

**Edward Taylor's Meditation of
the Body of Christ**

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要約

エドワード・テイラーの瞑想、キリストの体

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1671年から1726年迄、マサチューセツ植民地の辺境で微小な教会国家を建設、指導したエドワード・テイラーは「準備瞑想集」などの詩を「形而上学的バロック」の様式で書き遺したが、その解釈は困難なものが多い。とくに「瞑想1. 42」で聖饗式のキリストの体が黄金のりんごの形をとり、蒸留されて詩人の体内に吸収されるイメージを考えてみよう。第一にテイラーは説教集でキリストの体を、肉体をふくむ完全な人間性と完全な神性の合一する、完全な自然=物質と考えている。中世以来物質はそれぞれの程度に応じて天の光を通すと考えられた。一番光を遮ぎる土は人間の体に、透明なガラスは魂に、黄金は復活の体にたとえられる。テイラーの黄金のりんごは復活され天に登られたキリストの体で、聖饗として信者の吸収される時、キリストの地上の体である教会を形成すると解釈できる。

また「瞑想2. 18」でキリストの贖罪の燔祭に人間が加わる時、キリストの「神=人性」は人間に、人間の原罪はキリストの体に移るとテイラーは考える。アダムの子の果実、りんごは神の座の右にいますキリストの「神=人性」の中に輝やいており、それを瞑想の中に見る特殊な視力が、教会に聖化として与えられる恵だった。アルベルトウス・マグヌスの「靈魂論」にも見られる、瞑想者が天上の世界を見る視力を清教徒詩人、テイラーも受継いでいたと考えられる。

清教主義は近代人の合理性を絶対に崩さぬ点に特色があり、テイラーにも旧教の神秘主義はまったく見られない。しかしプラトンの自己陶醉や神秘主義を一切斥けた場所で、キリストの体は詩人の体である。「瞑想2. 24」で、テイラーは自分の体が太陽であるキリストの体の黄金の髪に「ボタンで留められている」のを見る。形而上のものとは形而下のものとの無限の距りを軽く超えて来られる神の全能の力を表現するのにテイラーは特目の、楽しい奇想を持っていたと言えるだろう。

Edward Taylor's Christ is of course not Jesus of Nazareth. The colonial American poet spent the years 1671 to 1726 building and leading a small church-state at Westfield, on the frontier of the Massachusetts Bay Colony,¹ dying there in 1729. Before leaving England in 1668, his poetic taste likely was influenced by George Herbert's *The Temple*, for with Louis Martz, a reader hears numerous echoes of Herbert.² Having inherited Herbert's piety, wit and Christian typology, however, Edward Taylor is quite different in portraying Christ. Compare, for instance, Herbert's "The Agonie" and Taylor's *Preparatory Meditations* 1.42 :

Who would know Sinne, let him repair
 Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
 A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
 His skinne, his garments bloudie be.
 Sinne is that presse and vice, which forceth pain
 To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein.

("The Agonie," lines 7-12)³

Apples of gold, in silver pictures shrin'de
 Enchant the appetite, make mouths to water.
 And Loveliness in Lumps, tunn'd and enrin'de
 In Jasper Cask, when tapt, doth briskly vaper:
 Brings forth a birth of Keys t'unlock Loves Chest,
 That Love, like Birds, may fly to't from its nest.
 Such is my Lord, and more. (*Med.* lines 42 : 1-7)⁴

In Herbert's lines the poet sees a vision of Jesus in Gethsemane (Luke 22 : 44). The setting and locality are clear. With Taylor's image of Christ, the reader must spend much effort to understand that the apple of gold means the body of Christ.

