

“AND IN ANOTHER MAKE ME UNDERSTOOD”:
READING GEORGE HERBERT IN THE LIGHT OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Anne Judith Menkens

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of English.

Chapel Hill
2009

Approved by:

Reid Barbour

Darryl Gless

Megan Matchinske

John Wall

Jessica Wolfe

© 2009
Anne Judith Menkens
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

Anne J. Menkens: “And in another make me understood”: Reading George Herbert in the
Light of his Contemporaries
(Under the direction of Reid Barbour)

This dissertation examines the ways critics have coupled George Herbert with different authors and thinkers of his era and analyzes the effects of these pairings on what Herbert has meant to readers. The specific fellow writers considered are Richard Hooker/John Calvin (in whose company Herbert looks like a religious partisan); Francis Bacon (as “modern” thinker, examining the physical world separated from a religious interpretation); and John Donne (as artist, creating dramatic speakers in conversation with God). To a great extent, critics have used such couplings to convey the values they wish to impart to readers and build the literary canon thereby. Herbert is a special case because of the sheer variety of appropriations made of his work since its first publication and the often contentious nature of these appropriations. Moreover, Herbert seems aware of his own work’s flexibility and describes the uses of this quality in social discourse.

The review of the literature traces not only the roller coaster ride that has been Herbert’s critical reception but also the dozens of introductions to Herbert’s works. Then, for each case, we look first at the shifting scholarship surrounding the fellow authors and then examine how Herbert engages with the questions raised by the other authors’ works. “Herbert on the Religious Spectrum” examines the contentious area of study that places his work on the religious spectrum between presbyterianism and what would later be called “Anglo-Catholicism. “Herbert and Bacon” starts with Herbert and

Bacon's mutual admiration and examines how both men's works use nature to talk about God in complicated ways. And "Herbert and Donne" examines the assumptions and biases surrounding Herbert's coupling with John Donne, the fellow poet-priest and "founder" of the "metaphysical school" of which Herbert was considered a member by many critics from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. In every case, we parse where critics' concerns start and Herbert's end, concluding, ultimately, that Herbert's intention in using argument, philosophy, and artistry, and in examining his own role in the discourse of religion, science, and art, is to fulfill a pastoral mission.

To my mother, Gladys Clark Menkens, and my father, Edward George Menkens.

My parents gave me a love of reading and introduced me to the life of the mind.

These are precious gifts. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I came to this project after several years of not engaging with English literature or its criticism. I am grateful to my dissertation director, Reid Barbour, for his endless patience for all the “catching up” I had to do, as well as his consistently insightful reading and kind and constructive comments. John Wall offered good, close reading (and lively discussion) of my Chapter 3; Darryl Gless and Jessica Wolfe provided a warm welcome back to the department and fruitful initial conversations; and Megan Matchinske asked the all important “so what” question that helped me bring my argument home more effectively than I would have done otherwise. These individuals may take their breadth and depth of understanding of these topics for granted, but I surely do not.

Thanks also to my colleagues at the North Carolina Institute for Public Health, for their support and encouragement of me during this process.

Thanks and deep gratitude to Jonathan Weiler, who read every word and offered unfailingly keen insights at every turn. I truly couldn't have written it without him.

To my soon-to-be husband, Greg Duyck, whose support and love are the foundation upon which all my work and aspirations are built.

And, finally, to my loving, dear, and brilliant daughter, Lillian, who is the light of my life—indeed, the “light” in which I hope always to be read. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Idea of Coupling	1
Why Herbert?.....	3
The Problem of Coupling.....	6
Case #1: Herbert on the Religious Spectrum.....	8
Case #2: Herbert and Bacon and the Scientific Method.....	10
Case #3: Herbert and Donne: Talking to God	11
Drawing Conclusions.....	13
Notes	16
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	17
Introduction.....	17
The Seventeenth Century: The “companion to the primitive Saints”.....	18
Eighteenth Century: “Enthusiasm without sublimity”	22
Nineteenth Century: “The Mission of poetry is refining, pure and holy”	23
Twentieth Century and Beyond	27
Twentieth Century Tendency #1: <i>The Temple Poems</i> as Art	29
Twentieth Century Tendency #2: The Religious Wars.....	34
The Current Era.....	38

Reading Herbert in the Light of His Contemporaries	40
Notes	41
III. HERBERT ON THE RELIGIOUS SPECTRUM.....	42
Introduction.....	42
The Critical Landscape	47
Putting Herbert on the Theological Map	50
Herbert and Hooker.....	52
The “Mother” Church	53
“Give to Thy Mother”	58
Preaching and the Sacraments	61
“Let not Sinne devoure thy fold”	70
“‘This contagious infidelity’”: The Church Militant.....	74
IV. HERBERT AND BACON AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD	81
Introduction.....	81
Francis Bacon’s <i>Great Instauration</i>	84
The Literary Relationship between Bacon and Herbert.....	86
“Why dost thou prie”: Herbert the Anti-Scientist.....	87
“Monuments of his Doctrine”: The Right Study of Creation	89
Things Human and Divine	93
The Footsteps of the Creator.....	95
Metaphysics	97
The Ends of Learning: (Re)Building the Temple	103
The Language of “Sweetnesse”	109

Conclusion	112
V. HERBERT AND DONNE: TALKING TO GOD	114
Introduction.....	114
A Timeline of the Donne-Herbert Coupling.....	114
Herbert as “Deficient Donne”: The New Critical Perspective.....	118
“Cutting up a man that’s dead”: Correspondence and Communication	132
The Uses of Doubt	139
“I did expect a ring”: Herbert and Donne in Conversation with God.....	142
VI. CONCLUSION.....	148
Herbert Talking Back.....	148
Why is this controversial?.....	153
Going Forward	157
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	160

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Idea of Coupling

Annabel Patterson calls “the habit of coupling writers” one of the most important methods of canon formation. Coupling one writer with another when applying critical readings provides the means for “an effective conveyance of certain traditional values, including the value of tradition itself” (777). Patterson uses Spenser-and-Milton as her case, but she mentions others: Chaucer-and-Spenser, Milton-and-Dryden, Wordsworth (by his own account in *The Prelude*) -and-Chaucer, -Spenser, and -Milton. Patterson examines the content of critics’ coupling of Milton and Spenser, which has primarily focused on echoes from *The Faerie Queene* in *Paradise Lost* and Milton’s prose works. These couplings emphasize the “sage and serious” sides of both authors that “Christian Humanism could admire” according to Patterson (779), and she finds that the connections are actually quite weak. Expanding on the process of “coupling,” Patterson notes that David Norbrook and others have more recently linked Spenser and Milton “in the service of a different agenda.... a radical and reformist one” (777). According to Patterson, critics use coupling “inevitably [to] engage in the broadest possible contest that academic thought and writing can address... – the nature of the procedures, audience, and goals of the canonical process itself” (777). Incidentally, Patterson’s goal is not to “uncouple” Spenser and Milton: her conclusion is that rather than the “sage and serious” Spenser, it is

the “uncouth” Spenser of *The Shepheardes Calender*, which we hear echoed in *Lycidas*, that is more formative to Milton’s career, and illustrative of his theories of education (793). In effect, at the same time that she exposes the machinations of canon formation, Patterson is throwing her hat in the ring of the canon-formation contest, in the form of a new “uncouth” Milton to compete with the Christian Humanist and Radical Reformist ones.

This dissertation will look at the “couplings” of George Herbert, reading the ways critics have coupled Herbert with different authors and thinkers of his era and analyzing the effects of these pairings on what Herbert means to readers. As we shall see, Herbert has been coupled a *lot*, relative to other writers. From the very first editions of his poetry, he was coupled with other authors even in publication, and since then he has rarely been mentioned without the mention, in the same breath, of other individuals or groups, ranging from Richard Hooker to Edward Taylor¹ and Emerson;² from Herrick³ to Emily Dickinson⁴ to Sylvia Plath.⁵ Critics and editors have chosen the “couples” based on their assumptions—and projections—about what Herbert is trying to say with his poetry.

The overarching question I am addressing is “What is the effect on Herbert of looking at him in the light of different writers of his era?” The specific fellow writers I will consider are Richard Hooker/John Calvin (in whose company Herbert looks like a religious partisan); Francis Bacon (Herbert as “modern” thinker, examining the physical world separated from a religious interpretation); and John Donne (Herbert as artist, creating a dramatic speaker in conversation with God). In each case, Herbert claims innocence or others claimed it for him: he does not concern himself with the religious controversies of his day; he couldn’t possibly share Bacon’s concern with science or the

natural world; and he is certainly not writing in order to “torture” words as a metaphysical poet. However, critics have read him in these different lights over the centuries, and he manages, over and over again, to mean one thing and also be a commentary on that thing. He is a religious partisan (which part in the struggle he champions is not fully settled), but also disowns religious partisanship. He understands and appreciates the scientific method, but he criticizes using it to look for God in nature. He uses drama, colloquialism, argument, and erudition à la Donne, but seems to come to very different conclusions about God’s role in the life of the Christian artist. In most cases, there is little attempt to prove that Herbert actually knew the other individual, and it is not always a matter of influence. Rather, there is something about Herbert that makes him open to multiple interpretations, and one of the ways critics have explored—or exploited—this quality is by establishing him as a companion to authors that seem more clearly to represent particular interpretations. We will examine the implications of those couplings—what assumptions underlie them—and explore ways Herbert echoes, comments on, or complicates those observations.

Why Herbert?

On the face of it, Herbert’s work does not seem particularly fit for the breadth of appropriations, not to mention the contentious arguments that have been made about (and with) it. Herbert had a short and relatively limited artistic career. Born in Wales in 1593, he spent his early career as public orator of Cambridge, attempting to climb the courtly ladder; he was elected to represent Montgomery in Parliament in 1624 and 1625 (it is not clear how much he actually served); he took holy orders in 1630 at the age of 37 and died a scant three years later. Walton’s *Life* manages to paint this trajectory as both not what

Herbert initially desired (his court hopes were real, and were dashed only by the deaths of some powerful supporters), and what he had always intended and aspired to. As far as we can tell, Herbert did not circulate his work in manuscript, as was the custom among courtly poets of his age. His English poems, collected under the title *The Temple*, were first published posthumously the year of his death (and thirteen more editions came out before the turn of the century, selling more than 20,000 copies, a high number at that time). His prose work describing the life and character of a country parson, was first published (anonymously by individuals loyal to the King) in 1652. Besides these works, he translated parts of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* into Latin, translated Luigi Cornaro's *Treatise on Temperance*, collected and published proverbs in *Jacula Prudentum* and *Outlandish Proverbs*, and also produced *Briefe Notes on Valdesso's Considerations*, a commentary on Nicholas Ferrar's English translation of *Las ciento diez consideraciones divinas* by Juan de Valdes. The subject of his English works was limited to religious writing framed, at least, as merely personal statements of his own beliefs and aspirations as a Christian. In a certain sense, then, Herbert's English work is limited in scope and also in genre, being mainly lyric poetry and prose "handbook." It would seem that he would not be ripe for appropriation for a breadth of points of view, precisely because his own point of view seems quite narrow.

Herbert is a special case, however, for a few reasons. First, he wrote explicitly religious poetry and prose. Thus he deals directly with what some readers consider "transhistorical truths," eliciting a defensiveness in those readers, while other readers, who may not accept the truth of his religion, or may not accept its fitness for scholarly analysis, dismiss (or embrace) his work as non-literary. Second, he did not just write

about religion, he depicted its workings upon an individual Christian. By doing this he creates a place for readers to see themselves, experience for themselves the powerful emotions, probing doubt, and comforting respite that his speakers depict. This quality, along with his particular subject, makes his poetry immensely appealing and has the potential to make his readers particularly defensive of how it is read. Third, he lived in an era immediately preceding a cataclysmic upheaval of the religious and political establishments that had structured English society. It is difficult for later readers to see him without our view being distorted by that upheaval. One of the effects of this distortion is that we forget, sometimes, that anything *else* was going on in early seventeenth-century England besides people taking up sides for the coming conflagration. And finally, Herbert did not (usually) write simple, straightforward poems. He did not write clear theology, epic renditions of Scripture, or poetic clarifications of abstract Christian beliefs: he described as many different experiences of Christianity as he could imagine, and used wordplay, structural variety, dramatic devices, and cultural references both straightforward and complex. This complexity allows and challenges readers to find many meanings in his poems, and look for meanings in those that seem at first glance to be uncomplicated.

These characteristics taken together make Herbert particularly open to interpretation, manipulation, and appropriation for one of the central debates of our discipline: how to read the past. Admittedly, he shares these characteristics with many others of his era who were not thus appropriated, and we will come at length to look again at this question of why he is a fitting subject of this study and what his poetry can say to us today.

The Problem of Coupling

The coupling of Herbert's work with that of others allows us to see very different facets of his skill, interests, and values. To a greater or lesser extent, critics have used such coupling to convey the values they wish to impart to readers. The cases I have chosen vary widely. In the case of the religious spectrum, the association between Herbert and one or another of the guiding lights of the Tudor and Jacobean church has been assumed, and until recently not explicitly examined, by critics. The overall assumption has been that for Herbert, the focus is always on God and heaven rather than other people and the world, and the power relationships he depicts (for example) are not political but essential and from God. His place on the religious spectrum has usually been looked at from only one angle at a time, and it is based on the reader's understanding of the English Church, not (necessarily) on what the words Puritan, Protestant, Anglican, Catholic, presbyterian, Laudian, and so on, actually meant in the seventeenth century (if they were used at all). For example, critics such as Coleridge who consider Herbert the voice of the "established church of Hooker and Laud" are espousing with this coupling the value of what became the Anglican, even Anglo-Catholic, church of the nineteenth century. Barbara Lewalski, in response to critics who underscored the Catholic meditative and Counter-Reformation influences on seventeenth-century poets, emphasized the "Protestant" poetics she saw at work; other critics then complained about the "Puritanizing" of the Herbert canon. And most critics assume that a writer of Herbert's era (although he died 10 years before the English Civil War began)

would necessarily be a systematic theologian or, at the very least, have a rigid place on the religious spectrum of the day.

The other two couplings are similarly complicated by changes in how critics read Herbert's companions. Clearly, if C.S. Lewis is anxious to denounce Francis Bacon as one who "[sought] knowledge for the sake of power... with no higher omnipotence claimed for God" (qtd. in Bush 13-14), Lewis would be among the many critics "astonished" by a connection of Bacon with "the saintly Mr. Herbert." In fact, the coupling with Bacon has been almost exclusively a negative one. And yet, unlike either of the other couplings I look at, this is the only one affirmed in writing by both men involved. Herbert must have seen something in Bacon that critics of Bacon, until perhaps recently, did not see. Finally, a generation of readers was introduced to Herbert *through* John Donne and New Critical readings of his lyric poetry, in whose light Herbert becomes the "saint," again, and not in a good way.

Throughout this dissertation, I will be doing several things. First, Chapter 2 will summarize the critical apparatus that has carried Herbert from his day to ours. This summary will consider not only the critical attention to Herbert but also a sampling of introductions to Herbert that have accompanied his work over the centuries. An introduction to a work is essentially an argument for reading that work, and the arguments for reading Herbert have changed in ways that provide remarkable insight into the assumptions behind his concurrent critical reception. Following the literature review will be three chapters dedicated to my three cases. Each chapter will begin with a summary of how Herbert has been coupled with the particular other writer by editors and critics. Then, acknowledging that in some cases these are *misreadings* of the other author,

I will describe what I see as the assumptions underlying the particular coupling. For the major assumptions, I will look to Herbert for signs that he does, in fact, espouse that point of view or illustrate that notion, value, or characteristic. Finally, I will look for ways that Herbert seems explicitly to be complicating a reading of him in that particular light. The difficulty will be in handling point-of-view issues, to ensure that at every turn we are clearly dealing with Herbert's coupling with a set of ideas, not, necessarily, on some "transhistorical" truth about the English Church, or Baconian science, or Donne's persona in the ever-shifting assessment in the eyes of scholars of the seventeenth century. For the most part, I'll save most suggestions about *why* critics may have made the couplings, the broader implications of trends in Herbert scholarship, as well as a suggestion of Herbert's own role in all of this, for the conclusion (or the convenient category of "future research").

Case #1: Herbert on the Religious Spectrum

I am essentially looking at the arguments that have arisen based on what light has been deemed right for reading George Herbert, and nowhere is the word "argument" more appropriate than in the chapter on Herbert's place on the religious spectrum of his day, the spectrum that spanned the gap between presbyterianism and what has sometimes been called (though would never have been called at the time⁶) "Anglo-Catholicism" in the years before, during, and after the English Civil War. For from its publication (which, again, happened 10 years before the war began), Herbert's work was immediately appropriated for the conflict and his partisan stance posthumously assigned, indeed is still being assigned today.

Readings of George Herbert along these lines have put him in the company of the major influences on the English Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Richard Hooker, who has often himself been paired with William Laud, and John Calvin, whose influence on English church doctrine has in more recent years been seen as central. Traditionally, readers who have read Herbert as inheriting Hooker's world view and anticipating Laud's have seen Herbert as a conformist high-church Anglican, using his saintly equanimity, aversion to contention, and love of ceremony to counter "prattling" schismatics in England and the "undrest" meanness of continental reformed churches. Conversely, readers who have read him in the company of Calvin have looked at Herbert's saintly equanimity and aversion to contention as a reaction (anachronistically, it turns out) to Laud's aggressive enforcement of high-church liturgy, and these critics have focused more on his characters' personal relationships with God and repeated reliance on Grace, rather than his poetic statements about the beauty and value of the visible (established) church. There has been general agreement that Herbert walked a "middle way" (but then, so did Hooker and, some say, Calvin); the location of that "middle" has changed as well, as we shall see.

So, in Chapter 3, "Herbert on the Religious Spectrum," I will outline how readers have read Herbert as a partisan in the religious controversies of his era. It is now believed that Hooker and Calvin became symbols of ideas and beliefs that may not have corresponded to what either of them actually thought or said. The assumptions behind the couplings are moving targets. In any event, reading Herbert in the light of religious luminaries means his poetry is not merely depicting his own inner struggles, as Walton claims for him—the poems are not diary entries, but little sermons (or sacraments), and

the prose *Courtrey Parson* is not merely a “Mark [for a priest] to aim at” but a depiction of the proper behavior for the English Christian, within the proper English religious structure, whatever that behavior and structure may comprise.

Case #2: Herbert and Bacon and the Scientific Method

The connection of Herbert with the guiding religious lights of his times is regularly taken for granted by critics, whereas when scholars read Herbert with Francis Bacon, they often begin with a disclaimer admitting how “astonishing” it is that Bacon and Herbert could have had anything to admire about one another. And yet, we know they did. Why they did, and how we can see Herbert’s admiration for (and critique of) Bacon in his poetry and prose, is the subject of Chapter 4.

The essential difference between the coupling of Herbert with Hooker and/or Calvin and a coupling of Herbert with Bacon is the difference between the God/heaven-centered approach of the systematic theologian and the human/earth-centered approach of the natural philosopher. Because the majority of the critical attention to Herbert coupled with Bacon has merely noted their mutual admiration while expressing disbelief that they could have felt any true affinity, in this chapter we will first re-read Bacon scholarship to establish a slightly more nuanced reading of him that allows us to take Herbert’s admiration at face value and move forward from there. Recent Bacon scholars find in him much less bifurcation between the religious and philosophical realms, and see in his explorations a search for signs of the God of will with whom Calvin, for example, would have been very comfortable. Herbert, for his part, spends much space criticizing the

search for God in nature, but he, like Bacon, uses nature to talk about God in complicated ways.

Herbert and Donne: Talking to God

In the final substantive chapter we examine Herbert's coupling with John Donne, the fellow poet-priest and "founder" of the "metaphysical school" of which Herbert was considered a member by many critics from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. But at the same time that many critics were comparing Herbert's artistry with that of Donne, Herbert critics have worked to distance Herbert from Donne. One of the reasons they have done this is that a certain condescension toward Herbert began with the earliest critics who coupled the two, which would characterize this coupling as long as it was made: the idea of Herbert as a "lesser" Donne, artistically and philosophically. Many critics who coupled Herbert and Donne based their assessment of Herbert on a reading of Donne as the skeptical, tortured, isolated, and yet erudite and somewhat audacious artist most fitting to the modern taste. Inevitably, Herbert comes off as deficient.

A telling thing about Herbert criticism is that before the twentieth century, "The Church Porch" was generally considered the best poetry in *The Temple*. This is the first section of the work, a collection of pithy couplets in the second person, telling the young reader how to make friends, keep council, listen to sermons, and similar proverbial or commonplace book-type advice. Editors of Herbert before the mid-nineteenth century or so often apologized for much that they found in the rest of *The Temple*—his stylistic flourishes of conceit, colloquial language, dramatic settings—but praised the piety and

good sense so clearly expressed in those lines. In the twentieth century, his obvious piety became, if not outright embarrassing, at least an awkward fact to some critics. In focusing instead on the artistry, they looked for a debt to Donne, who used an amplified version of all these stylistic elements that now made Herbert attractive. This comparison throws into relief some basic differences between the two, which have implications for how they are read. For example, Herbert's speaker is much more apt than Donne's to come (sometimes at length) to clear answers to the questions raised in scenes of doubt and despair. Also his speaker is less isolated than Donne's: the "drama" of Herbert's poems seems often to conclude with a denouement that implies more certainty of God's presence in the life of the Christian speakers. Finally, Herbert's imagery is much more apt to stay in the domestic realm familiar to his parishioners, and his conceits are generally considered less erudite and "tortured" than Donne's. For some critics, this all meant that Herbert's artistry and philosophical stance were essentially naïve when compared with Donne's skepticism and angst.

Keeping in mind that the criticism of these two has moved far away from such simplistic readings of both poets, in Chapter 5 we examine the merits of this reading and go beyond it to look more closely at how Herbert and Donne use the stylistic elements that characterize their poetry, particularly drama and the extended conceit, to depict and investigate the relationship between the Christian and God. Herbert and Donne are no longer automatically coupled, but the coupling can illuminate a deeper understanding of both poets.

Drawing Conclusions

In the spring of 1989 (or thereabouts), Cleanth Brooks came to speak at Carolina about the New Criticism and its place in critical history. He used the analogy of the study of architecture to talk about the field of English literary studies. The “old” historicists who came before, Brooks said, were like students who looked at a building and wanted to learn all about its creator – who was the architect? Where was he or she born? Where did he study? What other buildings did she design? After what other building was the building modeled? Then, Brooks continued, the New Critics came along and wanted a key to the house. They wanted to look inside the building. How many rooms are there? What do the different rooms look like? What do they look like in a different light? How did the builder use the different tools of his or her trade to design the building? How do we feel when we are inside?

Brooks stopped there, but I would continue the analogy to the New Historicism, which was popular at the time Brooks was speaking (and against which, at some level, he was defending his oeuvre). The New Historicists asked about the neighborhood – what other buildings are near-by? What was the building used for? What were the laws, or religious beliefs, or social structures that had an effect on the building’s design or use? Is it in the shadow—or light—of something else? What can other theories of architecture that arose later tell us about the significance of the building?

The metaphor, of course, illustrates the value systems that dictate how literary critics approach literature. If one finds value in the poet as Creator, one will choose a worthy creator to read; with Coleridge, for example, one will argue that a spiritual affinity down to the specific sect of Christianity and level of preferred formality in that

sect is necessary to appreciate a particular Christian poet. On the other hand, if one finds value in the House—the poem as interesting maze of rooms, needing a string with which to follow the seemingly endless ways “out”—then the more complex, multifaceted and difficult poems are inevitably more valued. And if it’s the neighborhood that matters, sometimes we don’t need to look at the house very closely at all—although the best of those critics will shed light on both the culture and the individual works.

All of this points to much larger questions about core methodological issues of our discipline: how we read and how we use context to understand what we read. Do we read the work in the light of its culture or our own? Do we look at the work in light of its author, his or her biography, gender, friendship with other authors, country of origin, or professional life outside of authoring? Do we try to separate it from these things, looking inside the work, in light of our understanding of aesthetics, rhyme, imagery, language, and the like? Do we call it Renaissance or Early Modern?

Herbert absorbed a debate in English literature studies that goes beyond religious matters—a philosophical debate about 1) how to read texts; and 2) how to read religious texts, specifically. In about the mid-1980s, the term “early modern” began being applied to what had previously been called “Renaissance” in literary studies. One of the effects of this shift is to symbolize the tug of war being played with authors of the era, Herbert among them. Were these writers looking backward or forward? Were they connected with what the twentieth century perceived as a medieval sense of order and truth, a sense of integration within the community and understanding of the self in terms of that community, which is natural and god-ordered? Or, are they connected with what the twentieth century perceived as an inwardly oriented individual, who has a shrewd

understanding of power structures and how they work and (it follows) a fundamental distrust of those power structures and any “transhistorical” truths that may emanate from them? Herbert’s part in the debate stayed primarily within the realm of whether he was more “Catholic” or more “Puritan,” but it is easily seen how that debate becomes about politics and world view. And the whole debate seems to drown out the idea that an author may be a product of his times, not just his religious or even political times, or, conversely, an author may speak to us through his created work’s artistry beyond time and place. Some artists, like Herbert, may do it all.

In this dissertation I take one small facet of this issue—how readers use context to understand literature—and apply it to George Herbert’s work, asking the question, What does Herbert mean in the light of those with whom we often repeatedly have compared him? With this work I mean both to protect Herbert from appropriations, and to do a richer, evidentiary-based, and flexible job of contextualizing him. In the end, perhaps, we will have a clearer view not only of our ever-shifting engagement with Herbert’s work, but also of his own engagement with the habits of thought and discourses of his time.

Notes

1. Summers makes this connection in *George Herbert: His Religion and Art* pp.16-17, and Louis Martz makes the connection in his forward to *The Poems of Edward Taylor*, ed. Stanford, Donald E. New Haven: Yale UP, 1960. Also, Wm. J. Scheik, "Typology and Allegory: A Comparative Study of George Herbert and Edward Taylor" *Essays in Literature* 2 1975, 76-86).
2. Emerson's admiration of Herbert's poetry is well documented: see *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1833-1836*; see also "The Corn and the Wine": Emerson and the Example of Herbert," Michael J. Colacurcio, *Nineteenth Century Literature* 42(1) (June, 1987), 1-28.
3. In her introduction to *Two Gentle Men*, Marchette Chute cannot explain why she coupled these two poets, except for their biographical similarities.
4. Oberhaus, Dorothy Huff: "Herbert and Emily Dickinson: A Reading of Emily Dickinson" In (pp. 345-368) Miller, Edmund (ed.); DiYanni, Robert (ed.), *Like Season'd Timber: New Essays on George Herbert*. New York: Peter Lang, 1987. xvi, 396 pp.. (New York: Seventeenth-Cent. Texts & Studies 1). (1987)
5. In his introduction to *The Essential Herbert* (1987), Anthony Hecht puts Herbert in the context of modern poets and poetics, mentioning (as fellow "confessional poets") Robert Lowell, W.D. Snodgrass, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Allen Ginsberg, claiming that "[the label] applies more justly to George Herbert than to any modern poet" (3)
6. According to Diarmaid MacCulloch (*The Reformation*), the word "Anglican" was first used by James VI of Scotland (disparagingly) in 1598 and was not in wide use in our period; the word "Anglo-Catholic" was not used until the nineteenth century. In this chapter, I have tried to avoid over-dependence on words Herbert would not have used, or would have used differently than we may, but in some cases I am also trying to remind the reader that whoever did use those words (Puritan, Catholic, Anglican, etc.) had particular designs or assumptions in doing so.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This dissertation is about arguments being made *about* Herbert, but it is also about arguments being made *with* Herbert, whether explicitly or implicitly. I believe that, more than other authors, Herbert has been used to serve particular purposes over the years and that one of the ways these purposes have been furthered has been through the coupling of him with other writers and thinkers and the ideas they represent. These couplings have been made not only by critics and scholars trying to tell us what Herbert means, but also by Herbert's editors, who have included his religious devotees and fellow artists of his day and our own. Thus, this summary will consider not only the roller coaster ride of George Herbert's critical reception over the almost four centuries since his works were first published, but also a sampling of the dozens of introductions to Herbert that have accompanied his works' publication.

An introduction to a work of art is essentially an argument for reading that work, written by an editor at least somewhat sympathetic with the writer, writing for a particular audience at a particular time (though with aspirations for future readers). The goal of any introduction is, as Ferrar stated in the first introduction to Herbert's *Temple*, to "interest any mortall man in the patronage of [the book]." In the case of Herbert's book, Ferrar is here contrasting his own goal to Herbert's, for Herbert dedicated *The Temple* "to the *Divine Majestie* onely" (Hutchinson 3). In fact, all editors of Herbert's

Temple are making an argument Herbert almost refused to make: why should anyone *not supernatural* read this work? I say “almost” because Herbert’s speaker does make a claim for his verses in the first lines of “The Church-porch;” editors and critics will make the most of “A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies, / And turn delight into a sacrifice” (ll. 1, 5-6) for the next almost four hundred years and counting.¹

The Seventeenth Century: The “companion to the primitive Saints”

The original “critics” of Herbert’s poetry and prose were Herbert’s contemporaries or later seventeenth-century biographers and editors: his brothers, Nicholas Ferrar, Barnabas Oley, Isaak Walton, and many others. Tributes through poetic imitation became a tradition; poets such as John Polwhele, Cardell Goodman, Robert Codrington, Christopher Harvey, Ralph Knevet, George Daniel, and others, including of course Richard Crashaw and Henry Vaughan, used imitations (or sometimes mangled quotations) of Herbert to show their admiration of his “faire booke” (*Patrides Critical Heritage* 3-6; Crashaw 130).

Izaak Walton wrote a *Life* of Herbert (1670) and lives of two of our other subjects: Donne (1640) and Hooker (1665) (he wrote two others: Wotton in 1651, and Sanderson in 1678). Walton couples Herbert with Donne by constructing similar narratives of dashed secular hopes (and, in Donne’s case, a separate secular “persona,” Jack Donne) and final success at opposite ends of the field of religious placement (Donne was Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral). In the case of Herbert-Hooker, Walton emphasizes “saint”-like qualities in both, the narrative about Hooker being that he was meek and mild and, especially, humble (there are 29 instances of words related to “humble” or

“humility” in the *Life of Hooker*; in Herbert, these descriptors occur only after his ordination, which happens about one third of the way into the narrative). Hooker, according to Walton, was not privileged, but great men saw greatness in him and supported his education and advancement in the church. Walton solidifies the link between George Herbert and Hooker-style religious conformity by laying out in the *Life of Mr. Herbert* the proper “Rules” for all English Christians, introducing such practice-related matters as when to kneel and stand (and why), how best to pray, why the English Church has fasts and other traditions, beginning paragraph after paragraph of this matter with “[Herbert] instructed [his parishioners] ...” “he made them know ...” “he inform’d them ...” – putting into Herbert’s mouth what “Reverend Mr. Hooker saies” in the *Polity* (Walton 233-237).

Without fail, seventeenth-century Herbertians “coupled” him with the divine. These earliest critics wrote almost exclusively about Herbert’s piety, which was their primary argument for reading him. Nicholas Ferrar describes Herbert in 1633 as “a companion to the primitive Saints and a pattern or more for the age he lived in” (Hutchinson 3). Oley’s 1652 biographical preface to *The Countrey Parson*² compares Herbert with several Biblical figures, and compares Herbert’s death scene to that of a martyr, “*Mr. Hullier* by name...burnt to death in *Cambridge*; who having the *Common-Prayer Book* in his hand, in stead of a Censor, and using the prayers as incense, offered up himselfe as a whole Burnt Sacrifice to God; with whom the very Book it selfe suffered Martyrdome” (Oley 81). Oley’s point is that Herbert was a son of the established church with martyr-like loyalty to the symbols of that church. Ferrar, too, emphasizes

specifically Herbert's public piety: "His obedience and conformitie to the Church and the discipline thereof was singularly remarkable" (Hutchinson 4).

