spiritual actings towards such or such objects.” (6:162. Italics mine.) For the sake of the colloquial convenience we usually say that regeneration is a new life. But Goodwin made it precise that regeneration is the new *principles* of the new life, not the life itself. He contended that the meaning of regeneration “is not that God destroys them in respect of their being or existence; they must have that still.” (6:160-61) The reason is evident that God would not destroy what He created. Once the original being is destroyed by grace, “there would be no subject left capable of having this spirit begotten in it.” Hence there would be no salvation as well. (6:161)²⁸

From this Goodwin developed another concept, the *suitableness*

²⁸ If destroyed, there are two possibilities: either (1) God creates a new being distinct from Himself. Then what is the difference from the one He would destroy? or (2) God would make us deified! To this thought Goodwin cried, “rend my garments.” So “the nature of things must not be destroyed, God must alone be God.” See TG 6:161.

Chapter IV Effectual Calling

between spiritual things and a spiritual man. Remember “one man’s heaven is another man’s hell.” (6:172) A man’s suitability decides what kind of man he is: natural or spiritual. The new suitability lies entirely in the new principles. Gold will not be drawn to a magnet. But “let the divine power turn that gold into iron ... then you shall see the new-made iron in motion, as the loadstone moves to it.” (6:190) Take the dullest soul and let God infuse his likeness unto it. Then his understanding is divinely enlightened to know God and his heart, disposed to love Him. (6:191) There is a new suitable link between them due to regeneration.

The definition indicates that the quality of the principles is inherent and abiding. (6:187) The fact that regeneration is an infused and habitual grace dovetails with the epoch-making Spirit which is characterized by its being an Indwelling One. (6:193) Regeneration will endure to eternity. So it is abiding and permanent. (6:198) Goodwin did not forget to remind us that the latter-day glory has dawned and touched a celestial tint upon the regenerating grace. This grace will make the soul “capable of a further degree of glory, as it brings grace with it into the other world.” As a matter of fact the definitive quality of the new principles is eschatological. (6:200)

This principle is also a voluntary principle. Natural faculties of a heart consist of mind, will and affection. (6:212) In experiencing the regeneration grace one’s mind is illumined and renewed in order to see the spiritual light. That is the initiative step. Then his will “should have a bias clapped on it, a poise, an inclination, or ... ‘a readiness,’” (6:205) But as I have mentioned above, this falls into the last phase: effectual calling in its active sense. Actually it is bordering on faith!

Case of conscience: temporary faith

This case helps us to clarify what regeneration is. Goodwin indicated that temporary believers are “elevated to the tasting of the powers of the world to come,” yet are “never so much enlightened.” (6:169) He illustrated temporary faith in this way:

Streams ... are ... to be diverted a contrary way by winds ... without having a new and natural spring or fountain to feed and carry it on that contrary current: so the natural mind may sometimes flow in another current than that in which its own inclinations carry it. (6:170)

When the wind ceases, the stream still flows back along its original channel. So the once-activated natural mind will step back to its previous stance.

All five experiences in Hebrews 6:4-5 are *phenomena* while Jesus maintains what should be paid attention to is nothing but their *root* under diverse religious affections, Matthew 13:21. The root is the newborn spirit, suitable for heaven forever.

Case of conscience: self-love

Goodwin took self-love as an example to explain what he meant. Self-love is the “great and predominant principle in us.” (6:170) He admitted that “at first a man hath no other principle but self-love to be wooed and courted.” (6:173) So he lamented that “it [self-love] is the spirit, the quintessence, of original sin.” (6:170)²⁹

²⁹ We shall understand what Goodwin taught about self-love under the light that self-love is originally an “adjunct of being.” It became the spirit of sin only after it was captivated by sin. For a conscious being, self-love is part of creation. So Goodwin

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He nevertheless raised a case of conscience: “whether a regenerate man ... may ... affect spiritual things for his own good, and how far?” Self-love is an “adjunct of being.” If you think “nothing of love to yourselves should remain, then you must destroy the subject of those affections.” He argued that “If you cut off this nail entirely, you cut off the finger too.” So the right way is to sanctify self-love, for “even part ... of our holiness must lie in loving ourselves.” (6:173) He showed to us how a new spiritual principle can be added upon a natural principle and convert it into spiritual purpose. “Hence two make one stream ... Yea, upon this ground I will go higher.” (6:174)

Then Goodwin raised a similar case of science: “if any man should love spiritual things ... chiefly for his own good, would not this be hypocrisy, and he be a carnal man?” (6:174) To solve this puzzle, he considered the case of God Himself! God loves Himself above all. His election of us is also for His own glory. Yet elsewhere the Bible ascribes God’s redemption to His infinite love of us. Goodwin asked, “Are these two then so reconciled in God’s heart, love to us and himself?” (6:175)

So we can imitate God. Goodwin found that “Thus also you value a medal ... of a friend ... as it relates to him, a thousand times above the value of it in itself.” (6:179) If self-love is not taken with what is of God, it would not be spiritual love. (6:178) Thus in practice Goodwin advised us “not to rest satisfied till we have found some dispositions ... naturally matching with, and suited unto, what is spiritually good in things that are spiritual.” (6:177) That means the natural love has been somehow converted into the spiritual one. The conversion is

objected against the idea of its being destroyed.

implemented by the new principle being added to self-love.³⁰ He said that “This love of God ariseth not out of self-love (though it is so in a carnal man) but it may more properly be said to be joined with it, self-love, to take it into itself.” (6:176)

New sense of the heart

The new principles are also new *senses* to taste spiritual things much like a new eye to see and a new ear to hear. (6:166) There are two parts of discerning the spiritual things: objective and subjective. The revelation of those things is the objective part. “But he must subjectively be made by that Spirit a spiritual man, and have *spiritual senses* given him, else ... he could not receive them.” (6:168. Italics mine.) *Spiritual senses* are the subjective part through which we are able to have glimpses of the spiritual world experientially. Just as Adam was created to see “there is a brave world,” Goodwin envisioned, “he [a regenerate] no sooner opens an eye but he finds himself to be come into a new world, and to be environed with new objects.” (6:166) The principle which enables a regenerate into visual sense is called *spirit*. (6:167)

Echo from Jonathan Edwards

Goodwin’s theology was reiterated one century later in the work of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards preached a series of sermons on 1 Peter 1:8, titled as *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections*, in 1742

³⁰ To our amazement the most spiritual mystic, St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), would say in his *On the Love of God* that the final stage, the fourth one, is “loving myself wholly for God’s sake” The first three stages are: love God for our own sake, love God for what He has done, and love God for who He is. See Peter Toon, *The Art of Meditating on Scripture: Understanding Your Faith, Renewing Your Mind, Knowing Your God*. (Zondervan, 1993.) 110-11.

through early 1743. It was published in 1746.³¹ Not a few scholars, being under the influence of Perry Miller, have attempted to reinterpret Edwards by Lockean philosophy.³² But “we remember him, not as the greatest of American philosophers, but as the greatest of American Calvinists,” as concluded by F. J. E. Woodbridge in *The Philosophical Review*.³³ John E. Smith reminds us that

The influence of Locke and the British experience-philosophy upon Edwards have been described before, and there can be no question of their special relevance for the *Affections*. But less well known is the part played by English intuitive-rationalist thought and the doctrine of illumination in shaping his opinions.³⁴

Iain Murray concurs that “Edwards’ place in history is not alongside Locke His life and impact were essentially religious.”³⁵ It is true that Edwards had been stimulated by Locke in his early days, but if we compare Goodwin with Edwards, we may find that the former is perhaps a better interpretation than John Locke.

³¹ Iain Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1987.) 251.

³² Cf. *ibid.*, 64. Murray says, a Lockean re-interpretation of Edwards “has long since been abandoned as untenable.” As to Perry Miller’s interpretation, see his “Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart.” *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948): 123-45.

³³ Murray quotes the words from B. B. Warfield’s article, “Edwards and the New England Theology,” in his *Studies in Theology*. 1932. p. 516. See Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*. xx.

³⁴ John E. Smith, “Editor’s Introduction.” in Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*. Edited by John E. Smith. (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1959.) 52-53.

³⁵ Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*. xx.

Jonathan Edwards deemed that regeneration can be construed as “a new *spiritual sense*, or a principle of a new kind of perception or spiritual sensation.” He continued to clarify his point that “This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no new *faculties*, but new *principles* of nature”³⁶ According to the research of John Smith, “Edwards quoted more from Shepard than from any other writer, depending chiefly upon *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*.”³⁷ Though Thomas Goodwin is not on Edwards’ reading list prepared by Smith,³⁸ the fact that both Shepard and Goodwin were deeply influenced by their common mentor John Preston can explain the congeniality between Goodwin and Edwards without much difficulty, even if

³⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*. (Banner of Truth, 1961.) 134. (Hickman’s 1834 edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. 1:266.) According to John E. Smith, the “sense of the heart” forms the core of Edwards’ theology of revival. Starting No. 782 of his *Miscellaneous Observations*, titled as “Ideas, Sense of the Heart, Spiritual Knowledge or Conviction. Faith,” Edwards had devoted himself to pursue the genuine religious affections by elaborating the doctrine of the new spiritual sense. This doctrine was expressed in his early renowned sermon in 1733, “A Divine and Supernatural Light.” So was it in his *A Faithful Narrative* (1737), *The Distinguishing Marks* (1741), and *Some Thoughts* (1742). It culminated in *The Religious Affections* (1746). See Smith, “Editor’s Introduction.” 4-5.

³⁷ John E. Smith, “Editor’s Introduction.” 54. Thomas Shepard (1605~49), educated in Emanuel College, Cambridge, was brought to conversion through the ministry of John Preston. His successful ministry of converting souls at several places incurred escalating persecutions from the Archbishop Laud. He finally resolved to answer the call from the New England and was chosen as the pastor of Newtown, Cambridge, in 1635. He served there till his death. See Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*. 3:103-107. He “was one of the most accomplished preachers among the first-generation New England Puritans.” See *Concise Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 313.

³⁸ John E. Smith, “Editor’s Introduction.” 52-73. Sixteen Reformed and Puritan divines are mentioned.

Edwards did not directly read and expose himself to Goodwin.³⁹

Author of Regeneration

Goodwin demonstrated that regeneration is a solemn and concurrent work of the Triune God. (6:416) He asked “what was the greatest work of wonder that ever God did in the world.” The answer is the incarnation of the Son of God in light of Hebrews 10:5. (4:418) Regeneration is similar to the conception of Christ in terms of the union of the human nature and the divine nature. It will “conduce to illustrate the like at our regeneration.” (6:420) How does the Triune God work for our regeneration? Goodwin described that

As all three persons ... deal secretly, and treat with each other for us, the Father giving and recommending, the Son apprehending, both sending the Holy Spirit into the heart; so in our coming to God, both first and last, we have our pass from one person to the other, and have distinctly to deal with them all. ... The Spirit, being come into the heart, leads us by the hand back again to Christ; and Christ leads us to the Father. (6:422-23)⁴⁰

We will go into the details of what the three persons perform in our regeneration.

The Father as the efficient cause

Goodwin observed that “only in ... regeneration there is neither

³⁹ As to the efforts of Goodwin to distinguish the genuine and counterfeit mortification and vivification, see Chapter IX, Sanctification. The literature styles of Goodwin, Shepard, and Edwards, were very similar, too.

⁴⁰ Cf. TG 6:47. The economical Trinity is thus: “1. Election is appropriated to the Father. 2. Redemption to the Son. 3. Application of both to the Holy Ghost.”

propter nor *secundum*.” That is, we can neither give glory “for our work,” nor “according to our work.” The only cause is God’s mercy. “It is God who of his own will begetteth us, as it is James i.18.” (6:410-11) Humans can contribute nothing, being “merely passive.” That is the reason why “an infant is as capable of all the essentials of regeneration as a man grown up is.” (6:411-12)

In addition to infinite mercy of the Father, the almighty power of Him is manifested in our regeneration. According to Ephesians 1:19-20 the *exceeding greatness* of God’s power wrought upon us is no less than that which raised Christ up to glory. (6:425) They are the same power! Goodwin called our attention to the “great superlative expressions the Holy Spirit useth. ... It is not only great power, but ... that exceeding greatness.” (6:427) God talks about His mercy in our salvation. In regeneration there is exceeding greatness of God’s power involved in some particular instances, such as: (1) pulling down the strongholds in our fallible reasonings and imaginations. 2 Corinthians 10:4. (2) breaking off our heart from the sinful pleasure and inordinate lusts. (3) loosening the heart from the world. (4) growing holiness in our heart. (6:443-46) We are advised that this power goes beyond “what was done in ... creation, providence, &c.” For regeneration is a new creation. (6:428)

Christ as the meritorious cause

In our regeneration we are apprehended by Christ. (6:423) The Son’s apprehending us should be actually attributed to His intercession in the state of exaltation. So Goodwin termed the Son’s apprehending as the “*applicatory* cause” of regeneration, while the death of Christ is the “*meritorious* cause.” (6:457) “Christ, as a redeemer, had a virtual meritorious influence” upon the indwelling of the Spirit. Moreover,

the resurrection of Christ is the “*virtual* cause” of our conversion. Our Lord “breathed not his Spirit until after his resurrection.” (6:52) Goodwin found that in the Bible “as his [Christ’s] resurrection is called his begetting again, so our resurrection is called our regeneration.” (6:455) There is really an affinity between Christ’s resurrection and regeneration.

Why? (1) Since the resurrection of Christ ushers us into the “glorified condition.” (6:456) (2) “The very same power that wrought in Christ when he was raised up works in us to beget us again.” (4:457) We are regenerated, or our states are altered, through the death of Christ. Goodwin illustrated as follows:

As if you could suppose a Roman slave had been killed and dead, and then raised again to a new life, the law must have freed him from the former state, for he was now a man of another world; so a man being freed from sin is also freed from a state of death, and he is said to pass from death to life (6:78)

This is how regeneration alters our states: from that of sin to that of grace. Consequently “regeneration ... is a bridge ... to carry him over into another dominion of grace.” (6:79) This transition is accomplished in Christ.

The Spirit as the principal cause

Goodwin admitted that though all three persons have their “distinct and proper” hands in our regeneration, the Holy Spirit has a more eminent and special role. (6:74) The “principal cause” is attributed to the Holy Spirit. (6:47, 56) He gave us several reasons to justify the authorship of the Spirit in our regeneration. First, it is the “near kindred and dependence the new creature hath with and upon the Spirit.”

To assert this intimate relation between the Father and the new creature He begets, the Bible names the former the *spirit* in John 3:6. (6:47) Secondly, the broader context of our conversion also attributes the whole work to the Holy Spirit. John 16:8-10. (6:48) Thirdly, The creation of the first man in Job 33:4 by the Spirit is the type of what is to come in Ezekiel 37:13-14. It is the Spirit who sanctifies our old nature and “forms the new creature in us.”

Though we see that Goodwin ascribed the apprehending of souls to Christ, it should, however, be noticed at the same time that it is the exalted Christ in His heavenly ministry, not upon the cross any more! (6:422, 423) He showed how Christ apprehends Cornelius and Paul. But Goodwin indicated that in the case of Cornelius “the Holy Ghost fell on all,” and He “took that very cue ... to come in and enter upon the stage;” and in the case of Paul’s conversion “the Holy Ghost ... wholly falls upon him, and this at his laying on of hands, and his being baptized.” (6:417, 423) In other words, the real executor of Christ’s apprehending souls is the Spirit!

As I have mentioned once: when He comes at the first time, the Spirit “seizeth” on a man. That is how the Spirit apprehends us! It is by a violent and immediate seizure. We have no way to do any preparation work to welcome Him. (6:60) We are “merely passive.” (6:412) So regeneration is neither *propter* nor *secundum* on human side. (6:410) “The third person comes as the first inmate in us, and ... the other two come in and take up their abode also.” (6:65) So letting the Spirit be the principal cause of regeneration is fully justified.

Instrument of Regeneration

The *WCF* 10.3 or *Savoy Declaration* 10.3 implies that except

Chapter IV Effectual Calling

those who die in infancy or are incapable of receiving the Word of God, all other elect are effectually called by the ministry of the Word. So the normal way of effectually calling the elect is through the preaching of the Word. By 1 Peter 1:23 Goodwin understood “the incorruptible seed” as the Holy Spirit. But at the same time he also said that the Spirit is “cast into the soul with the word, as the prolific virtue in the word; which is the seed *materially*, but the Spirit *virtually*.” That is how the Spirit interacts with the Word in our regeneration. As a consequence he deemed the Spirit as “the principal cause” of regeneration while the Word is “the instrumental cause.” (6:56)

Though the prolific virtue is ascribed to the Spirit, he admitted that the divinely-ordained instrument of the Word is also indispensable. The seed is not the Word or the Spirit alone, but the Word and the Spirit together. Goodwin made a metaphor to illustrate the relation between the Word and the Spirit: “God took a keen arrow out of the quiver of his word, and put it into the hand of an able minister or friend, which shot by him at random . . . , was carried home by the wind of the Spirit, that went with it into the heart and wounded it.” (6:424) Without the power of the Spirit, the arrow cannot carry itself to the home, not to mention hit the depth of the heart. But without the arrow of the Word, the Spirit finds no carrier to exert its power.

The Word of God is like a “net” reserved by God to “catch” the elect. Romans 10:17. Hearing the Word is the “ordinance of God to that end” of faith. The Levites in the Old Testament and the pastors and teachers in the New Testament, being the ministers of the Word of God, are all appointed by God to convert souls. (6:88)

That the Word of God is construed as the instrument of regeneration lies primarily in the fact that only the Word can purify the soul.

(6:29) Though it presides in the great assize at the last day, yet at the latter day the Word is engaged in our conversion by penetrating the thoughts of the heart and gathering all “sad remembrance of all sins into the conscience.” The Word has great power in subduing man’s lusts, in casting down strongholds in man’s imaginations. (7:304-5) So the Word deserves to be called the “seed to beget them.” (6:88)

To know why the temporary believer falls from God’s grace helps us to understand the importance of the Word of God. Commenting on 1 Peter 1:24, Goodwin said that “what is there termed flesh and grass ... is not meant only of worldly glory, ... but also and more principally of all excellencies and gifts that are short of true regeneration, which opposeth to them, and which is wholly a right seed, and incorruptible.” (9:298) Tasting the good Word of God cannot replace receiving it as a seed of life. Being short of the seed of the Word is equal to being destitute of eternal life.

Conclusion

According to Stanley P. Fienberg’s research, Goodwin as a pastor, not like Baxter who left voluminous cases of conscience in his works, touched upon Christian social ethics only sporadically. Fienberg says that “Goodwin often has little to say on questions of practical ethics beyond the vague injunction that love is the greatest law.”⁴¹ But on the

⁴¹ Stanley P. Fienberg, “Thomas Goodwin” 74. Despite the paucity of ethical expositions in Goodwin’s works, Dr. Fienberg still painstakingly finds pearls of Goodwin’s expositions in ethics from the latter’s diverse works. According to Fienberg, ethical topics touched by Goodwin include sanction of secular activity (TG 3:468), moderation of the pursuit of wealth (TG 9:294, 1:79, 7:2842:100), promotion of social order (TG 7:284), marriage as a spiritual union (TG 11:270), power of the covenant of grace upon the family (TG 9:431), family value in a church (TG 9:433), etc. See *ibid.*, 74-79.

other hand, Goodwin had high interest in conscience.⁴² In his eyes conscience functions as the “province of reason.” (6:238) It is “the seat, throne, or sceptre, by which the law of God comes to rule over and to have these effects in the hearts of men.” (6:236) His social vision was that “the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives” through the court of his conscience.

Where did Goodwin treat the doctrine of conscience? To our surprise Goodwin treated the doctrine of conscience primarily in this treatise of regeneration.⁴³ The reason is as simple as I have said before that for Goodwin regeneration, “the only standing miracle in the church,” serves as the foundation of Christian ethics. (6:157) Faith and good conscience—*credenda* and *agenda* in the Amesian tradition—form the two parts of true religion. Goodwin said that “Faith looks upward to the things of the gospel, and takes in all supernatural truths, with application to a man’s soul. Conscience looks both inward, to our own actings within; and outward, to the law or rule which is to guide us.” (6:232)

He then stressed that the conscience must be a *good* or *regenerate* conscience in contradistinction to a *natural* or *unregenerate* conscience. The latter is the source of counterfeit religion.⁴⁴ So Goodwin

⁴² The primary sources of Goodwin on conscience are as follows: the whole Book VI of *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* in TG 6:231-323 (13 chapters); Book II, Chapter VII of *An Unregenerate Man’s Guiltiness Before God* in TG 10:94-106, and the whole Book VII of the same title in TG 10:257-277 (5 chapters).

⁴³ Book VI (*Of Conscience*) covers almost one fifth of this volume, or more precisely, 17.82%. (93 out of 522 pages.) This figure suffices to redress the wrong image that Puritans are too spiritual to care about ethics.

⁴⁴ All counterfeit religion is due to either natural conscience, or un-renewed understanding and affection. See TG 6:232.

made a lot of efforts to demonstrate the distinction between them, and the deficiency of the latter. Conscience evidently functions as the fulcrum of practical religion. Its genuineness determines the validity of all related involvements. Now it is a fact that any man falls either under the covenant of works by natural conscience, or under the covenant of grace by faith and regenerate conscience. Then we see the wisdom of Goodwin’s design by incorporating conscience with regeneration. Goodwin was not satisfied with the doctrine itself. The practicality of regeneration rests in another light—a regenerate person should make glorifying God his chief end in this life. This is the last book of his treatise on regeneration. Glorifying God is the most supreme agenda of a regenerate man.

Now I will call back Goodwin’s eschatology to understand the deeper significance of the doctrine of regeneration. He complained that even the first reformation of Luther had many worshippers unregenerate. “Not one of a hundred are true worshippers.” (3:127) The second reformation of Calvin was over. Now they *are* in the third reformation. The door for them to enter into the “inward temple” is regeneration. Then the godly are able to “make a new reformation ... more answerable to the pattern in the mount.” (3:123) Only the genuinely regenerate can assume the glorious mandate of the “two witnesses.” Now it *is* on the threshold to the latter-day glory. He warned his peers once that “We are now within the whirl of it.” (12:54)

He was convinced that a true doctrine as that of regeneration should not only calibrate the conscience and ethics, but will bring in conversion of souls. To this outcome Goodwin added more fuel by closing the whole volume of regeneration with a chapter entitled: *That one eminent disposition immediately flowing from the new creature is*

a desire to convert and beget others to God. (6:509) The intense expectation of the mass conversion of mankind, Gentiles or Jews, in the coming “rising of the two witnesses” (3:201) stimulates him to channel this doctrine in such an unusual way as his.

The urgency of the end-time in Goodwin’s context also caused him to find the eschatological dimension of regeneration. No wonder he would say that “Yea, this oil in their vessels or hearts did they [wise virgins] carry with them into glory with the bridegroom, ... made for glory, ... to be made capable of a further degree of glory, as it brings grace with it into the other world: 2 Cor. v.5.” (6:200) Regeneration does not only induce *faith* in our heart, but also deposit a “further degree of glory” which is the “*immediate light*” from the countenance of God that we as the regenerate may experience today. (3:239) Goodwin’s radical covenant theology anticipates such modification in the first doctrine of his *ordo salutis* as this. His doctrine of regeneration shows its tendency to transcend unto the realm of the latter-day glory. As a matter of fact, only by rediscovering the radicality of the doctrine can we fathom the full implication of it.

Chapter V Saving Faith

According to Thomas Goodwin, Jr., the son of Thomas Goodwin, *The Acts of Faith*, the second and major part of his great work, *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*, was done by Goodwin in Latin when he commenced his Bachelor of Divinity at Cambridge. (8:x) The date should be 1630. (2:xxiv)¹ However, this masterpiece was first published posthumously as the fourth volume of the complete works by his son in 1681~1704.² This work upon the doctrine of justifying

¹ As to the date of the other parts, there is no record found. But TG 8:562 reveals Part III is a work done by Goodwin at his ministry of the early 1630s when Cambridge was still in a status of spiritual revival. His conversion into Congregationalism in 1633 prevented him from a ministry like the one he described here. The spiritual decline in Oxford in 1650s does not match the situation shown in TG 8:562. As to the paucity of conversion at Oxford in the 1650s, see Goodwin's jeremiad in TG 6:157. Love of using Ex. 34:6-7 in his other early works (e.g. TG 3:25-30 is a short form of Chapters 3-11 of Book I, Part I, upon the names of God, Jehovah and etc., in Ex. 34:6-7; see TG 8:11-108) reinforces the possibility that Part I is also a work in 1630 or so. (Details, see the last footnote of the chapter of "The Latter-Day Glory.") The reason why Goodwin did not publish this work may be due to its large size. (His pre-1630s publications were basically booklets.)

² See TG 8:ix-x. This work was collected as the eighth volume of the 12-volume Nichol's edition in 1864.

faith is comprised of three parts. I would follow the thought of Goodwin to examine what he taught on this locus.

Part I: Object of Faith

Among the three parts of Goodwin's book on saving faith, the first part, Object of Faith, is the longest one. It runs to 253 pages in length.³ In the beginning of this book, commenting on Psalm 130:7 and 4, he enumerated three things to be the grounds of our hope in God: God's mercies which are "the original and womb of all," redemption of the Messiah and forgiveness of sins by God. (8:5)

God's mercy

Goodwin firstly meditated on why it is God's mercies, not other attributes of Him, that become the "first causes of our salvation." Let us think about the case of devils who are "shut out from mercy." Their intellectual belief of God causes them "the more to tremble at the thoughts that they are for ever utterly excluded." (8:8) For God's mercies are willfully dispensed. It is an "act of his will, and is not a mere, sole, single effect of his nature." (8:10)

To explore the implication of the nature of God's mercy, Goodwin appealed to Exodus 34:6-7. Genesis 3 and this passage are two pillars in the Old Testament by which God proclaimed His revelations to man *immediately* by God Himself. The first revelation was given by God Himself to Adam regarding "the promised Messiah." (8:11) The

³ Under the title, "faith," Robert P. Martin lists about twenty Puritan authors in his *A Guide to the Puritans*. If you make a brief survey on their titles, you have to be convinced that only Thomas Goodwin wrote something about the *object* of faith. See Robert P. Martin, *A Guide to the Puritans*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997.) 93-96.

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second was a historical incident in which God once descended visibly in order to proclaim the gospel to man. (8:14) The context was the golden-calf incident. But God in His mercies only chastised His covenanted people, but did not destroy them. (8:15-16) Moses found that the moment of pardon of sins is the best time to “lay hold on it by faith, and turn ... it into prayer.” (8:18) Goodwin exclaimed that “This proclamation of grace” is “a *magna charta* of the Old Testament.” (8:19) A thousand other promises ensued are but rehearsals of this one! (8:24)

However, Goodwin tried to find out the nature of God from this “*suavissima concio*.” (sweetest sermon, 8:25) The name of God is Jehovah, יהוה, that imports “all his mercies ... proceed wholly from himself, having no motive but from what is in himself.” Being merciful is God’s nature, yet its dispensation is from His will. (8:31) The other name of God, לַאֲלֹהִים, or “the strong God,” implies that “God’s mercy proceeds from strength.” (8:49) Power and mercy are joined together in God. So the almighty God is able to do all things merciful! In Exodus 34:6 there are five attributes among which love (goodness) and grace are the roots of mercy. (8:59) But what is the distinction of mercy from others? Goodwin presented a beautiful exposition which hits the core of God’s nature:

Let us consider that there is no other use of all these riches of mercy in God, but to be given all forth unto sinners for his glory: whereas all his other attributes are to himself, and for himself. Thus his wisdom is the perfection of his own being: his love is that whereby he loves himself: his all-sufficiency is that which makes himself blessed; but his mercies redound not in this manner unto or upon himself (for he is not merciful unto himself ...), but the sole improvement and glory of them consists in extending

them to others, so as otherwise they would lie useless by him. ... Full breasts love to be sucked and drawn, their fulness otherwise becomes a pain. (8:125-26)

This then becomes the most convincing motive for sinners to come to God even when they see their heinous and aggravated sins! It is this nature, mercy of God, that initiates human acts of faith: seeing the merciful God, embracing and trusting in Him. (8:115) Thus the mercy of God deserves the priority and preeminence of all attributes of God. (8:6)

Christ, a quickening Spirit

At first Goodwin showed that the “two grand objects of the faith”— “the grace of the Father and the righteousness of the Son”— go hand in hand. They “must never be separated.” (8:141-42) Based on John 6:44-45, Goodwin asserted that “the Father ... teacheth us to know Christ, and draws us to him.” This is the “actings of faith at first conversion” or the “faith of recumbence.” For every child of God shall be taught by God, and this kind of faith arises. Many Scriptures prophesy this glory of the New Covenant. (8:153)

The able expositor of the hearts of the Apostles depicted vividly again how the Father woos our heart to be drawn to His Son:

Thus the Father comes and awakens thine ear, and causeth thy soul to be attentive, and brings something to thy soul; ... he doth take thy heart ... by an intuitive beam. ... so this beam from God takes and inflames the heart. The poor disciples ... knew not that it was Christ, till ‘he opened their understanding,’ ... and then (they say) ‘Did not our hearts burn within us?’ &c. There is an inflammation of the spirit, a taking of the heart, that accompanieth

Chapter V Saving Faith

such teachings as the Father teacheth. ... there goeth affection with it. (8:162)

Goodwin showed us how our Father reveals His beloved Son to us.

Then he demonstrated how Christ is presented to us. Chapter six of John is the great chapter for Goodwin to explicate what faith is. John 6:63 is the “key to all that sermon foregoing, and unto what follows after.” By the text, “It is the Spirit that quickens,” the Lord means that

[the Spirit] elevates and advanceth my flesh or humanity to that high state of life, as to give life to men ...—I who am God have sublimated and spirited this sacrificed flesh (by reason of this union) to be a spiritual food to your spirits and souls, ... for I am a spiritual Christ, and a spiritual Saviour, and not a fleshly. (8:175)

Not only does the Father draw us to Christ, but also Christ presents Himself as a quickening Spirit. He as a result becomes the “proper object of faith” for those who are drawn to Him. Goodwin called a quickening Spirit a “definition of him.” See 2 Corinthians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 15:45 as well. (8:180)

Free grace of God

Goodwin calls our attention to the fact that “the free grace ..., as it is set forth in the covenant, is a *further* thing than a declaration that God is merciful in his nature.” (8:194. Italics mine.) So we have to lay hold on free grace according as it is dispensed in the covenant of grace. Here we see the New Covenant comes into play as prophesied in Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36 and etc.

The paradox lies in that the *absolute* promises are *indefinite*, “not naming the persons to whom they are designed: they are expressions

of purposes as they lay in his [God's] heart.” (8:194) Now the prince of Christian experience once again taught us how to enter into the free, yet inscrutable grace of God. He counseled that first of all “renounce all self.” For this is not the covenant of works, but that of grace. (8:195) The soul should honor free grace mightily: “he comes not to be accepted because he hath fewer sins, that were to derogate from grace, nor is he discouraged because of the abundance of sin.” (8:197) We have to be familiar with the terms contained in the covenant of grace, such as Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. These are “I will” passages.

Secondly, we shall be taught the sovereignty of God in this regard. The soul should acknowledge God's absolute freedom, knowing that God *may* choose either way to treat me: showing mercy to me or making me hardened! Goodwin advised us to pray in this way: “I am a poor creature, ... and I lay down myself at thy feet; if thou wilt be merciful, here I am; I throw myself upon thee, thou mayest give me up to hardness.” But Goodwin ensured us that when one shows “the faith of submission” and has nothing to integrate with God's grace, God will say to him “I *will* be gracious because I *will* be gracious.” (8:196)

As it is shown above, the three objects are related as *one* object! God's mercy is the fountainhead. Christ as the quickening Spirit makes Himself available to believers to *eat* and to *drink* Him. Finally we are to appropriate the free grace in the covenant of grace.

At last Goodwin also guarded free grace against the accusations from the Arminians and the Antinomians. So we have to prepare ourselves in the use of *means*, and holiness cannot be dispensed anyway. (8:198)

Part II: Acts of Faith

In this part Goodwin divided the acts of faith into three books, namely, justifying or saving faith, assurance of salvation and faith in prayer. As to the second book, I treat it in Chapter XI. So primarily I will examine here the first book which is Goodwin's doctrine of saving faith.

Nature of Faith

Having defined the object of faith, we will examine the nature of faith. Faith has many and diverse offices and acts. As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 16.3 reads, it is "different in degrees, weak or strong." So Goodwin wanted to focus first on the "faith as justifying." (8:257) If the *ordo salutis* is like a spectrum, then faith runs almost from the very beginning to the open-end, because the whole of salvation is "conveyed to us by faith." (2:321) By faith we procure every blessing in our salvation. Goodwin listed many of them such as justification, sanctification, communion with God, assurance of salvation, joy and peace, (8:257-58) perseverance (2:438) and so on. But among them justification is the first grace after conversion. So he picked it up to explore the nature of faith in general.⁴

Why faith?

Before we proceed to examine the doctrine of faith, we may raise a question: why the Bible sets faith in such a crucial position. To this question Goodwin answered that "God ... singled out faith ... that grace might stand unimpaired." When salvation is wrought by faith, "nothing is derogated from grace at all." Faith is a mere receiver.

⁴ Cf. TG 8:302.

(2:323) In this respect faith is different from love. Faith “doth not give to God anything, it doth not return, as love doth.” Of all graces faith is “the meanest and the lowest, a poorer and a more beggarly grace than to love.” (8:459) It is “merely passive,” if we would say it is an act. (2:324)

Goodwin had an excellent simile for faith: it is like a looking-glass.

Indeed, nothing could have given the entire glory unto grace but only faith. It is just as a mere looking-glass, when the sun shines it is a glorious thing. Oh, how glorious is that looking-glass when it shineth! But what is the glory? It is nothing else but the very sun’s shining on it: so is faith, and the soul believing the free grace of God in Christ, receiveth salvation from him. (2:324)

Faith is such a transparent instrument as it derogates nothing from salvation. It gives to God all glory. Goodwin also praised faith as the “most modest grace that ever was in this point.” (2:327)

Least degree of faith

Goodwin had no intention to quantify the grace of faith. But for the sake of zeroing on the very essence of faith, he defined “faith of recumbency” in contradistinction to “faith of assurance.” Even in the “lowest degrees” of the former, a sinner can treat with Christ about justification. Goodwin thought that this kind of faith is “more essential.” (8:258) Here we see Savoy is at variance with Westminster.⁵ The

⁵ Comparison of Westminster and Savoy at 14.1:

Chapter V Saving Faith

addition of *The Savoy Declaration* 14.3 reveals the intention of the drafters—Thomas Goodwin and John Owen—that they just wanted to extract the most essential traits from faith. So they reduced faith to the “least degree of it.”

But at the same time Savoy says that the lowest degree of faith is as much as distinguishable from the temporary faith. It is a “secret whisper” which is “enough to carry on to Christ.” (8:271)

A spiritual sight

Now what is the nature of justifying faith? Goodwin was in favor of using “a spiritual light” or “seeing” to characterize “the first act of faith.” (The sole object of faith is Christ.) So saving faith starts from our understanding. (8:258-59) It is an act of knowledge. Man is more passively persuaded to receive illumination from Christ in this inceptive stage. Man is just opened by the Spirit with a new spiritual sight to see Christ spiritually. Goodwin would like to contrast the sight of

<i>WCF</i> 14.3	<i>Savoy Declaration</i> 14.3
<p>This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong;</p> <p>may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.</p>	<p>This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong; yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it (as is all other saving grace) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.</p>

See Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. (New York: Scribner, 1893; reprint by Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1991.) 381.

the spiritual man with the blindness of the natural man. 1 Corinthians 2:14. Yet the inchoate sight is different from the extraordinary sight of St. Paul’s encounter with Christ at his conversion experience, or the eschatological sight as of 1 Peter 1:8 and 1 John 3:2. (8:259)

As a matter of fact seeing is the first operation of our regenerate faculty. It is called a new sense, a new eye or a new taste. Faith then is the new sight with “which it sees them otherwise than either reason or sense could present them to a man.” So the new sight distinguishes faith from reason. But Goodwin went on to say that “he doth not create a new faculty, but endues this with a new activity” by way of augmenting a spiritualness into the understanding. As a result the faculty of understanding functions “as much as a new understanding.” (8:260) The spiritual sight is “thus elevated above all rational knowledge of Christ whatsoever.” So “it is a further thing,” but at the same time it is “joined with” reason. Goodwin would rather say that “it is ... super-added to reason, let it be elevated and enlightened ever so much by the Holy Ghost in a rational way.” (8:262)

He also cautioned us here that the supernatural light of faith does not destroy that of reason and nature; “yes, it subordinates it to itself, and restoreth it again, and rectifies it, and then makes use of it, even as the light of reason doth subordinate and make use of sense.” (7:64; cf. 8:264) For Goodwin life ranks up from beast to sense and then to reason. But in the new creation it goes up higher to a supernatural light. We may call it superadded reason, for the new light joins itself with reason and then functions.

Goodwin continued to explicate the nature of faith. The new light conveyed is “the demonstration of the Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 2:4. It can frame an image of Christ in our heart. (8:260) Angels can see God.

But their sight is natural and has no image imprinted in their heart. Supernatural faith has a different story: “the Holy Ghost [is] coming fresh from the heart of Christ, stampeth the very same upon the heart of a Christian in his measure.” So St. Paul can proudly declare that “We have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:16. (8:261) For regeneration engenders genuine faith in this way. That is the difference between saving and temporary faith. The latter has light, sense, but not image inside.

Hence Goodwin took a further step to say that the new understanding is “intuitive.” For it is a sight of Christ Himself. “Rational knowledge is to gather one thing out of another, but the knowledge of faith ... is to see a thing in itself, to see Jesus Christ in himself.” (8:263) Goodwin maintained that this spiritual knowledge is a kind of heavenly knowledge. When we come to heaven, God will not give us a knowledge of Himself in *proportion*. So faith is also a light of heavenly vision. He even boldly averred that faith is “the prelibation, the beginning of heaven.” (8:263) This is the essence of saving faith.

Faith has certainty

Whether or not faith carries with it certainty is a continuing controversy in Reformed theology to this day.⁶ Goodwin observed a “double mistake” in his day which was (1) faith has no assurance; and (2) faith is assurance. (1:235) According to Goodwin the truth is: faith is a certain knowledge of the *things* one believes, though not a certainty of his *salvation*. This kind of certainty appeals to the rule: *sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*. (Sense is never deceived about

⁶ As to a detailed discussion, refer to the section below, “Assurance—A Reformed Battleground!” in Chapter XI, The Assurance of Salvation.

its proper object.) Because faith is a new sight and a new sense of the heart, so a certainty inheres. Goodwin ascribed several Scriptures to this kind of assurance, such as: Hebrews 10:22, 11:13; Colossians 2:2; James 1:6; John 6:69, 17:8, etc. (8:265) Despite a heap of expressions, we should distinguish two kinds of assurance.

He concluded that “In all faith there is a fixedness, an assuredness, a persuasion, namely, of the *things* that I do believe; but it doth not follow that it should be an assured persuasion of my own *interest* in the things themselves.” (8:266. Italics mine.) Besides, this certainty is *infallible*, because it is out of the witness of the Holy Spirit. (8:267)

Faith sees reality

Next Goodwin argued for the reality faith sees in its objects. A Christian will *really* feel the glory, the excellency and the sweetness in Christ. That is a “peculiar art” of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this. A temporary believer only sees the “accidental goodness,” such as the light of the sun reflected upon the moon, whereas a true believer sees the “native excellency” of Christ, such as the sun itself. The reason why a Christian loves the Lord and the other world is simple: because they are real in the eye of faith. By the same reason he does not love this world, because it is not real any more to him. (8:267-69)

A voluntary coming

So far the act of faith performs basically in the understanding. But faith does not stop there. “If only a general assent ... were that act that justified, then the will should be excluded.” True faith always involves an act of application. So man’s will has to come into the picture so that he can rest on Christ for his own particular salvation. (8:273) By Ephesians 1:13 Goodwin argued for the necessity of the

voluntary act:

Now, faith is seated in two faculties, in the understanding and in the will. Answerably, what hath the gospel? To satisfy the understanding, it hath the greatest truth in the world; it is the word of truth; the understanding closeth with that. To satisfy the will, it has the greatest good in the world; it is the gospel of salvation. So that now *first* a man being persuaded of the truth of the gospel, and that truth being matter of salvation, his will hath reason to close with it, and so he makes up the bargain with God; that is, believeth. ... There was *seeing* and being persuaded of ... the word of truth; there was *embracing* of them, as being the salvation of their souls. (1:226. Italics mine.)

Thus in Goodwin's mind saving faith moves forward from understanding to will to make her full journey. A passive and static *seeing* is converted into a active and dynamic *embracing*.

To explicate the mechanism of the voluntary act of the will in faith, Goodwin gave us a scholastic anatomy of it! It involves seven steps. As a soul sees the excellency in Christ, so his will takes a reaction to "set the highest value and *esteem* upon that excellency that is in him." This is to believe! Goodwin exclaimed. (8:303. Italics mine.) Hereby it starts the act of will as a completion of the acts of faith. The act of will is still a work of God: He then stamps upon man's will "an *instinct* after Jesus Christ, and after mystical union with him, so as he can never be quiet without him." (8:304. Italics mine.) Faith is a supernatural drawing to Christ by God the Father. John 6:44-45. This instinct is like that of the beasts when they turned to the ark before the deluge came in. Then the soul cast all in him upon Christ alone.

Thirdly, loyal to his instinct after Christ, he "looks up to him for

help, with a *confinement* to him alone.” (8:305. Italics mine.) His goal is none else than Christ Himself. In the initial stage faith is more intellectual, persuasive and passive. But now it becomes more voluntary, coercive and active.

Next step, the soul really *comes* to Jesus Christ! So the soul rests upon Christ alone. The soul then advances again. Goodwin said that “the eminent and the principal act of the will ... is *trust*.” (8:308) This is the fifth step. He considered that “trusting in God is ... common to all believers in all estates.” It is still distinctive from the assurance of salvation. When temptations come, a man may overthrow his assurance, but not overthrow his basic trust in God. For without trust faith is not faith any more.⁷ The last two steps are *abiding* by Christ and *fashioning* the heart to the law of faith. (8:313, 316.)

Appendix: temporary Faith

The discussion of the nature of faith will not be complete if we do not cover the topic of temporary faith. Goodwin discussed it many times.⁸ From the entries where he talked about this doctrine we found

⁷ Louis Berkhof concurs with Goodwin by saying that “A *volitional element (fiducia)* ... is the crowning element of faith.” He recognizes three elements: *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent) and *fiducia* (trust). He also recognizes the first two as two aspects of the same element in faith. “Knowledge may be regarded as its more passive and receptive side, and assent as its more active and transitive side.” See Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939, 1981.) 503-505.

⁸ On temporary faith, see TG 1:59-60, 366, 386, 407, 413-16 (the best one); 3:440-44; 6:80-81, 199-200 (excellent!), 215-16, 240-42, 319-23, 324-58, 469; 7:296-301; 8:268-69. The Scriptures he used are Matt. 13:6, 20-21; (with the synoptic parallels in Mark 4:5-6, 16-17; and Luke 8:6, 13;) Matt. 25:1-13; Heb. 6:4-8; and 2 Pet. 2:20-21.

that he did it in *The Work of the Holy Spirit* rather than in *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*, because temporary faith has problems more in its reality than in its phenomena. As a Reformed theologian, Goodwin followed his predecessors in defining temporary faith as a kind of faith which feels the joy of the Word of God, yet transient. The reason is that it is without root. Luke 8:13. Goodwin once scornfully commented that “Many glorious things are spoken of temporary believers, but it is nowhere said in all Scripture ... that they are born again.” (6:215) This is the most pertinent statement to the Achilles heel of temporary faith.

The reason why he spent so much ink upon this doctrine is that Arminians often used these texts in relation to this doctrine to prove their case: Christians may fall from grace. So Goodwin rigorously exposed to them that temporary faith is just a kind of “slighter works” of the Holy Spirit, not “true grace” at all, though he admitted that “it is a work above nature.”⁹ It must be Goodwin who added the additional words in *The Savoy Declaration* 14.3 to put the accent on the *qualitative* distinction between the least degree of saving faith and “the faith and common grace of temporary believers.”¹⁰

Here we also see that in Goodwin’s eye, temporary faith *is* a work of the Spirit with “so great a likeness”! He thought that “as the heathens did in civil things ... in the second table, ... so these temporaries perform the religious duties of the first table ... (by the like habits in-

⁹ TG 1:386. As to the slighter works of the Spirit, see the same title above in Chapter I, Life and Age of Thomas Goodwin. What Goodwin preached here reflected what he experienced.

¹⁰ Cf. TG 1:59 which mentions “infinitely the least grain of true heavenly grace.” Cf. TG 6:81, “the least spark of that divine nature.”

fused).” (6:348) So temporary faith is a kind of religious instinct in natural man. Only the great High Priest can distinguish it from the true one by the sharp and piercing sword of the Word of God. Hence temporary faith “will turn to the greater glory to Christ.”¹¹

There are degrees in temporary faith. He used the parable of the sower to open them. “There is the stony ground ... and there is the thorny ground, that goes further.” (1:413) Their difference lies in that the former is “not much humbled” and the latter, “more deeply humbled, and having a sense of the wrath of God upon their consciences.” (1:414) The stony heart is only affected in the “uppermost part.” The stone of its bottom is not taken away. “When the sun in the daytime thaweth a little, ... but thrust ... your finger in, it is hard underneath.” In the case of the thorny ground, the thorns grow up with the Word of God. “therefore their roots of lust were not grubbed up,” though “there was a cutting off of the tops indeed.” That man is not mortified at all, for the corrupt nature is not circumcised. (1:414) He drew a natural scene to illustrate the case: “Even as the ivy, though it clasping about the oak receives much sap from it, which it digesteth and turneth into itself, yet it brings forth all its berries by virtue of its own root, rather than as in the oak, which yet sustains and supplies it with juice and sap.” (3:444) The problem is in the root.

What is in desperate need is the “habitual dispositions of grace created in their hearts, that might be a root to the fruit of the Spirit.”

¹¹ TG 6:328-29. By this Goodwin distinguished the unregenerate into three sorts: the heathens with mere nature, unconverted Jews under the law and those who have a “conscience enlightened” with temporary faith, “yet short of grace.” See TG 6:240-41. From this you know why Goodwin described this kind of faith as having “a reality joined with it.” TG 6:328.

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(1:366) The real difference of the two faiths inheres in whether it is regenerate or not! In terms of 2 Peter 1:4, the divine nature is not partaken of yet in temporary faith. So sin may fetch back the temporary runaway slaves of their master-sins. Ice becomes water after being heated. But it can be frozen again, because its nature is not altered. (6:81) The parable of the virgins was used by the Puritans to explicate the doctrine of temporary faith. The foolish virgins only have oil for “outward profession” and performance of duties. “They had not grace in the heart” as oil in the vessel as a stock. (6:200)

To our surprise Goodwin was not so negative to temporary faith as we usually are. He admitted that “these temporaries had a work so like true grace as it was very hard to distinguish it from the true.” Then what can a seeker do? Goodwin turned to Hebrews 3:6. Just “hold fast the beginning of thy confidence to the end.” (6:322) He counseled that

If you have slackened . . . , yet revive that diligence again, and you will find your first confidence will come in again, if true, with advantage and increase, even with full assurance of hope unto the end; *or if there was not a true faith at first, then a better will come in the room of it.* (6:323. Italics mine.)

What is the better thing and better than what? Goodwin regarded Hebrews 6:10 as a better thing. It is no other than “your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” In contrast to those high religious affections list in Hebrews 6:4-5, he confirmed that this is a better thing than all those enlightenings. (1:59) For it accompanies salvation. Hebrews 6:9.

In his interpretation and experience, temporary faith could be a part of the journey to salvation. So he took positive use of it and urged

seekers to pursue Christ in the end.

Faith in prayer

It is lovely that Goodwin incorporated the topic—“faith in prayer”—in his volume on saving faith. This topic is less doctrinal, but much more practical than the doctrine of saving faith! It becomes a case of conscience quite often. Next to God Himself as the object of faith is His promises. Goodwin classified promises into two kinds: *universal* versus *indefinite* promises. (8:431) He raised John 3:16 as an example to the universal promise. It is indeed the proclamation of the gospel or the external calling of God. (8:431) In this promise God endows common grace.¹² “But many other are indefinite.” God’s indefinite promises do not respect all persons, but some. And God does not even declare beforehand who are to receive them. In this book on faith in prayer, he focused on the indefinite promises.

Indefinite promise and faith

Firstly he pointed out that James 1:6-8 should not be misunderstood as you-can-get-what-you-pray-for! He set up his rule in this case as: “such a special persuasion of faith in prayer is not of absolute necessity to obtain the blessing desired.” (8:421) For God is not so bound up by these particular objects of our faith in prayer that He “will certainly give the very particular we shall ask in true faith on these.” (8:422) God always reserves a kind of liberty and latitude for Himself. In this way God may perform his promises according to His secret will. Especially for those temporal promises, Goodwin found the biblical rule is that “God’s secret will was never to perform ...

¹² The Reformed theologians like to recognize the proclamation of the gospel as a kind of common grace which is shared by and through the covenantal community.

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every good thing *in specie* ... to ... every one of his children personally.” God “reserveth that in his own breast.” (8:430)

So Goodwin arrived at a corollary that “our faith in prayer is not bound up to a certain persuasion, I shall receive that very particular.” (8:422) In spite of the indefiniteness of our faith, Goodwin asserted, “these indefinite acts of faith are good faith.” (8:431) For the criterion of a good faith lies solely in the “grand and fundamental object of faith, as of God and his attributes.” So the good of our faith depends on our appealing to the *truth and faithfulness* of his promises, not to the truth and faithfulness of his *promises*. (8:434-35) The prayers are still successfully answerable to the mind and tenor of the “*it may be*” promises. (8:431)

However, Goodwin also pointed out that the indefiniteness of our faith in prayer is more likely ascribed to our blindness and ignorance in seeking God. So “there falls out a great variation of the compass by our steering aside” between our comprehension and God’s intention! (8:433) How much we should thank God for His many answers “besides, and without, and above our prayers!” Goodwin concluded that the indefiniteness lets God judge the “most expedient” things for His people. (8:434)

There still arises a problem naturally. How can this doctrine of indefiniteness be harmonized with the Scriptures like: “Ask, and it shall be given;” and “Ask wisdom of God, and it shall be given.”? Goodwin saw a “double obligation on God’s part as may afford a certainty to our faith.” These double-obligation promises in our prayers are but “like the gleanings.” (8:433) In another word, we are encouraged to pursue them in our faith life.

Under the indefinite promises falls a further classification: *spir-*

itual versus *temporal* ones.¹³ Now we turn to the two kinds respectively.

The case of temporal promises

God’s promises to work miracles belong to this case. (8:431) So when we read the Scriptures like John 14:12, Mark 16:17, and similar passages, we should take God’s latitude into account. Goodwin found that “Under the Old Testament, as a man more righteous, God ordinarily prospered him; but now, according as a man is more holy, God ordinarily afflicts him.” (8:450) His comment is understandable under the persecution history of the Puritans in England for the past one hundred years before him. According to Goodwin’s interpretation of the *Apocalypse*, more fierce persecutions are awaiting the elect. So he counseled that the “alteration of God’s dispensation on God’s part must needs alter our faith.” The attention of our prayer life should alter from the temporal to the spiritual things. He urged us that “our prayers should be earnestly and vehemently ... that we may live to serve God.” (8:451)

Nevertheless, Goodwin still left copious counselings on how to pray for temporal promises. Though there is indefiniteness both in God’s temporal promises and in our faith, the only rock we can apply our spiritual anchor to is God Himself and His attributes. Goodwin indicated four of God’s attributes we can plead to: God’s all-sufficient power, mercy, wisdom, and glory. (8:422–28) Let us see how Goodwin

¹³ Goodwin listed the “promises to work miracles” and “absolute promises of salvation” in the group of “indefinite” promises. See TG 8:431–32. He continued to explain both in detail in subsequent chapters. See temporal promises (8:443ff) and spiritual promises (8:451ff), respectively.

expounded the case of the leper in Matthew 8:2-4.

The reason of this difference of believing on his power and on his will (that the one must be absolute, the other needs be but indefinite) is, because if we do not believe his power absolutely, ... we do not believe he is God, nor do we come to him and glorify God as God; but to believe he will, or that he will not, do a thing, or may not, this detracts nothing at all from his being God. But on the contrary, exalts him in the acknowledgement of the liberty, dominion, and sovereignty of his will. (8:425)

The leper succeeds in his prayer by pleading to God's power. His prayer is a typical indefinite prayer. But he has no doubt about God's power. Such conviction as the leper's moves Christ to do the particular miracle for him. Comments like this have high pastoral values.

The case of spiritual promises

Goodwin classified again the spiritual promises that concern salvation into three sorts. The first sort is the "absolutely absolute." An example is the immediate declaration of God's purpose to save His people by the covenant of grace as recorded in Jeremiah 31:33. The second sort is the "secondarily absolute." By this he meant those promises which presuppose "prerequisite qualifications" such as faith and repentance. Upon these God-wrought conditions God expresses "a certainty of performance of" promises. Examples are found in Romans 5:2, John 3:16, etc. The third sort is those "additional promises," because they "belong ... to the better being of a Christian, ... but not absolutely to the ... being of a believer." Joy unspeakable is a good example. (8:451) Obviously the three sorts each correspond to a respective "level of ... faith in prayer." (8:455) They escalate like the *ordo salutis*. Faith becomes the instrument by which we procure those spir-

itual graces along our ascent of pilgrimage.

It is evident that concerning the first two sorts we pray absolutely, for “God hath absolutely undertaken, without *ifs* and *ands*.” (8:452) We may distinguish them, the first sort is accompanied with “a first act of saving faith” only, while the second, “some lesser degrees of hopes growing up towards assurance.” (8:455) Goodwin recognized that the last sort of promises are those “matters of the greatest complaints amongst Christians.” We pray earnestly, but find “no more performance.” Therefore it causes a lot of discouragement, scruple, sadness and even unto doubt whether God answers our prayer at all. (8:452) The third one is no other than the “triumphant assurance of salvation.” Goodwin made a further distinction of it: “whether [it is] obtained by experience of their own graces ... or further by a super-added immediate testimony of the Spirit.” He regarded the last one as a grace “beyond all those experiences.” He used the word, “immediately” or “immediate,” three times to describe the highest step as a kind of immediate, intimate, affectionate and direct encounter with God Himself through the outpouring of His love. Goodwin admitted that there is difficulty in such prayers. (8:455) But it is worth pursuing.

Return of prayers

How to discern God’s answer to our prayers is a notable case of conscience. Goodwin preached another series of sermons under that title.¹⁴ Our prayers are strengthened by the indefiniteness of God’s promises conversely! Hence Goodwin laid much emphasis on God’s answers to his promises. This two-way traffic is “one great part of our walking with God.” (3:362) For Goodwin and his age, living under the

¹⁴ In 1636 he published *The Return of Prayers*. See TG 3:351-429.

shadow of the latter-day glory, the lively visions of “the calling of the Jews, the utter downfall of God’s enemies, the flourishing of the gospel, the full purity and liberty of God’s ordinances, the particular flourishing and good of the society” hastened them to pray. Goodwin counseled that they would not fall out in their time, yet they would be answered in the latter-day definitely. (3:365) Therefore those “absolutely absolute” promises will boost the morale of those who pray!

Part III: Properties of Faith

In the third part Goodwin treated some practical issues of saving faith.

Excellency of faith

First and foremost he highly appraised the excellency of saving faith in the frame of the covenant of grace. Goodwin found many directions to examine the excellency of faith.

The sole instrument

Against the dispensational milieu, the importance of faith stands out more sharply.¹⁵

It is in a primary sense the *sole instrument in the covenant of grace*, and works and obedience are but subservient Our great business in the covenant of grace is faith, as the form of the covenant of works lay in doing. Therefore still the two covenants, and the righteousness conveyed by both, are differenced by doing and believing only. ... the reason is couched in three words, in Rom. iv.16, ‘Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace, and

¹⁵ Cf. “Why faith?” above.

that the promise might be sure.’ (8:461. Italics mine.)

The age of the New Covenant is characterized by God’s grace and promises. Only faith as an instrument can be its agency to implement God’s promises of salvation. In the old covenant of works, the principle is doing. But in the present covenant of grace, the *only* way is by believing. So faith plays such a crucial role as described.

Faith, the subsistence

The excellency also lies in that faith “makes things it believes real and present.” The apostle calls it “the subsistence of things hoped for.” Hebrews 11:1. For instance, faith causes us to have a “real communion” with Christ and “makes Christ present.” Faith does more. It rather unites man to Christ. The tie of the union is the “marriage-knot betwixt Christ and you” that you may procure all kinds of abundance in Christ. (8:463)

In this way faith becomes the “mother-grace which begets children on all graces, and stirs them up, and sets a-work.” (8:463) Faith is the “elixir, the least dram whereof turns the heart of stone into a heart of flesh.” (8:481) Goodwin also compared it to the “navel-string” which conveys spiritual nourishment to us. So we are taken care of by the “nurse, and midwife” until the “soul is carried into the other eternal world.” Then faith ceases and the soul lives by vision. (8:471) Nevertheless, God still gives a “crown” to faith. (8:465)

Faith and good works

Finally, the excellency of faith lies in the fact that *faith* does much more than *works*. Can works usher in the righteousness of God for man? Can they increase sanctification? Can they unite man to Christ? Can they purify man’s heart? Nothing above can works do!

