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Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology: The Relationship of Hooker's Conversion Preaching to Its Background.

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THOMAS HOOKER AND THE REFORMED THEOLOGY:
THE RELATIONSHIP OF
HOOKER'S CONVERSION PREACHING TO ITS BACKGROUND

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by
Everett Harvey Emerson
A.B., Harvard College, 1948
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ABSTRACT

Recent students of New England Puritanism have argued that the theology of such writers as John Cotton, Thomas Shepard, and Thomas Hooker is not to be confused with Calvinism, for it differs in important ways: it is covenant theology, a later development of the Reformed theology which put more emphasis on man's spiritual ability and less on predestination. This dissertation examines the teachings of the important Puritan divine Thomas Hooker (1586-1647) on conversion, in the light of Calvin's teaching and seventeenth-century Reformed and Puritan thought.

Puritan thought such as Hooker's differs from the thought of Calvin in being more concerned with man's salvation and less concerned with God's glory. Predestination was for Calvin a teaching which emphasized God's mercy and also His justice; for Puritans it was most important for its role in the conversion process. Hooker is like Calvin in that he taught that conversion is accompanied by persuasion, but unlike Calvin in that Calvin did not make central to Christian doctrine the so-called "Five Points of Calvinism" and put less emphasis on man's inability than did the later strict theology of Reformed scholasticism, on the basis of which Hooker's thought developed.

The most important doctrine in understanding Hooker's conversion teaching is not the covenant but the sermon as a means of grace. According to this theory, the preacher's exhortations to take the steps necessary for conversion--such as contrition and humiliation--will by God's grace so affect the elect that they will follow the preacher's directions. Preaching of the word has the effect of making the conversion process--actually a result of God's irresistible grace--appear to be a matter of man's choice. Calvin taught this sacramental concept of preaching, although it did not loom large in his practice because he was not nearly as concerned with the salvation process as were later Reformed writers. But John Preston and others of his time developed the concept of the sermon as a means of grace and related it to psychological processes. The developed doctrine provides the basis for many of Hooker's exhortations, which, to one unfamiliar with the doctrine, may sound Arminian.

Hooker's most effective preaching ability was his analysis of the "shifts" and rationalizations by which men avoid taking the steps prescribed for salvation. These analyses are often in the form of characters.

Hooker's thought is more closely related to the school of Reformed theology called "High Calvinism" than it is to covenant theology. His departures from strict orthodoxy are rare and not surprising, considering the difficulties of contending at the same time that man totally lacks spiritual ability and that man is fully responsible for the state of

his soul. Two aspects of Hooker's thought appear to be important weaknesses. First, conversion has an ambiguous role in his teachings, for to the unconverted it is the ultimate goal, but those who regard themselves as converted may not enjoy assurance: they must continually test themselves to see if they are really saved. Second, Hooker teaches that conversion is a long and painful process but argues that those who fail to attempt the process are resisting God's free gift of grace.

Cotton and Shepard, Hooker's contemporaries, differ so considerably from Hooker in the details of their teaching on conversion that the three cannot be said to form a school of theology; they belong to the school of Calvin and his successors, the Reformed theology.

Hooker's greatest accomplishment was his degree of success in reconciling divine predestination and human responsibility, but his effort was not sufficiently successful to warrant for him an important place in the history of seventeenth-century ideas.

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hooker died at the age of sixty-one, yet had lived long enough to establish a great reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. Cotton Mather called him "The Light of the Western Churches,"¹ while Samuel Collins, agent of Archbishop Laud, said of him in 1629, "I have lived in Essex to see many changes and have seene the people idolizing many new ministers and lecturers; but this man surpasses them all for learning, and some other considerable parts, and . . . gains more and far greater following than all before him."² He was more talked about than the question of tonnage and poundage.³ In our own times he has been called "a statesman of the first rank,"⁴ "the father of American democracy,"⁵

¹In Magnalia Christi Americana.

²Calendar of State Papers: Domestic, 1628-1629, CXLII, 554, No. 113, quoted by Perry Miller, "Thomas Hooker and the Democracy of Early Connecticut," New England Quarterly, IV (1931), 665.

³State Papers: Domestic, 1628-1629, CXLIV, 567, No. 36, quoted by Miller, "Hooker," p. 665.

⁴Warren Seymour Archibald, Thomas Hooker (New Haven, 1933), p. 1.

⁵Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., s. v. "Thomas Hooker."

and the "noblest of the New England Puritans."⁶ He has been ranked by the editors of the standard history of American literature as a major author,⁷ and it has been said that "There is great need for an adequate study of [Thomas Hooker,] one of the leading thinkers and writers of the seventeenth century."⁸ The following study is an attempt to fill partially that need.

Thomas Hooker was born at Marfield, a tiny town in Leicestershire, England, in 1586.⁹ Probably he attended Market-Bosworth School, near Marfield, before he arrived in 1604 at Cambridge. There he matriculated as a sizar at Queen's College¹⁰ but later transferred to Emmanuel College, where he received the bachelor's degree in 1608 and the master's degree in 1611. Since thirty-five of the 130 university-educated men who came to New England before 1645 were

⁶Clinton Rossiter, "Thomas Hooker," New England Quarterly, XXV (1952), 461.

⁷Robert E. Spiller, Henry Seidel Canby, et al., Literary History of the United States (New York, 1949), Vol. III.

⁸Thomas H. Johnson, Literary History of the United States, III, 569.

⁹This biographical summary is based in the main on the standard (though inadequate) biography, Thomas Hooker, by George Leon Walker (New York, 1891).

¹⁰A sizar was a student who was exempt from college charges because he performed certain duties, such as waiting on table.

Emmanuel men,¹¹ it can readily be seen that Emmanuel was basically Puritan in outlook, as was Cambridge University as a whole at that time. Indeed, Emmanuel had been a Puritan college from its establishment in 1584. Thomas Fuller, in his History of the University of Cambridge (1655) tells of a conversation between Queen Elizabeth and Walter Mildmay, the founder of Emmanuel:

"Sir Walter, I hear you have erected a Puritan Foundation?"

"No, Madam," saith he. "Farre be it from me to countenance anything contrary to your established Lawes; but I have set an Acorn, which when it becomes an Oak, God alone knows what will be the fruit thereof."¹²

Hooker was associated with Cambridge until 1618. There he must have come into contact with William Ames, spiritual godfather of the American Puritans and author of a book against ceremonies, which Hooker later helped to edit.¹³ Hooker became a Dixie Fellow after his graduation, and in 1616 was Dean of the College. He left two years later to seek a parish, in accordance with the wishes of the founder

¹¹Samuel Eliot Morison, The Founding of Harvard College (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), pp. 358-363.

¹²Quoted by Morison, Founding of Harvard, p. 93. Among its fellows and students soon after Hooker's period were the Platonists Benjamin Whichcote, Ralph Cudworth, and Nathaniel Culverwel. See E. T. Campagnac, The Cambridge Platonists (Oxford, 1901), pp. xvi, xxvii, and xxix.

¹³See Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), passim.

of the College.¹⁴ John Cotton, later to migrate with him to New England, was at Emmanuel while Hooker was there. But more important than any new acquaintance or high post was his conversion, or, to use phrases by which he later characterized such experiences, his Effectual Calling, and Implantation into Christ. Hooker's theology, as we shall see, taught that regeneration was necessary for salvation.

Fortunately for him, he was able to obtain a place as a minister despite his nonconformist views. He came under the patronage of a Mr. Francis Drake, who awarded him the rectorship of the Parish of Esther in Surrey, sixteen miles from London. Hooker apparently received the post because he had already become noted as an "experimental theologian": he was an expert religious psychologist. Mr. Drake's invalid wife was convinced that she had committed the unpardonable sin, and since Hooker "now had no superior, and scarce any equal, for the skill of treating a wounded soul,"¹⁵ it was perhaps natural that he should be called in. Apparently Hooker helped her considerably. While at Esther he was married to Mrs. Drake's waiting maid, Susanna.

In 1626 Hooker was appointed Lecturer at Chelmsford, Essex, perhaps because he had become famous both as a preacher and as a physician of souls. Many parishes in the

¹⁴Morison, Founding of Harvard, p. 100.

¹⁵Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana (Hartford, 1820), I, 303.

early seventeenth century had a special, additional preacher or lecturer, often paid by wealthy Puritans and designed to supply better preaching than might be provided by the regular clergy.¹⁶ The system was very popular^p with the country people, who were dissatisfied with the liturgical, non-preaching services of the Church. It was in this position at Chelmsford that Hooker reached the peak of his popularity in England. Many journeyed to Chelmsford especially to hear him speak, and the whole county felt his influence. The clergy of the county split into two groups, his supporters and his opponents. The latter had the sympathy of Laud and won out; Hooker was silenced. This was at the end of 1629, the same year that Hooker's first published work, "The Poor Douting Christian Drawne Unto Christ," appeared.

Hooker, upon his suppression, set up a school at Little Baddow, near Chelmsford, with John Eliot, later famous for his preaching to the Indians, as his usher. Although Hooker was not allowed to preach in any church, he was able to continue the work of the ministry since many ministers gathered with him monthly at meetings and also in private consultations. Thus Hooker's teachings were felt long after he was officially silenced.¹⁷

In July, 1630, he was ordered to appear before the High

¹⁶William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York, 1938), pp. 52-53.

¹⁷Mather, Magnalia, II, 305.

Commission Court. Perhaps influenced by the mutilations that other nonconformist ministers had incurred, he fled to Holland. After a short stay in Amsterdam, he became connected with the Scottish Presbyterian Church at Delft, not as pastor, but as an assistant. Here he served about two years before returning to Amsterdam to be associated with William Ames, who soon died, leaving Hooker to edit Ames's last work, A Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in Gods Worship (1633).

Meanwhile plans were underway in England for Hooker's removal to Massachusetts. A group of settlers from Essex County had left in 1632 with the understanding that Hooker would soon join them in America. Indeed, the group was known as "Mr. Hooker's Company." Samuel Stone, a younger man, was chosen as Hooker's associate. Hooker returned to England in 1633, where he preached a farewell sermon, later published as The Danger of Desertion.¹⁸ Soon afterwards Hooker, along with Stone and John Cotton, left England, arriving in Boston on September 4, 1633.

Thomas Hooker had left England forever, but he was not forgotten there. Besides the two titles referred to above, over twenty works by Hooker were published in London before 1660, and many of them went through several editions: "The

¹⁸ See Edwin Read, "Thomas Hooker's Farewell Sermon," Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, LXVI (1913), 253-274.

Poor Douting Christian," for example, went through six editions in the seventeenth century.

In America Hooker became pastor of the church at Newtown, but within a year he and his people were ready to move. Complaining that they did not have adequate land, they petitioned the General Court for permission to remove to the unsettled area of Connecticut. Finally Hooker and his people left, though without formal permission,¹⁹ and settled in 1636 at what was to become Hartford. Perry Miller has conjectured that Hooker found irritating his proximity to John Cotton, who had already become "the mouth-piece of the ruling oligarchy."²⁰

Hooker returned to Massachusetts the following year to attend a synod, where he served with Peter Bulkley as moderator. Here the Antinomian heresy was condemned. On returning to Connecticut he played a very important role in formulating the "Fundamental Orders" (1639), for which role his biographer calls him "the founder of the Connecticut Constitution."²¹

In 1643 Hooker served as joint moderator with Cotton at the very important synod where presbyterianism was condemned. Shortly after, in order to clarify the New England position

¹⁹Miller, "Hooker," pp. 673-674.

²⁰Miller, "Hooker," p. 676.

²¹Walker, Hooker, p. 123.

on church discipline to old England, Hooker wrote A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline. Unfortunately the ship carrying Hooker's manuscript to England never arrived, and Hooker, now in poor health, reluctantly rewrote it. His "yeares and infirmityes"²² kept him from attending the important Cambridge Synod of 1646, and in the following year he died. When on his death bed he was consoled by a visitor, "Sir, you are going to receive the reward of your labour," Hooker replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy!"²³

In his own time Hooker was especially noted as an experimental theologian: in Cotton Mather's words

. . . he entertained a special inclination to those principles of divinity, which concerned, the application of redemption; and that which eminently fitted him for the handling of those principles, was, that he had been from his youth trained up in the experience of those humiliations and consolations, and sacred communions, which belong to the new creature; and he had most critically compared his own experience, with the accounts which the quick and powerful word of God, gives of those glorious things. Accordingly he preached first more briefly on these points, whilst he was a catechist in Emanuel-College, in a more scholastic way; which was most agreeable to his present station; and the notes of what he then delivered were so esteemed, that many copies thereof were transcribed and preserved. Afterwards he preached more largely on these points, in a more popular way at Chelmsford, the product of which were those books of preparation for Christ, contrition, humiliation, vocation, union with Christ, and communion, and the rest, which go under his name

²²Hooker's phrase, quoted by Walker, Hooker, p. 146.

²³Mather, Magnalia, I, 317.

But when he came to New-England, many of his church, which had been his old Essex hearers, desired him once more to go over the points of God's regenerating works upon the soul of his elect; until at last, their desires prevailed with him to resume that pleasant subject. The subject hereby came to have a third concoction in the head and heart of one, as able to digest it, as most men living in the world²⁴

The following study attempts to consider Hooker's writing, especially his soteriological thought, and its relationship to the Reformed and Puritan traditions.

It is hoped that this investigation may serve as a corrective to recent scholarship in the history of ideas in the seventeenth century. This scholarship has been mainly the work of Perry Miller, although the great historian Samuel Eliot Morison has also helped to establish a view of the Puritans very different from the older view that the Puritans were doctrinally Calvinists. Thus we read in Miller's "Marrow of Puritan Divinity" that Jonathan Edwards was "the first consistent and authentic Calvinist in New England";²⁵ and Morison, in The Puritan Pronaos, proclaims that "after reading some hundreds of puritan sermons," he is "about ready to deny that the New England puritans were predestinarian Calvinists."²⁶ These works, along with Miller's The

²⁴Magnalia, I, 314-315.

²⁵"Marrow," Pubs. Col. Soc. Mass., Proceedings, 1933-1937, XXXII, 300.

²⁶Pronaos (New York, 1936), p. 10. Morison makes the point that Miller had made concerning Edwards.--p. 155.

New England Mind, have convinced other workers in the field that the New England Puritans were important thinkers who revised substantially the theology which they fell heir to as children of the Reformed tradition. Thus the important literary historian Douglas Bush has accepted Miller's findings and incorporated them into his standard study of seventeenth-century English literature.²⁷ In one of the best studies of Puritanism, that by M. M. Knappen, Miller's work on Puritan theology is cited with approval.²⁸ Likewise, the notable historian Wallace Notestein, in a work likely to become a standard historical work, follows uncritically Miller's studies.²⁹ Again, Herbert W. Schneider, in his excellent study of American philosophy, leans heavily on Miller for his analysis of the Puritan theology.³⁰

The thoroughness of Miller's readings in New England Puritan sermon literature and the general excellence and carefulness of his studies are the factors which have led to the influence of his work. Thus when he argues that covenant theology, a seventeenth-century development in Reformed theology, transformed the theology of New England to

²⁷English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, Oxford History of English Literature, Vol. V (Oxford, 1945), pp. 320-321.

²⁸Tudor Puritanism (Chicago, 1939), p. 395.

²⁹The English People on the Eve of the Colonization, New American Nation Series, Vol. I (New York, 1954), p. 159.

³⁰A History of American Philosophy (New York, 1946), pp. 4ff.

something very different from what Calvin taught, Miller's readers have been prone to accept his findings since few have had the courage or the desire to read as widely as he has in the works of the period.³¹ Further, like Miller himself, most of his readers have been students of literature and history, not theology.

The basic weakness of Miller's studies is that they are not based on a familiarity with the writings of John Calvin. Miller is indeed familiar with the Institutes, but it is hardly proper to compare the sermons of the Puritans with a doctrinal work such as the Institutes of Calvin; other writings, especially his sermons, must be considered carefully if one wishes to compare Calvin's teachings with those of the New Englanders.³²

The following study is concerned with the history of ideas. Although its scope is in some ways narrow, the

³¹It is perhaps proper to remark here that the present writer is a former student of Professor Miller's and is one of his most ardent admirers, although he has found him to be not always infallible.

³²Thus Herschel Baker, who relies on Miller's studies, declares that the development of covenant theology in the seventeenth century was an indication that Calvinism was becoming more liberal and humanistic. Like Miller, Baker fails to make clear what he thinks Calvinism is. See The Wars of Truth (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 292 and *passim*. Also observe the implications of this statement by Thomas H. Johnson: "Boston and Salem were not touched by Calvinism. . . . Edwards as the first American Calvinist did not emphasize, like Thomas Shepard, Thomas Hooker, and other leaders among the seventeenth century Puritans, the covenantal relation between God and man"--Literary History of the United States, I, 75.

author feels that he has been able to make several important observations, which, he hopes, may help to modify the present conception of the thought of the period.

One matter concerning the method of the study should perhaps be made clear. Frequently the divines whose works are studied below paraphrased or echoed Biblical passages in their works, as is hardly surprising, since they were all close students of the Bible. The author has not taken into consideration that such phrases are echoes or paraphrases; what is important in an historical study such as this is not the source of the lines but the fact that the divines selected these passages to support their arguments.

CHAPTER I
REFORMED THOUGHT ON CONVERSION BEFORE HOOKER

John Calvin

Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown white
With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,
The martyr, the wan acolyte,
The incense-swinging child,--undone
Before God fashioned star or sun!¹

These lines from Robert Browning are fairly typical of many modern interpretations of the theology of John Calvin.

Indeed, in one recent textbook of theology the lines are cited as a "vivid presentation" of one aspect of Calvin's system.² Because Calvin and Calvinism have often been misrepresented, this discussion of Calvin's teaching on the process of salvation will attempt to compensate for the customary false picture of Calvinism as immoral and almost sacrilegious, and therefore will have a rather different emphasis than would otherwise be required.

Traditionally, Calvinism is represented as centering around five points of dogma: double predestination (election

¹"Johannes Agricola in Meditation," ll. 51-55.

²Claude B. Moss, The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Dogmatic Theology (London, 1943), p. 159.

and reprobation); limited atonement (Christ died for only the elect); the total depravity of man; irresistible grace (the elect cannot choose but be saved); and the perseverance of the saints (those truly "called" to salvation will persist until judgment day). As we shall see, these "five points" are not the basic features of Calvin's theology. It is therefore useful to use the term "Calvinism" only when speaking of Calvin's own teaching, using the terms "Reformed theology" or "predestinarianism" when referring to the teaching of theologians, British and Continental, who were in the same non-Lutheran Protestant tradition as Calvin.³

The modern mind is likely to regard the theologian as dwelling in unreality, where he builds Gothic castles which become ever more intricate as new relationships are made between the building blocks "Grace," "Free Will," "Predestination," and the like. Although Calvin's system is intricate, he kept a close watch on reality, to which he constantly related his thought. Indeed, for one modern student of Calvin, A. M. Hunter, Calvin was not basically a theologian but a pious man, constitutionally religious, whose interest in theology resulted from his desire to support his religion.⁴

The piety of Calvin is evident from the fact that the most important feature of his religious thought is his sense

³The term "High Calvinist" is explained below.

⁴The Teaching of Calvin (London, 1950), p. 296. This is also the view of James D. Moffat, "Influence of Calvin on Religious Thought," Auburn Seminary Record, V (1909), 157.

of the overwhelming glory of God. This concept, along with Calvin's belief in the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures, leads to all the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism. The glory of God is so great that all men by nature have "some sense of Deity," which should by itself be enough to cause them to worship God and consecrate their lives to His service.⁵ Much fuller knowledge of God the Creator and God the Redeemer than this sense of Deity is available to the "recipient of the redemptive revelation," the elect, the saint of God.⁶ In all, God's qualities include "power, eternity, self-existence, wisdom, goodness, mercy, justice, righteousness and truth," and, most important, "gratuitous-mercy-known-in-Christ."⁷

But for Calvin, following St. Paul, natural man since the Fall has been totally depraved: "all human desires are evil . . . [for] nothing pure and upright can proceed from a polluted nature."⁸ Only the all-powerful God can do anything to narrow the tremendous gap between man's depravity and His righteousness, and the aim of what Calvin calls the "Scripture system" is the narrowing of the gap. This system has

⁵Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (London, 1953), Bk. I., Chap. 3, Sect. 1. Henceforth, references to the Institutes will be cited in this way: I, 3, 1.

⁶See Edward A. Dowey, Jr., The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology (New York, 1952), p. 221 and passim. The phrase is Dowey's.

⁷Dowey's list and phrase, Calvin's Theology, pp. 146 and 220.

⁸Institutes, III, 3, xii.

two aspects: (a) the instilling and implantation in men's minds of "the love of righteousness, to which we are by no means naturally inclined"; and (b) the prescription of "a rule which will prevent us while in the pursuit of righteousness from going astray."⁹ Thus the system is clearly not primarily soteriological, but moral. As Hunter puts it, the essence of Calvin's teaching is "the moralisation of all life through religion": "Calvin's lifelong aim and business were to re-wed religion and morality."¹⁰ One could almost say that Calvin's piety was moralism.

To make some men holy is God's method of narrowing the gap. Our analysis of Calvin's thought on this point must take two forms: first, a brief statement of the steps which Calvin maintains are followed by God in the salvation process, and, second, an analysis of the psychological technique used by Calvin in describing this process.

For Calvin, the first step in the salvation process is the election of the saint before all time. Once God had chosen His elect, He then had to invent a method by which His justice could be satisfied, for it would have been immoral to let sinful man off scot-free. God's system was satisfied by the atonement: "Christ, in his death, was

⁹Institutes, III, 6, 11.

¹⁰Hunter, Teaching of Calvin, p. 298. See also Hardin Craig, The Enchanted Glass (New York, 1936), pp. 56-57. Craig argues that Calvin was interested primarily in saving his people from the degenerate society of his day.

offered to the Father as a propitiatory victim";¹¹ by this means "the glory of God" was "maintained unimpaired," and man's conscience, in the view of God's tribunal, could "be secured in peaceful rest and calm tranquility."¹² With the atonement God was able to confer Christ's righteousness on the elect, the process being called "justification." In time, "the special election which otherwise would remain hidden in God, he [God] at length manifests by his calling."¹³ The benefits of Christ are then made available to man by faith, which is generated in man by the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Next follows sanctification, which in the Institutes is presented somewhat ambiguously. It is interpreted in one place as man's reciprocal action: "Ever since Christ purified us . . . it would ill become us to be defiled with new pollution."¹⁵ In another place Calvin argues that "we are created in Christ Jesus with good works, which God hath prepared . . . all the fruits of good works are originally and immediately from God."¹⁶ At any rate, after "calling," man is free from the dominion of sin and the Devil.¹⁷

¹¹Institutes, II, 16, vi.

¹²Institutes, III, 13, i.

¹³Institutes, III, 24, i.

¹⁴Institutes, III, 1, i-ii.

¹⁵Institutes, III, 6, iii.

¹⁶Institutes, II, 3, vi.

¹⁷Institutes, I, 14, xviii. Compare III, 3, x-xi.

This is one side of the situation which Calvin describes. In the bald outline form presented here, the theology may seem neither attractive nor convincing. But if we go over the same ground in an attempt to get at Calvin's psychological approach, we may become more appreciative. A key to the approach is a passage which occurs early in the Institutes: "Until men feel that they owe everything to God, that they are cherished by his paternal care, and that he is the author of all their blessings, so that naught is to be looked for away from him, they will never submit to him in voluntary obedience."¹⁸ Man's nature being what it is, he will never desire to become righteous until he knows that he has been elected. Or, as Calvin puts it elsewhere: ". . . no man will ever reverence God that does not trust that God is propitious to him; no man will ever set himself to observe the Law who is not persuaded that his services are pleasing to God."¹⁹ There is, in this view, a necessary connection between election and holiness.

If we go back to Browning's poem, we see that it does not represent Calvinism. If it be said that a man wastes his time by trying to make his life holy when he may be reprobated, this is, to Calvin, "the most impudent falsehood. From whence can any such study come but from election?"²⁰

¹⁸Institutes, I, 2, 11.

¹⁹Institutes, III, 3, 11.

²⁰Institutes, III, 23, xii.

On the other hand, Calvin's system does not permit pride: "We differ not at al . . . the one from the other but that it pleased god to gather unto hym selfe those whom he wolde."²¹ Taking another approach, Calvin maintains, "If the end of election is holiness of life, it ought to arouse and stimulate us strenuously to aspire to it, instead of serving as a pretext for sloth."²²

What of the assurance of salvation, which Calvin felt was absolutely necessary? Faith, according to Calvin, cannot be apprehended "without at the same time apprehending sanctification. . . . Christ . . . justifies no man without also sanctifying him."²³ Therefore, we know we are elected "when we receaue in obedyence of fayth the doctrine of god, and rest upō his promises, accepting the offer whiche he hath made to hold us for his chyl dren."²⁴ As this passage may suggest, Calvin did not demand that his hearers and readers make agonizing reappraisals periodically to determine the state of their souls, as did some other Reformed theologians. On the contrary, when we find him mentioning the matter at all, it is in a far different spirit: ". . . everyone ought to regard his calling as a token of his election. Farther,

²¹Tvvo Godly and Notable Sermons . . . (London, c.1575), sig. Diii^r and v.

²²Institutes, III, 23, xii.

²³Institutes, III, 16, i.

²⁴Tvvo Godly Sermons, sig. Dviii^r and v.

although we cannot judge with the same certainty as to another's election, yet we must always in the judgment of charity conclude that all that are called are called to salvation."²⁵ There is no demand here for a soul-searching designed to achieve a full proof of election: Calvin's intention is simply to offer consolation.

On the related question of reprobation Calvin is much less frightening than the modern reader might suppose. The doctrine itself he states without any ambiguity: "All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he is predestined to life or death."²⁶ Calvin is equally clear in denying that this is unjust or purposeless. "The refusal of the reprobate to obey the word of God when manifested to them, will be properly ascribed to the malice and depravity of their hearts; provided it be at the same time added, that they were adjudged to this depravity because they were raised up by the just but inscrutable judgment of

²⁵Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, trans. John Pringle (Edinburgh, 1848), I, 59. Note also Calvin's observation: "fayth is to us . . . an infallible mark, that god rekeneth us for his chyldren" Two Godly Sermons, sig. Evi. Further, "There are two reasons that show that it is more than necessary for this doctrine of predestination to be preached . . . one is that God is to be magnified as He deserves; the second is that we are to be made certain of our salvation, to invoke Him as our Father in full freedom." Sermon on Ephesians I. 3-6, quoted by Leroy Nixon, John Calvin, Expository Preacher (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1950), p. 87.

²⁶Institutes, III, 21, v.

God to show forth his glory by their condemnation."²⁷ Not only does God, by depriving them of saving grace, leave them to their naturally depraved state; he also excites their wills toward evil.²⁸

But Calvin does not seem to have had a thought of reprobation when dealing with individuals and, according to Hunter, never named anyone as doomed. Instead he urged all ministers to press the claims of God on all men as if all could be saved.²⁹ He wrote in 1555, "I know well enough that we ought to be humble and modest in the treatment of this profound mystery . . . [of election and reprobation; my] only object is to subdue the pride of the human spirit, and to teach it to reverence in all fear and humility the majesty of God."³⁰ In his preaching, therefore, Calvin did not terrify his hearers, because he treated reprobation with reticence and with emphasis on God's honor and grace.³¹ Several close students of Calvin's thought have even argued that Calvin's preaching did not encourage--even

²⁷Institutes, III, 24, xiv.

²⁸Institutes, II, 4, iii.

²⁹See Hunter, Teaching of Calvin, p. 133.

³⁰quoted by John T. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (New York, 1954), p. 211.

³¹See McNeill, Calvinism, p. 212. For discussions of Calvin as preacher, see Nixon, John Calvin, and T. H. L. Parker, The Oracles of God (London, 1947).

unintentionally--preoccupation with one's spiritual health.³² Calvin's teaching instead seems to have inspired, more than anything else, worship of God's gracious quality.

Let us take a closer look at Calvin's theory and practice of preaching. Such an examination is necessary because Perry Miller,³³ S. E. Morison,³⁴ and others have relied too exclusively on the Institutes in forming their concept of Calvinism, which they then compare with their concept of seventeenth-century New England theology--as revealed in sermons.

Calvin's "Summary of Doctrine concerning the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments"³⁵ is his fullest discussion of his concept of preaching. For Calvin, the ministry operates on a sacramental basis. The external preaching of the Word of God by the minister to the people is matched by the internal communication "to the souls of all who will"³⁶ by the Holy Spirit of what the Word proclaims: Christ. Preaching is very much like the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, both of which also communicate

³²E. Doumergue, Jean Calvin: Les Hommes et Les Choses de son Temps (Lausanne, 1910), IV, 399; E. Troeltsch, "Calvin and Calvinism," Hibbert Journal, VII (1909), 108.

³³Especially in The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1954; first ed., 1939), hereafter cited as Seventeenth Century.

³⁴The Puritan Pronaos (New York, 1936).

³⁵In Calvin: Theological Treatises, ed. J. K. S. Reid (Philadelphia, 1954).

³⁶Treatises, p. 173.

Christ. In the one instance faith is the means by which the elect receive grace; in the others water and bread and wine are the means of grace.

A statement in the Institutes should help to prepare us for the sermons themselves. In his discussion of reprobation Calvin warns future preachers to beware of how they deal with the doctrine. "Were any to address the people thus: If you do not believe, the reason is, because God has already doomed you to destruction: he would not only encourage sloth, but also give countenance to wickedness. Were any to give utterance to the sentiment in the future tense, and say, that those who hear will not believe because they are reprobates, it were imprecation rather than doctrine."³⁷

Calvin's own practice was to avoid preaching reprobation almost entirely, dwelling instead on God's love as revealed by his election of the saints. This theme is central in all of the sermons which I have read. For example, in Thirteen Sermons . . . Entreating of the Free Election in Iacob and of reprobation in Esau³⁸ Calvin identifies his hearers with Jacob, who was chosen by God not for any personal merits but merely to demonstrate his mercy. Throughout the series of sermons Calvin seems to take for granted that his hearers are saints, God's chosen, and even appears to offer his hearers assurance of their election: "let vs . . . content

³⁷Institutes, III, 23, xiv.

³⁸I have used the English translation of 1579.

our selues with the holy Scripture. and when there is any cause of inquiring after God, if we will have him for our maister, let vs come to the holy Scripture . . . [for] it pronounceth cleerly and manifestly that God hath chosen vs in Iesus Christ before the creation of the worlde, according to his good pleasure, the which he hath purposed in himselfe."³⁹ How grateful should we elect then be!

In a sermon "On Enjoying Church Ordinances,"⁴⁰ Calvin makes no mention of predestination at all; the sermon, however, has much the same theme as do the thirteen on reprobation and election: the blessings of God which are enjoyed by Calvin's hearers. This time the particular blessing is the privilege of having the means of salvation, especially the sacraments, available in their true form.

In the first of Two Godly Sermons . . .,⁴¹ Calvin's emphasis is on doing honor to the God who has saved his hearers, again the assumption being that his hearers are the elect: ". . . he hath brought us the saluation and hathe further cauled us to make us partakers therof";⁴² ". . . god elected us beyng not moued therunto throughe our desertes, afore we coulde haue layd before hym any thyng at al

³⁹Folios 30 and 31.

⁴⁰In Four Sermons on Important Practical Subjects (Edinburgh, 1851).

⁴¹The sermon is concerned with patience in adversity.

⁴²Sig. Biiii^v.

. . . .⁴³ This positive approach to election is always the one which Calvin takes.

One needs to remember that for finding what Calvin regarded as fundamental Christian doctrine the best source is not his dogmatic textbook the Institutes, which was designed for the preparation of candidates for the ministry,⁴⁴ but the catechisms and confessions which Calvin prepared for the laity, and, of course, his sermons. H. D. Foster has argued that since the doctrine of double predestination is omitted from the definitive edition of the Geneva Catechism and from "the four creeds from Calvin's hand," it is clear that he believed this doctrine not to be fundamental and regarded it as quite unnecessary in a church's symbol of faith.⁴⁵ Although this may be an overstatement, it is significant that the record shows Calvin to have received a converted Anabaptist into the Church although the latter was unwilling to accept the doctrine of predestination.⁴⁶ Hunter's position seems to be correct: Calvin regarded predestination as a "part of the substance of the faith but would not force it at bayonet's

⁴³Sig. Cvi^r. See also sigs. Diiii^v and Diiii^v.

⁴⁴See the "Epistle to the Reader" prefixed by the author to the last edition of the Institutes, Vol. I, p. 25.

⁴⁵Collected Papers (Hanover, N. H., 1929), p. 111. Compare Williston Walker, John Calvin (New York, 1906), pp. 416-417.

⁴⁶Hunter, Teaching of Calvin, p. 95.

point upon anyone reluctant to accept it."⁴⁷

Foster seems to be on firmer ground when he states that Calvin never held that grace is irresistible and that he regarded as nonessential such points as whether Christ died for all or only the elect and whether one can fall from grace.⁴⁸ It is true that in the Institutes Calvin states that "no man approaches God unless previously influenced from above," and that God's "mercy is offered to all who desire it and implore it, and this none do save those whom he has enlightened."⁴⁹ But this is not the orthodox doctrine of irresistible grace. On the other hand, we find Calvin maintaining in a sermon that "a man shall finde many, who through contēpt & ingratitude wil shut against themselves the gate of saluation & reiect all the graces of God."⁵⁰ Although the idea of resisting grace is not central to Calvin's thought, one does not have to go through many sermons to find a sentiment such as this: "It is true that faith is the gift from the Spirit of God alone, but nevertheless, we must not repulse Him when he speaks so sweetly to us, for He invites us, and only asks that we be united to Him, to rejoyce in the plentitude of blessings which He has

⁴⁷Teaching of Calvin, p. 96.

⁴⁸Collected Papers, pp. 123, 130-131.

⁴⁹Institutes, II, 24, xvi-xvii.

⁵⁰Thirteen Sermons, folios 29^v and 30^r.

put "in our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵¹

These passages are significant for their resemblance to expressions which occur in the writings of the so-called non-Calvinistic covenant theologians.⁵² If the test is to be what Miller seems to make it, the "Five Points" of "Calvinism," it appears that Calvin might score as only about a fifty-percent Calvinist.

A brief look at some of the symbols of faith which Calvin either had a hand in or agreed to may well suggest what was Calvin's Calvinism on the theology of salvation. Three documents are convenient and useful: the Genevan Confession of 1536, the Catechism of the Church of Geneva (1545), and the French Confession of Faith (1550).⁵³

The Geneva Confession, which Calvin participated in writing, does not mention election. It states that "since man is naturally . . . depraved and destitute in himself of all the light of God, and of all righteousness . . . hence he must look outside himself for the means of salvation."⁵⁴ By God's Spirit men are "regenerated into a new spiritual

⁵¹ Calvin's Sermon on Luke II. 9-14, in Parker, The Oracles of God, p. 150. The sermon contains no mention of predestination.

⁵² See Miller, Seventeenth Century; for example, p. 393.

⁵³ English versions of the first two are given in Calvin: Theological Treatises; of the last, in The Creeds of Christendom, ed. Philip Schaff (New York, 1877), Vol. III.

⁵⁴ Article V, Treatises, p. 27. For Calvin's role in its writing, see Treatises, p. 25.

nature." Thus man's "will is rendered conformable to God's will, to follow in his way and to seek what is pleasing to him," and then "we are made capable and able to do good works and not otherwise."⁵⁵ Those who contend that Calvin is basically a moralist rather than a dogmatist can find good ammunition here.

The Catechism of the Church of Geneva is interesting in that, while it does not mention election, it implies that man has certain abilities, seemingly independent of God's grace. In answer to the question "What is the right way of honoring God?" the catechumen is to answer: "To put all our trust in him; to study to serve him all our life, by obeying his will; to call upon him, whenever any need impels us, seeking in him salvation and whatever good things can be desired"⁵⁶

The first draft of the French Confession was written by Calvin. If we could be sure that Calvin was responsible for Articles XII and XXI, we should have a better case for believing that Calvin attached more importance to the doctrines of double election and the perseverance of the saints than Hunter and Foster have maintained. Article XII states, in part, "We believe that from this corruption and general condemnation in which all men are plunged, God, according to his

⁵⁵Article V, Treatises, p. 28.

⁵⁶Treatises, pp. 91-92. It is of course true that Calvin says elsewhere that only the elect have the ability to honor God in the right way. But we are here examining only what the Catechism says. For a discussion of the authorship of the Catechism, see Treatises, p. 83.

eternal and immutable counsel, calleth those whom he hath chosen by his goodness and mercy alone in our Lord Jesus Christ, without consideration of their works, to display in them the riches of his mercy, leaving the rest in this same corruption to show in them his justice."⁵⁷ Here surely is double election in its strictest form.

In Article XXI we read: "We believe also that faith is not given to the elect only to introduce them into the right way, but also to make them continue in it to the end. For as it is God who hath begun the work, he will also perfect it."⁵⁸ This sounds like the doctrines of irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. But there is also Article XIII: "We believe that all that is necessary for our salvation was offered to us in Jesus Christ. He is given to us for our salvation . . . so that if we refuse him, we renounce the mercy of the Father, in which alone we can find refuge."⁵⁹ If the "our" and the "us" of the first sentence refer to the elect, then the last clause suggests that grace is not irresistible. If the words refer to all mankind, then Christ did not die for the elect only--a teaching contrary to

⁵⁷Creeds of Christendom, III, 366-367. For a discussion of the authorship, see Creeds, I, 439.

⁵⁸Creeds, III, 371; italics mine. The italicized phrase reads in the French, "pour les y faire continuer."

