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William Ames and his Contribution to Evangelical Theology

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I Introduction

This article examines the uniqueness of the thought of the Puritan theologian William Ames (1576–1633) in the context of Reformed evangelical theology. Ames has been regarded as an authoritative voice of this tradition by none other than Cotton Mather, John Norton, and Samuel Morison; Jonathan Edwards also admired Ames' idea of Christian virtues.

Even in today's context, Ames' theology can offer significant insights. In our post-enlightenment era, where a mere rational theology is found inadequate, Ames' point of theological departure remains attractive. Another relevant topic is his concept of happiness, considering we are now living in an age full of entertainment that can lead inescapably to a hedonistic view of life. His anthropology is not a discipline that stands alone in the modern sense, but one that is beautifully integrated with other doctrines such as soteriology and Christology. There is also ecumenical potential in Ames' doctrine

of sin when it is compared to that of Thomas Aquinas. With regard to the 'order of salvation', Ames can offer a broader understanding of evangelical soteriology so that unnecessary polemics could be avoided. The most original contribution in evangelical theology is perhaps his idea of conscience that helps shape the development of evangelical theological ethics.

Aspects that will be noted in this article include the point of departure in theology, the concept of humanity as created in God's image, the order of salvation, and the notion of happiness in human life. The study shows that despite much in common between Ames and his predecessors as well as his successors in the Reformed evangelical tradition, there are significant features of his system that are unique and relevant for our contemporary context.

II Point of Theological Departure

The Puritan divine Cotton Mather

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described William Ames as 'incomparable'.¹ John Norton turned to Ames as the chief authoritative voice regarding church polity.² Harvard historian Samuel Morison has noted that the books of Ames '... are found in almost every recorded New England library' and that they belong to the 'first furniture' of the library of Harvard College.³

The influence of Ames in later Puritanism is undeniable. Ames was a student of Augustine and Calvin. As a student of these giants, Ames started his book, *The Marrow of Theology*, with the treatment of faith as one of the two parts of theology.⁴ As well, Ames' Augustinian theological voluntarism is generally known by many scholars.⁵ However, Joel R. Beeke does not agree

with the term *voluntarism* to represent the key of Ames's theology. He writes, 'Within the parameters of orthodox Reformed theology, Ames stressed that Christianity is a Spirit-worked, vital, heartfelt faith that produces a genuine Christian walk.'⁶ It is clear that Beeke uses the term *voluntarism* with different understanding.

With regard to theological approaches however, Ames did not follow Calvin. Rather, by starting with the knowledge of God, Ames, with his emphasis on human will, wanted to secure theology as the doctrine of living for God according to God's will instead of a non-practical, speculative discipline that characterized cold orthodoxy. Sprunger has remarked that Ames's emphasis on the will was a response to 'the chill of orthodoxy that leaves men too comfortable'.⁷

Voetius, Ames's contemporary, already judged Ames's theological emphasis on the will to be a minority position in the Reformed tradition of the seventeenth century. Petrus van Mastricht, however, followed Ames's argument that faith receives agreement in the will:

a theoretical knowledge and consent is not sufficient; a practical act is required whereby men are convinced, and the will moved, to reach for the proffered God and Mediator (Rom. 7:18).... In the will saving

1 Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 124.

2 Douglas Horton (ed.) and John Norton (trans.), *The Answer to the Whole Set of Questions of the Celebrated Mr. William Apollonius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), xvi-xvii.

3 Samuel Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (Ithaca: Great Seal Books, 1960), 11, 160; Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 267; quoted in J. Gregory Behle, 'The Marrow of Theology' in *Master's Seminary Journal* 9.1 (1998), 97.

4 William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology* I.iii, ed. John D. Eusden (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 80-83.

5 See Douglas Horton (trans.), *William Ames by Matthew Nethenus, Hugo Visscher, and Karl Reuter* (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School Library, 1965), 185, 202; John D. Eusden, 'Introduction to Ames' in *Marrow*, 49; Martin Schmidt, Art. 'Ames, William' in *TRE* Vol. 2 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 452.

6 Joel R. Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality: A Practical Theological Study from Our Reformed and Puritan Heritage* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2004), 125.