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But faith says, “I am nothing, though I do all.” “Whatever works ... can do, faith doth it much more.” Goodwin commented that “A few thoughts of faith glorify God more than a thousand acts of obedience.” (8:464)

Because “what he [Christ] attributes to faith is wholly attributed to his name,” Goodwin understood, so God would like to give credit to faith, not to works. “Faith robs not Christ a whit.” (8:460) The relation of faith and works is like light and heat. He said that “Thus heat is as necessarily in the sun as light; yet it makes not day by its heat, but by its light.” (8:462)

But on the other hand, Goodwin insisted that good works should not be disdained, ignored or neglected in sacrifice of exalting faith. Goodwin said not to let the glory of the sun put out the lesser stars. The lesser stars—good works—still have their value. Then what is good works’ position? Goodwin stated that

If they will stand at the bar and give in witness, they may be heard, and their witness is not slighted; but if they would have a hand in the sentence of justification, then they are cried down, and bidden to stand by, and hear faith alone to plead a man’s case. (8:477)

They are “annexed to” faith (8:461) as a good and secondary *witness* to what faith has done to the case. “When more than is due is denied, it is not slighted.” An inferior magistrate should not deserve the compliment for what a king does. Under such circumstance, we should not slight works, nor inward holiness. We should also be in pursuit of inward holiness, for it “makes us more lovely in the sight of God, and more amiable.” (8:478)

Commenting on 2 Peter 3:18, Goodwin reckoned faith as the “root” of virtues and counseled us to “water that, and you will be fruitful.” He was convinced that “The more faith there is, the more love there is, too.” (8:479) Works follow faith. That is the order.

Difficulty of faith

Goodwin confessed that “*to believe is the easiest and the hardest.*” He elaborated that

But now to go to Jesus Christ for life is the easiest way, it is the shortest cut And yet of all else it is the hardest, for you must come off from this *I*; this *I* would live, this self would live, it would give you grounds of life; but to throw away a man’s self, and that nothing shall live in a man but the Son of God, and I live in him by faith, this is the hardest thing in the world, yet the easiest when a man hath found the way, and none findeth it but those whom God teacheth, ‘They shall all be taught of God.’ (1:449)

He clearly pointed out that the difficulty lies in the *I*—the man himself. In this sense faith is called as the “elixir” which can turn a heart of stone into that of flesh. (8:481)

Goodwin analyzed the difficulty into two aspects: man’s total inability—“There is nothing in the heart that induceth it to believe.” (8:483), and total depravity—“All ... that is in a man ... hinder the work of faith.” (8:483) He dug it deeper. He found that “this law of faith is a new law, so it was not written in Adam’s heart.” So faith is “not only out of the reach and power of corrupt nature, but of pure nature also.” In another word, even the understanding and will of the innocent Adam were also lacking the new principle or habit whereby he could see God in a supernatural level. (8:484) What a relief to sinners!

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If Adam in Eden would find it difficult, how much more shall we.

Goodwin demonstrated man's understanding, will, and conscience are all incapable of believing God and rather, set themselves against the law of faith. He started from an examination of carnal reason (8:494-97), then natural conscience (8:497-502), and finally unregenerate will (8:502-19). That carnal reason and unregenerate will form difficulties to faith is understandable. Yet that natural conscience is the "greatest enemy" to faith needs explanation.

Conscience detects his own sins, but "will never help him a whit in believing," for "it is deaf to what the gospel saith." (8:497) After detecting sins, the guilt "will cry down faith in a man's heart" till faith "brings in the blood of Christ; and then that cries louder ... Heb. xii. 24." So he dubbed conscience "a secret enemy, and the closest enemy." Worse is that its strength is the law. (8:499) Goodwin's conclusion is thus:

You may ... see ... why ... their spirits are acted in a legal way. The reason is clear, because that conscience is the highest principle in nature. Conscience is a principle in a man that believes, ... but it is not the supreme principle; ... for if the matter of the law be an under thing to the gospel, certainly conscience is so to faith. Now, therefore, whilst that conscience remains the supremest principle ..., it must be a deadly enemy unto faith ... till the Holy Ghost hath subdued the whole heart to a way of believing in the Lord Jesus. (8:502)

Faith, our duty

Goodwin underscored the mere passivity of faith by teaching that "there is nothing in you that contributes to faith." (2:342) To the sur-

prise of his rivals Goodwin urged that faith is our duty. Both propositions look seemingly opposite. To tell the truth both of them are Reformed teachings. Goodwin is but one of those who hold these doctrines. He really sounded like an Arminian when he exhorted us to make endeavors to believe.

How both reconciled?

Goodwin considered many endeavors not to be faith, but to lead to it. They are but preparatory to faith. (8:521) He learned from nature:

Husbandmen cast the seed into the ground, and wait for the increase, because it is God that giveth it, and men do the like for preferment. In all such natural things, I say, men do act upon a dependence and in a subordination to the power of God, and should they not do so in matters of salvation? (8:563)

What he endeavored to do is but a preparation of faith. It is subject to the power of God. He just cast the seed for faith, not growing faith itself. He called the seed “the *materials* of believing” which should be retained in the soul. (8:580. Italics mine.) What he did is like preparing the sacrifices. It waits till fire comes down from heaven and sets all on a flame. (8:581)

He admitted that “faith is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God.” But he saw his endeavors are but *means* to attain faith. Philippians 2:13 becomes his best guide in this regard, because man should co-work with God in both will and deed. (8:553)

These two thoughts in the side of man’s duty—preparation of *materials* and performance of *means*—are not only fully reconciled with God’s sovereignty in engendering our faith, but they are co-working with God in His good pleasure.

How to do the duty?

Goodwin gave five directions. **First**, take heed of all hindrances which may hinder God's working of faith in our heart. (8:520) Two grave hindrances he indicated are the sense of heinous sins (8:563) and uncertainty due to the doctrine of election (8:567) To the former one, he called them to look unto God's mercy. To the latter, he counseled that "Though there be many signs of election, yet none of absolute reprobation." (8:568) **Secondly**, be humbled for our sins. For God never abandons those contrite and heartbroken people. **Thirdly**, do use duties and ordinances God appoints. (8:521) What Goodwin recommended, "do thou cast in the seed ... and retain them in thy soul," is an example of how we may make use of God's ordained ordinances. (8:580)

Fourthly, lay hold of those special opportunities which God draws nigh in his ordinances. (8:521) He provided two biblical examples: St. Paul in Romans 15:9-13 (8:540) and the woman of Canaan in Mark 7:27. (8:542) **Finally**, Goodwin urged us to believe the Lord just as a midwife urges a woman to push for delivering her newborn. He said that

But further, souls humbled are to attempt the exercise of the very act of believing; that is, they are to take promises into their thoughts, ...and attempt to lay hold upon him, to exercise thoughts of taking him, and treating the marriage with him, ... and so far as God strengthens a man's heart, *so far go and try, and try again, and see when and what thoughts of faith will take thee.* (8:521. Italics mine.)

These exercises are specifically to "inure the heart to familiar and constant acts of believing." (8:583) He based his teaching upon He-

brews 4:11. However, he added a caution: “do work with God in a subordination to his power, when we go forth in a renunciation of all our own abilities, in a continued distrust of all our own abilities.” (8:532) This is a “double work,” which means “as you are to attempt to believe in a subordination to the power of God, so you are to beat off and drive away all thoughts of self-confidence and self-conceitedness.” (8:534) This “double work” will prevent Goodwin’s attempt of believing from self conceit.

I suppose that these are the most Arminian-sounding words ever spoken from a Reformed theologian! (But they are not.) By these words Thomas Goodwin should be exempt from such an accusation as that he was responsible for “omitting or weakening an essential element in Holy Scripture, namely the responsibility of men to God,” which is shown in the *Savoy Declaration*.¹⁶

Conclusion

If Robert T. Kendall accuses the Westminster divines of widening the distinction between saving faith and assurance of salvation as to codify them into two different chapters in their *Confession*,¹⁷ how

¹⁶ Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*. 82-83. Toon charges the imbalance of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man as shown in the *Savoy Declaration* “may be seen as one root of that hyper-Calvinism which infected both Congregational and Baptist churches in the early eighteenth century.”

¹⁷ Upon the Westminster Assembly Robert T. Kendall concludes,

But the apparently unquestioned acceptance of a distinction between faith and assurance; that ‘Faith’ should have one heading in the Confession and ‘Certainty of Salvation’ another. This division between faith and assurance seems to have been accepted implicitly from early on in the Assembly. There is no indication at all of any questioning of this significant division. Calvin’s view that faith *is* assurance was thus rendered incapable of penetration into the

Chapter V Saving Faith

much more he would accuse Thomas Goodwin, for the latter widened them more by considering the *least degree* of saving faith in the *Savoy Declaration*. But the Kendall school fail to see the pastoral motivation of those Puritans. Goodwin made more endeavors than his peers in the Westminster Assembly in search of the indispensable essence of saving faith. So he explored the nature of the least measure of it. This pastoral task was a tradition since William Perkins. Their goal was to help anxious souls to a sound conversion with assurance of salvation!

We should not overlook the fact that, as Goodwin showed, even the least degree of faith carries a kind of certainty with it. Without the understanding of this we are liable to confound saving faith and assurance of salvation. The aftermath of this mix-up will yoke unnecessary legalistic burdens to the shoulders of God's people and hence create unbiblical tensions in the Christian society.

Finally we cannot express too much appreciation upon how Goodwin emphasized that procuring faith is our duty. His exposition could even silence the accusation of the Arminians. What he said is not a mere theory, but a real practice in his ministry based upon Philippians 2:12-13:

And that others have missed ... is not a discouragement neither, ... for there are thousands that have obtained. ... I say thousands of souls have gained this way, as well as some have missed. ... Let me say this to you, *faith is the greatest adventure in the world*, so I use to express it; and when all is done, you

Westminster documents from the start. Beza won the day.

See Robert T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.) 195-196.

must make a venture upon it. You make a venture upon God's will when you throw yourselves upon it to accept you; and you make a venture upon his power when you act faith with a subordination thereunto to work faith upon you. You must resolve to cast away your own endeavours for the glorifying of his power, as you must cast away your own righteousness for the glorifying of his free grace, and to be glad to put your mouths in the dust; and yet if there may be any hope, and if there may be faith, you ought to work out your salvation, because he worketh in you both the will and the deed. (8:562. Italics mine.)

What an excellent exposition! Faith is not only the greatest adventure for man, but also for God! Let the church keep the adventure on and on in the world for God's glory.

As we mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* is a work of the early 1630s. So his doctrine of faith as displayed in this work looks just like a traditional Puritan doctrine of his age. His persuasion of the Congregational Way by John Cotton in June 1633 is a milestone for his whole life. After this encounter he was won by the millenarian church polity. Since then there had been a new interest in his exercises of faith in the new direction. The first time he showed this new interest might be as late as 1636, two years after his resignation from Cambridge. For in this year he published his *Return of Prayers* in which he said that

There may be some prayers which you must be content never yourselves to see answered in this world, the accomplishment of them not falling out in your time: such as are ... the calling of the Jews, the utter downfall of God's enemies, the flourishing of the gospel, the full purity of the society and the place you live in.

(3:365)

This new British apocalypticism is not characterized by those two eschatological signs, namely, “the calling of the Jews” and “the utter downfall of God’s enemies” which was understood to include the pope in his time, but by “the flourishing of the gospel.” It intimates an intervening period of time, which is after the fulfillment of these two signs and before the eternal state! In this new era the gospel will flourish in the whole world. The church of God will enjoy her liberty which she has never done before. Not only so, the society also will share God’s pure common grace. The chiliastic teaching does not change the essence of his doctrine of faith, but redirects its exercises in the life of faith.

Last but not least is the glory beyond the horizon of faith. Goodwin recognized that this oil in the vessels the wise virgins carry with them into glory with the bridegroom. So also our soul is wrought here in faith for a specific purpose: “to be made capable of a further degree of glory.” (6:200) Faith prepares us into the sight of the other world. 2 Corinthians 5:5.

Chapter VI

Repentance Unto Life

Goodwin proposed as a best definition of conversion that “it is the change of a man’s utmost end, and upon that a man’s soul is turned to God.” Before his conversion the man “himself is his end,” but now he puts “holiness into” himself to “aim at God in all things.” Conversion “changes all his course, all his affection, everything in him.” Goodwin made an analogy: “It is a new loadstone, it will make him sail after another compass.” (1:381) To underlie the importance of conversion, he urged us to “take the worst condition thou hast ever been in since, ... and compare it with the best of thy condition afore calling.” For “afore conversion, thou hadst not as then a dram of the least holy affection in thee, no aim at the glory of God.” (9:314) Louis Berkhof says that “conversion comprises two elements, namely repentance and faith.” They are but “different aspects of the same turning,—a turning away from sin in the direction of God.” As to repentance he defines it as “that change wrought in the conscious life of the sinner, by which he turns away from sin.”¹ So he basically concurs with Goodwin’s definition of conversion, except he stresses its human

¹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 486-87.

responsibility while Goodwin, the divine sovereignty.

To fathom the depth of the doctrine of conversion Goodwin opened the text of John 16:7-11 in full in Book VIII of his *The Work of the Holy Spirit*.² “These words contain a summary of the work of the Holy Ghost in regeneration and conversion.” For in the text there are three parts of conversion: “conviction of sin, ... faith on Jesus Christ, sanctification, or amendment of heart and life.”³ The second part—faith in the righteousness of Christ—is venerated by another two parts—conviction of sins and new obedience, both of which form the evangelical repentance. Obviously Goodwin paid attention to repentance here for he would treat the doctrine of faith specifically at another time.

Repentance

Holiness is the “ancient fashion.” Losing it makes man “naked”

² Three main passages upon the doctrine of repentance are Book VIII of *The Work of the Holy Spirit* in TG 6:359-404, Book IX of *An Unregenerate Man’s Guiltiness Before God* in TG 10:324-76, and Sermons XXII-XXIX of *Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians*, TG 1:323-449. The case of conscience—“Whether After Repentance a Child of God May Fall into the Same Sin?”—will be treated in Chapter X, Perseverance below. That case is collected as *Tidings of Peace* and *The Folly of Relapsing* in TG 3:405-29. Besides, he preached two sermons in *On Repentance* in TG 7:545-76, which treated national repentance.

³ TG 6:359. Goodwin juxtaposed regeneration and conversion here only to stress that conversion is a close fruit of regeneration. In Goodwin’s *ordo salutis*, regeneration is “the first application of salvation to us.” (6:47) Book VIII was primarily a book on conversion. In this Book there are six chapters. Goodwin devoted four and half chapters (i.e. Chapters 1, 2, half of 3, 4, 5) to conviction of sin; half of Chapter 3 to faith in Christ; and Chapter 6 to sanctification. Hence the major part of Book VIII focuses on repentance unto God. See also the three parts in TG 6:48-49, exposition of the same text; in TG 8:511, exposition of Ps. 51:3-4, 2 and 6.

Chapter VI Repentance Unto Life

and hence shamed indeed. Goodwin exclaimed, “to return from sin and become a saint again ... should not be ashamed.” (10:35) There are two principal parts of repentance:

1. Looking backward to an act of guilt as gone and past;
2. Looking forward to time to come, in turning unto God for the future(10:343)

The first work of a true conversion consists in conviction of sins. “It implies the opposition that is in men’s hearts to receive that his word, so as they need rebuking and convincing before they will effectually yield unto it.” The conqueror wins his crown by force whereas our King “acquires his by the conviction of his word and Spirit.” (6:360)

Conviction by Law

But what is the means by which the Spirit convinces the sinners of their sinfulness? Against those contemporary antinomians who thought “there seems to be no need of any use of the law to do it,” Goodwin averred that “there should be a foregoing discovery of sin by the law, before faith and revelation of Christ.” In the very beginning of human history, though “Adam’s natural conscience was already made sensible of his misery,” God convinced him of “his sin by the law which he had given him ... to work a further conviction than natural conscience.” This “further work of the Spirit” was solely to expose to Adam “the heinousness of his sin.” (6:362) Before Christ came to preach the gospel to man, His precursor, John the Baptist, prepared the way for Him by bruising the reeds! He convinced men of their “particular sins.” (6:363)

But it is St. Paul who gives us the best exposition of what the conviction of sins is. By Romans 8:15-16, Goodwin said, “the Holy

Ghost is a Spirit of bondage in conversion only,” which “appears by the opposite effect of the same Spirit as he is called the Spirit of adoption.” (6:363) He chose Romans 7 to explicate this conviction in details. He evinced that the “primary and direct end unto which it [the law] serves is, to give in conversion the first knowledge of sin.” He admitted that “Paul being a Pharisee, was never without the law.” But by his former pharisaical knowledge of the law “he knew not original sin nor lust” until his conversion. So the knowledge of law in Romans 7:9 must be “that knowledge which he began to have when he was first converted” (6:364-65) Goodwin distinguished three conditions in relation to law in this chapter. The first condition as indicated in Romans 7:5-6 is the unregenerate man with a “common knowledge of the law ... which knowledge did then enrage his lusts; ... yet to have been but occasional.” The second, in Romans 7:7-13, is when men have “a spiritual conversion of their sin by the law.” The end of law giving this knowledge of sin serves “not such as stirs up lust, as afore, but such as humbles them, and lays them for dead.” The third, in Romans 7:14-25, shows “the use of the law to a man regenerate” (6:365) Here Goodwin echoed what Calvin spoke of as the first use of the moral law.⁴

The role of law is not to kill or destroy sin, but to discover it. “Like flashes of lightning, it on the sudden discovers, but expels not the darkness, yea, often leaves the soul the more in the dark; yea, which is more, it enrageth some lusts the more, and that whilst it restrains the outward acts.” Ironically the “ordinary light” of sin through law and our conscience, “though it restrains the acts, yet increaseth the

⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes* 2.7.6.

lust, and so doth more hurt one way than good another.” Goodwin summarized: law “hath the power to kill the man for sin, and condemn him ... but not to kill sin in the man!” (6:282)

The Case of Job

To illustrate his doctrine Goodwin chose two biblical examples: Job in the preaching of Elihu, Job 33:15-30, and St. Paul. However, his descriptions were quite autobiographical. We can see his own shadows in this sermon *passim*. As a matter of fact he was talking about himself rather than the Job in Elihu’s mind or Paul!⁵ Goodwin showed how God uses external means, such as a dream, a vision or a great sickness, to seal his heart to initial or subsequent conversion from sins. God will “work pride out of his heart, to bury it ... extinguisheth it.” By breaking off “self-confidence of one’s own righteousness, and creature-confidence,” God will “work poverty of spirit in a man.” (6:369) To bring this sick man to be “sensible of his sin” cannot satisfy God. He would like to do it further “to death’s door,” making him “apprehensive of hell too.” (6:371) The soul seems “to be wounded with sin as sin, ... the greatest misery.” But “what a blessed end tends it.” (6:382) Goodwin understood what Elihu sets forth in Job 33 as “the essentials of conversion.” (6:369) The “ancient footsteps” and the examples “in the last days” converge with respect to the doctrine of conversion. (6:366)

Sin in Repentance

Goodwin remarked that the “duty of searching [the sin] is the

⁵ See Chapter I, Life and Age of Thomas Goodwin—His Life—Christ’s College Days.

foundation and corner-stone of true repentance.” (7:549-550) Now we will turn to Book IX of his *An Unregenerate Man’s Guiltiness Before God* and examine the sin of which man should be repentant. At the beginning of the book, Goodwin criticized the views of the Socinians, Arminians, Bonaventura (1221~1274), the Dutch exegete Estius (1542~1613), the Jesuit theologians Francis de Suarez (1548~1617) and Robert Bellarmine (1542~1621) for they all denied original sin to be “a fit matter of repentance.” (10:324-330)

Original Sin, the Target

He expounded David’s confession of sins as recorded in Psalms 51:5-6. David “goes farther, and descended to the source of all,” which is his own “conception-sin and birth-sin” rather than the sins of adultery and murder he committed consecutively in this case. Goodwin contended that it does not say that David is not to be responsible for what he is doing, but that it becomes providentially an occasion for him to take a new survey of the sins of his whole life, and examine himself to the bottom. It is like “going along by a river ... at last to the well-head, the fountain of all those streams.” (10:332) In humiliation David humbles himself not only to the sins he committed before, but to the bottom of his sinfulness of sin. So David “reserves his *behold* for this” confession in verse 5 of this psalm. Is this calling attention to man? No, Goodwin said, “it was to God, or rather afore God.” David is not calling God to behold. “It was a *behold* of astonishment at himself, as before the great and holy God.” Goodwin tried to reverberate the heart cry of David as below,

Oh, how am I every way overwhelmed ... how infinitely corrupt I am in the very constitution of my nature; and with the other eye I beheld and consider what an infinite holy God thou art in thy na-

ture and being, and what an holiness it is which thou requirest. I am utterly overwhelmed in the intuition of both these, and am able to behold no more, nor to look up unto thee, O holy God! (10:333)

Goodwin diagnosed it as the original sin. (10:334) Following Piscator's annotation of this psalm, Goodwin deemed the wisdom in verse 6 is that of "seeking justification through faith by Christ alone." The soul "will never be quiet in any other thing but Christ's righteousness." The new wisdom "points the soul unto ... the true spiritual sanctification." (10:335)

Original Guilt

Goodwin continued to give us the anatomy of original sin. There are two branches: Adam's "first act of disobedience imputed to us"; and "inherent corruption thence flowing." (10:337) He even gave to them the appellation "the two attributes of sin," that is "the guilt of sin and the power of sin." (1:360) Through his lengthy exegesis he found that two sentences of Psalms 51:5 correspond to these two branches.

Once we, like David, are guilty of the first sin of Adam, Goodwin inquired, then what true penitential acts are applicable to this guilt? *First*, judge ourselves for this sin so that we are not judged with the world. This is the wisdom from 1 Corinthians 11:31-32. *Secondly*, fear and tremble before our holy God. *Thirdly*, lament and bewail ourselves for it. Goodwin collected many heathenish customs which were practiced to appease the offended gods in primitive times. If pagans do it, Goodwin pressed, how much more are Christians obliged to do it. *Fourthly*, confess this guilt. For the heathens did not know the cause, nor the imputation of the guilt; but we are enlightened by the word of God and convicted of it by the Spirit. *Fifthly*, confess our sin with a

contrite and broken heart as David did in Psalm 51:17. (10:344-50) This is a rare instance we see Goodwin approach the doctrine via the human aspect of repentance—the responsibility of man. He almost always stressed the divine aspect—the sovereign grace of God being involved in the acts of repentance.

Inherent Corruption

As to the second branch—the inherent corruption of our fallen nature, Goodwin indicated from Romans 7:20 that it is “our sin, not by imputation, but by indwelling in us.” Leprosy is the best analogy. A man may derive leprosy from his parents; however, it becomes his own! The corruption of our nature is enough for our conscience to testify to its “boiling up every day.” The guilt is the same since its first commission, but the corruption is “increased in us,” if not dealt with. It is the “cause of the greatest and most heinous sins which we commit, and which gives us the highest occasion of mourning.” The inbred defilement is “more near and intimate than” our actual sins. (10:361) Goodwin kept on disclosing to us that, as revealed in Romans 8:7, the inward disposition or flesh is enmity to God, contrary to holiness, working “in a way of antipathy.” It is much “deeper and stronger” than transient sinful acts. It becomes a “rooted habitual disposition.” Not only so, he said, “there is a nearer union between sin and thy soul.” (10:363) To an extent the corruption is not only the cause of sins, but also “the cause as a law” of them. He used an analogy to interpret the sinful nature as a law:

Suppose the greatest [sins] can be perpetrated by a state ... and it is far less heinous than if there were a standing law enacted by them authorise such an act. And now take the grossest sin that ever thy soul committed, and there is a standing law in thy nature

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hath force in thy members to bring forth a thousand thousand such acts; and by virtue of it they may be brought into act until that law be recalled, that is, thy nature changed. (10:364)

This is an invincible proof that our nature is “more wicked than the most grievous act of sinning whatsoever.” Finally sin is called the old man, a body of sin, Goodwin pointed out, because sin is “spread through all, and thereby all ... members are made weapons ready formed, fashioned, and sealed to be employed in the service of sin.” (10:365) Now we are convinced of what Romans 7:13 says, “sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”

Just as “there is a thousand times more fire in the oven than in the sparks that fly out of it,” so in repentance of our sins we concur with Goodwin: we should repent of our original guilt and our inward corruption much more than of the actual sins. (10:367)

Power of Conversion

Facing such an exceeding sinfulness of sin Goodwin helped us to see how the sovereign grace operates in the dynamics of our repentance. He unraveled the question, “what power God putteth forth in converting men to him,” in the Sermons XXIV-XXIX of his *Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians*.

Us-Ward Work

From Ephesians 1:19-20 he analyzed the exceeding greatness of the power of God into two aspects, namely, “us-ward” and “in us.” When converting a man, God does an extrinsical work out of him. Before his conversion, every man is a child of Satan. To bring him to God, the devil has to be cast out of him. So in Matthew 12:28 Christ says at the point of conversion, “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of

God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.” Goodwin enumerated many Scriptures to pinpoint this truth. Before his conversion, a man is taken captive by Satan at the latter’s will, 2 Timothy 2:26; but when the prince of this world is judged, which means he “is cast out,” the man is converted, John 16:11. Goodwin averred that “this is a mighty power, to throw the devil out of a man.” Goodwin also related sins in a man to the bondage of the devil. In Luke 11:21-22 Christ compares Satan to a strong man who has his armors and goods. “Every sin is the devil’s good.” So convicting the sin of a man, God has to cast the devil out of him at first. Here is the greatness of God’s converting power to “us-ward.” (1:356-57)

In Us Work

The “in us” work of conversion is basically a *metamorphosis*. Goodwin appealed to Ezekiel 36:26-27 and perceived that “removing of what hindereth” goes before “giving of a new capacity to perform.” It needs a “double power,” not only “calling thing out of nothing,” but also “bringing to nothing old things.” The old things are the stony heart, etc. So conversion is harder than creation. “Here is not only power, but greatness of power; it will come to exceeding greatness anon.” (1:359) This is the power to dissolve the old, as the Bible says, destroying the body of sin in Romans 6:6, or performing circumcision of the heart in Colossians 2:11. The stony heart is the “highest, the greatest enemy.” So conversion is the “turning of one contrary to another.” Goodwin commented that “Between nothing and something there is an infinite distance; but between sin and grace there is a greater distance than can be between nothing and the greatest angel in heaven.” Sin has two attributes, namely, the guilt of sin and the power of sin. To take away the former requires “an infinite power, an infinite

righteousness.” Goodwin exclaimed “how great a power must it needs be!” (1:360-61)

“To destroy the power of sin ... is as great a work as to take away the guilt of sin.” The power of sin in a man’s soul lies in his understanding and his will. Goodwin used parliamentary language to open 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. When a man turns to God, he said, a bill—the highest law of obeying Christ in all things—“must pass with the consent of the whole heart.” How does God pass this bill ? Man has “a world of arguments and objections, and an infinity of reasonings” against God. (1:362) Worse is that the unregenerate will has two principles, namely, self-love and love of pleasure. “One is first, the other is last, backs all these lusts that are between.” Self-love is the “prince of devils, ... the bottom of original sin.” (1:363) It is a “habitual aversion from God.” There are “dispositions only to ... evil” in it. (1:366)

Light of Life

How can the Spirit throw down all these strongholds in our mind and depose this “great king, this absolute monarch” in our heart? The mighty power of God puts “a little light, a bottom light into a man’s heart.” He lets man see the divine excellency and lets the light in himself answer all objections. (1:362-63) Goodwin added, A man has three lives to live: a life of a plant, the life of a beast, and the life of reason. But “here is a fourth life , to aim at the glory of God. It is called ‘the light of life,’ John viii. 12.” (1:381) This new principle of life furnishes man with holy dispositions. It is also a new creation of grace, fitting a man for heaven. The light of grace is the greatest work of God, only next to glory and a beginning of it. (1:366-67) The Bible makes conversion a parallel with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. Their powers are in parallel accordingly. Goodwin deemed the

raising of Christ from death to glory as a pattern to show how the great power of God works upon and in a Christian's conversion. (1:440)
The light of life is the regeneration of man. Here we see that regeneration comes to the fore, making conversion of souls as the subsequent platform for the power of God to display its mightiness.

Experience of Repentance

As a master of experiential Christianity Goodwin shared many points of the practical repentance.

Effects of the Godly Sorrow

Goodwin did not forget to delineate for us the real experience of repentance when he had a chance to expound 2 Corinthians 7:10-11. There are seven effects of the godly sorrow: carefulness, apology, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal and revenge. Goodwin paired them as follows. The sign of a true sorrow for a sin in the past is a new resolution not to sin in the future. The experience of the church at Corinth provided a good example.

Four degrees of the godly sorrow

The **first couple** are *care* and *fear*. Let any soul always have the transaction of Satan with Eve in his view. He may find in it a great admonition to the prodding of sin. Hence man should be careful and watchful for himself. Fear imports more carefulness against self-confidence. Goodwin was always convinced that the key to the victory in a spiritual battle consists primarily in sanctification on our own side, not in defeating the devil outside of us. Fear would add additional caution in dealing with our own inward corruptions. (10:357)

The **second couple** are *indignation* and *revenge*. What is indignation? Goodwin set Asaph, the author of Psalm 73, as a best example.

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We have to ask ourselves what is our pursuit. Is it a “creature-grace”? If it is so, then we will be trapped into the temptation of Satan just like Adam and Eve at their first act of sin, or Asaph in the psalm. “We are apt enough, indeed, to have our spirits fume, at Adam and Eve ... for so great an unworthiness,” Goodwin reflected. “If I had been in his stead, I with my creature freewill grace should ... have ... lost all for myself ... even as he did.” The way of indignation against myself and all sin in the future is never to trust “creature grace or free-will grace more, for this foul failure of it” in Adam at Eden and Asaph in his psalm. (10:357-58)

Revenge should not be taken as the sense of founding a “compensation or satisfaction unto God.” It can be understood as “a revenge done on sin for God’s sake, wherein the penitent soul can rest satisfied with nothing but the utter destruction of it.” The extent of the revenge is in proportion to what formerly he has done. St. Paul in 1 Timothy 1:12-16, the penitent woman in Luke 7:36-50 (especially verse 47) and the new converts at Ephesus who burnt their books of sorcery in Acts 19:19, are all good examples. Asked “where and how ... to ... direct the sword’s point of thy revenge,” Goodwin counseled, just as David, having known Jonathan was dead, extended kindness to Mephibosheth, so “look first if there be any of its brood left behind it [the sin], whom thou mayest fairly wreak thy vengeance on.” Actually he meant for that to go no farther than our own heart. “Behold a whole body of sins, all sorts of lusts therein, that are the brood it hath left behind it, the sin was the father of, besides all the actual sins which are begotten by it, the grandchildren of that grand sin.” He also suggested one may go farther to all the sins of his own children. Sate your hatred of sin by cutting down the root of sin. Spare it not. (10:358-59)

The **third couple** are *desire* and *zeal*. These are latter fruits of repentance. To be sure, they spring from pure love to God. The more we repent the guilt of Adam, the more we will desire the righteousness of the last Adam. The former provokes the latter. Zeal is but love, desire of God and other holy affections intensified. Goodwin said, “Desire is smoke, and zeal is flame.” (10:359)

The **last single** is *apology* or *clearing ourselves*. Apology is often misunderstood as seeking to excuse one’s self. Goodwin contended that it is “an apology, or pleading for pardon and forgiveness, having first taken a sin upon us.” True faith and evangelical repentance interact each other. “The more it is made sensible of its sin through its working, the more it puts the soul upon further exercises of faith, and to seek after the attainment of fresh assurance of forgiveness.” Goodwin even projected his own experience of assurance upon David! In his experience of assurance he ever heard God speaking the vivid word of promise to him through Ezekiel 16:6, “yea, I said unto you, live.” (2:1xi) The penitent David approached the throne of grace for God’s absolution and cleared his own sense of it. “Though God had ... declared he had forgiven his sin,” Goodwin imagined, “yet David’s soul must hear God himself speak that word over anew to his own soul.” Psalm 51 reflects such immediate experience as described above. This is what apology is. (10:359-60) The four degrees display steps of repentance and hence form a sound experience of it.

Sound conversion

Some repentances are more imperfect, Goodwin admitted, like thawing slowly “by a little sunshine of God’s love.” They are like men “in an ague,” the fits returning every other time. That means that they are caught by their lusts sometimes. If they are not temporary believers,

belonging to God, then “usually that aguish distemper is, in the end, by a more thorough repentance, so healed as that they attain to more victory and security against it than any other sin.” (3:426) The seven particular acts of the godly sorrow provide a good and biblical route for believers to endeavor their thorough conversion. That is their own duty.

Second conversion

Related to the degrees of repentance is the second or repeated conversion after a backsliding. Goodwin said that the prescription is the same as for the new converts. (6:366-67) For the terms of recovery—such as humiliation for sins, seeking out for pardon of sins, and vehement petition for holiness—are all the same as the terms used by the new converts. (9:387)

Two modes of Conversion

Goodwin distinguished two modes of conversion: sudden conversion and gradual conversion. The sudden conversion is like Joseph brought from a prison into glorious status abruptly. It changes with a violent inundation of humiliation for sins and then with much gracious dew from heaven. The change is apparent and sensational. But it usually abates afterwards, like a stream flowing less and then becoming an ordinary channel. To an extent he may call into question whether he is wanting in grace! On the contrary, the gradual conversion starts insensibly, like the sun breaking forth little by little, not discernible in the process. It only makes an evident difference till it is noon. (3:461)

Both are the work of grace; however, Goodwin favored the latter rather than the former. He compared them to herbs and oaks. “Herbs ... grow fast, but with full of pith; oaks more slowly, yet more

solidly, and in the end attain to a greater bulk.” (3:463) The former ones are “apt, through desertion, neglects, and carnal presumption, to call into question their progress in it,” while the latter see “a constant spring and stream increasing.” (3:462)

Time of Conversion

Conversion is a “business of infinite moment.” Because all heaven, all hell and often much on earth are stirred about it. We should not neglect the great business of conversion, “nor the time of God’s stirring of us.” Though the offer of Christ by God is all the time there in the ministry of the word of God, Goodwin took a divine perspective and observed, “you never come actually to believe till all three persons thus concur in it, and till they join in a special concurrence together for your turning and conversion.” (8:150) There is a fullness of time, a special time, which we must wait for. (8:151) God also uses occasional causes, such as a dream, a vision or a great sickness, even the threat of death before the sealing of the promise on our heart. (6:369) The time of effectual faith is appointed by the Father.

Why does God suffer his elect to stay in a state of sinning into riper years? Goodwin explained that thereby God’s mercy is more illustrated by such a dispensation as this. Manasses was converted after fifty years’ long rebellion. Before his conversion, St. Paul was not only a non-believer, but a persecutor of Christians, a blasphemer of God! God has His divine wisdom to dispense all these things. Upon knowing the critical illness of Lazarus, Jesus stayed away intentionally in order to show forth the glory of resurrection later. So He allowed the death of Lazarus. Thus God “defers his own not only four days, but many years, and before he raiseth them up, lets them stink in their sins.” (6:94-95) Then it gives an occasion to glorify God “in the con-

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version of some notorious sinners.” St. Paul is such a case. God does not employ angels to convert people, but “reserves it wholly for us men.” So the great joy of converting a soul can befall a Christian. (6:97)

After observing this we surmise it must be Goodwin who wrote the words starting Chapter XV (*Of Repentance unto life and salvation*) of the *Savoy Declaration* as thus: “Such of the Elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature”

National Repentance

Louis Berkhof distinguishes three kinds of repentance: true repentance, temporary repentance, and national repentance.⁶ As to national repentance Goodwin preached it in his two sermons *On Repentance*. Prophets in the Old Testament times preached to the whole nation frequently. So did the renowned Puritan preachers to the Parliament during the Interregnum. Goodwin here called the whole nation or a gathered congregation to search into the national or collective sins, then their religion and worship of God. As to the state of religion of his own nation, there were four conditions to be redressed: idolatry, apostasy, Reformed-faith pretension, and irreligion. Who were more responsible to do the task of evangelism? The revival in the years of Jehoshaphat set a good example: both Levites and princes were sent out to teach through all the cities. Priests and princes should back true religion with authority. They were a “greater strength and fence to his kingdom than all his subjects” and the “chariots and horsemen of Israel.”⁷

⁶ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 482-83.

⁷ TG 7:545-48. As to the Puritans’ sermons in the Parliament during the Interregnum,

Temporary Conversion

On temporary conversion Goodwin wrote a lot, for he had been in its illusion for many years.⁸ He discussed temporary conversion in detail.⁹ Again he approached this doctrine from the divine perspective: in the case that “there is not so great a power” as converting souls, the work of the Spirit falls into a certain “inferior and lower sorts” of works. The power does not “hold proportion with that exceeding greatness of power” of God. (1:385) This was what Goodwin experienced as the “slighter works” of the Spirit when he was just six! He was fooled and thought that it was saving grace of God. (2:lii)

Given that there is an inferior work of the Spirit, Goodwin continued to inquire what kind of work it is. He demonstrated it as below: (1) It only restrains the corruption of man’s sinful nature or elevates its civil use. (2) Without creating new principles it improves or educates the old nature even in a supernatural way. (1:390, 395) Socrates, he judged, was “the highest instance how far the light of nature would

see John Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640~48*. Princeton University Press, 1969. As to the parliamentary sermons by Goodwin, two extant sermons preached before the House of Commons: *Zerubabel’s Encouragement to Finish the Temple* on April 27, 1642; and *The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms* on Feb. 25, 1646, are collected in Vol. 12 of his *Works*. So is another same type of sermon—the controversial *A Glimpse of Syons Glory, or The Churches Beautie Specified*, preached during a fast-day in Holland in 1641.

⁸ See Chapter I, Life and Age of Thomas Goodwin—His Life—I. Early Years and III. Sound Conversion.

⁹ See Sermons XXVI-XXVII in *Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians*. TG 1:384-418. Besides, he discussed temporary faith in Book VII of his *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation*. TG 6:324-58. I have treated the latter sermons in Chapter V, Saving Faith. Here I only focus on the former ones by which he explored the doctrine of temporary conversion.

go.” (1:388)

Goodwin presented the “relics of the image of God” as left in the corrupt human nature in five principles: **First**, *seeds of truth* in man’s understanding. They include “a glimmering light that there was a God,” principle of reason, and considerable knowledge of the eternal moral law. “If the light of nature be brought to the law of God, it is mightily improved.” Man will feel more confident in his natural knowledge. “His light is greater, but yet still it is of the same kind, ... but an improvement of the principle of nature.” **Secondly**, a *natural devotion to a deity*. Though it brings a devotion to the law, and even to the word of God, it may be still in the state of nature, not in grace. Goodwin pointed out that the devout women in Acts 13:50 were stirred by Jews to persecute St. Paul. Then the difference between nature and grace is revealed. **Thirdly**, *knowledge of eternal punishment*. But this knowledge does not lead him to the Lamb! Because he does not have the light of regeneration, he cannot see the true way of salvation. **Fourthly**, *concept of a mediator and his intercession on his behalf*. Most pagan religion is a world of hierarchy of gods. Then the lower gods are the mediators to intercede for them to the greatest one. If a person has grown up in a Christian community, his concept of a mediator does not mean that he is a regenerate. **Fifthly**, *natural desire of the celestial happiness*. Man is like a bee. He may not be satisfied with anything in this world. So he seeks a greater good than this world has. But again this is natural. (1:403-405)

With the above principles of nature in mind, if only under the inferior working of the Spirit, Goodwin warned, temporary conversion will be seen. A civil man will show his abstinence from gross sins. He believes Christ and professes the Christian religion of the State. Edu-

cated in the Church, he knows the only God taught in the Bible. Better than those heathens is that he observes the Christian Sabbath, doing the duty of public worship and private prayer. He can also be improved to be a zealout for the religion like Saul before his conversion! No matter how far he can go, he is still not regenerate. (1:405-406) Rather, “the more common graces men have, wanting true grace, the stronger carnal reasons will they have to justify their states; and accordingly the holds of a civil and moral man are better fortified than those of one that is profane.” (10:383) What an irony!

Goodwin tried to draw a conclusion: “Self-love ... is the predominant principle in man by nature; he loves himself more than he loveth God.” This predominancy is the “very bottom of original sin.” (1:408, 409) True repentance kills self-love while temporary repentance only stirs it up. When one’s self-love knows that he is in the danger of the wrath of God, he naturally knows that he now stands in urgent need of a redeemer. Yet he still remains unregenerate. Goodwin quoted Psalm 78:35-36 to support his argument. Do not be fooled by Balaam as well when he says, “Oh that I might die the death of the righteous!” Whether self-love is “turned to worldly things, or to things out of this world, it is one,” as long as it is only stirred up, not being slain. “When a man is sick in conscience, he is dead to all the pleasures in the world;” however, Goodwin continued, “this is not mortification,” for “the lusts are not killed.” Once it gets well, “his lusts grow well with him, and gather up their crumbs.” (1:408-409) Goodwin set up a test to distinguish true and counterfeit repentance—mortification of self-love.

Critical Conclusion

If we compare Chapter XV (*Of Repentance unto Life*) of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and that of the *Savoy Declaration*,

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we will find that the latter almost rewrote the former. Peter Toon detects a “subtle change of emphasis.”

Whilst the Westminster divines described repentance primarily from the human point of view as a responsibility of men to God, the Savoy divines chose to view it in the light of God’s eternal purposes and of federal theology, and therefore as a gift of God to His elect.¹⁰

In the first section of the *Savoy*, it says that God gives the elect repentance unto life. In the second, it says that in the covenant of grace being renewed through repentance unto salvation is God’s merciful provision. In the fifth and last, it reiterates that it is the provision of the covenant of grace. In the third, being made sensible to his sin, a person then humbles himself. Only in the fourth, it says that “it is every mans duty to repent” To this Peter Toon’s judgment is as follows:

It would seem therefore, that the authors of the *Declaration* placed their emphasis in the wrong place. Being enthusiastic to maintain the sovereignty of the grace of God, they failed to emphasise adequately the equally important responsibility of men to God.¹¹

Its authorship included Goodwin. It is right for Goodwin to expose the exceeding sinfulness of man’s original sin and then address the necessity of the grace of repentance unto God. But he seemed to tip it off balance by adding too much weight on the side of the sovereignty of God. After opening the reality of man’s sinfulness and help-

¹⁰ Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*. 79-80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

lessness, he naturally appealed to the “exceeding greatness of God’s power” in converting souls. Goodwin continued to show us how the Spirit brings us into evangelical repentance through the convicting work of the moral law. Not only is the provision of the dynamics of conversion sovereign, but also its implementation! In the eyes of Goodwin, during the process of conversion, man’s deliverance from the Satanic dominance of darkness is a “freeing by violence, a snatching out of a power that else would never yield.” Man in the state of nature has “no desire to be free.” (1:361) His way of thinking evidently complies with that of the *Savoy Declaration* at this doctrine. If we impose Peter Toon’s critique of the Savoyan repentance upon that of Goodwin, it will not be inadequate. Among many doctrines in the *ordo salutis*, repentance is one which involves the obligation of man the most. If the balance of the sovereignty of God and the duty of man is crucial for this doctrine, then Goodwin is found guilty in not doing justice to the balance, though he emphasized man’s duty in repentance in some passages.

Nevertheless, there is a lot of gold in Goodwin’s sermons upon repentance. What an insight when he zeroed in on the target of our repentance to original sin! What amazing grace he disclosed to us when the sovereign power of love delivers us out of the exceeding sinfulness of sin! What a distinction between the evangelical and temporary repentance by testing whether there is mortification of our self-love or not!

In this doctrine he never lost sight of the eschatological dimension of it: his calling for national repentance in 1628 was enhanced with a different implication in his later millenarian church reformation

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agenda in 1639. He applied the old doctrine with a new scope.¹² Besides, Goodwin set the aim of repentance for the “glory of God.” (9:314) While a man has three natural lives to live, he will acquire a “fourth life” to live. The new life is “the light of life.” (1:381) Through this life one is “looking forward to time to come, in turning unto God for the future” (10:343) Therefore repentance is preparing a man for heaven. Despite a kind of grace, it is only next to glory and a beginning of it! But his doctrine of national repentance reveals much more his modification of it due to his millenarian conviction.

¹² As to the details, see Chapter II, The Latter-Day Glory—An Evaluation—Link the Latter-Day Glory to Soteriology above. 83-84.

Chapter VII

Justification

From Goodwin's censures of the Romish doctrine of justification, a high appraisal of Martin Luther in this respect should be expected in Goodwin's works. Actually he praised Luther as the third angel of Revelation 19:9-13. But he did not specify there that this doctrine is in view. In spite of this appraisal Goodwin still reserved *the* Reformation proper to the Reformed force, not to Luther.¹ All Protestants, including Goodwin, should credit Luther for rediscovering this truth of justification.

Goodwin was much aware of the human liability to justification by one's own righteousness, for it is indelible in human nature even after man fell from the innocence of Eden. (6:23) According to his study it is no wonder that gentiles follow the maxim of "trust in themselves," and the papists "set up their own righteousness." To his surprise, Protestants "in doctrine [i.e. justification] profess to trust in Christ alone by faith only, ... yet practically their hearts run the way of

¹ See TG 3:102, 88; see also Chapter II, The Latter-Day Glory and Chart of Revelation's Synchronism of Thomas Goodwin.

all flesh before them.”² Goodwin thought that this most important truth has to be reclaimed. Let us first review the chief tenet of Luther’s justification.

Luther, the Pioneer

For Luther the doctrine of justification is “the summary of Christian doctrine, the sun which illuminates God’s holy church.”³ But his re-discovery of this doctrine was usually shrouded in two misunderstandings: that it was principally reaped through his theological studies, and suddenly revealed to him through Romans 1: 17.⁴ We had better survey Luther’s understanding of it diachronically. “The first definite clue” can be attributed to “his study of Augustine as far as back to the autumn of 1509.” That study helped him dispel all the shadows of Aristotelian scholasticism and paved the way for his later Bible studies.⁵ The counsels of Staupitz, as Luther confessed many times, should not be neglected at all; however, his ruling that Luther teach Bible at Wittenberg might count much more. In his retrospect, *Rueckblick*, Luther recalled that “a single word in [Romans 1:17] ... the *righteousness* of God ... had stood in my way.” He hated that word! For he had been always taught that it is no other than the *formal* or *active* righteousness.

² TG 6:314. Cf. TG 6:181 where, Goodwin said, his contemporary Protestants were weary of the doctrine of justification, though they formerly entertained the doctrine out of reference to the Reformation.

³ Paul Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*. 1963 [German]. (Translated by Robert C. Schultz. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1966.) 224.

⁴ Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther, Man Between God and the Devil*. 1982 [German]. Translated by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.) 185, 157ff.

⁵ *Ibid.* 158-60.

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Hence God kept punishing sinners by demanding them to do good. Luther was privately angry with such a God. His conscience had long been tortured by his concept of God. He “beats ... upon Paul ..., most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.”⁶ That was 1515~1516. In his *Commentary on Galatians* printed in 1519, we see him complete his Reformation breakthrough. Finally he understood it as a *passive* righteousness, a *gift* of God. He testified, “I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.”⁷ A series of spiritual discoveries between 1509 and 1519 escalated Luther to the “Paradise Gates.”⁸

Luther grounded his justification in the doctrine of God. God is the creator and giver. Should man be justified by his own works, it would defy that “God is God.” Man’s creatureliness anticipates God’s grace in creation of righteousness “out of nothing and under a contrary form.”⁹ This perspective was reflected in his *Small Catechism*: the answer to Article One on the creator God. It is full of the sense of human creatureliness toward the creator God.¹⁰

“The theology of the cross also determines Luther’s understand-

⁶ Luther, *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings*. Wittenberg, 1545. Selected in *Martin Luther, Selections from His Writings*. Edited by John Dillenberger. 10-11. Cf. LCC, *Luther: Lectures on Romans*. 17-19. Goodwin mentioned Luther’s misunderstanding of the epistle of Romans. For Luther, Goodwin said, to declare God’s righteousness is to set forth His judgment. See TG 4:208.

⁷ John Dillenberger, ed. *Martin Luther, Selections from His Writings*. (New York: Anchor Books, 1961.) 11.

⁸ Oberman, *Luther, Man Between God and the Devil*. 165.

⁹ Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*. 118-29.

¹⁰ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 3:78.

ing of justification.” What human reason and experience cannot justify is paradoxically done by *faith* in the hidden cross of Christ.¹¹ Hence this soteriological doctrine turns out to be trinitarian as well. He interpreted the passive righteousness as an *alien* one, only graciously imputed by Christ.¹² It is “given in place of the original righteousness lost in Adam ... set opposite to original sin, likewise alien ...”¹³ Luther meant that

passive righteousness is not more and more replaced and limited by an active righteousness, the alien righteousness is not more and more replaced by man’s own. Man, including the Christian man, remains a sinner his whole life long and cannot possibly live and have worth before God except through this alien righteousness, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.¹⁴

But he also juxtaposed a new transformation with the righteousness. He even called the new birth “the second kind of righteousness,” which is the fruit of the first, the alien one. He considered the second one in an eschatological dimension: God forgives man as though God has made him completely righteous.¹⁵ The practicality of the doctrine can be fully displayed by the idiosyncratic doctrine of Luther, *simul justus et peccator*, derived from Tauler’s duality of spiritual experi-

¹¹ Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*. 32.

¹² Luther, *Two Kinds of Righteousness*. 1519. See Dillenberger, ed. *Selections*. 86.

¹³ Dillenberger, ed. *Selections*. 88. Actually, it accomplishes more than what we lost in Adam.

¹⁴ Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*. 229.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 234–42.

ence.¹⁶ This is Luther's version of the dichotomy of flesh and Spirit in the Bible, especially that of Romans 7. For Luther, "the death of the old man occurs in the vertical dimension" between God and man. And it is "total."¹⁷

What Is Justification

Like many other doctrines that of justification does not receive a specific book from Goodwin's volumes focusing on its meaning. However, he expounded upon it when the chance presented itself.¹⁸

Definition of Justification

Goodwin defined justification in two essential parts: first, "acquittance from sin and freedom from condemnation;" and secondly, "justification of life" as it is called in Romans 5:18, which "gives title to eternal life." (4:51) At another place he elaborated upon this definition. The first part is the "taking away of actual sins." Goodwin tied Romans 3:24 to it. The passive obedience of Christ upon earth took away the guilt of our actual sins. The second and positive part can be attributed to Christ's active obedience which "made many righteous." He stressed that "Justification lies not only in pardon of sin, but in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us." The way to confer is by impu-

¹⁶ Ibid. 242; Oberman, *Luther, Man Between God and the Devil*. 184.

¹⁷ Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*. 245.

¹⁸ *Christ Set Forth* is devoted to explicating one truth: Christ is the object of justifying faith. The doctrine of justification receives part of its attention. TG 4:1-91. Chapter XIX and XX, Book V of *Christ the Mediator* cover some depths of justification. TG 5:337-66. Chapter XV, Book I of *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* is also a rarely sparkling chapter on justification. TG 8:133-39. Besides these three places, there are also many pearls scattered in his works *passim*.

tation, not by impartation or infusing. Goodwin added that the righteousness is “imputed to us as Adam’s sin was.” So we can safely say that in Goodwin’s mind the acquittal of sins includes original sin as well.¹⁹

So basically Goodwin based his understanding of justification on the frame of the covenant theology. Christ is the “common man.” He defined justification from the two aspects of obedience of Jesus upon the earth.²⁰ Christ is the fountainhead of this spiritual benefit procured by saving faith.

The Nature of Justification

Goodwin began with what Luther had discovered: God’s righteousness is *alien, forensic* and *passive*. Human nature is always liable to bury this truth. Goodwin had to reassert it to face new threats from the papists, Arminians and certain heretics.

¹⁹ TG 5:352. Here Goodwin pointed out a third part—fulfillment of the law against the corruption of our nature. I will discuss it in depth later in this chapter.

²⁰ From Goodwin’s use of the passive and active obedience of Christ, we find that his usage complies with John Murray’s interpretations. The passive obedience of Christ does not mean He was “passive” during His sufferings and death. Rather, Christ said that “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself;” and thereby showed that “He was extremely active.” Murray also indicates that “the distinction between the active and passive obedience is not a distinction of periods.” So allocating certain phases of our Lord’s life to the active obedience and certain others to the passive obedience is a mistake. He concludes that the distinction rests upon “the recognition that the law of God has both penal sanctions and positive demands. . . . The passive obedience refers to the former and the active obedience to the latter.” Murray’s interpretation helps in the understanding of Goodwin’s use of them. See John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. 20-22.

God's righteousness is forensic

Justification is a “moral, legal, forensic change” of a “man’s state of salvation” from condemnation to a “state of life.” This change is specific, not gradual, nor physical. (6:409) As to God’s graces there are two kinds. Their difference is thus:

the one is given at once, and the other the Lord doth give by degrees, and go on to perfect it one after another: the one is an act of God upon us, towards us, and therefore is a mere act of free grace, immediately residing in God, and doth not import infusing anything into us. (2:316-17)

He continued to point out that justification belongs to the first kind of grace: “not *in* all, but *unto* all and *upon* all.” The Lord saves us “as a judge ... by endowing us with the pardon of all sin, and righteousness ... which are all forensic actions, actions of a judge, without us.” (2:317. Italics mine.) So he defined the nature of justification as a sort of judicial, forensic, legal, extrinsic act of God. He also described the difference as a relative change in contrast to a real change. The relative change corresponds to the legal act which depends upon “God’s accounting, and reputed, and actual reckoning as such.” Justification, reconciliation and adoption are of this sort, while regeneration and sanctification are of another sort. Justification “lies in a title, in an authority, in a charter, in a commission.” Therefore there should not be any confounding between justification and sanctification. They are two typical types of graces described as above. The Romish notion of justification confounds the imputed righteousness with a kind of inherent one. Their righteousness is “wickedness” and “absurdity.” (2:315-16)

It is once and for all

As a consequence, justification is “one act at once, *actus unicus et individuus*.” At the same time it is also “continued, yes, renewed every day.” (9:224) It is once-for-all act. Goodwin explicated Galatians 5:5 to demonstrate its significance. What is the hope of righteousness we wait for? “We not only did rely upon that righteousness wholly for our first justification,” Goodwin explained, “but ever since we abide by it, and upon that alone for our justification afterward” (6:21) Even works of true holiness “would entice us over to join them ... as a ground of our confidence for justification.” But Goodwin insisted: “Do wait.” We are to be justified along the remainder of our lives. It is what Daniel 9:24 calls the “everlasting righteousness,” so it is “but one and the same righteousness first and last which we wait for.” (6:22) Goodwin denounced the Church of Rome again for distinguishing first justification from final justification. The papists agree to rely upon the merits of Christ wholly for the first justification while they think that man’s own inherent righteousness counts for the final phase of our justification. They contend that their good works are “dipped in Christ’s blood.” (6:21)

Now we face two cases of conscience: how do we settle the problems of (1) the remembrance of old sins, and (2) sins newly committed? “Look therefore as God ordained the rainbow in the heavens,” Goodwin counseled, “when he [God] looked on it, he might remember his covenant, never to destroy the world again by water; so he set Christ as the rainbow about his throne.” Just as the Lord’s supper is set up as a remembrance of Christ’s death and resurrection for our comfort, so is “Christ himself appointed in heaven to shew forth his death really as a remembrancer thereof to his Father.” So all sins, old or new, cannot

affect us as long as we have such a rainbow in heaven on our behalf as Christ. (4:65)

It is imputed

Another important characteristic of God's righteousness is its imputation to man. It concerns how God's righteousness is attributed to us. It is done through imputation because God's righteousness is free grace. Imputation is God's act primarily. In spite of its involvement, faith is "nothing at all in our justification, but only as it apprehends all." (8:134) Imputation corresponds to the "relative change," not the "real change." The imputative nature of justification dovetails its being the free grace of God. Goodwin abhorred the error of Andreas Osiander (1498~1552) who, attacking Melanchthon's forensic justification, asserted that believers partake of the divine nature in justification.²¹ "The justification of a sinner," for Goodwin, "as it supposeth nothing in the man, so neither doth it expect or wait for something to be in him, but it is a pure act of God." (5:343) We do not expect anything in ourselves because only the passive obedience of Christ is "sufficient [to] expiate the guilt of sins of the whole world." Nor do we wait for anything in ourselves because only the active righteousness of Him superfluously satisfies the requirements of the law of God. (5:346) The whole righteousness of Christ, both active and passive, "as it ought to be imputed, so *de facto* it is imputed unto us." (5:347) The last point Goodwin wanted to address here is that in imputation both parts of justification "coalesce into one entire and undivided righteousness." One part is not considered separate from the other.

²¹ TG 5:338. As to the biography of Osiander, see *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Revised edition. Edited by J. D. Douglas. 736.

(5:348)

To illustrate the implication of imputation Goodwin chose Abraham as an example. The latter's experience of justification by God is recorded in Genesis 15 whereas he was converted many years later. "He had no eye to works no more than at the very first." When he was imputed with God's righteousness, he still "looked upon himself as ungodly." So we are "justified by faith all along, after conversion as well as before we are," for the righteousness comes of God's imputing. Goodwin wondered why "after conversion a man may be said to be an ungodly person. And how can this be?" He found that "Paul in Christ" is different from "Paul in himself." When a person comes to be justified, he views himself not as a man in Christ, but as a man "in himself to be an ungodly person, utterly ungodly," or rather in his "nakedness, as a person abominable, cast out!" Finally Goodwin concluded that "It is not a man's godliness takes away the guilt of his ungodliness, but it is only God's imputing a righteousness to him that is none of his own." (6:104-105)

It glorifies God most

The way of imputation leads naturally to the fact that "above all other of the parts ... of the application of salvation unto us," God receives glory most "in point of justification." For in other parts, God has some shares with ours. But in justification, "God is so tender and jealous, as he utterly and altogether excludes works." He reserves glory for Himself alone! (5:366)

To explicate this fact Goodwin compared justification with sanctification and adoption in Ephesians 1:4-7. These last two "were ordained us without the consideration of the Fall," whereas the first has us "considered as sinners and unbelievers." Obviously the former

needs a “greater degree of his grace” than the latter, because the former is “founded merely upon the merits of Christ” and needs “the removings of those obstacles which by reason of sin stood in our way to that intended glory.” Hence its glory is double glory. (1:117-19) Justification reveals more glory than other graces do.