In working out the associations of Christian typology, both Herbert and Taylor use the same kind of metaphysical poetry. Herbert's figure of speech compares the body of Christ to the vine tree, which is supported not only by the prophesy of Isaiah (5 : 7) but also by Jesus' parable (John 15 : 5). The sins of humanity run through Jesus' veins because they are the branches of Jesus the vine tree. In two sentences Herbert portrays the parable of Jesus and his afflictions before he was arrested to be crucified. Taylor's golden apples remind us of the transgression of Adam, and Paul's idea that Christ is the second Adam whose blood has bought man the fruit of salvation (I Cor. 15 : 45). Yet the liquification of the apples and the evaporation of the liquid are Taylor's own images, from his New England background. Reading Herbert's lines, we cannot miss Jesus' passion, presented vivid with his agony, and offered to us most gently as a cup of communion wine. Taylor's golden apples, on the other hand, can be appreciated only if he meditated about Jesus as God the Son who has ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father. Yet Taylor dwelled on the body of Christ throughout his two hundred fourteen meditations

during his period of ministry, each written in preparation for communion services at his church. Like all kinds of metaphysical poetry, his meditations must be carefully studied and annotated. In this paper, we will try to interpret why Christ in glory is represented by the image of golden apples set in silver pictures, and why they are liquified and distilled.

First of all, Taylor defines clearly in his collected sermons, *Christographia*, that the body of Christ means the humanity of Christ and the perfection of nature. Quoting from Hebrews 10:5, he asserts in his very formal sermon, "Doctrine. That God the Father both prepared a Body, or an Human Nature for Christ":⁵

First. When did God prepare a body for his Son?

Solution: I *Ab Aeterno* [Since Eternity]. Before the world was . . . This setting up was not only in his Eternal Personality in his Divine Nature: but also in [the] Eternall Purpose, did he constitute him a Compleate Redeemer, in the Natures Essentiall to his worke, and therefore in the Human Nature (Decretive) in his Holy all wise purpose (*ETC* 9).

Christ's body was not made of fallen nature, for otherwise what is the use of his redeeming blood? It must have been made of ideal nature entirely free of sin. Human nature, made before the creation of the world, was not in "factum esse" (being already made) but only *in fieri* (in making. *ETC* 13). It is essential to recognize here that this ideal unique nature, possible solely in the body of Christ, is forever in the process of creation. As Paul wrote in Col. 1:19, in this perfect nature "should all fulness dwell" (*ETC* 173), and the creating power is one of God's major attributes. Such self-creating, growing matter supposedly existed in the knowledge of the Renaissance intellectuals, represented by a vegetable gold. The fruit of the Tree of Life that grows in the center of paradise represents the creating nature, as Milton describes in *Paradise Lost* 4.220. The body of Christ is the sole being of this kind, the single work that is never repeated, and with which the people elect will mystically be unified through grace. Hence the golden apples of Taylor are Christ's body returned to heaven, having absorbed our sin with his perfection of nature, indicating how our own sinful nature will be changed into this unity of Godhead and Manhood (*ETC* 16).

Jesus in glory graciously fulfills the needs of the colonists in Westfield, both in the spiritual and the material sense. Here is the second reason for Taylor to find the Word of God not in the biblical image of grapes and wine, but in the New England harvest of apples, cider and brandy. The body of Christ appears in the poet's meditation not only as the communion bread at church services but also as other kinds of food, obtained precariously in the wilderness. The colonists found the bread of life in everything that they saw, touched (I John 1:1), and that supported their life. The form it takes varies from a sugar cake to a roast mutton (*Med.* 2.5.31-36). On the kitchen table is spread the feast of God that feeds His guests (*Med* 2.17.7-14). Christ in glory descends to provide the water of life, to lay the golden "gutters" on Taylor's alter (*Med* 1.10.16), and to ejaculate the seed of grace as a spermodote (*Med* 2.80.31). When the brief fall precedes

the winter, and the barrels of apples are stored in the barn, the villagers depend on the spirits brewed from the fruit as the Word of God to endure the sub-zero weather.

For Taylor, as the apples stand for the communion wine, they exist not in earthly time but in eternity. He speculates in *Christographia* that Christ as Eternal is related to the whole creation, being “*a Parte Ante*, as their Alpha, and *a Parte Post*, as their Omega” (Revelations 22 : 13). He fills the eternity which was before the world was, and the eternity at the end of the world when time shall be no more (*ETC* 204). Since he descended from heaven for incarnation in the fulness of time, in order to intersect earthly time and split it as the eternal now, we realize that Christ fills the whole time, Past, Present and Future (204–205). “With Golden Wedges he of Promise, splits. / The Heav’ns ope, to shew what Glory ’braces,” Taylor meditates (1.14.27).

