Materiality and Devotion in the Poetry of George Herbert

Francesca Daniela Cioni

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University of York

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Abstract

Early modern Protestants understood, inhabited and used the material world in contradictory ways: the co-existence of iconoclastic destruction and enduring use of pre-Reformation rituals and objects suggest the deep ambivalence people felt about material things in worship. This thesis explores how English Protestants understood materiality: how early modern worshippers 'read' the world around them, and how this shaped their reading of devotional poetry. I focus on the work of George Herbert, chosen for his immense popularity in the seventeenth century, and his posthumous – and continuing – alignment with Anglican orthodoxy; understanding Herbert's writing is crucial to understanding how seventeenth-century English Protestants thought.

This thesis looks closely at two material forms central to early modern worship and the imagery in *The Temple*: the body in prayer, and the church building. The first part explores the idea of the 'voice' (of praying subject, or poetic speaker), the heart (the organ of spirituality and emotion, which performs prayer and which poetry 'moves'), and bodily performances of prayer. References to 'voice', 'heart' and 'knees' in *The Temple* hover between literal, symbolic and metaphysical depictions, and the distinctions between these tell us much about the formal and devotional function of Herbert's verse.

The second part probes how worshippers inhabit church space. First I consider the parish church as a textually constructed edifice, and as a spiritual experience analogous to devotional reading. The next chapter examines land ownership, the changing patterns of which shaped worshippers' lives; an uncertain and 'dislocating' relationship to space enables Herbert to express the Protestant believer's spiritual state, uncertain of their fixed fate – salvation or damnation. Finally, I discuss the church monument, which shapes how churches were used and communal and spiritual identities were conceived, and allows Herbert to articulate the conflicted relationship between spirit and matter.

The thesis closes by considering the book as a material artefact, and reading and writing as material devotional acts. Herbert was followed by seventeenth-century devotional poets whose works blur the boundaries between literary imitation and devotional exercise. Examining how Herbert 'reads' the Bible, and how later poets 'read' Herbert, sheds light on the intersections of seventeenth-century devotional and literary practices.

Contents

A Note on Texts

Unless otherwise stated, references to Herbert's English poems are to *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: CUP, 2007); references to Herbert's prose and Latin poems are to *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. by F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford: OUP, 1941).

Unless otherwise stated, all Bible references are to *The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

References to OED definitions are to those on *OED Online* (Oxford: OUP, 2020).

References to early modern texts within the thesis provide place and date of publication; names of publishers are given in the bibliography. For visual efficiency, full references for online sources including URLs or Digital Object Identifiers are given in the bibliography.

Original spelling and punctuation are retained throughout, except ſ, which is modernised to s.

Abbreviations

BCP	*The Book of Common Prayer: The texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: OUP, 2011)
BHO	*British History Online*
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Bray	*Documents of the English Reformation, 1526-1701*, ed. by Gerald Bray (Cambridge: James Clark, 1994)
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EP	*The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: CUP, 2007)
GHJ	*George Herbert Journal*
Hunt.	Huntington Library, San Marino, California
HUP	Harvard University Press
Hutchinson	*The Works of George Herbert*, ed. by F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford: OUP, 1941)
NAL	National Art Library, London
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OUP	Oxford University Press
PUP	Princeton University Press
STC	Short-Title Catalogue
SUP	Stanford University Press
UCP	University of Chicago Press
UPP	University of Pennsylvania Press
VCH	*Victoria County Histories*
WHV	*The Works of Henry Vaughan*, ed. by L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957)
YUP	Yale University Press

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Thou that hast giv'n so much to me
Give one thing more, a gratefull heart.

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There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd:
Copie out onely that, and save expense.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

George Herbert's 'The Posie' poses a problem for thinking about his poetry. Like many of his poems, it describes an everyday object, and through this conveys the spiritual experience of that object – as 'The Windows' approaches preaching, 'Church-monuments', mortality, and 'The H. Scriptures', biblical reading (*EP* 246-47, 325-36, 208-210). In dismissing other "wits" and their "words and posies" in favour of the speaker's motto, "*Lesse then the least/ Of all thy mercies*" (*EP* 632), it seems to fit comfortably within *The Temple*'s rejection of elaborate poetic composition, as in 'The Forerunners' ("Farewell sweet phrases, lovely metaphors," *EP* 612), or 'Jordan (I)' ("Who says that fictions onely and false hair/ Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?" *EP* 200).

But 'The Posie' *is* not itself the 'posy' it describes; in fact, in repeatedly dismissing 'wit' and 'invention', the poem rejects its own poetic form. In the second stanza, between opening and closing rejections of 'wit' and repetitions of the titular 'posy', the speaker meditates on the various material forms the posy might take – physically inscribed into an object, or spoken aloud and embodied by the speaker:

> This on my ring,
> This by my picture, in my book I write:
> Whether I sing,
> Or say, or dictate, this is my delight.

The former couplet imagines a literal 'posy' – a motto Puttenham describes customarily inscribed into tokens such as marzipan, trenchers, or – as in 'The Posie' – rings.[1] As Juliet Fleming notes, such artefacts are distinguished from purely 'literary' poetic compositions as their meaning inheres in their materiality.[2] However, Herbert does not grant his 'posy' any material specificity: its performance remains hypothetical, ("whether I sing…"), and its potential material forms – on a ring, under a portrait, or in a book – are syntactically suspended, with no conjunction to tell us whether they are

[1] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy: a critical edition*, ed. by Frank Whigham and Wayne Rebhorn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 146.
[2] Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (London: Reaktion, 2001), p. 20.

real or imagined. Even as Herbert fills the stanza with material forms of the motto, it remains dislocated, a repeated line in a self-effacingly 'witty' poem.

In invoking the slippery materiality of the imagined 'posy', Herbert paradoxically draws attention to the actual materiality of 'The Posie'. After all, the poem allows the possibility of the posy being written "in my book" – possibly *The Temple* the reader holds in their hand. But if so, this only distances 'The Posie' from the 'posy' it describes: the former likely inscribed on the flyleaf or title page, while the poem remains printed, static, rebuffing such an intimate relationship with the reader.[3] 'The Posie' invokes a textual form whose materiality is key to its meaning: the portability and intimacy of the ring, picture and book make them ideal for inscribing the posy, able to accompany the owner through life; yet by centring these material forms, the poem highlights its own materiality, and its crucial differences from what it describes. It rejects 'wit' and 'invention' in favour of pure materiality, but doing so reveals its function as a witty conceit. The 'posy' is central to, repeated in, 'The Posie', and yet remains frustratingly absent; its materiality embodies its meaning, but is of no concrete importance in the poem.

'The Posie', that is to say, is a material and a literary artefact that rejects or effaces its own material and literary qualities. In this sense it expresses the thorny problem that materiality posed for early modern English culture. As the very idea of a 'posy' demonstrates, material objects were capable of holding real meaning, not merely in symbolic terms, but in their material presence. At the same time, however, the early modern English Protestant experience is characterised by suspicion of the material world and anxiety about the use of material things. Successive waves of iconoclasm and endemic iconophobia saw the material 'stuff' of worship and devotion – church furniture and decorations, clerical vestments, public shrines, personal devotional aids, 'heretical' texts – destroyed, defaced or hidden away as trappings of heathenish Catholicism and enticements to idolatry. Over the sixteenth century, in moving from regionally differentiated pre-Reformation 'traditional' worship to the Elizabethan Settlement's aimed-for singular national religious identity, the material culture of

[3] Ben Jonson is one of the more famous figures whose library has been able to be recreated thanks to his use of a motto, '*tanquam explorator*', to mark his books: cf. David McPherson, *Ben Jonson's Library: An Annotated Catalogue, Studies in Philology* 71.5 (1974), pp. 1-106.

early modern devotion was fundamentally changed and forensically scrutinised, in polemical and controversial texts discussing the use of material things in worship, in legislative and doctrinal restrictions on the kinds of worship that could be performed and the kinds of material objects that could be used, and in the visitation articles that sought out heterodox worship practices.[4] The realities, however, of how individual worshippers understood, interpreted and interacted with this matter are more complex than even such obsessive and manifold kinds of regulation can tell.[5]

The problem of materiality

One vision of the material world of post-Reformation England sees Catholic, object-centred devotion, characterised by the accumulation, decoration and veneration of objects, ranged against Protestant destruction and plainness. But observance of legislative impositions, and enthusiastic participation in the religious programme behind such legislation, are far from identical phenomena. Removal of forbidden objects, such as liturgical furniture, garments and vessels, from churches might indicate Protestant fervour, or perhaps simply compliance with official injunctions to perform obedience on the occasion of a royal visit or episcopal visitation; 'removal' might even mean

[4] Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, Volume 1: From Cranmer to Hooker* (Princeton: PUP, 1970) and *Volume 2: From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1660* (Princeton: PUP, 1975), give a detailed survey of the material conditions of worship over the period of what may broadly be termed the 'long Reformation', attending to controversial points of doctrine as well as their effect on the material artefacts and practices of worship; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: YUP, 1992) and Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: the changing face of English religious worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford: OUP, 2007) both emphasise the combined force of theological ideology, official pronouncements and local acts such as the selling-off of churchware in regulating religious practices, though where Duffy depicts a 'traditionalist' English population, whose long conversion to Protestantism is unwillingly forced upon them by a political and social elite, Fincham and Tyacke present legislative intervention as concerned primarily with negotiating the opposed beliefs of different emergent factions within the Church. For comprehensive surveys of the period's offical doctrines, visitation articles and injunctions, and polemical texts respectively, cf. Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation*; W. H. Frere and William Kennedy, eds., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910); Kenneth Fincham, ed., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994); and Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: a survey of printed sources* (London: Scholar, 1977) and *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age: a survey of printed sources* (London: Scholar, 1978).

[5] Particularly nuanced portrayals of post-Reformation attitudes to material objects in worship are given by Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Laws against images* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) and *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), who surveys attitudes to and treatment of images, artefacts and text both positive and negative in the post-Reformation English Church; and Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, reason and religion, 1250-1750* (OUP 2010), who discusses the complexities of religious activity as a mental process in the period.

forbidden matter was hidden, or sold to traditionalist gentry to protect it from destruction or confiscation, paradoxically guaranteeing its survival.[6] The presence or absence of material objects might, therefore, suggest attachment, aversion, or plain indifference, subject to a particular interplay of social and political as well as religious considerations. In the midst of the vast changes to worshippers' everyday material existence over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the scripture to be read, prayers to be prayed, liturgy to be followed and tools to be used in worship all changing dramatically – an individual believer might hold apparently contradictory feelings towards a material object: nostalgia for the old ways, fear of unconscious idolatry, anxiety about the 'new' rules, or even, potentially, enthusiastic participation in Reformed theology.

The traces left of post-Reformation English material culture can tell us much about the complex sorts of uses to which they were put and what meanings they might hold for contemporary worshippers. Much critical attention has been paid to the role of church buildings and the matter of worship in constructing a particular vision of national religious history.[7] Destroyed shrines, relics, decorations and wayside crosses attempt to erase a now-unsavoury, 'idolatrous' religious inheritance; but post-Reformation England's religious spaces were not marked by an *absence* of pre-Reformation objects and images, but by their defaced remains. Statuary was beheaded rather than torn down; heretical words and images crossed out of missals, not torn out or erased; wall-paintings whitewashed over such that, within a generation, the effaced images of saints began to peek through the words painted over them.[8]

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[6] Eamon Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 481-91.

[7] Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English antiquarians of the seventeenth century* (Oxford: OUP, 2007) surveys the rise in attention to church buildings and features as a subject of secular, antiquarian interest in the seventeenth century; Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, identity and memory in early modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2011) describes the way changes to the landscape in the Reformation – iconoclastic destruction of wayside shrines and crosses, desecration of holy wells, and the Dissolution of the Monasteries and associated redistribution of large amounts of monastic lands – helped to shape early modern national identity. Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1988) explores the conflicted treatment and use of monuments in churches in the period, and their role in shaping religious identities and experiences.

[8] Philip Schwyzer, 'Fallen idols, broken noses: Defacement and memory after the Reformation', *Memory Studies* 11.1 (2018), pp. 21-35; cf. Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England*, pp. 76-78 on the 'reversibility' of whitewashing.

Such remains might be interpreted as the conscious, paradoxical performance of 'forgetting' the pre-Reformation past; or, alternatively, as allowing continuity with traditional kinds of devotion, to the wounds of Christ and the martyrs, and other marks of physical destruction. Philip Schwyzer describes an ambivalent, unspoken 'curation' of iconoclastic remnants, in which individual believers might respond to the same artefact in different ways.[9] The complexity of early modern believers' relationship to the material elements of their devotion is explored fruitfully in Joe Moshenska's work on post-Reformation 'play': children were frequently given broken idols as playthings, to the chagrin of some reformers, suggesting a complex attitude towards these objects; their dismissal as trivial and undeserving of pious respect corresponds, paradoxically, with the great care they received from the children they were handed to.[10] To approach early seventeenth-century English Protestant attitudes to the material world is more than simply to reconstruct the physical state of the typical parish church using archival and material evidence, or to survey the debates over worship practices that raged throughout the period, valuable as both these approaches are.[11] We must also try to recover believers' emotional and devotional experience when encountering or using material 'stuff' in worship.[12]

[9] Philip Schwyzer, 'Fallen idols', pp. 28-29.

[10] Joe Moshenska, *Iconoclasm as Child's Play* (Stanford: SUP, 2019).

[11] Particularly enlightening here are Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship: the liturgical arrangement of Anglican churches, 1600-1900* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), and Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), who discuss how successive religio-political interests have shaped the physical state of the English parish church; J. F. Merritt, *The Social World of Early Modern Westminster* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), Ch. 9, who offers a case study of the parishes of Westminster in the early decades of the seventeenth century; and Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: the arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), who discusses the interplay of political, religious and aesthetic concerns in the rise of the Laudian style in church interiors.

[12] Such an enquiry will owe much to work on affect in early modern literary and historical studies. Interest in early modern conceptions of the body has revealed the 'embodied' nature of the emotions: for instance, Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean stage* (Chicago: UCP, 2004); Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: CUP 1999) discusses the physiological and ethical 'regimes' of managing the humours that defined early modern subjectivity. *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, ed. by Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) looks at the material realities of the domestic devotional practices of early modern British Protestants; its sister volume, *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, ed. by Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) does the same for public worship practices. *Sensing the Sacred in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Robin MacDonald, Emilie Murphy and Elizabeth Swann (London: Routledge, 2018) explores the continuities and differences across the medieval and early modern periods and across the European churches in the sensory experience of the sacred.

Worship practice and understanding the material world

The Protestant suspicion of, even outright hostility to, use of material objects in devotion was not antithetical to a material world in which God did intervene and might be materially encountered. As Alexandra Walsham has shown, the Protestant rejection of any human or saintly intermediary between the individual subject and the divine did not dampen enthusiasm for reading divine messages into unusual occurrences.[13] The early modern English Protestant lived in a world where interactions with the material world might allow direct experience with the divine, if approached and interpreted correctly.[14] But this caveat is substantial: many words of doctrine, polemic and devotional guidance were written, and much time and energy expended by ministers and bishops, in determining and policing the 'right' way to encounter, inhabit and use material things. God may be able to communicate with man through external matter, but man's own interaction with the material world must remain within strict bounds. The nature of the sacraments and the use of bodily ceremony in worship were perennial problems for the Church, as bishops sought to maintain adherence to Anglican orthodoxy without placing excessive emphasis on the external matter of worship to the detriment of the 'real', inward experience of devotion.[15]

Cranmer's essay 'Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished, and some retained', prefaced to the Book of Common Prayer, sets out the reasoning behind the partial elimination of ceremonies from newly-determined Church of England worship: those ceremonies are to be excised which have "much blinded the people, and obscured the glory of God", while others are retained "as well for a decent order in the Church… as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the Church… ought to be referred" (*BCP* 214-16). Some ceremonies, Cranmer argues, though "at first… of godly intent and purpose devised", eventually "turned to vanity and superstition"; others "grew

[13] Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 9.
[14] Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, pp. 328-57.
[15] Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and liturgy* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp. 94-207, gives an overview of how interpretation of the incarnation, and with it the performance of the sacrament, changed of the period of the Reformation; Judith Anderson, *Translating Investments: Metaphor and the dynamic of cultural change in Tudor-Stuart England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), Ch. 3 discusses in detail Cranmer's negotiation of the problem of the sacrament as a question of figurative and literal meaning.

daily to more and more abuses". Such ceremonies have become intolerable not through a categorical problem with either their form or their meaning, but through their erring use or performance, becoming 'vanity' (that is, empty or meaningless) or 'superstition' (inappropriate or improper worship), or opening themselves up to 'abuses'.

The power of ceremonies as enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer, whether negative (as 'vain superstition') or positive (as 'pertaining to edification'), is twofold: firstly, in the intent of the performer; and secondly, in its mental and spiritual effect on them – 'good' ceremonies will "stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God", while the 'bad' will "burden men's conscience without any cause". The potential pitfalls on both sides are manifold: many are "addicted to their old customs"; others are "so newfangled, that they would innovate all things". Both these parties err in attaching too *much* meaning to ceremonies whose observance should be regarded as "but a small thing". This excessive attachment to the specifics of such ceremonies is, to Cranmer, a "yoke and burden" on a mind that should be focused on the spiritual meaning of the worship.

The value and meaning of such ceremonies do not inhere in the action itself, but in the mental or spiritual action of the worshipper in undertaking it, which Cranmer sees as both an expression of the individual's mental and spiritual tendencies (towards excessive traditionalism or innovation, both of which can obstruct proper devotion), and an act of interpretation, of a ceremony which is itself value-neutral. The duality of the ceremony's significance, both embodied and interpreted by the user, gives the lie to any inherent meaningfulness attached to bare physical action, so inextricable are the act and its interpretation. This sense of the meaning – and therein both the threat and benefit – of physical actions existing only in their conception by and effect on individual users, rather than in the thing itself, is evident in the different approaches made to the devotional use of ceremonies and material objects by early modern English Protestants.

Controversy over the use of ceremonies and material things in worship continued intermittently over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Different specific objects or practices were at issue at different moments, but the same points of contention emerge across the period: bowing or kneeling to receive the sacrament; the sign of the cross used in baptism; the use of the surplice to give

communion.[16] As in Cranmer's essay, polemical discussions of these ceremonies offer great insight into how physical actions and material objects held meaning within the early modern English Church. For instance, in a 1618 tract defending Anglican ceremonies, Bishop of Chester Thomas Morton quotes Bucer's 1550 response to John Hooper's rejection of liturgical vestments: "*The abuse of such things doth not cleaue to the things themselues, but vnto the minds of them that do abuse them*."[17] Bucer's '*haeret*' is frequently rendered in English translations as 'depends upon', but Morton's 'cleave' both reflects more accurately the sense of the original and bespeaks the greater complexity in the relationship between believers, devotional aids, and the concept of the 'use' to which they put the latter: neither 'the things' nor their 'abusers' are grammatical subjects here, but rather the 'abuse'.[18] What is at issue is not 'the things themselves', which are after all indifferent, or the actors who use them, but the quality of the 'use' itself. Unlike 'depending', 'cleaving' does not suggest a straightforward logical relationship, but one that is animated, intimate, to be resisted, and therefore reflects more closely the complexities of the Protestant approach to the material world.

If material objects and practices carry significance in the mental and spiritual state of those who use them, the nature of this 'understanding' – the interpretative act which imbues the otherwise indifferent object or action with meaning in the mind and soul of the user – is something that equally concerns early modern writers. Morton, for instance, goes on to castigate those who would "denie *Symbolicall ceremonies*": unlike Catholic "dumbe, and insignificant Ceremonies", Anglican ritual is "Significatiue" and therefore "lawful, though not as operatiue". The distinction between, on the one hand, 'dumb' ceremonies with no meaning, and, on the other, 'operative' ceremonies, which might stray into superstition, is a fine one, but this is the space in which Morton locates proper, 'lawful' Anglican worship. Ceremonies must hold meaning, but are not themselves efficacious; they signify, they do not act. Again, their work is solely within the mind and soul of the individual worshipper –

[16] cf. Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 25-38; and *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age*, pp. 24-33.
[17] Thomas Morton, *A Defence of the Innocencie of the Three Ceremonies of the Church of England, viz. The Surplice, Crosse after Baptisme, and Kneeling at the receiuing of the blessed Sacrament* (London, 1618), sig. A1^{r}.
[18] e.g. in Constantin Hopf, *Martin Bucer and the English Reformation* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), p. 135.

crucially, this is work that the worshipper themselves must also undertake through proper, Protestant interpretation.

Cranmer agrees: the reason that the Book of Common Prayer's ceremonies are acceptable and Catholic ones onerous to the mind is that, unlike Mosaic 'ceremonial law', Christ's Gospel is "a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow but in the freedom of spirit". Ceremonies work, he argues, by stirring up the worshipper's mind "by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified". The precise interpretative work the worshipper must do in order to perform these ceremonies appropriately is once again a finely balanced matter, rejecting an overly prescriptive significative framework of 'figure or shadow', and instead embracing the more ambiguous "notable and special signification". It is particularly significant that it is the 'signification' itself, rather than the ceremony to which it cleaves, that works to 'stir up' the worshipper's mind. Pre-empting the work of phenomenological philosophers three centuries later, Anglican defences of ceremonies assert that we cannot make claims – positive or negative – about the nature of material things, but instead only about the 'minds' of people who use – or, as it may be, 'abuse' – them.[19]

In this light, the question of how material objects and physical bodies may carry meaning and be spiritually efficacious comes even more sharply into focus. The subject performing the ceremony – who is also, inescapably, the material body with which the ceremony is performed – executes it more precisely in their mental or spiritual apprehension and interpretation of the ceremony, than in the act itself. This is unsurprising, in the context of a religious culture that defined itself by centring reading

[19] The concept of 'intentionality', the "power of minds and mental states to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties, and states of affairs", resonates meaningfully with Cranmer's reference to ceremonies "of godly intent" (Pierre Jacob, 'Intentionality,' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (2019)). Historical-phenomenological approaches to early modern literary studies have been fruitfully pursued by the likes of Bruce Smith, 'Premodern Sexualities', *PMLA* 115.3 (May 2000), pp. 318-29 and *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), and in a special issue of *Criticism* on *Shakespeare and Phenomenology*, ed. by Kevin Curran and James Kearney (*Criticism* 54.3 (2012)). For the same reason that phenomenology offers such a valuable approach to sexuality, being "biologically, psychologically, politically… a state of being in the body" ('Premodern Sexualities', p. 319), it lends itself to bodily performed texts like plays – and also to liturgies. Moreover, if we consider devotion as an analogous "state of being in the soul", the historical-phenomenological approach to devotional texts like *The Temple* will also prove valuable – as it might have to Cranmer, Morton, and other early modern believers in their endeavours to interpret religious texts, artefacts and experiences.

of scripture, and whose leaders agonised at length over the proper hermeneutic method to approach both scripture and the material world.[20]

The question of how elements of the material world were to be interpreted as spiritually significant (or not) is central to Protestant hermeneutics. Figurative interpretation of the world characterised the Protestant worldview. Typology – the interpretative practice by which Old Testament characters and events were understood as prevenient figures or 'antitypes' of those in the New (Jonah's three-day ordeal in the belly of the whale, for instance, as a figure for Christ's three-day descent into hell) – had been part of orthodox Christian understanding since the early Church, but the Reformation, with its emphasis on salvation achieved *sola scriptura*, placed it at the centre of biblical reading practices.[21] Typological readings were applied not only to scripture, but to the contemporary physical world: under this scheme every material thing was connected figuratively to something else, under the hand of the omnipotent authorial God. Experiencing the material world was thus a hermeneutical practice as much as a question of following the Church's edicts, and this spiritually significant interpretative habit is crucial to reading contemporary devotional verse.

[20] The Reformed emphasis on salvation through scripture, and the resultant 'logocentrism' of post-Reformation religion, has been investigated extensively by recent scholarship. Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: OUP, 2002) shows how uses of language and of material texts expressed and effected the doctrinal changes of the Reformation. James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text: Imagining the book in Reformation England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2009) explores the problem posed by material texts in the apparently contradictory Reformation impulses of iconophobia and logocentrism. Scriptural reading was prioritised as an element of Reformed devotional practice, and what exactly this reading consisted of has been the subject of study by many scholars, including Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, literacy and gender* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009); William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2008); John King, ed., *Tudor Books and Readers: Materiality and the construction of meaning* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010). The effect of contemporary print culture and the material dissemination and consumption of texts on religious practices is explored by Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991); and Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2000). The ways in which the materiality of reading practices, in particular the almost ubiquitous habit of commonplacing, affects the devotional practice of Bible reading has been explored by Evelyn Tribble and Nicholas Keene, eds., *Cognitive Ecologies and the History of Remembering: Religion, education and memory in early modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); and Matthew Brown, 'The Thick Style: Steady sellers, textual aesthetics, and early modern devotional reading', *PMLA* 121 (2006), pp. 67-86. The ways in which scriptural reading practices in turn shaped devotional and literary writing is discussed by Kate Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Philip West, *Silex Scintillans: Scripture Uses* (Oxford: OUP, 2001); and Victoria Brownlee, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England, 1558-1625* (Oxford: OUP, 2018).

[21] cf. Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 107-20; Thomas Luxon, *Literal Figures: Puritan allegory and the Reformation crisis in representation* (Chicago: UCP, 1995).

Materiality and Poetics

The material world offers a way for God to 'communicate' with humanity; it is unsurprising that in this context, where materiality is both potentially meaningful and deeply contested, the use of elaborate and complex imagery increasingly features in devotional poetry. As Colin Burrow notes, the term 'metaphysical poetry' is an imprecise one whose defining traits – the use of complex 'conceits' to draw attention to the poet's ingenuity, the combination of metaphysical speculation and feelings – do not fit equally well onto all members of the loose 'group' to whom this term has been applied.[22] For many critics, the relation of the literal and the figurative within the conceit is a driving concern when treating the 'metaphysicals': A. J. Smith sees material and spiritual cohering in the conceit, understood as operating within the cognitive frame of their 'wit': "Donne and Herbert incarnate in the instant a concrete and living intuition of spiritual truth."[23] Recent scholarhip has highlighted the significance of religious experience in shaping the understanding of figurative language in the seventeenth century; Frances Cruickshank sees Herbert and Donne "look[ing] for transfiguration, the poetics of incarnation that knits divinity to earth and invests materiality with immortal hopes".[24]

The turn of the seventeenth century likewise saw great critical interest in the function of poetry in general, and figurative language and imagery in particular. Across these discussions of the literary 'figure', there are clear resonances with contemporary religious debates about figuration and signification in images, worship practices and sacraments, among others, and much common ground, in discussions of how poetry functions, with religious texts' exploration of the spiritual function of the material world. Sidney distinguishes poetry from philosophy in that the philosopher's "infallible grounds of wisdom… lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy."[25] Poetry's creative power, to 'figure forth' matter not in substance but in the imagination of the reader, is essentially cognitive, accommodating the external

[22] Colin Burrow, 'Metaphysical poets, (act. c.1600 – c.1690)', *ODNB* (2007).
[23] A. J. Smith, *Metaphysical Wit* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 6.
[24] Frances Cruickshank, *Verse and Poetics in George Herbert and John Donne* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 13.
[25] Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry, or, The Defence of Poesy*, ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd, rev. by R. W. Malsen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 90.

realities determined by 'philosophy' to the limited receptivity of the human mind. Similarly, in *The Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon sees imagery functioning in explicitly cognitive terms:

> For the inventions and conclusions of human reason… being then new and strange, the minds of men were hardly subtle enough to conceive them, unless they were brought nearer to the sense by this kind of resemblances and examples.[26]

Imagery functions to make the "conclusions of human reason" more easily accepted by the "sense" – not unlike Cranmer's justification of certain ceremonies as being able to "edify" the worshipper's mind through "some notable or special signification". Both edifying rituals and effective imagery function directly in the mind, the "dull mind of man" that is "hardly subtle enough to conceive" difficult ideas or practice effective devotion without imagery or proper ceremonies. In this context, early-seventeenth century religious poetry's complex conceits resonate clearly with both self-conscious considerations of the function and effect of poetry, and the perennial Protestant 'problem' of materiality. Critical discussions of 'sacramental' or 'liturgical' poetics of the period have been particularly illuminating in drawing connections between the Church's and poetry's approaches to the material world, positing a distinct poetics in which the spiritual effect of material things is engaged with in literary writers' use of poetic tropes and figures.[27]

Much as with Reformers' attitudes to material objects and actions in worship, literary discussions of figurative language combine cautious appreciation of their power over the mind of the user with suspicion of potential misuse. Puttenham, for instance, regards rhetorical tropes and poetic figures as 'ornament' for the text, "to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mind as the ear of the hearers". He compares poetic 'ornament' to jewels or golden cloth added by an embroiderer, or "rich Orient colours" by a portrait-painter; like poetic ornament, should these

[26] *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. by James Spedding (London: Longman, 1860), vol. 4, p. 317.

[27] e.g. Regina Schwartz, *Sacramentality at the Dawn of Secularism: When God left the world* (Stanford: SUP, 2007); Robert Whalen, *The Poetry of Immanence: Sacrament in Donne and Herbert* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Kimberly Johnson, *Made Flesh: Sacrament and poetics in post-Reformation England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2014); Sophie Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013); Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007); Daniel Gibbons, *Conflicts of Devotion: Liturgical poetics in sixteenth and seventeenth century England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017).

> be not well tempered, or not well layd, or be vsed in excesse, or neuer so litle disordered or misplaced, they not onely giue it no maner of grace at all, but rather do disfigure that stuffe and spill the whole workmanship.[28]

This warning suggests that figurative language is understood as something immensely powerful – positively or negatively – whose usage must be carefully policed to prevent its 'abuse': Puttenham's view of the figure shares much with the anxious, self-policing relationship with material artefacts in worship and devotion held by early modern Protestants.

Specifically, it is the potential disparity between the external sign and the internal reality it denotes that causes anxiety in poetry and material worship alike. Sidney laments that lyric love poetry so often exhibits such a mismatch, in the "far-fetched words" of "honey-flowing matron eloquence, apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation."[29] This rather misogynistic image of the over-painted 'courtesan' as the epitome of 'bad' poetry is invoked by Herbert repeatedly across *The Temple*, expressing concerns about both poetic and ecclesiastical 'ornamentation'. Most clearly, 'The British Church' sets the image of Anglican beauty apart from the "Outlandish looks" of European churches, who "either painted are,/ Or else undrest" (*EP* 390-91). Herbert's praise of the 'mean' between Catholic extravagance and Puritan plainness resonates with contemporary discourse over the proper 'fit' of figurative language.[30]

Elsewhere Herbert invokes images of material ornamentation – whether of female vanity or artisanal craftsmanship – to discuss his own poetic compositions. In 'Jordan (I)', he bewails that "fictions onely and false hair/ Become a verse", and that poetry must apparently "do [its] dutie/ Not to a true, but painted chair" (*EP* 200). In 'Dulnesse', he explicitly re-shapes the sort of overblown love lyric Sidney complains of for praising God:

> The wanton lover in a curious strain
> Can praise his fairest fair;
> And with quaint metaphors her curled hair
> Curl o're again.
>
> Thou art my loveliness, my life, my light,
> Beautie alone to me:

[28] Puttenham, *Poesy*, pp. 221-22.
[29] Sidney, *Apology*, p. 113.
[30] cf. Lisa Freinkel, *Reading Shakespeare's Will: the theology of figure from Augustine to the Sonnets* (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2002), Ch. 3-4, on the inescapable weight of Reformation theology's anxious meta-reading of *res* and *verba* in early modern poetry.

> Thy bloudy death and undeserv'd, makes thee
> Pure red and white (*EP* 410-11).[31]

Most explicitly, in 'Jordan (II)', the speaker recalls how "My thoughts began to burnish, sprout, and swell,/ Curling with metaphors a plain intention" (*EP* 367). Poetry, and in particular its use of figurative language, must strike a delicate balance between meaningful 'fiction' and deception or spiritually dangerous misrepresentation.

'Jordan (II)' has frequently been read as a kind of Herbertian manifesto, expressing the speaker's thwarted striving for effective devotion, a vivdly self-conscious concern with poetic composition – "I often blotted what I had begunne;/ This was not quick enough, and that was dead" – and the ultimate retreat of the human, poetic speaker in favour of an interrupting divine authority:

> *How wide is all this long pretence!*
> *There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd:*
> *Copie out onely that, and save expense.*[32]

In its earliest surviving form, in the Williams manuscript, the poem is titled 'Invention': a vibrantly multivalent word, denoting at once the mental faculty of inventive creation (*OED* 4), the rhetorical act of selecting topics to treat (*OED* 1d), the technical manner of construction of an artefact (*OED* 5), and the invented work itself (*OED* 7).[33] Herbert's interest here unites these meanings: he is concerned with the poem itself and its craftedness, with his choice of subject matter to treat in *The Temple,* and with his own mental or spiritual act of devotion in its composition.

Poetry, Sidney tells us, is "an imaginative ground-plot for human invention", working fruitfully in the human mind to make it receptive to godly inspiration.[34] For Herbert, human invention remains the prime channel for divine poetic inspiration, but he is more apprehensive. In 'The Posie' he sends it away ("Invention rest,/ Comparisons go play"); in 'Jordan (II)' he rejects the "quaint words, and trim

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[31] cf. Michael Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (London: UCP, 1991), for Herbert's use of the tropes of courtly love poetry for devotional ends.

[32] Philip McGuire, identifies the poem's rejection of "trim invention" with a humble Reformation 'plain style' enjoined in prayer manuals, advocating "familiar speech" to address God ('Herbert's Jordan II and the Plain Style', *Michigan Academician* 1 (1969), pp. 69-74); Mark Taylor reads the poem as searching after a poetic "method", "appropriate" to presenting God in verse, where "the dangers of ornamental multiplicity… lurked in wait for the poet overwhelmed by the radiance of God's image" (*The Soul in Paraphrase: George Herbert's poetics* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974, pp. 24-26).

[33] Amy Charles, *The Williams Manuscript of George Herbert's Poems: a facsimile reproduction* (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), p. 74^{r}.

[34] Sidney, *Apology,* p. 103.

invention" that "curl… a plain intention" and "deck the sense" excessively, and, in the later Bodleian manuscript, even excises it from the poem's title. Yet surely the latter title, scripturally allusive and suggesting a relationship with its title-mate 'Jordan (I)', is more technically 'inventive' than the straightforward subject-denotation of 'Invention'. Even in overtly denouncing poetic craftedness, Herbert performs it. Like the function and quality of material objects, poetic endeavours were both fruitful as a mental process and physical artefact representing, embodying and prompting devotional activity, and troubling to the early modern Protestant mind.

Reading Herbert's imagery grants us insight into how early modern readers saw poetry and the material world holding spiritual meaning, and how verse and matter functioned together in Protestant devotional poetry. It is not Herbert's poetic skill alone that makes him suitable for such a reading, but also his enormous and measurable influence on seventeenth-century devotional poetry. *The Temple* was extremely popular with contemporary readers, being printed in thirteen editions by 1709, and closely inspiring the style and form of subsequent poets, many of whom make their debt to *The Temple* explicit. Among others, Christopher Harvey's *The Synagogue, or, The Shadow of the Temple* (first published in 1640), and Richard Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple* (1646) both invoke *The Temple*'s influence in their title; similarly, the subtitle of Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* (1650) copies *The Temple*'s subtitle, *Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, exactly. This 'school of Herbert' was a prominent feature on the landscape of seventeenth-century devotional poetry, and deserves attention as such. The devotional life of the seventeenth-century English Protestant clearly stimulated an appetite for something about Herbert's verse; equally, Herbert's verse clearly prompted some readers to respond in kind through their own literary compositions. Herbert's poetry, as both a literary artefact and a source for devotional writing in its own right, is invaluable for understanding seventeenth-century English devotional culture.

Readings of Herbert's poetry have frequently been centred around his perceived (and often deeply contested) confessional leanings – as have readings of his imitators and successors,

particularly Vaughan and Crashaw.[35] To some extent, such scholarship builds from the foundations laid by Herbert's first editors and biographers, who carefully portrayed him as the apotheosis of Anglican priesthood. Nicholas Ferrar, who saw the first edition of *The Temple* through the press, in his prefatory letter to the readers of *The Temple* describes how Herbert's "obedience and conformitie to the Church and the discipline thereof was singularly remarkable", and how his "faithfull discharge" of his priestly service "was such, as may make him justly a companion to the primitive Saints, and a pattern or more for the age he lived in" (*EP* 42). Izaak Walton, in his *Life of Mr George Herbert*, likewise presents Herbert as a saintlike model for his contemporaries: in calling Herbert to the priesthood, Walton tells us, God "intended him for a great example of virtue".[36]

From his earliest readings Herbert has not only been aligned with a specific confessional stance within the early modern English Church, but represented so in a way that renders him a passive object of contemplation and admiration as much as he exerts his own authorial agency. Seventeenth-century poetic responses to Herbert follow closely the path laid out by Ferrar and Walton: John Polwhele, the minister of Tremorgan in Cornwall, in a verse composed soon after Herbert's death, praises Herbert as "Sacred Architect", who "a glorious Temple raise[s]… with curious gravings of a Peircinge witt"; this exaltation of Herbert's technical skill is ultimately a moral example, teaching us that "a penitent sigh,

[35] Foundational here are Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: a study in English religious literature of the seventeenth century* (New Haven: YUP, 1962), and Rosamund Tuve, *A Reading of George Herbert* (Chicago: UCP, 1962), which argue that *The Temple* was largely influenced by continental and medieval Catholic meditational practices rather than Reformation theology, and, on the other side, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), which argues for a distinct 'Protestant poetics,' modelled on Biblical poetic forms, of which *The Temple* is a key example. Richard Strier emphasises Herbert's alignment with Lutheran theology (*Love Known: Theology and experience in George Herbert's poetry* (Chicago: UCP, 1983)); Gene Veith prioritises the phenomenological experience of early modern 'spirituality' over bare confessionalism, but focuses strictly on the experience of Calvinism as expressed and explored in *The Temple* (*Reformation Spirituality: the religion of George Herbert* (London: Associated University Presses, 1985)). More recently, Elizabeth Clarke, despite seeing Herbert as "unambiguously Calvinist", points out continuities between *The Temple* and continental Catholic theology (*Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry: 'Divinitie, and poesie, met'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)); Christopher Hodgkins presents Herbert as an avowed adherent of the *via media* of the Elizabethan Settlement (*Authority, Church and Society in George Herbert: Return to the middle way* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993)); Daniel Doerksen portrays a lively 'puritan' wing of an inclusive English Church of which Herbert and Donne can both be read as members (*Conforming to the Word: Herbert, Donne and the English Church before Laud* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997)).