⁵⁹Creeds, III, 367.

the so-called "Five Points of Calvinism."⁶⁰

Conclusions based on the French Confession must be conditional. If Calvin did write Articles XII and XXI, then in his last years he came to regard some doctrines included in the "Five Points" as fundamental. But surely these five doctrines do not represent all that was most important for Calvin.

This survey of Calvin's teachings on salvation will have been successful if it has both indicated Calvin's basic position and made less credible some current ideas concerning Calvin's thought. What we have seen should make clear the falsity of a recent historian's description of Calvinism: "God had predestinated every human being either to salvation or to damnation, and . . . no intensity of faith or integrity of conduct could alter that foreordination."⁶¹ "Impudent falsehood!" (in Calvin's words). Nor is it accurate to say that Calvin "demanded that they [his disciples] contemplate with steady, unblinking resolution, the absolute,

⁶⁰ Calvin's views on whether or not Christ died only for the elect are not dogmatic. For a good discussion of the point, see John Olert, Jr., "Predestination: Calvin and the New England Theology," unpub. Th.M. thesis (Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1943), pp. 13-24. Olert concludes that to Calvin a variety of opinions could be regarded as orthodox. The Canons of Dort contain an ambiguity similar to that observed in the French Confession. See below.

⁶¹ S. T. Bindoff, Tudor England (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1952), p. 226.

incomprehensible, and transcendent glory of God."⁶² For Calvin, the true disciple would find God rather to be a "guardian and protector," "fountain of all goodness," and "author of salvation."⁶³

Continental Reformed Soteriology through the Time of the Synod of Dort

We shall next examine briefly the development of soteriological thought among Continental theologians in the Reformed tradition. These include both contemporaries of Calvin and theologians of the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth century. Since the Synod of Dort marks the end of an epoch, and since most of the theologians whom Hooker cites flourished before Dort, it serves as a useful stopping place.⁶⁴

The first two theologians whose positions we shall examine are Martin Bucer and Heinrich Bullinger. Although I have not located references to Bullinger in Hooker's writings, he

⁶²Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," Pub. Col. Soc. Mass., Transactions, 1933-1937, XXXII, 248. The source of all of Miller's citations from Calvin here is the Institutes; the sermons are not mentioned.

⁶³Institutes, I, 2, 1-111.

⁶⁴Hooker refers to most of the more important Continental reformers. I have counted eight references to Beza (only one fewer than Hooker's references to Calvin), four references to Junius, three to Zanchius, and also references to such other important writers as Vermigli, Piscator, Bucer, and Pareus.

had a great influence in England in the sixteenth century;⁶⁵ many of the Marian Exiles had come under his influence at Zurich⁶⁶ and continued to keep in touch with him after their return to England. The correspondence of Bullinger with Bishop Grindal (later Archbishop of Canterbury), Bishop Sandys (later Archbishop of York), John Foxe, and Bishops Jewel, Parkhurst, Cox, Horn, and others, reveals the high regard in which Bullinger was held in England.⁶⁷ The "Puritan Bishop" Hooper was especially influenced by Bullinger.⁶⁸ Perhaps most important as vehicles of his influence were the many works of Bullinger published in England,⁶⁹ notably his collection of sermons, The Decades, which enjoyed a semi-official status in the sixteenth-century Church of England.⁷⁰

Bullinger's theology emphasizes the justifying mercy of

⁶⁵See M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago, 1939), p. 367, and L. J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, XX (1951), 37.

⁶⁶See Christina Garrett, The Marian Exiles (Cambridge, Eng., 1938), passim.

⁶⁷See Hastings Robinson, ed., The Zurich Letters (Cambridge, Eng., 1842-1845).

⁶⁸See Hooper, Later Writings, ed. Charles Nevins (Cambridge, Eng., 1852), pp. vii-x.

⁶⁹See the extensive list in Pollard and Redgrave, Short-Title Catalogue.

⁷⁰See the discussion by G. W. Bromley, ed., Zwingli and Bullinger (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 283-285. The Decades have been edited by Thomas Harding (Cambridge, Eng., 1849-1852), in four volumes.

God,⁷¹ but is vague on the question of predestination.⁷² For Bullinger, "the cause of God's mercy to us-wards must of necessity be not in us, nor in any other thing beside God" ⁷³ Indeed, "unless we be drawn of the heavenly father, we cannot believe, and we must be very careful, lest we . . . neglect the drawing itself." Consequently, we should "despise not the grace offered, but use it whiles time present serveth" ⁷⁴ An Arminian would admit as much! ⁷⁵ Bullinger here preaches man's inability, but surely not the irresistibility of grace which, on the contrary, man should not despise. Elsewhere, Bullinger gives his hearers definite assurance that they can know they are "predestinate to life" by the "assured sign" of faith.⁷⁶ But Bullinger's inconsistency is revealed by another passage, which tells us that

we must not imagine that in heaven there are laid two books, in the one whereof the names of them are written that are to be saved, and so to be saved, as it were of necessity, that, do what they will against the word of Christ and commit never so heinous

⁷¹ Especially in his important De gratia Dei.

⁷² See Otto Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, III (Göttingen, 1926), 246-248.

⁷³ Decades, III, 7.

⁷⁴ Decades, III, 190.

⁷⁵ See Joseph Hall's interesting Via Media: The Way of Peace, in Volume X of his Works (Oxford, 1837).

⁷⁶ Decades, III, 187.

offences, they cannot possibly chose but be saved; and that in the other are contained the names of them which, do what they can and live never so holily, yet they cannot avoid everlasting damnation. Let us rather hold, that the holy gospel of Christ doth generally preach to the whole world the grace of God, the remission of sins, and life everlasting.⁷⁷

Although the straw man that Bullinger sets up to knock down is not of course Calvinism, this statement, which seems to be theological rather than rhetorical in nature, implies that redemption is not particular, but general.

The last passage cited is significant because it indicates the original nature of Reformed preaching, before symbols of faith had so restricted the limits of man's ability that reactions such as covenant theology set in.⁷⁸ The uncertainty of Bullinger's views on predestination may be the reason why Hooker and his fellow seventeenth-century Puritans did not make much use of his teachings.

Martin Bucer (or Butzer), regius professor of divinity at Cambridge from 1549 to 1551, the year of his death, was thoroughly in agreement on theological matters with Calvin, whose views on predestination he anticipated.⁷⁹ Since their views were nearly identical, it becomes difficult to trace

⁷⁷Decades, III, 32-33.

⁷⁸For covenant theology, see Chapter IV below.

⁷⁹For a summary of scholarship on the Calvin-Bucer relationship, see Wilhelm Pauck, The Heritage of the Reformation (Glencoe, Ill., and Boston, 1950), pp. 77-79, 92.

their comparative influence. Like many Reformed theologians who, though basically independent of Calvin, had views on predestination similar to his, Bucer contributed to the increasing popularity of Reformed theology. But gradually Calvin's influence became more important than the influence of the other Reformed theologians, such as Bucer.⁸⁰ However, an important and perhaps influential difference in emphasis has been observed in Bucer's teachings: while Calvin thought of religion primarily as related to God, Bucer thought of it primarily as related to man's salvation.⁸¹ The latter approach is much more that of Puritan preachers than is Calvin's.

As John T. McNeill has observed, Bullinger and Bucer were not Calvin's opponents, but his co-workers.⁸² Although the same can probably be said of the Reformed theologians writing after Calvin, the divisions which Ritschl has used are helpful. According to him, one group of the Reformed were predominantly independent of Calvin: Ursinus, Peter

⁸⁰See Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 283-289.

⁸¹See Pauck, Heritage of the Reformation, p. 91; and compare Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 245, and Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston, 1952), p. 117. The Puritan Whitaker in 1595 noted that English theology of his time was much indebted to Bucer. See Constantin Hopf, Martin Bucer and the English Reformation (Oxford, 1946), p. 260.

⁸²History and Character of Calvinism, p. 310. Also among Calvin's co-workers was John a Lasco or Laski, who lived for a time in London. See Charles Beard, The Reformation (London, 1897), pp. 182-183.

Martyr Vermigli, Musculus, Keckermann, Alsted, and others. A second group consists of those who were predominantly followers of Calvin: Zanchius, Piscator, Bucanus, Beza, Perkins, Junius, Gomarus, Twissé, and others.⁸³ It is perhaps significant that while Alsted, Keckermann, and Ursinus were popular writers in seventeenth-century New England,⁸⁴ no references to their writings appear in Hooker's works to my knowledge, and only three references to other "non-Calvinists"; on the other hand, references to Calvin's followers, the high or strict "Calvinists," are much more common.⁸⁵

Of the writers who regarded themselves as followers of Calvin, Theodore Beza, frequently referred to by Hooker, is in many ways the most important. First as Calvin's co-worker and then as his successor, Beza benefitted much in terms of prestige from his identification with Calvin. But his teachings are different from Calvin's in an important way. While for Calvin predestination was primarily a practical matter, for Beza it was an issue to be treated with strict logic.

⁸³Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, passim.

⁸⁴See Miller, Seventeenth Century, pp. 96, 102-103, and passim.

⁸⁵Hooker refers to two theologians who were not followers of Calvin. He refers twice to Peter Martyr Vermigli, who spent several years in England (see Alexander Gordon, s. v. "Vermigli," DNB). Vermigli followed Bullinger in his concept of predestination. See Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 269. I have also observed one reference to Musculus, whose interpretation of predestination agrees in many ways with Bucer's. See Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 249.

Calvin's somewhat undeveloped theory of predestination becomes in Beza's writings supralapsarianism: even the fall of Adam was divinely ordained. "Predestination," says Beza, "is an eternal and immutable decree whereby he [God] determined to be glorified by saving some in Christ by mere grace, and by damning others in Adam and by his own just judgment."⁸⁶ This extension of Calvinism to supralapsarianism marks the beginning of a new stage in the development of Reformed thought: "Protestant Scholasticism."⁸⁷ We shall look at this a little later.

Beza's theology differs from Calvin's in another way significant for us. Whereas for Calvin the test of election was faith in Christ, for Beza the test was the performance of good works through the sanctification which followed effectual calling.⁸⁸ Although both tests were used by Puritan

⁸⁶Quoted by E. F. Karl Müller, s. v. "Predestination," Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. See also Eugène Choisy, s. v. "Beza," Schaff-Herzog. William Cunningham, who defends Beza as a follower of Calvin, writes that "the points of alleged difference between them in matters of doctrine, respect chiefly topics on which Calvin was not led to give any very formal or explicit deliverances, because they were not at the time subjects of discussion, or indeed even present to his thoughts."--The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation (Edinburgh, 1866), p. 344.

⁸⁷See Charles Beard, Reformation, pp. 262-299, and Arthur C. McGiffert, Protestant Thought Before Kant (New York, 1911), pp. 141-154.

⁸⁸Ernest Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches (London, 1949), II, 590.

preachers and writers,⁸⁹ the greater frequency with which Beza's test is invoked by Hooker and others makes Beza's contribution to Reformed soteriology significant.

Perry Miller has suggested that New England preachers read more widely in the writings of theologians following Calvin than in the writings of the great Genevan reformer himself. Miller goes on to say, "Even if the specific doctrines of Calvinism were unchanged at the time of the migration to New England, they were already removed from pure Calvinism by the difference of tone."⁹⁰ Although Miller unfortunately fails to define "Calvinism" here or elsewhere, it is clear that by 1630 there had been major changes in Reformed thinking since the days of Calvin--far more significant than the change of tone that Miller has observed.. The debates among the Reformed and between the Reformed theologians and other Protestants did much to narrow the limits of orthodoxy. "Bezaism" won victory after victory over Bullingerism and less strict varieties of Reformed thought. Several of the writers to whom Hooker refers were important proponents of this stricter brand of theology: David Pareus,

⁸⁹See the interesting list compiled by Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 394. For Calvin "Nous ne pouvons pas nous assurer de notre salut que par la foy"--Congrégation sur l'élection éternelle, quoted by Doumergue, Jean Calvin, IV, 397. According to Troeltsch, Puritanism developed a system of self-examination into good works as a sign of election. See Social Teachings, II, 680, and below.

⁹⁰Seventeenth Century, p. 97.

author of Orthodoxus Calvinus; ⁹¹ Junius, who attempted by means of some very nice distinctions to set up a moderate position between supra- and infralapsarianism; ⁹² and Zanchius, who developed to a new position of importance the idea of the perseverance of the saints. ⁹³ Reformed orthodoxy reached such a point of refinement that Calvin himself "would probably have made a difficulty about adopting precise and definite deliverances on some points concerning the truth of which the great Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century had no hesitation." ⁹⁴ This is the significant change in the Reformed theology.

The arguments among the infralapsarians, the sublapsarians, the supralapsarians, and the semi-supralapsarians on the order of the divine decrees, and other similar controversies gradually split the Reformed party into two groups, the "High Calvinists" or Bezaists, a good example of whom is William Perkins, ⁹⁵ and the low or "Liberal Calvinists" or

⁹¹See Pierre Bayle, s. v. "Pareus," Dictionnaire Historique et Critique.

⁹²See Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 311.

⁹³See Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 288.

⁹⁴Cunningham, The Reformers, p. 412.

⁹⁵Perkins is discussed later. Ritschl relates him to other Reformed writers in Dogmengeschichte, III, 300-303.

Arminians.⁹⁶ Other than causing a split among the Reformed, "theologisch fructbar aber ist diese Scholastik eigentlich nur in Spitzfindigkeiten gewesen,"⁹⁷ as Ritschl nicely puts it. Its total effect was the crystallizing of the Reformed theology, for the split brought about the Synod of Dort and its Canons.

A useful method of showing the development of the Reformed theology is to examine the history of its symbols of belief. After the creeds of Calvin which have already been discussed, one of the most important is the Belgic Confession (1561, revised 1619), called by Schaff "the best symbolic statement of the Calvinistic system of doctrine, with the exception of the Westminster Confession."⁹⁸ The Belgic Confession does not teach a limited atonement, irresistible grace, the perseverance of the saints, or a decree of reprobation, although it has a clear doctrine of election:

We believe that all the posterity of Adam, being . . . fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest himself such as he is: that is to say, merciful and just: merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom he, in his eternal and

⁹⁶Foster defends the use of the term "liberal Calvinists" in his paper "Liberal Calvinism and the Synod of Dort," published in his Collected Papers. On the relationship of Calvin to Beza and supralapsarianism, see Cunningham, The Reformers, pp. 362-364.

⁹⁷Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 314.

⁹⁸Schaff, Creeds, I, 506. The Confession is included in Volume III of Creeds.

unchangeable council, of mere goodness hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works: just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.⁹⁹

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563), like the Belgic Confession approved by the Synod of Dort,¹⁰⁰ is even less outspoken on the "Five Points." Nothing is said here of a limited atonement, a decree of absolute reprobation, irresistible grace, or the perseverance of the saints.¹⁰¹ Even the idea of election itself is only suggested in phrases such as that of Question 20, that only those are saved who "by true faith are ingrafted into him [Christ] and receive his benefits,"¹⁰² or more particularly that of Question 54: ". . . out of the whole human race, from the beginning of the world, the Son of God, by his Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion in the unity of the true faith" ¹⁰³

At Dort many of the doctrines which had previously been at most the views of individual theologians became binding

⁹⁹Article XVI, quoted by Schaff, Creeds, III, 401.

¹⁰⁰Schaff, Creeds, I, 506-507, 549. Schaff includes the Catechism in Volume III of Creeds.

¹⁰¹See the interesting discussion in the Tercentenary Edition of The Heidelberg Catechism . . . With an Historical Introduction (New York, 1863), pp. 80-89.

¹⁰²Schaff, Creeds, III, 313.

¹⁰³Schaff, Creeds, III, 325.

upon the ministers of the Reformed Church in France, and were received with respect elsewhere: clergymen who opposed the doctrines of the Canons of Dort were deposed in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁴ Weber speaks of the disappearance in Calvinism of the God of the New Testament, whose "place has been taken by a transcendent being, beyond the reach of human understanding, who with his quite incomprehensible decrees has decided the fate of every individual and regulated the tiniest details of the cosmos from eternity."¹⁰⁵ He speaks of the religion not of Calvin but of Dort.

Dort is of particular interest for its connections with England. Five Englishmen--two bishops, the King's chaplain, a professor, and Joseph Hall--attended the meeting. Their presence indicates that as late as 1619 the Church of England was regarded officially as part of the body of the Reformed Church. Further, Dort had a part in the process of shaping English Reformed theology, which was to be crystallized in the Westminster Confession.¹⁰⁶

The Canons of Dort are restricted to the five points of

¹⁰⁴Schaff, Creeds, I, 514.

¹⁰⁵Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London, 1930), pp. 103-104. In this connection the treatise of the Reformed theologian Tossanus on Providence (1597) is of interest. Here it is maintained that God's Providence relates to lice, ants, bees, silkworms and spiders, not just to man. See Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte, III, 289-290.

¹⁰⁶See Schaff, Creeds, I, 760-761, 769.

the so-called Calvinistic system.¹⁰⁷ This very fact makes clear just how prominent a part these points had come to take in Reformed theology. The basic teachings of the Canons, which are very full, may be set forth briefly.

(1) Predestination. All men by justice merit punishment for their part in the sin of Adam, but God provides mercy for some through Christ. The elect, "though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others . . . God has decreed to give to Christ to be saved by him." The elect are called by the ministry of the word to faith in Christ, which faith is God's gift and "proceeds from God's eternal decree." Those who do not believe are the reprobate; God has decreed that they should be left to their just condemnation, for "the cause or guilt of this unbelief . . . is nowise in God, but in man himself."¹⁰⁸

(2) Limited atonement. "It was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross . . . should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father This purpose proceeding from everlasting love towards the elect, has from the beginning of the world to this day, been powerfully accomplished"¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷They are printed in Schaff, Creeds, III, 561-597.

¹⁰⁸Schaff, Creeds, III, 581-582.

¹⁰⁹Schaff, Creeds, III, 587.

(3) Total depravity. Man is totally depraved: unable to perform any saving good; unable to reform.

(4) Irresistible grace. Regeneration "is nowise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such mode of operation that, after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead . . . so that all in whose hearts God works in this marvellous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe."¹¹⁰

(5) Perseverance of the saints. Whom God calls to salvation, he confirms and preserves to the end. These have assurance of salvation according to the measure of their faith. "This certainty of perseverance . . . should serve as an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works"¹¹¹

Although these were the doctrines adopted, the objections of the "Remonstrants" or Arminians were addressed to even stricter doctrines, especially supralapsarianism,

¹¹⁰Schaff, Creeds, III, 589-590.

¹¹¹Schaff's abridgment, Creeds, I, 523.

which had advocates among the leaders of the "Defendants" or High Calvinists. That the Arminian objections were denied is perhaps more significant than that the above positive articles were approved. The party of Gomarus, the leading supralapsarian, won the dispute, although his views were not indeed adopted. To be stricter than the Canons was permissible; to be less strict was heresy.¹¹²

The Canons of Dort, according to Schaff, "prepared the way for a dry scholasticism which runs into subtle abstractions, and resolves the living soul of divinity into a skeleton of formulas and distinctions." It "consolidated orthodoxy at the expense of freedom" and sanctioned "a narrow confessionism."¹¹³ It also marked the end of the formative period of the Reformed theology.

¹¹²This discussion is based on material in Schaff, Creeds, I, 509-517, though Schaff's interpretation is rather different from the one presented here. Note also Foster's interpretation, in Collected Papers, p. 143, that the source of the argument which led to Dort was personal and political, not doctrinal.

¹¹³Schaff, Creeds, I, 515. See also Moffat, "Influence of Calvin," p. 163.

CHAPTER II

THE PURITAN BACKGROUND OF HOOKER'S THOUGHT

Our study of Puritanism will begin with a brief survey of theology in England during the period roughly from 1550 to 1620. This will be followed by an examination of the special characteristics of Puritanism as they relate to Hooker's thought on conversion, with special attention to a discussion of Puritan ideas on preaching. Next will follow an analysis of the teachings of some important Puritans from Hooper to Preston. After a brief examination of some Anglican views of conversion for purposes of comparison, we shall look at the English Reformed symbols of faith of the period: the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Lambeth Articles, and the Westminster Confession.

The History of the Reformed Theology in England, 1550-1620

Although English theology had wavered from Roman Catholicism to Lutheranism to a semi-Reformed position during the period from 1527 to 1547, from then on until sometime after 1600 it was closely related to the Reformed theology

except during the brief Marian reaction. The relationship of the Church of England to the Reformed Church began in Edward's reign: Cranmer, Latimer, and Hooper were all influenced by the Reformed theologians of the Continent,¹ and with the return of the Protestant clergy from exile in the Reformed cities after 1558, the victory of the Reformed theology in the teaching of the English church was, for the time, sealed.² L. J. Trinterud has contended strongly that since only a few exiles went to Geneva and none of these gained power on returning to England, the Rhinelanders' influence was much greater than Calvin's.³ But although this may be true of the early days of Elizabeth's reign, later Calvin came to have greater influence. The statement of W. M. Southgate seems nearer to the truth. His position is that the Anglican Church from the time of Parker to the end of the sixteenth century was "Calvinistic," though the Church also looked to other Continental reformers.⁴

One of the peculiarities of the Elizabethan church is

¹For Cranmer, see C. H. Smyth, Cranmer & the Reformation under Edward VI (Cambridge, Eng., 1926), pp. 27-74; for Hooper, see Smyth, Cranmer, pp. 95-105, and below; for Latimer, see A. G. Chester, Hugh Latimer (Philadelphia, 1954), pp. 167-168, 192-193, and passim.

²Wilhelm Pauck, Das Reich Gottes auf Erden (Berlin and Leipzig, 1928), p. 111.

³"The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, XX (1951), 45ff.

⁴"The Marian Exiles and the Influence of John Calvin," in R. L. Schuyler and H. Ausubel, eds., The Making of English History (New York, 1952), p. 176.

that it was not primarily concerned with metaphysics or theological doctrines as such:⁵ only two Elizabethan works can claim to be theological treatises, one by Dudley Fenner, one by William Perkins.⁶ A possible explanation is that the multitude of treatises by Continental Reformed writers published in England (in the original Latin or in English versions) satisfied the need. The Short-Title Catalogue has extensive listings under the names of, for example, Calvin, Beza, and Piscator.⁷

Many seats of learning during Elizabeth's reign were filled by "High Calvinists," such as William Whitaker (1547-1595), regius professor of divinity at Cambridge.⁸ In one of the great religious disputes of the period, the Puritan, Cartwright was opposed by an equally orthodox follower of Calvin, John Whitgift (c.1530-1604), later Archbishop of Canterbury.⁹ Calvin's Catechism was ordered to be used at Oxford and Cambridge in 1587, and in 1581 Cambridge officially acknowledged preference for Calvin and Beza to any

⁵The observation is A. L. Rowse's. See his The England of Elizabeth (New York, 1951), p. 480.

⁶Fenner, Sacra Theologia (1585); Perkins, Armillia aurea (1590) or A golden Chaine (1600).

⁷In the sixteenth century alone there were, according to the Short-Title Catalogue, seventy-four items by Calvin, fifty-nine by Beza, and seventeen by Piscator.

⁸John Dowden, Outlines of the History of the Theological Literature of the Church of England (London, 1897), p. 65.

⁹Rowse, England of Elizabeth, p. 469.

other men since the Apostles!¹⁰ The treatise of William Perkins (1558-1602) entitled The Reformed Catholike (1598) supports the Church of England on the basis of Perkins's "High Calvinism." He was so well regarded in his time that after his death King James officially appointed another theologian to defend Perkins from attack by Roman Catholics.¹¹

Until the 1590's no real opposition appeared to challenge the predestinarianism of both Anglicans and Puritans. Then an Arminian, Peter Baro, managed to obtain some support for his views while serving as a professor of divinity at Cambridge, but he was soon silenced.¹² About the same time the very strict, predestinarian Lambeth Articles, discussed below, were signed by Archbishop Whitgift, the Bishop of London, and other high officials. Although they did not become a public act, Whitgift announced that they were to be regarded as corresponding to the official doctrine of the

¹⁰ Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom (New York, 1877), I, 603. Thirty-five editions of the English Bible published between 1574 and 1615 contain between the Old and New Testaments a "Calvinistic" Catechism, according to Douglas Campbell. Most of these Bibles were from the press of the royal printer. See Campbell, The Puritan in Holland, England, and America (New York and London, 1899), II, 148-149.

¹¹ Louis B. Wright, "William Perkins: Elizabethan Apostle of 'Practical Divinity,'" Huntington Library Quarterly, III (1940), 189-190. According to Wright, only Perkins's views on the liturgy found official disfavor.

¹² M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago, 1939), pp. 369-370; Daniel Neal, The History of the Puritans (London, 1822), I, 455-456.

Church of England already established.¹³

Although one Puritan diarist observed ominously in 1597 that "Lutheranism begins to be established,"¹⁴ as late as 1608 the Institutes were recommended at Oxford as containing the best system of divinity.¹⁵ But despite the fact that James I and his Archbishop, Abbot, were followers of Calvin,¹⁶ in 1616 James recommended, in letters sent to the universities for the regulation of studies, that young divinity students should rely, not on modern systems, but on the fathers and councils. According to Isaac Walton, "the advice was occasioned by the very indiscreet references made by very many Preachers out of Mr. Calvin's Doctrines concerning Predestination, Universal Redemption, the Irresistibility of God's Grace, and of some other knotty points depending upon these; Points which many think were not but by Interpreters forc'd to be Mr. Calvin's meaning."¹⁷ We have already observed the tightening up of the Reformed system,

¹³Neal, History of the Puritans, I, 455; Powel M. Dawley, John Whitgift and the English Reformation (New York, 1954), p. 215.

¹⁴Dr. Samuel Ward, in Two Puritan Diaries, ed. M. M. Knappen (Chicago, 1933), p. 126.

¹⁵H. Hensley Henson, Puritanism in England (London, 1912), p. 80.

¹⁶Henson, Puritanism, pp. 92-93; W. Fraser Mitchell, English Pulpit Oratory (London, 1931), p. 203.

¹⁷Walton's life of Sanderson in Robert Sanderson, XXXVI Sermons (London, 1686), p. 8.

which made "knotty points" central; apparently it was an important factor in the decline of the Reformed orthodoxy from official favor within the Church of England. English theology from 1620 on was to be divided into two varieties: Reformed, the Puritan theology; and Arminianism, the official Anglican theology.¹⁸

Some Characteristics of Puritanism

Before examining the writings of some important English Reformed divines, it may be profitable to consider briefly the peculiar characteristics of Puritanism, as distinguished from the Continental Reformed theology. The difficult task of defining Puritanism fortunately is not necessary for our purposes, but it is commonly agreed that Puritanism is more than merely "English Calvinism."¹⁹

¹⁸The Reformed theology and the influence of Calvin did not, of course, die out in the Church of England overnight. Such notable figures as James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, and Bishop Robert Sanderson (1587-1663) were vigorous predestinarians, at least in the earlier part of their careers. See Dowden, Outlines, p. 105. Joseph Hall, a leading figure in the Church of England during the first half of the seventeenth century, stated that it was the belief of the Church of England that God applies the benefits of Christ's death "absolutely, certainly, and infallibly, to the elect alone"--Works (Oxford, 1837), X, 49.

¹⁹See, for example, J. C. Brauer, "Reflections on the Nature of English Puritanism," Church History, XXIII (1954), 99-108; Ralph Bronkema, The Essence of Puritanism (Goes, Holland, 1929).

The chief distinguishing characteristic of Puritanism is doubtless anxiety concerning the state of one's soul. This anxiety gave a center and unity to the entire course of a man's actions.²⁰ To solve the problem, to discover one's eternal fate, one had to have a testing apparatus; and Puritan preachers provided such devices in profusion. Good works were of course the standard test, but there were others. According to John Dod, one could discover the state of his soul by testing his ability to pray; for Richard Greenham, a test was one's attitude towards sin and God; for William Perkins, a vague trust in God.²¹ John Downname's popular book Christian Warfare (1604) was written, according to the author, to comfort those whose consciences are afflicted, by assuring them that unquestionably they are saved, and to lead them to Heaven.²² Another standard Puritan treatise of the period, Richard Sibbes's The Brvised Reede, and Smoaking Flax (1630), is filled with observations on assurance of election; for example: "When Christs will cometh in competitio with any earthly losse or gaine, yet if thē in that particular case the heart will stoope to Christ,

²⁰R. B. Perry, Puritanism and Democracy (New York, 1944), pp. 253-255.

²¹Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 394.

²²William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York, 1938), p. 155.

it is a true sign."²³

M. M. Knappen, editor of two important Puritan diaries, reports that they imply "a surprising amount of Arminianism";²⁴ yet he quotes elsewhere the old saw that Puritans spoke like Arminians in the pulpit, and like strict predestinarians in prayer,²⁵ and Puritan diaries were similar to sermons in purpose and use. Further, what seems like Arminianism can be found in nearly all Reformed writings. Again observing a seeming inconsistency, Knappen declares that although "the doctrines of predestination and justification by faith clearly remove some of the strongest incentives to Christian morality . . . the Puritan coolly asserted that every nerve must be strained in that cause nevertheless."²⁶ The explanation, not supplied by Knappen, is, as we shall see, that while fatalism is the logical outcome of predestinarianism, "on account of the idea of proof the psychological result was precisely the opposite,"²⁷ for

²³Fourth edition (London, 1632), p. 279. William Ames lists as one of the tasks of the preacher in consoling: ". . . in consolation, markes are profitably joyned, by which the conscience of a man may be assured that such a benefit pertaines to him"--The Marrow of Sacred Divinity (London, 1643), p. 159. See also Ames, Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof (London, 1643), Bk. II, pp. 9-11.

²⁴Knappen, Diaries, p. 15.

²⁵Knappen presents a version of the saying in Tudor Puritanism, p. 392.

²⁶Tudor Puritanism, pp. 341-342.

²⁷Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic (London, 1930), p. 232.

one had to prove to himself and to other "saints" by his Puritan morality that he was of the elect.

The magnum desideratum of Puritanism was, according to Hugh Peter, a collection and compilation of data to be used for the scientific analysis of regeneration: ". . . the Experiments Ministers and others have in several cases of Conversion, and the cases of Desertion, with the quieting of souls, and means thereunto, with a probatum est, the names of the parties concealed; which if everie able Christian would write, and keep by him, and print, how might Satan's Methods bee discovered, and manie souls comforted?"²⁸ With such an apparatus, true conversion could be exactly determined. Peter's proposal shows the great importance that "proof" came to have in the Puritan variety of Reformed thought.

But in spite of all the Puritan concern with proof, there is considerable evidence that predestinarianism did result at times in fatalism. At the Hampton Court Conference (1604), the Bishop of London reported to King James that many people were neglecting holiness and depending on predestination, saying, "If I shall be saved, I shall be saved."²⁹ And Ralph Cudworth implied throughout his famous

²⁸ Peter, Good Works for a Good Magistrate (London, 1651), pp. 74-75, quoted by R. P. Stearns, The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter (Urbana, Ill., 1954), pp. 51-52.

²⁹ Edward Cardwell, A History of Conferences (Oxford, 1840), p. 186, quoted by E. S. C. Gibson, The Thirty-Nine Articles (London, 1896), II, 482.

sermon before the House of Commons in 1647 that a great deal of fatalism existed in the England of his day. "He that builds," said Cudworth, "all his comfort upon an ungrounded perswasion, that God from all eternity hath loved him, and absolutely decreed him to life and to happiness, and seeketh not for God really dwelling in his soul; he builds his house upon a Quicksand, and it shall suddenly be swallowed."³⁰

The conversion experience was central in Puritan thought concerning salvation. Every Puritan had to undergo such an experience, and it served as a means of distinguishing Puritans from other Anglicans.³¹ Every man not a convert was susceptible of conversion, according to the teaching of English Puritan preachers.³² The Puritans were much more concerned with this life than with eschatology, though hell-fire preaching was not rare and the motivation for their concern with daily living, their scrupulousness, was basically otherworldly.³³ Puritans meditated on their conduct in this life, or, as Knappen puts it, "The Puritan

³⁰Cudworth, A Sermon Preached Before the House of Commons (1647, facsimile text, New York, 1930), p. 8.

³¹Brauer, "English Puritanism," p. 100.

³²Haller, Puritanism, pp. 95 and 175. E. S. Morgan has observed that covenant theology in New England changed Puritan theories so that many preachers came to regard only those within the covenant as susceptible. See The Puritan Family (Boston, 1944), pp. 97-104, and below.

³³Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 351.

lived nine-tenths of his time for the joys of this world"-- spiritual joys, that is.³⁴

In the conversion process, the sermon itself played the leading role; it was indeed regarded as almost the sole instrument of salvation.³⁵ Although Bible-reading was recognized as valuable, preaching was considered far more important. According to Thomas Cartwright--and many other Puritans echoed his sentiments--"As the fire stirred giveth more heat, so the Word, as it were blown by preaching, flameth more in the hearers, than when it is read."³⁶ Far from being didactic and subjective, the Puritan sermon declared to its hearers the revelation of God, and the word was confirmed in the hearts of the hearers, if they were of the elect. For matching the outward offer of salvation by the

³⁴Two Puritan Diaries, p. 9. See also Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 351. Miller agrees with Knappen on this point. See The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 37-38, hereafter cited as Seventeenth Century.

³⁵"No Salvation can be expected where the Gospel is not preached."--Thomas Norton, The Orthodox Evangelist (London, 1654), p. 153. Calvin had said, ". . . the voice of man is nothing but a sound that vanisheth in the ayre, and notwithstanding it is the power of God to saluation to all beleeuers"--Thirteen Sermons (London, 1579), folio 35. Calvin's sacramental view of preaching is implied in Ames's Marrow, pp. 143ff. And later, for Samuel Willard, the gospel was "a medium used by God, for the bringing of Sinners to Faith in Christ and so to Salvation."--A Compleat Body of Divinity (Boston, 1726), p. 436. Most of this work was delivered as sermons in the late seventeenth century.

³⁶Quoted by Horton Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans (Westminster, 1950), p. 186.

preacher was the inward offer, "a spiritual enlightening, whereby those promises are propounded to the hearts of all men, as it were by an inward word."³⁷ The vital function of the sermon for the Puritan is perhaps best indicated by Richard Baxter's saying, that in the sermon the preacher speaks to his congregation as "a dying man to dying men."³⁸

The Puritan sermon in the seventeenth century was usually divided into "doctrines" drawn from the text being used, and each doctrine had several "uses" or "applications." These varied uses were conveniently listed in the standard textbook of theology, William Ames's Medulla Sacrae Theologiae (1630; English translation entitled The Marrow of Sacred Divinity):

Information is the proving of some truth. . . .
 Refutation is the confutation of some error. . . .
 Instruction is a demonstration of that life that is to be followed. . . . Correction is a condemning of that life that is to be shunned. . . . Consolation is the application of some argument, either to take away, or to mitigate griefe and oppressing feare. . . . Exhortation is the application of an argument, either to beget, cherish, and execute some inward vertue, or to further the exercise of it. . . .

³⁷Ames, Marrow, p. 111.

³⁸Quoted by Davies, Worship, p. 184. An interesting insight into the preacher's attitude towards his own sermons as a means of grace is supplied by a passage from Thomas Shepard's autobiography: "I was desired to preach at . . . [a] marriage; at which sermō the Lord first toucht the M^{rs}. Margaret, with great terrours for sin & her Christles estate."--"The Autobiography of Thomas Shepard," Pubs. Col. Soc. Mass., Transactions, 1927-1930, XXVII (1932), p. 1372.

Admonition is the application of an argument to correct some vitiousnesse [sic.]."39

John Cotton's famous catechism Milk For Babes teaches more about the function of preaching. First "the Ministry of the Law" should be preached; this will cause the elect hearer to know his sin and the wrath of God against him for it and to feel his accursed estate and the need of a Saviour. Then the "Ministry of the Gospel" serves to humble him even more and then finally raises him "up out of this estate."⁴⁰

The method of preaching by which these ends were to be reached was expository preaching, Calvin's method. So taught the standard work on preaching, William Perkins's The Art of Prophecyng (1592). But unlike Calvin's, Puritan sermons of the seventeenth century demonstrate that love for system which was a characteristic of the Puritan mind. Sermon after sermon follows the pattern of four steps set forth by Perkins:

1. To read the Text distinctly out of the Canonical Scriptures.
2. To give the sense and vnderstanding of it being read, by the Scripture it selfe.
3. To collect a few and profitable points of doctrine out of the natvrall sense.
4. To apply (if he have the gift) the doctrines rightly collected, to the life and manners of men

³⁹Marrow, pp. 158-160.

⁴⁰Milk for Babes (London, 1646), pp. 7-8 (misnumbered 7-10).

in a simple and plaine speech.⁴¹

Two aspects of the last step are emphasized again and again in Puritan writings. First, the proof of the doctrines must be kept to the "commodity" of the hearers.⁴² Second, the preacher must be specific in dealing with sins: general statements fail to have the effect of particular ones.⁴³

It was basic to Puritan theology (and to Reformed theology in general) that doctrines must be based on the Bible⁴⁴ --"proved by scriptural testimony"--for the Bible "is the word of God written in a language fit for the Church by men immediately called to be the Clerkes, or Secretaries of the holy Ghost."⁴⁵ We know this by God's own testimony.⁴⁶ "God," wrote Richard Sibbes, "joining with the soul and a spirit of a man whom he intends to convert, beside that inbred light that is in the soul, causeth him to see a divine

⁴¹Quoted by Mitchell, English Pulpit Oratory, pp. 99-100. Ames held that each doctrine must be explained in terms of use.--Marrow, pp. 156-157.

⁴²For example, Marrow, pp. 156-157.

⁴³For example, Ames, Marrow, p. 165.

⁴⁴Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans (New York, 1938), pp. 41-54.

⁴⁵Ames, Marrow, p. 156.