Three Stages of Justification

Goodwin also discussed the *tria momenta* of justification. He explained that it is not saying there are “three parts” of it, nor that God bestows Christ’s righteousness “by parcels,” but that He “entitles us to the whole” in these progresses. “In regard to our investiture into this, there are three pauses.” (8:134) But for God “all things stand before him from eternity, all things both past, present, and to come, being to him as present.” Goodwin also notified us that this process “also answers to the distinct works of the three persons, who, as they have a distinct hand in the whole work of redemption, so also in ... our justification.” (8:135) The first stage is the eternal justification between Christ and the Father “through a secret yet irrevocable covenant.” (4:40) The second stage is the meritorious righteousness Christ won for us through His death and resurrection. The final stage is the justification by faith through the Spirit.

The Eternal Justification

The first stage was “at the first covenant-making and striking of the bargain from all eternity.” This is the covenant of redemption between God the Father and God the Son who represents all the elect as their head. So justification was “not in our own persons, yet in our Head.” However, we came to “have a being and interest in him.” By virtue of this covenant “Christ had all our sins imputed unto him, and

so taken off from us.” So God would not impute sins unto us, but would look at Christ “for the payment of all,” and discharge us. This is an “everlasting transaction ... an estating us into the whole tenure of life”—Yet this is but the “inchoation.” (8:135)

Christ, Our Righteousness

Goodwin explored the mystery of justification in much detail, especially in his *Christ Set Forth*, an exposition upon Romans 8:34. Christ is the object of the justifying faith. Goodwin followed the last stages of Christ’s ministry—His death, resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and intercession—to study the influence of Christ’s ministry on justification.

At His death

Goodwin asked first “what matter of support and encouragement faith may fetch from Christ’s death for justification.” (4:21) The “payment and performance” of justification was done by Christ. He came to this world as our “surety,” representing us as the Last Adam. For “three and thirty years and upwards” Christ had been paying “several payments,” and “laid down the last payment.” (8:135-136) For no matter what the heinousness, naughtiness, aggravation, deliberation, presumption, etc. of our sins, “Christ’s suffering and satisfaction ... would fitly answer to anything in our sins.” (4:22-23)

At His resurrection

Our original guilt was charged *formally*, “there must be as formal an act of acquitting.” (4:35) Goodwin raised the question: “when was that done ... but at his resurrection?” Goodwin tried to unravel the question by putting two Scriptures together: “justified in the Spirit” in 1 Timothy 3:16 and “quickened by the Spirit” in 1 Peter 3:18. By Spir-

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it is meant the power of the Godhead. Christ was declared justified when He was quickened, “as he had been declared condemned by his death.” Therefore, “to be *justified* is put for his resurrection; for ... that he was justified from all the sins laid to his charge.” (4:36) It is Christ *Himself* justified at His resurrection. Because He was justified as a *common person* representing us, so we were justified in Him accordingly. (4:35)

So “at the instant when he arose God then performed a farther act of justification towards him [Christ], and us in him, admitting him as our advocate, into the actual possession of justification of life, acquitting him from all those sins which he had charged upon him.” Afterwards God received Christ into glory. In respect of the *matter* imputed, justification is attributed to the death and the blood of Christ. But the *formal* justification is ascribed to the resurrection of Christ. (8:136) But only when we believe in Christ is justification actually and personally applied to us. “Yet at Christ’s resurrection ... this act ... was *virtually* pronounced upon us.” (4:41. Italics mine.)

At His ascension and enthronement

Why did Goodwin go on to consider the influences of Christ’s enthronement and intercession upon justification? For him, justification comprises two parts as mentioned above. “Now dying and rising as a common person for us, procures the first, sets us perfectly enough in that state of freedom from condemnation.” It is needful that “Christ, his entering into heaven as a common person, sets us far above that state of non-condemnation,” which is the second part, “justification of life.” (4:51) “By his resurrection, we may see and rest assured that he hath the keys of death and hell ... and by his ascension and sitting at God’s right hand, that he hath the keys of heaven, whose door he hath

unlocked, and now set open.” (4:53) So Christ’s death and resurrection are the “ground and foundation” of our justifying faith, while other elements are the “top and full triumph of faith therein.” (4:45)

As to the ascension of Christ, from Ephesians 4:8 and Colossians 2:14-15 Goodwin expounded that after His spoiling His enemies on the cross, Christ “further makes a public triumphal show of them in his own person ... at his ascension.” (4:47) Christ just showed what He had spoiled and subdued on the cross. But the essence of the influence from His ascension is shown by John 16:9-10. Christ says that His ascension to the Father is for the purpose that the Comforter shall convince the world of righteousness. After His satisfaction for sin at the cross, according to Goodwin’s comment, Christ will go to heaven to procure a “perfect righteousness ... which God’s justice doth accept of.” Therefore, that His disciples will not see Him any more is a sign that Christ now stands in heaven. Otherwise God would send him down again to do the rest, and the disciples should certainly see him sent back again with shame. But “I go to heaven, and you shall see me no more.” (4:48) The righteousness was perfected above.

His enthronement has its crucial contribution in the justification of sinners. It is a “posture of judges; a phase used to note out their authority.” If Christ, who “loved us so, and died for us, be the Judge himself,” then negatively speaking, believers shall have no fear of condemnation. Moreover, He sits there as a common person. So we are also said to sit together with Him “in the highest heavens” and to sit “as assessors on his judgment-seat, to judge the world with him.” (4:54)

At His intercession

Justification, regardless of its initial or continual acts, all depends

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upon the intercession of Christ in heaven. Christ now is our Mediator and Great High Priest of the new order in heaven. Hebrews 12:24 tells us that Christ sprinkles His blood as a Priest in heaven. “This sprinkling ... is from the virtue of his intercession.” Goodwin ascribed intercession to the continuing cause of justification. “There is no fresh act of justification goes forth, but there is a fresh act of intercession.” (4:64) The relation of intercession and justification is what providence is to creation. As Christ continues to intercede on our behalf as a priest forever, so we are to be justified forever. (4:65)

Justification By Faith

If God the Father is the original cause of justification, and Christ, the meritorious cause of it, (8:133) then the actual cause of it is our faith. (4:64) The first two acts are wholly “out of us, immanent acts in God.” They concern “*towards us*, yet are not acts of God *upon us*.” Both Romans 5:9, 11 and 1 Corinthians 6:11 speak of a “*now* of justification.” Only at the instant we first believe in Christ, are we “in our own persons made true owners and enjoyers of it.” This act of faith is the “completion and accomplishment of the former.” (8:137)

But in the case of justification by faith, we should put emphasis on *righteousness* rather than on *faith*. “It is not that God doth justify us by *faith*, as it is an act put forth by us, an act of ours, or a quality in us, but he doth justify us by reason of the *objects* laid hold upon by faith, the free grace of God,” Goodwin explained. (8:299. Italics mine.) Actually, faith itself is also a gift of God. No one can boast except of God’s grace. Faith is but the instrument by which we apprehend the grace of justification. Goodwin continued to illustrate their relation: when we say that a house is enlightened by opening the window, it only means that “opening of the window lets in the sun that enlighten-

eth it.” By the same reason “faith is said to justify, because it lays hold upon, lets in Christ, and God as justifying, into the heart of a sinner.” (8:300) So Goodwin averred:

Faith may have a thousand other virtues and properties in it; but the glory it gives to Christ and his righteousness in point of justification is that which makes it precious faith indeed. This stone set in it, serving to make the lustre of this righteousness to shine forth, is that which makes the ring so rich and precious. (6:183)

The glory of *faith* is like the moon while that of the divine *righteousness*, the sun. The former is derived from and dependent on the latter. So let us give glory to the ultimate source.

Justification and Sanctification

In treating the doctrine of justification Goodwin was confronted twice with a thorny problem: there is an element of holiness in justification itself!²² He did not evade it or ignore it. He stated it honestly. I think that is what John Murray later calls the definitive sanctification.²³

A Perfect Justification!

The biblical context is Romans 8:15-16 where, upon our believing, the Spirit of truth testifies to our new status. There must be “a real truth” in us for the Spirit of truth to testify. “When we are said to be justified by faith,” Goodwin discovered, “it implies more than a justi-

²² See TG 8:137-38 in *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*; TG 5:349-52 in *Christ the Mediator*. The latter was published in 1642.

²³ John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1984.) 2:277-93.

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fication in our conscience, and causing us to apprehend our justification.” (8:137) He inferred that

there is an act passeth from God which makes a *real change* in our estates, from a state of ungodliness to an estate of justification; which is a *real moral change, as truly and as really as sanctification is a physical change*, and that not only in our apprehension and judging of ourselves, but in the course of God’s proceedings of judgment upon us; that whereas before, he ... would and must have proceeded with us as persons ungodly, out of Christ, now ... he doth pronounce us just, and we come actually to have a *real* claim, title, and interest ... in justification (8:137-38. Italics mine.)

But Goodwin did not elaborate any further in this place. He only identified a *real, moral, and physical change* found in us when we have faith in Christ. This change is not *relative change*, of which sort justification should be.²⁴ However, Goodwin linked this real change with justification and not with sanctification, for it involves our title in God’s sight. One thing we can confirm is that Goodwin found something quite strange: a kind of holiness involved in justification.

A more thorough treatment fell in Chapter XX, Book V of his *Christ the Mediator*. Here he commented upon Romans 8:1-4. He found a “regenerate man at his worst” in Romans 7. (5:349) In spite of the conflict between grace and natural corruption, there is no condem-

²⁴ TG 2:315. Here Goodwin classified the salvific changes into two groups: a relative change and a real change. The former “consisteth merely in title,” while the latter, “works in us.” When he used the word “physical,” he just meant a *real, moral* change. In this change God infuses His grace into us. See TG 2:318.

nation of this man in Christ. The first four verses in Romans 8 are meant for justification, he said. Then the no-condemnation even extends to the corruption of nature. He talked about the imputed justification very much elsewhere. But here he focused on the no condemnation of the innate corruption. There is a “spirit of regeneration”²⁵ or “a stream of spirit” in this man that makes him fight against his lusts, even in the midst of his “captivity” described in Romans 7. What is the law of the Spirit of life which delivers him from the law of sin and death? This law is known by its opposite, sin and death—that is, the “inherent corruption.” So, Goodwin deemed, the law is the “holiness of his nature.” Why is it called a *law*? Goodwin appealed to the messianic Psalm 40:8. (“Thy law is within my heart.”) The new nature delights to do God’s will flowing from the law written in his heart. A stronger reason is that Christians are in Christ. The law has the power and authority to free them by virtue of their union with Christ. (5:350) Goodwin concluded,

There is no condemnation to those in Christ, notwithstanding all the remaining corruptions that are in them, it is because there is such a *perfect holiness in Christ*, which being mine by my union with him, frees me from the law and power of sin and death.

The holiness is in Christ’s nature. For Christ was born in the likeness of man’s sinful flesh and circumcised as a common person, which signifies the “cutting off of original corruption.” So the new holiness has the “power to condemn that sin which is in us,” and even “takes away the condemning power of original corruption in us.” This no-

²⁵ Cf. TG 10:43 where he says “there is a work of regeneration also required, which is a renewing the nature of man.”

condemnation is not by the righteousness, but the holiness of Christ! (5:351. Italics mine.)

Goodwin summarized a “perfect justification” by adding a new element to his former definition of justification. There are three elements. The **second part** is the same as before. The addition of a new element is indeed created by a split of the first element into two. At his former definition he did not limit the first part to actual sins only.²⁶ Now in the new definition the **first part** is the “taking away of *actual sin*” by the passive obedience of Christ, (5:351-52) while the **third part** is taking away *original sin* by Christ, who once assumed the likeness of sinful flesh and perfectly sanctified human nature in Himself. As a matter of fact the third part can also be put in the category of the passive obedience of Christ when He was crucified upon the cross. The division, however, is necessary in the eye of Goodwin, for it is the message of Romans 8:4: “The law is not fulfilled yet; for we have corruption of nature in us.” The only solution is that “Christ came into the world in our nature, and fulfilled the righteousness of the law, in having that nature perfectly holy.” That is the third part of justification. He exclaimed, “here is a perfect justification, and we desire no more.” (5:352)

Goodwin had to confess that this “perfect justification” is a *relative change*, plus a *real change*. John Murray shares a similar theological concern with Goodwin. He observes,

When we speak of sanctification we generally think of it as that process by which the believer is gradually transformed more and more But it is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the

²⁶ “Acquittance from sin and freedom from condemnation;” see TG 4:51

New Testament the most characteristic terms that refer to sanctification are used, not of a process, but of a once-for-all definitive act.²⁷

So there are two modes of sanctification: definitive and progressive. Murray finds in Romans 6, the typical passage teaching the doctrine of sanctification, that there is a “once-for-all definitive and irreversible breach with the realm in which sin reigns in and unto death.”²⁸ After the decisive breach, a new principle is planted in his heart and an antithesis is incurred simultaneously. Once a person comes under the provisions of grace, Murray alleges, “there is no possibility of toning down the antithesis.”²⁹ After examining passages of Apostles John and Peter, he finds there the same doctrine as the Apostle Paul’s. This is a New Testament scene.³⁰ Murray still categorizes it in the locus of sanctification. But Goodwin classified it in the locus of justification in order to make the great doctrine *perfect!* Wherever the decisive element is located, it is always true that there is a new and antithetic holiness in our heart.

Their Relation

Justification and sanctification are so close that Goodwin would rather call them “a twofold righteousness.” Both of them flow from the same union with Christ. Sanctification, of which Christ is thought of as the author, is wrought in a man and called his own. It is imparted,

²⁷ Murray, *Collected Writings* 2:277.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:279.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:280.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:280-84.

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not imputed. (5:357) So it is drastically different from justification. The distinction lies in that it is able to “subdue sin, take away the power of it, change the heart, make a man a new creature” while justification removes the guilt of sin. They also function as signs of assurance of salvation. Goodwin denominated them as blood and water respectively, the first two earthly witnesses in 1 John 5:8. (8:362)

No matter how close they are, their distinction requires us not to confound them. The position of the Church of Rome confounds them in supposing that man is justified by his own inherent righteousness, not by an imputed righteousness. Goodwin refuted this confusion first as an absurdity, then a wickedness. Goodwin made efforts to maintain the difference between the two. (2:316) For the papists ruin the holy design of God and transform the Christian religion into a system of sacraments and penance. In their system, justification has been devoured by their wrongly conceived sanctification. In Goodwin’s days there was another peril, that of antinomianism, which tried to absorb the glory of sanctification into a newly-coined doctrine of justification. A biblically-balanced relation between these two major doctrines is always important for Christian churches.

Justification: Paul vs. James

The popular controversy of St. James’ “justification by works” is also treated in Goodwin’s treatise, *Of Gospel Holiness*. To reconcile the “clean contrary,” Goodwin presented the idea of a double justification by God: “the one *authoritative*, the other *declarative* or *demonstrative*.” The first one is the one *coram deo*, as man appears before God “nakedly.” So it is authoritative. St. Paul uses Abraham as an example to show that this justification is by faith alone, not by works, in Romans 4. (7:180-81)

But at the latter day, God will be the judge over the whole world. At that day God will make a difference between those justified “out of his prerogative” and those “he hath left under wrath.” Because God has ordered it so: at that day “he will not put the possession of salvation upon that private act of his own, without having anything else to show for it.” Election and justification are the *private* works of God; the last judgment, *public*. The two different justifications correspond to these two different occasions. However, Goodwin hated to refer to them as two separate justifications. Rather, he joined them and called it “a double justification.” (7:181)

Therefore today God shows grace to a man regardless of his works. But the man should go to work “demonstratively.” The believing Abraham differentiates himself from the unbelieving Ishmael and Laban by such good works. James’ scope is, according to Goodwin, that God “will justify his own acts of justification, of this man, and not of that.” In other words, James focuses on the *demonstrative* aspect of the double justification while Paul, the *authoritative*. (7:181)

Goodwin continued to do his work of harmonization. He appealed to the parable of sheep and goats given by our Lord in Matthew 25:31-46. Judgment according to works means a *demonstrative* kind of justification or condemnation. At the latter day “our sentence of salvation is termed expressively a justification; and this very thing is asserted by Christ Himself” in Matthew 12:36-37. So James’ language is acceptable biblically. Actually we can find James’ scope in the Pauline texts. Goodwin enumerated Romans 2:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 4:5. But Paul uses other words which James does not use to present the same idea.

So, then, Goodwin concluded, “Paul’s judging according to

works, and James his justification by works, are all one.” Thus James’ scope is not inconsistent with Paul’s great doctrine: justification by faith. (7:182-83)

Reconciliation

Reconciliation was treated almost inextricably with justification by Goodwin. To our amazement he paid no less attention to reconciliation than to justification. He even devoted several series of sermons to it.³¹ George Ladd finds that reconciliation is closely allied with justification. The latter declares “the acquittal of the sinners from all guilt of sin” while the former, “the restoration of the justified man to fellowship with God.” That reconciliation does not occupy a large space in Paul’s epistles does not mean that it is a less essential doctrine in his thought.³² There are four kinds of reconciliation, namely, (1) Christological: God’s reconciling Himself to us in Christ; (2) ministerial: the ministry of reconciliation; (3) soteriological: our being reconciled to God; and (4) dispensational: the reconciliation of Gentiles and Jews through Christ in New Testament times. Our primary concern is the third one: our being reconciled to God. This is a work of the Holy Spirit.

³¹ Book III of his *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation* in TG 6:117-50; *Reconciliation by the Blood of Christ* upon Col. 1:20 in TG 5:499-521; Two Sermons upon Eph. 2:14-16 in TG 2:357-90; *The Reconciliation of the People of God by Christ’s Death* upon Eph. 2:14-16 in TG 5:463-78. The last two treat the reconciliation between Gentiles and Israelites. We will examine the first two documents which treat the reconciliation *proper*.

³² The Pauline Scriptures regarding this doctrine are Rom. 5:1, 9-10; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Col. 1:20-22; Eph. 2:14-16. George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974.) 450. Reconciliation receives more attention and treatment in biblical theology than in systematic theology.

Views of Calvin, Ames & Westminster

When we read John Calvin’s *Institutes* and his *Commentaries*, we are deeply impressed by his frequent quotations of those texts regarding reconciliation, and by his constant reiterations of this doctrine in topics of atonement and salvation. He did not isolate reconciliation as an independent locus of soteriological doctrines from justification. Rather, he deemed it as a synonym of justification and expounded upon it under the doctrine of justification. Ames followed Calvin in this respect.

Calvin on reconciliation

Calvin said that “reconciled” doubtlessly means “justified”. The text of 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 is the “best passage of all” for us to understand the doctrine of justification. Because here is shown the antithesis of righteousness against guilt, and the imputation of God’s righteousness.³³ He took Romans 5:9-10 as an analogy of Romans 3:24-25, the *locus classicus* of the doctrine of justification. On one occasion he quoted Romans 5:9-10 and deliberately displayed the parallelism of these two verses. So we can safely come to an exegetical conclusion: reconciliation and justification are sometimes synonyms in Calvin’s mind.³⁴ But at other times he may think that the nature of salvation cannot be better demonstrated by any other concept than by the import of reconciliation. He then felt no hesitation to use the phrase—“to reconcile us to God the Father”—to present the many-sided con-

³³ John Calvin, *Institutes* 3.11.4. Battle’s edition, 1:729.

³⁴ *Institutes* 2.16.5 or 1:507-508.

cept of atonement in short.³⁵

While expounding upon Colossians 1:19-20, Calvin demonstrated the superiority of the doctrine of reconciliation over that of justification in terms of the perimeter of influence. Reconciliation reaches up to heaven. Calvin understood heaven in this text as *angels*. Do they need reconciliation with God? Does it mean that the devil can be forgiven and reconciled? No, “not to the devils.” But there is no revolt, no sin for those good angels. Why do they need a grace of reconciliation? Calvin answered: (1) they, being creatures, do need that grace to transcend “the risk of falling;” (2) in them “there is not ... so much righteousness as would suffice for full union with God.” He then concluded that the grace of Christ “does not reside in men alone but is common also to the angels.”³⁶

The nature of reconciliation is similar to that of justification. Both are judicial, not inherent graces as is sanctification. Both progress in stages: first accomplished by the Mediator at His death, and then experienced by us in our hearts. Both are once for all. However, both are everlasting in efficacy, because they share the same fountain—the death of Christ.³⁷

Preceding the conciliation, there is offense. “God, to whom we were hateful because of sin, was appeased by the death of his Son to

³⁵ *Institutes* 1.11.7 or 1:107.

³⁶ Calvin, *Commentary* on Col. 1:19 or Eerdmans’ translation, 11:20-21.

³⁷ So on the other hand, Calvin wrote, “Christ ever *remains* the Mediator to reconcile the Father to us, and his death has everlasting efficacy.” To be reconciled is also a moment-by-moment exercise *coram deo*. See Calvin, *Institutes* 3.14.11 or 1:779.

become favorable toward us.”³⁸ Calvin found a “marvelous and divine way,” which is the ambivalence of God toward us. “He loved us even when he hated us!”³⁹ God hates us because of sin. But He ceases to do it “as far as He receives us into the body of Christ by His secret counsel.”⁴⁰

When he discussed soteriological reconciliation, Calvin usually emphasized it as the sweet fruit of justification. It is “peace or quiet joy ... in consciences,”⁴¹ enjoyment of the fellowship with God offered by the gospel,⁴² beginning to love God,⁴³ assurance of salvation,⁴⁴ etc. This peace also “originates from the awareness of having God reconciled to oneself.”⁴⁵

Soteriological reconciliation is subjective whereas Christological reconciliation is objective. We are “repeatedly to exhort ... to be reconciled to God in Christ’s name.”⁴⁶ The fact that it is a grace wrought by the Spirit in our heart *passively* does not negate our responsibility to receive it *actively*. Calvin once paraphrased Romans 5:10-11 in this way—“We were reconciled, and received reconciliation through his

³⁸ Calvin, *Institutes* 2.17.3 or 1:531.

³⁹ *Institutes* 2.16.4 or 1:507. This is a quotation from Augustine’s *John’s Gospel*.

⁴⁰ Calvin, *Commentary* on Rom. 5:10 or 8:110.

⁴¹ Calvin, *Institutes* 3.13.5 or 1:767.

⁴² *Institutes* 3.5.5 or 1:675. See also 3.14.6 or 1:733.

⁴³ *Institutes* 3.14.6 or 1:733.

⁴⁴ *Institutes* 3.2.16 or 1:561. This assurance is the “highest degree of glorying.” See his *Commentary* on Rom. 5:11 or 8:110.

⁴⁵ Calvin, *Commentary* on Rom. 5:1 or 8:104.

⁴⁶ Calvin, *Institutes* 4.1.22 or 2:1035.

death”—to demonstrate its paradox.⁴⁷ The paradox can better be thought of as a process of how we procure the gift of reconciliation.

Louis Berkhof also notes the two sides of reconciliation in the locus of atonement.⁴⁸ Charles Hodge says that man should not refuse this gracious offer from God, but rather just experience and embrace it, in his *Commentary on 2 Corinthians*.⁴⁹ But he excludes any discussion of subjective reconciliation in his *Systematic Theology*.⁵⁰ Some Reformed theologians, such as Heinrich Heppe and R. L. Dabney, do not discuss reconciliation—except the objective aspect of it, if at all. The frequent appearances of it in both atonement and soteriology in Calvin’s works make a striking contrast with its recessiveness in current systematic theology textbooks!⁵¹

Ames on reconciliation

Ames also deemed reconciliation synonymous with justification on some occasions. Justification or “absolution from sins is called many things ... but these all have the same meaning.” He followed the steps of Calvin in this respect. “When sin is thought of as enmity

⁴⁷ *Institutes* 2.17.3 or 1:531.

⁴⁸ See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 373, 375.

⁴⁹ Charles Hodge, *I & II Corinthians*. 1857~59. (Reprint by Banner of Truth, 1974.) 518, 523.

⁵⁰ Hodge discusses reconciliation under the atonement of Christ, but not so under soteriology, in his *Systematic Theology*. G. E. Ladd notices this. See his *A Theology of the New Testament*. 454, n 41.

⁵¹ John Murray provides an excellent section on reconciliation in his *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955.) 33-42. However, he does it under the atonement of Christ, for he emphasizes the Christological reconciliation.

against God, justification is called reconciliation, Romans 5:10.”⁵² So reconciliation, for him, is found within the concept of justification.⁵³

Paralleling justification, reconciliation also has three stages. Only in the third stage is it known to man.⁵⁴

As in many doctrinal *loci*, William Ames played the role of middleman between Calvin and Goodwin in this case. He mentioned reconciliation much less than Calvin. Nevertheless, it was still treated in his theology. Goodwin obviously recovered its liveliness found in Calvin.

The Westminster Standards

After checking with all occurrences of the four Pauline passages quoted regarding reconciliation,⁵⁵ we find that: **(1)** They are quoted twelve times as proof texts for the doctrine of justification in *WCF* 11:1-4 (*Of Justification*), *WLC* 70 (What is justification?), *WLC* 71 (How is justification an act of God’s free grace?) and *WSC* 33 (What is justification?); **(2)** They are quoted four times for showing peace of conscience as the fruit of justification in *WCF* 18:3, 20:1, *WLC* 83 and *WSC* 36; **(3)** The enmity of mind preceding reconciliation contained in these texts is referred to twice for proving the sinfulness of man in *WCF* 6:4 and *WSC* 18; **(4)** 2 Corinthians 5:20 is quoted for the preaching of the Word in *WLC* 67; **(5)** The passage Colossians 1:19-20 is quoted once concerning Christological reconciliation in *WCF* 8:5 and

⁵² William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology* 1.27.22 or Eusden’s translation, 163.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 165; or *Marrow* 1.28.6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 149; or *Marrow* 1.24.4. Cf. *Marrow* 1.24.2 or Eusden, 149.

⁵⁵ I.e. Rom. 5:1, 9-10; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Col. 1:20-22; Eph. 2:14-16.

(6) Ephesians 2:14-19 was quoted twice for proving the dispensational reconciliation in *WCF* 19:3 and 7:6.

Westminster divines rarely used the terms *reconciliation* or *reconciled*; however, all its essential elements were contained in the confession and the catechisms. Judging from the fact that they frequently quoted the Pauline passages regarding reconciliation in proving justification, the synonymity between them in their mind was implied. In other words, they presented reconciliation in the doctrine of justification. This may explain why reconciliation was integrated into justification while adoption, which is also closely related to justification, formed a separate chapter in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

The Nature of Reconciliation

Now we turn to Goodwin. The doctrine of reconciliation, especially the soteriological one, is the Cinderella of Reformed theology. But it was not so in Calvin and Goodwin. They welcomed this dignitary warmly. They also shared congenial theological position with respect to it. Justification cannot glow at its best until reconciliation is considered its companion doctrine.

Reconciliation, for Goodwin, like justification and adoption, is not a real change, but *a relative change*. He explained that a relative change “consisteth merely in title,” not “in works in us.” Moreover, this title depends on “God’s accounting, and reputed, and actual reckoning as such.” So reconciliation means God’s “not imputing their trespasses unto them, but accounting them friends, for that is the position of it.” (2:315-16) Title implies *privilege*. It is an “immanent act, in God’s breast and heart.” Reconciliation is indeed a privilege as much as justification is. The reconciliation which is implied by seeing “his face with joy” in Job 33:26 is a higher privilege than justification.

But God is “wont to gratify sincere new converts with” it. (6:124-25) John Murray draws two verses of Romans 5:9-10 as parallel. The fact that “justification is always forensic” gives a “similarly juridical force” to reconciliation. Since the former “does not refer to any subjective change in man’s disposition,” so the latter belongs to “the objective sphere of the divine action and judgment.”⁵⁶

Its Relation to Justification

Is reconciliation a synonymous entity to justification? From Goodwin’s exposition of 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 we know that these two doctrines—reconciliation and justification—are so tightly interwoven that not separating the former as distinct from the latter is biblically justifiable. There are two parts of reconciliation: God’s part—God reconciled the world to Himself in Christ by making Christ sin for us, and our part—we are reconciled to God in Christ by making us the righteousness of God in Christ. (6:376) The essence of reconciliation lies in the holy exchange of sin and righteousness upon our Mediator; this, evidently, is the marrow of justification.

Goodwin expounded vividly upon 2 Corinthians 5:21 as follows: There are two different time frames in reconciliation, one for Christ and one for us. Involved here is the former: “there was a time when God laid all our sins upon Christ, and then another time in which he took our sins off from him, when he had satisfied for them.” This is the time frame of the cross. Goodwin thought that, according to Romans 8:4, it is Christ who fulfilled the law on our behalf. So we are considered in Christ the righteousness of God. The time frame for us is our conversion. This is also a time when “God accounts personally

⁵⁶ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. 39.

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to us Christ's righteousness." That is the time when we are justified. (2:332-33) This difference is also that between Christological and soteriological reconciliation. But Paul uses the language of justification to explain reconciliation.

In his exposition of Colossians 1:20, Goodwin commented that reconciliation crowns the atonement of Christ "with an additional weight of glory." From the perspective of reconciliation, God will "not only satisfy and make peace, but also reconcile, make friends." Goodwin paralleled that with the perspective of justification: "His righteousness will not only pacify vengeance, but there is enough in it to bring us into favour with God." (5:135)

Goodwin never spoke of the synonymy of these two theological terms. For him they are sometimes like closely related twins; one cannot appear without the other. (8:133) They are destined to be linked together that atonement and salvation can be expressed in full. In this sense they are not interchangeable.

In terms of extensiveness, the concept of reconciliation seems superior to that of justification. For the former is deeper and broader than the latter. There are four degrees in the original corruption of human nature: from weakness, to ungodliness, to sinfulness, and finally to enmity against God. (10:86) Justification concerns the reversal of man's sinfulness to righteousness. But reconciliation restores man from enmity—the lowest in his fallen status—to amity, the original purpose of his creatureliness. (5:481) What a thoroughgoing grace it is! But at the same time we see the disadvantage in reconciliation: it covers too wide a spectrum of graces. Here lies the advantage of the less extensive justification: it is very specific in describing the central message of salvation.

As reconciliation brings more effects than justification, so the former is naturally considered a fruit of the latter. Justification has many fruits, such as peace with God, assurance, love of God, and joy in Him. According to Romans 5:1 and 11, peace is the immediate fruit of justification and paves the way for highest fruit—joy from the assurance of salvation.⁵⁷

When its sphere of influence is considered, the uniqueness of reconciliation is shown to be without equal. As did Calvin before him, Goodwin thought that the angels were not created unto a vision of God in heaven. So they need “confirming grace,” or “elevating grace,” to the fullness of the vision of God. Colossians 1:20 imports a second gathering in Christ. Goodwin admitted, on the other hand, that the reconciliation of all things in heaven to God in Christ “is not a proper reconciliation indeed.” For the angels did not have an “actual falling,” but a “possible falling.” So the reconciliation “fixed them to God for ever.” (1:185)

The Three Stages of Reconciliation

Next, we should examine the three stages of reconciliation. They are fully synchronized with those of justification. The reason is simple: they are all initiated by the same Father, accomplished by the same Mediator-Redeemer on the cross through the absolution of sins, and applied by the Spirit to our hearts.

Eternal reconciliation

Reconciliation comes from its fountainhead, the offended Father

⁵⁷ TG 2:337. Goodwin mentioned it many times. See also TG 6:25, 122, 315-16; 8:143.

Chapter VII Justification

God. Goodwin called our attention to there having been “an ancient contrivement and agreement, whereby God made Christ ‘sin,’ and laid our sins upon him.” (4:20) 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 are “those eternal passages,” because God the Father was “from eternity reconciling, and not imputing the sins of the world ... of elect, unto them.” (8:410) This agreement was what theologians call the covenant of redemption between God the Father and our Mediator, Christ, in the eternal past. No wonder Goodwin declared that reconciliation is the “great mystery of the gospel.” (5:481) All was laid upon Christ. God did not take after other creditors, engaging Himself to require satisfactions only upon our Surety. (4:29)

Reconciliation at the cross

The second stage follows. Christ came into this world in His time to fulfill the covenant He had with His Father in the eternal past. Christ said, “Lo, I come to do thy will.” (Hebrews 10:5) God’s will was “to take away sins.” Christ spoke when “he took our nature ..., clothed with infirmities like unto us sinners.” (4:20)

Goodwin gave us a much more detailed exposition on this Christological reconciliation from the text of *Christus pax nostra*, i.e. Ephesians 2:14-16. (2:361) He understood the *καὶ* beginning verse 16 as “moreover.” Then verse 16 introduces a “new and distinct discourse.” There are two kinds of peace here: (1) between Jew and Gentile in verses 14-15; and (2) between God and us in verse 16. Actually, the first one corresponds to the dispensational reconciliation. So there is found here a “double enmity,” an answerable “double slaying” and a “double reconciliation” upon the cross by Christ. (2:364) The enmity of verse 15 is “those Jewish rites and ordinances of ceremonial law.” (2:367) The enmity of verse 16 is that “between God and us on the

cross.” God laid all our enmities against God on Christ. When Christ was “slain and sacrificed for them on the cross,” He thereby “slew them, and reconciled us to God.” (2:376) There is a distinction between a “*for us*” aspect and an “*in us*” aspect of the reconciliation. (2:362) The “*for us*” aspect is the Christological reconciliation brought about by Christ alone on the cross. He acted as Head and common person on our behalf. (1:119) Goodwin thought the Lord’s supper is a “solemn commemoration of Christ’s death offered up upon the cross.” Reconciliation wrought by God toward us in Christ is in view. (2:382)

Soteriological reconciliation

Christ could die “ten thousand deaths,” but “both Father and Son have ... resolved that this man should never be better for it [reconciliation] till he comes in.” (6:123)

Goodwin described the subjective experience of it as follows: God gives man “a secret hint,” then He “draws” his heart, “enamours” it with Himself, and “allures” him with His good will. (6:126-27) But on the other hand, faith is the only means to procure this grace. So we should be active to be reconciled to God. (6:308) Goodwin urged us to learn from the example of Shimei. When he heard that David’s kingdom was settled and had power to crush him, “he being conscious of his rebellion, came in voluntarily, and ... submitted, and soon got his peace.” Do it now! (6:150) Being reconciled to God demands immediacy. (6:149)

Definition of Reconciliation

Finally we should be informed of Goodwin’s definition of reconciliation. He repeatedly used Luke 2:14 to define it as consisting of

two parts: peace and good will.⁵⁸

Peace of conscience

Peace means peace with God, because our sins are washed away in the blood of Christ. So our conscience is pacified without the former accusation of Satan through our guilt. These two parts are parallel to Romans 5:9. Before our conversion we are not only sinners, but also enemies of God. Christ has abolished the enmity in us once and for all, so we are reconciled to God. Peace of conscience *coram deo* is the first fruit of justification.

Good will of God

God will “not only satisfy and make peace, but also reconcile, make friends.” The imputed righteousness “will not only pacify vengeance, but there is enough in it to bring us into favour with God.” (5:135) That is the second and higher part, the good will of God. Reconciliation is such that “God *further* causeth this justified soul to see his face with joy.” (6:124. Italics mine.) It is to crown justification “with an additional weight of glory.” The good fruit of God’s good will comes from the “overplus” of the obedience of Christ. Goodwin explained that the righteousness of Christ is “not only able to pay our debts the first day ..., but enough besides to purchase heaven itself as a portion for us, the favour of God.” (5:135-36) This amity is God’s original design for man *coram deo*. (5:481)

⁵⁸ The KJV reads, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” This translation forms a basis for Goodwin to understand the significance of reconciliation. As to its entries, see TG 5:3, 481, 512; 6:120, 134; etc.

Conclusion

Peace as a fruit of justification is listed in Romans 5:1. Good will, or favor with God, is listed in verse 10 of the same chapter. We can then say that the soteriological reconciliation can be understood as a fruit of justification.

Now it is clear why the Westminster divines, including Goodwin, would not separate reconciliation as an independent chapter, as they did with adoption. Reconciliation is so tightly interwoven with justification. More specifically, reconciliation is predicated as the immediate fruit of justification. Though the diction of reconciliation does not appear in the formulation of the doctrine of justification in the *Confession*, the theological concept is nevertheless deeply involved in the formulation of justification to complete a fuller picture. Therefore, it is necessary to tie reconciliation with justification if we desire a comprehensive view of justification in Goodwin’s mind.

Now we will turn to dispensational reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, for in this doctrine Goodwin demonstrated how his eschatology influences his theology. He treated it as early as 1620s in his *A Sermon on Ephesians II.14-16* (2:361-90). But when he treated it again in his *Sermon XII* (on Ephesians 1:10) of his *An Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (1:184-205) in 1641, it becomes a different story. He evidently reinterpreted the same doctrine in a highly apocalyptic tone.⁵⁹

Last words should be given to the *everlasting* aspect of the righteousness which is imputed to us in Christ. It is “one and same right-

⁵⁹ See Chapter II, The Latter-Day Glory—An Evaluation—Link the Latter-Day Glory to Soteriology above. 84-85.

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eousness first and last we wait for.” (6:22) Compared with other graces—such as sanctification and adoption—justification, being a once-and-for-all grace, becomes the best window for us to peep into the future glory. When we are justified by faith in conversion, we are not endowed with a portion of righteousness enough only for the earthly life. The forensic righteousness is “entire and undivided.” (5:348) So in our justification we are really justified *eschatologically*. The righteousness we are hoping for is indeed the same righteousness which has been imputed to us and for which we are exonerated. Moreover, Goodwin remarked that justification is different from other graces in the sense that it is a double glory. (1:119) We are usually drawn to the down-to-earth part of it by which our sins are forgiven. But we should be reminded that we “stand with one foot upon the blessings ordained us from eternity, and intended us when we come in heaven.” (1:117)⁶⁰

Goodwin stepped forward to say that at the latter day God “will not put the possession of salvation upon that private act of his own, without having anything else to show for it.” So today based upon the *authoritative* justification of St. Paul’s epistles, we should further focus on the *demonstrative* justification of St. James as well. This is what Goodwin called “double justification.” (7:180-81) In the same spirit Goodwin tried to hold justification and sanctification closer by supplementing a kind of “real moral change” to justification. (8:138) Then he exclaimed that it is a “perfect justification.” (5:352)

Goodwin once complained that in his time “Protestants not one

⁶⁰ Goodwin designated the former one extrinsic, for Christ acquired it by the work of redemption; and the latter one intrinsic, for men are beloved of God *in* Christ. TG 1:119.

of a hundred are true worshippers.” (3:127) For they “in doctrine [i.e. justification] profess to trust in Christ alone by faith only, ... yet practically their hearts run the way of all flesh before them.” (6:314) According to Revelation 11:1-2, the doctrine of justification must be a “double justification” and “perfect justification” in order to make sure the worshippers are no more the carnal and unregenerate of the outward court. Then “a new reformation” can be “more answerable to the pattern in the mount.” (3:123) If we do not assess his doctrine of justification from the perspective of his eschatology, how can we understand why he would do so many modifications upon the great doctrine of the Reformation? Now this idiosyncratic doctrine of his became one of his most millenarian doctrines!

Chapter VIII

Adoption

The doctrine of adoption has long been another Cinderella of the dogmatics. John L. Girardeau, able exponent of the doctrine of adoption in American Southern Presbyterianism, points out that the doctrine of adoption has not received adequate attention and not attained as mature development as others.¹ Sinclair Ferguson explains that obviously the idea of it “was often hidden by the bright glow of our justification by faith.”²

Calvin’s Contribution

Robert A. Webb wrongly asserts that “Calvin, for example, makes no allusion whatever to adoption”³ Actually Calvin’s contribution to this doctrine was more than just planting a seed. I would like

¹ John L. Girardeau, “The Doctrine of Adoption.” in *Discussions of Theological Questions*. Edited by George A. Blackburn. (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1905; reprint by Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1986.) 428-29.

² Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Children of the Living God*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987.) xii.

³ Robert Alexander Webb, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1947.) 17.

to do a brief review of it from his works. John T. McNeill makes a significant footnote of *Inst.* 3.2.11 in Battles' translation and provides key entries upon adoption therein.⁴ Calvin had located the classical *loci* of it for the Reformed theology; namely, Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5; John 20:17; 1:12, etc. From his expositions in his *Institutes* and related *loci* in his *Commentaries*, Calvin's theological insights can be summarized as follows: (1) He clearly knew the classical *loci* of adoption. (2) He confined adoption strictly to the elect only. So for Calvin there is no natural adoption. (3) His notion of adoption evidently differed from that of justification. By censuring Osiander's confusion of justification and sanctification, he answered that these two graces are inseparable and, moreover, "Whomever, therefore, God receives into grace, on them he at the same time bestows the spirit of adoption [Rom. 8:15], by whose power he remakes them to his own image."⁵ He made distinction between a kind of receptive grace, which should be justification from the context, and adoption as much as he did between justification and sanctification. (4) The notion of adoption, for Calvin, seems to be related to sanctification in terms of the doctrine of the *imago deo*.⁶ (5) Adoption stresses the Fatherhood of God, hence our nearness to and intimacy with Him.⁷ (6) Adoption entitles us to the eschatological inheritance.⁸

⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes* 3.2.11, or Battles' edition, 1:555.

⁵ *Institutes* 3.11.6, or 1:732.

⁶ Cf. Girardeau distinguishes "the blood" from the "water." The blood symbolizes the change in our relations to God, including under it justification and adoption. The water symbolizes the change in our nature and characters, including under it regeneration and sanctification. Their contrast is also objective vs. subjective. Girardeau, "The Doctrine of Adoption." 486.

⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes* 2.12.2 on John 20:17; 3.20.36 on 1 John 1:12.

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(7) The assurance of eternal election of God is only addressed in the experience of the filial cry of “Abba Father” through the Spirit of adoption. Therefore adoption functions as the link between election and assurance; and ushers in assurance—the apex of salvation on earth. He frequently intertwined these two doctrines—adoption and assurance—together. (8) Calvin also noticed that the significance of this doctrine in redemptive history lies in that it contrasts the bondage of the old age with the freedom of the new.⁹ (9) Calvin made distinction of adoption and regeneration in John 1:12 and 13. Then he could construct his *ordo salutis* of regeneration, faith and adoption without any confusion.¹⁰

Calvin had indeed brought the doctrine of adoption to a considerable development, which is much more than the impression we generally have had of him. Different approaches to the doctrine--soteriological, experiential, eschatological, redemptive-historical--have all been present in the above nine points.

Ames & Westminster

Without any doubt Ames was the transitional person between Calvin and the *WCF* in the doctrine of adoption. William Ames (1576~1633) treated adoption fairly in his *The Marrow of Theology*. There are twenty-seven entries in the chapter of adoption, Chapter XXVIII of Book I. Ames noticed that adoption “progresses in the same

⁸ *Institutes* 3.22.1; 3.18.2; 2.12.2.

⁹ *Institutes* 2.11.9 on Rom. 8:15; 2.7.15 on Gal. 4:5b. But Calvin also admitted that adoption is a grace shared by the old dispensation. See Calvin’s *Comm.* on Rom 9:4, or Eerdmans’ edition, 8:194; cf. *Institutes*. 3.2.22 or 1:568.

¹⁰ Calvin’s *Comm.* on John 1:12-13, or Eerdmans’ edition, 4:17-19.

steps as justification. ... first in God’s predestination Afterward ... in Christ. ... then ... in the faithful themselves.”¹¹ He, like Calvin, juxtaposed adoption with justification without confounding them. So he continued to say that “By adoption we are not made just, which would follow if adoption were only a part of justification itself Neither is it a calling to Christ. Adoption is rather a sublime dignity”¹²

Ames also made another breakthrough in this doctrine by pointing out that “Adam might be called *metaphorically* the son of God, because of his dependence on God and the likeness and image of him in which he was created”¹³ But now we are “the first-begotten of God by the grace of adoption and communion with Christ.”¹⁴ Amesian adoption would accomplish what God could not do in the Garden of Eden and even much more than that. Therefore adoption further means “all the glory prepared for the faithful and expected by them in heaven.”¹⁵ Ames said, “A true part of the adoption is the witness of the Spirit.” The Spirit is for this reason called the Spirit of adoption. When the testimony of the Spirit is said to yield assurance, it is more biblical to say that it is to testify to our adoption by God.¹⁶

But Ames also showed the down-to-earth side of adoption. It bears many fruits: Christian liberty in mundane life, partaking of the

¹¹ William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*. Edited and introduced by John Dykstra Eusden. 164.

¹² *Ibid.*, 165. Bear in mind that effectual calling has the connotation of regeneration.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 166. Italics mine.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 165 or *Marrow* 1.28.13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 167 or *Marrow* 1.28.22.

three offices of Christ on earth, the cultural mandate.¹⁷ So this essentially other-worldly doctrine will bring in a mighty ethical force to transform the whole society in many dimensions. In less than two generations Puritans indeed undertook a cultural revolution on both sides of the Atlantic.

The spirit of Ames was kept in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, which was the first creed in church history separating adoption as an independent chapter. Adoption was separately formulated, though short with only one section, in Chapter XII of the *Confession*. The *Savoy Declaration* kept this chapter intact. Now we will turn to Goodwin's exposition upon this locus.

Goodwin on Adoption

Upon the doctrine of adoption Goodwin always used superlative adjectives to describe its superiority over other doctrines. He described it as “one of the greatest benefits of all others,” (5:43) “the highest way,” (5:548) “the highest favour,” (4:562) “the greatest change of our state,” (6:409) and “the height of our happiness.” (4:499) To our bewilderment he never composed one book specifically about it, but only one sermon in his *Ephesians*. (1:83-102) Goodwin, however, expounded adoption whenever he had the chance to do it in many places of his works. Like Calvin before him he interwove both Pauline and Johannine passages into one beautiful integral doctrine. In his expositions he put Scriptures from both sources together without hesitation, in spite of different biblical terms.

¹⁷ Ibid., 167 or *Marrow* 1.28.25-7.

Adoption as a *Privilege*

What is adoption? His plain answer was: “it is right to the glory of heaven, and superadded to holiness.” (1:85) Goodwin said that there are two kinds of God’s mercies. The first sort are such as “impress something on us, work some real new being in us.” He called it “a physical change.” (8:34) Of the first sort there are the future resurrection and sanctification. The second sort are “privileges granted us, which work a mighty change in us in our state and condition before the Lord.” The change is not in *being*, but in its *status*. However, the greatest reality potentially flows from it. (8:36) He argued that “the greatest works in the order of grace are of sovereignty’s make.” For instance, a king has no greater strength than other men, but he “can do strange acts of another kind, which flow from their sovereignty.” His acts are “not by any internal workings *on* the persons, but by external works as *to* the person.” (8:34) Of the second sort are effectual calling, justification and adoption. (8:35–36) In terms of the *ordo salutis*, regeneration precedes adoption, John 1:12–13. (9:327; 6:155) While adoption goes together with sanctification today, yet it belongs essentially not to *grace*, but to *glory*. (1:86) “Pardon of sins goes first,” (1:97) but by the same reason adoption also transcends justification today.

Goodwin not only made adoption distinct from other graces, but also, in the spirit of Calvin and Ames,¹⁸ demonstrated it as a kind of privilege in John 1:12, which Christ dubs upon God’s royal sons. (4:563) It imports *legally* both dignity and power. (2:336) With this

¹⁸ The spirit is displayed especially in the use of all the *loci classici* Calvin used for the doctrine of adoption.

grace our state changes drastically from a slave of sin to a royal son of liberty. Not only so, but plenty of blessings will keep on following it in glory.

Adoption into *Glory*

Through the definition of adoption as a privilege Goodwin stressed that it leads to the glory of heaven. In this respect Goodwin indeed refined what Calvin initiated the eschatological dimension of adoption. He spent much effort on this point.¹⁹ His emphasis upon the eschatological aspect of adoption is understandable. Among the *ordo salutis* the doctrine of adoption radiates the latter-day glory the most. And the latter-day glory dominated the whole theology of Goodwin. No wonder he would elaborate this doctrine whenever he had the chance.

Commenting on Romans 8:23 he indicated that adoption relates to the resurrection glory. Adoption and glory even conjoin in Romans 9:4. It is clearer in 1 John 3:2 that the adopted sons of God are “put for heaven.” (1:86) He also linked regeneration, sanctification and adoption with regard to the image of God in us. As Isaiah 53:10 says, Christ prolongs His days on earth through those who have been regenerated with His seed. We grow in the grace of sanctification. However, “the full conformity to him shall be in heaven” according to 1 John 3:1-2. (6:220) But if we understand adoption as something fully in the future, then we err. From Romans 8:30 he remarked that “the foundation of all glory was then laid.” The “right to eternal life is then given”

¹⁹ See TG 1:30; 4:104-5, 511 on John 20:17. 2:263, 443; 6:220 on 1 John 3:1-2. 1:261; 5:43; 7:372 on Rom. 8:23. 9:310 on Rom. 8:30. 4:245, 323 on Rom. 9:4. Besides the 14 entries, see also 1:83-102, the sermon on adoption in *Ephesians* 1:5.

on earth today, though the entrance of it is at heaven in the future. (9:310)

While he admitted that the physical change in resurrection belongs to what will be done *in* us, he pointed out that the privilege conferred to us, together with the related ultimate glory, is what will be done *on* us. Hence the glory of heaven is comprehensively our adoption. His favorite verse in this regard is 1 John 3:1-2. By these words he said that

As God will be all in all to the human nature of Christ, so he will be to us; we shall have the same glory that Christ hath, for the kind of it, though not for the degree. . . . This is that makes heaven heaven, that you sit together with Christ, . . . that he is the cause and the example of all your happiness. (2:263)

This is also the typical latter-day glory. Note that the apostle at the same time calls us to behold God's love. Only for this reason can we have sonship today on earth! (8:353-54)

Another favorite verse of him for explicate adoption is John 20:17. When entering into His glory, Jesus mentions both Father and God. Rather, He "puts Father first afore being his God." (1:30) Why Father first? Since He eagerly has a message for His brethren. They are the sons of the same Father! From the fatherhood of God Goodwin composed one of his most moving expositions. He calls His disciples "my brethren," which is "a great point of love and condescending in Christ so to entitle them." Compare Jesus with Joseph who introduces himself, "I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt." The latter clause reminds them of their unkindness;

but not so Christ, not a word of that, he minds them not of what

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they had done against him. Poor sinners, who are full of the thoughts of their own sins, know not how they shall be able at the latter day to look Christ in the face when they shall first meet with him. ... He says not, Tell them I have been dying for them, ... but forgets his sufferings as ‘a woman her travail, for joy that a man-child is born.’ (4:104-5)

The forgiving love of Jesus overwhelms the bruised heart, so the poor sinner dares to look into His face and let the latter-day glory shine in.

Goodwin construed the εἰς αὐτόν of Ephesians 1:5 as “for Christ” rather than “for God the Father.” (1:94) For it makes more sense that “we were predestinated to and for Christ, and to the glory of Christ.” (1:90) Through the grace of adoption Christ “might have company in heaven.” This is the greater glory that God “ordained us to be adopted sons through him.” (1:98)

Having confirmed the end of adoption, he enlarged a little upon a sanctioned speculation as to the purpose of the incarnation of God the Son. “Not only upon the consideration and foresight of the Fall,” but also upon the ground of adoption unto which all things were predestinated for Christ. For the person of Christ is “of infinite more worth than they all can be of.” However, he said that “Neither yet ... dare I affirm that Christ should have been incarnate ... man had never fallen.” Facing two ends—being the Redeemer of the sinners and being the Head of the union with all the adopted sons, he said, “the glory of Christ’s person, in and through that union, had the greatest sway.” (1:98) He concluded that “God contrived all things that do fall out, and even redemption itself, for the setting forth of Christ’s glory, more than our salvation.” (1:100) In this inheres the preeminence of the doc-

trine of adoption.²⁰

Predestination and Adoption

Based on his exposition of Ephesians 1:5, Goodwin retraced the distinction of holiness and adoption to that of election and predestination. He analyzed that

Before ever you can come to have a right of inheritance in anything of the other world, you must first be supposed to be in Christ. Now, election is that which first gives you a being in Christ, and then God by the act of predestination did appoint you a well-being through him. (1:85)

Holiness, being the fruit of election, is the image of God which makes man capable of communication with God. In contrast “adoption contains all the great dignity of a Christian in this life; but ultimately ... that fulness of glory whereby we shall be like to Christ in his glory.”²¹ So in his eye “adoption ... is superadded to holiness.” (1:85)

There are two relations God bears unto us in Christ. In Ephesians 1:3-5 and John 20:17 He is God and Father of Christ and hence

²⁰ The fact that in both the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Savoy Declaration* the chapter on adoption came between those of justification and sanctification did not mean that the preeminence of adoption over sanctification was not recognized. The juxtaposition of justification and adoption emphasized that they are of the same sort of grace, forensic or legal. The juxtaposition of adoption and sanctification emphasized that they grow together in relation to the image of God. Actually the preeminence of adoption was displayed in the content of assurance and its order in the *ordo salutis* of the *Confession*. Here we see the wisdom of the divines of the Westminster Assembly.

²¹ Goodwin quoted Rom. 8:23; 9:4; 1 John 3:2 and John 17:22 (“The glory thou hast given me, I have given them.”).

through the union with Christ, ours. Goodwin distinguished

two acts of God towards us from everlasting that proceed from these: namely, election, ordaining us to be holy in conformity to him as our God; and predestination to the adoption of children, as he thereby would and did become a Father to us. (1:87)

However, this distinction is hair-splitting and they are not separable. They are too closely related. The concept of the image of God inheres in sanctification. But the likeness of Christ of us in heaven speaks of adoption. For glory is ultimately “added to grace” and is “the varnish of it.” (1:86) Louis Berkhof defines two sonships—moral and legal—to predicate their similarity.²² At any rate Goodwin’s analysis never lost sight of the difference between holiness and adoption, or of grace and glory.

Sonship and Adoption

Our sonship comes wholly by adoption. There is no natural relation to the Father God. (1:87) The difference between a slave and a son is too vast. Goodwin asked whether the adoption is made “through his merits, or through the mere relation to his person.” By the help of a certain learned Mr. Forbes,²³ he averred that it is through the natural Sonship of Christ. “Adoption, as *primitively* it was in predestination bestowed upon us, was not founded upon redemption, or Christ’s obe-

²² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 516.

²³ He was probably the Mr. John Forbes (1593~1648) listed in Douglas, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 382. John Forbes was a notable theologian at King’s College, Aberdeen. His strong episcopacy made him not welcome at his college. He was exiled to Holland in 1644. In 1645 he published his *Instructiones Historico-Theologicae de Doctrina Christiana*.

dience, but on Christ’s personally being God’s natural Son.” This expression is from the perspective of the eternal predestination. So Goodwin said *primitively*. As we lost all our privileges in Adam then Christ purchased them for us, so it is also true that adoption now is also a fruit of the merit of Christ. But, Goodwin insisted, adoption still “is first intended and founded upon his being God’s natural Son.” (1:96. Italics mine.)

What is the natural Sonship? This is the personal union of the human nature of Jesus with the Son of God. This Sonship is natural, not adoptive. For by eternal generation the Second Person is the Son of God. (4:510) “The Son of God communicates his personality ... to the man Jesus Christ—this is the highest communication, for his nature is communicable to none but the three persons.” (5:52) He “takes up that human nature into a nearer relation to his person, so as to be one person with it immediately.” (6:66) This is also a union with the Father “in a direct line.” (4:512) From Colossians 2:9 Goodwin meditated that the union between Father and Son is a permanent union and “the Godhead is said to dwell in him, and the fulness of the Godhead to fill that human nature, as fire fills the iron that is in it.” (5:51) Christ, the second Adam, reclaimed what Adam had lost. Hence He is “the store-house and treasury of all that grace and glory,” Goodwin explained from Colossians 1:9.

Commenting on the “glory” in John 17:5, 22 and 24, Goodwin said that the glory which the Father had given to Christ is not the essential glory of the Second Person, nor the “mediatory glory” which is solely for the redeemer and the Mediator, but the glory “of his being God-man ... as the immediate consequent of that union.” (4:508) This Father-given glory was “his personal union with the Son of God.”

(4:509) The glory may be incommunicable as in the case of the miracle in John 2:11, or communicable as in the case of “giving grace and holiness” in 2 Corinthians 3:18. (4:508)

Goodwin observed from Gal. 4:4 and 4:6 a parallel of conception of human nature. The first is the natural Sonship and the second, the adoptive sonship through the Spirit. (6:421) Our sonship is derived from the union with Christ. Goodwin also likened the union as a marriage. (4:509) The union is “a copyhold of this Lord of glory, ... derivative of an original.” (4:512)

Natural Sonship?

From Luke 3:38 Goodwin admitted that “Adam was created holy, perfectly holy, ... was the son of God.” But at the same time it was alleged “nowhere that he was the son of God by adoption through Christ.” What he meant is that the spiritual privilege endowed in the grace of adoption through Jesus Christ was impossible for Adam to achieve in the covenant of works. (1:97) Because “to be a son of God by Christ ... is a higher thing, and puts the spiritualness upon it;” (6:180) so for Goodwin there was nowhere the existence of a natural sonship. Human sonship was only through adoption by Christ.

Goodwin: No

The contention of Goodwin was a result of his scheme of the covenant of works. He concurred with the view of Ames in this regard. An Eden with its eschatological implication had long been a tradition since Augustine. But for Ames and Goodwin such an Eden as described by Augustine was untenable.²⁴ So the natural sonship can in no

²⁴ As to the details, see Chapter III, Covenant Theology—Thomas Goodwin on Covenant of Works.

way achieve the glory of adoption.