[36] Izaak Walton, 'Life of Mr George Herbert,' in *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert & Robert Sanderson*, ed. by Geoffrey Cumberlege (Oxford: OUP, 1927), p. 277.

and groane" can blow "flintye heartes" to heaven, "where Herbert Angell's flowen awaye before".[37] From the variety of contexts in which *The Temple* appears in seventeenth-century notebooks and miscellanies, we can infer the breadth of uses to which Herbert's verse was put. As well as appearing in collections of devotional verse such as the commonplace books compiled by Thomas Sparrow (BL MS Add 74272) and Marmaduke Rawdon (BL Add MS 18044), Herbert's poems feature in compilations of sermons (Yale University, MS Osborn b 245), moral and philosophical verse (Hunt. MS HM 93), and political tracts and speeches (Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.13). Notebooks kept by the Cartwright family of Aynho, Nottinghamshire (Bodl. MS Don.e.6) and John Gibson of Welburn in Yorkshire (Bodl. MS Broxbourne 85.18) find Herbert's verse among such apparently artless quotidiana as medical and household receipts, tables of tides, highways and fairs, and, in both, copious witty and moralistic aphorisms. Herbert's saintly spiritual authority is not inconsistent, for early modern readers, with either his aesthetic craft or his practical utility.

This capacious kind of devotional reading should inform our reading of Herbert's verse. We need not see as distinct his literary work and his biographical reality as a rural priest or, more uncharitably, a failed courtier writing religious verse as a kind of consolation prize for his abortive parliamentary career.[38] An appreciation of the formal power of Herbert's verse is not in tension with an understanding of its historical context. For a question as intricately affective, spiritual, intellectual and cognitive as that of materiality, they are inextricable. The 'material turn' in literary studies has emphasised how a text's material form creates meaning that is as significant as its literary form; Don McKenzie's 'sociology of texts' valuably points up "the human motives and interactions which texts involve at every stage of their production, transmission, and consumption" and "the roles of institutions, and their own complex structures, in affecting the forms of social discourse, past and present".[39] In recent years, this treatment has been fruitfully nuanced by discussions that complicate

[37] John Polwhele, 'On Mr. Herberts Devine poeme the church', in *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 61-62.
[38] Though Cristina Malcolmson reminds us that "preferment was as much a concern in the ministry as in any other profession", *George Herbert: A Literary Life* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 59.
[39] Don McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 15; cf. Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham, eds. *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).

the dichotomy of material and literary form, seeing both as carrying meaning, 'working' together to define the experience of reading a text.[40] Attention has been paid to the kinds of 'reading' we employ when approaching literary texts: building on Clifford Geertz's influential 'thick description', Heather Love proposes a reading that is "close but not deep"; Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, a "surface reading" that embraces rather than resists the 'surface' meanings of material and verbal forms.[41]

Reading of any kind, but particularly literary reading, demands a continual, instinctive translation between 'surface' and 'deeper' meanings – between, on the one hand, the literal meaning and material form of a text, and on the other its literary, affective and, here, devotional, meaning and effect. As we have seen, this double interpretative act characterises the early modern Protestant approach to the material world, at once resistant and studiously attendant to the material 'surface'. These kinds of considered, capacious readings are deeply valuable to understanding *The Temple*. Herbert's poetry is alive to the spiritual potential of material objects, but also to the challenges that this can pose in a Protestant context; and further, to both the spiritual potential, and the problematic materiality, of his own verse. The very means by which Herbert's poetry, which grapples so vividly with the problems of materiality and representation, is able to reach its readers – the published edition of *The Temple* – places these questions in the hands of its readers in the form of the book itself. This thesis sets out to explore the weight and the life of material things in *The Temple*, and of the materiality of *The Temple* itself.

[40] Ben Burton and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, 'The Work of Form, in *The Work of Form: Poetics and materiality in early modern culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), pp. 1-22; cf. Ellen Rooney, 'Form and Contentment', *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000), pp. 17-40.

[41] Heather Love, 'Close but not Deep: Literary ethics and the descriptive turn', *New Literary History* 41.2 (Spring 2010), pp. 371-91; Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, 'Surface Reading: An Introduction', *Representations* 108.1 (Fall 2009), pp. 1-21; cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected essays* (London: Fontana, 1993), Ch.1: 'Thick Description: Towards an interpretative theory of culture'.

Part One: The Body at Prayer

‘Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations’: Praying voices in *The Temple*

The Temple is full of voices. “In his Temple doth every man speak of his honour”, declares the epigraph that features on the title-pages of every seventeenth-century edition of the volume (*EP* 37). The intention of the collection, the epigraph promises, is to offer a space in which ‘every man’ will be given a voice to praise God.

In these respects the epigraph is appropriate for *The Temple*’s content. Herbert’s speakers are diverse: sometimes a preacher (as in ‘The Church-porch’); sometimes a hesitant minister (‘Priesthood’); a prosopopoeial representation of a Biblical figure (e.g. Christ in ‘The Sacrifice’); or simply a penitent, despairing, rejoicing or thankful believer. The experience of reading *The Temple* is one of identification with a range of personae, and frequently with personae who are not explicitly identified. This is a temple where “every man” is allowed to speak, even in his most desperate and ineloquent voice. This is not to say that *The Temple* is incoherent or cacophonous, however: rather, these disparate voices reach a kind of harmony across the volume as they are brought together within the communal space of the eponymous *Temple*.

The Temple’s title page, through its epigraph and its subtitular assignation as ‘private ejaculations’, asserts somewhat contradictory identities, one the one hand as a collective vocal act of worship, on the other aligning it with contemporary guides to private devotion for individual use.[1] As we shall see however, the functions and practices of public and private prayer were not quite so contradictory to the early modern worshipper. The Book of Common Prayer for instance, which established the set forms of public worship and was the period’s most widely printed book after the Bible, also contained prayers for private and domestic use; and guides to prayer, both public and private, show what these forms of prayer share in the terms in which they were conceived. If *The Temple* represents a multitude of voices speaking to God’s honour, they are allowed to stand at once

[1] For instance, *A tryall of priuate deuotions. Or, A diall for the houres of prayer* (London, 1628); John Cosin, *A Collection of private devotions in the practice of the ancient church* (London, 1627); and Henry Valentine, *Private devotions digested into six letanies* (London, 1635).

as individual, private voices, and as parts of a collective whole, in a way that resonates with the devotional experience of worshippers within the divided but coherent early-seventeenth century English Church.

What sort of voice, or voices do we hear when we read *The Temple*? At times the speaker's voice is broken, failing, insufficient, as when the speaker of 'Church-lock and key' laments "the chilnesse of my faint demands" (*EP* 242); at others, the voice is that of the speaker's human failings, as in the "pratler" of 'Conscience', whose 'chatting fears' disturb the sought-for "noiselesse sphere" of "Harmonious peace" (*EP* 379), or the 'noise of thoughts' in 'The Familie', the "loud complaints and pulling fears", "wranglers" that "defile thy seat" (*EP* 477). Elsewhere the voice is more confident: the singing shepherds of 'Christmas' (*EP* 292); or the beauty of God's creation in 'Providence' which "must appeare,/ And be dress'd, and tun'd by thee,/ Who sweetly temper'st all" (*EP* 417). Throughout *The Temple* where Herbert invokes the voice of the speaker, he does so to draw attention to the humanity and the deeply embodied condition of his speaker, in all its weakness, and yet therein its ineffable connection to the divine.

The speaker's 'voice' also allows Herbert to explore the material and spiritual function of his verse itself. In exploring what it means for a human, embodied voice to try to pray to God, Herbert also questions what it means for a human poet to write materially embodied devotional verse. *The Temple*'s poems, its title-page tells us, are to be taken as the 'private ejaculations' of Herbert himself, or of his invented speakers, or perhaps of his intended readers. That is to say, they lie somewhere between the recorded traces of performed prayer, an invented simulacrum of literary devotion, and a prescription for future devotional practice. In any case, the material page on which the poem appears cannot itself be the 'ejaculation' the volume declares it to be.

The Temple's struggle to represent vocal devotion in a material or visual form on the page resonates with contemporary debates about the relative value of vocally embodied worship, between the orthodox view of it as a necessary part of devotional discipline and non-conformists who regarded it as an empty distraction from 'real' devotion in the heart, and still others who advocated extemporaneous 'ejaculations' over set forms of articulate verbal prayer. Treatments of the voice in

devotional poetry and prose as well as polemical and even physiological texts represent a key battleground in the struggle to pin down the relative value of material and immaterial forms of worship, and indeed, the very possibility of the latter. Throughout *The Temple* Herbert is keenly attuned to this struggle, the difficulty of its verse's material representation of vocal worship resonating with the complexity of early modern worshippers' understanding of the function of vocal prayer.

The importance of prayer to the early modern worshipper – its urgency, its prominence, and its necessity to daily life – can scarcely be overstated. In his posthumously-published devotional volume *The Spiritual Favourite at the Throne of Grace*, godly minister Richard Sibbes admonishes his readers of the necessity of constant prayer: "Take away prayer, and take away the life and breath of the soul. Take away breath and the man dies; as soon as the soul of a Christian begins to live he prays."[2] Indeed, one of the few things to unite Protestants of all stripes in the early decades of the seventeenth century was the importance of praying, and specifically of praying in the right way.

Here, however, the unity breaks down. Devotional handbooks, sermons and treatises, as well as practical guides to prayer – of which hundreds were printed every year – were constantly concerned with working out the specifics of the proper way to pray. Was prayer best done alone or with others; aloud or silently; read or recited; according to set forms or extemporaneously; articulated in words, or by heartfelt 'sighs and groans'? Was there a difference between the function and efficacy of public prayers – such as the daily Prayer-Book mandated morning and evening prayers, as well as divine services on Sundays and holy days – and private prayers, whether undertaken in the household or by a solitary believer? Such questions vexed clergy and lay worshippers alike in the period, as the sheer prolificacy of printed output dealing with these problems attests: David Gants estimates that about one third of books printed in London 1614-18 were devotional or instructional volumes, and just over half of all books printed were religious in content.[3]

[2] *The Works of Richard Sibbes, D.D.*, ed. by Alexander Balloch Grosart (Edinburgh, 1863), vol. 6, p. 96.
[3] David L. Gants, 'A Quantitive Analysis of the London Book Trade, 1614-1618', *Studies in Bibliography* 55 (2002), pp. 185-213, p. 186.

These questions have also animated much scholarly energy in recent years. Building on the works of the likes of Adam Fox and Walter Ong highlighting the importance of the oral and aural in pre-modern culture, critical work on devotional literature and practice must take seriously the matter of words in prayer and worship, whether printed or vocally performed.[4] Bruce Smith proposes an 'acoustemology', a critical practice that recognises the centrality of "things heard and said" to early modern culture, in a world without the ambient 'background noise' of the post-industrial age, where conversation and specific noises would be more readily identifiable: sounds, in all senses, mattered more.[5]

Discussions of early modern performance of prayer have set the problem in the context of other kinds of performance. Ramie Targoff, for instance, sees resonances between early modern discourse on the performance of prayer and theatricality, opening prayer acts up to accusations of vain hypocrisy across the confessional divides with which early-seventeenth century England was riven.[6] Peter McCullough and Jonathan Willis have highlighted the prevalence of singing and musical performance in post-Reformation worship, even in the context of heated debate on whether 'song' should be silent or vocal.[7] In his discussion of Reformation ideas of prayer, Brian Cummings notes the echo of the Book of Common Prayer's definition of a sacrament as "an outward and visible signe of an inward and spiritual grace" in J. L. Austin's performative utterance.[8] Prayer's position between the inner and the outer world, the material and the immaterial, what can and cannot be represented – and what does the representing – makes it as problematic, and important, for modern critics as it was for early modern worshippers.

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[4] Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000); Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the word* (London: Routledge, 1982).

[5] Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: UCP, 1999), p. 48.

[6] Ramie Targoff, 'The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England', *Representations* 60 (1997), pp. 49-69, pp. 57-61.

[7] Peter McCullough, 'Music Reconciled to Preaching: A Jacobean Moment?', and Jonathan Willis, 'Protestant Worship and the Discourse of Music in Reformation England', both in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, pp. 109-129 and 131-149.

[8] Brian Cummings, 'Prayer, Bodily Ritual and Performative Utterance: Bucer, Calvin and the *Book of Common Prayer*' in *Prayer and Performance in Early Modern English Literature: Gesture, Word and Devotion*, ed. by Joseph Sterrett (Cambridge: CUP, 2018), pp. 16-36, p. 21.

"The soul in paraphrase, the heart in pilgrimage": Body, spirit and the voice in prayer

Discussions of seventeenth-century treatments of prayer generally highlight the confessional lines that shape debates on the subject: Anglican orthodoxy demanding active, vocal participation in liturgical worship and private devotion, against nonconformists who either advocate for extempore, inarticulate 'sighs and groans', or express suspicion of any external, vocal prayer altogether.[9] Often, individual treatments were more ambivalent. In a godly book of devotions, Sir James Perrott sets out a distinction between 'two kindes' of prayer:

> The Mentall prayer is, vvhen our inward conceptions and meditations of the minde, are fixed on the Maiesty of God, by secret and silent recounting, (without expression of words) the miseries that our sinnes haue brought vpon our selues…. The other kinde of Vocall Prayer is, when the heart cannot be contained and satisfied onely vvith contemplation, but striues to set the tongue & voyce on worke.[10]

While 'mental' prayer is "profitable", he concludes, "if it bee done with zeale, deuotion, and vnderstanding", 'vocal' prayer is "commonly more firme and fruitefull", since "the exterior sences doe many times seduce and withdraw the inward meditation, which maketh them vanish… except they bee vnited and bound together with the organs of voyce and speech".[11] External speech is not the poor cousin of 'real' inward prayer, but in fact acts as a safeguard against the 'seduction' of the failing mind by worldly distractions.

In Perrott's argument, the "organs of voice and speech" – corporeal organs engaged in physical actions – perform an important function of spiritual discipline, 'uniting and binding together' the 'exterior senses' to profitable prayer. Such a view partakes in the early modern 'spiritual physiology' described by Richard Sugg: this conceived of a human biology animated by airy 'spirits' that were rarefied between the liver, heart and brain, for, respectively, digestion, sensation and rationality. Crucially, Sugg observes, the 'Renaissance body' was "not so much an entity as a process", thanks to

[9] Judith Maltby, '"Extravagencies and Impertenancies": Set forms, conceived and extempore prayer in Revloutionary England', in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern England,* pp. 221-243; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, Ch. 8.

[10] Andrew Thrush, 'Perrot, Sir James (1571/2–1637), politician', *ODNB* (2008); James Perrott, *An inuitation vnto prayer, and the practise of piety, directing the way to true happinesse…* (London, 1624), pp. 5-6.

[11] James Perrott, *An Inuitation vnto Prayer, and the practice of Piety, directing the way to true Happinesse* (London, 1624), p. 7.

the ever-changing state of the humours and spirits which early modern physiology understood as the main actors in both body and soul; 'spirits', he tells us, could transmute easily "between the material and the immaterial, the mental and the physical sides of human life".[12]

Early modern treatments of prayer fruitfully draw on this discourse of 'spirits' as simultaneously material and immaterial substances animating body and soul. Perrott urges his readers to make their prayer "an euen harmony" of the 'inward' heart, "the seate of the vitall spirites, [that] gaines quickening spirit to the body", and the 'outward' lungs "which receyues from within, and vents out breath: without which the heart it selfe cannot long continue in health; nor the body in life".[13] The physiology of the heart and lungs invoked here is not merely the contrivance of a writer more interested in his devotional instruction, but in fact accords with contemporary physiology: Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* describes the chest as "the seate or conceptacle of the vitall Faculty which harboureth especially in the heart"; the lungs, crucial to the work of both the heart and the voice, "driue out the aer…. That it may giue place vnto that which is fresh, and make also matter for the voice… Another vse of them is in expiration to auoide the fuliginous and smoaky sootinesse of the heart and spirits."[14] Both Crooke's thoracic physiology and Perrott's mechanics of prayer see the heart relying on the lungs to function, sharing a sense of the mutually dependent physiology of body and soul.

We might assume that Perrott is rhetorically deploying scientific ideas as an analogy on which to hang his argument about the efficacy of the voice in prayer. But the voice is literally, rather than metaphorically, embodied, and the heart was conceived as a seat of the substantial, rather than metaphorical, 'vital spirits'. The boundaries between 'matter' and 'spirit' are more permeable than we might expect; so are those between devotional and physiological approaches, and between literal and metaphorical meaning more broadly. In his description of the sense of hearing, Crooke posits the existence of an "inbred Aire" that exists in the head, separated from the "outward aer" by the ear

[12] Richard Sugg, *The Smoke of the Soul: Medicine, physiology and religion in early modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 19, 47.
[13] Perrott, *Inuitation*, p. 7.
[14] Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia a description of the body of man, together with the controversies and figures thereto belonging* (London, 1616), p. 347, p. 388.

drum; this 'inbred air' is "thin, pure, without any sound at all, immouable, plentifull", while the 'outward', subject to the differences of the atmosphere, may be "crasse and cloudy", and "thicker" in winter than in summer.[15] Though both 'inward' and 'outward' airs are material rather than strictly 'spirit', the description of the former clearly resonates with the terms used of the spirits: in his mammoth 1604 treatise *The suruey of Christs sufferings*, Bishop of Winchester Thomas Bilson described how the head and heart, being "the seates of vnderstanding and will", contain "certaine thinne, quicke, and *aeriall vapours*, or *spirits*" that

> carie to the minde of man with incredible celeritie the resemblances of all things subiected to sense, and with like vehemencie stirre and excite the heart and will of man.[16]

Here again we see Crooke's physiology of the senses echoing in devotional writers' treatment of spiritual action.

Moreover, Crooke, like Bilson, sees the *physical* functioning of the senses not as a quirk of nature, but as evidence of a higher power or purpose: quoting Aristotle, he argues that hearing's fundamental purpose is "to acquire or get knowledge and wisedome". He locates the distinction between man and animal specifically in the tongue, "the best proportioned and most at libertie" of any creature's, "the messenger of the Braine", able to communicate "those things that fall vnder our vnderstanding" as well as the base "affections of the Sensatiue soule", to which "all creatures deuoyde of reason" are confined.[17] He goes on, after detailed discussion of the form and function of the larynx, glottis, uvula, tongue and lungs, to quote Galen's assessment that the voice, "the Messenger of the Thought of the mind", is "worthily… accounted the principall of all the actions of the Soule".[18] Anatomical knowledge, it is clear, does not displace the spiritual involvement in human physiology, but instead makes more explicit the connection between the two.

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[15] ibid., p. 607.
[16] Thomas Bilson, *The suruey of Christs sufferings for mans redemption and his descent to Hades or Hel for our deliuerance* (London, 1604), pp. 188-89.
[17] Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, p. 612, p. 629.
[18] ibid., p. 646.

This intermingling of physiological and devotional approaches to the body and the soul is deeply fruitful for Herbert in his representation of the praying subject in his poetry, attempting their spiritual undertaking through inevitably materially embodied means. He sees the location of prayer in the heart as potent in physical as metaphorical terms: 'Praise (III)', for instance, sees the speaker announcing their intention to "mean and speak thy praise" – a longed-for combination of mental or cordial intention with vocal performance – and declaring that

> My busie heart shall spin it all my dayes:
> And when it stops for want of store,
> Then will I wring it with a sigh or grone,
> That thou mayst yet have more (*EP* 542).

The heart being 'wrung' for prayer is a typically evocative, brutally physical image by which Herbert portrays his speaker's spiritual pain, but we may also note here that it aligns with the physiology of 'spirits': 'wringing' suggests that prayer is fluid, like the 'vapours' of Bilson or Crooke's 'spirits'. In its final stanza the poem returns to this image, lamenting that "my heart,/ Though press'd, runnes thin". This again reflects the cordial, spiritual physiology of prayer: the speaker's prayer is an act of 'pressing', materially changing the "thin" spirits that constitute their devotion.

Crucially, this follows two stanzas in which the speaker's titular 'praise' is expressed in tears. In a brief allegorical sequence, the speaker "did weep to heav'n", where they find a half-filled bottle; God, having "slipt a drop/ From thy right eye", fills the bottle to the point of overflow. This scene is intriguing: the allegorical sense of the narrative distances it from its intimate subject, the shedding of a tear in prayer; yet Herbert domesticates the heavenly events by comparing the tear-bottle to a church poor-box, and God's tear to streamers hanging from a church tower. Immediately following this, the final stanza's image of the "press'd" heart "runn[ing] thin" metaphysically synchronises the two meaningful fluids, spirit and tears. The speaker's prayer points up the literal coincidence of the embodied and the ethereal in the 'spiritual' act of prayer, but also, in making tears carry meaning, like the cordial 'spirits', both figuratively and literally, Herbert allows some ambiguity in how the prayer, the titular 'praise' the poem undertakes, is actually effected.

If 'Praise (III)' sees prayer as a substance physically embodied in the speaker's tears and cordial spirits, elsewhere the act is imagined as much more materially vocal. In 'Gratefulnesse', in

which the speaker demands, with ironic forcefulness, "a greatfull heart", this is expressed in terms that emphasise the audibility of these demands: "Perpetual knockings at thy doore"; "all our noise"; "a sigh and grone" (*EP* 435-36). The noisiness of these prayers is the thrust of the speaker's argument: it is a mark of man's rustic simplicity that his humble "country-aires" of "perpetual knockings" and "tears sullying thy transparent rooms" are welcomed by God as if they were the heavenly "much better tunes", and a mark of God's beneficence that he "[did] allow us all our noise", and even "made a sigh and grone/ [his] joys". The poem seems to try to erase itself, promising God "quiet" if the speaker receives their sought-after 'grateful heart'. There is a level of self-consciousness here: the speaker describes prayers as "countrey-aires" in comparison to the "much better tunes" of heavenly music, in a poem that corresponds formally to the plain metrical style of the 'country air'. Coburn Freer highlights the irony here, as the speaker attempts to work on God "by art" while also self-deprecatingly working towards the elimination of this very 'art'.[19]

The speaker's prayer, and the poem itself, are fired by a twin sense of self-consciousness and self-repudiation, which resonates with the early modern conception of prayer more broadly. The speaker of 'Gratefulnesse', voicing a prayer that takes the form of a poem, speaks in the third person, and describes the prayer as effected, not in the first person, or even by the third-person subject of the poem, but by "our hearts and hands". This line, in which the speaker recalls a time when "at first/ Thy word our hearts and hands did crave", is significantly ambiguous as to which of "thy word" and "our hearts and hands" is subject or object: does God's word crave our human "hearts and hands", which presumably represent attentive prayer and worship, or do we crave God's word? This uncertainty as to the specific situation and direction of the prayer reflects a sense of uncertainty and subjective dislocation which, we shall see, was central to the seventeenth-century English understanding of prayer.

[19] Coburn Freer, *Music for a King: George Herbert's style and the metrical Psalms* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 142.

"Gods breath in man returning to his birth": Performance of prayer and poetic self-consciousness

Herbert's verse continually equivocates about whether it strives for a kind of heavenly articulacy, the perfect poetic representation of the speaker's spiritual experience, or a spiritual experience that itself transcends the earthly limitations of the poetic form: for the "sighs and grones" that are God's "joyes", or for a 'pulse' of divine 'praise'. This resonates powerfully with the prevailing concern in the seventeenth-century English Church that the outward performance of prayer, if undertaken, should accord properly with the subject's internal experience.

Even for those who agree that prayer should be performed vocally, the perils of mis-performed prayer loom large on all sides. In Lancelot Andrewes' *Institutiones Piae*, he argues that

> *God* heareth not… cold, faint, and drowzie *prayers*, nor loud crying, long babling, or many tautologies or repetitions… which proceede onely from the lips: but it is the *affection*, and zealous desires of the deuout, mixed with *sighes, teares, and grones, not to be vttered*, which mooue, and preuaile with him.[20]

The scope for praying incorrectly here is wide: to avoid being "cold, faint, and drowzie", and to use one's "*affection*, and zealous desires" in "*sighes, teares and grones*", without transgressing into "loud crying, long babling, or many tautologies or repetitions", must be a careful balancing act.

Andrewes' castigation of prayer that "proceede[s] onely from the lips" is meaningful. The *OED* notes a range of such constructions as 'lip service' (its first recorded use in 1590), 'lip-holiness' (1591), 'lip-religion' (1597), 'lip-devotion' (1613) and 'lip-holy' (1624) that emerge into use in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, indicating a superficial worship or devotion that does not translate to inner godliness.[21] The emergence of these terms at this time suggests the deep anxiety about the potential for devotion to fail to engage the spirit, and reside 'only' in the lips. These terms just as often seem to denote an active deception as well as an unintended failure: in a sermon preached in 1613, the minister of Modbury in Devon and popular devotional writer Samuel Hieron warns his hearers that "there is no grace which accompanieth saluation… but [Satan] can frame some one or other of his limmes to a shadow of it… There may be somewhat like praier, which yet is not praier,

[20] Lancelot Andrewes, *Institutiones Piae or directions to pray* (London, 1630), pp. 17-18.
[21] 'lip, n.' *OED Online* (2018).

but lip-deuotion"; similarly, Robert Greene, in a 1591 poem dedicated to the memory of the courtier Sir Christopher Hatton, describes how "Deuout without dissembling… Lip-holines in Cleargie men he could not brooke".[22] The anxiety of vocal performance is directed both inward, towards the believer themselves, and outwards, against others who may be dissembling, leading them into false religion or performing a meaningless show of empty devotion.

Devotion, then, does not pertain merely to the individual performer, but to those with whom they share a religious community. Individual performance of prayer can have effect on those around them: Andrewes quotes a patristic source that points to Hannah's silent prayer (1 Samuel 13) as an explicit model for others: "*Let euery one heare this, and imitate it*".[23] The believer must be constantly aware that their private devotions are the subject of scrutiny not just by themselves, for the purpose of the standard anxious Protestant self-scrutiny, but also by others. The praying Protestant thus experiences a kind of displaced subjectivity: their thoughts simultaneously constrained by the humbling awareness of their own sinfulness and frail human nature and yet projecting upwards to heaven; and at the same time both conscientiously devoted whole-heartedly to the prayer itself, yet also scrutinising their own prayer as an external viewer, connected to the others who might judge their prayer from the outside.

This displaced subjectivity finds resonance also in the simultaneously physically embodied and immaterial action of prayer as conceived in its 'spiritual physiology', the invisible and 'spiritual' motions of the heart moving outward into the world through its physical, 'airy' vocal expression. Once out in the world, these prayers might, in the words of John Norden's popular devotional handbook *A Load-Starr to Spiritual Life*, pass "from the mouth into the Ayre, and [vanish] with the sound", or they might be effective "without vttering any sound", since God, "seeing and searching the heart", already knows "what we inwardly desire, and seeth wherof we haue need".[24] It is constantly

[22] Samuel Hieron, *The baptizing of the Eunuch: In three Sermons vpon Act. 8. 36. 37. 38.* (London, 1613), 24. Robert Greene, *A Maidens Dreame vpon the Death of the Right Honourable Sir Christopher Hatton Knight, late Lord Chancelor of England* (London, 1591), sig. C^{r}.
[23] Andrewes, *Institutiones Piae*, p. 17.
[24] John Norden, *A load-starr to spiritual life* (London, 1614), p. 10.

uncertain *where* exactly a prayer may be located as being effective: whether within the heart of the praying subject, or as being 'expressed' and 'delivered' to God in heaven.

The subjective and physical dislocation that characterise the experience of prayer for the early modern believer is also deeply fruitful for Herbert in *The Temple*: his representation of prayer provides a productive vehicle for his self-conscious concern with his own poetics. The anxieties that plague the praying subject – the self-scrutiny, the sense of the ineffectiveness of one's words and actions, the concern that one's physical actions might not translate to spiritual effect – coheres with Herbert's own anxieties surrounding his poetics, that the aesthetic beauty and rhetorical fluency of his poetry fails to express his spiritual fervour. The anxious embodiment of prayer in its vocalisation proves particularly fruitful: by representing the praying voice – the ephemeral, invisible, 'living' embodiment of prayer – on *The Temple*'s printed page, in terms that hover within the poems between the literal and the metaphorical, Herbert provokes the reader to consider how the prayer may be 'translated' into poetic form, but also how the poetry itself functions more broadly in its attempt to similarly 'translate' the apparently ineffable experience of devotion into polished verse.

'Longing' seems in its opening stanzas to mimic the 'living voice' of the praying subject, full of exclamations and injunctions aimed at God, whom the speaker pleads to have pity on his spiritual turmoil:

> Look on my sorrows round!
> Mark well my furnace! O what flames,
> What hearts abound!
> What griefs, what shames"
> Consider, Lord; Lord, bow thine eare,
> And heare! (*EP* 513-15)

The effect of the repeated exclamations – "Bowels of pitie, heare!... Bow down thine eare!"; "O be not now/ More dead to me!"; "My love, my sweetnesse, heare!" – and questioning, both rhetorical and direct, of God – "Wilt thou deferre/ To succour me?"; "Is all lockt? hath a sinners plea/ No key?"; "Lord, didst thou leave thy throne,/ Not to relieve? how can it be,/ That thou art grown/ Thus hard to me?" – replicate the dramatic exclamations of its speaker's anguished soul. On one level, the poem is deeply formulaic, consisting of fourteen stanzas in a consistent form; but the line lengths within the

stanzas are irregular, varying between two and four feet, as if to replicate the uncertain, decidedly non-formulaic development and expression of the speaker's prayer.

The speaker's anguish here is the essential stuff of prayer, man's sinful nature providing an ever-replenished source when the heart is proving dull.[25] Nor was this 'sorrow' conceived as suffering to be relieved, but as a precondition for proper prayer: unpleasant as it was, experiencing sorrow signalled that the subject was aware of the weight and intolerability of their sins, and therefore that their soul was open to receiving grace. Henry Scudder, in his popular handbook *The Christians daily walke in securitie and peace*, advises his reader to "Labour… that your heart may bleed with godly sorrow for sin, cry out as David did against his sinne…", and to see such "godly sorrow" as the mark of true faith: "Doe you feele your hearts ake with sorrow for sinne?... Then certainly you have Faith, you have an effectuall Faith. For what are these but the very Pulse, breath, and motions of faith?"[26]

Yet the sorrow expressed in 'Longing' is not this 'godly' one. Herbert's speaker is not concerned with the weight of his own sinfulness, but shaken with the sense that God is absent from him. Scudder's emotion is copious, even overwhelming: the subject is "loaden and burthened with sinne"; the heart "ake[s] with sorrow". By contrast, 'Longing' voices a sense of frailty and emptiness: the speaker is "sick and famisht… With doubling knees and weary bones", their "heart is wither'd". They even express a momentary "longing" that "Were sinne alive, good cause there were/ To bear": even the 'living' feeling of self-repudiating sorrow for sin is preferable to the apparent purposelessness of the speaker's unheard prayers. For all that 'Longing' vividly evokes the active, living voice of the praying subject, then, the poem does not so much represent the prayer-act itself as an emphatically distinct emotional experience. The speaker's pleas to God increasingly seek only the efficacy of the prayer itself, rather than a specific petition, as in 'Gratefulnesse' for a 'greatful heart': "Lord Jesu… be not now/ More dead to me!"; "how can it be,/ That thou art grown/ Thus hard to me?"; "My love, my sweetnesse, heare!".

[25] Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), esp. Ch. 1.
[26] Henry Scudder, *The Christians daily walke in securitie and peace* (London, 1631), p. 498, pp. 624-25.

As the poem progresses, and the desperation of God's unresponsiveness to the speaker's prayers becomes more pronounced, the emphasis on the embodied and vocalised performance of the prayer increases – most potently in the final stanzas:

> My love, my sweetnesse, heare!
> By these thy feet, at which my heart
> Lies all the yeare,
> Pluck out thy dart,
> And heal my troubled breast which cryes,
> Which dyes.

The final stanza here offers the poem's most physically embodied description of the prayer act, as the speaker prostrates themselves at God's feet – though even this depiction is heavily metaphorical, invoking a "dart" of pain in the speaker's "troubled breast" to be "plucked out". To this we may compare the strikingly physical terms in which the speaker's suffering is described in the poem's opening stanzas: the "hoarse" throat, "doubling" knees, "weary" bones and "sick and famisht" eyes. These earlier lines resonate with the Psalmist's frequent lamentations of his physically-experienced spiritual suffering:

> Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee…incline thy ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily. For… and my bones are burned as a hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass… By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin (Psalm 102:1-5).

The poem's opening stanzas see the speaker adopting the familiar pose of the lamenting psalmist; by the end of the poem this sense of scriptural familiarity is displaced by a pose that is at once bodily familiar yet rendered unsettlingly metaphorical.

Nevertheless this image is relatively straightforward when compared to the metaphysical complexity of that in the preceding stanza, in which the speaker describes how his heart "hath been broken now so long,/ That ev'ry part/ Hath got a tongue!" These lines' bodily physicality in referring not to 'speech' but to a 'tongue', and not to the speaker's 'soul' but to their 'heart', lends a certain inescapable strangeness to the resulting image of a broken heart full of tongues. Yet at the same time this image would be at least comprehensible to readers familiar with the emblem tradition: George Wither's 1635 *Emblemes Ancient and Moderne,* for instance, includes emblems depicting a winged tongue (to illustrate "No *Hearte* can think, to what strange ends,/ The *Tongues* unruely *Motion* tends")

and an eyeball peering out from within a heart ("The *Minde* should have a fixed Eye/ On Objects, that are plac'd on high").[27] Herbert's lines would seem to participate in this tradition, and in this sense the reader brings a certain expectation to them: that they, like an emblem, should lead to a neat and devotionally useful lesson. 'Longing', however, does not offer such resolution; what the speaker expresses is not wisdom but desperation, and the return of the exclamations that filled the poem's opening stanzas – "My love, my sweetnesse, heare!" – again emphasizes the presence of the speaker's 'living voice,' fallible and human, in the poem, rather than a divine (or even poetic) wisdom.

Figure 1: George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne* (London, 1635), pp. 42-43. Hunt. 79919.

Alicia Ostriker, setting out to distinguish between Herbert's 'speech' poems and his 'songs' – those whose metrical patterns naturalistically reflect the cadences of conversation, and those whose metre matches the sense of the verse – notes a roughly equal distribution between those where stanza form and syntactic content reflect the harmonic 'song' mode, those that are more discordant, suggesting 'speech', and those where the two effects are balanced against one another.[28] 'Longing' seems to fit best as a 'speech'-poem, its irregular and unusual stanza form and the frequent enjambment and caesura interrupting the process of thoughts on the page reflecting the thoughts

[27] George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne* (London, 1635), pp. 42-43; see Figure 1.
[28] Alicia Ostriker, 'Song and Speech in the Metrics of George Herbert,' *PMLA* 86.1 (1965), pp. 62-68.

narrated. The repeated exclamations and questions throughout the poem further animate the speaker's 'living voice'.

Yet at the same time, this is subdued by Herbert's deployment of effects that accentuate a sense of the poem as a constructed poetic artefact: the use of overtly emblematic images; direct quotation from the Psalms ("*Shall he that made the eare,/ Not heare?*", Psalms 94:9); the use of a commonplace image of the world as a book, "Where all things have their leafe assign'd".[29] 'Longing' seems to exist at the confluence of two distinct entities: the vocal, artless, 'living' prayer performed by the speaker; and the textual poetic artefact that Herbert composes. Neither phenomenon is dominant by the poem's conclusion; as we have seen in the case of 'Gratefulnesse', even in a more direct rehearsal of the prayer act, the speaker is consistently alienated from their own prayer by their human fallibility. In 'Longing' the prayer act necessitates a level of self-alienation, and committing it to textual representation amplifies this problem.

Norden warns of prayer made "vnprofitable… by proceeding from an vnbeleeuing, vnfeeling, or vnreformed heart, or proceeding onely from the lippes, passing from the mouth into the Ayre, and vanishing with the sounds".[30] The minute detail with which the physical process of prayer is described here recalls Helkiah Crooke's account of the physiology of speech – fittingly, since Norden depicts failed prayer as fundamentally a failure of the heart's physical function. Successful prayer must involve more than physical matter: its failure is defined by its reduction to physical materiality ("vanishing with the sounds"). A failing heart, to Norden, is an "vnreformed" one; the participle reveals that proper performance of prayer is not merely a question of the heart's form being correct, but of it being 're-formed', undergoing a process of re-shaping by faith.

'Form', is, of course, a provocatively slippery term: it is something more than outward matter, but not simply immaterial either. It has physiological weight too: Crooke opens his discussion of the senses by explaining that "in euery Sense there is a Matter and a Forme. The Forme is the Faculty

[29] cf. e.g. Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (Oxford: OUP, 1964), p. 15: the world is *"that universall and publik Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all"* written by God's "servant Nature".
[30] Norden, *Load-starr*, p. 8.

which is a thing yssuing from the Soule and differing in Name not in Nature as it informeth this or that Matter which is the Instrument."[31] Crooke, like Perrott and Norden, grapples with how the outward, material conditions of the world affect or 'inform' the inward conditions of the body and spirit, positing a "forme" that "differ[s] in Name not in Nature" according to the material "instruments" it works with (that is, the sense organs). Crooke's 'form' is an attribute of external things different from "Matter", to which the body and mind respond via the senses. In this context, the heart's 're-formation' by faith is not a solely spiritual matter; faith, like the external material world, is something to which the body and soul respond, via the heart.