⁴⁶Perkins, Workes (London, 1612-1613), II, 647. Ames says that God "did dictate and suggest all the words in which they [the Scriptures] should be written."--Marrow, p. 149.

majesty shining forth in the Scriptures, so that there must be an infused establishing by the Spirit to settle the heart in this first principle . . . that the Scriptures are the word of God."⁴⁷ Or, as William Perkins wrote, the one proof positive is "the inward testimony of the holy Ghost speaking in the Scripture"⁴⁸

Besides preaching the gospel, the minister of course administered the Sacraments, whose rôle is discussed below in the treatment of covenant theology. In general it may be stated that, for the Puritan, the Sacraments did not bring salvation, but "sealed" the election of the saint, although such a sealing was not, strictly speaking, necessary. Along with preaching and prayer, the Sacraments are "outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of Redemption"; but none of the three means are "made effectual" except to the elect.⁴⁹ Sibbes distinguished between the Reformed view and the High Church view of the sacraments: as a Reformed divine he held that "there is grace by them, though not in them."⁵⁰ The Lord's Supper was for

⁴⁷Works, ed. Grosart (Edinburgh, 1862-1864), III, 427, quoted by Geoffrey Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford, 1947), p. 23.

⁴⁸Workes, II, 649. Calvin had said, "God alone can properly bear witness to his own words"--Institutes (London, 1953), Bk. I, Chap. 7, section iv.

⁴⁹Willard, Body of Divinity, p. 806.

⁵⁰Works; ed. Grosart, III, 134, quoted by Nuttall, Holy Spirit, p. 91.

the Puritan not so much a spiritual feeding intended to give the communicants the grace to overcome evil and be saved, as a feast where Christ the Host delivers to the elect the benefits of his passion, benefits which had already been assigned to them.⁵¹

Hooper, Smith, Perkins, Ames, and Preston

For an historical study such as this attempts to be, an examination of the teachings of some important Puritans is helpful and perhaps necessary. Of the early group of English Reformed writers, John Hooper is especially interesting. According to one of his biographers, he "very effectively contributed to the popularizing of the extreme puritanic views of religion in England."⁵² His views on conversion are stated more fully and distinctly than the views of most English writers of the period. Beyond his personal influence, his teachings reached many, for his works continued to be republished during the latter part of the century. As has been observed, he was a follower of Bullinger.

In his Brief and Clear Confession of the Christian Faith (1550, republished 1581 and 1584), we find him writing: "I believe that the Father in Jesus Christ his Son through

⁵¹Davies, Worship of the Puritans, p. 216.

⁵²G. G. Perry, s. v. "John Hooper," DNB.

the Holy Ghost hath elected and chosen those that are his own, according to his good will, before the foundations of the world were laid, whom he hath predestinated unto life eternal"⁵³ But although this statement places Hooper in the Reformed tradition, another passage, from the epistle to his A declaration of the ten holy commaundementes (1548, republished 1550 and 1588), is in sharp contrast with Calvin's views on reprobation and man's inability.

The promise of grace appertaineth unto every sort of man in the world, and comprehendeth them all; howbeit within certain limits, and bounds, the which if men neglect or pass over, they exclude themselves from the promises in Christ: As Cain was no more excluded, till he excluded himself, than Abel; Saul than David; Judas than Peter; Esau than Jacob Howbeit . . . [the] threatenings [of God] against Esau, if he had not of his wilful malice excluded himself from the promise of grace, should no more have hindered his salvation, than God's threatenings against Ninive⁵⁴

Hooper's teachings are an excellent example of the kind of theology to be found among English writers of the Reformed tradition before scholasticism began to set in; later, this would have been labelled Arminianism. Another important Puritan, of a somewhat later period, is Henry Smith (c.1550-1591), the Chrysostom of the English pulpit,

⁵³Later Writings, ed. Charles Nevins (Cambridge, Eng., 1852), p. 25. This quotation is from the eleventh of the hundred articles in the Confession.

⁵⁴Early Writings, ed. Samuel Carr (Cambridge, Eng., 1843), p. 265.

whose popularity is indicated by the fact that in the twenty-one years from 1589 to 1610, eighty-three editions of his sermons were published.⁵⁵

It is significant that in Smith's published writings⁵⁶ no references to Romans IX. 19-25 appear, a favorite text among the predestinarians. Further, one of his best sermons, "Jacob's Ladder, or The Way to Heaven," makes no mention at all of predestination. Smith's position on the salvation process can be pieced together from pronouncements appearing throughout his works. Rather than tell his hearers how to apply Christ's righteousness to themselves, more often Smith, like Calvin, assures his hearers that they are the elect and asks that they act accordingly:

The light of the Gentiles is our light, your light and my light: Christ is our grace, your grace and my grace; and Christ is our salvation, your salvation and my salvation. . . . He came into the world when the world did abound in wickedness, and saved us when we most deserved wrath. Wonder at this, you that wonder at nothing, that the Lord would come to bring salvation, to redeem our lost souls, even, as it were, against our wills; so that now we would not be as we were for a thousand worlds.⁵⁷

For Smith, "Christ is their salvation that believe in

⁵⁵See A. F. Herr, The Elizabethan Sermon (Philadelphia, 1940), pp. 99-102; Mitchell, English Pulpit Oratory, pp. 208-212.

⁵⁶The Works of Henry Smith, ed. Thomas Smith (Edinburgh, 1866-1867).

⁵⁷Works, II, 192.

him, and make much of him, and thankfully receive him."⁵⁸

"If you will you may be saved, and the Lord will one day put those words into my mouth that will touch your hearts.

Therefore now arise, kiss and embrace the sweet babe Jesus, and then frame yourselves to obey him; for then the Lord will knock at your hearts, and if you will let him in, he will teach you all things."⁵⁹ The passages are significant because, had they been uttered by a seventeenth-century Puritan (such as Hooker), the preacher would have made clear that only those whom God has elected will ever truly will to be saved; that men can neither frame themselves to obey God nor thankfully receive Jesus: men can only ask God to give them the ability to do these things, things that natural man can never do. Although we may feel sure that Smith's abstract theological views were very similar to Calvin's,⁶⁰ he clearly did not feel any necessity to discuss man's spiritual inabilities, let alone dwell on them at length.⁶¹

On the important question of the perseverance of the saints Smith seems to have held pre-scholastic views. He wrote, ". . . when thou art weary of thy godliness, God doth

⁵⁸Works, II, 180.

⁵⁹Works, II, 186-187.

⁶⁰See his high praise of Calvin and Geneva in Works, II, 311.

⁶¹For Smith's ideas on human spiritual ability, see his Works, I, 67, and II, 193.

not count thee good, but weary of godliness; and when thou declinest from righteousness, God doth not count thee righteous, but revolted from righteousness. . . . As God's mercy endureth for ever, so our righteousness should endure for ever."⁶² For the "High Calvinist" or Bezaist, our righteousness will endure for ever (with brief lapses), if we are of the elect.⁶³

Of roughly the same period as Smith is William Perkins, probably the most famous and important Puritan theologian. At least eleven editions of his collected works were published during the period 1600-1635; his writings appeared in English, Latin, Spanish, Dutch, Welsh, and Irish. His influence was especially great in New England, and for seventeenth-century Puritans, he ranked with Calvin in importance.⁶⁴

⁶²Works, II, 91.

⁶³But Beza, like most of the other followers of Calvin who believed in the perseverance doctrine, let himself slip at least once into heterodoxy on this doctrine. He contends in one place "that they which neuer had externall nor internall calling, they (if wee regard an ordinarie calling) must needes perish: but whosoeuer is once called, he hath set as it were his foote in the first entrie into the kingdome of heauen: and unlesse it be by his owne default, he shall come afterwards into the courts of God & so by degrees into his Maiesties pallace."--"A Treatise of M. Theodore Beza," published in William Perkins, A golden Chaine (Cambridge, Eng., 1600), p. 182; italics mine. See also the passage immediately following this one.

⁶⁴See Wright, "William Perkins," pp. 171, 192, 194; and Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," Pubs. Col. Soc. Mass., Transactions, 1933-1937, XXXII (1938), 255.

Although Perkins was the author of abstract works, such as Armillia aurea, or A golden Chaine, again and again he emphasized practical aspects of Christianity, giving advice on such everyday problems as business morality. In his . . . Exposition . . . of Zephaniah he taught that godliness will bring prosperity to individuals and nations; in Christian Oeconomie he dealt with home management problems.⁶⁵

Perkins is interesting because he combined with his practical interests a very strict, "High Calvinist" supralapsarian theology, which is readily distinguishable from Calvin's Calvinism.⁶⁶ Whereas Calvin's test of election is, as we have noted, simple, with the new theology conversion becomes the chief end of man; to Calvin it was only the beginning. This new emphasis on assurance is shown by the title of one of Perkins's works, A Case of Conscience, the greatest that euer vvas; Hovv a man may know whether he be the Childe of Ged, or no. The same emphasis is to be found in another of Perkins's works, the title of which is an

⁶⁵See Wright, "William Perkins," pp. 180-185. Although none of Hooker's extant sermons are practical in the way that Perkins's are, New England Puritan divines frequently preached on such practical subjects as the duties of husbands and wives. See E. S. Morgan, "Light on the Puritans from John Hall's Notebook," New England Quarterly, XV (1942), 95-101, especially p. 99.

⁶⁶Perkins is also interesting, as we shall see, because his teaching on the preparation process was not quite orthodox. For Perkins's position in relation to the Reformed theology, see Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, III (Göttingen, 1926), 300-303.

interesting revelation of the occasional disregard of predestinarianism by Puritans in practical matters: A Treatise tending unto a declaration whether a man be in the estate of damnation or in the estate of grace: and if he be in the first, how he may in time come out of it; if in the second, how he maie discerne it, and perseuere to the end.⁶⁷

Another shift of emphasis, one we have already observed in the tightening up of Continental Reformed theology, is also to be observed in Perkins's writings. The subtitle of his treatise A golden Chaine is The Description of Theologie, containing the order of the causes of Saluation and Damnation.⁶⁸ Apparent here is the new concern with the order of the divine decrees, the favorite topic of debate among Protestant scholastics of the Continental Reformed churches. Calvin wrote about the one decree of God; for him discussion of the decrees would have been purposeless hairsplitting.

A somewhat detailed discussion of Perkins's theology, especially as presented in A golden Chaine, is useful for our purposes, since it is a full flowering of "High Calvinism" and will permit us to see how the new theology differs from Calvin's teaching. Two important differences strike

⁶⁷For A Case, I use the edition of London, 1595; for A Treatise, the edition of London, 1589.

⁶⁸I use the edition of Cambridge, 1600.

the reader of A golden Chaine at once: (1) the material is arranged in a very intricate system, with divisions and sub-divisions, and sub-subdivisions.⁶⁹ (2) Election and reprobation and "the application of Predestination" loom much larger here. Six chapters, more than ten per cent of the whole, are devoted to the subject of reprobation.

Although double predestination is set forth early in the book (pages 10 and 11), few soteriological points are handled in the first hundred pages; then soteriology dominates the discussion. We are told that "the gospel preached is . . . [the] ordinary means to beget faith," and that, except in infants, the faith necessary for salvation is based on "a knowledge of Gods free promise."⁷⁰ Perkins then proceeds to present details of the steps in the "declaration of Gods loue." The four steps and their parts are as follows:

I. Effectual calling, which has two aspects: election

⁶⁹ Compare Perry Miller's statement: "The great difference between Calvin and the so-called Calvinists of the seventeenth century is symbolized by the vast importance they attached to the one word, "method."--Seventeenth Century, p. 95. I would by no means agree that this symbolizes "the great difference."

⁷⁰ Pages 103 and 144. Miller uses such statements as these as a basis for his idea that the New Englanders departed from orthodoxy by granting man ability to "prepare" himself for salvation, by listening to expositions of Christian doctrine, for example. See Miller, "'Preparation for Salvation' in Seventeenth-Century New England," Journal of the History of Ideas, IV (1943), 253-286. But I have no reason to believe that Calvin would have disagreed with the "preparation" idea, although, as we shall see, some later "High Calvinists" did.

and union. In the latter God gives the elect to Christ as a free gift. These two steps are accomplished by:

A. "The saving hearing of the word of God" (page 117), first the Law, then the gospel.

B. The bruising of the heart by:

1. The knowledge of the law of God.
2. The knowledge of sin and its punishment.
3. Compunction for sin.
4. Recognition of one's inability to stop sinning.

C. Faith applied by the Holy Ghost, which causes man to:

1. Know the gospel.
2. Hope for pardon.
3. Be eager for the grace of Christ.
4. Approach the throne of grace with confession of sins and craving for pardon, based on the application of God's promises, which the Holy Ghost has persuaded man are his. This "perswasio is, & ought to be in euery one."⁷¹

⁷¹p. 119. The phrase "is & ought to be" represents the kind of confusion which one often finds in the Reformed theology: predestination controls what "is," but the preacher holds man responsible for what "ought to be."

II. Justification, in which those who believe are accounted just through the obedience of Christ, who performed the Law for man. After justification man is to keep the Law only as a testimony of his faith. There are two parts to justification:

A. Remission of sins.

B. Imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the sinner.

III. Sanctification, in which men are delivered from sins and have their righteousness renewed by:

A. Mortification: sin is kept under control.

B. Vivification: holiness is created by the Holy Spirit.

IV. Repentance, which is based on sanctification, and in which man denies himself, professes Christ, and turns to God.⁷²

This somewhat lengthy and doubtless dull summary of an important section of Perkins's most significant work has been presented in order to indicate the approach which the "High Calvinist" took. The order and divisions are significant because the same type of organization--indeed, almost the identical organization--was used again and again in the sermons of Thomas Hooker and other important Puritan preachers.

⁷²A golden Chaine, pp. 114-128.

For the purposes of this study, the chapter entitled "Of the application of Predestination" (Chapter 58) is also helpful. Here we learn that the elect reach, in time, assurance of salvation by testimony of God's spirit and by the results of sanctification--thus by both Calvin's and Beza's tests. Some of the effects of sanctification include, according to Perkins, the desire "to striue against the flesh," "to loue the ministers of Gods word," and "to flie all occasions of sinne." (page 77) But one must not conclude that he is a reprobate even if he has not observed in himself these effects. "Let him rather vse the word of God, and the Sacraments, that hee may haue an inward sense of the power of Christ, drawing him vnto him, and an assurance of his redemption by Christs death and passion."⁷³

Perkins's detailed listing of the qualities of the elect here and elsewhere⁷⁴ seems clearly designed to persuade the reader to adopt these qualities; however, Perkins doubtless would have defended the list as an aid in

⁷³p. 78. Where the conversion experience and the concept of effectual calling fit into this discussion of assurance is unclear. Perkins's attitude towards the Sacraments does not seem altogether orthodox, if the person who is exhorted to use the Sacraments is as yet uncalled. Should this be what is meant, then Perkins's view is similar to that of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritan "heretic" Solomon Stoddard. For "Stoddardeanism," see Perry Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), especially pp. 227-236, hereafter cited as Colony to Province.

⁷⁴For example, A Treatise, pp. 28ff.

performing the duty which he believed every man to have: to examine his soul to see "whether hee be in the faith or not."⁷⁵

Clearly Perkins had a far greater concern with the health of his followers' souls (and with their apprehension of it) than we found Calvin to have had. Perkins was especially concerned with the question of how far a reprobate can go down the path to salvation, and how far a saint must go before he can be considered saved. All that a saint must have is a faith "compared to the graine of mustard seed, the least of all seedes";⁷⁶ for if a man ". . . doth but begin to be conuerted, [he] is euen at that instant, the very child of God, though inwardly he may be more carnall than spirituall."⁷⁷ "To see and feelee in our selues the want of any grace pertaining to saluation, and to be grieued therefore, is the grace itselfe."⁷⁸ On the other hand, a reprobate may have most signs of election,⁷⁹ for many reprobates are called (though not "effectually") and are to a degree enlightened, have penitence, a temporary faith, even a "tasting" of justification and sanctification, and

⁷⁵"To the Reader," in A Treatise.

⁷⁶Workes, I, 366.

⁷⁷Workes, I, 637.

⁷⁸Workes, I, 641. See also A golden Chaine, pp. 120-121.

⁷⁹A Treatise, pp. 1-27.

demonstrate for a time, before finally falling away, an outward holiness of life.⁸⁰ Determining one's spiritual health is clearly no easy matter. For Calvin, assurance was to be achieved in order that a Christian might go on with his duties; for Perkins, one's duty was achieving assurance, or rather, it would seem, achieving salvation.

One final passage from Perkins is worth quoting, for it demonstrates how far even a "High Calvinist" departed from his theology in practical application. "God hath appointed," writes Perkins, "vnto euery man that liues in the Church a certaine time of repentance, & of coming to Christ. And hee which misspendeth that time, & is not made a Christian then, can neuer be saved."⁸¹ What this implies it is hard to say. Does every man have an equal opportunity to be saved, an opportunity which he may spend or misspend? Or is it that the elect manifest themselves by responding to the call, the reprobate by failing to respond? The passage has the kind of ambiguity which can be found in much Reformed writing on practical, applied subjects: it can be read so that it is consistent with predestinarianism, but at the same time it offers hope to all.⁸²

William Ames (1576-1633), author of another standard

⁸⁰A golden Chaine, pp. 176-179.

⁸¹Workes, I, 379.

⁸²For the effects of the Puritan doctrines here presented by Perkins, see Bunyan's Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.

textbook of Puritanism, especially the New England variety, is a significant representative of a period of theological development somewhat later than Perkins.⁸³ As we shall see later, he is an important figure in the new school of covenant theology. But except for the sections on the covenants, Ames's Marrow of Sacred Divinity contains nothing particularly divergent from the earlier Reformed theology of such divines as Perkins. But there is an important new emphasis on the process by which man receives the benefits of Christ's redemption, and a more detailed account of the steps which man may take in order to be saved. On these developments our discussion of Ames will focus.

Ames is clearly a believer in the limited atonement: ". . . application is altogether of the same latitude with redemption it selfe, that is, the redemption of Christ is allied to all and only those, for whom it was obtained, by the intention of Christ and the Father" ⁸⁴ Although this process of application is treated in the Marrow in detail--with chapters on calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification--the chapter on vocation or calling is most relevant here.

⁸³For Ames's influence, see Miller, Seventeenth Century, p. 48. Miller calls Ames's Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof the Puritan "guide book for earthly existence."--Colony to Province, p. 40.

⁸⁴Marrow, p. 100.

The parts of the process of vocation, for Ames, are two: the "offer of Christ, and the receiving him The offer is an objective propounding of Christ, as of a means sufficient and necessary to salvation."⁸⁵ The instruments of the offer are preaching, the "outward offer," and the Holy Ghost, who by an inward offer spiritually enlightens the hearts of the men who are to be saved.⁸⁶ If it is their time, men then passively receive Christ by means of "a spiritual principle of grace . . . begotten in the will of man"; in the will because its conversion "is an effectual principle of the conversion of the whole man." The will is not free but is under "obedientiall subjection." Faith is the result of this new grace, and it is exercised "certainly unavoydably and unchangeably."⁸⁷ Faith comes first in the process of conversion, but repentance, though caused by faith, is perceived first.⁸⁸ The real order and the perceived order are not the same.⁸⁹

After digesting such statements as these, the non-predestinarian may be at least momentarily bewildered by Ames's discussion elsewhere of man's role in the salvation process.

⁸⁵ Marrow, p. 110.

⁸⁶ Marrow, p. 111.

⁸⁷ Marrow, pp. 112-113.

⁸⁸ Marrow, p. 114.

⁸⁹ This is an example of the Puritan split between what theology taught and what experience demonstrated.

In answer to the question "What ought a man to do, that he may be translated out of a state of sin, into the state of Grace?" Ames responds, examine yourself by the Law, convict yourself of sin, despair of being saved by self-reliance or help from man, achieve true humiliation.⁹⁰ Ames also answers the questions of "what a man is to doe that he may repent,"⁹¹ "what a man ought to doe that hee may obtaine the lively act, and the sense of it [adoption],"⁹² and "what a man ought to do that he may be sanctified."⁹³ We may also learn from Ames how to make progress in sanctification.⁹⁴ Even the means to the supposedly key step, obtaining faith, is set forth by Ames.⁹⁵

How is it that Ames (and Perkins) can present strict predestinarian views and yet give details about how to take the steps in the salvation process, from vocation to sanctification, when the process for the elect is completely controlled by God? The answer is not far to seek. Since election "makes no inward difference in the Predestinate themselves before the actual dispensation of this application,"⁹⁶

⁹⁰Conscience, Bk. II, p. 8.

⁹¹Conscience, Bk. II, p. 18.

⁹²Conscience, Bk. II, p. 23.

⁹³Conscience, Bk. II, p. 25.

⁹⁴Conscience, Bk. II, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁵Conscience, Bk. II, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁶Marrow, p. 103.

one who seriously wishes to find the way to salvation is interested simply because he is predestined to be saved. When he has discovered what the means prescribed are, he will take advantage of what he has learned; he will follow the prescribed course. This is God's method of bringing men to salvation, according to Samuel Willard, because to be "carried by instinct, and a blind impulse" "would be to treat us, not as men, but as brutes." God's way is "by Counsel," for indeed "believing in Christ, is a most deliberate act. The man considers and sees reason for what he doth."⁹⁷

It is true that Willard's explanation is somewhat bolder than Perkins's or Ames's would have been: the word "reason" looms larger in Willard's discussion than it would have in an earlier period, and over fifty years separates Willard and Ames. But an explanation is needed, and Willard's is doubtless correct. Perry Miller uses a Willard-like interpretation to explain how the Puritans reconciled predestination and exhortations to save one's self. He suggests that "sermons are the chief means of salvation because they are best accommodated to God's treating with men as with rational creatures, and ministers who carry the Gospel to the world must persuade the mind of the world to believe."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Body of Divinity, p. 451. According to Miller, Willard's great work "always summarizes New England opinion." --Seventeenth Century, p. 199.

⁹⁸ Seventeenth Century, p. 292.

Further understanding of how the Puritans reconciled the seeming opposites is supplied by one of the best preachers of seventeenth-century Puritanism, John Preston (1587-1628), who was very influential in both old and New England.⁹⁹ Although a full discussion of Preston's writings is more relevant to the discussion below of "preparation for salvation," some mention here of his teaching is necessary. One of Preston's most interesting works is posthumous: The Position of John Preston . . . Concerning the Irresistibility of Grace, in which he is revealed to be a super-subtle Protestant scholastic of the "High Calvinist" school. The work is especially interesting because the position which Preston sets forth he describes as "our opinion": the opinion, that is, of the Puritan party. The work, though extremely abstruse, should be studied by all students of Puritanism. Here only one portion, albeit an important one, can be examined. Preston's position is that grace is irresistible and yet man remains free: irresistible in fact, grace from the point of view of the person undergoing the process appears to be resistible. Preston considers the conversion process in four steps:

1. God infuseth into the whole Soule, and so into the Will, a habit or quality of holinesse, renewing it, and making it, of evill good, of unwilling

⁹⁹Seventeenth Century, pp. 18, 186, 200 and passim.

willing:¹⁰⁰ by which meanes, that which belongs to the nature of the Will, is preserved entire, but that which was corrupt is rectified.

2. From the quality so infused, presently there arise in the Will, certaine imperfect inclinations, preventing the notice of reason, like unto those which the School-men call the very first Motions of the heart. For by these the will doth not compleatly, and effectually will that which is good, but is onely initially, and incompleatly inclined to those good workes which please God, from whence such acts may be called, not so much willings, as wishings and wouldings.

3. Those inclinations are presented as an object to the understanding, which weighs them, debates them, takes counsel about them; and at length, when it hath by its ultimate, and conclusive dictates, confirmed them, propounds them to the will as to be chosen.

4. After those initiall inclinations, arising from infused Grace, have passed the censure of the understanding and are allowed by the preceding judgement there of; then at length doth the Will put forth a compleat and effectual willingnesse, from which conversion immediately doth follow, or rather that very willing is the conversion of a man unto God.¹⁰¹

From this passage much can be learned. Perhaps most significant is the light it sheds on the Puritan preacher's attempts to persuade the understanding of his hearers. Persuading itself was not enough; even the most persuasive preacher could do nothing with the understanding of even the most (seemingly) rational men unless God effected the inward means of salvation to match the outward means, preaching; and whom God had chosen to be called was, of course, unknown. All man could do was to assume that any man might be an

¹⁰⁰An echo of a frequently-quoted phrase of St. Augustine's.

¹⁰¹The Position of John Preston (London, 1654), pp. 5-6.

uncalled saint, and then apply all the persuasion that could be mustered. But the barrier to salvation was in the depraved will of man, and not in the understanding. Although Puritan psychologies usually gave the understanding dominion over the will in man as God created him, the will, since the Fall, is "driver of all faculties," according to Preston.¹⁰² Thus for Preston and Ames, like Calvin, the sermon was sacramental in nature.

The order which Preston sets forth also deserves attention. It seems that inward grace works before the reason observes its action ("preventing the notice of reason"). Then, presumably, man recognizes the validity of the preached gospel only after grace has permitted him to recognize it. In a sense the gospel preached might be regarded as being, for the elect, the "rationalizing" of grace. In Redeemed Man, as contrasted with Natural Man, the will follows the judgment of reason, and this new and proper order is itself conversion. Grace is irresistible; yet man remains free.

In passages in another work, The Brest-Plate of Faith and Love, Preston reveals more clearly than Ames, Perkins, or most other Puritan preachers the relationship of man's

¹⁰²Quoted by Miller, Seventeenth Century, p. 249. Miller's discussion of the Puritan ideas of the relationship of the will to the understanding is much less clear than most of his presentation, but his quotations are helpful. His full discussion occupies pages 248-251.

ability to predestination. According to Preston, "That righteousness, by which alone we can be saved now in the time of the Gospel, is revealed and offered to all that will take it."¹⁰³ The same point is made again and again: ". . . it is given to every man, there is not a man excepted" (page 7). But all of this is not to say that Preston believes only in the "general" or outward calling, rather than in the "particular" or inward calling. "Indeed, when Christ was offered to every man, and one received him, another rejected him, then the Mystery of Election & Reprobation was revealed, the reason why some received him being, because God gave them a heart, which to the rest he gave not" (page 8). But since the aim of the predestinarian Preston is persuasion, he contends that no sin "shall be so much layd to your charge at the day of Judgement, as your rejecting of the Sonne, and of his righteousness revealed, and freely offered to you"; though indeed the means of receiving the Son is "the gift of faith . . . a fruit of election."¹⁰⁴

More than most Puritans Preston emphasizes the connection between ethics and faith, the relationship so central to Calvin's thought. "I say," says Preston, "he that hath the strongest Faith, he that beleeves in the greatest degree the promises of pardon and remission, I dare boldly say, he

¹⁰³Brest-Plate (London, 1651; first edition, 1630), p. 2.

¹⁰⁴Brest-Plate, pp. 22 and 10.

hath the holiest heart, and the holiest life. For that is the roote of it, it ariseth from that roote"105

It is worth noting that Preston, like other leading conversion preachers--among them Hooker and Shepard--seems to assume that his hearers know wherein holiness lies. In their writings we do not often find the kind of practical advice concerning everyday Christian duties that can be observed in such earlier writings as those of Perkins and Smith.

Some Anglican Views

Before we examine symbols of faith in order to observe how Reformed thought developed in England, it may be instructive to look briefly at the conversion teaching of some non-Puritan Anglicans.¹⁰⁶ One of the most useful documents is the official collection of sermons read again and again from the pulpit throughout Elizabeth's reign, the two books of Certaine Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches. According to Philip Hughes, the first five homilies of the first book "form the earliest manifesto to

¹⁰⁵The Nevv Covenant (London, 1634; first edition, 1629), pp. 349-350.

¹⁰⁶The term "Anglican" could of course be used to describe Perkins, Smith, Hooper and even Preston, but is less defensible for Ames, a professor at Franeker, and for Hooker and the other New Englanders.

proclaim the fundamentals of the Protestant Reformation as the official religion of the Ecclesia Anglicana."¹⁰⁷ The very titles of these homilies reveal their emphasis: (1) A Fruitful Exhortation to the reading of Holy Scripture; (2) Of the misery of all Mankind; (3) Of the Salvation of all Mankind; (4) Of the true and lively Faith; and (5) Of Good Works. Although the homilies teach doctrine which is clearly Protestant and emphasizes justification sola fide and the Pauline concept of the relation of faith to good works, they are definitely not in the Reformed tradition, but more nearly Lutheran.¹⁰⁸

The concept of total depravity is very prominent. One eloquent passage puts it as follows:

We are all become unclean, but we all are not able to cleanse our selves, nor make one another of us clean. We are by nature the children of God's wrath, but we are not able to make our selves the children and inheritors of God's glory. . . . we can find in our selves no hope of salvation, but rather whatsoever maketh unto our destruction.¹⁰⁹

After this passage comes, not praise of God for electing some from this state of utter depravity, but praise of God for providing men with the means of grace and the hope of glory. It may have been the lack of predestinarian teaching

¹⁰⁷ The Reformation in England (London, 1954), II, 96.

¹⁰⁸ Homilies Three and Four are by Cranmer.

¹⁰⁹ Certain Sermons (London, 1726), Homily Two, pp. 10-11.

which caused the Puritans to contend in 1616 that the Homilies do not contain godly doctrine in every point.¹¹⁰

In the sermons of Archbishop Edwin Sandys (c.1518-1588) the same concept appears as in the Homilies: "He [God] commandeth vs . . . to doe that which of our selues we are not able to doe; that seeing our want, we may craue his grace and helpe, which will enable vs to drawe neere vnto him."¹¹¹ Perhaps we should not take too seriously the lack of predestinarian views in Sandys's sermons. His sermon "Draw neere to God, and he will drawe neere to you"¹¹² is doctrinally very similar to "Jacob's Ladder," a sermon on the same topic --the way to Heaven--by the Puritan "Calvinist" Henry Smith.

A reading of seventeenth-century "High Calvinist" sermons probably would lead one to expect greater emphasis on predestination and man's inability in Elizabethan sermons than one actually finds there. But if the Homilies and other sermons of sixteenth-century Anglicans lack the strict doctrines of the later period, the lack is less obvious in the doctrinal treatises of the period. We have observed that only two purely theological treatises were written by English Protestants in Elizabeth's reign. But other works,

¹¹⁰ See Davies, Worship of the Puritans, p. 187. It is interesting to note that Bucer found "the teachings of the Homilies in agreement with his own teaching and that of his fellow reformers"--Constantin Hopf, Martin Bucer and the English Reformation (Oxford, 1946), p. 81.

¹¹¹ Sermons (London, 1616), p. 57.

¹¹² Sermon Seven in the collected edition cited.

such as catechisms, did appear. One of the most important of these works is the semi-official catechism by Alexander Nowell (c.1507-1602), Dean of St. Paul's.¹¹³ Though not labelled a Puritan, Nowell was a strict predestinarian, as the following passage makes clear:

They that be stedfast, stable, and constant in the faith, were chosen and appointed, and (as we term it) predestinated to this so great felicity, before the foundations of the world were laid; whereof they have a witness within them in their souls, the Spirit of Christ the author, and thereunto also the most sure pledge of this confidence.¹¹⁴

In the seventeenth century the Church of England was no more free from Protestant scholasticism of the Reformed variety than Puritanism was. Anglican scholasticism is manifested in Joseph Hall's very interesting work, "Via Media: The Way of Peace" (c.1623). Hall, later a bishop, here tries to settle on a compromise between the "High Calvinists" and the Arminians on the "Five Points," and in the process reveals that although not quite willing to go along with all five points of the Synod of Dort, he nevertheless stands with the strict supralapsarians on important points. One passage in the "Via Media" is interesting also for its similarity to the passage from John Preston quoted at length

¹¹³A Catechism, ed. G. E. Corrie (Cambridge, Eng., 1853). For a discussion of its status, see pp. iv-vi. It was published in 1570, 1571, 1574, and 1576.

¹¹⁴A Catechism, p. 171.

above:

God, when he will and to whom he will, gives such an abundant, such powerful, such congruous, otherwise effectual grace, that, although the will may, in respect of the liberty thereof, resist; yet it resists not, but doth certainly and infallibly obey: and that thus God deals with those, whom he hath chosen in Christ, so far as shall be necessary to their salvation.¹¹⁵

Hall, like Preston, contends that though grace is irresistible, man's will remains free.

Another passage reveals that Hall not only believed in the doctrine of irresistible grace but even regarded it as a standard doctrine:

To hold, that faith is so the gift of God, as that he doth not only give common and sufficient helps to men whereby they are made able to believe, if they will, but so works in them by his grace that they do by the power thereof actually believe and conceive true faith in their soul--this is fair and orthodox.¹¹⁶

It would be difficult to find a more extreme statement of the doctrine of irresistible grace than Hall's. His position on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is similarly extreme.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Works (Oxford, 1837), X, 494. Hall's terms for describing grace were carefully chosen from Roman Catholic, Arminian, and "High Calvinist" sources.

¹¹⁶Works, X, 483.

¹¹⁷Works, X, 496. The position of Richard Hooker (c.1554-1600), the most important Anglican theologian, is presented below in connection with the discussion of the Lambeth Articles.

English Reformed Symbols of Faith

In the doctrinal history of Puritanism, three documents are significant: the two official religious formularies, the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles (1563) and the Westminster Confession (1648); and the unofficial but useful Lambeth Articles (1595).¹¹⁸

That the Anglican Articles of Religion contain a statement of predestinarian views stricter than most Continental Reformed symbols--stricter than any of the sixteenth century which we have examined--is an observation which has seldom been made. Article XVII, "Of Predestination and Election," which is the longest of the articles, states clearly the doctrine of double predestination. While the article is too lengthy to be quoted here in its entirety, the following portions are especially relevant:

Predestination to lyfe is the euerlastyng purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were layd) he hath constantly decreed by his counsell secrete to us, to deliuer from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christe out of mankynd, and to bryng them by Christ to euerlastyng saluation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefite of God, be called accordyng to Gods purpose by his spirit workyng in due season: they through grace obey the callyng: they be iustified freely: they be made sonnes of God by adoption: they be made lyke the image of his onely begotten sonne Jesus

¹¹⁸ The revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles begun by the Westminster Assembly went only as far as Article XV. Notice of a revision is given below.

Christe: they walke religiously in good workes, and at length by Gods mercy, they attaine to euerlastyng felicitie.

. . . for curious and carnal persons, lacking the spirite of Christe, to haue continually before their eyes the sentence of Gods predestination, is a most daungerous downefall, whereby the deuyll doth thrust them either into desperation, or into rechelesnesse of most vncllean living, no lesse perilous than desperation.¹¹⁹

It is not surprising that in 1643 the Puritans regarded the Articles as orthodox and sound;¹²⁰ as Schaff puts it, the article on predestination contains "all that is essential, and a matter of dogma in the Reformed Churches."¹²¹ Reprobation is clearly implied--no one was ever "thrust into desperation" by Arminian doctrine. Grace is irresistible: "they through grace obey the calling"; there is no question of resisting it. The saints persevere: "they attain to euerlastyng felicitie."

On two other of the so-called "Five Points" the Articles are less clearly "High Calvinist." Article II states that Christ was a sacrifice for "all actual sins of men" as well as original sin. The Puritans, when revising the Articles, left out the "all" in order to make the article

¹¹⁹Schaff, Creeds, III, 497-498.

¹²⁰Schaff, Creeds, I, 754.

¹²¹Schaff, Creeds, I, 635. See also pp. 623 and 634.

conform to the doctrine of a limited atonement.¹²² Article IX, "of Original or Birth-Sin," refers to man as "very far gone from original righteousness"; the Puritans revised this later to read, "wholly deprived of original righteousness."¹²³ The second is of course more explicit, although the first may seem extreme enough.

Although the Lambeth Articles were never proclaimed as official doctrine within the Church of England, Thomas Fuller says that they contain "the general and received doctrine of England in that age"¹²⁴ That they were at least close to being this may be suggested by presenting in juxtaposition the nine articles and eight statements in which Richard Hooker, the foremost Anglican theologian, summed up his own position on the same doctrines. The Lambeth Articles appeared in 1595; Hooker stated his position in the later 1590's.

Lambeth Articles

1. God from eternity hath predestinated certain men unto life; certain men he hath reprobated.

Richard Hooker's Position

1. That God hath predestinated certain men, not all men.

¹²²The Articles are compared in an appendix to Neal, History of the Puritans, V, liii-lxiii. This difference is pointed out by E. S. C. Gibson, The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (London, 1876), I, 149.

¹²³Neal, History of the Puritans, V, lviii.

¹²⁴Church History of Britain (Oxford, 1845), V, 227, quoted by Schaff, Creeds, I, 658. For the background of the Articles, see Dawley, Whitgift, pp. 208-221.

2. The moving or efficient cause of predestination unto life is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or of any thing that is in the persons predestinated, but only the good will and pleasure of God.

3. There is predetermined a certain number of the predestinate, which can neither be augmented nor diminished.

4. Those who are not predestinated shall be necessarily damned for their sins.

5. A true, living, and justifying faith, and the Spirit of God justifying [Latin original sanctificans] is not extinguished, falleth not away; it vanisheth not away in the elect, either finally or totally.

6. A man truly faithful, that is, such a one who is endued with a justifying faith, is certain, with the full assurance of faith, of the remission of his sins and of his everlasting salvation by Christ.

7. Saving grace is not given, is not granted, is not communicated to all men by which they may be saved if they will.

8. No man can come unto Christ unless it shall be given unto him, and unless the Father shall draw him; and all men are not drawn by the Father, that they may come to the Son.

2. That the cause, moving him hereunto, was not the foresight of any virtue in us at all.

3. That to him the number of his elect is definitely known.

4. That it cannot be but their sins must condemn them, to whom the purpose of his saving mercy doth not extend.

5. That to God's foreknown elect final continuance of grace is given.

[No equivalent.]