7 Keith L. Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds of English and American Puritanism* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1972), 147.

faith receives concurrence by which we earnestly desire God and the mediator who offered themselves to us in the gospel and whom we accept and receive (John 1:12).⁸

Thus, as a voluntarist, Ames considered the will as 'the first and proper subject of theology',⁹ and started his discussion on 'The Division and Parts of Theology' with faith. Faith as receiving may be called an act of the will. That true theology should derive from above, i.e. from divine revelation rather than from human inquiry, was not an issue for Ames.

His theology was not without criticism however. Bavinck, for example, criticizes the concept of living for God as the content of dogmatics as an increasing acceptance of the subjective practical notion in theology—a tendency taken up and promoted by Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schleiermacher—and, thereby, moving theology away from scientific objectivity of divine knowledge.¹⁰ Bavinck's reading proves to be anachronistic for in Ames' time there were no knowing/believing, reason/faith, or science/religion dichotomies promoted by Enlightenment philosophy. Defining theology as the doctrine of living for God has a high degree of compatibility with Calvin's or

Zwingli's prolegomena concerning the knowledge of God and knowledge of self.¹¹ Ames' teacher, William Perkins, had related these two issues in his definition of theology:

Theologie is the science of living blessedly forever. Blessed life ariseth from the knowledge of God. Ioh. 17.3. *This is life eternal, that they know thee to be the only very God, and a Sonne thou has sent, Christ Jesus.* Isa. 53:11. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant (viz. Christ) justify many.* And therefore it ariseth likewise from the knowledge of ourselves, because we know God by looking into ourselves.¹²

Years later, Peter van Mastricht, who was influenced by Perkins and Ames, related the definition of living for God with piety, a key term in Calvin's prolegomena.¹³ Thus, the definition of theology as living to God is just another way of defining theology as knowing God and knowing self, which in practice teaches us piety, the source of religion.¹⁴ Following Perkins, Maccovius defined theology as 'a discipline, in part theoretical, in part practical, teaching the way of living well and

⁸ Petrus van Mastricht, *Praktikale Godgeleerdheit* II.i.129 (Rotterdam and Utrecht, 1749-1753); cf. Gisbertus Voetius, *Disput.* V, 289, cited in Jan van Vliet, *The Rise of Reformed System: The Intellectual Heritage of William Ames* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 64-65.

⁹ Ames, *Marrow*, I.i.9, 78.

¹⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* Vol. 1: Prolegomena, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 35.

¹¹ Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* Vol. 1: Prolegomena to Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 155.

¹² William Perkins, *Golden Chaine*, p. 11, col. 1 in *Works* (Cambridge, 1612-19) Vol. 1.

¹³ 'This theoretical-practical Christian theology is nothing other than the teaching of living to God through Christ (*doctrina vivendi Deo per Christum*); or, the teaching that follows the way of piety (*doctrina, quae est secundum pietatem*).' (Peter van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia* I.i.36).

¹⁴ Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* I.ii.1.

blessedly in eternity'.¹⁵

Perkins and Maccovius represent the Ramist school of thought that defines theology as the teaching of both living well and living blessedly/happily.¹⁶ Ames however, created another school of thought in the Reformed evangelical tradition that one-sidedly emphasizes theology as living well/rightly, not as living blessedly/happily. Ames' scepticism towards the notion of living happily requires certain attention that we are going to deal with in the last section of this article.

III The Doctrine of Humanity

The doctrine of humanity is treated in the *Marrow* somewhat as part of or subsidiary to the doctrine of divine providence.¹⁷ Divine providence consists in the ordinary and the extraordinary government by God of the world.¹⁸ The latter is also called special government of intelligent creatures (1.9). One part of this special government deals with prescribing a law; another part relates to the ordering of events, which are the fall and the restoration of human being.¹⁹

Under the restoration section are included the doctrine of Christ (1.18 -23), the order of salvation (1.25 -30), the doctrine of the Church (1.31 -37), and the doctrine of the last things (1.38 -41). The doctrine of humanity and sin is especially considered under

the fall (1.12 -17). This structure is comparable to Calvin's treatment of the knowledge of man that is partly placed in the beginning of the second book in the last edition of his *Institutes*.²⁰ By placing the doctrine of humanity in close relation with the doctrine of sin, evangelical anthropological tradition has functioned as an anticipation to the doctrine of salvation.