As Ben Burton has shown, discussions of 'form' in poetry are inextricable from the anxieties surrounding 'formalism' in religion, understood as an excessive, indeed exclusive, belief in outward performance without internal faith: "problems of ritual are also problems of poetics, involving questions about performance and sincerity that inspired and challenged authors through this period."[32] Sidney sees the poet's power as "making… forms such as never were in Nature"; the tragedy, he asserts, can correct the tyrant's evil by presenting him, in tragedy, with "the form of goodness", working on him "as if they took a medicine of cherries".[33] Poetic 'forms' sit outside nature, 'bodying forth' the imagination of the poet, but they also work irresistibly on the physical constitution of their reader. The 'form' of prayer similarly negotiates between internal spirit and external matter; the problem of 'set forms' dominate sixteenth- and seventeenth-century discussions of the practice of prayer. In his defence of these, Hooker points to the Lord's Prayer, which God "left us of his own framing, one which might… serve as a pattern whereby to frame all other prayers".[34] The language of 'framing' suggests a material as well as verbal significance: the material, spiritual, vocal, textual and bodily 'forms' of prayer cannot be distinct.[35] Anxieties about the 'form' of prayer, necessarily

[31] Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia,* p. 530.
[32] Ben Burton, 'Forms of Worship', in *The Work of Form*, ed. by Ben Burton and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, pp. 56-72, p. 61.
[33] Sidney, *Apology*, pp. 85, 96.
[34] Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed. by Arthur Stephen McGrade (Oxford: OUP, 2013), vol. 2, p. 78.
[35] cf. Helen Wilcox, 'Early Modern Sacred Space: Writing *The Temple*', in *Sacred Text, Sacred Space: Architectural, spiritual and literary convergences in England and Wales*, ed. by Joseph Sterrett and Peter Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 141-62, p. 155.

comprehending all these senses of the term, moreover, pertain equally to the 'form' of devotional poetry, and this resonance is particularly powerful in Herbert's approach to prayer in *The Temple*.

This collision of prayer and poetry, and the overwhelming significance of 'form' to both, receive their most delicate – though least straightforwardly prayer-like – treatment in 'Prayer (I)', a sonnet consisting of an accumulation of epithets for prayer itself: "Prayer the Churches banquet, Angels age,/ Gods breath in man returning to his birth…" (*EP* 178). The poem is not itself a prayer. Rather, the systrophic massing of metaphors, each extending no longer than a line, within the strict sonnet form, locates it within a tradition of 'epithet-sonnets', practised by the likes of Sir Philip Sidney and Robert Southwell – possibly used by Herbert here in a poetically self-conscious parody of secular love poetry.[36] Expressing the 'meaning' of 'prayer' through such an apparently familiar form, then, should serve in some way to domesticate the sheer enormity and magnificence of some of the imagery used: "The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth"; "Reversed thunder"; "the milkie way". Such imagery consistently represents prayer as containing the divine within an earthly frame – "the soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage", "Heaven in ordinarie" – or, alternatively, as the domestic and familiar extended to the level of the universal – "Church-bels beyond the starres heard".

If 'prayer' allows humanity to communicate with God, and renders God comprehensible to humans, this is never articulated within the poem. Even the opening line eschews formal syntax: not "Prayer [*is*] the Churches banquet", but "Prayer the Churches banquet". In a poem that sets itself out as *about* 'Prayer', prayer can only be glanced at obliquely, figuratively, without the stability of a clear narrative or strictly-defined conceit. The final definition offered for prayer is its most indefinite: "something understood". Just who is understanding what, is left unexpressed. 'Prayer (I)' does not rehearse or narrate the prayer-act, but represents, through overtly poetic means, the destabilisation of the subject, their spatial and temporal alienation from themselves, that was conceptually crucial to the act of prayer both as represented in *The Temple* and as practised daily by the early modern believer.

[36] Virginia R. Mollenkott, 'George Herbert's Epithet-Sonnets,' *Genre* 5 (1972), pp. 131-37, pp. 133-34.

"Heaven in ordinarie": The efficacy of the voice in public prayer

One effect of the lack of firm subjective stance in 'Prayer (I)' is that it is never made explicit what kind of prayer is being invoked. Some of the epithets suggest private prayer – like the corporeal intimacy of "God's breath in man returning to his birth" – while others are awesomely universal: "A kinde of tune, which all things heare and fear". Others mediate between these extremes by invoking communal, liturgical prayer: "The soul in paraphrase" connotes scriptural 'paraphrasing', familiar to contemporary readers in Erasmus' biblical paraphrases, copies of which were required to be accessible in every English parish church through Elizabeth's reign; "The six-daies world transposing in an houre" plays on the liturgical week; "Heaven in ordinarie" refers to the 'ordinary' order of worship in the Book of Common Prayer. The 'prayer' Herbert wonders at is at once public and private, rooted in specifics of the experience of each form of prayer.

Treatments of public and private prayer in early modern England by modern scholars have tended to view them as fundamentally distinct entities. Discussions of the Book of Common Prayer in particular have tended to focus either on its use to wield political control or to express particular political intention, or on its influence on early modern religious and literary culture.[37] More recently the Prayer Book's extensive influence on literary culture as well as religious practice and church politics has been noted. Study of the Book of Common Prayer has shown how liturgy shapes the internal spiritual and cognitive experience of individual worshippers.[38] Repeated daily or weekly,

[37] Geoffrey Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1982), Ch. 7, and Diarmuid Macculloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (London: YUP, 1996), Chs 9-11, discuss the piecemeal development of the Book of Common Prayer over the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the result of high-level theological and political debate and compromise. Judith Maltby emphasises the Prayer Book's importance as a tool of 'persuasion' that was nevertheless enthusiastically supported and followed by English Protestants through the early seventeenth century, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), p. 4 and *passim*.

[38] Sophie Read notes Cranmer's skill in "linguistic salvage" – "borrowing the communal, authoritative (but not authored) voice that came with those forms, but investing them with new meanings", *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination*, p. 21; Timothy Rosendale traces the influence of the Prayer Book's redefinition of the terms and importance of figurative signification in the development of a post-Reformation English poetics, *Liturgy and Literature*, p. 5; Ramie Targoff explores liturgy's effects on devotional poetics, shaping individual worshippers' internal world through collective worship, *Common Prayer*, Ch. 3; Daniel Gibbons argues that the Prayer Book allowed worshippers to define religious community through its language of "accommodation and exclusion", analogous to devotional poets' "accommodation and exclusion" of diverse religious beliefs among its readers, *Conflicts of Devotion*, pp. 32-46, 215-30.

Prayer-Book orders provide a framework for worshippers' lives. Its words and forms are ingrained in their minds and spirits, and with no officially sanctioned alternative, they circumscribe the worshipper's spiritual world, defining the experiences one can conceive and the terms in which these experiences can be expressed. Such an imaginatively, cognitively and devotionally formative function was explicitly advocated by supporters of the Book of Common Prayer – as we have seen in Hooker's vision of set forms as "a pattern whereby to frame all other prayers".

For early modern thinkers, the function of vocally performed public prayer, while being subject to the same forensic scrutiny as private prayer, is of a fundamentally different character. William Gouge, a godly minister described by his own son as an 'arch-Puritan', expresses a typical suspicion of vocal prayer in advising that prayers should be "sent forth… with extension not of voice, but of Spirit", since unlike earthly sounds, only "the ardencie of spirit can pierce to the Throne of Grace".[39] Yet when he turns to collective prayer, Gouge detects real efficacy in outward, specifically audible expression of prayer:

> There is mention made of a celestiall sound, which *was as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Hallelu-iah.* If full assemblies in our Churches did all of them audibly after a prayer say *Amen*… it would be such a sound as there is mentioned, a heauenly sound: A sound well beseeming a Church. No Echo like to the Echo which maketh the wals of a Church to ring with *Amen*. Such a sound would quicken a Ministers spirits, and put a kinde of heauenly life into the people themselues.[40]

According to Gouge, the collective 'Amen' is effective because "that which is said and vttered, is manifested", and hence "The phrase of *saying Amen*… doth import a manifestation of assent". The congregation's vocal performance of the 'Amen', that is to say, materialises the speakers' abstract belief. The spoken 'Amen' does the same job as the "extension of Spirit" Gouge advocates in private prayer: forming a spiritually and materially embodied connection between the praying subject and God, "a heauenly sound" within the church walls.

[39] Thomas Gouge, 'The life and death of Dr. Gouge who dyed *anno Christi* 1653', in *A collection of the lives of ten eminent divines*, ed. by Samuel Clark (London, 1662), pp. 95–125, 99; William Gouge, *A guide to goe to God: or, An explanation of the perfect patterne of prayer, the Lords prayer* (London, 1626), p. 27.
[40] Gouge, *Guide*, p. 335.

Gouge's view of the power of collective prayer, as celestial, "a heavenly sound", likened to John's Revelation, but at the same time local, knowable and material, making church walls ring with its echo, resonates with Herbert's depiction of prayer in 'Prayer (I)'. In that poem, Herbert elides possible differences between different forms of prayer, and between prayer's material form and spiritual function, using language at once materially familiar – books and bells, thunder and birds – yet dematerialised in its metaphoricity. Herbert uses a consciously 'poetic' form, the artfully composed sonnet of tantalisingly accumulated images, to make the prayer's textuality prominent; this is crucial to Herbert's vision of prayer, manifesting both the material form and devotional activity of the poem and the prayer it depicts.

For Gouge, the collective 'Amen' has power as the material manifestation of communal assent to the prayer – of the collective identity of the Church. For Herbert, however, collective prayer, and specifically the Book of Common Prayer, is powerful as it provides a textual model and means of expression for his poetry. If the Prayer Book provides a 'form' for Herbert's verse, it is not in the sense of mere allusion or aesthetics, but in the simultaneous spiritual and material significance with which we have seen Crooke and Norden invest it. Since both *The Temple*, with its title-page invitation of diverse devotional voices, and the Book of Common Prayer in its encoding of collective worship, seek to represent and invoke vocal, embodied devotion, their material, textual form is invested with real, albeit difficult, spiritual significance.

"Something understood": Vocal prayer in material texts

As Ramie Targoff has argued, the Book of Common Prayer represents an important context for *The Temple*, providing a model for composition for Herbert and a method of reading for his audience.[41] Herbert's engagement with the forms of public prayer is consistently slippery. He does not shy away from titles that locate their poems within liturgical settings – services ('Mattens',

[41] Targoff, *Common Prayer*, Ch. 4.

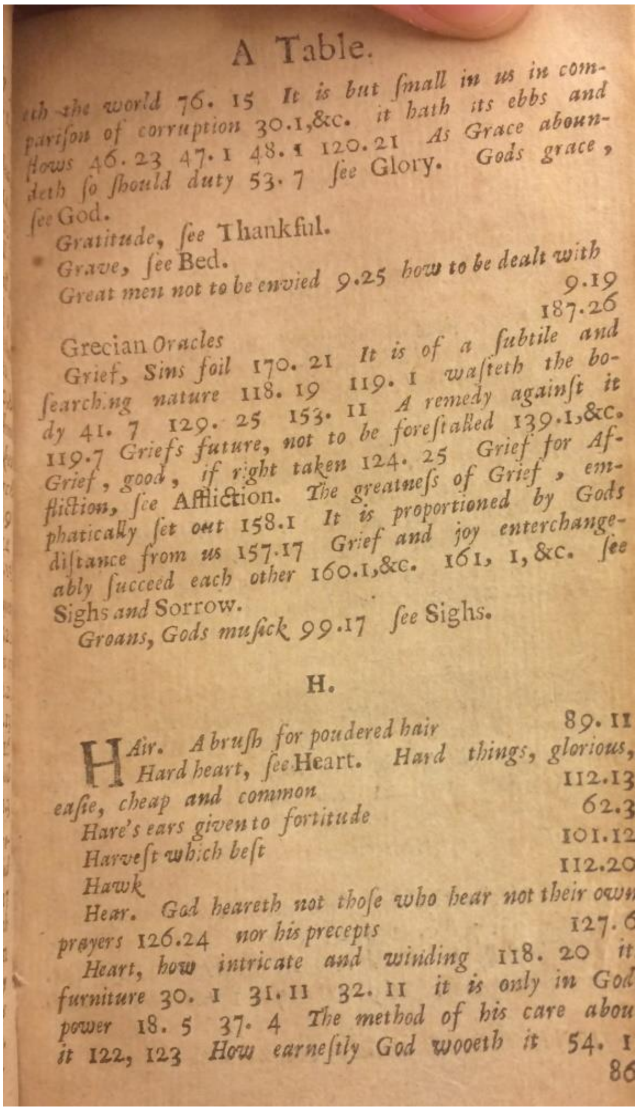
'Evensong', 'Sunday'); sacraments (the 'H. Baptisme' and 'H. Communion' poems); feast days ('Christmas', 'Lent', 'Easter', 'Good Friday', 'Whitsunday', 'Trinity Sunday'); and references to liturgical music ('Antiphon', 'Church-musick', 'A True Hymne') – with the effect that reading *The Temple* seems intermittently to present an alternative Prayer Book, offering occasional verse for the reader's use at any given moment of the liturgical day, week or year.

In likening itself formally to the Book of Common Prayer, *The Temple* foregrounds practical use by its readers; as Maltby reminds us, the Prayer Book is "intended not so much to be read in a passive sense, but to be used, performed, experienced".[42] Around half a million Prayer Books were circulating by the mid-seventeenth century, undoubtedly one of the most widely printed and owned texts of the period alongside (literally – often bound with) the Bible.[43] It was available in a remarkable range of forms: enormous folios for consultation in the parish church; quartos bound with Bibles for daily domestic use; tiny duodecimos and sextodecimos, likely not for use in public services but for private perusal.

The ubiquity of the Book of Common Prayer goes hand in hand with its manifold material and devotional uses; William Sherman's discussion of the signs of use in surviving sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Prayer Books but scratches the surface of the diverse ways believers interacted with their Prayer Books.[44] Though Sherman concerns himself with an "odd volume", the 'normal exception', to use Edoardo Grendi's term, we must remember that even the most conventional experience of Prayer-Book worship involved a variety of verbal manifestations – vocal, textual and scriptural.[45] Attending a weekly service would involve hearing scripture being read and interpreted by

[42] Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, p. 3.
[43] Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 182-83.
[44] William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2008), Ch. 5.
[45] Edoardo Grendi, 'Microanalisi e storia sociale', *Quaderni storici* 35 (1977), pp. 506–20, p. 512.

the preacher, while possibly taking notes on the sermon, and prayers being read or recited. The Prayer Book is experienced textually, vocally and mentally, all proving a manifestation of its spiritual effect.



A Table.

ith the world 76. 15 It is but ſmall in us in com-
pariſon of corruption 30.1,&c. it hath its ebbs and
flows 46. 23 47. 1 48. 1 120. 21 As Grace aboun-
deth ſo ſhould duty 53. 7 ſee Glory. Gods grace,
ſee God.
Gratitude, ſee Thankful.
Grave, ſee Bed.
Great men not to be envied 9.25 how to be dealt with 9.19
187.26
Grecian Oracles
Grief, Sins foil 170. 21 It is of a ſubtile and
ſearching nature 118. 19 119. 1 waſteth the bo-
dy 41. 7 129. 25 153. 11 A remedy againſt it
119.7 Griefs future, not to be foreſtalled 139.1,&c.
Grief, good, if right taken 124. 25 Grief for Af-
fliction, ſee Affliction. The greatneſs of Grief, em-
phatically ſet out 158.1 It is proportioned by Gods
diſtance from us 157.17 Grief and joy enterchange-
ably ſucceed each other 160.1,&c. 161, 1, &c. ſee
Sighs and Sorrow.
Groans, Gods muſick 99.17 ſee Sighs.

H.

Hair. A bruſh for poudered hair 89. 11
Hard heart, ſee Heart. Hard things, glorious,
eaſie, cheap and common 112.13
Hare's ears given to fortitude 62.3
Harveſt which beſt 101.12
Hawk 112.20
Hear. God heareth not thoſe who hear not their own
prayers 126.24 nor his precepts 127.6
Heart, how intricate and winding 118. 20 it
furniture 30. 1 31. 11 32. 11 it is only in God
power 18. 5 37. 4 The method of his care abou
it 122, 123 How earneſtly God wooeth it 54. 1
86

Figure 2: from 'A Table' appended to *The Temple*, 9th edn. (London, 1667), Hunt. 470127. sig. I^r.

The Temple likewise invites various mutually reinforcing material and devotional uses. It has long been noted that *The Temple*'s duodecimo format marks it out for devotional use by its material similarity rather to the smaller, more personal Prayer Book formats than larger secular poetic volumes.[46] Certainly, the portability of a smaller volume allows a more intimate relationship of reader and text: an early *Temple*, generally less than six inches tall, might easily be taken into one's chamber for solitary devotion or out with its owner in case they felt an urge to pray. The table included at the end the volume from the seventh edition of 1656, an index which leads readers poems by the subject matter they look up – among them (to take examples from the first page) "Aaron's garments", "Abuse of things", "Affliction" and "Alms" – suggests that *The Temple*'s poems are indeed used by its readers on an occasional basis, for reference, rather than read once, straight through (see Figure 2).

[46] T. A. Birrell, 'The Influence of Seventeenth-Century Publishers on the Presentation of English Literature', in *Historical and Editorial Studies in Early Modern English*, ed. by Mary-Jo Arn and Hanneke Wirtjes (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), pp. 163-74, pp. 163-66.

This cursory view of *The Temple*'s material form suggests the occasional and fragmentary use to which it invites its readers. This itinerant and momentary usage resonates with the material use encoded in the Book of Common Prayer itself, in which sections are read according to the time of day, week and year, and following a service would involve moving back and forth through different sections for prayers, readings and psalms. Moreover, the Prayer Book, like a play-text, is not simply a written artefact, but a prompt for action and performance, embodied and vocalised, existing beyond itself, in the rites, rituals and ceremonies of Prayer-Book worship and the vocal recitation of its prayers, psalms and responses. Speech and rubric are marked out in various ways – for instance, many imprints represent speech, by the minister, clerk or congregation, in black letter, with rubrics and titles in roman font.[47] Like play-texts, liturgies were grappling with the problem of how to represent embodied speech on the printed page. In a period when modern printing conventions of typeface, punctuation and so on were only starting to be standardised, typographical choices were useful tools for the challenge, and the Book of Common Prayer finds solutions that are tellingly dramatic in character: for instance, the pilcrow (¶), used to separate Collects and Bible readings, is also deployed in early printed plays to indicate a new character's speech.[48]

The use of pilcrows in poem headings in early editions of *The Temple* has often been taken as another sign of its material mimicry of, and its devotional debt to, the Book of Common Prayer.[49] Yet the particular role of the pilcrow in pointing out speech, and marking out different kinds of speech, is surely significant, rendering graphically – materially – prominent the different voices with which Herbert populates *The Temple*. Typography visually manifests *The Temple*'s polyphony across the volume. In 'A True Hymne', for instance, the speaker's initial frustrated attempt to pen an effective hymn ("*My joy, my life, my crown*"), their heart's troubled "sigh" ("*O, could I love!*") and God's ultimate helping words ("*Loved*") are all printed in italics (*EP* 576). Both voices are accommodated within the poem, which concerns itself primarily with the transition between the two, as the speaker

[47] e.g. Robert Barker's 1600 printing: *The Booke of Common Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments* (London, 1600), STC 16323.5, among others.
[48] Claire Bourne, 'Dramatic Pilcrows', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 108.4 (December 2014), pp. 413-52, pp. 415-17.
[49] Targoff, *Common Prayer*, p. 117.

attempts to compose the titular ‘true hymn’. There are marked similarities between how the speaker conceives of the function of such a ‘true hymn’, and how effective prayer is understood in contemporary devotional writing. The hymn’s “few words” should be praised, the speaker tells us, “if truly said”; these three words might stand for the various formulations we have seen in prayer guides, attesting to the importance of the specific words of prayer only if they be attended by “ardencie of spirit” and a “faithfull heart”, to cite William Gouge and John Norden respectively.

Indeed, it is the heart that confirms the effectiveness of the ‘True Hymne’: as Wilcox notes, the reference to a poem pleasing to “He who craves all the minde,/ And all the soul, and strength, and time” alludes to Christ’s injunction in Luke 10:27 that “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind”, replacing the “heart” with “time”: like Norden’s “vnprofitable” prayer from an “vnfeeling” heart, the speaker’s verse has replaced the ‘heart’ with the superficial exigencies of rhyme and metre, and thus sacrificed any hope of efficacy. The “somewhat” that is missing from the resulting verse – implicitly the “heart” – recalls, in the indeterminacy of its expression, the “something understood” in ‘Prayer (I)’; here, as there, the use of the indefinite pronoun suggests a quality of prayer, and here also of effective devotional verse, that is beyond explicit description.

For what is missing is not the heart itself, but something the heart can help to find: “if th’heart be moved”, the speaker tells us, “God doth supplie the want”. Again, what is missing is defined only as “the want”, an indeterminate lack; but it is the *movement* of the *heart* that rouses God to bring it to the verse. We have seen that ‘Longing’ collides the more discordant elements of style, repeated exclamations and questions that reflect the speaker’s spiritual torment, with elaborate metaphysical conceits and emblematic images, to represent the action of a mind in humanly imperfect prayer. By contrast, ‘A True Hymne’ critically appraises poetry’s attempt to praise God, at first aiming for a “finenesse… when the soul unto the line accords”, before conceding that even if “the verse be somewhat scant”, what is necessary is God’s support. Like prayer guides that eschew eloquent formulations or elaborate rituals for simple whole-hearted effort, what prompts God’s final

intervention is the heart's humble "sighing to be approved", as in Andrewes' injunction of meaningful 'sighs and groans'.

Despite the poem's interest in the specifics of poetic composition, the titular 'hymn' is imagined repeatedly as an oral phenomenon: in the opening stanza the heart is "mutt'ring up and down… *My joy, my life, my crown*"; the condition of its efficacy is that it be "truly said", and in the final stanza the 'sighing' heart "says… *O, could I love!*". The only mention of *writing* before the final line is the speaker's reported complaint of the difficulty to "write a hymne in kinde". Again, it accords with contemporary conceptions of prayer that, while the heart is constantly presented as entirely necessary to the function of the poem, so too is the voice, and the whole-hearted embodiment of the hymn. In the final line, significantly, God's resolving words are not spoken but written: "God writeth, *Loved*".

There is a contrast here between the oral language of the speaker's attempted poetic composition and God's writing, perhaps playing on the ineffectuality and momentariness of human compositions compared to the permanence of the divine word. Yet, significantly, both are represented by italic text: the distinction of God's word, set apart typographically from the rest of the poem, is undercut somewhat by the italicisation in the same line of the speaker's heart's frustrated exclamation, "*O, could I love!*" and, earlier, the 'failed' hymn, "*My joy, my life, my crown*". These three expressions, drawn together visually in their typography, unite the various incarnations – textual and vocal, human and divine, successful and failed – such that these expressions, however partial and ineffective the former two, however irreconcilable their differences, in fact meet in the middle, as God accommodates himself to man, communicating *beyond* the words of the poem, through the visual medium of the poem's typography.

The poem's titular 'hymn', then, is outside the scope of the poem itself, requiring that the reader conceive of the poem visually as well as verbally. Its typographical presentation reflects the perfection of the divine word, but also the meaningfulness of imperfect human expression. To this we may compare 'The Method' (*EP* 466-67). Like 'A True Hymne', it engages in the struggle for communication with God, expressed in terms familiar from contemporary prayer guides: the speaker

advises the addressee that God's refusal to hear their prayer stems from "some rub, some discontent,/ Which cools his will" like half-hearted attendance to prayer; like 'A True Hymne', God's interjection, "*Glad heart rejoice*", provides the solution, again printed in italics, marking out the words' efficacy visually.

But 'The Method' is more ambiguous: God's words are not, as in 'A True Hymne', strictly God's, but are put in his mouth by the speaker, attested in the future tense and so, as of the time of the poem's reading, not yet expressed. Moreover, italicisation is also used elsewhere in the poem, again to express a contrast with God's words, in recording the subject's failures and weaknesses written on their heart: "*Yesterday/ I did behave me carelesly,/ When I did pray*"; "*Late when I would have something done,/ I had a motion to forbear,/ Yet I went on*". Where, in 'A True Hymne', the italicised expressions share the channel of divine-human communication, be it understood as poetry, hymn, or prayer, in 'The Method', the human subject's failures and the divine reassurance seem opposed to one another, the shortcomings written on the fallible heart being the very qualities that prevent effectual prayer in the present tense, within the scope of the poem.

In this light, the speaker's solution to their failure, to simply redouble their efforts – "Then once more pray:/ Down with thy knees, up with thy voice" – underwhelms. Early modern Protestants knew well that the embodied prayer act, both bodily and vocal, may not accord with the spiritual engagement, and of itself could not guarantee the poem's sought-for resolution. Both these instructions, and that to "Seek pardon first", are, as the poem has shown, not things the fallible human subject can be relied upon to execute successfully. As such, the speaker's apparent confidence that "God will say,/ *Glad heart rejoice*" seems misplaced. This is not to say the poem *itself* fails: unlike 'A True Hymne', which found its apotheosis and its namesake confirmed in the final word, "*Loved*", 'The Method' offers only an imperfect, human 'method', to work towards effective prayer. As in 'A True Hymne', typography in 'The Method' draws together the various italicised statements along the same axis, not of effectual prayer, but of human striving towards it – including, in the second stanza, the speaker's cogitation on the logic of God's coldness to the subject ("Thy Father *could*… For he is *Power*: and sure he *would*/ For he is *Love*"). The variation in these statements represent the variety of

authoritative voices the human subject finds, and refuses to offer more comfort in the hope of God's intercession than in their own human shortcomings; such is the reality of human spiritual insight.

The relationship of writing and speaking to divinity and humanity in 'A True Hymne' – vocal performance reflecting the temporary and partial status of human words; writing, divine permanency and efficacy – is reversed in 'The Method'. Here, the subject's failures are *written* on their heart, having permanent detrimental effect; divine reassurance is only spoken. Yet in the final stanza, as the speaker recommends specifically vocal repentance ("up with thy voice"), God responds *vocally*. Once again, effective prayer entails God's response in kind. The representation is complex: though vocal performance connects the successful prayer and God's response, typographically God's words are connected rather with the failings of the human heart. It is just this complexity with which 'The Method' concerns itself, as Herbert attempts to untangle the knotty problem of the possibility of effective prayer by an imperfect speaker.

Through *The Temple*, Herbert speaks in a multitude of voices. The volume's title page promises that "every man doth speak": it becomes clear, as we read *The Temple* with a sensitivity to the intricacies of vocal performance and embodiment represented within it, that Herbert does not attempt to represent individual voices of "every man", or even the voice of a universal 'everyman' figure; rather, he grapples with the problem of *how* 'man', in all his weaknesses, his shortcomings, his physical limitations, can hope to 'speak' in any spiritually meaningful way. This is a problem of interest to contemporary clergy and lay writers across various genres, and the mass of written words *about* the pursuit of proper vocal and spiritual communication that abounded in the early decades of the seventeenth century too has its weight on how Herbert approaches the subject. Prayer conceptually inheres a subjective dislocation, which is reflected in the material ways both the Book of Common Prayer and *The Temple* invite readers to engage with them. Vocal and written words are bound up in one another, each able to be spiritually effective under different circumstances. In Herbert's poetry, as we might expect, the efficacy of human communication frequently becomes an avenue to consider the efficacy specifically of poetic communication, and vice versa. The vocally embodied word remains central even to the essentially textual experience of reading Herbert's poetry, the difficulty of

representing vocal perforamcne on the page reflecting the difficulty of effecting divine communication through a human body and soul, and its visual presentation and textual materiality remain inextricable from even a vocal performance of the poems.

In 'A True Hymne', Herbert presents a model for prayer and devotional poetry, in which the heart's speech ("*O, could I love!*") is fulfilled in God's inscription ("*Loved.*"). The material form of human and divine communication is spiritually functional; this spiritual engagement is denoted here by the speaker's heart:

> … if th'heart be moved,
> Although the verse be somewhat scant,
> God doth supplie the want.

Where the heart fits in this model of prayer and poetics – whether as symbolic representation of faith, or physical organ of life – is a complex and predictably controversial question, and the subject of the next chapter.

"My heart hath store, write there": Hearts and poetry in *The Temple*

In 'Mattens', Herbert's speaker twice asks of God, "what is a heart?" (*EP* 226). The speaker muses on whether it is "Silver, or gold, or precious stone,/ Or starre, or rainbow, or a part/ Of all these things, or all of them in one?", and why God should "it so eye, and wooe" and use on it "all thy art". The poem first imagines the heart as a raw material, then as a celestial body or natural phenomenon; the images move from raw and worldly materials to the celestial bodies and natural phenomena of the following line. The sheer variety of images invoked so densely in these lines suggests the imaginative scope of the heart, able to be figured in both the most worldly and the most celestial images.

But these questions are clearly not literal: neither Herbert himself nor his plaintive speaker, nor indeed his assumed reader, thinks that the heart is literally made of gold, stars or rainbows, nor are they asking an anatomical question of what the heart is made of. Rather, the clearly metaphorical questions represent the different ways that such a question could be framed. To answer the question, "What is a heart?" with "silver, or gold, or precious stone" is clearly metaphorical, effectively 'answering' that it is a precious raw material for man to work on. To answer 'stars' or 'rainbow', however, is more oblique: both stars and rainbows are elements of God's creation, evidence of his providence in the world, and signs by which he communicates with mankind – the Star of Bethlehem that led the Magi to Christ, and the rainbow of God's covenant with Noah (Matthew 2:9; Genesis 9:12-17). The movement between these lines, then, is not from literal to figurative meaning, but from the metaphorical to the scripturally referential. In the following lines, "… or a part/ Of all these things, or all of them in one?", these two 'kinds' of meaning are effectively collapsed into one another, any conclusions foregone and any distinctions we might draw erased in the speaker's apparent surrender of his abortive enquiry.

These lines perhaps inevitably fail to confidently answer the speaker's questions about the nature of the heart. It seems that the meaning of the lines lies rather in interrogating the nature of any such enquiry itself, than in examining the exact nature of the heart. More to the point, as the next

stanza reveals, is the fact that, whatever it *is*, the heart is the object of God's work, and the channel for his communication with mankind: "what is a heart," the speaker asks again,

> That thou shouldst it so eye, and wooe,
> Powring upon it all thy art,
> As if that thou hadst nothing els to do?

Answers are still not forthcoming: the poem will ultimately conclude only with a plea that God will "Teach me thy love to know", rather than a revelation of the nature of this love. This stanza's questions have a more anxious note, voicing the repentant sinner's worries that his soul is not worth God's love; the speaker's desire to understand the semiotics of the heart and its place in God's creation gives way to his anxiety about the weight of mankind's place in this creation, worried that man "studies [heaven and earth], not him by whom they be."

The movement of the poem is therefore one of self-repudiation, as the speaker rejects his own questioning in earlier stanzas in favour of a form of knowledge that represents a meeting of divine and human subjects in specific relation to one another: God will 'teach' man and provide a 'light' for him. The new focus is on "both the work and the workman". The reflexivity of this newly 'enlightened' subjectivity that the speaker looks to is the only way he is able to gain the understanding he seeks. The heart cannot know itself except through God, and cannot know God except through looking to itself.

'Mattens', then, offers a rattling tour through the frantic self-interrogation the speaker undertakes – as the title suggests – daily before they "can… ope [their] eyes". The abrupt shifts in scope and intention of the questions and prayers the speaker makes bespeak a soul that is fundamentally unsettled; crucially it does so in terms that resonate with the anxious self-scrutiny and enquiries into the nature of the world and the self that were being asked with increasing fervency in the early seventeenth century by theologians, philosophers and scientists alike. Advances in anatomy led to the displacement of previously dominant Aristotelian and Galenic ideas of human physiology in

general, and the heart in particular.[1] At the same time many characteristics of post-Reformation theology – the predestination of individual souls, the consequent need for constant self-scrutiny, the privileging of the Word in worship – all made the heart the object of anxious study, and the prompt – or means – for a fundamental reassessment of the place of the individual within society, within the world, and in relationship with God.

"Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know?": the cognitive heart

The speaker's question in 'Mattens' of what a heart 'is' is both urgent and insatiable, and one for which different – sometimes even contradictory – answers proliferated in the early seventeenth century. Physiologically, the heart might be seen as a physical 'pump' for spirits or life forces, a seat of emotions, and an organ of understanding. The heart is, both physiologically and conceptually, the 'frame' through which the spiritual 'life' of the early modern believer is to be understood.

In the modern imagination, we think with our brains and feel with our hearts. Our brains are organs of reason and intellect; our hearts, of emotion. This framework for the relation between the heart and the brain owes something to the Aristotelian tripartite division of the soul based on the three faculties of nutrition, sensation and intellect.[2] Renaissance physiologies build on this, describing the three 'seats' of cognitive function: as Robert Burton tells us in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*,

> Of these *Spirits* there be three kindes, according to the three principall parts, *Braine, Heart, Liver; Naturall, Vitall, Animall.* The *Naturall* are begotten in the *Liuer,* and thence dispersed through the Veines, to performe those naturall actions. The *Vitall Spirits* are made in the Heart of the *Naturall,* which by the Arteries, are transported to all the other parts… The *Animall Spirits* are formed of the *Vitall,* brought vp to the Braine, and diffused by the Nerues, to the other Members, giue sence and motion to them all.[3]

Though the three 'souls' – vegetative, animal and rational – speak to essentially different functions, they were understood as fundamentally interrelated, both physically and metaphysically. The different

[1] cf. Harold Cook, 'Medicine', in *The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 3: Early Modern Science*, ed. by Katharine Park and Lorraine Datson (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp. 407-34; Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the human body in Renaissance culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), pp. 39-43.
[2] Roland Polansky, *Aristotle's De Anima* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp. 188-94.
[3] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), p. 22.

'spirits' – natural, vital and animal – are substantially the same, but differentiated by their movement through the body and their successive refinement in each seat. As we have seen, these 'spirits' that both materially constituted the human body and actively performed its functions, are effectively indistinguishable from the immaterial 'spirits' of the eternal soul, and so bridge the gap between the human and the divine, the temporary and the eternal, the bodily and the spiritual.[4] The heart, in refining, moving and housing these spirits, lies at the centre of a system of 'spiritual physiology' in which the physical body materially affects the spiritual life of the believer.

Part of the heart's concordance of physical and spiritual functions is its marshalling of the emotions. Catholic priest Thomas Wright's 1604 treatise on *The Passions of the Minde* notes that the heart is "the peculiar place where the passions allodge", the "very seate of all Passions… both of men and beastes".[5] This is proven, Wright, asserts, by "very common experience":

> who loveth extreamely, and feeleth not that passion to dissolve his hearte? who reioyceth, and proveth not his heart dilated? who is moyled with heavinesse, or plunged with payne, and perceiveth not his heart to bee coarcted? whom inflameth ire, and hath not heart-burning?[6]

The emotional function of the heart is not simply metaphorical, but is experienced as an observable physical reality, which Wright expresses by bringing together language that is both emotionally and physically forceful ("moyled… plunged… inflameth") and that which is more straightforwardly mechanical ("dilated… coarcted").[7]

The use of such terminology – physically forceful, emotionally resonant, and mechanically specific – to describe the function of the heart and the passions that it houses reflects Wright's understanding of how the passions operate. The heart, the source of the body's 'natural heat', is by its nature the seat of its passions: "as the brayne fitteth best, for the softnesse and moysture, to receyue

[4] Sugg, *Smoke of the Soul*, pp. 13-20, Ch. 5.
[5] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall. Corrected, enlarged, and with sundry new discourses* (London, 1604), pp. 32-33.
[6] ibid. p. 33.
[7] 'moil' is defined in the *OED* with a variety of meanings of differing levels of physical exactitude or metaphorical transcendence: 'to wet or moisten' (*OED* 1a); 'to defile' (1c); 'to toil, work hard, drudge' (2); 'to burrow or grub in the ground like a pig' (3); 'to weary, fatigue; to harass, torment, worry' (4a). To 'coarct' is defined as 'To press or draw together; to compress, constrict, contract, tighten'. Wright's use of both terms here are cited examples (in sense 4a for 'moil'), suggesting their unfamiliarity even in the period: the specificity of these terms lends Wright's description of the heart a real physical forcefulness.

the formes and prints of obiects for vnderstanding; even so the heart endued with most fiery spirites, fitteth best for affecting."[8] To use the language of physical force when describing the function of the passions is not to convey metaphorically the emotional effect of the passions *like* 'inflammation', 'plunging' or compression, but is literally true. Similarly, to describe the emotions as taking place *in* the heart – as Herbert does when asking "where is that mightie joy,/ Which just now took up all my heart?" ('The Temper (II)', *EP* 196), praying for "For many weeks of lingering pain and smart/ But one half houre of comfort for my heart" ('The Glimpse', *EP* 530), and recalling how "I felt a sugred strange delight… Bedew, embalme, and overrunne my heart" ('The Glance', *EP* 589) – is not metaphor but synecdoche: the heart is *literally* the organ through which the passions are experienced, the 'part' through which the experience of the 'whole' soul is understood.

This is not a pedantic distinction to make. Certainly at points, the distinction between metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche in the language used of the heart, particularly in poetic treatments, is fine: the image of Christ's glance 'bedewing', 'embalming', and 'overrunning' the speaker's heart in 'The Glimpse' all call on different, distinct metaphors of the successive sprinkling, anointing and flooding of the heart. Yet the common 'liquid' element of each image aligns it both with the tears of the eye and the 'vital spirits' of the heart, substances both physiologically and figuratively identified with the emotional experience Herbert describes. He walks the line between metonymic, metaphorical and literal meaning, representing the uncertain but hopeful voice of his speaker, whose understanding moves between the literal and figurative, seeking the comfort of Christ's titular reassuring 'glimpse'.