John L. Girardeau: Yes

For so many years there was an inclination in Reformed theology to absorb the doctrine of adoption into that of justification. James Henley Thornwell (1812~1862), the leading American Southern Presbyterian theologian of his day, started to recover the splendor of adoption.²⁵ He proposed a question: “how may a servant, through adoption, become a son.” All other doctrines surrounded the central theme. His most valuable work upon doctrine lay in “...the supreme and regulative place he assigned to *Adoption*.” So Thornton C. Whaling concludes that “This is his chief achievement as a Theologian, making a distinct advance upon the Reformed soteriology”²⁶

Afterwards John L. Girardeau asked a more preliminary question: “Is he [man], in any sense, a son of God by nature?”²⁷ Against the views of R. S. Candlish and Thornwell he appealed to biblical passages such as the genealogy in Luke 3:38 tracing back to Adam, the son of God; the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24; and Paul’s argument in Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31.²⁸ He then affirmed his proposition: “The natural relation of man to God as a Father remains.”²⁹

²⁵ For more details about the adoption of Girardeau, see my term paper, “John L. Girardeau on the Doctrine of Adoption.” under Dr. Douglas Kelly for the course of *Southern Presbyterian Theology*, March 1, 1992 in WTS.

²⁶ William Childs Robinson, *Columbia Theological Seminary and the Southern Presbyterian Church*. 216-217.

²⁷ Girardeau, “The Doctrine of Adoption.” 429.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 429.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 433.

Chapter VIII Adoption

Girardeau broke through the more restrictive definition of the Fatherhood of God and extended it to the realm of creation. John Murray distinguishes four kinds of biblical Fatherhood of God; namely, inter-trinitarian, creative, theocratic and adoptive Fatherhood.³⁰ The New Testament is liable to narrow the Fatherhood to the first and fourth kind.³¹ Girardeau contended that the natural relation of man to God as a Father cannot be destroyed by his fall, despite the fact that the spiritual and legal relation is destroyed by it. Through redemptive grace the spiritual and legal sonship is restored again.³²

But the most essential readjustment of Girardeau upon adoption rests on his high view of the covenant of works in Eden. Girardeau modified Thornwell's doctrine of moral government to match his concepts of probational justification and creative adoption. Thornwell distinguished moral government from moral discipline; the former one fits a servant while the latter, a son. In Thornwell's mind man is only a servant of God in Eden. But Girardeau indicated that man is a servant of God as well as a son of God even in Eden. Man under the original covenant of works can be a servant and a son of God at the same time. So Adam is expected to be awarded with justification and (spiritual) adoption after the gracious probation period. As a servant he is under a rectoral (or retributive) government and as a son, under a disciplinary

³⁰ John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray* 2:223-225.

³¹ Concerning the creative Fatherhood John Murray says that "Nowhere is God expressly called the Father of all men. Hence the concept of universal fatherhood ... must be employed with great caution." As to the theocratic Fatherhood, it refers to "God's adoption of Israel as his chosen people." So it is the "Old Testament counterpart" of the New Testament sonship. *Ibid.*, 224-25.

³² Girardeau, "The Doctrine of Adoption." 432-433; cf. 472.

government.

Against Ames and Goodwin, Girardeau reverted to the scheme of an optimistic Eden along the traditional Augustinian line and constructed a natural adoption for Adam, though hypothetically. The disagreement of Goodwin and Girardeau inheres in their different view towards the covenant of works.

Experience of Adoption

Goodwin knew that to be given the right and title of adoption is one thing, but its full accomplishment must be wrought “by degrees, time after time.” (2:315) That is the experience of it. Romans 8:15-16 and Galatians 4:4-6 are two passages Goodwin used most to express the experiential aspect of adoption. The first experience of a Christian is the *filial cry* to God the Father. God becomes our dear heavenly Father. Formerly the Spirit comes “as a wayfaring man, for a night.” (6:57-58) Now through receiving the Spirit of adoption as sons, the Spirit indwells in our heart with comforts. The past bondage of conviction of sins is gone and instead, a new *liberty* in Christ masters our heart, because we are sons under the new covenant of grace. Adoption makes the covenant of grace very different from the covenant of works. (6:59) *Heirship* of God’s spiritual inheritance is also in our spiritual outlook. Finally, the *immediacy* of the Spirit in the intuitive assurance prepares our heart for the impending glory of the ultimate adoption in heaven. (6:57, etc.) In one word, the experience of adoption upon the earthly pilgrimage is no other than the experience of assurance of salvation.³³

³³ As to the assurance of salvation, see Chapter XI, Assurance and Chapter XII, the Sealing of the Spirit.

Short Conclusion

Given that Calvin had planted a root of the doctrine of adoption and the Westminster divines formulated it in the *Confession*, why had later Reformed theology overlooked it for centuries? The negligence might be explained by the influence of the teaching of Francis Turretin (1623~1687) of Geneva, who “was one of the first to set ... forth” that “adoption is essentially the second part of justification.”³⁴ This opinion is held by Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge,³⁵ R. L. Dabney³⁶ through Turretin’s *Institutio Theologicae Elencticae*, the seminary textbook for decades. (The late Louis Berkhof also holds this view.)³⁷ Under this situation Thornwell and Girardeau started to restore the distinctive significance of adoption in the nineteenth century.

As indicated above, Girardeau’s adoption is an optimistic one. His scheme of the covenant of works in Eden was varnished with the

³⁴ Edwin Hartshorn Palmer, [*Matthias Joseph*] *Scheeben’s Doctrine of Divine Adoption* [1835~1888]. (Kampen [Netherlands] : J. H. Kok, [1953].) 164-165. This confusion Goodwin was aware of. See TG 2:318.

³⁵ Though A. A. Hodge comments upon the adoption of the *WCF*, he does not make the distinction of it. He says that adoption includes both a change of relation, like justification, and a change of inherent nature, like sanctification. See his *The Confession of Faith*. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869; reprint by Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1983.) 191-93.

³⁶ Following Turretin, R. L. Dabney says that “Adoption cannot be said to be a different act or grace from justification.” He obviously fails to recognize the distinction of adoption in the *ordo salutis* of the *WCF*. He also counts John Owen in his fold. It is his misunderstanding of Owen. See his *Systematic Theology*. 627. As to Owen’s standing on adoption, see Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life*. 89.

³⁷ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 515-16. He comes close to the idea of the Westminster adoption at some points; however, he still puts adoption under justification and deems it as one of the positive elements of the latter.

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680) on the Christian Life

eschatological glory of adoption. But for Ames and Goodwin, the case of the covenant of works was not optimistic at all. So Goodwin devoted all the hope of adoption on the real *eschaton*. In the shadow of the latter-day glory it is Goodwin who among many theologians directed the attention of adoption to its eschatological dimension the most. His doctrine of adoption was indeed tinged with his pursuit of the latter-day glory, for it plays a role of expressing his concern in this regard.

Chapter IX Sanctification

Goodwin had a strong conviction that his age was in a desperate need of a third, or a new reformation of the Church of England.¹ Though Martin Luther succeeded in the first separation from the popery and the Reformed church leaders brought in the harvest time of the Reformation, yet God was still “angry ... with the imperfection of his temple building, not yet answering the pattern, and therefore intending to erect a purer temple.” (3:123) One of the essential tasks of the new reformation lay in purging the mixture and imperfection of the “inner temple,” or the visible true worshippers. The key to this purging task was to have them washed with the “water of regeneration and sanctification.” In Goodwin’s mind the true worshippers under the gospel were typified by the “inward holiness.” (3:125)

It is interesting that roughly at the same time when he was preaching his *Revelation* to those British exiles at Arnhem, his *The Trial of A Christian’s Growth*, the most important book on sanctifica-

¹ See Chapter II. The Latter-Day Glory—The Eschatology in His *Revelation*, and the Chart of Revelation’s Synchronism of Thomas Goodwin.

tion by Goodwin, was first published in his native country.² We may feel perplexed by the fact that Goodwin did not dedicate any book specifically to this important doctrine after the one he had done in his early years. But as he did to other doctrines, Goodwin expressed what he thought of sanctification when he had chances. Amassing those expositions dispersed in diverse works, we can fortunately form a fuller view of it.³

Basics of Sanctification

In the preface to *The Trial of A Christian's Growth*, Goodwin clarified his way of handling this doctrine. It is not so much a doctrinal or hortatory treatise in general as a practical case of conscience in particular. His scope was to help spiritually *young* Christians in how to discern their growth in grace. (3:433) According to 1 John 2:13-14, there are three ages in Christ; namely, fathers, young men and babes. (7:475) Goodwin argued that it is the young men or middle-aged Christian group who are “most assaulted with lusts.” Hence the spiritual middle-age is the “eminent time of warfare.” (7:501) A Christian life undergoes the spiritual growth during these fierce battles. To those young men Goodwin addressed this case of conscience with a view to their growth into the Head, Christ. (3:433-34)

² TG 3:433. But Goodwin complained of the “many imperfections and incongruities both in style and matter” of this edition. So after amending it he published it again in 1642 one year after he came home from Holland.

³ In his *Three Several Ages of Christian in Faith and Obedience* on 1 John 2:12-14, collected in TG 7:475-518, Goodwin touched something of the spiritual battle in Christian growth. You may expect something of sanctification from his *Man's Restoration by Grace*, collected in TG 7:519-41, but you will be disappointed. Another lengthy work, *Of Gospel Holiness in the Heart and Life* in TG 7: 129-336, is basically an exposition on evangelical obedience, not on sanctification.

Nature of Sanctification

Goodwin recognized two sorts of God's grace. The first sort is a "physical change," which works some real new being *in* us, while the second sort only grants us privileges, which makes a change *on* our state before the Lord. Sanctification is typical of the first sort, for it is a "working holiness *in* us." Justification then is typical of the second sort, for it is a "work of God *upon* us." (8:34)

Goodwin used another parameter to distinguish justification from sanctification. The distinction between them can be stated thus: justification is "given at once," whereas sanctification "the Lord doth give by degrees and go on to perfect it one after another." The former one is an "act of God upon us, towards us, and therefore a mere act of free grace," whereas the latter implies that it infuses something into us. (2:316-17)

Regeneration is also a "physical change," of the same sort as sanctification. But regeneration is "once for all" while sanctification is the consequent or concomitant of it. (6:409) When one is regenerated, "holiness in the heart is the main and ultimate birth brought forth." (6:389) Goodwin noticed the closeness between them.

End of Sanctification

An in-depth exposition of Ephesians 1:4-5 can help us to understand the essence of sanctification. Both election and predestination are acts of God's blessing from eternity. Adoption is "the fruit of predestination, as perfect holiness is of election." (1:83) Goodwin indicated that "election being a preferring of some before others; doth connote the *terminus quo* ... but predestination more eminently notes out the *terminus ad quem*" So election is the first act by

which we were elected in Christ. This is our *being*. Predestination is the second act of ordaining us into a glorious *well-being* in Christ. (1:84) Goodwin concluded,

Before ever you can come to have a right of inheritance in anything of the other world, you must first be supposed to be in Christ. Now, election is that which first gives you a being in Christ, and then God by the act of predestination did appoint you a well-being through him. (1:85)

He continued to raise the question: “Why is holiness made the fruit of putting us into Christ ...?” He who was elected to be in Christ will become “a member of Christ” and “the spouse of Christ.” Now “the head and members must be homogeneal, and husband and spouse must be of the same kind and image.” So he “must necessarily be holy.” (1:86)

The purpose of sanctification is to make man “capable of communion with him [God].” Holiness is the “image of God and a likeness unto him.” The Bible says, “Without holiness no man shall see God.” Hebrews 12:14. Sanctification is the “groundwork” or the “foundation” for communion with God. “Heaven is but communion with God.” Sanctification recreates us to attain the glory of adoption. Adoption is “superadded to holiness.” (1:85)

A Definition of Sanctification

Now we try to come to a definition of Goodwin’s sanctification. It is a physical and progressive change *in* us unto the perfect holiness of God. The change is evidently a conformity to God’s image, especially to His will as expressed in the law of God. The concept of the image of God then became a window for Goodwin to comprehend

what sanctification is. (6:152) During the process of the conformity there are two parts of the work of sanctification involved: mortification and vivification. (3:457) The new nature of holiness performs in a Christian as the “square and measure of all ... affections and actions.” Hence holiness in him “forms, orders, despoth, guides, directs, acts all for himself.” (6:152) It “puts all into their right order again.” (10:125) It becomes a new disposition for God, “even as God is for himself.” (6:152) So Goodwin in another place reflected that “true holiness in any or in all faculties lies in setting up God as our chiefest end.” (6:272)

Sanctification and the Image of God

Though he chided the partaking of the essential holiness of God as a dream of Andreas Osiander (1498~1552) and refuted the being Goded-with-God through the real transubstantiation as a popish error, Goodwin thought that after man’s having lost the image of God, God was pleased to restore and renew this image in man’s heart a second time. (6:390) The image of God in Christ is threefold. First, it is the *essential* image of God, by which the Son of God reflects the invisible and incomprehensible God. Secondly, it is the *heavenly* image of God shining in glory. Again it is proper only to the only begotten Son of God. Thirdly, it is the *gracious* image of God which communicates to us all the moral attributes of God. (4:267) Obviously the third sense of the image of God is our concern.

God also sets up the “mediate instruments” to re-stamp His image upon man and to impart His holiness in him. The two “mediate instruments” or “middle instruments” are first, the evangelized word of God, which bears a “doctrinal image” of God’s holiness; secondly, the Man Jesus who is the Incarnate word of God and bears a “living,

transcendent image” of it. Though a real conformity to the law of God is as true a sanctification as a conformity to Christ, Goodwin rather appealed to the word of God, for it is more suitable to the initial experience. (6:390)

The very passage of the word of God Goodwin used to explicate the doctrine of sanctification is Hebrews 10:14-16. He used the similitude of *mould casting* to present the doctrine of holiness. The law of God is compared to the mould which will shape the same stamp or fashion upon the “heart” cast into it. Man had long lost the image of God. The law of God is holy and righteous, bearing the same attributes of God as Christ. (6:392) It can present the doctrinal image of God to us.

Our heart must be fashioned into the mould to be sanctified. By nature we live according to the course of the world, Ephesians 2:1; and are fashioned by the world, Romans 12:2. Hence we require a metamorphosis, that is, “get the form and fashion of your hearts altered.” The word of God provides a transforming power in our heart. We, “being cast anew in the word, are made ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ 2 Peter i.4,” and fit to be employed as “a vessel of honour,” 2 Timothy 2:21. The fitness is from its being sanctified. (6:393)

How is the heart molded to the renewed image? First the old image must be broken into pieces. This being not enough, it needs to be melted as well. So the word of God is compared to both the breaking hammer and the melting fire. God melts the soul in order to cast out the dross of corrupt dispositions and lusts. The heart, once softened, is apt to receive the seed of the word with meekness. The transformation is under way when our mind is renewed, Romans 12:2. (6:394) Goodwin further explained that the transformation is a “universal frame and

temper of all the faculties of the soul.” What is changed is not the substance, but the “temper, frame, and disposition of it.” (6:395) Once one is regenerated, there is a habitual preparedness to good duties. “His heart may be hacked and battered, ... yet the fashion is still the same.” Its “edge and actual vigour” need to be whetted again by “one good prayer or sermon.” A civil man may have good impressions of the second table, but few or none of the first. (6:396-97) Goodwin observed that the “inward stamp of holiness” is molded distinctively in the first table of the law of God rather than in the second.

Another similitude used in this passage is *writing the law* into their heart. After the fall of Adam, his “inward part of the law, the holiness and spiritualness of it” is blotted out. God’s law is only extant in His word. (6:403) So the “writing the law in the heart is true and genuine sanctification.” (6:402) Now the law of God is renewed in the regenerate soul and it “is termed the law of mind, which ... observes the law of God, as the heliotrope doth the sun, or the needle the loadstone” So the law of God becomes “the law of the new nature,” commanding and ruling in the believer just like a law! (6:403)

A third similitude of the *engrafted word* in the heart is found in James 1:21. It means that the word of God is engrafted (ἐμφυτον) into the soul of men. The σύμφυτος in Romans 6:5 may help us to understand its implication. The latter speaks of Christ and His members, being planted together into one stock, as two twigs grow into one tree. (6:398) So God’s word is planted in our heart and hence spreads forth like a seed all its perfection, holiness, etc., to the new stock. (6:400)

The three similitudes converge to one point: the restored image of God in man takes life, fashion and nutrition from the doctrinal image of God, namely the word of God. Then the new image grows in the

holiness of God unto the conformity of Christ.

Definitive Sanctification

Goodwin treated this kind of sanctification twice: first in the doctrine of justification, and then in sanctification. He found “a perfect holiness in Christ” to free Christians from the law and power of sin and death.” This holiness makes justification perfect!⁴ The term, definitive sanctification, is coined by Professor John Murray. He defines it as a kind of sanctification, “not of a process, but of a once-for-all definition act.” It is a “once-for-all definitive and irreversible breach with the realm in which sin reigns in and unto death.” So, according to him, there are two modes of sanctification: definitive and progressive.⁵

Though John Calvin did not use the term, definitive sanctification, in his works, nor the Westminster divines, in their *Confession*, yet its concept and doctrine were in their works.

⁴ TG 5:351-52. For the treatment relating to justification, see Chapter VII, Justification. Here I will examine his treatment of it relating to sanctification.

⁵ John Murray, *Collected Writings* 2:277, 279, 294. (Originally published in *Calvin Theological Journal* vol. 2, number 1, April 1967.) Earlier he presents the same doctrinal expositions in his *The Epistle to the Romans* (NIC. Eerdmans, 1959). Commenting on Rom. 6:5, he says, “It is not that this relationship is conceived of as a process of growth progressively realized. ... The death of Christ was not a process and neither is our conformity to his death a process.” From the fact that the tense of *συνεσταυρώθη* (“was crucified with”) of Rom. 6:6a is aorist, he remarks that “the tense indicates a once-for-all definitive act after the pattern of Christ’s crucifixion.” A definitive breach with sin occurs through union with Christ in his death. This is the “fundamental premise” of Romans 6. So “the apostle does not weary of reiterating the finality and decisiveness of that event.” He concludes that “the dying and rising with Christ are not viewed as process but as definitive and decisive event.” See his *Romans*, 218, 220, 224.

Calvin's Exposition

John Calvin taught clearly that in our regeneration the “sway of sin is abolished” in Christians. “Sin ceases only to reign; it does not also cease to dwell in them.” He appealed to Romans 6:6 as a proof text. Based on Romans 8:2, the law of sin is also abolished. “The saints ... are free from this guilt,” while, he admitted, some “vestiges” of sin still remain to “humble them by the consciousness of their own weakness.” He ascribed the agent who demolishes the power of sin to the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit “dispenses a power whereby they may gain the upper hand and become victors in the struggle.” The doctrine of definitive sanctification was delineated here.⁶

Calvin commented upon Romans 6:6 that “This ‘old man’ ... is fastened to the cross of Christ, for by its power he is slain.” The “body of sin” means “a mass of sin.” So the power of sin is destroyed for those who partake of the grace of Christ. But, at the same time, he admitted that the old man “must die in the proportion as we are renewed into true life.” That is progressive sanctification. Then he added that “the only source of our mortification is our participation in the death of Christ.” The death of Christ here means crucifixion of the old man with Christ. Hence it imports definitive sanctification. So Calvin linked definitive sanctification to progressive one; and the former becomes the “only source” of the latter.⁷

WSC's Position

The Westminster divines distinguished two modes of sanctifica-

⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes* 3.3.11 or Battles' translation 1:603.

⁷ John Calvin, *Commentary* on Romans 6:6 or Torrance's edition 8:125.

tion: “the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed;” and “the several lusts thereof are more and more ... mortified, and they more and more quickened ... to the practice of true holiness.”⁸ The first mode is what Professor John Murray calls definitive sanctification; the second, the progressive sanctification.⁹ The first mode was not included in both *Larger (WLC 75)* and the *Shorter Catechism (WSC 35)*, the correspondent catechisms of *WCF 13*. From the exposition of Goodwin upon the first mode of sanctification, we know that less mentioning of it in the standards did not mean less importance.

It is unfortunate that this mode had long been neglected or even lost in most Reformed dogmatic texts.¹⁰ Professor John Murray is one

⁸ *WCF 13.1*. The *Savoy Declaration* is essentially the same as the *WCF* at Chapter XIII, *Of Sanctification*, except the former changed some words to recognize the union with Christ.

⁹ To the first mode, the proof text is Rom. 6:6, 14. To the second, the texts are Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13 for mortification and Col. 1:11; Eph. 3:16-19 for vivification.

¹⁰ E.g. **William Ames**, who usually played the role of bridging Calvin and Goodwin, disappoints us on this point by not mentioning definitive sanctification. For him, the body of sin or the old man is the corruption remaining in the sanctified. See his *The Marrow of Theology*. ET: Eusden, 1968. p. 168. **A. A. Hodge** thinks that the destruction of the old body of sin is *gradual*. It is “not immediately destroyed in the instant of regeneration.” See his *The Confession of Faith*. 1869. pp. 194, 197. If you turn to **Robert Lewis Dabney**, you will also be disappointed. He only mentions progressive sanctification. See his *Systematic Theology*, 1871. (Reprint by Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1985.) 660-87. **Louis Berkhof** only refers the newborn “holy disposition” to regeneration. In his definition of sanctification he does not mention definitive sanctification at all. See his *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed., 1939. p. 532. Only one spark is found in **Heinrich Hepp**. His concept of sanctification is reserved only for the progressive mode, but he says, “Of course sanctification is involved in justification, *so far as the latter is the real and essential beginning of sanctification.*” Hepp finds a strange kind of sanctification which emerges at the inception of the sanctification progress. But he ascribes it to justification! See his *Reformed Dogmat-*

among those who unearth and underline the old doctrine of Calvin and the Westminster standards.

Goodwin's Insight

Goodwin argued that in our regeneration¹¹ there must be a mortification of the inherent corruption and a habitual principle comes in the room of the corruption destroyed. He distinguished two kinds of mortification: the “first work of mortification” which is “wrought at a man’s first conversion,” and the other mortification which is “restrained ... to the progress of a Christian in the work.” (3:474) He further indicated that in the progressive one “we are not mere passive,” that is, we participate in God’s purging work. He implied that in the “first habitual beginning of it” we are passive. (3:475) It is a divine work altogether.

What is the task?

This inceptive mortification is not a “restraining grace.” It brings *destruction* to inherent corruption. If there is “no inherent quality of

ics, [German, 1934]. ET: 1950. p. 565. Italics mine.

¹¹ Most of Goodwin’s expositions of “definitive sanctification” were preached when he treated regeneration, conversion or justification, not sanctification itself. So one might think that he was discussing regeneration, etc. and there was no such “definitive sanctification” in his mind. John Murray has a defense for this doubt. He says that definitive sanctification should not be subsumed under regeneration. The reason is that “death to sin by union with Christ in his death and newness of life by union with him in his resurrection, cannot properly be referred to regeneration by the Spirit.” Murray calls our attention to the “multiformity ... at the inception of the Christian life.” Each facet—regeneration, effectual calling, and definitive sanctification—must be “accorded its own particularity.” Otherwise, indulgence in oversimplification will impoverish our concept of God’s definitive grace. Murray, *Collected Writings* 2:285.

grace to carry it God-ward,” then there will be two disadvantages: first, we “remain naked, and neutral, and volatile, to be tossed with [e]very wind;” secondly, the remaining sin in our soul has “a bias, a poise, or ... a weight continually to pull it down” unto evil again. (6:201) He concluded that “if flesh be a corrupt principle inherent, so must grace likewise be an inherent principle.” For “contraries are cured but by contraries.” Only in this way, “Christ comes with *full* healing in his wings, and sanctifies throughout.” (6:202. Italics mine)

At another place he termed inceptive sanctifying grace as “habitual holiness” or “principles of holiness” in contradistinction to mortification. He likened it to dyeing. Just as clothes are dyed with “a new tincture,” so “the Holy Ghost takes a man’s heart, and dyes it anew, changeth it.” During the dyeing one “goes wholly flesh, comes out spirit in a good degree, ‘which two are contrary,’ Gal. v.” (6:29)

This inceptive mortification and vivification, different from that of progressive sanctification, as John Murray says, makes a decisive and irreversible cleavage with inherent corruption in the beginning of a Christian life.

Total depravity

What is the condition of man before his regeneration? Goodwin concurred with the judgment of the Pharisees! John 9:34. But he applied their condemnation of that blind man to all the human race. Man was born in sin altogether. It means that the *whole* man is so inherently sinful. He then indicated that the Bible uses two terms—the old man and the flesh—to explicate the doctrine of total depravity of man. Why is it called “the old man”? For sin “overspreads every part in man.” Every power and part of it is tainted with sinfulness. In contrast to the old man, after regeneration man becomes a new creation, a new

man. 2 Corinthians 5:17. All faculties of man are recreated. Its newness is a new spirit born of the Spirit. John 3:6. (10:127)

Flesh is used much more pervasively in the New Testament to describe the total depravity of man. His mind, wisdom, will, conscience, affections, lusts, passions, tongue, all limbs and body, are all defiled in sin. Goodwin was deeply convinced of the miserable status of human beings by piles of biblical witnesses in this regard. Therefore “every part in man ... ought to be sanctified.” (10:127-28)

The best text to show the *wholeness* of man to be sanctified is 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The ὁλοτελεῖς in this verse means that the grace of sanctification spreads not only to the *whole* man, but also to *all* in man. It also signifies that God sanctifies man *to the end*. To express the thoroughness of sanctification, this text in rare fashion enumerates particular parts of man into three divisions: spirit and soul and body. This division only has an echo in Hebrews 4:12. Goodwin said that dichotomy of human beings is still maintained. The further division of man’s immaterial part into soul and spirit intends to show those particulars to be sanctified. By *soul* the Bible means “those inferior faculties and powers of the mind, the integral senses and affections, fancy, anger, desire, &c., which, being the more gross part, are common to beasts.” By *spirit* is meant those “more sublime parts,” such as moral judgment, conscience, and so on. He confessed that “sometimes spirit is taken for those sparks of moral light and virtues in the conscience and will.” But whenever it is raised, “spirit signifies that *natural* power of the mind.” [Italics mine] To reinforce the *wholeness* of man the Bible uses another word, ὁλόκληρον (“whole”), to demonstrate the truth: “every part in man is corrupted and infected by sin, and so ought to be sanctified.” (10:126, 128)

Christ sanctified Himself

Now Goodwin would lead us to see how Christ undertook His divine task to make that definitive breach with the dominion of sin once-for-all for mankind. Goodwin appealed to Romans 8:3 primarily. But another thought comes to the fore which is the union of Christ and His elect. Hebrews 2:11, 14, 17. The sanctifier, Christ, and we, the sanctified, are all of one, that is, “of one nature in every part.” For this reason Christ “took our nature , and every part of it, to sanctify it, that we might be made partakers of his sanctification, and so might be of one, agree and be alike to him.” Those partakers form the mystical body of Christ, being filled by His fullness. Ephesians 1:23. Christ is called the “holy thing” in Luke 1:35. For the purpose of our sanctification He sanctified Himself. John 17:9. (10:130)

The phrase, *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* of Romans 8:3, speaks of the “occasion” of Christ’s taking the likeness of sinful flesh. It means “for sin, that is, because of sin.” So Christ came to die “merely for sin, that sin might have its course in justice.” Only the Son of God has the power to do the “greatest and strangest design,” that is, to condemn sin. (4:20) This is the greatest and long-awaited justice.

The way Christ sanctified Himself and those who are in Him was by assuming “the likeness of sinful flesh.” The end of His taking human nature was to “condemn sin in the flesh,” that is, “by sanctifying our nature in his person.” Christ took away our sins by the “righteousness of that his nature.” He sanctified every part of His nature with a view to sanctifying every part of our nature. (10:129-30) When Christ’s body was crucified, “not a vein, not a sinew, but was stretched.” Romans 6:6 links our body of sin to the crucifixion of Christ. “So also is every member of the body of sin crucified, it reach-

ing to every lust, great and small, Gal. v. 24, they all now stretched for it.” How painful is the parting with lusts! The strings of a man’s heart are “as dear as his life.” Goodwin urged us to meditate the case of Christ upon the cross: “the parting with these, the crucifying of these, must needs be as breaking of the heart-strings, and making the vital sinews crack.” He likened the effect of Christ’s death upon us to “a deadly wound” or “a deadly blow.” He asked, “Can a man that is ... deadly wounded, live?” (6:229) This is a “universal wound, a crucifying unto *all* and *every* lust in thee.” (9:316. Italics mine) What a definitive breach with the dominion of sin through the death of Christ! So a Christian no longer lives under law or the covenant of works, but under grace or the covenant of grace. Before regeneration man trusts in himself. *Sibi fidere*. But now “Christ’s way is to cause all men to distrust themselves, and be nothing in themselves,” because there is a radical and decisive sanctification in their nature. (6:249) The result is that God plants in man’s soul the “seeds of *all* and *every* grace and gracious disposition.” (9:315. Italics mine) The seed is “holiness and grace” implanted by God “in every faculty ... whereby we have abilities” to glorify God. (10:131)

Commensurability

Goodwin further explained the new sanctification by commensurability of sin and grace. Before our regeneration there is only the law of sin prevailing in our heart. Nothing in us can counter it. Even the moral law of God could not prevail because of the weakness in our flesh. But after our conversion, a new law of the mind is written in our heart, which is commensurably opposite to the law of sin. (9:315) “The dominion and extent of power, both of grace and sin, are commensurable.” (10:129) So now for every particular temptation and lust

in us, there must be some particular grace considered to oppose it. The grace is the new law of the mind, which is congenial with the holiness of God. It is actually the inherent holiness in man. (9:315)

In man's fall the "law of sin is written upon *all* in his heart." It is contrary to the original law in Adam. But in our regeneration the law of God is written in our heart again. At the same time an inherent holiness is wrought that we may live according to it. (10:131, *italics mine*) Goodwin declared "what is indeed the sanctification of understanding and will but be the writing of the law there." This is God's promise in the new covenant. Jeremiah 31:33.

Make sanctification easier!

Sanctification in the inception is like "a deadly wound" at the first stab given to the heart. (6:229) This "deadly blow" makes later progressive mortification and hence vivification easier. Goodwin drew a conclusion:

how easy is it for God ... who wrought all grace *de novo*, that is, anew at first, still to strengthen any one grace or graces that are already wrought, and are extant in being in thy heart, against what is or are but a particular temptation or temptations, when grace is thus but singly set upon and assassinated? (9:316)

The first make-easier reason is that to strengthen an extant grace is easier. Definitive sanctification implants inherent holiness in place of inherent corruption. In other words, vivification is made easier.

So is the case of mortification. Goodwin observed,

then certainly he is able and willing much more to help thee out against, and in the end to strengthen thee against, that corruption or corruptions that *have been already thrust through, and go*

Chapter IX Sanctification

limping with a mortal wound, though they rise up with a renewed strength at the present; for it is both a *more easy* work to him thus to assist thee (9:316, *italics mine*)

Definitive sanctification merited from the death of Christ is tantamount to a “mortal wound” to corruptions. After the “first deadly blow” the original lusts, which “remained unkilld in a swoon,” look like dead,¹² or stay “wholly in a manner for a while laid asleep.” (3:451) In other words, the first deadly blow also makes mortification easier.

Here we see that on the one hand definitive sanctification makes justification perfect; (5:352) on the other, it makes progressive sanctification easier. It becomes a link between justification and sanctification.

We can step forward to say that definitive sanctification is not only beneficial to progressive sanctification, making it easier, but also essential to it, making it feasible. For if there is no inherent grace in regeneration to carry our soul God-ward, then the remaining sin in it has “a bias, a poise, or ... a weight continually to pull it down” unto evil again. (6:201) But the inherent grace due to definitive sanctification exerts another bias, poise, and weight continually to pull us up to God. The decisive holiness is not optional, but foundational in our sanctification.

¹² TG 3:500. It is quite interesting that Goodwin expounded Rom. 7:9b (“when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”) as Paul’s autobiography in Acts 9:9. During his new conversion, especially the first three days of fasting, Paul was so overwhelmed by God’s pardon of sins that “sin is left in a swoon, and it seems quite dead.” But afterwards Paul “by degrees [comes] out of that swoon, and sin revives.” He even thinks he decays in mortification.

Progressive Sanctification

Now we will examine one of Goodwin’s major cases of conscience, How to discern our growth in grace.¹³ He knew the difference between these two modes when he undertook to solve this case of conscience. He “set the bounds and limits of this discourse about it” at first. The intended “purging,” “mortification,” or “emptying out sin out of our hearts and lives is to be restrained here to the *progress* of a Christian in that work.” He distinguished it from the “first work of mortification wrought at a man’s first conversion.” What he cared for here was the “*growth*” in grace. (3:474. Italics mine.)

There are two parts of this mode of sanctification; namely, mortification (purging out of sins) and vivification (bearing fruits of holiness). (3:457) Why are there two parts? Because “if sin hath two parts, then sanctification must have two parts also” Two parts of sin to be sanctified are the *privative* one and the *positive* one. (10:283) While original guilt is dealt with by the grace of justification, original corruption is dealt with by that of sanctification. “Original corruption includes two things, namely, the absence of original righteousness, and the presence of positive evil.”¹⁴ So Goodwin counseled, “you have

¹³ Five cases of conscience were published in three works: *The Child of Light Walking in Darkness*, *Return of Prayers* and this one. See TG 3:227. Goodwin reiterated his purpose and design of preaching *The Trial of a Christian’s Growth* as “*How to discern our growth*” in TG 3:433 again. See also TG 3:436. This work, collected in TG 3:431–506, was Goodwin’s main work in the doctrine of progressive sanctification, and also the only book upon the doctrine of sanctification specifically. These sermons were expounded upon John 15:1–2. In treating “case-divinity” Goodwin knew that the mode of progressive sanctification is much more practical and important than the mode of definitive sanctification. His dedication of one lengthy book to treat the progressive mode is understandable.

¹⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 246.

learned first to put off the old man, and then put on the new.” Otherwise it is a kind of “half religion, a negative and dough-baked religion in the world.” (10:282)

Goodwin had in his mind that this progressive mode of sanctification is in no way perfect, whether vivification (1:80; 9:310) or mortification. (3:451) The ultimate stroke is left for God’s work at our departure for heaven. (3:475)

According to John 15:2b, the priority between them seems to be given to mortification. But Goodwin gave it to vivification for it is “the end and perfection of the other [mortification].” Mortification is “subserving unto” bearing more fruits. (3:457) Another convincing reason to do this is that “true mortification ariseth from a spirit of life; it is a consequent of spiritual life.” God does not first kill a man’s sin and then put a principle of life in him; but “by a principle of life he kills sin.” Mortification is “a fruit of living and walking in the Spirit.”¹⁵ Hence vivification is not only the end of mortification, but also its fountainhead. So Goodwin reasonably treated vivification at first.

Vivification

John 15:2 (“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prune, that it may bear more fruit.”) conveys a very clear message to us: bearing spiritual fruit is very important for Christians. The end for the unfruitful branches is

¹⁵ TG 2:205. But Goodwin once said that “the new creature ... wrought in the room of corruption then mortified.” TG 9:310. This view seems to support the priority of mortification. It does not mean that mortification must be wrought at first and then makes room for vivification; however, it means that new life kills the old corruption and then takes its room.

cutting-off.

A divine apology!

The negative reasons why God takes actions toward the branches are as follows: (1) they “dishonour the root.” The root is full of sap and the branch extracts sap from it. But it produces no fruit at all. Without fruits of holiness we dishonor our heavenly Father. Then God will take those unfruitful branches away to prevent any further disgrace done to the root. (2) Our Father who is the husbandman just wants to reap His profits from our fruits of holiness. If He can gain no profit from the branches, He just lops them off. That is the end of the temporary believer as Hebrews 6:8 reads. (3) Not like other trees, the only use of a vine is its fruits. If it reaps no fruits, the end is to be burned. (3:454-55) By fruits Goodwin discerned whether a man is one of the elect or a reprobate. (3:456) Here lies the importance of bearing fruits.

Goodwin also gave us *positive* reasons why fruits of holiness become so crucial to a Christian. First, “in Christ God accepts a little good, and it pleaseth him more than sin in his doth displease him.” God accepts our little good *in Christ*. Christ is the very real reason. He argued, “Every dram of grace ... cost the blood of Christ, and he [God] will not suffer it to be destroyed.” Another reason is the ordination of the Father. John 15:16. His works in us are “eternal.” So they will endure forever. Thirdly, God only hates sin, but loves the person. So He only destroys the sin while He preserves the person so that he can continue to bear fruits. Fourthly, Goodwin added, “Therein God shews his skill, that he is able to ... sever the corruption, and let the branch stand still.” That is *art*. (3:452-53) God wants all to appreciate His beautiful masterpiece in us. Thus God justifies His work of sanctification.

Why Christians grow

From Ephesians 1:4 Goodwin observed that there is a relation between election and holiness. Perfect holiness is the fruit of election by God the Father. (1:83) “Election is that which first gives you a *being* in Christ.” (1:85) Because we were elected in Christ, so there must be a *homogeneity* between Christ and the elect. So the elect “must necessarily be holy.” (1:86) He also appoints us to grow “an increasing with the increase of God.” Colossians 2:19. (3:459)

Secondly, Christ is the head of the mystical church-body. There must be a conformity unto the head in all the members of the body. “As his fulness is for our growth, so our growth makes up his fulness, even the fulness of Christ mystical.” (3:458-59)

Thirdly, it is the Holy Spirit, which “works growth in the hearts of his people; and by him they have a nutritive power conveyed from Christ.” So there is “an effectual working to the measure of every part, Eph. iv.16.” After being born-again there is still a great necessity, which is to grow in grace. “Unless ye grow, there being a further measure appointed you of my Father, you cannot enter into heaven.” Then the Spirit stirs us up inwardly. (3:459-60) In one word, growth in grace is a Trinitarian work.

How Christians grow

Two basic types of growth are observed: sudden and gradual changes. The first type is usually “increased with many gracious enlargements and dews from heaven” in the beginning. But the stream of grace is “afterwards abating, ... and coming to an ordinary channel.” Comparing with his inception, one may question his “want of growth.” The second type is a “quiet stream, ... small at first, and not discerni-

ble.” But he grows into a “more evident and sensible” state, “like ‘the morning light, which grows clearer and clearer unto the perfect day,’ Prov. iv.18.” (3:461)

Goodwin’s judgments have been stated in his description of these two types. His favoring of the *gradual type* lies in the natural disadvantage of the first type, which is “apt, through desertions, neglects, and carnal presumption, to call into question [the] progress in it.” Sometimes they even doubt their apparent beginning. (3:462) Without assurance of grace, growth dies down. Abiding in God and a sense of our own inability contribute to growth of grace and our sense of it as well. (3:436) Goodwin compared “herbs” with “oaks”: “herbs ... grow fast, but full of pith; oaks more slowly, yet more solidly, and in the end attain to a greater bulk!” Things most excellent grow most slowly. (3:463)

But the *personal condition* should be considered. God assigns a measure to everyone specifically. For those who are endowed with more gifts, converted more lately, and going to die sooner, Goodwin enumerated these as examples grow faster than others. (3:463)

As justification is *by faith*, so is sanctification. Growth in grace is a mystery, so it is “rather discerned by faith than by sense.” Eager desire to grow in some respect does “keep them from thinking that indeed they grow.” They are liable to look to “what they want, and not what they have.” Goodwin advised “a sure rule”: compare your current state with before. (3:462)

Usually the initial conversion is especially discernible while later gradual growth is not. So *time* must be allowed to discern growth in grace. It needs time. Can we discern the progress of the sun when it moves higher and higher? But “after one hour’s motion” it is discerni-

ble. (3:463)

As to *means of grace*, Goodwin mentioned the ministry of the word of God and sacraments. The word of God may be Bible-reading, preaching, and especially spiritual operating in our hearts to purge our inward sins or to arouse our spirits to love God. (3:436) Sacraments cannot convert man, but can help to increase grace as “meat ... is ordained for growth.” (3:459)

Counterfeit sanctification

As Jonathan Edwards after him,¹⁶ Goodwin provided two contrasting signs of sanctification. There are seven counterfeit signs. (1) Development in *spiritual gifts and ministerial abilities* is not a sign of growth in grace. The Corinthians in the New Testament times were

¹⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*. 1746. Banner of Truth, 1994. There are twelve counterfeit and genuine signs of religious affections. His proposition is that “True religion largely consists in holy affections.” Then in Parts II and III he provided twelve signs for each, respectively. First counterfeit signs and then genuine ones. According to John E. Smith, Edwards’s *Affections* was deeply influenced by Thomas Shepard (1605~49) in particular, and by “Sibbes, Owen, Goodwin, and other seventeenth-century English Puritans” in general. (Seventy-five out of one hundred and thirty-two quotations in *Affections* are from Shepard.) Shepard’s *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* concerned two kinds of believers in the visible church. He especially maintained in Chapter 18, Part I, of his *Parable* that “the Holy Spirit dwells in the true believers as the principle of holiness.” See Smith, “Editor’s Introduction” in Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1959. pp. 53-57. Both Goodwin and Shepard were students of John Preston at Cambridge, and also inherited a legacy from him. Both later adopted the *congregational way*. (Shepard went to New England in 1635.) Both were physicians of souls. However, Shepard was renowned for his preparationism while Goodwin had a tendency to overemphasize divine sovereignty. Edwards’ *Affections* and Goodwin’s *Trial of a Christian’s Growth* are similar in many ways. E.g., the way of thinking, the *genre*, contrast of religious affections, etc. Edwards nevertheless did not quote or mention Goodwin among those 132 quotations of his *Affections*.

much fooled by themselves, for they were enriched in all utterance and knowledge, ... and came behind in no gift. But in spirituality they were but “babes and carnal.” So Apostle Paul shew them the best way.¹ Corinthians 1:5, 7; 3:1, 3; 12:31. The best way is charity. “A dram of that is ... worth a pound of the best fruit of gifts.” Gifts are given for edification of others whereas “graces ... are given to save a man’s own soul, and therefore therein is the true growth.”¹⁷

(2) *Success in the exercise of gifts* is not a sign of growth of holiness. Ministerial success is dazzling. But Goodwin warned that it is not an index of your grace. The moment when John the Baptist says of himself, “I must decrease,” is the climax of his spiritual life. Old ministers may decrease in ministry, “yet they decay not in grace.” God “delights usually to honour those of most sincerity with most success.” God recognizes a man by his endeavors to serve Him rather than by the outcome he brings forth. (3:465-66)

¹⁷ TG 3:464. Then Goodwin continued to append the first counterfeit sign with three cautions to make clear the relations between gifts and graces. He wanted to distinguish their different functions. Man is likely to confound and hence to misuse them. Then growth in grace is hampered. Clarifying them will help both grow together. **First**, they may grow together. Gifts are the “fruit-dishes” of graces! So if grace does not grow with gifts, we bring forth not much fruit. For the instrument is dispensed with. **Secondly**, Christians are encouraged to covet gifts, and to enkindle them, etc. Goodwin still positively recognized the value of gifts. Yet, he reminded, “we are not simply thereby to take an estimate of our growth.” **Thirdly**, Often growth in grace may increase development in gifts. “Talents being used faithfully, were doubled;” otherwise, lessened. The more we are humble, the less we are gratified by gifts. So we may use them the more sorely for the cause of Christ, the more seeing them coming from Him, and the less we will envy others who have them, too. In the long run we bear more fruits of holiness. TG 3:464-65.

Cf. The third counterfeit sign in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: That Fluency and Fervour are no Sign.

(3) *More opportunities* to serve God is not a sign of growth in grace. The Apostle Paul reaped more fruits in the Spirit when he was put into jail. So did John the Baptist. However, if a man shall “voluntarily let go all opportunities of advancing himself, ... then the more fruit he brings forth in those opportunities, the more is reckoned on his score.” (3:466)

(4) *Accessory graces* (e.g. *joy, spiritual ravishment*) cannot replace substantial graces (e.g. *love, humility*) as a sign of holiness. New musical instruments have “more varnish than old, but not so sweet a sound.” Lack of feeling causes more exercise of faith! “Sweet blooms may fall off when fruit comes on.”¹⁸

(5) *Outward professing* does not count as a sign of heart-godliness. Paul does not want others to think of him above what he is indeed. 2 Corinthians 12:6. Goodwin said,

When the root strikes not deeper downward and further into the earth, but spreads much upward in the branches, this is not a true growth. ... True growth begins at vitals; the heart, the liver, the blood gets soundness and vigour, and so the whole man outwardly.¹⁹

We should judge by heart-godliness.

(6) Even *inward affections* may be deceptive and hence still cannot be a sign of true holiness. Goodwin compared most of them to “mercenaries” in the army of affections. So joy and sorrow become

¹⁸ TG 3:466. The seventh counterfeit sign in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: That Religious Affections are of many kinds is no Sign.

¹⁹ TG 3:466-67. Cf. The tenth and twelfth counterfeit signs in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: Much expression of Praise is no sign; and Moving Testimonies are no sign.

larger than reality. The unregenerate part plays as faith for a while. Carnal sorrow also makes the stream of sorrow bigger when one is awakened by God’s wrath. They are the “mixed multitude” in the Exodus. Goodwin analyzed, “when the fire is first kindled, there is more smoke ...; but after the flame comes, that contracts all into a narrow compass, and hath more heat in it.” He urged Christians to seek purer “flame” after “smoking flax” which “grows purer, and less mixed with vapors of corrupt self-love.”²⁰

(7) *The religious duty* is not measured as a sign of grace. It includes prayer, fasting, Bible-reading, and meditation, etc. Men at their first conversion are liable to spend more time in such duties because these exercises are necessary for drawing them near to God. However, “young Christians are apt to be more negligent in their particular callings, and are all for the duties of religion.” Paul portrays the best Christian as the one who does his own business with hands and at the same time abounds in his love for the brethren more and more. 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 10. Goodwin hereby highly promoted gospel holiness. “To enjoy immediate communion with God in prayer, and to meditate all the week long” brings comfort to a man particularly; but “to be employed in the business of a man’s calling” will be “*more* profitable for the church, or commonwealth, or family.” When young, Christians “eat often, and do little;” but afterwards they are set to work with reduced meals.²¹

²⁰ TG 3:467. Cf. The first counterfeit sign in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: That Religious Affections are very great is no Sign.

²¹ TG 3:468-69. Italics mine. Cf. The ninth counterfeit sign in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: Much Time and much Zeal in Duty are no Sign. Also cf. the twelfth genuine sign in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: Religious Affections have their fruit in

Genuine sanctification

Then Goodwin proceeded to present genuine signs.²² **(1)** *Grace upon grace* is a genuine sign. True grace makes a Christian to add God's grace with all diligence. At his conversion he may only know all of Christ's fullness, but then he "goes over them by piecemeal again throughout his whole life." He lays up fruits new and old for his lover, the beloved Lord, in Cantic 7:13. Thus godly men are led from one grace to another. This is a sign that we grow in grace. (TG 3:470-71) As the sun shines on the whole hemisphere and becomes clearer and clearer to the perfect day, so grace usually begins at the spiritual understanding, yet it will go through one's whole being. Every Christian should grow up into Christ in *all* things. Ephesians 4:15. (3:505)²³

Christian Practice. Goodwin rarely talked about Christian practices. But cf. *Of Gospel Holiness in the Heart and Life*, in TG 7: 129-336. This is the only book Goodwin dedicated to this respect. But this book is still more of doctrines than of ethics. As to his ethics, the best summary is provided by Stanley P. Fienberg, see Chapter IV, Social ethics in his "Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine." 74-79.

²² Goodwin listed eight signs under this title. Because the sixth and the seventh of his list are of the same concern, I combine them into the item **(6)** here, and thereby also make *seven* signs, the same number as of the signs of counterfeit sanctification.

²³ Cf. The tenth genuine sign in Edwards' *Religious Affections*: They have beautiful Symmetry and Proportion. Rarely we see a Protestant theologian recovers the aesthetics of St. Augustine. Augustine stressed that beauty inheres in symmetry and proportion. (See his *City of God* 22.19, "The perfection of the resurrected body." Penguin ed. 1060-62.) Edwards commented that the saints "have the whole image of Christ upon them: ... have put on the new man entire in all his parts and members." They are not "a cake not turned, half roasted and half raw." Edwards gave an example of symmetry and proportion: "In the saints, joy and holy fear go together." Also "the joy and comfort ... is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin." In hypocrites only one side of the affections is found. There is no symmetry and proportion, hence no beauty. See *The Religious Affections*, 292-93. Goodwin did not develop into the concept of beauty in his theology. But a step forward from his signs would

Yet Goodwin admitted that there is diversity in this growth: “Some have more love, and fit for offices of charity; some more knowledge, and are fit to instruct; some more patience, and are fitter to suffer; some for self-denial, and accordingly do grow in these more specially.” (3:506)

(2) *New degrees of the same grace* added is a genuine sign of growth in grace. St. Peter exhorts toward “being fervent in your love among yourselves.” 1 Peter 4:8a. Saving faith, being exercised to “eat his flesh and drink his blood,” tastes sweetness in Christ and grows up into assurance of faith. Each grace can be raised to enhance God’s grace upon itself.²⁴

(3) *More maturity and more relish* of the fruits is a genuine sign of growth in grace. This sign steps further than the above. A short prayer with a broken heart sounds better in God’s ear than a long one. The “widow’s mite” cast in more than all. Luke 21:3. “It is not the bigness of the fruit, ... but the relish it is that gives the commendation.” (3:471) The relish is the “chiefest excellency” in fruits. It makes the fruits “more desirable” and “acceptable to God.” (3:443)

This spiritual relish also raises our ends “more to aim at God, and to sanctifying him more.” So “the greatest growth of grace is in spiritual holiness, in sanctifying God much in the heart.” (3:471)

(4) *Growing more rooted into Christ* is another genuine sign of growth in grace. Such Christians experience indeed the words of

lead him to aesthetics as Edwards derived.

²⁴ TG 3:471. Also cf. The tenth genuine sign in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: They have beautiful Symmetry and Proportion.

Christ: “without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5. Christ for them is not only the final cause, but also the *efficient* cause. This virtue distinguishes a Christian from a civil man and a temporary believer. For the latter men do duty in themselves. They are like ivy which “hath sap from the oak, yet concocts it in its own root, and so brings forth as from itself.” Goodwin deemed this genuine sign as the “surest” sign of true grace! So “to do *one* duty, sanctifying Christ ... in the heart, is more than a *thousand*.”²⁵

Having the “poverty of spirit” to see one’s own nothingness is the “first evangelical grace.” Matthew 5:3. The continual sensitivity of our own inability drives us to “have a continual dependence upon a power from above.” This is the real honoring of Christ in the heart. The emptying one’s self cultivates the virtue of humbleness.²⁶

Goodwin admitted that such a Christian life as described above may not make him sensible of union with Christ. The reason is that the spiritual working of the Spirit is a “secret” one. So we need the prayer of Paul for the enlightenment of the Spirit in Ephesians 1:18-19. “A dark recumbency” usually leads to the clarification of “union with him.” Once when Christ comes more sensibly into your hearts, Goodwin comforted, you will “set the crown of all upon His head”! (3:447-48)

²⁵ TG 3:472. Italics mine. Cf. The second, third and eleventh genuine signs in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: Their Object is the Excellence of Divine Things; They are founded on the moral excellency of Objects; and They are raised unto higher attainments.

²⁶ TG 3:446-47. Cf. The sixth and seventh genuine signs in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: They are attended with Evangelical Humiliation; and They are attended with a Change of Nature.

(5) *Bearing fruits in season* is a sign of growth in grace. That is the ideal of spiritual life displayed in Psalm 1:3, Ezekiel 47:12 and Revelation 22:2. Goodwin exclaimed, “how acceptable are they!” Words in season are also highly appraised in Proverbs 25:11. Being out of season will let Satan deceive Christians and abuse their duties. “The season adds the goodness to our actions.” We should “have our senses exercised to know fit seasons.” (3:472)

(6) *Constancy in duties* without intermission is a sign of growth. The ideal tree in Psalm 1:3 does not bear fruits “by fits.” Even confronted by greater difficulties and less means, he continues to bear fruits. Cold weather and less sunshine cannot prevent him from performing his Christian duty. Even with less straw, fewer encouragements, less wages, we should “make the same number of brick ... with cheerfulness!” (3:472-73)

(7) *More wisdom and faithfulness* to achieve best advantage forms the last sign of growth in grace. Jethro’s advice made Moses’ ministry to a “greater advantage.” Applying money to the most charitable use makes one’s liberality no less. As “we live in a wicked world” and cannot do what the wicked men can do, Goodwin argued, so we should “lay out all ... opportunities and abilities to the best advantage” for the kingdom of God. He affirmed, this is “positive growth in faithfulness.” (3:472-73) Goodwin once said that duty itself is not a sign; yet our love of God and man exhibited in our Christian practices is. From the fact that Goodwin reserved the last three out of seven to duty, we know that he cherished the down-to-earth ethics as much as Jonathan Edwards did.²⁷

²⁷ Cf. The twelfth genuine signs in Edwards’ *Religious Affections*: Religious Affec-

Chapter IX Sanctification

With negative and positive expositions Goodwin tried to explicate what is true sanctification in our life. Spiritual gifts, Christian ministries, religious affections, holy duties and spiritual exercises are all peripherals or instruments to true growth in holiness. They cannot be dispensed in sanctification. Christ must be the center. Grace upon grace *in degrees* makes the beauty of holiness in its symmetry and proportion. Goodwin might not have a heart for the aesthetics of nature and grace as Edwards did; however, his eagerness to pursue true holiness was in no way less than Edwards. For he was engaged in a great *new reformation* leading to the latter-day glory. Sanctification for him was tinged with an eschatological hue.

Mortification

In every degree of grace mortification is involved as much as vivification is. Goodwin called it a “new conversion.” (3:506) Now we turn to mortification.

A divine apology!

But the fruit-bearing branch may inquire of its husbandman why there remains corruptions in it even when it has been in the state of grace. Goodwin gave us four reasons.

The need of purging remaining corruptions makes the once-for-all perfection of justification of our original guilt far more salient. As a consequence, God is glorified. (3:448)

Another reason is to confuse and humiliate Satan. “Neither would the confusion of the devil in the end be so great, and the victory so

tions have their fruit in Christian Practice. Edwards concurred with Goodwin that Christian duty is the *chief* sign.

glorious, if all sin at first conversion were expelled.” In the beginning grace is but like a spark, and corruptions damp it with “much smoke and moisture.” Because Christ “rules amongst the midst of his enemies,” He “strongly carries on his work ... by degrees” to victory. (3:449)

Thirdly, Goodwin reflected that Christ’s disciples “must ... have something within them to pull down their spirits, that when they look on their feathers they may look on their feet, which ... are still defiled, John xiii. 10.” So God still retains His ancient wisdom in how He humbled those Israelites in the days of the Judges. “Nothing humbles so as sin.” By these corruptions in us can we also learn “our continual obnoxiousness to him.” The height of our spiritual exercise is self-denial, which is the key to the completion of mortification. (3:450-51)

Then we more fully understand the divine design of progressive mortification. It is different both from inceptive mortification at our conversion and from ultimate perfection at our departure. In the latter two cases we are fully passive. But during the progressive mortification process, on the one hand, we recognize that it is “a work of God;” however, on the other, we “are not mere passives, ... but therein we are ‘workers together with God’.” In the eye of Goodwin “both [God and man] do go together” harmoniously. God stirs up our thoughts, affections and faith to work. We mingle our faith with the death of Christ in our heart. Therefore “it is said as well that “we purge ourselves,”—so 2 Tim. ii. 21, and also 1 John iii. 3, and Rom. viii.” (3:474-75) What an honor that we can participate in God’s purging work all the way! At the same time God still preserves His own glory upon us to the end. (3:449)

Why Christians mortify

Mortification is a Trinitarian work. God wants to draw nigh to us and wants us to draw nigh to Him. But we are still full of corruptions. So God cannot have much delight in us. James prescribes that “cleanse your hands, and purify your hearts.” James 4:8. This is not a vain thought for “Christ hath purchased an eternal divorce between corruption and our hearts.” Now the Spirit comes to purge us that we “may be fit for use and service.” The Lord shall sit to purify the sons of Levi. Malachi 3:3-4. By His purification our performances may “savour less of gifts, and pride, and self-love, and carnal desires.” The more a Christian is purged, the more his service is acceptable to God. (3:475-76)

How Christians mortify

Without any hesitation Goodwin ascribed the *efficient cause* to the Spirit. Though we are active in mortification of sins, yet it is due to many inward stirrings which the Spirit works in our hearts. There are five degrees. First, the Spirit discovers to us the inner corruptions through the law-work. David cries to the Lord in the light of the law, “Who can understand his errors?” He pleads for cleansing of secret faults. Psalm 19:12. A sharper light exposes David to see his real state: born in sin. He then confesses and prays for purgation of corruptions. Psalm 51:5, 7. Thus God sets our heart to make it a business: get one’s lusts mortified more and more, and not to rest until the goal attained. This is the second step. (3:478-79)

Thirdly, when we make our resolution to pursue cleansing from sins, God will secretly incline our heart more and more into holy duties and evangelical obedience. This kills sin and causes it to wither—namely, taking away the sap of the sinful heart. (3:479) The Spirit fi-

nally directs us to more positive experience: more acquaintance with Christ and assurance of God’s love. Goodwin pointed out that Christ “is already made sanctification for us.” In this sense Christ is the “purging drug.” On that account “the more distinctly a man understands Christ, ... the more easily he gets his lusts purged.” This living knowledge will “do more in a day than another in a year.” Fifthly, assurance of being like Jesus prods a Christian to be weaned from his old world. Relish of a greater joy spoils the sweetness of sin and hence deadens its pleasure. (3:479-80) These are the secret works of the Spirit in the process of our mortification.