In the chapter on creation (1.8), the human being is said to be the summary of all creation. Unlike other creatures, the human being was not brought forth by the Word only (let there be ...), but especially with 'greater counsel and deliberation' (let us make man).²¹ The dichotomy of body and soul with the priority of the latter was advocated by Ames: in his soul the human being is absolutely perfect; in his body contingently perfect.²²

On the other side, Ames also stated that the inward image of God is the perfection of soul *and* body, whose perfection is seen in its beauty and its usefulness conforming to the will of God.²³ In the Augustinian tradition and like Vermigli, Ames saw the body belonging to the inward image of God as long as it functioned as an instrument of a higher goal (*telos*) which is the righteousness of God.²⁴ The righteousness is however

¹⁵ Maccovius, *Loci communes theologici* (Amsterdam, 1658), I.

¹⁶ Cf. Peter Ramus, *Commentariorum de religion christiana* (Frankfurt, 1576), I.i.

¹⁷ Ames, *Marrow*, 72-73.

¹⁸ Ames, *Marrow*, I.ix.8.

¹⁹ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xi.

²⁰ Calvin, *Institutes* II.i-v; the other part was placed by Calvin in I.xv; cf. Ford Lewis Battles, *Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 15.

²¹ Ames, *Marrow*, I.viii.63.

²² Ames, *Marrow*, I.viii.61.

²³ Gen 2:25 and Rom 6:13; see Ames, *Marrow*, I.viii.71-72.

²⁴ See Rom 6:13; cf. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *The Common Places of the Most Famous and*

one of the three aspects (the other two being wisdom and holiness) in which the human being is fit to live well. Here, Ames echoed Calvin's teaching on the three aspects included in human renewal.²⁵

In these three aspects, and in human faculties of understanding and will, the perfection of the soul consisted, while their external perfection consisted in human beings' dominion over lower creatures.²⁶ A certain image of God resulted from both the external and internal perfection of human being. Even though human being bore the true basis for the image of God, the perfect image of God is reserved for Christ.²⁷ Ames used the term *imperfectio* of God's image in human beings as a denial (not deprivation) intended by God himself even before the fall.

This notion has the consequence that in Ames' thought, true anthropology cannot be considered apart from Christology. Christ was not sent to the world in order to meet God's soteriological agenda only but also the anthropological.

Of the relation between man and woman, Ames interpreted the creation of woman 'out of the man and for the man' as man's own good: nothing was 'missing for his well-being'.²⁸ Thus, the relation between man and woman is not a hierarchical one but complementary.

Renowned Divine Doctor Peter Martyr I.xiii.28 (S.I.: In Pater Noster Rovve, 1583), 124-125.

²⁵ See Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xv.4.

²⁶ Ames, *Marrow*, I.viii.73.

²⁷ Col 1:15 and Heb 1:3; see Ames, *Marrow* I.viii.68.

²⁸ Ames, *Marrow*, I.viii.79.

IV Sin and Punishment

Quoting Genesis 2: 17 and Romans 5: 12 Ames understood death as the punishment for sin.²⁹ It is the deprivation of life, which is 'both the joining of the soul with the body and all the perfection which belonged to man in that state'.³⁰ In another chapter on bodily death, mortality is called 'a dissolving or loosening of that bond by which the soul was joined with the body'.³¹

The perfect integrity between body and soul is thus extremely important in Ames' conception of a true life. Ames divided death into two parts: the punishment of loss [*damnum*] or defacement of God's image and the punishment of a matter of consciousness [*sensus*] or the spiritual bondage.³²

Ames believed that after the fall, freedom of the will still remains since it is essential to human nature. That freedom was however destroyed or left remote and dead by spiritual bondage to the devil, to the world, and to sin. Not only physical death, but also the multiplication of sin in our present life itself is a punishment for the first sin. Sinning suppresses the human nature and in sinning the human being is also subjected to inward suffering.

The first sin is called the original sin. Ames defined it as 'a habitual deviation of the whole nature of man or a turning aside from the law of God'.³³ Ames advocated the doctrine of total depravity: the corruption is attributed to the intellect, to the conscience, to

²⁹ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xii.28.

³⁰ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xii.30.

³¹ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xv.4.