In the seventeenth century, Herbert was immensely popular and beloved by believers of many stripes. An audience of Christians was assumed (as would be the case, either implicitly or explicitly, until the late nineteenth century), but different types of Christians were addressed by different editors. On one side, many used Herbert as a "bulwark against the Puritan attack" (Summers, *George Herbert* 12) in very specific terms. A contemporary poet, John Polwhele (1633), was pointed (and clear about what "the Church" did *not* include), praising Herbert's "most Catholique Conformitie / Without a nose-twange spoylinge harmonie" (Puritans were said to have characteristically nasal voices) (l. 9-10, Polwhele 61). Oley's biography is addressed specifically not only "To the *Christian*, [but] more designedly, to the *Clergy*-Reader of the same Time, and Rank, and Mind, and in like Condition with the Epistler" (Oley 73). He links Herbert with Thomas Jackson and Nicholas Ferrar, as three "who died in peace," as opposed to those of their profession who suffer under "the ends of the world" of the Civil War (Oley 75). All three "embraced" the Church of England, according to Oley, avoiding errors on the left (Roman Catholic) and right (Puritan) sides (Oley 76) (these are Oley's designations, in praise of Herbert's and the others' "dexterity" in dealing with the controversies on either "hand"). Oley praises Herbert's "carefull, (not scrupulous) observation of appointed Fasts, Lents, and Embers" (80), and describes Herbert's dedication to Anglican devotional practices, taken from the Roman Catholic mass "as gold from drosse" (81). Oley somewhat jarringly applies the concept of social courtesy to the English reformers' decisions to keep some elements from Roman liturgy, "being loth

to give offence.... As our blessed Saviour, being loth to offend the Jews...kept divers old Elements, and made them new Sacraments and Services” (81).

Literal coupling was part of this bulwark. In all editions between 1656 and the Grosart edition of 1874, Herbert’s *Temple* was bound with Christopher Harvey’s *The Synagogue, or The Shadow of the Temple, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, a collection with clearly partisan aims. According to Ilona Bell, who traces this coupling and its effects, with each edition, Harvey adds increasingly aggressive pro-establishment poems, and anonymous writers (one, labeled “I.W.,” is clearly Izaak Walton) write commendatory poems that “[go] to great lengths to cement the bond between Harvey’s aggressive high Anglicanism, and Herbert’s angelic saintliness” (Bell, “In the shadow” 265). An effect of this coupling, according to Bell, is that critics through the centuries (Bell’s article came out in 1987) have accepted the connection between Herbert and “Laud, Hooker, and the rich reasonable ceremoniousness of high Anglicanism” (268). As Joseph Summers puts it, Walton and Harvey saw and created Herbert as a “lovable and naïve Laudian” (Summers, *George Herbert* 13).

Later in the seventeenth century, “Herbert the Anglican began also to appear in the guise of Herbert the Puritan” (Patrides, *Critical Heritage* 12). In her study of Herbert’s reception during the time of the Restoration, Sharon Achinstein notes that “before Walton adopted the poet for an Anglican hagiography,” nonconformist London bookseller Philemon Stephens published several editions that presented Herbert as “the Puritan’s Puritan standing for devotional authenticity in a corrupt age” (Achinstein 430-431). Achinstein summarizes other non-conformists’ uses of Herbert:

In defending a doctrine of earthly poverty in *Saints’ Everlasting Rest*, Richard Baxter recommends Herbert’s riddle “A Poor mans Rod when thou dost ride, is

both a Weapon and a Guide.” Milton cites Herbert’s *Outlandish Proverbs*; Baptist Thomas Vincent counseled godliness to the victims of the fire and plague by citing Herbert; the Nonconformist publisher John Dunton advised readers of *The Athenian Mercury* that Herbert was especially appropriate to women readers. Richard Baxter signed off his powerful tome *Saints’ Everlasting Rest* with a verbatim transcription of Herbert’s “Home,” as if that poem summed up the whole of his preceding book. (Achinstein 431)

Richard Baxter, Peter Sterry, Philip Henry, John Bryan, Oliver Heywood, and the Puritans in colonial America all claimed Herbert as theirs, seeing in him an emphasis on the direct relation of the individual to God. They considered this emphasis the domain of nonconformists, charging that the Roman and English Church’s sacramental system as the vehicle of grace put a barrier between individuals and God. Although Rome (and Canterbury) did not accept the legitimacy of this charge, the assumption stuck, and whether Herbert was emphasizing the communal or the personal relationship with God would become a litmus test for whether he was “nearer Rome or Geneva.”

One last seventeenth-century figure who coupled Herbert with the divine was Francis Bacon, who proclaimed that in Herbert, “Divinitie and Poesie met” (qtd. Patrides, *Critical Heritage* 57). The admiration was mutual: Herbert himself praises Bacon’s work extravagantly. The connection, however, will not be taken up by critics until the twentieth century.

Eighteenth Century: “Enthusiasm without sublimity”

A gap exists in the printing of Herbert’s *Temple* from 1703 until 1799. This gap reflects a dim view of Herbert’s talents then current among critics, even as religious writers writing for religious ends continued to praise Herbert’s piety and emphasize his biography. Hobbes in 1650 had anticipated an era critical of the style of many of the

earlier seventeenth century poets, by commenting on the “needlesse difficulty” of shape poems, “verses contrived to form of an Organ, a Hatchet, and Egge, and Altar, and a payre of Winges” (Hobbes 71). Hobbes did not name Herbert specifically, but was obviously thinking of “The Altar” and “Easter Wings” as examples. He was discussing the unfitness of the forms for epic, but also, presumably, they were not befitting religious verse either.

Later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editors and critics such as Dryden and Johnson were very critical of earlier poets whose style, they believed, was not appropriate for true art. Dryden’s complaint (1693) that Donne “affects the Metaphysics... where nature only should reign,” (Nethercot 11) and Johnson’s in his *Life of Cowley* about the “hyperbolic abstractions” used by the metaphysical poets would not apply to Herbert, but only because the two thought Herbert too provincial, too “inelegant,” as Johnson phrased it, to matter (Johnson did not deign to write a *Life* of Herbert). In 1787, the anthologist Henry Headley uses a negative coupling to put Herbert firmly down, dubbing Herbert “infinitely inferior” (infinitely!) to Quarles and Crashaw: “His poetry is a compound of enthusiasm without sublimity, and conceit without either ingenuity or imagination” (Headley 164). Including only one poem, “The British Church,” in his collection, Headley makes clear that he included Herbert primarily to illustrate what poor taste Herbert’s contemporary admirers had!

Nineteenth Century: “The Mission of poetry is refining, pure and holy”

Literary critics of the nineteenth century continued the general dismissal of Herbert. The *Christian Remembrancer* (1862) is typical of that era. In its listing of

“highest order” religious poets, the anonymous critic writes: “Among our countrymen, Milton stands alone in this category; Cowper, Keble, Trench, and some few others, occupying the next places....To compare Herbert with the colossal genius of Milton would be preposterous. He is more nearly on a par with the others whom we have mentioned” (253).

In response to this critical attitude, the sense of a “defense of Herbert,” or “apology,” rises among Herbert’s nineteenth-century editors: it was a defense of his *matter*, an apology for his *style*. All editors felt obliged to spend time acknowledging Herbert’s poetic faults in their introductions, and most based their argument for overlooking these faults on his works’ edifying power. One of the first collections of Herbert not edited by a clergyman, journalist William Jerdan’s 1853 edition, begins with a statement of literary theory that seems to have been shared by many of the era: “The Mission of Poetry is refining, pure and holy. If it be not, it will not last, descend the stream of time, and be cherished from generation to generation through succeeding ages.” (Jerdan 195). Here Herbert is again coupled with Biblical figures; he “commingl[es] the wisdom of Solomon with the inspiration of David” (199). Nodding to current aesthetic tastes, Jerdan admits that Herbert used “strange and quaint conceits” and typographical shape poems, which the current age does not like; Jerdan quotes at length poems that illustrate “blemishes” of Herbert (204). According to Jerdan, the “Church-porch” is better suited to the nineteenth-century reader than “The Church.” In typical nineteenth-century hyperbole, Jerdan exclaims, “the example and teaching of the Rector of Bemerton have diffused a vast amount of holiness throughout the British Empire and the Universe...!” (199).

Some readers in the nineteenth century, whose English church had shifted toward Anglo-Catholicism, moved Herbert as well. The critics and editors second the old assumption that only the Christian could appreciate Herbert, and most (Willmott, for example) state that the best reader will have “Catholic” sympathies: “Herbert is pre-eminently ceremonial; To a reader without a deep Catholic devotion, he is only the ingenious or the fantastic rhymers; to one who has that feeling, his verses are the strings of a musical instrument, making melody in themselves, and awaking sweet sounds in the hearts of those who hear it” (Willmott xxv). Coleridge’s views on this were clear and influential: a reader needs “sympathy with the mind and character” of Herbert; specifically, the reader must love the church and its ceremonies to truly appreciate Herbert (Summers *George Herbert* 21).

Willmott’s is an early instance of a “coupling” in which Herbert’s worth is defined by his closeness with other authors whose reputations were more firmly established:

[Herbert] stands amid a group of English worthies remarkable for their personal and historic interest. The eloquent Donne was one of his dearest friends; he knew the accomplishments of Wotton, and the learned casuistry of Sanderson; the first portion of Hooker’s wonderful treatise appeared while he was in his cradle; and his childish fancy was enriched by the Essays of Bacon. With Ben Jonson, who survived him about five years, he was likely to be acquainted. Shakspeare he had probably seen in some festive interval of Cambridge life. . . . In this splendid company of theologians, philosophers, and poets, he wore an expression and a costume of his own. (Willmott xxi-xxii)

Grosart’s scholarly edition of Herbert (the first, published in 1874) makes similar speculations: “[Herbert’s] birth-year—1593—reminds us that his Mother’s friend and his own, Donne, was at the very time working on his toothed and memorable Satires. . . ; . . . in that same year Richard Hooker was sending forth ‘Book I.’ of the ‘Ecclesiastical Polity,’

and—at an opposite pole—William Shakespeare his ‘Venus and Adonis;’ while ‘by Mulla’s shore’ Edmund Spenser was perchance musing of ‘Colin Clout’s come home again’” (Grosart xxxiv).

Nineteenth-century criticism takes the personal connection with Herbert the man, which had always characterized the critical apparatus around Herbert, to its logical conclusion. We see realized a Romantic attribution of meaning and intentionality to the person of the author. Earlier, Herbert’s biography lent credence to his religious poems because he was so saintly; the poetry itself was almost beside the point. Now it is the connection of the poems with the life that is significant. Now, when the editors spend time repeating Walton’s biographical detail, it is to illustrate not only Herbert’s saintliness, but also his value as an artist. In this sense, for example, Gilfillan (1853) literally equates the poet’s life with a text, coupling Herbert with Milton and proclaiming that whereas most lives are fragmentary and disappointing, “volumes without a preface, an index, or a moral. . . . [i]t is delightful to turn from such apologies for life to the rare but real lives which God-gifted men, like Milton or Herbert, have been enabled to spend even on this dark and melancholy foot-breadth for immortal spirits, called the earth” (Gilfillan 207). Thus Herbert, like Milton, is great—and not just a great man, but a great poet—because “the life and the poems were thoroughly correspondent and commensurate with each other” (207). This belief that the life was the poetry—that the poet lived the poem, and that made each more perfect—was common in this period.

Gilfillan, by the way, is one of the first editors to allow that non-Anglicans, and even non-Christians, could appreciate Herbert’s work in what he calls its devotional, poetical, and philosophical aspects (Gilfillan 208). He suggests readers may “believe in

Herbert, even when they do not understand him” (Gilfillan 208), and find him meaningful “by the power of conscience, the sense of guilt, and that fear of the terrors and that hope of the joys of a future state of being, by which all hearts at times are moved....” (Gilfillan 208). This connection can be made at least in part because, for the first time, we can believe in this poet as a man. Moreover, we are starting to see his poetry as something other than a text of, and for, the church.

Finally, it is in the nineteenth century that we catch a glimpse of how Herbert’s “saintliness” will become laden with cultural implications. John Ruskin, in a lecture at Oxford in 1874, claims pointedly, “Perfect Christianity is the Christianity of Sir Philip Sidney and George Herbert, *not* of John Knox or Calvin” (qtd. in Patrides 22).

Twentieth century and beyond

Two tendencies in Herbert scholarship, two sets of assumptions about reading his works, were handed down to the twentieth century from the nineteenth. First is a religious possessiveness, which had been wide-ranging, but by the nineteenth century is primarily the domain of Anglicans who see in Herbert a spokesman for their own Anglo-Catholic sensibilities (and untouchable as such). Second, is a Romantic attachment to Herbert the man and his poetic statements. The former of these can be seen in Arthur Waugh’s edition of 1907, which treats Herbert’s poems as symbols of the English Church in all its perfection: “the very embodiment of her principles and doctrine,” he calls them (Waugh v). Herbert’s poems are not to be criticized: “So much are they become a portion of the literature of devotion that it can be no part of the present rough picture of the saintly figure which created them to submit them to cold, analytical criticism” (Waugh xvi).

George Herbert Palmer's *The English Works of George Herbert* (1905), perhaps the most authoritative edition up to that point, illustrates the second of these strands, the Romantic attention to Herbert's life and the poems as statements of that life. Palmer rearranged the order of the poems to fit his idea of a "chronological order," dividing the poems into three sections: "Cambridge Poems," possibly written before Herbert considered taking orders, "The Crisis," eighteen poems in which Palmer detects "references to Herbert's hesitation about entering the priesthood," and "Bemerton Poems," written presumably during the three years of his installment at Salisbury. Within this last section, moreover, Palmer grouped poems further narrowly, under the titles "The Happy Priest," "Bemerton Study," "Restlessness," "Suffering," and "Death," in that order (Hutchinson lxviii). The principle behind this grouping is that the life was important as an organizing force for the work and is, in fact, more important than the work as it existed. Hutchinson disagrees with the order Palmer has chosen, but he shares the principle that poems may be organized by Herbert's life, and uses them to make his point that Palmer's order is faulty: "As the two poems named 'The Temper' show, [Herbert] was a man of moods, which succeed one another quickly" not, as in Palmer, marching methodically from happiness to malaise (Hutchinson lxix).

It is in the twentieth century that rigorous critical attention will first be paid to Herbert, and it will stem from, and react to, these two tendencies. First, an increasingly secular audience will follow Palmer to a reading of the poems as artistic renditions of a questioning, tortured soul rather than depictions of a "refining, pure, and holy" message. Second, readers who do explore Herbert's religion will move that discussion from the ethereal and unexamined coupling with saints, angels, and biblical figures to a very self-

conscious tug-of-war between critics who want him read as the spokesman for Hooker and Laud and others who want him read as a spokesman for Calvinism in the English Church. The political implications of these readings are for the first time since the seventeenth century brought to the fore, and Herbert absorbs what is to become a major battle in twentieth-century literary and cultural debates.

Twentieth-century tendency #1: *The Temple* Poems as Art

We saw that when Palmer rearranged Herbert's poems in "chronological" order he presumed to make the life more important than the works. He also decided that what was credible about that life would be a movement from relative comfort, through hesitation and crisis and relief, to eventual re-infection with doubt and misery. A few years later (1918), in *Formative Types in English Poetry*, Palmer again explains his reasoning: Herbert entered the priesthood and "at first he found great happiness in it," but "he could not help wondering whether such a life was what God and he had intended" (Palmer *Formative Types* 16). The only biographical information we have of Herbert, that written by Walton, however, disproves Palmer's speculation that Herbert suffered from malaise at the end of his life (Hutchinson lxix). Thus, the rearrangement is meant to illustrate Palmer's speculation about Herbert's life at Bemerton, but aside from his own biases about such a life, it is based on the presence throughout *The Temple* of poems that grapple with the priestly submission to God's service. In other words, Palmer bases his "biographical" rearrangement of the poems on the poems themselves (though not on the structure of *The Temple* as a whole, of course). Inadvertently, with this argument Palmer

moves away from the attachment to the life that had ostensibly motivated him to rearrange the poems in the first place.

Furthermore, in rearranging the poems as he does, it is as if Palmer were unable to accept that a man like Herbert, whose poetry reflects a keen understanding of the excruciating struggle any person of faith feels when faced with the realities of life, could come at length to a simple submission to a faith like that depicted in “Love” (III). Palmer confesses great personal attachment to George Herbert (More 298), and he rearranges the poem to fit his own understanding of a maturing mind: that of the progress from simple faith to complex doubt. Moreover, it is this very doubt that makes Herbert’s poetry valuable: “It is chiefly Bemerton with its enforced loneliness, questionings, revolts, and visions of completed love which made Herbert an example of all that is best in the metaphysical poetry of the inner life” (Palmer, *Formative Types* 295). A reviewer of Palmer’s text complains that Palmer sounds “a note of apology, as if Herbert’s religious emotion were something outworn and outgrown, something incomprehensible” to the twentieth-century reader (More 299). I would not go so far as to say it was “incomprehensible,” but Herbert’s “religious emotion” was, among a certain type of secular twentieth-century reader, not the selling point it once was, to say the least.

An essay from 1921 changes the terms of the debate in a different way: the conflict in Herbert’s life “was a conflict between ambition and beauty;.... There were in him the courtier and the artist, and only gradually and painfully did the artist win” (Clutton-Brock 325). Suddenly, we do not have to talk about religion because Herbert was concerned, really, with something else:

Nowadays the artist would not express himself like Herbert; but he would feel the same temptations and need the same renunciation, not for nothingness, but for the

beauty that is his deepest and most permanent desire. Some artists never have to make the choice; beauty is to them the only temptation; the world does not exist except as an outside enemy. But for Herbert it was an enemy within, and that is why he fortifies himself with incessant self-analysis, why he must be telling himself ... that beauty, which he calls God, is his true desire. (Clutton-Brock 325-26)

Most critics were not re-naming Herbert's aim as purely aesthetic, but this attitude marks a turn toward an understanding and appreciation of Herbert's artistry over and above his purely didactic elements. Hutchinson describes the twentieth-century reader's reception of Herbert:

Certain excellences of Herbert as poet are generally recognized to-day. His craftsmanship is conspicuous. Almost any poem of his has its object well defined; its leading idea is followed through with economy and brought to an effective conclusion, the imagery which runs through it commonly helping to knit it together. He takes much care to select a verse-form to match the content, and he constantly varies the incidence of the rhymes and the length of the lines. (Hutchinson xlix-l)

Needless to say, these would not have been the "excellences" Johnson—or Walton, for that matter—would have highlighted.

Twentieth-century critics value the parts of Herbert for which earlier critics apologized, and apologize for the parts of Herbert earlier critics most valued. Helen Gardner proclaims, "[Herbert's] poems are remarkable for clarity of design and precision in expression....Feelings and thoughts have been refined and controlled by the effort to give them their aptest expression; and the great variety of verse-forms Herbert uses is a striking and obvious sign of his desire to match content perfectly with form" (Gardner xix). Where Willmott advised the reader to try to look beyond the "grotesque" wit of "The Church" for the valuable advice Herbert gives in the "Church-porch," Auden takes the opposite view: "One expects to be utterly bored but, thanks to Herbert's wit, one is entertained [by the Church-Porch]" (Auden 12).

C. A. Patrides's introduction to his *English Poems of George Herbert* parses the modern reader's distaste for the "exclusively sacred" in Herbert (21). Herbert's poetry seems "insistently propagandistic" to the modern reader (21); Herbert mitigates this explicitness by "eschew[ing] the declamatory for the dramatic....[so that] the reader finds himself...at the very centre of the given situation" (21). In other words, Herbert's use of drama, including a dramatic persona, saves his poetry for a modern secular reader. Add that drama to that quality to which T.S. Eliot attributed the modern appreciation for the metaphysical poets—the fact that the modern mind is more apt to "accept the belief that any state of mind is extremely complex, and chiefly composed of odds and ends in constant flux manipulated by desire and fear" (Eliot 331-32)—and we have a fresh way of appreciating seventeenth-century poetry.

So, Herbert's poetry is art, rather than a religious man's "propaganda;" it is dramatic and thereby engaging to a modern reader; and the drama it recreates is that of a tortured soul, grappling with inner turmoil about the temptations of the world vs. the life of service (or art). Insofar as he fit this definition of good poetry, Herbert was attractive to the modern secular reader. His conceits, puns, stylistic flourishes, structural variety, and dramatic characters all provide great fodder for a close reader with a good imagination and a handy Oxford English Dictionary. Herbert and Donne and the other "metaphysical poets" suddenly become interesting and comprehensible through their artistry that had been seen as at best a distraction and at worst a grave defect by earlier critics.

Up to this point, although Donne had been mentioned in passing by Herbert critics here and there, usually in the context of Herbert's family's connection with the older

poet, Herbert and Donne had not been coupled as “brother” poets in any sustained way. Herbert’s adoption as a symbol of religious purity, with the concomitant attention to his edifying biography and straightforward and uncomplicatedly didactic poems, put him in a different league altogether from that of Jack Donne the Rake or the poet of “metaphysicall ideas and Scholasticall Quiddities” (Drummond, qtd. in Norbrook 52). But now, what had been disliked about Donne and Herbert, what had seemed most indecorous for art, became the basis for pairing them (along with other “metaphysical” poets) and praising their work. Starting in the 1930s, collections of “the metaphysical poets,” or of essays about them, began being released—two dozen with that exact name or concentrating on a particular number of poets can be found in the UNC library (Leishman, 1934; White, 1936; Bennett, 1953; Gardner, 1957; Dalglish, 1961; the list goes on, up through the re-release in 2008 of Bloom’s *John Donne and the Metaphysical Poets*) (which had previously been ...*and the Seventeenth-Century Metaphysical Poets*). The collections of artists all started with Donne and Herbert and included, variously, Vaughan, Crashaw, Traherne, and others, depending on the edition. In these works’ introductory matter, several characteristics are identified as unifying features: first, the use of erudition and complicated imagery to make witty intellectual arguments. Second, is the style, specifically the abrupt openings with a surprising dramatic line and the use of colloquial diction and conversational rhythm that push against the constraints of meter. And third is the use of this dramatic apparatus to present what look like modern, novelistic characters with inner motivations, varied frames of mind, and approaches to the subject not necessarily equitable with those of the author himself. They are all religious poets, but the organizing principle is their artistry.

Twentieth-century tendency #2: The Religious Wars

Typical of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Anglican critics, A.G Hyde, writing in *George Herbert and his Times* (1906), calls it “inevitable” that “[George Herbert,] the Poet of the Church was allied to the party of conservatism and reaction against the drastic ideals of the extreme Puritans – to the party called in its own time ‘Arminian’ ... as Hooker had been the judicious apologist” (Hyde 4). Perhaps Hyde is something of a straw man, but a more familiar scholar, Herbert J.C. Grierson, in his introduction to *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (1921), states, “The poet in whom the English Church of Hooker and Laud, the Church of the *via media* in doctrine and ritual, found a voice of its own, was George Herbert” (Grierson xl). Putting aside the fact that both Hooker and Laud (and the Church itself) had voices—some would say very loud voices—of their own—it’s clear that no examination has gone into these couplings of Herbert with Hooker and Laud: it is taken for granted (indeed, it is “inevitable”).

Between the early twentieth century and the late, a complete re-reading of both the theology of the English Church of the seventeenth century and of Herbert’s theology in particular had taken place, such that by 1986, the Modern Language Association was holding a Special Session at its annual meeting entitled, “George Herbert’s Theology: Nearer Rome or Geneva?” Essentially, the understanding of the English Church had been moved “nearer Geneva” by religious historians. Against the idea that the Arminians represented mild, conservative churchmen against “the drastic ideals of extreme Puritans,” historians such as Christopher Hill, Patrick Collinson, Nicholas Tyacke, and

Peter Lake described what they called a “Calvinist consensus” in the Elizabethan Settlement and the Stuart Church, as evidenced primarily by the presence of a belief in predestination in the Articles of the Church and many other statements of the official church before the rise of Laud. According to Patrick Collinson, “Puritan” was a personal category, not directly politically significant until the rise of aggressive Arminianism under Charles I (Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* 81); and Peter Lake adds, “It was the sudden rise to power of Arminianism in the reign of Charles I that represented the truly destabilizing, even revolutionary, event in the history of the early Stuart church” (Lake 4). Other historians of the period (e.g., Peter White) maintained and reiterated the traditional view that predestination was a specifically Puritan belief, and the major religious conflict of the period was waged between a radical predestinarian Puritanism vs. a moderate Anglican mainstream interested in keeping the peace of the established church. In this view, as we saw implied by Oley and Walton in the seventeenth century, Puritanism radically questions the church, particularly its structure and role in the lives of individual Christians, and is therefore a subversive threat.

Much was wrapped up in this debate and its affect on Herbert studies, which we will explore in more detail in Chapter 3. Essentially, Herbert’s place, which had been comfortably in the center of English conformist thought—and thus assumed to be Arminian in sympathies (nearer Rome and Hooker), was now argued to be still conformist, but now Puritan in sympathies (nearer Geneva and Calvin). The former of these positions was held by critics such as Louis Martz, Rosemond Tuve, C.A. Patrides, and Stanley Stewart, who based their argument on readings of Herbert’s sacramentalism and focus on the Christian’s communal and liturgical relationship with God. The latter

position was taken up by Barbara Lewalski, Richard Strier, and Gene Edward Vieth, among others, who based their arguments on readings of Herbert's speakers' personal experience of the grace of God and his biblicism. In his paper for the MLA special session, Daniel Doerksen presented a mediating view, coupling Herbert with both Hooker and Calvin. Yes, Herbert, like Hooker, values and recommends participation in the liturgical ceremonies of the Church, but No, that does not make him "nearer Rome," as it were. In fact, according to Doerksen, Herbert agreed with both Hooker and Calvin who, in their writings, proclaimed that "in non-essential matters like ceremonies there need be no uniformity across time or national boundaries, but that within each church situation orderliness and charity call on the individual to conform" (Doerksen, "Things fundamental" 16). Christopher Hodgkins (1993) also explores the idea that English dissenters (and modern readers) were misreading the English Church when they define Herbert by the categories that had been established, and finds in Herbert a nostalgia for "true" Calvinism, the real "middle way" between Catholicism and what Hodgkins calls "neo-Calvinism" – what Calvinism had become under Beza and others (Hodgkins 16).

Tangled in all of this was a general grappling in academia with the power structures at play in what was now being called the early modern period. In essence, New Historicists were beginning to look at the religious figures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as political actors. For example, Hooker and Laud were clearly attempting to control the "practice of piety and obedience" to the church and the commonwealth, in service of their own power or (in the case of Hooker) using a defense of the "natural" hierarchical structure of the established church to maintain power in the hands of the few (White *Past and Present* 213). As such these men may be seen only as

squelchers of religious freedom rather than the moderate and benevolent fathers of the Anglican Middle Way. This type of reading elicited defensive readings on the part of critics who wished to defend what they saw as the religious and mediatory motivations of their subjects (White 217, Lake 33).

New Historicist reading came at length to Herbert studies. Exemplified by Michael Schoenfeldt *Prayer and Power*, published in 1990, work was under way which demystified and politicized Herbert, depicting a strategic, political thinker investing his deity with “the institutions and practices by which political power exhibited itself in Herbert’s culture” and speakers using “the forms of minimal compliance and nonconfrontational resistance by which the socially impotent at once protect themselves and register their insubordination” (Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power* 2-3). The effect of this work was to contend against Herbert as “the human saint,” to break his image as “our picture of the order, strength, and beauty of seventeenth-century Anglicanism at its best” (Bush 138). It emphasized the underside of courtly aspiration, the uses of masculinity, patriarchy and punishment and often (as in the work of Cristina Malcolmson and Jeffrey Powers-Beck), Herbert’s own family and friends and their roles in the world of England and the Virginia colonies. And just as earlier critics coupled Herbert with Donne to highlight their common stylistic and dramatic devices, these cultural critics designate others as proper contexts for reading Herbert. For example, in a study of Herbert’s use of the imagery and styles of courtly discourse, Marion Singleton exactly describes the method:

We so customarily read Herbert as a devotional poet that...we seldom read his courtly voice in the context of other poets who take the uneasy equilibrium between ideal and actual versions of courtliness as their subject. Yet such poets

as Wyatt, Gascoigne, Sidney, Carew, and Suckling offer a promising “category of understanding” for Herbert. (Singleton 9)

The Current Era

Currently, the criticism of Herbert finds itself in a period of eirenicism, a kind of “post-new-historical” critical position that (at its best) takes its promptings from both “old historical” and “new historical” methods and paradigms, as well as a keen attention to the text itself, to read Herbert. For one thing, Herbert may be seen as a product of his times, not just of his religious and political times, as when some critics we will meet in Chapter 4 hearken back to Herbert’s early praise of Bacon and examine his engagement with the science and philosophy of his day. But even in terms of the question of his theology, it is currently accepted that Herbert contains and synthesizes much that was previously seen as mutually exclusive. Joseph Summers had sounded a reasonable note back in 1954, when he stated that “Herbert believed as strongly in predestination and the doctrine of Grace as he believed in the significance and beauty of the ritual” (Summers *George Herbert* 58). Significantly, his book was re-issued in 1981. In his review of it then, Louis Martz (who spends most of his allotted space criticizing Helen Vendler and “the modern psychological reader” 82) praises Summers for showing Herbert as a poet/priest rather than a theologian: “The religious sensibility of the early seventeenth century could contain multitudes: Herbert could hold predestination and a version of the real presence within his belief at the same moment” (Martz *Review* 80). Doerksen suggested that it is actually in Herbert’s attention to the individual’s relationship with God—what seems most “Protestant” to a modern reader—that Herbert is closest to “the real Rome” (“Things fundamental” 20):

By dwelling on the spiritual relationship of God and man and on the depiction of inner spiritual conflicts, even with what one may call a Protestant approach, Herbert deals with what is of great importance to Catholic as well.... [These poems] can cross barriers because they are personal and biblical rather than institutional. (Doerksen 20)

Ramie Targoff (2001) goes further, suggesting that “personal and biblical” is not necessarily antithetical to “institutional,” or, if Herbert is essentially inward-looking then he may also use and value ceremonial language. The idea that ceremonial language is not compatible with a personal relationship with God is, according to Targoff, a bias stemming from a Romantic heritage of valuing the “authenticity” of personal over communal language, a bias that can eventually be traced to Puritans’ complaints about the Reformed English liturgy. These readings are all enriched by a nuanced understanding of the power structures at work, coupled with a recognition that Herbert could be registering the human difficulty with submitting to authority, even the recognition that “everything is political,” at the same time that he is exploring and finally affirming his own belief that—in the end—“everything is sacred.”

Helen Wilcox’s 2008 brilliant edition of Herbert’s English poems carries us forward with this “ecumenicism” in mind. Wilcox does not couple Herbert with any other authors at all. Rather, the work is essentially a “digitalization” of Herbert by separating out each poem and literally framing each with four centuries of critical apparatus and line-by-line annotation. Wilcox is aware of and celebrating all the multilinear ways Herbert has been received, recording his biography but not dwelling on it, looking at each poem separately as if holding a gem up to the light of the centuries of criticism and her own keen insights. A reader of Herbert need not share his religion or world view; all she

needs, according to this latest version of “our Herbert,” is “an open mind [and] an appreciative ear” (Wilcox xxxiii).

Reading Herbert in the Light of His Contemporaries

The preceding is my background for an evolving portrait of Herbert, a Herbert who has come down to us as open-ended, complex, balanced. What follows is a series of pictures that have led to this portrait.

Notes

1. All quotations of Herbert's poetry are from Hutchinson (1967rpt). Other editions of Herbert's works, cited for their introductory material, are cited and listed in the bibliography by the editors' names.
2. Oley named Herbert's prose work *A Priest to the Temple*, but Summers reminds us that Herbert himself had called it *The Country Parson: His Character and Rule of Holy Life*. What one critic calls it says something about whether that critic sees Herbert as Oley's and Walton's representative "primitive Laudian" (Summers, *George Herbert* 13) or a Calvinist rural minister. In the interest of "uncoupling" Herbert (in this case, from Oley), I use Herbert's title.

