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# The Robe and Crown Imagery of Edward Taylor's Poetry

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The Robe and Crown Imagery  
of Edward Taylor's Poetry

(THESIS)

BY

Juliana Kaufman

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Edward Taylor was the finest poet of the colonial times and is considered an important American poet today. His poetry, often undertaken as a spiritual exercise, reflects his profound love of God and his intense desire to achieve a complete union with Him. Taylor's poetry is marked by its homely imagery drawn from the simplest daily experiences of colonial life, and by its simple homespun diction. "Taylor saw nothing incongruous in using an image from everyday life (such as beer) to illustrate a serious theological idea (such as grace)."<sup>1</sup> By reaching out and varying the use of images, Taylor does not confine himself to the same images. In his observations, Evan Prosser cites the use of such images as the lock and key, "filling" imagery, garden imagery, and clothing imagery.<sup>2</sup> The extensive use of homely imagery is due to Taylor's background where the spinning wheel and other tools of this nature played an important part, however, it must be noted that not all of Taylor's imagery is homely. Two images, both very important in the Taylor canon, are the robe and crown.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald E. Stanford, ed., The Poems of Edward Taylor (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), p. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup>Evan Prosser, "Edward Taylor's Poetry," New England Quarterly, XL, (Sept., 1967), pp. 375-398.

The robe appears approximately thirty-five times in forms such as "rich attire" and "wedden garment," whereas the crown appears fifty-two times in phrases such as "crown of life," "crown of glory," and "crown of righteousness." The images of the crown and robe hardly fall into the category of everyday, colonial objects. Spinning wheels and keys are objects that could be owned by any member of Taylor's congregation. Keeping this fact in mind, why then would Edward Taylor want to present the unusual images of crown and robe in his "Preparatory Meditations?" These two images were special to Taylor because they represented the ultimate union with God. The ultimate union which Taylor had in mind consisted, first of all, of Christ's suffering to free man. Man needed to be free in order to have the union with God. For Taylor, the robe and crown meant suffering for Christ and freedom for man.

The next step in the accomplishment of a union with God is a mediator, that is, Christ as High Priest. The garments of a High Priest consist of a robe and crown of gold. As High Priest, Christ brings man closer to the Father. However, the ultimate union is attained once man puts on the robe and crown and becomes one with God. For Taylor, the robe and crown were all important because they were visible signs of man's union with God. Weaving and spinning imagery only tell a part of the spiritual story. In his article entitled "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," Norman Grabo documents Taylor's use of the

the spinning and weaving imagery which appears in his meditations and miscellaneous poems. The poem "Huswifery" centers around spinning and weaving and is clearly a conceit. According to Grabo, "Huswifery" follows this pattern:

Its threefold division is neat, orderly,  
more-or-less logical: first yarn spun on  
the poet-wheel, then that very yarn woven,  
fulled, and ornamented upon the poet-loom,  
and finally the finished garment worn upon  
the poet's soul as a holy robe of glory.<sup>3</sup>

Weaving and spinning occur in other meditations such as Meditation I: 41 in the lines:

... Here is Gods Son,  
Wove in a Web of Flesh, and Bloode rich geere.  
Eternal Wisdoms Huswifry well spun.  
Which through the Laws pure Filling mills did pass  
And so went home the Wealthy'st Web that was.  
(11. 7-12)

In this meditation, Christ is the material or thread being woven. He is the makings of the finished product or garment. Grabo cites eleven other meditations which incorporate this same type of imagery. However, spinning and weaving imagery only deal with the process of coming closer to a union with God. The robe and crown prove that one has attained the union. In order to discover what the robe and crown meant to Edward Taylor, it is necessary to examine those passages in his writings where the robe and crown appear. In examining the passages, I hope to illustrate that Taylor gives equal significance to the robe

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<sup>3</sup>Norman S. Grabo, "Edward Taylor's Spiritual Huswifery," PMLA, LXXIX, (Dec., 1964), p. 557.

as to the crown. In fact, the two images are associated with the same qualities, such as righteousness and glory, so frequently that at times, they appear to be synonymous or interchangeable. In the process, I will show why Taylor sometimes uses the robe and other times uses the crown, even though both have synonymous associations.