³² Ames, *Marrow*, I.xii.34-43.

³³ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xiii.2.

the will, to every kind of affections, and lastly to the body as well. Sin is especially understood as the habitual lack of obedience to God's law. This understanding also applies to the definition of actual sin (1.14).

Ames' strong emphasis on the juridical aspect of sin may lead to the implication that being and becoming human means habitual obedience to God's law. There are two parts of sin: the formal which is an aversion to good, and also the material which is a turning and inclining towards evil.³⁴ Ames' concept of original sin as habit (*habitus*) brought him closer to Thomas Aquinas who understood original sin as habit in the sense of a disposition of a complex nature.³⁵ Actual sin as an act follows from original sin as a habit.

After the anthropological issue of God's image in the chapter on actual sin (1.14), its next logical placement is to be found in the story of its restoration, i.e. in the chapter on sanctification (1.29). Sanctification is defined as 'the real change in man from the sordidness of sin to the purity of God's image'.³⁶ As already mentioned above, the renewal of God's image in humanity includes the aspects of true righteousness and true holiness. For Ames, the anthropological understanding of God's image should be viewed within the soteriological perspective from sin to sanctification.

V Conscience and Theological Voluntarism

Another important aspect of eternal damnation is the terror of conscience, which the Bible describes as the perpetually gnawing worm.³⁷ Conscience plays a significant role in Ames' anthropological understanding. It is 'a practical judgment whereby that which a man knows is particularly applied to his good or evil so that it becomes a rule to direct his will'.³⁸ Like his teacher William Perkins who assigned the conscience to knowledge, Ames assigned it to the understanding; unlike Perkins however, Ames defined conscience as an *act* of practical judgment.³⁹ For Schmidt such conception of conscience which is characterized by certain autonomy was a development towards modern conceptions of this topic.⁴⁰ Ames's concept of conscience gives a strong impulse to his theological voluntarism. However, this is not to say that the role of conscience in Ames's thought is merely subjective for Ames related the believer's conscience to God's given commandments.

As a follower of Calvin, Ames too emphasized the motif of obedience as attested in his definition of theology with the concepts of faith and observance.⁴¹ Yet, his strong relation between conscience and the will has given a different colour to evangelical spirituality: instead of an introspec-

34 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xiii.7-9.

35 'The second kind of habit is the disposition of a complex nature, whereby that nature is well or ill disposed to something, chiefly when such a disposition has become like a second nature, as in the case of sickness or health. In this sense original sin is a habit.' (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II.lxxxii.1).

36 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxix.4.

37 Mk 9:4; Is 66:24.

38 Ames, *Conscience, with the Power and Cases Thereof* I.i.3, English ed. (London, 1639), 89.

39 Ames, *Conscience*, I.i.1; I.i.6.

40 Schmidt, 'Ames', 452.

41 Ames, *Marrow*, I.ii.1; compare Schmidt, 'Ames', 452.

tive conscience as the measure of true knowledge, it is the power of freedom of a clear conscience—very much at home in the Ramist dialectic—that wills and does things voluntarily.⁴²

Ames gave a Christological foundation for his understanding of voluntarism: Christ's self-sacrifice for the sheep not compelled but voluntary.⁴³ Is such a conception inconsistent with his (Calvinistic) emphasis on the legal aspect of obedience? In the *Institutes* 1.15.2 Calvin used the testimony of conscience to support the idea of the immortality of the soul. Through its response to the divine judgment, the conscience is proved to have knowledge of God. The emphasis on the knowledge of God shows Calvin's concern to combat superstitious Roman Catholic religion in his time. Calvin opined that without theological edification, the church will be left in confusion and superstitious belief that finally will lead to idolatry instead of worship of the true God.