CHAPTER 3: HERBERT ON THE RELIGIOUS SPECTRUM

Introduction

In the review of the literature, I related in detail how Herbert has been read as a partisan for one side or the other in the English Civil War. During the nineteenth century, Herbert was appropriated by Anglican readers for the Anglo-Catholic sensibilities that animated their own religious identity. With the rise of more complicated and complicating readings of seventeenth century religion in the twentieth century, Herbert and his church were revealed (or misconstrued, depending on one's point of view) to be "nearer Geneva than Rome," as it were, and a tug of war ensued. Mediating voices re-defined the terms of the debate and placed him in a new "middle way" based on what was arguably a clearer picture of the "map" that was seventeenth-century religion.

In this chapter, we will step back from the current peace to explore in more detail the seminal differences that critics who have placed Herbert on the religious spectrum have assumed to exist between the "advanced Protestants" (otherwise known as Puritans, Presbyterians, dissenters, or Calvinists) and the establishment churchmen (otherwise known as Anglicans, inheritors of Hooker, or Arminians). My study will take into account complications inherent in pigeonholing Hooker and Calvin, much less Herbert, in these ways. Drawing on what critics of Herbert thought Calvin or Hooker stood for when they presumed to put Herbert in their camps, I will show how Herbert's work may be read in light of these assumptions and, finally, how it cannot.

This chapter is as much about Herbert and the critics as it is about the actual writings of Hooker and Calvin and what Herbert thought of them. However, I cannot avoid including an introductory summary of what they wrote that Herbert may have known. I do so with the caveat that the understanding of what was significant about their contribution to Herbert's church is ever shifting, and that what informed much of the debate was not what historians now think is significant about Hooker and Calvin.

Hooker was the priest of the Temple Church (Master of the Temple); he died in 1600. Hooker's major work, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, was written in the 1580s and responds to three developments in England at that time: the production of the Marprelate tracts, which attacked the episcopal power structure with vitriolic satire; a growing emphasis on matters of form in the church; and the rise of a small, but vocal, separatist movement. Hooker's task was to respond to what was being recognized as a threat to the English Church from Protestant (as opposed to only Roman Catholic) quarters (Haugaard 26). To accomplish this task, Hooker wrote *The Laws* as the systematic statement of the Elizabethan Settlement as it defined the relationship between individual belief and the laws and practices of the larger society, as well as the proper bases for those laws (Gascoigne 23). The first four books of the *Laws* were published in 1593 (incidentally the year of Herbert's birth); the fifth book in 1597, and books six through eight long after the deaths of both men. Of the books Herbert might have known (and he would have known the ideas contained in them regardless), the first was a discussion of law; the second and third refute Puritan positions on the sole authority of scripture for church polity, and Book IV defends the church against the claim that it retained too many Roman Catholic ceremonies.

Young Hooker had been a defender of the early Elizabethan church against the arguments of Roman Catholicism, but his opinions toward Roman Catholicism had softened by the time he wrote the *Laws* (Gascoigne 24); by that time he was contending with Puritans who thought the English church had not fully reformed. He was criticized for arguing in at least one sermon (one delivered two years before the Spanish Armada) that individual Catholics could be saved, even though their church was not salvageable (Archer 22). Hooker strongly argues that unless one directly denies the foundational Christian belief that Christ died for our sins, one may be saved (Archer 24). On the other hand, in many places Hooker clearly states the belief in predestination and the need to “begin reformation at yourselves” (33).

Some critics who have connected Hooker’s “world view” with Laud and Laudianism are talking about Hooker’s treatment of natural law and its connection with church polity and practice. Basically, according to Hooker, humans can look to the book of nature to understand God: “Nature is God’s instrument” he says in the Preface (Hooker 68). Natural law derives from God and is ordered in accordance with God’s purposes. Hooker personifies and grants intentionality to nature: “... heaven and earth have hearkened unto [God’s] voice, and their labour hath been to do His will... [O]bedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world” (Hooker 66). The order of nature is hierarchical, and we may read its meaning deductively from God’s law: “All things therefore do work after a sort according to law; all other things according to a law whereof some superiors unto whom they are subject is author; only the works and operations of God have Him both for their workes and for the law whereby they are wrought” (Hooker 61). It follows, according to Hooker, that the laws of God’s church

should conform to God's natural law, and in England, that means an episcopal hierarchy and a dedication to the system of lawfulness in service of peaceful incorporation. This all illustrates Hooker's debt to Aristotle, a debt found also in his sermons, (most of which were published between 1614 and 1616): a belief in a harmonious, unified system of being, all with the potential to be part of "The Good" (and thus no part of which is predestined to damnation), and capable of salvation through Christ. Hooker stressed free will, the necessity of faith, God's general good will, Christ's having died for all, and the sufficiency of grace (Archer 37).

Much of Hooker's space is spent responding to the presbyterian positions on the locus of power within the church: specifically, he affirms Calvin's reforms for the church in Geneva, but argues that such reforms, specifically lay leadership and a scriptural basis for church polity, are not appropriate for the English Church. Interestingly, Hooker bolsters his argument that scripture could be neither the guide for all actions (the subject of Book II) nor the sole guide for church discipline (Book III) with quotations from scripture throughout, specifically using the Geneva Bible rather than the Bishops' authorized version (Haugaard 64).

Hooker's defense of the form the English church has taken has its bases in fundamental beliefs about free will, unlimited atonement, and the sufficiency of grace. Similarly, dissenters' complaints about this form have their bases in fundamental Calvinistic points. Recent scholars have teased out all the ways Calvin has been misread, and his "followers" read to be something other than mainstream English churchgoers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Hodgkins, Doerksen). The scriptural basis for church doctrine and form is now considered the most central Calvinist doctrine

(Doerksen, “Generous ambiguity revisited” 35); Calvinist doctrines of predestination and total depravity are sometimes given more prevalence, especially among readers who wish to formulate a wedge between Hooker’s world view and Calvinism. “Total depravity” is the belief that fallen humanity is morally and spiritually unable to follow God or escape their condemnation before him and that only by divine intervention in which God must change their unwilling hearts can people be turned to willing obedience. “Predestination” is the belief that God has chosen some to save “unconditionally”: his atonement is for those few chosen based on his mercy alone (not their good works), and before time. It is a limited atonement, God does not will the salvation of all men; it is “sufficient for all and efficient for some” (Kendall 13); and those who are chosen as “saints” “persevere”: they are saved until the end of times. All of the terms of the relationship between God and man are unchangeably decreed by God. Finally, Calvin’s belief that the doctrine and polity of the church should be modeled only on scripture meant that only those elements that are instituted or appointed by command or example in the New Testament are permissible in worship. Thus, for example, a flat structure was called for, of lay leaders with no political power and no power or responsibility to mediate the relationship between individuals and God, except insofar as they preached the scripture (Calvin 202-58). It was this argument Hooker took on in his *Laws*, in defense of the hierarchical nature of church government.

It follows from this (and did at least among Calvin’s followers, if not always in Calvin himself), that the English Church needed reform to become perfect for the perpetually elect. Some went so far as to argue that the membership of the church should reflect the fact that not everyone was elected to be saved (Lake 39). The church should

also reflect that individuals had no free will with regard to salvation; thus good works, fasting, repentance, and other actions on the part of the Christian should be discouraged as “a detestable scorning of Christ” (*Harmonie* 1:26) (qtd. in Stewart, “Investigating” 136), and communion should be given as a remembrance of grace already bestowed, rather than as elements themselves containing the grace of God through the sacrificing clergy (Whalen 1288).

This picture is a simple one, meant only to set down what a critic might have been thinking of when he or she invoked the name of Hooker or Calvin in discussing Herbert’s poetry. We shall see this picture become more complicated.

The Critical Landscape

In 1953, Rosemond Tuve, in *A Reading of George Herbert*, set herself the task of “rescu[ing] Herbert from Freudian critics and returning the study of his poems to their traditional background of liturgical symbolism” (Tuve 2). One facet of that symbolism was Herbert’s use of sacramental imagery. Patrides would later claim, “The Eucharist is the marrow of Herbert’s sensibility” (Patrides, *The English Poems* 17), and what he meant was that Herbert’s language is “replete with words reminiscent in their literal dimension of Roman Catholic claims—*altar, table, board, repast, banquet, feast, store, bread, meat, wine*, and especially *blood*, no less than the reiterated verbs *taste* and *eat*—yet aspiring to intimate the mystery of the ‘pattern, the shadow, the type’ of the ultimate reality” (Patrides, *The English Poems* 18). Staking a different claim for Herbert at this “Catholic” end of the spectrum, Louis Martz in 1954 focused attention on the inward-looking aspects of the poetry, reading Herbert and his contemporaries in the light of

medieval and Counter-Reformation Catholic meditative practices. Elsewhere, Martz argues that during the early seventeenth century, an increasingly Calvinistic England replaced the “Lord of Love” with a “Lord of Power” (“Generous Ambiguity” 35). Hooker had defined the “love” as that benign natural force which keeps Christians in communion with each other and with the angels and the animals. Martz’s logic, then, is that Herbert, as a poet, essentially, of love, could not have been a Calvinist.

Other critics countered that the Church and Herbert were thoroughly Protestant, and Herbert, at least, had no debt to medieval or continental Catholic influences. Barbara Lewalski (1979) argued that Herbert’s internal and meditative poems come from a world-view and spirituality biblically-based and thus distinctively Calvinist. Richard Strier and Gene Edward Veith (1983 and 1985, respectively) also read Herbert in light of Reformation spirituality. They looked at Herbert’s sacramental theology, which had been used to show his affinity with the Anglo-Catholic focus on the physical church rather than a Reformed focus on inner spirituality, and see Herbert’s language of sacrament as *metaphorical*, not literal, and thus closely aligned with Reformed, not Laudian, or “Anglo-Catholic,” terminology. None of this, according to these critics, made Herbert specifically a “Puritan dissenter.” Political and religious historians traced a Calvinist orthodoxy to the Elizabethan Settlement and the Thirty-Nine Articles, which clearly express Reformation affirmations that scripture is the final authority on salvation (VI); that Adam's fall compromised human free will (X); that justification is by faith in Christ's merit (XI); and that in the eucharist, “The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner” (Bicknell). Article XVII, on predestination and election, presents election unto eternal salvation in terms

very similar to those used by the Reformed churches, though the Article is silent on the question of “double predestination,” i.e., it does not go so far as to say that individuals are predestined to be damned as well as to be saved. Thus, according to this reading, the church into which Herbert was born carried these Protestant ideals at its core.

The English Church never adopted the presbyterian and biblically based structure of the church endorsed by Calvin (and especially endorsed by some of his followers in Scotland and England). Thus critics who countered what they (often derisively) called a “revisionist” reading of Herbert and his church (Lake 32) often used the sense of “inwardness” vs. “outwardness” as a kind of test for Herbert’s religious affinity. Essentially, public ceremony and private religious devotion are considered “ideologically contrary imperatives” by the scholarship on this question (Whalen 1273). For example, Stanley Stewart’s *George Herbert* for the Twayne series argues that the “modern trend toward Puritanizing the Herbert canon” ignores Herbert’s defense of public prayer over private and his use of the Anglican liturgical calendar and practices. He is referring to the lines in “The Church-porch,” “Though private prayer be a brave designe, / Yet publick hath more promises, more love” (ll. 397-98), although Herbert evinces a belief in public prayer in many other places. In other words, Stewart is saying that if Herbert is emphasizing the ceremonial and communal aspects of prayer and communion with God, rather than the personal and private, then he is opposing “Puritan dissenters.” Stewart himself may be accused of ignoring the many dissenters’ and others’ attraction to Herbert’s piety traceable (as we have seen) back to the seventeenth century, which makes the “Puritanizing” anything but “modern.” He also ignores the readings of the basic

tenets of the church which had codified both the ceremonial and the personal aspects of prayer and communion with God.

The question of “inwardness” vs. “outwardness” is more complicated than just whether one believed in the efficacy of the ceremonial and communal aspects of the church as opposed to the personal and private communion with God. However, this is the state of the debate leading up to the 1986 MLA Special Session: “George Herbert’s Theology: Nearer Rome or Geneva?” In this formulation, Hooker is near Rome, and Calvin is near Geneva. Before we take him “off the map” (in Strier’s phrase), let us ask with those MLA scholars, Where is Herbert?

Putting Herbert on the Theological Map

The following is a description, in its most simplistic terms, of the two sides of the debate as it existed leading up to 1986. First, if Herbert is connected with Hooker and establishment Anglicanism, he believes in the centrality of the Church and its priesthood and sacraments in the relationship of an individual Christian with God. He believes that individual Christians have free will and are not predestined to be saved or damned. He believes that the Elizabethan Settlement was perfectly suitable for the English Church, and no further reformation is needed. Finally, he believes in a world view that flows from these: the force of natural law and “love” being a model for the hierarchical structure of church and society, which, because it is “natural,” is good. This point of view assumes that the English Church of the early seventeenth century resembled the Anglo-Catholic church of the nineteenth and later, but even as the understanding of the English Church was changing to accept that Calvinism was at its core, critics who argued

this position for Herbert could argue that he was an early supporter of Laud (e.g., Anthony Milton, R.V. Young).

Conversely, if Herbert is a Calvinist, he believes that the individual's relationship with God—through introspection and direct prayer rather than through intermediaries, such as ritual, sacraments, the sacrificing priesthood—is primary. He believes in the predestination of believers, such that the salvation of the soul is in the hand of God, rather than the church. Because he believes these things, he believes there is need for further reform of Church of England so that it can be made perfect for its elect. Finally, he may hold a world view that flows from these: that the human identity is based not on place in a hierarchy or community but on individual rights and responsibilities towards God and others. Those who argue this position maintain that Herbert was still an establishmentarian; the re-reading of Herbert was concurrent with a re-reading of his Church. Some critics argue that Herbert is an early reactor against Laud (e.g. Schoenfeldt).

These are crude renderings, and the debate was made heated by a number of factors, including emotional factors related to the possessiveness of Herbert and his church that had been inherited from previous centuries. On the other side was a desire to demystify Herbert and the power structures that had been described by Hooker as “natural,” but were now (some would say had always been, at least by their purveyors) seen as political. The debate placed tremendous pressure on Herbert's poetry to be consistent and definitive on these questions, and even to speak to the modern implications. Let us examine some of the implications of these most simple renderings before we complicate the picture.

Herbert and Hooker

We will start with the connection of Herbert with “Laud, Hooker, and the rich reasonable ceremoniousness of high Anglicanism,” which was firmly established by the beginning of the twentieth century and was the starting place for the critics we will deal with (Bell 268). Hooker’s own place on the religious spectrum has, like Herbert’s and that of the English Church itself, been shifted toward “Geneva” in recent years (Brydon 2). According to more recent critics such as Michael Brydon, neither Hooker nor Herbert would have seen much of his beliefs reflected in the Anglican high church assumed by Herbert’s autobiographers and critics of the later seventeenth century, much less in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, the fact that Hooker never used the word “Anglican” does not mean he was not a “conformist” with what that term would come to mean. As Peter Lake points out, Hooker did not “[express] existing ‘anglican’ attitudes and values...he, more than anyone, invented them” (Lake 230). Lake maintains that Hooker, writing 40 years earlier, contains “the ideological origins of English Arminianism...its emphasis on sacramental grace, on the visible church as a sacred or holy institution and on a definition of Christian piety and membership of the Christian community in terms of the rites and observances of that holy institution” (Lake, “Calvinism and the English Church” 42-75). Hooker did, in effect, *define* conformity and what would be called Anglicanism (which Lake calls Conformism), by writing the systematic defense of the English Church’s practice, its episcopal structure, its fundamentally Aristotelian view of a unified, harmonious universe with a consistent, reasonable God. Diarmaid MacCulloch summarizes what the later

Anglican church derived from Hooker: its belief in natural law, or reason, as a prime authority along with divine and human law; its belief in the continuity of the Church, as opposed to a strict Reformation divide; and its focus on the sacramental, rather than the personal, mode of thought about salvation (MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation* 85). And Ramie Targoff illustrates how in Book 5 of the *Laws*, Hooker clearly argues against one of the primary assertions of the non-conformists, that preaching, rather than liturgy, should be the central focus of Church services, and that preachers should be given authority to “speak ...from the heart” rather than read from the Prayer Book with set responses from the congregation (Targoff, *Common Prayer* 86). Hooker’s contention is that common prayer is not only, or primarily, a way to force conformity upon a people; it is also both a comfort for the parishioner and an aid to zeal (Hooker 49).

To see Herbert as those who put him with Hooker saw him, then, we must search in him both for a belief in the communal connection with God, alongside and in some ways more central than the personal, and a belief in the sacraments and other liturgical features as having meaning as conduits for God’s grace. Notwithstanding the several problems with this reading, there is much in Herbert that supports a reading of him as believing, with the utmost conformists of his church, that the English Church needed no further reformation.

The “Mother” church

Two fundamental arguments for further reform of the English Church were 1) that as a “visible church” its understanding of soteriology, or salvation, was misdirected toward “visible” things, such as the sacraments, holy days, and acts, rather than

“invisible” things, such as personal experience of grace and an individual search for assurance of election; and 2) that it did not fully represent the Church as defined in the New Testament, that is, the hierarchy of bishops, priests, and deacons should be replaced by a flat order of ordained and lay ministers with diverse roles. So, to believe that no further reform was needed was to believe 1) that the visible church, with its sacraments, music, and other “visible” elements, was in fact an important way to God; and 2) that the order created by the episcopacy was “appropriate and convenient” for the English Church, and that obedience to earthly powers was a form of godliness (Hooker 302).

Two Herbert poems that have been used to make the argument that the English Church needs no further reform are “The British Church” and “Church-rents and Schismes.”

“The British Church” is pat, unreflective, sure of itself. One nineteenth-century Milton biographer calls it one of Herbert’s “poetic interpretations of Laud’s prose” (Masson 307), and more than one twentieth-century critic has expressed “dismay” at the ending and disgust at its cultural egocentricity (Strier “Getting off the map”). Simply put, the poem compares the Roman Catholic, the Genevan, and the British Churches as three women, the first “painted,” the second “undrest,” and the third “perfect,” “sweet and bright,” “Neither too mean, nor yet too gay” – the British Church in all ways superior to the others’ “Outlandish looks” (ll. 2-12). It has been pointed out that this poem, like much of Hooker’s *Lawes*, deals only with the outward forms of worship, not its doctrine – and thus is not controversial (Wilcox 390). Yet Summers and Pebworth (in “Public Concerns in Private Modes”) suggest that “Herbert’s rejection of the rhetoric of controversy in favor of ... allusion is itself a political strategy” (9). It speaks of “moderation and

peaceful intent” that all sides of the debate wished to evince, even as they held very strong views (Lake, *Calvinism and the English Church* 60). Further, even if the poem is merely about the forms of worship, these forms were tied to their meanings, as many who believed the English Church was too oriented toward the physical elements would be quick to point out. For these reformers, the 1559 Settlement had been much too ambiguous in its interpretation of the sacraments, and subsequent events had set in place a religious structure that was inimical to that proscribed by Calvin, which was a flat presbyterian structure as he saw prefigured in the New Testament, with lay deacons and no concomitant secular power for the ordained ministers. For Calvin himself, the structure of the physical church was considered secondary in importance to the central points of doctrine (Lake, Doerksen), but for some presbyterian critics of the English Church, the church apparatus was comparable to that of the Roman Church, and damnable as such.

Hooker had been criticized for not differentiating between the two threats to the English Church sufficiently. In a sermon delivered in March, 1586 (and published between 1612 and 1614), entitled “A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown,” Hooker defined the primary difference between the Roman Catholic and the Reformed Churches as the means of justification: the attainment of grace through works, its diminution through sin, and its restoration through the sacraments (Archer 22). He defined the foundation of the two confessions as the same: that Christ was crucified for the salvation of the world (Archer 23). Hooker was speaking of individual Catholics, who he believed could be saved as long as they

affirmed the foundational Christian belief, but he was accused (by Travers and others) of apologizing for the Roman Catholic Church (Haugaard 22).

“The British Church” is comparable to a Hookerian stance in the way that the poem gives equal space and weight to the Reformed and Roman Churches in its critique. The poem draws on biblical sources, particularly the image of the Whore of Babylon from Revelation, which label Protestants had used for the Roman Church (Wilcox 101), but for the most part the portraits of the two alternatives to the British Church are balanced in the terms of the allegory. Neither is worse or better than the other, and neither is particularly threatening to the British Church in this poem. Again, the low level of “threat” may be tied to the surface features being critiqued and Herbert’s desire to appear non-polemical, but at another level, Herbert may be arguing against the belief that the gap between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism was wider than that between any two Protestant sects (Haugaard 4).

The threats facing England were different when Hooker was preaching from when Herbert was writing “The British Church.” The Spanish Armada, with which the Roman Church schemed to bring the English back under its control, was three years in the future when Hooker delivered “A Learned Discourse,” and although historians now see the defeat of the Armada as a turning point, even after the event its decisiveness in the struggles between England and Spain was not immediately obvious to the English (Haugaard 26). Herbert (writing 45 years later) praises that God did “double-moat” the British Church “with his grace” (ll. 29-30), and it is possible that this refers to the miraculous defeat of the Armada in the English Channel. In her note on this line, Helen Wilcox suggests that the “one moat refers to the “grace” given by God, the second is the

water of the seas around Britain, protecting the British church against foreign influences” (Wilcox, *The English Poems* 394). With this physical protection, the English were also separated from the continental wars, which had been raging since Herbert’s young adulthood. Herbert also keeps his poem separate from overt animosity toward either extreme. Clearly, Herbert is not unaware of dangers to the English Church and England. He makes a conscious decision, however, within the terms of this poem, to show both “outlandish” Churches as (equally) innocuous, though unattractive.

“Church-rents and schisms” is another allegorical poem, this one about internal threats to the church, which loom more dangerous to Herbert (and to Herbert’s age) than do external threats. Critics such as Anthony Milton have argued that Herbert was one of the earliest divines “to proclaim the new Anglo-centric orthodoxy” which sought to extricate itself from the confessional struggles of European Protestantism (rather than contending against Anti-Christian Rome) by emphasizing sacrament and ceremony over private religious devotion (Milton 528). The British church in “Church-rents and schismes” has become a rose (and also called “Mother”), destroyed by a “worm whose many feet and hair/Are the more foul, the more thou wert divine” (ll. 3-4). We are reminded of (John) Milton’s “false worm” in *Paradise Lost*, here representing “rudeness” (l. 8) and “debates” (l. 16), or dissidence from within (Wilcox 129). The “many feet” could refer to the many sects of English Protestantism and “hair” is always problematic for Herbert – “false hair” in “Jordan (I)” is clearly opposed to “truth” (ll. 1-2), and in “Charms and Knots,” hair is a symbol also of false beauty, “sweet” only “through pride or lust,” its owner forgetting his mortality, and thus doomed (ll. 13-14). We see here that the Reformation itself was good for the English Church – “the bleeding did you good” (l.

14). Louis Martz sees this line as referring not to the Reformation but to the crucifixion, “tak[ing] a long view of the history of the church” (“Worm” 21). Whichever it means, that purging has devolved into to “debates and fretting jealousies” (l. 16), which threaten to destroy the church.

Summers and Pebworth have pointed out Herbert’s use here and elsewhere of the word “Mother” to mean the Church, a word they connect with Laud (“Politics” 7); they also point to Herbert’s use throughout *The Temple* of derogatory words Laudians used to describe Puritans, to describe unsavory characters or conditions in *The Temple*. A poem they examine that seems clear on this score is “The Familie,” in which unwelcome members, presumably of the Church of God, include “loud complaints and puling fears” (3). Derogatory words often used by Laudians for Puritans include “puling” and “wranglers,” and clearly in this poem Herbert wants these undesirables turned out to make room for proper “family” members, Peace and Silence, Order “giving all things there set forms and houres” (11), Obedience, Joyes, and (quiet) Griefs. In this poem, if the English Church needs reform, it is reform that would entail expelling Puritan “wranglers” from the fold.

“Give to thy Mother”

A basic argument about the Church’s needing further reform was also about the individual’s place in relationship to God: what role should the Church play in mediating that relationship? “Not much,” might be the answer of those arguing for further reform of the Church: individual Christians are predestined to be saved, or not, by God, and it is through the grace of God and faith, not works or sacraments, that they know and receive

God. Calvin in his *Institutes* stated that election and reprobation are unconditional, and that God does not will the salvation of all men (Calvin 202-58). Kendall offers that Calvin did allow “that in some sense Christ died for all mankind,” although that death was “efficient” only for a chosen few (Kendall 13). Other “Calvinists”—whom Hodgkins called “neo-” because they went further than Calvin ever did in this matter, argued that the form of the church should reflect the fact that not everyone was elected to be saved (Lake 39). In other words, those not visibly saved should not be allowed into the church, and the church should engage all of its members primarily with the examination of their individual souls and the state of grace with regard to that soul, not with visible signs and conduits of grace which was, after all, already granted (or not) by God. We shall return to the question of Herbert’s stand on predestination later; for now, let us examine the argument that the individual, rather than the Church, communicates with God.

A poem that seems to answer that argument is “Lent.” Unlike many poems’ speakers in *The Temple*, the speaker of “Lent” is not speaking to or about himself in this poem; there is no surprising “my God, I mean myself” at the end to interject a confessional tone. Rather, “Lent” is basically a sermon treating the question of fasting, not only in the abstract, but specifically during Lent, when “the Church sayes, *now*” (l. 4). Those who do not love fasting, the speaker explains, love not “Temperance, or Authoritie,” and although sometimes figures of authority can push too hard and thereby “disable” their own power (l. 16-18), in general “True Christians” should take this opportunity to give back to their “Mother,” the Church, and, even if “doctrines disagree,”

or others have abused or spoiled Lent, join this communal undertaking of “sweet abstinence” (l.19).

The “abuse and spoiling” and the disabling quality of too hard pushing by authority seem to hint at anti-Calvinist excesses (Tyacke). At the same time, Herbert’s speaker is aware of, but explicitly rejecting, Calvinist arguments that we cannot (and should not try to) imitate God through fasting. In *Harmonie*, Calvin wrote “... it was a wicked and a detestable scorning of Christ, in that [papists] attempted in theyr fained fasting to frame them selves after his doing” (from *Harmonie* 1:126) (qtd. Stewart, “Investigating” 136). Luther also argued that to imitate Christ was presumptuous and self-righteous (Strier, “Ironic Humanism” 44-45). In “Lent,” Herbert writes that “It’s true, we cannot reach Christs forti’th day” (l. 31), but he argues that despite our inability ever to “reach our Saviours puritie” (l. 34), we will still be more apt to meet God “in the way which Christ hath gone” than if we “rest” with worldly material things (including food) (l. 37). In *The Countrey Parson*, Herbert praises the Church catechism, not only because it is a way to teach the important precepts of the Church, but also “for [teaching] obedience to Authority and for uniformity sake” (Chapter XXI, 255). In “Lent,” the fast is about temperance *and* due obedience to authority, both of which, for him, are ways to “meet” God and godliness.

In “Lent,” Herbert makes clear that the *Church* should guide our understanding of God and how to imitate him. The little poem “Bitter-sweet” portrays a speaker describing his *own* view of God’s way. This poem seems to say that what Herbert is doing throughout *The Temple* is in imitation of Christ: since the speaker’s “deare angrie Lord” does “love, yet strike; / Cast down, yet help afford” (ll. 1-3); the speaker (and,

indeed, speakers throughout the collection) will be just as changeable: “complain, yet praise” “bewail, approve,” “lament, and love” (ll. 6-8). But the message of “Bitter-sweet” is very different from that of “Lent,” and that difference is significant in terms of the role of the Church. In “Bitter-sweet,” the individual identifies what it is about God that he is going to imitate, and the imitation has the effect of assigning human changeability to God. When the church identifies how to imitate God, as in “Lent,” it helps humans find a place of godly purity and temperance.

Preaching and the Sacraments

Another way the religious controversies of the seventeenth century have been characterized is as an argument about the place of preaching vs. that of the sacraments or liturgy in communicating between God and Christians. This characterization pits the sacramental system as the vehicle of grace, administered by the clergy using the Prayer Book, against the centrality of preaching based on Scripture and affirmation of the priesthood of all believers. For those who argued for further reform, preaching was the most important part of the Sunday service. They believed that the Prayer Book should be used mainly to prepare the congregation for hearing the scriptural readings and understanding sermons, and that priests should be better trained to deliver and explicate Scripture for their congregations (Bush 296). The country parson “preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne,” Herbert writes in Chapter VII (232), and elsewhere he advocates studious preparation for writing sermons (Chapters III and V, *The Parson’s Knowledge and The Parsons Accessory Knowledges*), and careful attention to how the sermon is delivered, procuring the congregants’ attention “by all possible art” (Chapter

VII). The poems of *The Temple* have been seen as “little sermons, ” based on the speaker’s proclamation in the beginning of “The Church-porch” (what is labeled the “Perirrhanterium”) that “A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies” (l. 5). And Kenneth Hovey mentions Herbert’s poems in the context of Bacon’s praise of sermons that do not last too long and do not attempt to apply reason to mysteries, rather present brief observations for a listener to absorb (Hovey 35).

On the other hand, Herbert has also been seen as emphasizing the sacraments in his poems. The line in the “Perirrhanterium” could in fact be saying the poems are *not* little sermons: they are sacraments to be taken *instead* of sermons to be listened to (the reader, after all, has “flown” from sermons). The goal, Herbert (or his speaker) says, is to “turn delight into a sacrifice” (l. 6), and the Dedication statement “Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee” (Herbert 5) (admittedly a common trope), sounds like the Priest’s invocation over the communion table.

Later critics would reassert the sacramentalism of devout *Protestantism* (Veith, Strier, Hodgkins, Whalen); but when Patrides calls the Eucharist Herbert’s “marrow,” he meant that Herbert’s “center” veers toward Roman practice, with “poetry replete with words reminiscent in their literal dimension of Roman Catholic claims,” as we saw above (Patrides, *The English Poems* 18). In *The COUNTRY Parson*, Herbert clearly affirms the presence of God in the sacraments: in the communion wafer, he says, he is “not only to receive God, but to break, and administer him” (Chapter XXII, 257). He believes that making the sign of the cross over the infant in baptism is to be done “willingly and cheerfully,” for unlike some in the Church, the country parson “thinketh the Ceremony not onely innocent, but reverent” (Chapter XXII, 258). Baptism is, he writes, “the first

step into [a Christian's] great and glorious calling" – by which Herbert puts the beginning of the road to salvation in the hands of the Church rather than of God before all time. He also urges that children should begin taking communion as soon as they understand its meaning, for without this sacrament they will lack "many excitings of grace" (259). But how could one whose God gave "irresistible" grace lack that grace? All of these seem to be clearly addressing a possibly skeptical audience, one who might question both the "innocence" and the "reverence" of these acts.

On the subject of the sacraments, Herbert's poems (and their critical interpretations) vary. The first poem of the collection, "The Altar," is a "proper" beginning to "The Church," according to Arthur Clements, because Herbert conceives of his poetry as sacrificial and redemptive (Clements 98). Critics who see *The Temple* as an architectural metaphor have been confused about the placement of "The Altar" near the beginning of the collection; altars are not generally near the doors of Christian churches (Rickey 10). The placement may indicate that Herbert is drawing upon the idea of classical and Hebrew stone altars, or is graphically portraying the transformative and redemptive work of Christ's sacrifice. On the other hand, the placement of this poem is critical to Stanley Fish's reading of *The Temple* as a model for the catechism: the catechumen (the "human temple") learns the words of wisdom on the "Church Porch" in preparation for entering "The Church" to be baptized at "The Altar" and begin learning Christian doctrine (Fish, "Herbert's Catechizing" 3-4).