The first question one might ask in regard to the robe and crown imagery is why Taylor chose the two. The robe and crown appear together in the Bible, and to a Puritan preacher in the seventeenth century as Taylor was, the Bible was an appropriate and logical source for finding images for poetry and sermons. "It need hardly be said that Taylor was thoroughly familiar with the Old and New Testaments not only in various English translations but also in the ancient tongues."<sup>4</sup>

Taylor's familiarity with the Bible is reflected in his meditations. He derives the robe and crown imagery from parts of the Bible. For instance, both the crown and robe are associated with the pain and suffering that Christ endured in order to save mankind. Meditation I:12 pictures Christ in this way: "How Christ in Pinckted Robes from Bozrah puts/ Comes Glorious in's Apparell forth to Woee." (ll. 27-8) In the beginning of the poem, Christ is in "Died Robes from Bozrah." (l. 3)

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<sup>4</sup>Stanford, p. xxv.

"The red robes of Bozrah foreshadowed the robe of blood that Christ wore at the passion."<sup>5</sup> In Meditation II:41, Christ is referred to as "That Living Wisdom put on dying Cloaths:/ In mortal robes to Sorrows Schoole house run." (ll. 15-16) Taylor realizes that he cannot attain salvation without the sacrifice Christ makes. Meditation I:25 echoes this realization of Taylor's in the following lines:

But, my sweet Lord, what glorious robes are those  
That thou hast brought out of thy Grave for thine?  
They so outshine the Sun-Shine, Grace the Rose.  
I leap for joy to thinke, shall these be mine?  
(ll. 19-22)

It is paradoxical that robes from the grave can bring life (Sun-Shine). This paradox is parallel to Christ's situation in which he had to die in order to give eternal life to man. Another poem, Meditation II:94, has the same sentiment as Meditation I:25:

Array me, Lord, with such rich robes all ore  
As for their Matter, and their modes used are  
Within these Mansions. Dye them all therefore  
Deep in thy blood: to make them gracious Ware.  
(ll. 25-8)

The robes are meaningless unless they are sanctified by the blood shed by Christ.

The crown imagery is also associated with Christ's passion. Meditation I:45 speaks of the crown of thorns

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<sup>5</sup>Stanford, p. 24, All quotations from "Preparatory Meditations" are from this edition, where they are arranged by number in two series. Roman numerals in citations refers to series I or II.



in this way: "Yet more than this: my Hands that Crown'd thy Head/ With sharpest thorns, thou wastest in thy Grace."

(11. 19-20) This particular meditation declares two important beliefs of Taylor's. The first is that man's original sin is responsible for Christ's having to suffer death. Secondly, the blood that drips from the wounds caused by the piercing thorns is grace, i.e., the blood of Christ's is grace. By shedding his blood, Christ gave hope or grace for salvation.

The crown of thorns appears in Meditation II:6 and is identical to the crown of Meditation I:45:

His Fathers blessing him, shews thou camest down  
Full of thy Fathers blessing: and his Griefe  
That thou shouldst be a man of Grief: a Crown  
Of Thorns thou wer'st to purchase us reliefe.  
(11.19-22)

Taylor expresses Christ's sacrifice in a peculiar way, that is, as if his death were part of a business deal, and he had to purchase salvation for man. The crown of thorns of Meditation II:6 and I:45 is called the "Pascall Crown"(1. 6) in Meditation II:22. Christ has always been known as the Pascal Lamb and Pascal Victim; therefore, calling the crown "Pascall" associates it with Christ's role in man's salvation. In the crucifixion, the robe and crown were given to Christ to mock him for his claiming to be King of the Jews. Ironically, he was King of the Jews, and he did deserve a crown and robe; however, not the kind they gave him. The biblical passage that Taylor depended on so heavily in the meditations associated with the

crucifixion is the following from Matthew 27; 28-9:

28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

Both the crown and the robe are associated with kingship in this biblical passage. In the meditations that speak of Christ's passion, either the crown of thorns is referred to or the cloak or robe. Even though both images do not appear in the same poem, the idea of Christ's kingship and sacrifice for man's salvation is clear. Both images mean salvation for man.

Along with Christ's crucifixion, the Bible provided another instance for Taylor's use of the crown and robe imagery--the consecration of Aaron as high priest.

Meditation I:15 speaks of the crown and robe (Ephods Shoulder piece, in this case) in regard to the office of High Priest:

Upon thy Ephods Shoulder piece, like flame  
Or graved in thy Breast Plate-Gem: Brave Knops  
Thou'lt then me beare before thy Fathers Throne  
Rowld up in Folds of Glory of thine own.