It is no wonder that the apples in the barn reveal themselves in the eschatological time of Revelations in which fruits and barrels are transformed into gold and sapphires to make the celestial throne (Revelations 4 : 3). Apples that are being distilled represent Christ exhaling the breath of the Holy Ghost (John 20 : 22), and the distilled cider will be Taylor’s “*Aqua Vitae*” (the water of life, *Med* 1.10.10), indicating the water of life that is Jesus (John 4 : 14). In Meditation 142, already quoted (p. 2), this “*Aqua Vitae*,” evaporated into the Holy Ghost, gives birth to the casket of love. When the thin sunbeams of winter are transformed into the glorious sun of the Lamb of God that shines in New Jerusalem (Revelations 21 : 23), the crude casket in the kitchen being the body of the poet acquires the additional meaning of the earthen vessel for the Holy Ghost. The eternity that the body of Christ brings blends a quiet afternoon with chirping birds into the unity of nature and divinity.

Golden apples naturally had alchemical connotations in the seventeenth century. Following A. B. Chambers’ study of Donne’s image of gold and body, we learn that alchemy links gold and resurrection through the association of death and the resurrection of metals.⁶ The resurrected body was considered to exist, believed to be completely transparent as the sun and “as near come unto the nature of a Spirit, as it is possible for a body” (Chambers 7).⁷ Christ’s prophecy that at the end of the world the righteous shall “shine forth as the sun” (Matt. 13 : 43) was interpreted to mean that the bodies of the righteous would be turned into gold (Chambers 10), which Milton assumed to be vegetable gold like the fruit of the tree of life. The sun, being the *anima mundi*, was thought part of the celestial reason of the Platonian Renaissance. Medieval and Renaissance thought classified gold and jewels as particularly transparent as different kinds of matter allow the light of the sun to pass in different degrees. Dante’s *Convivio* is only one of many works which speculate about the transparencies of materials: “Certain substances, because they have large measure of the clearness of the transparent mingled in their composition, as soon as the sun sees them become so luminous that their aspect consists in the multiplication of the light in them, and they cast a great splendour from themselves upon other substances; as are gold and certain stones” (3.7.4).⁸ Donne in his “Epitaph on Himselfe,” very skillfully summarizes:

Parents make us earth, and soules dignifie

Us to be glasse, here to grow gold we lie. . . .⁹

The earth, that is the clay of human flesh, is least transparent to the celestial beam. Glass is likened to the human soul which accepts the divine light, but never to the degree that the resurrected body can accept it. It is confirmed again that the golden apples of Edward Taylor's meditation indicate the body of Christ in resurrection, appearing in the poet's meditation shining even as the sun.

What did Taylor know about alchemy? Fortunately he left us his manuscript copy of John Webster's *Metallographia* (1671). Joan del Fattore compares *Metallographia* with Taylor's *Med.* 1.7, and proves that Taylor's images of fermentation and distillation are derived from the process of changing metals into gold. Taylor prays in Webster's language that Christ might distill the "Tincture" of grace into his mind:

Thy speech the Liquor in thy Vessell stands,
Well ting'd with Grace a blessed Tincture, Love,
Thy Words distilld, Grace in thy Lips pourd, and
Give Graces Tinctur in them where they go.
Thy words in graces tincture stilld, Lord, may
The Tincture of thy Grace in me convey.

(*Med.* 1.7.7-12)

Webster's "Tincture" means philosophers' sulphur, a fluid or power that is distilled from a substance whose composition was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the alchemists. Once the "Tincture" specific to gold has been fermented, it will change any other metal into gold by permeating it and causing the "Homogeneal parts to join together and separate themselves from the Hetrogenal impure Sulphurs," which prevent nature from making that particular metal into gold.¹⁰ Taylor's conceit is his comparing the living Word of God to fermented cider and to the "Tincture" or philosophers' sulphur. When the "Tincture" fermented from the golden apples that represent Christ's body is distilled into a human body, it will transmute man's vile body "unto his glorious body," as we see in Philip. 3 : 21, and *Med.* 2.7.6. Only after reading *Med.* 1.7 can we comprehend why the golden apples "briskly vaper" (*Med.* 1.42). The sulphur specific to gold separating the impure sulphur and joining the homogeneal parts is a metaphor of Christ's body working within man, separating sin and absorbing man's sinful humanity. Although a minister on the frontier, Taylor used his metaphors with a scholar's accuracy.