Our understanding of this poem has also been manipulated by editors. Sharon Achinstein, in "Reading George Herbert in the Restoration," examines editors' presentation of this shape poem. In the edition of 1670, which was published with

Walton's *Life*, the poem was accompanied by an engraving of a clearly Christian altar, but it had previously had an illustration that looked like a classical altar. Achinstein sees the change as one made to emphasize Herbert's connection with the post-Restoration Anglican Church. The poem itself has a shape that is actually more columnar than like a table or altar. It could be that Herbert is saying the whole collection is an altar table; this first poem is but the first leg. It also looks something like the podium behind which a priest stands when delivering a sermon. The speaker says that the poem "stands" or "speaks" for the whole collection: "...if I chance to hold my peace / These stones to praise thee may not cease" (ll. 13-14). The phrase echoes Luke, where Christ is entering Jerusalem and ridding the temple of thieves to make it fit for prayers (Luke 19:40-45). Thus whether Herbert meant to symbolize the presentation of sacraments or the delivery of prayers is not clear.

Whatever the meanings of this poem, he did name it "The Altar" and gave it a place of prominence at the beginning of the collection. Its claim to gather the "parts" of the following "Church" (l. 3) seems to indicate the prominence of the idea of sacrifice and sacrament to *The Temple*. Quite fittingly, "The Sacrifice" follows "The Altar," and critics have argued over this poem's meaning as well. It is the only poem in the collection in which Herbert's main speaker is Christ and not a Christian, and the poem relates the drama of Christ's entry into Jerusalem and words from the cross at his crucifixion. Empson actually spurred Tuve's desire to "rescue Herbert from the Freudians" with his treatment of this poem as an expression of one of his seven types of ambiguity; specifically it is a reaction to the psychological strain that arises from "the paradox of the vengeful God of Love" (qtd. Wilcox 94). Tuve believes it is a Eucharistic

poem with its roots in the Roman Catholic meditative tradition and “Complaint of Christ” monologue tradition (22); Bell argues that Herbert is actually criticizing that tradition by depicting a “failed meditation” (318). “O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,” Herbert prayed in the penultimate line of “The Altar,” but here the refrain (“Was ever grief like mine?”) and final line “Never was grief like mine” emphasize the futility of trying to participate in (or own) God’s grief. With “The Altar” this poem illustrates for the reader that “the subject of the lyrics in *The Church* will be Christ-focused and eucharistic” (Wilcox 104), but it does not explain how the sacrifice of God will be shared with the Christian, beyond its reenactment. Wilcox suggests that the sacrifice may be “(in some limited way) that of the poet who imitates Christ by offering up his words” (104).

I believe this poem deals with doctrinal questions only indirectly, and only through its conversation with other poems. As we will see, throughout *The Temple*, Herbert’s poems communicate with one another, asking and answering questions in a recursive, reiterative way that says more about what a Christian should *do* than what he or she should *think* about the concepts they deal with. The questions raised in “The Sacrifice” are, first, how does a Christian understand, and, then, how should a priest communicate, the sacrifice of Christ? “The Thanksgiving” follows “The Sacrifice.” Many critics (Bloch, Johnson, Bell) emphasize the speaker’s failure to respond to, or thank, Christ, and I think that the drama is as much about figuring out what Christ’s sacrifice means. “Surely I will revenge me on thy love” (l. 17) he proclaims, but by “thy love” he means the wealth, honor, and loyalty that God has given him on earth and that he will send back to God—“Thy art of love,” he says, “Which I’le turn back on thee” (ll. 47-8). He cannot understand that Christ’s sacrifice *is* his loving gift: “Then for thy

passion—I will do for that—/Alas, my God, I know not what” (ll. 49-50). The next poem, “The Reprisal,” continues the complaint, also in reaction to “The Sacrifice.” This speaker understands that no, there never was grief like Christ’s, and feels he must attempt to recreate the crucifixion in his own person. Sending love back to God must necessitate some sort of imitation of Christ’s sacrifice—but, again, “There is no dealing with thy mighty passion” (l. 2) because this speaker assumes that he must duplicate the act in order to share in it, and of course he despairs of attaining Christ’s perfection. Finally, “The Agonie” reacts to both of these misunderstandings of the meaning of Christ’s sacrificial love and makes the connection between God’s love and his passion and man’s love and his acceptance (and sharing) of that sacrifice. When he accepts this love, it looks like taking communion:

Who knows not Love, let him assay
And taste that juice, which on the crosse a pike
Did set again abroach; then let him say
If ever he did taste the like. (ll. 13-16)

These lines answer “The Thanksgiving” by explaining that man must accept and understand the grief contained in the blood of God in order to love him. “The Agonie” concludes:

Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,
Which my God feels as blood; but I as wine. (ll. 17-18)

These lines go further and answer the despair of attaining perfection that was voiced in “The Reprisal,” explaining that the essence of Christ’s sacrifice is translated from blood to wine for the Christian; thus the Christian need not be without sin to share it, nor can he act but to receive it.

Over the course of these four poems, Herbert may be seen as arguing that the physical elements of the eucharist are an important way for Christians to receive and understand God's sacrifice. It may not be enough to recognize oneself as a member of an invisible godly congregation. Some may, but most Christians will not understand how to receive God unless they can actually receive him in some corporal manner. Rather than a theologian's statement of the meaning of efficacy of the elements for salvation, then, these poems may be a parson's statement of the uses of the elements in the life of a Christian congregation.

There are not, actually, many poems in *The Temple* that deal directly with individual sacraments. Those that do exist fittingly deal only with the sacraments recognized by Protestants, the Eucharist and Baptism. One poem is included entitled "The H. Communion," and two entitled "H. Baptisme."

In "The H. Communion," Herbert explores how God "conveys himself" to man through the elements of the eucharist. He uses an architectural metaphor throughout. In the first lines, he presents the simple accessories of English Church worship, not "rich furniture, or fine array," and in lines 13-25 he describes how the eucharistic elements can of themselves reach the door to the soul, unable to "[leap] the wall that parts/ Our souls and fleshly hearts," but the grace "with which these elements come" has the key that opens the soul's inmost recesses (l.19). The state of grace is compared to a house in which one may go between earth and heaven "As from one room t'another", as Adam was able to travel between Paradise and heaven (l. 34-35). Significantly, we are restored to the pre-lapsarian of living "one room" away from God, as it were, by the eucharist:

Thou hast restor'd us to this ease
By this thy heav'nly bloud

Which I can go to, when I please,
And leave th'earth to their food. (ll. 37-40)

Many critics have contrasted the version of "The H. Communion" that came down to us in *The Temple* with an earlier version of the poem that appeared in what is called the Williams (or W) Manuscript. Comparing the *Temple* poem to the W version, Louis Martz points out that the earlier poem is much more Calvinist in tone and "ponders with a surprising lack of reverence the various controversial views of the Communion, dismissing the problems with a sarcastic tone" ("Worm" 25). Vendler praises the "quietness" of the *Temple* version (141), and Wilcox notes how much less "defiant" it is (Wilcox 184). Whalen calls the *Temple* "H. Communion" "irenic in tone, accommodating a more integrated, amorphous relationship among body, soul, grace, and the material means of grace" (Whalen 1291). Both Marz and Whalen attribute the tone and the movement away from Calvinism to Herbert's desire to avoid controversy during the ascendancy of Laud.

Whalen describes Herbert's understanding of the Eucharist in this poem as "bordering on a Roman Catholic sacramental position" (1288). At the same time, however, it may be a "poetic description of what in fact is not a physical process after all," for it may describe the communication of grace "with" or alongside, rather than "in" the elements, which is consistent with Calvinism (1288). In the end, it is the speaker who is *going to* grace (l. 39), not the other way around, which seems to imply willful action; however, God has made that action possible by entering the house and opening the door in the first place (albeit entering "with" the elements of bread and wine).

The "Baptisme" poems are clearly Protestant. Both essentially voice a Protestant understanding of the grace coming from God in heaven ("my deare Redeemers pierced

side” (“H. Baptisme” (I) l. 6); no mention is made of the church’s administering the sacrament or the earthly water and oil with which it is administered in the ceremony of the church. “H. Baptisme” (II) clearly describes how baptism works upon the soul; Leah Marcus calls attention to how it transforms the speaker into a “child of God,” a Biblical conceit we will explore in more detail in Chapter 5 (Marcus 101). Just one line hints of retreat from a strictly Calvinist reading of the sacraments. Richard Strier argues that the line “In you Redemption measures all my time” (l. 10) means that Herbert is arguing for the permanent efficacy of baptism, with no sacrament of penance required (Strier 141). However, the speaker seems to be thinking a bit more broadly about the “blessed streams”: they “*either ... prevent / And stop our sinnes ... / Or else* give tears to drown them” (ll. 7-9) (my emphases). How would human tears “drown” sins if penance (a Catholic sacrament) is not efficacious?

A final poem to look at in the light of sacraments—this time the Eucharist—is “Peace.” This poem is a parable told by old man, about a Prince who “sweetly liv’d; yet sweetnesse did not save / His life from foes” (ll. 25-26), after whose death “twelve stalks of wheat” grew from his grave, bringing “peace and mirth / By flight of sinne” to all who taste the bread made of it (ll. 35-36). Many readers see this poem as an allegory of human experience leading to religious conversion (Wilcox 115), and the images of pilgrim-like searching in the poem support this reading. Michael West says “Peace” is a clearly specific rejection of Puritanism in favor of the established church forms of Eucharistic worship (Wilcox 115). Louis Martz, however, says Herbert is walking that line between the two ends of the religious spectrum, rejecting neither. Martz calls “Peace” an example of Herbert’s “generous ambiguities,” a place where he creates—

indeed, insists upon—more than one reading of the symbols and scenes he creates. According to Martz, a strict Calvinist could read this passage as affirming the “secret virtue” of the Scriptures to be revealed through preaching.” Thus, the bread is the bread of life, as in John, “I am the Bread of Life,” i.e., Jesus’ preaching will bring the hearer eternal life. However, an Arminian could read the story as depicting the secret power within the sacrament, the “bread” created by the wheat grown at the grave of the “Prince,” spread to other gardens, and made into the “bread of heaven” of the Eucharist. Indeed, in a “peaceful” fashion, Herbert may be illustrating an ideal peaceful church in which both preaching and sacraments are considered essential and conducive along the road to eternal life.

“Let not Sinne devoure thy fold”

The belief in predestination, as opposed to free will, was also a marker of Calvinism for critics trying to create a formula for reading seventeenth-century writers. Although Calvin himself was guarded on this issue, some of his followers took it to its logical conclusion, a belief in predestination both of the saved (to eternal life) and the reprobate (to death). The core documents of the English Church affirmed a belief in the doctrine of grace received by predestination; debate stirred on the question because of its implications for the visible church. Essentially, the doctrine of predestination was antithetical to the traditional doctrine of grace received through the sacraments of baptism and communion. Consequently, to strict Calvinists, these sacraments could not perform the function of grace, but became tokens of a faith already granted (*Anti-Calvinists* 176). The question had been raised as early as the 1590s, whether the priest could properly say,

while giving communion, “The Body of Our Lord which is given for thee,” when many receivers would expressly not be saved (Whalen 1280). Peter Lake describes the central divide among English Protestants of this time as a disagreement between those who would restrict active membership in the Christian community to the “visibly godly” and those who would invite all in and work to “infuse with a positively religious content” the established church, as Hooker had (Lake 39).

The question of Herbert’s place in this debate was at one time seen as a simple question of whether he believed in predestination or free will for Christians. In this vein, critics have used “The Water-Course,” in which the speaker describes a God who gives Salvation and Damnation “as he sees fit” (l. 10), as an indicator of Herbert’s Calvinism (and conformity with Whitgift and his Lambeth Articles). Calvin’s *Institutes* is a source for this poem’s central metaphor, of the pipe of water/grace, and Lewalski and Strier insist that Herbert’s “Water-course” is a statement clearly confirming the double predestination of the saved and the damned (Wilcox 582-83). Back in the Dedication, Herbert despairs of being able to help any readers “who shall hurt themselves or me” and would rather they “refrain” from reading his poetry (l. 6). This last is probably a common trope, but it does smell of predestination: there are some whom these poems will not help (regardless of whether the poems are sermons *or* sacraments). But “as [God] sees fit” (from “The Water-Course”) does not *necessarily* point to predestination: a believer in free will would agree that God has the final say in one’s salvation, the difference being that God will judge “as he sees fit” based on what one does, or believes, during one’s life.

Elsewhere, it is clear that Herbert is participating in the more complicated debate about whether God meant for “all” to be members of his fold, rather than “few” or even

word “sweet” throughout *The Temple* to refer to God and godliness. The word or a derivative shows up in at least 18 of the *Temple* poems, always in a positive context: in the “sweet sacrifice” of God in “The Sacrifice” (l. 19); in “Whitsunday” the “sweet dove” and “The same sweet God” listen to his song (ll. 1, 26); “His blouds sweet current” pleads for the speaker in “Church-lock and key” (l. 12); and “the sweet cement, which in one sure band/Ties the whole frame, is *Love*” (“The Church-floore” l. 10-11), implying that Herbert saw value in uniting the church. We saw “the cleanness of sweet abstinence” in “Lent” (l. 19), and the “Sweet day... Sweet rose... Sweet spring... [and] a sweet and virtuous soul” combine to paint a picture of true righteousness in “Vertue.”

“Conscience” is a special case for our purposes. The speaker complains that the “pratler” with his “lowre” ruins all that is good in these terms: “Not a sweet dish, but thou dost call it sowre,” he complains (l. 3). Many critics have seen this poem as a clear statement of anti-asceticism within the individual soul (Wilcox 378), but Gottlieb suggests that Herbert is personifying “Conscience as a non-conforming, radical Protestant, a danger not only to one’s peace of mind but also to one’s church and society” (qtd. in Wilcox 97-98). Summers and Peabworth made a similar argument (“Politics”). Throughout *The Temple*, Herbert clearly defines the taste of “sweetnesse” as godly and good, and the taking of something to eat as equal to the taking in of God’s grace, and in this poem he seems specifically to be saying to those who might not believe that the visible church has anything to offer them, “sit and taste.” Significantly, in “Love” (III), the collection’s final poem, God invites the sinner not just to dwell with him but, “sweetly questioning” (l. 5), to “sit down... and taste my meat” (l. 17).

“This contagious infidelity”: The Church Militant

One poem often quoted to demonstrate Herbert’s Puritan, even Millennialist, tendencies, is “The Church Militant,” the long prophetic poem in iambic pentameter that forms the third section of *The Temple*. This was one of the most frequently cited of Herbert’s poems in the seventeenth century, although it is one of his least favorite and least known today (Wilcox 664). Walton recorded in the *Life* (75) that the lines describing the Christian Church “on tip-toe in our land, / Readie to passe to the *American* strand” almost prevented the original licensing of *The Temple* because they implied that the Church in England was corrupted by sin, and that the Puritans made up the true church.

Several critics have attempted to describe this poem’s connection with the rest of *The Temple* (see, e.g., Martz, *Poetry of Meditation*, and Stewart, “Time and *The Temple*”). However, Grosart put it in a separate volume, and Lee Ann Johnson makes a very good case that it is not allied with “The Church-porch” or “The Church,” either through its formal characteristics, its content, or through the evidence from the Williams manuscript (Johnson 206). The fact that this long poem was included in the original manuscript for publication, in light of the censor’s concerns, is interesting: presumably the publisher could have omitted “The Church Militant” with no great loss to the “Private Ejaculations” that came before. That he did not may say more about the publisher’s intentions than about Herbert’s. The fact remains, however, that Herbert did write “The Church Militant,” whether or not he meant for it to be tied forever to his other poems, and it behooves us to figure out what it means.

“The Church Militant” is addressed to God:

Almightie Lord, who from thy glorious throne
Seest and rulest all things ev'n as one:
The smallest ant or atome knows thy power,
Known also to each minute of an hour
Much more do Common-weals acknowledge thee,
And wrap their policies in thy decree,
Complying with thy counsels, doing nought
Which doth not meet with an eternall thought. (ll. 1-8)

These first lines have been called “good Hooker” (by Malcom Mackenzie Ross and Richard Strier, qtd. Hodgkins 461) – they emphasize the connections between things large and small, the love that rules the universe, the connection between God’s rule and civil rule, the timelessness of the Good. Like Hooker, these lines explain that the power of love is the binding force of the universe: “... above all, thy Church and Spouse doth prove / Not the decrees of power, but bands of love” (ll. 9-10). On the other hand, if we didn’t know any better, we might think these lines were written by an eighteenth-century satirist. Gottleib calls it “often wickedly satiric” (Gottleib, “Social and Political Backgrounds” 116), and Hodgkins calls it, of Herbert’s poems, “the most specifically—and urgently—pessimistic about the ravages of “Sinne and Death” in England” (184). The lines ironically depict the ideal of nations acting only on the eternal providence of God, unencumbered by the sordid power struggles of politics and religion, only to be followed by a few hundred lines of pessimistic history and prophesy about the church.

The pessimism is relentless. Where the Church goes, ever westward, there goes “Sinne,” doggedly ousting the true church at every turn. In the earliest churches, sin fights from outside the institution, but starting in Rome, sin fights from within:

Sinne being not able to extirpate quite
The Churches here, bravely resolv’d one night
To be a Church-man too, and wear a Mitre:
The old debauched ruffian would turn writer. (ll. 162-65)

Sin takes from other churches to corrupt the Roman church: from Egypt, “pettie deities” (multiple saints) and “Anchorisme and retirednesse” (cloisters, nunneries); from Greece, “oracular infallibilities” (papal perfection); old Rome, “the libertie of pleasure” (lavish riches, palace-like churches); from Greece and old Rome: “statelinesse”; such that all countries are submitted to his (Sin’s) power:

... having conquer’d, did so strangely rule,
That the whole world did seem but the Popes mule.
As new and old *Rome* did one Empire twist;
So both together are one Antichrist (ll. 204-207)

Similarly, Rome (or the ways Sinne is manifest in the Roman Church) will pollute the British Church, such that true religion will flee:

When *Italie* of us shall have her will,
And all her calender of sinnes fulfill;
Whereby one may foretell, what sinnes next yeare
Shall both in *France* and *England* domineer:
Then shall Religion to *America* flee:
They have their times of Gospel, ev’n as we. (ll. 243-248)

However, the New World is not a special case: Sin will follow there as well, and “They have their period also and set times / Both for their vertuous actions and their crimes” (ll. 261-262).

In other places in *The Temple* Herbert plays on the pun on the Son and the Sun; here the ironic pun is on Sinne and Sunne: “Thus do both lights, as well in Church as Sunne, / Light one another, and together runne. / And also Sinne and Darknesse follow still / The Church and Sunne with all their power and skill” (ll. 271-274). At the end, “The Church and Sunne” will end where the poem began: “So also did the Church by going west / Still eastward go; because it drew more near / To time and place, where judgement shall appeare” (ll. 275-277).

It is difficult to read “The Church Militant” as anything but an indictment of the ascendant Church of England at the time of Herbert’s writing. It seems to be a pretty good illustration of the Calvinist idea of “total depravity,” that fallen humanity (and by extension its institutions) is morally and spiritually unable to follow God without the intervention of God. Gene Veith argues that Herbert is clearly indicting the “institution of the visible church as it exists corporately and historically” (Veith 235), as opposed to the invisible church of the elect. In this poem, Herbert seems intent on highlighting the essential corruption of the visible Christian Church, not on highlighting any positive religious content it may have. However, its placement as part of *The Temple* makes it part of a whole that has much to recommend the Christian visible church. We’ve seen before several indications that Herbert believed that the physical church had much to offer an individual believer, and will see in Chapter 4 how Herbert conceived of his *Temple* as an act of building, or instauration of that church: so how might “The Church Militant” be part of that activity?

“The Church Militant” is considered a more “public” poem than the lyrics of *The Temple*, primarily because it deals with the Church in society, not the examination of an individual soul. However, it is a poem that gets to a central question that must have plagued Herbert’s career as a parish priest. At the level of a population, the idea that only a tenth of the people will be saved may seem disturbing, but to a faithful individual assured of his or her own salvation, the idea of irresistible grace might be immensely comforting. The logical question for someone in charge of a church is 1) how do you encourage moral behavior, or good works, in a population that believes in total depravity and double predestination? and 2) what do you do in church every week, if everyone

there is already either damned or saved, before time? As a parish priest, Herbert is in a position to ask these questions, and he looks at them from many angles.

Hooker's work quiets the nagging question about how to live with a worldview based on the identification and division of godly and ungodly: basically, the priest's job is to assume that God's grace was sufficient for all and to help the members of the congregation understand their place in the scheme of things. But the worldview that follows from Hooker's writings also raises questions. According to Hooker, humans are by nature political beings, in communion with each other and with the angels and the animals. We are what we are only in relationship to others – ideally, in gracious fellowship. Edmund Spenser's "Hymne in Honour of Love" puts this world view into poetic terms:

The earth, the ayre, the water, and the fyre,
Then gan to raunge them selves in huge array,
And with contrary forces to conspire
Each against other, by all meanes they may,
Threatning their owne confusion and decay:
Ayre hated earth, and water hated fyre,
Till Love relented their rebellious yre. (ll. 78-84)

Love applies the order, sometimes (as in Spenser's depiction) by force. As Hooker puts it, "Good doth followe unto all things, by observing the course of their nature, and on the contrary side evill by not observing it" (Book I, 9). Man is the only creature able to act voluntarily against this order, although most do not, according to Hooker. Herbert acknowledges that many do, and warns his reader in the "Church-porch" to ignore any who criticize those who live by rule: "What does not so, but man?" (Herbert 23 l. 2) he asks.

Just as the Calvinist formulation of predestination may be comforting to an individual assured of his own salvation, it may be discomfiting to an individual not so assured: we'll see in Chapter 5 how some of Donne's speakers approach the question. Similarly, the worldview Hooker describes may be comforting to someone in charge of a church (power structures are more secure if you believe and can convince others that they are essential and come from God). An individual within that church may, however, have difficulty submitting his or her "rebellious yre" to "Love" that comes in the form of church (or state) hierarchies.

Herbert deals with all of these reactions, and not systematically, but experientially. Herbert is using his poetry to picture forth an individual Christian grappling with profound—and often contradictory—religious truths. He portrays speakers who believe in predestination looking for signs from God that they have been chosen. He also portrays speakers who rebel but then come happily under the order of "love," either through the personal touch of God or through a sacrament given in God's name. At another level, he portrays a loyal priest of the Church "[which is] best" ("The British Church" l. 9); the Church in "Lent" that provides the spiritual food for "banqueting ... his soul" (ll. 47-48) and a Church Militant dogged ever by "Sinne and Darknesse" yet ultimately followed by a still hopeful plea to God to "Let not Sinne devoure thy fold" ("L'Envoy" l. 5).

The country parson aims to "keep mid way between superstition and slovenliness" (Herbert 246). By this formulation, it seems as though Herbert does not see himself anywhere near Rome *or* Geneva! In fact, in that phrase he puts himself squarely in front of his congregation as a model and a teacher. At every turn, Herbert depends on

the idea that “people are drawne, or led by sense, more than by faith, by present rewards, or punishments, more than by future” (Chapter XX: “The Parson in Gods stead”).

Hooker made a similar observation in a sermon, describing Christians as more apt to believe what they see by “the light of nature” than what they see by the “light of grace” (qtd. Archer 21). Herbert’s point is that he needs to meet people where they are and—importantly—bring them to where he is, which is with God. Daniel Doerksen suggests that there is, perhaps, a central spot of Christianity at which the “accidentals of humanly instituted outward forms and rites” are excluded, and the relationship with God—which a Protestant, and a Roman Catholic, and any believer, really—knows is the only essential thing. Doerksen calls that spot a “hub;” in the metaphor of this chapter I would call it pure light, with no “colors” of doctrine distorting or interfering with it. Herbert knew such a spot was only theoretical; humans need to be able to see, feel, or hear their way to God—even if, as we see in “The Church Militant,” the physical church cannot be an end in itself.

CHAPTER 4: HERBERT AND BACON AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Introduction

The connection of Herbert with the guiding religious lights of his times is regularly taken for granted by critics, whereas when twentieth-century scholars read Herbert with Francis Bacon, they often begin with a disclaimer. William A. Sessions is typical: “It may seem difficult to conceive of any degree of admiration existing between a Lord Chancellor whose concept of metaphysics was hardly more than mechanical laws of physics and the priest-author of *The Temple*” (Sessions 165). C.A. Patrides, in *The Critical Heritage*, is more pithy: “The connection between Bacon and Herbert should astonish but, astonishingly enough, does not” (Patrides, “Critical Heritage” 2). These “straw man” beginnings should wane because of more recent reconsiderations of Bacon’s religious sense, but as late as 1992, a critic named Andrew Cooper, comparing Herbert’s use of the religious pattern poems with “their epistemological *opposite* [my emphasis], the Baconian idea of a language able to reveal the patterns or ‘forms’ of matter,” felt compelled to begin, “[c]omparison of the two writers is not as unlikely as it might seem...” (Cooper 96).

However, except for the fact that it is rarely done, following a treatment of Calvin and Hooker (as symbols of different world-views) with a discussion of Bacon is not remarkable. Even leaving aside the fact that Bacon’s goals can be seen to be quite religious in nature, we can see connections between him and each of these religious

thinkers. In the first place, much of what Bacon writes about, we shall see, assumes a God of will, a God whose works cannot be read in the light of Aristotelian or Christian-Platonic patterns, with whom Calvin would be very comfortable. And if we look at Bacon beside Hooker, we must ask: what other early modern thinker was as insistent that humans pay attention to nature, and the lessons we could learn from understanding it? Obviously, Hooker had very different ideas of what it meant to understand nature than Bacon had, and critics until recently have assumed Herbert's conception of nature would have been closer to Hooker's than to Bacon's, but that makes them two sides of a coin, not different currencies. And my trump card (to switch metaphors), is that Herbert himself made explicit the connections between himself and Bacon, something that cannot be said about his connection with either Hooker or Calvin.

Patrides asked, "How was it that the father of modern scientific methodology ... responded to the strictly devotional poet?" (*Critical Heritage 2*), and in this chapter I will answer that question in reverse: what did Herbert see in Francis Bacon? A few critics have focused on the rhetorical clarity explicitly valued by both, and we will consider that. But beyond style, what in Bacon was attractive to Herbert, and how did this admiration – for it is clear in the poems Herbert wrote directly to or about Bacon that Herbert did admire the Lord Chancellor for more than his ability to communicate – how did this admiration manifest itself in Herbert's canonical poetry and prose?

The easy answer to Patrides and Sessions, et al., is that they have misread Bacon if they think he is diametrically opposed to Herbert. As in the case of Herbert's place on the religious spectrum, the misreading of the "lights" by which Herbert has been read is part of the story. New Bacon scholarship presents a more nuanced view of the religious

goals of Bacon's work, and a closer reading of Herbert shows how the poet's work, although his themes were clearly very different from Bacon's, actually manifests a strong affinity with and commitment to Bacon's core philosophy, methods, and worldview.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) has a storied biography and a wide body of work, but for my purposes here I wish to focus on his works of natural philosophy, primarily his plan for *The Instauration Magna* and the parts of that work that came out during his lifetime. It is in his role as a theorist of science that readers see him as farthest from the writer of *The Temple*. In this theory, to put it very simply, Bacon advocates the critical interrogation of the natural world and the separation of this interrogation from considerations of religion and other forms of received knowledge. In his hands, knowledge becomes power; understanding nature through observation and experiment will give humans power over nature, allowing us, in essence, to overcome the effects of centuries of empty philosophizing. Further, and notwithstanding his stated separation of religion from his worldview, if we can truly understand nature, through using inductive reasoning to find out the forms of simple natures, we can re-create a natural history and resume a position of power within nature, which was lost with the Fall. The knowledge and methodological tools gained through this process should be used to improve human life on earth, in practical, concrete ways. Finally, and it almost seems beside the point but may not have been to a contemporary poet, Bacon reclassified the genres of knowledge so that poetry is found in a decidedly inferior position relative to that of natural philosophy. It seems on the face of it that our poet-priest should have been, if not one of the divines Bacon worries will attack him, at least indifferent to this work of natural philosophizing.

But he was not. We know Herbert knew Bacon's work intimately because he helped translate the *Advancement of Learning* into Latin for release as the first part of the *Great Instauration*. Also, in several works written when he was Public Orator at Cambridge, Herbert praises Bacon in such specific terms, that it is clear Herbert understood and agreed with Bacon emphatically. In this chapter, I will present brief introductions to Bacon's *Great Instauration* and the words Herbert used to praise it. We will then turn to readings of Herbert's poetry that explicitly criticizes the scientific enterprise, and summarize the critical argument about Bacon's use of religion. Finally, using points of reference from Herbert's praise, we will look for places where the admiration of Bacon's methods, goals, and rhetorical style is manifested in Herbert's poetry.

Francis Bacon's *Great Instauration*

The *Instauration*, of course, was never finished. Most of it was never begun. In 1620, Bacon brought out his grand plan for the work, which would include six parts. He announced them as follows:

The first: The Partitions of the Sciences.

The second: The New Organon; or Directions concerning the Interpretation of Nature.

The third: The Phenomena of the Universe; or a Natural and Experimental History for the building up of Philosophy.

The fourth: The Ladder of the Intellect.

The fifth: The Precursors; or Anticipations of the Philosophy to Come.

The sixth: The Philosophy to Come; or the Active Science (Bacon 27)

The first part would be a survey of the existing sciences and their deficiencies. This would be a Latin, expanded version of *The Proficiency and Advancement of Learning* (1605), completed in 1623. Part 2 comprised a proposal for rebuilding the sciences and included the preface to the *Great Instauration*, the *Novum Organum*, and the first and second books of aphorisms (all included in the 1620 edition). The natural history of Part 3 was to be new interpretations of natural phenomena and contained the *Silva Silvarum* (dated between 1620 and 1626); Part 4 was to be the precepts of Part 2 put into practice; and Part 5 would present new theories. These last sections were barely begun when Bacon died, and Part 6, to be the result of testing the theories from Part 5, was never started (Some say *The New Atlantis* filled this role).

Bacon's stated goal in the *Instauratio* is to improve the way humans understand the world around them and, in so doing, to improve the well being of mankind, particularly by reinstating the powers of the mind "which [men] could exert ... if proper helps were applied to it" (Bacon 3). He has two basic tasks: to criticize the past state and methods of learning and to propose a new learning. His core philosophy is that traditional authority, abstract reason, and the unaided senses should be replaced by critical interrogation of nature and the use of inductive reasoning to find out the forms of simple natures. He has a utilitarian intent, but he starts with elucidation, not utility, for, he says, just as God created light on the first day of creation, not material substance, so we too should "first educe from experience of every kind the discovery of real causes and axioms, and search for experiments that bear light not fruit" (Aphorism LXX) (Bacon 113). The first task is to uncover problems with old ways of learning. These problems

are legion: the numerous obstacles to correctly seeing and communicating information; the lack of proper goals in mind for the uses of our knowledge; confusion about the different disciplines of learning; and entrapment in endless syllogism, blinding superstition, unaided and uninformed observation, or wrong-headed mysterious pursuits. Bacon describes the old ways of learning as “dogmas which are not merely desperate but dedicated to despair”—the despair of scientific inquiry (Aphorism LXXV) (Bacon 121). He does not only tear down old ways of learning, however; he also demonstrates “the art itself of interpreting nature,” by presenting his method of building a natural history by inductive reasoning, finally investigating “the unity of nature beneath the surface of materials,” or what he calls “Forms, eternal and immutable” (Aphorism IX) (Bacon 215). His style is consciously readable, his subject encyclopedic in scope, and the work, ideally, a cooperative enterprise that will go on long after he has passed from the scene.

The Literary Relationship between Bacon and Herbert

The close literary relationship between Bacon and Herbert is easily documented. In one version of Bacon’s will, Herbert is one of the executors of Bacon’s literary works. Bacon also dedicated his *Translation of Certain Psalmes* (1625) to his “very good friend” Herbert, in whom Bacon admired “Divinitie, and Poesy, met” (qtd. in Patrides *Critical Heritage* 57). And, as I mentioned above, Bacon chose Herbert to prepare the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, the Latin version of the *Advancement*, in 1623. In his own works, Herbert made the connection insistently, through three official Latin letters to Bacon; four Latin poems in Bacon’s honor; and an English poem prefacing a fifth Latin poem (Sessions 167). In the poems, Herbert praises Bacon extravagantly, lauding him as “the

Prince of Theories” (*Dux Notionum*) “High Priest of Truth” (*veritatis Pontifex*) and “Lord of induction” (*Inductionis Dominus*), emphasizing Bacon’s apocalyptic role as first revealer of natural history to mankind (transl. from Summers, *George Herbert* 195). He also calls Bacon the “Master of the Universe” (*Rerum magister unicus*) “evergreen of elegance and profundity” (*Profunditatis pinus, atque Elegantiae*), emphasizing Bacon’s decorous use of language, which, among other things, is able to free science from tired methods and pursuits without alienating the very ancients Bacon is “destroying.” Herbert finally asks, “who else has ever had the good luck of a glory more eternal than eternity, and wider than the world?” (transl. McCloskey and Murphy). The indecorous hyperbole notwithstanding, it is clear that Herbert admired Bacon.