In contrast, Ames who lived until the first half of the seventeenth century, did not see himself in a polemical position against the Roman Catholic deficiency on the importance of knowledge or understanding. Though faith must be understood as an act of the understanding, it may rightly signify the act of the will too; it is an affair of the heart.⁴⁴

Ames even criticized the understanding of faith as a mere act of the intellect.⁴⁵ In the age of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ames saw greater danger in mere intellectual faith than in a superstitious belief that is characterized by lack of theological knowledge. In the age of 'rationalisation', 'moralisation' and 'confessionalisation', there was a natural need and tendency towards a stronger emphasis on the will than the intellect.⁴⁶ On the relation between faith, understanding and the will, Ames wrote:

True Christian faith which has a place in the understanding always leans upon divine testimony, as far as it is divine. But it cannot be received without a genuine turning of the will towards God.⁴⁷

In the same tenor Ames also criticized those who understood Christian faith as partly placed in the understanding (or knowledge) and partly in the will (or affections).⁴⁸ Placing faith partly (instead of wholly) in the affections will discourage a high regard for the essential role of affections in religion. The second part of theology according to Ames is observance. In observance, the role of the inward affections in the true religious worship is emphasized.⁴⁹ In the same tone, Ames

⁴² See the relation between Ames' conception of conscience and the thought of the Reformed philosopher Peter Ramus in Eusden's introduction to Ames, *Marrow*, 42-47.

⁴³ Jn 10:11,18; see Ames, *Marrow* I.xxii.2; I.xxii.27.

⁴⁴ Ames, *Marrow*, I.iii.2; 'Faith is the resting of the heart on God, the author of life and eternal salvation ...' (I.iii.1).

⁴⁵ Jn 6:35.

⁴⁶ Christoph Strohm, 'Methodology in Discussion of "Calvin and Calvinism"' in H.J. Selderhuis (ed.), *Calvinus Praeceptor Ecclesiae: Papers of the International Congress on Calvin Research*. Princeton, August 20-24, 2002 (*Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* Vol. 388; Geneva: Droz, 2004), 81.

⁴⁷ Ames, *Marrow*, I.iii.5.

⁴⁸ Ames, *Marrow*, I.iii.22.

⁴⁹ Ames, *Marrow*, II.iv.17-25.

also emphasized the importance of hiddenness in Christian (inward) observance since it is a sign of sincerity.

If he be obedient in the absence, as well as in the presence of lookers on, in secret as well, yea and more, then in publike, phil.2.12. Mat.6.6.⁵⁰

If Vermigli had promoted a strong intellectual impulse in later Reformed Orthodoxy (without neglecting the importance of Christian virtues) Ames might rightly be called the opposite who counterbalanced the emphasis on the faculties of the heart and the will. That does not deny him the right to be a true Calvinist; on the contrary, Ames' division of theology into two parts of faith and observance echoed very much Calvin's rhetorical interrelation of doctrine and application in his theology.⁵¹

VI The Order of Salvation

Ames' order of salvation shows both similarities and uniqueness within the Reformed evangelical tradition. Following Calvin, Ames also stressed that the application of Christ's redemption begins with the work of the Holy Spirit. By quoting 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ames, along with Calvin, also understands the application of redemption as mystic union with and into the body of Christ.⁵² The discussion of the application of redemption follows after the exposition of Christ's person, office,

satisfaction, life, death, and exaltation.

This corresponds with the application of redemption consisting in the order of salvation: predestination, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. Calvin placed the chapter of predestination almost at the end of the third book in his *Institutes*. Ames, however, places predestination at the onset of his discussion on the order of salvation.

As noted by Muller, Ames' 'order of the various aspects of union with Christ is not primarily chronological but causal, given the priority of the divine over the human act'.⁵³ Thus, Ames' quotation from Ephesians 1:4 used to confirm the placement of predestination at the beginning of the order appears natural and is understandable.⁵⁴ Calvin understood predestination from the perspective of the believer's subjective experience of salvation, that is, *a posteriori*, while Ames sees it as the causal basis of redemption. Ames' supralapsarianism is attested in the statement that 'predestination does not necessarily presuppose that either its end or object exists; rather it causes it to exist'.⁵⁵ Despite the strong link with God's decree, predestination does not have the symmetrical dimension of double predestination; rather, it is foremostly a predestination to salvation.

As already noted by Eusden, in Ames' thought predestination is not a doctrine for inquiring into the divine mind or reason, thus primarily a theory

⁵⁰ Ames, *Conscience* III.v.1; III.v.7; This is the passage quoted by Jonathan Edwards in his *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 374 n.

⁵¹ See the observation of Calvin's use of rhetorical structure in Christoph Stroh, 'Methodology', 72.

⁵² Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxiv.2.

