The Works of Thomas Goodwin

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INTRODUCTION

This reprinting of *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* stands as a fitting climax to the past half-century of the rediscovery and republication of the writings of the Puritans. Renowned for intelligent piety at its Puritan best, Thomas Goodwin, "the Atlas of independency," stands on a par with John Owen, "the prince of Puritans," as a theologian and an exegete, and often surpasses him in experimental depth. Slightly easier to read than Owen, Goodwin's writings demand concentration for maximum benefit. Any lover of the biblical and experimental emphases of the Puritans will find Goodwin both readable and spiritually rewarding. He represents the cream of Puritanism, capturing the intellect, will, and heart of his readers. His treatises join the vigor of earlier Puritans such as William Perkins and Richard Sibbes to the matured thought of later Puritan divines, represented supremely by Owen.

Those influenced by Goodwin's writings include John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and John Gill. Alexander Whyte confessed: "I have read no other author so much and so often. And I continue to read him to this day, as if I had never read him before." He calls Goodwin's sermon, "Christ Dwelling in Our Hearts by Faith," one of the "two very greatest sermons in the English language." Whyte aptly concludes:

> Goodwin is always an interpreter, and one of a thousand.... All his work, throughout his twelve volumes, is just so much pulpit exposition and pulpit application of the Word of God.... Full as Goodwin always is of the ripest scriptural and Reformation scholarship; full as he always is of the best theological and philosophical learning of his own day and of all foregoing days; full, also, as he always is of the deepest

> spiritual experience—all the same, he is always so simple, so clear, so direct, so untechnical, so personal, and so pastoral.[1]

In our generation, Puritan scholar J.I. Packer concurs: "Whyte called Goodwin 'the greatest pulpit exegete of Paul that has ever lived,' and perhaps justly; Goodwin's Biblical expositions are quite unique, even among the Puritans, in the degree to which they combine theological breadth with experimental depth. John Owen saw into the mind of Paul as clearly as Goodwin—sometimes, on points of detail, more clearly—but not even Owen ever saw so deep into Paul's heart."[2]

The Life of Thomas Goodwin

Thomas Goodwin was born in 1600, at Rollesby, Norfolk, in a county of England famed for Puritan resistance to religious persecution by the Crown. This Puritan climate impacted his God-fearing parents, who strove to rear him in preparation for the ministry by their own example and by providing him with the best classical education offered by neighboring schools. In early school days he had a tender conscience, experiencing from the age of six impressions of the Holy Spirit that produced tears for sin and "flashes of joy upon thoughts of the things of God."[3] At the age of twelve, one year before the usual time, he was able to enter Christ's College, Cambridge (1613), a "nest of Puritans" in those days. The young Goodwin found that the memory of the father of Puritanism, William Perkins (1558-1602), permeated Cambridge. Here too Richard Sibbes, the "sweet dropper of Israel," was preaching at Trinity Church, attracting those who yearned for spiritual edification rather than embellished rhetoric.

Goodwin's memoir, edited by his son, reveals a great deal about his induction into the Puritan movement at Cambridge

[1] *Thirteen Appreciations* (London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1913), 158ff.

[2] "The Witness of the Spirit: The Puritan Teaching," in *The Wisdom of Our Fathers* (London: Puritan Conference, 1956), 14; cf. J. C. Philpot, *Reviews by the late Mr. J. C. Philpot* (London: Frederick Kirby, 1901), 2:479ff., who comments, "Being a man of choice experience, Goodwin so blends with [his sound expositions of doctrine] the work of the Spirit, in all its various branches, as to enrich his exposition with a heavenly savour and unction which carries with it great force, and commends itself in a very sensible and profitable manner to the conscience."

[3] *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 2:xi.

under the direction of several godly and learned tutors.[4] At age fourteen, Goodwin eagerly anticipated Easter when he hoped to partake of the Lord's Supper for the second time because he thought he found those marks of saving grace within him which were expounded by Zacharius Ursinus in his *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism.* He also prepared himself by praying, attending Sibbes's lectures, and reading Calvin's *Institutes.* When the day arrived, however, his tutor, Mr. William Power, who had a profound influence upon him, lovingly restrained him from receiving Communion due to his age and spiritual immaturity.

Feeling rejected, the young Goodwin stopped attending Sibbes's sermons and lectures, ceased praying and reading the Scriptures and Puritan literature, and instead set his heart on becoming a successful preacher in the world. He determined to study the art and rhetoric of preachers who cared more for style than substance and were inclined to embrace the current brand of Arminianism being imported from the Netherlands.

In 1619 he continued his studies at St. Catherine's Hall in Cambridge, probably to obtain early promotion where scholars were not as abundant as at Christ's College. He became a fellow and lecturer in the Hall. Among the fellows there were John Arrowsmith, Andrew Perne, William Spurstowe, and William Strong, all future colleagues of Goodwin in the Westminster Assembly. Several of these and other Puritan friends sought to persuade him, somewhat successfully, that his pursuit of embel-

[4] *Ibid.*, 2:lii ff. For biographical material on Goodwin, see "Memoir of Thomas Goodwin, D.D.," by Robert Halley, and "Memoir of Thomas Goodwin, D.D., Composed out of his own papers and memoirs, by his son," *ibid.*, 2:ix-xlviii, lii-lxxv respectively. Also, consult Edmund Calamy, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, ed. Samuel Palmer (London: Alex. Hogg, 1778), 1:183-87; James Reid, "Life of Thomas Goodwin," in *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines* (1811; reprint Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 319-43; Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography [DNB]*, vol. 22 (1890; reprint Oxford: University Press, 1922), 148-50; A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 228-29; Whyte, *Thirteen Appreciations,* 157-76; Philip E. Hughes, gen. ed., *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Marshallton, DE: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1972), 4:392-94; Brian Freer, "Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan," Graham Harrison, "Thomas Goodwin and Independency," in *Diversities of Gifts,* Westminster Conference Reports, 1980 (London: The Westminster Conference, 1981), 7-44.

lished rhetoric and flirtation with Arminianism could serve neither edification nor truth. Moreover, he never could fully free himself from the preaching of Sibbes at Trinity Church and the catechetical sermons of John Preston in the college chapel. Nevertheless, his interest in Puritan spirituality remained spasmodic for another year, usually intensifying prior to the Lord's Supper.

Hardness of heart increased until God finally brought Goodwin to a more profound conviction of sin and genuine conversion on October 2, 1620, just after his twentieth birthday. On that afternoon, as Thomas met with some friends to "make merry," one of the friends convinced the group to attend a funeral sermon preached by a Dr. Bainbridge, which focused on the need for personal repentance from Luke 19:41-42. God used this message to show Goodwin his dreadful sins both original and actual, the essential depravity of his heart, his averseness to all spiritual good, and his desperate Christless condition which left him exposed to the just wrath of God and an open hell.[5]

Happily, it was not many hours later "before God, who after we are regenerate is so faithful and mindful of his word,"[6] came and spoke to him a "speedy word" of deliverance from Ezekiel 16:

> '[Live,] yea, I said unto you, Live,'—so God was pleased on the sudden, and as it were in an instant, to alter the whole of his former dispensation towards me, and said of and to my soul, Yea, live; yea, live, I say, said God: and as he created the world and the matter of all things by a word, so he created and put a new life and spirit into my soul, and so great an alteration was strange to me....
>
> God [then] took me aside, and as it were privately said unto me, Do you now turn to me, and I will pardon all your sins though never so many, as I forgave and pardoned my servant Paul, and convert you unto me....[7]

Goodwin explains four reasons why he believed that "these instructions and suggestions [of deliverance and pardon] were immediately from God": (1) the condition of his heart prior to receiving the word of God's willingness to pardon—"the posture and condition of my spirit, and that this suggestion took me when my heart was fixed, and that unmoveably, in the contrary persuasions"; (2) the appropriateness of this divine word when it did

[5] *Works*, 2:lii-lx.

[6] *Ibid.*, lxi.

[7] *Ibid.*, lxi-lxii.

come—"it was a word in its proper season"; (3) that this word was "not an ungrounded fancy, but the pure word of God, which is the ground of faith and hope"; and (4) that this divine intimation had "consequents and effects after God's speaking to me," including an altered disposition of soul; a dissolution of the works of Satan; an enlightened understanding; a melted will disposed to turn to God; a new nature "inclining me to good"; the Spirit of God as "a new indweller"; and "an actual turning from all known sins, and my entertaining the truth of all godliness."[8]

Upon conversion, Goodwin aligned himself unequivocally for the remainder of his life with the theological tradition of Perkins, Bayne, Sibbes, and Preston. He resolved never to seek personal fame but "to part with all for Christ and make the glory of God the measure of all time to come." Consequently, he abandoned the polished style of preaching then common among Anglican divines, since it promoted the preacher, and adopted the Puritan plain style of preaching, which, in its self-conscious disuse of human embellishment, sought to give all glory to God. His preaching became earnest, didactic, experimental, and pastoral.

For the first seven years after his regeneration in 1620, Goodwin struggled for personal assurance of faith. During these years he was largely "intent on the conviction God had wrought in him, of the heinousness of sin, and of his own sinful and miserable state by nature; of the difference between the workings of natural conscience, though enlightened, and the motions of a holy soul, changed and acted by the Spirit, in an effectual work of peculiar saving grace. And accordingly he kept a constant diary."[9] Through letters and conversations with a godly minister, Mr. Price of Kings Lynn (of whom Goodwin "said that he was the greatest man for experimental acquaintance with Christ that ever he met"), he was led to see his need to "live by faith in Christ, and to derive from him life and strength for sanctification, and all comfort and joy through believing." Of this period of spiritual struggle and difficulty, he confessed: "I was diverted from Christ for several years, to search only into the signs of grace in me. It was almost seven years ere I was taken off to live by faith on Christ, and God's free love, which are alike the object of faith."[10]

[8] *Ibid.*, lxii-lxiv.

[9] *Ibid.*, lxviii.

[10] *Ibid.*

Goodwin's soul finally found rest in Christ alone. He learned that he could not live from marks of grace. Writing to Mr. Price, he states: "I am come to this pass now, that signs will do me no good alone; I have trusted too much to habitual grace for assurance of justification; I tell you Christ is worth all." His son concludes: "Thus coming unto Christ, his weary soul found rest, when in all its unquiet motions it could not find it anywhere else."[11]

Goodwin's preaching now became considerably more Christ-centered. He could now agree with Dr. Sibbes's advice: "Young man, if you ever would do good, you must preach the gospel and the free grace of God in Christ Jesus."[12]

Shortly before this time, Goodwin was licensed as a preacher in Cambridge University. The following year (1626) he was influential in bringing Sibbes to St. Catherine's Hall as Master. In 1628 he was appointed lecturer at Trinity Church, succeeding Sibbes and Preston at the age of twenty-seven! From 1632 to 1634 he served as vicar of this church. In 1634, not willing to submit to Archbishop William Laud's new articles of conformity and having become a target of Laudian repression, Goodwin resigned his offices and left Cambridge. Numerous people, including several who later became influential Puritan pastors, were converted under Goodwin's preaching and lecturing in Cambridge.

During the mid-1630s, largely under the influence of John Cotton, Goodwin adopted Independent principles of church government.[13] From 1634 to 1639 he was probably a Separatist preacher in London. In 1639, because of increasing preaching restrictions and the threat of fines and imprisonment, he took refuge in the Netherlands where he labored in Arnhem with other well-known Independent ministers in serving a group of more than one hundred refugees from Laud's persecution. For two years he also exchanged reflections with his Dutch colleagues and came to realize that the Dutch Second Reformation (*Nadere Reformatie*) divines were emphasizing the same kind of Reformed, experimental truths in preaching and pastoring as were

[11] *Ibid.*, lxx.