“Why dost thou prie”: Herbert the Anti-Scientist

Herbert’s praise in the Latin poems is clearly for Bacon’s method and the pursuit of restoring or renewing humankind through knowledge of the natural world. Yet, a look at Herbert’s *Temple* poems shows a poet not only “strictly devotional,” but also, it seems, anti-scientific. When Herbert specifically mentions the exploration of the physical world in *The Temple*, he generally does so to illustrate a wrong-headed attention to that which is much less important than the next world. Herbert makes clear in several poems not only that we cannot find the way to heaven through knowledge of worldly things of any sort (Bacon would agree), but also that we are wasting time even looking at them. The speaker in “Vanitie (I),” a poem Helen Vendler calls “a fearful repudiation...of intellectual inquiry” (Vendler 182), epitomizes the disdain for a pitifully misdirected scientist: “Poore man, thou searchest round / To find out death, but missest life at hand”

In several poems, Herbert directly addresses the scientist's methods of observation and, particularly, measurement, of the world around him: the good Christian should be measuring other things. The speaker of "The Agonie" contrasts attempts to "measure" mountains, seas, and civic life, to the "two vast, spacious things, / The which to measure it doth more behove: . . . Sinne and Love" (ll. 4-6). The speaker continues by outlining the senses the Christian would use to gauge sin and love, telling where to find "sinne" – what to look for, and where (Mount Olivet), to see the visible signs of Christ's suffering; and "love" – using another sense to taste "that juice, which on the crosse a pike / Did set again abroach" (ll. 14-15). This poem seems to answer natural philosophers who put the senses to use studying the wrong subjects. Similarly, in "The Discharge" the speaker criticizes the "Busie enquiring heart," asking "Why dost thou prie, / And turn, and leer, and with a licorous (lecherous) eye / Look high and low; . . . Hast thou not made thy counts, and summ'd up all?" (ll. 1-6). In "Vanie II," he proclaims: "Heark and beware, lest what you now do measure / And write for sweet, prove a most sowre displeasure" (ll. 5-6). Clearly the anxious or jealous attention to this world takes one away from true preparation for the next, but it is more than that, for he is particularly talking about quantifying these things, not just loving them inordinately.

"Monuments of his Doctrine": The Right Study of Creation

Unlike a medieval rendition of this theme, however, Herbert does not ever imply that nature is fallen and thus evil and suspect to man. It is merely an idolatrous obsession with analyzing nature that is untrustworthy and, in fact, sinful. The speaker in Herbert's poems is always forgiven for trying to find God thereby, but profoundly mistaken

nonetheless. Bacon would agree, but would add that through the “regenerated sciences” one can read in nature the other “book” of God’s revelation—the created *works*, which stand next to Scripture, the book of God’s *will* with regard to creation (For natural history “is the book of God’s works and ... another kind of Holy Writ”) (Aphorism IX, Bacon 469). God didn’t punish Adam and Eve because they wanted knowledge of nature, according to Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning*, but because “...the proud knowledge of good and evil, with an intent in man to give law unto himself, and to depend no more upon God’s commandments, ... was the form of the temptation” (Bacon, “Advancement” 162).

Herbert acknowledges the “right” attention to God’s works through repeated references to one form of nature controlled and used by God and humans: the garden. Bacon began his essay “Of Gardens,” “God Almighty first planted a garden,” then proceeded to detail every aspect of the “princely garden,” “the purest of human pleasures” (Bacon 197). Herbert, in turn, through both literal descriptions of the uses of plants and metaphorical treatment of gardening and farming, illustrates the ideal use of nature by man. A lengthy quotation from Chapter XXIII: The Parson’s Completeness illustrates both Herbert’s cataloguing tendency and his overarching theory about what “civilized” nature can mean to the Christian:

... [T]he knowing of herbs may be done at such times, as they may be an help, and a recreation to more divine studies, nature serving Grace both in comfort of diversion, and the benefit of application when need requires; as also by way of illustration, even as our Saviour made plants and seeds to teach the people: for he was the true householder...[O]ur Saviour did this for three reasons: first, that by familiar things hee might make his Doctrine slip the more easily into the hearts even of the meanest. Secondly, that labouring people ... might have every where monuments of his Doctrine, remembring in gardens, his mustard-seed, and lillyes; in the field, his seed-corn, and tares; and so not be drowned altogether in the works of their vocation, but sometimes lift up their minds to better things, even in

the midst of their pains. Thirdly, that he might set a Copy for Parsons. In the knowledge of simples, wherein the manifold wisdom of God is wonderfully to be seen, one thing would be carefully observed; which is, to know what herbs may be used in stead of drugs of the same nature, and to make the garden the shop: For home-bred medicines are both more easie for the Parsons purse, and more familiar for all mens bodies. [*Then follow several lines about particular herbs and their uses by the Parson and his wife*] In curing of any, the Parson and his Family use to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a Parson, and this raiseth the action from the Shop, to the Church. (Herbert 261-262)

These references to the literal uses of plants by humans have the effect of establishing the Parson's role as a healer of the physical as well as the spiritual self (although we are reminded at the end of the passage that prayers remain above medicines.). It is also a way of assuring the reader that God has created a world that shows forth his power and goodness.

The Temple also contains many examples of the uses of plants. "The Rose" recalls the belief that a rose as tonic will purge, or flush unhealthy things from one's system : "So this flower doth judge and sentence / Worldly joyes to be a scourge: / For they all produce repentance, / And repentance is a purge" (ll. 25-28). The speaker ultimately chooses the rose instead of the worldly joys, desiring no further reason to purge himself ("But I health, not physick choose")(l. 29). Similarly, "Herbes gladly cure our flesh" in "Man" (l. 23), "Providence" catalogues the uses of herbs and roses, their qualities (cold or hot, wet or dry); and "An herb distill'd, and drunk, may dwell next doore ("Praise" (I), which is to say that attending to a poor man may be a cure for vanity (l. 13).

Herbert uses the imagery of planting metaphorically, as well, as in Chapter III, "The Parsons Knowledg," where he writes about "the planting both of love, and humility" among peoples (Herbert 229). The idea of "seeds" of truth is used often (as in Chapter XXI, "The Parson Catechising"), and "transplanting" is used throughout to

illustrate the borrowing of ideas from one culture or community to another (see for example Chapt. XXXII, “The Parson’s Surveys”). In “Employment” (I) the speaker compares his life unfavorably to that of a garden flower: “All things are busie; onely I / Neither bring hony with the bees, / Nor flowres to make that, nor the husbandrie / To water these” (ll. 17-20). His heart comes off better in “The Flower,” where through God’s love he is able to “[recover] greenesse” so that he can “bud again” in his older age (ll. 9, 36) because God “hast a garden for us, where to bide” (l. 46). Critics (Summers, Lewalski) have noted that the lines of “Paradise” mimic a gardener lopping off branches in husbandry: “I Bless thee, Lord, because I GROW / Among thy trees, which in a ROW / To thee both fruit and order OW (ll. 1-3). Generally, God is the gardener, which is key to the metaphor: we are constantly reminded that it is God’s creation we are looking at, not God himself, and the important lesson is of respect and faith in the caretaker not, ultimately, of dependence on the thing created.

Two poems use the imagery of harvest to emphasize this point. The unhappy speaker of “The Collar” conducts a misdirected search for earthly reward:

Have I no harvest but a thorn
 To let me bloud, and not restore
 What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
 Sure there was wine
 Before my sighs did drie it: there was corn
 Before my tears did drown it. (ll. 7-12)

The harvest imagery (which also, of course, invokes the Eucharist) is not taken up again in this poem, but we can imagine that the speaker of “My lord” at the end has let go of his vain quest to find physical sustenance as a final reward for the love of God (l. 36).

“Home” seems to say that the fruit of our labor is only manifest when we let go of our labor:

We talk of harvests; there are no such things,
But when we leave our corn and hay:
There is no fruitfull yeare, but that which brings
The last and lov'd, though dreadfull day. (ll. 55-58)

Richard Strier reads the lines “Nothing but drought and dearth, but bush and brake, / Which way so-e’re I look, I see” (“Home” ll. 49-50) to indicate Herbert’s rejection of the humanist vision that would take a positive view of the natural world (qtd. Wilcox 384). “Home” is also the quintessential “*ubi es?*” poem, pleading repeatedly, “O show thyself to me, / Or take me up to Thee!” In “The Search,” the speaker asks, “Whither, O, wither art thou fled / My Lord, my Love?” (ll. 1-2). He can see God’s creation: “... I mark how herbs below / Grow green and gay” (ll. 9-10); ...I mark how stares above / Simper and shine” (ll. 13-14), and ends up deeply frustrated: “Thy will such a strange distance is, / As that to it / East and West touch, the poles to kisse, / And parallels meet” (ll. 41-44). The speaker recognizes that God’s physical distance “excel[s] / All distance known” (ll. 57-58), but begs and hopes for a spiritual closeness, which will “mak[e] two one” (l. 60). Like Bacon, Herbert valued the natural world for what it could teach us about God’s methods and power; over and over again, however, he warns against actually looking for God in the world.

Things Human and Divine

One way to look at the difference in the topics Herbert and Bacon chose to address is through Bacon’s exhortation to “give to faith that which is faith’s” (LXV) (Bacon 103). Bacon’s admonishment was like Herbert’s: they both would agree that with the “unhealthy mixture of things divine and human begets not only a fantastic philosophy but heretical religion” (LXV). This mixture is avoided on Bacon’s side by not attempting

“to build natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, the book of *Job*, and other sacred writings” (LXV). Herbert avoids it by consistently telling his Christian reader to focus on the heavenly and see the worldly only insofar as it leads us to understand the power of God.

Kenneth Hovey argues that Bacon and Herbert are some of the first to advocate the separation of science from religion. Looking at the poem “Divinitie,” Hovey notes Herbert’s “ardent Baconianism” in “its mockery of the old science, its dismay at the mixing of divinity and science, its demand for a divinity tied closely to the moral letter of the Bible, and its limitation of the use of reason in the mysteries of the faith” (Hovey 37). According to Hovey, Herbert’s work “enunciates the major principles of Baconian divinity as expressed in the *Advancement of Learning*.” (Hovey 37). Charles Whitney concludes further that Bacon and Herbert represent the modern bifurcation of disciplines symbolized by that clear distinction between the scientific and the theological realms. Whitney points out that both Herbert and Bacon echo the phrase from Luke, “why seek ye the living among the dead?” Herbert, as I quoted above, in “Vanie” (I), and Bacon, in the *Instauratio*, where he claims that to try to find scientific truth by reading scripture is “inter viva quaerentes mortuus” (seeking the dead among the living). Thus, the two writers prefigure modern disciplinary divisions.

But we have seen that Herbert walks a line between condemning the scientific enterprise and showing how God’s works show forth God’s power. Also, although Bacon argues for the strict separation of religion from natural philosophy, he does not actually strictly separate them in his writings. John Channing Briggs argues that Bacon truly didn’t see any such bifurcation. Briggs highlights the religious language and messages of

Bacon's philosophical writings, noting that when Bacon says it is wrong to use scripture to read the natural world it is not because revealed religion has no part in scientific inquiry, but because too great an attempt to find exact parallels will set the rest of natural philosophy against scripture, and "there is no such enmity between God's word and his works" (qtd. Briggs 175).

The Footsteps of the Creator

For Bacon, looking for a *pattern* of God in nature – for the kind of rational order of things advocated by Hooker – was idolatrous. Bacon's dedication to King James at the beginning of *The Advancement of Learning* recognizes that contemporary divines are working to discredit his philosophical writings at least in part because his ideas threaten the teleological system that orders their world. Bacon accuses contemporary divines of "gratify[ing] God with a lie" when they look to the divine hand for causes in this world (Aphorism LXXXIX) (Bacon 145). Describing precisely what he has elsewhere called the idol of the tribe, Bacon explains, "The human intellect is constitutionally prone to supposing that there is more order and equality in things than it actually finds" (Aphorism XLV) (Bacon 83).

Bacon claims, and Herbert would agree, that rather than a picture of God, we see the "footsteps of the Creator imprinted on his creatures" in nature. (qtd. Briggs 175). Much is implied by his choice of words here. First, the word "footsteps" implies a direction, something humans can follow to an end; by definition, the one who leaves the prints is no longer physically there. As in Herbert's poem "Dulnesse," where the speaker sees "The very dust, where [God] dost tread and go, / Makes beauties here" (ll. 14-15),

footsteps leave behind something worth looking at, but not the “treader” himself.

Footsteps are also individual marks, which the follower must look at one by one in order to follow, as opposed to a path clearly laid out and able to be anticipated. Usually in the Bible the word “footsteps” refers to the human foot and its potential to fail (for example, Psalms 17:5, 38:16, 73:2, and 94:18 all present the specter of the slipping foot on the path of life). Bacon’s use echoes Job 23:11, “My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined” (KJV), or Psalm 77: “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known” (77:19, KJV). In the one, the way is clear; in the other it is not, but in both, the idea is to look for God’s footsteps so that one can attempt to follow God, which is what I think can be inferred from Bacon. For Bacon, the footsteps may lead to, but are not, God; they are not easily known, but they are knowable with special instruments and strict investigative methods to correct our innately dull and deceivable senses. And finally, the end of following the footsteps cannot be judged prematurely or on the basis of our human prejudices or rationalizing.

A *Temple* poem that illustrates the way Herbert may be thinking about the issue of looking at nature apart from its role in the humanistic hierarchy like that described by Hooker is “Man.” This poem may be seen as “an extended celebration of humankind [and nature] and their creator” (Wilcox 331): “Man is ev’ry thing, / And more” (l. 7); “Man is all symmetrie” (l. 13); “Man is one world, and hath / Another to attend him” (ll. 47-48). Its picture of the created world all has to do with its relationship in deference to Man: “For us the windes do blow, / The earth doth rest, heav’n move, and fountains flow. / Nothing we see, but means our good” (ll. 25-27). However, the speaker, in the end, is

begging God to join him in this world, and if we read the poem closely we see that it is less than celebratory of the “man” it describes:

He is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is, or should be more:
Reason and speech we onely bring.
Parrats may thank us, if they are not mute... (ll. 8-11)

The uses to which this speaker has put his “reason and speech” are to reiterate (indeed, parrot back) an understanding of the self based only on classical humanistic self-congratulations and assertion of dignity based on the hierarchy of being. Richard Strier calls the speaker’s “praising [of] man in light of his place in nature” a “rhetorical ploy to convince God that man is that ‘stately mansion’” (Strier, “Ironic humanism” 36). In other words, Herbert is saying “know thyself”—and nature—not in the classical humanist meaning of finding oneself within a tiered world but in the Baconian meaning of knowing thyself truly and individually, as a being separate from any concept of hierarchical nature. For Herbert, the end of that examination is the recognition of God’s power.

Metaphysics

According to Bacon, these “footsteps” will lead the seeker to a fixed reality through the exploration of that which underlies the created world, which he calls “metaphysics.” For Bacon, metaphysics is a search for fixed meaning that is connected with empirical realities: understanding metaphysics through inductively searching for the forms behind simple natures enables us to think about real causes not abstracted from reality. Bacon defines metaphysics in Aphorism IX “... the investigation of forms, eternal and immutable as they are ... constitutes *Metaphysics*” (Bacon 215). He compares it with Physics: “... the investigation of *Efficient* and *Material Causes*, and of *latent process* and

latent schematism (which all relate to the common and ordinary course of nature, and not to her fundamental and everlasting laws)” (Bacon 215). His meaning differs from those of both Aristotle and Plato, who saw the natural world as not as “real” as the universal (Aristotle) or the supersensuous (Plato) worlds, or the image in the artist’s mind (Neo-Platonism), or a heavenly truth (Christian-Platonism). Bacon redefines metaphysics, according to Barbour, “so that it is neither prime philosophy nor natural theology but rather the home of formal and final causes apart from a physics of material and efficient causes” (Barbour 78). It contains the “summary law of nature,” with which God created the world. There is no guarantee that we will ever understand this law, but to get closer to it Bacon assigns the understanding of forms.

His “law of nature” has nothing to do with the “Natural Law” described by Hooker, which required a holistic view of the system by which God’s love ruled the world. Bacon’s goal is to avoid Aristotelian-type abstractions by traveling methodically through physical properties to get to metaphysical properties. Bacon says “The man who knows the cause of some nature (such as whiteness or heat) only in certain subjects has incomplete knowledge of it But he who knows forms grasps the unity of nature beneath the surface of materials which are very unlike.” (Bacon 203). He explains: “... the form of any nature is such that if it be in place the given nature invariably follows” : it is its necessary and sufficient cause (Bacon 205). To understand this pinnacle of knowledge, Bacon said, we must effect “A separation and solution of bodies ... by reasoning and true induction, with experiments to aid; and by comparison with other bodies, and a reduction to simple natures and their Forms, which meet and mix in the compound” (IV, 125). Bacon’s table for the “form” of heat is an example: in his “Table

of Essence and Presence” in the *Novum Organum*, he lists every instance of “hot” things—the Sun’s rays, Sparks from flint and steel, Quicklime with water, warm-blooded animals, hot spices, and all “other instances.” He presents what he calls “a muster or presentation ... of all known instances which agree in the same nature, though in substances the most unlike” (Bacon 215-217). He applies negative instances to each positive instance of heat—times and places where the sun’s rays are not hot, instances of things that sparkle or glow without heat, or hot things that turn red but do not flame, for example. The section goes on, not exactly searching for the form of heat, but rather showing the method by which one would search for such a form by gathering instance after instance and negative after negative, in hopes of presenting the quality consistently in dissimilar instances, to avoid its “[being] taken for the mere property” (Bacon 207).

We will more completely define Herbert’s metaphysics in Chapter 5, as part of our examination of his and Donne’s concepts of “correspondences,” but it is fitting here to show how Herbert sometimes seems to use Baconian cataloguing to probe deeply into meanings that can be found in the physical world, introducing a symbol in one poem, drawing other connections in others, asking repeatedly the Baconian question, what is the essence of this thing? What can we learn from its similarities to other things, its differences, its various attributes, how we find those attributes in other, seemingly dissimilar, things, and the list goes on. The underlying question for Herbert is “what is the essence, or form, of the Christian’s relationship with God?” This is too abstract, however. Herbert makes it concrete for us by presenting and probing myriad connections between the natural world and that of God, distilling what are for him the forms of God’s love.

One of Herbert's recurrent conceits, for example, involves comparing the sun of the sky with the son of God. This comparison is common enough in English Christian poetry because of the convenient homophone, but Herbert does seem to be commenting on how the Christian can understand God through understanding all the permutations of physical light in the world. In "Mattens," the speaker demands, "Teach me thy love to know; / That this new light, which now I see, / May both the work and workman show" (ll. 17-19). "Then by a sunne-beam I will climbe to thee" (l. 20). He does not want to stop at seeing the rising sun; he wants to proceed and understand light itself. "The Bag" explains how God's coming to earth literally invested (as in "dressed") the physical world with spiritual meaning:

The stares his tire of light and rings obtain'd,
The cloud his bow, the fire his spear,
The sky his azure mantle gain'd. (ll. 13-15)

The oft-quoted phrase in "Jordan" (II), "Nothing could seem too rich to clothe the sunne, / Much lesse those joyes which trample on his head" (ll. 11-12), assumes the analogy between the Sun and the Son. In "The Sonne," Herbert explicitly addresses the pun and plays with the connection between the "fruitfull flame," enlightening the world (l. 7), traveling East to West (reminding the reader of "The Church Militant" tracing of the progress of Christianity)—and the son of God, who "in humbleness began" but is now "in glorie call[ed], *The Sonne of Man*" (ll. 13-14). Herbert brings humanity into the equation in "Coloss.3.3 *Our life is hid with Christ in God.*" If we are "hid with Christ," then we share in God's connection with life-giving light. The poem, in Baconian fashion, defines the many meanings of man's life, in form like the sun: both have a "double motion," one straight and one oblique (l. 2), each tends toward both earth and heaven,

both foster life and after life through their “daily labour” (l. 9). Like Bacon, Herbert introduces negatives: God is not actually the sun—in “Miserie,” God is “all brightnesse, perfect puritie,” while “The sunne holds down his head for shame, / Dead with eclipses, when we speak of thee” (ll. 32-34). And all that is bright and hot is not the sun: in “Employment” (II) we see that “Man is no starre, but a quick coal / Of mortall fire” (ll. 6-7).

“The Starre” is a case for illustrating how Herbert catalogues the significance of symbolic physical things within and between poems. In that poem, the speaker invites the “Bright spark” to dwell within his heart and use its qualities to make him a better Christian (l. 1). The essential qualities of the star are “fire-work,” “light,” and “celestiall quicknesse,” – a “trinitie of light, / Motion, and heat” (ll. 9,11,14, 17-18) which, if applied to the speaker, will allow him to “Glitter, and curle, and winde” along with the other beams of light that “surround my Saviours face” (ll. 26, 2). We’ve seen the image of the star doing its work upon man before, in “Artillerie,” where the speaker, as he “... sat before my cell / Me thoughts a starre did shoot into my lap” (ll. 1-2) And “Artillerie” itself echoes Herbert’s Latin poem “On Sacred Scripture”:

... when I was resting
Near my door not long ago,
And it was evening, did I
Swallow a falling star? And is it
Trying to escape, not knowing how
In this disgraceful lodging to be hidden? (ll. 2-6) (transl. McCloskey and Murphey)

The “disgraceful lodging” is like the “bad lodging in my heart” from “The Starre” (line 6), and in each instance, ingesting the “light” allows the speaker to see God more clearly, which is, of course, Herbert’s ultimate goal.

For Bacon, metaphysics was connected with empirical realities, and Herbert uses this connection to make his own points about how the Christian should understand what cannot be seen. In his poetry, Herbert seems to take up Bacon's charge against empty philosophizing and taps in to the Baconian search for forms and essences. As we shall see in the next chapter, Herbert adds another layer to this search. For Herbert, the human can see the "real" only through God's grace, without which we are blinded by our mortality.

Bacon's goal is "to write an apocalypse" of the footsteps of God. In using the loaded religious word, Bacon is clearly putting his examination of creation in the context of divine providence and even revelation. For Bacon, purging the study of nature of "*Superstition*, and admixture of theology" (LXV, Bacon 101), or the "superstitious philosophy" that he would categorize as an idol of the market place, will actually strengthen human faith in God when we come to study those things that belong solely to faith. "...[N]atural philosophy after the Word of God is the best medicine for superstition and most highly recommended food for faith. And so to religion natural philosophy is rightly given as her most faithful servant, the former manifesting God's will, the latter His power" (Bacon 145). Further, "...Discoveries are also like new Creations repeated, and imitations of God's handiwork" (CXXIX, Bacon 193). Studying the natural world is a way to be faithful. It is not that God, or a pattern of God, will necessarily be found there, but that God wants us to know the world around us and understand it and its causes as far as we are able, so that we will better understand his power. It is not theology or divinity; it is, as Barbour puts it, the study of the "circumstance" of "creation in the context of divine providence" (Barbour 178). It allows us to look at nature apart from

God-centered natural law as described by Hooker, but acknowledges its connection to the knowledge of God.

The Ends of Learning: (Re)Building the Temple

Bacon wrote in the proem to the *Instauratio* his “sincere concern for the well-being of the human race” (Bacon 5). Some modern critics have accused Bacon of power-hungry, atheistic searching for knowledge and progress at any cost (Rees reports on this and C.S. Lewis actually participates in it). But Stephen McKnight, in his reading of *The New Atlantis* notes, “What is often overlooked is Bacon’s emphasis on charity as the motive for using the knowledge of nature for the benefit of humankind” (McKnight 99).

Whitney points out that the word “instauration” comes from the vulgate: to refurbish, or rebuild, and relates to the rebuilding of Solomon’s temple (Whitney 231). By calling his work an “instauration,” Bacon indicates that he is working to rebuild the human intellect or at least humanity’s body of knowledge, to ward off idols and vanities of learning that keep us from knowing the true power and will of God the Creator.

The “temple,” for Bacon, is vast, as indicated by the images that accompany the published versions of his works. The frontispiece to the *Novum Organum* shows an image of a ship passing through two pillars in the sea, with another sailing ship in the distance. The Latin motto written beneath the ship is a quotation from the Book of Daniel, reading “Multi pertransibunt & augebitur scientia,” or “Many shall pass through and learning shall be increased”(Daniel 12). Some critics believe that Bacon was thus putting his “exploration” into the context of world naval exploration that was going on at the same time, implying that God’s will was in both.

Bacon's enterprise was also intended to be cooperative. The frontispiece of the *Instauratio Magna* includes a figure of clasped hands, not clasped as in prayer, but as in cooperation between the two globes labeled "*Mundus Visibilis*" ("the Visible World"), and "*Mundus Intellectualis*" ("the Intellectual World"). The "*Oxonium*" ("Oxford") pillar has "*Scientiæ*" ("Sciences") on its base, and the "*Cantabrigia*" ("Cambridge") pillar has "*Philosophiæ*" ("Philosophies"). The motto shared by the two pillars reads "*Moniti Meliora*," an abbreviation of the fuller motto "*Moniti Meliora Sequamar*" ("Let us, being admonished, follow better things," which is from Virgil's *Aeneid* iii, 188).

Herbert also can be seen as establishing or re-establishing a temple. For one thing, he had a literal fix-up project in his own church at Bemerton for the three years he was rector there. Also, we have seen that the speaker of "The Church Militant" clearly has an ideal in mind of the true church, and a pessimistic view of the actual Church. Many critics see an architectural conceit running through *The Temple*, and in many cases the "stones" or "parts" of the edifice ("The Altar") are broken. Clearly, throughout his writings, Herbert has the purpose of clarifying, perfecting, and figuratively "rebuilding" the temple, or church, for his human readers. He expresses this purpose through both his poetry and his prose work, *A Priest to the Temple*, or, *A Countrey Parson*.

In an example that speaks literally to his "rebuilding/refurbishing" goal, in Chapter XIII, "The Parsons Church," he describes every aspect of caring for the church, from how to keep it in good repair, "as walls plastered, windows glazed, floore paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font be as they ought;" to cleaning and outfitting it properly, to ensuring the

texts of scripture on the walls are “grave, and reverend, not with light colours, or foolish anticks.” All accomplishes his primary goal:

... following the Apostles two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, *Let all things be done decently, and in order*: [I Cor. 14:40] The second, *Let all things be done to edification*, I Cor. 14 [:26]. For these two rules comprize and include the double object of our duty, God, and our neighbour; the first being for the honour of God; the second for the benefit of our neighbor. (Herbert 246)

Herbert’s work is, in effect, an encyclopedia of what a country parson must do to *edify* – a word that in Herbert’s time meant both literally and figuratively to build or refurbish (as he describes his care for the church). In the Corinthians quotation, “edification” means to build up the church, or the soul, imparting strength, stability, and permanence to the faith.

Poems in *The Temple* that use the imagery of edification or instauration include “Man,” in which the speaker asks, “What house more stately hath there been, / Or can be, then is Man?” (ll. 4-5) In “Sion,” Herbert clarifies that it is not the physical temple he means to rebuild. There, he compares the “glorie” of Solomon’s temple with the true heart: “All Solomons sea of brasse and world of stone / Is not so deare to thee as one good grone” (ll. 17-18). He concludes:

And truly brasse and stones are heavie things,
Tombes for the dead, not temples fit for thee:
But grones are quick, and full of wings,
And all their motions upward be. (ll. 19-22)

In “The World,” “Love” builds a “stately House,” which is soon overrun by sinful human nature, until finally “... *Love and Grace took Glorie by the hand, / And built a braver Palace then before*” (ll. 1, 19-20), and in “Giddinesse,” Herbert broaches the need to edify the mind of man, who “builds a house, which quickly down must go, / As if a whirlwinde blew / And crusht the building; and it’s partly true, / His minde is so” (ll. 13-16). In these

and other poems, Herbert's point is that God built something perfect in the human heart, which humans have destroyed, and we must trust in "the Architect, whose art / Could build so strong in a weak heart" (The Church-floore (ll. 19-20) to get back to that perfect edification.

The "instauration" goes beyond building anything physical or even spiritual, to encompass the development of forms of discourse and rhetoric, human institutions, and ways of seeing the world. Herbert's view of Christianity as depicted in the *Country Parson* is, like Bacon's view of science, public, communal, and collaborative (Rossi 32). In *Redargutio philosophiarum*, Bacon paints the picture of the scientist about to give a lecture: he is "... a man of peaceful and serene air, save that his face had become habituated to the expression of pity... he took his seat, not on a platform or pulpit, but on level with the rest and delivered the following address..." (III: 559) (qtd. Rossi 33). This portrait says something about Bacon's world view. The scientist is connected to his audience, as symbolized by his sympathy with them and, more concretely, by his sitting "on level" with them. The peace, serenity, and pity all also point to a saintly figure of Christian virtue. This portrait is not far off from what we might expect to hear about Herbert's parson, who is "holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his wayes" (Chapter III), and who, like a father, "overcomes evill" in his parishioners "with gentle reasoning and pitying" (Chapter XXVIII) (Herbert 227, 269). As does Bacon's scientist, the parson sits with his parishioners when he can: "... the poor are welcome also to his table, whom he sometimes purposely takes home with him, setting them close by him, and carving for them, both for his own humility, and their comfort" (Chapter XI) (243).

Bacon's practical purpose in his scientific endeavors parallels Herbert's practicality in divinity, and both have human-centered aims. The Parson's method is clear: observe the community to understand their requirements, reduce what they need to first principles, and deal not with abstractions but rather with concrete individuals in realistic situations. To reach his audience, Herbert stays with the concrete, and avoids what Bacon would call "hasty abstractions" throughout his work. For example, Herbert insistently relies on characters to make his points. These characters find themselves in a range of situations, working out how to relate to God and their own souls. In the *Country Parson*, Herbert states his belief that that good country priest will always use what we would call casuistry to guide his congregation:

He greatly esteemes also of cases of conscience, wherein he is much versed. And indeed, herein is the greatest ability of a Parson to lead his people exactly in the wayes of Truth, so that they neither decline to the right hand, nor to the left. Neither let any think this a slight thing. For every one hath not digested, when it is a sin to take something for mony lent, or when not; when it is a fault to discover anothers fault, or when not; *when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means, or honour, be a sin of covetousnes or ambition, and when not, when the appetites of the body in eating, drinking, sleep, and the pleasure that comes with sleep, be sins of gluttony, drunkenness, sloath, lust, and when not,* and so in many circumstances of actions. (Herbert 230)

Herbert even uses a case to illustrate for his learned clerical reader the wisdom of this method: "Now if a shepherd know not which grass will bane, or which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd?" (Chapter V, Herbert 230).

The Temple is full of cases. The case of the unhappy Christian, wearing the priestly habiliment, "calling" to God ("The Collar"); the afflicted Christian servant ("Affliction I," "Love Unknown," and others); the traveler ("The Pilgrimage"); the speaker of "Conscience," whom we met above in Chapter 3, begging for "a noiseless sphere" away from chatting, prattling complainers who look suspiciously like a caricature

of Puritans. Some poems are quite dramatic: the guest of “Love” (III), helping the reader picture how it would be to receive God; the tenant of “The Redemption,” figuring forth the new covenant in strikingly mundane terms.