The instrumental cause is the word of God. It has many expressions: just reading it, meditating on it or receiving it in preaching or a conference. Chewing upon sweet truths in it has “an exceeding purging virtue.” Examples of others, be they good or bad, in our life or in the Bible, provoke us to purge our sins away. They can be included in this category. (3:477)

The Lord of providence uses many *occasional means* to deal with our sins. Even falling into sins can be converted into a good occasion in which God may purge away our corruption thoroughly. King David is the most mentioned case among the biblical characters. Another occasion is afflictions. Goodwin remarked that “What the word doth not purge out, nor mercies, that afflictions must.” An example is the experience in which Moses is called “a husband of blood.” Exodus 4:25.

Thus mercies prevail against some sins, and afflictions against others. ... In like manner God sometimes puts us in the fear or danger of losing our lives, casts us into sickness, and the like, making as if he meant to kill us, and all to bring us to this work of purging, to circumcise our hearts. (3:477)

By all means God wills to put our sinful nature to death.

Lack of mortification

Goodwin distinguished three directions to help Christians decide whether they are in the progression of mortification. First, lack of it; secondly, genuine mortification; and thirdly, counterfeit mortification.

Lack of mortification will freeze the process of sanctification. This happens when an individual Christian or a church falls into spiritual dormancy. There is almost no sanctifying activity of the Spirit at all. Goodwin provided ten points for us to evaluate whether our heart is still “green” or not. In the case of a “green heart,” what controls in a man is but his flesh and lusts. (3:481-85)

Lack of mortification may be an absence of it. That is the case of temporary believers. They “have good motions in them, but yet the thorns grow up and choke them.” Goodwin summarized that “There is vivification without mortification.” Their faith is “a kind of half religion, a negative and dough-baked religion.” Goodwin insisted that “if sin hath two parts, then sanctification must have two parts also.” (10:282-83) The positive corruptions have to be mortified for our salvation. He compared temporary believers to ivy: It receives juice and sap from the oak; however, it digests sap into itself and brings forth all its berries by virtue of its own *root* rather than the oak. (3:444) So lack of mortification is a perilous sign to Christians. We have to ask ourselves a more basic question: am I in the state of grace or not?

Counterfeit mortification

Lack of mortification is evident in itself. But discerning whether those signs of mortification are genuine or counterfeit is much harder. Hence Goodwin presented two contrasting groups of signs as he did in

the case of vivification. As for practical signs of counterfeit mortification, there are seven.

(1) *Overcoming such lusts as the nature is not so prone unto* is not a sign of mortification. A conqueror will not estimate his victory by the number of villages he burns, but by that of forts and strong holds, and by what *main* forces he has cut off from his enemy. Goodwin counseled, “Do the like in the decrease of ... your lusts.” So the “surest way” is to judge the “decay of a man’s bosom-sin.” (3:490)

(2) *Prevailing by extraordinary assistance* cannot be a sign of mortification. Jehoshaphat should not count his survival from the attack of Syrians as his own credit at all. His survival was altogether attributed to the divine interference which was answering to his call for God’s help. 2 Chronicles 18:31. He did not defeat any Syrian indeed!

Goodwin continued to solve a similar, but contrary case. Under an extraordinary temptation a weak man may, “through much heat and stirring up of all his spirits, have the strength of five men in him, and much greater than when he was in health.” Goodwin concluded that “The estimate of our growth must not therefore be taken by a step or two, but by a constant course.” (3:490-91)

(3) *Less occasions and provocations to sin* does not imply a sign of more mortification. David in the wilderness could lead a strict life much easier than when he was in his palace. His later fall into grave sins exposed his reality which was prevented when he was still in the wilderness. Can we say that the younger David was more mortified than the older David? Not really. Occasions of sinning should be considered, too. (3:497)

(4) *Natural inactivity* may be mistaken for a sign of mortification.

Do not scold Peter too much. His rash speech and instant corruption should be considered with his bold spirit. That a naturally slower person commits less error does not mean that he is more mortified. But when the “son of thunder” one day became the apostle of love, he was really mortified, because he had to conquer the disadvantage in his natural traits. (3:497)

(5) *Restraining grace* should not be mistaken as a sign of mortification. Goodwin thought, “it was not Judah’s grace so much kept him from killing Joseph, ... but nature wrought in him, and made him abhor the killing him.” Genesis 37:26. Sometimes God uses a means to prevent us from committing a sin. David wanted to kill Nabal. But Abigail’s “lowly submission and elegant oration won him, and cooled him.” True mortification must have an ingredient—hatred of sin. Goodwin advised us: ask ourselves how much our abstinence from sin is out of hatred of it. Then the growth can be measured accordingly. (3:497-99)

(6) *Listlessness and deadness* to sin is not necessarily a sign of mortification. True mortification brings in listlessness to sin. But not vice versa. “Sickness breeds a listlessness; when we are sick, our lusts are sick together with us.” (3:499) So we have to discern their difference. Goodwin offered two indices with which true mortification is also joined: first, a quick hatred against sin, even aiming at the destruction of it; secondly, active life in holy duties. (3:500)

That listlessness to sin is mistaken for true mortification is often seen in new converts. Goodwin observed that “young Christians are more dead to all pleasures of sin than those who are grown up, or than themselves are when grown up.” Their mistake is attributed the following misunderstandings: the first deadly blow still leaves sin in a

swoon; legal humiliation adds the bitterness of sin and hence deadness of their lusts at this moment; and inceptive ravishment may convince that they have been mortified. But the truth is not so! Goodwin counseled,

sin is left in a swoon, and it seems quite dead; but by degrees men come out of that swoon, and sin revives, and then men think they decay in mortification. Again, young Christians sometimes, and others afterwards, for some honeymoons of their lives, are entertained with raptures and ravishments, joy unspeakable and glorious, and then they seem in a manner wholly dead to sin, and walk so; but as others are in a swoon, so they are in an ecstasy; but when they are out of it, then sin comes to itself again. ... Thus spiritual joys do ... much alter the taste; but yet much of that alternation is adventitious and not wholly radical, or altering the sinful faculty itself (3:500)

This passage is an excellent exposition of Romans 7:9. “Sin revived,” says Paul, “and I died.” If we have a real evaluation of ourselves, then it helps us on the way of mortification.

(7) *Keeness against sin* should not be judged as a sign of mortification. The real sign is spiritual strength against sin. “Therefore judge your growth herein by your strength to resist.” The strength lies in the inner man of Ephesians 3:16. Goodwin compared keeness and strength against sin to the metal and edge of a sword. “When edge and metal both meet, a man walks above his lusts. If either be wanting, a man may be foiled.” (3:501)

Genuine mortification

Now we turn to true signs.²⁸ (1) *Insight into one's spiritual corruptions* is a sign of mortification. There are two sorts of corruptions: one of *flesh* which is manifested as worldly lusts and gross evils; the other of *spirit* which is spiritual wickedness. 2 Corinthians 7:1. (3:486) The first sort can be exposed even by the light of nature. (3:423) The other sort is manifested as pride, carnal confidence, self-flattery, presumption, etc. These corruptions sit “nighest to the heart,” while worldly lusts “lie ... in the frontiers and skirts of it.” Goodwin pointed out that “the chiefest of his conflict is come to be with spiritual lusts ...; it is an evidence of his progress in this work.” (3:486) For the real victory should be claimed at the core, not around the frontier.

This is a paradoxical experience: the more Christians are sanctified, the more they know their inner corruptions. Then the more they claim victory in their spiritual battle against the flesh through genuine mortification, the more they are exposed to minute conflicts.

(2) *Self-denial* is the sign of true mortification. For self-denial is the key to purge the inner spiritual lusts. “Were we free ... to the world, were our hearts loosened from all, and were all the secret *fibr*Q, those stings of lusts ... cut, it would be nothing to us to part with them.” So Paul lay down his life. Then he could fulfill his ministration with joy. Acts 20:24. Abraham set a good example in ancient time. He was obedient to offer his dear son to God. “It was a sign that he was

²⁸ Goodwin listed eight signs under this title. Because the seventh and the eighth of his list are of the same concern, so I combine them into the item (7) here, and thereby also make *seven* signs, the same number as of the signs of counterfeit mortification.

much weaned.” (3:487)

(3) *Constancy against fits* is another sign of true mortification. Man’s heart is full of unequal tempers—“sometimes in hot fits, sometimes in cold, and so suddenly altered, this cannot be but from much corruption.” Goodwin further diagnosed, “This double-mindedness comes from want of purging.” But walking in the Spirit imports constancy in the Spirit. Because “when lusts are crucified, then the holy Spirit will rule us . . . , and a holy frame of heart will be discovered, in a constant tract of holiness.” (3:487-88)

(4) *Spiritual taste of God’s word* is a sign of genuine mortification. The word of God is the instrument with which Christ will cleanse his church. For “the word . . . discovers the sin, and sets the heart against it. . . . then the word sets out the vileness of a sin; . . . and sets upon it to kill it and destroy it.” This was how Goodwin elaborated the meaning of Ephesians 5:26. (3:477) But here he quoted 1 Peter 2:1-2 to say that “Therefore the more corruption is laid aside, the more we taste the word, and God in it; the more we taste, the more we desire it; the more we desire it, the more we grow.” (4:488) Ephesians 5:26 is the cause of mortification, while 1 Peter 2:1-2, the effect of it. Hence the spiritual taste constitutes a true sign of it.

(5) *Being ashamed of former ways* is another sign of true mortification. Why is one ashamed of former ways? Since he finds he has grown so much in grace that he feels his former status could not witness to God’s grace as he can do today. This shameful feeling speaks of his growth in grace to a great degree.

(6) *Finding his lust more impotent* in temptation is a sign of real mortification. Like items above, this sign is the effect of mortification. We infer the cause from its effect. Mortification itself is a long battle.

“The weakness or strength of a kingdom is best ... discerned in time of war, when all forces are mustered up.” After some mortification of spiritual corruptions, “the motions of sin ... meet a hotter encounter than they wont” Now “be it a lust of pride ... when it falls from bringing forth fruit, to bring forth but blossoms, ... and blossoms only to bring forth leaves, it is a sign then it is withering more and more.” This is a sign of a growth in grace. (3:488-89)

(7) *Abstaining from occasions of sinning* is a sign of growth in mortification. Job was such a person. Job 31:1. Joseph was another one. Jude 23. (3:489) He makes no provision for the flesh, even an occasion of indulging his lust. This is a “strong sign” of mortification.

Goodwin extended this case to a further degree. Occasions are external opportunities. But a Christian heart even does not linger after a mental object of lusting. “When out of sight they are out of mind.” Goodwin said that “a giving of his heart to such and such a lust, an inclination, ... a sympathising with such an object, —that is a sign of unmortifiedness.” Reverse it and then it is mortification. We see this kind of mortification in Joseph who resisted the temptation of his mistress, in Boaz next to whom a woman lay down all night, and in David who refused to kill the anointed Saul when the chance came. For they had been weaned in *mind*, so they still claimed victory when objects presented themselves. “This is a further degree of mortification attainable.” (3:489)

Battle between flesh and Spirit

For Goodwin “the chiefest of [one’s] conflict is come to be with spiritual lusts” (3:486) To complete a Goodwin’s scenario of true mortification, we have to understand his view of spiritual warfare. He thought that Satan cannot attack a Christian except as occasioned by

his own sin.²⁹ Though the spiritual warfare is primarily a “conflict with spiritual lusts,” Goodwin still linked the spiritual conflict to Satanic attack. As a whole the spiritual conflict ultimately fights against Satan. Since the fall of Adam, it was God who proclaimed the war in paradise. (7:264) In all battles “the devil is the leader, lusts are but the common soldiers.” (7:267) But on the other hand, “to resist the devil ... is done in resisting sin.” (7:268)

According to 1 John 2:13-14 there are three kinds of Christians; namely, little children, fathers and young men. Goodwin counseled that “The special time of this conflict against flesh and worldly lusts is the middle age of Christians in Christ.” The middle-age group is the young one. (7:501) Goodwin gave two reasons: (1) The young men have somewhat outgrown the spirit of bondage and attained “more quietness of spirit ... yet not ... up to a full and settled assurance ...” They are more exposed to the “rising up of lusts;” and Satan stirs the lusts up more in them than in others. (2) “The devil ... is let loose more by God upon Christians in that age, as to the point of stirring up lusts.” The purpose of God is for Christians to experience “growing pang,” not for them only to suffer. (7:502-503)

As to how Christians overcome Satan, Goodwin ascribed it first to the victory of our Head, Christ, and then to the “seed of God,” which “abides in [our] hearts unconquerably, so as the assaults of sin and Satan have not, cannot totally prevail against [us].” (7:505) During the conflict, “conscience alone will not keep the field so long, nor hold out.” It clamors against sin at best, but soon will be “flatted.” The

²⁹ TG 3:266. Details see Chapter XII, The Assurance of Salvation—Renewal of Assurance—Satanic Attacks.

seed of God is a “constant principle of holiness,” which “really fights against sin.” The new holiness “can never be stilled, nor return thither.” This radical principle is also a “habitual grace,” which is assisted by the Spirit. So Goodwin called the grace a “double spiritual strength.” (7:508) He even named it the “pawn and pledge,” for the inner man is characterized by the strength wrought from the Spirit. Ephesians 3:16. (7:506, 508.) However, Goodwin did not rule out a third factor: God’s providential interference. A good example is shown when David was counseled by Abigail not to kill Nabal in 1 Samuel 25:32-34. Such cases are not victories on our parts, but “ways to escape” as indicated in 1 Corinthians 10:13. (7:506)

Goodwin quoted Augustine’s words: “whereas the devil is a dog in chains, yet lo, how he doth prevail, when yet he can only bark and solicit, but hurt and bite none but him that is *willing*, and join himself to him [Satan].” (7:272. Italics mine.) For in the conflict a Christian cannot do what he wants to do. So Goodwin picked upon man’s *will* as the focal point. “It is not a fight of one faculty against another, but of the same faculties against themselves, and this through the whole man.” In the battle “grace in the will fights against sin in the will; the flesh in the will lusteth against the spirit in the will; Gal. v. 17.” (10:129) So in this battle, man should hold his own *will*.

Another insight of Goodwin into the spiritual battle is that it is not only a battle engaged individually, “but as a joint body they all [the brethren] strive together as one man.”³⁰ So a Christian’s victory is

³⁰ TG 7:266. Goodwin based his interpretation upon the word ἀδελφότητι of 1 Pet. 5:9, which should be translated as the “brotherhood” in a collective sense, not an individual brother. Cf. Fritz Rienecker, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*. “The word has the concrete sense of a band of brothers.” 766, 753. Zondervan, (one

“won to the whole party.” At the latter day, the whole church “will all rejoice together, and stories will be told who did most valiantly at such and such a time.” (7:274.)

A Short Conclusion

From Goodwin’s doctrine of sanctification we have a chance to look at the beauty of this doctrine in the setting of the Westminster Assembly, including those millenarian Independents. His doctrinal exposition not only recovers for us the original insights of Calvin’s theology in this *locus*, but also displays the latter’s richness and implications.

There were interactions between his soteriology and eschatology. The fact that his doctrine of sanctification shown in *The Trial of A Christian’s Growth* is not tinged with any millenarian hue at all supports the notion that his doctrine of sanctification might have been formed before his persuasion to millenarian congregationalism in 1633.³¹ In the case of sanctification, we observe how his passion for growth in grace directs his interpretations in apocalyptic passages. If we compare Goodwin’s apocalypticism with those of his predecessors, namely Thomas Brightman, Johann Heinrich Alsted and Joseph Mede, we observe that his soteriology, especially the doctrine of sanctification, not only prevented him from being a millenarian extremist, but also guided him to use eschatology in a *spiritual* way.

Goodwin did not make any modification on sanctification; how-

volume edition) 1982.

³¹ The fact that Savoy almost followed Westminster at this doctrine, except somewhat alterations in wording, also reinforces this notion. Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 380.

Chapter IX Sanctification

ever, he found new insight when he applied this doctrine to his new reformation agenda. Out of his millenarian concern he still discovered the eschatological implication of the old doctrine. And the doctrine never finds importance more than in pursuit of the purity and holiness of the “inner temple.”

If a seventeenth-century theologian like Goodwin could cherish this doctrine in light of the latter-day glory, how much more we, Christians at the threshold of a new millennium, should practice it in the hope of the glory and grow into the fullness of Christ.

Chapter X Perseverance

The doctrine of perseverance should be one of the most autobiographical doctrines for Goodwin. He treated this doctrine mainly in Book IV of his grandiose work, *A Discourse of Election*. This book is a treatise upon 1 Peter 5:10. The way in which Goodwin approached the doctrine revealed the influence of the contemporary Remonstrance Controversy upon him. Just as the controversy started from the doctrine of election and ended in that of perseverance, so Goodwin embedded his doctrine of perseverance in that of election.

Historical Background: Baro & Arminius

Arminianism was not strange to Goodwin. He encountered the fad early in his Cambridge days. The new mode of learning “began to be every man’s talk and inquiry, and possessed my ears,” he recalled. (2:lix) His rejection from the communion service by his tutor, Mr. Power, on Whitsunday 1614 made him pursue the “high applause” of Arminianism. (2:lili) But his conversion experience on October 2, 1620 rendered a judgment in his heart—“Arminianism in the wrong.” This judgment resonated with the conclusion of the Synod of Dort convened in Holland from November 1618 to May 1619. In his memoir he reflected that the controversy between the Remonstrants and the

orthodox is the conflict of “the power of free-will” against “the power of electing grace.” (2:lix)¹

Influence of Baro before the 1610s

But do not think the theory of free-will is only on the Dutch scene. Decades before the death of Jacob Arminius (1560~1609) and the ensuing Remonstrance Controversy in Holland, Peter Baro (1534~99) came to England in 1572. As Jacob Arminius was a disciple of Beza, so Baro was a disciple of, and received his ordination by, Calvin himself in 1560. Returning to France in 1572, he then fled from the persecution to England in the same year. He was elected to the Lady Margaret Professorship at Cambridge in 1574. After assuming the professorship, he became gradually critical of the Reformed doctrine of predestination. He inferred from the Bible that “God predestinated all men to eternal life, but on condition of their faith and perseverance.” Baro also taught universal atonement and forfeiture of justifying grace even in the elect. His opponent was William Whitaker (1548~95), who became the Regius Professor of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1580.² But Nicholas Tyacke indicates that the theological force of the confrontation from the Reformed side should be also accredited to the supralapsarian theologian, William Perkins. For the publication of his most widely read *Armilla Aurea* (ET: *A Golden Chain*) in 1590 may be “symptomatic of the situation”—that is, the ascendancy of Calvinism in England in general and at Cambridge University in particular—

¹ As to the details, see the sections of *Whitsunday rejection* and *Conviction* in Chapter I, Life and Age of Thomas Goodwin above.

² Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:659.

during the early 1590s.³

The real showdown came about when William Barrett, a fellow of Caius College, who “was probably influenced by ... Peter Baro,”⁴ preached a sermon to attack on “the honored names of Calvin, Beza, Peter Martyr, and Zanchius, and their doctrine of irrespective predestination” in a *concio ad clerum* on April 29, 1595.⁵ In consequence of this sermon Barrett was called before the Consistory Court to recant his view. He then appealed to Archbishop Whitgift, an enemy of Puritanism, and earned his sympathy at the outset. But soon even the archbishop yielded to the pressure of the whole university.⁶

The controversy culminated in the adoption of the *Lambeth Articles* on November 20, 1595. The articles contain nine points which elucidate the Calvinistic predestination system in a clear and strong way.⁷ The aftermath of the Barrett affair was the silence of the two anti-Calvinists—Peter Baro and William Barrett. Barrett was driven out of the university, went to abroad and became a Catholic in 1597. Goaded by the *Lambeth Articles*, Baro preached a sermon to counter-attack the doctrine of limited atonement on January 12, 1596. This exposure caused him the failure of being re-elected as Lady Margaret

³ Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640*. (Oxford, England: Clarendon, 1987.) 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁵ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:659.

⁶ Tyacke, 30.

⁷ As to the content of the articles, see Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 3:523-25. The essence of the *Canons of Dort* had emerged in these articles.

Professor in the same year. He then retired to London till death.⁸

The *Lambeth Articles*, however, did not have the queen's authorization. They were used, according to Archbishop Whitgift, only as an explanation of existing laws of the land with discretion. It is not surprising that the queen would command the suppression of these articles. But at the Synod of Dort (1618~19) it was stated that the English deputies exhibited the articles to express their judgment upon this similar theological issue in the past.⁹

Alexander McNally observes judiciously that the election of Peter Baro to the Lady Margaret professorship in 1574 still "signified a watershed between the decline of Calvinism and the rise to dominance of Arminianism," though the "process was slow and unspectacular"¹⁰ The "first glimmerings of an English Arminian school of thought" was not discerned until 1613 when the Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius (1583~1645) defended the Remonstrance before James I. Though Grotius converted no man in his visit, he found some Baro supporters, like John Overall and Lancelot Andrews, were akin to his mind. It was an irony for the Puritans that Overall was elected to succeed to the professorship of William Whitaker, the mind and the drafter of the Lam-

⁸ Tyacke, 35; and see also "Peter Baro" in J. D. Douglas, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Revised ed. 106. Baro disguised himself as a confessor of the articles by distinguishing God's will into a primary or antecedent one and a consequent one. By God's antecedent will He created all men to eternal life. Reprobation is an act of God's consequent will as a result of man's own refusal of God's grace. See Alexander McNally, "Some Aspects of Thomas Goodwin's Doctrine of Assurance." Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, Phil., 1972. pp. 32-33.

⁹ Schaff, 1:661.

¹⁰ McNally, "Some Aspects of Thomas Goodwin's Doctrine of Assurance." 31.

beth Articles, in 1595.¹¹ Therefore, “it would be improper to use the word ‘Arminian’ of any English theologian before 1610.”¹² However, the glimmerings created by Grotius developed into the “noise” Goodwin heard from the Arminian controversy when he grew up in Cambridge during 1613~1619. (2:lix)

“The Noise of the Arminian Controversy”

I shall here summarize the five points of Remonstrance in 1610. The Remonstrance is “first negative, and then positive. It rejects five Calvinistic propositions, and then asserts the five Arminian propositions.” The five rejected doctrines are (1) the supralapsarian view of double predestination, (2) the sublapsarian view of double predestination, (3) limited atonement, (4) irresistible and discriminative grace of God, and (5) perseverance of the elect. The Remonstrants declared that as these statements are not contained in the Word of God, nor in the *Heidelberg Catechism*, so they should not be preached to the church.¹³ Rather, they proposed their positive five points as thus:¹⁴ (1)

¹¹ Ibid., 35-36. Quoted from A. W. Harrison, *The Beginnings of Arminianism to the Synod of Dort*. As to Overall, he was appointed the Regius Professor of Divinity in the end of 1595. Overall’s tenure lasted till he resigned the Regius Professor in 1607. He was succeeded by John Richardson, another anti-Calvinist. Their tenures made the Calvinist monopoly at Cambridge in the aftermath of the *Lambeth Articles* incomplete. See Tyacke, 35-39. This position was recovered by the Calvinist camp on September 25, 1617 when Samuel Collins, after assuming the Regius Professorship, could cope the pressure of the coming Synod of Dort much better than Richardson. See Tyacke, 41, 44; cf. 101.

¹² McNally, “Some Aspects of Thomas Goodwin’s Doctrine of Assurance.” 35. Quoted from A. W. Harrison, *The Beginnings of Arminianism to the Synod of Dort*.

¹³ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:516-17.

¹⁴ As to the text of the Remonstrance, see *ibid.*, 3:545-49. As Schaff says, his text only has the positive part.

conditional predestination, (2) universal atonement, (3) saving faith, (4) resistible grace and (5) uncertainty of perseverance.¹⁵

The “noise” which Goodwin heard before his conversion in the late 1610s was purged during the process when England had been involved in the Synod of Dort. What the Calvinists could not achieve in the Lambeth Articles of 1595, they reaped plentifully from the not-so-distant Dutch controversy! For “All Cambridge dissent from Calvinism appears temporarily to have been silenced by royal support for the Dort rulings.”¹⁶

The newly-publicized Remonstrant tenets rendered the whole Dutch society seething and almost tore it apart during the 1610s. Nicholas Tyacke is right when he remarks that “Basically a Calvinist in doctrine for most of his life, the King’s views blew hot and cold ...”¹⁷ The seething United Provinces is like a seesaw between two rival powers, counteracting each other. The side with which King James took might prevail the other.

Between Count Maurice of Nassau and Oldenbarnevelt, Advocate of Holland, which side would the King choose? Tyacke admits that “Clearly the motives of the King were mixed.”¹⁸ There were three factors to incline the king’s heart, namely, his own theological preference, the counselors around him and the contemporary politics in that time. From the fact that “Neither James nor ... Charles was willing to

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:517-19. But the Remonstrants went further in the fifth point to teach the possibility of the believer’s total and final fall from God’s grace.

¹⁶ Tyacke, 45.

¹⁷ Tyacke, 41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

make the Dort canons binding for England” after the Synod of Dort,¹⁹ we know that the true cause for King James to be sided with the Dutch Calvinists is primarily a political maneuver. In the past Elizabethan England “played a role in gaining independence from Spain for the seven northern provinces.”²⁰ Now Oldenbarnevelt “favoured a closer French alliance, and no trading concessions to the English” whereas Maurice maintained existing ties with England in order to adopt “a more aggressive policy towards Spain.” Tyacke also thinks that “these known preferences were likely to influence English government attitudes.”²¹

The Synod of Dort

As a consequence the Synod of Dort was convened by the States-General, Prince Maurice, to settle this theological and social issue on November 13, 1618. The *Canons of Dort* were adopted the next May.²²

The orthodox Calvinism achieved a complete triumph just in appearance. For the pure cause of the Reformed theology was tainted by the ambition of Prince Maurice. He took side with the Counter-Remonstrants late in July 1617. He probably “saw in the controversy an opportunity to gain political advantage over his rival Oldenbarne-

¹⁹ Ibid., 105.

²⁰ Ibid., 87-88.

²¹ Ibid., 90.

²² For the full Latin text of the *Canons of Dort*, see Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3:550-80. The English text, see 3:581-97. But notice that it contains only the positive articles and omits the preface, the rejection of each head and the sentence against the Remonstrants.

velt,” who adhered to the cause of the Remonstrance.²³ Oldenbarnevelt, together with some other political leaders, was arrested in August 1618. Only three out of all 58 delegates to the synod were Remonstrants. Yet they were forced to yield their seats to the orthodox ones. “Thus the fate of the Arminians was decided beforehand.” Once the synod was over, Oldenbarnevelt was “unjustly condemned to death.” Grotius was also condemned to perpetual imprisonment.²⁴

Philip Schaff comments, moreover, that the synod then “prepared the way for a dry scholasticism,” and “consolidated orthodoxy at the expense of freedom, sanctioned a narrow confessionalism”²⁵ But the case for Goodwin is drastically different. Arminianism, together with its preaching style, evaporated suddenly in Goodwin’s thought as a result of an abrupt experience of conversion on his most memorable day—October 2, 1620—at St. Edmund’s Church. We may safely conclude the real winner of the Synod of Dort was not the Dutch Calvinists, but the English Calvinists! For “in general, the Dutch Arminian controversy served to erode the limited toleration previously extended to the English anti-Calvinists.”²⁶ Divine providence granted the latter a golden chance by inclining the heart of King James to a religious policy that they rarely had since the rise of Puritanism in the mid-sixteenth century.

The support of King James for the Dutch Calvinists was imple-

²³ W. Robert Godfrey, “Calvin and Calvinism in the Netherlands.” in W. Stanford Reid, ed., *John Calvin, His Influence in the Western World*. 106.

²⁴ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:513-14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:515.

²⁶ Tyacke, 102.

mented in the selection of the five delegates. Four of them were from England and one, from Scotland. Though the Archbishop George Abbot (1562~1633) might be given the task of selection, only one of them, George Carleton, Bishop of Llandaff was his pick. The other three Englishmen—Joseph Hall, John Davenant and Samuel Ward—were related to the King’s circle. Hall was ill and then replaced by Thomas Goad, chaplain to Archbishop Abbot. Later a Scot resident in England, Water Balcanqual, was selected by the king to represent Scotland.²⁷ “English unanimity on doctrinal matters was at a premium” to the synod. The unanimity was especially pronounced by Cambridge.²⁸ Davenant, Lady Margaret Professor and Master of Queen’s College, and Ward, Master of Sidney Sussex College, were all Cambridge “resident academics.”²⁹ They “all took a definitely anti-Arminian stand.”³⁰ The five delegates all had voting power.

In addition to them, there were another two important Englishmen present at the synod, namely, John Hales and William Ames. Hales, the chaplain of Sir Dudley Carleton, served as an observer. His reports later were published. Ames acted as the advisor to the synod president, Johannes Bogerman.³¹ Now we turn to the *Canons* itself.

The Canons of Dort

The *Canons* were divided into five heads to redress the errors of

²⁷ Ibid., 91-92.

²⁸ Ibid., 41.

²⁹ Ibid., 44.

³⁰ Ibid., 100.

³¹ Keith L. Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames—Dutch Background of English and American Puritanism*. 53-54.

the five points of the Remonstrance. They declared that

God’s electing purpose was not conditioned by anything inherent in or done by sinful men; that Christ’s death was sufficient to save the world, but efficient only for the elect; that fallen man is totally unable to help himself and that the Spirit therefore sovereignly and irresistibly gives the gift of faith to the elect; and that those justified and regenerated will be preserved to the end and glorified.

The *Canons* are usually memorized by an acronym T-U-L-I-P which represents their five heads. However, the original order is U-L-T-I-P. The mnemonics should not sacrifice the spirit of the synod, which is to guard the *sovereignty* of God in His absolute and unconditional election. They were not drafted to display the full beauty of Reformed theology, for they were but to pinpoint the five errors of the Remonstrance.

In the synod Franciscus Gomarus failed to advocate his supralapsarian views. The general agreement was sublapsarian views—“unconditional nature of the double decree, of election and reprobation, subsequent to the fall of Adam.” The Second Head was opened by Balcanqual’s question—“whether the death of Christ was intended indifferently for all, or only for the elect.” This question became the focus of polarized debates. Even Ward and Davenant were drawn to the hypothetical universalism. Finally the wisdom of the Dortian divines presented a limited atonement statement and at the same time was able to “distinguish between the sufficiency and efficacy of Christ’s death.”³²

³² Tyacke, 96-98.

The Third and Fourth Heads were indeed written in one unit. For “the third point of the Remonstrance was erroneous only in relation to the fourth point.”³³ Actually Art. I-IX of the joint Heads are devoted to the doctrine of total depravity of man while Art. X-XVII, the irresistible grace of God. “There was no serious disagreement concerning Calvinist orthodoxy” about the rest three heads.³⁴

Schaff’s high appraisal of the Synod of Dort lies in that it is the “only Synod of a quasi-cumenical character in the history of the Reformed Churches.” The Dutch delegates of the 102-member body of the synod were only 58, that is, 56.86 percent. The rest were invited from foreign Reformed countries/churches such as England, the Palatinate, Hesse, Switzerland, Bremen and France.³⁵ In theology the *Canons* paved the way for the later and more mature Westminster Standards.³⁶

Synopsis of the Book of Perseverance

Before entering into the details of his doctrine of perseverance, I will make a synopsis of Book IV of *A Discourse of Election*. Book IV is a 195-page treatise upon 1 Peter 5:10. There are sixteen chapters steering along the thought of the text. Chapters I and II explicate the

³³ Godfrey, “Calvin and Calvinism in the Netherlands.” 108. In this concise summary of the *Canons*, the five mnemonic titles are hidden there in a different order from the traditional acronym TULIP: unconditional election, imited atonement, total depravity, irresistible grace, and perseverance of saints.

³⁴ Tyacke, 99.

³⁵ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:513-14. The elector of Brandenburg excused the absence of their delegates.

³⁶ E.g., the *WCF* 17.3, 18.1-3 used identical phraseologies of the Fifth Head of the *Canons of Dort*!

opening words—“God of all graces,” and thus set up the framework of the doctrine of perseverance in God’s grace. In writing this text Peter must have thought of his own backsliding experience in denial of the Lord. (Luke 22:31) The reason why he can stand is nothing but God’s covenantal grace. Goodwin continued to expound the threefold grace of God: the *purposing grace* starting before the world, the *dispensatory grace* running in this world, and riches of grace being in His *nature*. The third one moves God to make good the first two sorts of grace. “The grace in his nature is the fountain, the spring; the grace of his purposes is the well-head, and the grace in his dealings and dispensations are the streams.” (9:235) Then he used David as an example to demonstrate how the riches of the grace of God are dispensed upon the elect.

Chapters III, IV, V and VI tackle the doctrine of effectual calling. The text here considers the elect only. Goodwin distinguished effectual calling from general calling not in *degrees*, but in *kind*. Effectual calling is the fruit of election, ushering in all acts of grace—such as pardoning grace, sanctifying grace. The former grace deals with the guilt of sins while the latter deals with the power of sin. So God is able to “carry us through all temptations unto perfection.” (9:308) The perfection is nothing but God’s eternal glory, which is the end of our calling. Here we again see how Goodwin’s controlling thought—the latter-day glory—comes into play. He said, “as for the interim time between now and that day, we may expect that Jesus Christ ... will see to it to keep thee, and raise thee up at the latter day.” (9:336)

From Chapter VII to the end of Book IV Goodwin turns to the doctrine of perseverance proper. To open the doctrine he explores four points which all center on Christ: (1) Chapter VII elaborates that

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Christ, the God of grace, is the ground of our perseverance. (2) Chapter VIII explains that Christ's person, His relation to us and office for us afford our perseverance to the end. (3) Chapter IX clarifies that Christ's engagement with us arises from His calling us and secures us all the way to the end with His intercession. (4) Chapter X expounds that now Christ's bringing us into the redemptive glory enhances God's glory. His concern for God's glory will suffice for Himself to preserve us to heaven. (9:338)

Then Goodwin zeroes in on the promise of perseverance from Chapter XI to the former part of Chapter XII. He treats Christian backsliding from the latter part of Chapter XII to Chapter XIII.

Arguments Against the Remonstrance.

When he heard the "noise" of Arminianism during the age of the Remonstrance Controversy, Goodwin was still young. But one generation after the Synod of Dort he was a mature Reformed theologian upon the floor of the Westminster Assembly. The fact that he was deeply involved in the writing of the Westminster Standards reveals his hearty acceptance of the *Canons of Dort*.³⁷ After another decade, as a primary drafter of the *Savoy Declaration* (1658), he reconfirmed the doctrine of perseverance in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and inherited its theological formulation for *Savoy* in spite of two slight additions.³⁸

³⁷ I.e., *WCF* 17, *LC* 79 and *SC* 36. *SC* 36 only sketches the doctrine of perseverance and *LC* 79 only confirms its certainty; *WCF* 17 is no doubt one of the most comprehensive documents upon this doctrine.

³⁸ The implication of the slight changes is sufficient to interpret the theological distinction of the Independents. I will touch on them later. See Williston Walker, *The*

WCF 17 encompasses three sections: the first section teaches the *certainty* of perseverance; the second, the *grounds* of it; the third, the *hindrances* of it. Beyond the two formal confessions Goodwin left not a few expositions in his own works. Though Goodwin devoted Book IV of *A Discourse of Election* to the doctrine of perseverance, yet his thinking on this doctrine also came into sight pervasively in many other works. He debated fiercely against the assertions of the Remonstrance, echoing the doctrinal formulations of the three Reformed confessions—*Dort*, *Westminster* and *Savoy*.

Unconditional election

As an orthodox Puritan, Goodwin appealed to God’s sovereignty at first. Early in 1630 when he preached upon *The Acts of Justifying Faith*, he asserted the “absoluteness” of the covenant of grace against the Arminian “fore-supposed lower and subordinate prerequisite conditions to be performed by men.” What the Remonstrants detracted from the orthodox doctrines was to “embase the covenant of grace by subjecting it to the covenant of works.” (8:206) The election of God is absolute and purely out of His grace.³⁹ It is unconditional, “absolute and infallible.” (9:419) In 1641 he continued his tone in the expositions of *Ephesians* by saying that “he [God] first chose us, and never repenteth of it.” (2:167) Goodwin liked to use the biblical metaphor, *seal*, in 2 Timothy 2.19. “If it were but a king’s seal, it could not be reversed; but this is God’s.” (4:212) Our Father God has set the seal in

Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism. 384.

³⁹ According to Thomas Goodwin, Jr., his son, the purpose of the treatise on *The Justifying Faith* was to answer the “Arminian objections.” TG 8:x. Also consult “Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin” of this dissertation.

election. (4:231)

The election of God is a love story. “When God first began to love you, he gave you all that he ever meant to give you in the lump, and eternity of time is that in which he is retailing of it out.” In contrast, “the Arminians would make the love of God incomplete, and never complete till one comes to die.” (2:167) As His election is on an individual basis, knowing His elect “distinctly,” so God loves them in a definite way. (2:163) But “Arminians would have God’s love equal, and alike to all.” To this Goodwin adamantly averred that

that great love, which was in the heart of God as the foundation, that continued in man, though fallen, and wrought in mercy, was that which had begun toward his elect, *I do not say to all men in Adam*, nor to them in that holiness which was in Adam, but to bring them to that perfect holiness of another kind, which he meant to give us in heaven, whereunto he had elected us. (9:424. Italics mine.)

True love is like wine. Goodwin said that “the older it is the better it is.” How old is it? He answered that “God’s love is everlasting.” (1:78)

The fundamental error of Arminians lies in that, as Goodwin pointed out, they nullify and make nothing of “this grand act [election]” and instead, “they substitute in the room of this act another upon condition.” Theirs is a “general choosing,” depending upon man’s will, not upon God’s ruling. So “in one and same day a man is elected, if his free-will has consented, and then becomes non-elect if his free-will falls off.” Goodwin observed that “this happens a thousand times in the course of a man’s life!” Hence their doctrine is a “manifest contradiction.” (9:420) He judged that the case of Arminianism is like the Israelites in the wilderness or King Saul, both of which are left by God

in their own wills. They all fail in the long run . So “how fatal” the Bible proves their scheme. (9:419)

“Man’s free will” and “God’s peremptory decree” are “seeming, though not real, contradictions in the gospel.” But Arminianism does not know how to reconcile them. They say that “if God ... work [sic] irresistibly upon his [man’s] will, how can his will be free?” Goodwin thought that “the taking part with one truth, without reconciling it to another, hath been the foundation of many errors.” But “lies the depth of the gospel in reconciling all seeming contradictions whatsoever.” (4:277) J. I. Packer concurs by indicating “two philosophical principles” which Arminianism stemmed: “first, that divine sovereignty is not compatible with human freedom, nor therefore with human responsibility; second, that ability limits obligation.”⁴⁰

Goodwin showed how St. Paul reconciles the seeming contradiction in Philippians 2.12-13. “Though God doth all, art thou to wait, and in the mean time to act faith, and to work out *thy own*.” His pastoral experience for seekers is as follows,

Let me say this to you, faith is the greatest venture in the world. ... You make a venture upon God’s will when you throw yourselves upon it to accept you. ... You must resolve to cast away your own endeavours for the glorifying of his power, as you must cast away your own righteousness for the glorifying of his free grace, and to be glad put your mouths in the dust; and yet if there may be any hope, and if there may be faith, you ought work out your salvation, because he worketh in you both the will and the deed. (8:562)

⁴⁰ J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1990.) 127.

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This is Christian experience that “thousands of soul have gained this way,” (8:562) while “Adam knew no such thing ... in his life.” (4:276) He observed that “Husbandmen cast the seed into the ground, and wait for the increase, because it is God that giveth it, and men do the like for preferment.” Therefore, Goodwin concluded, “In all such natural things ... men do act upon a dependence and in a subordination to the power of God, and should they not do so in matters of salvation?” (8:562-63)

Ways to obtain salvation have been reduced to two: by works or by grace. They are set in opposition to each other. (Cf. Romans 11.6) But the words of Romans 9:16 confirm the way of “election grace,” not that of “free-will grace.” The “election grace” will become the “grace of execution” which makes us to will and to do unto salvation. (9:12)

Limited atonement

As an orthodox Puritan Goodwin endorsed the doctrine of limited atonement. He said that “[Christ] in dying ... aimed but at *some particular* persons, who were also justified by God, as also from all eternity, and they alone.” (8:404. Italics mine.) That is his confession of this Reformed truth. Goodwin continued to argue that “when men ... have also assurance given them, ... then indeed the consideration of ... Christ’s dying for *particular* men, will come comfortably and seasonably in” (8:405. Italics mine.) In his discussion of the concurrence of the Trinity in our conversion, Goodwin included “the Holy Ghost ... who is privy to God’s election, and to the heart of Jesus Christ when he died, and knows *for whom he died*” (8:146-47. Italics mine.) That means Christ did not die for all, but for particular people. Beyond that, to our amazement, Goodwin said almost nothing of

it! If you want to find something of this doctrine from his *opus magnum* in christology, *Christ the Mediator*, you might be disappointed.⁴¹ He kept reticent on this doctrine in this 500 plus-page christology!

Paul Edward Brown finds this problem as well:

It is apparent to any student of Calvinism that one concept which is a vital part of the Calvinistic theology has received very little emphasis in Goodwin’s discussion of the atonement. This is the doctrine of the limited atonement of Christ. Goodwin does not discuss this doctrine specifically in any of his books.⁴²

However, Brown makes a concession to admit that “yet the doctrine is a basic underlying proposition in all of his thought.” As to why Goodwin would take such a stance as this, Brown suggests that

In his theology Goodwin has taken an important step in his break with strict Calvinism. Yet he will not go further toward the Arminianism camp. God is the God of mercy even though Christ makes atonement only for the elect. His thought then is a compromise, a half-way house, but it looks backward to Calvin rather

⁴¹ The nearest text showing the thought of limited atonement found in Goodwin by Paul Edward Brown is that “God took up a strong resolution to reconcile some of the fallen sons of men to himself.” TG 5:12, 11. See Brown, “The Principle of Covenant—The Theology of Thomas Goodwin.” (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1950.) 192. From this sentence we can infer that when Christ executed the mandate of reconciliation upon the cross, it must have been *particular*.

On the other hand, we should not misunderstand the words in TG 5:428. When it is said of the “extent of that atonement to be universal as to all sins,” it only means the *power* of the sacrifice at the day of atonement in contrast to that of daily sacrifices in the old economy. It is not the so-called universal atonement at all.

⁴² Paul Edward Brown, “The Principle of Covenant—The Theology of Thomas Goodwin.” 191.

than forward to Arminius.⁴³

His comment sounds somewhat right in saying that Goodwin kept himself deliberately a distance from the Calvinistic hard-liners. But to suspect that Goodwin had any inclination to Arminianism is altogether out of the picture.⁴⁴ We should not forget that Goodwin was the *only* participant who attended both the Westminster Assembly and the Savoy Synod, and was also actively involved in the drafting of those confessions. At least Goodwin signed and endorsed the doctrine of limited atonement formulated in the synodical documents which were issued officially by both synods.⁴⁵

One year after the year Goodwin published his *Christ the Mediator* (1642), John Owen published his first work, *A Display of Arminianism* (1643). After this work, Owen prepared the publication of *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1650), his second work on the same controversy, over seven years.⁴⁶ According to J. I. Packer, this is the “first masterpiece” of Owen. Owen, much more polemic in doctrinal issues than Goodwin, was more suitable to tackle this controversy

⁴³ Ibid., 192.

⁴⁴ One forceful evidence is Goodwin’s criticism of Arminian universal atonement. According to Goodwin, in the Arminian view all sinful corruption “that accrues to us ... is so taken away by Christ the second Adam, and so universal, even to the heathens, as well as ... Christians, as that they are all quitted of that sin.” TG 10:325.

⁴⁵ The documents regarding the doctrine of limited atonement are WCF 8.5 and *Savoy Declaration* 8.5. Cf. G. I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. 79. Both of them are almost identical except one word in variance: Savoy changes from ‘his Father’ to ‘God.’ The wording in *Westminster* and *Savoy* is much softer than that in *Dort*. See Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 376.

⁴⁶ Peter Toon, *God’s Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen*. 179.

than Goodwin. Owen had confidence in his own work. He said that “Altogether hopeless of success I am not; but fully resolved that I shall not live to see a solid answer given unto it.” J. I. Packer says that “Time has justified his optimism.”⁴⁷

Total depravity

The third article of the Remonstrance sounds plausible in doctrine.⁴⁸ But it could not escape the scrutiny of the Dortian theologians and Goodwin. As to this Peter Toon explains that

The synod [of Dort] could not find anything wrong with the third article of the Remonstrance taken by itself. Thus the delegates decided to look at the third in the light of the fourth article. Hence the “Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine” in the Canons of Dort were combined under the title, “Of the Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs.”⁴⁹

Goodwin pointed out that the Arminian doctrine of regeneration is but man’s half-dead will “excited by extrinsecal motions and enlightenings on God’s part.” They only confessed “the adjuvant grace of God,

⁴⁷ John Owen, *Works* 10:146. Quoted from Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*. 146.

⁴⁸ The third article reads: That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do any thing that is truly good (such as saving Faith eminently is); but that is needful that he be born again of God in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers, in order that he may rightly understand, think, will and effect what is truly good, according to the Word of Christ, John xv.5: ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 3:546-47.

⁴⁹ Peter Toon, *Born Again: A Biblical and Theological Study of Regeneration*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987.) 121.

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assisting or elevating the will by way of motion and persuasion.” For them there is not “any working or infusion of a new heart and spirit unto us.” They did “utterly deny any infusion of habits or principles abiding in the soul.” (6:188) Thereby the Remonstrants could say that God’s grace is resistible.

We have to understand the third article of the Remonstrance in their mind! It looks quite evangelical; however, it is entirely Semi-Pelagian. For them “nature can do nothing without grace, but they make nature to concur with grace.” Goodwin said that the Arminians “still ... mingle dross” into the pure grace of God. (4:309) For them the spiritually dead man has “certain kinds of sparks of life” such as “a natural knowledge of God, and a natural sorrow for sin, and a natural desire of happiness.” Regeneration is nothing but what “the Holy Ghost hatcheth up to make a new creature.” No wonder Goodwin expressed an “urge against the Remonstrants.” (2:202) For them spiritual death is half death only, man still having “sparks of life;” while for Goodwin “there is no spiritual life in us.” (2:203) Goodwin exposed the real profile of the Remonstrants behind their plausible words.

Goodwin gave us more in-depth analysis of the Arminian doctrine of sin. They only “acknowledge the imputation of Adam’s act to be our sin, but the corruption inherent to be only a punishment of that sin.” The corruption had been “taken away by Christ the second Adam ... universally.” In their view even a heathen would have no such original corruption. Man’s natural capability is accordingly enhanced. They only pay lip service to the grace of God. (10:325) Goodwin argued that in the Remonstrant scheme the throne of sin is still therein, because they “err, not knowing the power of original sin, nor the depth of corruption that is in their hearts;” and “the will of man now is the

prime and proper seat of sin.” He averred,

As no prince’s will , in full and actual possession of regal power, can be brought by ordinary or any persuasions to be willing, much less to be indifferent, to be dethroned, so nor may we think that sin in our wills will upon easy terms lay down his crown. (9:7)

The will, mind and the whole heart of man must first have the original corruption to be dethroned from its dominion. Then the same vital habitual principle of inherent holiness can be created in it anew.

Adam had “wind and tide, and a new vessel, strong, and tight, and well built ... besides the concurrence of God’s assistance ... an inward principle of habitual and inherent holiness.” However, he “shipwrecked so miserably once before.” Now the Arminian free will is like a “rotten leaking old vessel, adventuring to sea again.” Goodwin criticized that it is doomed to “wilfully perish a second time.” (9:7)

Irresistible grace

The fourth point of the Remonstrance—that God’s saving grace is resistible—is a logical outcome of their perception of man’s will in conversion. Goodwin pointed out that the error comes from their misunderstanding of the true nature of regeneration. Grace for them is only extrinsic grace, not habitual infusion. Grace “consists altogether in acts stirred up by supernatural motions.” It only strengthens the will to accept or refuse. (6:188) Grace is but “moral persuasions.” The will itself undergoes no essential change. Though beset both by understanding and affections, it is still free. “Therefore that may refuse for all this.” (1:351) But the Arminian will can only resist the grace defined by them!—a grace of God not existent for the elect.

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Arminians are right when the case of temporary faith is considered. Goodwin enumerated the swine and dogs in 2 Peter 2:22, the stony and thorny grounds in the parable of the sower, and the “enlightened” unregenerate in Hebrews 6:4-8 as the alleged “falling from grace.” (1:413) He found “their hearts remaining still unregenerate.” (1:415) This grace is not the grace proper, but natural influence at its height. It is resistible, but it is not grace. The Remonstrance must have confused these two different cases.

Goodwin dug the root of their errors out: “they know not how to reconcile man’s free will with God’s peremptory decree,” but they want to reason them out. The result is “taking part with one truth, without reconciling it to another.” This error “hath been the foundation of many errors.” This contradiction is only seeming, not real. He asserted that “therein lies the depth of the gospel.” (4:277)

Perseverance of saints

The Remonstrants contended that the power of God only shows to us at the inception of faith and at the last day to glory. “They would cut off all the power of God working in us” during the two extremes. (1:342) For they did not know that it is not the power of man’s own will, but the exceeding greatness of God’s power. (1:341)

From 1 Peter 1.5 ([you] who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.) Goodwin indicated that the term “you are kept” signifies a military overtone. It implies that we are in a great danger during our pilgrimage. For “were there not a great and an apparent danger of miscarrying, such a mighty guard needed not.” What is the danger? It is nothing but “our corruptions that still remain in us, which ‘fight against the soul,’ and endeavour to overcome and destroy us.” (3:448-49)

Therefore in Goodwin’s mind perseverance is the finality of sanctification. He admitted that “though God’s people are foiled often, yet that there should still remain ‘a seed within them,’ 1 John iii.9.” Perseverance is “a spark of grace in the midst of a sea of corruption.” Today “God strongly carries his own work begun, though slowly, and by degrees.” But, Goodwin imagined, “would the confusion of the devil *in the end* be so great, and the victory so glorious!” (3:449. Italics mine.) This is a sanctified imagination, for it is given by the Lord Himself in His final prayer, John 17:12, 15. He stressed that “the apostles turned the eyes of all the primitive Christians upon that day, or the coming of Christ.” They will be kept blameless until that day. (7:160) Thus the doctrine of Goodwin’s perseverance is enamored with eschatological glory.

Perseverance—a Heavenly Scene

To Arminius perseverance is an uncertainty. His followers, the Remonstrants, then went further to teach the possibility of total and final fall from God’s saving grace.⁵⁰ But for Goodwin, perseverance is not only possible, available, but also absolute, divine, and necessary. It is a Trinitarian symphony indeed. The doctrine is primarily a concern of God Himself. For it is God who has long been concerned about the accomplishment of His eternal purpose upon us, rather than man who is anxious for his own ultimate salvation.

An ultimate necessity

“Even any one of his members,” Goodwin said, Christ “would not think himself completely happy without them.” That is the prayer

⁵⁰ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*. 1:519.

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of John 17:24. For Christ, “if but a Benjamin or a Joseph were wanting, heaven would be less to him.” He would reckon Himself imperfect. He would like to die for us to prevent his being alone in heaven, John 12:24. (4:568) Christ would bring many sons into glory, Hebrews 2:10. So He is “not complete without them.” (4:51) Christ, together with the Father, would like to have others glorified and to share His glory. This is the “original” of the gospel and the strongest motive of redemption. God could not suffer being alone in heaven! (9:129)

In the same vein Goodwin even said that “as if his [Christ’s] own single personal glory would do him no good unless we should be with him and have part of it.” All divine attributes shall serve for the good of us just as it serves His own glory. (7:197)

Someone may argue why God would risk the creation of man. Are all the sun, moon and stars enough to shine God’s glory in creation? Goodwin argued that there are differences between the unreasonable creatures and the reasonable ones. The difference lies in that only the latter can “reflect and beat it [God’s glory] back again to him.” Therefore God created man “whose sole and adequate end was to reflect glory upon him.” (6:498) In which way does man reflect God’s glory? “A beggar may behold the glory of a king, and be never happier for it.” Goodwin said that “as we were all *born* like Adam, so we shall be *made* like Christ.” For we, far more than a beggar, are “made conformable to the image of his Son” and “shall wear the same kind of glory which Christ wears.”(7:461-62)

But on the other hand Goodwin expounded that by the course of Christ’s “altar prayer” in Chapter 17 of John, “he soars up unto a glory that is purely his own, and for himself alone. He flies up to the very top-pinnacle, the supreme sublimity of the divinest glory ... ‘the glory

which I had with thee afore the world was.’ ... And therefore this is the crown of all.” (4:500)

From this perspective Goodwin considered the doctrine of perseverance. The certainty of this doctrine comes from the certainty of the ultimate glory, which Christ is to achieve in the heaven. The experience of perseverance is down to the earth, but its certainty is up in heaven.

A divine authority

On John 10:29 Goodwin commented that “It is reigning, a domineering power, a power that carries all before it.” Herein lies the difference between the Remonstrance and the Reformed theology. The latter always considers from the perspective of God’s sovereignty. It is a monarch’s power, signifying his dominion and absoluteness. “If all that power of God will bring you to salvation, and keep you to salvation, you shall be surely kept.” This kingly power will do “beyond all resistance.” (1:337) Perseverance is the outcome of God’s authority.

In John 17:24 we see an example: “Jesus prays like a king.” The Lord says “And concerning the work of my hands, you command me. “ Isaiah 45:11. This kind of command God is unable to go against. “How much more doth Jesus Christ’s intercession bind God’s hands, and command all in heaven and earth!” (4:81) Goodwin likened the commanding love of God to a strong stream which runs “under ground for so many years, and that so many rebellions ... should not dam it up ... at last bubble up at a time designed, and save, and wash, and purify the wretched defiled creature.” (6:91) Nothing can dissolve the divine redeeming authority. “For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable.” Romans 11:29. So grace is “deposited in Christ to be kept for us.” It is impossible to be “cut off by any fate or death.”

(8:396)

A heavenly scene

Goodwin continued to explicate the secret of this doctrine. It is implemented by the mediatorship of the ascended Christ from His heavenly throne of grace. Goodwin reiterated the challenging words of Christ in John 10:28—“who then can pull us out?” and explained the reason why He could say this is that He held two keys of the kingdom of heaven: “By his resurrection , we may see and rest assured that he hath the keys of death and hell ...and by his ascension and sitting at God’s right hand, that he hath the keys of heaven, whose door he hath unlocked, and now set open.”

So Goodwin dared to shout: “What need we then fear hell, when Christ our Redeemer hath the keys of it?” (4:53) As a consequence he turned up to the throne of grace to elucidate the implication of the doctrine of perseverance. Actually he focused on three passages centering on the mediatorship of Christ, namely, Hebrews 7:25, 1 John 2:1-2 and Romans 8:34.

In the dichotomy of our flesh and spirit, the doctrine of perseverance describes our struggles. But if we the same thing through the lens of the ascended Mediator, it becomes drastically different, full of triumphant tones. At the present age it is the mediatorial kingdom of Christ. By Romans 8:34 the ascended Christ sits at God’s right hand to intercede for us. “By sitting there he meaneth reigning, —to destroy enemies, to put us out of danger of death and condemnation.” This reigning will sustain until the final sentence is passed and the kingdom ceases. Then “Christ presenteth us to his Father.” (1:505)

In comparing Christ’s sitting at God’s right hand with His death,

resurrection and ascension, Goodwin said that “if ... there were anything which none of all the former three could do or effect for us, yet his intercession could do it to the utmost, for itself is the uttermost and highest.” Hebrews 7:25. So he related the doctrine of perseverance to Christ’s reigning-at-God’s-right-hand while some others to the former three. The feasibility of this inconceivable doctrine rests in the fact that Christ has ascended to the highest place of the universe. The power and authority on our behalf comes accordingly. (4:56) In another place, Goodwin said, “to the uttermost” implies that “our preservation in grace is more eminently ascribed to his life in glory,” and it will last to “the uttermost of time, that is, to the end of thy life, and all along.” (9:359-60)

With 1 John 2:1-2 Goodwin called our attention to the picture: “We have an enemy on earth, Satan, but an advocate in heaven, 1 John ii.1.” So never lose our heavenly vision while we are engaged in earthly battles with those spiritual adversaries. (7:264) As a matter of fact the “advocateship” of Christ in heaven only executes what He fulfilled with the satisfaction for sins upon the cross. (4:76) They are two aspects of the same Redeemer’s salvation. Goodwin added a somewhat pastoral sense to this text by saying that “the work of reconciliation for sins before conversion is attributed to his death; and for sins after conversion to his intercession.” (4:66) We might not fully agree with this statement. For *all* sins were once and for all both satisfied upon the cross and propitiated before the mercy-seat, no matter what is before or after. Nevertheless Goodwin’s second sentence is right when it predicates the post-conversion sinning. It applies pastorally to the sin-stricken conscience. When the Apostle John turns to God, he uses the intimate name, *Father!* Goodwin indicated that it is the affectionate Fatherhood bringing “comfort and support to the believers against the

evil of the greatest sins that can befall them after conversion.” (4:82)

If we would only look inward, we must have inevitably been the Remonstrants. But when we turn our eyes upon Jesus, we must concur with the Dortian divines.

Restoration of Backsliders

The strongest case against the Remonstrance is no other than the restoration of those backsliders. Goodwin pointed out that “what power went to work faith in you ... was not the power of your own will, but ... the exceeding greatness of his power.” But the Remonstrants, as Goodwin protested, “would cut off all the power of God working in us at first when we believe ... and all the power ... before the latter day.” According to them, man is self-reliant. Peter had denied the Lord three times. The principle of faith was not extinct in him, “but smothered as in a smoke, which a look of Christ’s blew up into a flame of ... repentance.” His recovery was a “new conversion” to him. (1:341-342) If the scheme of the Remonstrance was correct, then Peter must have had no hope to be restored. For “Satan hath even devoured [Peter] ... so as he hath not only a foot in his snare, but his whole man in his belly.” What Satan has done to Peter seems to be no different from what he has done to Judas. But only one look of Christ breaks Peter’s heart so that “the devil must give him up again, to have his prey ... out of his teeth.” Goodwin scornfully asserted that “it doth mightily confound the devil.” (5:325) This is the case of a restored elect person.