[12] *Ibid.*, lxxi.

[13] Cf. Freer, "Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan," 12-13. "Cotton's Congregationalism was given a final expression in *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1644), about which Goodwin said it provided a middle way between Brownism and Presbyterianism" (*ibid.*, 13).

the English Puritans, and were provoking similar responses from many of their colleagues. Just as some of the orthodox Dutch Calvinists looked askance at pietists such as Gijsbertus Voetius, the Dutch Owen, so some Calvinistic clergy in the English establishment viewed the Puritans with a certain degree of suspicion. In Holland, however, there was more freedom to experiment in the area of church government, so Goodwin found opportunity to explore the "Congregational Way," knowing that Independency was at best a minority view among the Puritans in England.[14]

In 1641, after Laud had been impeached and the Long Parliament had convened, Goodwin responded to Parliament's invitation to all who had left England for nonconformity to return. Some have claimed he gathered a church on Anchor Lane in the parish of St. Dunstan's in the East, London, later to become one of the most influential of the Independent churches. There is no conclusive evidence to substantiate this claim although Goodwin was preaching to an Independent church in St. Michael's Crooked Lane in London in 1646.[15]

Goodwin's rise to fame began with an invitation to preach to Parliament on April 27, 1642. Subsequently, he was appointed a member of the Westminster Assembly, where he is said to have been "the most decisive figure and the great disturber of the Westminster Assembly," due to his continual promotion of the Independent view of church government. Records of the assembly covering 243 sessions held from August 1643 to December 1644, indicate that Goodwin gave more addresses than any other divine—357 in all![16] Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sydrach Simpson,

[14] At Arnhem he studied church order and church discipline extensively with his colleague, Philip Nye. For additional detail on Goodwin's stay in the Netherlands, see Joel R. Beeke, *Assurance of Faith: Calvin, English Puritanism, and the Dutch Second Reformation* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 330-32, 353-54.

[15] *The Registar-Booke of the Fourth Classis in the Province of London,* transcribed by Charles Surnam (London: Harleian Society, 1953), 143.

[16] Wayne R. Spear, "Covenanted Uniformity in Religion: The Influence of the Scottish Commissioners Upon the Ecclesiology of the Westminster Assembly" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1976), 362.

For Goodwin's role in the Presbyterian-Independent controversy, see Fienberg, "Thomas Goodwin: Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine," 80-265; Berndt Gustafsson, *The Five Dissenting Brethren: A Study of the Dutch Background of Their Independentism* (London: C. W. K. Gloerup, 1955); R. B. Carter, "The Presbyterian-Independent Controversy with

William Bridge, and Jeremiah Burroughs became nicknamed the five "Dissenting Brethren" on account of their Independent views which they also presented to the Westminster Assembly in their *Apologeticall Narration* (1644).[17] Despite Goodwin's prolonging of the debate on church government, he retained the respect of the Presbyterian majority as a capable and irenic Puritan.[18] He was chosen to pray in the solemn meeting of seven hours' duration in which the assembly prepared to enter on the debate concerning the discipline of the church. This respect is also evident by his being appointed in 1644 to present to Parliament *The Directory of Public Worship*, at which time (and on several other occasions) he preached before Parliament. Subsequently, the House of Lords gave Goodwin and Jeremiah Whitaker the oversight and examination of the papers to be printed for the assembly.[19]

After the assembly recessed, additional preferments followed in rapid succession for Goodwin. In 1649, Goodwin, Joseph Caryl, and Edward Reynolds were appointed lecturers at Oxford. On June 7, 1649, both Goodwin and Owen preached before the House of Commons on a special day of public thanksgiving and the next day the House put their names forward for promotion to the presidency of two Oxford colleges. In 1650, Goodwin became president of Magdalen College, Oxford, while Owen similarly became dean of Christchurch. The pair must have had considerable influence, since Cromwell yielded his power as Chancellor to a commission headed by Owen. At his post, Goodwin was made a close adviser to Cromwell and the protector's Oxford Commissioner.

Goodwin's influence shaped Magdalen College into an institution known for adherence to scriptural truth and Calvinistic, experimental doctrine. Demanding academic excellence and

Special Reference to Dr. Thomas Goodwin and the Years 1640 to 1660" (Ph.D. dissertation, Edinburgh, 1961); David R. Ehalt, "The Development of Early Congregational Theory of the Church with Special Reference to the Five 'Dissenting Brethren' at the Westminster Assembly" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont, 1969); J. R. De Witt, *Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government* (Kampen: Kok, 1969).

[17] *Ibid.*, 88-99.

[18] Freer, "Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan," 15-18.

[19] Goodwin's own shorthand notes on the Assembly filled fourteen volumes!

dealing plainly with the spiritual lives of the students, he was soon accused of operating a "scruple shop" by those who did not appreciate his Puritan emphasis on intelligent piety. It was in these years, however, as even Lord Clarendon later pronounced, that "the University of Oxford yielded a harvest of extraordinary good and sound knowledge in all parts of learning."[20]

As he began his college presidency, Goodwin married for the second time. In 1638 he had married Elizabeth Prescott, the daughter of a London alderman, but she died in the 1640s, leaving him with one daughter. In 1650 he married Mary Hammond, "of ancient and honorable Shropshire lineage." Goodwin was forty-nine and she was in her seventeenth year. By this second marriage Goodwin had two sons, Thomas and Richard, and two daughters, both of whom died in infancy. Richard died as a young man on a voyage to the East Indies. Thomas followed in his father's footsteps as an Independent pastor and later established a private academy for the training of ministers.

Goodwin's ten years at Oxford were active and productive. During this time he and John Owen shared a Sunday afternoon lecture for the students at Oxford, and both were chaplains to Cromwell. Goodwin also formed an Independent church and preached to a unique mixture of hearers, uneducated and educated, including Stephen Charnock and Thankful Owen. In 1653 Goodwin was awarded a doctorate in divinity by Oxford University. The following year he was chosen by Cromwell to sit on the Board of Visitors of Oxford University, as well as to be one of the Triers on The Board for the Approbation of Public Preachers, whose task it was to examine men for both pulpit and public instructional work. He was also appointed to the Oxfordshire Commission for the Ejection of Scandalous Ministers. During this decade, Goodwin was probably closer to Cromwell than any other Independent divine and attended the Lord Protector on his deathbed.

Before Cromwell died (September 3, 1658), Goodwin secured his reluctant permission for the Independents to hold a synod and draft a confession of faith. On September 29, 1658 Goodwin, Owen, Philip Nye, William Bridge, Joseph Caryl, and William Greenhill were appointed to draw up a confession of faith to be used by some 120 Independent churches. Owen almost

[20] Cited by Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism* (Swengel, PA: Reiner, 1973), 47.

certainly wrote the lengthy introduction, but it was Goodwin who probably had the most important hand in writing the first draft:

> Goodwin again was prominent and this declaration amounted to a statement of his convictions on Church faith and order spawned in his twenties, triggered into action by John Cotton, consolidated in his thirties, thrashed out in Holland, practised in London and Oxford, defended in the Westminster Assembly and thus at last given a definitive expression. Goodwin's star had reached its zenith.[21]

The resulting document was presented for approval to a group of representatives from over one hundred Independent churches. After eleven or twelve days of work, the *Savoy Declaration of* Faith and Order was adopted October 12, 1658, being unanimously approved. On October 14 Goodwin led a delegation to present the *Savoy Declaration* to Richard Cromwell. Closely resembling the Westminster Confession of Faith with the major exception of church polity, it became the confessional standard for British and American Congregationalism from that date.[22]

With the Rump Parliament restored in 1659 the Presbyterian state-church was restored as well, but one year later, with the support of many Presbyterians and Anglicans, Charles II landed at Dover on May 25. Due to the accession of Charles II and the accompanying loss of Puritan power, Goodwin felt compelled to leave his work at Oxford. He moved to London, together with a substantial part of his congregation, and formed a church there in 1660. Despite assurances to the contrary, the new king enacted strict acts of conformity. In 1662 two thousand godly ministers were ejected from the national church. Being in an Independent church, however, and holding no offices to which he had been appointed by the government, Goodwin was not among them. He was allowed by God's overruling providence to continue preaching throughout the many years of persecution under Charles II. He also was enabled to lead his London congregation through the dreaded Plague, when most Established Church pastors abandoned the city. He devoted his last years to preaching, pastoral work, and the writing of numerous treatises, of which we are

[21] Freer, "Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan," 14.

[22] Cf. *The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order*, edited by A. G. Matthews (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1959); Beeke, *Assurance of Faith,* 237-38, 273.

beneficiaries more than three hundred years later with this timely reprint of his *Works*.

Reading Goodwin

Thomas Goodwin was a prolific author and editor. During the 1630s he coedited with John Ball the works of John Preston and Richard Sibbes. He began to publish some of his own sermons in 1636.[23] Prior to his death, he published at least twelve devotional works, most of which were collections of sermons.[24] The fact that they were reissued forty-seven times indicates the high demand and wide circulation of his publications.

Most of Goodwin's major theological writings were the fruit of his riper years and were published posthumously. His unusually large corpus of treatises displays a pastoral and scholarly zeal rivalled by few Puritans.

The first collection of Goodwin's works was published in five folio volumes in London from 1681 to 1704 under the editorship of Thankful Owen, Thomas Baron, and Thomas Goodwin, Jr. An abridged version of Goodwin's works, condensed by J. Rabb, was printed in four volumes (London, 1847-50). The presently reprinted twelve-volume authoritative edition was printed by James Nichol (Edinburgh, 1861-66) as his first choice in what would become known as the well-edited and highly regarded *Nichol's Series of Standard Divines*; not surprisingly, it is far superior to the original five folio volumes.

Goodwin's treatment of his subjects is massive, sometimes liable to exhaust the half-hearted. The pull of his writings is not always felt immediately. His first editors (1681) explained his occasional prolixity in these terms: "He had a genius to dive into the bottom of points, to 'study them down,' as he used to express it, not contenting himself with superficial knowledge, without wading into the depths of things."[25] Edmund Calamy put it this way: "It is evident from his writings, he studied not words, but things. His stile is plain and familiar; but very diffuse, homely and tedious."[26] Though Calamy has exaggerated the problem of

[23] *DNB*, 8:149.

[24] Reid, *op. cit.*, 1:341-43.

[25] For the reprinting of the original, succinct preface, see *Works*, 1:xxix-xxxii.

[26] *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, 1:186.

style, one does need patience to read Goodwin at times; along with depth and prolixity, however, he combines a wonderful sense of warmth, unction, and experience. The reader's patience will be amply rewarded.

How then ought a beginner in Goodwin's *Works* proceed? Here is a suggested plan:

First, begin by reading some of the shorter, more practical writings of Goodwin, such as these:

(1) *Patience and Its Perfect Work*, four sermons expounding James 1:1-5, was written after the loss of a large part of Goodwin's personal library by fire (volume 2, pages 429-467 [hereafter 2:429-467]) and is replete with practical instruction for enhancing a spirit of submission.

(2) *Certain Select Cases Resolved* includes three experimental treatises which unveil Goodwin's large pastoral heart for afflicted Christians, each of them aiming at specific struggles in the believer's soul: (a) *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness*, a classic treatise of Puritan encouragement for the spiritually depressed based on Isaiah 50:10-11 (3:231-350). Its subtitle summarizes its contents well: *A Treatise shewing The Causes by which, The Cases wherein, and the Ends for which, God leaves His Children to Distress of Conscience, Together with Directions How to Walk so as to Come Forth of Such a Condition.* (b) *The Return of Prayers*, based on Psalm 85:8, a uniquely practical work that affords discernment in ascertaining "God's answers to our prayers" (3:353-429). (c) *The Trial of a Christian's Growth* (3:433-506), based on John 15:1-2, a masterpiece on sanctification which focuses on the graces of mortification and vivification. For a mini-classic on spiritual growth, this gem remains unsurpassed until today.