The corollary to this human-centered approach is that abstract logic and argumentation will not elucidate, no matter what the subject. According to Bacon, natural philosophy has been variously adulterated by logic, theology, and mathematics, leaving us with “just a farrago and mass made up of a good deal of faith, a lot of accident, and a fair few infantile notions which we swallowed when young” (Bacon 155). His predecessors’ weakness was that they used syllogistic logic “to entrench and firm up errors (themselves founded on common notions) rather than to investigate the truth” (Bacon 69), using first principles “recklessly abstracted from things” (Bacon 69). Herbert specifically praises Bacon’s having freed us from the “tyrannies of Authority” (*In Honorem Illust.* l. 15) and what he has learned from Bacon about edification is manifested throughout his poetry.

Herbert seems especially taken with Bacon’s point that excessive argument and logic cloud true understanding. We’ve seen examples of poems, such as “Church-rents and schismes” and “Lent,” in which he specifically denounces internecine quarreling; other poems censure argument more generally. In “Love” (III), the speaker attempts to reason his way out of accepting God, but is unable: the Christian must not deprive himself of what is essential by focusing on controversy and argument. In “Dialogue,” similarly, the speaker attempts to apply reason to the valuation of his soul. God replies, “If I say, Thou shalt be mine: / Finger not my treasure” (l. 11-12). The message hearkens back to the admonition not to try to quantify God, and it also insists that God is the one

authority to whom the Christian must submit, and no argument or logic can improve upon this knowledge. In “Divinitie” the speaker complains that in the old philosophy “Reason triumphs, and faith lies by” (l. 8), and in “The Church Militant” he takes aim specifically at the attempts of Aristotelian and Platonic logic first to withstand Christianity’s onslaught, and then to infiltrate it:

Religion thence fled into *Greece*, where arts
Gave her the highest place in all mens hearts.
Learning was pos’d, Philosophie was set,
Sophisters taken in a fishers net.
Plato and *Aristotle* were at a losse,
And wheel’d about again to spell Christ-Crosse. (ll. 49-54)

Eventually, however, “Prayers chas’d syllogismes into their den, / And *Ergo* was transformed into *Amen*.” (ll. 55-56)

The Language of “Sweetnesse”

Related to all of this is the fact that both Herbert and Bacon advocated “plain style,” and the straightforward, unadorned, use of language. Herbert’s memorial poem for Bacon focused entirely on Bacon’s uses of language, and it is speculated that Bacon chose Herbert to help translate *The Advancement of Learning* into Latin because of Herbert’s straightforward “masculine” command of that language.

For Bacon, words can act as “idols of the marketplace” that affect how we see the world. The admiration of words over matter, or an interest in rhetorical embellishment over clear language, Bacon called the “vanity of delicate learning” (Bacon “Advancement” 139) Similarly, for Herbert, poetry should be artful yet simple, derived from and inspired by the grace of God, not the adoration of worldly beauty or worldly expression. The content should be correct: “To His Mother” and “Jordan” (I) argue for

proper subject; and the style should match: “Jordan” (II) shows the poet must give God his best but beware that metaphor and other forms of witty “notions” (l. 7) can conceal meaning and lead a poet astray in obsession with his own art. In his notes on this poem, Hutchinson comments that Herbert is directly contrasting his own manner with the “intellectual subtleties of Donne” (Hutchinson 495n). Rosemond Tuve says this poem critiques “self-love masquerading as self-dedication” (Tuve 190), and Murrin says it is an “attack on the metaphysical manner” (qtd. Wilcox 366). At a different level, Herbert is adopting a Protestant poetics, as Lewalski argued, to emphasize “the absolute priority and centrality of scripture” for his work (123). In true Baconian (and Protestant) fashion, Herbert is advocating looking for himself at the scripture and putting a high premium on the ability of plain words to reveal God for his readers.

For both Bacon and Herbert, perhaps, “stylistic simplicity” would be more aptly called “stylistic decorum.” Joseph Summers compares this feature in light of Sir Philip Sidney: “Although they used different kinds of language for different purposes, both Sidney and Herbert were usually concerned with achieving the simplest and most direct language truly adequate to the occasions of their poems” (Summers, *Religion and Art* 215). And Coburn Freer calls the end of “Jordan” (II) an instance of “Sidneyan grace” (Freer 233).

William Sessions sees a deeper connection between Herbert and Bacon through language. According to Sessions, Herbert’s decorum of language and economy of expression were only the outward signs of what he learned from Bacon. Using “The Forerunners” to illustrate his point, he argues that the “economy of language merely reflects the economy of the universe” (Sessions 176). When Herbert mourns Bacon, he

focuses on the loss of language, which, according to Sessions, “has fulfilled its Orphic task of ordering reality, revealing its proper object, and is itself a part of all it points to” (176). It is Jonsonian decorum transformed: poetry about God is beautiful because God is beautiful; wit, borrowed from God, leads back to God.

A good poem for making this point is “Prayer” (I). In that poem the speaker swings from metaphor to metaphor to describe prayer. Prayer nourishes—“the Churches banquet” (l. 1); it attacks—“Engine against th’ Almightye, Sinners towre, / Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear”(ll. 5-6)—and soothes—“Softnesse, and peace, and joy, and love, and blisse” (l. 9). Prayer “translates,” “transposes,” and “sounds” the Christian experience, and travels to heaven, to the Milky Way galaxy, and out “beyond the stares.” But in the end, the breathless speaker, who never even paused to insert the verb “to be,” must give up. Prayer is, simply, “something understood”—by God, by the Christian—or it is nothing.

Of course, neither Bacon nor Herbert is truly repudiating language. They need and even love language and rhetoric at the same time that they recognize the entrapping and obscuring potentialities of words. Charles Whitney points out that Herbert’s commendation of Bacon in his letters and poems of the 1620s praises him in decidedly “un-Baconian” hyperbole (Whitney 235). Arnold Stein, in his study of Herbert’s poetics, shows that few of Herbert’s best poems follow the advice given in “Jordan” (II), to find “in love a sweetnesse readie penn’d: / Copie out only that, and save expense” (qtd. Stein 19), and Helen Wilcox calls the “apparently conclusive ending of the poem... deceptive” (Wilcox 366). In fact, Stein calls Herbert “a splendid master of that basic illusion upon which his poetry depends, that the language and forms of art are only another, if better,

way to talk naturally” (Stein 208). For my part, whenever I read “Jordan” (I), the poem about the proper (simple) *subject* of poetry, and get to the lines “Riddle who list, for me, and pull for Prime,” they do not strike me as straightforward or removed from human artifice; in fact, I always wonder why Herbert suspends the nature metaphor (we might expect the “enchanted groves” and “sudden arbors” to be replaced by natural settings) and instead uses a man-made art form with the goal of puzzlement (riddling) and a complicated card game (primero, which is similar to modern poker) as the examples of truth and honesty of the natural world.

The plain style, Kate Aughterson writes about Bacon, “was a highly complex rhetorical form, which draws self-conscious attention both to its plainness and to the fact that all language is inherently metaphorical” (Aughterson 98). For Herbert the goal for art is to use whatever means possible to depict and stimulate the faith of his readers. Similarly, the goal for science is not to be rid of rhetoric, myth, politics, and faith, but to make the best use possible of these. Hodgkins calls Herbert’s opposition to learning (as evidenced in poems like “The Pearl”) a “lovers’ quarrel” (Hodgkins 22); the same may be said of his opposition to artfulness. If Bacon is examining “creation in the context of divine providence” (Barbour 178), Herbert can be said to be exploring divine providence in the context of the created world and its human creatures – using this context, and all of his powers of communication, to bring all of his readers closer to God.

Conclusion

The connection of Herbert to Baconian science is not unrelated to his place on the religious spectrum. Looking at the world as it is is related to looking at oneself to know

oneself and the state of one's soul. Using Baconian philosophy and ways of understanding the world allows Herbert to separate himself from that world and connect himself with God—not because the world is sinful or damnable but because it is the state of the individual's soul, not his or her place in relation to a hierarchy of being, that is eternally significant. Scientific philosophy fits well with Calvin's God of will, who must be understood through his works rather than through human interpretations or designs for those works. On the other hand, Herbert also understood Hooker's pattern for the "natural" Christian community, and recognized what it could mean for individual Christian attempting to find meaning and correspondences in his or her own life. His engagement with nature in his poetry and prose makes his message meaningful to his readers and his congregants as they struggle with their own understanding of themselves. Herbert's speakers grapple with their own love of the world, criticizing an obsessive preoccupation with measuring or quantifying it, but also examining it to see reflected, or imprinted, the glory of God.

CHAPTER 5: HERBERT AND DONNE: TALKING TO GOD

Introduction

In the final substantive chapter of this dissertation we examine Herbert's coupling with John Donne, the fellow poet-priest and "founder" of the "metaphysical school" of which Herbert was considered a member by many critics from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, but most emphatically during the period between the two world wars (Summers). A generation of English majors was introduced to Herbert *through* John Donne and New Critical readings of him and the other "metaphysical" poets, although at the same time, Herbert critics have worked to distance Herbert from Donne. In my review of the literature I speculated about why such a coupling may have been attractive and useful for a modern, secular readership. My goal in this chapter is to illuminate the effects of the coupling and to examine how the comparison is and is not compelling for today's reader.

A Timeline of the Donne-Herbert Coupling

In 1983, C.A. Patrides noted that Donne makes the earliest extant mention of George Herbert (in 1615 the newly minted priest addressed a poem to the younger poet), and, Patrides mused, "it was to be a very long time indeed before Herbert would finally be dissociated from Donne and the 'metaphysicals' to have his individual talents recognized" (*Critical Heritage* 2). This assessment, however, is anachronistic. Many of

the earliest readers of Herbert would actually have contrasted him with Donne, as when Henry Vaughan praised Herbert for having “[given] the first check to a most flourishing and admired wit of his time” (Vaughan 84). As opposed to Donne, who was criticized for using “metaphysicall ideas and Scholasticall Quiddities” (by Drummond), Herbert was seen as important primarily for his pious and edifying biography, reflected in his equally straightforward and uncomplicatedly didactic poems. Donne, on the other hand, was considered “perplexing” in the seventeenth century (Dryden), “hyperbolic” in the eighteenth (Johnson), and reflective of “gross sensuality and coarse obscenity ... and cumbrousness of construction” in the nineteenth century (Norton xxiii).

We saw in Chapter 2 that in the twentieth century, two things happened that changed this status quo. Grierson’s 1921 edition of *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* first defined (and praised) the metaphysical poetry and first coupled Herbert with Donne as one of those who used the mode’s fundamental elements, including (as Grierson explained) fantastic and more complicated imagery than that of classical poetry; a wit more intellectual than verbal; a psychological bent in the conceits used; learned imagery; argumentative lyrics; and a blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination (Grierson 149). Herbert and Donne also used the elements of dramatic immediacy and conversational language and rhythm, as well as an often witty stylistic complexity in their poems. Unlike Donne, but in the service of artistic complexity, Herbert named his own poems, often by referring to something seemingly far from the subject of the poem, which wittily enriched the meaning of the poem. “The Pulley,” “The Pearl,” “Artillery,” and others come to mind. For the first time, this use of wit, erudition, drama, and argument became widely and highly valued characteristics of this poetry.

We saw also that a tipping point was reached at which readers stopped praising the didacticism of the seventeenth-century religious poetry and started praising its questioning, struggling aspects. Like Donne, Herbert presents speakers questioning their place in relation to God, grappling with the human difficulty of submitting to a “God of Love” who uses a fair amount of force upon his human subjects. Of course readers had always recognized and even valued this quality in Herbert, but earlier readers had by and large praised his peaceful reconciliation of these struggles more than his depiction of the struggles themselves. Thus, the “Church-porch” was considered more valuable than “The Church;” the biography of Herbert the priest more relevant to his poetry than that of Herbert the (disappointed) court climber. But as this formulation was turned on its head, Herbert and Donne became appealing in new ways to the modern, secular reader.

Herbert and Donne still had major differences, however, particularly if we look beyond the stylistic similarities. Herbert’s speaker, for example, is much more apt than Donne’s to come (sometimes at length) to clear answers to the questions raised in scenes of doubt and despair. Also his speaker is less isolated than Donne’s, and seems less afraid of isolation: the “drama” of Herbert’s poems seems often to conclude with a denouement that implies more certainty of God’s presence in the life of the Christian speakers. Finally, Herbert’s imagery is much more apt to stay in the domestic realm familiar to his parishioners, and his conceits are generally considered less erudite and “tortured” than Donne’s.

Based upon these differences, a certain condescension toward Herbert began with Grierson, which would characterize this coupling as long as it was made: the idea of Herbert as a “lesser” Donne (Summers 25). What Grierson values about Donne, and

what will attract other critics of the earlier twentieth century, are his “modern” understanding “that any state of mind is extremely complex, and chiefly composed of odds and ends in constant flux manipulated by desire and fear” (Eliot 331-32). Grierson praises the fact that Donne is, for example, “more aware of disintegration than of comprehensive harmony” (*Lyrics and Poems* 148) compared with poets who came before.

Whether Donne really was the skeptical, tortured, isolated artist deemed most fitting for the modern taste does not matter for now: we’re dealing first with the perception and assumptions of these readers. In this “poetry of the inner life,” “loneliness, questions, [and] revolts” are most meaningful (Palmer 295). And Grierson’s disappointment in Herbert on this score is obvious: he notes with regret that although he tried, in his selection of *Temple* poems, “to emphasize the note of conflict, of personal experience, which troubles and gives life to poetry that might otherwise be too entirely doctrinal and didactic,” *unfortunately* “there is no evidence [in Herbert] of the deeper scars, the profounder remorse which gives such a passionate anguished *timbre* to [Donne’s] poems” (*Lyrics and Poems* 150).

Many other critics who coupled Herbert and Donne also saw Herbert as less conflicted, and this quality was equated with naiveté or facility by some. Joan Bennet calls Herbert, by turns, “naïve,” “unsophisticated,” “simple,” and “childlike” (Bennet 49-70). Rosemond Tuve discusses Herbert’s “unaffected simplicity” as part of his conception of ideal Christian love because it stems from the imitation of Christ, who as the word need only be read to be understood (Tuve 175). In her attempt to show Herbert’s medieval influences, Tuve does not acknowledge that very few of Herbert’s

speakers actually succeed at plainly “copying out” the love of God, which task is not, in the end, facile.

Barbara Lewalski and Helen White make very good counters to these simplifications of Herbert’s religion and artistry, and Joseph Summers, in his seminal study, *George Herbert: His Religion and Art*, criticized both what he saw as a misunderstanding of Donne and the misreading of Herbert that followed from it. Summers notes that while the nineteenth century saw Herbert as a “romantic *manqué*” (some verses were so good, “Shelley might have written them” is one left-handed compliment he quotes, 25), the earlier twentieth century saw Herbert as “an inferior John Donne [in whom] those elements which had earlier seemed excessive faults now appeared to be deficient virtues” (Summers 25).

Criticism of these two has moved far away from a simplistic coupling and comparison of Herbert with Donne on the basis of their depiction of “modern malaise” through drama and conceit. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to examine the effects of a coupling that struck a resonant chord in the New Critical imagination and, eventually, helped prompt a New Historicist reaction that would have had Izaak Walton turning in his grave.

Herbert as “deficient Donne”: the New Critical Perspective

Let us examine and test two assumptions behind some of these readings of Herbert in comparison with Donne: first, that Herbert’s poetry and Christian faith are less mature than Donne’s, and, second, that Herbert is reconciled to the Christian life in a way Donne is not. Although both of these readings, particularly the first, seem somewhat

patronizing, they are not entirely unfounded. Herbert's speakers do often play the role of the inexperienced, even immature, youth. Sometimes Herbert's speakers are *like* children – small, vulnerable creatures such as birds, as when the “tender heart” is “hatching” in “Whitsunday,” or in “The Temper” (I), where he begs God to let him “roost and nestle” in heaven, evincing, as Hutchinson points out, a “fear of unlimited space and [love of] the shelter of an enclosure” (Hutchinson 55n) Elsewhere, Herbert's speakers are, in fact, children, or long to be. In “Church-monuments” he is a schoolboy, and in “H. Baptisme” (II), Herbert famously proclaims “The growth of flesh is but a blister; / Childhood is health” (ll. 14-15) and pleads:

O let me still
Write thee great God, and me a childe
Let me be soft and supple to thy will,
Small to my self, to others mild... (ll. 7-10)

Further, in each of Herbert's poems in which the church is specifically mentioned—“The British Church,” “Church Rents and Schismes,” and “Lent”—the church is referred to as the speaker's Mother. The idea of familial relationships, although not specifically a mother-child relationship, is used in “The Familie,” in which the church is symbolically presented, and in “Affliction” (V), in which service to the church is handled metaphorically, the speaker is a servant naively anticipating and then childishly bemoaning his subservient position. In all cases, Herbert chooses a dramatic setting to imply that his speaker is not an adult in a relationship with an equal.

One thing Herbert never uses, unlike Donne, is the imagery of adult sexual love. Herbert does use imagery of wooing (Artillerie: “My tears and prayers night and day do wooe, / And work up to thee; yet thou dost refuse”) (19-20); his characters are repeatedly found trying to win God's attention and love, and fretting sometimes like neglected or

rejected lovers. He also uses the sonnet form several times, though never coupled with even metaphorical use of courtly love devices. (“To My Mother” – an early sonnet not included in *The Temple*, explicitly uses the form to argue *against* using poetic gifts to express secular or sexual love; the others simply ignore secular love altogether.) In “The Forerunners,” Herbert’s speaker is not a child – but not a sexual being either: he’s an old man who raises the specter of sexual love to illustrate the wrongful use of “[l]ovely enchanting language” for profane rather than religious verse (l. 19) “And wilt thou leave the Church, and love a stie?” he asks of language in the service of “foolish lovers” (ll. 22; 25). Herbert uses the metaphor of sexuality so rarely, in fact, that he “doth protest too much” in “The Pearl” in an attempt to show that although he doesn’t use it, he does, at least, “know” about it:

I know the wayes of Pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it;
The propositions of hot bloud and brains;
What mirth and musick mean; what love and wit
Have done these twentie hundred yeares, and more:
I know the projects of unbridled store:
My stufte is flesh, not brasse... (ll. 21-27)

Here, as everywhere in *The Temple*, sexual love is effectively repressed by the true love of God (“And yet I love thee”).

Donne, on the other hand, is emphatically adult and sexual in his religious poetry, and one of the ways we see this is through his use of sexual imagery to talk about the Christian’s relationship with God. The relationship is presented as that between a lover and a mistress (Donne’s speaker is one or the other, depending on the poem). The speaker of Holy Sonnet XVII is a man choosing between two lovers who has chosen God because his earthly lover was “early into heaven ravished” (l. 3). The speaker uses the

word that meant to seize or carry off by violence, either to death or (as today) implying the attack of a woman to commit rape. This God is jealous “[l]est the World, Fleshe, yea Devill putt [him] out” (l. 14). God neither answers the speaker’s question “why should I begg more love[?]” (l. 9) nor does anything to assuage the speaker’s fears that a jealous God will not be merciful. In Holy Sonnet XIII the speaker asks whether the Christ who is the savior could also be the condemner. Addressing himself, he answers “No, no,” recalling the arguments he once used with his “profane mistresses” – that the beautiful must be merciful to the wooer – by which logic, Christ must be piteous because he is beautiful. (Which, if we’ve read any love poetry, including Donne’s own, we know is false logic: lovers are ever beautiful and cruel.)

Sexuality is also used in Holy Sonnet XVIII, a poem in which we may also question the speaker’s logic. This poem presents the church as the spouse of Christ. This trope is conventional enough (and we saw the conceit of the Church as different types of womanly appearance in Herbert, but, again, the British Church was Mother, not lover). As is Herbert’s “British Church,” Donne’s poem is traditionally read as the search for the true church among the competing versions of Christianity. However, Donne’s attempt to turn the conceit of marriage into a purely spiritual metaphor is complicated by the ambivalent characterization of the true church as either prostitute or wife. The last lines proclaim that the church “is most trew, and pleasing to [God], then / When she’s embrac’d and open to most men” (ll. 12-14). These lines may be read as Donne’s endorsement of the British Church’s *via media* between extremes of seventeenth-century churches, “embracing” not the extremes of, but the best from, the continental churches. It also speaks to his endorsement of the church as national, able to include the various sects

and beliefs of his countrymen, which point he made clear in his sermons as well. But the literal meaning is illogical and confusing. As Elizabeth M. A. Hodgson suggests, the poem shows a speaker truly questioning the Church: “is she as a bride an icon of spiritual purity and integration, or is she rather ... a prostitute like figure of dangerous eroticism and elusive criminality?” (108). If the latter, whatever the symbolic meaning of the poem, the disconcerting and paradoxical literal ending leaves the reader confused about the speaker’s place in relationship to the church and, by extension, to God.

The irony in all of this is that the use of sex doesn’t actually bring the speaker closer to God. As Herbert’s speaker proclaims in “The Forerunners,” “sweet phrases, lovely metaphors” in the service of “stews and brothels” does not bring the Christian closer to “[t]rue beautie” (ll. 13, 15, 28). Similarly, Donne’s use of sexual imagery only highlights in most stark terms the fate of the solitary Christian attempting to forge—or force—a connection with God. In Holy Sonnet XIV, “Batter my heart, three person’d God,” although rhetorically Donne’s speaker is the officious master of ceremonies, dramatically, he is the (presumably female) receiver of violent sexual action on the part of a male God. In the final sestet of this poem, the necessary saving grace of God is compared to a divorce and a rape—the former necessary because the speaker is “betroth’d unto [God’s]emie” (l. 10) and the latter because the speaker needs to be forced into union with God. But the divorce and rape do not actually happen in the drama of the poem; begging for them is merely the speaker’s desperate attempt to bring God closer.

The similarities and differences between “Batter My Heart” and Herbert’s “The Collar” illustrate well both why Herbert may be considered stylistically similar to Donne

and how Herbert differs from Donne. Both poems begin with an abrupt dramatic colloquial line, and both present a picture of the struggle of submitting to God. “The Collar” depicts a rebellious servant who, at heart, wishes he had more love from his Lord. We find out in the last few lines that it is an event remembered in calm, but the effect through most of the poem is of immediate emotion and agitated complaint. “Batter My Heart” does not depict rebellion, although its speaker is also struggling to get the attention of God and affect a union with God.

Herbert’s imagery in “The Collar” is from the domestic realm. The “board” he strikes may be a table or an altar: either way, we are emphatically in inside space; and although he compares the freedom he enjoys to the road and the wind, his freedom is only as large as “store”—that which a house holds for use by its inhabitants. The imagery is almost exclusively limited to housekeeping and farming and images from nature. None of this detracts from Herbert’s intent, which is still argumentative, if not shocking, but it has the effect of feeling constrained, as if the rebellion were taking place with certain limitations in space. It also reflects his philosophy, as stated in *The Countrey Parson*, of using imagery close to people’s everyday lives to make larger religious points.

“Batter My Heart,” on the other hand, ranges far and wide for its conceits, comparing God’s love to a tinker repairing a battered pot, the Devil’s desire to an enemy occupying a besieged town, and the grace of God, as we saw, to divorce and forcible sex. The poem is permeated with wit: yoking dissimilar concepts (“enthrall” to “free” and “chast” to “ravish,” for example), and combines vigorous and alarming thematic content with an effect that seems more intellectual than emotional. The last twist – that the speaker is a woman who needs to be “ravished” – gives what feminist scholar Kate

Belsey would call a “discursive discontinuity” to the subject of the poem: the female character is “unfixed, asymmetrical, slippery ... [her] very unfixedness underwriting the sense of autonomous fixity on the part of the male subject” (from Quilligan 47). Like the other “objects” in this poem—the pot and the town—the woman at the end needs to be abused in order to be safe.

In keeping with his characteristic wit, Donne’s poem ends with a final conceit that encapsulates the line of reasoning presented by the poem: the speaker is saying, in essence, “save me by whatever means necessary, no matter how paradoxical it may seem.” Herbert’s poem, in contrast, ends with a sudden call from God and the speaker’s reply. Unlike Donne, Herbert reasserts a dramatic immediacy at the end, and the questions and arguments raised by the speaker throughout the poem seem to be abandoned when God enters the drama through his call. The arguments raised in the body of the poem are forgotten; the persona who spoke them reproved. Joseph Summers illuminates the form of this poem:

The disorder of the poem provides a constant implicit criticism [of the speaker], and with the final lines we recognize that “The Collar” is a narrative in past tense: the message for the present concerns the necessity of order. (*George Herbert* 92)

Michael Schoenfeldt analyzes this ending in light of materialist power concerns:

By exercising the royal prerogative of torture in order to inflict excruciating pain on the body and soul of his creature, Herbert’s God engages in the naked practice of power. ... Herbert represents the immense terror that divine love finally counter-balances. The love cannot be fully appreciated without attention to the terror it offsets. (*Prayer and Power* 112-113)

Schoenfeldt argues that the complexity lies in Herbert’s underlying resistance to such “claustrophobic” surveillance, under which many of his speakers chafe. According to

this reading, the “necessity of order” noted by Joseph Summers is a necessity for social order.

Whichever type of order is being instated (and, knowing Herbert, it is probably both and some others we haven’t even considered), the relationship between God and the speaker seems clearly hierarchical, with God being the dominant, and the speaker being the weaker, member. The voice of God reprimands the speaker by calling him “Child” (l. 13), and at this word the speaker abruptly halts what had been the choleric rant of a servant against his master. It all seems to be a very pat acceptance of a comfortable, secure—and immature—subservience to gentle authority.

With the word “child,” at one level, Herbert is indeed emphasizing the innocent simplicity of the ideal relationship of the Christian with God. It is important, however, that the speaker does not answer, “My Father,” to the call, but “My Lord.” John Roberts points out that the word “child” coming from the voice of God has a precise biblical meaning that would have been apparent to Herbert’s original readers. Roberts points out that throughout the Bible the words “child” and “children” are used to designate those who have an intimate, Christ-like relationship with God, including all that implies about service to God and Man, not a sentimental or romantic understanding of childhood and innocence, and all that implies about dependency and naiveté. By accepting the appellation with “My Lord,” Herbert’s speaker accepts the “particular relationship that Christ came to establish between God and man” (Roberts 200), and the responsibilities of a (respected) servant to God.

God may not actually speak in “The Collar” (“*Methoughts* I heard one calling” implies that it is an inner assurance of election), yet the speaker has received a clear

message of salvation and union with God. At the end, the speaker is alone, but has an unambiguous role or place (that of Child/Servant) in relation to another (God/Lord). Moreover, it has been suggested (by Ilona Bell, in "Double Pleasures" 81) that the words of the poem – both those of rebellion and those of submission – are simultaneously Christ's and the poet's, thus the poem is recreating the crucifixion in the struggle of the speaker. Jeffrey Hart adds that the vocabulary of harvest, particularly corn and wine, represents both rebellion and atonement because while these items are here the basis for complaint and want, they are also representative of the Eucharist (Hart 65-73; qtd. Wilcox). In a sense, then, this a poem where "Christ is in the pain" ("Affliction" III). The speaker is never actually alone and is the "Child" of God in the same way Christ is.

Donne, on the other hand, uses the language of sexuality and presents a speaker clearly removed from the innocence and purity of an ideal relationship with God to portray an individual desperately pursuing something that never comes within his reach or even, as far as we can tell, comes close enough to hear his pleas and questions. Donne's "sense of strain and violent effort," as the Norton Anthology characterizes his use of metaphysical conceits (Norton 1053), goes beyond the yoking of strange metaphors, and applies to the agony of the personae who populate his poems. They use strange metaphors because they are estranged, in large part, from the object of their speakers' desire. "Batter My Heart," like the other Holy Sonnets (and "The Collar"), is deeply Protestant: God must force salvation upon the speaker. But Donne's Protestant Christian speaker is not assured of his own salvation. Although the speaker seems certain, even imperative, about the process of salvation, he is not confident, by any means, that God will actually do the things the speaker is commanding.

Both poets grapple with the fear of abandonment by God. In Donne's Holy Sonnet II, the speaker ends in complete despair of being saved, with no benefit being gained by being "involved in mankind":

Oh I shall soon despair, when I do see
That Thou lov'st mankind well, yet wilt not choose me.
And Satan hates me, yet is loath to lose me.

Herbert's "A Parodie" also deals with a lonely speaker in fear of abandonment by God. In Herbert's poem, the speaker asks God to hide within him to help fight off sin. Like Donne's speaker in Holy Sonnet II, Herbert's speaker fears that sin will overtake him if God abandons him. Unlike Donne's speaker, however, Herbert's speaker in "A Parodie" finds solace in the grief: "but while I grieve," he concludes, "Thou com'st and dost relieve" (lines). The speaker explicitly denies that the "cheerfulnesse" or "aw" can bring true relief from fear and desolation. Herbert's goal is didactic: but this is not a simple lesson.

We see in many of Herbert's poems the true pain caused by the love of God. The speaker of "Confession" describes:

No scrue, no piercer can
Into a piece of timber work and winde,
As Gods afflictions into man,
When he a torture hath design'd. (ll. 7-10)

Herbert's speakers have a litany of prayers to the "deare angrie Lord" ("Bitter-sweet") in response to the pain and grief of loving God: "O rack me not to such a vast extent," ("The Temper" I); "O do not use me / After my sinnes!" ("Sighs and Grones"); "Kill me not ev'ry day" ("Affliction" II); "Thou knowest how grief and sincee / Disturb the work. O make me not their sport" ("The Glimpse" ll. 28-29). In "Complaining" he begs, "Let not thy wrathfull power/ Afflict my houre, / My inch of life" (lines); the only relief will be in

death: “or let thy gracious power / Contract my houre, / That I may climbe and find relief. (16-20). Speakers complain bitterly that these prayers are not heard: “O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue / To crie to thee, / And then not heare it crying!” (“Deniall” 16-18); and, “My tears and prayers night and day do wooe, / And work up to thee, yet thou dost refuse” (“Artillerie” ll.19-20). In “Grace” the speaker asks for God to “drop from above” the grace he needs, but he gets no answer.

Outbursts of frustration like the one that characterizes most of “The Collar” belie the calm ending and give a hint that Herbert is at least portraying the terror of his God and, at times, a violent reaction against him. In “The Collar,” he threatened to leave; in other poems, he threatens to fight back against God’s power. Images of combat, artillery, and fortification abound in Herbert’s poems. Prayer often becomes a weapon. In “The Storm,” Herbert explains the urge to pray as “A throbbing conscience spurred by remorse” (l. 9), which rises from earth to “assault” and “besiege” the door of Christ (l. 12). In “Prayer” (I), prayer exerts itself as an iron power with which to fend off the crosses Christ forces morals to bear, fighting back with “Engine against th’Almightie, sinners towre, / Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear” (ll 5-6). “Engine,” a machine of warfare, also implies ingenuity, wit, and plotting genius; prayer opposes God’s bombardment in a stealthy though aggressively hostile manner. From the tower of Babel, hypocrites and narcissists send thunder back to God, climbing toward heaven not to worship, but to replace, God. Finally, though, Herbert’s goal of bringing the argument back to first principles triumphs. The sibilant line, “Christ-side-piercing spear” (6), both culminates his speaker’s wrath and deflates it. Besides being another instrument of war against God, the spear brings us to the foot of Christ’s own cross, reminding the reader

that the pains of life “Are properly a crosse felt by the Sonne” (“The Crosse” l. 35). And, indeed, these lines purge the speaker’s agitation and “Prayer” (I) turns to images of harmony and accord, prayer becoming, not a weapon, but a “kinde of tune” to be heard by God, of “Softnesse, and peace, and joy, and love, and blisse” (ll 8-9).