⁵³ Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 235.

⁵⁴ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxv.2.

⁵⁵ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxv.8.

about divine foreordination, but ultimately a statement of a divine gracious act.⁵⁶ This is confirmed also by including this doctrine within soteriological *loci* instead of within the doctrine of God. However, such placement cannot be taken for granted in Reformed evangelical tradition. According to Boughton, Vermigli, Zanchi, and Beza, for instance, had betrayed the more humanistic experimental method of the Reformers by venturing metaphysically into the priority of divine decree as a form of Reformed Aristotelian scholastic metaphysics, while Perkins who followed Beza also discussed predestination under the doctrine of God.⁵⁷

Predestination is followed by calling, by which union with Christ is accomplished. At the beginning of the chapter Ames describes union with Christ as one of the two parts of application (the other being the partaking of the benefits flowing from the union). This twofold division echoes precisely Calvin's teaching.⁵⁸ Furthermore, there are two parts of calling: the (objective) offering of Christ and its personal

(subjective) reception.⁵⁹ If the objective presentation of Christ is the sufficient and necessary means of salvation, the subjective reception of Christ can be termed conversion or regeneration.⁶⁰

Thus, regeneration here is not understood as the objective operation of the Holy Spirit creating faith in the heart of a believer; rather, it emphasizes the subjective side of the believer in receiving Christ's offer of salvation. This (passive) reception of Christ's offer is generated especially in the will since the enlightening of mind only is not sufficient.⁶¹ The turning of will to do good and to shun evil is called repentance.⁶² Thus, repentance might be viewed as the fruit of conversion or regeneration.

In his *Institutes*, Calvin also understood repentance as 'our regeneration by faith',⁶³ even identifying it with regeneration:

Therefore, in a word, I interpret repentance as regeneration, whose sole end is to restore in us the image of God that had been disfigured and all but obliterated through Adam's transgression.⁶⁴

Repentance consists in two parts: mortification (of the flesh) and vivification (by the Holy Spirit). Note that in Calvin's order, repentance comes after faith for it is the fruit of faith. Ames however, perceives repentance as prior to faith.⁶⁵

56 Eusden, 'Introduction to Ames' in *Marrow*, 27-28.

57 Cf. Lynne Courter Boughton, 'Supralapsarianism and the Role of Metaphysics in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology' in *WTJ* 48 (1986), 65; William Perkins, *A Golden Chain: Or the Description of Theology* I.105-12, in *Works* (London, 1616); see Jan van Vliet, 'Decretal Theology and the Development of Covenant Thought: An Assessment of Cornelis Graafland's Thesis with a Particular View to Federal Architects William Ames and Johannes Cocceius' in *WTJ* 63 (2001) 401n33.

58 Calvin, *Institute*s III.i.1 and IV.i.1; see also Billy Kristanto, *Sola Dei Gloria: The Glory of God in the Thought of John Calvin* (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 2011), 140-141.

59 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.7.

60 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.19.

61 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.21-24.

62 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.29.

63 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.iii.

64 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.iii.9.

65 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.31.

How does the relation of repentance to faith in Ames' thought distinguish him from Calvin? First, Ames states that repentance and faith have the same cause and principles as both are God's free gifts; secondly, both are in the will; thirdly, they are begotten at the same time.⁶⁶ Though begotten at the same time, repentance can be said to precede faith because from the perspective of a sinner the belief in being reconciled to God in Christ (faith) follows the feeling of having left one's sins behind (repentance).⁶⁷

The similar order is also attested in Calvin's *Institutes*, using a different vocabulary, namely the relation between repentance and forgiveness of sins. In the same tenor Calvin notes that in a sense repentance is the prior condition of forgiveness, yet, at the same time it is not the basis of our deserving pardon.⁶⁸ What is called forgiveness of sins by Calvin, is termed faith by Ames.

Therefore, Kendall's representation of Ames' *ordo salutis*, describing repentance as the prerequisite to faith, is a one-sided statement.⁶⁹ It is true that 'repentance, so far as it comprises the care, anxiety, and terror connected with the law, precedes faith in order of nature, as a preparing and disposing cause'; however, as already noted above, repentance and faith are 'begotten at the same time'. On the other hand, 'insofar as it turns man away effectively and genuinely from sin, by which God is offended', repent-

ance even 'follows faith and depends upon it as an effect upon its cause'.⁷⁰ Thus, Ames can say both that repentance precedes faith and faith precedes repentance, depending upon in what sense they are interrelated.