Moreover, that representations of the heart should invite such fine interpretative distinctions is understandable, given the close association of the heart not only with emotions but also, frequently, with the sort of cognitive experiences sometimes associated more readily with the brain. In particular, religious experiences are conceived frequently not simply as emotional, but as *understanding* God, and in particular, in logocentric post-Reformation religion, understanding scripture. As Robert Alter shows, in the Bible the heart is a "seat of understanding rather than feeling": Biblical prophets must learn to see with their hearts rather than their eyes, to look, as God does, "on the heart" rather than on

[8] Wright, *Passions*, p. 35.

the "outward appearance" (1 Samuel 16:7).[9] To think about the heart, and in particular about its spiritual work, is to self-consciously consider the very organ that enables that very investigation.

The sense of the heart as a seat of cognition as well as of emotion is attested to in early modern devotional and theological works with more regularity than in physiological texts. Where the latter more often maintain the distinction, as Burton does, between the 'animal' and 'rational' functions respectively of the heart and the brain, theological treatments are by comparison keen to present the heart as a multi-purpose, living, feeling, thinking organ. Bishop of Winchester Thomas Bilson describes the head and the heart ambiguously as "the seates of vnderstanding and will", each alike filled with "*aeriall vapours,* or *spirits*", which "carie to the minde of man with incredible celerity the resemblance of all things subiected to sense". [10] This comes, crucially, in a meditation on the soul's 'sensitive' faculty, so termed for its equivalence to the senses that detect and respond to the external world. As the 'external' senses – sight, hearing, touch, and so on – "perceiue… the natures, helps, and vse of all externall and sensible things", the "sensitiue… soule" located in the heart and mind is similarly attuned to "seeing the workes & hearing the words of God."[11]

The importance of the heart as a spiritually-attuned sense organ lies not in repudiating worldly sensory experiences, but in locating the experience of the divine within the physical world. In a 1625 sermon delivered at the Guildhall, Calvinist preacher Thomas Adams describes how

> All other faculties of man apprehend their obiects, when they are brought home to them, onely the Will, the Heart goes home to the obiect. Colour must come to the eye, before it can see it: sound to the eare, before it can heare it: the obiect to bee apprehended is brought home to the vnderstanding, and past things are recollected to the memory; before either can doe her office. But the heart goes home to the obiect. *Vbi thesaurus, ibi cor*. Not where the heart is, there will be the treasure: but *where the treasure is, there will be the heart*. [12]

The heart reverses the action of the other senses, both internal (sight and hearing) and internal (understanding and memory), 'coming home' to the object it perceives, rather than mediating between the mind and the world. The difference lies in the particular 'object' of the heart's perception: not the

[9] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, revised edn. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), p. 196.
[10] Thomas Bilson, *The suruey of Christs sufferings*, p. 189.
[11] ibid., p. 188.
[12] Thomas Adams, *Fiue sermons publishe vpon sundry especiall occasions* (London, 1626), p. 76.

physical world, but the spiritual. The heart, unlike the purely bodily faculties, allows the subject to access the "treasure" of the spiritual world.

Early-seventeenth century writers, therefore, seem to have considered the heart as a crucial to understanding both the spiritual and the material world. For Herbert's speakers, the 'thinking heart' seems to be a constant problem: "Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know?" asks the speaker of 'The Discharge' (*EP* 502); elsewhere, speakers complain of "this noise of thoughts within my heart" ('The Familie', *EP* 477) and that "My thoughts are all a case of knives,/ Wounding my heart" ('Affliction (IV)', *EP* 328). Herbert's invocations of the heart play on its understood sensitive, cognitive and spiritual operation, but, in 'The Familie,' show the speaker's heart malfunctioning in this capacity: the "noise of thoughts", "loud complaints and pulling fears", distract from the "Peace", "Silence" and "Order" of God; even "griefs without a noise", the speaker laments, "speak… louder, then distemper'd fears./ What is so shrill as silent tears?". Where the likes of Bilson and Adams invoke the heart as the versatile workhorse of the soul, enabling us to feel and to understand the spiritual world, for Herbert it is much more troubling, suggesting a heart that, in its frenetic self-scrutiny, even obstructs its own purpose of spiritual understanding.

"Search well and see; for hearts have many holes": the devotional heart

The heart's capacity for conceiving of itself and its own spiritual function resonates particularly keenly in the context of a Protestant spirituality that prioritised anxious self-examination. The Protestant believer was continually urged to search their heart for signs of election or reprobation; but at the same time, it is the heart itself, conceived as a sensory organ attuned to receive God's grace, that must do this searching. As Alec Ryrie points out, this "almost narcissistic concern" early modern Protestants showed with the welfare of their souls, in paying forensically close attention to the emotions they experienced in prayer and meditation, is in fact contingent on an underlying sense of

emotion as "a form of revelation": one's emotional response to the act of devotion was as important an object of meditation as the scripture or prayer-text taken as a prompt.[13]

William Slights traces this sense of "perpetual surveillance" of the heart to the Bible, a tradition which the Protestant "regime of introspection" seized upon eagerly.[14] Thanks to early modern England's frequent abrupt changes in religious beliefs and practices, "the heart became a place where few could feel comfortably 'at home'."[15] The difference between the experience of *self*-scrutiny and external surveillance could be a thin one, especially in a culture where religion and the State were inextricable, and in which collective worship was central to the believer's devotional experience. Moreover, as Cecile Jagodzinski has shown, spiritual reading practices – in particular the rise of private, silent devotional reading – allowed not only a newly 'personal' relationship between believer and God, but a new way of knowing the self.[16] As we shall see, early modern conceptions of the heart both responded to and helped to shape the ever-changing devotional practices and sense of spiritual self of individual worshippers.

The heart is at the focal point of early-seventeenth century religious practice. As Robert Erickson notes, the term 'heart' is used 858 times in the King James Version – far outnumbering comparable terms like 'spirit' or 'mind'.[17] The heart was thought to be vital to the believer's devotion, its spiritual and cognitive function making it naturally suited to receiving and understanding scripture. The Elizabethan Homily on the Reading of Scripture, for instance, exhorts the listener that "These bokes therefore ought to bee much in our handes, in our eyes, in our eares, in our mouthes, but most of al in our heartes".[18] 'The heart' here is the locus of scripture's deep internalisation, in addition to its location in the eyes, ears and mouths – that is, the external actions of the believers.

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[13] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 39-40.
[14] William Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 1, 12, and *passim*.
[15] ibid., p. 13.
[16] Cecile Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and writing in seventeenth-century England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 36-43.
[17] Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600-1750* (Philadelphia: UPP, 1997), p. 26.
[18] *Certayne sermons appoynted by the Quenes Maiestie…* (London, 1559), sig. Aiv^{v}.

It is unsurprising, then, that the heart also figures repeatedly in daily worship: the Book of Common Prayer's order for Morning Prayer begins with one of a handful of Bible verses spoken by the minister, many of which foreground the importance of the heart's engagement in worship: "At what tyme soever a sinner doth repent him of his sinne from the botome of his harte, I wil put al his wickedness out of my remembraunce sayeth the Lord" (Ezekiel 18); "A sorrowful spirite is a sacrifice to God: despise not (O Lorde) humble and contrite hartes" (Psalm 51); "Rende your hartes, and not your garmentes, and turne to the Lorde your God…" (Joel 2). In the opening prayer the congregation prays that they should "confesse [their sins] wyth an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient harte", and that their fellow congregants should "accompany me wyth a pure harte", before confessing that "we have followed to much the devises and desires of our owne hartes" (*BCP* 102-03). In effect, daily prayers are a kind of exercise *for* the heart, working *on* the heart to make it more apt to receive God's grace.

The heart, then, is both the object of devotional work and the subject that undertakes this work: it is the heart that prays; it is also the heart that is prayed *for*. Ceri Sullivan sees the intrinsic "alterity" of this "godly graffiti" as inherently confounding: "When God carves on a heart, the medium is the message – and that message does not always get through."[19] This duality is, however, poetically generative; Herbert reflects the inherent self-consciousness of this prayer regime in centring his 'Mattens' around the nature of the heart. Certainly, the tone of poems like 'The Method' resonate with the advice dealt in Protestant godly living manuals, sermons and theological works: to "Go search this thing,/ Tumble thy breast, and turn thy book" (*EP* 466) recalls admonishments like those offered by William Perkins to "search thy heart and life, that thou maiest know the very worst by thy selfe: If thou wilt not know it now, thou shalt know it to thy shame in the day of iudgement", or by John Downame to "search out our hidden sinnes, and ransacke our hearts and consciences, so as they cannot lye lurking in them, but are apprehended, condemned, and dravvne out to execution".[20]

[19] Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Conscience in Donne, Herbert and Vaughan* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 81.
[20] William Perkins, *A commentarie or exposition, vpon the fiue first chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London, 1604), p. 328; John Downame, *A guide to godlynesse or a Treatise of a Christian life shewing the duties wherein it consisteth, the helpes inabling & the reasons parswading vnto it ye impediments hindering ye practise of it, and the best meanes to remoue them* (London, 1622), pp. 629-30.

The speaker's driving motivation in 'The Method' for 'searching' their heart is to find "some rub, some discontent" that "cools [God's] will" from granting their prayer. Here, intriguingly, the language of humours and faculties – the physiological substance and function of the heart – is attributed to God's work: Wright characterises the passions channelled through the heart by their humoral qualities ("love will have heate, and sadnesse colde"), for instance, and Bilson sees the heart as a 'seat' of human 'will'.[21] In 'The Method', God operates on the same lines as the physiology of the human heart.

Moreover, the relationship between God and the human speaker of 'The Method' appears comparable to the interconnected relationship of matter and spirit which the heart binds together. We have seen how the early modern heart operates within an interdependent network of external and internal, earthly and divine factors, responding to the substantial changes in humours, spirits and sensory information it receives from the body, and the blessings and punishments it receives from God. The heart's 'movements' – the 'motions' or passions that are its prime observable action – are prompted by and felt in bodily humours and spirits. A similar relationship seems to exist in 'The Method' between God and the speaker: "Thy Father *could*/ Quickly effect, what thou dost move". The speaker's prayer is like the changes in the humoral and spiritual conditions of the body that affect the heart's operation; God's refusal of the prayer, appearing as some essential disconnect between him and the speaker, is like the 'hard' or 'stony' heart that was dreaded by all believers.[22]

The heart, then, is at the centre of a spiritual and material network of relations – between the human subject and the earthly and divine worlds they simultaneously inhabit – that is complex, dynamic, and potentially fraught with imperfections and dysfunction. It is the subject of constant scrutiny by its owner, by itself, but also by God, who looks 'on the heart' in judging man. The heart is thus a site at once of identification and of judgement, resulting in the kind of dislocated subjectivity we have seen was characteristic of the early-seventeenth century Protestant religious experience. The

[21] cf. Wright, *Passions*, p. 35.
[22] cf. Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 20-27; Adrian Chastain Weimer, 'Affliction and the Stony Heart in Early New England', in *Puritanism and Emotion in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Alec Ryrie and Tom Schwanda (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 121-43, pp. 125-29.

problem posed by the heart attempting to understand itself frequently finds expression in the variety and vividness of metaphors invoked to describe it: Adams, for instance, within a matter of pages, compares the heart to a door with a spring-lock, a fortress or citadel, a mill, and a chapel.[23] Each of these metaphors builds on the ideas of interiority, exclusion and surveillance that characterised the spiritual function of the early modern heart. At the same time, the rapidity with which Adams moves between these vastly different images suggests the lack of clarity or fixity with which the heart is able to be understood.

A kind of subjective dislocation is, then, inherent in any attempt to conceive of the heart in a devotional context. This dislocation animates Herbert's exploration in *The Temple* of the experience of the Protestant believer. The particular weight of the heart's characteristic anxious self-scrutiny and emotional vividness is fruitful for Herbert. A number of *The Temple*'s poems take the form of addresses *to* the heart: 'Easter' opens with an invocation to "Rise heart; thy Lord is risen" (*EP* 139); and 'The Dawning', to "Awake sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns" (*EP* 399). In both cases, the 'occasion' of the verse is that of Christ's resurrection, when Christ's transcendence of the bounds of human mortality and embodiment are most evident, makes the quasi-transcendent, simultaneously embodied and spiritual, heart of the speaker or reader a fitting focal point for these poems.

The embodied state of both poems' 'hearts' is emphatic, yet not straightforward: the second lines of 'The Dawning' calls on the heart to "take up thine eyes" and "unfold thy forehead"; 'Easter', to praise him "Who takes thee by the hand". In both cases, the addressee's worship is expressed by bodily means – their facial expression in 'The Dawning', and their holding Christ's hand in 'Easter' – but these charges being made directly to the *heart* results in a physically impossible, even unsettling image. Such bodily rearrangement would perhaps be most familiar to *The Temple*'s readers from emblem images by the likes of George Wither, in which dismembered parts of the body, depicted apparently solely for their figurative meaning (the tongue for speech, the hand for action, the heart for love) are brought together in physically impossible ways.[24]

[23] Adams, *Fiue sermons*, pp. 14-15, pp. 73-75.
[24] George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne* (London, 1635): see above, Figure 1, p. 40.

This bodily dislocation remains a driving force throughout 'The Dawning', as the heart must "Arise", not "by hanging down break from the hand", and "with his buriall-linen drie thine eyes". Physically nonsensical as this bodily arrangement is – a heart with an expressive face, holding hands with Christ – it is nonetheless stable through the poem. The closing image is disarmingly intimate, invoking the sensation of drying one's eyes that is embodied yet also spiritually significant. The dislocated physicality of the 'heart' in 'The Dawning' is resolved not by Christ's bodily resurrection, as might be expected, but by his grave-cloths refigured as handkerchiefs, and their use by the 'heart'. Here the heart's ever-changing agency – as active or passive, subject or object – reflects the mystery with which the poem grapples, and the intimate, basely emotional ways in which it can be approached by the poem and by the believer.

The complex agency of the early modern heart – at once subject and object of prayer, at once actively undertaking devotion and the passive receiver of divine grace – is something Herbert responds to fruitfully in his verse. 'An Offering' (*EP* 509-10) exemplifies this clearly: the titular 'offering' *is* the heart, but it is also the heart that *does* the offering. From the outset, the poem's speaker is unclear: the opening line's "gift" is presumably presented to God, but the impatient, ungenerous tone of "What hast thou there? a heart? but is it pure?" does not accord with a divine infinite patience and mercy. Coburn Freer suggests that the poem is spoken by a "snappish parson rebuk[ing] a dull worshipper".[25] Certainly, the first stanza's explication of doctrine in a distinctly admonitory tone is one that would fit with the pastoral relationship: "one pure heart is nothing to bestow:/ In Christ two natures met to be thy cure".

Yet as the poem continues, the speaker begins to converge with the addressee: by the third stanza, rather than reprimanding them for the insufficiency of their heart, instead they express sympathy, "fear[ing] lest thy heart displease" God. This follows a stanza in which the speaker and addressee are referred together collectively in the plural first person: "O that within us hearts had propagation". By the fourth stanza (the final of the first half of the poem) the tone is wholly impersonal and aphoristic – "There is a balsome… dropping from heav'n, which doth both cleanse

[25] Freer, *Music for a King*, p. 176.

and close/ All sorts of wounds" – before returning to an advisory tone, albeit one altogether gentler than the opening stanza's, as the speaker tells the addressee to "bring thy gift; and let thy hymne be this". The poem subsequently changes in form, into the 'hymn' to God that brings together the former half's addressee and speaker: the hymn is presumably the composition of the pastoral speaker, but it is to be performed by the addressee – and indeed by Herbert's reader. These three parties are distanced and brought together again variously across the poem, highlighting the necessity and efficacy of communal worship in the hymn as well as the pastoral relationship between the speaker and the addressee (and reader), and the instability of any individual subjectivity within this communal relationship with God.

The integrity or fragmentation of the addressee's 'offering' is central to the poem. The addressee offering their 'heart' suggests the literal 'whole-heartedness' of their devotion: they offer their whole consciousness and identity to God. Yet almost as soon as the heart appears in the poem, it is questioned not only for its 'purity' or otherwise, but for its physical integrity: "hearts have many holes", warns the speaker. Even if the heart *is* whole and undefiled, the speaker still dismisses it: "one pure heart is nothing to bestow:/ In Christ two natures met to be thy cure". The specific focus on the addressee's own heart lasts only until "Search well and see"; the next stanza discusses 'hearts' only indefinitely, as a class; the "one pure heart" of the following line is purely hypothetical; and the following stanza's wish that "within us hearts had propagation,/ Since many gifts do challenge many hearts!" highlights its counterfactuality with its "O that" construction. The addressee's specific heart, that is to say, effectively disappears from the poem, to be replaced by a series of conjectural and generic 'hearts', which connects the addressee to the rest of fallen humanity, but also distances them from achieving their cordial 'offering' to God.

At the same time, the poem increasingly focuses on various divisions and accumulations: the second stanza sees the speaker wish for "propagation" of hearts, to strengthen the fallible human heart against the 'challenges' it faces, but also remind us that one 'pure heart' is worthy even in adversity, since "single things grow fruitfull by deserts". In the third stanza the focus returns to the addressee's proffered heart, and the fear that their "lusts" will have made "divisions" within it, their "passions...

set partitions" which "parcell out the heart". Both these images strike a markedly metaphysical tenor, representing the fruitfulness or decrepitude of the Christian heart by its multiplication or physical decay. By contrast, the fourth stanza introduces the more straightforward image of the "balsome… Dropping from heav'n, which doth both cleanse and close/ All sorts of wounds". As in the grave-cloth handkerchief of 'The Dawning', the tenderness of this image resolves the anxious hypothetical state of the addressee's heart by an intimate, bodily connection with Christ; the "bloud" that properly is this "balsome" connects both Christ's saving sacrifice and the blood in the physical heart of the addressee (and reader), thereby resolving the metaphysical anxieties of the earlier stanzas by the immediate physical reality of the heart.

"Broken now so long/ That ev'ry part/ Hath got a tongue": the 'broken' heart

The fears that the speaker of 'The Offering' expresses are as revealing about the early modern religious conception of the heart as they are vividly and physically imagined: that "hearts have many holes," and that "lusts" may have "made their divisions", the "passions", their "partitions", share a sense of the heart as vulnerable to physical degradation through its owner's fault. Anxieties about human fallibility and the individual's potential reprobation are expressed in emphatically material terms that connote also the instability of the individual subjectivity under these conditions. 'The Offering' is far from alone in expressing such anxieties in this way, either in *The Temple* or religious writing more widely; rather, the idea of 'brokenness' in the heart is a trope that is repeated throughout both. The fear of the 'broken heart', unable materially to perform its spiritual function, frequently lurks behind any invocation of the heart in devotional texts.

The image of the broken heart recurs throughout *The Temple*: 'The Altar', opening 'The Church', professes the speaker's intention to raise "A broken ALTAR… Made of a heart, and cemented with teares" (*EP* 92); 'Deniall' depicts the speaker's distress at the failure of their devotions, that "Then was my heart broken, as was my verse" (*EP* 288); in 'Dialogue' the human speaker interrupts God's account of his sacrifice, "[Leaving] all joyes to feel all smart ----" with the exclamation, "Ah!

no more: thou break'st my heart" (*EP* 408); the speaker of 'Longing' laments that their heart "hath been broken now so long,/ That ev'ry part/ That got a tongue!" (*EP* 515). We have seen how hearts in *The Temple* are often used to reflect the simultaneously embodied and immaterial, earthly and divine, element of the human spiritual experience; just as often as the heart connotes a 'special connection' between man and God, it seems, it evokes the fallibility and frailty of this connection.

Yet this 'brokenness' is not merely a recognisable trope to be straightforwardly invoked; the heart's particular function as a seat of cognition, the subject as well as object of devotion, means that the idea of the 'broken heart' often resonates more profoundly in the form of the poem itself. 'The Offering', we have seen, not only invokes the image of the broken heart to convey the addressee's spiritual distress, but represents the subjective dislocation of the situation through the changes in the way the speaker invokes the image within the poem's narrative: it is the instability of the very image of the heart in the poem, effectively, that conveys the heart's 'brokenness'.

'Affliction (IV)' similarly conveys the 'brokenness' of the speaker's 'heart', not directly by invoking the 'broken heart' trope, but by implication. 'Brokenness' is foregrounded from the first line: "Broken in pieces all asunder…" (*EP* 328). Yet what is 'broken' here is not the speaker's heart, but the speaker themselves; the heart appears only in the second stanza, 'wounded' by the "case of knives" that is the speaker's thoughts. The intensely corporeal language of breaking, and specifically of wounding, in this stanza ("Nothing their furie can controll,/ While they do wound and prick my soul") is not sustained across the poem, but rather is replaced by less violent language of 'dissolving' or 'scattering': "All my attendants… Quitting their place/ Unto my face"; "dissolve the knot,/ As the sunne scatters by his light/ All the rebellions of the night". Like the language of physical disintegration, the power of the image of the broken heart 'dissolves' over the course of the poem, as the focus moves from the speaker's immediate experience of their spiritual pain, to a more universal scope, and therefore to the hope that God's help will offer them – such that, in the place of the language of physical disintegration, the final stanza can utilise the language of building: "Then shall those powers… Labour thy praise… With care and courage building me,/ Till I reach heav'n." The speaker's 'broken heart' causes the collapse of their particular subjectivity, but also allows the general

sense of 'brokenness' within the poem to be 'mended', as the subjectivity of the 'broken heart' – to use Adams' term – is "brought home to God".

The idea that the 'broken heart' might in fact be a site of creation as well as destruction is central to the volume: 'The Church' opens with declaration in 'The Altar' that "A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servant reares,/ Made of a heart, and cemented with teares" (*EP* 92). This 'broken altar' has consistently been identified with *The Temple*'s poetic programme, as is suggested by the poem's position at the opening of 'The Church', the central 'space' and structure of *The Temple*.[26] The altar's 'brokenness' introduces the speaker's anxiety about the success or efficacy of their devotional verse that will prove a constant concern in the volume; that the altar is "made of a heart" effectively announces the personal scope, devotional function, and simultaneously material and spiritual essence of the poetry that will follow.

The idea of brokenness, being so deeply interwoven into the poem, and therefore into *The Temple*, from the very beginning, is consistently expressed in emphatically material terms: the speaker's tears do not just 'join' the stones together, but 'cement' them; God's power over the speaker is imagined as the 'cutting' of a 'stone'. Yet the coherency of this extended masonry metaphor is matched by the emphatic counterfactuality of the poem: in such a consciously crafted poem as 'The Altar', its shape representing its subject matter visually, the speaker nonetheless asserts that "No workmans tool hath touch'd" it; and the speaker attests to the efficacy of their verse ("These stones to praise thee may not cease") in a statement dependent on conditions ("if I chance to hold my peace") that the poem cannot meet – as Arnold Stein points out, this apparently recusatory statement "introduces more than one hundred and fifty poems in which the poet does *not* hold his peace".[27]

[26] For instance, Robert Shaw sees 'The Altar' as "a dedicatory inscription to the entire volume"; its 'broken altar' "is represented by the poem at hand, but also stands for *The Temple* as a whole", *The Call of God: the theme of vocation in the poetry of Donne and Herbert* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1981), p. 102; Stanley Fish, as part of a "sequence of catechistical instruction" with 'The Church-porch' and 'Superliminaire', which respectively offer "a thorough indoctrination in moral knowledge" and the awareness "that such knowledge is not enough", *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 139-40.

[27] Stein, *George Herbert's Lyrics*, p. 109.

It is also significant that 'The Altar' thus opens 'The Church' with such a marked emphasis on the materiality of the essentially literary and spiritual 'altar' that the poem raises: the heart, the altar, and *The Temple*'s poems are all characterised as 'stone' or 'stones'. That the image of 'stone' and the idea of 'brokenness' are both given such prominence in a poem that takes the heart as its subject locates the poem categorically within the specific discourse of the heart in Protestant devotional and godly advice literature. The 'stony heart' was the fundamental fear of the Protestant imagination, a heart so 'hardened', so dead and unresponsive, that it was utterly incapable of receiving divine grace. Early modern accounts of the depths of despair in diaries and personal prayers often call on the imagery of 'stoniness' in the heart. One Richard Kilby's spiritual diaries, published in 1635, records a prayer made in the throes of a painful illness:

> O Lord God, had I not beene a stony hearted sinner, this deadly windinesse might have terrefied me from sinne above sixe yeares agone… Now my time is gone, mine heart is dead within me. And though I should live a while, this hellish strangury quite disableth mee.[28]

For Kilby and other Protestant believers, the stony heart is a fatally incapacitating state: his heart is "dead within" him, though he is still alive; to live with a stony heart is a state of literal hell on earth, as one feels oneself unable to receive God's saving grace.

Yet Herbert opens *The Temple* with a promise to build it from heart-stones, and this is not without precedent: this sense of abject spiritual degradation is not always understood as wholly hopeless. In his 1619 Ash Wednesday sermon, preaching at court on Joel 2:13 ("*rend your heart, and not your clothes, and turne unto the LORD your GOD*"), Lancelot Andrewes examines what the necessary 'rending' of the heart consists of:

> And, what must [the heart] suffer? *Contrition:* It should even *conteri,* be *ground to powder. A contrite heart,* it should be: If not that, not *contritum,* yet *cor confractum,* a *broken heart,* broken in peeces, though not so small. If neither of these; yet with this qualifying heere, *cor con-scissum,* with some *rent,* or *cleft. Solutio continui,* somewhat there is to be opened; Not onely that the *apostemate* matter may breath forth, but much more (which is the proper of this part) that feeling the smart there, we may say, and say it with feeling, *Quòd malum*

[28] Richard Kilby, *Hallelujah. Praise yee the Lord, for the unburthening of a loaden conscience: by his grace in Iesus Christ vouchsafed unto the worst sinner of all the world* (London, 1635), pp. 91-92; cf. Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 21-26.

> *& amarum,* that an *evill thing* it is, and a *bitter,* to have *turned* away and forsaken the LORD. Some such thing is the *heart* to feele, or els nothing is done.[29]

Andrewes defines the 'broken heart' trope with precision, drawing a distinction between different types of 'rending' the heart can undergo in devotion: "contrition", invoked at first in its standard English sense of repentance and sorrow, is drawn back to its Latin etymology to denote being "*ground to powder*". A less preferable alternative, the "*cor confractum*", is also explained in material terms as being broken into pieces "though not so small"; or even "*cor conscissum*", "some *rent,* or *cleft*". The more complete the destruction of the heart, the greater the spiritual benefit; the ideal makes the heart not merely 'broken' but an entirely different material, crushed into 'powder'. To receive God's gifts properly, Andrewes argues, we must first give ourselves over to complete physical and spiritual degradation.

The benefit of this 'breaking' or 'grinding', as Andrewes sees it, is twofold: that "the *apostemate* matter may breath forth"; and also that "feeling the smart there, we may say… that an *evill thing* it is… to have *turned* away and forsaken the LORD". "Apostemate matter" denotes something festering; an 'aposteme' is a pus-filled abcess (*OED* 1) – a significantly more organic form of decay than the 'contrition' of the stony heart. It is only with the 'breaking' of the spiritually unresponsive stony heart that its natural "evill" – the sinful state of the human soul – can be healthily and necessarily purged.

The different kinds of 'breaking' Andrewes describes are all encompassed within the extended image of the 'stony heart'; yet in explaining the effects of God's breaking, he returns to a more bodily, though still figurative, frame of reference: the physical heart does not literally 'breathe', but, as we have seen, the literal function of the heart and lungs were understood as fundamentally symbiotic; and as the seat of the passions, "feeling the smart" and "say[ing] with feeling" are both essentially physically cordial acts. The sense of the heart as a 'stone' to be 'broken' in devotion, then, seems to hover somewhere between the literal and the figurative: the movement between the rich image of the 'rent', broken or ground up stone, and the heart's physiological function, accords with

[29] Lancelot Andrewes, *XCVI Sermons by the Right Honorable and Reverend Father in God, Lancelot Andrevves, late Lord Bishop of Winchester* (London, 1629), p. 112.

the action and effect of the subject's devotion: the extent of the 'rending' that the believer undergoes determines the extent to which they 'feel' the results of this rending in literal terms. Yet this relationship is *causal* rather than merely *figurative*: the apparently metaphorical understanding of the heart's materiality is also *literally,* materially real.

The 'broken heart' is a site simultaneously of destruction, and of the possibility of spiritual growth. What is more, the terms of signification through which this devotional 'breaking' and its felt effects are comprehended are fruitfully ambiguous: it is not quite clear to his auditor the extent to which the terms of 'rending' and 'contrition' are figurative or literal, and it is this semiotic ambiguity in which the subject becomes the "something to be opened" up to God. We have seen that Herbert takes advantage of the heart's subjective duality – as subject and object of its own devotion – in representing the troubled agency of the early modern Protestant, and how the almost ubiquitous worry of the 'stony' or 'broken' heart to this Protestant subject shapes Herbert's speakers and his use of imagery. But the heart is not merely a conveniently multivalent image to explore questions of subjectivity and devotional effect and affect; the immediacy of the heart's materiality is also crucial to Herbert's self-conscious presentation of his own poetics.

"To turn his double pains to double praise": the generative heart

'JESU' offers one of the most famous pieces of 'heart', and indeed specifically 'broken heart', imagery in *The Temple*: a mini-allegory, in which the speaker's heart, on which is "deeply graved" the name 'JESU,' is 'broken' by "a little affliction"; looking for the pieces, they find each of the constituent parts, 'J', 'ES' and 'U' in various 'corners', when

> … instantly
> I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
> That to my broken heart he was *I ease you,*
> And to the whole is *J E S U* (*EP* 401).

Here, as elsewhere in *The Temple*, the speaker's broken heart is consonant with its spiritual 'affliction', but also a site of regeneration: it is only through the 'breaking' of the heart, and with it Christ's name, that its affective function in 'easing' the speaker is revealed. The speaker's description

of their heart breaking "Ev'n all to pieces" recalls Andrewes' admonishment that the heart should be broken "in peeces"; yet Herbert extends the material imagery into a narrative, as the 'pieces' retain individual significance; and the importance of the heart itself as the particular subject of the poem is clear in that the 'punchline' is not merely in the classically Herbertian wordplay, but in the emotional affect of the name of Christ 'easing' the speaker.

So the function of the heart is crucial to the narrative of 'JESU'. But Herbert's image of the broken heart regenerated into greater spiritual fertility is more than straightforwardly devotional; rather the poem meditates on the power of devotional poetry in bringing about this affective spiritual regeneration. Language resonant with devotional poetry – and Herbert's devotional poetry in particular – recurs throughout the poem. The fundamental conceit of the poem relies on the efficacious power of textuality, for instance – Christ's residence in the heart is evidenced by his name being "deeply carved there", and the emotional resolution is found when the speaker "sat… down to spell" the "parcels" they had found. Moreover, the use of the term "parcels" itself is significant: though primarily denoting any 'small thing' (*OED* 2a), and also potentially suggesting a passage of a text, particularly a sacred text (*OED* 3a), or any material fragment of a broken object (*OED* 8a), the term also carries a specifically poetic connotation, often applied to lyric poetry, connoting brevity, lightness in content, and its ability to be used and recontextualised. Richard Tottel, for instance, refers in the preface to his *Songs and Sonnets* to those included in the miscellany having written "in small parcelles".[30]

In being broken into "parcels" which must be brought together to perceive their meaning, then, the spiritual experience of the speaker of 'JESU' is like that of reading *The Temple*, as each poem's own fragmentary experience is made greater when accumulated into the volume as a whole. It is also significant that the 'breaking' that begins the poem is occasioned by "a great affliction": a reader progressing through *The Temple* in a linear fashion will, by the time they reach 'JESU', have read five poems entitled 'Affliction', some only pages before 'JESU'. The experience of reading *The Temple*,

[30] *Tottel's Miscellany. Songes and Sonnettes*, ed. by Edward Arber (London: Constable, 1921), p. 2.

by implication, is both the 'heart rending' Andrewes advocates and the 'rebuilding' that 'JESU' eventually effects.

Moreover, it is significant that the heart is referred to as a "little frame". As we have seen, Herbert opens 'The Church' with an 'Altar' built on the speaker's broken heart, a heart whose "parts are as thy hands did frame"; and, conversely, "each part/ Of my hard heart/ Meets in this frame,/ To praise thy name" (*EP* 92). The altar's 'frame' is the means (the human life, or the poem itself) by which the subject can forge a relationship with God, and to 'frame' is to undertake a work of spiritually productive creation – whether God's 'framing' of the subject's life, or the speaker's 'framing' of their devotion to God within the poem. Rayna Kalas has described the significance of the term 'frame' in self-conscious discussions of early modern poetry; the conceit of 'framing', prevalent in sixteenth-century English poetic treatises, "captures the sense that the word is a material creation and that material creation is a text".[31] Helen Wilcox traces 'frames' through *The Temple*, in 'The Altar', 'JESU' and 'Sion', where the term consistently denotes both a "defined and contained" sacred space, and the poem itself: "Sacred text and sacred space [become] almost identical in Herbert's 'Church'."[32] By drawing attention to the text's 'framing', Herbert highlights the poem's status not only as a material and literary 'creation', but as one in which the language itself is materially significant.

In 'The Altar' as in 'JESU', the heart is both the subject and the object of the poem's framing, as the poem itself is both the subject and the object of the poet-speaker's devotional 'framing'. The conceit of framing, that is to say, connects the poems' devotional and literary function with the spiritual and physical functions of the heart. The specific connection between the work of poetry and that of the heart is not merely a coincidence of similar but separate metaphorical commonplaces, however: language is understood to function fundamentally similarly to the heart. In his *Discourse of Divine Providence*, published in 1684, the nonconformist minister of St Katherine Cree Stephen Charnock describes how

[31] Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Creation in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 55.
[32] Wilcox, 'Early Modern Sacred Space', p. 156.

> *Imagination*, properly signifies *figmentum*… to afflict, press, or form a thing by compression. And thus it is a *metaphor* taken from a *potter's* framing *a vessel*, and extends to whatsoever is framed inwardly in the heart, or outwardly in the work.[33]

Charnock's view of the imagination, which 'presses' or 'forms' things by 'compression', like a potter framing clay on a wheel, echoes, in its intense physicality, Thomas Wright's 'moyling', 'dissolving', 'plunging' and 'inflaming' heart.

Yet this is more than simply a physically resonant image. The image of the potter's wheel recalls Calvin's assertion that "man's nature is… a perpetual factory of idols".[34] Calvin and Charnock alike see man's cognitive work as essentially a productive or generative organ. For Calvin this is a site of potential idolatry that influences the anxieties of English Protestantism throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the human mind, he argues, "substitutes vanity and an empty phantom in the place of God", and, worse, "The mind, in this way, conceives the idol, and the hand gives it birth". Charnock too notes the largely negative generative capacity of the heart, its "natural corruption" and "evil imaginations", "that fountain of sin within us"; but he also sees its complementary positive power, as when David prays "that a disposition to offer willingly to the Lord might be preserved in the *Imagination of the thoughts of the heart of the people*".[35] The heart, and the imagination it houses, becomes a site also of what Charnock calls the "double figment, good and bad" of humanity, with capacity to do good and evil – to actively produce expressions in the world, not simply to respond passively to divine and human influence.

The heart's generative capacity is fertile ground for Herbert in *The Temple*. In 'JESU' the brokenness of the speaker's heart is the occasion to find the comfort in Christ they had been overlooking. Elsewhere in *The Temple*, the richness of imagery of the heart is more directly put to use in discussing Herbert's own poetic output: the heart is not the source only of the speaker's spiritual experience, but of their poetic expression of this experience. In 'Good Friday', for instance, the speaker spends the first half of the poem questioning how they are to "measure out [Christ's] bloud"

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[33] *The Works of the Late Rev. Stephen Charnock, BD*, ed. by Edward Parsons (London: Baynes, 1816), vol. 8, p. 503.
[34] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles, ed. by John McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), p. 108.
[35] Charnock, *Works*, vol. 8, pp. 503-05.

and "count what [him] befell,/ And each grief tell", before finding the solution in the latter half: "My heart hath store, write there, where in/ One box doth lie both ink and sinne" (*EP* 126-27). The answer to the speaker's problem of how to appreciate Christ's sacrifice is explicitly textual: in the final stanza the threat of sin is imagined as being that it may "return" to the speaker's heart and "all the writings blot or burn".

The speaker's spiritual engagement is framed as an essentially figurative act of writing, but one that is for all that deeply embodied: Christ will write on the heart in 'bloud'. At the same time, this is effected by the speaker's literal act of writing in the composition of 'Good Friday'. That the poem provides the 'solution' to the problem it itself poses is demonstrated in its structure, moving from the irregular form of the first five stanzas (the first and last lines of each stanza being dimeter lines, the second and third tetrameter) to the regular, 'complete' final three stanzas, each of four tetrameter lines. The heart-writing trope in these stanzas brings together the intimate physicality of both Christ's suffering and the speaker's spiritual experience, with the written materiality of how this confluence is achieved – both in the poem itself, and in the scripture that allows Christ's suffering to be knowable to the speaker. The speaker's assertion that "my heart hath store" connects their heart with scripture itself, frequently described as a 'storehouse' of wisdom, from which the believer should plunder their own spiritual riches. The heart as an image and a subject, then, partakes in both a figurative and a materially textual form of generation that the poem speaks to.

This specifically textual, spiritual propagation with which the heart is empowered in *The Temple* is not a Herbertian innovation, however: the early modern Protestant heart is constantly attributed with both textual and (re)productive associations. In his study of the early modern Biblical heart, Robert Erickson identifies "language, writing and thought" and "sex, passion and gender" as the two key fields of imagery with which the heart is associated both in scripture and in the homiletic and devotional texts that make use of it; furthermore, as he crucially argues, the former group incorporates the latter, the textuality of the heart inextricable from its function in propagating ideas and passions.[36] The Elizabethan Homily on the Reading of Scripture, for instance, explicitly enjoins the auditor to

[36] Erickson, *Language of the Heart*, p. xiii.