Some Herbert poems end in the agony of not knowing whether God’s conferral of grace is imminent, but Herbert’s poems speak to each other in a way that Donne’s do not, so that in Herbert the pain is explained, the grace received, and “order restored,” as it were over the course of one or more poems. Paul Dyck, writing about the five “Affliction” poems, notes the fact that Herbert purposefully gave these poems the same “commonplace book” name (editors added the numbers), and early readers were treated to unique (for its time) indexing that would allow them to read these poems in any order. He argues that Herbert uses these poems to force the reader into a “multilinear and recursive” progress through the theological category of “affliction,” teaching readers by showing them pure personal complaint, then a wider view of human dependence on God, to an understanding that Christians are especially “honoured” to suffer as Christ did, and back to more hyperbolic complaining about Christians’ having to share Christ’s suffering. “These poems show affliction as unpredictable, paradoxical, and recursive” (Dyck 43): and I believe they work with other “grief” poems throughout *The Temple*. “Affliction” (I), like “The Collar,” depicts a naïve entrance into the service of God, contrasting the joy the speaker expected with the grief he experienced in this service. It ends, as Christopher Hodgkins points out, with an almost hopeless plea for “a pure and simple love, free from mercenary motives” (“Let me not love thee, if I love thee not”) (Hodgkins, “Betwixt” 470). But “Repentance” follows, in which we learn that although sin and grief rack us,

God's healing restores, and "Fractures well cur'd make us more strong" (l. 36). The "rod" of "Discipline" is made into a "scepter" in "Affliction" (II); and we learn that God is "in the grief ... to guide and govern it to our relief" (in "Affliction" III, l. 3).

Both Donne and Herbert vividly illustrate the struggle to maintain a relationship between a God whose love is suffering and sacrifice and a human for whom the way to study, accept, or communicate this sacrifice is often to share in it, usually as an isolated individual. For Herbert, suffering and grief bring Christians closer to God, by allowing them to understand Christ's pain. Also, as Ilona Bell points out, grief is for Herbert a sign that God is in his breast, because it means that God is fighting sin there (Bell, "Herbert's Valdesian vision," 303). Finally, for Herbert grief is good because it prompts Christians to pray, which is "music beyond the stars heard" to God. "Weep foolish heart, / And weeping live," says the speaker of "Ephes. iv.30" (ll. 8-9). And when I've run out of praise, the speaker says in "Praise" (III), I'll "wring [my heart] with a sigh or grone / That thou mayst yet have more" (ll. 5-6). "Josephs coat" proclaims the role of the poet/priest: "Wounded I sing, tormented I indite" and "I live to shew his power, who once did bring / My *joyes* to *weep*, and now my *griefs* to *sing* (ll. 13-14).

Unlike Herbert, Donne does not clearly depict a resolution to, or explanation for, the pain caused by the love of God. This situation seems to cause anxiety in some of his critics. Some critics are quite anxious lest Donne's speaker (much less Donne himself) be seen as truly despairing. Helen Gardner has argued that we should read these poems in a sequence that makes them resemble Jesuit meditations and that they in fact record final assurance of God's salvation rather than true malaise (qtd. Stachniewski 683). Martz, too, connects them with Ignatian meditation, and many others also try to prove

that Donne's fearful speaker is truly peaceful of mind, rather than fearful (Ricks, Lewalski, Grant). However it is difficult to find evidence in the texts of these poems of even temporary confidence in God's grace. Frank Warnke puts it bluntly, "There is little hope in Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, and not very much trust. What one encounters, rather, is naked fear" (Warnke 105). John Stachiniewski counters earlier attempts to find assurance or peace of mind in the *Holy Sonnets*, arguing that Donne is actually confronting the Calvinist God of "total depravity, double predestination, irresistibility of grace, etc. – [which] conferred on man an extreme passivity" (Stachiniewski 688). Thus, Donne's subject is the "conflict between his personal integrity and the demands of a theology which brutalized self-esteem" (Stachiniewski 690). Stachiniewski's conclusion is that Donne believed in double predestination, and "experienced tormented doubt of his [own] salvation" (Stachiniewski 699), as evidenced in his *Holy Sonnets*, no matter what order in which we read them. I don't think I would go that far about Donne himself, although he may be creating a speaker who is struggling with these agonizing questions. Like Herbert, Donne creates speakers who recognize that edifying grief can come from God. "[T]urn, / O pensive soul" (he says in Holy Sonnet VIII), "to God, for He knows best / Thy true grief, for He put it in my breast" (ll. 12-14). But in general we do not see Donne's God "in the grief," and there is no clear relief in his poems, even those that do not seem to end in complete despair. Herbert, on the other hand, says his God is vastly separate from his speaker: "As that to it / East and West touch, the poles do kisse, / And parallels meet" ("The Search," ll. 42-44); but he consistently portrays God as "in the room," as it were.

“Cutting up a man that’s dead”: Correspondence and Communication

Clearly, Donne’s speakers seem more radically alone than Herbert’s, and the dramatic effect is of dispersal and isolation. Donne’s speakers in the Holy Sonnets address many others, including, besides God and his own soul, the Angels and saints (“At the round earth’s imagin’d corners, blow”); the Jews (“Spit in my face”); created nature (the “ignorant horse,” and “bull and boar” of Holy Sonnet XII); and Death (as in “be not proud”). However, none of these entities answers him; he has no other speakers in his poems, as Herbert does when God, or “Love,” or “a friend,” or “One standing by,” or his “rich lord,” or some other One answers or converses in the course of the poem. If only by virtue of this companionship, Herbert’s poems are more “comfortable” than Donne’s.

But it is not only this companionship that distinguishes the scenes of their religious poetry. In Donne, as Hutchinson points out, we find depicted “a profound sense of the reality of sin” (“Sinne” (II) 498n). And the “effect and cause, and punishment” for sin (Holy Sonnet III l. 14), both in the individual and the larger society of Christians, is specifically dispersal, decay, and death. “Thou has made me, and shall Thy work decay?” Donne’s speaker asks at the beginning of Holy Sonnet I, and gets no reply. Death will come and “instantly unjoint / My body and soul” he moans, fearing the face of God, “whose fear already shakes my every joint” (Holy Sonnet VI, ll. 5-6, 8). His life is divided into the years of “mine idolatry” and the current terror. Essentially, Donne’s speaker is not whole: “black sin hath betray’d to endless night / My world’s both parts, and, oh, both parts must die” (Holy Sonnet V, ll.3-4).

In this regard, a fundamental difference between Herbert and Donne is in how they present the meaning of the created world, and the ability of humans to connect with

the “real” or communicate it with others. For Herbert, the world contains correspondences that can be known and communicated through the grace of God. Even though the Christian is painfully aware of his own sin and does not necessarily see himself in Hookerian community with nature or with heaven, it is still possible to know and communicate with God, and to share that knowledge and understanding with other humans. For Herbert, the poet/priest’s job is to reveal the things on earth that are like divine things, and teach his reader to recognize them, make connections between them, and “climbe with [them] toward heaven.”

For Donne’s speaker, such communication is not so straightforward. Much of Donne’s poetry is about the difficulty, in a fallen world, of finding the sort of connections necessary to know and communicate God’s love and “true beauty” that flows from that connection. The effect for the reader is the impression that Donne’s is a world of non-interrelated parts which, having lost its binding spirit, is dead. Herbert portrays understanding the self, the world, and God as a recursive process of visiting and revisiting how Christians receive and live the Christian life, probing the wound of Christ’s death but also the world in which Christians find themselves for proof that they live and will have life everlasting. Donne, on the other hand, evinces a more fitful relationship with the world and a less direct path between “object” and “wit,” or the thing known and the knower.

Donne’s “Anatomy of the World... the First Anniversary” states in more general terms what his *Holy Sonnets* proclaimed about the speaker’s individual soul:

Then, as mankinde, so is the worlds whole frame
Quite out of joint, almost created lame:
For before God had made up all the rest,
Corruption entred, and deprav’d the best:

It seis'd the Angels, and then first of all
The world did in her Cradle take a fall,
And turn'd her braines, and tooke a generall maime
Wronging each joint of th' universall frame...
So did the world from the first hour decay (ll. 191-201)

Using the occasion of the death of Elizabeth Drury, and dedicated to this girl's father, the poem sets out to show "the frailty and the decay of this whole World." It depicts a speaker desperate to find (or create) meaning in the world, or in the girl's death, or in the Anatomist's ever more distressed probing investigation. But we learn repeatedly that the world is dead and decayed (and, variously, "sick," "perished," "lame," "ugly," ghostly, "dry," and "rotten"). If this is the case, Donne's speaker seems to ask, what can we know from it, and what can we communicate through symbols derived from it?

We've seen how twentieth century critics such as Grierson and Eliot found this acute sense of dispersal and decay satisfyingly modern. Rosalie Colie argues that this poem participates in a discussion of epistemology that had been going on since the sixteenth century: "Erasmus, Montaigne, and Hamlet ... were engaged in something other than the moral self-examination required by religious tradition ... [rather] the self-conscious effort to understand understanding, their own and that of mankind" (Colie 154). The Anatomist repeatedly bemoans "incomprehensibleness" and reminds the reader that we, the world, are his corpse, and we are "all in pieces, all cohaerence gone" (l. 213). He seems at some points also to argue explicitly that no artist can use symbols from this world to signify the next:

What Artist now dares boast that he can bring
Heaven hither, or constellate any thing,
So as the influence of those stares may bee
Imprisond in an Herbe, or Charme, or Tree,
And doe by touch, all which those stares could do?
The art is lost, and correspondence too.

For heaven gives little, and the earth takes lesse,
And man least knows their trade, and purposes (ll. 391-98).

As do all of Donne's poems, this poem portrays a tension between hope and despair.

Through most of this poem, we are left unable to understand the world or communicate any meaning derived from it. The speaker continues seeking, and sharing, lessons learned from his anatomy of the world, but his lessons are repeatedly despairing. When Grierson praised Donne's recognition of "the clash between the older physics and metaphysics on the one hand and the new science of Copernicus and Galileo and Vesalius and Bacon on the other," he (Grierson) quoted this poem:

The new philosophy calls all in doubt
The element of fire is quite put out;
The sun is lost and the earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it. (ll. 205-208)
(qtd. Grierson, "Donne and Metaphysical Poetry" 148)

This idea – that "the sun is lost" – would never have been written by Herbert. For one thing, the sun, as we saw in the chapter on Francis Bacon, was a favorite pun and extended conceit that Herbert used explicitly for exploring the connection between what humans can see and feel and what must be accepted on faith. If something is "lost," for Herbert, it is that faith, not the sun, or God. Nor would Herbert ever say that "no man's wit" can have a part in enlightening others. For Herbert that which makes verse verse, its essential quality without which it is just "crazie glass" is its ability to portray truth – i.e., God – to his readers. He explains this succinctly in "The Quidditie": "a verse.... Is that which while I rise / I am with thee" (ll. 11-12). Over and over again, Herbert explores the difficulty of reflecting God in the (often broken) human heart, but over and over again, God's grace comes through, even in brokenness. "The Windows" says this explicitly, comparing the preacher to a "brittle, crazie glasse" ("The Church Windows"), incoherent

without the grace of God's story. Elsewhere, (in "Dulnesse") Herbert calls his praise poetry "window-songs" through which he praises "... my lovelinesse, my life, my light / Beautie alone to me" (ll. 9-10) indicating that he thinks of the poet as the interpreter of what would otherwise be on the other side of the wall of human consciousness. The poet/preacher finds his window or looking glass in the Bible: "H. Scriptures" calls scripture "... the thankfulle glasse, / That mends the lookers eyes: this is the well / That washes what it shows" (ll. 8-10). Human eyes might be sufficient if we were not so sinful. "Miserie" bemoans a loss of true vision because of a wallowing in physicality:

Oh foolish man! where are thine eyes?
How hast thou lost them in a crowd of cares?
Thou pull'st the rug, and wilt not rise,
No not to purchase the whole pack of stares:
There let them shine,
Thou must go sleep, or dine (ll. 49-54)

Herbert succinctly describes what the Christian ought to be looking at, and how, in "The Forerunners": "True beautie dwells on high: ours is a flame / But borrow'd thence to light us thither" (ll. 28-29). "On high" of course, is in heaven, which is where Herbert's search for the real always leads. Donne's Anatomist, on the other hand, describes the world, whose "beauty is decay'd, or gone" (l. 250), where

Sight is the noblest sense of anyone
Yet sight hath only color to feed on,
And color is decay'd: summer's robe grows
Dusky, and like an oft-dy'd garment shows. (ll. 353-356)

At this point in his poem, Donne's speaker cannot see past the "lusterless" earth.

Herbert's speaker may not always find the "flame" he describes, but, again, it is consistently man, not "the sun" which is lost. "A Parodie," mentioned above, illustrates what happens when God's light in man weakens:

Ah Lord! do not withdraw,
Lest want of aw
Make Sinne appeare;
And when thou dost but shine lesse cleare,
Say, that thou art not here. (ll. 16-20)

“A Parodie” seems to be a straightforward translation into religious terms of a secular love poem about the loss of a lover; specifically it imitates “Song: Soules joy” by Herbert’s distant cousin William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (Wilcox 633). Most criticism focuses on the relationship of “A Parodie” to its model and to the art of parody itself, but the poem also delivers a lesson about the effect of despair on a Christian’s faith, specifically his faithful ability to see God’s presence. A superficial faith, based only on joy and “cheerfulnesse” of heart (l. 7) is easily destroyed by the perception that God has withdrawn his support. Then the power to understand truth is almost destroyed:

O what a deadly cold
Doth me infold:
I half believe,
That Sinne sayes true (ll. 26-29)

We saw above that with grief comes God’s relief. And in the first lines of the next poem in the sequence, “The Elixer,” the prayer, “Teach me my God and King, / In all things thee to see” (ll. 1-2) is fulfilled. Finally, “Faith” makes clear that humans have the ability to see “true beautie” through the grace of God, which we can understand by understanding the sun:

When creature had no reall light
Inherent in them, thou didst make the sunne
Impute a luster, and allow them bright;
And in this shew, what Christ hath done. (ll. 32-36)

Herbert's explicit statements affirm the ability of man to reach the solid truth beneath the symbols, if only he puts his faith in God and indeed, in the "footprints" created by God on earth.

Donne, on the other hand, expresses in "An Anatomy of the World" no such faith that we can see "true beauty" in the world, in its crumbled, disproportionate, colorless state. Moreover, his Anatomist has had a part in destroying any connecting spirit even further, through his act of cutting it up to teach his lessons. However, according to Donne, all is not lost if we have art. As the editorial prefatory poem asks, "how can I consent the world is dead / While this Muse lives?" (l. 7): the poet's "cunning pencil" meets the "cunning face" of the girl, thus creating beauty. In the vacillations between despair and hope, the poem ends with a hopeful statement that the artist (in this case, the speaker celebrating this girl who *does* contain proportion, coherence, color, and beauty) can create the unity between truth and beauty that is lacking in the world. The "Progress of the Soul ... the Second Anniversary," a poem Donne wrote as a companion piece to the first, continues the *contemptus mundi* theme. No longer is he obsessed with the dying world, however, or caught in the cycle of hope and despair of attempting to find meaning and coherence (or beauty) in it. Here, the speaker addresses his soul in its progress toward heaven. The end of "The Anatomy" pointed toward Moses as a model for the poet/prophet he may aspire to be (if only in service of Elizabeth Drury's "fame enroll[ed]"). At the end of the "Progress," Elizabeth Drury is "the proclamation" of God's power, and the poet is "[t]he trumpet, at whose voice the people came" (l. 528). We are left with questions—can a few lines at the end of the First Anniversary negate the drama and recurring refrain of disintegration that have characterized the other hundreds of lines?

And, if it is up to us—or artists, or magicians—to reconstitute the world, what does that say about the world thus created? Is it real, or fictive and, does it matter? And, just because Herbert does not explicitly describe what he is doing as similarly reconstructive, does that mean he is not, in fact, also creating the world of interconnected parts that makes up his poetry?

The Uses of Doubt

Throughout this chapter I have tried to remember always to write “Herbert’s speaker” and “Donne’s speaker,” because more than any other coupling in this dissertation, these two use drama to make their points. As we have seen, one of the reasons both Donne and Herbert seem modern – “early modern,” in fact – is that they both create speakers who look and sound to modern readers like complex novelistic characters. Their speakers seem to be imaginary persons with a complex of attributes, not necessarily the voice of the author himself, nor symbolic or representative of an easily definable type. Within one poem or over the course of several, these characters can change, their emotions shift and develop, they become enlightened and grow. Often, the speakers’ motivations are not immediately apparent: is it fear or love (or something else) that motivates the speaker(s) of Donne’s Holy Sonnets? Is the speaker of “Death Be Not Proud” being bombastic or merely frank in the face of “poor death?” What is the motivation of the speaker of Herbert’s “Discipline,” who “creep[s] / To the throne of grace” to convince God to replace his wrath with a Love that seems as violent as any rod (ll. 15-16). Although the sing-song, even childish, rhythm and rhyme scheme of this poem imply a sense of certainty in the speaker that his plea will be heeded, in fact God

never answers in this poem, never gives an indication that he will indeed “throw away” the wrath the speaker has experienced. Or, in “The Thanksgiving,” what is the nature of the competition between the speaker and the “King of grief”? Why does the speaker feel the need to equal or even surpass the grief and pain of God, and what kind of “revenge... on [God’s] love” can he be looking for? In these poems there is no narrative voice to answer for us; we must read the characters much as we would watch a play.

This is important because for both Herbert and Donne, it is a play largely about doubt. Both poets, in fact, often depict the *absence* of God, and modern readers, reading these speakers as characters, sometimes see in this drama a picture of cynicism or despair, or rebellion against the power structures that Hooker described but never actually grappled with. Herbert, as we have seen, recognizes that for fallen man, the relationship with God is not ideal, and he provides many characters who never reach an ideal communion with God. Donne goes further, depicting very few ideal relationships in this poetry, and it follows that his speakers seem more despairing. One way to see the use of doubt and despair is to look at this poetry as a discourse about doubt and faith, and about how to use the picture of doubt to inspire faith in readers. Lawrence Beaston counters critics who focus on a lack of resolution in Donne’s religious poetry, particularly what is seen as “unsuccessfully repressed despair,” and argues that we should look at these poems in light of the *via negativa* tradition: “a long tradition of Christian mysticism, rooted in the Psalms, which acknowledges and, in fact, insists upon recognizing the vast difference that separates God from humans.” (Beaston 2). Like the God of the *via negativa*, according to Beaston,

...Donne’s God refuses to be caught in the constructions of human reason and human language. Any Herbertian intrusion of God in Donne’s Holy Sonnets

would only undercut the sense of God's otherness and the mystery Donne insistently and repeatedly acknowledges. (7)

The *via negativa*, as defined by Aquinas, insists that "We cannot know what God is...but only what he is not" (qtd. Kelleher 47), and that "we cannot accurately name God because we cannot fully know him" (Kelleher 52). It is as if Donne's speakers in the "Holy Sonnets" were post-lapsarian but pre-Christian – they have been cast out from Eden and thus can no longer talk to God or hear God's voice, and that voice has not yet become incarnate in Christ. In some poems, Herbert, too, presents the paradox of God as "light and dark," the love of God is "known," as in "Mattens," and yet never fully achieved, as in "The Pulley" (Kelleher 54-55). Only in "Love" (III) does the speaker finally achieve a moment of full communion with God, and "[a]t the instant of total consumption, language leaves off" (Kelleher 60); the collection of lyrics comes to an end.

The problem for the reader of the "Holy Sonnets" is that Christianity, and particularly Protestant Christianity, is fundamentally based upon revelation – God the Word became flesh and thus does have attributes that Christians expect to see shared in Christian poetry. St. Paul admits that God is "ineffable" or "unknown" (Acts 17:23), but the goal of scripture (and religious poetry) is to make God known. In Donne's "Holy Sonnets," we cannot know God because he is not present. We know, through other poems, such as "A Litanie" and "La Corona," that Donne could write reassuring, reassured poems about Christian faith (Stachniewski 685). And his "Devotions" and sermons paint a picture of faith and, often, joy, not despair. But if Donne, in "The Holy Sonnets" is presenting the drama of a mystical individual experience of "God in the negative," there is no way "positive" in this context for the reader to know the outcome of this experience. The *dramatic* effect is the same as if Donne's speaker were in despair.

Herbert's *Temple*, on the other hand, contains the drama of both "negative" and "positive" ways of knowing God. If Herbert explores the *via negativa*, the "unnameability" of God and godliness, he also, in Helen Wilcox's astute phrase, uses language that is "incarnate: alive and embodied" (Wilcox *English Poems* xxiv). One poem that illustrates this use of language is "Prayer" (I), that list of metaphors for communion with God, in which there is no verb "to be" and the simple "something understood" (l.14) breaks a string of analogies that never exactly captures the essence of divine communication. Others also have read this line as an abandonment of the attempt to define prayer (Mollenkott, Miner, Greenwood). But "something understood" can be read in exactly the opposite way. Prayer—and, by extension, Christian poetry—is some *thing*, not *nothing*, not *anything* and not some *idea*, but a thing understood – we can stand under prayer, prop it up with these words, with the sonnet structure of the poem, and with the bulwark of "Faith" and "Holy Communion" – the two poems on either side of "Prayer" (I) – the spirit and meat of his Church.

"I did expect a ring": Herbert and Donne in Conversation with God

The primary effect of looking at Herbert in the light of Donne, particularly with the intense engagement with the text called for by the New Critics, is that it allows us to recognize the multifaceted ways Herbert is approaching the conversation with God even in what seem like simple poems. For example, one little poem in which Herbert illustrates a Christian's struggling with his participation in God is "Hope." In its very different manner, this poem echoes the cries of Donne's lovers—both of secular and divine objects—and their attempts to enter into union with a God who does not answer as

they'd hoped. This poem examines the meaning of hope, depicting the chasm between the speaker's expectations of hope, and what it means for a Protestant to live in the hope of eternal life:

I Gave to Hope a watch of mine: but he
 An anchor gave to me.
Then an old prayer-book I did present:
 And he an optick sent.
With that I have a viall full of tears:
 But he a few green eares.
Ah Loyterer! I'le no more, no more I'le bring:
 I did expect a ring.

At first glance this poem does not seem dramatically immediate; the speaker seems to be telling a story in the past tense. But when we get to the penultimate line, we see in fact it is a direct address to Hope, the “Loyterer” who has not delivered on the speaker's expectations. The overarching metaphor is of giving and receiving gifts: how we may try to get what we want from others by giving things (or not) to them. By giving the watch, the speaker may wish to have power over time, control over this-world events; “watch” also involves vigilant protection from (or at least advance notice of) this world's troubles and dangers. Returning with the anchor, Hope is instructing the speaker to concentrate instead on unchanging eternity, not the changeable world, recalling the ancient symbol of Christian hope in future existence as described in Paul's letter to the Hebrews: “Which hope [of salvation] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast” (Hebrews 6:19). This security comes not from the ability to “watch” the future, but from faith in what is not seen.

With the “old prayer-book,” the speaker may want the ritual, words and music of conventional communal prayer, expecting, perhaps, a reliable key to communicating with and understanding God. Following with the optick, or magnifying glass, Hope says we

need something more than the words of man, we need to look at God and magnify God—like Bacon’s workmen on the obelisk, we need help from beyond ourselves to have an effect. Then, by giving a “vial full of tears” the speaker is giving repentance and wishes to receive sympathy, care and love: Hope gives him “green ears” of corn. Perhaps the Christian needs to focus more on nurturing life than on mourning his own troubles; perhaps he needs to mature; perhaps the water of his tears must be applied to help the corn grow and mature, so that others may be fed. Finally, he gives nothing and gets nothing—he expected a ring of marriage. He’s not ready, according to Hope, because he is stuck in time, ritual that comes from without, sadness, immaturity: he is not ready to cleave to or receive the hope of eternal life. His outburst, “Ah, Loyerer,” reveals his expectation: a “loiterer” in Herbert’s time was an idle beggar or one who neglected his work: Hope is taking things from the speaker and not “paying” him for them as the speaker sees fit, and Hope is not doing what the speaker believed is his job, which, presumably, is to give himself to the speaker.

Wilcox translates the last line of the poem to mean “I expected commitment, and all I kept receiving was postponement” (Wilcox 429). The message, though presented in a deceptively simple format, is not that different from Donne’s pleas for God in the Holy Sonnets. The primary mistake that the speaker has made is to equate Christian hope with wishful thinking, or a desire for some accomplishment, material good, or token. Hope in Christian parlance is more an expectation, and as a divine virtue, it is an assurance given by God that the Christian will reach heaven. Herbert is illustrating the error described by Luke: “And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do

good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest” (6:34-35). He is also reflecting the Protestant belief that the Christian loves God for his own sake, and others for God’s sake, rejecting anything done as if in exchange for eternal reward. Herbert may also be adding a layer of meaning with his simple rhyme scheme and sing-song rhythm: the reader may expect and (indeed) “hope” that the speaker will be with God at the end. In fact, “Hope” is followed in *The Temple* by “Sinnes round” in which the image of the ring now symbolizes the entrapment of the Christian in a dance with sin. Interestingly, too, the following poem in the collection is “Time,” which hearkens back to the images of time raised in “Hope,” and then “Gratefulness,” where he continues to work out how to have true thankfulness for God’s gifts.

We saw in Chapter 4 that one of Francis Bacon’s goals, with the understanding that he could never accomplish this himself, was to know, or allow humans to know, everything it is possible to know. Although he was called atheistic for this ambition, in fact we saw that his quest was full of faith that it is possible and even holy and charitable to pursue such goals. By contrast, what we come to in Donne is “unknowableness”—the confused and agonized speaker of “The Anatomie of the World” calls it “incomprehensibleness” and despairs of finding real correspondence between the temporal and the transcendent. For this speaker, searches like Bacon’s removed God from the center in such a way as to cause the disintegration of the whole. As an artist, his job is to create that correspondence, stop the dispersal of elements through his art. Donne’s job is to illustrate both the fear of dispersal and the struggle of his speakers to understand God.

For Herbert, the Christian can know truth only through faith in God. One of the reasons Herbert constructs a simple or childlike persona is that for him, the way to God is through rebirth to a new innocence in God. In the worldview he inherited from Hooker, a childlike innocence was the state of those of humankind who followed the law; the higher soul was in fact a virtuous innocence, idealistic, not succumbed to cynicism. And Calvin in his *Institutes* wrote “God designates as his children those whom he has chosen” (Calvin, *Institutes* III xxiv 1; qtd. Wilcox 529). Thus over and over again in *The Temple*, Herbert returns to that persona to approach God; at times he is *childish* rather than *childlike*, but he forever returns to that point where, like Bacon, he can attempt to see the world and himself without preconceptions and idols. Another thing he may be doing is creating *himself* as a spokesperson for the innocence he believes is necessary for true faith. Cristina Malcolmson and others have illustrated all the ways Herbert does the work of “Renaissance self-fashioning”: he constructs for himself a social self in the “‘character’ of holiness, a stylistic mode of life, or a life-style which expresses the piety that motivates it” (Malcolmson 247). I do not believe (though I cannot know) that this is a cynical exercise for Herbert. He may have had to do it as a younger son forced to take on a career that gave him little chance for fame and fortune; or, he may truly have believed that what he acted he would be for his parishioners, and thus he would help them find their own way to faith and heaven.

Both Herbert and Donne are telling their readers, “don’t rest in your faith.” For them both, the Christian must always be asking the question, “Was ever grief like [God’s]?” and examining what grief is, and how human grief is like divine grief. Calvin thought it was preposterous for humans to try to imitate God, but both Herbert and Donne

try to depict the effect of the sacrifice on the Christian. For both, in an ideal world the relationship between the Christian and God is simple: God's love for/gift to the Christian is exemplified by his death on the cross, and the Christian loves God, and his gift, through the acceptance of this sacrifice. For Donne, the relationship is complicated by the fact that his speaker cannot find God to communicate with him. Herbert's God is in the conversation.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

Herbert Talking Back

This dissertation is an exercise in analyzing George Herbert's place in the "literary canon." Herbert's work has come and gone from, and risen and fallen in, that body of works academicians have called English literature for over almost 400 years. I have looked at the ways critics have coupled Herbert with different authors and thinkers of his era and analyzed the effects of these pairings on what Herbert has meant—and continues to mean—to readers. Critics through the centuries have often seemed anxious (or eager, depending on the context) to convince the reader of Herbert's piety, or artistry, or modern bent, or of the fact that his speakers are dramatic creations rather than illustrations of his personal piety or psychology. Why do we do this? And why do others react so strongly against such readings, as if they undermined the very fabric of our culture or, at the very least, upset the canon in unpardonable ways?

I mentioned in the introduction that Herbert was a special case because of various factors, including his subject matter, his use of complicated stylistic devices and of drama, and the era in which he wrote, right before the great transformative event of the English Civil War. These things are true, and I think they differentiate him from other writers who wrote, for example, about abstract religious ideas, or put biblical stories into epic modes, or did not use drama to the extent that readers had to see themselves in the

sense (and thus care deeply what that sense was). However, as I noted there, Herbert shares these characteristics with many of his contemporaries whose work was not made to mean so many different things: there is something else special about Herbert.

Throughout this study I have come back again and again to the fact that he saw himself—one could say he “fashioned” himself—first and foremost as a pastor. His speakers may be delivering sermons or sacraments, depicting a wrong-headed search for God in nature or finding signs and correspondences between the natural world and the eternal, or “winding themselves into the sense” of verse, but at every turn they are meant to describe something that will edify the church of Christ and the individual Christians who are its members. In fact, at every turn his speakers are responding (in a literal sense) to the many claims upon that Church that existed in Herbert’s time.

I have used the word “coupling” about Herbert’s relationship with these other writers because I have conceived of it as something that has been done to Herbert by critics from his age to ours. But the phenomenon of Herbert’s meaning many things and their opposites—what Martz has called his “generous ambiguity”—could just as rightly be called “discourses,” or conversations he is having, fully aware of his role in, and responsibility to control, that conversation for the edification and entertainment of his reader (Martz, “Generous Ambiguity” 31). Moreover, at the same time, he is discoursing with his reader about how to communicate most effectively about faith.

In stanzas 49 through 54 of “The Church-porch,” George Herbert begins a series of statements about how to handle oneself in conversation. He begins with the following advice:

In thy discourse, if thou desire to please,
All such is courteous, usefull, new, or wittie.

Usefulnesse comes by labor, wit by ease;
Courtesie grows in court; news in the citie.
Get a good stock of these, then draw the card
That suits him best, of whom thy speech is heard (ll. 289-294)

To “draw the card / That suits him best, of whom thy speech is heard” is all Herbert’s priestly calling. He may be preaching from the pulpit (“with particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich”) (*Countrey Parson* 233); or catechizing (“illustrating the thing by something else, which [the Answerer] knows”) (257); or serving as a chaplain in a rich man’s home (“not to be over-submissive, and base, but to keep up with the Lord and Lady of the house, and to preserve a boldness with them and all...but seasonably and discreetly” (266); in all these pastoral roles, he must “draw the card” best suited for the situation.

This is his poetic calling, as well. To his purpose, Herbert draws upon his Bible, his Prayer Book, and the artistry and doctrine of his church, but he also draws upon the character book tradition, the oratorical skills he learned as a student and honed as University Orator at Cambridge, and on what can only be called a keen understanding of human nature and of the natural world itself, that was such a dominant presence in the lives of his parishioners.

In terms of his church, he is doing what Jesus and St. Paul modeled: telling “stories, and sayings of others...for them also men heed, and remember better then exhortations....[a]nd herein St. *Paul* excelled in all his Epistles” (VII). Daniel Doerksen, in arguing that Herbert’s purposes are not actually “ambiguous,” quotes Paul’s letter to the Corinthians as a clear model for Herbert:

... unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law [i.e., Gentiles], as without law ... that I might gain them

that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake. (*1 Corinthians* 9:19-23. (Doerksen, "Generous ambiguity revisited" 28)

When Herbert discusses "The Parson arguing" with "any of his parish that hold strange Doctrins," he clearly echoes Paul's strategy: "[He works to observe] ... what is the main foundation, and pillar of their cause, whereon they rely; as if he be a Papist, the Church is the hinge he turnes on; if a Schismatick, scandal" (262). The Parson is doing what Calvin urged, "For Christ hath... appointed pastors ... that they may take charge of every particular sheep, that they may bring back to the sheepfold those which wander and go astray" (*Commentary on Acts* 20:20) (qtd. Doerksen, "Generous ambiguity revisited" 29).