6. That inward grace, whereby to be saved, is deservedly not given unto all men.

7. That no man cometh unto Christ, whom God, by the inward grace of his Spirit, draweth not.

9. It is not in the will or power of every one to be saved.¹²⁵

8. And that it is not in every, no not in any man's mere ability, freedom, and power, to be saved, no man's salvation being possible without grace. Howbeit, God is no favorer of sloth; and therefore there can be no such absolute decree, touching man's salvation as on our part includeth no necessity of care and travail, but shall certainly take effect, whether we ourselves do wake or sleep.¹²⁶

That the Lambeth Articles teach "High Calvinism" is readily evident. Although Hooker's comments on the last article make clear that he did not like the emphasis of the Articles, it is to be observed that only on the question of assurance of election does he seem to have been unwilling to go along with the conclusions presented. Admittedly, his position is less extreme, especially on questions of reprobation, but the Articles themselves are even more extreme than the Canons of Dort. Richard Hooker's position is only, in Schaff's phrase, a "slight modification" of the Articles.¹²⁷ Hooker is more nearly an Arminian than the great majority of sixteenth-century Anglicans; according to a prominent nineteenth-century Anglican, ". . . during an

¹²⁵Schaff, Creeds, III, 523-524.

¹²⁶Works, ed. Keble, Church, and Paget (Oxford, 1888), II, 596-597.

¹²⁷Schaff, Creeds, I, 661. See F. E. Pamp, Jr., "Studies in the Origins of English Arminianism," unpub. diss. (Harvard, 1950).

interval of nearly thirty years the most extreme opinions of the school of Calvin, not excluding his theory of irrelative reprobation, were predominant in almost every town and parish."¹²⁸ We may conclude that Fuller's statement, as well as Archbishop Whitgift's own description of the Articles,¹²⁹ is accurate enough: they represented the consensus of the Church of England.

The most important symbol of faith for our purposes is not an Anglican document, but one which represents solely the Puritan point of view: the very full and detailed Westminster Confession.¹³⁰ According to Schaff, the Confession shows the "Calvinist system in its scholastic maturity."¹³¹ Although the work was not prepared until the 1640's, like all symbols of faith it sets forth only what had come to be accepted as orthodox by a large number of divines of its party. The Confession contains the very theology that Puritans had been preaching; Ames, Preston, and Hooker were among its exponents. Miller has contended that ". . . the Confession was written by Presbyterian Calvinists, not

¹²⁸Archdeacon Hardwick, History of the Articles (2nd ed.), quoted by Dowden, Outlines, p. 67. The period was the close of Elizabeth's reign.

¹²⁹Given above, pp. 49-50.

¹³⁰In Schaff's parallel-column Latin-English text, the Confession occupies seventy-three pages.

¹³¹Creeds, I, 760. Schaff observes that the authors were well acquainted with recent developments in Continental Reformed theology.

quite sophisticated enough to grasp the subtleties of the Covenant" idea.¹³² But Chapter VII is devoted to the topic "Of God's covenant with man"; and, as Schaff notes, this is the first inclusion of the covenant idea in a symbol of faith.¹³³

Although in soteriology the Confession is similar to the Lambeth Articles, there are some new elements and new emphases. After a clear exposition of double predestination,¹³⁴ a discussion of effectual calling is presented, significant for the role which "means" of conversion plays in the process:

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed in Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any

¹³²Colony to Province, p. 55.

¹³³Schaff, Creeds, I, 773. It is significant that in the standard study of covenant theology, there is a discussion of the Westminster Confession. See Gottlob Schrenk, Gottesreich und Bund im Älteren Protestantismus vornehmlich bei Johannes Coccejus (Gütersloh, 1923). Of the Confession, Schrenk writes, "Hier macht zum erten Male ein Bekenntnis die Föderallehre für eine grosse Kirche symbolisch." (p. 82) Although Hooker, John Cotton, and John Davenport were invited to attend the assembly, they did not make the trip. But the Massachusetts Synod of 1648 endorsed the Confession as orthodox. See G. L. Walker, Thomas Hooker (New York, 1891), pp. 136-138, and Miller, Colony to Province, pp. 3-4.

¹³⁴Chapter III, section 3.

other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.¹³⁵

Also significant is that the authors of the Confession agree with Calvin on a basic question: the use of the doctrine of predestination should be to assure men who attend the will of God and yield obedience to it that they have been elected. If so used, the doctrine will ". . . afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God."¹³⁶

In the light of the Puritan concern with preparation for salvation,¹³⁷ it is worth noting that according to the orthodoxy of the Confession, man is not only unable to convert himself, but is also unable "to prepare himself there-to."¹³⁸ Only in effectual calling does God, by drawing men from their state of sin, enlighten their minds so that they may understand God's will. But even more important than this enlightening is the renewing of men's wills, "and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."¹³⁹

¹³⁵Chapter II, section 6, Schaff, Creeds, III, 609-610.

¹³⁶Chapter III, section 7, Schaff, Creeds, III, 610.

¹³⁷See Miller, "'Preparation for Salvation,'" and below.

¹³⁸IX, 3, Schaff, Creeds, III, 623.

¹³⁹X, 1, Schaff, Creeds, III, 624.

Saving grace is irresistible, and yet man remains free, for he is released from bondage to sin when he is renewed by the Holy Spirit and is "thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."¹⁴⁰

The position of John Preston has now been codified.

The teaching of the Confession on the role of preaching is also what we might expect after having read what Perkins and Ames have to say on the subject, although the presentation in the Confession is much less detailed. The central passage reads, ". . . the grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word" ¹⁴¹ "By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein" ¹⁴² Although the passage does not make clear that preaching was sacramental to the authors of the Confession, perhaps we can reach such a conclusion on the basis of a phrase in the chapter "Of Effectual Calling": those whom God has elected "he is pleased . . . effectually

¹⁴⁰X, 2, Schaff, Creeds, III, 625.

¹⁴¹XIV, 1, Schaff, Creeds, III, 630. The quotation continues: "by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments and prayer, it is increased and strengthened."

¹⁴²XIV, 2, Schaff, Creeds, III, 630.

to call, by his Word and Spirit"¹⁴³ The word calls outwardly, by preaching; the Spirit, inwardly.

Calvin's doctrine of assurance of salvation has an important place in the Confession: it occupies an entire chapter. But the new emphasis on the necessity of careful examination for proof is quite unlike Calvin's teaching. "This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it."¹⁴⁴

When we remember Calvin's belief that man would obey God only if he were assured of God's favor towards him, we can readily see the change.

The Confession is more explicit than any earlier confession on two of the "Five Points": perseverance and the limited atonement. The first section of the chapter on perseverance reads, "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."¹⁴⁵ In the chapter "Of Christ the Mediator" the Confession states as doctrine, "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption he doth certainly and

¹⁴³X, 1, Schaff, Creeds, III, 624; italics mine.

¹⁴⁴XVIII, 3, Schaff, Creeds, III, 638.

¹⁴⁵XVII, 1, Schaff, Creeds, III, 636.

effectually apply and communicate the same¹⁴⁶
 Christ died for the elect only.

We have observed the development of the Reformed theology from the time of Calvin to the Westminster Confession, a period of over one hundred years. Within the party that retained the name of orthodox we have seen doctrines attain new importance, and old doctrines come to be all but disregarded. We have seen theology become codified into scholasticism. The "High Calvinism" of Protestant scholasticism, mitigated, as we shall see, only slightly by covenant theology, provides the context for an examination of the teachings of Thomas Hooker, to whose works we shall now turn.

¹⁴⁶VIII, 8, Schaff, Creeds, III, 622.

CHAPTER III
THOMAS HOOKER'S THEOLOGY AND ETHICS,
AND HIS CONCEPT OF THE ROLE OF PREACHING

An investigation of the theology of Thomas Hooker is seriously impeded by the fact that although Hooker's extant works are voluminous--about five thousand printed pages in all--he left no single major work in which he presents his theology directly. The greater number of Hooker's works are sermons, either taken down by hearers and published without his permission, or in a few cases prepared for publication by Hooker himself.¹ Of the remainder, one is a brief catechism, An Exposition of the Principles of Religion (London, 1645); another is his great work on church polity, A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline (London, 1648); two others are prefatory epistles to works by other men: one to William Ames's A Fresh Suit against human Ceremonies ([Rotterdam?] 1633), another to John Rogers's The Doctrine of Faith (3rd ed., London, 1629). Two other works, The Immortality of the Soul (London, 1646) and The Equall Wayes of God (London,

¹See Goodwin and Nye's Epistle prefatory to Hooker's Application of Redemption: The Ninth and Tenth Books (London, 1657).

1632), are probably not Hooker's work at all, though bibliographies so list them.² Like most Puritans, Hooker was not an expository preacher; he was a practical preacher. Thus we seldom find Hooker remaining in the realm of pure theology for very long, and what pure theology we do find is nearly always soteriological.³

Another serious obstacle to obtaining a good idea of the basic theology of Hooker is that he shifts his approach radically without warning, addressing the already-called saints from one theological position, and speaking to the uncalled from an apparently different position. As a result one needs always to take into consideration the context of Hooker's teachings; since he was above all a rhetorician, as Puritan doctrine demanded, the question of whom he is addressing is an important but not easy matter in determining how we are to consider what he says. For example, in The Soules Possession of Christ (London, 1638), Hooker indicates clearly at the beginning of the work that he is addressing the

²See Bibliography below.

³One exception to Hooker's general practice is the first section of "The Soules Justification," in The Soules Exaltation (London, 1638); here Hooker presents a long theological discussion--about forty-eight pages--before coming to practical applications. Hooker explains his usual method of preaching from texts in the following fashion: "We shall chuse such texts, in which all . . . [the] divine truths contained in the descriptions [of the application of redemption] are expressed Neither shall we meddle with every particular which the several texts will offer to our Consideration, but only handle such as concern our purpose."--The Application of Redemtion: The first eight Books (London, 1656), p. 3.

already-called, asking them to seek grace from God in time of temptation. But later he warns that if we do not resist sin we will be damned: "If you will live in your sinnes here, expect to be damned with them here after."⁴ To whom is this warning addressed? Three possibilities present themselves: (1) to those who regard themselves as saints, the warning being a method of exhorting them to test their election by the method of good works? or (2) to the uncalled, to exhort them to use the means of salvation, and thus become saints who can resist sin? or (3) are we rather to think that Hooker was asking the uncalled to reform while remaining "natural men"--an impossible task according to what Hooker says elsewhere? The context of the quotation makes clear that Hooker is here addressing the uncalled, declaring that if a man wishes to be released from the rule of sin, he must be converted, and if he does not win release, he will be damned.

One factor especially complicates the problem of determining the audience which Hooker was addressing at any one point in his sermons. According to Hooker, one of "The Christians Tvvo Chiefe Lessons" is "Selfe-Tryall."⁵ But the process of self-trial--testing one's spiritual condition to determine one's eternal fate--as described by Hooker is

⁴Soules Possession, pp. 157-158.

⁵See The Christians Tvvo Chiefe Lessons, Viz. Selfe-Deniall And Selfe-Tryall (London, 1640).

often difficult to distinguish from the process by which a sinner is translated to sainthood. At times Hooker can and does address both the called and the uncalled at once.

Keeping these factors in mind, let us look at Hooker's version of the chief events in the divine drama of Creation, the Fall, the Atonement, the Application of Redemption, and Sanctification.⁶ Hooker's concept of the Trinity is a good starting place, for it determines--or is determined by--his whole view of the conversion process. Hooker's Trinity seems very close to being three Gods, unless we are to take, always, his descriptions of the divine Persons as purely metaphorical. In his observations on the process of creation, for example, Hooker describes how "the three Persons enter into a consultation to set upon this master-piece" of making man.⁷ "I will create, saith the Father, and do you create, Sonne, and doe you create, Spirit."⁸ Elsewhere we are told that the Father is first in the work of creation, the Son first in the work of redemption, and the Holy Ghost --the deliverer of Grace--first in the process of

⁶Hooker's discussions of adoption in such treatises as A Comment Upon Christ's last Prayer In the Seventeenth of John (London, 1656). must be neglected here because they cannot be properly studied without an examination of the whole problem of Puritan mysticism, quite beyond the scope of this study.

⁷The Paterne of Perfection (London, 1640), p. 5.

⁸Paterne, pp. 19-20.

sanctification.⁹ Because of the peculiarities of the "personalities" of the Persons--the Father with a case of split personality, all justice and all mercy, the Son with a tender heart for sinners--the Christian scheme of salvation was the only arrangement possible: the redemption scheme was for Hooker the only means by which God's justice could be satisfied and at the same time his mercy be magnified.¹⁰

Another peculiarity of Hooker's concept of God is his Christology. For Hooker, Christ is nearly always thought of as the risen Christ, except in the discussions of the atonement. Nothing is made at all of Christ's human living.¹¹

The Fall

Man as created by the teamwork of the Trinity had access to spiritual knowledge which he lost with the Fall.¹² Adam's "understanding directed what should be done, the Will embraced that and the Affections yeelded serviceably to the

⁹Soules Exaltation, pp. 135-136.

¹⁰Soules Exaltation, pp. 286-287. On the whole subject of the Puritan attitude towards God, see Lewis Smith, "Changing Conceptions of God in Colonial New England," unpub. diss. (Iowa, 1953).

¹¹For one exception to this generalization, see The Soules Vocation (London, 1638), p. 584.

¹²Paterne, pp. 54-55.

command of Reason and Holinesse."¹³ In the will righteous-
ness and holiness were seated, and these qualities, which
were not part of the will, so regulated it that man was able
to perform the will of God.¹⁴ His body likewise was well
fitted to perform holy duties.¹⁵ Adam had liberty to choose
good or evil with equal ease, and was thus a free agent.¹⁶
In this state of innocence and perfection, "Adam . . . rep-
resented all mankind, he stood (as a Parliament man doth for
the whole country) for all that should be born of him: So
that look what Adam did, all his posterity did."¹⁷ Adam of
course fell, and with the Fall all men lost their liberty:
for ". . . remember that Adam had liberty, and thou in
him."¹⁸

For ". . . the sinne of Adam God may justly condemn
all, though they never commit actuall sin" ¹⁹ Thus
". . . if we had dropped out of our mothers womb into hell
and there been roaring . . . it had been just."²⁰ Since the

¹³Paterne, pp. 149-150.

¹⁴Paterne, pp. 62-63, 66.

¹⁵Paterne, p. 182.

¹⁶Paterne, pp. 123 and 127.

¹⁷The Saints Dignitie, and Dutie (London, 1651), p. 28.

¹⁸Paterne, p. 137.

¹⁹The Covenant of Grace Opened (London, 1649), p. 28.

²⁰Paterne, p. 202.

Fall, "All sins Original and Actual . . . are punishments of the transgression of Adam, as they come from God."²¹

The man with whom God now deals is "naturall man," fallen man, and the explanations of how God goes about the task of drawing men, "effectually calling" them to sainthood, must take into account the psychological processes of natural men. Since the Fall, man's nature "is stripped of all that holinesse and righteousnesse, whereby he might bee enabled to the performance of any spirituall worke, and not onely so, hee is not onely deprived of the image of God, but is altogether overspread with wickednesse and unrighteousnesse"²² The only relique left after the Fall is a limited knowledge of the Law, enough so that man has a conscience.²³

Man's understanding was severely damaged by the Fall. "Many things wee do not know; many things that wee know, we mistake; and those things we mistake not, we see at peradventures." Since the Fall "a natural man walkes in darknesse, or at most but by the starre light of reason."²⁴

But the most important effect of the Fall in man is

²¹Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 323-324.

²²The Unbeleevers Preparing for Christ (London, 1638), Pt. I, p. 104.

²³Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 318-319; The Saints Guide (London, 1645), pp. 93, 101; Principles of Religion, p. 51.

²⁴Paterne, p. 54.

that the will is wholly tainted.²⁵ Although "the will can embrace nothing, but what the understanding presents," it may decide not to choose what the understanding presents initially, but demand that another verdict be presented.²⁶ Because of this relationship, man can be willingly ignorant, may try to avoid truth or make it serve his wishes, or by reason devise techniques for avoiding truth. If these techniques fail, he may refuse the truth presented as too hard for him to bear, or avoid it by running into wickedness.²⁷ Also, in natural man "delight and desire out-bid reason."²⁸ In all of these changes, the inward character of the will itself is not changed, however; merely its disposition is changed because righteousness, which had been inserted into it, is removed, and corruption takes its place.²⁹

Natural men can only sin, and sin makes a man in time senseless and conscienceless, subject to worse kinds of sins, and unable to take advantage of the means of grace and salvation.³⁰ Man by nature is "not capable of grace, and is

²⁵Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 315-317.

²⁶Paterne, pp. 119-120.

²⁷Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 307-313.

²⁸Paterne, p. 160.

²⁹Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 128.

³⁰Application: Bks. IX-X, pp. 254-259.

unwilling to be made capable"31

The Atonement

God punished Adam and all mankind for their Fall with sin and death, but the scheme of redemption which was arranged was virtually a necessity, for otherwise God's end in creating the world would have been frustrated, God's mercy would not have been made manifest, and ". . . the Elect fallen without this could have had no comfort."32 The scheme of redemption was the result of conference among the Trinity. The Son agreed to "put himselfe into the roome of a sinner"; God was then to proceed against him with the Law, so that God might "justly express the power of his revenging Justice upon him"33 Thus Christ the Son suffered the death of his body and deathly pains in his soul,34 and "whatsoever punishments divine justice required, or were deserved by the sinnes of the faithfull."35 Christ died only for the elect since, had He died for all, God's justice would have received two payments for the sins of the

31 Unbeleeevers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 100.

32 Principles of Religion, p. 13.

33 Soules Exaltation, p. 175.

34 Soules Exaltation, pp. 210-214.

35 Soules Exaltation, p. 202.

reprobate: Christ's death, and their own punishments. The damned are in Hell only because God's justice demanded that they make payment for their sins, for which Christ had not paid. And further, if Christ had died for all, all would be saved.³⁶

Justification

Christ having atoned for the sins of the faithful elect, the next step in the process is justification, "an act of God the Father upon the beleever, whereby the debt and sinnes of the beleever are charged upon the Lord Iesus Christ, and by the merits and satisfaction of Christ imputed to the beleever; hee is accounted just, and so is acquitted before God as righteous."³⁷ The act of justification is God's act because the Father was the party offended by Adam's sin, which was directed against Him. So God the Father is the creditor, the Son the surety, the sinner the debtor, and the Holy Ghost the messenger who brings acquittance.³⁸ The means by which the sinner receives the benefit of the atonement is on God's part the decree of justification, on the sinner's part faith. "God the Father, and the Lord Jesus

³⁶Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 15-19. In the seventeenth century there was, of course, no need to deny Universalism.

³⁷Soules Exaltation, p. 132.

³⁸Soules Exaltation, pp. 135-137.

Christ made a mutuall decree and purpose, that so many [as] should beleeeve, they should be saved: And . . . they did make a mutuall agreement . . . that the Lord Jesus Christ should take the care of those soules to make them beleeeve, and to "save them by beleeeving" ³⁹ Thus though faith is the condition of justification, God the Son works the condition: ". . . when the Father hath revealed, that so many in such a place shall bee saved, then the Lord Christ undertakes the care of them, and he calls at such a door, and saith, I must have that poore drunken creature, and he must be humbled, and broken hearted, and he must beleeeve" ⁴⁰

On God's part the decree of justification has two aspects: a moral change and a natural change. The first consists of God's considering the sinner in a new frame of reference: God "puts the soule into another room," into a new category, and considers him sinless. ⁴¹ The second consists of God's giving the soul new grace: man, obtaining new affections and desires, is changed. ⁴² This second aspect does not justify man. While the Council of Trent maintains that a man is justified by the grace implanted in him, and is

³⁹ Soules Exaltation, p. 170.

⁴⁰ Soules Exaltation, p. 171.

⁴¹ Soules Exaltation, p. 140.

⁴² Soules Exaltation, pp. 134-142.

saved by what he becomes through grace, Hooker specifically rejects this concept and contends that man is justified only through imputation, and saved by faith, but not for faith--rather for Christ's obedience and merits.⁴³

Keeping in mind Hooker's concept of justification, we may well consider here a passage from The Soules Implantation (London, 1637). "So he [Christ] saith to every one of our soules, This day I have travelled a great way for you, and have had a very hard journey; I have suffered many crosses and afflictions, many mocks and scuffs, many buffets, yea even death it selfe, for you."⁴⁴ The question is, who is "you"? Hooker is speaking, apparently, either to the saints or to all men. If to the former, why does he use the universal term, "every one of our soules"? If to the latter, Hooker is here inconsistent with his views of a limited atonement. Such difficulties we shall come up against in other circumstances. The answer here seems to be that Hooker is describing, subjectively, how Christ appears to the elect; He seems to offer himself to them and to all men.

Vocation

After man has been justified, the benefits which are now his must be made effective to him through vocation:

⁴³Soules Exaltation, pp. 117-122.

⁴⁴Soules Implantation, p. 54.

redemption must be applied. In order of occurrence, vocation comes before the natural change and after the moral change of justification. It serves as the means of application; in it ". . . the Lord drawes the sinner from himselfe and his corruptions, and breakes that cursed league and combination that is between sin and the soule"45 Then follows "the putting in of the soule . . . to lye upon, and to close with the Lord Jesus Christ"46 The condition needed for a man to be able to respond to the "drawing" is faith, which, as we have seen, is supplied to the elect. "The Lord, as he requires the condition [of believing] of thee so he worketh the condition in thee."47 Faith Hooker defines as "a work of the spirit whereby we are inabled to apply to ourselves the promises made in Christ for reconciliation with God." Hooker makes clear that God does not require man to believe by himself, for by nature he is unable.⁴⁹ He will not and cannot receive grace and salvation except by the Holy Ghost working in him.⁵⁰ "Howsoever a naturall man cannot receive the Lord Jesus, yet the Lord

⁴⁵Soules Implantation, p. 83.

⁴⁶Soules Vocation, p. 33.

⁴⁷Soules Vocation, p. 40.

⁴⁸The Christians Two Chiefe Lessons, p. 148 (misnumbered 248).

⁴⁹Soules Vocation, p. 340. See also p. 331.

⁵⁰Unbeleevers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 89.

will make all that belong to the election of Grace willing to receive him"51

Faith as a condition is especially important in its role in reprobation. Christ purchased "all spiritual goods" for those who shall believe and deny themselves. By demanding of men a condition for salvation which the reprobates do not fulfill, God can punish them justly, and the fact that they cannot believe is their own fault, since their inability is a result of the Fall, for which they are responsible.⁵² Sensing that some may regard this situation as somehow unjust, Hooker in the same treatise raises an objection to the treatment of reprobates and then answers it, to at least his satisfaction. Why are reprobates commanded to believe what is not true for them--that Christ died for them--only to be punished then for failing to believe? Hooker's answer--if it may be called that--is that since reprobates cannot believe, they are not in fact commanded to believe.⁵³ A simpler statement of Hooker's views on reprobation is this: "God justly may and doth deny Reprobates Grace; not only because they do not what they may, but also because they do that which through the corruption of their hearts they

⁵¹Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 126.

⁵²Application: Eks. I-VIII, pp. 11-15.

⁵³Application: Eks. I-VIII, pp. 64-65.

cannot avoid."⁵⁴ This pronouncement has the merit of being far more forthright than some which we shall observe later.

Since the fallen but elected man that God is to convert to sainthood is a creature of desires, God takes advantage of man's selfish nature and presents Christ as desirable to man because He will preserve and help man.⁵⁵ God appeals to all man's faculties, so that faith comes after the Mind understands it, Hope eagerly awaits it, Desire longs for it, Love embraces it, and the Will will have it.⁵⁶ That the understanding be convinced and the will persuaded of the desirability of Christ is especially important.⁵⁷ But the intellectual process of believing is not enough,⁵⁸ for it is the will that is "the great commander of the soule."⁵⁹ It is difficult to reconcile Hooker's attitude in The Soules Vocation that the will must be persuaded, with his statement in the later Application of Redemption that the will does not in itself have the power to will grace, but must have supernatural power put into it, and that the power of corruption, which has ruled the will since the Fall, must be removed by "a holy kind of violence"; according to this

⁵⁴Application: Bks. IX-X, p. 308.

⁵⁵Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, pp. 32-33.

⁵⁶Soules Vocation, pp. 283-284.

⁵⁷Soules Vocation, p. 289.

⁵⁸Soules Vocation, p. 35.

⁵⁹Soules Vocation, p. 283.

explanation of conversion the will itself is not violated since it is powerless.⁶⁰ If this is the situation, one finds it difficult to see how the will can be persuaded. If we wish to believe that Hooker was consistent, perhaps we can explain the seeming contradiction in the following fashion. God appeals to the corruption which rules the will, basing His appeal on the soul's selfishness. Although such an appeal is not in itself sufficient, according to Hooker, for "effectual calling," it is nevertheless a necessary preparation for salvation. God's work on the will, in this explanation, is comparable to Hooker's description of God's work on the reason: before giving new power to the soul, He makes a "moral kind of drawing" in appealing to man's reason.⁶¹ This explanation is also consistent with two of Hooker's descriptions of the conversion process: the process, that is, which culminates in effectual calling. Both descriptions are taken from The Application of Redemption, a work which Hooker prepared for the press.⁶² In the first, Hooker writes:

. . . manie a Saint of God can say that the Lord hath been wrastling with him from the time of his Childhood, and all along in the places where he lived somtimes strange horrors and strokes of conscience, and strange sins that he fell into somtimes

⁶⁰Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 373-382, 385.

⁶¹Unbeleevvers Preparing, Pt. II, pp. 20-21, 24.

⁶²See Goodwin and Nye's Epistle in the Application: Bks. IX-X.

and then strange humiliation and abasement for this, Grace is not wrought yet thats true, but its working, the Sovereigne vertue of the blood of Christ is now at work, and will never leave the Soul for which Christ died untill [sic] there be a full and effectual application of all saving good⁶³

It is to be noted that Hooker makes clear here that the humiliation and strokes of conscience which prepare the soul for conversion are just as much God's actions as is the effectual calling itself.

According to a later passage in The Application, God first lets the soul see that it is not in the way of salvation, then lets it see His mercy, Jesus's sufficiency, His patient waiting and entreating. If these do not convert the soul--and from what we have read they cannot be expected to do so--God then makes the conscience work, stirs it up, and admonishes the soul.⁶⁴ But Satan fights back.

The World by her Allurements, Satan by his Temptations, and the accursed delights of our sinful lusts, they al beseige the soul, and by their wiles perswade the sinner to joyn sides with them, and not to be awed or carried away by any contrary command: these be (say they) threatenings announced, but threatened men live long, this wind shakes no Corn, this is no way of Policy to scare men, but it is not in earnest to hurt men, the same has been spoken to others, but nothing inflicted upon them, they never found, never felt any such sore blows as al those terrible shakings of the rod pretend. Thus the sinner is yet drawn aside to follow his sinful courses: Conscience therefore makes after him, laies violent hands upon, and holds him faster than ever; he becomes now an accuser of him, who was only a friendly

⁶³Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 79.

⁶⁴Application, Bks. I-VIII, pp. 355-365.

admonisher before.

The soul is then called back to its sinful course yet another time, and as a result God declares, "Let him perish in his sins, for he has rejected mercy." The soul now sees its condition truly. Then God plucks him out of sin and calls him to sainthood.⁶⁵

According to this description, God's grace seems to be irresistible mainly because He is an expert psychologist. "Effectual calling" is effectual at least partly because of God's nice sense of timing. If one asks how it is that God announces that He will permit the mercy-rejecting sinner to perish, only to "effectually call" the sinner later, the answer would seem to be that this description is a subjective view of the process: it is psychologically valid if theologically confusing. Students of Puritan "experimental theologians" such as Hooker would do well to consider that such preachers often attempt descriptions based on the appearance of the conversion process from man's point of view. Once again we see that grace is irresistible from a theological point of view though man regards himself as free throughout the process. In context, preparation for salvation is God's means of making His irresistible power appear to man to be merely persuasive. And indeed, saving grace actually does work partly through persuasion, which thus becomes a means

⁶⁵Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 367. See also the description in The Saints Guide (London, 1645), pp. 23-40.

of salvation. The process which is from an objective point of view strictly predestined is likely to appear to man to agree with the Arminian description.

Sanctification

As a result of vocation and justification, man is "adopted and sanctified,"⁶⁶ or rather, begins to be sanctified. But

. . . the frame of the heart in vocation is not the frame of the heart in sanctification. This Call and vocation in the Lord workes upon mee, and I have no power in myselfe, but I can only receive power from another. . . . But in sanctification I worke from the power of grace, that I have formerly received by the spirit in the work of adoption.⁶⁷

To receive the power of grace, ". . . the Lord learnes every faculty his lecture" ⁶⁸ As a result, ". . . no faculty of the soul, but it should be adorned with some glorious impression of the power of Grace, wisdom and prudence

⁶⁶Hooker is not always consistent about the order of the steps. Perhaps justification should follow vocation, according to the following convenient description: ". . . in vocation the Lord drawes the soule to himselfe, and the soule follows him; in justification the Lord undertakes for the sinner, and unites the soule to himselfe, and makes it one with himselfe; in adoption the Lord makes him a sonne, and in sanctification he sets a stampe upon him."--Soules Implantation, p. 137. The order of justification and vocation does not seem to have been an important point to Hooker.

⁶⁷Soules Implantation, p. 157.

⁶⁸Soules Vocation, p. 202.

in the mind, holiness in the will, harmonious readiness in all the affections, to attend the counsels of the Lord, to be the instruments of holiness."⁶⁹ All saints receive a "heart of flesh" which will do whatsoever the Lord commands.⁷⁰ Indeed, the saint is above Adam's excellence and innocence, since he is "wholly taken up with God in Christ."⁷¹ This new relationship is "adoption," one of God's purposes in conversion.

But although the soul is "subject to grace," actually ruled by grace,⁷² Hooker makes clear that he scorns the doctrine of the "cursed Familist" sect, which held that the truly converted soul cannot sin.⁷³ It is up to the saint to ask for grace to resist temptation and avoid sin. He must say to God,

. . . by that Spirit of wisdome, Lord informe mee;
by that Spirit of sanctification, Lord cleanse mee
from al my corruptions; by that Spirit of grace,
Lord quicken and enable me to the discharge of every
holy service, thus carry thy selfe and convey thy
soul by the power of the Spirit of the Lord, and
thou shalt finde thy heart strengthened and

⁶⁹Christ's last Prayer, pp. 89-90.

⁷⁰Unbeleeevers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 131.

⁷¹Christ's last Prayer, p. 45.

⁷²A brief Exposition of the Lords Prayer (London, 1645), p. 20.

⁷³For Hooker's scorn of the Family of Love, see, for example, Soules Exaltation, p. 190; Soules Vocation, p. 65; Soules Implantation, pp. 232, 236; Saints Dignitie, p. 131; and A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline (London, 1648), Pt. II, p. 42; Pt. II, p. 22.

succoured by thy vertue thereof upon all occasions.⁷⁴

But the more grace a man is given by God, the more God expects of the receiver,⁷⁵ and grace is given according to need. A family man gets more than a single man; a magistrate or a minister more than a layman.⁷⁶ But although he must go to Christ daily to ask for grace,⁷⁷ man may not be able to detect the grace given, according to Hooker, and then one should "labour to see sound evidences of the work of grace in thy soule"⁷⁸

But despite these difficulties, the process of sanctification is progressive, and continues, with interruptions and setbacks, until death.⁷⁹ This gradual process Hooker describes as being similar to the repairing of a clock. It is "not a making new faculties in the soule, but putting them into right order; as when a clock falls into pieces (the wheels not being broken) the clock hath not new wheels set into it, but they are new made againe."⁸⁰ Although the

⁷⁴Soules Exaltation, pp. 111-112. See also The Soules Possession of Christ (London, 1638), pp. 7-8.

⁷⁵The Faithful Covenanter (London, 1644), p. 17.

⁷⁶Soules Exaltation, pp. 69-71.

⁷⁷Soules Possession, pp. 29-30.

⁷⁸Soules Vocation, p. 633.

⁷⁹Saints Dignitie, p. 62.

⁸⁰Principles of Religion, p. 24. Compare Covenant of Grace, p. 31.

saint is superior to Adam in that his relationship to God is of a higher order, he is not to expect to be able to live as virtuous a life as Adam could have led.⁸¹ For though in the saint sin is not a king, "it may be a Tyrant."⁸² The reason for this situation is that the "old man" Adam in us is not wholly dead, and man tries to keep him alive.⁸³

When Hooker declares, therefore, that a saint "had rather endure the torments of hell, then that the least sinne should be committed by him,"⁸⁴ we are to understand that Hooker is not stating a fact, but is rather exhorting the saint to act as he should. The role of good works is very important in Hooker's thought. Besides their conventional role in Puritanism as a means of testing one's calling, good works have, according to Hooker, other important uses. In particular they serve as a means of achieving a closeness to Christ,⁸⁵ and as a means of glorifying God⁸⁶ and rewarding Him for His goodness to the saint.⁸⁷ And, "Though moral vertues will not save a Christian, yet without them no man

⁸¹Paterne, p. 228.

⁸²Principles of Religion, p. 25.

⁸³Soules Possession, pp. 95-96.

⁸⁴Soules Vocation, p. 498.

⁸⁵The Soules Humiliation (Amsterdam, 1638), pp. 81-82.

⁸⁶Soules Humiliation, pp. 84-85.

⁸⁷Soules Exaltation, pp. 24-25.

shall ever come to heaven."⁸⁸ We may juxtapose here another quotation from Hooker in order to illustrate once again how important it is to consider the audience Hooker was addressing. "The Saints of God," Hooker declares to the unconverted, "shall commit greater sinnes and goe to Heaven, when thou lesser and goe to Hell."⁸⁹ The statement sounds like a flat contradiction of the preceding quotation. But while the former is an exhortation to the called saint not to rely too much on justification by faith (since man is saved by faith, one may question why he should not do so), the latter is a warning to the uncalled not to rely on good works as a means of salvation.

Morality

Although Hooker's works are full of exhortations to good works, one is surprised at how seldom Hooker gives his reader any idea of what constitutes the good life. Vague descriptions of aspects of piety are not, however, hard to find. For example, in the section of The Paterne of Perfection entitled "The Character of a sound Christian in seventeen markes," Hooker lists mourning for sins, endeavoring to eliminate sins, delighting in prayer, rejoicing in God's word, loving good Christians, and hating the wicked. From

⁸⁸Soules Vocation, p. 504.

⁸⁹Saints Dignitie, p. 117.

this we may get a good idea of what Hooker regarded as works of piety. But lists of moral virtues are more rare, and Hooker's lists of sins include mainly the grossest variety: one list mentions drunkenness, adultery, blaspheming, condemning God's ordinances, railing on God's saints, despising God's truth, and profaning the Sabbath.⁹⁰ At least three of these sins would seem to be best classified as religious shortcomings, rather than moral vices, if such a distinction may be made. Another list includes only such sins as Sabbath-breaking, swearing, adultery, and drunkenness.⁹¹

More often Hooker's discussions of Christian ethics are such as to make the modern reader suspect Hooker of being almost a moral Pharisee. The following quotation, from The Saints Guide, is a choice example:

I must preferre my own occasions before another mans, my goods before his, my body before his, serve my selfe in the first place, and my neighbour in the second, but I must not prefer my body before his soule, my temporalls before his spiritualls, nor my goods before his life.⁹²

In Fovre Learned and Godly Treatises, Hooker declares charitably, ". . . the soules of all men should labour to doe good unto all, so farre as necessity require it and

⁹⁰Unbeleevers Preparing, Pt. II, p. 58.

⁹¹Saints Dignitie, p. 178.

⁹²Saints Guide, p. 160.

opportunity is offered there unto"93 Although this may seem limited enough, we learn later that doing good to all consists, according to Hooker, in getting men on the path to salvation.⁹⁴ In another work, Hooker leads the reader to believe that he is about to discuss some basic ethical principles. But after general statements to the effect that men should promote the good of their fellows Hooker becomes more particular and cites an example of how we can help our brethren: we should keep them from sin.⁹⁵

In a few discussions Hooker does, however, deal with practical morality, though the matters are usually mentioned only in passing: he condemns taking a penny or a shilling too much, selling marred goods by sleight of hand, gold-bricking in the older sense of the term, and outbidding "a man in a bargain by a wile, and he never the wiser."⁹⁶ In another discussion we are told that a man should obey his master even if his master is a carnal man.⁹⁷ But more often Hooker reduces his ethical principles to one tenet: help others to be saved.⁹⁸

⁹³Fovre Treatises (London, 1638), p. 65.

⁹⁴Fovre Treatises, p. 65.

⁹⁵Paterne, pp. 102-104.

⁹⁶Application: Bks. IX-X, p. 168.

⁹⁷Soules Vocation, p. 507.

⁹⁸For example, A brief Exposition of the Lords Prayer (London, 1645), p. 41.

The two cardinal sins for Hooker are surely pride and hypocrisy. Among the bright spots for the modern reader of Hooker's works are his psychological descriptions of types of hypocrites; these brief sections are closely related to the seventeenth-century genre, the character. Here is Hooker's description of a type that combines hypocrisy and pride, the "self-conceited Pharisee." He

hath such an overweening apprehension of his own worth and excellency, that he is not able to take shame for his sin, & therefore cannot endure to be convicted of it, what he will not do, he will not know, loth to confess his course shameful and vile, because then he concludes there is no color of common sense to continue in it, but he must be forced to reform it, unless he would openly proclaim to all the world, that he is resolved to go against Knowledge and Conscience, which is too loathsom and gross, even to ordinary profanenesse; therefore he pretends nothing but the search of the Truth, and further information of the mind of the Lord, and if that once would appear, how glad would he be to receive it, and more glad to follow it because the plea is beyond exception, yea, carries an appearance of conscientious and judicious watchfulness in a mans course, which cannot admit a Cavil, but is secretly resolved of the Conclusion, the reasons shal never be plain to him that would press and perswade to the practice of that which doth not please his sensual heart, which he purposeth to satisfie.⁹⁹

Other types of hypocrites that we meet in Hooker's works include the wrangling hypocrite, the whining hypocrite, the vainglorious hypocrite, and the presumptuous hypocrite.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹Application: Bks. IX-X, p. 423.