(3) *The Vanity of Thoughts*, based on Jeremiah 4:14 (3:509-528), is a convicting little work, stressing the need for bringing every thought into captive obedience to Christ, and providing remedies on how to foster that obedience.

Second, read for instruction and edification some of Goodwin's great sermons which inevitably bear a strong, Biblical, Christological, and experimental stamp (2:359-425; 4:151-224; 5:439-548; 7:473-576; 9:499-514; 12:1-127).

Third, delve into Goodwin's great works which expound major doctrines, including the following:

(1) *An Unregenerate Man's Guiltiness Before God in Respect of Sin and Punishment* (10:1-567) is a weighty Puritan

treatment of human guilt, corruption, and the imputation and punishment of sin. For exposure of the total depravity of the natural man's heart, this treatise is unparalleled in all of Christian literature. It aims to produce a heartfelt sense of dire need for saving faith in Christ rather than the quick-fix approach of contemporary, superficial Christendom.

(2) *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* is a frequently reprinted classic (8:1-593). Part I, on the *objects of faith*, focuses on God's nature, Christ Himself, and the free grace of God revealed in His absolute promises. Part II deals with the *acts of faith*—what it means to believe in Christ, to obtain assurance, to find joy in the Holy Ghost, to make use of God's electing love. A concluding section beautifully expounds the "actings of faith in prayer." Part III addresses the *properties of faith*—its excellency, for it gives all honor to God and Christ; its difficulty, for it reaches beyond the natural abilities of man; its necessity, for we must endeavor to believe in the strength of God. A valuable, practical conclusion provides "directions to guide us in our endeavours to believe."

(3) *Christ the Mediator* (2 Corinthians 5:18-19), *Christ Set Forth* (Romans 8:34), and *The Heart of Christ in Heaven Towards Sinners on Earth* are great works of Christology (5:1-438; 4:1-92; 4:93-150). *Christ the Mediator* sets forth Jesus especially in His substitutionary work of humiliation, and rightly deserves to be called a classic as well; *Christ Set Forth* proclaims Him largely albeit briefly in His exaltation; *The Heart of Christ* expounds the neglected theme of the affectionate tenderness of Christ's glorified human nature shown to His people still on earth. In this latter work Goodwin waxes more mystical than anywhere else in his writings, but as Paul Cook has ably shown, his mysticism is confined within the boundaries of Scripture.[27] Here Goodwin is unapproached "in his combination of intellectual and theological power with evangelical and homiletical comfort."[28]

(4) *Gospel Holiness in Heart and Life* (7:129-336) is a convicting and stimulating masterpiece, based on Philippians 1:9-11, expounding the doctrine of sanctification in every sphere of life.

(5) *The Knowledge of God the Father, and His Son Jesus*

[27] Paul Cook, "Thomas Goodwin—Mystic?," in *Diversities of Gifts*, 45-56.

[28] Whyte, *Thirteen Appreciations*, 165.

Christ (4:347-569), combined with *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (6:1-522), speak much of a profound experimental acquaintance in the believer's soul of each of the three divine persons in their personhood and saving work. *The Work of the Spirit* is particularly helpful in the doctrines of regeneration and conversion, and in delicately yet lucidly discerning the work of "the natural conscience" from the Spirit's saving work.

(6) *The Glory of the Gospel* (4:227-346) consists of two sermons and a treatise based on Colossians 1:26-27, and ought to be read together with *The Blessed State of Glory Which the Saints Possess After Death* (7:339-472), based on Revelation 14:13.

(7) *A Discourse of Election* (9:1-498) is a profound work which delves deeply into questions such as the supralapsarian-infralapsarian debate which wrestles with the moral order of God's decree, but it also deals practically with the fruits of election (e.g., see Book IV on 1 Peter 5:10 and Book V on how God fulfils His covenant of grace in the generations of believers).

(8) In *The Creatures and the Condition of Their State by Creation* (7:1-128) Goodwin waxes more philosophical here than elsewhere.

Fourth, digest prayerfully and slowly Goodwin's profound 900+ page exposition of Ephesians 1:1 to 2:11 (1:1-564; 2:1-355)—a work of which has been justly concluded, "Not even Luther on the Galatians is such an expositor of Paul's mind and heart as is Goodwin on the Ephesians."[29]

Finally, save for last Goodwin's exposition of Revelation (3:1-226) and his sole polemical work, *The Constitution, Right Order, and Government of the Churches of Christ* (11:1-546). Independents, of course, would value this latter work highly, while Presbyterians would hold that Goodwin is a safe guide in nearly every area but church government. Happily, Goodwin's work does not degrade Presbyterians; in fact, one of his contemporaries who felt compelled to answer it confessed the author conveyed "a truly great and noble spirit" throughout the work.[30]

Goodwin's Distinctive Teachings: Sealing and Assurance

In discussing Goodwin's teaching, the pastoral context of his writing must be remembered. Most of his writing focuses on the

[29] *Ibid.*, 162.

[30] *Ibid.*, 169.

doctrine of salvation and its personal application; he is seldom interested in dogmatics or metaphysics for their own sake. All his teaching and theology are ultimately pulpit exposition and application. Consequently, he commences each book and usually each chapter of each book with a scriptural text that he first expounds and applies. He excels in drawing all his theology out of the fountainhead of Scripture. This renders his writings fresh, rich, and personal. In short, his sermons and treatises were written to help believers know their spiritual state and grow in their relationship with the Triune God.

Surprisingly little has been written on what Thomas Goodwin taught. Major studies on his theology are few.[31] Perhaps this is due to the fact that, for the most part, his doctrine of salvation was not original. Its basic feature was drawn from the classically Pauline-Augustinian-Puritan conviction that true happiness lay in the knowledge of and communion with God by faith, as well as in praise and obedience to Him in daily life. Throughout his life, the believer needs increasingly to grasp by faith the objective work of God in election and redemption as well as subjectively to experience God's work of justification and sanctification within him. There are two areas, however, in which Goodwin does chart his own course soteriologically: the sealing of the Spirit and personal assurance of faith.

On these matters, Goodwin has most to say in his *Exposition*

[31] For Goodwin on the covenant of grace, see Paul Edward Brown, "The Principle of the Covenant in the Theology of Thomas Goodwin" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1950). Alexander McNally, "Some Aspects of Thomas Goodwin's Doctrine of Assurance" (Th.M., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1972) focuses on covenant, assurance of faith, and sealing of the Spirit. Stanley Fienberg, "Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974) studies Goodwin's teaching on depravity, justification, and sanctification. Beeke, "Thomas Goodwin: The Merging of English-Dutch Thinking on Assurance," in *Assurance of Faith* (chapter 9), addresses Goodwin on assurance and compares his views on steps of grace experienced by the believer to the views of John Owen and Alexander Comrie. Michael Horton, "Christ Set Forth: Thomas Goodwin and the Puritan Doctrine of Assurance" (Ph.D. dissertation, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and Coventry University, 1996) provides the most exhaustive look at Goodwin's theology to date, expounding his views on faith, assurance, predestination, justification, covenant, conversion, preparatory grace, temporary faith, perseverance, the church, and the sacraments.

of the Epistle to the Ephesians (sermons 13-17 on Ephesians 1:13-14), and *Of the Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* (Part II ["Of the Acts of Faith"], particularly Book II ["Of faith of assurance"]).[32] Additional thoughts on assurance are interwoven in several other works, most notably, *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness, The Return of Prayers*, and *The Trial of a Christian's Growth*.[33]

Goodwin's view on the sealing of the Spirit must be placed in light of its historical context. The seal of the Spirit was a common theme in the seventeenth century, and one which the majority of Puritans intimately conjoined with assurance. Not that this was always the case, however, for the early Reformers clearly maintained a one-to-one correlation between the "Spirit-regenerated" and the "Spirit-sealed." John Calvin (1509-1564), for example, denies what would become the general Puritan notion that it was possible to believe without being sealed with the Spirit; instead, he declares that the seal is the Holy Spirit Himself.[34] The sealing work of the Spirit also belongs to the essence of faith.

By the time of William Perkins (1558-1602), however, the focus was no longer on the Holy Spirit as seal, so much as on what the activity of the Spirit was in sealing the promise to the believer. Perkins taught that this personal sealing removes all

[32] *Works of Goodwin*, 1:206-252 and 8:338-419.

[33] E.g., *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness*, in which Goodwin affirms that the lack of assurance is compatible with faith (*Works of Goodwin* 3:238). In *The Return of Prayers*, Goodwin distinguishes assurance from "recumbency" (3:368), indicates that the doctrine of assurance will not make believers presumptuous unless it is abused (3:417), and stresses that assurance may be lost (3:422). In *The Trial of a Christian's Growth*, Goodwin asserts that God purges out corruption by assuring the believer of His love (3:480). In 4:207 Goodwin defines assurance as a persuasion that God and Christ "are prepared to save a man's own self in particular." In volume 5, he affirms that perseverance does not make the Christian less resolute in resisting temptation (p. 325), but acknowledges that many believers lack full assurance (p. 394). Moreover, assurance always presupposes a first act of faith's recumbency (5:403).

[34] Cf. Calvin's *Commentary* on Ephesians 1:13-14, 3:12 (reprint Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. F. L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 3.2.11, 34, 41.

doubt for the believer.[35] In sealing, which is mediated through the Word, the Spirit begets an assured "trust and confidence" in the promises so that the believer's will and understanding is moved to embrace the promises experimentally as his own.[36]

Perkins's successor, Paul Bayne (d. 1617), attempted to unite together both the Spirit as the seal Himself by being Indweller and the consequences of that sealing in the graces of the regenerate life, and thus bring some harmony to the diverse Reformed-Puritan heritage.[37] Bayne distinguished being sealed by the Spirit from being *made conscious* of such sealing. The former belonged to all true believers (Calvin's input); the latter, to some (Perkins's input).

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), one of Bayne's converts and his successor, taught that the sealing of the Spirit was a "superadded work" and "superadded confirmation" of the believer's faith.[38] Sealing is comparable to the "sweet communion of marriage" with a perfect Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, whose own sealing by God the Father is the foundation of the believer's sealing.[39] For Christ's sake, seals serve for "confirmation, distinction, appropriation, estimation, secrecy," and remain "inviolable."[40] For Sibbes, the internal, sealing testimony of the Spirit is the supreme sign of grace.

Moving a step beyond Sibbes, John Preston (1587-1628) taught specifically that the sealing of the Spirit was a *second work*

[35] *William Perkins, 1558-1602; English Puritanist: His Pioneer Works on Casuistry*, ed. Thomas F. Merrill (Nieuwkoop: B. DeGraaf, 1966), 50-51.

[36] *The Workes of that Famous and VVorthy Minister of Christ, Mr. William Perkins* (London: John Legatt, 1612), 1:104-105.

[37] Paul Bayne, *An Entire Commentary vpon the whole Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians* (London: Printed by M. F. for Milbourne and I. Bartlet, 1643), 80-81.