> reade, and in his heart to print that he readeth… For that thing, which (by continual vse of reading of holy scripture, and diligent searchyng of the same) is depely printed, and grauen in the heart, at length turneth almost into nature.[37]

The materiality of the heart's textuality – that the words of scripture are "printed and grauen" there – is what 'naturally' propagates scripture's lessons in the reader.

For Herbert, this association is often explicitly poetic, as the metaphorical terms in which the heart – that totem of interiority which evades literal representation – is understood invite his innovatively metaphysical and characteristically self-conscious treatment. 'Obedience', for instance, imagines the poem as a 'special deed', a legal document passed between the human subject and God (*EP* 374-75). The opening stanza sets out the metaphor: the "writings" of the opening line establishes an analogy between the legal documents that "may/ Convey a Lordship any way/ Whither the buyer and the seller please", and the poem, reduced to its barest material form as "this poore paper". The shared materiality of the vehicle and tenor of this metaphor, both being 'lines' on 'paper', allows the metaphor to collapse across the course of the poem, as the fundamental insufficiency of legalistic terms to describe the relationship between the speaker and God is revealed: repeated punning – on 'deed' as both a document and an action, and 'goods' as both properties and spiritual benefits – draws together the metaphorical legal documents, the spiritual reality they represent, and the poem itself that conjures both of them up for the reader.

The reader is actively involved in the poem's resolution: the speaker calls on "some kinde man" to "thrust his heart/ Into these lines" so that angels might enter both the reader and the writer into "heav'ns court of rolls". To read the poem properly, the speaker tells us, the heart must be "thrust" into it. The heart is similarly crucial to its composition: "On [the paper] my heart doth bleed/ As many lines, as there doth need/ To passe it self and all it hath to thee." Of course the heart, the seat of spiritual and cognitive understanding, will need to be engaged in both the production and the consumption of devotional poetry. Here, the heart's role in composing the poetry seems to transmit to

[37] *Certayne sermons*, sig. Bi[r].

the verse some of the self-reflexive capacity of a heart engaged constantly in surveilling and 'reading' itself: the 'lines' produced by the heart work to "passe it self and all it hath to thee".

If the heart is intrinsically involved in textual reproduction, this is another means by which it is actively connected with the poem's function: the early modern reader's interaction with any literary text, including *The Temple*, was characterised by acts of textual reproduction – copying out excerpts into commonplace books and notebooks from printed editions and manuscripts circulated within select coteries, or compiling selections of poems and other texts in miscellanies and anthologies in print and manuscript.[38] If the heart functions to produce devotional verse, and to re-produce it, it participates precisely in the literary culture in which *The Temple* was composed, circulated and reproduced: the heart is actively involved in the poetry not just as Herbert writes it and as its imagined speaker expresses their spiritual experience, but as the reader engages with it textually and materially.

Throughout 'Obedience', Herbert demands that we read the poem with an engaged heart, but also that we read the poem *like* a heart: we have seen that understanding with the heart, that central requirement of a devout early-seventeenth century Protestant life, required a sensitivity to holding figurative and literal meanings, and to discerning the spiritual 'truth' from them. The 'heart' in 'Obedience', whether that of the poet-speaker or the reader, works to discern figurative from literal meanings even as the two are collapsed materially. The heart, both within *The Temple* and in prevailing early-seventeenth century Protestant belief, seems to be the organ that 'performs' prayer: in forming a bridge between the divine and the human, more precisely between the physical and spiritual natures of humanity, it is the heart that makes the subject's prayer work. Further, it enables belief itself, in being crucially involved in discerning between literal and figurative truths, thus enabling the subject proper access to the Scripture that is the source of proper Protestant faith; this same interpretative function and spiritual nature effectively makes the heart conceptually the organ of devotional poetry.

[38] cf. Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 30-47; Henry Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), pp. 220-24; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), Ch. 4-5.

"Down with thy knees, up with thy voice": Bodily prayer in *The Temple*

The heart may be the perfect metonym for Herbert to discuss faith, worship, prayer and poetry, but the rest of the body nonetheless remains. For clergy and theologians this was a problem; for Herbert, an opportunity. Where the heart is sufficiently 'internal' to be comfortably poetic (even if its specific figurative or literal signification is fruitfully ambiguous), the external body is both more visible and more directly subject to religious controversy. This invests the question of its meaning with more practical urgency, and locates Herbert's depiction of prayer in the context of specific contemporary anxieties about bodily performance of devotion. Such discourse renders the body and the praying subject 'legible' – but how we are to 'read' it remains ambiguous.

The use of bodily ceremonies in public worship and private devotion was a fault line from the time of the Reformation onwards: excessive or improperly used ceremonies seemed too close to 'superstitious' pre-Reformation ritual, and might arouse suspicion of personal 'hypocrisy', that the gestures were mere show, not expressions of sincere belief. At the same time guides to personal devotion produced in great numbers advised readers to use various gestures and postures to express and elicit the proper emotional experience of devotion, and the title-page illustrations to such works often depicted subjects kneeling, with hands touching, crossed or extended to the sky, as a readily interpretable visual shorthand for the sincere devotion to which the reader presumably aspired. For instance, the title page to Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* shows, in the uppermost third of the page, a "Pious man" (as his label tells us) kneeling, his hands crossed over his chest and his head raised to heaven, as he prays, "A broken heart O Lord despise not".[1]

As with the words of prayer, it was entirely standard for early modern believers to make use of a range of prescribed and spontaneous physical gestures and postures in prayer. At the same time, however, the exact nature and purpose of such movements was the subject of much controversy: was

[1] Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Pietie: Directing a Christian how to walke that he may please God* (London, 1613).

bodily action indifferent and merely a matter of pragmatism within the church, or spiritually efficacious and therefore crucial to perform correctly? How could one ascertain the sincerity or otherwise of their own and others' prayers, with only bodily gestures and postures to 'read' from?[2] These uncertainties serve to muddy the hermeneutics of prayer and poetry, which, as we have seen, were bound up potently with the embodiment of the praying and composing subject.

The troublesome presence of the body in prayer and poem is evident throughout *The Temple*. In 'Deniall' Herbert laments God's apparent rejection of his prayers and his poetry:

> When my devotions could not pierce
> Thy silent eares;
> Then was my heart broken, as was my verse:
> My breast was full of fears
> And disorder (*EP* 288-9).

The speaker's 'heart' is identified with their 'verse', both 'broken' as the speaker's prayer shows itself to be ineffective, unheard by God. But the causal relationship here is unclear: does the prayer's failure cause the heart and verse to 'break'; or are the 'broken' heart and verse revealed as the causes of the prayer's inefficacy? The evasiveness of the apparently purely temporal prepositions "When" and "Then" expresses the ambivalence, the enigma around the function of prayer that plagued early modern believers. But whether the failure of the prayer causes the verse to fail too, the imperfect verse causes the failure of the prayer, or both are distinct symptoms of the speaker's underlying spiritual insufficiency, the statement that the speaker's 'verse' is 'broken' poses a problem: what apparently 'breaks' the poetry is in fact the occasion for the composition of 'Deniall'. This stanza reveals a disjunction between the prayer that the poem is *about*, and the poem itself; untangling the two over the course of the poem is easier said than done.

Throughout the poem the act of prayer is depicted as both an emotional and a physical experience, as the heart, the knees, and the tongue are employed as metonyms for prayer: the speaker's "bent thoughts" disrupt their prayer by "benumm[ing]/ Both knees and heart"; the speaker laments that God should "give to dust a tongue/ To crie to thee,/ And then not heare it crying!", and

[2] cf. John Craig, 'Bodies at Prayer in Reformation England,' in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain,* pp. 173-196, pp. 184-88.

describes the sincerity of their prayer by the image that "all day long/ My heart was in my knee"; finally the poem closes with a plea to God to "cheer and tune my heartlesse breast". Over the course of the poem, these images move from the literal and physical – it is understandable that continuous praying should physically "benumme" the subject's 'knees and heart' – to the metonymic – to have one's "heart in [one's] knee" makes sense if the 'heart' is taken as a straightforward symbol of sincerity – to the more metaphysical – the speaker's final description of their spiritually 'disconnected' state as a "heartlesse breast". It seems that, as the speaker's spiritual distress heightens, the tight bonds between physical and spiritual reality, and between literal and metaphorical truths, become increasingly distorted.

'Deniall' ends as a prayer, in the final stanza's appeal to God to "cheer and tune my heartless breast... And mend my rhyme" – while the former stanzas, by contrast, give a narrative account of the past failure of the speaker's prayers. This shift from one speakerly perspective to another is represented also in the poem's form: in the first four stanzas, the final short dimeter line unbalances the rhyme scheme (turning a neat ABAB stanza into ABABC) and denotes the same sense of spiritual unsettledness that it formally performs ("And disorder"; "Of alarms"; "But no hearing"; "Discontented"); in the final stanza, however, this final line asks God to "mend my ryme", and in doing so does rhyme with the second and fourth lines of the stanza. That is to say that the poem seems to see its prayer granted in its final line. Veith, locating 'Deniall' among Herbert's "poems of desolation" concerned with God's silence or deafness to the speakers' prayers, sees the poem's formal resolution as an "intrusion of grace into the tumultuous or complacent human soul".[3] Poetic form and the working of the prayer are inextricable: both, seeking to understand the speaker's spiritual situation and to perform the prayer depicted, demand the sincere belief that is requisite in both prayer and poetic reading, attuned to formal significance and figurative language.

Throughout *The Temple* Herbert represents and discusses the experience of prayer, as an embodied, emotional and spiritual experience, that inherently coheres with the purpose and function of his poetry. The problem, faced by contemporary clergy and lay worshippers alike, of how prayer

[3] Veith, *Reformation Spirituality,* pp. 223, 52.

functions – or, as in the case of 'Deniall' and other poems, does not function – and how, as a bodily and spiritual act, it should be performed, is reflected compellingly in the difficulties Herbert and his speakers seem to have in representing and performing prayer in verse. As in prayer the human subject seeks to communicate with the divine through means that are physically embodied (in postures and gestures like kneeling, raising the eyes, clasping the hands, and vocal ejaculations, as well as the embodied experience of passions like the "fears", "disorder" and "alarms" of 'Deniall'), so in Herbert's poetry material and literary form are the means by which Herbert crafts a particular spiritual experience.

"My heart was in my knee": bodily gestures in prayer

As we have seen, for as much as early-seventeenth century English clergy could agree on the crucial importance of regular prayer, both public and private, there was vast disagreement about what specific acts might be considered necessary or permissible. Spiritual diaries, biographies, conversion narratives and funeral sermons attest to the variety of forms devotional and worship practice could take: kneeling, with arms crossed or hands clasped and head raised to heaven was undoubtedly the most common posture for the praying figure in depictions of prayer in images in printed books and in statuary, but it was certainly not uncommon to deviate from this relatively restricted posture.[4] Within *The Temple* we find depictions of these conventional gestures and postures of prayer, as in 'The Search' ("My knees pierce th'earth, mine eies the skie", *EP* 556), 'The Method' ("Then once more

[4] As well as the praying 'Pious Man' of Bayly's title-page (see p. 82 n.1), printed images include an image of David kneeling in prayer, hands clasped and eyes raised to God represented by a tetragrammaton in the clouds, in William Hunnis, *Seuen sobs of a sorrowfull soule for sinne* (London, 1597), sig. A4^{v}. Sir John Hayward, *The Sanctvarie of a troubled Sovle*, 3rd edn. (London, 1602) contains images of an apparently contemporary praying figure kneeling before a Bible open on his reading desk, again with eyes raised to a heavenly tetragrammaton, and hands clasped before him (p. 144), captioned by Psalm 50:15 ("Call vpon me in the day of tribulation I will deliuer thee, and thou shalt praise me"), as well as, immediately after the title-page, a far less formal prayer act: an old, bearded man, barefoot and clothed in rags, praying while sitting under a tree, hands in his lap, eyes again raised to heaven (sig. ¶2^{r}), captioned with Isaiah 26:16 ("They sought thee out, O Lord, in their afflictions, they powred out their prayer when thy correction was upon them."). Church monuments erected in the period regularly depict the deceased, often with their spouses and offspring, in prayer, usually kneeling with hands clasped before them, though often they are also represented lying back with hands still clasped in prayer, or reclining with Bible in hand: for funerary monuments' depictions of prayer acts, cf. Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c.1500-1800* (London: Reaktion, 1991), Ch. 5.

pray:/ Down with thy knees, up with thy voice", *EP* 467), and 'The Dawning' ("Take up thine eyes, which feed on earth;/ Unfold thy forehead gather'd into frowns", *EP* 399), as well as the less conventional: prostration in 'The Priesthood' ("I throw me at his feet.// There I will lie, until my Maker seek/ For some mean stuffe whereon to show his skill", *EP* 552); lowering of the eyes in 'Charms and Knots' ("Who looks on ground with humble eyes/ Findes himself there, and seeks to rise", *EP* 347); even 'striking' the altar in 'The Collar' (*EP* 526). Of course, *The Temple* is not a devotional handbook to be taken literally, but even these instances testify to the range of actions that may be accepted as part of the bodily performance of prayer. The godly minister Richard Rogers' "Direction vnto true happinesse", for instance, advises readers to undertake daily morning prayer, "solemnely vpon thy knees (and not as many doe, lazing vpon their Beds)". This suggests the apparent significance with which bodily discipline was invested as a sign and symbol of spiritual discipline, at the same time, as Ryrie points out, the very need for such a remonstration suggests that such 'lazy' practices were widespread.[5]

The Protestant demand for continuous prayer, the need for one's mind to be constantly attuned to the divine rather than to worldly concerns, means that prayer cannot be restricted to times and places where 'proper' postures and gestures are practicable: in his *Load-starr* John Norden reassures the reader that their prayer will be heard regardless of outward circumstances:

> if our prayer be faithfull he heareth vs, walking, working riding, sitting yea, and in our familiar talking, the minde may haue her affections in Heauen, the soule may cast forth certaine inward holy desires, and yet the bodie may be occupied in whatsoeuer lawful function.[6]

Norden is clear that the act of prayer is not tied to any particular bodily actions, though certain movements may facilitate it – he does concede that when not occupied by other tasks, "we must then conforme out gestures in a more reuerence, and more humble outward manner… giuing our holy desires best satisfaction in so sacred an exercise."[7] Ideally, this is to say, one should pray silently and alone, with appropriately "reuerend" and "humble" mien, though when occupied bodily by work and other duties, it is better to be praying mentally, rather than that the mind should be likewise caught up

[5] Richard Rogers, *A Garden of spirituall Flowers* (London, 1616), sigs. A2^{r}, F3^{r}; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 171.
[6] Norden, *Load-starr*, p. 222.
[7] ibid., p. 223.

in worldly concerns. But the underpinning logic is less clear: the aspiration toward external expressions of 'reverence' and 'humility', and the capacity of such gestures to 'give satisfaction' to the subject's "holy desires", deny any fundamental distinction between body and spirit, the latter dependent on the former for 'satisfaction'. The ambiguity of this concept speaks to the often ambivalent relationship between bodily and spiritual acts within contemporary conceptions of prayer.

As we have seen, the Church of England's 'official' stance on ceremonies, expressed in Cranmer's essay in the Book of Common Prayer (*BCP* 214-16), sees bodily gestures and postures' function as one of cognitive intensification or obstruction: 'stirring up' the worshipper's mind, or 'blinding', 'darkening' or 'confusing' them. Conceptually, this points to the same 'spiritual physiology' evident in contemporary treatments of the heart and vocal prayer: the 'spirits', physically constituting the individual's emotional and spiritual experience of the world, both material and immaterial, allow the human subject access to the divine. For early modern worshippers, this capacity to engage with the divine and immaterial through the corporeal body extended to less apparently 'spiritual' organs: even the knees could express and incite a spiritual experience.

In his 1618 manual *Abba Father* the Suffolk minister Elnathan Parr describes kneeling in prayer, as "a signe and a helpe of our humiliation": "as these, and the like gestures issue from the feruent desire of the heart, so they reflect vpon the soule, whose inuisible affections, by these visible actions are the more inflamed."[8] The emotional experience of prayer originates in the heart, and finds expression in the bowing of the knee; at the same time, this external "visible" action reflexively augments the spiritual affect of the prayer. Almost identical language is used by Henry Mason, a controversially anti-Calvinist minister and secretary to the Bishop of London, in a 1625 treatise defending the spiritual efficacy of fasting:

> Because the outward acts and behaviour of the body, as they come first from the heart, so they reflect vpon the heart againe, and there they doe increase and confirme that affection, from which they sprang… these motions of the body, as they had their first being from the affection of the soule, so they doe againe stirre vp the affection that bred them.[9]

[8] Elnathan Parr, *Abba Father: or, a plaine and short direction concerning priuate prayer* (London, 1618), p. 36.
[9] Henry Mason, *Christian Hvmiliation, or, A Treatise of Fasting* (London, 1625), pp. 41-42.

In the language of 'stirring', 'inflaming' and 'reflecting' that such descriptions use, the various physical analogies by which gesture in prayer may be understood suggests that the exact spiritual physiology of such actions is beyond literal signification, accessible only obliquely through the clarifying and intensifying power of metaphor.

This fundamentally metaphorical understanding of the function of the body in prayer makes it a fertile source of imagery and a means of expressing a spiritual condition for Herbert. In 'The Method', as we have seen, the speaker searches for a 'method' for effective prayer, scanning the sins 'written' on their heart; the solution the poem finds is to "once more pray:/ Down with thy knees, up with thy voice" (*EP* 467). This action, the poem suggests, both expresses the speaker's spiritual dissatisfaction, and performs the "seek[ing] pardon" the prayer aims at, renewing the speaker's apparently stalling relationship with God. Similarly, 'Businesse' presents a dialogue between two speakers – perhaps a catechistical questioner and a respondent, or a soul and their conscience –made up almost exclusively of questions; it ends, however, with the uncharacteristically definitive statement, "Who in heart not ever kneels,/ Neither sinne nor Saviour feels" (*EP* 404-05). To 'kneel in heart' will, the poem implies, make the 'kneeler' more receptive to both their own spiritual state and to salvation from Christ.

To 'kneel in heart' is a relatively common turn of phrase, frequently appearing in godly living manuals as well as confessions and statements of repentance, used in each case to denote how deeply-felt is the prayer being made.[10] The use of this expression, then, is not a poetic innovation on Herbert's part, and in fact reverses the speaker's lamentation in 'Deniall' that "My heart was in my knee,/ But no hearing" (*EP* 288). On one level, these phrases are interchangeable: both denote the

[10] For instance, Bishop of Bangor Lewis Bayly praises "that *crosse*, that draweth a sinner to come (vpon the knees of his heart) vnto *Christ*", *The Practice of Pietie*, p. 834; Sir Edward Dering's 'Prayer before the receiuing of the Sacrament' sees the speaker express their unworthiness of the sacrament as a "foule offender, which bowing the knees of my heart with all humilitie before thee, confess vnfainedly…", *Mr. Edward Dering, his godly private prayers for Christian families* (London, 1624), p. 236. One Charles Courtney, laments his sorrow for the innocent people hanged for his crimes, "for which I doe first most earnestly on the knees of my heartbegge forgiueness of the Lord", *The life, apprehension, arraignement, and execution of Charles Covrtney* (London, 1612), p. 5; in his confession for the murder of William Storr, Francis Cartwright "begge[s] and sue[s] for pardon of God the Father… vpon the knees of my heart", *The life, confession, and heartie repentance of Francis Cartwright, Gentleman for his bloudie sinne in killing of one Master Storr…* (London, 1621), sig. D3^{v}.

sincerity of the prayer, expressed in a physical performance that in turn redoubles the spiritual experience of the prayer. Precisely, the phrase in 'Businesse' demonstrates that 'kneeling' is synonymous with 'being humble'; so clearly understood is the meaning of the gesture performed physically that its meaning surpasses its physical performance, and can be carried out by the heart as well as the knee. Physical expression and performance of prayer shapes the spiritual experience as much as the spiritual state of the praying subject determines the physical performance of their prayer.

The language of poetry, able to move fluidly and often without clear delineation between literal and metaphorical modes of expression, and aiming to form a line of communication between the human and the divine, not only serves the same purpose as corporeally performed and spiritually effective prayer, but expresses the same reflexivity of body and spirit, the same difficulty of capturing in literal terms processes so rooted in figurative ways of thinking, acting and existing. Approaching the body not as a tool for action or an inescapable tie to worldly sin, as it is sometimes understood in the context of early modern religion, but as a language through which spiritual experiences can be expressed and roused, increasingly characterises early modern religious and secular discourse alike. For instance, Thomas Becon typifies early reformers' attitudes to the external gestures of prayer, dismissing them as "meane & indifferent thynges", which "are to be lefte to the iudgement of deuout & well disposed people, eyther to be done or to be left vndone, as their mindes shal serue the[m]".[11] To Becon, gestures are themselves without meaning, so emphatically so as to merit no more discussion than two lines in a 300-page treatise.

Mid-sixteenth century Reformers' treatment of the body was thus somewhat inconsistent with secular humanist attitudes. Thomas Wilson concludes his 1553 manual on *The Arte of Rhetorique* by advising us that

> the gesture of man, is the speache of his bodie… as we ought to haue good regarde for the vtteraunce of our words, so we ought to take hede that our gesture be comely, the whiche bothe being wel obserued, that increase fame and gette estimacion vniuersally.[12]

[11] Thomas Becon, *A Newe Pathway vnto Praier ful of much godly frute and christen knowledge* (London, 1542), sig. C1^{v}-C2^{r}.
[12] Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique, for the vse of all suche as are studious of Eloquence* (London, 1553), sig. Ggii^{r-v}.

Yet by the middle of the next century, these religious and secular attitudes to 'body language' had converged. In a 1637 treatise, then Bishop of Exeter Joseph Hall sees physical postures and gestures in prayer as an irresistible expression of internal devotion: "where the heart stoopes, it cannot be, but the knees must bend, the eyes and hands must be lift up; and the whole body will strive to testifie the inward veneration."[13] Bodily actions can 'testify' to spiritual realities; they are in their way eloquent.

"But no hearing": The failure of prayer

Bishop Hall's view of gestural and postural expression as being the instinctive bodily reaction to the emotional experience of heartfelt devotion corresponds with prevailing opinion about the function of gesture more widely. In his 1644 treatise on gesture, *Chirologia*, John Bulwer takes as fundamental the idea that an "ordinance of nature" underlies every bodily gesture; he sets the scope of the volume as "the declarative conceits of Gesture, whereby the Body, instructed by Nature, can emphatically vent, and communicate a thought".[14] Earlier in the century Thomas Wright expressed a similar idea in his discussion of the passions, advising his readers how they may diagnose a person's character and emotions from their outward mien, including their use of gestures: "The internall conceits and affections of our minds, are not only expressed with words, but also declared with actions… In discoursing, to vse no gestures, argueth slownesse; too much gesticulation commeth of lightnesse: mediocritie proceedeth from wisedome and grauitie; and if it be not too quicke, it noteth magnanimitie."[15]

This understanding of the function of gesture suggests a kind of 'body language', by which gestures and postures communicate the internal reality of the speaker as certainly and unambiguously as words. Discussions of the 'body language' of prayer agree that kneeling in prayer denotes humility and submission to God; lifting the eyes, the raising of the mind heavenward; raising the arms, abject

[13] Joseph Hall, *The Remedy of Prophaneness. Or, the true sight and feare of the Almighty A needful Tractate* (London, 1637), p. 112.
[14] John Bulwer, *Chirologia: or, The natural language of the hand, and Chironomia: or, The art of manual rhetoric*, ed. by James Cleary (London: Feffer & Simons, 1974), p. 15.
[15] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1601), pp. 124, 133.

deference to God. Yet the seamless transition guides such as Wright's make from 'reading' a subject's heartfelt emotions from their 'natural' gestures, to using gesture as a means of manipulating both one's own and one's addressee's emotions, suggests their greater rhetorical complexity. Gestures do not simply express emotion, but, like words, may be used artfully to control and shape the emotional experience of the user and those around them. Wright initially explains gesture's capacity to convey emotion by referring to comedies, "gestures in dancing", and the "Orations" of "Rhetoricians", all highly artful constructions of verbal and 'body' language; the 'natural' order that lies behind earnest use of gestures is all but inseparable from more artificial manipulation of emotions – and therefore of devotion – by artful users.

This need not pose an immediate problem to worshippers: preachers' use of gesture to maintain and direct their congregation's attention during the sermon was the subject of many *Ars Praedicandi* handbooks.[16] Herbert himself enjoins the country parson to use "all possible art" in his preaching, "both by earnestnesse of speech… and by a diligent, and busy cast of his eye upon his auditors… and with a particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich" (Hutchinson 232-33). Elsewhere in *The Country Parson*, Herbert discusses the parson's gestures in his own prayers in similar terms: he must "compose… himselfe to all possible reverence: lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may expresse a hearty, and unfeyned devotion"; this is not for the sake of the parson's "hearty, and unfeyned devotion" alone, but rather "as presenting with himself the whole Congregation… that being first affected himself, hee may affect also his people" (Hutchinson 231). An awareness of how gestures might be legible to others leads ultimately to a performance of gesture explicitly *for* these onlookers.

Here the use of gestures in prayer begins to pose a problem for early modern worshippers. Understanding that kneeling showed humility and raising the eyes signified attention on God by no means guaranteed that anybody kneeling or raising their eyes was truly humble and unconcerned with worldly things. Anxieties about and castigations of hypocrisy in worship abound in discussions of

[16] cf. Kate Armstrong, 'Sermons in Performance', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. by Hugh Adlington, Peter McCullough and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp. 120-36, pp. 122-29.

gesture and posture in worship. Wright chastises those who "scarce thinke they doe pray, except they wrie and wrest their neckes; which, either commeth of hypocrisie, superstition, or foolishnesse".[17] Bulwer describes "hypocrites, [who] as if fired with *zeal*, extend their arms and hands, who yet but mock God by seeming to draw *nigh* unto him when their hearts belie their hands".[18] John Norden is most scathing:

> Man may deceive man, not onely by visible actions of earthly and worldly deuises, but euen in spirituall exercises; for they may seeme… to pray, because they may be seene to kneele at a piller to lift vp the eies, to strike the breste, and to moue the hand and the lips, as if they were deuout: And yet may their hearts be full of gall and bitternes, and their affections be set (like *Demas*) vpon the world and worldly things, wherin God is not deceiued.[19]

Using the gestures and postures of prayer, far from guaranteeing effective prayer, can be a form of deception. The correspondence of 'body language' and the verbal language allows not just communication and interpretation, but also the human capacity to lie.

But no onlooker studies the gestures and the sincerity of an individual's prayers more than the individual worshipper themselves. Self-surveillance, and close monitoring of one's own emotional experience within prayer, was part of daily life for the early modern Protestant, as surviving spiritual diaries attest. Effie Botonaki surveys numerous seventeenth-century devotional guides which foreground the importance of spiritual self-examination.[20] Presbyterian minister Richard Rogers advises his reader to

> looke backe to the workes of the day, how we haue passed it, that where we haue had blessings, we may be thankfull, and proceede in the like course after: where we haue faulted and failed, we may reconcile our selues to God, and so lye downe in peace.[21]

As well as continually taking stock of their blessings and their sins, the believer must monitor their emotions; as we have seen, an absence of emotions, a 'dullness' or 'stony' heart, is frequently lamented by those who experience it in diaries and other forms of life-writing.[22] At the same time,

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[17] Wright, *Passions*, p. 133.
[18] Bulwer, *Chirologia*, p. 23.
[19] Norden, *Load-star*, pp. 43-44.
[20] Effie Botonaki, 'Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen's Spiritual Diaries: Self-Examination, covenanting, and account keeping', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30.1 (Spring 1999), pp. 3-21.
[21] Richard Rogers, *Seuen treatises containing such direction as is gathered out of the Holie Scriptures…* (London, 1603), p. 335.
[22] See above, pp. 70-73.

believers were primed to constantly take note of their fellow worshippers' actions in prayer – either to be led on by their example of sincere devotion, or to look out for signs of hypocrisy and superstition.

These various acts of compulsive monitoring, both reflexive and of others, must ultimately fall into the gap opened by the disjunction between the external performance of prayer in bodily gestures and verbal utterances, and the prayer's spiritual effect. On the one hand, subjects concerned about their waning emotional engagement in prayer or about apparently unanswered petitions could redouble their efforts at sanctioned outward performances of prayer, hoping that these would 'stir up' the appropriate emotions; at the same time, however, use of gestures without the appropriate spiritual and emotional source was hypocritical, an act of deception that would distance the worshipper from God. The performance, experience and efficacy of prayer are connected in ways that are complex and even contradictory.

It is unsurprising, then, that in poems in which Herbert represents the act of prayer, he should portray most often specifically a *failed* act of prayer. We have already seen how, in 'Deniall', Herbert's speaker expresses the despair of a subject whose prayer, despite its deep sincerity and the resolute discipline of its embodied performance, finds no purchase with its divine interlocutor. The opening stanzas reveal the speaker as the very worldling that Norden so castigates: though they maintain that "my heart is in my knee", yet "My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,/ Did flie asunder". Attuned to the fine distinctions between the performance of prayer in body, heart, mind and soul, we can see how Herbert's speaker came to this position: their wayward "thoughts" leave the "heart broken" and the "breast… full of fears/ And disorder" – that is, derailing the prayer entirely; with the heart unable to engage properly with the task of prayer, it may perform the outward actions "all day long", but will never be effective. At the same time, these outward performances of prayer, thanks to the stubborn worldliness of the speaker's thoughts, serve only to "benumme/ Both knees and heart": far from redirecting their thoughts to proper spiritual matters, 'stirring up' the heart to properly perform the prayer, these outward acts only amplify the problem.

Yet, as noted above, there is an inherently paradoxical relationship between Herbert's poetry and his speakers' prayers. In 'Deniall', as in 'The Search' and 'Longing', the speaker's inability to

pray effectively is the occasion for the verse itself; had their speakers' prayers been performed properly and granted, they would have occasioned an entirely different poem *thanking* God for his blessings. That the 'denial' of the speaker's prayers ultimately generates other spiritual work in the form of the poems is again reflective of the early modern Protestant experience: as Botonaki shows, the apparent failure of prayer or spiritual engagement regularly occasions some form of writing, often in spiritual diaries, in an attempt to undertake serious reflection and make sense of the divine snub.[23] For Herbert's speaker, their prayer's 'denial' is resolved only in the composition of the poem, which takes the form of, but also requires further, prayer-like appeal to God; the poem is both an alternative to and a remedy for the previous failed prayer.

By contrast, this pattern is effectively reversed in 'The Method' (*EP* 466-67). Again, the occasion of the verse is God's 'refusal' of the speaker's prayer, and the search for the "rub" or "discontent,/ Which cools his will". Where in 'Deniall' poetic composition emerges over the course of the poem as the solution to the speaker's problem, here it is central in the opening line: "Poore heart, lament". As we have seen, the 'narrative' of the poem consists of the speaker's 'reading' the various sins and inattentions that have weakened God's favour, and finding the inner perseverance that will enable them to turn again to God ("*Late when I would have something done,/ I had a motion to forbear,/ Yet I went on*."). The solution is further prayer: "Then once more pray:/ Down with thy knees, up with thy voice." The speaker is inattentive in prayer – "*Yesterday/ I did behave me carelesly,/ When I did pray*" – and pays insufficient attention to the emotional experience – "should Gods eare/ To such indifferents chained be,/ Who do not their own motions heare?" – but still, the speaker resolves, their redoubled efforts in bodily performed prayer ("Down with thy knees, up with thy voice") will rouse something within them to ensure efficacy.

To a modern reader, the speaker's confidence in the final lines of 'The Method' seems questionable: their assertion that "Seek pardon first, and God will say,/ *Glad heart rejoyce*" seems not to be convincingly supported by the rest of the poem, which details only the speaker's human failings and the halting progress of their logic ("Thy Father *could*/ Quickly effect, what thou dost move;/ For

[23] Botonaki, 'Spiritual Diaries', p. 11.

he is *Power*: and sure he *would*;/ For he is *Love*"). There is an element of tragic irony here, as the reader is aware of the futility of the speaker's efforts to court a God of whose attention they are unworthy. However, for contemporary readers this would have been a deeply, personally, familiar situation; the sort of textual spiritual self-examination to which early modern believers were accustomed would certainly lead to the conclusion that efforts in prayer should be redoubled. Yet the prayer that is enjoined remains beyond the scope of 'The Method', and its success is ambiguous – as the continuous task of self-examination and self-improvement in prayer would remain for the early modern praying subject.

In 'The Search' too we find a speaker lamenting God's rejection of their prayers: "Whither, O, whither art thou fled,/ My Lord, my Love?... My knees pierce th'earth, mine eies the skie;/ And yet the sphere/ And centre both to me denie/ That thou art there" (*EP* 556-57). As these lines suggest, the speaker's central concern in the poem is with the uncrossable distance between themself and God; the image of the speaker kneeling on the ground and looking at the sky invokes the gestures for their commonplace signification – to suggest the humble submission of the praying subject and their spiritual focus on heaven – but in the context of 'The Search' this serves not to emphasise the power of sincere prayer, but to embody the speaker's insufficiency on a divine scale: what are they, a single human figure, kneeling humbly on the ground, against the whole "sphere/ And centre" of the universe? The poem not only deploys, but subverts, the gestural 'language' of prayer, fundamentally questioning the basis of its signification and use.

The uncertain basis of the speaker's understanding of the world built on figurative symbols and turns of phrase is exposed and exploited across the poem. The speaker is confident in their understanding of the physical world – how "herbs below/ Grow green and gay" and "starres above/ Simper and shine" – but envies the way both seem unthinkingly to have access to God, while they "decay" and "pine". The speaker feels their insufficiency by comparison with these natural phenomena, but the divine blessing of the stars and the herbs only exists in the speaker's interpretation: "As if to meet thee they did know"; "As having keyes unto thy love". Throughout the poem, the speaker's metaphors are mixed and mutable: their "sighs" are "Wing'd like an arrow", but

like music can be "tun'd… Into a grone". The instability of the terms on which they understand the world exposes the problems they face in prayer: having dilated on the progress of their prayer as 'sighs' and 'grones', compared to arrows and music, ground trodden extensively by poems like 'Sion', 'Artillerie' and, of course, 'Deniall', the speaker laments bathetically that "all was one", and turns to seek the emphatically indefinite "some new fabrick". The speaker continues to search for vehicles of comparison and figurative understanding by which to comprehend and therefore communicate with God.

The limits of this comprehension seem to be reached in phrases like "Thy will such a strange distance is", apparently denying any material basis by which this 'distance' can be comprehended – but the stanza continues and instead employs the metaphysical commonplace of impossible geography to make this "strange distance" figuratively, if not literally, comprehensible:

> Thy will such a strange distance is,
> As that to it
> East and West touch, the poles do kisse,
> And parallels meet.[24]

As the speaker's chosen image – that of physical distance as a means to express the subject's spiritual 'distance' from God – becomes more pronounced, the use of other imagery does not abate: within the three stanzas following this, the speaker invokes a trial ("Lord, see my case"; "Be not Almightie… Against, but for me"), music ("take these barres, these lengths away"), and weaponry ("What edge so keen,/ What point so piercing can appeare/ To come between?"). These fields of imagery frequently overlap – "barres" applying to both musical notation and prison 'bars'; a weapon's point and a musical note both being "piercing". The resultant effect is of a subject grasping frenetically at something beyond its comprehension; the proliferation of images by which the speaker attempts to access God stands in ironic contrast with God's capacity, calmly reached in the poem's final line, to "Mak[e] two one". The image of the speaker praying, using everyday gestural symbolism, from the poem's opening, gathers momentum into the crescendo of colliding imagery in its closing lines, but

[24] Compare e.g. Donne's 'Hymn to God, my God, in my Sickness': "As west and east/ In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,/ So death doth touch the resurrection." *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, ed. by Robin Robbins (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 610.

the extent to which this figurative outpouring illuminates or obscures the divine subject is never quite made explicit.

"Not as himself alone": Gesture and communal prayer

If the early modern English Church can be seen to develop an awareness that the bodily acts performed in devotion can themselves be spiritually efficacious without necessarily being superstitious, a particularly Protestant scriptural emphasis can often be detected in treatments of the same. Scripture justifies a range of individual gestures: for instance, Solomon stretching his arms towards heaven (1 Kings 8:22); Peter and Paul kneeling (Acts 9:40, 20:36); and the tax collector beating his breast (Luke 18:13). By performing the same physical gestures as their biblical predecessors, English worshippers claim a succession from these figures, membership of community in the timeless Church that is formed by bodily and textual means. Bodily acts of worship and the scriptures both knit together a Church that is the immaterial community of all believers – and both, significantly, render the individual subject a kind of legible text on which they themselves and others may read their membership of the Church and their spiritual state.

The writers who pointed to scripture most pervasively to justify meaningful gestural expressions in prayer largely did so polemically, in order to defend the necessity of conformity to officially sanctioned forms of worship, which were increasingly disputed by non-conformists. For instance, Robert Whittle, minister at East Malling in Kent, lists the numerous Bible verses that feature prayer being performed by kneeling, raising the hands, looking up to heaven, or standing, before concluding,

> But notwithstanding this diuersity of gesture in praying… in publique, wee are to conforme our selues to the same gesture which is vsed in the Church where we liue; lest, vsing a gesture different from that which is receiued, and vsed in the Church, wee giue occasion of offence. [25]

[25] Robert Whittle, *The vvay to the Celestiall Paradise. Declaring how a Sinner may be saued, and come to life euerlasting* (London, 1620), pp. 342-43.

Whittle, like Cranmer in 'Of Ceremonies', points to Paul's order to "Let all things be done decently, and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Where, writing in the 1540s, Cranmer is concerned with excising traditional 'disorderly' worship in a Church characterised by a disparate array of regional liturgies, for Whittle, writing against the early-seventeenth century anti-ceremonial non-conformists, supporting 'order' is not a question of pruning away old forms of worship, but of ensuring their continuity. To put no stock by conformity, Whittle argues, is not to be virtuously unconcerned with indifferent externals, but "vnseemliness, and disorder"; the "offence" that non-conformity causes outweighs any virtue of individual expression, or indeed the positive power of conformity itself.