¹⁰⁰Soules Implantation, pp. 219-244. For other descriptions see Soules Vocation, pp. 164-182, 277-282; and Soules Exaltation, pp. 18-20.

Hooker's attacks on pride, though not in the form of characters, often have literary merit because the subject seems to have stirred him to real eloquence.¹⁰¹

A few words may well be said here concerning the relationship of the uncalled to good works for Hooker. Although he often argues strenuously that every sinner is in a state of slavery to sin,¹⁰² he often seems to urge the uncalled sinner to reform as a means of preparing for salvation. In these passages he often appears to the modern reader to speak as we expect a Puritan to speak. We read that ". . . the Lord saith, thou must forsake thy sins, or else I must damn thy soul." Again, ". . . either I must lose my sin or my soul, there is no other thing to be done."¹⁰³ But one is never quite sure in dealing with these passages whether Hooker is urging the saint to forsake his sins, the as-yet-uncalled sinner to use the means available by which he might forsake his sins--that is, through the sanctification which follows effectual calling--or perhaps the natural man to use common or restraining grace, in which Hooker, like Calvin, believed.¹⁰⁴ Man can never forsake his sins by himself, according to Hooker, and so when he warns, ". . . if you will

¹⁰¹See, for example, Soules Humiliation, pp. 127-131, 266-281.

¹⁰²See, for example, Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. II, p.8.

¹⁰³Saints Dignitie, pp. 240-241.

¹⁰⁴See Christians Lessons, p. 114 (mismumbered 214).

have sinne dwell in your soule, God will never dwell with you, nor you shall never dwell with him,"¹⁰⁵ he is here encouraging man to want to forsake his sins, for ". . . if a desire unto sinne be the sinne itself before God . . . why shall not, much more an earnest desire [f]or the pardon of sin be an obtaining of it? An earnest desire to beleve be accepted for belief it selfe?"¹⁰⁶ This may sound like mere sentimentality or an attempt to substitute sweet reason for irresistible grace, but we should remember that "an earnest desire," according to Hooker's teaching, is a sign of election.

Preaching

The role of the preacher is crucial in Hooker's view of the salvation process. Although at times he appears to believe that the preacher has the power in himself to save sinners merely by using the right technique,¹⁰⁷ more often the preacher is regarded merely as God's instrument. Preaching is thus "like a Burning-Glass; that which burns

¹⁰⁵Fovre Treatises, p. 252.

¹⁰⁶Christians Lessons, p. 149 (misnumbered 249).

¹⁰⁷In the Soules Implantation, for example, appears the following passage: "If the ministry of God were dispensed as it should [be], it would be as effectually as it ever was, it would worke salvation. But where lies the fault? Alas, that lieth with the ministers of God, who doe not performe the worke of the ministry as it should [be done], and with the power they ought."--p. 73.

and heats is not the Glass, but the beams of the Sun that pierceth through the Glass."¹⁰⁸ But although the preacher is only a tool, he is a necessary one, for "Faith cometh by hearing . . . [since] the Word preached doth evidently reveale truths to the soule, and works more effectually upon a mans heart" than mere reading of the Bible.¹⁰⁹ If a man wants to come to Christ, it is because of what he has heard preached; and in addition to providing motivation, preaching provides the sinner with knowledge of how to come to Christ and thereby be saved. How is a man to obtain grace? "The Lord hath vouchsafed it to none, but to those that do seek it in his ordinances; it is to be had by the preaching of the Gospel of grace."¹¹⁰ "Grace hath sent meanes, grace hath continued means, grace hath given us hearts to use the means, all is grace, nothing but grace"¹¹¹ Thus the preacher teaches men what the means of salvation are; such a situation is made possible by the fact that the Spirit, which enables man to desire and use the means, is communicated by preaching: ". . . the work of the spirit doth alwayes goe with, and is communicated by the word."¹¹² The preaching of

¹⁰⁸Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 134.

¹⁰⁹Principles of Religion, p. 27.

¹¹⁰Paterne, p. 280.

¹¹¹Unbeleevvers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 8. This and the preceding quotations appear to me to be key quotations in the study of Hooker's thought.

¹¹²Soules Vocation, p. 45.

the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost, always together, are God's means of conversion, but only, of course, to the elect, for ". . . the Spirit of the Lord God . . . is there in an extraordinary manner, and hardens the hearts of the reprobates, and humbles, and converts the soules of his servants"113 "The same dispensation of the word which is powerful and profitable to some is unprofitable to others."114 God "may send his Gospell and meanes of salvation to one poore soule . . . and not to another"115 The word of God may have opposite effects on different people, for, if God wishes, it may harden a man's heart.116

Therefore, if a man has lived for a long time under an effective minister, and has not been prepared, it seems likely to Hooker that God does not want him to be prepared117 and "will never bestow any saving Good upon that Soul."118 If a minister tells the people what steps to take for salvation, and they take them, it is because God enabled them, and enabled them because they are of the elect: ". . . the Lord will make all his that belong to the election of Grace

113 Soules Exaltation, p. 27. See also pp. 35-36.

114 Apolication, Bks. IX-X, p. 283.

115 Unbeleevers Preparing, Pt. I, pp. 9-10.

116 Soules Implantation, pp. 71-72.

117 Soules Implantation, pp. 75-76.

118 Application, Bks. I-VIII, pp. 218-219.

willing to receive him¹¹⁹

To this last quotation let us juxtapose another from the same work; this second quotation will help to show Hooker's attitude towards the role of preaching, and also give an insight into the previously discussed problem of the point of view from which Hooker means for his readers to look at a passage (or his hearers to understand it). This time a careless reader or listener might regard the passage as an invocation addressed to man's natural abilities.

. . . God stands this day & knocks at this and all other the like opportunities, the Lord knockes this day, and will come and knocke againe the next Sabbath, and the next, the next Lecture, and the next opportunity, when the minister comes God comes, when he persuades God persuades, when hee threatens God threatens, when he reprooves God reprooves, sometimes the Lord knocketh at the doore, sometimes hee pickes the locke, thus every way striving to come in, stands thus knocking, and intreating, exhorting, perswading, he knocks with much patience and long suffering, if any man will but open, here is all the Lord requires, all that he expects and lookes for, the opening of the doore that is all¹²⁰

After reading the quotation presented immediately before this passage--to the effect that the Lord makes the elect willing to receive him--one may regard this passage as an example of Hooker's demanding the impossible. How can man open the door by himself? The answer is, of course, that he cannot. But those who desire to do this impossible deed

¹¹⁹Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 126.

¹²⁰Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, pp. 27-28.

will ask for and receive grace to permit them to do it, as Hooker elsewhere directs them to do. This is simply the way that God arranges the situation: "God doth not punish a man because he cannot get faith, but because he will not use the meanes whereby he might get faith, we may waite upon God in his ordinances"121 Therefore when Hooker describes God as knocking at man's soul, imploring him to be saved, he is accurately reporting how conversion appears to man: this is the way God wants man to regard conversion. If you are willing to be saved, that is a sign that God intends good. He who is willing, will use the means. If man desires to be exhorted or reprov'd, good. If he is willing to part with his sins, it is because grace works within him, and the willing will result in the soul's parting from its sin; it cannot be content to have it otherwise.122

One of Hooker's fullest descriptions of the role of preaching in the salvation process is in the Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline. Here a number of details are given concerning how the preacher leads the soul to conversion. But we must remember in reading them that preachers are at most "Co-workers with the Sonne . . . to bring the poor creature, and his Creator together."123 And the preaching of the word is an "instrumental cause of

121 Unbeleev'ers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 121.

122 Application, Bks. I-VIII, pp. 335-345.

123 Spiritual Munition (London, 1638), p. 25.

application" only because the word is accompanied by the presence and operation of the Spirit.¹²⁴

Among the preacher's functions are:

. . . to work upon the will and affections, and by savoury, powerfull, and affectionate application of the truth delivered, to chafe into the heart, to wooe and win the soul to the love and liking, the approbation and practice of the doctrine which is according to godlinesse
 . . . to lay open the loathsome nature of sinne, and to let in the terrour of the Lord upon the conscience, that the carelesse and rebellious sinner may come to a parley of peace, and be content to take up the profession of the truth.
 . . . to discover the cunning fetches of the hypocrite, and to hunt him out of his muses, that he may not cosen himself and sit down with some reserved delusion, and go no further.
 To censure all those feares, and to scatter all the clouds of discouraging objections, that the soul may see the path plain and safe to come to the promise, and to receive power and comfort to walk with God therein.¹²⁵

Hooker recognizes clearly that since the preacher is dealing with fallen man, appeals to the understanding are not enough: he has to appeal as well to the affections of fear and love, and to the will. But his aim is to restore man's faculties from the dislocation--which resulted from the Fall--to their proper relationship with reason at the helm. For from the psychological point of view, conversion is simply getting the clock to start working properly again, to use Hooker's image. As Hooker puts it, ". . . if thou art not

¹²⁴Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 133.

¹²⁵Survey, Pt. II, pp. 19-20.

another man than when thou camest into the world, thou art but a natural man, thou art but a damned man."¹²⁶

After conversion, the role of the minister is to exhort the saint to achieve assurance of salvation through rigorous testing, and "to quicken . . . strengthen and incourage the soul in every holy word and work."¹²⁷

The Puritan was taught to look to the minister for the means of salvation: ". . . we must not looke for revelation and dreames, as a company of phantasticall braines doe . . . in common cause God's Spirit goes with the Gospel, and that is the ordinary meanes whereby the soule comes to be called."¹²⁸ God has indeed tied Himself to the gospel as the means of salvation.¹²⁹ It was altogether natural that Hooker, and other Puritans whose great interest was in the technique of preaching by which men are saved, would try to develop a detailed analysis of God's process in the application of redemption. We shall look at aspects of Hooker's analysis in the next chapter.

¹²⁶Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 297.

¹²⁷Survey, Pt. II, p. 20.

¹²⁸Soules Vocation, p. 63.

¹²⁹Soules Vocation, p. 64.

CHAPTER IV
HOOKER, COVENANT THEOLOGY,
AND THE SERMON AS THE MEANS OF GRACE

Within the last twenty years the New England theology of the seventeenth century has been examined far more closely than it had ever been before, and the findings have been that this theology is very different from the simple "Calvinism" which earlier students of the period had labelled it.¹ Perry Miller, the principal worker in the field, discovered that the New England theology was really "Covenant Theology" and has declared that this is very different from "Calvinism."² Others have readily accepted his findings.

That such a thing as covenant theology exists was

¹Examples of the earlier scholarship are V. L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (New York, 1930), I, 12-15; and F. H. Foster, A Genetic History of the New England Theology (Chicago, 1907), p. 15.

²Miller's main discussions on the subject are "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," Pubs. Col. Soc. Mass., Transactions, 1933-1937, XXXII (1938), 247-300; The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (New York, 1939; Cambridge, Mass., 1954), hereafter cited as Seventeenth Century; and The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), hereafter cited as Colony to Province. See also his "The Puritan Theory of the Sacraments in Seventeenth-Century New England," Catholic Historical Review, XXII (1937), 409-425; and "Preparation for Salvation in Seventeenth-Century New England," Journal of the History of Ideas, IV (1943), 253-256.

scarcely a new discovery, though Miller's discussion and special bibliography of the subject³ might make one think that he had been exploring an unknown territory and had come back with new findings. Such a general study as James Orr's article "Calvinism" in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics reveals that covenant theology was one of the three fundamental developments in the Reformed theology after Calvin's death. In the same encyclopedia the article "Covenant Theology" by W. Adams Brown points out that covenant theology developed in English Puritanism as a parallel movement to its growth on the Continent. Brown cites Perkins, Ames, and Preston as examples of English covenant theologians. Even in the last century the German scholar J. A. Dorner had pointed out exactly what Miller maintains: that covenant theology tended to undermine predestinarianism.⁴

Our study will proceed in the following fashion. First, we shall see what covenant theology is. Second, we shall try to determine the degree to which covenant theology differs from the theology of Calvin in its approach to the conversion process. Third, we shall try to determine the extent to which the teachings of Thomas Hooker can be described as covenant theology. This discussion will necessitate a

³In Seventeenth Century.

⁴History of Protestant Theology, trans. G. Robson and S. Taylor (Edinburgh, 1871), II, 41-42. Dorner (II, 43ff.) also shows that covenant theology was opposed by orthodox Reformed writers.

detailed analysis of Hooker's techniques in conversion preaching, a discussion which will be continued in the next chapter.

Covenant Theology: its History and Central Tenets

Historically, covenant theology stems from Calvin's predecessor Zwingli, author of De Testamento seu Foedere Dei Unico et eterno (1534); it was taken up later by such important Reformed theologians as Bullinger; Ursinus and Olevianus, authors of the Heidelberg Catechism; Junius; and afterwards by Ames and Cocceius.⁵ Cocceius formulated his theology more completely on covenant lines than any earlier theologian and is regarded as the greatest covenant theologian. Calvin himself, like many other Christian theologians, spoke of a divine covenant, but because the covenant is not a basic element for his system, he is not regarded as a covenant theologian.⁶

⁵See Gottlob Schrenk, Gottesreich und Bund im Älteren Protestantismus (Gütersloh, 1923), passim; Peter Y. De Jong, The Covenant Idea in New England Theology (Grand Rapids, 1945), pp. 23-31 (unfortunately an unsatisfactory book); and Alexander Mitchell, "The Theology of the Reformed Church with Special Reference to the Westminster Standards," in Report of Proc., 2nd Gen. Council of Presbyterian Alliance (Philadelphia, 1880), pp. 474-484. L. J. Trinterud has argued persuasively that in England covenant theology goes back to Tyndale and John Frith. See his "The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, XX (1951), 37-57.

⁶Schrenk, Gottesreich und Bund, pp. 44-45.

The fundamental concept of covenant theology is well and simply set forth by Bullinger:

God, in making of leagues, as he doth in all things, applieth himself to our capacities And therefore, when God's mind was to declare the favour and good-will that he bare to mankind . . . it pleased him to make a league or covenant with mankind.

Bullinger goes on to say that this covenant was first made with Adam after the Fall, then with Noah and Moses. The terms of the agreement were, on God's side, the promise of His Son, through Whom would come complete reconciliation and heavenly blessings; and on man's side, "faith and due obedience." Christ finished and fulfilled this old league and made a new one. In this, man is asked only for "faith and charity," and "holy and wonderful liberty is given unto the godly."⁷

There are three points of this covenant plan to be emphasized. First, God was willing to consider man's abilities. As A. C. McGiffert puts it, ". . . the covenant theology laid stress upon His historical dealing with men first in one way, and then when that failed, in another."⁸ Second, the new relationship is an agreement between God and man, not a decree. Ursinus defines the Christian covenant

⁷Decades, ed. Thomas Harding (Cambridge, Eng., 1850), III, 169-170.

⁸Protestant Thought Before Kant (New York, 1911), p. 153.

as

a mutual pactio between God and men, by which God assures men that He will be favorable to them, will remit sins, bestow new righteousness, the H. Spirit [sic] and life eternal through and because of the Son the Mediator. In turn men bind themselves to God to believe and to repent, i.e., to receive with true faith this sublime benefit and to afford God true obedience.⁹

Third, predestination does not play so important a role as is usual in Reformed theology. The emphasis is on man's role, since God, in making the covenant, "has promised the whole of humanity, so far as it accepts His grace with penitence and trust, righteousness and eternal life as an inalienable inheritance of grace."¹⁰ Heinrich Heppe points out that the concept of the covenant of grace is thus established on an "essentially universalistic basis."¹¹ Such a situation is made possible in covenant theology because another covenant exists besides the covenant of grace: a covenant by which God "graciously fulfils the condition required in those whom He has assigned to Christ from eternity."¹²

Covenant theologians, at least in purely doctrinal

⁹Ursinus, Explicationes Catécheseos (Heidelberg, 1612), p. 99; quoted by Heinrich Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, trans. G. T. Thomson (London, 1950), p. 382.

¹⁰Heppe's summary of the Reformed position, especially that of Cocceius, Dogmatics, p. 371.

¹¹Dogmatics, p. 371.

¹²Eglin, De Foedere Gratiae (Marburg, 1614), p. 43, quoted by Heppe, Dogmatics, p. 372.

works (as distinguished from "practical" works--sermons), make clear that man is able to enter into the agreement with God only when God supplies the means: "Before grace supervenes, man has nothing by which to raise himself. . . . Hence it is clear that by grace alone is man drawn to the covenant and to the grace or friendship with God."¹³

The Covenant of Grace was first established after the Fall--after the Covenant of Works had been violated. According to the Continental theologian Wollebius, who was very influential in New England,¹⁴ the covenant was first administered in the form of the Old Testament: "in the time of Christ to be exhibited"; "the New Testament is the covenant of grace administered after Christ has been exhibited."¹⁵ However, Miller says that for Puritan theologians, the new covenant was first proposed to Abraham.¹⁶

The Implications of Covenant Theology

Covenant theology, though it originated in the sixteenth

¹³Cocceius, Opera, VI (Amsterdam, 1673), 212-214, quoted by Heppe, Dogmatics, p. 388.

¹⁴Miller, Seventeenth Century, pp. 90, 190.

¹⁵Wollebius, Christianae Theologiae Compendium (Basel, 1626), p. 23, quoted by Heppe, Dogmatics, p. 395.

¹⁶Seventeenth Century, p. 377. Miller implies that all covenant theologians regarded Abraham as the first to be within the covenant of grace. This interpretation is clearly a mistake. See Heppe, Dogmatics, pp. 394-409, for a full discussion of the various views.

century, flourished in the seventeenth as a reaction against the abstractions of Reformed scholasticism,¹⁷ and as a defense against the Arminian attack on predestination.¹⁸ By using the covenant idea, theologians shifted emphasis from the eternal decrees of God to God's relationships with man, without abandoning predestination.¹⁹ In addition to these historical causes for the flourishing of covenant theology, Miller has proposed that

it almost seems as though Puritan theologians, having dwelt for years upon the implacable rigor of divine justice and being forced . . . to present sovereignty as the dominant attribute [of God], were intensely relieved to come upon the covenant doctrine as at last something tangible to adduce in pleading that God was also gracious.²⁰

Although Miller has taken pains to qualify with an "almost" this explanation of the Puritan interest in covenant theology, by implication he is contending that earlier Puritan divines had presented sovereignty and rigorous justice as God's essential qualities. Doubtless isolated examples of such presentations could be pointed out, but earlier Puritan sermon literature is, in general, quite different from what Miller suggests: the difference between earlier and later

¹⁷Dorner, History, II, 31.

¹⁸Frederick E. Pamp, Jr., "Studies in the Origins of English Arminianism," unpub. diss. (Harvard, 1950), pp. 160-161.

¹⁹McGiffert, Protestant Thought, p. 155.

²⁰Seventeenth Century, p. 381.

Puritan preaching--if we wish to find one--is that earlier preachers put less emphasis on man's inability and predestination than did seventeenth-century Puritans.²¹

It is not difficult to discover what kind of logic led Miller to his explanation, but since the point has been made only obliquely up to now,²² it deserves to be stated here. Miller has traced with some care "the expanding limits of natural ability" in seventeenth-century Puritan preaching from Hooker and John Cotton to Increase and Cotton Mather;²³ he has proved, it seems clear, that the late seventeenth-century divines expected more of man's spiritual abilities than did the first generation of New England preachers. What could be more natural, then, than to assume that Puritan preachers before Hooker and Cotton expected even less of man? But although Miller is doubtless correct in thinking that seventeenth-century Puritan theology would have been more rigorous, would have expected less of man, if covenant

²¹See, for example, the sermons of Thomas Adams, especially "The Garden of Graces" and "A Contemplation of the Herbs," both first published in 1616; and "Physic from Heaven," first published in 1614. All three were republished in The Works of Thomas Adams (Edinburgh, 1862).

²²See Wayne H. Christy, "John Cotton: Covenant Theologian," unpub. M.A. thesis (Duke, 1942), p. 51.

²³Colony to Province, pp. 53-67. It is true that Cotton Mather, among others, built on the foundation of the teachings of Hooker and his fellows something very like Arminianism. See Miller, "Preparation for Salvation," pp. 282-285. But it is not quite fair to hold Hooker responsible for this eighteenth-century Arminianism.

theology had not been developed, he seems to have overlooked the fact that from Calvin's time onwards Reformed orthodoxy became more and more rigorous, more "scholastic," as we have seen. Thus to say that covenant theology mitigated the rigor of Calvinism is not quite correct; it mitigated the rigor of the Reformed scholastic theology, which was a good deal more strict than Calvin's teachings.

Another major effect which Miller attributes to covenant theology needs to be considered. According to Miller, ". . . by putting the relationship between God and man into contractual terms, they [covenant theologians] found themselves blessed with the corollary that the terms could be known in advance." When election "comes as a chance to take up a contract, they [men] must first of all know what is to be contracted."²⁴ Thus with the covenant system God arranges "that we might know what to expect from God, and upon what terms."²⁵

All of this seems to say that according to non-covenant Reformed theology the "terms" to which man must consent cannot be known before salvation. Miller offers us the opportunity to compare conversion according to covenant theology with conversion according to Calvin: grace comes as a flash of supernatural light, according to Calvin, but to the

²⁴Colony to Province, p. 55.

²⁵Obadiah Sedgwick, The Bowels of Tender Mercy (London, 1661), p. 6, quoted by Miller, Colony to Province, p. 55.

covenant theologians it is "a reinvigoration of the slumbering capacities of the soul."²⁶ But let us see whether this comparison is a fair presentation of Calvin's thought on the subject.

In the Institutes Calvin writes:

A simple external manifestation of the word ought to be amply sufficient to produce faith, did not our blindness and perverseness prevent. But such is the proneness of our mind to vanity, that it can never adhere to the truth of God, and such its dulness, that it is always blind even in his light. Hence without the illumination of the Spirit the word has no effect; and hence also it is obvious that faith is something higher than human understanding. Nor were it sufficient for the mind to be illumined by the Spirit of God unless the heart also were strengthened and supported by his power. . . . If there were only a single gift of the Spirit, he who is the author and cause of faith could not without absurdity be said to be its effect; but . . . there is nothing strange in ascribing to faith the very gifts which faith prepares us for receiving.²⁷

Two points here deserve attention. First, Calvin clearly assumes that those who are converted are exposed to the preaching of the gospel before grace works conversion. Faith is higher than understanding; but a degree of understanding--though of course it is not adequate for conversion--Calvin assumes will come before conversion. Second, conversion, to Calvin, is a reinvigoration of the various capacities of the soul, affecting the mind and the affections

²⁶"Marrow," p. 280.

²⁷Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (London, 1953), Bk. III, Chap. 2, section xxxiii.

("the heart"). The gifts of the spirit are manifold.

Such an interpretation of the passage from Calvin is supported by passages from his other writings. The gospel reforms us, declares Calvin, "by calling us to Jesus Christ, and by showing us how we must be regenerated by His Holy Spirit."²⁸ "It is true, as the Scripture saith, that we are saved by faith; for we know not that God is our Father, only by faith, and by laying hold of the promises contained in the gospel"²⁹ Man must of course know what the promises are before he can lay hold of them.

In conversion, "God begins . . . by exciting in our hearts a desire, a love, and a study of righteousness, or (to speak more correctly) by turning, training, and guiding our hearts unto righteousness."³⁰ For Calvin as for the covenant theologians, regeneration is a gradual process.³¹

Another difference exists between covenant theology and the older Reformed theology, according to Miller. Since the

²⁸The Deity of Christ and Other Sermons, trans. Leroy Nixon (Grand Rapids, 1950), p. 201.

²⁹The Mystery of Godliness and Other Selected Sermons (Grand Rapids, 1950), p. 87. Miller describes Calvin's concept of regeneration as "a forcible seizure of the surprised will." Though this may be, as Miller states, "the blunt language of Calvin," it is clearly an oversimplification of Calvin's concept. See Miller, Colony to Province, p. 56.

³⁰Institutes, II, 3, vi.

³¹Compare Institutes, III, 6, v, and III, 3, viii-xi. See also Roy W. Battenhouse, "The Doctrines of Man in Calvin and in Renaissance Platonism," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX (1948), p. 457 and passim, and, for the Reformed view in general, Heppe, Dogmatics, p. 52f.

covenant cannot be accepted unless sinners first learn what is proposed, the covenant idea had the effect of suggesting that there must be a time between depravity and conversion when the transaction of the covenant is proposed. This learning period, Miller contends, transformed Reformed theology. Since conversion does not come like a flash of lightning, it can be prepared for. Man can perform some parts of conversion, and so all men can be called to prepare for grace. In this way, according to Miller, the covenant idea led to the concept of preparation for salvation.³²

But in his sermons Calvin likewise suggests that salvation can be prepared for, and, like the covenant theologians, he sets down the procedure, though in less detail. Since "we cannot draw near to what God shows and declares to us, unless we have first bowed down,"³³ Calvin declares, "all men have to be humbled" God will not provide for us unless "He sees that we are cast into the depths of all miseries."³⁴

. . . when we shall be well persuaded that it is to those who are the most miserable that He addresses the salvation which He acquired, provided they recognize themselves as such, and they humble themselves, and they are entirely confounded, rendering themselves blameworthy (as they are) before the judgment of God; that is how we shall have easy access to be sharers of the righteousness which is

³²"Preparation for Salvation," pp. 259, 277.

³³Deity of Christ, p. 41.

³⁴Deity of Christ, p. 151.

offered to us, and by which we obtain grace and favor before God.³⁵

Here are clear directions as to what steps lead to conversion.

Miller further maintains that "The covenant made it possible to assume that while God elects whom He pleases, He is pleased to elect those who catch Him in His plighted word, and that it is up to fallen man to do so."³⁶ Although the tones of Calvin's and Miller's language are very different, Miller's interpretation could be as readily applied to Calvin's teaching as to the teaching of the New Englanders.³⁷

Indeed, Calvin was not a covenant theologian, but the implications of covenant theology according to Miller--that

³⁵Deity of Christ, pp. 151-152. Observe that Calvin makes no reference here to predestination. Note also Calvin's statement in the Institutes: ". . . Christ . . . manifests himself to none but miserable and afflicted sinners, groaning, labouring, burdened, hungry, and thirsty, pining away with grief and wretchedness, so if we would stand in Christ, we must aim at repentance"--III, 3, xx.

³⁶"Marrow," p. 274.

³⁷According to Miller, another difference between the covenant theologians and Calvin is that for Calvin God was inscrutable, arbitrary, terrifying, but according to the covenant theologians, God through the covenant let himself be "restricted and circumscribed"--"Marrow," pp. 262-263. It is true that Calvin believed that "His [God's] majesty will always be terrible and fearful to us. If we hear mention made of His everlasting purpose, we cannot but be afraid, as though He were ready to plunge us into misery." However, this is not Calvin's complete concept of God. He continues, "But when we know that all grace resteth in Jesus Christ, then we may be assured that God loved us, although we were unworthy."--The Mystery of Godliness, pp. 41-42.

man can know ahead the terms of salvation, that man can prepare for salvation, that conversion is a process in which man's faculties are gradually transformed--all these are present in Calvin's teaching. They are not as fundamental to Calvin as to the covenant theologians because Calvin usually assumed, as we have seen, that his hearers were already called saints.

The near-identity of the approach of Calvin and that of the covenant theologians can perhaps be demonstrated best by the following extended quotation from Calvin. In one of his sermons on the Ten Commandments Calvin declares that God gave man the Commandments, saying,

. . . all which I have done and doe, is onely for your profite, and for your welfare. I am then here readie to couenant by articles with you, and to bind my selfe unto you on my part.

Calvin comments:

Seeing I say, that the liuing God doth debase him selfe so farre, I pray you shall not ~~we be so~~ unthankful, if we be not herewith beaten downe to humble our selues under him laying aside our pride and hautinesse. . . . Nowe if this was to be done in the time of the lawe, then at this day much greater reason thereof: for the Lorde hath not onelie made a couernaunt for one time, as with the Iewes: but when he sent his onely sonne, then declared he him selfe to be our father and sauior much more fullie than before he had done, and that after so sweete, so gracious, and so amiable a manner, as nothing more: in such sort that he hath here as it were laid forth his bowelles of loue and compassion towards us.

We ought therefore

. . . to frame our selues wholly unto him, renouncing euen our selues, and all our affections.

When we are inclined to forget to live in a godly fashion,

. . . let us haue in minde this couernaunt which the Lord hath made with us.³⁸

This passage should be adequate evidence that Calvin was not so different from the covenant theologians as Miller believes. The essential difference between the covenant theologians and Calvin is much more simple than what Miller has argued for. The sermons of covenant theologians are nearly all either attempts to persuade the uncalled, or exhortations to those who regard themselves as called to test their calling.³⁹ But Calvin's sermons, addressed to the already-called, assure them of salvation and exhort them to be grateful.

According to Miller, covenant theologians, after stating the conventional inability of man, "were at liberty to press upon their congregation an obligation to act, as though John Calvin had never lived."⁴⁰ But as we have just seen, Calvin likewise pressed "on his congregation the obligation to act, and in Calvin's sermons, statements of inability are in fact less common than in the sermons of

³⁸Sermons of M. Iohn Caluine, vpon the X. Commandements (London, 1579), folio 5.

³⁹Especially the sermons of the earlier "covenant" preachers.

⁴⁰"Preparation for Salvation," p. 282.

covenant theologians. Here is Calvin's customary approach:

When we inquire about our salvation, we must not begin to say, Are we chosen? No, we can never climb so high; we shall be confounded a thousand times, and have our eyes dazzled, before we can come to God's counsel. What then shall we do? Let us hear what is said in the gospel: when God hath been so gracious, as to make us receive the promise offered, know we not that it is as much as if He had opened His whole heart to us, and had registered our election in our consciences!⁴¹

Hooker's Covenant Theology

Having seen the difference which exists between Calvin's teachings and covenant theology, let us look at Hooker's

⁴¹Mystery of Godliness, p. 44. Here is one description of conversion by Calvin, which, though brief, is fuller than any other description that I have found in Calvin's sermons: ". . . if an unbeliever come into the church and hear the doctrine of God he is reprov'd and judg'd. By this we understand that although the unbeliever may be wrapped in darkness, and pleased with his own ignorance, yet when God so enlightens him that he seeth the misery and wickedness in which he hath lived, when he seeth his deplorable situation, while giving ear to the Word of God, he perceiveth the heavens open, as it were, and that man was not made for this life only, but to be exalted to a higher station. Thus unbelievers are convicted."--The Mystery of Godliness, pp. 135-136. Compare with this passage the following incident told by Cotton Mather: "A profane person designing therein only an ungodly diversion and merriment, said unto his companions, Come, let us go hear what the bawling Hooker will say to us; and thereupon with an intention to make sport, unto Chelmsford lecture they came. The man had not been long in the church, before the quick and powerful word of God, in the mouth of his faithful Hooker, pierced the soul of him: he came out with an awakened and a distressed soul, and by the further blessing of God upon Mr. Hooker's ministry, he arriv'd unto a true conversion; for which cause he would not afterwards leave that blessed ministry, but went a thousand leagues to attend it, and enjoy it."--Magnalia Christi Americana (Hartford, 1820), I, 306.

covenant theology and his techniques in conversion preaching. Two of Hooker's works deal specifically with covenant theology, The Covenant of Grace and The Faithful Covenanter. But the first of these is concerned primarily with the covenant doctrine of baptism, and the latter, though helpful, is brief (only forty-two pages). It deals with the judgment of God against the English nation for not repaying God's goodness with thankfulness. Besides these we may pick out Hooker's covenant theology from some of his other works.

Hooker refers to a number of covenants. In one place he speaks of the covenant between God and Christ which resulted in the atonement. This is the covenant of redemption.⁴² Elsewhere he speaks of the covenant of works, by which Adam could have purchased life through obedience to God. According to the terms of this covenant, Adam was obliged to keep God's commandments out of his personal holiness, perfectly and exactly.⁴³ After this covenant had failed, another one was prepared, the covenant of grace, or, as Hooker sometimes calls it, the covenant of faith. The terms of this covenant are simple: "He that beleeveth shall live."⁴⁴ For those who agree to the covenant of faith, there is a further covenant: the covenant of walking before

⁴²The Saints Dignitie, and Duty (London, 1651), p. 30. Compare Miller, Seventeenth Century, pp. 405-407.

⁴³The Faithful Covenanter (London, 1644), pp. 12-13.

⁴⁴Covenanter, p. 10.

or with God. Man agrees to perform God's commandments in proportion to the grace he receives, as an indication of his thankfulness. Hooker also calls this the covenant of God's law or the covenant of evangelical obedience.⁴⁵ This covenant is unlike the covenant of works in that it cannot be kept by man's own power and is unlike the covenant of works and the covenant of grace in that it is not rewarded, when kept, by life and salvation, since those within it are already saved by faith.⁴⁶

As a result of the key covenant, the covenant of grace, God appears to have limited His power, for He promises to save those who have faith. Hooker, like other New England Puritan theologians,⁴⁷ spoke of God as actually being bound by the covenant arrangement. But this description is only Hooker's way of describing how the redemptive process appears to man, who cannot of course know who is saved. God indeed appears to be bound to save those who believe, but Hooker declares that he who believes and is saved by faith, believes only because God has given faith to him as one of the elect. It is indeed true--from man's point of view--that "He alone, of his own unfettered will, proposed that He be chained."⁴⁸ But let us see how Hooker describes God's

⁴⁵Covenanter, pp. 10-11, 13.

⁴⁶Covenanter, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷See Miller, Seventeenth Century, pp. 379-380.

⁴⁸Miller, Seventeenth Century, p. 379.

self-limiting arrangement. He says:

God is bound to none further then he will bind himself; and he binds himself in no wise to the creature, but by his promise, and that he will never deny, who cannot deny himself. Now in the Gospel only this promise and ingagement of God is revealed, he hath promised to work the condition [that is, to supply faith], and then tied himself in his truth to do good to those, whom he will so fit for his mercy. And now the Soul upon this notice grows in upon God, here is a handle, as it were, for faith to lay hold on⁴⁹

Here Hooker seems to regard the covenant arrangement as nothing more than a subjective description of the redemptive process: a useful description because such an arrangement looks attractive and is thus useful as persuasion--and persuasion accompanies (according to Hooker) God's saving grace.⁵⁰ For Hooker, then, God's covenant is with the elect --with those "whom he will . . . fit for his mercy." Such only is God's promise.

The Father . . . laies al his excellencies, and sufficiency to pawn, that he will see the Salvation of his shal not miscarry. As he is said to swear by himself, he calls his God-head, as a Witness to see done what he saies. So, I may say, he doth by his Promises, lay his infinite sufficiency to pledg . . . God saies, require what may be needful, or helpful at my hand, I will answer it.⁵¹

All things necessary for salvation shall be supplied to

⁴⁹A Comment Upon Christ's last Prayer (London, 1656), p. 7.

⁵⁰See above, Chapter III.

⁵¹Christ's last Prayer, p. 390.

God's elect.⁵² While God's covenants rely on the condition of faith and thus are never absolutes, grace effects the condition.⁵³ By this arrangement predestination is never denied--is indeed affirmed--yet by making redemption depend on the condition of faith, God can present his irresistible grace in the form of persuasion.

One of the most important aspects of the covenant idea for Hooker is its relationship to his teachings on baptism and the relationship of elect parents to their children. According to Hooker, God may use the elect as means of salvation to their children,⁵⁴ because

Beleeving Parents when they enter into a visible covenant to walk in Gods wayes, they enter not for themselves alone, but for all that come of them; and God does ingage himselfe by their meanes to worke grace in their hearts as he sees fit⁵⁵

The children receive grace automatically when their parents are called saints, though such grace, "federall grace," is

⁵²Compare Calvin's declaration, "Yea (and as I said before), Jesus Christ hath taken charge of our souls, and will not suffer us to be taken out of His hands."--The Mystery of Godliness, p. 88.

⁵³The Application of Redemption: The first eight Books (London, 1656), pp. 30-38.

⁵⁴The Covenant of Grace Opened (London, 1649), p. 56 and passim.

⁵⁵Covenant, p. 35. The visible covenant to which Hooker refers here is the church covenant; submitting one's self to such an agreement was one of the requirements which an adult must fulfill in order to be baptized. Others were to be decided upon by God's ministers. See Hooker, Covenant, p. 19, and, for background, Miller, Seventeenth Century, pp. 432-462.

not saving grace and may be lost.⁵⁶

The child of a saint is

made partaker of the covenant with the father, and by the father God hath promised, that [the father's partaking of the covenant] should be a means, not that the father conveyes grace to the childe (that is a dream) but he [God] uses the father as a means, and will communicate himself to the childe, as he sees fit⁵⁷

Because God is likely to use the parents as a means of grace, it is likely, according to Hooker, that children of the elect also belong to the elect. Such children may therefore be baptized, since baptism and the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, are seals of election: ". . . the Seales doe not give the first grace; but do presuppose that such as doe receive them, are within the covenant of Grace."⁵⁸ Although the sacraments are not causes of salvation,⁵⁹ they do have a valuable function: they serve to strengthen faith, in Hooker's view, by presenting Christ visibly to the soul; they show Christ's merit and obedience

⁵⁶Covenant, pp. 35, 41, 43.

⁵⁷Covenant, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁸Covenant, pp. 16-17. It should be observed that elect children are referred to here as being within the covenant of grace, though they are as yet uncalled. Such a situation makes clear that for Hooker predestination underlies the covenant arrangement.