[38] *Complete Works* (1862; reprint Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973-82), 3:455. Sibbes preached often on the Spirit's sealing. First, a series of sermons transcribed by a noblewoman, Lady Elizabeth Brooke, was published in 1637 as *A Fountain Sealed* (*ibid.*, 5:409-456). Secondly, sermons on 2 Corinthians 1.22-23 in the *Exposition of Second Corinthians Chapter 1*, were published in 1655 (*ibid.*, 3:420-84). Thirdly, a sermon on Romans 8:15-16, *The Witness of the Spirit*, was first published in 1692 (*ibid.*, 7:367-85). Cf. *ibid.*, 2:453-64, 4:132ff., 6:374-79, 428-30.

[39] *Ibid.*, 5:433-34; 3:443.

[40] *Ibid.*, 434-37; 4:123.

given exclusively to those who overcome.[41] Influenced by this Sibbes-Preston tradition and by his own experience of full assurance, Thomas Goodwin carried the sealing of the Spirit as a second work to its fullest development. Consciously rejecting Calvin's position, Goodwin defines such sealing as a "light beyond the light of ordinary faith."[42] He expands as follows:

> The sealing of the Holy Spirit is an immediate assurance by a heavenly and divine light of a divine authority, which the Holy Ghost sheddeth in a man's heart, (not having relation to grace wrought or anything in a man's self,) whereby he sealeth him up to the day of redemption.[43]

And again:

> It is the next thing to heaven . . . you can have no more until you come thither.[44]

Sealing is the "whispering" of the Holy Spirit that I am elected of God, have my sins forgiven, and belong to Him forever—both intuitively and directly.[45] Thus, Goodwin made a direct tie between the sealing of the Spirit and full assurance of faith, contrary to Owen who rejected identifying the sealing of the Spirit with a post-regeneration experience of assurance.

Interestingly, the Westminster Assembly seems to have left this question open (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter XVIII, paragraph 2). The divines agreed that assurance of faith is grounded primarily upon the promises of God and secondarily on "the inward evidences of those graces unto which these promises are made," but then they added these words without specifying whether they represent a continuation of the second ground or a distinct third ground: "the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption."

The Westminster divines knew that the witness of the Holy Spirit was the most difficult ground of assurance to comprehend. They freely confessed that "amazing variety" and vast mysteries

[41] *The New Covenant, or the Saint's Portion* (London: I.D. for Nicholas Bourne, 1639), 2:416-17.

[42] *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 1:236.

[43] *Ibid.*, 233.

[44] *Ibid.*, 236.

[45] *Ibid.*, 236-37.

surrounded them when they spoke of the leadings of the Spirit and how He dwells in believers. Consequently, the assembly desired to allow freedom for different opinions concerning some of the finer details of the Spirit's testimony. There were two, and possibly three schools of thought among the divines.

In the first group are those men, such as Jeremiah Burroughs, Anthony Burgess, and George Gillespie, who regarded the testimony of the Holy Spirit in assurance as exclusively His activity within syllogistic reasoning whereby He brings conscience to unite with His witness that the Christian is a child of God.[46] According to this view Romans 8:15 and 8:16 are regarded as synonymous: the witness of the Holy Spirit is always conjoined *with* the witness of the believer's spirit.[47] For these divines, the inward evidence of grace and the testimony of the Spirit are essentially one; they impart *full assurance*. These divines felt this view was important to maintain in opposition to mysticism and antinomianism which are prone to accent a direct testimony of the Spirit apart from the necessity of bringing forth practical fruits of faith and repentance.

In the second group are those divines such as Samuel Rutherford, William Twisse, Henry Scudder, and Thomas Goodwin, who believed that the witness of the Spirit described in Romans 8:15 contains something in addition to that of verse 16.[48] This group distinguishes the Spirit witnessing *with* the believer's spirit by syllogistic reasoning from His witnessing *to* the believer's spirit by direct applications of the Word. As Meyer points out, the former leaves in its wake the self-conscious conviction, "*I* am a child of God," and on the basis of such

[46] Burroughs, *The Saints' Happiness, together with the several steps leading thereunto. Delivered in Divers Lectures on the Beatitudes* (reprint ed., Beaver Falls, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1988), 196; Burgess, *Spiritual Refining: or, A Treatise of Grace and Assurance* (London: A. Miller, 1652), 44; Gillespie, *A Treatise of Miscellany Questions* (Edinburgh: Gedeon Lithgovv, 1649), 105-109.

[47] Cf. Burgess's exegesis of Romans 8:15-16, Ephesians 1:13, and 1 John 5:8 in *Spiritual Refining,* 49-50.

[48] Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened* (Edinburgh: Andro Anderson, 1655), 65ff.; Twisse, *The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort and Arles, reduced to the practise* (Amsterdam: G. Thorp, 1631), 147ff.; Scudder, *The Christian's Daily Walk* (reprint Harrisburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1984), 338-42; *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 6:27; 7:66; 8:351, 363.

Spirit-worked syllogisms finds freedom to approach God as Father. The latter speaks the Spirit's pronouncement on behalf of the Father, "*You* are a child of God," and on this basis of hearing of its sonship from God's own Word by the Spirit, proceeds to approach Him with the familiarity of a child.[49] Henry Scudder's breakdown of the Spirit's witness is typical of this second group:

> This Spirit does witness to a man, that he is the child of God, two ways:
>
> First, By immediate witness and suggestion. Secondly, By necessary inferences, by signs from the infallible fruits of the said Spirit.[50]

This second group differed among themselves on whether the Spirit's direct testimony should be regarded as more spontaneous, durable, and powerful than His syllogistic testimony. The most common approach is Rutherford's, which allows for the direct testimony, but then stresses that the reflex act of faith is as a rule "more spiritual and helpful" than are direct acts.[51] Consequently, all believers should be regularly praying for the Spirit's illumination to guide them into syllogistic conclusions. Twisse and Scudder distinguish the Spirit's testifying with our spirit from His witnessing of personal adoption without determining which is most valuable.[52] Goodwin asserts, however, that the direct witness of the Spirit far supersedes the co-witnessing through the syllogisms.[53] For him, "full" assurance is more than *discursive*; it is also *intuitive*. Generally speaking, however, this second group (with the exception of Goodwin and a few others) does not conceive of the direct testimony of the Spirit as being

[49] Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to The Epistle of the Romans* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1889), 316.

[50] *The Christian's Daily Walk*, 338.

[51] *Catechisms of the Second Reformation,* ed. by Alexander F. Mitchell (London: James Nisbet, 1886), 207; Rutherford, *The Trial and Triumph of Faith* (Edinburgh: William Collins, 1845), 88ff. and *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himselfe* (London: J. D. for Andrew Cooke), 71, 94ff. Burgess agrees with Rutherford (*Spiritual Refining*, 672).

[52] Twisse, *The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort and Arles, reduced to the practise*, 156; Scudder, *The Christian's Daily Walk*, 338-42.

[53] *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 1:233; 8:366.

independent of the syllogisms, but as "superadded" to them. They are agreed that the syllogistic way of reaching assurance is more common and probably safer: "Some Divines do not indeed deny the possibility of such an immediate Testimony, but yet they conclude the ordinary and safe way, is, to look for that Testimony, which is by the effects, and fruits of God's Spirit."[54]

Goodwin and those he influenced may also be said to belong to a sub-group of the second group because though their views are intimately associated with the second group *theologically*, they place the event of "immediate" assurance by direct witness of the Holy Spirit on a higher level *practically*. Some Westminster divines, such as William Bridge and Samuel Rutherford, belonging to the second group, believe that such assurance becomes the portion of many Christians before they die.[55] Others, however, and most notably Goodwin, place this experience far beyond the pale of ordinary experience. In fact, Goodwin states that the experience of full assurance pronounced by the Spirit "immediately" is so profound that it is comparable to "a new conversion."[56]

For Goodwin this "full" assurance is the zenith of experimental life. Unlike the position adopted by most in the second group, such assurance is divorced from the syllogisms entirely:

> This witness is immediate, that is, it builds not his testimony on anything in us; it is not a testimony fetched out of a man's self, or the work of the Spirit in man, as the others were; for the Spirit speaks not by his effects, but speaks from himself.[57]

Goodwin repeatedly uses terms such as "immediate light," "joy unspeakable," "transcendent," "glorious," and "intuitive" in describing the experience of full assurance. Indeed, it is beyond human description:

> Those who have attained it cannot demonstrate it to others, especially not to those who have not experience of it, for it is a white stone which no one knows but he that receives it, Rev. 2:17.[58]

Goodwin nevertheless wholeheartedly concurred with his

[54] Burgess, *Spiritual Refining*, 52.

[55] Cf. *The Works of William Bridge* (reprint Beaver Falls, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1989), 2:140.

[56] *The Works of Thomas Goodwin,* 1:251.

[57] *Ibid.*, 8:366.

[58] *Ibid.*, 8:351.

fellow divines that the Spirit's testimony is always tied to, and may never contradict, the Word of God. "The Spirit is promised in the Word, and that promise is fulfilled in experience."[59] All the Westminster Assembly divines were most anxious to avoid antinomianism and unbiblical mysticism on the one hand, as well as to protect the freedom of the Spirit and the reality of Biblical-Pauline mystical experience on the other.

Goodwin's Homegoing and Epitaph

Goodwin died in London in his eightieth year embracing the Triune God by victorious faith and reminiscing of God's past faithfulness to him. More than fifty years before that time, he had experienced a sweet, "immediate" assurance sealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit which went far beyond anything he had previously experienced. Inseparable from this personal sense of full assurance, through which he felt almost as if he were "converted again," was an experimental realization of communing with each of the three divine Persons. This conviction strengthened with time and served him in good stead on his deathbed, as his son informs us:

> In all the violence of [his fever], he discoursed with that strength of faith and assurance of Christ's love, with that holy admiration of free grace, with that joy in believing, and such thanksgivings and praises, as he extremely moved and affected all that heard him.... He rejoiced in the thought that he was dying, and going to have a full and uninterrupted communion with God. 'I am going,' said he, 'to the three Persons, with whom I have had communion: they have taken me; I did not take them.... I could not have imagined I should ever have had such a measure of faith in this hour.... Christ cannot love me better than he doth; I think I cannot love Christ better than I do; I am swallowed up in God....' With this assurance of faith, and fulness of joy, his soul left this world.[60]

Throughout a long life, Thomas Goodwin not only attained celebrity or notoriety (depending on one's view) as a leader of Independency during the Civil War and Interregnum period, and as a principal architect of the Cromwellian domestic settlement; he also was known among the Puritan divines of the seventeenth

[59] John Von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 165-66.

[60] *Works,* 2:lxxiv-lxxv.

century as an eminent believer, an able preacher, a caring pastor, and a profoundly spiritual writer. Buried in Bunhill Fields, his epitaph, written in long obliterated Latin, is most moving when read in full;[61] it summarizes well his most important gifts: He *was* by the grace of God knowledgeable in the Scriptures, sound in judgment, and enlightened by the Spirit to penetrate the mysteries of the gospel; he *was* a pacifier of troubled consciences, a dispeller of error, and a truly Christian pastor; he *did* edify numbers of souls whom he had first won to Christ. And is not the closing section of his epitaph being fulfilled even today by the reprinting of his works at the close of the second millenium of the Christian era?

> His writings..., the noblest monument of this great man's praise, will diffuse his name in a more fragrant odour than that of the richest perfume, to flourish in those distant ages, when this marble, inscribed with his just honour, shall have dropt into dust.

Joel R. Beeke

[61] *Ibid.*, xlii-xliii.

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GENERAL PREFACE.

BY

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GENERAL PREFACE.