Taylor's use of alchemy gives us to suspect two possibilities. Did he believe in any kind of occultism in which alchemy played a major part? Fattore, for instance, reports that Webster's alchemical gold exists in a liquid state of *primum ens* (the first being), permeates everything material, and renews and restores whatever it takes; not only men but also beasts, fruits, herbs and trees (234). Taylor certainly uses this aspect of Webster's *Metallographia*:

There's Life in thee, like golden Spirits, stills,
To ery member of the Mystick Selfe,
Through secret Chases into th' vitall tills
Or like the Light embodi'd in the Sun

That to each living thing with life doth run.

(*Med.* 2.47.20–24)

In *Med.* 2.47, Webster's *primum ens* is certainly nothing but a metaphor of the Holy Ghost, if pluralized, and "thy Mystick Selfe" is the body of Christ which means the church (I Cor. 12:27) collectively. In Taylor's theology could the body of Christ mean in any non-nominalistic way the perfection of nature which would permeate every link of the chain of being? The other question is whether Christ's body exists on the earth miraculously as the magical and pseudo-scientific *primum ens*.

When we study Taylor's poetry and sermons, however, we realize that our poet firmly adhered to the rational theology of the Reformation. The Christian typology that he inherited from both Herbert and the Puritans¹¹ was used to reduce any magical practice such as alchemy to the types of the works of grace. For the transmutation of humanity into perfection, no alchemy is needed. The human body, corrupt because of original sin, is still the type of the greater and more perfect tabernacle in heaven into which Christ entered once by his own blood (Heb. 9:11–12):

That I might not receive this mould in vain
Thy Son, my Lord, my Tabernacle he
Shall be: me run into thy mould again.
Then in this Temple I will worship thee.
If he the Medium of my worship stand
Mee, and my worship he will to thee hand.

(*Med.* 2.20.7–12)

The human body has received from the beginning the irrevocable print of this type, and Christ's redemptive work restores it. One can leave the moulding of the Tabernacle in heaven to the ever-creating work of the Savior. All works of nature, however abstruse, make types of God's works of salvation. In his later meditations about Canticles, any lovely object in nature is made a type of Christ's body which link heaven and earth like pillars of marble founded on sockets of fine gold (Cant. 5.15, *Med.* 2.123 [B]).

In Sermon 5 of *Christographia*, we meet Taylor severely renouncing the plea of Ubiquitarians that Christ's Divinity exists everywhere in nature. This certainly testifies that Taylor did not believe in alchemy, nor *primum ens* except as metaphors of grace. Taylor's text for the sermon is Col. 2:9, "For in him [Christ] dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "Bodily" or "*σωματικῶς*" does not imply any infinity or ubiquity, but is the body of Christ in which the Godhead and Manhood are united. The body of Christ's work is to redeem the sin of humanity, not to renew the chain of being in its entirety (*ETC* 139).

The background from which Taylor works is the period of the Reformation when Scholasticism was rejected by experimental science. Scholasticism assumes the perfection of nature, supposedly empirical on earth in two objects: the heavenly bodies and the sacramental bread and wine in the Catholic mass. "What ever dyes, was not mixt equally," Donne argues in his mock syllogistic jest of "The good-morrow" (line 19). A heavenly body in which the four elements are all equally mixed was considered immuta-

ble and the very perfection of nature. The authority of scholasticism and Catholicism was first shaken when Galileo with his telescope proved the fact that elements have rarity and density on the surface of the moon just as on earth. The Reformers in New England, being naturally anti-Catholic and anti-scholastic, were highly responsive to the advancement of science, even though they lived across the Atlantic. In 1663, only three years after the Royal Society was founded in London, the eldest son of John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, was recommended to be a member. Taylor's own poem, "The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended" (c.1685), describes the earth bound to the sun by a string, making the reader suspect he knew something about the theory of gravity. Actually Taylor kept thinking how the perfection of nature in Christ's body lived in this world even though such perfection is impossible on the earth. He takes the example of the sun in Sermon 5, limited but filled with the power of the unlimited Creator:

but as the Primogeneall Light of the Sun is in the body of the Sun dwelling *σωματικῶς* [in the body], and in a Sense mode Corporeall of incorporeall, yet the light that dwells in the Sun itself, is not therein shut up: but poures out itself everywhere, the Sun itselſe abiding
(ETC 142).