⁵⁹The Soules Humiliation (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 38. See also The Soules Exaltation (London, 1638), p. 101: "The Sacrament saith, grace is not in mee"

and make men's hearts love Him.⁶⁰

Covenant Theology and the Sermon as a Means of Grace

Hooker, then, was thoroughly familiar with covenant theology; his teaching on baptism was such that in this aspect of his thought he may be readily labelled a covenant theologian.⁶¹ A much more important question must now be considered. It has been argued that Hooker and others were able to demand of their congregations that they take steps which were actually inconsistent with the Reformed doctrine of predestination. Miller puts it in this fashion:

Some of them [the covenant theologians], notably Hooker and Shepard . . . even argued that before any faith was generated, before God gave the enabling grace, merely from the incentives of the means, a man could at least "prepare" himself for receiving the faith, though out of this argument were to grow conclusions still further removed from the pure doctrine of Calvinism. The final outcome in all New England preaching of the covenant theory was a shamelessly pragmatic injunction. It permitted the ministers to inform their congregations that if any of them could fulfill the Covenant, they were elected.⁶²

The difficulty with this analysis is that it overlooks

⁶⁰ An Exposition of the Principles of Religion (London, 1645), p. 28.

⁶¹ See Miller's very reliable discussion of the covenant view of the sacraments in "The Puritan Theory of the Sacraments."

⁶² Seventeenth Century, p. 395; italics mine.

the Puritan theory of preaching, according to which sermons are sacramental in nature. In his chapter "The Means of Conversion"⁶³ Miller provides an excellent discussion of the Puritan concept of preaching, although it seems unfortunate that the relationship of Puritan theory to Calvin's theory is not discussed. But in his account of covenant theology he neglects to take into account that Puritan preaching theory, considered against the background of Reformed "High Calvinist" theology, provides an adequate explanation for what he calls the preachers' "shamelessly pragmatic injunction."

Briefly, the thesis to be developed here is that Hooker and others of his time were fully convinced that natural man could not be called upon to do the work of redemption, as many earlier Puritan preachers had prescribed. In the early seventeenth-century intellectual climate, the orthodoxy of Dort and Westminster would have labelled the earlier preaching practice, with its slight references to predestination and spiritual inability, as Arminianism. But the Puritan theory was that, since God's irresistible grace is always matched with the preacher's persuasion, the sermon is normally the means of grace. This theory provided a method by which belief in the inability of natural man could be maintained by the preacher while he exhorted sinners to be saved.

⁶³Seventeenth Century, pp. 280-299, especially p. 291.

A passage from Hooker's writings may help us to understand the role of "the means of grace."

Christ giveth us right to come out from under all iniquitie, but Christ requireth that we our selves should bring our selves from under iniquitie. It is true indeed, we cannot doe it, but by Christ, it is the grace of Christ, the power of Christ, the spirit of Christ that doth help us to get ourselves from under iniquitie; yet notwithstanding we must labour to get ourselves from under it, and Christ will help us.⁶⁴

This perhaps confusing passage deserves explication. According to the interpretation being presented here, it may be explained in the following fashion. By declaring that natural man is unable to do saving works unaided but requires God's grace, Hooker completely avoids Arminian doctrine. But as a predestinarian he can ask man to labor to get from under iniquity, assuring him of Christ's help if he does so, because only the elect will so labor, and the elect (of course) labor with Christ's help. Or, as Hooker puts it elsewhere, ". . . a man must will mercy before hee can have mercy, and whosoever doth will it shall have it" ⁶⁵ For Miller, this is a departure from the essential and pure doctrine of Calvinism; it is a shamelessly pragmatic injunction. But what would he propose as the truly Calvinistic alternative to Hooker's teaching? Calvin does not of course

⁶⁴ Saints Dignitie, p. 38.

⁶⁵ The Unbeleevers Preparing for Christ (London, 1638), Pt. I, p. 27.

teach that man will receive what he does not want. He follows Augustine and argues that ". . . the Lord prevents the unwilling in order to make him willing, and follows after the willing that he may not will in vain"66 Heppe's summary of the Reformed position on this aspect of conversion elucidates Hooker's orthodoxy on this point.

. . . the H. Spirit [sic] so works upon man as to esteem him a personal creature and so does not regard him as a clod or a stone, but acts so that enlightened by the Word and impelled by grace man receives in conversion the will to convert to God and so his conversion takes the form of spontaneity [italics mine]. Yet since in conversion every sort of co-operation of man's will with the H. Spirit is completely excluded, the activity therein exercised by the H. Spirit is no merely natural, merely moral or mediate activity (no mere suasio per verbum), but at the same time and pre-eminently an immediate, supernatural one, in which the H. Spirit avails it-
 Word, works essentially and irresistibly way com-
 the thought, will and life of man.67
 pletely independent of the natural activity of the
 Word, works essentially and irresistibly . . . upon
 the thought, will and life of man.67

It is to be noted that according to this view, the redemptive process includes man's willing to be converted, and that although the process is supernatural, it also involves suasio per verbum. As we have seen, in the thought of both the Continental Reformed churches and Puritanism, God's irresistible grace is accompanied by persuasion, for persuasion is the outward accompaniment of grace for the elect, serving the purpose of "rationalizing" irresistible grace.

66 Institutes, II, 3, vii.

67 Dogmatics, p. 521.

From this point of view let us now consider additional samples of what may appear to be Hooker's Arminianism. In The Unbelievers Preparing for Christ Hooker declares, ". . . what a thing is this then, when neither Minister can persuade thee, nor Angels exhort thee, nor Christ himselfe intreat thee to take mercy" ⁶⁸ Is Hooker saying that persuasion ought to be enough? Is it that Christ's entreating itself can be resisted? According to the Remonstrants (Arminians) at Dort,

The operation of grace in the beginning of conversion is indifferent, and might be resisted, so that man can be converted by it or not: and the conversion does not necessarily follow unless man by his free consent decides for it, and wants to be converted. ⁶⁹

Hooker's position would seem to be quite proper Arminian doctrine. In the same work Hooker writes that on Judgment Day God will laugh and say, ". . . how often have I sent unto you, and called upon you, and you would not heare nor regard mee. Behold men and Angels, this is the man, this is hee that contemned my Word, and slighted the meanes of salvation" ⁷⁰ Is God laughing at reprobates, or at those who chose to resist His apparently resistible grace? This question and the two above can be reduced to two possibilities: (1) Hooker is being inconsistent with the very

⁶⁸Pt. I, p. 125.

⁶⁹Quoted by Bernhard Citron, New Birth (Edinburgh, 1951), p. 121.

⁷⁰Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 183.

strict predestinarianism which is to be found throughout his writings, for he realizes that one cannot preach predestination and expect to convert one's hearers;⁷¹ or (2) Hooker is using these declarations as attempts at persuasive logic, knowing that from man's point of view it appears that one can accept or reject God's grace. The second view is more consistent with the outlines of Hooker's thought, although accepting either alternative may lower our estimate of Hooker as a man. In dealing with certain other passages we have had to take into account Hooker's attempt to see the redemptive process from the human point of view; apparently such is the situation here.

Of course it may be argued that one of the standard doctrines of Reformed thought is presented in these two quotations from Hooker, especially the latter; this doctrine teaches that although their calling is ineffective, the reprobate may be "truly" called--by the outward word though not by inner grace.⁷² Such an explanation makes Hooker seem more orthodox, but it is important to see that Hooker's purpose in these passages is not merely instruction in the doctrines of religion, but is rather persuasion. According to

⁷¹F. H. Foster argues that the strict predestinarian preaching of the Puritans of the earlier seventeenth century was later abandoned because of this practical difficulty. See his Genetic History, pp. 26-32.

⁷²See Hepoe, Dogmatics, p. 517, for a good brief statement of the doctrine. See also Calvin, Institutes, III, 14, viii.

the standard organization of Puritan sermons, Hooker's purpose here is "exhortation."

Hooker used even the doctrine of reprobation as a device for exhorting men to seek salvation. If a man has lived for a long time under an effective minister and is not "prepared" for salvation, it seems likely, suggests Hooker, that God does not want him to be prepared.⁷³ Although Miller regards such a statement as "apparently contradictory to a literal interpretation of the doctrine of natural inability,"⁷⁴ there is a practical basis for Hooker's charge: that it may persuade men to use the means at hand.

The concept of "the means of salvation" made it possible for Hooker to remain a predestinarian and yet offer his hearers assurance of salvation. We should "bestir our souls in the use of all means to entertain a Savior . . . and we shall not mis of our expectation."⁷⁵ Here Hooker offers assurance of election as a reward for using the means of salvation since only the elect will choose to use the means and use them properly. For "without means thou hast no reason to think that God will work" ⁷⁶ If men "have prayers and sermons, and exhortations, and admonitions, and

⁷³The Soules Implantation (London, 1637), pp. 75-76; also The Application of Redemption: The Ninth and Tenth Books (London, 1657), p. 28.

⁷⁴Seventeenth Century, p. 297.

⁷⁵Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 199.

⁷⁶Application, Bks. IX-X, p. 436.

comforts," then they have "all things that are available to bring a man to life and hapiness,"⁷⁷ for the means, "so far as he [God] is Pleased to appoint and use them," are instrumental causes of the application to sinners of redemption.⁷⁸ God does not use miraculous means now as once he did;⁷⁹ now God's means of salvation is "the ministry of the Gospel."⁸⁰ The doctrine of means furnished Hooker, as Miller wisely says, with "a common meeting place for irresistible grace and for reason. It made the grace compatible with nature without doing violence to nature or reducing grace to a natural influence."⁸¹

A central problem in studies of Puritan thought is the role of preparation for salvation. As we have seen, Miller has argued that covenant theologians called for man to use his natural ability to prepare for grace. The assertion that the Puritan doctrine of preparation was not quite orthodox is not a new one. The late seventeenth-century Reformed theologian Witsius criticized gently the teachings of Perkins, Ames, and the British divines at Dort for their view of preparation, which he found confusing and somewhat unorthodox. These theologians, he says, teach that God

⁷⁷Saints Dignitie, pp. 213-214.

⁷⁸Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 111.

⁷⁹Unbeleevvers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 160.

⁸⁰The Soules Vocation (London, 1636), p. 34.

⁸¹Miller, Seventeenth Century, p. 293.

takes preliminary steps in the conversion process in order to prepare the soul for conversion itself. These steps, such as a serious consideration of one's sins and despairing of one's salvation on the basis of personal merit, are, according to Witsius, the results of conversion, not preparation for it.⁸² An Englishman of the seventeenth century, William Pemble, denounced those who teach that preparation apart from grace is possible.⁸³ Traces of voluntarism have been found in Perkins's teaching on preparation by Ralph Bronkema, who also cites examples from the Puritans Owen and Sibbes.⁸⁴

The heterodox position is perhaps best stated by John Preston. According to Preston, although a man cannot save himself,

. . . yet withall, I say, he hath power to doe those things, upon neglect of which, God denies him ability to beleieve and repent: So that, it is true, though a man cannot beleieve and repent, and nevertheless for this is condemned; yet withall take this with you, there be many precedent acts, which a man hath in his liberty to doe, or not to doe, by which he tyes God, and deserves this Iustly, that God should leave him to himselfe, and deny him ability of beleeving and repenting.⁸⁵

⁸²Witsius, The Economy of the Covenants (Edinburgh, 1803; first edition, 1685), I, 366-368.

⁸³See "Vindiciae Gratiae," in Works (Oxford, 1659), pp. 78-84. Miller summarizes Pemble's position in Colony to Province, p. 57.

⁸⁴Bronkema, The Essence of Puritanism (Goes, Holland, 1929), pp. 101-106.

⁸⁵Preston, The Saints Qualification (London, 1634), p. 225.

Man "ties God" by failing to prepare.

John Norton, in The Orthodox Evangelist, is likewise unorthodox, but in a different manner. He describes preparatory work as "the effect of common grace: as saving work is the effect of free special grace." "Preparatory Work, taken in its full Extent, is the whole frame of inherent Qualifications; coming between the rest of the Soul, in the State of Nature, and Vocation; whereby the Soul is put in a next disposition, or Ministerial Capacity of believing immediately, i.e., Of immediate receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁸⁶ For Norton this preparatory work "hath no necessary connexion with salvation."⁸⁷

The position of Norton and Preston is the New England Puritan doctrine which Miller has discussed.

Giles Firmin, a Puritan of the later seventeenth century, was very critical of Hooker's teaching on preparation.

He reports:

When Mr. Hooker preached those Sermons about the Souls preparation for Christ, and Humiliation, my Father-in-law, Mr. Nath. Ward, told him, Mr. Hooker, you make as good Christians before men, are in Christ, as ever they are after; and wished, would I were but as good a Christian now, as you make men while they are but preparing for Christ.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Orthodox Evangelist (London, 1654), pp. 139-141.

⁸⁷Evangelist, pp. 100-101. According to William Perkins, man has certain knowledge of God naturally, and this should "be preserved with good bringing up, with diligent instruction, and with good company"--A Treatise tending unto a declaration . . . (London, 1589), p. 3. For John Cotton's position on preparation, see Chapter VI below.

⁸⁸Firmin, The Real Christian (London, 1670), p. 19.

According to Firmin, Hooker demanded more than God requires.

Against this rather detailed background, let us look at one of Hooker's works to which Firmin refers, The Soules Preparation for Christ (London, 1632). Hooker held that the parts of preparation for Christ are two: contrition and humiliation.⁸⁹ The Soules Preparation is subtitled A Treatise of Contrition, Wherein is discovered How God Breaks the Heart and wounds the Soule, in the Conversion of a Sinner to Himselfe. Thus without going beyond the title page we learn that contrition is God's work, not man's. Throughout the work itself appear such phrases as "how the Lord workes this sorrow" (page 125), and ". . . this sorrow in preparation is rather a sorrow wrought upon me, then any worke comming from any spiritual ability in my selfy [sic]" (pages 155-156).

Unlike Preston and Norton, Hooker maintains that preparation "is a saving worke, and a worke of Gods Spirit . . ." (page 157). Though Norton argues that preparation has no necessary connection with salvation, Hooker argues that "the work of contrition of heart is wrought in every one in this worke of preparation, before he is, or can be planted into Christ . . ." (page 158). For Norton, preparation puts the soul into an intermediate state between depravity and salvation. But according to Hooker, "When the heart is fitted and prepared, the Lord Christ comes immediately into it" (page 155). Preparation does not merely put the soul into a

⁸⁹ See Soules Implantation, pp. 3-4.

condition such that Christ may enter it, but puts it into a condition such that Christ does enter it. Therefore if a man has been prepared and dies, his salvation is assured (page 155).

Contrition is, then, God's work. God's means of bringing men to contrition--to a true sight of sin and hatred of it--is "to prick their hearts." But God's methods differ. He may choose to give a man a violent blow, such as St. Paul received on the Damascus road. But the more customary method is through the agency of God's ministers, especially in sermons (pages 125-131). If this is the situation, we may expect that Hooker's aim in this sermon will be to prick men's hearts, to bring them to a recognition of their sinful state and to a hatred of it. If he succeeds, it is of course only because God is working in men's hearts as he speaks.

Perhaps the most useful method for presenting Hooker's technique of making men contrite is to examine the main points of The Soules Preparation, now that we understand how the work is to be considered. As usual, Hooker's method here is to present a series of doctrines, each of which consists of a definition or a proposition. If the doctrine is a definition, each part is taken up and considered in detail, word by word, phrase by phrase. If it is a proposition, it is usually defended immediately. One of Hooker's greatest assets is his ability to state the case against his proposition and answer it just at the time when the objection

is most likely to occur to the reader. After the doctrine has been defended or defined, the reasons why there should be such a doctrine are presented. Then comes the heart of the work, the uses of the doctrine. Hooker's works were always designed to be practical. After the uses comes another doctrine, often one which is prepared for by the preceding doctrine. In this presentation, it will be necessary to omit many of Hooker's lesser points.

As the title states, The Soules Preparation is a treatise of contrition--its nature, purpose, and method. The text used is Acts ii. 37: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said to Peter and the other Apostles, 'Men and Bretheren, what shall we do to be saved?'" Hooker begins his discourse with a definition of contrition as the hatred of sin after it has been truly perceived, so that the result is a separation from it. That definition is important, but although Hooker is careful to discuss it fully at this step, the most significant parts of it--"the true sight of sin" and the resultant hatred for and separation from sin--form the substance of the sermon proper. The sermon thus can be regarded as an explication of the meaning which Hooker assigns to "contrition."

The first doctrine does not seem to be of special significance, and indeed Hooker does not emphasize it, but uses it merely to lead up to the second doctrine. The first is that it is possible for the most stubborn sinner on earth to get a "broken heart" (that is, to achieve contrition), since

God is all-sufficient and can pardon all sins, the sin against the Holy Ghost excepted. This doctrine, which Hooker bases on Scripture, is presented for two purposes. First, Hooker hopes by it to universalize his message, for this doctrine checks discouragement. Second, he uses it to caution his listeners that, while it is possible for even the worst of sinners to be saved (as far as he can tell none of his hearers is excluded), much mercy is needed. Clearly such a discussion is a necessary and natural preliminary, since Hooker must persuade all of his uncalled hearers that his message is intended for them, but that the means of remedying their condition is not easy.

The second doctrine is a crucial one--there must be a "true sight of sin" before the soul can be broken. Sin, according to Hooker, is an opposing of God, though it is not often recognized as such by the sinner, either because he has regard for the pleasures or profits which he seems to derive from sin or because sinful man considers God to have endless patience, and so thinks that he can always repent later. But, says Hooker, sin deprives man of his greatest good, unity with God, and this is to be feared more than Hell itself, especially since it is a cause of Hell and also is a cause of pain to God, Who is All Goodness. Man must see sin clearly, recognizing it as sin and seeing its consequences; he must also see it "convictingly," recognizing the evils of particular sins.

As we read on, we may find ourselves wondering if

Hooker is not assuming a great deal when he says that contrition is necessary for salvation. Because of the numerous issues involved, Hooker on this occasion and elsewhere asked his audience to accept certain doctrines at the beginning of a discussion which he is to defend later.

The method of achieving a true sight of sin is to ask God for knowledge, and to study God and His Law, accepting His truth without objection.

In the summary form presented here, Hooker's discussion may sound objective and impersonal, but in the work Hooker constantly intersperses such addresses to uncalled sinners as the following:

I pray you in cold blood consider this; and say thus, Good Lord! What a sinful wretch am I? that a poore damned wretch of the earth should stand in defiance against the God of hosts, and that I should submit my selfe to the devill, and oppose the Lord of hosts? (page 18)

Man, Hooker realizes, develops many devices to escape from a true sight of sin. It is in this discussion, more than elsewhere, that Hooker shows why the means of salvation which he prescribes is the only real way. He first considers the common excuse that sin is not dangerous. Many, he says, contend that sin is common (but there is much room in Hell) and natural. Some say:

. . . there is also a naturalnesse in a sinful course . . . it is my nature, and my infirmity, and I am of a cholerick disposition, I shal sometimes sweare, when I am angry; and I cannot but be drunke sometimes, when I light into good company . . .

Nay, dost thou say it is thy nature to sin? Then I say the greater is thy wickednesse, if it be thy nature so to doe. We hate not a man because he drinks poyson, but we hate a Toad because it is of a poysonous nature; therefore rather mourne the more for thy sinnes, because it is thy cursed nature so to doe. (page 40)

Others complain that their sins are the result of impulsive thought, but, Hooker answers, thought is the essence of sin. Commonly our sins seem so pleasant that we stay with them even though we recognize them as bad. But this, says Hooker, denies God.

Another device which man uses to escape from a true sight of sin is to trust to luck that he will not be punished. Perhaps he assumes that God does not heed his little sins, but God by His nature sees all. Or perhaps a man admits that God observes his sins, but procrastinates, saying that he will repent later. Hooker reminds us that any time but now may be too late, for, although some say that Christ will be merciful and save them, God's mercy is not always available, and if it is offered and not accepted now, it will not be offered later. (This is a recurring idea in Hooker's works.) The sinner may say that if he is to be damned, then he will just have to accept his fate. But, Hooker protests, we cannot bear our consciences now, and this is merely a foretaste of Hell. Hooker reminds his hearers that Jesus Himself could not bear the suffering of the cross. Hooker presumably expects that all of these "shifts" are to be found among his hearers.

Next Hooker provides his listeners with three motives for contrition. First, contrition is the only way to reach Heaven. Second, it is not difficult to achieve contrition if one will only start now. Third, great joys will be the reward of the contrite; being contrite is the "most comfortable course in the world" (page 59).

The next doctrine is that a special application of particular sins is a chief means to bring people to a sight of their sins and to a true sorrow for them. Hooker argues that a minister can best bring sinners to repentance by telling them specifically wherein they sin. Ministers feel discouraged about using this technique because the truth hurts. But ". . . we commit sin, because we see it not, and therefore sorrow not for it" (page 31).

The next doctrine is of considerably greater importance. A serious meditation of our sins in the light of the word of God is a special means to break our hearts for our sins. Hooker defines meditation as a settled exercise of the mind for a probing inquiry into a truth, and for the affecting of the heart therewith. It brings truth home by taking much time and full attention for the matter. The grounds upon which meditation is based^c are God's mercy and justice, and a consideration of the seriousness of one's sins and the punishment they deserve. The method of meditation is to think of these grounds continuously, seeking pardon without stubbornness, which is often, according to Hooker, the obstacle that keeps men from salvation. It is

based on a belief that man does not need Christ. This is really either an unwillingness to be ruled by Christ or a belief that Christ will not provide mercy for sinners until they improve themselves.⁹⁰

Further in the method of meditation, and most important, is the idea that the heart must be pricked. Pricking means feeling grief and sorrow for sin and a desire to be severed from it, and a dependence on God for help. This concept of pricking seems, from the point of view of logic, to be a flaw in Hooker's argument, since he contends that meditation is a process that one can choose and execute, and at the same time he holds that the pricking comes from God. But we should remember that the preacher's exhortation was regarded as coming from God, as were also the willingness to choose meditation and even the ability to meditate. Hooker does not suggest here that some may be predestined to eternal damnation,⁹¹ but at least implies that all of his hearers have a chance to be saved. While this may seem contrary to what he should have held as an orthodox predestinarian, it is the only approach psychologically feasible.

Hooker next discusses God's means of pricking men's

⁹⁰ But in "The Preparation of the Heart" in Soules Implantation, Hooker argues that man must eliminate his "sinful lusts" before he can be saved. Hooker's position as found in Preparation is also to be found in Soules Vocation (London, 1636), p. 541.

⁹¹ Except those who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, a sin with which Hooker is not here concerned.

hearts. The first means mentioned is a violent blow, such as that which God gave St. Paul on the Damascus road. We may expect from this introduction that Hooker is going to show how God may intervene directly in the process of conversion. But the violent blows which Hooker suggests, are supplied through the agency of preachers, especially in their sermons. Other means discussed are reading, hearing, and conferring concerning God's Law, and realizing the dangers of Hell.

Hooker next discusses the sequence of events in contrition, a description which some of his hearers doubtless felt was a good example of Hooker's deep understanding of the processes of the mind. Perhaps it is more useful to note that his description demonstrates an understanding of the powers of suggestion. Early in the process of conversion, according to Hooker, the individual begins to have a bad conscience and then to recognize his sins clearly. With this recognition comes sorrow, because the sinner is unwilling to part from his sins yet realizes that they defile him, separate him from God, and make him liable to the punishments of Hell. As the process continues, the sinner begins to feel a great sorrow for even his little sins, and sometimes, at this stage, a desire for public confession is felt. This sorrow, be it noted, is distinct from the earlier sorrow, which might be called the sorrow of the dilemma, and comes after it. Sin is now felt as an ever-present burden, and the greatest desire of the sinner is to remove it. This

"sound sorrow" is altogether necessary for conversion and salvation, according to Hooker, because it is the only means of true preparation for Christ. It is the only means because man must cast off his sins before he is acceptable to God, and yet the soul will not depart from its sins until it is weary with them. When the soul has come to hate its sins, when it has reached a "sound saving sorrow," it is saved, although the process of conversion is not yet complete.

Hooker stresses and re-stresses that man must know what he is being saved from--his sinful state--before he can be saved: ". . . all men must be thus disposed before they can be saved; and if thus fitted and disposed; they shall be certainly saved; It is not enough for a man to be in a miserable state and damnable condition, but he must also see it . . ." (page 159). Without a true sight of sin, ". . . you . . . keep your sins as Sugar under your tongues, and will be loose, and malicious and covetous still" (page 230).

God's method of conversion is always the same, says Hooker; it is always through contrition. But there are several manners which He uses, depending on the condition of the sinner. If a man is an opposer of God, he will have his heart utterly broken. If a man has continued long in sin, he must see all of his sins fully. If He plans to do a great work by a man, the Lord acts violently. But

. . . if the soule be . . . trained up among godly parents, and live under a soule-saving Ministry, that

saith, you cannot goe to heaven by a civill course, and you cannot have any dispensation for your prophanation of the Sabbath; I say, if a man live under such a Ministry, and keepe good company the Lord may reforme this man, and cut him off from his corruptions kindly, and breake his heart secretly in the apprehension of his sinnes, and yet the world never see it. (page 168)

Next Hooker turns to the "fruit" of the sorrow of which he had been speaking, basing his remarks on the question asked Peter and the other apostles after Peter's sermon, "Men and bretheren, what shall we doe?" Hooker believes that the questioners see their horrible condition, are ignorant as to what course to take, and yet hope that somehow something can be done. (Presumably Hooker hoped that some of his hearers were, at this point in his sermon, in the same condition.) On this basis Hooker builds the doctrine that there is a secret hope of mercy wherewith God strengthens those who are truly broken hearted for their sins. (Of course he is also arguing that men at this stage have such a hope so that his hearers will as a result be hopeful.) Since an individual sees that there is hope for him, he is able to make a true confession. A true confession can come only from a truly contrite soul who resolves inwardly, as he confesses, that he will sin no more, but who at the same time has no confidence in himself and therefore leans on God for help. Only those can ask for help who believe that there is still hope of salvation. A man will not confess unless he feels some assurance that he will be pardoned.

A late part of Hooker's work is a lengthy discussion of

the role of the minister in confession, a discussion which today lacks the interest of the earlier parts of the work. Although a minister cannot absolve a person of his sins, confession to a minister is very important, in Hooker's view. In fact, it seems clear that Hooker regarded preaching and the advising of souls in confession as the two most important duties of a clergyman. Hooker regards a minister as a physician of souls. He should be skillful and experienced, merciful yet faithful to God; he must be no respecter of persons and should regard what he hears as entirely private.

Hooker concludes with another doctrine: the soul which is truly pierced has a restless hatred of sin. This hatred has two parts: a desire to have sins discovered so that they may be killed, and a hatred of sin in others and of anything which has to do with sin. Hooker's attitude here does not seem to be in any sense that of the self-righteous Puritan; it is rather that he is not a man who will tolerate what he considers evil. To Hooker this hatred is a sign of election, for, he argues, if one hates sin, he may be sure that his heart is broken and he will, as a result, have saving grace. This idea brings Hooker to a final eloquent observation:

If this hatred of sinne be a true evidence of broken heartednesse, what will become of a world of prophane persons, that are carried on with the pursuit of sinne from which they will not be plucked; the drunkard will have his cups, and the adulterer his queanes, and the chapman his false weights; they

are so farre from this dislike of sinnes, that they hate everything save sin . . . and say . . . what shall we doe? . . . What shall we doe that we may not be checked and reprov'd? get you down to hell, and there you shall have elbow room enough; there you may be as wicked and prophane as you will
(pages 241-242)

Let us consider now the method used by Hooker in this work. First, let us note that Hooker attempts to persuade his audience that contrition is necessary; his method is to appeal to both their understanding and their affections. In a sense this aim is central to the whole work, for Hooker returns frequently to this theme. Second, he shows how God brings men to contrition: he emphasizes the importance which God has given to sermons, because according to Puritan doctrine the sermon is the chief means of conversion, and also because Hooker wants his hearers to realize that the sermon which they are hearing may be God's means of calling them from their sins. Having established these two bases, Hooker can proceed to urge men to meditate on their sins. He explains why they should meditate, how they should meditate, and what will be the results of their meditation. Reading, conferences, and more sermons Hooker also prescribes. When men have reached an advanced stage in the contrition process they will, according to Hooker, receive a hope of salvation. Encouraging the contrite to expect this hope, Hooker can then proceed to the last step by discussing the role of confession. With confession, the process is complete: man is saved, for he now has achieved a permanent hatred of sin

which will result in sanctification.

It should be noted that this summary of the steps in Hooker's description of the process of contrition does not follow altogether the order of Hooker's treatise. This is because Hooker seldom completely leaves a doctrine when going on to a new point but instead returns repeatedly to present new arguments or re-phrased old ones to support the doctrine. The theme of the necessity of a true sight of sin can be found on almost every page. Hooker seems to have doubted that he could ever be certain of having convinced his hearers. Even the final passage is a last attempt to persuade his audience that contrition is the necessary means of sanctification and salvation.

A second means of preparing the soul for salvation is humiliation. As we have seen, Hooker teaches that the soul is saved when it achieves true contrition, though the preparation process is not yet complete. The final step, humiliation, is necessary in order that the soul's reliance on itself may be broken,⁹² for if a man honors himself he cannot trust in Christ; indeed, he will not even see Christ unless he sees no other way out of his troubles.⁹³ Like contrition, humiliation is God's work; the soul is passive.⁹⁴

⁹²Soules Humiliation, p. 5.

⁹³Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 153-155; compare Soules Humiliation, pp. 24-25.

⁹⁴Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 149-152; and Soules Humiliation, p. 302.

When humiliation is completed, faith is certain to follow, for the soul, though not yet saved, will be saved even if it die.⁹⁵ But humiliation, like contrition, is extremely difficult to achieve,⁹⁶ for the work of renovating a man is greater than the work of creation.⁹⁷

Hooker's position on preparation is, briefly, that preparation is necessary for salvation and is a saving work, resulting from God's special grace.⁹⁸ Hooker's teaching thus is similar to what Witsius found to be not quite orthodox in the works of Ames and Perkins. But it is not what Miller refers to when he says, "Regeneration through covenant meant that men could make themselves ready, at least by studying the nature of covenants."⁹⁹

The most striking aspect of Hooker's teaching on preparation is surely not his emphasis on man's spiritual abilities; it is rather the great difficulty of being saved. In later life Hooker seemed to consider this difficulty even greater. Like The Soules Preparation, the tenth book of The

⁹⁵Application: Bks. I-VIII, pp. 152-153; and Soules Humiliation, p. 182 (misnumbered 282).

⁹⁶Soules Humiliation, pp. 232-242.

⁹⁷Soules Humiliation, p. 50.

⁹⁸In The Soules Implantation, p. 34, Hooker suggests that an important result of preparation is that it makes man willing for Christ to enter his soul, and in The Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, pp. 40-41, he declares that to will Christ is a gift of grace and is necessary for salvation. Compare Application: Bks. I-VIII, p. 153.

⁹⁹Colony to Province, p. 56.

Application of Redemption is a treatise on contrition; here Hooker declares that contrition

. . . will cost much labor and long time, before it can be done in an ordinary way; and therefore if thou art wise for thy soul omit no time, be faithful to do what thou canst, and yet fearful, because it's in Gods hand to do what he will. Therefore seek seasonably, tremblingly, and uncessantly unto the Lord to do this work for thee. It's not the dipping, but rubbing and soaking of an old stayn that will fetch it out; thou must soak and steep thy soul with godly sorrow. It's not salving, but long tenting an old sore that will do the Cure. It may be it will make you go crying to your grave, and well if you get to heaven at last.¹⁰⁰

In some passages in Hooker's writings, however, there can be found demands that men prepare themselves by using "common" grace, and such demands are indeed of the same variety as those cited by Miller. They are very rare. In The Saints Guide Hooker considers whether it is in man's power to make a sermon effective to him. He answers:

No, but it is in your power to doe more than you doe, your legs may as well carry you to the word, as to an Ale-house, your ears may heare the word as well as idle tales, you may sing as well Psalmes as idle songs, you may read good books, as well as Play-books; doe you what you are able to doe, put all your strength, and diligence unto it, and then cast your selves upon God, and tell his majesty, that faine you would forsake every evill way, but of your selfe you are not able, and though the spirit bee somewhat willing yet the flesh is weak
¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Application: Bks. IX-X, p. 29.

¹⁰¹ Saints Guide (London, 1645), pp. 117-118.

In The Unbeleevers Preparing for Christ Hooker declares that ". . . we have no spirituall abilitie in our selves to performe any spirituall dutie, but yet we have ability to performe some morall actions; a man hath restraining and preventing grace whereby he is enabled to waite upon God in the meanes, that so he may be enabled to receive grace"102

But although such invocations to natural man's spiritual abilities may be considered seeds of the Puritan Arminianism against which Jonathan Edwards was to fight in the eighteenth century,¹⁰³ it is perhaps more useful in studying Hooker to consider them against the background of "High Calvinism." Puritans such as Henry Smith did not emphasize predestination and man's inability nearly as much as Hooker did. Hooker's problem was to preach conversion sermons at a time when the orthodoxy with which he identified himself insisted on the centrality of the doctrines of inability and predestination. Within this framework Hooker had to rely on such doctrines as that of common grace in order to remain at the same time an effective preacher and a strictly orthodox theologian.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Pt. I, p. 120 (misnumbered 220).

¹⁰³As Miller considers them, in "marrow," p. 286.

¹⁰⁴Hooker's views on common grace are in fact similar to Calvin's. Calvin taught that ". . . a certain common grace is granted . . . to all those who in the times of the New Testament dispensation live in the covenant sphere, to all the believers and their children, to all who in any

Let us consider some passages in Hooker's writings which demonstrate his consciousness of his delicate position. Hooker considers a possible dissuasive from the doctrine of means:

. . . some may cavill now and say, Gods mercy is free, and therefore hee may as well deny it mee as bestow it upon mee. I answer, this is true, hee may deny it thee as well as give it thee, and he may also as well give it thee as deny it thee; it is as possible that thou mayest receive mercy, and therefore try all meanes possible to obtaine it.¹⁰⁵

Although Hooker here may not answer the objection to the satisfaction of the modern reader, it is significant that he felt the need to consider the objection at all.

If some people who seek God never find Him--the orthodox Reformed position--then why should men try to seek Him? "Reason thus," answers Hooker,

Is it so, that those who seeke the Lorde shall never finde him, then what shall become of me that never cried at all, nay, that loath prayer, and reject the use of Gods ordinances, and dispise the meanes of grace and salvation, whereby I must seeke and obtaine mercy if ever I have it my condition

sense may be accounted members of the New Testament Church." This includes even those "who have a name and a place in God's Church in distinction to those who have never come into touch with the means of grace." Note also that according to Calvin's teaching "God in various ways manifests his goodness to men at large in order that he may turn them from their sins and allure them to Himself. . . . God woos men to Himself and urges them to come to repentance"

--Herman Kuiper, Calvin on Common Grace (Goes, Netherlands, and Grand Rapids, Mich., 1928), pp. 194 and 207-208. See also p. 222.

¹⁰⁵ Unbelievers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 22.

is desperately lamentable, fearfully irrecoverable
¹⁰⁶

Hooker seems altogether conscious of the awkwardness of his position in these attempts to get around the difficulties supplied by the extreme doctrine of predestination.

Hooker would not have resorted to the doctrine of common grace in exhorting his hearers to go to church, hear sermons, sing psalms and read books, except for the fact that the strict orthodoxy of his day rigidly insisted on man's spiritual inability; common grace was for Hooker a loophole which he could use in persuading his hearers to "use the means."

Let us summarize the conclusions reached so far concerning Hooker's techniques in preaching conversion. Because of the Puritan theory that preaching is sacramental in nature, the strict predestinarian Hooker could make Arminian-like demands of his hearers. These demands include exhortations to prepare for salvation through contrition, which is, according to Hooker, God's means of saving the elect.

Although Hooker may be classed as a covenant theologian, especially in his teaching on baptism, covenant theology does not differ from the teaching of Calvin in the respects that Perry Miller has suggested. The theory of the sermon

¹⁰⁶ Fovre Learned and Godly Treatises (London, 1638), p. 279.

as sacramental is more useful than the covenant idea in understanding Hooker's teachings on conversion. In the next chapter, we shall examine other aspects of Hooker's technique in preaching conversion.'

CHAPTER V

ADDITIONAL PREACHING TECHNIQUES USED BY HOOKER

Having examined Hooker's teaching on preparation and some aspects of his preaching technique, we shall now consider, against this background, several other techniques which Hooker used repeatedly. One of the most interesting is the argument that if one fails to "use the means"--fails, that is, to follow the prescribed program of preparation which will result in conversion--he is actually resisting grace. This concept, evidences of which we have already observed, is clearly a result of the Reformed and Puritan doctrine of vocatio or effectual calling. Heppe points out that in Reformed teaching ". . . the word by which the H. Spirit [sic] effects calling is the same word by which God's call to grace is outwardly proclaimed to man."¹ If preaching is God's means of effecting calling, one could easily argue that to resist what is preached is to resist God's grace. Presumably this was Hooker's reasoning. Further, as the Reformed divine Wollebius puts it, "The form of this calling consists partly in the offer of the benefit of

¹Reformed Dogmatics, trans. G. T. Thomson (London, 1950), p. 518.

redemption, partly in the injunction to accept it."²

Hooker's insistence that men accept grace by using the means to obtain it is thus orthodox in the Reformed view.