Certainly, the social function of the bodily performance of prayers cannot be underestimated. Whittle himself makes the clear distinction between private and public prayer in his argument – "a Christian hath more libertie for his gesture in priuate", he concedes, before focusing on the need for conformity in public worship. The power of performing liturgical worship together, in words and in the bodily actions prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, is what constitutes the congregational community. As John Wall points out, "At the heart of the Church of England is not intellectual assent to a specific doctrinal position but the entering into something *done*."[26] This is true semantically as well as conceptually: 'liturgy', of course, means 'public work', and the Church of England's worship as defined by the Book of Common Prayer is a greater concern the majority of its clergy and worshippers than more minute theological points, as exemplified by Whittle's easy turn from the scriptural precedents for given devotional practices to the necessity of liturgical conformity.

Herbert himself is firmly in line with this communal emphasis, particularly in 'The Church-porch'. In this preparatory rite of a poem, the priestly speaker promotes collective worship over private or domestic devotion: "Leave thy six and seven;/ Pray with the most: for where most pray, is heaven" (*EP* 61). He goes on to instruct the reader in how to conduct themselves in the church:

> When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
> God is more there, then thou: for thou art there
> Onely by his permission. Then beware,

[26] John Wall, *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 11.

> And make thy self all reverence and fear.
> Kneeling ne're spoil'd silk stocking: quit thy state.
> All equal are within the churches gate.

The specific injunctions to bare-headedness and kneeling are well within the realm of Anglican orthodoxy. Herbert's vision of conformity, however, differs from more polemical treatments in serving to shore up not the authority of the church, but the equality and identity of its members: "All equal are within the churches gate". That this is expressed by the intimate image of a stocking on a bended knee reveals the triviality of the concerns that might distract one from proper, heart-in-the-knee worship. But the sharp rebuke this line leads to – "quit thy state" – is one that any parochial preacher might have addressed to his parish in the early seventeenth century; visitation articles and injunctions of the period, as well as presentments at consistory court sessions, regularly attest to the scourge of prominent parishioners arriving late to services to broadcast their importance within the parish, thereby inconveniently disturbing worship.[27]

Elsewhere in *The Temple,* we have seen how imagery of the body associated with prayer is essentially ambiguous: the language of 'knees', 'hearts' and 'voices' operating as one might be interpreted as a metaphysical conceit to represent prayer in abstract or figurative terms, or as a literal, physiological representation of the way the body at prayer functions. In 'The Church-porch', the dense metaphysical imagery of much of the rest of the volume is absent, and instead the speaker's initiatory instructions are articulated in aphorisms; the structure of the stanzas, consisting of ABAB quatrains followed by a summarising rhyming couplet enacts the admonitory tone and function of the verse.

Yet for all that this verse form seems to work to simplify the speaker's advice, it is not without ambiguity: the moralising, aphoristic tone serves to generalise what is said, extending it from direct advice to the addressee to universal advice to all of Herbert's readers, and this generalising movement poses an interpretative problem. In the stanza on preaching, for instance, the advice to "Judge not the

[27] For instance, Bishop William Chaderton's articles for the Diocese of Lincoln inquire "whether hath any in your parish disturbed the service or sermon by walking, talking, or any other way, or departed out of the church during the service or sermon without some urgent cause;" Archbishop George Abbot asks in his 1612 articles for the Diocese of Gloucester, "who come late to church, and depart from church, before service be done upon said daies." cf. Fincham, ed.,*Visitation Articles… of the Early Stuart Church,* pp. 77, 104.

preacher" is clearly literal; to "not grudge/ To pick out treasures from an earthen pot", clearly metaphorical. Yet the earlier stanza on behaviour in church is more ambiguous: the instruction to "be bare", if referring to bare-headedness for male worshippers, is literal; but it is more difficult to say whether "Kneeling ne're spoiled silks stocking" would likely be a real injunction directed at worshippers. Kneeling, as we have seen, was part of a range of entirely unsuspect gestures in prayer for most English worshippers.[28] Unlike late entry into services, documented cases of refusal to kneel seem to have been more often an expression of active non-conformity than a lack of 'reverence'.[29] This line, therefore, uses the act of kneeling in prayer as a shorthand for 'reverence' in general, rather than pertaining necessarily to the performance of prayer itself.

It is worth looking more closely at what this represents in terms of the signification of gesture in prayer. Kneeling in prayer is frequently justified as part of a 'natural' 'language' of gesture: John Bulwer's "ordinance of nature" that defines the relationship between inward emotion and outward bodily expression is understood as a particularly potent force in religious worship. In his *Defence of the Liturgie of the Church of England*, Ambrose Fisher similarly asserts that "it is a *Dictate of nature*" that "*kneeling* is a *gesture* agreeable to *Gods worship*: But to doe this before *the idol of Iupiter*… that is only prohibited as idolatrous."[30] Later he clarifies: "Kneeling in praier is but humane, though it signifie reuerence to God."[31] The 'natural' correspondence between the feeling of reverence and the act of kneeling makes the gesture significant as a sign of internal emotion and of the active choice of the faithful to express this reverence to God – a combination of the internal and instinctive, and the external and purposeful, that we have seen caused anxiety in worshippers.

In this line in 'The Church-porch', then, Herbert assumes the way that gesture is understood to function – as an outward action that expresses inner piety – and deploys it in an aphoristic context: 'kneeling' here functions as a metonymic representation of the 'reverence' of true piety, precisely

[28] Of course, kneeling to receive communion is, by contrast, highly controversial – but without any reference to the sacrament in this stanza, it cannot be read as concerning communion.
[29] cf. Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 327 on one James Howell's adoption of unorthodox postures in services to express his spiritual fervency.
[30] Ambrose Fisher, *A Defence of the Liturgie of the Church of England, or, Booke of Common Prayer In a dialogue between Nouatus and Irenaeus* (1630), p. 4.
[31] ibid., p. 42.

because of this 'natural' gestural 'language'. The worshipper depicted in this stanza exists to be interpreted both within the poem, as the purely hypothetical, metonymic subject of a moralising couplet, and as the praying subject whose actions and emotions would be monitored closely for sincerity on their own part, and by fellow worshippers in everyday worship. As the aphoristic construction of 'The Church-porch' turns an otherwise personal, intimate image into a universal moral, to be read, internalised and used by the larger community of readers of *The Temple*, in the same way the practice of collective worship itself makes the individual worshipper open to communal interpretation, to some extent even given meaning by this collective and reflexive interpretation. Both individual acts of devotion and communal identity alike make the pray-er an object of interpretation and an interpreting subject; Herbert's use of poetic language and forms enables a representation of this complex collective subjectivity of early modern prayer.

"Cheere and tune my heartlesse breast": Prayer, gesture and poetry

Whether they were using gestures and postures in prayer, or consciously avoiding them, early modern worshippers daily performed devotion that carried significance through its embodied form, and engaged with the interpretative processes that determined the symbolic, figurative or physiological means by which these performances held meaning. Herbert's poetry, which uses imagery so centrally and in such flexible ways, is naturally equipped to address these questions, corresponding as it does with prayer's essential attempt to transcend the apparently irreconcilable oppositions of human and divine, material and immaterial, spiritual and worldly, and to bring the unknowable and divine within the restrictive compass of human comprehension.

The fundamental impossibility of such a task is reflected, as we have seen, in the conscious insufficiency Herbert sees in his imagery, metaphysical conceits stretched beyond their breaking point within the 'narrative' of his prayer-poems. Yet at the same time, the very figurative quality of such poetic expression, not tied to literal representation, allows it to communicate a truth beyond the merely literal. That metaphor may suggest some kind of 'truth' even where what is being represented

is not clear speaks to an experience of prayer that is effective as a form of spiritual discipline even when its petitions are not granted; like the perseverance that gives the prayer of 'The Method' its power, accepting the value of metaphorical 'truth' involves relinquishing the hope of literal truth or the prayer's requests being directly met, and instead accepting something beyond the remit of human desires and literal understanding.

Gestural and postural performance of prayer is a form of bodily action which both performs and invites this kind of symbolic interpretation of the praying subject; at the same time it is understood as being itself in some way transformative or performative, 'stirring up' the proper devotional experience in the mind of the pray-er and the onlooker alike. Such actions again invite comparison with devotional writing: recent work on early modern devotional reading and writing habits has shown how the composers of devotional commonplace books, notebooks and other works that transcribed or discussed scripture often did so both for their own use, in compiling and in reading the text, and for a presumed or imagined future readership.[32] Devotional writing and the bodily performance of prayer share correspondences in performance and effect, and in what they can tell us about an early modern Protestant subjectivity that was fundamentally disjointed in conceiving itself at once as subject and object in its devotional action.

Moreover, if the gestural language of prayer – signifying humility, submission and dependence – serves to embody a particular kind of social relationship between the subject and God, this can also be inferred from the distinct gestural language that is used of devotional and scriptural texts, both within and beyond *The Temple*. The manuscript of Lancelot Andrewes' *Preces Privatae*, which itself recommends a forms of devotion involving much physical expression in apposite gestures and postures, is described by its editor as being "slubber'd with His pious hands, and water'd with His penitential tears", which "glorious deformitie" could not but convince the beholder "*That Book* belonged to no other then pure and Primitive Devotion".[33] Like heartfelt kneeling in prayer, the marks of handling and crying on the book are both signs of Andrewes' own sincerity in composing

[32] Narveson, *Bible Readers*, Ch. 4.
[33] Richard Drake, 'To the Christian Reader', in *A Manual of the Private Devotions and Meditations of the Right Reverend Father in God, Lancelot Andrews, Late Lord Bishop of Winchester* (London, 1648), sigs. A8^{v}-A9^{r}.

and using the text, but also themselves examples by which the reader might be roused to greater devotion, like an onlooker stirred by the fervency of their fellow worshipper's performance of prayer. The material book is therefore directly comparable in function to the praying body: both are material objects whose meaning is actively crafted and interpreted by its author and its user, and which by their material form thereby manifest a particular devotional state in both parties, and a relationship between the two.

For Herbert this sense of writing as a kind of meaningful, and meaning-making, bodily performance akin to gesture is expressed most powerfully in 'Providence' (*EP* 416-21). Most of the poem is given over to an extended paean to God's titular beneficence, providing in creation everything that man, and the natural world more widely, need to thrive, but in its opening and closing stanzas Herbert reflects on the purpose of his verse within a universal ecology of praise. From the beginning, writing is represented as a kind of divinely ordained impulse for the speaker: "shall I write,/ And not of thee, though whom my fingers bend/ To hold my quill?". God, by making writing possible, and even impelling the speaker to write, is the rightful addressee of the speaker's praise. Significantly, their fingers "bend" to hold the quill – recalling the submissive act of 'bending' the knee which is so universal in prayer. Writing as an expression of praise is directly comparable to the gestural expression of prayer in embodying a social relationship of submission between speaker and God.

The poem goes on to locate man precisely within a hierarchy of creation, in which God's munificence is bestowed on nature, and in return praise is expressed by all creatures, channelled specifically through the speaker's composition:

> Of all the creatures both in sea and land
> Onely to Man thou hast made known thy wayes,
> And put the penne alone into his hand,
> And made him Secretarie of thy praise.

The idea of humanity as a "Secretarie" of nature is a striking one, and not one that was commonplace in contemporary understanding of the natural world; early modern treatments of the subject, drawing on God's command to Adam to "have dominion over" the rest of creation (Genesis 1:26, 28), were

more likely to see man as master or steward of nature than as its scribe.[34] As Herbert sees it, it is man's bodily abilities as well as his spiritual favour with God that places him in this position:

> Beasts fain would sing; birds dittie to their notes;
> Trees would be tuning on their native lute
> To thy renown: but all their hands and throats
> Are brought to Man, while they are lame and mute.

Birds, animals and even plants rely on man's ability to write to express their praise of God. 'Hands' appear repeatedly across the poem, suggesting the multiplicity of purposes to which different elements of creation are put ("The trees say, Pull me: but the hand you stretch,/ Is mine to write, as it is yours to raise"), and the variety of gestural language: God's hands express both power ("For either thy *command*, or thy *permission*/ Lay hands on all: they are thy *right* and *left*") and fatherly tenderness ("Tempests are calm to thee; they know thy hand,/ And hold it fast, as children do their fathers"). Hands are man's to write in praise to God, and God's to manifest his power over and love for his creation. This multivalence makes the reader's interpretative intervention in the poem more visible and significant, making the act of writing directly comprehensible as a kind of devotional gesture, an action which manifests a relationship between man and God, and which invites interpretation as to its meaning.

This understanding is made more explicit still in the poem's final stanzas. As other beings though in "sev'rall wayes", "in their being joyn" to praise God, so the speaker vows to "give thee praise/ In all my other hymnes, but in this twice". Each living thing praises God both actively – like birds' singing or trees' putting forth fruit, as the earlier stanza suggests – and in their "being" itself; the poem likewise expresses the speaker's praise in its content, but also in its very material form, which multiplies its capacity for praise in its readers' repetition of the praise it inscribes. This is reinforced in the following stanza:

> Each thing that is, although in use and name
> It go for one, hath many wayes in store
> To honour thee; and so each hymne thy fame
> Extolleth many wayes, yet this one more.

[34] cf. Peter Harrison, 'Subduing the Earth: Genesis 1, early modern science, and the exploration of nature', *The Journal of Religion* 79.1 (Jan 1999), pp. 86-109, p. 87.

The distinction drawn in the first line of this stanza between "use and name" of given items reflects the duality in the function of significant gestures that we have seen across this chapter: that in its performance; and that in its interpretation, by the performer or by outside beholders. "Each thing", the speaker declares, has a distinct "use and name", though they are understood as one, and together serve to multiply the actual "wayes" they can perform devotion. "Each hymne", by the similar ability of poetic expression to "multiply" accessible forms of meaning to the reader, "extolleth many wayes", but, as the syntactically ambiguous final clause of the poem tell us, "this one more". The immediacy of "this one" suggests, ambiguously, both the immediate material presence of the poem in the reader's hands, and the immediate devotional act of reading the poem. In both senses this moves the function of the poem from the speaker's declaration to the reader's reception of it; each reading rehearses the act of praise and therefore adds "one more" voice to the universal praise the speaker describes. Material form and its reading both carry meaning, whether bodied forth in physical acts of devotion or in poetic expression, in ways that multiply as they are variously performed and 'read'.

We have seen extensively how Herbert explored the parallels between prayer and his devotional poetry, as channels of communication between God and the human subject, where human words attempt to reach beyond the scope of the human, yet remaining rooted in intimate, embodied elements of the devotional experience. The gestural 'language' of prayer allows Herbert to explore the human task of prayer explicitly, and in particular the way embodied performance of prayer opens the praying subject up to the judgement – the 'reading' – of fellow worshippers, making even apparently individual prayer a communal, participatory experience. Similarly, Herbert's depiction of prayer in his poems invites his readers to externally observe but also participate in the experience of the poem. The practice of prayer shapes early-seventeenth century Protestant subjectivity as something that faces inward and outward, as both solitary and collective, and this is reflected in the poetic experience of *The Temple*.

Part Two: The Church Building

"All show'd the builders, crav'd the seers care": Building sacred space in *The Temple*

When Herbert's speaker opens 'The Crosse' by asking, "What is this strange and uncouth thing?" (*EP* 563), the question seems to refer to the troubled situation the speaker finds themselves in, spiritually speaking – "in all a weak disabled thing", "the fee/ Of all [their] woes another wo". Yet it might equally be asked of the poem, or at least of the 'cross' it takes as its subject. The term's multivalence is compelling: scripturally, it suggests Christ's cross, and thereby both his saving sacrifice and by analogy human suffering more broadly ("Much wrastling, many a combate"); as the symbol of Christianity, it manifests the demands and rewards of faith; most prominently within the poem, it suggests the individual struggles of self-contradiction and self-doubt ("These contrarieties crush me"). The cross is also the usual shape of the parish church, itself due to the cross's symbolic potency.

In its essential ambiguity, 'The Crosse' participates in this polysemic discourse that is at the centre of how early modern worshippers experienced their physical and emotional worlds. As we have seen, the emotional life of the early modern Protestant was one of constant self-scrutiny and self-regulation, forensically interpreting their emotional responses for signs of salvation or reprobation. No less pressing was the demand to interpret the physical world they inhabited for signs of God's providential intervention, and typological instructive resonances with scripture embodied in the contemporary world. In particular, the parish church was a space constructed for the active interpretation of its users, its architectural and liturgical arrangement manifesting the ecclesiastical debates over form and function of worship that characterised the early modern English Church. The material world at large, the parish church in particular, and most acutely the human subject who experiences them, might all be questioned with the speaker's opening salvo, "What is this strange and uncouth thing?".

The poem opens on an abrupt, dislocating question; the indefinite language of "things" throughout the poem, referring to the speaker ("I am in all a weak disabled thing"), the conditions of

their spiritual endeavours ("things sort not to my will"), or God's intervention in their life ("Thou turnest th'edge of all things on me still"), as well as to the indeterminate "strange and uncouth thing" of the opening line, points to the inescapable troubling nature of the material world of 'things' as the speaker experiences them. The nature of the speaker's 'cross' is a moving target, able to be pinned down only to the extent of being a "thing", something experienced materially in the world. Fundamentally the poem seems to express an inescapable human state of uncertainty, continually attempting to understand the world and one's spiritual condition through intellectual, emotional and embodied means: "To make me sigh, and seek, and faint, and die".

When Herbert was presented as prebendary at Leyton Ecclesia (now Leighton Bromswold) in Huntingdonshire in 1626, he quickly began overseeing rebuilding work at the church, and the spiritual struggle expressed by the speaker of 'The Crosse' resonates with this effort. Izaak Walton, in his biography of Herbert, describes his appointment at Leighton as "a fit occasion to shew that piety and bounty that was derived from his generous mother, and his other memorable ancestors"; similarly, the speaker of 'The Crosse' hopes that "all my wealth, and familie might combine/ To set thy honour up, as our designe". In this undertaking, the speaker reports "much delay,/ Much wrastling, many a combate"; Walton describes Herbert "restless till he saw [the building work] finished", his mother begging him to give up the task, since "it is not for your weak body, and empty purse, to undertake to build Churches".[1] 'The Crosse' depicts an act of devotion that is as all-encompassing and stressful as the renovation project at Leighton is depicted by Walton.

The act of church-building resonates compellingly with the emotion turmoil depicted in 'The Crosse'. As Amy Charles notes, the rebuilding works at Leighton were ongoing, with Herbert committed to them long after he had taken up his permanent benefice in Bemerton, and even charging his friend Arthur Woodnoth to take on the responsibility for fundraising and overseeing the restoration works after his death.[2] In this light, the picture of continued striving, delayed fulfilment and the threat of one's inescapable inadequacy that permeate the poem speak to Herbert's own

[1] Walton, Izaak, 'Life of Mr George Herbert', pp. 277-80.
[2] Amy Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 151-52, 174-81.

documented struggle to maintain the repair of the church at Leighton: "this deare end,/ So much desired, is giv'n, to take away/ My power to serve thee". These are, of course, experiences with which Herbert is concerned throughout *The Temple*; and, as throughout the volume, this spiritual and emotional striving also bears the weight of Herbert's own devotional poetic endeavours: "some place, where I might sing,/ And serve thee" is at once the church building fit for worship, the spiritual space of the devoted believer, and *The Temple* itself, 'serving' God through its speakers' song. The balance the poem strikes between biographical specificity to Herbert's life, overseeing building works at Leighton and composing *The Temple*, and universality in the speaker's emotional experience, is a mark not only of Herbert's skill, but the fundamental resonances between these, and other kinds of, practical endeavours to render one's spiritual devotion in material form.

In *The Temple* as in the life of an early modern worshipper, the church building both shapes and reflects the beliefs and worship practices of its parishioners or readers. The positioning of the altar, the prominence of the pulpit, the paintings or text that adorn the walls, and the forms and arrangement of parishioners' seating all materially affect how parishioners experience the church building and undertake worship, enforcing the prioritising variously of preaching, prayer or sacrament, and visual, vocal or aural piety.[3] Reformation theology can be read in the major changes to church interiors over the sixteenth century: replacement of altars with wooden communion tables, and the greater prominence of pulpits and reading desks, prioritises preaching over performing the sacrament in services; the replacement of medieval wall-paintings with the Lord's Prayer, Decalogue and other scriptural phrases enforces the logocentrism and resistance to image-centred worship Reformers promoted; fixed seating in churches restricts the possibility of movement during services and enforces closer attention to the read and preached Word.[4]

[3] cf. Yates, *Liturgical Space*, Ch. 4.

[4] Notably, Walton describes how Herbert himself, in his renovation of St Mary's at Leighton, installed a pulpit and a reading desk of equal height, that "should neither have a precedency or priority of the other; but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren, and have an equal honour and estimation" (Walton, 'Life', p. 277). On the decoration of churches, cf. David Brett, *The Plain Style: Protestant theology in the history of design* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2004), pp. 49-51; on the meaningful use of pulpits, cf. Emma Rhatigan, 'Preaching Venues: Architecture and Auditories', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. by Hugh Adlington, Peter McCullough and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp. 87-116. On church seating's role in shaping the experience of worship, cf. Christopher Marsh,

In addition to shaping worship practices, and with them worshippers' spiritual lives, the fabric and fittings of the church building were also the site of intense power struggles. As church features practically shaped worship practices, they were invested with the power to align the church and its worshippers with particular confessional positions. And as these material features were identified with particular factions, they participated in the long power struggle between these different interests. Royal coats of arms, whose display on church walls was widespread, embodied the Crown's supremacy within the Church, thereby instantiating national power; at the same time inscriptions commemorating prominent parishioners, either on their death or to recognise service to the church, often financing church building works, inscribe local landowners' control over the space, and therefore over the souls of the parishioners.[5] Fixed seating arrangements were socially significant and highly contentious: as John Reeks shows, the authority to decide who sat where inflamed tensions between parishioners, and between local stakeholders and the national Church.[6]

If 'The Crosse' poses an interpretative challenge to its reader, to understand what the titular 'crosse' refers to, what the "strange and uncouth thing" is, and whether the two are the same, this is a challenge that is central to Herbert's treatment of material things, and therefore to the poetics of *The Temple*. The physical edifice of the parish church poses, to early modern worshippers, a prominent and enduring interpretative challenge. In both its use and the interpretation of its form, the church building shapes how parishioners worshipped God and where and how power was wielded within the church and the community. We can again see clear resonances between the parish church building and Herbert's *Temple*. The control of meaning in space – the authority to determine what a space means as well as how it is used – was crucial to how particular parties – ministers, bishops, landowners – sought to maintain sacred or secular power within the Church. In *The Temple,* Herbert asserts and renounces his own authority, over his reader or against God, in order to explore the way the human

'Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: the view from the pew', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52.2 (2002), pp. 286-311.

[5] Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 126.

[6] Catherine Wright, 'The Spatial Ordering of Community in English Church Seating, c. 1550-1700.' PhD diss. (University of Warwick, 2002); John Reeks, '"The Churchwardens Have Not Used to Meddle with Anie Seate": Seating Plans and Parochial Resistance to Laudianism in 1630s Somerset', *The Seventeenth Century* 33.2 (2018), pp. 161–181.

subject exists in and inhabits the material and spiritual worlds. This chapter will explore how the early modern worshippers responded to interpretative challenge of the parish church building, and how the form of *The Temple* replicates this. It goes on to explore how claims of authority were made which defined the parish church, in consecration rites and sermons performed and preached by clergy across the confessional spectrum, and how these textual constructions of spatially-manifested authority are, again, replicated and nuanced in *The Temple*.

"Sea of brasse and world of stone": Experiencing and interpreting the church building

In his 1638 meditation on the proper fitting of the church, the avowedly traditionalist minister of St Saviour's Norwich, Foulke Robartes, opens by lamenting that

> The worship of God hath of late yeares beene so carried in many places among us, as if therein men were not about any businesse relating unto God. The places of meetings being so ruinous and sordid, the people in the act of prayers and praises demeaning themselves so, as if they sate in counsell with God… rather than devoute and humble worships.[7]

Robartes here expresses the standard motivations for the reforms of the 1630s that emphasised ceremonialism and decoration in churches and worship: that "ruinous and sordid" church spaces, neglected for decades by Puritan iconophobia, 'demeaned' the Church into such a state that they could no longer be properly understood and used as places of worship. This vision of the church of the early seventeenth century has to some extent been accepted by historians: whether the bishops of the 1630s were motivated by shame at the physical dereliction of their church buildings, or a drive to accommodate the sacramental and ceremonial worship they believed important, in any case these changes were necessary in parish churches and chapels whose upkeep had been overlooked by Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans, and were now unfit for worship.[8]

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[7] Robartes, Foulke, *Gods holy house and service according to the primitive and most Christian forme thereof* (London, 1639), p. 2.

[8] Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour*, p. 30; Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, vol. 2, pp. 11-22.

Yet, as Julia Merritt cautions us, to take such statements at their word as evidence for the actual state of the early-seventeenth century landscape of English churches is to follow a campaign of Laudian propaganda that invoked a specifically Puritan 'neglect' of church buildings.[9] Twenty-three years before Robartes' complaints about the "ruinous and sordid" state of English churches, in 1615 the antiquarian Edmund Howes had updated John Stow's 1605 *Annales*, and presented an image of a Church already marked by a wide-scale project of restoration: after the restoration of Christ Church in London in 1613, others across the city were, following its example, "likewise repaired and trimmed",

> and then the countrey by degree began also to make their Churches, handsome and clenly, & not without good cause for there was not any Church worke done in fiftie yeares vntill now.[10]

Howes gives thanks for "manifoulde Tokens and signes of the infinite Blessings of Almightie God bestowed vppon this Kingdome", evident, among other things, in "the generall repayre of parish churches… in Cittie, and country within this last seauen yeares, more then in fifty yeeres before".[11] It seems that, to the Jacobean worshipper, the present Church was not in a particular state of neglect or disrepair, instead emerging from the dilapidation borne of the early Reformers' iconoclastic zeal for unadorned worship.

What we must take from this is the extent to which the physical state of the church building may be interpreted and deployed polemically by writers with religious and secular interests alike, to construct a particular historical reading of the community or nation in recent memory. Clearly, the material 'repair' of church buildings at large implies, to the early modern mind, a pious duty towards the church as a community, and the national Church as an institution. This is not simply a polemical tool, but seems to be a reality of worshippers' lives. Financing repairs to church buildings was costly, but these were nevertheless usually raised through parochial levies; if a poor parish failed to attain the required resources locally, funds were not infrequently raised by recourse to rich connections

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[9] Julia Merritt, 'Puritans, Laudians, and the Phenomenon of Church Building in Jacobean London', *The Historical Journal* 41.4 (December 1998), pp. 935-60, pp. 959-60.

[10] Stow, John, *The annales, or a generall chronicle of England, begun first by maister Iohn Stow, and after him continued and augmented with matters forreyne, and domestique, auncient and moderne, vnto the ende of this present yeere 1614. by Edmond Howes, gentleman* (London, 1615), p. 892.

[11] ibid., p. 945.

elsewhere in the country.[12] However, there does seem to have been a cooling in individual parishioners' dedication to supporting their own parish's physical maintenance, coinciding broadly with the Reformation: in his study of charitable giving in London, W. K. Jordan compares the £8734 left in wills for the care of church fabric between 1480 and 1540 with the £3663 bequeathed in the following 70 years, and in turn with the £18708 left in the period 1601-1640.[13]

Such data seems to support the thesis of post-Reformation neglect of church buildings, 'corrected' by Laudians' re-centring the importance of the church building. We should not, however, simply adjust the period of 'neglect' to Elizabeth's reign, and see in the Jacobean surge in church building the premonitions of, or pre-conditions for, the Laudian campaign of 'beautification' of the 1630s. Rather, official injunctions and proclamations about the use and maintenance of church buildings throughout the period continually emphasise the importance of well maintaining church buildings. The Henrician, Edwardian and Elizabethan Injunctions, which translate the Articles of Faith into concrete action, all set out that

> All parsons, vicars and clerks, having churches, chapels or mansions within this deanery, shall bestow yearly hereafter upon the same mansions or chancels of their churches, being in decay, the fifth part of their benefice, till they be fully repaired, and the same, so repaired, shall always keep and maintain in good estate (Bray 178, 252, 338).

The language here is carefully neutral: buildings are not to be beautified and adorned, but 'repaired', 'kept' and 'maintained'. Yet the repeated avowal of this need for appropriate maintenance demands a diligence of attention to the physical state of the church that is more than merely practical. Taking such pains, as the Elizabethan Injunctions require, as to "take away, utterly extinct and destroy… [all] monuments of feigned miracles… so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glasses, windows or elsewhere within their churches or houses" (Bray 341), implies a level of emotional attachment to the materiality of 'proper' devotion far beyond bare indifference.

[12] Merritt, 'Church-Building in Jacobean London', pp. 948-50.
[13] W.K. Jordan, *The charities of London, 1480-1600: the aspirations and achievements of the urban society* (London: Routledge, 1960), pp. 292-93. Jordan makes similar findings for rural parishes: cf. *The charities of rural England, 1480-1660: the aspirations and achievements of the rural society* (London: Routledge, 1961), pp. 65-71, 182-190, 385-401.

In exploring ordinary worshippers' relationship with the Anglican faith in Stuart England, Judith Maltby points out the historiographical problems that trouble our notion of Anglican 'conformity': unlike Catholic recusancy and Protestant nonconformism, whole-hearted Anglican belief leaves no trace in court records in the early Stuart period, no chance to test its mettle in the fires of persecution. Histories of religion, Maltby argues, too often rest "on the assumption that non-conformists took their faith more 'seriously' than men and women who conformed to the lawful worship of the Church of England".[14] 'Conformity' is too bland a by-word for the sincere, devoted engagement ordinary worshippers held with orthodox Anglican faith. Similarly, "good estate", "repair" and "maintenance" are too markedly neutral for the care that the terms denote. Meeting the requirements of the Church's foundational Injunctions demands time and attention as well as money and physical labour that cannot be provided by indifferent actors. The use of such language suggests the imperative to allow the impression of indifference, implying a potential resistance to any positive approach to the church building. The forensic purging of the building of any "memory" of idolatrous worship in the Elizabethan Injunctions bespeaks this sort of suspicion of the materiality of worship, even as its physical upkeep is demanded.

By the early decades of the seventeenth century, the demand for 'repair' and 'maintenance' takes on an extra dimension: namely, 'decency'. The 1604 Canons require that

> The Churchwardens… shall take care and prouide that the Churches bee well and sufficiently repaired, and so from time to time kept and maintained, that the Windowes bee well glazed, and that the Floores be kept paued, plaine, and euen, and all things there in such an orderly and decent sort, without dust, or any thing that may bee either noisome, or vnseemely, as best becommeth the house of God.[15]

The emphasis on 'order' and 'decency' recalls the Book of Common Prayer's continual recourse to Paul's injunction that "all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40); in effect, the Canon demands that the church be kept merely as Prayer-Book piety requires. Yet the castigation of "any thing… noisome or unseemly" further emphasises the quality of 'appropriateness' within the

[14] Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, p. 8.
[15] *Constitutions and canons ecclesiasticall treated vpon by the Bishop of London* (London, 1604), sig. O2^{v}-O3^{r}.

idea of 'decency'. The church must be maintained in a physical state that somehow 'matches' the devotion that is to be performed within it.

This meaningful apposition of building and worship – of matter and use – structures the early modern understanding of the material world. As we have seen, a Protestant worldview saw the physical world as inviting typological interpretation, in which specific material phenomena corresponded with Biblical figures and events. Moreover, as Alexandra Walsham has shown, a view of the world as providentially open to divine intervention still further led Protestant believers to an approach to the world in which material things and environments meant more than the material substance itself, demanding interpretation through an appropriately attuned, scripturally informed Protestant lens.[16] The weight of judgement of what was 'fit', appropriate and decent is not only aesthetic, but is significant to devotion: understanding material phenomena like the church building, and using them appropriately, required that the worshipper understand the complex nexus of material and spiritual meanings and activities. Maarten Delbecke and Anne-Françoise Morel have described early modern church buildings as "metaphors in action", understood as "analogous" to models in scripture or the early Church.[17] To 'maintain' the church appropriately, in this context, is to undertake a spiritually significant judgement, and to participate in this interpretative framework that characterised Protestant faith more widely.[18]

For Herbert himself, maintenance of church buildings seems to be both an act of critical interpretation and emotional attention. The parson, he advises, "hath a speciall care of his church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his Name by which it is called" (Hutchinson 246). Texts on the walls should be "fit, and proper"; the communion cloth, "fit, and sightly". In particular, he is explicit as to why these fine judgements are to be followed so precisely: "all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition, and slovenlinesse." Despite his quoting *verbatim* from the 1604 Canons, he follows them

[16] Alexandra Walsham, *Providence*.
[17] Maarten Delbecke and Anne-Françoise Morel, 'Metaphors in Action: Early modern church buildings as spaces of knowledge', *Architectural History* 53 (2010), pp. 99-122, p. 99.
[18] See above, pp. 12-17.

not out of mere "necessity" – thus denying indifference towards the material conditions of worship – nor "as putting holiness in the things" – distancing himself from the misreading of materiality that characterises 'superstitious' worship – but as embodying the "middle way" between the two.

This term would not resonate as strongly to contemporary as to modern readers with the '*via media*' doctrines and practices with which early modern Anglicanism, as a distinct confessional identity, is now primarily associated. What is more significant, for our purposes, is that Herbert's twin perils in his treatment of the church building are mental ("superstition") and practical ("slovenlinesse"). For Herbert, as for the early modern Protestant more generally, one's relationship to the church building is both material and cognitive, predicated on a precise relationship between material and spiritual meanings, and between physical and spiritual action; to misread the relationship between these elements, in investing the building with excess importance or neglecting it entirely, is a real spiritual threat. The sense of the church building as a space defined by its practical use, and by the mental and thereby spiritual devotion that this use constitutes in its users, is one which resonates clearly with the literary edifice of *The Temple* as Herbert constructs it.

"Temples fit for thee": Architectural metaphor in devotional poetry

The Temple's status as a church-like edifice is crucial to the experience of reading it. To read *The Temple*, to travel through 'The Church-Porch' into 'The Church', is to move through a space that invokes the local, recognisable, material church building – its porch, altar, floor, windows, monuments (*EP* 234-48). It is also to move through the liturgy of the Church of England – through the calendrical feast days ('Easter', 'Whitsunday', 'Christmas', 'Lent') and Prayer-Book rites ('H. Baptisme', 'The H. Communion', 'Even-song', 'Sunday'). If the church building may be understood

as constituted by worshippers' use of it, Anglican worship is no less constituted by the words of the Book of Common Prayer, as it is defined in the 1604 Canons.[19]

Use of the church and the forms of the Book of Common Prayer are, moreover, synonymous: as Laura Feitzinger Brown points out, to 'brawl in church', an accusation frequently levied in consistory courts, was technically to use *any* words at a time of divine service not enjoined by the Prayer Book.[20] Herbert's centring of the Book of Common Prayer's words and forms in his textual *Temple* therefore works to extend his programme of building a poetic edifice that replicates the church that his readers would know well, one figured in the physical building but also in its use in practical worship, as well as the emotional and spiritual experience of using it.

How exactly to interpret the textual-architectural 'space' of *The Temple* has long exercised critics: John David Walker emphasises Solomon's Temple as a model for the volume's 'architectonics', the reader's progress through 'The Church-porch', 'The Church' and 'The Church Militant' like passing through the Temple's vestibule and 'holy place' to the 'holy of holies'.[21] Others have interpreted the volume's tripartite structure from other angles: Clifford Davidson sees the structure representing a Christian's developing internal life through conflict and submission to spiritual freedom; Valerie Carnes, different speakers' identities as preacher, poet and soul; Elizabeth McLaughlin and Gail Thomas, successive stages of biblical history; Kathleen Lynch interprets *The Temple* rather as an emblematic triptych, the relation between the three parts rather of one "reiteration and amplification of one theme" than of narrative progress.[22]

Each of these readings rightfully supposes a symbolic relationship between the invoked 'temples' of *The Temple* – the parish church, Solomon's Temple, the mental space, and the textual

[19] The Canons refer to "the Church of England, established by Law and conteined in the booke of Common Prayer, and administration of the sacraments", *Constitutions and canons ecclesiasticall*, sig. D2^{v}.
[20] Laura Feitzinger Brown, 'Brawling in Church: Noise and the rhetoric of lay behaviour in early modern England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34.4 (Winter 2003), pp. 955-972, p. 957.
[21] John David Walker, 'The Architectonics of George Herbert's *The Temple*', *ELH* 29.3 (1962), pp. 289-305.
[22] Clifford Davidson, 'Herbert's *The Temple*: Conflicts, Submission, and Freedom,' *English Miscellany* 35 (1975-6), pp. 163-81; Valerie Carnes, 'The Unity of George Herbert's *The Temple*: A Reconsideration', *English Literary History* 35 (1968), pp. 505-26; Elizabeth McLaughlin and Gail Thomas, 'Communion in *The Temple*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 15 (1975), pp. 111-24; Kathleen Lynch, '*The Temple*: Three Parts Vied and Multiplied', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 29 (1999), pp. 139-55, p. 142.

edifice. Herbert brings the reader 'through' the complex 'space' of the *Temple* by interweaving allegory, analogy, metaphor and allusion. He thus 'builds' on the analogical and typological understanding of church space that was natural to early modern English worshippers. Architectural construction offers Herbert a useful vocabulary to express the work of poetic composition, since both were understood as giving material embodiment to the mental and spiritual acts of memory and devotion.[23] Interpreting the physical church space through scripture gave it devotional meaning; relating *The Temple*'s textual edifice to an imagined physical building was, we shall see, similarly central to Herbert's devotional poetics.