The Country Parson accommodates his discourses "in Circuit" depending on the state in which he finds his parishioners, commending and advising those he finds "religiously imployed," commending also those he finds working, but also admonishing them if they "labour anxiously" (247). If one "of higher quality" needs reproof, he "lays his discourse so, that he comes to the point very leasurely, and oftentimes, as *Nathan* did, *in the person of another*, making them to reprove themselves" (latter emphasis added) (248). "In the person of another" is a key to Herbert's poems. His speakers are this "another" in whom the reader may see herself or himself: the struggling Christian, sometimes fitful, sometimes bordering on despair, sometimes raising questions about doctrine, such as predestination, or the uses of fasting and sacraments, or whether the visible church is an appropriate vehicle for grace. Sometimes the speaker is too simple to understand the lesson his "Friend" is teaching. Herbert presents his poems, which deliver these pictures most "leasurely," as his comments on "discourses" in *The Country Parson* say he should: with "a pleasantness of disposition" and interposed with "short, and honest

refreshments, which may make his other discourses more welcome, and less tedious” (252, 251).

In terms of artistry, Herbert clearly raises the argument about “form” vs. “content,” or, as Bacon diagnosed, “the first distemper of learning ... when men study words and not matter” (qtd. Wilcox, “Enchanting Language” 54). In “Jordan” (I), the speaker describes himself as having “sought out quaint words, and trim invention; ... [c]urling with metaphors a plain intention” (ll. 3, 5). Hutchinson claims Herbert is contrasting himself to Donne here (Hutchinson 495n); “quaint” and “inventive” were also words used in the nineteenth century to dismiss both Donne and Herbert as poets (Jerdan 204, Willmott xxvii, Gilfillan 208). We noted in Chapter 4 that neither Bacon nor Herbert truly repudiated language, even artful language; they merely acknowledged its potential for obscuring truth while using it (nevertheless) to try to deliver truth to their readers. Similarly, Herbert knows, and even shares, the common opinion that “Premeditated Orations” are not to be compared, for sincerity, with “Natural discourse”—Bacon’s admonishment is not only for the content of learning, but also for the fact that one might *study language*, rather than depending on nature to help reveal the truth of things (Wilcox, “Enchanting Language” 54). But at the same time, as a former orator, Herbert knows the uses and advantages of skillful communication. In her study of Herbert in the context of his Cambridge years, Helen Wilcox connects Herbert’s work firmly with Thomas Wilson’s *The Arte of Rhetorique*, noting how Herbert’s poems are (after Wilson’s precepts) “ordered” (in their careful placing within *The Temple* as a whole); “well-framed” (in the use of formal strategies of lyrical variety and shape poems): “musically graceful” (in the use of musical devices such as antiphon and echo);

and “mixed with both high art and common language” (in their use of the colloquial line and conceits taken from the lives of common people along with complicated artistry) (Wilcox, “Enchanting Language” 56).

Again, Christ is a model for artful and effective praise of God, but “the sense of the inadequacy of words to bear the burden of praise...is itself a successful rhetorical strategy” (Wilcox, “Enchanting Language” 63). Wilcox concludes that although Herbert repeatedly presents the argument that it is best not to be “wittie and learned,” he makes peace with the use of art and oratory “to serve his devotional purpose and not as an end in itself” (Wilcox, “Enchanting Language” 61). As Herbert wrote about his Parson,

When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, ...but the character of his Sermon is Holiness; he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy. ...[This character] is gained, first, by choosing texts of Devotion, not ControversieSecondly, by dipping, and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts, before they come into our mouths... so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is hart-deep. Thirdly, by turning often, and making many Apostrophes to God....Fourthly, by frequent wishes of the peoples good, and joying therein, though he himself were with Saint *Paul* even sacrificed upon the service of their faith.... Lastly, by an often urging of the presence, and majesty of God.... Such discourses shew very Holy.

The idea of “showing holy” and creating a “character” of holiness may seem insincere, but if looked at within the context of Herbert’s goal—to bring more Christians to God—we can see, as he did, the ends justifying the means.

Why is this controversial?

So, in a very real sense, Herbert has placed himself in conversation with the habits of discourse and thought that were present in his world. What critics who have appropriated Herbert have done, often, is put him in conversation with those that are present in ours. The question of Herbert’s place on the religious spectrum has raised

vociferous arguments, and it is not because we (necessarily) ascribe to a belief in predestination or Christian Humanism. For many readers, something more than a vision of the proper liturgical form of the Church of England, or even its core beliefs, is at stake.

In his quest to defend the English Church against those who contend that its episcopal structure should be supplanted by a presbyterian or congregational structure, and its laws should be derived only from scripture, Richard Hooker lays out a picture of the natural and divine bases for the hierarchical polity of the English Church. Insofar as it is divinely inspired, it is not to be questioned or able necessarily to be “rationalized” by humans; and insofar as it is natural, it is not solely derived from scripture, but from both nature and scripture, “jointly and not severally” (Hooker 54). The implications of this construction are potentially broad: Hooker is systematizing a world view in which “natural” law informs both religious and secular order; individuals have meaning based on their place in a hierarchical structure; they communicate with God through this structure, and they get their power among others based on where in the structure they find themselves.

At the same time, those who would contend against such a church structure and focus attention on the invisible church need to disassociate the visible church (and state) from God or godliness: it behooves them to be “revolutionaries who were not also heretics” (George 17). They must also divorce God from the natural order Hooker describes. If humans are considered as individuals, rather than a community, in relation to God, then communicating with God becomes a private conversation not mediated by or for any other person. Again, a modern reader may not care about predestination or the “God of will,” but rather may latch on to the idea of the rebellion against a stifling

hierarchy, or draw upon a modern preference for and trust in the rational, political individual over and against a statement of comfortable resignation to that power.

This is very sweeping and, in the end, simplistic, because it gives voice to an understanding of what was at stake for many modern readers at a particular point in time, not, necessarily, for Herbert. His theology, as well as that of his age, is more complicated than this appropriation assumes. Moreover, at every turn, I have argued, he sees his position as in front of a church, inviting his congregation to “taste and see” what that church has to offer. In so doing, he is speaking to a debate about the invisible and visible church, but his conclusion to that debate is “Come inside. The church is imperfect, but it has something to offer to you.”

He is also, incidentally, saying that the world has something to offer, as well. Less vociferously, though still with heat, critics have disclaimed for Herbert an affiliation with Bacon not because they disagree with Baconian philosophy or methods (although some do). However, besides showing that Herbert was an intelligent man engaged with the new ways of learning that his age had to offer, his engagement with Bacon shows Herbert’s willingness to distinguish a religious sphere from a secular: his (and Bacon’s) modernism lies in this distinction. Furthermore, his endorsement of a clear-eyed examination of the world and the individual within that world had much to do with his understanding of God and God’s design for humankind. It is not that we would be able to see God in nature, but that we must be able to see nature as God created it in order to understand God and then figure out one’s own role in relationship to God. Moreover, like Bacon (and Hooker for that matter) Herbert knew that a message that is going to mean anything to his readers or parishioners has to start with things familiar to them,

things they know and can touch, taste, and see, in order to reach a level of understanding of things they cannot see. Herbert's work, although his themes were clearly very different from Bacon's, actually manifests a strong affinity with and commitment to Bacon's core philosophy and methods.

The reading of Herbert with Donne is not controversial in itself. When Herbert was first put together with Donne, the coupling was based upon a new appreciation for the stylistic exuberance of their poetry and dramatic immediacy that spoke to a modern secular reader. And Herbert was too smart a man not to know that his clever artistry would be (eventually!) an important reason that readers would come back to him again and again. He disclaims artistry but uses it to show the beauties, intricacies, and mystery of his own faith. What became problematic in the New Critical methodology was its concomitant esteem for the complexity that most depicted the modern skeptic and its devaluing of anything that seemed simple. Another problem was its dependence on analyzing the "speaker" and avoidance of biographical or cultural information as if it had no effect on the text. By the late 1980s, proponents of the "artificial barrier between Herbert and his fictional protagonist" had "retired, changed their minds, or run for cover" (Low 57, 53). True, a primary assumption behind the original coupling of Herbert with Donne, and a value espoused by the New Critics who first coupled them, is that poetry can and should be seen in its *own* light—that it is possible and valuable to see poets as artists separate from their historical, political or other material contexts. This assumption and value may have been mistaken. But what these critics brought to the table was a richness of concentration on the work of these writers, a necessary engagement with the text that should not be undervalued. The best readers now deal with

the cultural landscape by acknowledging the complexity of both Herbert and Donne, not by demystifying their faith (or ignoring it in a focus on aesthetics) but by engaging with it, to allow that that faith which seems easy and uncomplicated is not so—even if it ends in comfortable communion with (and, indeed, submission to) God.

This study illustrates a danger at the heart of the methodology of literary studies: we often want to attribute to our (favorite or reviled) authors a more coherent and thought-out allegiance to a philosophy or world view than may be warranted or supported. It is very tempting to skew the evidence because otherwise the literary canon would be filled with works that accept, unreflectively, the dominant, chaotic and more conventional mores of their times. We want our great works to be demanding on many levels, both intellectually and emotionally. There is a value to looking at Herbert in the light of these other authors, or in conversation with them, as long as we realize that it is for him a two-way conversation, that he has something to say in response and is not merely reflecting their light as we see it.

Going Forward

I doubt that Herbert saw any of what he was doing as “controversial” in the ways that some critics over the years have made him “controversial” in their discussions of Early Modern religious and political culture. He would not have seen Calvin and Hooker as arguing with each other as many later critics did, and he may not have seen the connections of his own poetry with that of Donne and the other “metaphysical” poets in the terms that made sense to some twentieth-century readers. But at the same time, he was not unaware of his role as a responder to the discourses going on around him and the

ways that civil discourse could be a way of smoothing over differences and “reducing” others to the faith that he believed would bring them closer to God (Herbert 262).

Herbert’s “A Dialogue-Anthem” is a clear illustration of Herbert’s use of discourse to address discord, while also engaging with another (in this case Donne) who was presenting on the same subject. The poem clearly echoes Donne’s *Holy Sonnet X*, “Death, be not proud.” The difference is, here Death (as God is elsewhere) is in the conversation:

Christian. Death.

Chr. Alas, poore Death, where is thy glorie?
Where is thy famous force, thy ancient sting?

Dea. *Alas poore mortall, void of storie,*
Go spell and reade how I have kill’d thy King.

Chr. Poore Death! and who was hurt thereby?
Thy curse being laid on him, makes thee accurst.

Dea. *Let losers talk: yet thou shalt die;*
These arms shall crush thee.

Chr. Spare not, do thy worst.
I shall be one day better then before:
Thou so much worse, that thou shalt be no more. (ll. 1-10)

Donne used the phrase “poore Death” as well (l. 4), and yet he introduces a bombast that Herbert does not. In fact, the Christian asks questions, which Herbert has elsewhere said “is the most gain full way of Conversation” (Herbert 260). The speaker strikes a pose of clear sympathy with Death’s plight. The “main pillar” of Death’s cause, of course, is Death’s belief that *he* knows the true “storie” of Christ’s crucifixion. The Christian is confident that he does know the “storie” that encapsulates grace; it is Death who is “accurst” by not knowing the truth as told by God. That confidence gives the Christian the power to control (and have the last word in) the conversation. Whereas Donne’s poem is about the Christian facing his fears (and I think Donne is also presenting

“another” in whom a reader may see—and “reprove”—himself), Herbert’s poem does something different as well: it depicts a *discourse* that illustrates one of his primary motives in *The Temple*, which is to engage in a conversation, using (and also about the use of) “all possible art” and nature, and philosophy, and doctrine, that will “win” his reader for his God (Herbert 236).

In her review of C.A. Patrides’s *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, Helen Wilcox notes that Patrides apologizes for the fact that relatively few early readers of Herbert valued his poetry as poetry. But Wilcox appreciates this fact: “[Patrides conveys] not just a ‘critical’ heritage, but one thread to be traced through a web of historical, devotional, and aesthetic developments over three centuries” (Wilcox, “Review” 51). This dissertation is an exercise in analyzing George Herbert’s place in that web. I believe he was aware of his role: “in another make me understood” he writes in “The H. Scriptures” (II) (l. 12). He is commenting on the method of biblical exegesis by which readers can find explanations for God’s word within God’s text. But at another level, he says, “my life makes good” the secrets of God’s word (l. 9): as a poet, a priest, a human being, he works to communicate God’s word in any way possible, using the methods others have shared—philosophy, artistry, argument—and making them his own.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, et al., ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1. 4th ed. New York: WW Norton & Co., 1962.
- Achinstein, Sharon. Reading George Herbert in the Restoration. *English Literary Renaissance* 36.3 (2006): 430-465.
- Anonymous. George Herbert and his times. *The Christian Remembrancer* 44 (July 1862): 105-37.
- Archer, Stanley. *Richard Hooker*. Twayne's English Authors Series, 350. Boston: Twayne, 1983.
- Asals, Heather A.R. *Equivocal Predication: George Herbert's Way to God*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 1981.
- Auden, W.H., ed. *George Herbert*. Penguin, 1973.
- Aughterson, Kate. Redefining the plain style: Francis Bacon, linguistic extension, and semantic change in the Advancement of Learning. *Studies in Philology* (Winter 2000): 96-143.
- Bacon, Francis. *An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England*. Francis Bacon, ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. 1-19.
- Bacon, Francis. Dedication of his *Translation of Certain Psalms into English*. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. C.A. Patrides. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. 57.
- Bacon, Francis. *The Oxford Francis Bacon*. Ed. Graham Rees. Oxford: Clarendon, 2004.
- Barbour, Reid. *Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Bell, Ilona. The Double Pleasures of Herbert's "Collar." "Too Rich to Clothe the Sun": *Essays on George Herbert*. Ed. Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Pittsburgh, Pa: U of Pittsburgh P, 1980. 77 – 88.

- Bell, Ilona. Herbert's Valdesian vision. *English Literary Renaissance*. 17.3 (1983): 303-328.
- Bell, Ilona. In the shadow of The Temple. *Like Season'd Timber: New Essays on George Herbert*. Ed. Edmund Miller and Robert DiYanni. New York: Peter Lang, 1987.
- Benet, Diana. *The Secretary of Praise: The Poetic Vocation of George Herbert*. Columbia: U Missouri P, 1984.
- Bennett, Joan. *Four Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1953.
- Bowen, Catherine Brinker. *Francis Bacon : The Temper of a Man*. New York : Fordham University Press, 1993.
- Brydon, Michael. *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker: An Examination of Responses, 1600-1714*. Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 2006.
- Bush, Douglas. *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century 1600-1660*. New York: Oxford UP, 1952.
- Carey, John. *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art*. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.
- Chute, Marchette. *Two Gentle Men: The Lives of George Herbert and Robert Herrick*. New York: Dutton, 1959.
- Clarke, Elizabeth. George Herbert and Cambridge scholars. *George Herbert Journal* 27. 1/2 (2003-04): 43-52.
- Clements, Arthur L, ed. *John Donne's Poetry: Authoritative Texts and Criticism*. 2nd ed. New York: WW Norton & Co. 1992.
- Clements, Arthur. *Poetry of Contemplation: John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan and the Modern Period*. Binghamton, NY: SUNY UP, 1990.
- Colacurcio, Michael J. The corn and the wine: Emerson and the example of Herbert. *Nineteenth Century Literature* 42.1 (June, 1987): 1-28.
- Colie, Rosalie. The rhetoric of transcendence. *Philological Quarterly*. 43.2 (1964): 145-70).
- Collinson, Patrick. *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism*. London: Hambledon Press, 1983.
- Collinson, Patrick. *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

- Cruickshank, Frances. Herbert's Jordan (1). *The Explicator*. 64.1 (Fall, 2005): 12-14.
- Dime, Gregory T. The difference between "strong lines" and "metaphysical poetry." *SEL* 26 (1986): 47-57.
- Doerksen, Daniel W. *Conforming to the World: Herbert, Donne and the English Church Before Laud*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1997.
- Doerksen, Daniel W. "Generous ambiguity" revisited: A Herbert for all seasons. *George Herbert Journal* 30.1/2 (Fall 2006): 19-41.
- Doerksen, Daniel W. Nicolas Ferrar, Arthur Woodnoth, and the publication of George Herbert's *The Temple*, 1633. *George Herbert Journal* 3.1/2 (1979-80): 22-44.
- Doerksen, Daniel W. Things fundamental or indifferent: Adiaphorism and Herbert's church attitudes. *George Herbert Journal* 11.1 (Fall, 1987): 15-22.
- Donne, John. *The Poems of John Donne*. Ed. H. J. C. Grierson. London: Oxford UP, 1933.
- Eliot, T.S. "John Donne" in *The Nation and the Athanaeum* 33.10 (June 9, 1923): 331-332.
- Eliot, T.S. *George Herbert*. Longmans, Green & Co., 1962.
- Eliot, TS. The Metaphysical Poets. In *John Donne's Poetry: Authoritative Texts and Criticism 2nd Edition*. Ed. Arthur L. Clements. New York: Norton, 1992. 158-165.
- Fincham, Kenneth and P. Lake, eds. *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2006.
- Fish, Stanley. Letting go: the dialectics of the self in Herbert's poetry. *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature*. Berkeley U California P, 1972. 156-223.
- Fish, Stanley. *The Living Temple: George Herbert and Catechizing*. Berkeley, U California P, 1978.
- Flynn, D. Walton's *Lives*: Conformist commemorations and the rise of biography. (review) *Essays in Criticism* 53:1 (2003): 68-73.
- Freer, Coburn. *Music for a King: George Herbert's Style and the Metrical Psalms*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1972.
- Gardner, Helen. *John Donne: The Divine Poems*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978.

- Gardner, Helen. *The Poems of George Herbert*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford UP, 1961.
- Gascoigne, John. Church and state unified: Hooker's rationale for the English post-Reformation order. *The Journal of Religious History* 21:1 (February, 1997): 23-34.
- Gilfillan, George, ed. *The Poetical Works of George Herbert*. Edinburgh, 1853.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and their Contemporaries*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983.
- Gottlieb, Sidney. Herbert's case of "Conscience": public or private poem? *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 25 (1985): 109-26.
- Gottlieb, Sidney. The social and political backgrounds of George Herbert's poetry. *The Muses Commonweale: Poetry and Politics in the Seventeenth Century*. Ed. Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Peabworth. Columbia: U Missouri P, 1988. 107-18.
- Graham, Kenneth J. E. George Herbert and the "Discipline" of history. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31:2 (Spring, 2001): 349-377.
- Graves, Roy Neil. "The Collar." *The Explicator*. 54:2 (Winter, 1996).
- Grierson, Herbert J. C. *Cross-Currents in English Literature of the XVIIth Century*. Hammondswoth: Penguin, 1966.
- Grierson, Herbert J. C. *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1921; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Guibbory, Achsah. *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: Literature, Religion, and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Haigh, C. Revisionism, the Reformation and the history of English Catholicism, with a Comment by P. McGrath. *J. Eccl. H.* 36 (1985): 394-406.
- Halewood, William. *The Poetry of Grace: Reformation Themes in English Seventeenth Century Poetry*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1970.
- Harman, Barbara L. *Costly Monuments: Representations of the Self in George Herbert's Poetry*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Haugaard, William P. The Preface. In *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, Vol. 6, Pt. 1: Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Ed. W. Speed Hill. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993.

- Hecht, Anthony, ed. *The Essential Herbert*. New York: Ecco, 1987.
- Herbert, George. *Latin poetry. A bilingual edition translated by Mark McCloskey and Paul R. Murphy*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1965.
- Herbert, George. *The Works of George Herbert*. Ed. F.E. Hutchinson. Oxford: Clarendon, 1941, rpt. 1967.
- Hill, Christopher. Parliament and people in seventeenth-century England. *Past and Present* 92 (August, 1981): 100-24.
- Hill, Christopher. Review of *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture* and “*The Muses Common-weale*”: *Poetry and Politics in the Seventeenth Century*. *George Herbert Journal* 12.2 (Spring, 1989): 43-54.
- Hill, W. Speed, ed. *The Folger Library edition of Hooker*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1977.
- Hobbes, Thomas. The answer to Davanant. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. C.A. Patrides. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. 71.
- Hodgkins, Christopher. “Betwixt this world and that of grace”: George Herbert and the church in society. *Studies in Philology* 87.4 (Autumn, 1990): 456-475.
- Hodgkins, Christopher. “Yet I love thee”: The “wayes of learning” and “groveling wit” in Herbert’s “The Pearl.” *George Herbert Journal* 27.1/2 (Fall 2003-Spring 2004): 22 – 31.
- Hodgkins, Christopher. *Authority, Church, and Society in George Herbert: Return to the Middle Way*. Columbia: U Missouri P, 1993.
- Hodgson, Elizabeth M. A. *Gender and the Sacred Self in John Donne*. U Delaware P: 1999.
- Hooker, Richard. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Books I – IV*. Ed. Georges Edelen. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1977.
- Hovey, Kenneth Alan. “Divinitie, and Poesie, met”: The Baconian context of George Herbert’s Divinity. *English Language Notes* 22.3 (March 1985): 30-39.
- Hyde, A.G. *George Herbert and His Times*. New York: G.P. Putnams Sons, 1906.
- Jackson, Ken and Arthur F. Marotti. The turn to religion in early modern English studies. *Criticism* 46.1 (2004): 167-190.

- Jameson, Frederic. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981.
- Jerdan, William. Introduction to *The Works of the Reverend George Herbert*. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. C. A. Patrides. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. 195-206.
- Jordan, Richard Douglas. Herbert's first sermon. *Review of English Studies* 27 (1976): 178-79.
- Kelleher, Hillary. "Light thy Darknes is": George Herbert and Negative Theology. *George Herbert Journal* 28.1/2 (Fall 2004-Spring 2005): 47-64.
- Lake, Peter. *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988.
- Lake, Peter. Calvinism and the English Church: 1570-1635. *Past and Present* 114 (Feb. 1987): 32-76.
- Lewalski, Barbara. *Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1973.
- Lewalski, Barbara. *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979.
- Low, Anthony. *Love's Architecture: Devotional Modes in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*. New York: New York UP, 1978.
- Low, Anthony. Review of Marion Singleton's *God's Courtier*. *George Herbert Journal* 12.1 (Fall, 1988): 53-58.
- Lynch, Kathleen. George Herbert's Holy "Altar": name and thing. *George Herbert Journal* 17 (1993): 41-60.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *The Later Reformation in England: 1547-1603*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Malcolmson, Cristina. George Herbert's "Country Parson" and the character of social identity. *Studies in Philology* 85.2 (Spring, 1988): 245-266.
- Malcolmson, Cristina. *Heart-work: George Herbert and the Protestant Ethic*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1999.
- Malpezzi, Frances. Herbert's "Grace." *The Explicator* 62.1 (Fall 2003): 7-9.

- Marotti, Arthur. *John Donne Coterie Poet*. Madison, U Wisconsin P, 1986.
- Martin, Jessica. *Walton's Lives: Conformist Commemorations and the Rise of Biography*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Martz, Louis. Donne, Herbert, and the worm of controversy. *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 7 (May, 2001): 21-28.
- Martz, Louis L. The Generous Ambiguity of George Herbert's *The Temple*. *A Fine Tuning: Studies of the Religious Poetry of Herbert and Milton*. Ed. Mary A. Maleski. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1989. 31-56.
- Martz, Louis. Introduction to *The Poems of Edward Taylor*. Ed. Donald E. Stanford. New Haven: Yale UP, 1960. 1-20.
- Martz, Louis. *The Poetry of Meditation*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale UP, 1962.
- Masson, David. *The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of His Time*. London: Macmillan, 1875.
- McKnight, Stephen A. Francis Bacon's God. *The New Atlantis* 10 (Fall, 2005): 73-100.
- Milton, Anthony. *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Narveson, Kate. Flesh, excrement, humors, nothing: the body in early Stuart devotional discourse. *Studies in Philology* 96.3 (Summer, 1999): 313-333.
- Nethercot, Arthur. The term "metaphysical poets" before Johnson. *Modern Language Notes* 37.1 (1922): 11-17.
- Norbrook, David. Life and death of Renaissance man. *Raritan* 8.4 (1989): 89-110.
- Norbrook, David. Introduction to *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*. Ed. H.R. Woudhuysen. New York: Penguin Classics, 1993.
- Novarr, David. *The Making of Walton's Lives*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1958.
- Oberhaus, Dorothy H. Herbert and Emily Dickinson: a reading of Emily Dickinson. *Like Season'd Timber: New Essays on George Herbert*. Ed. Edmund Miller and Robert DiYanni. New York: Peter Lang, 1987.345-368.
- Oley, Barnabas. A prefatory view of the life of Mr. Geo. Herbert. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. C.A. Patrides. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. 72-83.

- Patrides, C.A., ed. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
- Patrides, C.A., ed. *The English Poems of George Herbert*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1974. Repr. 1991.
- Patterson, Annabel. Couples, canons, and the uncouth: Spenser-and-Milton in educational theory. *Critical Inquiry* 16 (Summer 1990): 773-793.
- Peltonen, Markku, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Pitcher, John. *Francis Bacon: The Essays*. New York and London: Penguin, 1985.
- Polwhele, John. On Mr. Herbert's devine poeme The Church. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. C. A. Patrides. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. 61-62.
- Potkay, Adam. Spenser, Donne, and the theology of joy. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 46.1 (Winter 2006): 43 – 66.
- Powers-Beck, Jeffrey. "Not Onely a Pastour, but a Lawyer also": George Herbert's Vision of Stuart Magistracy. *Early Modern Literary Studies* 1.2 (1995): 1-25.
- Powers-Beck, Jeffrey. *Writing the Flesh: The Herbert Family Dialogue*. Duquesne: Duquesne UP, 1998.
- Quilligan, Maureen. Completing the conversation. *Shakespeare Studies* 25 (1997): 42-49.
- Richey, Esther Gilman. *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance*. Columbia: U Missouri P, 1998.
- Rickey, Mary Ellen, *Utmost Art: Complexity in the Verse of George Herbert*. Lexington: Kentucky UP, 1966.
- Roberts, John R. "Methoughts I heard on calling, Child!": Herbert's "The Collar." *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*. 45.3 (Spring, 1993): 197-204.
- Roberts, John. *George Herbert: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism*. Revised ed. 1905-1984. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1988.
- Roberts, John. John Donne's Poetry: An Assessment of Modern Criticism. *John Donne's Poetry: Authoritative Texts and Criticism 2nd Edition*. Ed. Arthur Clements. New York: Norton, 1992. 351-361.

- Rogers, William E. *The Three Genres and the Interpretation of Lyric*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983.
- Rossi, Paolo. Bacon's idea of science. *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*. Ed. Markku Peltonen. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995. 25-46.
- Roston, Murray. *The Soul of Wit: A Study of John Donne*. New York: Oxford UP, 1974.
- Schoenfeldt, Michael. "That spectacle of too much weight": The Poetics of Sacrifice in Donne, Herbert, and Milton. *J Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.3 (Fall 2001): 561-584.
- Schoenfeldt, Michael. *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1991.
- Sessions, William A. Bacon and Herbert and an image of chalk. "*Too Rich to Clothe the Sunne*": *Essays on George Herbert*. Ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Pittsburgh, PA: U of Pittsburgh P. 1978. 165-178.
- Sheik, William J. Typology and allegory: A comparative study of George Herbert and Edward Taylor. *Essays in Literature* 2 (1975): 76-86.
- Sherwood, Terry G. *Herbert's Prayerful Art*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 1989.
- Shugar, Debora K. *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics and the Dominant Culture*. Berkeley: U California P, 1990.
- Singleton, Marion W. *God's Courtier: Configuring a Different Grace in George Herbert's Temple*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Sloan, Thomas O. Dr. Donne and the image of Christ. *Rhetorica* 24 (Spring, 2006): 187-216.
- Song, Eric B. Anamorphosis and the religious subject of George Herbert's "Coloss.3.3." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*. 47.1 (2007): 107-21.
- Stachiniewski, John. John Donne: The despair of the "Holy Sonnets." *ELH* 48 (1981): 677-705.
- Stewart, Stanley. *George Herbert*, Twayne's English Authors Series No. 428. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1986.
- Stewart, Stanley. Investigating Herbert criticism. *Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations* .

- Strier, Richard. "To All Angels and Saints": Herbert's Puritan poem. *Modern Philology* 77 (1979): 132-45.
- Strier, Richard. George Herbert and the world. *J Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 11.2 (1981): 211-136.
- Strier, Richard. Getting off the map: Response to "George Herbert's Theology: Nearer Rome or Geneva?" *George Herbert Journal* 11.1 (Fall, 1987): 41-48.
- Strier, Richard. Ironic Humanism in *The Temple*. "To Rich to Clothe the Sun": *Essays on George Herbert*. Ed. Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1980. 33-52.
- Strier, Richard. *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983.
- Stubbs, John. *John Donne: The Reformed Soul*. WW Norton, 2007.
- Summers, Claude J and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Herbert, Vaughan, and public concerns in private modes. *George Herbert Journal* 3 (1979-80): 1-21.
- Summers, Claude J and Ted-Larry Pebworth. The politics of the Temple: The British Church and The Familie. *George Herbert Journal* 8 (1984): 1-15.
- Summers, Joseph. *George Herbert: His Religion & Art*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1954.
- Targoff, Ramie. *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England*. Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 2001.
- Targoff, Ramie. *John Donne: Body and Soul*. Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 2008.
- Taylor, Edward W. *Donne's Idea of Woman: Structure and Meaning in The Anniversaries*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.
- Tuve, Rosemond. *A Reading of George Herbert*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1952.
- Tyacke, Nicholas. *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Tyacke, Nicholas. Puritanism, Arminianism and counter-revolution. *The Origins of the English War*. Ed. C. Russell. London: Oxford, 1973. 119-34.
- Varvis, Stephen. Humanism and the scientific revolution: Bacon's rejection of Aristotle. *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 14 (1983): 59-79.

- Vaughan, Henry. Preface to *Silex Scintillans*. *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. C.A. Patrides. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. 84-85.
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. The religious wars in George Herbert criticism: reinterpreting seventeenth-century Anglicanism. *George Herbert Journal* 11.2 (1988): 19-35.
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *Reformation Spirituality: The Religion of George Herbert*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1985.
- Vendler, Helen. *The Poetry of George Herbert*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975.
- Wall, John N. Hooker's "Faire Speeche": Rhetorical strategies in the *Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Polity*." *This Sacred History: Anglican Reflections for John Booty*. Ed. Donald S. Armentrout. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1990. 125-43.
- Wall, John N. Jeremy Taylor and Richard Hooker's contemporary reputation. *Seventeenth Century News*, 35.4 (1977): 112.
- Wall, John N. *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988.
- Walton, Izaak. *Walton's Lives*. London: Falcon, 1951.
- Warnke, John C. *John Donne*. Boston: Twayne, 1987.
- Weinberger, Jerry. *Science, Faith, and Politics: Francis Bacon and the Utopian Roots of the Modern Age*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- West, Michael. Ecclesiastical controversy in George Herbert's "Peace," *Renaissance English Studies* 22 (1971): 445-51.
- Whalen, Robert. Herbert's Sacramental Puritanism. *Renaissance Quarterly* 54. 4 (Winter, 2001): 1273-1307.
- White and Tyacke. Debate. *Past and Present* 115 (May 1987): 201-29.
- White, Helen C. *The Metaphysical Poets* 1936; rpt. NY Collier Books, 1962.
- White, Peter. *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- White, Peter. The rise of Arminianism reconsidered. *Past and Present*. 101 (Nov. 1983): 34-54.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *Science and the Modern World: Lowell Lectures, 1925*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997.

Whitney, Charles. Bacon and Herbert as moderns. *Like Season'd Timber: New Essays on George Herbert*. Ed. Edmund Miller and Robert DiYanni. New York: Peter Lang, 1987. 231-239.

Wilcox, Helen, ed. *The English Poems of George Herbert*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.

Wilcox, Helen. Review of C.A. Patrides' *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*. *George Herbert Journal* 6.2 (Spring 1983): 51-54.

Young, Diane. The orator's church and the poet's temple. *George Herbert Journal* 12.2 (1989): 1-15.