Hooker's task was, we must remember, to persuade. If we keep this in mind, we shall be less troubled by Hooker's seeming inconsistencies. For example, Hooker commonly holds that man cannot believe without grace, but in The Saints Dignitie, and Dutie he labels those who are unwilling to believe as horribly base, and those unable to believe as horribly unfaithful.³ Name-calling is used here to persuade; it is intended as an injunction to believe. Hooker even has two sermons which attempt persuasion by name-calling: "Culpable Ignorance" and "Wilful Hardnesse."⁴

In another work Hooker calls "resisting God's Spirit in the Word" (failing, that is, to follow the preacher's instructions) a sin next to the unpardonable sin, for it is, in a sense, a sin against the Holy Ghost⁵ "in a more than ordinary manner."⁶

So when God hath sent his faithful Servants to admonish thee, his Ministers to convince that

²Christianae Theologiae Compendium (Basel, 1624), p. 90, quoted by Heppe, Dogmatics, p. 515.

³Saints Dignitie (London, 1651), p. 90.

⁴Both in Saints Dignitie.

⁵The Soules Vocation (London, 1637), pp. 67-68.

⁶The Application of Redemption: The Ninth and Tenth Books (London, 1657), p. 95.

gainsaying Spirit of thine, to ransack the corruption of thy Cankered Conscience, so that the core might have been searched, and thy distemper healed. Who knows what might have been wrought, what benefit thou might have received, hadst thou but suffered and received the helps provided for that end; which when thou diddest oppose, and not suffer thy self to be convinced, thou didst oppose thine everlasting welfare, and therefore art guilty of thine own blood.⁷

Here Hooker extends his indictment of the unconverted: first, they are guilty of resisting God's grace, and second, they are committing spiritual suicide by being unwilling to be convinced. "To be hard to be convicted [of sinfulness] is a dangerous sin, and a dreadful curse to the party that is tainted with such a disposition of spirit."⁸

Thus the chain of "logic" which we have traced leads Hooker to suggest--again for persuasive purposes--that if a man is not effectually called, he is at fault:

If a bungling servant cannot tell how to hew a peece of wood for a building, it is no marvell; but if it be such a peece, that the master Carpenter cannot make it fit for the building, then it is good for nothing but to be burned: So it is here with the soule, if the Spirit of God can doe thee no good, who can?⁹

More often Hooker is less denunciatory, more imploring: "If you will, but come and take grace, that is all God lookes for, all that the Lord expects and desires, you may have it,

⁷Application, Bks. IX-X, p. 94.

⁸Application, Bks. IX-X, p. 94.

⁹Soules Vocation, p. 69.

for the carrying of it away"10 Christ wants man to obey His commands and live forever: ". . . he desireth it heartily, and he will be exceedingly pleased if you satisfie his desire."11 Christ so wishes for man's salvation that ". . . the Lord tyres himselfe . . . and wearieeth himselfe with waiting one day after another"12

Although Hooker appears to have based his teaching on accepted Reformed doctrine, both his denunciations and his solicitations are quite possibly suspect when compared with orthodoxy. But as a rule Hooker departed only slightly from Reformed theology in his invocations to man's ability. One interesting strategem which Hooker employed frequently was to describe the redemptive process in terms of what might be called minimal voluntarism: that is, Hooker holds that only a very slight spiritual effort from man is necessary for salvation.

The Gospel doth not require a Man should Beleeve of his own power, but that he should be willing and content to be made able to Beleeve and Partake of that Grace he is called unto.

Such an arrangement is possible because to many sinners

God affords means, so that if they wil but submit to the Gospel and be content to receive Grace they shal

¹⁰The Unbeleevers Preparing for Christ (London, 1638), Pt. I, p. 20.

¹¹Saints Dignitie, p. 151.

¹²Unbeleevers Preparing, Pt. II, p. 38.

not want it, and that Adam could do and we in him.¹³

Although Hooker makes clear elsewhere that in vocation "the Spirit makes us willing that we may will it [grace],"¹⁴ here Hooker unquestionably preaches a dilute form of voluntarism.

Elsewhere Hooker's voluntarism is based on much the same pattern of thought. In The Saints Dignitie Hooker's approach is based on three considerations. First, ". . . Gods Commandments are above the power of nature to obey: nothing [is] harder . . . [for] corrupt infirm nature [to perform] than Gods Commands . . ." (page 84). But nevertheless man's disobedience is "without excuse." There is a method which man can follow so that he may fulfill the Commandments: "The onely way to be able to obey Gods Commandments is to beleieve . . . all strength to obey cometh by promise, the promise is made ours by beleieving, there is no way therefore to obey but by beleiving" (page 88).

Another of Hooker's conversion techniques relates to his teaching on resisting grace and seems to be, in its universalist implications, even less orthodox. Frequently Hooker teaches that although man may refuse grace now, thinking to accept it later, "there is nothing more crosse and contrary to the power of grace"¹⁵ The basis for

¹³The Application of Redemption: The first eight Books (London, 1656), pp. 60-61.

¹⁴The Covenant of Grace Opened (London, 1649), p. 16.

¹⁵Soules Vocation, p. 537.

man's reliance on his ability to accept grace is, in Hooker's view, the fact that ". . . the Lord stands, and waits, and knocks, if any man will open . . . he [will] call till he be hoarse, and knock till he be weary. . . ."16

But Hooker warns his readers that ". . . the Lord is not at thy call, he will not give thee grace when thou wilt, but when he pleases"17 God will call repeatedly, but His patience is not endless.

On the basis of this idea, Hooker built a doctrine which appears to be very close to Arminianism--apparently for the purpose of universalizing his message. Since ". . . every man hath a day and a season which is the harvest of salvation, doe you not take notice of this, that at some Sermon God opens the eye and prickes the conscience . . . this is thy day, take heede how thou neglectest it"18 God gives every man a long time during which to repent, after which time if he has not repented,

The Lord ceaseth to strive with sinners anie more, he takes either the meanes from them, or them from the meanes, or his blessing from both. God hath bounds of his bounty and patience, hitherto and no farther he will strive, but not alwaies: when his time is expired, not a jot of a minute is further to be expected. . . . Gods season of mercie doth not alwaies last; there is a Terme time and a vacation. . . . The Lord make us wise to know the day of our

¹⁶Soules Vocation, p. 542.

¹⁷Soules Vocation, pp. 545-546.

¹⁸Fovre Learned and Godly Treatises (London, 1638), pp. 284-285.

visitation, least he remove his Candlestick from us, and he be seene no more, least he in his wrath goe away, and leave us to die and perish in our sinnes.¹⁹

Effectual calling here becomes a mere visitation.

The purpose of this teaching is clear enough. It enabled Hooker to warn that the day of salvation is not in the future, but now while ministers are calling and the sinner is still alive.²⁰ Hooker has an entire sermon devoted to the theme of "redeeming the time." In this work Hooker directs:

. . . when the Lord strikes, strike thou; when the Lord moves, move thou. As when thou hearest the Word, and art convicted by it, and thy heart begins to move: oh then, that's a season. make hay while the sun shines: follow the blow, and breake thy heart, and humble thy soule!²¹

This is one of the most Arminian-like passages in Hooker's writings, and seems to be a natural consequence of his teaching that every man has an opportunity to be saved. If not orthodox, Hooker's teaching is, in a sense, practical.

But in another treatment of the theme, Hooker's practical purpose, if he had one, is obscure. It is understandable that Hooker should charge that if men do not accept grace now, God may harden their hearts later so that they

¹⁹ The Saints Guide (London, 1645), pp. 81-83.

²⁰ Unbeleevers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 174.

²¹ The Paterne of Perfection (London, 1640), pp. 262-263.

cannot accept it,²² or He may not offer it again.²³ Hooker meant to be persuasive. But it is less clear why he should argue that if men try all the approved means to obtain grace and fail, it is only because they had refused it earlier.²⁴ Presumably Hooker wished to discourage procrastination, but it would appear that he did so at the risk of discouraging some of the unconverted from trying to use the means. Except for this point, which Hooker makes only in passing, the intention to persuade can be clearly perceived to underlie Hooker's warning against resisting grace.

One of Hooker's most interesting conversion techniques is concerned with the related doctrines of the perseverance of the saints and assurance of election. These doctrines are of course not properly redemptive doctrines as are the doctrines of justification and vocation. But although in Hooker's teaching the conversion process is crucial for the unconverted, Hooker seems to have attached almost no significance to it for those who regard themselves as "beleevers." We have seen (in Chapters I and II) the growing concern with assurance in Reformed and Puritan theology; Hooker's position is the logical extreme of the doctrine, for he would never have a sinner assume that he is called; instead, man must always be testing his election. Testing becomes in his

²²Application, Bks. IX-X, p. 178.

²³Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 204.

²⁴Fovre Treatises, p. 270.

teaching almost a redemptive process.

However, Hooker assuredly teaches that man can have definite knowledge of his election. Such knowledge is available.²⁵ God makes man "see by particular evidence, thou shalt be pardoned, and thou shalt be saved; this particular notice."²⁶ God can even be said to make with the soul "a kind of ingagement" that it shall be saved.²⁷ God uses His ministers as His means of informing sinners that they are saints.²⁸

Occasionally Hooker makes perseverance depend on man's own ability and argues that a soul which has been ingrafted into Christ, "if it be not negligent of its owne salvation, cannot lose that fitness [for the service of Christ] altogether, and the Lord Jesus cannot lose that glory which he expects from it."²⁹ Apparently a saint can persevere, but

²⁵ Saints Dignitie, p. 74.

²⁶ Soules Vocation, p. 73.

²⁷ Soules Vocation, p. 82.

²⁸ Soules Vocation, p. 214.

²⁹ The Soules Implantation (London, 1637), p. 147 (mis-numbered 187). In The Soules Possession of Christ (London, 1638), a treatise on sanctification, Hooker addresses the elect as follows: ". . . if you will not have God take away your sinnes, the truth is, God will take away his grace and holy Spirit from you, if you ever had it: Nay, you shall never have it upon these termes"--p. 168. Here Hooker seems to have remembered belatedly the doctrine of perseverance. It almost seems that he is making God's election depend on foreknowledge of how the saint will use the grace given him. Compare Application, Bks. IX-X, p. 299, where Hooker says that God denies the communication of the means to some who

to say that he will persevere would permit relaxation of one's spiritual muscles.

At times Hooker goes even beyond Calvin in demanding that his hearers--or rather, some of them--believe themselves to be saved. If a man is truly contrite and yet does not think himself saved, he commits the sin of pride, for both reason and ministers say that the truly contrite are saved. They who disagree follow their "owne conceit and selfe wildnesse of spirit."³⁰ Elsewhere Hooker lists in detail the sins committed by those who do not acknowledge--as they should--that they are called saints. First, these people break the Third Commandment by denying what God has done. Second, they commit spiritual mayhem by wounding their own souls. Third, they are thieves who rob themselves of comfort. Fourth, they bear false witness against themselves and Christ and the Holy Spirit.³¹

All of these invitations to assurance are, however, unusual in Hooker's writings. Much more commonly Hooker teaches that nothing is more important to man than "selfe-triall," for many who die thinking they are saved go instead

would use them to better advantage than some who have them. And in A briefe Exposition of the Lords Prayer (London, 1645), p. 20, Hooker argues that in those effectually called Christ "sets up that frame of Spirit, whereby it [man's heart] is subject to grace"

³⁰ Soules Vocation, p. 587.

³¹ "The Poore Doubting Christian Drawne Vnto Christ," in Richard Sibbes et al., The Saints Cordials (London, 1629), pp. 353-354.

to Hell. If people would only see that their hopes of salvation are false, "there were a great deal of likelihood that they would obtain true grace, and so consequently come to be everlasting saved."³² This seems to be a definite refusal to accept the Reformed doctrine of predestination.

Hooker's teachings on assurance, especially in his later works, such as The Saints Dignitie and The Christians Twvo Chiefe Lessons, were probably to some degree affected by the teachings of Antinomianism, which arose in New England about 1636.³³ According to Mrs. Anne Hutchinson, ". . . no works could have anything to do with justification . . . they could not be offered as 'evidence' . . . [and] a true saint might consistently live in sin" ³⁴ Similar doctrines had been taught by the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, and Calvin had answered them by insisting on the inevitable relationship of justification and sanctification.³⁵

³²Saints Dignitie, p. 67. A similar idea is expressed in The Christians Twvo Chiefe Lessons (London, 1640), p. 112 (misnumbered 212).

³³For Antinomianism, see Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 369-371, 389-391, and passim, hereafter cited as Seventeenth Century. However, as we have seen, Perkins taught the need of self-trial. Compare also the teachings of Richard Rogers, Richard Greenham and others in A Garden of Spiritual Flowers (London, 1620; first edition, 1605).

³⁴Miller's summary, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 59.

³⁵See the Institutes, trans. H. Beveridge (London, 1953), Bk. III, Chap. 3, section xiv.

Hooker's answer seems to have been that while saints may achieve assurance of election, it is best that they continually test themselves, just to make absolutely certain.³⁶

Let us look at some of the tests which Hooker proposes. In The Christians Two Chiefe Lessons, he begins his discussion of one aspect of "selfe-triall" by agreeing that "There is a possibility revealed of God for man to know whether he be called of God, or not; it is attaineable for a man to know whether he be in the state of grace, or remain still in his naturall condition."³⁷ But he immediately warns his hearers: "Let the unspeakeable comfort that issues from this assurance, the endlesse joy that ariseth hence, make us carefull seekers of so great a benefit."³⁸ Man may be confused about his true spiritual condition because of his spiritual blindness and Satan's deceptions. Further, God may withdraw His presence from the saint to punish him for negligence or to keep pride and security from his heart.³⁹ Therefore ". . . everyone that lives in the Church is bound seriously and with great diligence to try [test] and examine

³⁶Hooker's teachings on assurance are very different from the teachings of the covenant theologians of New England as described by Miller: ". . . union with God promised to be no more a torturing uncertainty, but a definite legal status [in the covenant of grace], based on quid pro quo." Seventeenth Century, p. 389. Hooker's teachings must have resulted in definite uncertainty.

³⁷Lessons, p. 104 (misnumbered 204).

³⁸Lessons, p. 105 (misnumbered 205).

³⁹Lessons, pp. 106-110 (misnumbered 206-210).

his estate, how it stands betwixt God and himselfe, in respect of the worke of saving grace wrought in his soule."⁴⁰ Hooker then volunteers to supply directions for the performance of this "duty."

He uses two techniques, one negative, one positive. • First he discusses "false shadows of the state of grace" as demonstrated in such types as the "Civill Man," the "Formalist," and the "Temporary Professor." These sketches, like those of the seventeenth-century character writers, are filled with vivid details of contemporary life. Each is an attempt to reveal to those present the ways in which they may be deceiving themselves concerning their spiritual state.⁴¹

Then Hooker presents the four "essentiall parts of him that is in the state of grace." These are faith, godly sorrow, change of mind, and new obedience. Hooker insists that one's faith must be great if it is to save one. One must have "a constant earnest desire of the pardon of sin flowing from an humble heart, joyned with a conscionable use of the meanes"⁴² If one has such a faith, he will know by the "marks of faith": a pure heart, a profound feeling that he lacks grace, a corresponding desire for grace, contentment in all his states, and a continued wrestling with doubt.

⁴⁰Lessons, p. 111 (misnumbered 211).

⁴¹Lessons, pp. 113-116 (misnumbered 213-216).

⁴²Lessons, p. 118 (misnumbered 218).

Apparently one can be sure that he is saved if he thinks he is not. A further mark of faith is that it must have come through the use of the means.⁴³ When it is remembered that William Perkins judged a vague trust in God to be saving faith, we can see how strict Hooker's teaching is.

If one has godly sorrow, he will have a deep displeasure at his sins and actually weep--often--for them. He will of course be extremely careful to avoid all future occasions for sin. Hooker then presents additional marks of godly sorrow, and also deals with change of mind and new obedience.⁴⁴

How does one know whether or not he is effectually called? Hooker's answer is that those who are called demonstrate their spiritual health in many particular ways. If one believes in Hooker's theology and regards himself as called, how would he react on finding that he does not "perform" as Hooker says the elect should? He would attempt to do what Hooker contends the elect do. If he were successful in his efforts, and continued throughout his life to use Hooker's testing method, he could feel assured of salvation. Further, he would demonstrate to himself that he had been called by following what many traditional, non-predestinarian Christians have prescribed as the way to salvation. The process of testing one's self thus becomes equivalent to the

⁴³Lessons, pp. 150-154 (misnumbered 250-254).

⁴⁴Lessons, pp. 158ff. (misnumbered 258ff.).

redemptive process in the teaching of Thomas a Kempis, for example.

Let us consider another of Hooker's works, The Soules Vocation, in order to examine further the self-testing idea. Here Hooker declares that if you truly love God, "if there be ever a Saint in heaven, thou art one now, & shall be in heaven for ever hereafter" (page 236). Such being the case, "How shal I . . . know my love, whether it be true, of the right nature or no?" (page 237) Hooker prescribes five "trialls": (1) True love of God is spiritual and is not based on God's mercy and goodness to the lover, for such love is in reality love of self. God must instead be loved for his attributes.⁴⁵ (2) The true lover of God loves prayer and sermons, and despises honors and riches. (3) The true lover tries to make God happy by following His wishes and never doing what would displease God. (4) The true lover's greatest joy is the promotion of the gospel. (5) The true lover of God greatly desires a closer union with Him (pages 237-255). Briefly, if one is a "saint" in the predestinarian sense, he will act like a "saint" in the modern sense.

⁴⁵ Thus Hooker's position here is diametrically opposed to Calvin's. See Chapter I for Calvin's views. But in Soules Implantation, p. 266, Hooker declares, ". . . if you will not love him [Christ] nor his grace or mercy, yet love your owne selves; deny not this gracious offer, lest hereafter you seeke for love, and mercy, and compassion, and bee refused and condemned for ever."

A similar test is prescribed for true faith. The true believer can test his faith by seeing if it is from heaven: Is it "put . . . into our soules by hearing" the word?⁴⁶ Is the believer willing to be disgraced for Christ and even give up all his lusts for Christ? Does he regard honors and all worldly things as nothing, the promises of the gospel as everything? If so, he has faith and is saved--but, of course, it may be only a temporary faith, and so he must continually try himself.⁴⁷

Hooker's teaching that man must love God for His quality of goodness and not for any good done to the sinner is reflected in another concept in his teaching, his belief that no man is saved unless, in the redemptive process, he sees that he deserves damnation and is even willing to be damned. In that part of preparation devoted to humiliation the soul must reach the point of saying, ". . . let me be damned, so thou maist be glorified."⁴⁸ The soul will, however, continue to seek mercy from God even while it is content to be damned.⁴⁹

Now the soule being beset with Gods wrath, in conclusion seeth he cannot escape the Lords hands; and how to purchase mercy he knowes not; nor is it

⁴⁶Soules Vocation, pp. 424-427.

⁴⁷Soules Vocation, pp. 427-434.

⁴⁸Soules Vocation, p. 212.

⁴⁹The Soules Humiliation (Amsterdam, 1638), pp. 156-157.

possible otherwise for him to escape, and yet he hath nothing to purchase mercy withall, therefore he is content to lye downe before God, saying, I confesse I have sinned, Oh Lord bee thou glorified, though I be damned for ever, my sinnes are so many and so vile, I cannot almost desire mercy, but if the Lord will, who can let him?⁵⁰

Such a state of mind must surely be hard to achieve; in the twentieth century one finds much the same mental outlook labelled, by George Orwell, "double-think."

This demand that one be willing to be damned makes a strange combination with Hooker's declaration that "... the Lord hath sent from heaven this day, and offered salvation and happinesse to men, as freely as ever any man had anything offered."⁵¹ Willingness to be damned is presumably the height of happiness.

Although the idea of willingness to be damned appears in several of Hooker's works, as a preacher concerned with persuading his hearers to use the means of salvation Hooker was commonly more interested in painting an attractive picture of the rewards which the saint will receive. As we might expect from our earlier observations on the paucity of eschatology in Puritan writings, the joys of salvation which Hooker describes are nearly always to be achieved in this world. First of all is of course the assurance of election. Other joys are often peculiarly intangible: "all spiritual

⁵⁰Soules Implantation, p. 168.

⁵¹Unbeleevvers Preparing, Pt. I, p. 77.

benefits,"⁵² "unconceivable good,"⁵³ "unsearchable riches."⁵⁴ Occasionally a more specific detail is given. "It is pleasant and comfortable God will come and sup with them that follow him. There are no wants, but rivers of pleasure and delights" ⁵⁵ More precisely, Christ will deliver the saint from sins (if he requests deliverance) and provide spiritual comfort.⁵⁶

The theme of the early part of The Soules Implantation is that a saint is "with Christ" and thus is in heaven. But later in the same work Hooker admits, readily, that he who possesses Christ may not know it until the hour of death: ". . . many a poore Saint of God hath smoaked out his dayes in doubting and making question of Gods mercy and goodnesse" (page 134). Too often the saint expects "some extraordinary sweetnesse" to be felt when his soul is possessed of Christ; when when the feeling is not experienced, he misjudges the presence of Christ (page 120). It would appear that Hooker was at least in part at fault if a saint expected such distinct sensations. Only a few pages later he declares, ". . . there is a sweetnesse and a relish which

⁵²Application, Bks. I-VIII, p. 6.

⁵³Soules Implantation, p. 264.

⁵⁴Lessons, p. 62.

⁵⁵Lessons, p. 33.

⁵⁶Soules Implantation, pp. 144-145 (misnumbered 184-185).

Gods love lets into the soule, and warms the heart with" (page 176).

When one is disappointed at the experience of possessing Christ, it is "as if some Gentleman should receive the King into his house, and yet would not be persuaded the King was come, because he did not presently send for him into the presence chamber, and advance him to some great place of honor: he is there though he will not presently send for you."⁵⁷ One wonders if, when He comes to sup with the saint, Christ prefers to eat in His own room, privately.

In discussing the joys of salvation, Hooker pictures them attractively to the unconverted as an incentive to use the means of salvation; to those who are already called, he explains why they may not feel Christ's presence. It may be because they have sinned seriously or because the saints grow careless and secure; failing to perceive Christ's presence then serves to draw the soul back to Christ. Or it may be that God fears that the saints "should be proud . . . and pranke themselves in regard of priviledges."⁵⁸

Hooker's technique in dealing with the joys of salvation is very similar to his treatment of conversion and assurance. For the unconverted, conversion is depicted as the ultimate goal, but the converted must continually test their election. Salvation, you will find, results in great joy,

⁵⁷Soules Implantation, p. 122.

⁵⁸Soules Implantation, p. 132.

but do not be disappointed when you find that it does not.

In contrast to the theology and teachings of Hooker and the preaching techniques which he developed from them as described in Chapters III and IV, the methods which have been analyzed in this chapter often appear heterodox and not altogether legitimate, although each bears a close relationship to Reformed doctrine. Hooker's heterodoxy on the points which have been discussed revolve around two central concepts. First, Hooker wished to make conversion seem easy and attractive; therefore he went even to the point of contending that those who had not been called were actually guilty of making successful efforts to resist God's grace.^o Yet at the same time, the conversion process which Hooker describes is in fact a long and difficult procedure, with somewhat uncertain rewards, at least in this life. Second, in the face of the Antinomianism which had spread from Old to New England, Hooker emphasized even more strongly than had earlier Puritans the need for the saints to test their election by careful examination. Hooker pushed this concept to the point where, in his thought, conversion came to be of little importance to the saints, although it remained vital to the unconverted.

Thus we have two basic discrepancies within Hooker's teachings, and while it is true that the reasons for these discrepancies are not far to seek, it is clear that Hooker's

importance as a religious thinker is diminished by these findings.

Having examined in some detail Hooker's thought on conversion against its historical background, we can now profitably turn to some of the writings of Thomas Shepard and John Cotton, with the expectation that by comparing their techniques and teaching with Hooker's, we shall be able to reach some general conclusions about Thomas Hooker's relationship to the theology and preaching methods of the other New England Puritan preachers of the first generation.

CHAPTER VI

SHEPARD AND COTTON IN RELATION TO HOOKER

In examining next some of the writings of John Cotton and Thomas Shepard, we shall not attempt to describe fully the theology and techniques of each divine. Rather we shall try to see wherein they differ from Hooker's theology and techniques. Such an investigation has at least two values. First, it should enable us to see how far Hooker's teaching may be regarded as typical of early New England Puritan teaching and to see to what degree there can be said to have been a theology peculiar to early New England. Second, it should put us in a better position to evaluate Hooker's comparative stature as a Puritan divine.

Thomas Shepard (1605-1649)

Of the writings of the early New England preachers, Thomas Shepard's works have been most remembered. In the seventeenth century nineteen editions of Shepard's The Sincere Convert were published; in the eighteenth century his works continued to be reprinted and some of his writings were translated into German for the benefit of Pennsylvania settlers. In 1853 his works were published in a three-volume

edition. In Scotland, where his writings have been widely read, Alexander Whyte, Principal of New College, Edinburgh, and noted preacher, published in 1912 a series of lectures called Thomas Shepard: Pilgrim Father and Founder of Harvard.¹

The most important modern study is by Karl Olsson, who has studied Shepard's thought thoroughly and wisely.² But his study considers Shepard's teachings in a vacuum, without relating him either to the Reformed theology or to other Puritan divines. Little use has been made of Olsson's findings in the present study, which attempts to be historical and comparative.

One aspect of Shepard's teaching is interestingly similar to Hooker's concept that by resisting God's ministers, man resists grace. Shepard confuses even more completely than Hooker the standard Reformed distinction between general or outward calling by means of preaching, and particular or inward calling by means of the working of the Holy Ghost.

¹See Babette May Levy, Preaching in the First Half Century of New England History (Hartford, 1915), pp. 144-145; and Donald Wing, Short-Title Catalogue, 1641-1700, s. v. "Shepard." Shepard's connection with Harvard is explained by Cotton Mather in the following fashion: ". . . it was with a respect unto this [Shepard's] vigilancy, and the enlightning and powerful ministry of Mr. Shepard, that when the foundation of a colledge was to be laid, Cambridge rather than any other place, was pitched upon to be the seat of that happy seminary"--Magnalia Christi Americana (Hartford, 1820), I, 348.

²"Theology and Rhetoric in the Writings of Thomas Shepard," unpub. diss. (Chicago, 1940).

By failing to make the distinction between the two callings --or two aspects of calling--Shepard can state, ". . . the Lord calls all in general, and consequently each man in particular"3 The identity of the inward and the outward call is thus proclaimed by Shepard:

Consider who it is that doth call you; is it Man or Minister think you? you might never come then; no, it is Jesus Christ himself that calls you by them. Why do many discouraged Spirits refuse to come? it is because they think deceitfull men, or charitable men call them I tell you their Ministry is not an act of their charity, wishing well to the salvation of all; but it is an act of Christs love & sovereigne Authority4

It is not difficult to see how Shepard, by identifying the two callings, can call rejecting God's agents, His ministers, "a bloody sin," "a most Dishonouring sinne," "a most ungrateful sin," "a most inexcusable sin."5

More peculiar than this downright theological confusion is another passage from Shepard:

. . . doe not say I am not able to come [to Christ], and therefore, I am not called; no more are you able to attend the rules of the Morall Law: yet you looke upon them as appertaining to you, & because you cannot doe them, you entreat the Lord to enable you, and so because you cannot come, you should looke up to the Lord to draw you: and verily many times the great reason why the Lord doth not drawe you is, because you do not deeply consider that he doth really

³The Sound Believer (London, 1652), p. 245.

⁴Believer, p. 214.

⁵The Sincere Convert (London, 1655), pp. 91-92.

& affectionately call you⁶

Here Shepard seems to be saying that men who regard themselves as uncalled because they are not able to respond may be unable because they do not, as they should, regard themselves as called. Confusions of this sort arise frequently in Puritan sermons--indeed even in Calvin's works⁷--because of the difficulty of reconciling human responsibility and divine predestination. In this passage Shepard holds man responsible for not being called, although he might have contended that he was only trying to persuade men to use the means of salvation. While other preachers tried to avoid the difficulty by such methods as holding the sermon to be a means of grace, Shepard more often tried to transcend the difficulty by verbal solutions, some expressed with spirited eloquence.

In spite of these confusions, Shepard in the same treatise distinguishes the two callings: the minister's call is general; particular calling is by the Holy Ghost.⁸ If

⁶Beleeever, p. 246.

⁷See the Institutes, trans. H. Beveridge (London, 1953), Bk. IV, Chap. 3, section 1: "But when a feeble man [a preacher], sprung from the dust, speaks in the name of God, we give the best proof of our piety and obedience, by listening with docility to his servant"

⁸Beleeever, pp. 191-192. In another work Shepard states even more distinctly the orthodox Reformed doctrine. "There is Gods externall or outward word, containing letters and syllables and this is his externall voice. . . . There is Gods internal word and voice, which speaks to the heart,

the Holy Ghost calls particular men, His calling is apparently not irresistible, for ". . . if there were not such a particular call, then men should not sinne by refusing the Gospell, nor should the Lord be angry for [their] so doing"9

Perhaps we shall be better able to apprehend this aspect of Shepard's preaching technique if we examine his own explanation. He identifies, as do other Puritan theologians, the call to come to Christ on the one hand, and, on the other, the offer of Christ, the acceptance of which constitutes vocation. Then he considers the three parts of this call or offer:

1. Commandment to receive Christ as present and ready to be given [to the soul]: as when we offer any thing to one another, it is by commanding them to take it
2. Perswasion and intreaty to come & receive what we offer: for in such an offer wherein the person is unwilling to receive & we are exceeding desirous to give, we then persuade; so doth Christ with us.
3. Promise; to offer a thing without a promise of having it, is but a mock-offer10

Here we have Hooker's teaching simplified. The only mention of the inward calling in the description is in the persuasive aspect of calling, and therein Christ is said only to

even when that only speaks in the externall word, when that only speaks to the hear The other [internal word] comes to few, who hear not only the word spoken, but God speaking the word."--Subjection to Christ (London, 1657), p. 89.

⁹Beleever, p. 243.

¹⁰Beleever, p. 191.

assist with the persuasion. We can see why Olsson concludes that according to Shepard's teachings, "... man actually comes to faith on being persuaded to belief."¹¹ Hooker's teaching, as we have seen, reaches much the same point, the difference being that Hooker usually couched his teachings in less bald language than did Shepard.

Hooker has been said to differ from all other Puritan preachers of early New England in that he alone preached conversion to the unregenerate outside the covenant.¹² By this interpretation all others preached conversion only to those within: "hypocrites who had been admitted to [church] membership by mistake, and the children of the godly who enjoyed membership though not converted."¹³ But what this historian says of Hooker applies equally to Shepard: he was

¹¹"Writings of Shepard," pp. 60-61. Shepard is the author of a very interesting work entitled "A Treatise of Ineffectual Hearing the Word; How we may know whether we have heard the same effectually: And by what means it may become effectually unto us" (in Subjection to Christ). Herein Shepard considers the relationship of two classes of people to the hearing of the word. The unregenerate he can only advise to come to the means, to hear sermons. But the regenerate may find that when they hear the word preached it comes to them only as the external word. To them Shepard prescribes four methods by which they can come to hear, in the external word, the internal word speaking to them individually. One of the methods is to "Draw near to God in the Word, by looking on it as God speaking to thee"--Subjection, p. 107. Shepard's advice seems to amount to this: if you can only convince yourself that you are hearing the word internally, you will in fact so hear it.

¹²Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Family (Boston, 1944), pp. 98-104.

¹³Morgan, Puritan Family, p. 97.

"an example of evangelical zeal . . . a man who spoke his words to sinners rather than saints."¹⁴ Here is Shepard's usual approach:

. . . you young men heare this, though you have spent the flower of your yeares in vanity, madnesse, & filthy lusts, yet the Lord calls you up to him; you old men growne gray headed in wickednesse, though it be the last hour of the day in your life, yet behold the Lord will hire you, & calls you to come in . . .¹⁵

God this day calleth you, it may be he will never call more; How many hath the Lord struck with death and sicknesse? And howe soone it may be any of your turnes; I know not; sicknesse is an unfit time to get Christ, and to make peece with God. If you stand still you die; therefore turne from all your sin, and come in and lay hold by faith on the promise, that so ye may live, and this that I have spoken unto you may not be in vain.¹⁶

An essential difference between Hooker and Shepard can be seen by comparing these passages with those of Hooker which are likewise exhortatory. Shepard is much more direct and relies on his eloquence rather than on subtle techniques such as those in Hooker's writings. Thus we find much more hell-fire preaching in Shepard's writings than in Hooker's, and much more preaching of the joys of heaven. Hooker indeed makes use of eloquence, but it would be difficult to

¹⁴Morgan, Puritan Family, p. 98.

¹⁵Beleever, v. 246.

¹⁶"The Saints Jewel," in Convert, pp. 226-227. Although Morgan quotes passages wherein John Cotton avoids addressing those outside the covenant, in many works he also preaches regeneration to all his hearers. See below.

find anything in Hooker's writings to compare with the following passage by Shepard:

. . . desire and pray, that heaven and earth shake till thou hast worn thy tongue to the stumps, endeavor as much as thou canst, and others commend thee for a diligent Christian; mourn in some wilderness till dooms day; dig thy grave there with thy nayls, weep buckets full of hourly tears, till thou canst weep no more, fast and pray till thy skinne and bones cleave together; promise and purpose with full resolution, to be better; nay, reform thy head, heart, life, and tongue, and some, nay all sinnes; live like an Angel, shine like a Sun, walk up and down the world like a distressed Pilgrim, going to another countrey, so that all Christians commend and admire thee; die ten thousand deaths, lie at the fireback in hell so many millions of years, as there be piles of grasse on the earth, or sands upon the Sea shore, or starres in heaven, or motes in the Sun; I tell thee, not one sparke of Gods wrath against thy sinne shall be, can be quenched by all these duties, nor by any of these sorrowes, or tears; for, these are not the bloud of Christ.¹⁷

Calvin would have called this statement blasphemous, for to him no one can perform these duties unless he is of the elect, although the reprobate might, by benefit of common grace, lead a decent life. Indeed, according to Calvin no man can live like an angel; certainly a reprobate cannot. But Shepard's purpose is clear, and his method is as direct as possible. For him conversion is the only means of winning God's favor.

Shepard's teachings differ most from Hooker's on the matter of preparation. Hooker regarded his audience as being in one of two classes: either they regarded themselves

¹⁷Convert, pp. 81-82.

as converted, in which case he exhorted them to test themselves; or they were unconverted, in which case he would exhort them to use the means by which they might be saved and then prescribe what they must do. But, as Olsson has shown, Shepard considered each man to be at a certain stage in a continuum, at one end of which is salvation and at the other end damnation. Each person who is to be saved needs to cover the same ground if he is to reach salvation.¹⁸ One step will not suffice for salvation, which is a much more complicated process in Shepard's teaching than in Hooker's. It is indeed true that according to Hooker's theory ". . . the Lord requires and works in those he will draw to Christ, Contrition and Humiliation."¹⁹ But in his practice, as we have seen, Hooker teaches that if man completes the contrition process he is saved. Not so with Shepard. For him there are four steps: conviction, compunction, humiliation, and faith.²⁰ Each is necessary and one depends upon the other.²¹ According to Shepard, ". . . the Lord Jesus in the day of his power, saves us out of our wretched estate; by so much conviction as begets, compunction; so much compunction,

¹⁸Olsson, "Writings of Shepard," pp. 69-105.

¹⁹The Application of Redemption: The Ninth and Tenth Books (London, 1657), p. 15.

²⁰Beleever, pp. 3-4.

²¹In Shepard's teaching the four steps are described as "distinctly set forth . . . in the day of Christs power"--Beleever, p. 4.

as brings in humiliation; so much humiliation, as makes us come to Christ by Faith."²²

Two aspects of Shepard's technique which we have thus far considered may be elucidated further by an examination of Shepard's teaching regarding the first step he sees in conversion: conviction. By examining the teaching, we shall be able to see how he envisions the function of the Deity in conversion and also how he subdivides even the subdivisions of the redemptive process.

In Shepard's view of conviction, the first step is seeing sin: what Hooker calls "a true sight of sin." A sight of sin is necessary because ". . . no man can feel sin, unlesse he doth first see it, what the eye sees not, the heart rues not . . . let a poore sinner lye under the greatest guilt, the sorest wrath of God, it will never trouble him untill he see it and be convicted of it."²³ In order to bring to his hearers such a sight of sin,

. . . the minister preacheth against one sin, it may be whoredom, ignorance, contempt of the Gospel, neglect of secret duties, lying, Sabbath-breaking, & c. This is thy case saith the Spirit unto the soule, remember the time, the place, the persons with whom thou then lived in this sinfull condition; and now a man begins to goe alone, & to think of all his former courses how exceeding evil they have been . . .²⁴

²²Beleeever, p. 252.

²³Beleeever, pp. 5-6.

²⁴Beleeever, p. 9.

In addition, God may, by means of his preachers,

. . . let a man see his blindnesse, his extreame hardnesse of heart, his weaknesse, his wilfulness, his heartlesnesse; he cannot pray, or looke up to God, and this may first convince him; or that all that he doth is sinful, being out of Christ.²⁵

The first step has been completed when the sinner sees his sins. But next he must be convinced, again through preaching, of the great evil of his sins. This work must be done by the Holy Spirit, for natural man, though he may see his sins, cannot recognize the great evil of them. Only the supernatural power which acts through preaching can do the work.²⁶

Next, the Spirit convinces the sinner that evils follow sin. Here Shepard emphasizes vigorously that a sinful soul "must dye, and that eternally."²⁷ He preached hell-fire more frequently than Hooker, perhaps because he recognized that this kind of preaching gave him an opportunity to use his powerful rhetoric. He speaks of "the bottomless pit" and "the endlesse woes and everlasting fires,"²⁸ and warns that Satan's most useful trick is to persuade men that they are not liable to eternal punishment.

Having convinced the reason, God and the preacher must

²⁵Beleever, p. 11.

²⁶Beleever, p. 13.

²⁷Beleever, p. 14.