One of these Gems I beg, Lord, that so well  
Begrace thy Breast Plate, and thy Ephod cleaver  
To stud my Crown therewith: or let me dwell  
Among their sparkling, glancing Shades for ever.  
(ll. 51-8)

This entire meditation deals with the High Priest and Taylor's relationship to him. Taylor's request is that God be his High Priest.

In Meditation I:25, Taylor says that Christ is

"Crowned with twelve Stars." (1. 24) In order to realize the full meaning of Taylor's statement, it is necessary to examine the passage of the Bible that he employs. This is not the passage upon which the meditation itself is based, that is Hebrew 4:14, but rather from the Book of Exodus 39:1-2, 27, and 30:

1 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place; and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the Lord commanded Moses.

2 And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

27 And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes.

30 And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, Holiness to the Lord.

Taylor relies rather heavily on this biblical passage in his meditation on the High Priest. Of course, all of Taylor's meditations are based on some passage in the Bible. In this biblical passage, it is obvious that Christ's role and the High Priest's role are very similar. Both are mediators and both are attired in a similar way. Just as Christ's garments at the crucifixion consisted of a crown and robe, so do the High Priest's garments consist of the highly decorative robe and crown. In the two meditations that speak of the crown and robe in terms of the High Priest's vestments, the Lord is the High Priest. He wears the robe and crown, and therefore, Taylor feels the

sacredness of these objects. The twelve stars on the crown mentioned in Meditation I:25 coincide with the twelve stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on the Breast Plate. Even if the ornamented Breast Plate and Robe were not mentioned, the crown, alone, would identify the High Priest. The same idea holds true for the Breast Plate or Robe standing alone. By itself, identification of a High Priest can be made. These robes are so special that only God, or one chosen by God, such as Aaron, can wear the vestments of a High Priest. The robes or vestments are nothing in themselves. Their power lies in what they represent: "The supreme pontiff and the representative of the nation before Jehovah."<sup>6</sup>

Why does Taylor both with speaking about the High Priest's garments when he knows he will never be able to wear them? The answer is in Meditation I:15 when he says of the gems in the Breast Plate:

...Or let me dwell  
Among their sparkling, glancing Shades for ever.  
I'll then be deckt in glory bright to sing  
With Angels, Hallelujahs to my King. (11.57-60)

The light reflected from the gems is so powerful that it radiates enough glory to make Taylor worthy of approaching his King. Taylor knows man cannot attain salvation on his own. In Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, Taylor speaks of Christ's role in man's

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<sup>6</sup>John D. Davis, A Dictionary of the Bible (Phil., Pa. : The Westminster Press, 1920), p. 310.

salvation in this way:

He was consecrated and sanctified to the sacred function of a meditator, consisting in those sacred offices of prophet, priest, and king of His church, whereby He had an office or relative holiness on Him.

Meditation II:55 identifies the crown with the various roles of Christ, mentioned in the Treatise, when Taylor says, "Here's three fold glory, Prophet's, Priest's and King's/ Tribble Authority bestud thy Crown." (II. 37-8)

The robe and crown are an emblem of the High Priest. The garments are a part of his calling as stated in the Bible:

1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

(Hebrews 5:1-4)

Even though Taylor realizes the improbability of ever attaining the High Priest's position, which is definitely stated in the Bible, and wearing the sacred garments, he is satisfied to know that the robe and crown still mean salvation because of the power associated with them.

At this point I have directed the discussion to the robes and crowns that only Christ as the Pascal victim

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<sup>7</sup>Norman S. Grabo, ed., Edward Taylor's Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1966), pp. 206-7.

and Christ as the High Priest may wear. Taylor, however, defines a robe and crown that are rewards for man's faith and good works. Meditation I:44 speaks of the crown as a reward or gift for man:

A Crown, Lord, yea, a Crown of Righteousness.  
Oh! what a Gift is this? Give Lord I pray  
An Holy Head, and Heart it to possess  
And I shall give thee glory for the pay.  
A Crown is brave, and Righteousness much more.  
The glory of them both will pay the score.  
(11. 1-6)

Taylor wants only to be worthy of the crown of righteousness. But exactly what does Taylor mean by righteousness? Norman Grabo finds that Taylor has two categories in which righteousness falls- "imputed" and "implanted." According to Grabo, Taylor defines righteousness in this way:

He explains by calling Biblical witness to its existence citing among other texts Revelation 3:5, which he developed in terms of weaving and cloth-making imagery a year and a half earlier in Meditation I:46. This righteousness is called "imputed" when it refers to God's 'accepting of Christ in our Stead for the fulfilling the Law and also for the Satisfying the Law broken by us, doth reckon Christs keeping the Law, and his Satisfying of for us to be ours. And the Soule by faith receiving the Same, becomes hereby acquitted from the Guilt of his SinL and Stands righteous before God.' It is called "implanted" righteousness when it refers to 'The Sanctifying Graces of the Spirit Communicated to the Soul.'<sup>8</sup>

Taylor views the robe and crown as being examples of both imputed and implanted righteousness--imputed when Christ wears the crown and implanted when man wears the crown as a sign of union with God. Therefore, Meditation I:44 is

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<sup>8</sup>Grabo, "Huswifery," p. 557.

speaking of imputed righteousness, that is, man is able to accept the crown since Christ sacrificed himself by wearing the crown of thorns in order for man to wear the crown of glory. In the meditation, Taylor is "asking for the righteousness earned for him by Christ and promised by the Gospels."<sup>9</sup> The crown is an external sign that Taylor, or man in general, is worthy of the crown because of Christ's sacrifice.

A display of righteousness is, in turn, expressed in the robe. Meditation II:92 speaks of the robe in terms of righteousness:

Now Glory to the Righteousness is the Song.  
Their dusty Frame drops off its drossiness  
Puts on bright robes, soth jump for joy, doth run  
To meet thee in the Clouds in lightning Dress.  
(11. 31-4)

The robes of righteousness are similiar to the crown of righteousness since both are external displays of the internal state of man, that is, the state of redemption. In addition, Meditation II:71 speaks of the robes or garments of righteousness.

The Wedden garment of Christs Righteousness  
And Holy Cloathes of Sanctity most pure,  
Are their atire, their Festivall rich dress:  
Faith feeds upon the Psachall Lamb its sure  
That on God's Porcelain Dish is disht for them  
And drinks the Cup studded with graces Gem.  
(11. 25-30)

The righteousness considered in this meditation would again be imputed righteousness since the "Paschall Lamb" shed his blood in order to fulfill the Law, in turn, making

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<sup>9</sup>Grabo, "Huswifery," p. 557.

it possible for man to share in God's grace. Only if man wears the garment can he take part in God's feast. Taylor discusses the wedden garment in Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper in association with the Bible passage where he derived the idea of the wedden garment.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.  
(Matthew 22:11-14)

The wedden garment is necessary because it makes the wearer a complete person.

Not to possess it is to go naked, spiritually naked, which Taylor makes a shameful and damning sin. Every person must know what that robe is and strive to get one.<sup>10</sup>

Because Christ put on the sacrificial robe and crown of thorns, man is able to wear the crown and robe of righteousness.

Besides righteousness, the crown and robe are connected with glory. Meditation I:45 deals with the crown of glory:

A Crown of Glory! Oh! I'm base, 'tis true.

My Heart's a Swamp, Brake, Thicket vile of Sin.

My Head's a Bog of Filth; Blood bain'd doth spew

Its vemon streaks of Poyson o're my Skin.

My Members Dung-Carts that bedung at pleasure,

My Life, the Pasture where Hells Hurdlooms leasure.

(11.1-6)

At the beginning of the poem, Taylor considers himself unworthy of the crown because he is "base." He, however,

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<sup>10</sup>Grabo, Treatise, p. xii.



promises to strive to be worthy of the crown, that is, to be "heir of this Crown." (l. 41) This particular meditation is different from the others because it speaks of the crown of thorns and the crown of glory in the same meditation. This, of course, leads to the conclusion Taylor came to so often: through Christ's suffering the crown of thorns, man is able to wear the crown of glory. No other meditation incorporates both aspects of the crown. The entire meditation is centered around the crown. This meditation is, again, different from the others in that it emphasizes the grief that Taylor feels for Christ's suffering for men. The grief Taylor feels is evident in this stanza:

Yet more than this: my Hands that Crown'd thy Head  
With sharpest thorns, thou washest in thy Grace.  
My Feet that did upon thy Choice Blood tread  
Thou makest beautifull thy Way to trace.  
(ll. 19-22)

The crown that Taylor hopes to be the heir of is not yet his. On the contrary, "all the Crowns of Glory are his own." (l. 4; Meditation I:17). In the next stanza of the same meditation, Taylor goes as far as to say, "He is the Throne, and the Crown of Glory 'tselfe." (l. 10) With this statement in mind, when man puts on the crown, he is putting on Christ, that is, being Christ-like.