THE stores of theology, enriched by the accumulating treasures of successive generations, have of late years been thrown open widely to the Church of Christ. The Fathers, the Reformers, many of the great Puritan writers, no less than the later theologians of the Church of England and of the Nonconformist Churches, have been issued in a form and at a price which places them within general reach. In the departments of Hermeneutics and Exegetics, more especially, these stores are receiving constant and, with more or less of the alloy of human imperfection and error, most valuable additions. Among English scholars, the labours of Professor Ellicott, who, in philological acumen and attainments of the highest order, in combination with an absence of party bias, and with a profound reverence for the inspiration and authority of the Sacred Scriptures, is a very model of scholarship, sanctified to the honest and fearless interpretation of God's Word,—trusting Scripture, and anxious only to educe its meaning, to whatever conclusions it may lead; Dean Alford and Dr Wordsworth, in their great works; Dean Trench, Dr Peile, Professor Eadie, Dr Vaughan (whose unpretending Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans is sufficiently indicative of many of the qualifications of an expositor); Messrs Conybeare and Howson, in their well-known work; Dr Henderson on the Prophets; in America, Professor Stuart, with all his faults, and (though not as a philological scholar, yet as a sober, copious, and painstaking expositor) Albert Barnes,—have given to the Church κτήματα ἐς ἀεί.*

* In enumerating (not invidiously, and without the affectation of attempting to do it exhaustively) some of the most valuable modern additions to our expository theology, I cannot bring myself to omit Haldane's "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans," though not agreeing with Mr Haldane on every point, any more than with the other writers specified above. No difference on particular points (where we recognise substantial orthodoxy on the capital truths of the gospel) should tempt us to withhold our meed of gratitude to such philologists and expositors. Their contributions should be recognised, not in a

Nor must our obligations to modern German theologians be forgotten. Their works, the best of them, need to be read with discrimination. And in those which have been brought within reach of the English student, some of which are deservedly in high esteem, there is even in the best, with scarcely an exception, not only much that is prolix and wearisome, but, specially to those of us who read them under the disadvantage of a translation, much that is misty, and not a little that is questionable. These are within our reach, and much used by many of our clergy and ministers. No theological library can be complete without them. To the student and to the preacher they are storehouses with which they can ill afford to dispense, if they are to be as scribes well "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," bringing "forth out of" their "treasure things new and old."

For although there is something specious in the notion that the preacher can afford to be a man of one book, if that book be the Book of God,—and we doubt not that such men have been, and will be yet again, blessed to great usefulness in the Church of Christ,—it involves surely a blind and ungrateful misappreciation and disparagement of the gifts dispensed by that Divine Spirit whose "manifestation" is "given to every man to profit withal," when we underrate the treasures which have been left to us by men raised from time to time for the close study and investigation of the written Word, and for the enforcement and defence of the doctrines of our "most holy faith." Individual cases of "unlearned and ignorant men," lacking apostolic inspiration and endowments, may arise not seldom, in which, with humble gifts, and little or none of the assistance of human lore and training, they have been signally owned and honoured by God to do His work in the ingathering and edification of His people. But, as a rule, an ignorant clergy, a clergy undisciplined by habits of study and uninformed by reading, will fail to be effective in an enlightened and inquiring age. Their preaching will be vapid, superficial, and desultory, ultimately settling down into an iteration (fluent enough perhaps) of facile topics.

These remarks apply with peculiar force to a crisis in the Church's history in which heresy is rife, and the foundations of the faith are undermined and assailed by formidable errors. The Church then needs well-equipped champions. Such can be found only among

narrow-minded spirit of party, but with candour and large-hearted acknowledgments. Robert Haldane's grasp of the general scope of the Epistle to the Romans, and his lucid exposition of its *key-phrase*, "the righteousness of God," have long led me to value his work as one of the noblest pieces of exegetics in our language.

well-stored theologians, theologians "mighty in the Scriptures," but well versed also in the works of the great and gifted champions and exponents of the faith in every age—the Fathers and Reformers of old, and the later and the living contributors to the Church's stores.

Among these stores, it will not be denied that the writings of the Puritan Divines must ever be held in high estimation. Many of them are, *in extenso*, within our reach, widely circulated, and largely used; as Bishop Hopkins, Owen, Baxter, Howe, Bates, Flavel, &c. &c. Others, such as are to be published in this Series, are generally accessible in select works only; as Manton, Goodwin, Sibbes, Brooks, Charnock, Adams, &c. The works of the first four of these have never been published in a uniform edition; and of the works of Sibbes and Brooks, no complete collection exists in any public library of the kingdom, and probably in few, if in any, of the private libraries is a full set of either to be found.

The projector of the present scheme—a scheme to be followed up, should its success realise the expectations formed of it, by the issue of the works of Trapp, Swinnock, Gilpin, Trail, Bates, Burgess, and others which have been suggested—is conferring a great boon upon the Church of Christ, and one the influence of which may be felt throughout the Protestant pulpits of Christendom; by doing for the comparatively inaccessible works of these Puritan Divines what has been done for many of the Fathers, the Reformers, and the German Theologians, in collecting their works, and issuing them in a form and at a price which will place them on the shelves of thousands of our students and ministers, at home, in the colonies, and in the United States of America.

It would obviously be beyond the scope of this preface to enlarge upon the history of the Puritans, interwoven as it is with stirring events and times, more familiar to us probably than any others in the annals of England. From Bishop Hooper, down to the disastrous ejectment of 1662, their story has been often told. By none with greater candour, with more enlarged catholicity of spirit, or with more graceful diction, than by the historian of the Early and Later Puritans, the Rev. J. B. Marsden, in his standard volumes:—

"Wherever the religion, the language, or the free spirit of our country has forced its way, the Puritans of old have some memorial. They have moulded the character and shaped the laws of other lands, and tinged with their devouter shades unnumbered congregations of Christian worshippers, even where no allegiance is professed, or willing homage done to their peculiarities. It is a party that has numbered in its ranks many of the best, and not a few

of the greatest men that England has enrolled upon her history. Amongst the Puritans were found, together with a crowd of our greatest divines, and a multitude of learned men, many of our most profound lawyers, some of our most able statesmen, of our most renowned soldiers, and (strangely out of place as they may seem) not a few of our greatest orators and poets. Smith and Owen, Baxter and Howe, were their ministers, and preached amongst them. Cecil revered and defended them while he lived; so did the illustrious Bacon; and the unfortunate Essex sought his consolations from them when he came to die." *

Mixed up as were the Puritans with keen and long-continued controversies, both political and religious, they have left behind them a vast mass of theology,—not controversial, but expository and hortatory,—which is the common property of the Church of Christ, and which Episcopalians and Presbyterians and Wesleyans, Independents and Baptists, may alike appreciate, use, and enjoy. Their works, developing and embodying the theology of the Reformation, form a department in our theological literature, and occupy a place so specific and important, that their absence from the student's shelves can be compensated neither by Fathers nor Reformers, nor by the richest stores of modern divinity, whether English or Continental.

They have ever been subjects of eulogy with those best acquainted with them. The *gustus spiritualis judicii* predicated of Goodwin by his editors, "Thankful Owen," and "James Barron,"†—the "genius to dive into the bottom of points," and "to study them down,"—"the happiness of high and intimate communion with God,"—the "deep insight into the grace of God and the covenant of grace,"—these are characteristic of the whole school; and, in an eminent degree, of those whose works have been selected for this Series. Of Manton writes the "silver-tongued Bates:"—

"God had furnished him with a rare union of those parts that are requisite to form an excellent minister of His Word. A clear judgment, rich fancy, strong memory, and happy elocution, met in him, and were excellently improved by his diligent study."

". . . . In the performing this work he was of that conspicuous eminence that none could detract from him, but from ignorance or envy.

"He was endowed with extraordinary knowledge in the Scriptures, those holy oracles from whence all spiritual light is derived; and in his preaching gave such a perspicuous account of the order

* Early Puritans, Second Edit., pp. 4, 5.

† Original Preface to folio, MDCLXXXI. See pp. xxix., xxx.

and dependence of divine truths, and with that felicity applied the Scriptures to confirm them, that every subject by his management was cultivated and improved. His discourses were so clear and convincing, that none, without offering voluntary violence to conscience, could resist their evidence. And from hence they were effectual, not only to inspire a sudden flame, and raise a short commotion in the affections, but to make a lasting change in the life."

"His doctrine was uncorrupt and pure; 'the truth according to goodness.' He was far from a guilty vile intention to prostitute that sacred ordinance for the acquiring any private secular advantage. Neither did he entertain his hearers with impertinent subtleties, empty notions, intricate disputes, dry and barren, without productive virtue; but as one that always had before his eyes the great end of the ministry, the glory of God and the salvation of men, his sermons were directed to open their eyes, that they might see their wretched condition as sinners, to hasten their 'flight from the wrath to come,' to make them humbly, thankfully, and entirely 'receive Christ as their Prince and all-sufficient Saviour.' And to build up the converted 'in their most holy faith,' and more excellent love, that is 'the fulfilling of the law.' In short, to make true Christians eminent in knowledge and universal obedience.

"As the matter of his sermons was designed for the good of souls, so his way of expression was proper to that end. Words are the vehicle of the heavenly light. As the Divine Wisdom was incarnate to reveal the eternal counsels of God to the world, so spiritual wisdom in the mind must be clothed with words to make it sensible to others. And in this he had a singular talent. His style was not exquisitely studied, not consisting of harmonious periods, but far distant from vulgar meanness. His expression was natural and free, clear and eloquent, quick and powerful, without any spice of folly, and always suitable to the simplicity and majesty of divine truths. His sermons afforded substantial food with delight, so that a fastidious mind could not disrelish them. He abhorred a vain ostentation of wit in handling sacred things, so venerable and grave, and of eternal consequence."

"His fervour and earnestness in preaching was such as might soften and make pliant the most stubborn, obdurate spirits. I am not speaking of one whose talent was only in voice, that labours in the pulpit as if the end of preaching were for the exercise of the body, and not for the profit of souls; but this man of God was inflamed with a holy zeal, and from thence such ardent expressions broke forth, as were capable to procure attention and consent in

his hearers. He spake as one that had a living faith within him of divine truths. From this union of zeal with his knowledge, he was excellently qualified to convince and convert souls."

"His unparalleled assiduity in preaching declared him very sensible of those dear and strong obligations that lie upon ministers to be very diligent in that blessed work."

"This faithful minister 'abounded in the work of the Lord;' and, which is truly admirable, though so frequent in preaching, yet was always superior to others, and equal to himself."*

Of Clarkson, Bates spoke thus in his funeral sermon—

"In his preaching, how instructive and persuasive to convince and turn the carnal and worldly from the love of sin to the love of holiness, from the love of the earth to the love of heaven. The matter of his sermons was clear and deep, and always judiciously derived from the text. The language was neither gaudy and vain, with light trimmings, nor rude and neglected, but suitable to the oracles of God. Such were his chosen acceptable words, as to recommend heavenly truths, to make them more precious and amiable to the minds and affections of men, like the colour of the sky, that makes the stars to shine with a more sparkling brightness." †

Both are included by the admirable and lamented Angell James in an apostrophe to the "mighty shades" of those "illustrious and holy" Nonconformists, who have "bequeathed" to us "a rich legacy in their immortal works." Later, in the pages of his stirring "Earnest Ministry," he places Clarkson in the first rank of those who were "most distinguished as successful preachers of the Word of God." ‡ The work of Charnock on the Divine Attributes is thus spoken of by his early Editors: §—

"But thou hast in this book not only an excellent subject in the general, but great variety of matter for the employment of thy understanding, as well as enlivening thy affections, and that, too, such as thou wilt not readily find elsewhere: many excellent things which are out of the road of ordinary preachers and writers, and which may be grateful to the curious, no less than satisfactory to the wise and judicious. It is not, therefore, a book to be played with, nor slept over, but read with the most intent and serious mind; for though it afford much pleasure for the fancy, yet much more work for the

* Bates' Works, (Farmer's Edit.,) vol. iv., pp. 231-235.