²⁸Beleever, p. 16.

now convince the heart of the sinner. Rational conviction of sin is not enough; "spirituall conviction" is required.²⁹ Shepard defines the point when contrition has been achieved: "all the Elect" must have "So much conviction of sin as may bring in and work compunction for sin, so much sight of sin as may bring in sense of sin" ³⁰ Conviction in itself will do no good unless it leads to compunction, which affects the will: ". . . a bare conviction of sin doth but light the candle to see sin; compunction burns the fingers; and that only makes him dread the fire."³¹ In Shepard's works even more than in Hooker's, one can see that the conversion process, if followed by a man according to the rigorous prescription of the preacher, would result in a new psychological point of view by which a man might very well have a hatred of sin--or at least a hatred of those sins which he had been so carefully taught to hate. One can see psychological resemblances between the Puritan's prescribed course to conversion and methods of indoctrination used by modern totalitarian states. Shepard's aim was to make sin so utterly repulsive and painful that one would never go back to his old ways.

In Shepard's description of the conversion process one

²⁹Beleeever, p. 20.

³⁰Beleeever, p. 24.

³¹Beleeever, p. 42.

can observe more clearly than in Hooker's writings the role of the Holy Ghost in regeneration. His role is to make the sinner see that the preacher's words apply to him. In a sense the Holy Ghost can be said to be the variable in the minister's "experimental" preaching. If the sinner is moved by what the preacher says, it is because of the Spirit. If the sinner is unmoved, the theological explanation is that the Holy Ghost is not working in his heart. But preachers must hold man responsible nevertheless, contending that the fault is in man, who can perhaps thereby be persuaded that he is resisting grace. If he conceives of himself as resisting grace, then perhaps he will be persuaded to accept grace. In this case the Holy Ghost can be considered to have worked the persuasion, though of course through His instrument, the preacher. Again we can see how it can be said that the preacher "rationalizes" grace.

Like Hooker, Shepard had to take into account that the concept of predestination may be a deterrent to man's efforts to be saved. One of Shepard's techniques for contending with predestination might be labelled argument by false analogy. Hooker does not seem to have used the same argument. "It is true," declares Shepard, "God hath elected but few: so thou must in this case venture and try, as many men amongst us do now, who hearing of one good Living fallen [vacant], twenty then will go and seek for it, although they

know only one shall have it."³² Either the elect manifest themselves by their efforts--in which case all twenty in Shepard's analogy are elected--or election does not depend on willing and running but on God, Who shows mercy. In either case Shepard's parallel is not a true one, but we can see that from his point of view it would have been valid if it had persuaded some people to take a chance and use the means.

Two minor aspects of Shepard's thought are very similar to Hooker's. First, Shepard argues that man's day of salvation is now: "Thy day of grace, thy day of means, thy day of life, thy day of Gods striving with thee, and stirring of thee, still lasts."³³ Shepard does not contend, as Hooker does, that some may find they have decided too late to respond, for, having resisted grace before, they will find that God is not now willing for them to be saved. Second, Shepard contends for a certain very small degree of voluntarism, much as does Hooker. If a person says, "I feare I shall never do this [part from my sins]," Shepard answers, "But art thou willing that Christ should make thee willing, and pitch thee upon a promise, and should hold thee there? If thou canst find these things, then comfort thy self, for thou hast right unto Gods promises."³⁴ Perhaps Shepard is

³²Convert, p. 94.

³³Convert, p. 87.

³⁴"The Saints Jewel," in Convert, p. 217.

merely arguing that willingness to be saved is a sign of election, but it seems at least possible that, like Hooker, he is reducing the quantity of effort required of man to a bare minimum, because of the influence of the strict theology of his day.

One finds fairly frequent references to the covenant of grace in Shepard's works, but, like Hooker, Shepard appears to have relied seldom on the covenant idea as a preaching technique. However, in two places he uses the concept, though in a way very different from Hooker's rare use of it, and also very different from the later covenant theologians' use as described by Perry Miller. Shepard contends that many of his hearers have the good fortune to be within the covenant of grace but warns,

Seeing God hath promised absolutely such good things in the Second Covenant, but hath not set downe the time when or how much grace he will give; and seeing only he can helpe, therefore looke up, and wait upon God in the use of all knowne meanes, untill he makes good what he hath promised to do, and performe, and worke for you.³⁵

Here Shepard contends that man must use the means so that God will give the sinner the grace that is due him. The effect is to cancel out any satisfaction to be gained from the covenant arrangement and, on the other hand, to encourage men to think that if they use the means they will be

³⁵Certain Select Cases Resolved (London, 1658), p. 36.

practically assured of salvation.

Elsewhere Shepard discourses on the covenant arrangement and concludes by questioning,

. . . is this not matter of great consolation to all those who feel themselves utterly unable to beleeeve? you think the Lord will give peace and pardon, life and mercy, if I could beleeeve; Oh consider the Lord hath undertaken in the Covenant of Grace to worke in all his the condition of the Covenant, as well as to convey the good of it.³⁶

Shepard does not conclude from such a situation that men should therefore leave to God the task of making them believe. By a very nice display of logic he instead questions, "But why hath the Lord made thee feel thy inability to beleeeve?" Shepard's answer is that God wishes for man to "ask and seeke" for belief. If men seek long and hard enough, apparently they will prepare themselves for God's granting of their request.³⁷ Since God will make his elect believe, man's obligation is, in Shepard's view, to seek for belief.

In looking at Shepard's teachings we have considered four main aspects, which we have compared with Hooker's teachings and techniques: preparation for salvation, theory of preaching, rhetoric, and covenant theology. Although on

³⁶Beleeever, pp. 151-152.

³⁷Beleeever, p. 152.

some other matters of importance Hooker's and Shepard's methods and teachings are similar, on each of these points there are important differences. In his teaching on preparation, Shepard insists on the necessity of passing through four distinct and different phases, each of which offers serious difficulties. Hooker teaches only two phases, and each leads separately to conversion, though the two are different. In his theory of preaching, Shepard is as explicit as Hooker concerning the existence of an internal and an external word, and yet at the same time for persuasive purposes he confuses the two even more completely than Hooker. In his use of rhetoric, a matter which we have examined only indirectly with respect to Hooker, Shepard was inclined to rely on emotional exhortations and denunciations.³⁸ Hooker, on the other hand, though an able rhetorician, preferred somewhat more impersonal methods: careful analyses of the "shifts" and devices by which men avoid taking to heart the teachings of the preacher. References to the covenant of grace are more common in Shepard's writings than in Hooker's, and Shepard does indeed use the covenant scheme as a device for assigning man more responsibility, as Hooker does not.

³⁸One more sample of Shepard's colorful rhetoric may well be quoted here. According to Shepard, Christ addresses sinful men as follows: "I have found this world before I came, a world of curses, briers, thornes, and thistles; but now I will have you know I have purchased a garden, and have brought the blessing of God into it, I have made the cursed world a garden, and have enriched it with comforts for your sakes, I am come into my garden"--Convert, pp. 229-230.

Shepard's teachings and techniques are thus rather distinct from Hooker's.

John Cotton (1585-1652)

The writings of John Cotton differ greatly from the works of Hooker. Although Cotton was a greater figure in his time in both Old and New England, the modern reader is likely to find his writings flat and colorless compared with Hooker's or Shepard's, and his teachings are quite different from Hooker's.

In England Cotton had been a famous preacher before and after his conversion to Puritanism and had been responsible for the conversion of John Preston.³⁹ New Englanders came to regard him as their greatest divine.⁴⁰ His voluminous and learned works are more varied in nature than Hooker's or Shepard's, many of them being controversial works and biblical commentaries. But although his own conversion was dramatic and his converting of others notable, most of Cotton's published sermons do not deal primarily with conversion. We do not find in a Cotton bibliography any such titles as The Unbeleevvers Preparing for Christ or The Sincere Convert. Cotton was much closer to Calvin in his preaching practice

³⁹Mather, Magnalia, I, 233-235.

⁴⁰Levy, Preaching in New England, pp. 141-142.

and wrote instead such works as The Way of Life, which is more concerned with Christian living after conversion than with the process itself.

Cotton's grandson Cotton Mather tells us that ". . . in his later days he indulged in nocturnal studies more than formerly," and being asked why this should be so, "he pleasantly replied, Because I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep."⁴¹ Considering this fact, one may be surprised to find very few references in Cotton's sermons to predestination. One of Cotton's rare uses of the doctrine of predestination is very different from Calvin's ordinary use. Calvin emphasizes God's mercy in electing--before all time--some men for salvation when all deserve to be damned, whereas Cotton reproves those who excuse their sins on the grounds of predestination, by declaring, ". . . little do such goules know what wickednesse hath been in their [the reprobates'] hearts, that hath given God just cause to give them up to such vile affects" God, Cotton goes on to say, damns men only after they "have filled themselves with filthinesse."⁴² Calvin likewise taught that God had just occasion to give reprobates up to the filthiness of sin, but he also insisted that ". . . the same wickedness would possess the minds of the former [the

⁴¹Magnalia, I, 250. A thorough study of Cotton's use of Calvin's writings would provide a useful tool for a close analysis of Cotton's thought.

⁴²The Way of Life (London, 1641), pp. 193-194.

elect], did not God in his goodness correct it."⁴³

In order to see how Cotton treated conversion, let us begin with the third sermon of Gods mercie mixed with his Iustice (London, 1641), more completely a conversion sermon than most of Cotton's works. Here he argues that God will treat sinners as briars and thorns in a garden. But, he contends, men can make peace with God and thereby avoid punishment. To do this they should take "hold of his [God's] strength," which will give them the power to resist sin. As Cotton describes the process, obtaining God's strength is neither a difficult process nor one in which only a few men can participate; rather, the process seems easy and attractive. Men should cast away their sins, stop trusting in themselves, believe in God's mercy, and remind God of His promises in their prayers (pages 68-71). These are of course the same kind of steps which Hooker prescribes, but Cotton proposes them as easy suggestions; Hooker, as extremely difficult, sometimes impossible, requirements.

⁴³Institutes, III, 24, xii. Compare III, 23, ix: "The reprobate would excuse their sins by alleging that they are unable to escape the necessity of sinning, especially because a necessity of this nature is laid upon them by the ordination of God. We deny that they can be thus validly excused, since the ordination of God, by which they complain that they are doomed to destruction, is consistent with equity,--an equity, indeed, unknown to us, but most certain. Hence we conclude, that every evil which they bear is inflicted by the most just judgment of God. Next we have shown that they act propositiously when, in seeking the origin of their condemnation, they turn their view to the hidden recesses of the divine counsel, and wink at the corruption of nature, which is the true source."

Cotton says nothing in this sermon concerning election or spiritual inability.

Elsewhere Cotton demands less humiliation than Hooker prescribes. Cotton seems to have been almost afraid that some of his hearers might try to become too humble. "If I be so farre humbled, as to come off with self-loathing; that my heart is broken because I have broken Gods heart, this is humiliation enough to find pardon."⁴⁴ By modern standards Cotton demanded much; but compared to Hooker's, his requirements were decidedly lax. According to Hooker, the soul achieves true humiliation only when it can declare, "Oh . . . it is fit that God should glorifie himselfe though I be damned forever, for I deserve the worst"⁴⁵ He had also insisted that ". . . you had need pray for the repentance of your repentance; and to begge the pardon of all your prayers"⁴⁶

From these discussions one can readily see that Cotton believed in a form of preparation, just as Shepard and Hooker did. The most important distinction between the teachings of Hooker and Shepard on the one hand and Cotton on the other is not in the realm of contrition and humiliation. It concerns those steps which Hooker urges on the

⁴⁴Way of Life, p. 328.

⁴⁵The Soules Humiliation (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 117.

⁴⁶Soules Humiliation, p. 55.

basis of common grace--hearing sermons, reading books, waiting upon God in the means.⁴⁷ Because the gap between total depravity and sanctification is so great, Cotton believes that man could not, by himself, prepare for salvation: "for our first union [with Christ] there are no steps to the Altar."⁴⁸ On the other hand, Cotton agrees with Hooker that God effects contrition in the hearts of those whom He will save, as a means of preparing them for salvation.⁴⁹ Cotton uses again the image of the marriage ceremony: "Now because God intends a marriage Covenant betwixt Christ and our

⁴⁷Perry Miller considers that Shepard taught much the same doctrine of preparation as did Hooker. See The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), pp. 64-65, hereafter cited as Colony to Province.

⁴⁸The New Covenant (London, 1654), p. 54.

⁴⁹The orthodox doctrine, as found in Ursinus, is as follows: "If they insist that the H. Spirit [sic] is not effectual in those who do not hear the word and persevere in their sins against conscience, that therefore for hearing the word and dropping sins it is necessary for them, being unconverted, to prepare themselves for conversion--we reply that this may be conceded as a whole, but that the two [following] points do not follow. First: that the works in question are pleasing to God. Although God uses not only these but also other works of the non-reborn (like acknowledgement of sins and fears of conscience, association with the godly who attract them to godliness or with the ungodly who deter them from ungodliness, their own crimes and punishments), to prepare men for conversion and salvation, nevertheless so far as the men themselves are concerned, all these things are prior to conversion. Second: that such morally good works are due by the non-reborn without divine providence and suggestion governing their minds, so that at last they might be gathered into the Church. Even in the non-reborn nothing good can be done, which God does not effect so far as it is good."--Loci Theologici (1562), quoted by Heinrich Hoppe, Reformed Dogmatics, trans. G. F. Thomson (London, 1950), p. 525.

soules, in first conversion, he will therefore have sin first mortified in us, our first husband must ly a bleeding his last blood before we can be married to Christ."⁵⁰

Like Hooker, Cotton holds that God pricks the hearts of those whom He will save and thereby makes them contrite; this is "the first work of saving and living grace."⁵¹ Cotton is a good deal more subtle than Hooker in his method of getting his hearers to achieve contrition--more subtle at least in his sermon on Acts ii. 37, the same text which Hooker used for The Soules Preparation. Hooker's method is to prescribe the steps which one should take to become contrite. Cotton instead declares first that if one does not find that his heart has been pricked, he should remain discontented with his spiritual state until it is pricked. Then, instead of setting forth directions, Cotton presents a full description of what one experiences when he has a pricked heart. It is, for instance, ". . . good evidence of an heart pricked and sprinkled with a saving and kindly sense of sin, when we be given to love and respect those

⁵⁰Way of Life, p. 130. The similarity of Cotton's view in The New Covenant to Hooker's can be seen by the following quotations: ". . . there is a saving preparation before . . . the manifestations of our gracious union with him [Christ]; but for our first union, there are no steps to the Altar But Christ doth prepare his Tabernacle for himselfe to dwell in."--New Covenant, pp. 53-54. "The soule must be broken and humbled before the Lord Jesus Christ can or will dwell therein, and before faith can be wrought therein."--Hooker, The Soules Implantation (London, 1637), . 3.

⁵¹Way of Life, p. 126.

Christians, whom we have despised, yea even such as have wounded us [preachers do the wounding?], and are willing to enquire of them the way to salvation, and to resign up' our hearts to bee directed by them."⁵² These are surely directions--in all but form.

Seldom does Cotton resort to downright directions. He is more likely to set forth his exhortations indirectly, in this fashion: "The pricking of the heart is wrought by hearing the word of God, applied to the convincing of our soules, both of our particular sins, and of the greatnesse and goodnesse of the God, against whom we have committed them."⁵³ When he does direct his hearers to take specific steps, they are much the same as what Hooker prescribed. Here Cotton sets forth, briefly, four steps: (1) ". . . yeeld up your hearts to God" (2) ". . . apply the word unto your hearts" (3) Ask God for grace. (4) Seek for spiritual knowledge.⁵⁴

Another sermon of Cotton's may make even clearer the similarity of Cotton's and Hooker's views. It is "godly sorrow, by which men are brought to Christ," Cotton declares; ". . . the spirit of grace . . . opens their [the elect's] eyes to see, that all their sinnes . . . have

⁵²Way of Life, p. 136.

⁵³Way of Life, p. 162.

⁵⁴Way of Life, pp. 184-185.

reflected on Christ."⁵⁵ Such being the situation--and Cotton is here less subtle than usual--if man wants to be saved, he must get this godly sorrow (which is a work of the Spirit!). Cotton then directs, "If . . . thou wouldest bring thy heart to unfainting godly sorrow, then pile thy sins as a sharp arrow shot at Christ, else they will not kindly wound thee."⁵⁶ Further, in order that there may be no question concerning how one may reach this godly sorrow for sins against Christ, Cotton sets down at some length the various ways by which man's sins can be said to be against Christ.⁵⁷ Presumably, if one considers these ways, he may be brought to true contrition. Cotton's technique differs from Hooker's, but his concept of preparation is basically the same.⁵⁸

A more extended example of Cotton's subtle technique can be found in The Way of Life. Cotton questions, "But how shall I get a spirit of Grace?" and answers,

First, if God be pleased to open thine eyes to see what a dry soule thou hast, and thou art sensible of the drynesse of thine own heart, wanting sap and moisture, and art therefore athirst for want of Grace, then it is very hopeful God will give thee a

⁵⁵Way of Life, p. 31.

⁵⁶Way of Life, p. 41.

⁵⁷Way of Life, pp. 31-36.

⁵⁸ Miller sees substantial difference between them. See "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," Pubs. Col. Soc. Mass., Transactions, 1933-1934, XXXII (1934), 267.

spirit of Grace. Esay 14. 3. To whom will God give the spirit of Grace? to those that are dry, and thirsty, that feelee themselves athirst for want of Grace. Though thou canst not yet call God Father, nor look at him as thy friend, yet if thou hast but a thirsty soule, and longest for grace, under sense of thine owne droughtinesse, then God will not deny the Holy Ghost to them that ask him, Luke, 11. 9.
13.59

In answer to the question, How can one get a spirit of grace? Cotton declares that a thirsty soul is a sign of spiritual health.⁶⁰ Clearly he is urging men to get "dry soules" just as Hooker urged men to meditate on their sins. Hooker and Cotton were attempting to achieve in their hearers the same spiritual state, though their techniques are very different.

In another work Cotton states his views on preaching, which are, at least in this passage, much more orthodox than Shepard's confusion of the external and internal words. Cotton exhorts his hearers to "take hold of Christ" and then considers this objection:

But what shall I doe to get him? how may I come to have him? you said, we cannot reach Christ by nature, and though we could we will not; are not exhortations then in vaine?

Cotton answers with considerable forthrightness:

⁵⁹Way of Life, p. 11. Compare the passages from Calvin quoted above, pp. 143-144.

⁶⁰Other signs which Cotton cites are diligent hearing of sermons and turning from wickedness--Way of Life, p. 12.

No they are not in vaine Though we be of that naturall sinfull distemper, that we would have all things but Christ, and let him goe, yet while we are thus speaking to you, God many times conveyes such a spirit of grace unto us, as gives us power to receive Christ . . . those that shal be saved, we speake not in vaine to them, the worde that we speake conveyes spirit and life unto them, then they begin to receive life in him, and are glad that they may finde Christ, and for other men, it leaves them without excuse, if they do not use the meanes, God appoints them to use.⁶¹

These could almost be Calvin's words.⁶² Hooker in similar situations was much more direct. Whereas Cotton here only indirectly suggests that men should use the means, Hooker argues simply that, although men cannot make the word effective, they can do far more than they are now doing towards achieving salvation.⁶³

But in spite of this strictly orthodox statement, in Gods Mercie Mixed with his Iustice Cotton preaches, in exactly the same fashion as Hooker and Shepard, that man can still repent even though he may have resisted grace before.

. . . let no man be discouraged, what if thou hast staid three yeers, what if forty, what if a hundred and twenty yeers, yet all this time God hath stayed; let it now now hinder thee from turning to God. . . . but as long as God waites, and especially so long as hee knocks, there is some hope, if thou wilt, but open thee in hope. (page 18)

⁶¹Christ the Fountaine of Life (London, 1651), pp. 173-174.

⁶²See above, pp. 62-63.

⁶³See above, p. 173.

If God has knocked for a hundred and twenty years, He has knocked without a spirit of grace, or Cotton, like Shepard and Hooker, is inconsistent.

Again like Hooker and Shepard, Cotton sometimes considers God's internal word as merely the offer of grace rather than the conveying of it; the offer takes place whenever a sermon is preached, rather than at one precise time, when those to be convicted "receive life" in Christ:

How shall I discerne the signes of the times of the visitation of my owne soule, for grace offered; that this is the time that God offers grace to my heart, that I doe not out-set my time: How shall I know it?⁶⁴

Cotton answers:

Christ himselfe followes close the pure ministration of his Gospell, and that's the day of salvation . . .⁶⁵

The day of salvation, therefore, is today, for now we are hearing the gospel preached purely.

We have seen that in Cotton's presentation the conversion process seems much less arduous than in Hooker's

⁶⁴Gods mercie, p. 119.

⁶⁵Gods mercie, pp. 120-121. Cotton's next question is, What are "the signes of grace received"? This information "is worthy any man's knowledge, to know the time, when God hath risen to his heart . . ."--p. 122. The answer is what we might expect from what we have seen of Cotton's theology: man has received grace when he grieves for his sins--pp. 122-126.

preaching, or in Shepard's. Another interesting description, from The New Covenant, presents additional details. Cotton's purpose in the following passage is not to convert his hearers but to describe carefully God's method.

You shal find that the Lord useth to convey himselfe unto the soule in some word of Promise of the Gospel that sheweth unto the soule the riches of the grace of God in Jesus Christ; something or other is declared of Christ. This word being taught in the publick Ministry of the word, or brought to remembrance in some spirituall duty, as Prayer, or Conference, or the like, (for I will not limit the Holy One of Israel) yet usually it is done in the ministry of the Gospel; and though the Lord doth limit us to attend upon the meanes which he usually worketh by; but what soever the way be, this is the manner of Gods working, he doth universally come unto the soule in some word or other of his grace In some word of his grace he cometh and putteth life into the soule, and maketh it somewhat quiet, and causeth it to see that there is hope for Israel, and the Lord is able, and there is riches enough in Christ to save me. By such kind of work it is that the Lord bringeth the soule of his servants effectually to Christ (pages 188-189)

This description is very different from Hooker's descriptions of the process in that there is nothing at all painful to be endured by the convert; he need not be willing to be damned, for instance. The description quoted above appears to typify Cotton's view of the conversion process.

Only eight very small octavo pages later, however, Cotton describes the conversion process again. This second description, though hardly as gloomy as comparable descriptions by Hooker and Shepard, is difficult to reconcile with Cotton's customary view. The passage is important enough to

warrant quoting in its entirety. According to Cotton, God

. . . will rend, as it were the caule from the heart, I mean he will pluck away all the confidence you have built upon; a as [as a] man would rend the intralls of a beast from him, so the Lord will bring you to a flat denial of your selves, and that you have neither good will nor deed, as of your selves: And, you will find, you know not what God will doe with you, but this you know, that whatsoever he doth he is most righteous. When the Spirit of God cometh as a Comforter, he will in this manner convince the soul of a man that he hath heretofore hung upon his reformations for hope & comfort, but now he is brought plainly to see and flatly to deny, that he hath so much as one drop of the fatnes of the true Olive in him, when he most trusted unto his excellencies. Now a man being thus far brought on, doth not only deny himselfe in his judgement, but in his will, and is ready to say as David sometimes did, If the Lord say he hath no pleasure in me, here I am, let him doe unto me as seemeth him good. The Lord is righteous in all that cometh upon me: this onely the soul hath for his support in such a case, the Lord is able to doe all for me that I stand in need of: If he show me no mercy, he is just, if he be gracious, I shall live to praise him. Now when a mans will is thus subdued, that he hath no will of his own to be guided by, but onely the will of God; this is true brokennesse of heart, when not onely the judgement, but the heart and will is broken . . . Then cometh the Holy Ghost in some declaration of Gods free love, and taketh possession of the heart, and then the soule beginneth to pant after Jesus Christ, and nothing in heaven but him nor in the Earth besides him. The soule beginneth to put forth it selfe towards the Lord Jesus but the Holy Ghost having taken possession before, helpeth our infirmities, Rom. 8. 26, 27. He alone must help us, and no other. (pages 197-198)

Three points deserve attention here. First, the process is described as very painful; the image of rending the entrails from an animal is a strong and unpleasant one. Second, Cotton at least implies that man reaches the point of willing to be damned for God's glory, just as Hooker taught.

Third, the process, though grievous, does not appear as strenuous as in the teachings of Shepard and Hooker: it seems abbreviated. How the first two of these points can be reconciled with Cotton's teachings elsewhere is far from clear.

Although, as Miller has shown, Cotton was in part responsible for the outbreak of Antinomianism in New England in the late 1630's,⁶⁶ Cotton insisted on the necessity of good living after conversion. As we have seen, Hooker sought to bring about the sanctification of the converts in his charge by exhorting them to test themselves continually. Cotton for the same purpose taught that ". . . many temporall blessings wee may get by Gods acceptance of our Evangelicall obedience" ⁶⁷ The elect will be rewarded in this life for the proper use of the grace given them. "The Redeemed of the Lord find favour, for as they are redeemed from the bondage of sin, so they are now accepted in the sight of God, as children are acceptable to their Parents, when they speake with judgement and understanding" ⁶⁸ Not only do the elect find favor with God when they act with

⁶⁶ Colony to Province, pp. 58-64.

⁶⁷ Way of Life, p. 230. Cotton did indeed use the "trial" method. Thus he argues that a convert feels his greatest sins to be those that are against grace--"against Christ and his Grace, against his Ordinances, and the motions of his Spirit"--Way of Life, p. 24. But compared to Hooker's very frequent exhortations to the convert to test themselves, Cotton's treatments appear substantially less important.

⁶⁸ Way of Life, p. 116.

judgment and understanding, but also they are punished in this world for violations of God's laws. "There is none under a Covenant of Grace that dare allow himselfe any sin, for if a man should negligently commit any sin the Lord will schoole him thoroughly, and make him sadly to apprehend how unworthily he hath made bold to abuse & imbeazle the treasury of the grace of God."⁶⁹

This reference to the covenant of grace, along with other discussions in Cotton's writings, provides us with abundant evidence that he was fully familiar with covenant theology.⁷⁰ But, like Hooker, Cotton does not seem to have made much use of the covenant idea as a technique in preaching conversion; at least in the sermons which have been read in the preparation of this study, Cotton relied, as we have seen, on the sacramental theory of homiletics, in much the same way as Hooker did. One student of Cotton has declared that his teaching differed from Calvin's in that, though "it is still God who provides salvation to sinful men, yet salvation is not imposed but is based on God's covenant with men."⁷¹ It is not quite accurate to imply that in Calvin's view God imposed salvation, but it is true that in his

⁶⁹Covenant, pp. 134-135.

⁷⁰See The New Covenant and also Wayne H. Christy, "John Cotton: Covenant Theologian," unpub. M.A. thesis (Duke, 1942).

⁷¹Christy, "Cotton," p. 161.

sermons Cotton, being more soteriological than Calvin, uses different techniques.⁷² He repeatedly teaches, however, that men do not wish salvation. For example, Cotton argues, ". . . it is an usuall saying, that every man will have Christ for a saviour . . . yet if in truth we consider it, I assure you in plaine English, we will not be saved; that is our resolution when it comes to the point."⁷³

There is, then, one real difference between Cotton and Hooker: Cotton is considerably closer to Calvin in his view of the conversion process. For Cotton the process, though it might be painful, is much simpler than Hooker's conception and very much easier than Shepard's. Perhaps related to this is the fact that Cotton in his preaching made much less of predestination and spiritual inability than did his two notable contemporaries.

But it is difficult to make clear by means of quotation the essential dissimilarity of Hooker's and Cotton's sermons. Hooker, although clearly a man of the world, was much more demanding of his hearers than was Cotton, who was somewhat more genial though very much a scholar. One feels that many members of Cotton's congregation who were convinced by his preaching that they were saved would have been much less hopeful of their chances in the other world had they been

⁷²It is perhaps inaccurate to refer to Calvin's preaching techniques, since he was primarily an expository preacher.

⁷³Christ the Fountaine, p. 61.
 inaccuracy to refer to Calvin's preaching - he was primarily an expository preacher.

faced by a barrage of Hooker's sermons.⁷⁴

Let us see in what ways this study of Shepard's and Cotton's writings bears on an evaluation of Hooker's works. First, it makes quite clear that the differences which exist among the three most important American Puritan divines of their time are so considerable as to make it difficult to apply to Cotton's or Shepard's thought findings made from Hooker's writings. Certain basic doctrines were held by all three, but these are mostly points of dogma held by all Reformed theologians. On other points, such as the difficulty of conversion, Hooker's views are similar to Shepard's, but different from Cotton's. Thus it appears unwise to speak of the theology of the early New England Puritans as being something unique and homogeneous.⁷⁵

Although our study of Cotton and Shepard has not been as thorough as our examination of Hooker, from the evidence

⁷⁴Note that F. H. Foster describes Hooker's The Soules Humiliation, The Unbelievers Preparing for Christ, The Soules Vocation, and "The Poore Dying [Doubting] Christian Drawne unto Christ" as "all very gloomy," but he finds Cotton's The Way of Life "rather helpful"--A Genetic History of the New England Theology (Chicago, 1907), p. 30 (note).

⁷⁵As do Miss Levy in Preaching in New England, pp. 25-39, and Kenneth B. Murdock, Literature & Theology in Colonial New England (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), *passim*. Note also Miller's comment, ". . . the Puritan theorists worked out a substantial addition to the theology of Calvinism which in New England was quite as important as the original doctrine"--The Puritans (New York, 1936), p. 27. As far as Hooker is concerned, Calvin's thought was surely more important than the addition, covenant theology.

presented here the thought of Cotton and Shepard may impress one as sounder than Hooker's. The techniques and teachings of Shepard and Cotton have a simpler nature than Hooker's; the varied indirections of Hooker's techniques often strike the modern reader as mere tricks of preaching. Hooker probably developed these techniques as a result of being imbued with the spirit of the strict "High Calvinism" of the seventeenth century. Cotton, on the other hand, kept closer to Calvin. Shepard seems to have been almost as well indoctrinated with the spirit of Reformed scholasticism as Hooker, but his method was to rely on his powers of eloquence rather than on carefully developed techniques.

Probably Hooker's greatest talent was his ability to describe, with real insight, types of unconverted sinners, presumably varieties with whom he had had experience and whom he expected to be among his hearers. His analyses were doubtless effective means of reaching those who might otherwise have managed to avoid applying to themselves Hooker's admonitions, exhortations, and instructions. In their sermons Cotton and Shepard likewise describe religious types.⁷⁶ But Hooker seems to have taken a particular pleasure in his descriptions, and perhaps as a result they loom larger in his works. Character analyses are to be found even in his

⁷⁶ The character was indeed almost a stock preaching device. See W. Fraser Mitchell, English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson (London, 1932), pp. 212-213.

non-homiletic writings. The following example is from the preface to Ames's Fresh Suit Against Human Ceremonies ([Rotterdam?], 1633).

The Temporary Gospeller having had some touch of Religion, & light of truth, in his mynde, can find no rest unto his conscience, unless he have some shew of reason to allege [for his actions] Resolving therfor to decline, they seek to catch at any appearance, which they may plead for their declining. And because they are most led by example, and sense, these are the weapons with which they use to ward them selves, & maintain their course.

Common example carries a perswading power with them, its a sufficient reason for their doing because they see it don. Here they take up their stand. All men for the most part do so, & why may not they? Thus like sheep they follow the drove though it be to the shambles. Especially if they heare of any noted & famous for piety, & godlines to goe in such a way, they conclude forthwith, it is the rightway: reasoning thus: They are wise & godly, & think you, they durst do it, they would do it, unlesse it were good and pious? when the truth hath told us, that all men are lyers, & eyther doe, or may deceive, or be decyved; even the courses of the strictest saynts have their crackings (sigs. A3^v-A4^r)

Beyond this, Hooker's chief claim to greatness as a religious thinker is perhaps that he was able to be at the same time a "High Calvinist" and a very effective evangelical preacher. He was closer to the orthodoxy of his day than Cotton or Shepard. Yet he was able to develop a series of preaching techniques which made possible both a bold emphasis on man's spiritual inability in the strict orthodox fashion and a vigorous demand that man assume complete responsibility for his spiritual state. When seen from this point of view, Hooker's occasional confusions and departures

from orthodoxy may seem less remarkable; his achievement was indeed a tour de force, though hardly an advancement in the history of religious thought.

CONCLUSION

As a result of our examination of Thomas Hooker's writings against his background--the thought of Calvin, later Reformed theology, and Puritan doctrines--we have been able to come to some important conclusions about his thought, conclusions which may help to clarify the history of ideas in seventeenth-century England and America.

First, we examined Calvin's thought and its relation to later Reformed and Puritan teaching. In two important ways later Reformed and, more particularly, Puritan doctrine differ from Calvin's thought. First, Calvinism is theocentric: the Gloria Dei concept is central to his thought and permeates it. Puritan thought, such as Hooker's, is much more anthropocentric; Puritan literature has as its focus man's salvation. Second, after Calvin, Reformed theology became codified and more precise. This codification, combined with the shift of emphasis from God to man, caused Puritans such as Perkins and Hooker to insist much more rigidly than Calvin had that natural man has no spiritual abilities. This new emphasis was closely related to, and in fact part of, a view of predestination different from Calvin's. Whereas Calvin taught predestination--election and reprobation--to emphasize God's mercy, and, to a lesser degree, His

justice, for Hooker and other Puritans predestination was primarily considered for its role in the process of salvation.

In other ways Puritan teaching is much closer to Calvin's thought than many scholars have realized. Most important of these similarities is that in Calvin's teaching the conversion process is gradual and involves changes in the mind and the affections, and that conversion comes to those whose hearts are penitent and who have previously been exposed to the teachings of the gospel. Furthermore, there is evidence that in Calvin's teaching conversion is accompanied by persuasion. In these ways the thought of the covenant theologians is rather similar to that of Calvin.

Although it may be argued that Hooker was a covenant theologian, he made little use of the covenant-of-grace concept. In his preaching practice, he instead used the concept that preaching is the means of grace, as a basis for exhorting his hearers to be saved. This concept, taught by Calvin and developed by later writers such as Preston, permitted Hooker to reconcile predestination with human exertion, for according to the theory God sees to it that only those predestined to salvation take the steps necessary for salvation; yet these steps Hooker attempted to persuade all his hearers to take, for he could not know who were elect and who were reprobate. Thus Hooker could charge that men should

. . . lay out their labour & that unto the utmost of all their abilities never to give the Lord rest, nor rest with their own souls, before they get this true sight of sin, if ever they hope to see the work of Gods Grace in their hearts here in this world, or to see the face of God in Glory, in that other world to come. . . . This is the way that God hath appointed and he wil bless, the order which he hath set in his infinite wisdom and which he will prosper.¹

Hooker's simplest statement of the doctrine of means shows clearly hcauses which keep men from taking the prescribed steps. ¹If

it were God's will that one of his hearers be damned, Hooker
 Tt
 exould not of course know. He did know, from wide experience, he commandeth, yet this shutteth not out their endeavor. His promise of enabling them is upon this supposition, that they doe indeavor in the use of meanes he shall appoint them. The Lord in promising doth not meane that they should be idle, and look that he should doe all; but his promising includeth their endeavouring, and upon their endeavouring in the use of the meanes that God hath appointed, he hath promised to enable them to doe what he hath commanded.²

This is the method which Hooker most often used to reconcile human responsibility and divine predestination.

In his attempt to persuade, Hooker uses many techniques. Probably of first importance is his effort to describe the causes which keep men from taking the prescribed steps. ¹If it were God's will that one of his hearers be damned, Hooker could not of course know. He did know, from wide experience,

¹The Application of Redemption: Books IX-X (London, 1657), p. 111.

²The Saints Dignitie, and Dutie (London, 1651), pp. 82-83. The phrase "his people" (*italics mine*) means of course the elect.

the devices--the "shifts" and rationalizations--by which men often avoid using the means of salvation. These descriptions he handled with real skill.

Hooker demanded much from those who would be saved. The process would be long and painful, and Hooker did not always offer much hope for success. One must, he taught, be willing to be damned before he could be saved. But although the process was difficult, one could not rest, according to Hooker, after he had been converted--or rather after he thought he had been converted. Apparently in an effort to achieve in his hearers the sanctification which is supposed to follow effectual calling, Hooker taught that man must continually test himself in order to make sure that he is saved: he is not permitted to have any basic concern other than the question of his spiritual state. The ambiguous role of conversion is an important weakness in Hooker's thought.

Another technique which Hooker commonly used is a negative approach very different from the positive approach demonstrated by the above quotations. This technique was to argue that God offers grace as a gift, so that if men refuse it, they can be said to resist grace. The incompatibility of this approach with the laborious struggles which Hooker contends one must pass through in order to be saved provides a real difficulty to those who would regard Hooker as an important religious thinker.

Cotton and Shepard, Hooker's contemporaries, were rather different in their teachings and techniques from Hooker, different enough so that it would be improper to consider the observations made regarding Hooker's thought applicable to other divines of Hooker's time. Cotton, although in many ways as subtle a preacher as Hooker, was much closer to the teachings of Calvin than to the Reformed scholasticism of the seventeenth century, which profoundly affected Hooker's preaching practice. Shepard's theology was in many ways like Hooker's, but he made more extensive use of eloquence as a persuasive technique than did Hooker, and was also less prone to rely on psychological strategies.

Hooker was a "High Calvinist"; this is abundantly clear. Although he occasionally strayed from the very narrow path of the Reformed orthodoxy of his day, it would be difficult to find a Reformed preacher who did not depart from the letter of the doctrines to which he subscribed. An examination of the sermons of such a supposedly orthodox "Calvinist" as Jonathan Edwards will demonstrate as much. Hooker was not wholly successful in his attempts to reconcile the practical requirements of preaching with the seventeenth-century Reformed concept that man totally lacks spiritual ability. But this should not be surprising. It is noteworthy that he came as close to success as he did.

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the Reformed Theology

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