As the creating and nourishing power of the infinite Divinity works on the vessel of the sun, dwelling "bodily" in it, Christ's humanity, unified with the Divinity, can be illimitable, even though it works in the limited and mutable human life on earth.

If alchemists' gold is merely a representation of the body of Christ in resurrection, it is also the type of Christ's body that will replace heaven and earth at his second coming. At the beginning of the second series of *Preparatory Meditations*, Taylor quotes from Col. 2: 17 that all glories on earth "are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The golden tree in *Med.* 1.29 looks like the tree of life in *Kabbalah* representing the whole universe, but with the image of gold in Taylor's poetry, one should interpret it as a biblical image of Christ being the true vine (John 15.1), characteristically transformed into a golden tree of apples:

My shattered Phancy stole away from mee,
 (Wits run a wooling over Edens Parke)
And in Gods Garden saw a golden Tree,
 Whose Heart was All Divine, and gold its barke.
 Whose glorious limbs and fruitfull branches strong
 With Saints, and Angells bright are richly hung.

(*Med.* 1.29.1-6)

The image of the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece is presumably a symbol of meditation. Virgil, too, in his poem "Ad Venerem"¹³ sang of his imaginary voyage to Paphos, sacred to Venus. The theme of Christ's grafting all his saints to his own body is seen in a gold apple tree from the branches of which saints and angels are hanging!

Last of all, we can count on Taylor's reformer's contempt of the Catholic theory of transubstantiation for his not trusting alchemy to create such a tangible piece of

spiritualized nature as philosophers' gold. Against the Catholic theology that the sacramental bread is mystically changed into the body of Christ, Calvin contends that to place Christ in the bread is to drag him down from heaven.¹⁴ Together with this Catholic doctrine, Taylor rejects also the Lutheran concept of consubstantiation that Christ's body is present with the bread and wine¹⁵ in *Med.* 2.108, because of irrationality. "The Christian Faith cannot abide at least/ To dash out reasons brains, or blinde its eye" (*Med.* 2.108.27–28), he declares. The Word of God extending over all creation, the sacramental wine and bread, have been produced just as everything else on earth, through Aristotle's four causes:

Four Causes do each thing produc'd attend:
 The End, Efficient, Matter and the Form.
 These last th' Efficient passt through to the End,
 And so obtains the same the babe is born.
 So in this Supper causes four attend
 Th' Efficient, Matter, Form, amd nowe the End.

(*Med.* 2.107.31–36)

The poet, who had in his library Theocritus' *Idylls* in Greek, enjoys using Aristotle's *Metaphysics* for declaring the self-evident fact that wine is wine and bread is bread, though they symbolize the body of Christ. Aquinas identified the first, formal cause to be God,¹⁶ and Taylor had no objection so far as it was clear that no words spoken by a man could change the process of divine creation as believed in transubstantiation. Taylor is making us laugh in *Med.* 2.107, wielding his intellectual force with pseudo-scholastic, hyperbolic gestures.

On the other hand, Taylor the minister seriously teaches his congregation in Sermon 7 of *Christographia* that, being the Word of God, Christ naturally is all Reason, so that his body constitutes the four causes. Christ speaks in Revelations, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last (Revelations 22 : 13). Christ is the first cause, being the logos that created the world, and the last because he is the end of every creature (*ETC* 204). Since the first cause includes all other causes, he is the efficient cause and the material cause. Nor does he grudge showing this, for he commands the sea to be still and brings the dead alive, destroying the power of death in order to reveal himself as the efficient cause. For proving himself to be the material cause he opens ears for the deaf with his fingers, and restores speech to the mute by touching their tongue (216). Disassociating himself from irrationalism, Taylor believed that the body of Christ is the perfection of nature, both creating and created.