Arminians like to cite Judas and Demas to make their point. In John 17:12 Judas is called “a son of perdition,” who is “ordained by God to perdition.” (2:118) Judas’ fall from grace should not surprise us because there is no seed of God ever implanted in his heart. Demas

and Esau belong to the same group who would sell their birthright in exchange for “present needs and desire,” or “sell heaven ... to enjoy present pleasures.” (10:204) They show little interest in eternal salvation. They are not the elect and hence cannot be examples to disprove the truth of perseverance. For there is no perseverance reserved for the reprobate.⁵¹

Disciplining the children of God becomes another case. To excommunicate the incestuous Corinthian in 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 is to “terrify and afflict his conscience, and to stir humble and mortify the flesh.” That is Paul’s strategy of bringing him back later. (3:258-59) Goodwin quoted 2 Corinthians 2: 7 and 11 to prove the restoration of the backslider.

The hardest case of conscience for the Reformed theology might be Hebrews 6:4-8. Arminians always use this case as an example to show that an elect person may fall from grace. Goodwin labeled the person in Hebrews 6:4-8 as “the highest kind of unregenerate” in the Bible. (1:414) That person is not a regenerate only because he has had those five high religious affections listed in the text. Rather, he is proved to be an unregenerate because of the fruits he bears as thorns and briars. Goodwin ruled that his heart still remains unregenerate, (1:415) though he belongs not to the “stony ground ... that was not much humbled,” but to the “thorny ground being more deeply humbled.” (1:414) This case still poses no real difficulty to the doctrine of

⁵¹ So is the case of Alexander, the hypocrite of 1 Timothy 1:19. TG 3:358. Cf. TG 4:185. The two thieves crucified with Christ show that “election should break forth in the one... and the other left to his own accursed cursing spirit ... should go to hell.” TG 9:184.

perseverance.⁵²

Short Conclusion

The significant differences between Westminster and Savoy are only two additions by the latter. The first addition is but a phrase—“and union with him, the oath of God”—added to *WCF* 17.2.⁵³ This section presents various foundations of perseverance. *Savoy* augments this doctrine *covenantally*. The Triune God implements it in a covenant-of-grace framework. The center is Christ with whom we were, we are and we will be placed always in the gracious union. The oath of God more enhances the certainty of that covenantal union with Christ.

The second addition is a clause added to the original sentence. It reads,

Savoy 17.3. **And though** (*WCF*: Nevertheless) they may through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God’s displeasure, and grieve His

⁵² Goodwin made two long analyses on (1) how far can a regenerate sin? (2) the difference between sinning against the Spirit and sinning against knowledge. See Book IV of his *Of Gospel Holiness*, TG 7:296-336.

⁵³ *Savoy* 17.2 reads: This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; **and union with him, the oath of God**; the abiding of **his** (*WCF*: the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof. Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 384. (The bold-faced words are the Savoyan additions.)

Holy Spirit, come to **have** (*WCF*: be deprived of) some measure of their graces and comforts **impaired**; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves; **yet they are and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.**⁵⁴

The original wordings of *WCF* 17.3 only underline the afflictions in the dark valley of perseverance. After the addition, the original gloom is eclipsed by the sunshine and hope from above! All of a sudden a new vertical dimension is augmented to the horizon of this doctrine. The heaven is opened. Owing to His unceasing intercession on our behalf, our merciful and faithful Mediator, Christ, merits the unswerving power to us.

The addition is a magic touch. It carries the indelible fingerprint of Goodwin. He always incorporated an eschatological hue to his doctrine. By emphasizing the priesthood of the exalted Christ, Goodwin successfully tinged his doctrine of perseverance with the latter-day glory. Losing sight of the heavenly mediatorship will leave this doctrine much tarnished.

I am also convinced that when the Savoyan theologians confessed this additional clause, they had the future “last killing” in their mind.⁵⁵ With the demise of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, on the eve of

⁵⁴ Ibid. The bold-faced words are the Savoyan additions. The addition to *WCF* 17.3 makes the original sentence a grammatical change. *WCF* 17.3 has only one sentence. After the addition, the original clause becomes a subordinate clause and the additional one assumes the main clause.

⁵⁵ As to the “last killing,” see TG 3:164 or Chapter II, The Latter-Day Glory—The Eschatology in His Revelation—The Third Reformation—The Fourth Vial above. 56.

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the Savoy Synod, the decline of the cause of Independency, and the jeremiad towards the whole Puritan movement, the Independent divines seemed to prepare for themselves a confession of perseverance to the end by God's grace.

Chapter XI

The Assurance of Salvation

If one wants to highlight a particular doctrine of Thomas Goodwin's as his salient contribution to church history, it must be no other than his doctrine of assurance of salvation.¹ Among his works, sermons in relation to this doctrine and to that of eschatology are the earliest. Goodwin, as Robert Letham observes, "developed a somewhat idiosyncratic view of a twofold of assurance of salvation."² His own life has been inseparably integrated with his theology. His early life especially reflects his doctrine of assurance.

Concerning the doctrine of assurance we will primarily examine three of his works, namely, *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness* (1628),³ parts of both *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* (1630)⁴

¹ To prevent any misunderstanding, except where otherwise specified, "assurance" denotes full assurance of salvation, as defined in the *WCF* 14.3 and Chapter 18.

² Robert Letham, "The Relationship Between Saving Faith and Assurance of Salvation." Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1976. p. 37.

³ This work was published by Goodwin himself in 1636. In "TO THE READER" he said that the sermons "were first preached eight years since". So I set 1628 as the year he preached them. Professor William Haller also sets this year as when he preached the sermons. See his *The Rise of Puritanism*, 152. Haller also thinks that Goodwin might have preached them at Cambridge or Ely. *Ibid.*, 144.

and *Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians* (1641).⁵ Though all three works preceded the Westminster Assembly (1643~49), the best map to guide us in his doctrine of assurance is Article XVIII of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, together with that of the *Savoy Declaration*. The deviation of the latter from the former reveals important and significant messages.⁶

Is Assurance the Essence of Faith? (WCF 18.3A)

As I mentioned above, Volume VIII is the great book on saving faith. In Book II of Part II of this work Goodwin treated the doctrine of assurance systematically. He dealt with assurance in the Book which treated the *acts*, not the *property*, of faith. At the very beginning of his essay, he defined assurance, drawing upon Romans 8:37 as a kind of “prevailing assurance,” which “overpowereth doubts and sense to the contrary, so as ... he is able to say, Christ is mine, and my sins are for-

⁴ Thomas Goodwin, Jr., his son, said that this part, the second part on the acts of faith, was his father’s “*Concio ad Clerum*.” (A sermon to the clergy.) Goodwin wrote it in Latin when he commenced Bachelor of Divinity in Cambridge in 1630. See Robert Halley, *Memoir of Thomas Goodwin, D. D.* TG 2:xxiv. Not finding the English part, the son then translated it with the confession that his English “doth not reach the eloquence of his Latin.” TG 8:x, the preface of the whole treatise on faith.

⁵ The date is immediately after returning from Holland. That was 1641. TG 1.xxx-xxxii. (On page xxxi Thankful Owen said these sermons were preached “about forty years ago.” Its year of publication was 1681.) I will treat this part inside of Chapter XII (The Sealing of the Spirit), an extension of the doctrine of assurance.

⁶ See Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 385-86. As observed by Beeke, besides a minor change in *The Savoy Declaration* 18.1, all major changes belong to 18.2. I treat them below in this chapter. See Joel R. Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith: English Puritanism and the Dutch “Nadere Reformatie”*: From Westminster to Alexander Comrie (1640~1760). (Ph.D. dissertation of Westminster Theological Seminary, Phil., 1988.) 221.

given ...”. (8:338) Then he premised as a foundation of his arguments the statement that

that act of faith which justifies a sinner, is distinct from knowing he hath eternal life, and may therefore be without it, because it doth not necessarily contain prevailing assurance in it. (8:338)

This is the same stance as that of the *WCF* 18.3, which states, “This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith”⁷ He also explained that he would like to treat this concept at the forefront “not only for more clear and orderly proceeding ..., but also thereby to allay the cavils and exceptions which men have against the doctrine of assurance.” (8:238)

Assurance—A Reformed Battleground!

Whether assurance is the essence of faith has long been a controversy even in the Reformed theology itself since the release of the *Westminster Standards* in 1646~48. The controversy originated from the fact that Calvin consistently averred that assurance is the essence of faith while the *WCF* 18.3 claimed otherwise. The *Larger Catechism* published one year later also confirmed the stance of the *WCF* 18.3:

Q.81. Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?

A81. Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it⁸

⁷ The *WCF* was completed on December 3, 1646 and supplemented with the Scripture proofs on April 29, 1647. See *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Atlanta, GA: The Committee for Christian Education & Publications. xvi. *The Savoy Declaration* 18.3 shares the same wording.

⁸ The *Larger Catechism* was completed on April 14, 1648. See *The Westminster*

While they differ at face value, Calvin and the *WCF* are congenial to each other at many crucial points; in fact, the *WCF* digested many theological insights of Calvin as well as developing its own distinctions. Their differences demand more in-depth research to locate a real, organic relationship between assurance and faith.

Since this controversy arose in Reformed scholarship, many theories have been proposed to solve or to interpret it. Joel R. Beeke divides them into two schools,⁹ namely the Cunningham-MacLeod school and the Kendall school.¹⁰ The former does “mildly fault the Reformers for allowing ... reasons blind them to a thorough fleshing out of the doctrine of assurance in its relationship to saving faith” Hence they think that the doctrine of assurance of the *WCF* is a *qualitative improvement* on the Reformers’.¹¹ But according to Kendall,

Theodore Beza and William Perkins are regarded as the culprits who packed and pushed respectively the Post-Reformation doctrine of assurance down the slope of experimental subjectivity until it snowballed into Westminster’s despicable betrayal of Cal-

Confession of Faith. xvi.

⁹ Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith.* 22-26.

¹⁰ To this school Beeke lists 18 additional notable Reformed scholars to the list: Brian Armstrong, Karl Barth, John Beardslee, Ernst Bizer, James Daane, Johannes Dantine, Edward Dowey, Basil Hall, Philip Holtrop, Walter Kickel, Donald McKim, Jürgen Moltmann, Charles Munson, Wilhelm Niesel, Pontien Polman, Jack Rogers, David Steinmetz, and Hans Emil Weber. See Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith.* p. 2, n. 1. Here I will add some others alongside Kendall himself: in chronological order, W. H. Chalker (1961), Kendall (1976), A. N. S. Lane (1979), and M. Charles Bell (1985).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

vinism”¹²

Therefore the *WCF*’s doctrine of assurance, in the eyes of Kendall, is a *qualitative*¹³ and *dichotomous*¹⁴ departure from Calvin. Beeke’s judgment upon these two schools is that: “The theories of fundamental discrepancy (Kendall et al.) or of less fundamental, yet qualitative discrepancy (Cunningham et al.), are both erroneous.”¹⁵ Then he proposes his own theory: “the discrepancy between Calvin and Calvinism on faith and assurance was largely *quantitative* rather than *qualitative*.”¹⁶ Now there are three schools: fundamental discrepancy, qualitative discrepancy and quantitative discrepancy.

I have researched this same problem, not directly concerning the

¹² Kendall, “Puritan Modification.” in *John Calvin: His Influence in the Western World* ed. by W. Stanford Reid. 214.

¹³ Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith*. 2-3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3, 25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26. But Beeke also concedes that both “contain elements of truth,” however, neither group has reached the heart of the issue. 25-26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26. Probably the theory of David Lachman and Robert W. A. Letham can be added to the school of Beeke. Lachman comments, the Reformers and the *WCF* were different ways of talking about assurance, and at the bottom they were essentially the same. See David C. Lachman, “The Marrow Controversy: An Historical Survey with Special Reference to the Free Offer of the Gospel, the Extent of the Atonement and Assurance and Saving Faith.” Th. M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, Phil. 1973. pp. 176-177; quoted in Letham, 48-49. Letham stresses that there is an organic and integral relationship between assurance and faith. See Letham, *The Relationship Between Saving Faith and Assurance of Salvation*. 50. After pointing out that “there is a distinct possibility that *consciousness* of assurance may not always be present for believers,” he concludes that “assurance of salvation is a normal—because Biblically normative—but not necessarily invariable ingredient or constituent element of saving faith.” See *Ibid.*, 243.

doctrines of faith and assurance themselves, but indirectly, from the perspective of Calvin's doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit, a major theological contribution by him. From it he bore natural fruit, his doctrine of assurance. It also serves as the epistemology for Calvin's grand systematic theology. After examining the theological structure in Calvin's thought, as exhibited both in his *Institutes* and his *Commentaries*, in seeking to understand the structural implication of assurance in his whole system, an astonishing conclusion confronts me: the *WCF* not only did not change Calvin's structure—the twofold knowledge of God and the double structure of Word and Spirit—within which he derived his doctrine of assurance, but also shared them with him. However, due to exegetical and pastoral concerns, the *WCF* adopted nonessential modifications. So I echo Beeke's proposal.¹⁷

After more than 350 years, revisiting such a great and representative Puritan theologian as Thomas Goodwin will benefit us beyond our imagination. After our examination of his doctrine of assurance and clarification of many misunderstandings imposed by the controversy, we will discover the congeniality between Calvin and the Puritans.

Exegetical Reasons

Goodwin came to this doctrinal position exegetically. First, he said that it is Christ himself who pronounces justification to those who lack assurance. He inferred this doctrine from the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Christ “pronounceth a blessedness to the poor in spirit, to the meek, to those that mourn, to those that hunger and

¹⁷ Paul Ling-Ji Chang, “John Calvin on the Doctrine of Assurance.” Th.M. thesis, under Dr. D. Clair Davis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1992. pp. 1-5, 133-34.

thirst for righteousness, all which estates want assurance.” Just so is the case of the poor publican in Luke 18:13-14. That he stood far off and was cast down with shame indicates a lack of assurance. To this publican, however, the Lord “pronounceth the state of this man justified.” (8:339-40)

The same truth can also be drawn from the fact that a believer may want assurance in his state of desertion. Goodwin took Heman of Psalm 88, the darkest psalm in the Psalter, as an example. He argued that “still he hath recourse to God by faith in prayer, ... yet he was under terrors and apprehensions of God’s casting him off.” We can find many more instances in Job, David, Jonah and the child of God in Isaiah 50:10. (8:340-41)¹⁸

To these the case of doubting can be added. Goodwin says, “if doubting be a corruption, ... as all other corruptions may prevail against the spirit and other graces, so may doubting prevail against the assurance of faith.” For “assurance depends on strict assurance and holy walking, and so may be interrupted by our remission and negligence.” David exemplifies this case, in his fall from grace. (8:342)

A sense of belief may also “be over-clouded ... by temptations to the contrary. Thus the natural atheism ... seem [*sic*] to conquer this faith that there is a God” He enumerated the disciples upon the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 and Thomas in John 20 to prove it. (8:342)

Pastoral Concerns

Did Goodwin know that he deviated from the position of Re-

¹⁸ As to the case of Isa. 50:10, Goodwin elaborated it in his *A Child of Light*, which I will treat later in this chapter.

formers in this locus? From the statement that “This assertion our later and more divines have more generally declined . . . whenas it is the Lutherans only that do at this day affirm the act of justifying faith to be assured persuasion that our sins are pardoned,” (8:211) we know that he has been in a readjustment of theology and he was well informed of it. The proposition is not new to him. It has been accepted for years by the Reformed divines. It is Beza, the successor of Calvin at Geneva, who made the first modification by placing more accent upon *sylogismus practicus* due to the “pastoral concern with a somewhat more rationalistic theological methodology than Calvin.”¹⁹ Beza urged that one should begin with the quest for assurance at the “lowest order.” Beeke’s comment upon Beza grasps the new spirit of the Bezan modification:

Thus, the Bezan transition from a *sylogismus practicus* of subordination at best in Calvin to a *sylogismus practicus* of some prominence was not made in conflagration of *sola fide* and *solus christus*, but in support of both.

So Beza put it to the fore “not because such is primary in itself, but because it is more readily accessible to the conscience of a believer, which in turn will assist him to rise Christward and Godward.”²⁰ The Puritans used it as a step upon which man can move forward unto the sealing of the Spirit, the full assurance.

The second modification comes probably from a different exegesis of Romans 8:15-16 by the father of Puritans, William Perkins (1558-1602). For Calvin there is only one joint witness in Romans

¹⁹ Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith*. 91.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

8:15-16,²¹ whereas:

In his exposition of Rom. 8:16, Perkins goes beyond Calvin in making a clear distinction of the relative roles of the testimony of the Holy Spirit and that of “our spirit.” Calvin viewed the testimony of the Holy Spirit as a witness *to* the human spirit. Perkins on the other hand, sees the testimony of the Holy Spirit as being *with* the human spirit.²²

After this exegesis Perkins redefined faith possibly without the testimony of the Spirit of Romans 8:16, and assurance certainly with it. Thence the distinction of weak faith without assurance and strong faith with it is generated. The weaker testimony through our spirit is faith whereas the super-strong testimony of the Holy Spirit, alongside our own, is the infallible assurance. So to interpret the experience of the dichotomy of flesh and Spirit, the *WCF* would say that you may be destitute of your sensible assurance²³ while Calvin would say that your faith-assurance may be tinged with doubt. But both claim that faith will get the victory in the long run.²⁴ These are the two modifications Goodwin inherited from his predecessors.

It would not be wrong if we say that for Goodwin the pastoral concern comes to the fore. In the very beginning of his thesis on the

²¹ Paul Ling-Ji Chang, “John Calvin on the Doctrine of Assurance.” 102-104; that is an examination of Calvin’s use of Rom. 8:15-16, under the section of “The Illumination and Sealing” in Chapter 6.

²² Gordon J. Keddie, “Unfallible Certenty of the Pardon of Sinne and Life Everlasting.” in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 48 (Oct-Dec 1976): 241.

²³ *WCF* 18:4.

²⁴ *WCF* 14:3.

doctrine of assurance, Goodwin argued that

When it is affirmed that none are in the state of grace ..., but only those who are ... undoubtedly assured ... the generation of many just ones is condemned And also my end is to keep off those that have assurance superadded to faith, from censuring the present condition of many of their brethren, as if they were without grace, because they want such assurance. (8:338-39)

At the same time Goodwin warded off being spiritually lukewarm by saying that “yet my scope ... is not to encourage any to rest in such a faith without such assurance, and content themselves with it” On the contrary he concluded that “the intent of this present conclusion is to keep such as have their hearts drawn to Christ” (8:338-39)

Many of his exegetical reasonings are indeed out of pastoral concerns. As for those who will say, “faith is a triumphing, a prevailing assurance,” he would “refer them but to ten or twenty years’ experience, which may ... lamentably confute them; for they may fall into this darkness as well as Job did.” Goodwin thought of another case, “Wicked men are not immediately bound to have assurance, and therefore it is not the essential act wherein faith consists.” (8:343)

Logical Argument

In addition to the above two grounds in his doctrinal assertion, Goodwin had a kind of logical argument to reinforce his theological position. Goodwin said his contemporary divines had declined what only the Lutherans in his days still affirmed. They affirmed “the act of justifying faith to be an assured persuasion that our sins are pardoned.” Goodwin utilized the syllogism to argue against it. The syllogism is thus: Whosoever believes shall be saved. But I believe, therefore I

have eternal life. Out of the minor premise (but I believe), men “fetch a conclusion of assurance.” Then the minor premise is often “mistaken by many to be the first act of justifying faith.” (8:211) Goodwin argued vehemently against such misunderstanding as mentioned above. He pointed out that the “but I believe” is an experiential sight of my own faith. Then I apply the major premise to myself and then deduce the conclusion of assurance. So he gave us three polemics as follow to affirm his view:

First, it is *another act*, for it is an act of faith after another ... nor is it a mere repeating or renewal of the first act, but a sight of that other which was the first act thereby expressed, yea, and is founded upon the intuition of the first, in the strength of which intuition the soul says, ‘but I believe.’ It is a secondary and after act arising upon a first. Secondly, it is another kind of act, for it is a *reflex act* of the mind upon its own act; but justifying faith is a direct act on Christ. And ... my seeing I believe is an act of experience ...; whereas the first act of faith must be a mere pure act of faith, and not of sight. And so, thirdly, they *differ in their objects*; for the object of my seeing I believe is my own believing, but the object of my faith at first, when I began to believe, was and must be God and Christ as the objects (8:212. Italics mine.)²⁵

Hence, if justifying faith itself carries with it assurance of salvation, then it is a logical absurdity. For the *reflexive* assurance demands a kind of *direct* faith prior to it.

To make his point clearer Goodwin continued to show that these

²⁵ The importance of this paragraph is highlighted by Robert W. A. Letham. See his “The Relationship Between Saving Faith and Assurance of Salvation.” 39.

two distinctive acts are wrought in sequence:

... assurance comes in but to confirm and seal to what pure faith hath done, and therefore follows upon faith, and so all expressions that express assurance imply: as when it is called establishing or conforming, sealing and giving in earnest, and a witnessing, all these suppose an act of faith already passed, ... to which assurance comes in as a confirmation.

Not only the spiritual seal, but also the sacramental seals—baptism and the Lord’s supper—are “administered after a man hath faith.” (8:345) To reinforce his doctrine Goodwin said that “faith must fight first, and have a conquest, and assurance is the crown, the triumph of faith.” They come in sequence. (8:346) Goodwin showed us the differences between them in three areas—in *sequence*, in *kind* and in *object*.

Goodwin pointed out that the difference also lies in the *faculty*. For him, faith and assurance is a “twofold application, the one is real, which makes a thing mine; the other is axiomatical, whereby I say it is mine.” Faith is the real one and “is in the *will*” (8:350. Italics mine.) He reasoned in this way that

for the consent of that, and the knitting of that to Christ, makes the union, as the consent in marriage doth; therefore believing is called receiving him, John i.12, and coming to Christ, and being drawn to him ...and that principally is of the *will*. (8:345. Italics mine.)

In contrast assurance is “an apprehension of the *understanding*, when I judge and discern, and challenge this is mine. ... That is but an axiomatical application, an act of the understanding, ... draws the will more unto Christ.” (8:350. Italics mine.) Hence there is inferred a dis-

inction between them.

Therefore, he averred logically, assurance must not and cannot be the essence of justifying faith.

Attainability of Assurance (*WCF* 18.1)

The first sections of Chapter XVIII of both confessions are almost identical.²⁶ Goodwin almost used 1 John only to establish the attainability of assurance, for this epistle is “a sufficient abudary.” (8:356)²⁷ Obviously he sympathized with those moral philosophers who set against Plotinus when the latter said that “the happiest condition might be without knowledge.” (8:353)

The assurance of salvation is not a privilege vouchsafed only for the choicest saints as the papists believe. “As the scope of St John is to assure *all* believers, so he says in general ... to them that believe.” He continued, “Yea, if the apostle ... had assurance ..., then other believers may have it too.” Right in the beginning of 1 John, the epistle sets its theme very clearly that the recipients may have the same fellowship with God the Father and God the Son, and hence their joy out of assurance may be full. (8:356. Italics mine.) He added a sarcastic comment about the papists: “the Church of Rome teaches her children to know their mother, but to doubt of their father.” (8:357) It might be the newly-emerged Arminians of his day who said that Christians are now the sons of God, but what will become of them hereafter is not known. Goodwin argued against them from 1 John 3:2 that “for the

²⁶ The *WCF* reads “hypocrites” while the *Savoy Declaration*, “temporary believers.” See Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 385.

²⁷ In answering 12 objections against the doctrine of assurance in Part II, Book II, Chapter IV, Goodwin set up its attainability.

certainty of our future condition, as now we are the sons of God, so we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” (8:359) The eternal status of our salvation is attainable today.

Moreover, against the opinion that “it is to such as are of long standing in Christianity,” he argued that “it is attainable for others also; for all sorts of ages in Christ, for babes, young men, old men: 1 John ii.14.” He pointed out that in the gospels “Christ ... tells many new converts on the first day, that their sins were forgiven.” They are of “ordinary rank, not disciples and apostles only.” (8:357)

The attainability also relates to the manner of assurance. The extraordinary way is granted as it is demonstrated upon the *Damascus Road*; however, St. John here gives ordinary directions. In allusion to *The Rich Man and Lazarus* in Luke 16, he affirmed that “... if men believe not, neither would they believe if one from the dead, or an angel from heaven, should assure them.” Referring to 1 John 5:7-8 (KJV), he said, “there are not only witnesses in heaven, but also witnesses on earth, in a believer’s breast; a believer ... carries a work of faith and sanctification in him.” (8:357-58)

The attainability is not impeded by man’s corruption and deceitfulness. For “the Son of God hath given us a mind that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true.” The new understanding is endowed by God on the special purpose to know God and experience His salvation. And the guide of the new mind is the unction of the Lord, 1 John 2:20, 27. It is the Holy Spirit who is our witness, 1 John 5:6, 8. (8:358) The testimony of the Spirit is as bright as “the light of the sun.” Christians therefore will not be deluded even though “there are many enthusiasms, and Satan joins with hypocrites’ hearts.” (8:358-59) Goodwin did not deny the possibility of falling from grace.

However, “As, in the third chapter [of 1 John], there is a seed mentioned which remains in them unshaken out, so they may ... go with a confidence to God through Christ, and recover themselves.” Indeed assurance will make man purify himself as Christ is pure. “It works out corruption ... that they might not sin.” But he did not exclude another possibility of the temporary faith. That is the case of 1 John 2:19. (8:359-60)

Foundation of Assurance (*WCF* 18.2)

As to the foundation of assurance, James Buchanan is right when he said “But the confession relates to a complex assurance, resting on several distinct grounds, and capable of existing in different degrees.” He indicates that “It is this complex or full assurance, that the Confession says, that ‘it doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may be without it for a time;’”²⁸ John Murray interprets the grounds of assurance as “the ways in which a believer comes to entertain this assurance, not the grounds on which his salvation rests.”²⁹ The *WCF* 14:3 speaks of a kind of *full* assurance into which “saving faith may grow up”. Theologians usually distinguish faith and assurance as the primary and reflex acts of faith. Murray comments that “The distinction between the primary and reflexive acts of faith does not mean, however, that assurance of faith must always be separated chronologically from the primary act of faith.”³⁰

Here the confessions explore the distinctive aspects or grounds of

²⁸ James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*. 184-85.

²⁹ John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*. 2:270.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:265.

the *full* or *complex* assurance. Only when we make precise and correct exposition of the *full* assurance, then will we find that the apparent conflict in the relation between saving faith and assurance can be harmonized satisfactorily. Louis Berkhof rightly comments upon the *WCF* that “So understood the teaching of the Confession does not materially differ from that of the Reformers and of the other great Protestant Confessions, though there is undoubtedly a difference of emphasis.”³¹

In this section we will see that the *Savoy Declaration* deviates somewhat from the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The differences reflect the distinction, and even the disagreement between Goodwin and John Owen, the two great Independent theologians, on this locus. To clarify the variations I contrast them below:

<i>WCF 18.2</i>	<i>Savoy Declaration 18.2</i>
This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation,	This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel,
the inward evidence of those graces unto which promises are made,	and also upon the inward evidence of those graces unto which promises are made,

³¹ Louis Berkhof, *The Assurance of Faith*. 28.

the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our Adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.³²

From the above table we can easily discern the changes: (1) The first major change is to hinge the foundation of assurance on **the blood and righteousness of Christ**, revealed in the Gospel instead of the more general term: **the divine truth of the promises of salvation**. (2) The second change is to replace **the testimony of the Spirit** with **and on the immediate witness of the Spirit**. (3) The third change is from **whereby we are sealed** to **leaving the heart more humble and holy**. If we compare the changes with Goodwin's works, we are convinced that the first two changes are Goodwinian while the third one was "a direct concession to Owen's view that sealing of the Spirit is common to every believer."³³ The change of the word "sealed" is not only a deletion of Goodwin's idiosyncratic doctrine of the sealing of the Spirit,

³² Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. 385. Those words in bold are in the variance. I deliberately formulate the three grounds into three paragraphs to make their variations in parallel.

³³ Cf. Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith*. pp.221-23. According to Beeke, the first change is "thoroughly Owenian." While Owen's mind at this point is in line with Goodwin, its phraseology is Goodwinian evidently.

but also deprivation of his radical latter-day glory chiliasm!

His Hermeneutics

Goodwin used 1 John 5:7-8 (KJV) to construct his doctrine of two three-fold witnesses which contribute to the full assurance.³⁴ He accorded the three witnesses on earth with the three grounds of the full assurance of the confessions. By blood, water and the Spirit, he meant the justification, sanctification and the sealing of the Spirit. He explained the case of the blood. From Romans 3:24-25 we know that all the work of justification of a poor sinner “synecdochically are comprehended in blood.” The blood of Christ is the object and the promises ratified by it are the object of faith. “And by metonymy the work of faith itself is also meant. The object (blood) connotes the act itself (faith).” Then he concluded, “In a word, the whole work of justification, and whatever goes to it, is meant by blood.” (8:361)

Quite interesting is that he shared an almost identical interpretation with his mentor, John Cotton.³⁵ After asking the question—“What are these three witnesses?”, Cotton in his exposition on 1 John 5:8 said that

³⁴ Chapter V of Part II, Book II, Volume VIII is a great chapter in Goodwin’s works. The *Savoy Declaration* 18.2 was dealt with in this chapter. This chapter is his exposition of 1 John 5:7-8 (KJV). See TG 8:360-71. McNally pays attention to this textual problem. See his thesis, 96. As a matter of fact, the so-called “spurious” text in the 1550 Stephanus’s edition of the Greek New Testament does not bother the doctrine of assurance Goodwin wanted to present to us. For the text upon which he elaborated in his exposition is not the “spurious” text, but the non-problematic text of 1 John 5:8 which is the authoritative reading of all ancient manuscripts.

³⁵ Cf. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life*. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1987.) 120.

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There is a Spirit that bears witness in our hearts that Jesus is the Son of God ... so that we are convinced, comforted, or strengthened to every good work and duty.... By water here may be understood the water of sanctification.... Blood ... bears witness by pacifying our consciences (Heb. 12:24). ...this blood of purchase witnesses that it was the Son of God who redeemed us from the world and our own corrupt hearts.³⁶

Cotton also ranked these three witnesses in reversal biblical order as the blood, the water and then the Spirit. He contrasted the testimony of the Spirit with the water of sanctification as the extraordinary work and the ordinary work of the Spirit of God. He said,

Besides the Spirit of God which at times fills us with unspeakable joy of the Holy Spirit, there is also an ordinary work of God's Spirit Those great occasional enlargements of God's Spirit do not always abide with us that measure, but this water is a spring in us, continually affording us something which evidently witnesses this truth (Tit. 3:5; John 4:14).³⁷

For Cotton, the testimony of the Spirit is the highest and most extraordinary witness among the three.

But Goodwin's hermeneutics on this passage might go earlier to Richard Sibbes. On 1 John 5:7-8 (KJV) he said that "Now the Spirit is the feelings and the sweet motions of the Spirit. The water may well be that washing of the Spirit, sanctification. The blood the shedding of

³⁶ John Cotton, *An Exposition of First John*. 1657. pp. 527-29. Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1962.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 527.

the blood of Christ, and justification by it.” By the “Spirit” Sibbes meant the “extraordinary seal” or the immediate sealing of the Spirit. Being asked “what course we shall take when we want comfort,” Sibbes counseled that “when the witness of the Spirit is silent, go to the work of the Spirit in sanctification.” But “if the waters be troubled in the soul,” and “we cannot see the image of God ... in sanctification,” he prescribed that “Then go to the blood of Christ! There is always comfort.”³⁸ Both Cotton and Goodwin were in line with Sibbes on this point.³⁹

The Blood

Obviously the new wording in the *Savoy Declaration* at this point was from the mind of Goodwin. The *WCF* stresses the word of God as the infallible foundation whereas the *Savoy Declaration* would like to narrow the word of God down to the gospel and the Christ revealed in it. The blood of Christ is in the spotlight. By blood he meant justification. For in the conviction of the Spirit

when he hath seen the guilt of his sin as the greatest evil, an emptiness and insufficiency in himself ... then hath had the fountain of Christ’s blood opened to him. ... when he spies Christ out, and his blood as the only means to help him, and sees the all sufficiency of redemption in it to wash him, justify him, and prizeth it accordingly ... he finds God graciously opening the riches, the

³⁸ Richard Sibbes, *Exposition of Second Corinthians Chapter One*. 3:464. Goodwin had long been under the influence of Sibbes by attending his lectures. It became more evident after his conversion in 1620. See Chapter I above.

³⁹ John Cotton was converted by the instrument of Sibbes. See Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*. 1:255. Quoted by Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life*. 119, n 2.

freeness of his grace (8:363)

Not only so, but in his life of faith

when guilt ariseth he can oppose Christ's blood to it, ... and so finds the guilt quelled, allayed, his conscience pacified, stilled, and quieted by it, when no duties nor nothing else will give him ease. (8:364)

This is the testimony of blood and the work of faith.

Two kinds of assurance

This is the first witness; however, Goodwin noted that "faith is not assurance" (8:364) He said that "There are ... several degrees in faith there is faith of assurance and faith of recumbency." The latter one is the lowest degree "wherein a sinner treats with Christ about justification." (8:258) Evidently the ground of blood is not only for the full-grown assurance, but also for justifying faith. He painstakingly distinguished two kinds of assurance:

In all faith there is a fixedness, an assurance, a persuasion, namely, of the things that I do believe; but it doth not follow that it should be an assured persuasion of my own interest in the things themselves (8:266)

The distinction between them is the object of the assurance: Christ (direct belief) or salvation (indirect interest of the direct belief). Goodwin showed to us that "faith is a knowledge that riseth up to a persuasion, to an assurance." (From many scriptures such as James 1:6; John 6:69; 17:8, etc.) Even the word, assurance, appearing in the text does not denote the assurance of salvation, the second kind of assurance. We have to discern it by its context. For example, the full assurance in Hebrews 10:22, he argued, is "the knowledge of faith." For it is the

work of faith in the blood of Christ. The object of the assurance here is our God in the Holiest. It belongs to the first kind of assurance. Goodwin instanced the full assurance of understanding in Colossians 2:2 as the first kind of assurance, too. “The apostle heaps up expressions; he calls it *assurance*, ... *full assurance*, *full assurance of understanding* ...; words enough, ... to make knowledge sure.” They are but the knowledge of the direct *object* of faith, not that of the *interest* of faith. (8:265-66)

Why faith also has certainty

Why does faith always carry with it some certainty? He applied a common sense rule: “*sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*, — Sense is never deceived about its proper object.” (8:265) To elucidate this truth he compared one who is awake with another who is asleep. The sight of sunshine of the latter may be the same as the former, but “there is no certainty in it.” He concluded that for the case of the former one “where there is a reality of sight, there is also always accompanying it so far a full persuasion and assurance.” Goodwin continued his argument a step further:

Now, that is more infallible than all that a man knows by his outward senses, or by reason, by how much the witness of the Spirit is above the witness of nature So the light and demonstration of the Spirit hath more certainty in it than all rational apprehension a man hath of Christ.

“All the torches in the world”, he claimed, cannot be brighter than “the demonstration of the Spirit.” (8:267) So there is not only a possibility that faith carries with it a kind of certainty. Rather, it must have an assurance of Christ Himself!

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Therefore the first kind of assurance is essential to saving faith. Goodwin said, “I do never truly believe, unless there be an assured persuasion of the truth of the things on which I believe, and which I believe.” (8:265) Without this certain knowledge, it is not faith any more. He boasted that “This even the poorest and meanest believer hath, take him out of those temptations and doubts which the devil may suggest to him; take him when he is himself, he hath an assurance that is of things themselves.” (8:267) Now comparing the *WCF* 14:2 with 18:2, we find that the Westminster divines grounded both faith and assurance upon the certainty of the promises of salvation in the Word. That is the stance of Goodwin, too.

Now let us deliberate whether Robert T. Kendall has done justice to the Westminster divines. On the Westminster Assembly he concludes,

But the apparently unquestioned acceptance of a distinction between faith and assurance; that ‘Faith’ should have one heading in the Confession and ‘Certainty of Salvation’ another. This division between faith and assurance seems to have been accepted implicitly from early on in the Assembly. There is no indication at all of any questioning of this significant division. Calvin’s view that faith *is* assurance was thus rendered incapable of penetration into the Westminster documents from the start. Beza won the day.⁴⁰

His judgment is untrue, unconvincing and untenable.

⁴⁰ Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*. 195-196.

The Marrow Controversy

During 1720–22 the Marrow Men in the Marrow Controversy were accused of teaching against the *WCF* that assurance is the essence of faith.⁴¹ Louis Berkhof thinks that the Confession does not say that there is a kind of assurance belonging to the essence of faith, and “the Marrowmen in Scotland certainly gave a different interpretation of its position.”⁴² He concurs with James Buchanan that “the Confession speaks of a complex assurance, resting in part on the promises of God”⁴³ Buchanan exonerates the Marrow Men by pointing out that while never denying that the complex or full assurance does not belong to the essence of faith,

they meant merely to bring out the full meaning of the statement, that the assurance of faith is founded, in the first instance, upon ‘the divine truth of the *promises* of salvation,’ that **faith ... must necessarily involve an assurance of the infallible certainty** The assurance of which they spoke was that which is implied in the DIRECT act of faith ...—as distinct from, but necessarily presupposed in, that which springs from the REFLEX exercise of faith The former may not amount to the ‘full assurance’ ... but assuredly the latter cannot exist, —cannot even com-

⁴¹ Upon the recommendation of Thomas Boston (1676–1732) James Hog republished Edward Fisher’s *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1645) in 1718. The book was condemned by the Scottish church in 1720. Boston and eleven others (the ‘Marrow Men’) were rebuked in 1722. See *New Dictionary Theology*. 108–109 (under “Boston, Thomas”); and *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 172–73 (under “Boston, Thomas”) and 695–96 (under “Marrow Controversy”).

⁴² Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*. 508.

⁴³ Berkhof, *The Assurance of Faith*. 28.

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mence, —without it; and it may continue, in the absence of sensible evidence, and in the midst of much darkness and doubt; since it is ... ‘seed of God, and life of faith,’ by which believers ... are ‘... supported from utter despair.’⁴⁴

The Marrow Controversy helps us to understand what Goodwin taught about the “assurance of the thing itself.” The exposition of Buchanan explicates its implication. John Murray refers to it as “the germ of assurance.”⁴⁵

No wedge between faith and assurance

When we reserve the word *assurance* for the full assurance of salvation, we should not bury the element of certainty of our belief under this word. If we do err like this, then the words of Kendall are justified. But the *WCF* 14:3 never allows a wedge to be inserted between saving faith and assurance of salvation, even though the Westminster divines described them in two different chapters.

So we should bear in mind Goodwin’s word, “In all faith there is ... an assurance of the things that I do believe,” to safeguard against unnecessary misunderstanding and confusion between the two great theological *loci*—faith and assurance.

Infallibility of justification

The “complex” or full assurance is an *infallible* assurance. Whence does the infallibility come? From the above we know that the reason why even saving faith also has its certainty is because the certainty is built upon the promising word of God and the blood of Christ.

⁴⁴ Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*. 185. Bold mine.

⁴⁵ Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*. 2:265.

That the assurance in this sense is *infallible* is very obvious, for it is rooted in the *infallible* word of God.

The Water

By water Goodwin understood

sanctification, both in the habits and fruits of it; ... it also doth cleanse and sanctify, and washeth away the filth of sin; thus it is expressed John iii.5, a man ... ‘born of water and the Holy Spirit;’ that is, of the Holy Spirit working as water, purifying and cleansing. (8:361)

The Spirit especially purifies the heart and makes it fruitful unto every good work.

Two witnesses work together

The two witnesses work together—the blood takes away the guilt of sin while the water subdues sin, washes away its power, changes the heart and makes man a new creature. “These do also join to give in testimony to assurance that God hath given a man eternal life ...” (8:362) Moreover, these two witnesses are related in this way: “Now as the power of sin, when it prevails, strengthens the guilt of sin against us, and raiseth doubts, so when the cleansing power of grace prevails, it helps to strengthen faith in Christ’s blood.” So Goodwin counseled us that when (1) “men neglect the blood of Christ, ... and the sprinkling of it on their consciences for justification, and the evidence thereof”, or (2) “betake themselves wholly to water, ere they have closed wit this blood”, these are ordinary errors. He added that “if a man hath been guided aright in the work of faith, and his heart pitched right for justification, to seek it alone in blood, then water comes fitly in as a witness.” (8:365) Sanctification is but a dependent

sign. We should never lose sight of the very foundation of the blood of Christ. We should always keep blood and water together and in right order. Only in this way can our sanctification then be a witness.

Right use of syllogism

Use of sanctification as a sign for assurance is the alleged syllogism.⁴⁶ Beeke gives us a good summary of those different kinds of syllogisms, namely *syllogismus mysticus* (the inward evidences in the WCF 18:2) and *syllogismus practicus* (the good works in the WCF 16:2).⁴⁷ Goodwin, like other Puritans, used the method of *syllogismus mysticus* primarily for pastoral concerns. This knowledge is “by way of deduction”—“because they are sanctified, therefore they are justified; and because they are justified, therefore they are elected.” He knew that this is “the witness of our spirits.” (8:371) He also characterized this way as “discursive.” He made an analogy: “a man gathereth that God loveth him from the effects, as we gather there is a fire because there is smoke.” (1:233) However, he thought, as our spirits have been “framed and renewed to the obedience of faith and true holiness, and as enlightened and irradiated by the Spirit, . . . so [they have been] fitted to witness the truth.” (8:362) For Goodwin sanctification is closely knitted with justification. They can never be put asunder. Then, through the discursive syllogism, our sanctification can be a sign of our justification by God. So assurance of salvation is always something grown out of saving faith and still a part of it.

To help Christians find their assurance, 1 John “cuts this water into many rills and signs, in every of which, as so many signs, believ-

⁴⁶ As to the definition of the syllogism, see above in this chapter.

⁴⁷ For lengthy discussion, see Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith*. 147-56.

ers may see and have some evidence of their estates.” (8:364) These signs are keeping God’s commandments, 1 John 2:3; doing righteousness, 2:29; purifying himself, 3:3; being unable to sin, 3:9; love of brethren, 3:14, etc. “So that when one sign is not so evident, yet a man may have recourse to another.” (8:364-65) Goodwin indeed urged a Christian using two kinds of syllogisms (*syllogismus mysticus* and *syllogismus practicus*) to achieve his assurance.

Infallibility of sanctification

In what sense can we say that the sign of the inward evidence is infallible? Among the three grounds of full assurance we easily understand that the blood of Christ and the immediate witness of the Spirit are infallible. But how can the signs of our spirits be infallible? Goodwin instanced the case of love of our brethren thus: “because love is of God, and he is the fountain of it,” so the sign is in turn an infallible sign, 1 John 4:7; 5:1. (8:365) He said,

For graces in us shine but with a borrowed light, as the stars do, with a light borrowed from the sun. So that unless God will shine secretly, and give light to thy graces, and irradiate them, thy graces will not appear to comfort thee, nor be at all a witness of God’s favour to assure thee. For our spirit, that is, our graces, never witness alone; but if God’s Spirit joineth not in testimony therewith, it is silent ... Rom. viii.16. (3:241)⁴⁸

The infallibility of our inward evidence lies in the fact the light in our graces is borrowed from the divine sunlight! “When the sun is set, yet starlight appears.” Then our soul knows that “there is a sun in another

⁴⁸ The astronomical knowledge of Goodwin is thus: the light of the stars is from the sun! However, we know what he meant in this analogy.

horizon, because the stars... have their light from it, and we are sure that it will arise again to us.” (3:240) For Goodwin the grounds of assurance are tied together.

The Spirit

By the Spirit⁴⁹ Goodwin meant

an *immediate* testimony of the Holy Spirit, superadded to all these.... though it backs and confirms what the other two said, yet quotes them not, builds not his testimony on them, but raiseth the heart up to see its adoption and sonship, by an immediate discovery of God’s mind to it, and what love he hath borne to it. (8:366. Italics mine.)

Immediacy

Different from the syllogism, here “the Spirit speaks not by its effects, but speaks from himself.” (8:366) John L. Girardeau denominated the first two grounds of assurance as the mediate testimony.⁵⁰ Compared with the syllogism which “is fetched and produced out of the records that are written in our own bosoms, ... that other testimony of the Spirit ... is fetched out of the records in God’s own breast ... but is an immediate voice of God’s Spirit.” (8:362-63) He also made another analogy—that of candle and sun—to describe enlightenment of the Spirit: “As you need not light a candle by which to see the sun,

⁴⁹ Because this doctrine is the most representative contribution of Goodwin, I include a separate chapter on the sealing of the Spirit. The next chapter is primarily his exposition of Eph. 1:13-14 in Volume One of his *Works*. Here is a preliminary discussion in terms of 1 John 5:8.

⁵⁰ John L. Girardeau, “The Doctrine of Adoption.” In his *Discussions of Theological Questions*. 499.

so when Christ witnesses immediately to our hearts, it is enough.” (8:385) Hence it is “the greatest, the clearest of all rest ... puts all out of question.” (8:362) In his earliest work on this doctrine, *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness*, he even arranged the immediate light of God’s countenance prior to the sight of one’s own graces. (3:239-40)

Regarding the third foundation of the full assurance, Beeke is as keen as to observe that the *Savoy Declaration* 18:2 makes the second change:

“and on this immediate witness of the Spirit” in place of “the testimony of the Spirit,” relinquishes Westminster’s unitive silence on whether this testimony is essentially synonymous with, or above and beyond, the *syllogismus practicus*.

However, Beeke would credit this change to John Owen rather than Goodwin.⁵¹ But reading Goodwin’s exposition on this point, one cannot deny that the insistence on a third witness and on immediacy in the Savoyan change shows his fingerprints!

Concurrent testimony in Romans 8:16

Goodwin came to his interpretation through his rigorous exegesis of Romans 8:15-16. Commenting upon this passage, he said that “He doth not only say he beareth witness *to* our spirits, but he beareth witness *with* our spirits.” (1:306) Goodwin revived the view of Calvin

⁵¹ Beeke, *Personal Assurance of Faith*. 222-23. As to the third change, the word “sealed” in *WCF* 18:2 is removed from the *Savoy Declaration*. Beeke rightly remarks that it is a “direct concession to Owen’s view that the sealing of the Spirit is common to every believer” *Ibid.*, 223. The third change will be examined in the next chapter.

and incorporated it into that of William Perkins.⁵² In Perkinsian fashion he admitted there are two witnesses, that of our spirits and that of the Spirit, in Romans 8:16. The witness of our spirits are the “blood and water” (justification and sanctification) from the records of our bosom. Then the Spirit comes to join *with* them. But Goodwin at the same time kept the spirit of Calvin by reasserting the uniqueness and the transcendence of the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He used the word *immediate* to describe the nature of the witness of the Spirit and thereby express all the overtones of Calvin’s exposition of it. Girardeau resonated with Goodwin: “The witnesses-bearers are distinct, but they bear *concurrent* testimony.”⁵³

But a question ensues. Is the witness of the Spirit essential to the syllogistic assurance in Goodwin’s mind? Judging by his words that “Our spirits, our grace ... never witness unless the Holy Ghost witness with them; if he do not give in his testimony with them, your graces will give no witnesses at all;” (1:306; cf. 8:370) it is essential. So we know that syllogism only works in the biblical frame of Romans 8:16. Then does it mean that as long as one has inward graces as the discursive assurance, he must have the immediate testimony of the Spirit? No, for Goodwin said that “as though the soul hath an assurance, depending on the prevalency of the fruits of grace in itself, ... yet the soul lingers after, and waits for a further discovery, and is taught to do so.” In the sense of *immediacy*, the testimony of the Spirit is called “the third testimony.” (8:366) From the above quotation about the

⁵² Calvin construed the τῷ in τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν of Rom 8:16 as *to*; hence there is only one witness in this verse. Perkins construed it as *with*. Thenceforth there are two witnesses in it.

⁵³ Girardeau, “The Doctrine of Adoption.” 503. Italics mine.

immediacy of the third witness, it is described as “over ... above ... distinct from ... severed from ... beyond” the signs in faith and sanctification. (8:367) It is interesting: as there is a kind of certainty essential to faith, so there is also a kind of “witness-*with*” testimony of the Spirit essential to the discursive assurance; as the discursive assurance is not essential to faith, so the immediate witness (also called the intuitive assurance by Goodwin elsewhere; the “witness-*to*” testimony of the Spirit) is not essential to the discursive assurance.

Three balances

But it is quite strange that when the immediate witness transcends itself over the syllogistic assurance, it is “always in and with the *word*, and according to it.” So Christians are said to be “sealed with the Spirit of promise.” Ephesians 1:13. (8:367. Italics mine.) The attraction of the third witness lies in its ensuing heavenly joy. R. T. Kendall records an incident showing how the late Martyn Lloyd-Jones cherished the joy of the sealing. Once Mr. Kendall was asked by him to read Goodwin’s sealing of the Spirit. He did. Then the doctor called him to discuss it at the doctor’s home. Asked what he thought, Mr. Kendall responded, “... I thought it was wonderful.” Then tears filled the doctor’s eyes. He said, “That’s the greatest thing I have ever heard you say.”⁵⁴ Goodwin described the experience vividly:

upon this witness follows joy unspeakable and glorious, it being the earnest of heaven; for it is a seeing my estate of grace and adoption, not in the effects or love-tokens, but in God’s breast, as in heaven do. Now such joy follows not the other two witnesses,

⁵⁴ Michel A. Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit—the Teaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones*. (Leicester, England: IVP, 1989.) 61.

though peace and quiet may. (8:367)

No matter how high a soul is raised to see his state of grace in God's mind, the characteristic of the third witness and its distinguishing mark is whether "It calls up some *word* that echoes to it, and goes with it." The mind of God must be opened "in some *words* of God"! (8:367. Italics mine.) Waiting for an "immediate revelation of the Spirit," he averred, "is an error ... against Scripture and experience." (8:405-406) The revealed word of God is always a protection of Christians, especially those who seek to be overwhelmed by religious affection.

A second balance is that though the immediate testimony of the Spirit speaks like a king: "*teste meipso*" (witness myself), that is, it needs no other discursive witnesses, nevertheless, Goodwin adamantly counseled that "yet ... their [discursive] testimony then comes to be considered but as the *occasion* upon which this of the Spirit is let in, and as the hint given" (8:367. Italics mine.) This counseling is great! While he highly appraised the third witness, Goodwin never had an intention to despise the position and use of the discursive assurance. The latter is the occasion for the former. Girardeau explained the significance of the "occasion":

The absence of the true witness of our own spirit would involve the absence of the Spirit's witness. I am not prepared to assert that the two testimonies always associated in time.... But it is clear that if one never has had any consciousness of possessing the marks of sanctification, he cannot enjoy the Spirit's testimony to his adoption. Should such a one claim to have the witness of the Spirit, his claim would be false. That claim can alone be true, where there is, or has been, some consciousness of the work of sanctification in the heart. The two testimonies God has joined

together. They cannot be put asunder.⁵⁵

No exposition is clearer than Girardeau’s! The statement of the *WCF* 18:1b also confirms that holiness in life is the best way to prepare for the unexpected glory and joy.

Rarely would Goodwin give a high appraisal to good works. Commenting on the case of the Lord’s enjoining Mary “Touch me not,” he remarked:

Though communion with Christ may be sweeter to us, as it is with a child to be with his mother all day, yet it is his duty to go to school all day, and then he shall come home to his mother at night; so it is our duty to be conversant in our calling, to be doing those things Christ sets us about, and it is more acceptable to God than to have communion with him all day long. (8:393)

Why? He thought that “we shall have familiarity enough with him in heaven.” But for today, “To be employed in works for the glory of Christ and good of his churches, when he calleth us thereunto, is more acceptable than private communion with him in prayer, &c.” (8:390) He on the one hand pointed the way to heaven; however, on the other hand, he also underlined the importance of the down-to-earth duty of being a Christian. He even stressed the latter in sacrifice to the high priority of the former.

Infallibility of the immediate assurance

That the immediate assurance is infallible is not because it is wrought by the Spirit, but because it is wrought by the Spirit and the Word. Hence the infallibility is transfused from God the Spirit and His

⁵⁵ Girardeau, “The Doctrine of Adoption.” 503.

inspired Word unto the immediate assurance. As the three grounds of the “complex” or full assurance are all infallible, so the assurance in Goodwin’s mind concurs with “this infallible assurance” in these two *Confessions*.

Duty toward Assurance (*WCF* 18.3B)

“Since ... assurance of our salvation may be attained,” Goodwin urged, “let us not rest and content ourselves in abiding in this wilderness of faith of reliance only” (8:371-72) So “it is the duty of everyone that doth believe to grow up to assurance.”

Duty—an Immediate Obligation

“Once a man hath believed on the name of the Son of God, then the next and great duty ... is to endeavour to know that he hath eternal life.” (8:372) So the attainment of the assurance of salvation is not only the duty of a believer, but also the *immediate* duty once he is saved. The urgency lies in the fact that Satan has been waiting to undo what the Lord has done upon the Christian. A second reason will be explained in details below: the duty demands a whole process to grow what the Lord has planted in man’s heart. It takes time to cultivate the “seed of God.” So take action right now and you will see that God will bless you with further grace of assurance.

But why cannot so many Christians enjoy such a heavenly blessing as assurance at their inception of conversion? Or why do not the average believers assume the immediate duty right after they believe the Lord? From the case study of Mary Magdalene in John 20:16-17, Goodwin found a rule:

let us but consider the different course which Christ held towards this Mary Magdalene and the other disciples, according to that

different temper of spirit We have two sorts of Christians exemplified in them and her. In the apostles we have an instance of judicious, wise, discreet professors, yet holy, that have true and solid affections to Christ, though *not so flaming*; who while they think to live by a solid and rational faith, and content themselves with it, are apt to think any extraordinary assurance, or special manifestation of Christ, to be idle tales, and will not hearken to them; ... rest in inferior discoveries of graces as signs in themselves which satisfy them, whereas these are but the grave-clothes of Christ ... afford but little comfort (8:383. Italics mine.)

Goodwin's tenet was confirmed by Jonathan Edwards in his greatest proposition: "*True Religion, in great part, consists in Holy Affections.*"⁵⁶ Goodwin's diagnosis explains the lack of assurance among more intellectual and rational Christians.

But the other, like Mary, are "impetuously and passionately fond of him," and "can no way be satisfied but by seeing him, and enjoying communion with him." They refuse to be comforted until Christ "delights to manifest himself." The full reason is the promise in John 14:21. (8:382) Her "ravishing joy" (8:384) "shall be told as largely at the latter day." Goodwin called this encounter of Mary with the Lord a "romance." (8:385) He concluded,

Christ makes early discoveries of himself unto those believers who are vehement in affections and desires after him, when he defers the manifestations of his love to others, who though holy and having well settled affections, yet have them not so vehement

⁵⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*. (Reprinted by Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994.) 23.

and flaming. (8:383)

Duty—a Growing Process

Goodwin based his encouragement upon 1 John 5:10a, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” He argued that “the meaning whereof is not that he hath the prevailing act of witnessing ... but the meaning is, he hath the matter of it in himself.” If it is the “prevailing act of witnessing,” then it becomes the essence of saving faith and every believer should have such an act of assurance as this. “The matter of it in himself” of which Goodwin spoke is no other than the “seed of God” in the *WCF* 18:4. He continued, “therefore, having the matter of assurance in himself, if he do not *grow up* unto it, it is through his own fault.” (8:372) So Goodwin looked upon the realization of the duty not as a one-shot action, but as a growing process from a seed up to a full life. It involves growing pangs.

Its Negligence, a Sin

Once it is the immediate duty for a believer, then “if he do not grow up unto it, it is through his own fault.” “It is his sin not to make out of it; ... to sit down on this side of it.” The reason is that a Christian is engaged in a spiritual warfare once he is converted. There are always two kinds of spiritual voices confronting his ears: on the one hand, “the continual whisperings and secret suggests of the Holy Ghost concerning his condition,” and “the voice of the blood of Christ ... though a still voice;” and on the other hand, the suggestion of Satan which “saith of all the Spirit’s impressions ... are but the voice and savings of his own heart”. The strategy of Satan is to make Christians negligent of what Christ has done in His atonement and “negligent in cherishing the dictates of the Spirit.” If the believers “have the matter of the witness in themselves thus go and throw it off,

and are in love with the contrary despairing and doubting thoughts, they are guilty of a great sin.” (8:372) The sin “makes God a liar.” (8:373, 372)⁵⁷ 1 John 5:10b.

Extent of the Duty

Goodwin contended from the fact that our Lord pronounces to the “poor palsy man” of Matthew 9:2, Mary of Luke 7:37-38, etc. that “your sins are forgiven,” so that “even babes in Christianity are capable of it.” Even the “lowest Christians” are obliged to attain the assurance, 1 John 2:12-14. (8:373) “Though a man is assured of all *implicitly* at once,” He continued, “the Holy Ghost oftentimes doth *distinctly* set on first one thing and then another”

The experiences of the full content of assurance are distinguished into degrees. He said, To know the pardon of his sins, and that I am justified, that I have right in eternal life ... to see the privileges of a man’s sonship, and to be assured of it, this is the first degree of assurance, or at least the lowest actings of it. (8:374. Italics mine.) Actually this is the basic definition of assurance: being assured of the *interest* of faith. However, Goodwin said, it is but the lowest degree. We should press on.