† Bates' Works, vol. iv., p. 385.

‡ An Earnest Ministry the Want of the Times, pp. 56, 269 (Third Edition.)

§ Folio, 1699.

heart, and hath indeed enough in it to busy all the faculties. The dress is complete and decent, yet not garish or theatrical; the rhetoric masculine and vigorous, such as became a pulpit, and was never borrowed from the stage; the expressions full, clear, apt, and such as are best suited to the weightiness and spirituality of the truths here delivered. It is plain he was no empty preacher, but was more for sense than sound; filled up his words with matter, and chose rather to inform his hearers' minds than to claw any itching ears."

"In the doctrinal part of several of his discourses thou wilt find the depth of *polemical* divinity, and in his inferences from thence the sweetness of *practical;* some things which may exercise the profoundest scholar, and others which may instruct and edify the weakest Christian; nothing is more nervous than his reasonings, and nothing more affecting than his applications. Though he make great use of *school-men*, yet they are certainly more beholden to him than he to them."

"He is not like some *school writers*, who attenuate and rarefy the matter they discourse of to a degree bordering upon annihilation; at least beat it so thin that a puff of breath may blow it away; spin their threads so fine that the cloth, when made up, proves useless; solidity dwindles into niceties; and what we thought we had got by their assertions, we lose by their distinctions."*

Baxter enumerates the works of Reynolds among those which he considers as indispensably necessary to the library of a theological student. Dr Doddridge says that Reynolds' "are most elaborate both in thought and expression. Few men," he adds, "were more happy in the choice of their similitudes. He was . . . . of great learning, and a frequent preacher."†

"Distinguished by profound learning and elevated character, serious without gloom, and zealous without harshness, he stands out as one of the best ecclesiastical characters of his time; and, in a crisis which was most solemn and memorable for the Church of England, he bears a lofty contrast to most of the dignitaries which assembled around James."‡

"The divines of the Puritan school," writes the Rev. C. Bridges, with his wonted discrimination, "however, (with due allowance for the prevalent tone of scholastic subtleties,) supply to the ministerial

* Charnock's Works, folio, 1699.

† Reynolds' Works, (Chalmers' Edit,) Preface, p. lxxi.

‡ Dr Tulloch's English Puritans, p. 33.

student a large fund of useful and edifying instruction. If they be less clear and simple in their doctrinal statements than the Reformers, they enter more deeply into the sympathies of Christian experience. Profoundly versed in spiritual tactics,—the habits and exercises of the human heart,—they are equally qualified to awaken conviction and to administer consolation, laying open the man to himself with peculiar closeness of application; stripping him of his false dependencies, and exhibiting before him the light and influence of the evangelical remedy for his distress." *

"I have learned far more from John Howe," said Robert Hall, "than from any other author I ever read. There is an astonishing magnificence in his conceptions." Having added—"He had not the same perception of the beautiful as of the sublime, and hence his endless subdivisions"—"There was, I think, an innate inaptitude in Howe's mind for discerning minute graces and proprieties, and hence his sentences are often long and cumbersome"—he declared him "unquestionably the greatest of the Puritan Divines." "Baxter," said Mr Hall, "enforces a particular idea with extraordinary clearness, force, and earnestness. His appeals to the conscience are irresistible. Howe, again, is distinguished by calmness, self-possession, majesty, and comprehensiveness; and, for my own part, I decidedly prefer him to Baxter." Owen, Mr Hall did not admire.†

It is curious to compare with this the criticism of another master-mind—

"Baxter," said Richard Cecil, "surpasses, perhaps, all others in the grand, impressive, and persuasive style. But he is not to be named with Owen, as to furnishing the student's mind. He is, however, multifarious, complex, practical." "Owen stands at the head of his class of divines. His scholars will be more profound and enlarged, and better furnished, than those of most other writers. His work on the Spirit has been my treasure-house, and one of my very first-rate books.'" ‡

It is not to be denied, however, that Puritan theology has, of late years, been comparatively little read, either by clergy or laity, in this country. Owen and Baxter—and perhaps Howe—are those best known to the present generation. Of the others a few select works only are accessible to the mass of readers. Nor has the present Series been projected under the anticipation that their works, as

* Christian Ministry, Third Edition, 12mo, pp. 53, 54.
† Robert Hall's Works, Bohn's Edition, vol. i., pp. 163, 164.
‡ Cecil's Remains, pp. 281, 282.

a whole, will be popular, in the wide sense of that term, in our own day. The current of theological literature has become wider, but shallower. Shorter books, books calling for little thought; the thoughts of the intellectual giants of former days diluted and watered down to our taste; these are best adapted to an age of much and rapid reading, but little study—an age marked by a pernicious taste for light reading, and content to derive too much of its learning and information at second-hand, from periodicals and newspapers. An age, too, in which even the multiplication of privileges, in the number of sermons preached and of public meetings held, in combination with the cheap publications with which the press teems, tends to diffuse, but not to deepen, thought. And ministers find in the multiplication of facilities for the composition of sermons a corresponding snare. Many a boy at school would grow up into a sounder, riper, and more independent scholar —certainly the process of acquirement would have proved a more healthful gymnasium to his mental powers and habits, as well as for the general disciplining of his character—if he had fewer crutches on which to lean, in lexicons and translations and copious English notes, which make everything easy, and enable him to dispense with personal and direct reference to the great fountain-heads of learning and scholarship. Thus the minister finds appliances so multiplied, the old theology of Fathers, Reformers, and Puritans so ready to his hand, in commentaries and in diluted forms, that he is tempted to a growing habit of indolence; takes all at second-hand; and finds it easier to manipulate into sermons and expositions the cheap commentary, than to study the ponderous folio for himself.

It must be confessed that while, in substance, the Puritan theology is of sterling value, it presents not a few characteristics which are drawbacks to general popularity among theologians of our habits of thought. They are over-copious and diffuse, and thus not seldom prolix to wearisomeness; solid, often to heaviness; and encumbered by references to works little known and altogether unread. "Due allowance," says Mr Bridges, in the passage just quoted, must be made "for the prevalent tone of scholastic subtleties;" and, in some, for "the occasional mixture of obscurity and bombast." And Mr James, in eulogising a sermon of Doolittle's as perhaps "the most solemn and awful sermon in the English or any other language," qualifies that high eulogium by a criticism on much of its "terminology," as expressive of a "familiarity with awful realities" which was a "vice" of the Puritan age and school.*

Neither their expository works nor their sermons are presented as

* Earnest Ministry, p. 103.

models. The former, looked upon *as expositions*, are marred occasionally by the endeavour to make them exhaustive treatises, and by a tiresome minuteness of division and subdivision. A sermon of Charnock's would be ill suited, *as such*, to a modern congregation: though not so much so as one of the English Chrysostom, Jeremy Taylor. But this very over-copiousness and attempts at exhaustiveness render them as storehouses invaluable. They are tomes of massive theology; theology with prolixity, and pedantry, and subtlety, but never as dry bones. It is experimental. There is unction. There is warmth. It is theology grasped and wrought out by great minds, but realised by loving hearts. The writers have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious. Their every page bears the impress of the *bene orasse est bene studuisse.* They are not theologians only but saints.

Nor are their characteristic excellencies hard to be accounted for. Not only were they pre-eminently men of God, and deep students of God's Word—"living and walking Bibles"*—and this in combination often with great secular erudition—but their lot was cast in troublous times, times in which great principles were at stake, to which they were called to witness, and for which they were called to suffer. As with the individual Christian, the time, not of his wealth and ease, but of his trial and suffering, is that which braces his power, and stimulates his health and growth, so is it with the aggregate Church. Stirring times produce stirring men. Christ's heroes are drawn out by conflicts. When we handle the doctrines of the gospel merely as the subject-matter of sermons, and treatises, and controversies, we are in danger of handling them drily and abstrusely. But when we are called to confess Christ by the actual bearing of His cross, and to suffer for His truth's sake, our theology must be experimental. We *then* want not Christianity but Christ. The gospel is *then* a reality, not a creed, nor a system only nor mainly, but an inner life, an indwelling, inworking power. "Christ —the Scripture—your own hearts—and Satan's devices," writes Thomas Brooks, "are the four things that should be first and most studied and searched; if any cast off the study of these, they can be neither safe here, nor happy hereafter." † His words are the key-note of Puritan theology.

These divines were diligent and profound students to a degree attained by few ministers of our own day, when, in all sections of the Christian Church, so much of their time is consumed in out-door work and quasi-secular duties. The organisation and maintenance

* Original Preface. See p. xxx.

† Preface to "Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices."

of parochial or congregational machinery,—the anxiety and labour merely of raising funds for their varied agencies and institutions,—the co-operation expected of them in the countless philanthropic schemes and multiplied religious societies of our age,—these drive or draw them from their studies. The mental tone and habits of the student are soon lost. A restless, desultory, excited spirit is engendered. And many an energetic minister falls into the fallacy that he is never working for his people, unless he is going up and down among them, and busy in schools, visitation, committees, and public meetings. No doubt it is a working age; working as distinguished from retirement, study, and meditation. But no minister should, under any stress of fancied duties, cease to be a student.

"Apart from practice, thought will become impoverished without study; the most active and fertile minds have perceived this. We cannot derive all the nourishment we need from ourselves; without borrowing we cannot create. It is true that there are other methods of study besides reading. When we have learned anything from books, and in the best of books as well as in others, we must make use of our native powers in order to assimilate it, as also we assimilate nourishment for the body. But when, without the aid of books, or in the absence of facts, we labour in solitude, on what materials shall we labour unless it be on those supplied by recollection? Whence do our thoughts arise except from facts, or from books, or from social intercourse? A great volume, which also demands our careful study. We must, therefore, study in order to excite and encircle our own thoughts by means of the thoughts of other men. Those who do not study will see their talent gradually fading away, and will become old and superannuated in mind before their time. Experience demonstrates this abundantly, so far as preaching is concerned. Whence comes it that preachers who were so admired when they entered upon their course, often deteriorate so rapidly, or disappoint many of the lofty expectations which they had excited? Very generally the reason is because they discontinue their studies. A faithful pastor will always keep up a certain amount of study; while he reads the Bible, he will not cease from reading the great book of humanity which is opened before him; but this empirical study will not suffice. Without incessant study, a preacher may make sermons, and even good sermons, but they will all resemble one another, and that increasingly as he continues the experiment. A preacher, on the other hand, who keeps up in his mind a constant flow of substantial ideas, who fortifies and nourishes his mind by various reading, will be always interesting. He who is governed

by one pervading idea and purpose will find in all books, even in those which are not directly connected with the ministry, something that he may adapt to his special aim." *

"For a man who preaches much, without from time to time renewing the stock of matter with which he began his career, however sound or pious he may continue to be, will be almost sure ultimately to become a very barren preacher. And I only say *almost*, in consideration of a few rare instances, in which observation of life, and intercourse with varieties of character, seem to make an original and peculiar cast of mind, independent in a good measure of reading. But these are rare exceptions. Generally, and all but universally, a public teacher requires to have his own mind supplied and exercised by books. And to derive full advantage from them, I need hardly say, that he must not only read, but think. Undigested reading is better, I am sure, than none. I know that a different opinion is entertained by some, but this is mine. For there is no one who does not take away some matter from what he reads, and no mind can be so inert as not to be forced to some activity, while taking in new facts or thoughts. And, what is not to be put out of view, every mind becomes continually more unfurnished and more inert, when reading is wholly given up. But the benefit to be derived from reading without purpose and thought, of course falls far short of that which reflection will draw from the same, or from scantier stores. And this applies very particularly to the most fruitful, as well as the most important of the sources from which the preacher's materials are to be drawn. By reading the Holy Scriptures, without meditating upon them, a man may, no doubt, obtain considerable acquaintance with the facts and doctrines which they contain,—may become an adroit controversialist, and a well-furnished textuary,—but unless he studies the sacred volume with patient thought, (I need not add to you, my brethren, with earnest prayer,) until he becomes imbued with its spirit as well as acquainted with its contents, his use of Scripture will be comparatively jejune, and cold, and unprofitable. And so, you remember, the Apostle exhorts his beloved son in the faith: 'Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.' And, certainly, all do feel the difference which there is between one who is giving out crude materials, taken in hastily for the occasion, and one who is drawing from the stores which he has laid up in this meditative study of divine truth." †

* Vinet's Pastoral Theology, pp. 109, 110.