In his *Commentary on John* written before the fourth and the fifth edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin also holds the view that we should not feel obliged to choose between the order of faith—regeneration or regeneration—faith.

It may be thought that the Evangelist reverses the natural order by making regeneration to precede faith, whereas, on the contrary, it is an effect of faith, and therefore ought to be placed later. I reply, that both statements perfectly agree; because by faith we receive the *incorruptible seed* (1 Peter 1:23), by which we are born again to a new and divine life. And yet faith itself is a work of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in none but the children of God. So then, in various respects, faith is a part of our regeneration, and an entrance into the kingdom of God, that he may reckon us among his children. The illumination of our minds by the Holy Spirit belongs to our renewal, and thus faith flows from regeneration as from its source; but since it is by the same faith that we receive Christ, who sanctifies us by his Spirit, on that account it is said to be the beginning of our adoption.⁷¹

Thus, Ames follows Calvin when he perceives regeneration as prior to faith in order to emphasize the initiative

66 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.30.

67 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.30.

68 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.iii.20.

69 R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), 159-160.

70 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxvi.30.

71 Calvin, *Commentary on John* 1:13.

character of divine work as the cause of human response.

The Reformed evangelical tradition that one-sidedly speaks of regeneration before faith comes from the writings of Peter Martyr Vermigli. Not only so, Vermigli even understands regeneration as 'the initial point at which God begins to bring about redemption in the life of an individual'.⁷² Vermigli's concept finds strong reception in later Reformed Orthodoxy. By accommodating both the order of faith-regeneration and of regeneration-faith, the broader Reformed evangelical tradition as in Calvin and Ames has successfully maintained the twofold perspective from the causal divine act as well as from the subjective human experience. It has thereby managed to accommodate the broader evangelical soteriological concepts which commonly begin with faith.

VII Happiness

The notion of happiness is mentioned by Ames at the end of his 'ordo salutis', on the topic of glorification. He describes glorification as 'the real change in man from misery, or the punishment of sin to eternal happiness'.⁷³ In his *Marrow of Theology*, happiness appears

seven times: in the discussion on the nature of theology, on special government of intelligent creatures, on the consequences of sin, on the difference between the new and the old covenant, and finally on glorification.

Ames seems to distinguish between goodness and happiness, or between human pleasure and divine glory. Living well is considered more excellent than living happily, because happiness, which has to do rather with human pleasure, should not be the chief end of human striving; it is rather 'goodness which looks to God's glory' that has to be striven for.⁷⁴

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle already wrote that living happily could be identified with living well although there had been disagreement on what kind of life could be regarded as living well:

Verbally there is a very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is [*eudaimonia*], and identify living well and faring well with being happy; but with regard to what [*eudaimonia*] is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise. For the former think it is some plain and obvious thing like pleasure, wealth or honour ...⁷⁵

Aristotle then mentioned the possibilities such as a life of pleasure (associated with Epicurus), a life of political activity, and a philosophical life. For Aristotle, *eudaimonia* is a life

⁷² Frank A. James III, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562)', in Carter Lindberg (ed.), *The Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Modern Period* (Oxford et al.: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 203; in Vermigli's own words: 'This is the righteousness which first clings and adheres to our minds by the blessing of God through Christ.' (Peter Martyr Vermigli, *In Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos commentarij doctissimi* ... [Basel: P. Perna, 1558], 517).

⁷³ Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxx.1.

⁷⁴ Ames, *Marrow*, I.i.8.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* §21; 1095a17, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

of 'virtuous activity in accordance with reason'.⁷⁶ It is obvious that Ames carefully avoided the Epicurean hedonistic philosophy in his definition of theology through his exclusion of living happily.