Besides, there is “explicit assurance of the love of God in Christ.” It is “not only a knowing and believing,” but “to have my heart taken and swallowed up with” It is defined in 1 John 4:16 as “dwelling in love.” (8:374)⁵⁸ Love, among all the attributes of God, is singled

⁵⁷ As to the spiritual warfare engaged in, Goodwin expounded it in details in his *A Child of Light Walking in his Darkness*, TG 3:231-350, which I will treat extensively in the next section.

⁵⁸ “I am swallowed up in God.” is one of the last words of Goodwin. See TG 2:lxxv.

out as the best way for us to enter the bosom of Christ. This degree is highly experiential: “to have the heart steeped and dipped in that love, so as to taste and relish the love ... it is an higher degree of assurance.” (8:375)

But, Goodwin alleged, what St. John holds forth here ... “is not only the assurance of the love of God shewn in these benefits ... but it is a fellowship with God the Father and God the Son.” It is an even higher (the third) degree. He distinguished “the love of God” from “the God of love.” Now “all that is in God, and all the beauty and glory in him, appears to us clothed and apparelled with love, as he saith, 1 John iv.6, God is love.” (8:375) It is a mystical union between God and man:

when all that is in God is presented to the soul in a way of love; and when the soul hath fellowship and communion with him, all that is in God is his, and he sees himself an heir of God, Rom. viii.16, 17, and he hath all that is in God to delight in; and God manifesteth the beauty and glory that is in himself unto him in love, and so the soul dwells in God, and God in him, and all in love.

That is one of the most beautiful statements depicting the sweetness of the union. To prevent any suspicion of Platonic mysticism, he pointed out intentionally that it is “not that he is swallowed up into God, but God filleth him.” Though there is a mutual dwelling between God and man, “yet he remaining still what he was, and God remaining what he is too.” The personal union is only reserved for the Father and His Son, Colossians 2:9. (8:376)

Finally, Goodwin said, “there is communion and fellowship with all the persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and their love, severally

and distinctly.” (8:377) It involves all three persons. He explained:

it is in assurance: sometimes a man’s communion and converse is with one, sometimes with the other; sometimes with the Father, then with the Son, and then with the Holy Ghost ... and so a man goes from one witness to another distinctly, which, I say, is the communion that John would have us to have.

“The fulness of the Godhead dwelling then [is] in you by vision, which *now* you take in by faith ...” This is an assurance wrought intuitively, something like the beatific vision. But Goodwin guarded it quickly by saying that *now* we are still walking by faith, not by sight. One day “all three persons will be enjoyed and possessed by vision.” Goodwin urged that

we should never be satisfied till we have attained it, and till all three persons lie level in us, and all make their abode with us, and we sit as it were in the midst of them, while they all manifest their love unto us; this is John’s communion, and this is the highest (8:379)

Here we have all four degrees of assurance. By these Goodwin tried to encourage Christians to attain the full assurance of salvation.

Goodwin’s model of presenting the assurance is tinged with Reformed scholasticism; however, the progressiveness of the four degrees in objects, from the interest in salvation up to the Triune God Himself, still adheres to the tenet of the assurance of the *Confessions*: “This faith is different in degrees... growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance”⁵⁹ Here we have seen how Goodwin

⁵⁹ WCF 14:3; *Savoy Declaration* 14:3 differs slightly.

pierced beyond the wording of the *Confessions*, and explicated further the richness of the immediate witness of the Spirit. The last three degrees are all in the parameter of the third witness.⁶⁰

Renewal of Assurance (WCF 18.4)

Now we will examine Goodwin's renowned and earliest work, *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness*. This work is an excellent exposition of the WCF 18.4, namely, the forfeiture and renewal of assurance. The process is the Reformed "spiritual warfare". Into this work he later added his biblical theology of Satan.⁶¹ Professor William Haller comments that Goodwin "gave ... more to the vivid description of what happened in the sinner's heart."⁶²

On the one hand, there are three efficient causes in the forfeiture of assurance, namely, the withdrawal of the Spirit, the weakness of our own hearts and the attacks from Satan; and the works of God's Spirit should be "carefully ... severed from Satan's, as light from darkness." On the other hand, however, Goodwin stressed the sovereignty of God from the beginning to the end and hence he always tried to treat this case of conscience from both the divine and Satanic perspectives to-

⁶⁰ The last three degrees progress from the love of God (one attribute of God), to God of love (God Himself), then ultimately to the mysterious Trinity. All of these are not syllogistic, but immediate or intuitive.

⁶¹ The whole discourse on Satan begins from Chapter VI of Goodwin's *A Child of Light* and possibly ends at Chapter X. I.e. TG 3:256-87. According to the "To the Reader" announcement of the publication of *A Child of Light* in 1636, Goodwin, after making sure not to incur at all "that severe increpation of the Apostle against curious speculations about angels," added this discourse on Satan in order to make the book more complete. TG 3:233.

⁶² William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 144.

gether. Goodwin said:

He may suspend his testimony, and the execution of his office of witnessing adoption; he may withdraw his comfortable presence, and hide himself for a moment ... And also when *Satan* comes gives in a false witness and evidence, and *our own hearts* thereupon likewise condemn us, the *Holy Ghost* may stand by, as it were, silent, and say nothing to the contrary, but forbear to contradict Satan by any loud testimony or rebuking him, as he doth at other times; as Zech. iii.1, 2. (3:244. Italics mine.)

Thus, most of time, he combined these three threads into one cord. The work on this account displays Goodwin's version of "spiritual warfare." For a Satanic element is usually involved in the experience of forfeiting assurance.

Withdrawal of the Spirit

Goodwin at first affirmed that once a man is converted, "that Spirit is never after again the spirit of bondage ... nor reverseth his testimony of adoption." (3:243) But he continued,

Though the judge doth not condemn any more, yet the jailor may trouble and affright us, and our own hearts may condemn us, 1 John iii.21. God may give Satan leave to cast us into prison, to clap bolts upon us again, and to become a lying spirit of bondage to us ... and he [God] may give up our hearts ... to be ensnared with its own inventions, and fears, and jealousies. (3:244)

The sovereign God is the judge far superior to the jailer, Satan. Without His permission Satan cannot cast Christians into spiritual bondage. Only beyond His sunshine can saints be ensnared by their own weakness.

God not only *privatively* concurs in the darkness in which a child of light walks, but also *positively* applies divine disciplinary wrath upon His children for their sins. As a consequence the conscience of the saints is wounded. It is a torture as Proverb 18:14 says, “The spirit of man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” God makes His anger known, “not only by dumb signs in outward crosses and effects, but by an immediate witnessing, and plain and express speaking so much to their consciences, by scalding drops of his hot displeasure let fall thereon.” After all, it is not “eternal wrath,” but “a temporary displeasure.” As to the presumptuous sins, however, the Holy Spirit may be provoked and proceed to shake a Christian with “the rod of his eternal wrath.” By this measure God prevents him from going worse. But Goodwin made a distinction between warning a believer and threatening a non-believer. (3:245) The divine privative departure and/or His positive displeasure should not be confused with the unrelenting buffets of Satan.

Why God Withdraws

Why will God withdraw His countenance from His beloved children? Goodwin provided quite detailed diagnoses.⁶³ I rearrange them into the following categories.

God's sole prerogative

There is “no ruled case or precedent,” when God will “use his absoluteness and prerogative in his dealing with his children.” Job’s case belongs to this category:

⁶³ Goodwin wrote two chapters for the cases and another three chapters for the ends of God’s withdrawal. See TG 3:288-307.

God took a liberty to glorify himself, by singling out one of his stoutest, valiantest champions, and setting him hand to hand to wrestle with the powers of darkness. And because Satan was ... not hard enough for him, he turned enemy himself, Job xiii.24. (3:288)

God withdraws himself from His children to an extent that He plays the role of Satan and turns himself into their enemy! But it is not without a cause. “God hath higher ends of glorifying himself ... and of confuting the devil.” (3:289) On the one hand, Job fights “a single combat with Satan;” however, on the other hand, this is “the height of our Christian warfare ... the highest pitched battle ... the brunt ... for a man encounters with God himself, apprehended as an enemy.” (3:304) God doubly ridicules Satan by such a conflict as Job’s after God himself joins the battle against not Satan, but the man of faith! This is the insight of Goodwin on the Christian warfare.

Involved with this cause is the trial of faith of God’s children. God would like to “make trial of our graces and a discovery of them.” He “left Hezekiah to the power of sin in the point of sanctification—namely, ‘to know what was in his heart.’ [2 Chronicle 32:31]” Goodwin contended,

There be many gracious dispositions which actually have not opportunity to discover themselves but in case of this kind of desertion. Some of those which are the highest acts of grace and purest fruits of it, and which are the surest evidences of the truth of grace, would never appear but in case of such desertion.

The last victory of Samson explains that “in desertions it alone doth wonders.” 3:303-304) In deserting Job God did “shew what strong patience, unconquered faith was in him.” (3:303) Goodwin depicted the

details of it:

this is done by faith, ... God's power rather supporting it, a man relies on God, ...though God put on never so angry a countenance, look never so sternly, yet faith is dashed out of countenance, but can *read love in his angry looks*, and trust God beyond what he sees ... Then, faith goes wholly out of itself, as seeing nothing in itself but barely a capacity of mercy and plenteous redemption, which it knows to be in God. This faith is a *miracle of miracles*, for it is founded ... upon mere nothing in itself, and ... yea, of God himself. (3:304-5. Italics mine.)

That is one of the most beautiful expositions in Goodwin!

Goodwin also justified God by observing that “God might well take liberty to deal with Job, because he could make him amends, as afterward he did, in restoring double to him.” (3:289)

Edifying purpose

This cause is more understandable than the former. Goodwin enumerated many cases and spent much ink upon it. God shows His power and faithfulness in upholding a spirit again when it has long been “deadly wounded with inward terrors.” Goodwin compared it to the “bruising of a reed.” When a reed is bruised, who can make it stand upright again? “To heal is made the prerogative of ‘the Sun of righteousness, arising with healing in his wings,’ Mal. iv.2.” (3:300)

Many a time God leads us through sufferings. We may feel His withdrawal, whereas God wants us to know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. Thereby the soul may be better conformed to the image of Christ. We “must suffer somewhat in spirit as well as he [Christ], and have a portion therein also.” No hu-

man being is able to “drink off to the bottom” of the cup of agony, but he is commanded to “taste” its “inward affliction” as well as “outward persecution, —terrors within and without, —and all to make us conformable to him” (3:301) Suffering also “enlargeth the heart, and makes it thirst after comfort the more.” That is the case of St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 12. Paul had been raptured to heaven. After he came down, God let Satan batter him. “Now he must hear by devils the language of hell.” God wants Paul to learn more humility lest he should be exalted above measure. Humility is the index of the enlargement of one’s heart. (3:290-1. Cf. 3:306.)

God also intends in our sufferings to make us wise in comforting others. 2 Corinthians 1:4, 5. “This greatest wisdom ... is not learned but in Heman’s school.” (3:289)⁶⁴ A wounded spirit who can bear? Only a man who has been in the depths of desertion like Heman can heal the wounds of others.

The absence of God will widen the “difference between the estate of God’s children here, and that hereafter in heaven.” The cloudless sky is for the world to come in eternity. We must endure the vicissitude here. Hence the difference is to “make the heaven sweeter and to exercise faith.” Then we prize heaven more—the “state of perfection and continual health.” (3:301-302)

Discipline due to negligence

This type of cause may be the most common as to why Christians’ assurance is shaken or diminished and even lost. God deserts a person when he fails to be engaged in God’s commission. This is the

⁶⁴ See Psalm 88. Heman is “reckoned among the wisest of his time, ... next to Solomon ... 1 Kings iv.31.”

case of Jonah. “when we will not witness for God, then there is no reason his Spirit should witness to us.” (3:298)

God leaves a soul when he neglects such opportunities for comfort and refreshment as God-vouchsafed sacraments, prayer, etc. Christ knocks on the door of the church and moves her heart . But she makes excuses. “Upon this, Christ went presently away; only he left him an impression, a scent of himself in her heart ... enough to stir her up to seek him.” When we fail to exercise the graces, that is, performing duties “half awake,” or praying “as if we prayed not, ... this provoketh God to absent himself.” (3:294)

Discipline due to sin

Another cause is that God leaves one for certain gross sins committed against light. Goodwin chose the “David” of Psalm 119:25-28 to explicate this truth. His soul clings to the dust and melts from heaviness. Why? For he has been along the “way of lying.” Goodwin understood 1 Samuel 21:1-9 and 27:8-12 as occasions where David lived in lying—he lied to Ahimelech four times and to Achish once. So his soul melted from heaviness. (3:294-95) The Lord, by His withdrawal, prodded David to repent.

Another case is when “a sin be not thoroughly humbled for and confessed.” Goodwin raised David as an example again, using the murder of Uriah. After committing such a heinous sin as this, David felt unashamed and explained it away to Joab in 2 Samuel 11:25. Then “God ... lays his hand so sorely on him” We may read Psalms 32 and 51. God’s discipline is to “deliver such a one to Satan ... to terrify him and afflict his spirit.” God intends to mortify the flesh of man and thus humble him. (3:295-96)

God also subdues a stubborn, stiff spirit under outward crosses. In this stage He tries “taking some stars of comfort out of the firmament, when others are still left to shine to them.” But if that fails, God will hide His face and become very angry, bringing the inward afflictions upon man. Then a general darkness falls upon him and drives him to God. Isaiah 57:16-19. (3:297-98.)

Sometimes, after a long time, the “guilt may return again and leave us in darkness,” even when the sin committed long ago has been confessed and pardoned. It becomes a burden to Job in Job 13:26-27. “As the power of sin and the law of sin is but in part done away in our members, so in our conscience the guilt of sin is likewise but in part done away ...” So “after the commission of some new act, or forgetfulness of the old, ... God may let them loose upon us afresh ... as if they never had been pardoned.” Goodwin advised us: (1) time wears not out the guilt of sins; “nothing ... but repentance.” (2) Therefore, seeing that “to God they are fresh, ... Great sins forgiven must not be forgotten.” (3:297)

To demolish carnal confidence, God will hide His face to make man troubled. In Psalm 30:7 David puts his trust in the mountains and says, moreover, “I shall never be removed.” Then God deliberately hides Himself in order to provoke his holy jealousy. His anger is but for a night. Then His favor may be restored, and joy may come in the morning. (3:293)

Satanic Attacks

Similar to the *WCF* 18:1 and 4, Goodwin had an interesting pastoral observation:

As men that want true faith ... are thus apt, through carnal mis-

applying the word they hear, to frame and draw from thence ... multitudes of false reasons to uphold and maintain to themselves a good opinion of their estates: so, on the contrary, in those who have true faith, all that carnal reason ... is apt to raise and forge as strong objections against the work of faith begun, and as peremptorily to conclude against their present estates by the like misapplication of the word, but especially by misinterpreting God's dealings towards them. (3:250)

It is paradoxical: a hypocrite may have false hope while a believer, want of assurance. The key element of this enigma is man's carnal reason, especially when it is vitiated and manipulated by Satan. He twists reality through the carnal human faculties to prevent man from true assurance. In the eyes of Professor Haller Goodwin in this work "depicted the encounter of the soul with Satan during its pilgrimage through the benighted world."⁶⁵ Goodwin endeavored to find the fingerprints of Satan upon human carnal faculties when a Christian walks in darkness.

Limitations of Satan

Goodwin kept on insisting that Satan has "permissive power only." (3:258) Satan cannot trespass any further than what he is permitted to do by God. Though he concessively admitted that "when buffetted by Satan ... Nor could all the saints on earth any other way have freed him:" yet Goodwin completed the sentence by adding: "none, till God should cause him to depart." (3:287) God always reserves sovereignty for Himself!

⁶⁵ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*. 152.

Despite the fact that Satan sometimes gets “leave” from God to attack vulnerable man, Goodwin also reminded us, “Satan cannot enforce an act of assent to any falsehood upon the understanding of any man.” It “should not have been unless it were their own sin.” (3:266)⁶⁶ John Bunyan concurred with Goodwin in his *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Great-heart explains to Christiana and her sons while they pass by the Valley of Humiliation,

We need not be so afraid of this Valley, for here is nothing to hurt us, unless we procure it to ourselves. ’Tis true, Christian did here meet with Apollyon, with whom he had also a sore Combat; but that fray was the fruit of those slips that he got in his going down the Hill: For they that get Slips there, must look for Combats here; and hence it is, that this Valley has got so hard a name. For the common People, when they hear that some frightful thing has befallen such an one in such a place, are of an opinion that that place is haunted with some foul fiend, or evil spirit; when, alas! It is for the fruit of their doing, that such things do befall them there.⁶⁷

That is the best reiteration of Goodwin’s theology. What Satan does is but “a superadded working of blindness unto their own natural blindness.” (3:266) Without the efficient cause on the human side, Satan cannot bring any woe upon man. We should not overestimate Satanic power in this regard.

⁶⁶ Cf. in TG 7:272 Goodwin quoted Augustine’s words: “whereas the devil is a dog in chains, yet lo, how he doth prevail, when yet he can only bark and solicit, but hurt and bite none but him that is willing, and join himself to him [Satan].”

⁶⁷ John Bunyan, *Pilgrim’s Progress*. The Second Part. 1684. Oxford (The World Classics) edition. 196. (A more popular Barbour edition. 280.)

Chapter XI The Assurance of Salvation

As to the court of our conscience, we may inquire as to “how Satan should come, and how far, to know matter by us thus to accuse us of.” Goodwin answered, “he [God] can *alone* both search and know the heart and conscience.” (3:271. Italics mine.) God is the only judge presiding over us. Two things are requisite to perform His office—“skill and knowledge to find out and examine the fact; ...[and] power to execute and torture the malefactor when found guilty”—meet in Him “transcendently and sorely.” (3:272) God reserves this privilege for His own glory and for His being the sole “judge and rewarder of men’s ways.” (3:274)

Goodwin’s insight reminds us that overestimating the power of Satan, as in the modern Charismatic Movement is not biblically correct.

Advantages of Satan

Once he gets “leave” from God, Satan attacks man along three vulnerable lines: carnal reason, corrupt affection, and guilt in conscience.⁶⁸ At the end of his analysis Goodwin reduced Satan’s advantages over man to seven: (3:285-87)

(1) Satan can familiarly and frequently suggest his false reasonings and accusations unto us—because we are weak by nature and, moreover, have innate darkness and are apt to fall into sin. (3:249) He has the ability to forge counterfeit arguments to overthrow our faith. He is called “the tempter and the accuser from his employment.” He

⁶⁸ Goodwin deemed the “soul and spirit” in Heb. 4:12 as “those two main powers of the heart.” The spirit means the “superior part, of the understanding, conscience,” while the soul, “the inferior part, that sensual part, wherein the affections are.” TG 3:273.

has honed his crafts continually (five thousand years) since his fall! (3:262) He also knows “how best to suit ... both to persons and seasons.” (3:263) So he is able to continue the dispute and to give new replies to our answers. “Satan, some way or other, is able to guess at, and discerns the replies in our hearts to his objections, as well as to make and cast in objections.” (3:266-67)

(2) He can overwhelm man with a multitude of reasonings, together, at once. By bringing in “a cloud of witnesses and instances” he can prove man a hypocrite, not one of the elect. He persists until we are persuaded.

(3) He seems to fend any comfort away from man. Jeremiah has forgotten all good, Lamentations 3:17. Job has mistakenly believed that it is God who suffers him not even to take a breath, Job 9:18. “He rains down temptations sometimes, not by drops, as in ordinary rains, but by spouts ... when a cloud melts ... suddenly and falls by wholesale” (3:285-86)

(4) He adds, to his lying accusations, weights upon a guilty conscience by imperious affirmations. Satan is not only the “great general of the whole powers of darkness in us,” but also “hath some command over” the forces of man’s guilt of sin in his conscience. Therefore he can “stir up that guilt that is in us, so also work upon that ... defilement that is in the conscience ... misleading it in its verdict of our estates, as cunning pleaders do a silly jury.” (3:271)

All reasonings are done by syllogism. So are the false ones. Carnal reason allows the false *major*, while the guilty conscience gives in to the false *minor*. The false *major* and *minor* are “like the two wings of an army.” Satan marshals both. If the innocent Socrates, Goodwin explicated, was admonished by his accusers that “he should have sus-

pected himself guilty, how much more, when the accusation shall fall upon persons that are so guilty, as we are ...?" (3:286) In this way Satan affirms his accusation of man.

Next we would ask the same question as Goodwin: "How, and how far, Satan may come to know so much matter against us whereof to accuse us?" He often charges us by "guess." Then, starting from a "scruple," he dilates upon it and finds in our conscience "matter against itself to prove and increase that surmise." More specifically, Satan travels up and down the earth to "discern all corporeal actions." He makes it his "business to study men." Goodwin speculated further that Satan "may be privy to our vocal confessions of sins to God or men; unto ... private prayers, or to others in trouble of conscience." (3:275) He is also privy to "all our more retired actions." Goodwin said, "he is a good physiognomist." (3:276) Not to mention those gross sins. With the grant of "all divines," he stepped further to say that "both phantasms and passions ... the devil may know ... they have a nearer access to us than men can have each to other." (3:277) By this Satan has mastered at manipulating man's guilt of conscience.

(5) He backs his false conclusions with terror. Nebuchadnezzar was impressed by the terror of his dream rather than its content! (3:287) Satan always strikes "further and deeper distress than the Holy Ghost by himself alone intended." (3:244) These terrors are never intended by God. Satan just wants to dominate man through them.

(6) He can convince man that his suggestions are their own thoughts, or even from the bondage of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:15. He is able, undiscernible to us, to insinuate false reasonings and to make us accept them. The depths of Satan in Revelation 2:24 is termed because "the devil was the master and the author and suggester

of them.” As in the case of the lying spirits to persuade Ahab, Satan is able “to delude wicked men’s understandings with false reasonings.” (3:264-66)

(7) No man can throw Satan off—only God. Satan is like a man that carries a dark lantern, who can see the assaulted, and how to buffet him, and follows him wherever he goes; whereas the poor man cannot see him, nor who it is that strikes him, nor be aware how to ward the blow.

Goodwin confessed the inferiority of even the Apostle Paul to Satan: “when buffeted by Satan ... [he] knew not what to do, but only to have recourse to God by prayer ... Nor could all the saints on earth any other way have freed him: none, till God should cause him to depart.” (3:287) By this he echoed the anthem of the Reformation in Martin Luther’s *Ein’ Feste Burg*:

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing,
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God’s own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth, his name,
From age to age the same,
And he must win the battle.

Ten Directions of Recovery

This section is a devotional reading with beautiful theological backup. Something concerning the ten directions should be noted here. Goodwin urged the troubled soul diligently to search for the “true

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cause that provokes God thus to leave thee.” He did not deny that it may be that God “terrifies and lasheth thy conscience;” however, it is “usually some false reasoning or misapprehension, some mere mistake, some device and sophistry of Satan.” Though Satan must get leave from God to terrify our conscience, he goes yet further in engulfing us with overwhelming sorrow, by persuading us that such sin is unpardonable. At this juncture Goodwin suggested that one “go to some spiritual lawyer skilled in soul-work: keep not the devil’s counsel.” (3:317-19)

Of the troubled soul it is said in Isaiah 50:10, “Let him trust in the name of the Lord.” Goodwin expressly highlighted the name revealed upon Sinai to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7. When you, a poor soul, cannot see any sign or evidence, or

when the devil and God’s wrath beleaguers thee round, and encompasseth thy soul, and thy comfort of every grace in thee is taken from thee, and thou art driven from, and art forced to forsake all other thy holds and grounds of comfort, then fly to the name of the Lord as thy city of refuge

The name of the Lord is the last resort we can “catch hold as on the horns of the Altar.” He counseled that “if thou diest, die there.” (3:325-26, 30)

Waiting for the recovery of sweet assurance means “constant use of all ordinances and means of comfort.” He warned that “the devil endeavours nothing more than to keep such souls from the word, from good company, from the sacraments, from prayer” Use of them may seem to “reap no benefit,” but he insisted upon using them, for “some secret strength is gotten by [them].” (3:331) His teaching in this regard fully complies with the *WCF* 18:3, “... he may, without ex-

traordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.”

His last direction is that we rest “not in ease of conscience, but in healing of conscience.” It is not self-centered regret, but God-centered repentance. Goodwin argued,

The offence ... done to God, that wounds him; for he hath a heart after God’s heart, and therefore looks on sin with the same kind of eye that God doth; and as God accounts the offence done to him the greatest evil in sin, so doth a godly heart also.

So he concluded that the chiefest of a godly man’s trouble is a further thing:

it is not the sting of this serpent only, but the poison of it that disquiets him; neither is it only the want of pardon of sin, and the fear of God’s everlasting wrath, which troubleth him, but the want of God’s favour, the parting with him whom he sees so excellent and glorious, the want of seeing his face. (3:338)

True experience of assurance coincides with the pilgrimage of sanctification. By this moral change he rightly proclaimed, “It is a new conversion.” (1:251)

Conclusion

Alas! The most experiential doctrine of all has been in decline during the age of Rationalism since the eighteenth century. John Wesley, a Puritan descendant, inherited a sense of the worth and advantage of assurance from his father, an Anglican rooted in the Puritan tradition, and from his own spiritual experience. He treasured this doctrine all his life and incorporated it even into his Arminian systematics. Methodism keeps the legacy of Wesley. Arthur Yates dares to assert

that this doctrine is the Methodistic banner. Not only that, he even boasts that “assurance is ... the fundamental contribution of Methodism to the Church.”⁶⁹ In fact, prior to the boast, Louis Berkhof confesses that in the last two centuries “Methodism reacted against the prevailing spiritual pessimism of the age and aimed at promoting a cheerful and joyous Christian life.” Then he exhorted the Reformed people that “this is still one of its purposes today.”⁷⁰

But the tragic truth is that this Reformed/Puritan doctrine is not only ignored or, worse, lost among Reformed-faith churches as Dr. Berkhof laments—but also distorted in the hands of the Methodists and their spiritual descendants, the Pentecostal and the Charismatic people, in the twentieth century. Goodwin has long ago presented his full exposition of assurance, together with its related doctrine—the sealing of the Spirit. It functions as a key to revivals.⁷¹ May the Lord bless His Church with the fire of biblical revivals through the revived message of Goodwin’s immediate assurance.

There are some thoughts concerning the interaction between his doctrine of assurance and that of eschatology. Goodwin was one of the masterminds upon the chapters of assurance both in Westminster and in Savoy. He incorporated the traditional Puritan assurance into what Robert Letham calls “a somewhat idiosyncratic view of a twofold of assurance of salvation.” There are three elements of assurance. The third one, the sealing of the Spirit which can be experienced as the

⁶⁹ Arthur S. Yates, *The Doctrine of Assurance*. (London: Epworth, 1952.) preface.

⁷⁰ Louis Berkhof, *The Assurance of Faith*. 1939. p. 39.

⁷¹ Michael A. Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit: the Teaching of Martin Lloyd-Jones*. 13, 29-32.

immediate light, is on top of the first two syllogistic style ones. He first attained this experience in 1627. Very soon in 1628 he preached it in his *A Child of Light*. Then his exposition of the same doctrine appeared in *The Acts of Justifying Faith* around 1630. But his most mature presentation of it still awaits another masterpiece in 1641—*The Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians*.

In this chapter we only examine the first two works. As we have seen, his doctrine of assurance by the year of 1630 is free from the influence of his millenarian thought. The predominant thinking in his mind must have been the development of the sealing of the Spirit. So when his favorite doctrine of the latter-day glory appeared in many of his works after his *An Exposition of the Revelation* in 1639, we should not be surprised. Because there is a kind of congeniality between the sealing of the Spirit and the latter-day glory. Therefore in this sense the proposition that Goodwin's doctrine of immediate assurance played a significant role in shaping his eschatology and moreover, his ecclesiology in the late 1630s, is not an unsound inference.

Chapter XII

The Sealing of the Spirit

Now we will examine the works of Goodwin upon the immediate assurance. They are Sermons XV through XVII on the sealing of the Spirit in his *Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle of Ephesians* (1641). The doctrine of the sealing of the Holy Spirit has long been a treasure of the Reformed and Puritan tradition. Based upon the three occurrences of the Greek word σφραγίζω (seal) in the New Testament relating to the work of the Spirit,¹ the Reformed/Puritan theology definitely formulated an important doctrine, that of the sealing of the Spirit.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

We will start from Calvin.² To know Calvin's doctrine of sealing we have to understand it in his doctrine of the *testimonium spiritus*

¹ The Greek verb σφραγίζω appears 29 times in the NT. Only five of them are of use in this doctrine: i.e. John 6:27 (God sealed Christ); 3:33 (Christians seal Christ); 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30 (God seals Christians with the Spirit).

² This chapter is partially a correction and improvement of my former paper, "The Doctrine of the Sealing of the Holy Spirit in the Puritan Tradition," under Dr. William Barker in Fall, 1992, at Westminster Theological Seminary.

sancti, for Calvin used these two terms interchangeably. What is the *testimonium*? It “not only attests and seals abundantly in our souls the truth of the prophetic and apostolic doctrine, but also effectually bends and moves our hearts to embrace and follow it.”³ So bear in mind: two crucial aspects—the attestation of Scripture and the assurance of salvation—have also been coupled together in Calvin’s doctrine of sealing.

B. B. Warfield avers that “Calvin had no predecessors in the formulation of the doctrine [*testimonium*].” Early in 1536 we see the doctrine already in germ in *The Geneva Confession*.⁴ Warfield claims, “It was left, then, to the edition of 1539 [*Institutes*] to create the whole doctrine at ... a single stroke.”⁵ We may find some clues of the origin of this doctrine from his life. The first clue would be his abrupt conversion experience and hence that of *testimonium*.⁶ A further clue

³ Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*. 24.

⁴ Its fourth article mentions the necessity of the illumination of the mind. John Calvin, *The Geneva Confession* (1536). in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*. 27. This *Confession* was presented to the magistracy of Geneva on November 10, 1536 by Farel and Calvin.

⁵ B. B. Warfield, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God.” in *Calvin and Augustine*, 1909. Reprinted by Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956. pp. 116, 122.

⁶ It was only stated in the preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms*:

God at last turned my course in another direction by the secret rein of his providence. What happened first was that by an unexpected conversion he tamed to teachableness a mind too stubborn for its years And so this mere taste of true godliness ... set me on fire with such a desire to progress

T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin*, Batavia, Ill: Lion, 1975. 26, 193. Dr. Parker would set the date in 1529–30. Afterward, from his conversion experience Calvin might discover it and develop it from his Bible studies. *Ibid.*, 195, 26.

would lie in his religious context.⁷ Therefore his sudden experience in conversion, assiduous exposition in Scripture and doctrinal challenges from his milieu all converged to call for the emergence of the doctrine of the *testimonium*.

A more fundamental doctrine to the *testimonium* is Calvin's double structure of Word and Spirit. Only in this harmony can the Spirit illuminate man to see that God is the author of the Scriptures and of assurance of salvation.⁸ As long as the union of Word and Spirit is autopoietic (for the Spirit) and instrumental (for the Word),⁹ the answer to the question how many *testimonia* are in the double structure will be no other than *one*.¹⁰ So when the Holy Spirit illumines man with the

⁷ Against the background of the Roman magisterium, God illuminated Calvin's eyes to recognize that the true authority lies in the Word. Calvin found in the doctrine of the *testimonium* the invincible weapon to prevail over the challenges of the papacy, as well as fanatics and rationalists. Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959.) 12-16. Against the fanatics, Calvin asserts the union of the Word and Spirit especially in *Inst.* 1.9; against the rationalists, the depravity of mind and the necessity of its illumination by the Spirit in 1.6-7.

⁸ Calvin, *Inst.* 2.5.5.

⁹ Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God." 82-83. Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit*. 63-64.

¹⁰ There are two aspects of the effects of the *testimonium*. Calvin taught one aspect in *Inst.* 1.7 and another in 3.2. In *Institutes* he never juxtaposed these two aspects in one passage. But in his *Commentaries* he did. In my examination, that Calvin had only *one* testimony of the Spirit is proved by the following texts: *Comm.* (1) on John 15:26 or Eerdmans translation vol. 5:109-110. (2) on John 16:13-14 or vol. 5:121. (3) on 1 John 2:27 or vol. 5:263-264. (4) on 1 Cor. 2:11-12 or vol. 9:58-59. (5) 2 Cor. 1:21-22 or vol. 10:23-24. Cf. Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit*. 100; Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God." 72; Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin*, 217-218. As to the details, see Paul Chang, "John Calvin on the Doctrine of Assurance." Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1992, under Dr. D. Clair Davis.

authority of the Word, the Spirit at the same time seals the promises to his heart. For Calvin, as there is only *one* testimony of the Holy Spirit, so there is also *one* sealing of the Spirit.

With the broader knowledge of assurance in mind, now from the *Institutes* and the *Commentaries*, let us see Calvin’s teachings on “sealing.”¹¹ (1) Anointing, sealing, earnest and establishing are the “same thing with different words”. But the most frequently used term is the *testimonium*.¹² 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5, Romans 8:15-16 and Ephesians 1:13-14 are Scriptures of the same group. When he mentioned the motif of assurance, he usually quoted several texts of that group. (2) Calvin assigned both aspects of the effect of the *testimonium* to “sealing.” In *Institutes* 1.7.4-5, where he treated the doctrine of the Word, the Spirit seals the self-authentication of the Word of God in our heart so that we “feel that the undoubted power of his divine majesty lives and breathes there;”¹³ while in six occurrences of Book 3 of *Institutes*, only the other aspect was mentioned.¹⁴ Only once did Calvin put the two aspects together under the word of “sealing.”¹⁵ Obviously Calvin assigned “sealing” more to the assurance of salvation than to the attestation of Scriptures. Though the Puritans shifted the gravity of sealing, Calvin’s initiation and insinuation to do it has to be

¹¹ I will narrow to *Inst.* 1.7.4-5, 3.1.3, 3.2.12, 36-37, 3.4.14, 3.24.1, 3, 8; *Comm.* on 2 Cor. 1:21-22 or vol. 10:23-24; Eph. 1:13-14 or vol. 11:131; 4:30 or vol. 11:194-195.

¹² Calvin, *Comm.* on 2 Cor. 1:21-22 or vol. 10:23.

¹³ One of three occurrences discussing the first aspect only is Calvin, *Comm.* Eph. 1:13-14 or vol. 11:131.

¹⁴ See also Calvin, *Comm.* Eph. 4:30 or vol. 11:194-195.

¹⁵ I.e. Calvin, *Comm.* 2 Cor. 1:21-22 or vol. 10:23-24.

put into consideration.

(3) As assurance is the essence of faith, so is sealing. Therefore sealing is by no means a post-conversion experience. As to Ephesians 1:13-14, Calvin was not ignorant of the existence of an *apparently* chronological order of faith and sealing inherent in this passage. He raised the question, “he [Paul] *seems* to subject the sealing ... to faith. If so, faith precedes it.” But he still insisted that it is but a *twofold* faith. Sealing confirms and completes faith.¹⁶ He exclaimed, “all who do not have the witness of the Holy Spirit ... have no right to be called Christians.”¹⁷ (4) Sealing intimates the Sealer, the Holy Spirit, Himself on the one hand and also, on the other hand, the promises the Spirit seals in our heart.¹⁸ That means we have both the seal *in* us and the sealing *upon* us.

(5) Does Calvin’s sealing leave any hint for later Puritans to define their sealing? The hint, I think, is the measure of faith. Having confirmed that assurance is the essence of faith and faith has different measures, then we can safely infer that assurance has its measure, too. So does the sealing. The assurance which the least measure of faith carries with it must not be an assurance of large measure. (Many a time the Puritans just made explicit what Calvin implied.) The Puritans used the presence/absence of *full* assurance to describe Calvin’s model of the Spirit-flesh dichotomy. Calvin ever depicted the ecstasy of faith: Being kindled by the Spirit, then the mind is “aroused to taste the divine goodness” and the “abundant sweetness which God has

¹⁶ Calvin, *Comm.* on Eph. 1:13-14 or vol. 11:132.

¹⁷ Calvin, *Comm.* on 2 Cor. 1:21-22 or vol. 10:24.

¹⁸ Calvin, *Comm.* on Eph. 1:13-114 or vol. 11:131.

stored up” for the God-fearing people. “It utterly ravishes him and draws him to itself,” with a kind of heavenly emotion, by which he is “admitted to the most hidden treasures of God and to the most hallowed precincts of his kingdom.”¹⁹ Can we identify such a full, ecstatic assurance as above with the weak faith of the “half-broken reeds and smoking lamp-wicks”?²⁰ Definitely not. Then the Puritans’ distinction of faith and *full* assurance (or sealing) is not incompatible with Calvin’s teaching. Rather, Calvin indeed intimated such a development by providing materials.

(6) As to the sources of assurance, Calvin took sealing, pledge and good works.²¹ Notice that the last one is but an “inferior aid, ... not the foundation on which it rests.” Regarding the practical syllogism, his attitude was a *via media*—he did not reject it squarely, but accepted it as a sign while other real causes exist. Actually the first two causes are but the dual effect of the *testimonium*. They always come together. For Calvin sealing comes to the fore, for it is the Spirit who comes to assure us of spiritual things through the pledge of the gospel. The first two elements—pledge and sealing—appeared in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 18.2 while the third—good works—appeared, in 16.2, notwithstanding different orders.

The contributions of Calvin with respect to the doctrine of sealing are concisely summarized above. We will now see how Calvin’s teaching developed in the Puritans.

¹⁹ Calvin, *Inst.* 3.2.41 or 1:589. This is the most ecstatic passage I found in Calvin.

²⁰ Calvin, *Comm.* on Matt. 12:19 or vol. 2:37.

²¹ Calvin, *Comm.* on 1 John 3:19 or vol. 5:278. Cf. “uprightness ... *a posteriori*.” *Inst.* 3.14.21.

William Perkins (1558-1602)

In the history of Reformed theology Perkins held a very important position. After the failure of the presbyterian classical movement in 1570-1585, he was the theologian who successfully reinterpreted Calvin in the newly-conceived covenant theology. As a result Calvin's doctrines could wield their powers in many dimensions of England and hence transformed the English society in the first half of the seventeenth century. In this sense he won the name of the father of Puritanism. One of his three greatest contributions, according to Ian Breward, is "his teaching on assurance."²² Assurance is the most urgent and greatest case of conscience. Now we turn to his doctrine of sealing.²³

Perkins put Calvin's doctrine in a more pastoral orientation. That is the basic difference between them, a difference not of essence as R. T. Kendall charges, but in practical treatment. Though he organized Reformed soteriology in a "golden chain," he did not intend to mechanize theology, but to secure any man with a least measure of faith that once he is covenanted with God he is in the elect side of the chain,²⁴ and to exhort him to grow in God's grace. According to Calvin there

²² William Perkins, *The Work of William Perkins*. Introduced and edited by Ian Breward. 88-89.

²³ I find that basically four of Perkins's works are crucial to his doctrine of assurance and sealing: *A Golden Chain*, 1590, slightly revised 1592; *The Foundation of Christian Religion*, 1590; *A Grain of Mustard Seed*, 1597; *A Treatise Tending unto a Declaration Whether a Man be in the estate of Damnation or Salvation*, 1588 (?). All are collected in Breward's work in abridgment.

²⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*. 1.6. Introduced and edited by Thomas F. Merrill. (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1966.) 111-12.

are two aspects of the effect of the *testimonium spiritus sancti*. Obviously Perkins would rather restrict the title, while using “sealing” for the *full* assurance.²⁵ Therefore a clear split from Calvin ensued: Sealing or *full* assurance is NOT the essence of faith.²⁶ So Perkins and almost all the Elizabethan spiritual brotherhood confessed that a believer might have lack of assurance. From the pastoral point of view, it was a soothing message and conversely encouraged many souls to attain the sealing of the Spirit.

In *A Golden Chain*, his systematic theology handbook, Perkins set all executions of God’s eternal decrees in *four degrees* to declare God’s love—Calling (Chapter 36), Justification (Chapter 37), Sanctification (Chapters 38-47) and Glorification (Chapters 48-50)—which included preparationism, least/greatest measures of faith and the practical syllogism. He elaborated effectual calling again into another three degrees.²⁷ The first two degrees, i.e. hearing of the Word and the mol-

²⁵ Perkins once used Eph. 1:13 to say that the Spirit “persuades” his conscience that the Scripture is the Word of God—the first aspect of the *testimonium*. Then he quoted Heb. 4:12, 1 Cor. 14:25 to stress the second aspect of Calvin’s *testimonium*, a personal appropriation of the promise of salvation. *Foundation*, edited by Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 161-2. So we see (1) Perkins followed Calvin’s teaching on the *testimonium*, not disassociating the *testimonium* from sealing. (2) But he changed the title and would not call it sealing, even when he used the renowned sealing-verse, Eph. 1:13.

²⁶ Even so, if we examine Perkins’s definition of faith, we will find that he did not depart from that of Calvin. In the fourth principle of *Foundation*, he still juxtaposed the persuasive part (intellectual, passive) with the apprehensive part (voluntaristic, active) and did not lose sight of assurance, the completion of faith. Edited by Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 155-56. For Perkins, faith was a broader categorical term while assurance was reduced to designate the more matured part of it.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 228-9; or Perkins, *Armilla* 36.

lifying of the heart, are his preparationism, not a regenerating work. Perkins remarked that “the right way to go unto heaven is to sail by hell... he [God] bringeth no man to heaven, except he send him to hell first; if he promise life, he slayeth first; when he buildeth, he casteth down all first.”²⁸ It is not until the third degree that man is apprehending Christ.²⁹

Then he utilized Calvin’s concept of measures of faith to analyze faith into another five degrees or motions.³⁰ In the “divers degrees and measures of the true faith,” the lowest is “the least measure of true faith.” To this Perkins said, a man does “not yet *feel* the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins and yet is *persuaded* that they are pardonable,”³¹ It is like “a smoking flax which can neither give out heat nor flame, but only smoke.”³² However, Perkins averred, “it is sufficient to ingraft them into Christ.”³³

²⁸ Ibid., 366, 374; or Perkins, *Declaration*.

²⁹ Ibid., 228; or Perkins, *Armilla* 36. Calvin would not feel offended, for Perkins only restated what Calvin had always said that the Spirit comes to demonstrate sin, rebukes us, accuses our conscience, lays low our stubborn will and even brings the will to death (!) in his *Comm.* on John 16:8 or vol. 5:117, Acts 9:6 or vol. 6:261, Heb. 4:12 or vol. 12:51, 50. All the works Calvin described are but common, not supernatural. They are preparation to regeneration. So the legal work, corresponding to the second use of the law, brings man to the brink of conversion. (I am deeply convinced that Puritans familiarized themselves with Calvin’s *Commentaries* and utilized them as materials to do their theology.)

³⁰ Edited by Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 229-30; or Perkins, *Armilla* 36.

³¹ Ibid., 158. Italics mine; or Perkins, *Foundation*.

³² Ibid., 230; or Perkins, *Armilla* 36. Cf. Calvin, *Comm.* on Matt. 12:19 or vol. 2:37 where Calvin warned not to mix the “obstinate malice” with “a smoking wick or a shaking reed.”

³³ Edited by Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 258; or Perkins, *Armilla* 58.

The presence of the sealing of the Spirit distinguishes the beginning of faith from a *feeling* assurance. The greatest measure of faith comes to be *fully* persuaded of God's love.³⁴ "Man comes to the highest degree after the sense, observation and long experience of God's favour and love."³⁵ So it does not differ from the least one in *essence*, but in *degree*. So Perkins would agree with Calvin when Calvin said, assurance is the essence of faith, if the assurance is not the *full, ripe* assurance. Calvin would also agree with Perkins when Perkins said, the assurance is not the essence of faith, if the assurance is specifically the *full* assurance.³⁶

Hence we see Perkins's theology was a clarification and improvement of Calvin. By redefining assurance he made Calvin's least measure of faith a suitable concept for pastoral purpose. For Perkins predestination to glory also implied a predestination of means to achieve the glory. The means included the preregenerate legal works, the practical syllogism (or evangelical good works), and the mystical syllogism (the sealing of the Holy Spirit).³⁷ Hereby the Spirit-sealing was, for Perkins, the crown of the works of the Holy Spirit. Calvin pointed out that seeking the certainty of election lies best in clinging to

³⁴ Ibid., 158; or Perkins, *Foundation*.

³⁵ Ibid., 231; or Perkins, *Armilla* 36.

³⁶ Joel R. Beeke recognizes a distinction of objective and subjective assurances in Perkins. Cf. his "Personal Assurance of Faith: English Puritanism and the Dutch 'Nadere Reformatie': From Westminster to Alexander Comrie (1640~1760)." Ph.D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, Phil., 1988. p. 101.

³⁷ Breward, "Introduction." 95. Interestingly there is a mystical syllogism in Calvin, *Comm.* on Gal. 4:6 or vol. 11:74-75.

“the latter signs which are sure attestations of it.”³⁸ Beyond Calvin’s *testimonium*, Perkins responded with the practical syllogism.³⁹ He rejected the idea that good works make man worthy of eternal life. Yet Perkins also encouraged man at the same time to descend into his own heart to search his sanctity and then to know whether he is justified.⁴⁰ This seems similar to the position of Calvin, a *via media*.

There are two usages of the practical syllogism, as a guide to the mystical syllogism (the sealing of the Spirit) as well as a check on it. Anyone who thinks Perkins devised a legal system misunderstands him. The practical syllogism was never for him an independent instrument. Except as a service to the *full* assurance, it is nothing in itself. In answering Timotheus’s inquiry to show him how to procure the earnestly-desired certainty of salvation, Eusebius (Perkins) gives the priority to the sealing of the Spirit.⁴¹ Moreover, Perkins never thought of a purely human means by which man can achieve the most precious sealing of the Spirit. He said, the assurance comes “in God’s time.”⁴² When the sealing work is not so powerful in the elect, the “physicians of souls” would suggest to them to judge “other effects of the Holy Ghost, namely sanctification,” because “these are the most notable.”⁴³ From the heat one can infer there is fire, though he does

³⁸ Calvin, *Inst.* 3.24.3. For “the latter signs,” see Gordon J. Keddie, “Unfallible Certainty of the Pardon of Sinne and Life Everlasting,” 232-3.

³⁹ Edited by Breward, *The Work of William Perkins.* 257; or Perkins, *Armilla* 58.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 159; or Perkins, *Foundation*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 370-72; or Perkins, *Declaration*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 257; or Perkins, *Armilla* 58.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

not see its flame.⁴⁴

Regarding a check of the truthfulness of the sealing, Perkins appealed to Romans 8:15-16. Gordon Keddie comments,

In his exposition of Romans 8:16, Perkins goes beyond Calvin in making a clear distinction of the roles of the testimony of the Holy Spirit and that of “our spirit.” Calvin viewed the testimony of the Holy Spirit as a witness *to* the human spirit. Perkins, on the other hand, sees the testimony of the Holy Spirit as being *with* the human spirit.⁴⁵

There are two witnesses, one divine and the other human, one infallible and the other fallible. The human witness is the fruit of justification, a witness from our regenerated conscience. Perkins was masterly in the use of the practical syllogism.⁴⁶ The major premise is what the Bible registers in our mind. The minor is what our conscience witnesses with memory as its assistant. The conclusion is what our conscience sentences. Now the testimony of our spirit is also the sanctification through our conscience. The Word of God has been implied in the practical syllogism. A genuine testimony of the Spirit must concur with our own. Otherwise extraordinary revelations or carnal conceit

⁴⁴ Perkins, *Cases of Conscience*, 1.6.1 or edited by Merrill, 113. Cf. J. L. Girardeau: “he [Paul] regarded the witness of our own spirit as inchoate and incomplete until consummated by the witness of the Holy Spirit.” See his “The Doctrine of Adoption.” 498.

⁴⁵ Keddie, “Unfallible Certenty of the Pardon of Sinne and Life Everlasting.” 241.

⁴⁶ Merrill, “Introduction.” in *William Perkins (1558~1602), English Puritanist. His Pioneer Works on Casuistry: “A Discourse of Conscience” and “The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience.”* Introduced and edited by Thomas F. Merrill. xiii.

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will creep in as a counterfeit.⁴⁷ Perkins thought that *full* assurance would generally come to a believer a long time after his conversion and he must be a holy man. True holiness and ecstatic sealing are twins.⁴⁸ So the importance of sanctification to the case of the full assurance or the sealing of the Spirit was not optional any more, but necessary. The position of the practical syllogism in Perkins turned out to be more elevated than Calvin's *via media*.

Perkins did not expound much upon the sealing itself.⁴⁹ Never-

⁴⁷ Perkins, *Cases of Conscience*, 1.6.1 or Merrill, 112.

⁴⁸ Cf. the teaching of J. L. Girardeau:

The absence of the true witness of our own spirit would involve the absence of the Spirit's witness. ... But it is clear that if one never has had any consciousness of possessing the marks of sanctification, he cannot enjoy the Spirit's testimony to his adoption.

He continues to aver,

Should such a one claim to have the witness of the Spirit, his claim would be false. That claim cannot be true, where there is, or has been, some consciousness of the work of sanctification in the heart. The two testimonies God has joined together. They cannot be put asunder.

See his "The Doctrine of Adoption." 503. Cf. William K. B. Stoever, who reflects on the Antinomian Controversy of 1636~38:

It was in this sense of an objective identifying mark that the elders [of the Boston Church] regarded sanctification as the "seal of the Spirit." The Hutchinsonians construed this "seal" as the immediate witness of the Spirit, to the exclusion of "any thing in our selves, whether by faith or by any other grace."

See his *A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven*, 73.

⁴⁹ By the way, he seemed to intimate both meanings of "sealing" —the seal as the Holy Spirit Himself, and the seal as the *inner works* of the Holy Spirit. See Perkins, *The Art of Preaching*, 3, in *Works*, 2:647, or edited by Breward, *The Work of William Perkins*. 335. By quoting Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience*, 3, edited by Merrill, 50-1, Sinclair B. Ferguson says,

theless, he rather did it in the orientation of the whole picture of the doctrine of assurance, as well as in that of the covenant theology. At least he has taught: (1) Sealing of *full* assurance is not the essence of saving faith. (2) Sealing is the crown of the works of the Holy Spirit upon earth. (3) Sealing is far from extraordinary revelations. Rather, it is usually attained by ordinary means, such as reading and hearing the Word, prayer, and the sacrament, (of course, the Lord’s Supper.) (4) Sealing must concur with holiness. Thus far, in Perkins’s sealing we have almost found all the essential elements of the doctrine of assurance of the Westminster Standards as presented in the *WCF* 18 and 14. His mind really cast the Westminster theology with respect to this and many other points. Since Calvin the doctrine has advanced and matured considerably to a new milestone in Perkins.

William Ames (1576-1633)

In Ames, as a student of Perkins, we expect to see a continuity of his teaching of assurance and sealing. First of all, he followed Perkins’s proposition: assurance is not the essence of faith, based upon the fact that there are “many degrees of this persuasion [faith].”⁵⁰ He also distinguished the “objective” certainty from the “subjective” cer-

This meant that, for Perkins, ‘the seal of the Spirit’ was an *activity* in addition to his indwelling of the believer. This in turn opened the way for a further development of the idea of the seal in which the notion of its subsequence to conversion would come to the fore.

See Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life*. 117.

⁵⁰ William Ames, *Medulla theologica (The Marrow of Theology)*. 1.27.19. 1623. Translated with an introduction by John Dykstra Eusden. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968. p. 163

tainty.⁵¹ The term “assurance” undoubtedly predicates the latter. The objective certainty comes from the “truthfulness or faithfulness of God.”⁵² So for Ames and all the Puritans the objective assurance is the essence of faith, because it is the nature of faith. Ames added an exegetical evidence to it. By Ephesians 1:13, the well-known *locus classicus* of sealing, he noticed the temporal factor out of the tense of the participle “having believed,” so assurance must be a post-conversion experience.⁵³ This exegesis was repeatedly cited by later Puritans. Sometimes faith’s wavering comes not from the nature of faith, but from the imperfection of man.⁵⁴ So the testimony of the Spirit is entailed to stir up faith in us.⁵⁵

Ames also referred to sources of assurance as Perkins did, but his exposition is more detailed than Perkins’s. Besides the objective promises of the Word of God, there are four ways of the subjective assurance: “a certain spiritual sense,” “the gift of discernment,” “witness of conscience,” and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶ Actually we can categorize the first two ways into the “inward illumination ... for the saving understanding” of the *WCF* 1.6, which implicates the ground element, “the promises of salvation,” of the *WCF* 18.2 (cf. 14.2) The third way corresponds to the “inward evidence” of the *WCF* 18.2 (cf. 16.2), which is the practical syllogism. So three elements of

⁵¹ Ibid., 243; or *Marrow*, 2.5.26. Cf. *ibid.*, 81; or *Marrow*, 1.3.6.

⁵² Ibid., 243; or *Marrow* 2.5.25. Cf. *ibid.*, 2.5.27. Or from the Holy Scriptures.

⁵³ Ibid., 167; or *Marrow* 1.28.23.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 243; or *Marrow* 2.5.26.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 243-44; or *Marrow* 2.5.28.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 173; or *Marrow* 1.30.15.

the assurance of the WCF 18.2 had appeared in the Amesian assurance. After remolding it in Ramism, Ames exercised the syllogism and mastered it even more than Perkins. Now we will see how Ames insinuated new insights into the Perkinsian doctrine of assurance or sealing.

Although it was a major topic in Ames's theology, he did not produce a separate chapter to discuss assurance in his *opus magnum*, *The Marrow of Theology*. Instead, he touched on this doctrine many times at various places. Most of them are in the first part, "On the Faith," not in the last part, "On the Observance." This reflects a very important message to us: Concerning assurance Ames would focus more on the sealing of the Spirit than on the practical syllogism.⁵⁷ He would refer Christian certainty to hope rather than to love.⁵⁸ In the chapters on "Good Works" (2.3) and "Sanctification" (1.29), two conventional loci for the practical syllogism, Ames was reticent regarding assurance!

Related to this new focus, we observe another shift in the loci where Ames discussed the doctrine of assurance. He just touched on it slightly in "Justification" (1.27) and said nothing on it in "Predestination" (1.25)! Instead, he treated it in depth in "Adoption" (1.28) and "Glorification." (1.30) It is an amazing shift. In other words, Ames pushed the doctrine of assurance, and hence that of sealing, forward into the *eschaton*.⁵⁹ This readjustment was a must for Ames in his lay-

⁵⁷ I find three entries on assurance in the second part of *The Marrow of Theology*: 2.1.38-39, 2.5.26-28, and 2.6.9,14, 15,19-23. Among them only 2.1 and 2.6.19-23 discuss the practical syllogism.

⁵⁸ Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, 2.6.14, in edited by Eusden, 247-8.

⁵⁹ Thereby we can anticipate the idiosyncratic doctrine of sealing of Thomas Goodwin in the Amesian assurance.

out of the entire covenant theology. As he deliberately eliminated the conditionality from the covenant of grace, so he could not avoid doing the same thing to the practical syllogism as a source of assurance. As he intensified the contrast between the covenant of creation (works) and that of grace, so he, against the Augustinian tradition, deprived the *eschaton* of Eden⁶⁰ and augmented that of the age of grace. So in the Amesian assurance the weight of the sealing eclipsed that of the practical syllogism. The voluntarism of the Amesian faith also contributed to this shift.

Tying assurance to adoption instead of other doctrines was a reversal back to Calvin and a correction of Perkins. Ames has done a great thing to preserve Calvin's insight concerning adoption and assurance. Ames said, "A true part of the adoption is the witness of the Spirit." The Spirit is by this reason called the Spirit of adoption. He therefore called the *testimonium* "a sign of ... inheritance."⁶¹ The sealing experience will escort the believer to a pretaste of the heavenly greatness of our salvation. It is tinged with the *eschaton*.

Compared with Perkins's assurance, Ames's is less psychological and syllogistic, and more theological and intuitive. Perkins focused the inner feeling of our conscience while Ames, the higher calling of our inheritance. Perkins elevated the position of the practical syllogism in assurance, while Ames subordinated it to the sealing of the Spirit. This subordination was another recovery of Calvin's concept of assurance.

Ames tried to explicate the doctrine of assurance in terms of the

⁶⁰ See Chapter III above, Covenant Theology. Cf. Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, 1.10.31-32, in edited by Eusden, 113. See also *ibid.*, 52.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 167; or *Marrow of Theology*, 1.28.23.

covenant of grace. While a good conscience is necessitated to be maintained in the covenantal status, yet it is the sealing of the Spirit which makes the individual, or the community, or the whole nation to be transformed by the covenanted God and filled with the covenantal blessings. The real dynamic lies in the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Ames enlarged our scope toward the doctrine of assurance: it is not an *enjoyment* of God only, but also an *involvement* of Him in the kingdom tasks.

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)

The heavenly doctor transmitted the angelic temperament from Calvin and Ames to Goodwin. The immediate assurance due to the sealing of the Spirit was one of his central concerns.⁶² He influenced Goodwin on the doctrine of sealing as much as Ames did Goodwin on that of adoption. Sibbes' contribution in the doctrine of sealing is as follows.

He stressed a kind of preparationism, that is, humbling must precede assurance. His most popular work, *The Bruised Reed*, explicated how the Spirit of bondage mollifies our heart and then prepares it to receive the assurance. Then a soul has been prepared for further work of the Spirit of adoption, which is the sealing work of the Spirit.⁶³

⁶² The expositions of Richard Sibbes on the doctrine of sealing are: 3:452-62 on the sealing of the Spirit in 2 Cor. 1:22 while a fuller coverage should extend to 3:420-84, the exposition upon 2 Cor. 1:21-22 (His *Exposition of Second Corinthians Chapter One* was published in 1655); *A Fountain Sealed*. A sermon on Eph. 4:30. (published in 1637). 5:409-56. (This book treats the grieving of the Spirit.); *The Witness of Salvation*. 7:367-85. A sermon on Romans 8:15-16. (published in 1629). The pagination goes with Nichol's edition.