† Bishop O'Brien's Charge at Primary Visitation, 1842.

The Puritan writers were men engaged in stirring scenes, and had the conduct of questions and controversies involving great principles, and in which the liberties of this country and of the Church of Christ were at stake. They had to endure, in not a few cases, "a great fight of afflictions," persecution, imprisonment, ejectment. They were not students as living in stagnant times. But study, long, close, deep, sustained, was with them an integral part of their ministry. They toiled alike in rowing and in fishing; but they mended their nets. They gave themselves unto reading. They were not content with indolently picking up a few stray surface pieces of ore, which had been dropped by others at the mine's mouth. They sunk the shaft and went down and toiled and dug and smelted and refined and burnished for themselves, and for the Church Catholic.

We hear, in our own day, complaints loud and frequent of the feebleness of the pulpit. Not men of the world only, to whom, if they ever hear sermons, the sermon is a form with which they would gladly dispense, but an Angell James asks, "Has the modern evangelical pulpit lost, and is it still losing, any of its power?" *

Sir James Stephen writes †—

"Every seventh day a great company of preachers raise their voices in the land to detect our sins, to explain our duty, to admonish, to alarm, and to console. Compare the prodigious extent of this apparatus with its perceptible results, and inestimable as they are, who will deny that they disappoint the hopes which, antecedently to experience, the least sanguine would have indulged? The preacher has, indeed, no novelties to communicate. His path has been trodden hard and dry by constant use; yet he speaks as an ambassador from Heaven, and his hearers are frail, sorrowing, perplexed, and dying men. The highest interests of both are at stake. The preacher's eye rests on his manuscript; the hearer's turns to the clock; the half-hour glass runs out its sand; and the portals close on well-dressed groups of critics, looking for all the world as if just dismissed from a lecture on the tertiary strata."

No doubt, in many cases, our critics are not qualified. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And the true power of the pulpit, be it remembered, is not in Paul, nor in Apollos, but with the Holy Ghost.

* Earnest Ministry, Preface, pp. vii., viii.

† Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, (Fourth Edition,) p. 393.

And we cannot yield to the clamour for interesting sermons, if sermons are to be made attractive by smatterings of geology, and political economy, and geography, in an age in which intellect is a chief idol.

But that there is a want of *solid matter*, a flimsiness, in too many of our modern sermons is undeniable. They may be *faithful*, but they are too often, if not crude, meagre and vapid. There is a cry for simplicity. Too often in aiming at simplicity we fall into imbecility. Practical preaching is in demand. But Christian practice must be enforced on Christian motive; and Christian motive cannot be urged in all its fulness and power, unless Christian doctrine in its depth and variety be stated and enforced. The gospel must be offensive to the natural heart. But surely that scheme into which "angels desire to look," and which is to those lofty intelligences, surrounded by many evidences of the divine wisdom beyond man's present ken, the brightest manifestation of it,* must have matter capable of exercising (and that lawfully and profitably) man's highest intellectual powers. We call upon men to receive it with the simple faith of little children, but not necessarily as in itself unworthy of intellectual study and research. "To the Greek foolishness," is still true. But let it be "the foolishness of God," not the foolishness of our indolence and insipidity. "Preaching indeed, considered in regard to its sublime object, is at its best but foolishness after all; but this, we venture to think, is a reason why it should do its best, not its worst."† To this end ministers must be, as were the Puritan giants, students. Less public work. Fewer committees. Less serving of tables. A larger enlistment of the laity, specially in that which is secular. We must determine on this, or we shall have, in another generation, that of which we have but too threatening symptoms now—if indeed we have not passed beyond symptoms into a disastrous state of malady—an ill-stored, unlearned, untheological clergy.

Complaints of pulpit feebleness are not the only evil results. Our divinity students pass into the ministry and ascend our pulpits, having gone through their university curriculum, and "crammed up" the few authors required by their bishop or theological college, but unstored with experimental theology; too often with no discernment of distinctive truth, no well-proportioned and symmetrical view of Christian doctrine. Hence they are in danger of being "carried to and fro with

* Eph. iii. 10.

† Dean Alford's Lecture on "Pulpit Eloquence of the Seventeenth Century," (Lectures to Young Men's Christian Association, Exeter Hall, 1857–58,) p. 323.

every blast of vain doctrine." The mistiness and vagueness of negative theology, the husks of ritualism, would fail to satisfy men who had tasted "the living bread" and drunk deep into the wells of such theologians as this Series is designed to make accessible. Faults of prolixity, pedantry, scholastic subtlety, over-systematising, over-straining, and over-spiritualising, a familiarity and a homeliness running into a coarseness which would now shock where it did not provoke levity inconsistent with the reverence due to high and holy themes, are as trifles when weighed against the scriptural knowledge, the clear, distinct statement of doctrine, the close, masterly handling of all the subtle intricacies of the experiences of the inner life, in its varied conflicts, its hopes, its fears, its sorrows, its consolations, its joys. Contrast with a page of our modern negative theology,—an essay or sermon in which the writer, dealing with the fact of the death of Christ, at one time so employs the language of Holy Scripture as to leave no doubt of his orthodoxy, and, the next moment, so explains, and fences, and emasculates this language as to deprive the cross of its true efficacy, and to leave us in doubt as to any adequate *cui bono* for that unutterably solemn display of the divine perfections,—contrast with this a page of Charnock, or Reynolds, or Goodwin, or Clarkson, or—to go beyond the limits of this Series—of Thomas Jacomb,* or of Edward Polhill,† and we at once feel the difference of the atmosphere. If we seem to have been guided by the negative theologian to some height of intellectual power and philosophic research, we find it not to be a height from which, in flooding sunshine, we may survey the panorama of Christian truth, but a height on which we stand shivering amid the mists of un-

* Several Sermons preached on the whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, by Thomas Jacomb, D.D. London, 1672.

"He was an excellent preacher of the gospel, and had a happy art of conveying saving truths into the minds and hearts of men.

"He did not entertain his hearers with curiosities, but with spiritual food. He dispensed the bread of life, whose vital sweetness and nourishing virtue is both productive and preservative of the life of souls. He preached 'Christ crucified, our only wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.' His great design was to convince sinners of their absolute want of Christ, that with flaming affections they might come to him, and 'from His fulness receive divine grace.'

"His sermons were clear, and solid, and affectionate. He dipped his words in his soul, in warm affections, and breathed a holy fire into the breasts of his hearers; of this many serious and judicious persons can give testimony, who so long attended upon his ministry with delight and profit."—*Bates' Works*, vol. iv., p. 286.

† The Works of Edward Polhill, Esq., of Burwash, in Sussex, are reprinted in a cheap form by Thomas Ward & Co., London. They form a grand volume of divinity. The author's preface is dated 1677.

satisfying negatives; and if, awhile, the mists seem ready to roll away and to disperse themselves, they return to cloud and chill us as before. When Manton expounds St James, or Goodwin St Paul,—when Sibbes is opening up the "Soul's Conflict," or dilating on the "Beloved" and His "Bride,"—when Brooks brings forth his "Precious Remedies" and "Heart's Ease,"—when Owen is analysing indwelling sin, or opening out the Epistle to the Hebrews,—or Polhill treating of election and redemption, we have massive theology baptized with all the rich unction of Christian experience. To travel still further beyond the limits of this particular Series, the Lectures of Bishop King on Jonas* present a combination of expository ability and pulpit power—specially in the element of uncompromising rebuke—which renders them a masterpiece and a model which modern preachers would do well to study. Contrasting these, and such as these, among our theological writers, with many whose unsound productions have for awhile unhappily superseded them, and are unsettling the minds of many in our universities and pulpits, we may employ the words of the editors of Goodwin, when they represent him as "wondering greatly at the daring attempts of some men of this age, unskilful in the word of righteousness, upon the great and momentous points of our religion, which are the glory of our Reformation; but these points will prove gold, silver, precious stones, when their wood, hay, and stubble will be burnt up. These will have a verdure and greenness on them, whilst the inventions of others will be blasted and wither. These will be firm, whilst others, wanting somewhat within, it will be with them as it was with the Jewish and heathenish worship, when a fate was upon them, all the efforts and endeavours of men could not make them stand."†

* Lectvres vpon Jonas, delivered at Yorke, in the yeare of ovr Lord 1594. London: Printed by Humfrey Lownes. 1618.

In the epistle addressed by the Christ Church students at Oxford to James I., in which they request that monarch to give Dr King the deanery, he is called "Clarissimum lumen Anglicanæ Ecclesiæ." Sir Edward Coke used to say of him that he was the best speaker in the Star Chamber in his time. "Deus bone, quam canora vox (saith one) vultus compositus, verba selecta, grandes sententiæ! Allicimur omnes lepore verborum, suspendimur gravitate sententiarum, orationis impetu et viribus flectimur."—*Wood's Athenæ Oxon.*, vol. i., p. 458, year 1621. Folio Edit., MDCCXXI.

HENRY SMITH, who died about 1600, (see Fuller's Life prefixed to Sermons, Edit. 1675,) was "esteemed the miracle and wonder of his age, for his . . . . fluent, eloquent, and practical way of preaching." "The Puritans flocked to hear him at St Clement Dane's, esteeming him the prime preacher of the nation. His sermons were taken into the hands of all the people."—*Wood's Athenæ Oxon.*, vol. i., p. 263, year 1593.

† Original Preface. See p. xxxii.

The controversial writings of the Puritans are beyond the province of this preface. If in one instance—that of a Treatise on Church Government by Goodwin—controversy has been included in this Series, it has been done to prevent his Works from being incomplete. As a whole, this class of subjects hardly enters into the writings of the authors whose Works are comprised in this Series. Of their abilities in polemical divinity Mr Marsden observes, with more immediate reference to the earlier among them, that "the student, after a wide search amongst the combatants of later times, finds to his surprise how insignificant are all their additions to a controversy opened, and, as far as learning and argument go, finally closed, by the earliest champions on either side."* Their style, if sometimes inflated and obscure, has a nervous pithiness and quaintness rarely found among the theologians and preachers of our own day. The commonplace book of the student will soon be filled up with terse and pointed sayings—those "words of the wise which are as goads." A strong, homely saying, quoted from an old Puritan, will be the sentence of all others, in many a modern sermon, which will fasten itself most readily on the memory, and retain the most lasting hold. "Several of them," says Mr Marsden, "write the English language in high, if not the highest, perfection, before it was degraded and Latinised by the feeble men of the last century."