Having searched Taylor's works for his concept of Christ's body, we can answer the first question: why Christ in glory is represented by the image of gold. The answer is complex but clear—because gold was thought to be a transparent metal that transmits the ray of heaven and shows Christ to the human eye. It is also because gold represents perfection of nature, for the creating power of nature was traditionally indicated by it. Derived from these two ideas, the metal stands for the body of resurrection in the metaphor of alchemy. Unique to Taylor's poetry, gold is made the type of Christ in his

second coming. In summing up, gold is used for Taylor's emblem of grace from the background of these traditions and his own meditation. Referring to Canticale 5.14, "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl," Taylor concludes, "This Orbe [of gold] is the emblem of the Sphere of Grace" (*Med.* 2.122.38).

The reply for our second question, why the body of Christ in heaven takes the form of apples, the fruit of Adam's trespass, can be found also in Taylor's own meditations. Taylor's concept of redemption is not so peaceful a process that the human mind is automatically made an alembic to distill atonement from the liquid of Christ's body, as we see in *Med.* 1.42. Taylor imagines in *Med.* 2.18 that Christ's divinity is a golden altar, and that his humanity is a sacrifice on it. It is for this very offering that God the Son was incarnated, and his followers are required to follow his example. Since the poet finds nothing to offer except his own sinful body, he lays himself as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12 : 1) beside the Savior, in order to be burnt together in the fire from heaven:

Shall I my sin Pouch lay, on the Gold Bench
 My Offering, Lord, to thee? I've such alone
 But have no better. For my sins do drench
 My very best unto their very bone.
 And shall mine Offering by thine Altar fire
 Refin'd, and sanctifi'd to God aspire?

Amen, ev'n so be it. I now will climb
 The stares up to thine Altar, and on't lay
 Myselfe, and services, even for its shrine.

(*Med.* 2.18.43–51)

As the result of man's and Christ's passing through the fire, Christ's "Theanthropy" (Divinity-Humanity. *Med.* 2.33.6) is given to man, and his sin is taken by the body of Christ, which shines as "Theanthropy" in the form of the loaded apple tree (*Med.* 1.29). Consequently, Christ's body in the poet's meditation even bears the fruits of Adam's sin. Man cannot return to the original state of innocence except by passing the sinful nature to Christ (*Med.* 2.33.27).

Taylor's image of apples for Christ's body thus interpreted, we still must study how Taylor's meditations present Christ's theanthropy as the church, for the church is the body of Christ (Col. 1 : 18). The curious image that the golden apples are shrined in silver pictures (*Med.* 1.42. See p. 3.) leads us to an image of the silver ocean in *Med.* 2.47 :

I strike mine oare not in the golden Sea
 Of Godhead Fulness, thine essentially.
 But in the Silver Ocean make my way
 Of All Created Fulness, thine most high.
 Thy Humane Glass, God wondrously did build:
 And Grace oreflowing, with All fulness Filled.

(*Med.* 2.47.7–10)

Taylor classified his objects of meditation into two. What is rendered with gold is the

metaphysical truth, invisible to the eye. What is rendered with silver is also the fullness of Christ's creation, but visible and empirical. The well-known verse, "Now we see through a glass, darkly" (I Cor. 13 : 12) suffices to interpret that the silver ocean means visible phenomena. This ocean of the created, physical world, nevertheless, only is a vague suggestion of Christ in heaven.

His church members, however, are granted sight to see the metaphysical essence of gold, even though they sail over the silver ocean of physical creation, for the sight of Christ, the head of the church, is mighty. As Taylor says to his congregation, the sight of Christ is "pure light without any Scrap of darkness," and "Bright Sunshine without any never so small a cloud" (Sermon 7, *ETC* 208). "If thy headship shines not in mine eyes, / My heart will fuddledly worldly toyes," Taylor confesses in *Med.* 2.36.34–35. It is the water of life drawn from Christ that creates such celestial sight for the elect, just as in *Paradise Lost* the angel Michael drenches the eyes of Eve with the water of life before he shows her the consequences of the fall and the history of salvation (*PL* 11. 367). Like a quaint seventeenth-century emblems, Taylor portrays Christ as a rock of ages giving the water of life, with a shining eye:

An Eye at Center righter may describe
The World Circumferentiall glory vast
As in its nutshell bed it snugs fast tide,
Than any angells pen can glory Cast
Upon this Drink Drawn from the Rock, tapt by
The Rod of God, in Horeb, typickly. (*Med.* 2.60 [B]. 7–12)

For Taylor, Moses, who talked to God on Mount Sinai (Exod. 33 : 11), makes the type of such a looking glass of grace to see Christ in glory (*Med.* 2.9). "My person make thy lookingglass Lord, clear/ And in my Looking Glass cast thou thine Eye," is Taylor's prayer in *Med.* 2.92.38–39. One should offer this prayer, as Jesus asked of the Father on his last night on earth, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17 : 5).

Any reader who knows a little medieval philosophy will be reminded by Taylor's celestial sight of the "diaphanum" discussed in Albertus Magnus' *De Anima*.¹⁷ The ray of heaven constantly descends for human cognition in order to coalesce with the inherent human reason. This ray of heaven is the Word of God above according to St. Augustine, and makes a bright shining body. But all other human elements such as memory, passion, ratiocination, and the senses invade to make "colors" to cover the transparency of the shining brightness (*De Anima* 1.2.7).¹⁸ Thus man sees phenomena with all colors instead of the shining diaphanum. If the diaphanum can be seen in meditation with the least color, it must be the shining gold of Christ's sight of grace, and a sign that the meditator's body is already drawn to some extent into Christ's theanthropy. Taylor the reformer stand in the midst of the medieval–renaissance tradition of meditative philosophy so far as his theory of sight is concerned, with the one difference that with Taylor, it is not skill in meditation but grace for the unworthy that enables the sight. Taylor's practice of meditation proves only that he was an orthodox

Calvinist. Meditation was a common practice among the Puritans. Richard Baxter, a Puritan leader in the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, exhorted meditation as the only way for the body to be redeemed by Christ's body.¹⁹

Barbara Lewalski very curiously characterizes Edward Taylor's poetry with a lack of experience in sanctity or mystical union through his faith, though her *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* is a major contribution which compares Edward Taylor with English metaphysical poets as a writer of equal stature:

On the one hand, God's glory and love and benefits to the speaker [Taylor] are beyond all measure in their greatness and magnificence. On the other hand, his vileness and utter insignificance prevent his sharing in, or approaching, or comprehending, or in any way responding properly in his life or in his verse to that goodness and greatness . . . there is no settling the matter and moving on to some higher state of sanctity or mystical union. The question must be, and is, confronted every time he considers any topic relating to the spiritual life.²⁰

It is incredible that Lewalski entirely misses that Taylor the meditator is already seeing in his poetry the body of Christ in heaven, and that despite the lack of any mystical language he states clearly that to enjoy the sight of grace is to share Christ's *theanthropy*.

The best testimony against Lewalski's criticism that Taylor never meditated the sanctity of believers is that he assumes the body of Christ in heaven is attached to his own body. Witness the bold image:

My Soul would gazing all amazed stand,
To see the burning Sun, with 'ts golden locks
(An hundred sixty six times more than th' land)
Ly buttoned up in a Tobacco box. (Med. 2.24.1-4)

A tobacco box, buttoned up to Christ the Sun of New Jerusalem, indicates Edward Taylor's body as a tiny part of Christ's body. Despite the absurd, laughable disproportion, the fact is never denied that he, Edward Taylor, is fixed to the head that is Christ and nothing can separate one from the other. Taylor's image of a tobacco box and the hair of the sun, waving and spreading forever burning into chromosphere and heliosphere is a collage like Salvador Dali's painting using the splendor of Renaissance art.

As Lewalski believes, Taylor was acutely aware of the infinite gulf that exists between God and man. He was ever faithful to the five points of the Calvinists' Synod of Dortrecht in 1619: total depravity of man, unmerited election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints (known as TULIP. Lewalski, 389-390). Yet the Puritan rigor with which he stuck to these doctrines brought about the boldest and most interesting images in his *Preparatory Meditations*. Having no Platonic sense of ecstasy whatever, he used no mystical, occult thought to fill in the dizzy depth that distances God and man, but for this very reason he never decreased the omnipotence of the divine grace to cross the gulf. Actually in expressing the omnipotence and omniscience of the Redeemer, Taylor showed a talent unique among the metaphysical poets.