⁶³ Cf. Sibbes, *Works* 7:370. Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 62, 65, 69.

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Sibbes enlarged the scope of the concept of sealing. There are three kinds of sealing: the sealing of Christ by God, the sealing set upon Christ by Christians as a token of their faith, and the sealing upon Christians by the Spirit.⁶⁴ To the question: “Is the Spirit itself this seal, or the graces of the Spirit?” he answered that the Spirit is the seal who always dwells in man’s heart, “doing all offices of a seal ... till he have brought him to heaven, for the Holy Ghost never leaves us.” While Perkins and Ames had connected the word “sealing” to assurance specifically, Sibbes moved on to expound its *degrees*. After including faith as a sealing of the Spirit, he made a distinction in assurance itself: sanctifying grace as a seal and a yet higher level of assurance—a superadded seal of the Holy Spirit. Though Sibbes was inclined to use the concept of “seal” to comprehend all the inner works of the Spirit, he seemed more to restrict the concept to the “superadded work” of it.⁶⁵

Then Sibbes provided a most beautiful counseling of “how to know there is a sealing.” There are four things. First is “a secret voice” of the Spirit to the soul through a Scripture to us. Sibbes was like a mystic. For he likened this voice to “a sweet joining, a sweet kiss.”⁶⁶ Then comes a filial cry of “Abba Father” responding to God with

⁶⁴ Sibbes, *Works* 3:452 (on John 6:27), 456 (on John 3:33) and 453 respectively.

⁶⁵ Sibbes, *Works* 3:455; 5:437-39. Beeke observes two ways of Sibbes’ sealing: a one-time sealing and a sealing that comes later as one matured in the Christian life. But at the end of the section on Sibbes Beeke also says that “Sealing is a continuous and progressive activity” for Sibbes while “Owen held a more static view of sealing.” See his “Richard Sibbes on Entertaining the Holy Spirit.” 8, 10.

⁶⁶ This was what Goodwin experienced in 1627. TG 2:lxii. See Chapter I above, Life and Age of Thomas Goodwin.

boldness. Before the completion of the sealing, Sibbes inserted a third one, sanctification, and he called it the “ordinary seal.” This is the wisdom of Sibbes, guarding the extraordinary sealing experience first with the ordinary means of grace—the Word of God, and then checking it with the ordinary “stamp” of the seal. The exposition of Ephesians 1:13-14 opened an eschatological realm for the sealing while that of Romans 8:15-16 related it to ethics. Sibbes kept the balance between this- and other-worldly views of it. Finally it is the “extraordinary seal, peace and joy.” Such “spiritual ravishings” come to us at the occasions before, during or after a suffering or spiritual battle. It implies that the experience of sealing interplays with the growth of practical holiness.⁶⁷

Beyond the practical syllogism, Sibbes’ interpretation of a super-added sealing paved the way for Goodwin’s interpretation. The latter interpreted the highly experiential witness of the Spirit as a *direct, independent, intuitive, and immediate* sealing. Here lies the most important contribution of Sibbes. Goodwin assumed his mantle. Perkins started the exposition of the two witnesses in Romans 8:15-16 as conjoint and concurrent. Ames directed our attention to the rare witness of the Spirit. Sibbes appealed the sealing to confirm the witness of the human spirit. This direction finally culminated in Goodwin.⁶⁸

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)

From Ames to Sibbes an inclination for the doctrine of sealing to be more spiritual and even more angelical has been checked out

⁶⁷ Sibbes, *Works* 3:456-57.

⁶⁸ Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 72-74. Stoever, *A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven*. On Sibbes, 120-23.

above.⁶⁹ This development culminated in Thomas Goodwin. Now we will examine what Robert Letham calls “a somewhat idiosyncratic view of ... the sealing of the Spirit found in Ephesians 1:13.”⁷⁰

Sources of Goodwin’s sealing

Scholars are interested to retrace the sources of his doctrine of sealing. On the whole he followed the covenantal design of Ames more than that of Perkins.⁷¹ As to the most intriguing “immediacy” of sealing Beeke suggests the possibility that Goodwin might have gotten some inspiration from the concept of steps of grace of the Dutch “Nadere Reformatie” during his short stay at Arnhem. This stay involved “not so much in forging new experiences,” he concedes, but “Goodwin no doubt found a close kinship in the Dutch Nadere Reformatie.”⁷² Brian Freer’s inference may be more convincing. “It

⁶⁹ William Ames was called by Cotton Mather, in a hyperbolic yet good sense, the “angelical doctor.” Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 1:236. quoted from Eusden, p.11, n.22. Richard Sibbes was called “the heavenly doctor.” See Daniel Neal, *History of the Puritans*. Edited by Toulmin, 1794. 2:268. Also quoted by Maurice Roberts, “Richard Sibbes: the Heavenly Doctor.” 96.

⁷⁰ Robert W. A. Letham. “The Relationship Between Saving Faith and Assurance of Salvation.” 37-8.

⁷¹ For details, see Chapter III above, Covenant Theology. Though Goodwin followed Ames’s theology very closely and they were only one generation apart, he never had a chance to listen to Ames or discuss with him. Both were of Christ’s College, Cambridge. Ames was accredited A.B. and became a fellow of the same college in 1607. But he had to flee overseas in 1610 owing to the irritation of Bishop Bancroft with his Latin translation of William Bradshaw’s *English Puritanism*. Ames died in Holland in 1633. Goodwin entered Christ’s in 1613 and fled to Holland in 1639.

⁷² Beeke, “Personal Assurance of Faith.” 337-40. Cf. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 228: The Arnhem church “had very little intercourse with surrounding Dutch Reformed or even English Reformed churches, except for Rotterdam.” Cf. Goodwin’s *Ephesians Sermons* were preached immediately on his returning from Holland in

was almost certainly that godly Mr. Price who so long before had pointed the agonizing seeker ... to Christ.” (2:lxviii) Now he said to Goodwin that “God knows the time when it will be best to fill us with his love, and to ravish us with his favor in Christ. ... go on in faith, looking ... for that day of ... a fuller sight of his blessed presence.” (2:lxix)⁷³

Freer’s conjecture may be correct in terms of experience. But without any doubt the concept and even the terminology of “immediacy” came from Richard Sibbes, with whom Goodwin had a very long and close relation. Another factor should be considered. That is the new millenarianism among the late Stuart Independents. Goodwin’s understanding of the dispensations in the covenant of grace,⁷⁴ coupled with all the elements mentioned above, compelled him to construe the sealing in his unique manner. That is to say that Goodwin’s central concern, “the latter-day glory,” indeed interacted and even overshadowed his doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ As we keep exam-

1641. TG 1:xxxi.

⁷³ Freer compares Mr. Price’s comforting words with Goodwin’s exposition of his experience of sealing in *Ephesians*, in TG 1:250-1. His opinion is very convincing. See Brian Freer, “Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan.” 19.

⁷⁴ In addition to the two covenants, Goodwin distinguished the Old from the New Testament dispensations by the absence and presence of the sealing of the Spirit poured out since Pentecost. Again, in the New Testament dispensation, the millennium is conspicuously distinguished from the long period prior to it. David Walker recognizes that the basic difference between the Presbyterians and the Independents does not remain in the church government polity. “The controversy ... may be viewed as a debate between the law of nature and the immediate action of the Holy Spirit.” See his “Thomas Goodwin and the Debate on Church Government.” 99.

⁷⁵ The time (1641) and the context (the eve of the Civil War) of delivering *Ephesians* indicates Goodwin’s eschatology might be accountable for his peculiar doctrine of

ining his works, we might be closer to the real answer.

Sealing: Covenant of Works vs. Covenant of Grace

Different from their former theologians, the Puritans explicated the doctrine of assurance from the perspective of covenant theology. Goodwin followed Ames considerably in his covenant theology. There was no *eschaton* in Goodwin's covenant of creation. His stance is clearer than that of Ames. In creation

as Adam's covenant was *foedus naturae*, so his happiness should [be] ... not in God himself immediately he had not the taste and earnest of heaven by faith supernatural, ... neither had he the testimony of the Spirit working in him 'joy unspeakable and glorious,' in the hope of heaven. (7:53)⁷⁶

From the antithesis between Eden and us we know why Goodwin would deprive Eden of the ultimate hope. If it was there, then there must have been the same provision of the sealing of the Spirit as ours. But it would be no use at all for Adam, he averred, because Adam "was in his condition and desires to be confined to" Eden. "Such a supernatural principle as an optic glass ... to help ... to see further into another world" would make no sense to Adam, who was created thoroughly natural. (7:57)

Sealing: N.T. vs. O.T.

The sealing of the Spirit not only makes a covenantal antithesis

the "immediacy" of the Spirit. See Chapter II above, The Latter-Day Glory. Cf. Anthony Dallison, "The Latter-Day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin."

⁷⁶ Cf. TG 7:57, 66, 67. On p. 57 Goodwin asserted the same thing and asserted that popish divines confound the antithesis between the two covenants.

between the covenant of works and that of grace, it also acts as a covenantal distinction between the two dispensations under the same covenant of grace. “The people of God under the Old Testament had it not.” (8:370-71) For “the giving of the Holy Ghost as a sealer with joy unspeakable and glorious,” he explained from John 7:38, “was reserved to the times after Christ was glorified.” (1:248) But he conceded,

It is a thing many know not the meaning of, that yet have grace; for their hearts are wholly drawn out Christ, and they but *implicitly* apprehend, or seldom consider or think, what God the Father or the Spirit hath done. (8:371. Italics mine.)⁷⁷

David of Psalm 4:6 and Job of Job 42:5 were the rare cases to receive the grace of an immediate light from God.⁷⁸ “The ordinary saints under the Old Testament had a Spirit of bondage upon them.” (1:248)

As a contrast to the Old Testament times, “the Spirit is given us by the covenant of grace” in the New Testament times. He found that the sealing was prevalent and ordinary in “primitive times.” St. Paul mentioned it among the Ephesians, the Corinthians, and

⁷⁷ Goodwin’s dispensational treatment of the *testimonium* is quite similar to that of Calvin. For Calvin the *testimonium* is the characteristic of the Gospel age. Almost all the entries I find are not in the *Inst.*, but in his *Comm.* e.g. those on Acts 2:17 or vol. 6:58-59; Heb. 8:11 or vol. 12:112-3; John 14:20 or vol. 5:84 etc. But he raised a question: “Was the grace of regeneration wanting to the Fathers under the law?” Here regeneration is construed as the *testimonium* [see context]. His answer is that it was “not inherent in the Law, but it was a benefit transferred to the Law from the Gospel.” *Comm.* on Jer 31:33 or vol. 10:130-1.

⁷⁸ For David, see TG 3:239 in *A Child of Light*; and for Job, see TG 1:237 in *Ephesians*.

the Thessalonians and St. Peter did it also among the recipients of his epistles. (1:248-49)

Conditionality of the Covenant of Grace

As to the conditions, *entering into* the covenant is absolutely unconditional. Because, based upon Titus 3:6,

the first coming of the Holy Ghost is immediately upon us, as we are in our natural condition ... without any preparation to make way for his coming upon us, or into us. He doth not work grace first, and then come into a man; but he comes first and seizeth on a man, then works grace in him. (6:59-60. Italics mine.)⁷⁹

Nothing is more lucid than this passage regarding his attitude to the Puritan preparationism. He adopted Ames's correction of Perkinsian overtones in the arising preparationism. He tried to deliver the people of God from the clouds and the lightnings of Sinai. Otherwise the sovereign grace of God would be belittled. That his mentor, John Cotton, with the same ideas of the unconditionality of the covenant of grace and the immediacy of the sealing, would be deeply involved in the Antinomianism Controversy is not a surprise.

Nevertheless, it is a misunderstanding to deem that Goodwin's covenant of grace is unconditional. He, in the steps of Ames, pushed the conditionality of it from faith to assurance. So his morphology of conversion is different from that of Perkins and the Preparationists. When an elect person is seized by God's grace in the effectual calling, he is regenerated without any legal works of law. The experience of

⁷⁹ The word "immediately" does not connote the "immediacy" of the sealing in his *Ephesians* especially.

the Spirit of bondage comes after that. He identified the works of the Comforter of John 14-16 with those of the Holy Spirit of Romans 8:15-16. “He [the Spirit] must be a regenerator ere a comforter.” (6:63) Hence regeneration leads us into the conversion experience. The covenantal conditions are faith and repentance. There are two aspects of the Comforter’s work: that of the Spirit of bondage and that of the Spirit of adoption. Again in his *ordo salutis* the conviction due to the Spirit of bondage comes prior to the deliverance due to the Spirit of adoption as is the order arranged in Romans 8:15. “He [the Spirit] must be a Spirit of bondage first to him, and (as John 16.8) ‘convince the world of sin’.” (6:63) Goodwin said, “He is pleased to bear a title from it, and termed a Spirit of bondage to us, as causing us to see our bondage to sin, and death, and hell.... And the discovery of this our bondage is an infinite favour.” (6:18)

Under the Spirit of bondage we are like servants. Only under the Spirit of adoption we experience that we *are* sons of God. Goodwin stressed, “But the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of bondage in conversion only.” (6:363) In this way we see repentance and faith are conditions of enjoying the grace of the Spirit of adoption.⁸⁰

One question I will raise: what is the *practical*, in addition to the doctrinal, difference between the pre-regenerate preparation works of law, leading to regeneration and conversion, and the conviction under the Spirit of bondage, leading to the freedom of adoption? Goodwin’s shift of the works of law from pre-regeneration to post-regeneration did not alter the experience of conversion itself. This shift does not

⁸⁰ As to Goodwin’s conversion, see above, Chapter I, Life and Age of Thomas Goodwin—His Life—III Sound conversion.

merely heighten the justification of God's demand of one who is a regenerate person instead of an unregenerate, but also hastens the Christian to pursue the assurance of adoption. A Christian need not be guilty because not undergoing the terror of the works of law. But he should be guilty because not attaining the joy of the witness of the Spirit.

Christ, the Virtual Cause of Sealing

Before we proceed to examine the efficient cause of assurance, we should examine the virtual cause. We all are sealed in Christ according to the light of Ephesians 1:13. He said the Greek *en* is all one with the Greek *eis*. "So that a man's union with Christ, his being in Christ, is the matter sealed up to him." (1:242-43) Then Goodwin turned to the historic fact that Christ was sealed by God with the Spirit at the Jordan River, recorded in Matthew 3:17 and explicated in John 6:27. Just as the inner activity of the Holy Spirit responded as the effect to the outward seal of Christ, so we are sealed up to adoption as a fruit of our baptism in Christ. "We are conformed unto Christ; look what was wrought upon him, is wrought upon believers." (1:245) Hence all subjective experiences of sealing are conclusively derived out of our union with Christ. Moreover, no matter how manifold are the *graces* of the Spirit, he reminded us, there is only *one gift, not many gifts* of the Holy Spirit. (6:69)⁸¹

⁸¹ Again I will recall Goodwin's experience of assurance. Price pointed him to turn to Christ. And then he "began to reflect that Jesus Christ was the head of salvation" His encounter with the Lord helped him to a Christological exposition. See TG 2:lxxi in *Memoir*.

Culmination of the Doctrine of Sealing

As to the assurance of salvation, he stepped upon the groundwork of Perkins, who redefined the assurance and made the distinction of faith and assurance, and that of Ames, who promoted the position of the sealing in assurance without further detailed exposition of it, to proceed to the anticipated culmination of the doctrine of sealing. Goodwin referred to Ephesians 1:13 as the main text and held a temporal order of faith and assurance as Ames expounded to elaborate the richness of his doctrine of sealing.⁸² Like his predecessors he showed his interest not in “an assurance of truth of the promises,” but in that of “a man’s interest in those promises.” He underlined that the text reads *ye* were sealed. So it intimates a sealing of *persons*, instead of a sealing of *instruction*. (1:228)⁸³ As Sibbes further made a distinction of degrees of the sealing of *persons*, Goodwin said that there is a two-fold assurance of salvation: first, an assurance by *sense*, called *discursive* assurance; secondly, an *immediate* assurance of the Spirit, called *intuitive* assurance. (1:233)⁸⁴ The first one is the practical syllogism. It is the *immediate, intuitive* assurance that attracts our attention.

To prove the distinction of degrees of witness, he repeatedly appealed to 1 John 5:6-8 (KJV) to sharpen his views. By blood he meant

⁸² As to the significance of the word itself, seal means (1) appropriation; (2) security. See TG 1:230.

⁸³ To consolidate that the sealing is a sealing of *persons*, he provided three proofs: (1) All the works of God of 1 Cor. 1.21-22 only make man sure of his salvation. (2) It is not the *inheritance* sealed, but *man*. (3) By Col. 2:11-12 and Rom. 4:11, the inward sealing work always answers the outward signs and seals of covenants.

⁸⁴ Goodwin also said that “divines make degrees of sealing.” He must have had Sibbes in mind. See TG 1:234.

the blood of the Lamb, hence our basic faith of justification. By water he meant sanctification. Yet there is a further witness, the witness of the Holy Spirit, which reinforces the former two and is in itself “an immediate testimony beyond all these.” (1:233-34)⁸⁵

Implications of the Sealing of the Spirit

Now what are the implications of Goodwin’s immediate sealing? (If we only isolate the passages of the immediate sealing without a pervasive reading of their contexts, we must misunderstand him.)

1. Absolutely from God Himself

Great and authoritative persons are used to “seal without witnesses.” They do not need another hand to their seals. Goodwin drew upon John 5:33-34 and Hebrews 6:13, together with an illustration from Esther 8:8, to prove that the immediacy of our great God needs no witnesses in doing great things. “Because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself.” The gospel is not simply a promise, but also an oath. For God added a seal upon it to confirm his good will. If salvation is the greatest thing in the universe, then that the Holy Spirit seals it to us with an immediate witness is a divine mandate to proclaim the faithfulness of God’s promise in the Gospel.

2. Light beyond the light

The Spirit-sealing is “a light beyond the light of ordinary faith.” (1:236) Notice the language Goodwin used here. Both faith and sealing are supernatural. But sealing is *extraordinary* light while faith is only ordinary light. By Job and Stephen, he continued to illustrate what he insinuated here. Job lived by faith—the ordinary light. He

⁸⁵ Cf. TG 7:521; 8:360-71.

could not see God until an extraordinary light came to his soul. The Lord whispered secretly to him by the Holy Spirit, so Job said, “But now my eye sees You.” (Job 42:5) The difference between faith and sealing is like hearing and sight. Goodwin said, “it is faith elevated and raised up above its ordinary rate.” So was the case of Stephen. Goodwin underscored that “It is not a revelation of new truths, but to apply those truths to a man’s own heart.”⁸⁶

A question is raised to the foregoing interpretation: Did Goodwin advocate the beatific vision on earth? It seems so. Beyond the above quotation, there are many other entries discussing the extraordinary sight of his two favorite characters, Job and Stephen.⁸⁷ Job’s vision was “much communion with God in a *rational* way.... He [Job] doth not mean that he had any *outward* vision of God.... He speaks therefore of an inward light.” Goodwin also quoted John 14:21 that the manifestation is some further expression of God’s love to the soul. So it is a spiritual knowledge. (1:293. Italics mine.) He also pointed out very explicitly that “the light of assurance is not sight compared with the sight in heaven, when we shall see Christ as he is.” (8:346)⁸⁸ In another place, on Job 42:5, he said, “It was ... but by God’s revealing his face, and the beauty of his holiness to him, which humbled him.” The sight is no more than a direct teaching of Christ. John 6:45.

⁸⁶ TG 1:236-7. Cf. a threefold light: an immediate light, comforting grace and remembrance of grace. Light signifies the presence of God. Goodwin, *A Child of Light*, in TG 3:239-41.

⁸⁷ Of Job, see TG 1:236, 293; 7:66; 8:346; 10:162. Of Stephen, TG 1:236, 467; 4:565; 7:453.

⁸⁸ Here he quoted 1 Pet. 1:8 and 1 John 3:2 to explicate the comparison. So there are three distinctive degrees: faith, assurance, (future) sight.

(10:162) So nothing is physical.

The case of Stephen is tougher in one entry. Goodwin, in expounding Ephesians 1:20-21, deemed Stephen's vision as those of St. John in Apocalypse. "He [Stephen] saw him [Christ] with his bodily eyes." But twice Goodwin said, "I know not well." Then said, "It seemeth to be a vision of his eye elevated supernaturally." (1:467)

Now I can confidently conclude that Goodwin did not advocate an earthly beatific vision through the sealing. The supernatural light beyond the light of faith is still an elevated rational knowledge, not a physical sight. For him the beatific vision is only reserved for the future. The distinction of the sealing experience and the future sight can never be erased or obliterated. But one thing is certain, that the sealing somehow prepares us for the beatific vision only in a spiritual sense, not in a physical sense. Here Goodwin still retained the boundary set by Augustine.⁸⁹ This is a good guide for us to judge whether a sealing is genuine or counterfeit.

3. *Pure impress of God's love*

It is a pure impress of God's electing love "without the consideration of works." This is an immediate impress and light of the Spirit. We can never procure this kind of higher knowledge of God by any

⁸⁹ Cf. St. Augustine, *The City of God*. 22.29. Translated by Henry Bettenson. (New York: Penguin Books, 1972.) 1081-7. This is the most excited, graceful chapter in *City*. In his pre-conversion Neoplatonic tradition, Augustine struggled many years not to relinquish the idea that man can see God physically on earth after his conversion. But after parting with Porphyry, when he lectured on Galatians, he at last cut off his non-biblical Neoplatonic imagination of a beatific vision in a natural body by the light of 1 Cor. 13:9-12. From then on the distinction of faith and sight was set up for Western orthodoxy.

syllogistic marks or signs. (1:237) It also comes to back and confirm what the “witnesses of blood and water”, which mean justification and sanctification, cannot secure for us. But the witness of the Spirit “quotes them not, builds not his testimony on them, but raiseth the heart up to see ... what love he hath borne to it.” (8:366) For if the third testimony of the Spirit quoted from the first two witnesses as grounds, then the faltering of the first two would pass to the third one and it would become faltering, too! Actually the sealing needs no witness from man. Conversely it comes to the aid of man.

4. A new conversion!

As a consequence, in this experience, we are passive. Not that we cannot offer anything, but we cannot offer anything which can contribute to our assurance. As the wax is passive to the seal, so is “the heart, the understanding, and the will and affection to this work of sealing.” That is the partial reason why Goodwin proclaimed that the sealing is like “a new conversion” for we are now as “at the first conversion,” and only God is active to do what He wants to do. (1:242)

It is a new conversion, it will make a man differ from himself in what he was before in that manner almost as conversion doth before he was converted. There is a new edition of all a man’s graces, when the Holy Ghost cometh as a sealer.... My brethren, it is the next thing to heaven, therefore it must needs make a man heavenly. (1:251)

By this, Goodwin is thought to be an advocator of “the second blessing.” But the content is quite different from that of the Holiness Movement or the Charismatic Movement.

5. *Be prepared*

Immediacy still demands man's preparation! Here lies the conditionality of the covenant of grace. Though man cannot work out an infallible assurance by himself, yet he should live an obedient and holy life according to the requirements of the moral law. Goodwin said, "their testimony then comes to be considered but as the *occasion* upon which this of the Spirit is let in." (8:367. Italics mine.) Why is our holiness demanded as an occasion for the sealing? Goodwin argued from John 14:21, "God doth not put these cordials into a foul stomach; and when a man hath these, they make him wonderful holy." Then he took the apostles in Acts 1:14 as an example. The covenant of grace is conditional with respect to assurance. So he said, "God doth not give this promise of his Spirit as a seal till a man be very holy." (1:250-51) As by faith we are accepted by God, so by faith our new obedience is also accepted by Him, too. This obedience is the occasion for God to vouchsafe the grace of sealing to us. This is Goodwin's preparationism.

6. *Holiness*

Immediacy means the sealing joins with the practical syllogism. Goodwin grounded his attitude to holiness on his exegesis of the word "holy" in Ephesians 1:13. The phrase in Greek is quite strange. He construed it as that "this title of holy is not given to the Spirit himself, but as an *effect* of his in sealing." So when the Spirit seals, it works holiness. (1:250)⁹⁰ How does the sealing affect us to be holy? In the steps of his predecessors, Goodwin appealed to Romans 8:15-16, the *locus classicus* of assurance, to find the clues. He confirmed the exe-

⁹⁰ The phrase, τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, he transliterated as "that Spirit of that promise, that holy." *Promise* comes in between *Spirit* and *holy*.

genesis of Perkins that the preposition is *with* rather than *to*. Yet he also kept the insight of Calvin that there is only *one* concurrent witness, for “it was this Spirit that taught thee to call God Father ... and therewith to seek adoption from him.” (6:21) So “Our spirits, our graces, (that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,) never witness unless the Holy Ghost witness with them.” He emphasized his view by repetition, “if he [the Spirit] do not give in his testimony with them, your graces will give no witness at all.” (1:306) This is Calvin’s position. The practical syllogism cannot be used independently of the *testimonium*. This is also where Goodwin split with Perkins. He cut off the tendency of the Perkinsian practical syllogism toward off legalism. He learned very early that “he could not live off of the *sylogismus practicus* alone.” He wrote once to Mr. Price, “signs will do me no good alone.” (2:1xx)⁹¹ For Beza and Perkins our sanctification is a bridge to the full assurance. For Goodwin sanctification can never be a witness unless it is joined with the sealing of the Spirit. Actually one of the purposes of the sealing’s coming is to back up and confirm the witnesses from justification and sanctification. (8:366) Without the testimony of the Spirit being joined to that conscience, the conscience could not witness. Goodwin praised, “He [The Holy Spirit] is the great witnesser.” The Spirit is not passively *invited* by the conscience to testify to our state of grace. Rather, He actively engages Himself in the witness of our conscience. So Goodwin said, “the Spirit ... was the cause of that witness.” (1:27-28) In Perkins the practical syllogism, or the witness from sanctification, prepares man up to the full assurance. It is a syllogistic ethics. In Goodwin the sealing plays a more active role in man’s pursuit of assurance.

⁹¹ Also quoted in Beeke, “Personal Assurance of Faith.” 329.

Chapter XII The Sealing of the Spirit

Holiness is required as a covenantal condition so that we are to be graced with the absolute gift of the immediate sealing. But our sanctification will never become a witness unless we attain the sealing in advance and let it join with our fallible and faltering holiness. Before assurance our sanctification is tinged with the color of Eden under the Spirit of bondage. (Ironically, this is necessary.) Afterwards, it is tinged with the color of heaven under the Spirit of adoption. So the ethics of Goodwin is an eschatological, intuitive ethics, because it is driven by the heavenly glory and guided by the immediate impression of sealing. A minute doctrinal correction should generate an enormous ethical transformation. Though the immediacy means man's passivity at the moment of sealing itself, both in the moral preparation before it and in the moral application after it, we are altogether active. His sealing is far from a mysticism.

Not only that, he further said, "when he sealeth then he works holiness." (1:250) He concluded Sermon XVI of *Ephesians*,

a seal hath two ends and uses, the first is to assure and certify, and the other is to stamp an image; ... He is called the *Holy Spirit* of promise in sealing, because he stampeth the image of holiness upon you, and makes you more holy than before. (1:252)

Notice that his earlier contention in the beginning of Sermon XV, that the stamping of sanctification upon the heart is not "the principal meaning of it [sealing]," but "in a secondary sense," does not contradict his conclusion at all. (1:229) Thus far from Goodwin can be removed a suspicion that his doctrine of sealing sounds very radical and is liable to fall into a category of immediate revelation or extravagancy.

Because of this moral change he said, "It is a new conversion." He quoted 1 John 3:3 to proclaim, "it is a next thing to heaven," be-

cause man becomes *heavenly* and *holy* in the sealing experience. (1:251) It is absolutely not the so-called second blessing in essence. The new holiness is more and more fused with the latter-day glory. He remarked upon the oil of the virgins of Matthew 25:1-12 that the grace in their heart signified by the oil in the vessels should be carried by them into glory. So “the soul itself is wrought by God here for this very purpose, to be made capable of a further degree of glory, as it brings grace with it into the other world.” (6:200) There is a continuity from grace to glory.

7. Word and Spirit

The immediate sealing should not be misunderstood as the immediate revelation of God apart from the Word. The phrase, “the Holy Spirit of promise” of Ephesians 1:13, has two exegetical directions. If we take *promise* as a subjective genitive, then the phrase is construed as the promised Spirit. If we take *promise* as an objective genitive, then it is construed that the Spirit “always sealeth by a promise.” Goodwin said that both directions are not exclusive and hence accepted them together. First, he turned to the baptism of Jesus. “Christ was sealed when he was baptized; but he was sealed by a promise, ... by bringing home a truth to his heart.” The promise is a quotation from Isaiah 49.21.

Then Goodwin extended the principle to Christians: “The Word and the Spirit are joined; they are joined in the new Jerusalem, much more now.” Goodwin still steered his sealing in the route of Calvin’s double structure of Word and Spirit. (1:249) He confirmed, “yet it is always in and with the word, ... calls up some word that echoes to it, and goes with it. The Spirit opens God’s mind in some word.” (8:367) The sealing defined by him is a typical *testimonium* defined by Calvin.

He applied the above truth to guard the immediate sealing from any misunderstanding:

Therefore when we say, it is an immediate testimony, the meaning is not that it is without the Word; no, it is by a promise; ... he bringeth home a promise to the heart, some absolute promise or other....

Therefore let me tell you this, all your revelations that are without the Word, or would draw you from the Word, are naught and dangerous. We do not speak for enthusiasms....

It is not to write new Scripture, to make words, to be guided by the Holy Ghost without the Word. No, we detest all such....
(1:250)

Goodwin's words have cleared his position against all possible charges that he might be a radical or an enthusiast.

8. *Unity of the threefold assurance*

Immediacy means the unity of the threefold assurance. This unity is expected to emerge again, once the double structure of Word and Spirit is revered. As we have examined, it is the Spirit who seals the *promise* to our heart, and it is also the sealing which makes possible the *inward holiness* as a witness. All three elements—promise, holiness, sealing—are distinct only as concepts. In real operations, they are concurrent and conjoint. By the phrase, “a *twofold* assurance,” he implied *one* assurance with a twofold connection. (1:233) In his exposition of 1 John 5:8, he said,

the witness of water and blood are *swallowed up* as it were in the witness of the Spirit, in respect of the immediate testimony of the Holy Ghost. His testimony, though it is joined with theirs, yet it is

hid under theirs; it is not said so much to be the testimony of the Spirit, as the testimony of water and blood: whereas here it is said to be the testimony of the Spirit, therefore that third is rather meant than the other. (1:234-35. Italics mine.)

What a beautiful exposition it is! All witnesses are reinforced and swallowed up by the immediate witness of the Spirit. He rather described a concurrent witness in our heart. Hence he recovered another concept of Calvin's assurance. This twofoldness or three-degree-ness is but the double-effect of *one testimonium*. (Including the *testimonium* itself, it is a threeness.) Perkins leaned to ward separating them. He did it in a pastoral consideration. He unwittingly set a wedge between these elements of assurance. Now the Ames-Sibbes-Goodwin tradition tried to join them together. Otherwise the practical syllogism would become a dead and dry legalism. This is a great achievement. For Goodwin proved that Calvin's assurance can be satisfactorily reinterpreted in the Puritan covenant theology without any loss of its original biblical insights.

9. Divine generous gift

The immediacy finally implies general sharing. But we are often impressed by scholars otherwise. Did Goodwin himself say that it is rare to experience the sealing of the Spirit among Christians? Cotton Mather admitted in colonial time that “there are very *Few*, very *Few*, among us, that enjoy a strong Testimony of the Holy SPIRIT unto their *Adoption* of God.”⁹² Perkins and Beza impressed us with the same idea that the sealing is rare, so one should try good works as a

⁹² Richard F. Lovelace, *The American Pietism of Cotton Mather*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979.) 97.

basis for assurance at first. (But Goodwin demolished this plausible bridge.) William Cunningham almost intimates a similar view. The high tide of assurance, which led Calvin to define assurance as the essence of faith, was no more even in the Puritans' age. That was why the Puritans corrected Calvin's view. Cunningham tries to extricate both sides. He seems to admit the scarcity of this phenomenon.⁹³ I have read many similar comments.

But I have never, thus far, read one word or one passage in which Goodwin complained that it is rare among the children of God. Conversely, he pointed out that the Apostolic churches enjoyed it quite pervasively. The *WCF* 18 never declares that it is rare. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the twentieth-century apostle of Goodwinian sealing, never utters that it is rare. One thing I can assume is that a partial reason why assurance becomes rare (if it is really so) is because of the ten out of twelve spies of our spiritual Canaan who keep on reporting an evil message to us!

Goodwin opposed ten evil spies by indicating **first** that our Head has been sealed, so we, members of His Body, are likewise to be sealed. **Second**, he showed that it is not only a promise, but also a *special* promise of God. So "my brethren," he urged, "they shall have the Spirit to seal them, if they sue it out." It was first fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and all Christians are urged to appropriate that promised Spirit. (Acts 2:4, 38.) After quoting some Scriptures, he said, "Mark that, to all believers." "It was the last legacy Christ left upon earth....

⁹³ William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*. Edited by James Buchanan and James Bannerman. (Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark, 1862; reprint by Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1989.) 113.

certainly it might be more common if men would sue it out.” (1:247-49) **Thirdly**, he analyzed, this is also a covenantal blessing. We are warranted by God’s faithfulness to apprehend this crown of blessings. How? Lead a holy life to prepare ourselves. Make use of *ordinary* means of grace to let the Spirit have occasion to seal us. The time is in God’s hand.

Short Conclusion

From Calvin to Goodwin we have seen how the doctrine of sealing developed into the form of the Westminster Standards. Calvin set up the basics. Perkins remodeled it into the double-covenant theology. Ames readjusted it and tied it to the doctrine of adoption. He also re-evaluated the position of the practical syllogism. Sibbes continued the direction defined by Ames and expounded the sealing in depth specifically. All the above works culminated in Goodwin. His genius lay in unfolding the insights of Calvin, but at the same time he retained the positive contributions of Perkins. He almost resolved the conflicts between Calvin and Perkins. (Assurance is the chiefest disparity between Calvin and the federal Puritans.) I am amazed that Goodwin should have rearranged his covenant theology and let Calvin’s insights work in more lively fashion in his assurance. Among the Puritans Goodwin really assumed the mantle of Calvin’s *testimonium*, the spirit of the latter’s assurance.

As to the development of the doctrine of the sealing of the Spirit in Goodwin himself, we observe that he first attained this experience in 1627 and very soon he preached it through his *A Child of Light* in 1628. Though he treated it systematically in *The Acts of Justifying Faith* in 1630, yet its full-fledged exhibition came in his *Ephesians* in 1641.

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The seed was planted in 1628 and the fruit was reaped in 1641. During the spanning years we see his eschatology formed and his soteriology matured. For him the immediacy of the sealing of the Spirit is “a light beyond the light of ordinary faith,” (1:236) only a step short of the beatific vision of God. It is also the dawn of the latter-day glory which he cherished all his life time. Concerning this light, he said further, it brings in “a new conversion.” He proclaimed that “it is a next thing to heaven,” because man becomes heavenly and holy in the sealing experience. (1:251)

The doctrine of the immediate assurance is the most beautiful doctrine in which Goodwin fused into one dogma and fire, mind and heart, grace and glory, and hence theology and eschatology. In this celestial doctrine, on the one hand, we see how the doctrine of the immediate sealing of the Spirit guarded him from being an apocalyptic extremist and then guided his eschatology into the spiritual edification of the church. On the other hand, we also see how his yearning for the latter-day glory expanded the prospect of the doctrine of assurance and then sublimated it below horizon.

Conclusion

If A. R. Dallison has clues to characterize the theology of Jeremiah Burroughes, the dear colleague of Thomas Goodwin both in Dutch exiled churches and in the debating floor of the Westminster Assembly, “A Theology of Hope,” then we have thousands of reasons to dub Goodwin as a theologian of hope.¹ From the previous chapters upon the covenant theology and all the *loci* of the *ordo salutis* of Goodwin, we have seen very clearly Goodwin never failed to link his eschatology to or with his soteriology. From all the additions to and variants from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in the *Savoy Declaration*, we have seen the fingerprints of Goodwin upon the latter! His doctrines of the Christian life really shine with the latter-day glory. That is what makes Thomas Goodwin most distinctive from other contemporary, especially those with Presbyterian-persuasion, Puritan authors.

My thanks go to some scholars’ efforts in reinterpreting the thought of Thomas Goodwin.² Among them especially A. R. Dallison

¹ A. R. Dallison, “Jeremiah Burroughes (1599~1645): A Theology of Hope.” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978): 86-93.

² To name the most important ones in chronological order: John F. **Wilson**, “A Glimpse of Syons Glory.” in *Church History* 31 (1962): 66-73; Anthony R. **Dallison**, “The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin.” in *The Gospel Magazine* (1969): 316-331. Reprinted in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 58 (1986): 53-68;

(1969), Peter Toon (1970, 1972), Stanley P. Fienberg (1974, 1978) and David Walker (1983) consecutively made breakthroughs in our understanding of Goodwin from the perspective of the seventeenth-century British millenarianism. After the renaissance of Puritan studies in the 1940s, many schools of thought tried to unlock the rationale setting Independents apart from the Presbyterians in the 1640s. David Walker demonstrated that “traditional views of the debate have failed to recognise that the central issue at stake is the nature of Christ’s kingdom on earth in the ‘last ages’ before His Second Coming.”³ To separate church polity from the Christian life is out of date for those Puritans of the 1640s. Walker successfully calls our attention to the *spiritual* nature of the controversy between the Presbyterians and the Independents. Fierce debates upon the issue of church polity were but

Peter **Toon**, edited, *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology, 1600 to 1660*. (1970); Iain H. **Murray**, *The Puritan Hope: A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*. (1971); Peter **Toon**, “Westminster and Savoy Compared.” in *The Gospel Magazine* (1972). Reprinted in his *Puritans and Calvinism*. 1973; Stanley P. **Fienberg**, “Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974); **Fienberg**, “Thomas Goodwin’s Scriptural Hermeneutics and the Dissolution of Puritan Unity.” in *Journal of Religious History* (Australia) 10 (1978): 32-49; David **Walker**, “Thomas Goodwin and the Debate on Church Government.” in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34 (1983): 85-99; Rodney Lawrence **Petersen**, “Preaching in the Last Days: Use of Two Witnesses in Revelation 11: 3-13, in Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries.” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985. Published under the same title. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

³ David Walker “Thomas Goodwin and the Debate on Church Government.” in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34 (1983): 87. Notice that the title of Walker’s article concerns the church polity of Goodwin. Comparing Walker’s original intention with his final conclusion leads us to be convinced that what the Westminster divines were concerned about was far above church politics. It was a spiritual issue. For Goodwin it was a spiritual issue in the shadow of the latter-day glory.

Conclusion

a showdown, while the real driving force lay behind their different views in hermeneutics, covenant theology and the Christian life.

Walker points out that

Out of the...dissension of the early 1640s there emerged two possible ways of establishing God's kingdom in England. One is the way of the Presbyterians, who interpret the renewal of man in the image of Christ as a return to the natural law The other is the way of Goodwin, who relied on the immediate working of the Holy Spirit which stamps a man with the image of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.⁴

Walker now zeroes in on Goodwin's doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit. But he puts Goodwin's soteriology in his eschatology. Walker continues to compare the two confronting sides in the Westminster Assembly. He concludes that "The Presbyterians' eschatology was an eschatology of judgement, but Goodwin's doctrine of the last things was directed towards that renewal of humanity which was begun at Christ's Resurrection, and which would culminate in His Second Coming." At the end Walker straightforwardly characterizes the theology of Goodwin as "the theology of grace"⁵

All the Goodwinian scholars from A. R. Dallison up to David Walker anticipate a comprehensive examination of his doctrine of the Christian life in every *locus* of the *ordo salutis*. They started a revised direction in studying the theology of Goodwin a generation ago. If we look at the Perkinsian Golden Chain, it is principally a cause-and-

⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁵ Ibid.

effect linear cord.⁶ The soteriological part of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* or the *Savoy Declaration* is the formulation of the *ordo salutis* of the Westminster divines, including Goodwin. His golden chain is not a linear cord. It is true that there is a linear *ordo salutis* there in some sense. For instance, saving faith comes after regeneration and assurance of salvation won't exist unless one genuinely believes the Lord. In our Christian experience, are we believing Jesus only because we know that we are regenerated? No. It is only because we look upon Jesus as our Savior without any knowledge of being regenerated. *Intuition* and *immediacy* are in contrast to *linearity*. None is more evident than the intuitive assurance in displaying the *immediacy* of man and God through the Spirit. Goodwin on the one hand widened faith and assurance so that the least measure of faith can make a person secure. On the other hand, he taught Christians not to recognize fire by smoke, but to let the fire burning in you directly.

Goodwin's Christian life is much like the Pauline eschatology described by Geerhardos Vos. Vos comments that

Living, then, in a world of semi-futurities there is every reason to expect that the thought of the earliest Christians should have moved backwards from the anticipated attainment in its fulness to the present partial experiences and interpreted these in term of the former. Just as natural as it appears to us to regard eschatology the crown of soteriology, it must have felt to them to scan the endowments and enjoyments already in their possession as veritable precursors of the inheritance outstanding.⁷

⁶ Breward, editor, *The Work of William Perkins*. 168-69.

⁷ Geerhardos Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*. (Princeton Univ. Press, 1930; reprint

Conclusion

In the New Testament era eschatology is the crown of soteriology. Now in Goodwin's thought eschatology becomes primarily the shaping force of the doctrines of the Christian life. Not only that, the latter-day glory is also their motivation and goal. His scheme is also to exalt the kingship of Christ in the world to come. (1:521) So his golden chain is Christ-centered. The shaping force is evidently the latter-day glory rather than a kind of cause and effect.

Facing the future world of *light*, the practical syllogism will be of no use sooner or later. If eschatology really crowns soteriology, faith should be enameled with some heavenly hues at present day. Therefore Goodwin called the immediacy new holiness and second conversion! As eschatology crowns soteriology, so soteriology crowns ethics. Only new holiness can match supernatural light. Goodwin rarely talked about ethics, but he knew that true holiness is the ultimate beauty of the new creation. There are three tiers. However, the latter-day glory penetrates into every corner of every tier.

New Testament uses all the elements in the *ordo salutis* to complete the manifold aspects of the eschatological graces conferred by the ascended Lord. From effectual calling to assurance of salvation, we have examined how Goodwin treated these doctrines in the light of the end-time glory. He showed us that none of these graces are wrought for themselves or for one another as cause and effect. God uses different graces to decorate us that we can be changed both legally and really. He sometimes did not deny that God "makes a chain of the principal causes of our salvation." (11:359) But all graces are working for us that we can give the glory to God ultimately.

by Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986.) 43-44.

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Now I, my task being finished, verify and confirm what the Goodwinian scholarship expected to see: in addition to the church polity, the latter-day glory also shines in and interacts with Goodwin's doctrines of the Christian life. Therefore I would like to call Thomas Goodwin *a theologian of the latter-day glory*.

Appendix I Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

Appendix I

Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

Date	National etc.	Personal	Remark
1599	Oliver Cromwell born		
1600		10/5: Born at Rollesby, Norfolk to Richard and Catherine	2:ix, li
1602	10/22: Death of William Perkins (1558-1602), a fellow of Christ's College. Paul Bayne (d. 1617) succeeds		
1603	Death of Elizabeth; Accession of James I		
1604	Hampton Court Conference		
1606		Slighter working of the H. S.	2:lii, xi
1607		Weeps for his sins after reproof	2:lvii, xi
1609	Thomas Brightman (1562-1607), <i>Apocalysis Apocalypseos</i> (<i>Revelation of the Apocalypse</i> , 1616)		
1610	Williams Ames (1576-1633) forced to quit Christ's College. Removes to Holland		
1611	Authorized Version of the Bible		
1613		8/25: Entered Christ College, Cambridge under Mr. William Power six yrs (1613-19).	2:xiii, li
1614		Forbidden to attend sacrament, forced to leave his place in college chapel	2:xvi,
1616	O. Cromwell enters Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge Shakespeare dies John Owen born	Proceeds to B. A.	2:xviii

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680) on the Christian Life

1617	Death of Paul Baynes, the successor of Perkins		
1619		Removes to Catherine Hall	2:xviii
1620	11/20: Pilgrims arrive at Plymouth Colony, MA on the Mayflower	Commences M. A., fellow and lecturer 10/2: Converted by Mr. Bainbridge at St. Edmund's Church	2:xviii 2:xix
1621		Exposure to millennialism.	1:521
1625	Death of James I; accession of Charles I	Licensed a preacher of Cambridge, subscribing to 3 rules ... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Glory of the Gospel on Col. 1:26-27.</i>	2:xxiii 2:359
1626		Helps the appointment of R. Sibbes (1577-1635) as Master of Catherine Hall	2:xxiii
1627	Joseph Mede (1586-1638), <i>Clavis Apocalyptica</i> (ET: <i>Key of the Revelation</i>) John Henry Alsted (1588-1638), <i>Diatribes de mille annis Apocalypticis</i> (ET: <i>The Beloved City</i> , 1643)	Experience of Assurance	2:lxviii, xx
1628	May: Petition of Right Founding of MA Bay Colony at Salem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>A Child of Light Walking in Darkness</i> (pub. 1636) Lecturer of Trinity Church after the death of John Preston <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Repentance</i>	Haller, 412; 3:233 2:359
1629	March: Dissolution of Parliament by Charles		
1630	William Laud becomes Chancellor of Oxford	Proceeds to B. D. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Acts of Justifying Faith</i>	2:xxiv 8:x; cf.

Appendix I Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

			Beeke, 343*
1632		Vicar of Trinity Church	2:xxiv
1633	Laud becomes Archbishop of Canterbury John Cotton (1584-1652) migrates to MA Bay Colony	June: Persuasion to Congregationalism by John Cotton	Barker, 72
1634		Resigns lectureship at Trinity Church & fellowship at Catherine Hall. Leaves Cambridge	2:xxiv
1636		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Return of Prayers</i> (pub.)	Fienberg, 363
1637	Imposition of Prayer Book on Church of Scotland by Charles I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Vanity of Thoughts</i> (pub.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Aggravation of Sin</i> (pub.)	Fienberg, 364, 361
1638	2/28: Signing of the National Covenant Nov-Dec: General Assembly of Glasgow	Married to Elizabeth Prescot (d. 1639) who bears Elizabeth (c. 1639-1678) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Blessed State</i> (pub.)	2:xxiv, lxxii Fienberg, 362
1639	First Bishop War	Flees to Amsterdam, then Arnhem <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>An Exposition of the Revelation</i> , preached at Arnhem	2:xxv 3:xxviii
1640	April: Short Parliament Second Bishops War; Scottish Army marches into England Sep: <i>Et Cetera</i> oath 11/3: Long Parliament opens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Trial of A Christian's Growth</i> (pub.) or in 1639. Rev. in 1643.	3:433-34
1641	Laud imprisoned by Parliament	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan (?): Being informed of the convening of the Long Parliament, preached a fastday sermon, <i>A Glimpse of Syons Glory</i> Winter (40-41): Returned to	12:79,62. Chapter II. 2:xxvii

* Joel Beeke says that *Of Faith of Assurance*, Book II of Part II of Goodwin's *Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* (TG 8:338-419), is a "brief exposition" of his doctrine of assurance! And Beeke even dates it in "1642, just after his return from Holland!" But Beeke does not provide any support to his dating.

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	Oct: Irish Massacres 11/27: Parliament passes Grand Remonstrance	London Gathers a church at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East ☑ <i>Exposition of Ephesians 1</i> preached	1:xxxi
1642	8/22: Charles I raises standard at Nottingham, Civil War breaks out. 10/23: Battle at Edgehill	☑ 4/27: <i>Zerubbabel's Encouragement to Finish the Temple</i> on Zech 4:6-9 to the House of Commons ☑ <i>Christ the Mediator</i> (pub.) ☑ <i>Christ Set Forth</i> (pub.) ☑ <i>Encouragement to Faith</i> (pub.)	2:xxvii Won, 212 Won, 213 Fienberg, 362
1643	6/12: Ordinance passed by Parliament for calling Assembly of Divines 7/1: Assembly convenes 8/17: <i>Solemn League and Covenant</i> approved by Scottish Parliament 9/25: <i>SL&C</i> subscribed by members of Assembly and Parliament and Scottish Commissioners 10/12: End of revision of <i>Thirty-Nine Articles</i> 10/17: <i>Church Government</i> under discussion	'The five dissenting brethren' are appointed into the assembly ☑ <i>The Heart of Christ in Heaven towards Sinners on Earth</i> (pub. 1645)	2:xxviii Cook, TG—Mystic? 45; Won, 212
1644	5/24: Report and Debate on <i>Directory for Public Worship</i> 7/2: Battle Marston Moor 8/20: Committee appointed on <i>Confession of Faith</i> 11/8: <i>Form of Church Government</i> sent to Parliament 12/9: Self-Denying Ordinance proposed	☑ Jan: <i>An Apologeticall Narration</i> Publish John Cotton's <i>Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven</i> with Nye 12/21: appointed to present <i>Directory for Public Worship</i> to the Parliament	2:xxix 2:xxx

Appendix I Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

1645	<p>1/3: <i>Directory for Public Worship</i> passes House of Commons Jan: Laud executed for treason 1/23: Resolutions passed by House of Commons containing substance of Presbyterianism</p> <p>6/14: Battle of Naseby 7/7: Assembly send up <i>Directory for Church Government</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Constitution, Right Order, and Government of the Churches of Christ</i>. Fruit of research from March to Sep. But not disclosed till publication in 1666</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sep: <i>A Copy of a Remonstrance</i></p>	<p>2:xxx Fienberg, 363</p>
1646	<p>4/27: Charles I escapes to Scots at Newark End of first Civil War 4/30: Committee from House of Commons with <i>Jus Divinum</i> Queries 12/4: <i>Confession of Faith</i> presented to Parliament</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2/25: <i>The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms</i> on Ps 105:14-15 to the House of Commons</p>	<p>See Chapter II</p>
1647	<p>4/26: Scripture proofs for <i>Confession</i> given to Parliament 8/6: Army marches into London 8/27: <i>Confession</i> approved by Church of Scotland 10/15: <i>Larger Catechism</i> completed 11/11: Charles I flees, ending up at Carisbrook Castle, Isle of Wright 11/25: <i>Shorter Catechism</i> presented to House of Commons</p>	<p>Invited by John Cotton to labor in New England, but remained</p>	<p>2:xxxi; Reid, 1:341</p>
1648	<p>4/14: <i>Catechisms</i> presented in final form 4/30: Outbreak of Second Civil War 8/17: Battle of Preston defeating the Scottish Royalists 12/6: Pride's purge. Rump starts</p>		

Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680) on the Christian Life

1649	1/20: Trial of Charles I opens 1/30: Execution of Charles I 2/22: Last numbered Plenary Session of Assembly 9/11: Battle of Drogheda	6/7: Preaches before Cromwell and the Parliament at Christ Church with John Owen Second marriage to Mary Hammond who bears TG Jr. and Richard G.	2:xxx 2:xxxii, lxxiii
1650	9/3: Battle of Dunbar	1/8: President of Magdalene College, Oxford Gathers a church at Oxford 8/14: Makes an inventory of the records of the Westminster Assembly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1650s: <i>The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation</i> preached	2:xxvii, xxx 2:xxxiv, lxxiii <i>D.N.B.</i> 8:149 Fienberg, 278-80**
1651	9/3: Battle of Worcester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Reconciliation of the People of God by Christ's Death</i> preached at St. Mary, Oxford	TG 2:359; Fienberg, 322, 362.
1652	3/25: End of Assembly's work of sitting as a committee to examine candidates for the ministry		
1653	Feb: <i>The Humble Proposal</i> to the Rump		

** In Book VIII, Goodwin mentioned about Joseph Caryl's *Job*. It must be the latter's *An Exposition with Practical Observations upon the Book of Job*. This exposition was printed in 12 volumes. Vol. 1 was released in 1644, vol. 2, in 1645 and the last one, in 1666. Goodwin called him the late Caryl (1602~Feb. 1673). So Book VIII could not be preached or written earlier than 1673. See TG 6:377 and James Reid, *Memoir of the Westminster Divines*, 1:202. However, earlier Books must have been preached in 1650s while he served at Oxford. E.g. in TG 6:157 (Book IV) he mentioned about his contemporary political context during the Puritan Revolution. He also referred to Oxford University where he served as the president of Magdalene College in 1650~60.

Appendix I Time-Line of Thomas Goodwin (1600~1680)

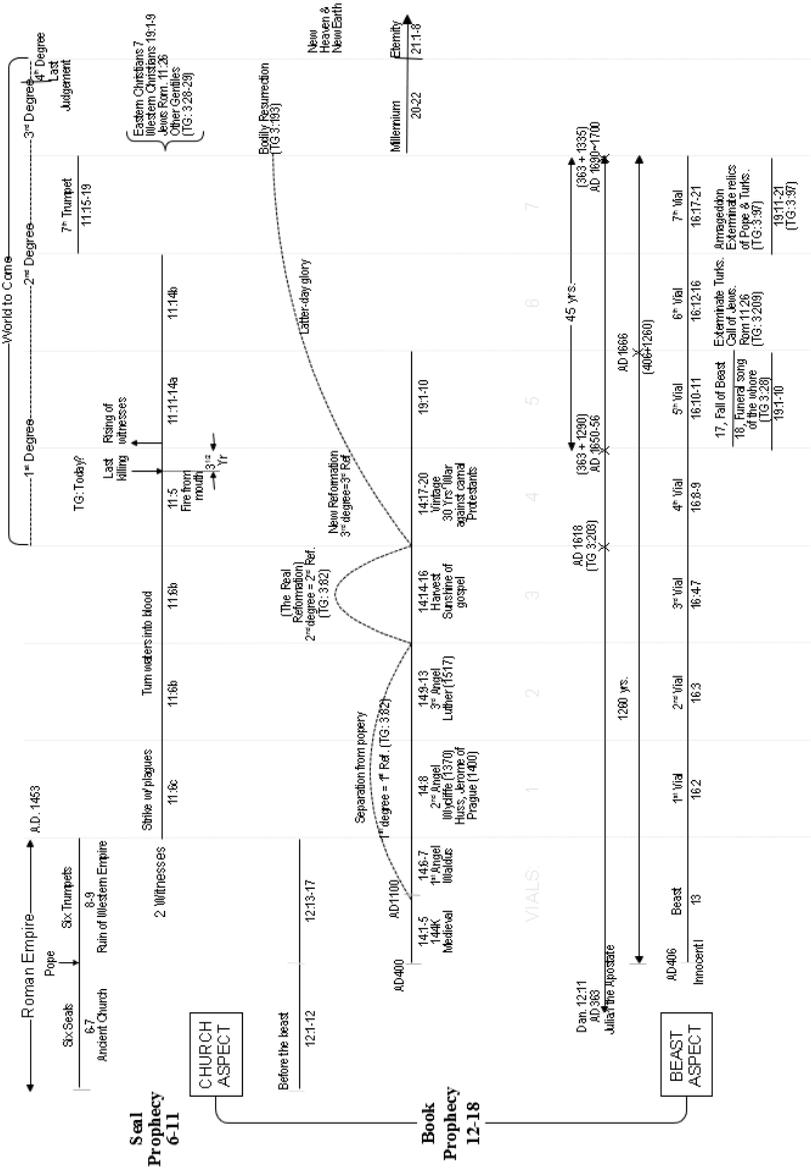
	4/20: Dissolution of ‘Rump’ of Long Parliament 7/4-12/12: ‘Barebones’ Parliament 12/16: Oliver Cromwell becomes Protector. <i>The Instrument of Government</i>	12/22: Doctor of Divinity, Oxford	2:xxxv
1654	April: <i>The Principles of Faith</i> 9/4: Cromwell’s first Parliament	3/20: Triers 8/28: Ejectors	Toon, <i>God’s Statesman</i> , 91-92
1655	1/22: Dismissal of the first Parliament	☑ <i>World to Come</i> . Fifth Monarchy men print without his permission	
1656	Cromwell’s second Parliament		
1657	5/8: Cromwell rejects kingship 6/26: Cromwell installed as Lord Protector. <i>Humble Petition and Advice</i>	☑ <i>An Immediate State of Glory</i> (pub.)	Fienberg, 363
1658	6/15: Preliminary meeting for Savoy 9/3: Death of Oliver Cromwell. Richard succeeds 9/29-10/12: Savoy Synod	9/3: One of six clergy who serve the death bed of Cromwell	Paul, 88
1659	April: Richard Cromwell abdicates		
1660	Jan: General Monck marches on London Feb: Recalled Rump dissolved March: The Convention Parliament 4/4: Declaration of Breda May: Restoration of Charles II Act of Indemnity	Removes to London	2:lxxiii, xxxviii
1661	Cavalier Parliament Corporation Act		

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1662	8/24: Act of Uniformity. Black Bartholomew's Day		
1664	Conventicle Act		
1665	Five Mile Act Sep: 65-66 bubonic Plague in London		
1666	9/2-5: Fire of London	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Patience and its Perfect Work</i>	2:xxxix
1667	Fall of Earl of Clarendon		
1669	First Indulgence of Charles II		
1672	Second Indulgence of Charles II		
1680		2/23: Death of Thomas Goodwin	2:lxv
1681		Complete works in five volumes published by his son, Thomas Goodwin, Jr. in 1681-1704.	Fienberg, 361
1688	'Glorious Revolution'		
1689	Toleration Act		
1861		Complete works in 12 volumes, edited by J. C. Miller & published by James Nichol in 1861-67.	Fienberg, 361

Appendix II Revelation Chart of Thomas Goodwin

APPENDIX II : CHART OF REVELATION'S SYNCHRONISM OF THOMAS GOODWIN



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