The volume's title appears on only one surviving manuscript, not in Herbert's hand, meaning that we cannot attribute the title to him with any certainty (*EP* 39). This is telling: Graham Parry argues that the term 'temple', used as synonymous with 'church', connoting "splendour and perfection" and divine ordination, sounded inherently 'Anglican' to contemporary ears.[24] It is likely, given that the title first appears on the Bodleian manuscript – that produced at Little Gidding, under Nicholas Ferrar's supervision with no oversight from Herbert himself – that Ferrar was responsible for the title, and his pronounced ceremonialist leanings would bear out Parry's argument here.[25]

Where Laudian reformers followed Hooker in reading the Temple as a legitimising model for the English church, puritans saw it instead as standing for the outdated religion, replaced by Christ: the former read churches as analogous to the Temple, emphasising the Church's continuity with ancient Israel; the latter read typologically, emphasising the distinction between them.[26] Attitudes to church space are thus specifically a question of reading practices: how one used the church building was an index of how one read scripture and interpreted the material world and the relationship

[23] In her survey of medieval and Renaissance mnemonic techniques, Frances Yates notes the importance of the church or cathedral, frequently prescribed as models for a mental 'memory palace': so internalised was the architecture of the church, that its layout provides the early modern subject with a mental map for less familiar concepts (*The Art of Memory* (Chicago: UCP, 1966), pp. 115-16).

[24] Graham Parry, *The Gold'n Age Restored: The culture of the Stuart court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 246.

[25] Trevor Cooper, '"Wise as Serpents": The form and setting of public worship at Little Gidding in the 1630s', in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, pp. 197-219, pp. 199-203.

[26] Achsah Guibbory, 'Devotional Poetry and the Temple of God', *GHJ* 37.1-2 (2013-14), pp. 99-116, pp. 101-02.

between them. In this light *The Temple* is less a partisan encomium of Laudian beautifying than an invitation to examine one's own theologically significant reading, as exemplified in their interpretation of the volume.

Certainly, *The Temple*'s structure prompts questions about our reading of the volume. The largest section of poems are grouped under the title 'The Church' – this name does appear in manuscripts in Herbert's own hand. With these terms defining its structure, *The Temple* asks how 'church' and 'temple' are to be understood in relation to one another. What does it mean for 'The Church' to be part of *The Temple*, with a 'Church-porch' leading to it? If the primary referent of 'The Temple' is Solomon's biblical one, how are we to read the explicitly architectural imagery of the local, familiar 'Church' and 'Church-porch'? The relationship between the 'parts' of *The Temple* is ambiguous, and the volume demands we interrogate the relationship between them. This relationship is one based in acts of reading: of individual poems; of the whole *Temple*; of the Bible; of the church space itself. Each of these reading acts was instinctive to Herbert's readers, but Herbert marries and interweaves them in provocative ways.

The Temple's vision of a local, material church is interleaved with references to the biblical Temple, in its various physical and spiritual states – from its glorious assembly by Solomon, to its refiguring by Christ in the New Testament, and in Christian souls today. 'Sion' describes its construction; 'The Sacrifice' refers to how Christ "the Temple to the floore/ In three days raz'd, and raised as before"; 'The Church Militant' laments how "The second Temple could not reach the first;/ And the late Reformation never durst/ Compare with ancient times and purer years" (*EP* 383, 98, 672). In 'The Windows', the speaker thanks God that

> In thy Temple thou dost him [the preacher] afford
> This glorious and transcendent place,
> To be a window through thy grace (*EP* 246-7).

Whereas at other points the Temple is purely biblical, or refers solely to a transcendent community of believers, the central conceit of 'The Windows' sees the Temple as immanent and transcendent simultaneously. It is the reader's knowledge of the material space that makes the sacred accessible;

the poem's central conceit of the poem is that the "brittle crazie glasse" of the human preacher, animated by the "light and glory" of God's grace, is able to convey God's 'life' and 'story' to the congregation. 'The Windows' extols the preacher not as contemporary preaching manuals might – for advocating moral conduct and wholehearted devotion, or explaining scripture – but rather as operating *himself* as a medium through which God's 'life' and 'story' – the matter and form of the Bible – is conveyed; he *is* the "brittle crazie glasse". The preacher in the poem functions as an antitype of Christ, himself an antitype of Solomon's Temple. Material familiarity and typological interpretation are requisite in the poem's "glorious and transcendent place", as throughout *The Temple*.

Biblical intertexts and typological interpretation are central to 'Sion' (*EP* 382): the opening stanza's recollection of Solomon's building of the Temple in Jerusalem is thoroughly scripturally referential. This account is concerned with the Temple's physical attributes: that "most things were of purest gold" is drawn from Solomon covering the oracle, altar, partition and "whole house" of the Temple with gold; that "The wood was all embellished/ With flowers and carvings", from the fact that "the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers" (1 Kings 16:18-22). As in the biblical account, material construction is not dismissed, but emphasised, and carries meaning: the intricacy of the "mysticall and rare" carvings "show'd the builders, crav'd the seers care".

Nevertheless, the "glorie" of the Temple, and the blazon of materiality of the poem's first stanza, gives way – as the Jewish Law gives way to the Christian Gospel, and as the Temple is replaced by the Church – to the individual worshipper's heart, where Herbert often locates God's symbolic 'dwelling'. Herbert disavows the 'glorie' he evokes in such detail, reminding the reader that "all this glorie, all this pomp and state/ Did not affect thee much, was not thy aim." The Temple's dazzling material beauty is gradually replaced by worshipper's voices: "All Solomons sea of brasse and world of stone/ Is not so deare to thee as one good grone". The final stanza praises the 'grone' as "quick, and full of wings", directed "upward", in contrast to "heavie" brass and stone, "tombes for the dead, not temples fit for thee". The wider poem is less absolute: the groaner's heart is not a fruitful dwelling-place for the Lord, but "peevish", something God must 'struggle' with. This stanza again draws directly from the Bible – here Jacob's wrestling with God (Genesis 32:24-30). Prioritising the

individual Christian's living 'grone' is achieved by 'reliving' the words of scripture, accommodating them within one's "peevish heart" like God.

As we have seen, Herbert is deeply interested in the tension between his verse's written form and the specifically vocal performance of devotion that the poems rehearse and record.[27] Ryrie shows how such exclamations suggest spontaneous affective outbursts associated particularly, though not exclusively, with nonconformist, godly devotion.[28] In 'The Sinner' the speaker prays that he may better receive and express God's grace, since "though my hard heart scarce to thee can grone,/ Remember that thou once didst write in stone" (*EP* 123); in 'Praise (III)' he vows that when his heart "stops for want of store,/ Then I will wring it with a sigh or grone,/ That thou mayst yet have more" (*EP* 542); in 'Businesse' the speaker laments his overinvestment in worldly matters and neglect of the spiritual by exclaiming, "If thou hast no sighs and grones,/ Would thou hadst no flesh and bones!" (*EP* 404). 'Sighs' or 'groans' represent by synecdoche an affective piety that is immaterial, apart from worldly concerns, yet nonetheless corporeal, located in the heart where God 'engraves' as in stone, or from which praise can be 'wrung'.

The exclamation in 'Businesse' works precisely because of the impossibility of separating 'sighs and grones' from 'flesh and bones', paralleled in rhyme and metre, and physically inextricable: the groans that represent both prayer and poetry are performed not merely by the soul, but by the fleshly body too. 'Sion' moves from evoking the glory of Solomon's Temple, to relocating it in the speaker's "peevish heart", and unites these manifestations both in the scriptural episodes they allude to, and in the 'grones' of prayer and poetry. Even the poem's title not only alludes to the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem to come, and the eternal communion of the faithful, but also *sounds* like 'sighing': as 'sighs' throughout *The Temple* point self-consciously to the craft of devotional poetry and extemporaneous prayer, so 'Sion' implicitly concerns the relation of devotional

[27] See above, pp. 49-53.
[28] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 217; cf. Peter Kaufman, *Prayer, Despair and Drama: Elizabethan Introspection* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 26-36.

activity and poetic construction – simultaneously corporeal, worldly, and spiritually transcendent – to the typological interpretation of The Temple's building.[29]

Throughout *The Temple*, and from the volume's very title, Herbert prompts us to question what we are reading, and how we are to interpret it. Within the poems, between them and over the course of the volume his verse demands being read as relational and experiential: reading 'The Church' can only be approached *through* 'The Church-porch'; 'The Windows', figuring the preacher in the poetic glass and the scriptural Temple, come only *through* the preceding sequence of poems centred on interpreting other specific material elements of worship ('Church-monuments', 'Church-musick', 'Church-lock and key', 'The Church-floore', *EP* 234-48). As Solomon's Temple in 'Sion' "show'd the buiders, crav'd the seers care", the construction and composition of *The Temple* are constantly visible, continually prompting us to explore what it means and what it can offer us as a spiritual experience. *The Temple*'s architectural metaphor is therefore crucial to the experience of reading it: like the architectural space of the church building, the volume's textual space is constituted by its practical and affective use. In 'Sion' as throughout the volume, the interpretative acts such usage demand – typological, material, emotional – integrate the reader's material reality, in the church building, with Biblical history and the immediate material presence of the poem. If we are to understand *The Temple* as a spiritual and material interpretative experience comparable with the parish church, it will be instructive to consider the terms on which the parish church itself is rendered spiritually significant: the consecration rite.

"Something there was, that sow'd debate": Consecration rites and claims of authority

The Temple opens with a 'Dedication' which offers the volume to God, elevating while also disavowing Herbert's own authority, since the poetry itself originates from God:

> Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee;
> Yet not mine neither: for from thee they came

[29] Rosemond Tuve, *A Reading of George Herbert* (Chicago: UCP, 1952), p. 125.

> And must return. Accept them and me,
> And make us strive, who shall sing best thy name.
> Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:
> Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain (*EP* 45).

Here Herbert follows both classicizing literary models, crediting the literary patron with authority in the text, and Biblical precedent – namely the commandment to offer the "first of the firstfruits of the land" to God (*Exodus* 23:19). Both poet and verse exist to "sing best [God's] name". In its concluding couplet, the speaker asks God to grant *The Temple* a proper audience: those who "shall make a gain" are invited, those who "shall hurt themselves or me", excluded. As we shall see, this dedication performs a kind of consecration rite for *The Temple*, participating in the particular, complex relationship of the earthly and divine worlds as these rites articulate, and delineating what is appropriate for the space.

In 1659, the first official English consecration rite was published, a record of the rite performed in 1620 by Lancelot Andrewes as Bishop of Winchester in the village of Peartree in Southampton. The orders reflect a sense of the church's sanctity constituted in the holy use of the space, beginning with the parish minister

> refus[ing] and renounc[ing] to put this Chappel, or any part of it, to any prophane or common use whatsoever; and desir[ing] it may be dedicated and consecrated wholly and only to religious uses, for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of our Souls.[30]

This form appears to have been mainstream: Edmund Howes records several churches built and consecrated in the early-seventeenth century, recounting in detail "the first… that came to [his] perfect knowledge", at Fulmer in Buckinghamshire in 1610. Though this consecration took place ten years before Andrewes' service at Peartree, they are broadly similar. As at Peartree, the Fulmer church is explicitly set apart from 'common' usage: the churchyard is "hallowed" by the Bishop, who justifies the its consecration in order to "giue due distinction, state, & reuerence to the Temple of almightie God, from all prophane wayes and base places".[31] Like Richard Smith at Peartree, Fulmer's benefactor, Sir Marmaduke Dorrell, is called on to give the churchyard up to consecration; after

[30] Lancelot Andrewes, *The form of consecration of a church or chappel. And the place of Christian buriall* (London, 1659), p. 10.
[31] Stow, *Annales*, pp. 908-910.

Dorrell, the parish priest and churchwardens consent, psalms and prayers are read, and the churchyard is consecrated.

Both services emphasise the single benefactor, whose "Free-will offering" (in Andrewes' terms) of the church and churchyard is as much a focus of the rite as the sacred use they will be put to. In Andrewes' service, Smith explicitly represents the congregation: the priest speaks "as well in his own [behalf], as in the name of the Inhabitants of the said Village". At Fulmer, however, Dorrell himself remains central and active in the ceremony. The churchyard consecrated, the assembly moves to the church porch, where the Bishop again addresses Dorrell: "nowe verily this Church-yard is exempt and free from any challenge of you or yours: but this house as yet remains wholly your owne." Again he must affirm that "his hearts desire" is to dedicate the land "to the Almightie God and… to his diuine seriuce onely", whereupon prayers, psalms and a speech declare that the building is "consecrated to his seruice, and seuered from all prophane imployments". Finally, moving into the church, in the middle of the middle aisle, the Bishop reveals in prayer the sacred mechanics of consecration: God is invited to "dwell in this house", to "receiue the sacrifices of thy Seruants, whether of almes, or prayers, or thanksgiuing which shall be offered herein", and to "graunt… a blessing to thy sacred word, herein read or preached".

The consecration is thus incremental: first the churchyard, then the building (at the porch), and finally the worship to be practised within the church (in the Bishop's prayers before the chancel). This sense of graduated holiness, a threefold construction in the form of an approach to the chancel and altar, is familiar to *The Temple*'s readers, its tripartite structure often read against that of Solomon's Temple – the vestibule, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies – which itself was frequently invoked as a structuring metaphor for thinking about complex phenomena.[32] Andrewes' consecration orders follow a similar processional pattern. As at Fulmer, the service begins in the churchyard, and proceeds through the church porch, into the church. Andrewes' rite inside the church is more complex than that

[32] cf. Jim Bennett and Scott Mandelbrote, *The Garden, The Ark, The Tower, The Temple: Biblical metaphors of knowledge in early modern Europe* (Oxford: Museum of the History of Science, 1998), p. 40.

at Fulmer: blessings are said at the font, 'holy table', 'marriage-place' and finally the floor, for the parishioners interred underneath, before the 'huge crowd' in attendance is finally allowed inside.

These orders, separated by a decade, suggest a development in the construction of sacred space: more emphasis on liturgical furnishings; more intricately hierarchical gradations of sanctity; and more ceremony in the consecration rite. The Fulmer consecration is fundamentally a transaction, the church transferred from worldly ownership and use to divine, whereas Andrewes' rite enshrines a sense of divine mystery in the consecration. These changes would seem to point to a move towards Laudian ceremonialism. Yet this ritual dedication of the church to sacred use did not necessarily actively guarantee such use in reality: though the 'crowd' was kept out of the church at Peartree until the consecration rites were complete, the church had in fact been built and in general use for two years already.[33] In this case, one enshrined in print as the archetypical consecration, the rite in fact follows rather than designates the building's use. As the dedicatory epistle to the Andrewes rite suggests, the text is fundamentally rather a "Memoriall… to Posterity of the Piety of the Church of *England*" than a practical order for future use.[34]

Two of the most detailed extant depictions of the early-seventeenth century consecration rite, then, are fundamentally 'memorial' in nature, recording an ideal form of worship threatened either by the irrevocable passage of time, as in Howes' *Annales*, or by explicit attack by Puritan sceptics – the epistle to Andrewes' rite laments

> the profane Novelists, who never more then now, *shoot out their arrows, even bitter words,* against such *H. Places,* as by the Word of God, and Prayer are solemnly dedicated and set apart with religious Ceremonies, to the alone worship and Service of Almighty God.[35]

As we have seen, church buildings and their representation in historical and other texts could carry polemical weight; so too, as we see here, consecration rites come to represent larger beliefs

[33] 'Parishes: St Mary Extra', in *A History of the County of Hampshire*, ed. by William Page (London, 1908), vol. 3, pp. 297-99, *BHO*.
[34] Andrewes, *Form of consecration*, sig. A3^{r}.
[35] ibid., sig. A5^{r}.

about sanctity of space and the efficacy of ritual, deeply contentious phenomena in the mid-seventeenth century.[36]

For the attempt to mark a physical space as 'sacred' was anathema to the most godly views and became increasingly politically sensitive across the early-seventeenth century; the Puritan Westminster Confession takes it as axiomatic that "Neither Prayer, nor any other part of Religious Worship, is… either tyed unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped every where, in spirit and truth."[37] One charge on which Laud was indicted at his 1644 trial was for "urg[ing] and enjoin[ing] divers Popish and superstitious ceremonies" including "innovations in consecrating churches and chapels after the Popish manner".[38] The concordant increase in building of new churches and godly suspicion of the sanctity of places in the early decades of the seventeenth century results in an abundance of consecration sermons that critically examine the consecration rites they accompanied and are characterised by an anxious self-cross examination. As Andrew Spicer notes, the content of these sermons was often explicitly Calvinist, suggesting that the affirmation of the power of ceremony in the consecration rite was not necessarily indicative of an anti-Calvinist doctrine with which they are usually associated.[39] Even amid rites that materially effaced and excluded wider communities, the sermon could represent a dissenting voice.

For instance, the consecration of Shrewsbury Free School chapel in 1617 was preached by Sampson Price, a staunchly Protestant clergyman known as the "Maul of the Hereticks" for his excoriating invectives against those he perceived as showing Catholic leanings.[40] Price explicitly

[36] Anne-Françosie Morel, *Glorious Temples or Babylonic Whores: the culture of church building in Stuart England through the lens of consecration sermons* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 97-100, 143-48 and *passim*.
[37] Anon., *The confession of faith and catechisms, agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster* (London, 1649), p. 45.
[38] William Prynne, *Canterburies doome, or, The first part of a compleat history of the commitment, charge, tryall, condemnation, execution of William Laud, late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury* (London, 1646), pp. 114-28.
[39] Andrew Spicer, '"God Will Have a House": Defining sacred space and rites of consecration in early-seventeenth century England', in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 207-30, pp. 214-217.
[40] Nicholas Cranfield, 'Price, Sampson (1585/6–1630), Church of England clergyman and religious writer', *ODNB* (2004).

rejects the sanctity of the church: God, he reminds us, is "not shutte vp in place".[41] Yet consecration is, under certain circumstances, a permissible concept:

> To *dedicate* is one thing, to *consecrate* is another: Things are sayde to bee *consecrated*, when of prophane things they are sayde to bee religious and holy: and to be *dedicated*, when they are appointed to God.[42]

To Price, dedication operates on a human level: "Dedication by prayer" of places is opposed to Catholic "gulleries" – rituals such as lighting candles before images, walking three times round the church, and sprinkling holy water – while consecration reflects God's presence and inhabitation in the earth: "All the world is his Temple" yet in the church God "*especially* affordeth his *presence* in those places, which he calleth his *houses*".[43] The consecration rite is a transitional one: it converts the 'profane' space to 'sacred', but it also compels a change in human activity and divine habitation within the consecrated space.

This distinction between 'dedication' and 'consecration' might help us read *The Temple*'s 'Dedication'. As in Price's formulation, the poet 'dedicates' by 'presenting' the poems to God. Herbert complicates this by also 'returning' them to God; they originate with God, not with Herbert. This seems to align better with Price's "dedication by Prayer" than Andrewes' 'transactional' consecration, in which the unconsecrated material is entirely human and profane; Herbert's *Temple*, being divinely co-authored, cannot be consecrated like the earthly 'temples' of the church, but rather 'dedicated' through its offering and 'appointment' to God. Where 'transactional' consecration sees the church 'handed over' from benefactor to God, Herbert presents himself and his poetry together to God ("Accept them and me") and both 'strive' to best "sing [his] name". Herbert and his poetry are both consecrated – put to sacred use by God, worshipper and reader – and active in their consecration. This active 'self-consecration' proves key to Herbert's construction of *The Temple* as sacred space.

In its final couplet the verse again mimics but diverges from the Andrewesian model of consecration. At Fulmer and Peartree, the church is incrementally turned from secular to sacred use,

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[41] Sampson Price, *The Beauty of Holines: or The consecration of a house of prayer, by the example of our Sauiour* (London, 1618), p. 3.
[42] ibid., p. 15.
[43] ibid., pp. 20, 32.

"seuered from all prophane imployments". In Herbert's 'Dedication', *The Temple* is similarly set apart from profane usage, by distinguishing not his verse from secular poetry, but his readers: "Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain", he pleads, "Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain". Though the hope that a text will find a suitable audience is a common literary trope, context prompts us to read it in terms of the consecration rite, whose terms Herbert again appropriates and puts to new use: while all worshippers are welcomed to the consecrated church for sacred activities, only certain readers are capable of the sacred use Herbert intends for his volume.

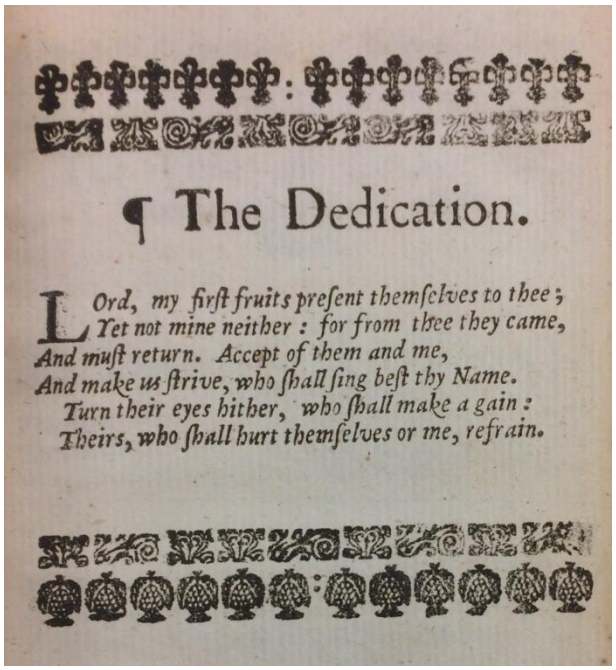
Readings of 'The Church-porch' focus on its role as a transitional space, preparing the reader for the meditative and devotional verse of 'The Church': Sheridan Blau sees Herbert's pastoral role as key, the poem becoming "a sort of sermon based on practical divinity… its purpose, like that of all sermons, was to prepare its auditors for the prayers of 'The Church'."[44] Brewster Ford connects the poem with catechism: "literally and spatially, [it] represents the pre-liminary, as the porch through which one enters the church building, and figuratively, as an introduction to the poems in 'The Church'."[45] Gene Veith likewise sees 'The Church-porch and its immediate successors 'The Altar' and 'The Sacrifice' embodying a particular reformed instructive method, "serving theologically as an introduction and as a necessary prelude to 'the Church', just as proclamation fo the Law necessarily preceds the proclamation of grace."[46]

Anne Myers contextualises the poem against contemporary usage of the church porch: settling contracts; collecting rates; paying debts, dowries and bequests; the beginning of the baptism and marriage ceremonies; for school lessons; as temporary housing for the homeless. These occasions bind together the parish community, and 'The Church-porch' reflects this, its refrain-like aphorisms effacing a singular authorial voice, instead conveying 'universal' wisdom. The poem, Myers argues, "is about church architecture, yet it does not treat the visible and the invisible or the internal and the external as though they were irreconcilable categories, nor does it seem to anticipate a reader who will

[44] Sheridan Blau, 'The Poet as Casuist,' *Genre* 4 (1971), pp. 142-52, p. 150.
[45] Brewster Ford, 'George Herbert and the Liturgies of Time and Space', *South Atlantic Review* 49 (1984), pp.19-29, p. 20.
[46] Veith, *Reformation Spirituality*, pp. 57-58.

view them that way".[47] As such it is programmatic for the volume – and 'The Dedication' is no less significant here. Like 'The Church-porch', 'The Dedication' establishes *The Temple*'s dominant architectural and liturgical metaphors, emphasising the multivalency of the church building, its devotional and liturgical use, and the meaningful materiality of the volume's textual construction.

One could even read 'The Dedication' as an introductory stanza of 'The Church-porch'. They share a stanza form: an ABAB quatrain, followed by a couplet expressing a self-contained aphoristic statement. Moreover, there is narrative continuity between them: 'The Dedication' ends with Herbert hoping to attract readers who will "make a gain"; the opening of 'The Church-porch' assumes this has been fulfilled, addressing the reader as "Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes inhance/ Thy rate and price". An injunction to "Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance/ Rhyme thee to good" (*EP* 50) reaffirms the volume's purpose given in 'The Dedication'. The permeable boundary between the two poems is significant in opening a volume whose structure, and the relationships between poems within it, is so meaningful. Visually, the two poems are completely distinct, presented on separate pages – separated from the first edition by the printer's ornaments that frame both poems, and, from the 1656 seventh edition, by a three-page contents list – but in form, and in their speaker's pastoral persona, they are identical (see Figure 3). The ritual of 'dedication' and the physical edifice of the 'church porch' are fundamentally indistinct in Herbert's verse as the reader experiences them; Herbert thus trains his reader from the beginning of *The Temple* in a kind of reading attuned to structures, to visual, material and literary form, and to the ways in which these may seem to resist one



¶ The Dedication.

LOrd, my first fruits present themselves to thee;
Yet not mine neither: for from thee they came,
And must return. Accept of them and me,
And make us strive, who shall sing best thy Name.
Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:
Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.

Figure 3: 'The Dedication', George Herbert, *The Temple*, 9th edn. (London, 1667), sig. *4r. Hunt. 43494[illegible]

[47] Anne Myers, 'Restoring 'The Church-Porch': Herbert's Architectural Style', *English Literary Renaissance* 40.3 (2010), pp. 427-457, p. 455.

another. As we shall see, this kind of structurally responsive reading is fundamental to inhabiting the architectural space of *The Temple*.

"All thy frame and fabric": Text, matter and poetic architecture

Having overseen the rebuilding of St Mary's in Leighton Bromswold, Herbert would have been familiar with the practicalities of church building works, and the poetic richness of the vocabulary it affords for expressing spiritual realities. Ceri Sullivan notes extensive technical building terminology in *The Temple*, suggesting Herbert's comprehensive understanding of building materials and construction: 'The Altar' concerning itself with its stones rather than its alignment; 'Church-monuments', with their marble and jet rather than effigies and heraldry.[48] In particular, she reads 'The World', in its depiction of a house "weakned… by alteration" and beset by "fine cobwebs", its "inner walls and Sommers cleft and tore" by a "Sycomore… Working and winding slily evermore", as building on Herbert's first-hand experience with the restoration at Leighton from its previous "ruinous" state, the south arcade and aisle having been pulled down in 1606 in preparation for a restoration that would not happen for two decades (*EP* 301).

If 'The Crosse' similarly resonates with Herbert's material and spiritual efforts in the restoration at Leighton, the poem's typically Herbertian conclusion is significant. The line "*Thy will be done*" is simultaneously quotation, prayer and statement, again – as in 'The Dedication' – blurring the distinction between the poem as human invention and divine inspiration. It also resonates with the pattern of consecration fundamental to *The Temple*. "*Thy will be done*" echoes both Christ's words (Matthew 26:42) and the Lord's Prayer (Luke 9:2) – and hence daily communal worship. Again, vocal performance and scriptural quotation are indicated typographically in italics. The poem therefore concludes emphasising its status as a material artefact and a devotional act. Simultaneously quotation

[48] Ceri Sullivan, 'George Herbert's Building Works', *Essays in Criticism* 66.2 (2016), pp. 168-197, p. 168-9.

and prayer, the poem reaches beyond itself; it is not merely to be statically 'read', but to be used as a tool for worship.

The physical act of building in *The Temple* does more than provide an easily interpretable symbolic representation of spiritual action and verse composition: emphasising the materiality of both poetic and architectural endeavours enables Herbert, paradoxically, to reach beyond the poem's material form. He achieves this through emphasising the scripturally referential legibility of both the church and his verse, in references to the Solomonic Temple and the typological reading it demands, and by imagining his poetry as a worshipful act that might be offered up to God by analogy with idea of consecration. Yet these tactics do not, ultimately, efface the material. For Herbert, the material edifice itself is spiritually meaningful.

To illustrate this, we should turn again to the troubled godly consecration sermon. Jeremiah Dyke, preaching at the consecration of Epping Chapel in 1622 on Exodus 20:24 ("In all places where I record my Name, there I will come vnto thee, and I will blesse thee"), professes an ambivalence towards the materiality of the church: "God confines not the promise of his presence, and blessing to any one Angle, or special place: but bee the place where it will be, if his Name be recorded there, thither will he come, there will hee blesse".[49] Yet in preaching this straightforward Calvinist sentiment, Dyke is interested not in the typological meaning of the church, or the godly use of the space, but the meaning in its materiality – in a way which resonates fruitfully with *The Temple*.

Dyke pays close attention to moments of biblical building, namely altars built of different materials. His warning of the danger of gold is itself captivated by its hypothetical physical allure: "If the Altar were gold, how many carnall eyes would so dote vpon the beautie of the mettall, as that they would be ready to ascribe all the efficacy thereof rather to the gold, then to God himselfe" (5); contrast the direct, forceful syntax of his affirmation that "Plaine brasse with Gods Name is more soueraigne, then the most precious gold without his Name" (7). Dyke is forthright in castigating the

[49] Jeremiah Dyke, *A sermon dedicatory Preached at the consecration of the chapell of Epping in Essex, October, 28. 1622* (London, 1623), p. 4. Subsequent references will be given in-line to this edition.

allure of the material and prioritising the 'Name of God' above material considerations, but while he argues that matter is adiaphora – "He will come never the sooner, blesse never the more for a golden; he will come never the later, blesse never the lesse for an earthen Altar" (6) – the force of his rhetoric moves the listener to an active suspicion of, rather than simply indifference to, material extravagance.

Dyke's interest in the altar's materiality naturally invites comparison with Herbert's own 'Altar'. In Dyke's sermon as in Herbert's poem, the altar is a synecdoche, representing something greater: the whole church edifice and the worship practised within it in the former, the anxious devotional poetics of *The Temple* in the latter. Both take the altar as a subject for its foundational role in Christian worship, rather than for its everyday importance. The Book of Common Prayer only required that communion be given three times a year, and incipient controversy around reorientation of the communion table was, in the 1620s, not as fevered or dominant as it would become in the following decade.[50] Practically speaking, the 'altar' was not the most prominent feature of early-seventeenth century worship. Yet as Dyke's sermon points out, the construction of the altar recurs in scripture at moments analogous to consecration, at which specific forms of worship are instituted; the altar both materially manifests and symbolically represents the worship itself.

'The Altar' echoes verbally in Dyke's sermon. Dyke enjoins his listeners to prioritise adherence to God's Word over worldly glory by asking, "Must God frame his Altar to mens humors, or men subiect their folly to God's wisedome?" (14). The idea of 'framing' as a kind of conceptual domination is also present in 'The Altar', the speaker submitting to God with the words, "each part/ Of my hard heart/ Meets in this frame, to praise thy name" (*EP* 92). We have seen the significance of 'framing' to early modern poetics, and to Herbert's devotional poetics more specifically.[51] Both Herbert and Dyke invoke the idea of 'framing' not only to point up the materiality, and therefore the immanency, of the 'framed' work – the altar and poem as the object of human craft, or the heart, of divine creation – but to explore the ambiguous position of the human subject.

[50] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored,* Ch. 5.
[51] See above, pp. 75-76.

Dyke imagines God being 'framed' by men's 'humours' in a rhetorical question, the idea of 'framing' the divine in human terms self-evidently absurd. 'The Altar' is more complex: the heart is metaphorically represented by the altar; and the heart, altar and poem alike are all comprehended within the 'frame'. Yet in the poem's opening lines the three are distinct: the altar is 'made of' the heart, and the 'parts' of either (or both, the syntax deliberately ambiguous) "are as thy hand did frame". The complexity of this four-line sentence, comprised of run-on subordinate clauses and the implicit simile, rather than outright statement, of "*as* thy hand did frame", is thus smoothed out in the image's recurrence seven lines later. Questions of authority, interpretation and meaning on the human level, bound up in the 'frame' image, are subsumed in the act of divine creation.

Yet human interpretation and signification remain central to the attempt to understand both the church and *The Temple*. Dyke's proclamation that "an Hovell, yea or worse then an Hovell, so bee it Gods Name had beene recorded there, and Gods Ordinances there was to be preferred before their Idolatrous Temple" (8-9) prompts the question of what 'Gods Name' and 'Ordinances' being 'recorded' actually means. This question occupies him for the majority of the sermon, and allows him to engage with the nature of sacred space from an avowedly anti-ceremonialist position.

Dyke's argument centres on the idea in Exodus 20:24 of God's name being 'recorded' in the holy space. Yet where in Exodus God 'records' his own name, Dyke emphasises human action: "Let vs get and keepe his Name *recorded* here. And if wee haue his Name here, his Ordinances of the Word, and Prayer, then hee himselfe is hee, and wee shall haue him here" (17). The building's sanctity is determined not by the ritual of consecration, but by the worship practised within it. The forms of worship Dyke points to here – 'Ordinances of the Word, and Prayer' – are both forms which render the Word into spiritual or practical action; by bringing these together as 'getting and keeping his Name recorded' Dyke in turn renders these outward actions as fundamentally textual.

It is not merely individual worshippers' devotions that Dyke presents as essentially textual, but the collective building works the sermon formally marks. Again, far from dismissing the practicalities

of building work as indifferent decoys distracting from a deeper spiritual purpose, they are presented as a sign of spiritual effort:

> Since therefore yee haue beene at cost, and charges to build vp an house for Gods Ordinances, improue your cost, let it be but so much put out to spirituall vsury, get the advantage, and returne of a blessing… Labour therefore vnder the Ministery to be built vp in grace, knowledge, to bee built vp in your most holy faith, in the power of godlinesse, and religion (24-5).

The effort to finance the building is acknowledged, but is not in itself sufficient. The parishioners' efforts to "build vp an house for Gods Ordinances" is paralleled with an injunction to "be built vp in grace, knowledge, to bee built vp in your most holy faith…" The outward, physical actions undertaken by the worshippers have value, but, using Dyke's financial metaphor, can accrue additional spiritual "advantage, and returne". To do so, the worshippers must submit to God: they have 'built up' the chapel, but they themselves must be 'built up' in worship.

In this light, the work of 'building' or 'building up' as Dyke presents it here, simultaneously internal and external, material and spiritual, actively undertaken by the worshipper but fundamentally a passive submission to divine power, has much in common with the 'framing' image Herbert invokes in *The Temple*. In 'JESU', as in 'The Altar', a broken artefact represents the imperfect heart of the worshipper, but here what is described is simply 'JESU,' the name carved in the speaker's heart (*EP* 401). Again the heart is a broken 'frame', but in this poem the speaker's comfort comes from a divine blessing, not despite his 'brokenness', but because of it: 'JESU' being fragmented into 'J', 'ES' and 'U' turns them into "*I ease you*". Thus far, 'JESU' seems aligned with Dyke:

> The lesse glory in the Altar, the more glory to God, who perfects his power in weaknesse, his glory in outward meannesse, and gets himselfe great glory in convaying heavenly blessings by earthly instruments (5).

To see God "perfect[ing] his power in weaknesse" is a deeply Herbertian idea, and that God "convay[s] heavenly blessings by earthly instruments" is clearly vital to poems that centre around material artefacts and human limitations like 'The Altar' and 'JESU'.

Yet in his poetry Herbert places great emphasis on materiality of worship and devotion, not in opposition to but intertwined with their spiritual element, including, and perhaps especially, in

textual forms of devotion. 'JESU' particularly emphasises specific actions in the speaker's act of reading:

> When I had got these parcels, instantly
> I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
> That to my broken heart he was *I ease you*.

For Dyke, as we have seen, to 'keep God's name recorded' in the church is a matter of internalising and outwardly performing scripture; God's initial consecratory act of 'naming' is performed repeatedly by individual worshippers. This resonates with Herbert's vision of devotion as an act of reading, but in 'JESU' the comfort is found within the speaker's heart; the translation of 'JESU' to 'I ease you' comes not from divine blessing alone, nor from the speaker following God's commands, but from their own despair and the re-appraisal of their relationship with God that this allows. The narrative of the speaker's 'affliction' and comfort essentially becomes a word-puzzle, and, as in similar poems like 'Anagram of the Virgin Mary' or 'Paradise' (*EP* 279, 464), the reader themselves undertakes the work depicted, experiencing the same emotional enlightenment the speaker does. By understanding worship and devotion as essentially textual, Herbert both situates his poetry within a mainstream understanding of early seventeenth-century worship practices, and ensures immediacy of the poems' effect.

For Dyke and Herbert alike, both textual forms of worship and the physical building of the church are materially and spiritually significant – the financial and physical efforts of church building, the discipline and devotion of observing textual and verbal forms of worship, physically- and materially-drawn acts of reading and meditating. Spiritual significance lies in both the inward effects of outward actions, and in providing a framework for interpreting the work undertaken in worship, whether it is to be considered as a kind of divine 'naming' or spiritual 'building'. Worshippers experience the space of the church not merely as a physical reality, but as a mental and spiritual process in which they actively participate. As we shall see, however, the conditions in which early modern worshippers lived and inhabited this space was often mutable and unstable, both materially and spiritually; constructing the spiritual 'space' of the church only invited further ambiguities, as we shall explore in the next chapter.

"Repining restlesnesse": Place and displacement in *The Temple*

The Temple's speakers long for a permanent home, but constantly find themselves cast into spiritual turbulence. The speaker of 'Affliction (IV)' is "broken in pieces all asunder", "tortur'd in the space/ Betwixt this world and that of grace" (*EP* 328); 'Giddinesse' opens with the speaker's observation of "how farre from power,/ From setled peace and rest" man is (*EP* 445). Any hope of permanent possession seems to lie with God: in 'Good Friday' Christ is called on to "fill the place" of the speaker's heart "And keep possession with thy grace" (*EP* 127); in 'Christmas', to "Furnish & deck my soul, that thou mayst have,/ A better lodging, then a rack, or grave" (*EP* 290). 'Man' opens with an apparently aphoristic statement that "none doth build a stately habitation,/ But he that means to dwell therein", and closes with the logical conclusion to this observation:

> Since then, my God, thou hast
> So brave a Palace built; O dwell in it,
> That it may dwell with thee at last! (*EP* 333)

In *The Temple*, 'possessing' space – whether attributed to God, dwelling in or shunning man, or to man, choosing the right or wrong place inhabit – is meaningful and deliberate, shaping how the speaker, and the reader, experience the volume's spiritual, material, and textual world. Earthly ideas of ownership, inhabitation and settlement in place and space give Herbert a lexicon for expressing the spiritual dispossession and unsettledness his speakers constantly experience.