Their homeliness, to call it by the mildest name, is nowhere more striking (nor, at times, more grotesque) than in the titles prefixed by them to treatises and sermons. Thomas Adams, for example, (following Luther,) designates a sermon on Judas, "The White Devil, or the Hypocrite Uncased;" another, "The Shot, or the Wofull Price which the Wicked pay for the Feast of Vanitie;" a third, on Jer. viii. 22, "The Sinner's Passing Bell, or a Complaint from Heaven for Man's Sinnes;" a fourth, on Matt. xii. 43, (the unclean spirit's return to the man from whom he had gone out,) "The Black Saint, or the Apostate;" a fifth, on Eccles. ix. 3, "Mysticall Bedlam, or the World of Madmen." We can hardly open a page of his sermons without finding quaintnesses of the most striking kind. The openings of the sermons, "The Fatall Banket" and "The Shot," are among the most singular. And not seldom, when we feel that the writer is running into fanciful conceit rather than exposition, the application is so full of power and beauty that, despite our judgment, it carries us with it. Take the following from Adams' sermon on "Christ his Starre, or the Wise Men's Oblation," folio, 1630, p. 165:—

* Christian Churches and Sects; article, *Puritans*, vol. ii., p. 139.

"Some will give *myrrh*, but not *frankincense;* some will give *frankincense*, but not *myrrh;* and some will give *myrrh* and *frankincense*, but not *gold.*

"1. Some will give *myrrh*, a strict moral life, not culpable of any gross eruption or scandalous impiety; but not frankincense. Their *prayers* are thin sown, therefore their *graces* cannot come up thick. Perhaps they feel no want, and then, you know, *rarœ fumant felicibus aræ.* In their thought, they do not stand in any great need of God; when they do, they will offer Him some *incense.* These live a morally honest life, but are scant of religious *prayers;* and so may be said to offer *myrrh* without *frankincense.*

"2. Some will give *frankincense*, *pray* frequently, perhaps tediously; but they will give no myrrh, not mortify or restrain their concupiscence. The *Pharisees* had many prayers, but never the fewer sins. These mock God, that they so often beg of Him that His will may be done, when they never subdue their affections to it. There are too many such among us, that will often join with the Church in communion devotions, who yet join with the world in common vices. These make great smokes of *frankincense*, but let not fall one drop of *myrrh.*

"3. Some will give both *myrrh* and *frankincense*, but by no means their *gold.* I will give (saith the worldling) a sober life—there 's my *myrrh;* I will say my prayers—there 's my *frankincense;* but do you think I will part with my *gold?* This same *gold* lies closer in men's hearts than it doth in their purses. You may as well wring Hercules's club out of his fist as a penny from their heaps to charitable uses."

The skeleton of the sermon on "The Blacke Saint" is a most curious specimen of the over-elaborate division of a subject, specially as typographically displayed by the author (p. 352.)

It need hardly be remarked that "the Puritan was a Calvinist naturally and entirely." "Calvinism had been, if not the progenitor, the nursing-mother of Puritanism."* Our Calvinism may be more or less than theirs, but every lover of evangelical truth will be at one with them in their full exhibitions of the grace and glory of Emmanuel, as the Church's Head and the sinner's only Saviour. Their transcendent merit is their "sweet savour of Christ." Man, in his utter ruin in the first Adam, and his glorious salvation in the second Adam; the sovereign grace of the Triune Jehovah, in the eternal purpose and plan for man's recovery; the riches of the Father's love; the might and comfort, the peace and joy of the Spirit's

* English Puritanism and its Leaders, by John Tulloch, D.D., pp. 5, 41.

grace,—these are so taught as to fulfil the good pleasure of the Father, "that in all things" Christ "may have the pre-eminence." Their gospel is not "another gospel, which is not another," but the glorious gospel of the grace of the blessed God. "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" the surrendered life of Christ; the penal and vicarious satisfaction by which the curse of the broken law was met; the blood of Christ the fountain opened for uncleanness and for the consecration of God's elect to their royal priesthood; the active obedience of Christ, as "made under the law," combining with his sufferings and blood-shedding to constitute Him "the Righteousness of God" to His people; present pardon and justification; the Spirit indwelling as the Sanctifier, the Teacher, the Comforter, the inward Witness to sonship, the Intercessor, the seal, the earnest; in a word, THE NEW COVENANT, with all its riches, and privileges, and strength, and peace, and hope, and joy,—these are their great and central theme. They discerned the difficulties presented, not by the implacableness of the Father, but by the laws of His moral government, based upon His own moral perfections, to the salvation of a fallen moral being; and how these were met by the counsels and provisions of that eternal scheme by which God is just, and the justifier of the ungodly—at once a Moral Governor of unsullied truth and purity, and a Saviour.

On the expulsion of the Puritans, on St Bartholomew's Day, in 1662, under the disastrous and suicidal Act of Uniformity, "they carried with them the spiritual light of the Church of England."* And "in the course of ninety years, the nation had descended to a state of irreligion which we now contemplate with feelings of dismay."†

"It was the opinion of those who lived in these evil days that had it not been for a small body of respectable clergymen who had been educated among the Puritans, and of whom Wilkins, Patrick, and Tillotson were the leaders, every trace of godliness would have been clean put out, and the land reduced to universal and avowed atheism. Indeed, the writings and sermons of the Church of England divines of this period confirm these statements. They are evidently addressed to hearers before whom it was necessary to prove not merely the providence, but the very being of a God—not only the soul's immortality, but the soul's existence. Their pains are chiefly spent not in defending any particular creed or system of doctrine, for they appear to have thought all points of doctrine beyond the attainment of the age. They take up the people of England where heathenism

* Marsden's Later Puritans, p. 473. † Ibid., p. 472.

might have left them a thousand years before; they teach the first elements of natural religion, and descant upon the nature of virtue, its present recompense, and the arguments in favour of a state of retribution, after the manner of Socrates and Plato. It is seldom that they rise beyond moral and didactic instructions. Theology languished, and spiritual religion became nearly unknown; and a few great and good men handed down to one another the practice and the traditions of a piety which was almost extinct. The restoration of civil liberty brought with it no return of spiritual life within the Church of England. The nation became less immoral without becoming more religious. Politics and party ate out the very vitals of what little piety remained. At length one of the most cautious of English writers, as well as the most profound of English divines, seventy years after the ejection of the Nonconformists, portrays the character of the age in those memorable words, in which he tells us that it had come, he knew not how, to be taken for granted by too many, that Christianity was not so much a subject of inquiry as that it was now at length discovered to be fictitious! How widely these opinions had infected the nation and its educated classes we may infer from the circumstance that he devoted his life to that wonderful book in which he proves by the argument from analogy that religion deserves at least a candid hearing. Bishop Newton, a few years afterwards, wrote his treatise on the fulfilment of prophecy, with the same intentions; while Doddridge, amongst Dissenters, deplored the prevalence of a fatal apathy, and the decay of real piety."*

The preaching with which these great and holy men aroused the nation was the preaching of Puritan doctrine, in place of the Christless ethics and semi- (or more than semi-) Socinian doctrine by which it had been supplanted. Substantially, it is the preaching by which the Sacramentalism and the Neology of our own day are to be met; for, substantially, not without its measure of "wood, hay, stubble," it is "gold, silver, precious stones," built upon the one foundation—Christ.

The present may seem, in some sense, an unfavourable moment for the issue of this Series. The theological taste of the day is not for systematic theology. Nevertheless, the cordial favour with which the design of this project has been greeted by divines of the greatest eminence, from nearly all sections of the Christian Church, both in this kingdom and in America, is in itself a token for good, and may well afford encouragement to those among us who are disposed

* Marsden's Later Puritans, pp. 470, 471.

to take a gloomy view of our prospects, by reason of the heresies and divisions which are rife. In the Puritan Theologians,—not, of course, in all their views and statements of doctrine, but substantially,—a large body of the most eminent and best qualified judges recognise a clear, rich, scriptural statement of evangelical truth. And, amid diversities of opinions and conflicting parties, no less than as affording hope that the power of the pulpit will be greatly strengthened among us, the accord of so large a body of Christian men and ministers is a hopeful and cheering sign. It will be an incalculably blessed result of this reprint, should our ministers catch something of the grandly SCRIPTURAL character of Puritan preaching and exposition. In this lay the secret of their strength.

No "Broad Church" divinity will be found in these pages. Our students and younger ministers are often attracted by more brilliant writers and bolder (not deeper) thinkers. They may pronounce the Puritans old-fashioned, behind the age, heavy. But the Series has been projected in the hope that a healthier tone may be fostered, and that facility may induce familiarity. Writings which must have been sought in rare and costly folios, or watched for at sales or at book-stalls, may now be upon our shelves without effort and at little cost. The supply will create a demand. A reaction in favour of Puritan theology—so far, at least, as to give it its due place—will indicate a healthier tone. The more spiritually-minded of our reading laity will find in these volumes truths and thoughts which may well tempt them to substitute them for those of writers who, if they make less demands upon the intellectual power of their readers, by presenting their matter in an easy and diluted form, repay the perusal in a proportionately moderate measure. But the main object and the paramount desire is that this Series may conduce to the soundness, solidity, and unction of the pulpit ministrations of our own day and of days to come; that, as these men were "mighty in the Scriptures," and proclaimed the gospel in all the riches of its grace, and exalted Christ, and honoured the Spirit of God, and entered, with a skilful and searching anatomy into the hidden secrets of the experience of God's saints, many a student and many a preacher may imbibe their spirit. No disparagement of the early Fathers nor of the Reformers, whose theology is here embodied and developed, is intended; nor any ungrateful undervaluing, by invidious comparison, of the treasures accumulated by later and living labourers. Still less are the Puritan theologians held up that we may call them fathers or masters, or make them an authoritative standard of appeal. Our first business, our solemn responsibility, is with THE WRITTEN WORD. "WHAT SAITH

THE SCRIPTURE?" Let that inquiry be first pursued, in lowly teachableness, in reliance upon no inner light, but upon the Spirit's promised teaching. Let it be pursued with diligent, honest study, not with a pedantic, but an exact and sound philology; and with a fearless trust in truth, no less than a sincere love of it. How few of us have full confidence in truth!

This Series, it is believed, supplies a lack. It comes forth in no ordinary crisis of the Church's history. If anywhere, within the Church the war of opinion rages. The ancient landmarks are being removed. The very foundations are threatened. The inspiration of the sacred oracles is controverted; their infallibility denied. The penmen of the Holy Ghost are deemed not to have been so inspired as to be preserved from error. Moses, Isaiah, and Paul—history, prophecy, doctrines—are alike assailed. Man brings his Maker's Book to the "verifying faculty" of his own inner light and moral consciousness. The death of the Son of God is an heroic self-sacrifice—not a penal satisfaction to the outraged law of the Moral Governor of the universe. Under our new interpreters, much of what we have received from our infancy, and have taught our children, as facts recorded in an inspired history, is relegated to the region of myth and ideology. At such a crisis, it is no slight boon to the Christian Church to make the voices of these witnesses to the truth be heard. Their testimony is, for the most part, silenced, because buried in costly folios; or comes to us only in the echoes of plagiarists. They will now speak in the library of many a pastor, upon whose shelves they have never yet found a place. And, while it is never to be forgotten that neither Father, nor Reformer, nor Puritan, is to share, much less to usurp, that homage which is due to the Scriptures of Truth alone, we believe that when the student and the preacher descend to the study of those uninspired, but gifted men who, in successive ages, have been raised up as exponents of those Scriptures and witnesses to that Truth, none are more calculated, under the divine blessing, to elevate and to deepen the tone of our theology, to preserve us from the deadly perils of old errors now revived, and to give distinctness, substance, unction, and experimental richness to our preaching, than the Puritan Divines.