Even though Taylor's poetry is a "peculiar mixture of the learned and the rude," as Louis Martz points out in his "Foreword" to *The Poems of Edward Taylor* (xxxvi) of Donald E. Stanford's edition, it is his Puritan rigor never to mitigate the holiness of the Redemption and to reject any effort on the side of man that makes his poems attractive to readers.

Moreover, his exquisite jests are unique. A meditator on the sun of New Jerusalem suddenly finds a tobacco case at hand with an infinite capacity from which the hair of the sun furls out, in an endless motion to all directions. A walker in the paradise of meditation is surprised to meet an apple tree in gold, with the saints and angels hanging from the boughs bending over the garden. The laughter there is light, holy and secret, even as the steps of Jesus retreating in silence after his visit to the parsonage of Taylor in Connecticut Valley, having left his Kingdom on the kitchen table.

Notes

- 1 See Karl Keller, *The Example of Edward Taylor* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 39.
- 2 See *The Poem of Edward Taylor*, ed. Donald E. Stanford with a Foreword by Louis L. Martz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), xiii–xiv. Cited hereafter as *PET*.
- 3 *George Herbert, The Country Parson, The Temple*, ed. John Wall, Jr. (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 151.
- 4 *Preparatory Meditation, PET* 68–69. Abbreviated hereafter as *Med*. "Apples of gold, in silver pictures shrin'd" can be a chalice of silver, though the image of golden apples on such a chalice is unimaginable. "Loves chest" can be a box to keep a precious chalice, though the following stanza says that the chest means Taylor's body.
- 5 *Edward Taylor's Christographia*, ed. Norman S. Garbo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 9. Cited hereafter as *ETC*.
- 6 "Glorified Bodies and the 'Valediction: forbidding Mourning,'" *John Donne Journal* I (1982): 1.
- 7 William Nicolson, *A Plain and Ful Exposition of the Catechism* (London, 1663), 78. Quoted by Chambers.
- 8 *The Convivio of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Philip Wicksteed (London: J. M. Dent, 1903), 173.
- 9 *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert S. C. Grierson, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1912) 1: 209.
- 10 Joan del Fattore, "John Webster's Metallographia: A Source for Alchemical Imagery in the *Preparatory Meditations*," *Early American Literature* 18 (1983–84): 238.
- 11 Thomas M. Davis quotes from Samuel Mather's *The Figures or Types* (London, 1673) and argues that the traditional Christian typology, in which the images of the Old Testament were used to interpret the images of the New Testament, came to be used for the individualistic reading of each interpreter. See "Edward Taylor and the Tradition of Puritan Typology," *Early American Literature* 4 (1969/70): 27. Edward Taylor left thirty–six unpublished sermons, *Upon the Types of the Old Testament*, donated to the University of Nebraska in 1977 by his descendents, and published in 1989, but Karen E. Rowe published in 1986 *Saint and Singer, Edward Taylor's Typology and the Poetics* at Cambridge University Press, using the manuscripts of these sermons.
- 12 See *The Kabbalah Decoded*, trans. and ed. George Sassoan and Rodney Dale (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1978), 216.
- 13 "Catalepton XIV," *Virgil: With an English Translation by H. Rushton Fairclough*, 2 vols. rev.

- (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1956) 2 : 507–508.
- 14 See *Institutis Christianae Religionis* 4.17.
 - 15 See Karen E. Rowe, *Saint and Singer, Edward Taylor's Typology and the Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 167.
 - 16 Etienne Gilson, *L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932) 2 : 61–63.
 - 17 *De Anima* 2.3.8. *Sancti doctoris ecelesiae Alberti Magni opera omnia*, ed. Institute of Albertus Magnus at Cologne, 37 vols. (Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1968) 7 : 1 : 176.
 - 18 *Opera Omnia* 7 : 1 : 34. Albertus Magnus believes that when the human soul takes its body as it descends from heaven, it accepts these factors of color from all the planets.
 - 19 *The Saints' Everlasting Rest, The Practical Works of Richard Baxter, Selected Treatises* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1981), 7.
 - 20 Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press, 1979), 398.

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