In the Christographia Taylor urges again and again that men exercise their natural imitativeness and live in imitation of Christ, which, because Christ assumed a human nature in order to redeem man, men are particularly capable of doing.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Grabo, Treatise, p. xxxv.

The same is true of putting on a garment. When the High Priest dresses in the mitre and robe, he is assuming a role in imitation of Christ's ways. He is an example for everyone to view so they, too, will know the way of Christ. This is why the robe and crown are of such importance—they identify the wearer to be worthy of his garments. They are signs of implanted righteousness that show a union of the garment wearer and God.

The steps toward an ultimate union with God end in man putting on Christ and being united with God. The beginning steps of Christ's wearing the crown and robe of suffering to Christ's wearing the High Priest's as mediator lead man to this ultimate step which is necessary for a complete union. As Christ put on a human nature, as if it were a garment, so, too, must man put on Christ. By putting on Christ, man attains glory. Glory is put on in the form of a garment, just as in the form of a crown. Meditation II:73 tells of the robe or clothing of glory:

When unto Angell's Glory opens doore,  
Or unto Saints, all to be glorifi'de,  
She well bestows herselfe, t'enriche her Store:  
Yet blushes much to eye thy Glories tide.  
When she doth make herselfe thy Cloaths to bee,  
She's cloathd with brighter glory far by thee.

The greatest glory glory doth enjoy,  
Lies in her hanging upon thee Wherein  
Glory that glorifies thee mightly,  
Is far more glorifide. (11.19-28)

The glory of the clothing or garment lies in its relationship to the Lord. When man puts on the robe of glory earned for him by Christ, he is giving glory back to the

one that gave it to him. The robe and the crown are both from God. In a sense, they are God because putting them on means becoming one with God. They are external signs that the wearer is one with God--he has won the right to wear them.

The robe and crown have always been associated with power, authority, and dignity. Edward Taylor finds these two objects to be appropriate images in discussing the ultimate union with God, beginning with Christ putting on the garments of suffering to man putting on Christ in the form of a robe and crown. This union is so special that homely imagery would be inappropriate in speaking of it. The robe and crown are equally important in Edward Taylor's poetry. The same associations are made to the crown as to the robe. Both meant suffering for Christ, power for the High Priest, and redemption for men. In some poems, Taylor uses the crown to speak of righteousness, glory, or salvation, while in others, he prefers to use to robe. In fact, only one meditation uses both images in the same poem, and that is Meditation I:14. Taylor obviously felt that both images entailed the same meanings, same associations, and that one might even be used in place of the other. Why then does Taylor bother with both images instead of using just one? The answer to the question lies in the examination of the differences in the use of the images to the entirety of the poems in which they appear.

After close examination, it appears that a small but significant difference in the robe and the crown imagery is that Taylor derived all associations with the crown from the Bible, whereas he does not for the robe. The associations he makes are these: the crown of thorns, John 19:5; crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. 4:8; crown of life, James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; crown of glory, 1 Peter 5:4; and the High Priest's crown, Ex. 29:6; 39:30. The only associations to the robe that Taylor derives from the Bible are from Matthew 27:28 (crucifixion robe), Matthew 24:11-14 (wedden garment), and Ex. 29:6 (the High Priest's garments). Taylor associates the robe with righteousness, glory, and all the other qualities on his own, reinforcing the idea that he did believe the crown and robe had similar meanings.

However, the most significant difference between the use of the crown and robe is that, for the most part, the crown is used as a conceit, while the robe appears as isolated imagery. This difference might account for Taylor's using the crown in some instances, and the robe in others. In Meditations I:43, I:44 and I:45, Taylor centers the meditations around the crown of life, righteousness, and glory, respectively. Every verse points to the crown as a goal. In Meditation I:44, the word crown appears thirteen times and in every stanza. The other two meditations come very close in the number of times the crown is mentioned.

In contrast, the robe is used for the most part as isolated imagery. There is one meditation in which the robe is used as a conceit, that is, Meditation I:46. In this meditation, Taylor uses a verse from the Bible (Rev. 3:4-5) to base the entire poem on. The passage is as follows:

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

The meditations based on this passage centers around the robe as an external sign of man's worthiness.