Ames also took up the Aristotelian philosophy on the close tie between *eudaimonia* and *arête* by emphasizing the glory of God as the highest Christian virtue to be pursued. Furthermore, the eternal state of happiness or unhappiness is the *telos* of humanity as intelligent creatures created after the image of God.⁷⁷ In the same manner, the elected angels are endowed with full happiness in the fullness of glory.⁷⁸

However, the fall into sin brings punishment as its consequence. This punishment deprives the good of happiness.⁷⁹ God then renewed the broken old covenant through the new covenant that led humanity to happiness once lost.⁸⁰ Finally, eternal happiness is the final state brought by the real change of glorification and felt in intimate participation in the chief good.⁸¹ There is an inseparability between true happiness and divine glory.

Thus, Ames differentiated between true happiness and false happiness resulting from human beings striving for their own pleasure. The notion of the inseparable connection between human happiness and divine glory is then taken up by Jonathan Edwards. For him, God's glory consists in humanity's love to God for his excellence

and rejoicing in this excellence.⁸² At the same time, the true happiness and joy of humanity consist in rejoicing in God and in God's excellence. Through Ames, Edwards strongly relates the vision of divine glory to the idea of human happiness. On this point, Edwards has modified American Puritanism via his predecessor.

Conclusion

The significance of Ames in the evangelical tradition is indubitable. However, significant departure and development of thought in Ames within the tradition cannot be underestimated. Ames started his *Marrow* with the issue of faith as an act of human will, thereby emphasizing the practical dimension of his theology.

His theological voluntarism certainly cannot be interpreted as a boasting of the human will against the work of the Holy Spirit that precedes faith. Rather, it is a development in the rise of Reformed Orthodoxy no longer in combat with the medieval Roman Catholicism. While it has its root in Augustine, Ames' theological voluntarism was a significant development in the evangelical tradition. It might help to correct the modern theological rationalism that has proved insufficient in the project of Enlightenment.

On the relation between religion and affections, Ames placed inward affections particularly in relation with true

76 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b22-1098a20.

77 Ames, *Marrow*, I.x.2.

78 Ames, *Marrow*, I.x.18.

79 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xii.11.

80 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxiv.16.

81 Ames, *Marrow*, I.xxx.1.

82 Jonathan Edwards, 'The End for Which God Created the World', in John Piper (ed.), *God's Passion for His Glory* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1998) 245. For various Amesian echoes in the thought of Jonathan Edwards see the study in Vliet, *The Rise*, 233-263.

religious worship, while religion itself is the first part of observance (the other part being justice or righteousness), which is the second part of theology (the first part being faith). A typical product of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ames was critical of the sufficiency of mere theoretical knowledge while heavily emphasizing the role of will in the context of his theological voluntarism. Consequently, affections are not part of Christian faith but its integral whole. The problem with today's Christianity is that on the one side some knowledgeable Christians are not affectionate while on the other side some other affectionate or enthusiast Christians do not have sufficient theological concepts. For Ames, theological knowledge and religious affections go hand in hand.

Ames was an advocate of the concept of a twofold divine image. He placed the treatment of the *imago Dei* in the context of the doctrine of sin and sanctification in Christ, thus in a strong soteriological dimension. In this respect, Ames' anthropology was in full continuity with the evangelical tradition.

Although using different vocabularies and definitions, Ames is in line with Calvin in his broader understanding of his '*ordo salutis*' regarding regeneration and faith. Unlike the one-sided statement that Reformed evangelical theol-

ogy always teaches that regeneration precedes faith, both Ames and Calvin could also say to a certain extent that faith precedes regeneration (as in the broader evangelical tradition). Such broader understanding might help minimize the polemic tension between Calvinist and non-Calvinist evangelicals, thus offering an ecumenical potential.

Finally, though Ames could also speak positively of human happiness when related to obedience and divine glory, he had a certain reservation for defining theology as living happily/blessedly. Ames successfully created a school in the evangelical tradition that is basically critical towards the idea of happiness. Drawing traditionally from Perkins, Ramus, and Aristotle, Ames emphasized the search for God's glory as the highest Christian virtue.

This in turn is the foundation of living well that finally leads to true and eternal happiness. Originating in Calvin's theology, the centrality of *gloria dei* was taken up and developed as a central motivation in evangelical ethics by Ames. It is not that happiness does not have a place in evangelical spirituality; rather, the search for human happiness tends to move towards a self-centred direction that finally results in a sinful hedonistic living. Here, Ames' theology can help safeguard the integrity of a godly evangelical spirituality.