This, however, is the only meditation in which the robe is used as a conceit. In other meditations, such as Meditation II:23, the robe is only mentioned in passing when speaking of Aaron and "His milke white linen Robes." Meditation II:71 speaks of the robes as the attire of the guests, but the poem is actually centered around a feast. It appears as if the Bible provided Taylor with ready-made conceits. In the meditations in which the robe and crown appear as conceits, there are corresponding biblical passages which also treat the two images as conceits, as seen in the only meditation (I:46) in which the robe is used as a conceit. The passage in Revelations treats the robe as a conceit; and in turn, Taylor treats it as a conceit. In Meditation I:43, the crown of life is a

conceit running throughout the poem. The conceit is derived from James 1:12:

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:  
for when he is tried, he shall receive the  
crown of life which the Lord hath promised  
to them that love him.

The conceit of the crown of life from this biblical passage is not as lengthy or elaborate as the traditional conceits of the poetry of Taylor's time. Edward Taylor's conceits are much more lengthy than this one, but it is important because it acts as a springboard for the conceits in Taylor's poetry. As a conceit, the reader is told vital information concerning the crown of life. First, man has knowledge of his reward for loving the Lord, Second, the reward is the crown of life. Lastly, man must be tempted to prove that he is worthy of the crown. All of these points center around the crown of life, which is an eternal, spiritual life. The meditation which uses this conceit, that is, Meditation I:43, is also based on another biblical passage, Rev. 2:10:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt  
suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some  
of you into prison, that ye shall have  
tribulation ten days: be thou faithful  
unto death, and I will give thee a crown  
of life.

Two biblical passages incorporate the crown of life, and both attach the same meanings with it: testing, reward, and promise of the Lord. Taylor speaks of being tempted or tested in Meditation I:43 in the following passage:

Nature's Corrupt, a nest of Passion, Pride,  
Lust, Worldliness, and such like hubs: I pray,  
But struggling finde, these bow my Heart aside.(11.7-9)

God's promise is resounded in Taylor's words, "Thou'lt give a Crown of Life to such as be/ Faithful to Death." (11. 23-4)

The last aspect of the crown of life, reward, is touched upon when Taylor says, "Breath, Lord, thy Spirit on my Faith, that I/ May have thy Crown of Life, and Sin may dy." (11. 29-30) Taylor utilizes the same associations to the crown as the Bible does.

The same pattern occurs in other meditations, such as Meditation I:44 in which the crown of righteousness is discussed or Meditation I:45 concerning the crown of glory. The Bible provides Taylor with the basic conceit, and he uses it in the meditation as a basis for discussion. For Taylor as a puritan preacher and a great supporter of the Bible, it seems very logical to use the concepts in his poetry that are already provided in the Bible. The Bible sets up a conceit, and Taylor follows through by incorporating it in his meditation. A similar pattern occurs with isolated imagery. When Taylor uses the robe as isolated, it is more than likely that the Bible uses it as isolated imagery. For instance, the robe that Christ wore at the passion is only briefly mentioned in the passage: "Then Jesus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe." (John 19:5) No explanation of the robe is given in the passage, in contrast to the detailed explanation given to the crown of righteousness or crown of life. Therefore, Taylor gives only

minor significance to the robe by making it an isolated image, that is, by briefly referring to Christ who "put on dying Cloaths." (Meditation II:41, 1.15)

Of course, Taylor's reliance on the Bible goes much further than merely employing its conceits and isolated images. For Taylor, the Bible was a storehouse of information concerning the ways to attain a complete union with God. The crown and robe represent, not only the steps toward the union, but the ultimate union itself. Christ's suffering the crown of thorns was the first step toward the union, for it freed man, enabling him to have a union with God. As mediator or High Priest, Christ brings man closer to the Father. The last step leading to the ultimate union with God is achieved when man can put on the robes of Christ and be one with God. When man wears the robe and crown of glory, he is able to show that he is worthy of a union with God, for they are external signs of the inner worthiness. Both the robe and crown represent suffering, redemption, glory, life, and righteousness. In view of their similarities, it might have become a problem of when to use the robe and when to use the crown. Taylor solved the problem by looking to the Bible which provided him with a pattern to follow in his "Preparatory Meditations."



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