This sense of alienation is, it seems, an inherent human experience for Herbert: 'The Pulley' presents a creation myth which sees "repining restlesnesse" and "wearinesse" as essential to human nature (*EP* 548-9). Narrating a Pandora-like story in which God 'pours' blessings into man but deprives him of 'rest', the result Herbert describes is a "rich and wearie" humanity; had we also been given 'rest', we would "rest in Nature, not the God of Nature,/ So both should losers be"; denied this gift, "wearinesse" will "tosse [us] to [God's] breast". This vision of creation is not celebratory, instead seeking to rationalise the insufficiencies of human nature – it has troubled some critics, as depicting

God purposely creating a fallen humanity.[1] However, the poem's emphasis on intense human dissatisfaction – ironic given the insistence on God's bountiful 'blessings' – should remind us that the poem does not set out to coherently explain doctrine, but to express a human, and therefore inherently incomplete, understanding of the world.

The poem imagines God's relation to man, and man's to the world, in metaphysically spatial terms: God creates man by pouring from "a glasse of blessings standing by", leaving humanity represented as a vessel, passively filled with God's blessings. At the same time man is a microcosm of the world: "Let the worlds riches, which dispersed lie,/ Contract into a span". The ambiguity in 'span' – whether referring temporally to human life, or spatially to the body – and the indefinite worldly riches that "dispersed lie", contrast with the simple opening image of man being filled with God's poured-out blessings. From the first stanza, where man is simply a concentration of divine blessings, a sense of 'place' is beyond both the poem's human subject and its human reader.

Unlike many of *The Temple*'s poems framed as studies of particular material features of the church, the title of 'The Pulley' has no obvious referent within the church building or liturgy. Wilcox notes that the pulley had precedent as a symbol of the mechanics of unearned salvation, as in Nicol Burne's statement that "we by certain pulleys, or engines are lifted up to heaven", and Thomas Nashe's description of Persians "pulled or pulleyed up to heaven" (*EP* 549). The "inherent paradox" of the pulley's double motion embodies the poem's implicit paradox: that man's only hope of rest lies in his 'weariness'. The violence of the closing line's "tosse" undermines this hope of repose, but also reveals the title's relevance. The initial opacity, and ultimate revelation, of the pulley-conceit's meaning makes the experience of reading the poem one of continual reassessment and reinterpretation – of intellectual dislocation and mutability, like the spiritual life of mankind the poem depicts.

[1] Edmund Miller, *Drudgerie Divine: The Rhetoric of God and Man in George Herbert* (Salzburg: Institüt für Anglistik und Amerikanistick, University of Salzburg, 1979), p. 49; Richard Strier, 'Ironic Humanism in *The Temple*', in *'Too Rich to Clothe the Sunne': Essays on George Herbert*, ed. by Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980), pp.33-52, p. 41.

It is a likely unintended, but nonetheless compelling, quirk of *The Temple*'s form that in all early modern printed editions the title and first stanza are on the bottom of a recto page, the latter three stanzas on the following verso. As such, the visual process of reading 'The Pulley' replicates the 'tossing' that the speaker longs for, the reader's eye necessarily moving upwards, as if to heaven, as they proceed through the poem. There is, moreover, a paradox in the 'revelation' of the poem's meaning in the final stanzas, made possible only by the occlusion of the poem's title and opening by the turning of the page. The relationship between the spiritual, intellectual and material experiences of reading 'The Pulley' is at once complementary and contradictory: to read the poem is to experience the parallel dislocation and satisfaction that the poem presents as inherently part of human life.

"Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plough": Displacement in the physical world

Throughout *The Temple* Herbert shows a twin commitment to the material realities of inhabiting space in the earthly world and the struggle for a place in the spiritual world that characterises his Christian speaker's spiritual journey. In the fourth stanza of 'The Church-Porch', for instance, the speaker enjoins chastity and sexual morality through an analogy with enclosure:

> If God had laid all common, certainly
> Man would have been th'incloser; but since now
> God hath impal'd us, on the contrarie
> Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plough,
> O, what were man, might he himself misplace!
> Sure to be crosse he would shift feet and face. (*EP* 50)

The process of enclosure was a well-established, and accelerating, phenomenon in the seventeenth century, a process which changed the face of rural communities like those of Leighton Bromswold and Bemerton where Herbert served as prebend and rector. In this stanza Herbert imbues the well-trodden ground of moralising about sexual behaviour with both a pressing political meaning, and a spatially-imagined dimension to the subject matter.

Agricultural metaphors for sexual chastity have long been a commonplace.[2] What is interesting about Herbert's use of the analogy here is that the salient concepts that make the image so appropriate for this subject matter – ownership, propriety, fertility – take precedence over the matter of sexual morality itself. It is only through this stanza's placement at the climax of three stanzas on the subject that it is clear that this is what it concerns. There are of course innuendos in the references to 'ploughing' and 'impaling', but even here the effect is more disconcerting than straightforwardly amusing or didactic: the image of God 'impaling' man is troubling, and casts humanity as both a sexualised victim and a trapped beast.

Moreover, the stanza continually swings back and forth between counterfactual hypothetical situations; significantly, each of the first three lines end with a clause denoting different levels of 'reality': "certainly… but since now… on the contrarie". Ultimately the force of the stanza is in man's tendency to live this kind of counterfactual life, to "himself misplace". The speaker laments how man will "shift feet and face", that is, stand on his head, to "live crosse" – a phrase which both conveys man's intrinsic contrariety and invokes Christ's cross.[3] The ambiguity that inheres in this single word, denoting both man's conflicting self-'misplacing' and his only possible means of salvation, is significant: in containing multiple contradictory meanings within a single word, the meanings compete for precedence in limited space, just as in the larger political issue of enclosure that the stanza has earlier invoked. On large and minute scales, the importance attached to specific spaces and places leads to a larger underlying sense of displacement for man, a defining part of the human condition as Herbert's speaker sees it.

This displacement was indeed inescapable as a material as much as a spiritual reality for people of all social strata in the early seventeenth century. Processes of enclosure, by which freeheld common land farmed by tenants in exchange for rates paid to the manorial lord were enclosed and leases sold, had been undertaken across England for centuries.[4] Enclosure fundamentally changed

[2] Mary Fissell, 'Gender and Generation: Representing Reproduction in Early Modern England', *Gender & History* 7.3 (1995), pp. 433-56, p. 436-7.
[3] On the ambiguity of the term 'cross' in 'The Crosse', see above, pp. 105-109.
[4] J.A. Yelling, *Common Field and Enclosure in England, 1450-1850* (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 127-29.

how people related to the land, as previously commonly-held land came into private ownership – and often into the hands of speculating merchants from London rather than local manorial lords.

The Reformation saw particularly religiously inflected changes to land distribution and ownership: Lynn Staley has shown how the political rhetoric used to characterise the English nation was tied deeply to the changing geography and balances of political power associated with the dissolution of religious houses and reassignment of lands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[5] Moreover, though largely distinct processes, the reallocation of land previously owned by monasteries and the enclosure of common lands by private owners were felt as intertwined; Kari Boyd McBride argues that the Dissolution was both an agent of agrarian change, and "a symbol of everything that was 'unnatural' and even blasphemous about changes to the landscape".[6] People's relation to the land they lived and worked on was fundamentally shaken in both economic and religious terms in the period, in ways that were mutually intertwined.

The spiritual resonances of land use and ownership are shown in Herbert's repeated use of the relationship between lord and tenant as a paradigm for the relationship between man and God. Where 'Good Friday' imagines Christ as a landlord evicting sin from the speaker's heart, its immediate successor 'Redemption' makes this analogy explicit. The title plays to both sides of this analogy: in financial terms, a 'redemption' refers to a repayment of a debt or obligation, or the buying back of a security (*OED* 7); in theological terms, it refers to man's salvation from sin by Christ's sacrifice – a meaning which ultimately derives from this sense of 'repayment', Christ's sacrifice in a sense 'paying' the debt of man's sin (*OED* 2). The poem is quasi-allegorical in its strongly narrative line, where the figure of God is barely concealed within that of the 'Lord':

> Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
> Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
> And make a suit unto him, to afford
> A new small-rented lease, and cancel th'old (*EP* 132).

[5] Lynn Staley, 'Enclosed Spaces', in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*, ed. by James Simpson and Brian Cummings, (Oxford: OUP, 2010), pp.113-32, pp. 127-28.
[6] Kari Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2001), p. 19.

The narrative of the poem is the renegotiation of the 'lease', a phrase giving legalistic connotations to the covenants between man and God of the Old and New Testaments; the first covenant with the Israelites (Exodus 19:5) is "th'old" lease which the speaker seeks to "cancel" in exchange for a "small-rented" one, the new covenant of Matthew 24:28.

However, the legalistic overtones of the language of 'leases' and 'rents' is not as important as the poem unfolds as the sense of placement the speaker finds over his quest to find the 'Lord'. With the lord absent from his heavenly manor, in "some land… on earth", this emphatic vagueness is contrasted with the specific locations in which the speaker seeks him: "in great resorts;/ In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts". These lofty locations, raced through at such speed as to cramp any impressive effect, are again contrasted to the indefinite designation of the place he is ultimately found: "At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth// Of theeves and murderers: there I him espied". No specific location is described, but only the "noise… of theeves and murderers" that infers it. The syntactic economy of the colon connecting the clause describing the "noise" and "there I him espied" emphasises the ill-defined nature of the place, in moving instantaneously from the aural 'noise' to the visual sighting of Christ.

Hearing and sight then in turn give way immediately to the titular redemption, in Christ's words, "*Your suit is granted*". The abruptness of this line is felt in the contrast between the immediacy of the action narrated and the staccato effect of the line's multiple caesurae, and the sudden intrusion, in the poem's final word, of the literal reality of Christ's death into the allegorical representation of Christ and man as landlord and tenant. The solution to the speaker's situation comes only in a dissolution of the situation entirely, the 'tenant/ landlord' conceit done away with and the speaker's words silenced by 'Christ's'. The spatial imagining of the relationship between man and God, earth and heaven, is undone, and it is this undoing, this subsuming of the spatial and material into Christ's transcendent self-sacrificial words and actions, that constitutes the poem's looked-for titular 'redemption'.

Clearly, the sense of place, the access to one's rightful place, and the potential denial of this access, have strongly-felt religious significance; this is not merely a useful topical reference for Herbert to insert into 'The Church-porch'. To 'misplace oneself', to orient oneself incorrectly within the world, was a mistake with spiritual as well as material ramifications. The spiritual significance afforded to the physical landscape even in the post-Reformation world has attracted scholarly attention in recent years, particularly in Alexandra Walsham's study into the shaping effects of successive waves of iconoclasm against holy sites on the landscape and on how the English people related to it; Walsham argues that iconoclastic destruction of holy site and monuments "reconfigured and relocated", and "redefined rather than wholly denied", the sense of the sacred in the physical landscape.[7] It is important to set this religious recalibration of the meaning of local topography alongside the equally definitive processes of enclosure in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by which individuals' relationships with the land they worked on daily was similarly fundamentally reshaped – especially since the attempt to parse out secular and spiritual aspects of one's relationship to the land is clearly wrong-footed.

Patricia Fumerton sees this sense of alienation as even more all-encompassing, traceable not to enclosure alone – that in any case would affect rural communities far more directly than urban ones – but instead as a result of various interrelated economic and social conditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This period, she argues, saw the rise of an economy that was much more fluid and fractured than in previous times: vagrants, peddlers and unsettled labourers like servants and apprentices made up a developed, largely urban, 'unsettled economy', but so too did the 'shallow poor' – those able to afford housing but forced through economic necessity to partake in small-scale, domestic crafts such as lacework, pin-making, or distilling aqua vitae.[8] This shifting, intermittent economy, destabilised from the traditional frameworks of guilds and feudal manors, translated to a sense of profound social instability.

[7] Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 151.
[8] Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: UCP, 2006), pp. 22-23.

Fumerton sees this instability as representing "a new kind of secular subjectivity", one "socially determined" rather than immutably assigned by God.[9] Yet while the conditions that shaped the experiences of the early modern 'unsettled' worker may be largely secular, the Church remained a powerful influence in the treatment of the poor. Poor relief and alms were collected and distributed within the parish, though vagrants in or transient residents of a parish were overwhelmingly ineligible to receive this relief – in other words, the formal means of support served to economically define and police parochial boundaries, and in the process paradoxically establish an unsettled population that shared its space but was excluded from the community.[10] The parish church operates both as a guarantee of one's localised belonging, a source of spiritual comfort and material support in times of economic hardship, and as a gatekeeper, denying this spiritual and material belonging to the transient and itinerant.

"God hath impal'd us": spiritual displacement and Protestant subjectivity

The early modern church building is, on one level, a locus of stability within the parish: often the oldest building of the parish, its parochial boundaries defining not just where and alongside whom individual parishioners would worship at daily services, but also the bonds of mutual care and dependency that were constituted by the collection and distribution of church rates and poor relief.[11] Consistory courts adjudicated the matters of interpersonal relations within and between families and neighbourhoods.[12] Liturgical worship, too, served to ensure peace and unity within the parish: the Book of Common Prayer's order for communion, for instance, demands that the curate reconcile any "notorious evil liver" who 'offends' the congregation, or who "have done any wrong to hys

[9] ibid., xiii.
[10] A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: the vagrancy problem in England, 1560-1640* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 109, 173-74; Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 69-73.
[11] Hindle, *On the Parish?*, Ch. 2.
[12] Laura Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London', *History Workshop* 35 (1993), pp.1-21, p. 1.

neighbours, by worde or dede" with his victims, and mediate "with those betwixt whome he perceyveth malice and hatred to raigne" (*BCP* 124).

In addition, as Anne Myers has shown, the parish church, and in particular the porch – by the early decades of the seventeenth century often a substantial structure composed of multiple storeys – acted in effect as a hub of local official regulation: a location for the instruction of school pupils, and for the storage of local records, the parish library, treasuries, armouries and standard weights and measures.[13] In the church parishioners had access to common identity, common space and shared knowledge. Yet in the same way it also enforced exclusion and uncertainty in the lives of outsiders: those without their names in the parish records, with no allotted pew or burial place within the church and churchyard, and with no access to poor relief to help them survive, or to the spiritual and social benefits of participation in communal liturgical worship. In this respect the church represents and creates both fixity and instability in worshippers' lives, the contradictory coincidence of which shaped the early modern English spiritual experience.

Moreover, this paradoxical concurrence of fixity and uncertainty, and the strict definition of a spiritually important community, characterised Protestant believers' conception of their place in the universe. The matter of predestination preoccupied the church, as clergy debated the mechanics of salvation – whether it was achieved through faith attained by an individual's own free will, or divinely bestowed on the elect through an unearned and unconditional divine grace. This debate was, if not all-encompassing in the English Church of the early seventeenth century, at least all-pervading.[14] The assurance that one was elect to eternal life is a rational conclusion of Calvinist doctrine that salvation was achieved by faith alone: if you believe fully, you should be assured of your election. Puritan divine William Perkins deduced assurance through a 'practical syllogism' based on the Gospel and

[13] Anne Myers, 'Restoring 'The Church-porch'', p. 436.
[14] Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and consensus in the English Church from Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), pp. 140-51.

direct evidence from the individuals' spiritual experience, and sees it as the believer's "dutie" to "labour to bee setled and assured in our conscience, that God is God".[15]

Yet even Perkins, who can deduce through sheer logic that he is saved, nevertheless still regards assurance as the result of real spiritual 'labour'. Good works were *not* efficacious: this was not 'labour' to achieve election, but to gain the certain knowledge of one's election. Spiritual diaries and personal devotions attest extensively to this 'labour'; believers of all doctrinal leanings strove to divine their status of predestination, whether by examining their emotions or their inclination to good works.[16] This was a delicate balancing act: to doubt one's election was to doubt the absolute saving power of divine grace – and thus, damningly, *not* to believe fully; on the other hand, to be fully assured of one's salvation was to risk slipping into 'security', a complacency that dulls one to the need for proper devotion. Lewis Bayly, bishop of Bangor and author of the popular devotional handbook *The Practice of Pietie*, warned its reader that "*Despaire* is nothing so dangerous as *presumption*. For we reade not in the *Scriptures* of aboue *three* or *foure* whom *roaring* Despaire ouerthrew: But *secure* Presumption, hath sent *millions* to perdition, without any noise."[17]

The search for a certain foundation on which to centre one's faith, then, is circumspect and inherently uncertain. The necessity of a fluctuating spiritual experience was emphasised by the earlier English Reformer Hugh Latimer: "God doth cast [despairing believers] into hell, he hideth himself from them; but at length he bringeth them out again, and stablisheth them with a constant faith, so that they may be sure of their salvation and everlasting life."[18] Even the experience of doubt and despair has the capacity to lead to assurance of one's salvation – even the most complete despair, with the believer 'cast into hell' and God 'hidden' from them. In his 1612 handbook *The Signes*, setting out the 'signs' of election that readers should look for and cultivate in themselves, the Calvinist minister

[15] Joel Beeke, *Assurance of Faith: Calvin, English Puritanism and the Dutch Second Reformation* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 107-16.
[16] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 44-8.
[17] Bayly, *The Practise of Pietie*, p. 264.
[18] Hugh Latimer, 'The Eighth Sermon of Master Doctor Latimer, The Second Sunday in Advent, 1552', in *Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer*, ed. by George Ewles Corrie (Cambridge: CUP, 1845), pp. 44-64, p. 52.

Nicholas Byfield understands "godlie sorrow" in similar, though less absolute, terms: despite being "beate" and "cast down", for the godly believer even "in the verie disquietnesse of the hearte the desire of the soule is to the Lord".[19]

That Byfield places this essential human 'disquietness' in the 'heart' makes this spiritual 'disquietness' a simultaneously emotional and intellectual experience. Early modern believers understood personal emotions as shaped by God, even as a form of direct divine communication. Emotions were difficult to shape: the sheer quantity of devotional matter written advising how to cultivate or alter one's emotions testifies to the difficulty of this endeavour.[20] Even with emotional quietude, to interpret it was impossibly precarious, striving for assurance without falling into overconfidence. Herbert gives voice to this sense of inescapable introspective uncertainty in 'Assurance' (*EP* 533-34): the opening stanzas see the speaker fearing that "all was not so fair, as I conceiv'd,/ Betwixt my God and me", though they have not yet fallen into utter hopelessness, asking, "wouldst thou unlock the doore/ To colde despairs, and gnawing pensiveness?" This uncertain middle ground is the "disquietnesse of the heart" described by Byfield; the latter half of the poem makes it clear that the speaker's unshakeable faith in God still provides assurance even as he repudiates it: "when both rocks and all things shall disband,/ Then shalt thou be my rock and tower."

The poem charts the peaks and troughs of the spiritual emotional experience, of a speaker wavering between doubt and confidence. Throughout the poem the speaker's emotions, spiritual state and communication with God are expressed in terms that are explicitly verbal. At points this suggests that the poem is particularly personal: Wilcox sees the dismissal of the threat of despair ("I see, I know,/ I writ thy purpose long ago") alluding to Herbert's own verse dealing with his despair, like the 'Affliction' poems (*EP* 535 n. 18). This serves to make the poem particularly personal and immediate, and to intensify Herbert's closer examination of the meaning of his assurance. If their comfort came from themself, the speaker reasons, "I had not half a word,/ Not half a letter to oppose/ What is

[19] Nicholas Byfield, *The signes or An essay concerning the assurance of Gods loue, and mans saluation gathered out of the holy scriptures* (London: Jonas Man, 1614), p. 38.
[20] e.g. those surveyed in Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, Ch. 1.

objected by my foes". But they have nothing to fear, as they do not write alone, addressing Christ: "Thou didst at once thy self indite,/ And hold my hand, while I did write". The focus on writing emphasises the permanence of the 'league' or covenant between speaker and God; this is in contrast to the embodied 'spokenness' the speaker attributes to their feelings of doubt: "what more/ Could poyson, if it had a tongue, expresse?" The effect here is to portray the speaker's doubts as fundamentally human and fallible, but their assurance as permanent and constant.

The idea of a 'league' equivalent to the scriptural covenant between man and God, and thereby providing inspiration and a textual foundation for Herbert's poetry against the rather more tempestuous human weaknesses his verse can fall to, resonates throughout *The Temple.* Multiple poems find the 'solution' to the speaker's human weakness – often the poet's insufficiency to praise God or perform devotion in his verse – in the words of God. Sometimes these lines quote the Bible exactly – "*Thy will be done*" in 'The Crosse' (*EP* 563), "*Lesse then the least of all Gods mercies*" in 'The Posie' (*EP* 632), or "*Thou art still my God*" in 'The Forerunners' (*EP* 611-12) – and sometimes Herbert puts his own words into the mouth of a Christ-like figure – "*Your suit is granted*" in 'Redemption' (*EP* 132), "*My Child*" in 'The Collar' (*EP* 526), or "*There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd*" in 'Jordan (II)' (*EP* 367).

In either case, the 'divine' words are printed in italics, setting them apart visually from the rest of the poem as if to confirm their divine status with an authority above that of the speaker. Frances Cruickshank sees such 'interruptions' as expressing something fundamental to Herbert's poetics, as "clues to that other poetry which he cannot produce, but towards which he constantly gestures… he is writing poetry about the inadequacy of poetry, and offers tantalizing suggestions of the ideal poetry that he echoes."[21] If, as Kate Narveson auggests, the poem is "a mini-drama" of emotions within the speaker's soul, and 'assurance' itself "by nature dramatic", the dramatic dialogue with the divine presence in 'Assurance' is somewhat muted: we hear of God's "league" and Christ's

[21] Cruickshank, *Verse and Poetics*, p. 32.

'indictment', but do not witness them ourselves.[22] The distance imposed between reader and God, impassably mediated by the speaker's self-examination, forces the reader to take the same 'leap of faith' in the speaker, that the speaker must in his own assurance. The poem thus represents in poetic terms, and enforces in the reader, the very spiritual condition it describes.

'Assurance', then, explores and enacts the counterbalanced senses of 'disquiet' and confidence characteristic of the early modern Protestant spiritual experience. Herbert makes this condition legible to the readers in terms that are variously literal and scripturally referential, as well as moving through a variety of frames of imagery: poison, the minting of coins, imprisonment, military invasions, legal actions, rocks and rivers, and 'spinning' textiles, among others, are all invoked to communicate the speaker's condition. Taken together, these diverse images clearly suggest the speaker's frenetic spiritual state. Like the speaker – and like the spiritual 'place' of the early modern believer – the poem's focus cannot remain stable for more than a moment before giving way to a new incarnation.

The speaker's search for God in 'Home' (*EP* 384-85) is similarly frantic. The opening stanzas express the speaker's desperation in familiar corporeal terms: "my head doth burn, my heart is sick… My spirit gaspeth night and day." At the same time, the speaker's search for God, and God's reciprocal search for the "lost" man, are represented as a physical search through the world:

> When man was lost, thy pity looked about
> To see what help in th'earth or sky:
> But there was none, at least no help without;
> The help did in thy bosome lie.

Moments of correction and clarification recur throughout the poem: "After all this canst thou be strange?/ So many yeares baptiz'd, and not appeare?/ As if thy love could fail or change." Do these lines express a genuine belief that God is 'strange' and absent, a suggestion that his "love could fail or change"? "As if" here holds a lot of weight, serving to create distance in the speaker's expression, pointing up its counterfactual nature, the impossibility of God's love 'failing', but at the same time

[22] Kate Narveson, 'The Problem of Peace in Herbert's 'Assurance' sequence', *GHJ* 38.1-2 (2014-15), pp. 1-14, pp. 8-9.

acknowledging the idea's emotional reality to the human speaker. These irreconcilable realities are thus held in tension in the verbal, and poetic, framing of the line.

Across the poem, the speaker repeatedly questions, "What is this world to me?… What is this weary world, this meat and drink/ That chains us by the teeth so fast?" The answer seemingly lies in repudiating the physical world entirely: "We talk of harvest; there are no such things,/ But when we leave our corn and hay." The literal harvest is rejected in favour of the metaphorical, spiritual bounty that comes in neglecting it. The paradoxical relationship between physical and spiritual worlds is emphasised in the "fruitfull year" existing only on "The last and lov'd, though dreadfull day". The ability of Herbert's verse, and his figurative language in particular, to reconcile impossible ideas, is what allows the speaker to approach the titular evasive 'home' on some level.

Significantly, as the speaker's splintering subjectivity is most clearly expressed – "O loose this frame, this knot of man untie!" they exclaim, seeing the soul "pinion'd with mortalitie,/ As an intangled, hampered thing" – they return also to the opening stanzas' embodied language: "My flesh and bones and joynts do pray:/ And ev'n my verse." This focus on 'verse' at the final moment draws attention to the poem's refrain, "O show thy self to me,/ Or take me up to thee!". It has been suggested that these lines provide the 'key' to the poem, the first five stanzas expressing the refrain's first line, the others the latter.[23] Certainly, the poem's 'narrative' shows the speaker seeking God in the natural world, before concluding that the sought-for understanding can only come by leaving it behind. But repeatedly calling at once for theophany ("show thy self to me") *and* assumption into heaven ("take me up to thee!") undermines a singular narrative reading of the poem; instead it represents the constant human condition of seeking God through disparate and irreconcilable channels.

The final stanza complicates this further: the speaker's wish is ultimately not to be 'taken up' *to* God, but for God to "*Come*" to him. The line puts focus on the word 'come': the speaker points

[23] George Ryley, *Mr Herbert's Temple and Church Militant Explained and Improved*, ed. by Maureen Boyd and Cedric C. Brown, (New York: Garland, 1987), p. 143.

out that logic and the poetic form both anticipate "*Stay*", to rhyme with "pray", but instead, as Colie observes, has "*Come*", to rhyme with the poem's title, 'Home'.[24] Even in this final call for unification or homecoming, the poem unsettles itself, breaking its rhyme scheme and directing the reader's attention back to the poem's title. Here lies the poem's fundamental irony: its speaker longs for a settled unity with God, but this search, the speaker's insistence on fruitlessly shouting, "*Come*", is what disrupts the poem's form and renders it essentially circular; the human condition, it seems, is one of constantly fruitless effort.

If 'Home', then, is read as a search for heavenly, homely unity with God, it is essentially fruitless. It does not, however, seek to 'find' God, but to represent the speaker's search for him, focusing not on God's obscurity, but on the insufficiency of the human pursuit. The title's ambivalence reflects the variety of divergent, even irreconcilable, conceptions of the relationship between God and humanity available to early modern worshippers. God's place in the physical world was problematic: was the church the special residence of God on earth, or was that the faithful Christian heart? Was the earthly world inherently irredeemable and apart from God or was he present everywhere? Herbert generally does not attempt to answer these questions in his poems, to pinpoint God's 'place' in the world; rather his verse seems to cultivate means of looking for God, and in particular ways in which poetry itself may 'look' more directly.

"O, what were man!": dispossession and representation

Herbert's focus on the means of representing and mediating the human search for the divine is not merely a form of self-conscious focus on his own craft, but reflects the ways in which human experiences of the divine, as well as of secular life, in the period were inescapably mediated by human

[24] Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 200-01.

acts of representation. A case study of the Northamptonshire village of Passenham will provide a useful way of thinking through these questions.

The first two decades of the seventeenth century seem to have seen almost all of Passenham's common land enclosed under the oversight of Sir Robert Banastre. Banastre was a colessee, with two others, of nearby Whittlewood, who settled in Passenham in 1610 and became its lord in 1624.[25] Banastre appears to have undertaken his management of the lands uncompromisingly to say the least: in 1640 he sued one William Nicholls for libel, for calling him a "base fellow" after Banastre had had Nicholls' brother imprisoned for debt in order to let his estate to other tenants. Nicholls was found guilty and fined £15.[26]

Banastre's treatment of his tenants certainly seems to fall far short of the sort of munificent, protective duty towards his dependents that might be expected of the manorial lord, which Herbert seems to have found germane for representing the relationship between God and man, as in 'Redemption'. Brown and Roberts record colourful local stories of hauntings by Banastre's ghost, and a nineteenth-century poem laying the blame for depopulation and enclosure at his door.[27] The archive and local popular history alike, then, bear witness to Banastre's reputation as oppressive and exploitative, his inadequacies in fulfilling his responsibilities as the lord of Passenham; they do so in a way that the church and manorial buildings themselves do not. For Banastre not only undertook large-scale enclosure of the land in Passenham, but he also carried out a sizeable project of rebuilding the parish church of St Guthlac and the village's manorial buildings in 1626, at which point the previous medieval manor house was reassigned as the rectory, the church was extensively rebuilt, and a new manor house was constructed.

In the church building in particular, Banastre's presence as a munificent authority is strongly felt: an inscription over the south porch declares that

[25] Philip Riden and Charles Insley, eds. 'Passenham', *A History of the County of Northampton: Volume 5, the Hundred of Cleley* (London: VCH, 2002), pp. 208-245. *BHO*.
[26] Richard Cust and Andrew Hopper, eds. '29 Bannester v Nicholls', in *The Court of Chivalry 1634-1640. BHO*.
[27] O.F. Brown and G.J. Roberts, *Passenham: The History of a Forest Village* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1973), pp. 77-78.

> *Robertus Banastreius miles quid retribuam tibi domine pro omnibus beneficiis mihi datis anno domini 1626*
> ([I] Robert Banastre, soldier, would repay you with this, Lord, for all the kindnesses you have given to me, in the year of the Lord 1626');

painted lettering on the north wall of the restored chancel similarly commemorates that

> *Robertus Banastreius, miles, hanc sacram sidem (ad laude dei) propriis sumptibus condidit, aetatis suae an'o 56, Anoq[ue] Domini 1626*
> (Robert Banastre, soldier, built this holy place (to the glory of God) at his own expense in the 56th year of his life, and in the year of the Lord 1626).

Perhaps most imposingly, the south wall of the chancel bears an elaborate funeral monument – likely commissioned and erected long before Banastre's death – featuring his bust, and an inscription telling of his political and familial achievements, and that "A man charitable prudent & very industrious hee built & beautified this faire chauncell where his bodie is interred". Banastre's presence in the church is inescapable, from one's entry through the porch and throughout the service, as his effigy watches over the congregation from the most elevated liturgical position, the chancel.

Archival and material sources thus seem to tell very different stories about Banastre's relationship with the village of Passenham: where court records show us a shrewd, even ruthless, politician and landlord who made the most of his acquisitions in financial terms, the imprint he has left in his rebuilding of St Guthlac's is more often interpreted as a sign of specific Laudian piety. The chancel's misericords, rood screen and wall paintings were all certainly what Pevsner terms "self-conscious archaisms" and could not but have been interpreted in the increasingly tense religious landscape of the 1620s as a traditionalist statement, as much religious and political as aesthetic.[28] To refer to his rebuilding of the church as 'beautifying' is certainly significant, aligning his intention with the wider Laudian programme of attaining a 'beauty of holiness' in the English church.[29] National religio-political movements were played out in the 'micro-politics' of parish life, the dramas of interpersonal relationships, court cases and changes in land ownership. Any understanding of these phenomena is mediated by a vast range of consciously crafted acts of representation – from Banastre's

[28] Nicholas Pevsner, *Northamptonshire*, rev. by Bridget Cherry (New Haven: YUP, 1974), p. 369.
[29] Morel, *Glorious Temples*, p. 147; Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour*, p. 6.

plaques and monuments within St Guthlac's, to the archival records such as they survive – that is no less applicable to the poetically crafted edifice of Herbert's *Temple*.

The apparent ease with which architectural design and the use of space may be associated with confessional identities – whether in ornate church interiors accommodating and promoting ceremonialist 'Anglican' worship, or in bare churches and word-centred 'Puritan' piety – reflects the way in which Herbert's *Temple* too has been read. In particular, 'The British Church' seems to exalt the English 'middle way' – "A fine aspect in fit array,/ Neither too mean nor yet too gay" – between Catholic extravagance and Genevan austerity (*EP* 390-91). Nowhere else in *The Temple* is Herbert as explicit in his apparent patriotism and his engagement with the terms of contemporary church policy: the statement that "Beauty in thee takes up her place" seems to assume the spiritual value of both beauty and of the 'distinction of places', both of which are doctrinally controversial.

Yet the details of this 'beauty' are couched in the metaphorical terms of a woman's appearance – her dress, her hair, her face – rather than the literal 'beautification' of the church building, like windows, woodwork or statuary. As Daniel Doerksen suggests, the poem's real concern seems to be with the theological 'middle way' that the English Church represents between Arminianism and strict Calvinism, the mediation and accommodation itself a virtue: "The mean thy praise and glory is".[30] The potentially, and uncharacteristically, controversial imagery through which Herbert expresses this point seems to work against this view, suggesting the complex and contradictory nature of the any such approach to the Church as an institution, whose function is at once communicated and compromised by its physical presence and form.

If Herbert seems to dance meaningfully around the terms of contemporary debate on both doctrine and the use of church buildings, this has not dissuaded critics from attempting to parse out Herbert's sincerely held opinions on such matters.[31] Indeed, the number and variety of such attempts

[30] Daniel Doerksen, 'Recharting the *Via Media* of Spenser and Herbert', *Renaissance and Reformation* 8 (1984), pp. 215-25, p. 217.

[31] For instance, Richard Strier interprets 'The British Church' as explicitly anti-Catholic ('History, Criticism and Herbert: a polemical note', *Papers on Language and Literature* 17 (1981), pp. 347-52); conversely, Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth read the poem as criticising Calvinist austerity just as much as Roman

attests to the complexity of the evidence as presented in *The Temple*: as in 'The British Church', formal and contextual ways of reading the verse can pull the reader in different directions. This is all the more keenly felt in the fact that 'The British Church', in all early modern editions of *The Temple*, directly follows 'Sion' and 'Home'. All three poems fundamentally concern the spiritual and physical entity of the 'Church' and the way in which the human soul is able to inhabit the world spiritually and physically, though the means of exploring these questions cover scriptural meditation ('Sion', heavily building on Solomon's construction of the Temple in 1 Kings 6), an intimate personal plaint to God ('Home'), and allegorical depiction of the church's beauty ('The British Church'). Herbert's verse resists a singular reading – whether biographical or doctrinal – and instead invites the reader, over the mini-sequence of these three poems, to consider the space they inhabit and use in worship in different contexts.

While Herbert certainly actively promotes such multifarious readings, this is not merely a matter of poetics, but shares much with the way in which the physical space of the church itself is to be inhabited and understood. As reading 'The British Church' as simply Anglican propaganda is overly simplifying, to see Banastre's rebuilding works as purely Laudian in intent or effect is myopic; rather, his rebuilding of the parish church was undertaken alongside that of the manor buildings, the secular manor house put to new use as the parish rectory, a new church building erected in effect concurrently with a new manor house. These building works would have been financed in large part by Banastre's income from the newly-enclosed land in Passenham. What Banastre portrays in the inscriptions adorning the church as an act of godly munificence – Banastre's private wealth given to the use of the parishioners of Passenham – might, to the contrary, be equally interpreted as being financed by the parishioners' own resources reappropriated.

It would be no less simplistic to see Passenham's rebuilt church interior as a wholly meretricious whitewashing of Banastre's actions as purely Christian: certainly there is religious significance in his monument referring to his 'beautifying' the "faire chauncell", but in the same

excess ('The Politics of *The Temple*: 'The British Church' and 'The Familie'', *George Herbert Journal* 8 (1984), pp. 1-15).

breath he is described as "a man charitable prudent & industrious"; similarly, the chancel painting declares that the rebuilding was undertaken '*ad laudem dei*', but the point is also made that Banastre did so 'at his own expense'. At each point, religious and worldly motivations go hand in hand – thus giving the lie to the model of sacred space suggested by contemporary consecration sermons, which attempted to set the church apart from worldly concerns.[32] Sacred and secular, and common and public interests did not so much intersect as operate symbiotically.

Banastre was, of course, no particularly committed theologian, the apparent high-church sensibilities of St Guthlac's likely as much an expression of his political as his ecclesiastical leanings. Nonetheless the inscriptions and furnishings would be legible to the parishioners passing them by, and it is likely that those who had seen their common land enclosed and the very shape of the village, in open land and public and private buildings alike, altered entirely within a generation, would respond strongly to a representation of their parish church as a gift from Banastre alone to God. A sense of alienation from the land a parishioner lived in and worked on was a likely result of the enclosure of their land; a similar sense of alienation might equally have followed from the rebuilding of parish churches, widespread in the 1620s and 1630s, that materially represented both a clear change in the liturgical conception of the space through Laudian prioritising of beauty over bare utility, and an incursion of the secular authority of the manorial lord or other benefactor over the sacred space of the church.

Significantly, it remains that the villagers of Passenham, parishioners of St Guthlac's and tenants on Banastre's land, leave much less permanent trace on either the material or archival record, beyond their often unlucky fortunes in the courts against him. Recent work by Alexandra Shepard on the class politics of testifying in the early modern courts has emphasised how even testimonies, often the only place illiterate people's words are preserved, did not represent a true, unadulterated 'voice' of the people, representing instead the interests of their employers and landlords, who exerted their financial and social control to ensure a testimony in support of their case, regardless of truth or the

[32] See above, pp. 120-21.

interests of those testifying; and mediated by the words of the scribe, who might insert formulaic phrasing or compelling language as suited the case.[33] Banastre's control of the land of Passenham entails not only control of the land itself and its economic capability, but the liturgical space in which the parishioners could worship, and their history as it is transferred to modernity. By appropriating the physical space of the land and the church, Banastre appropriates also the means of representation open to them.

To interpret church space involves a continual reconciliation of apparently contradictory sacred and secular influences: the demands of liturgical function and religio-politically- inflected confessional alignments on the one hand; on the other the will of the landowners and leading parishioners who financially and materially shaped the church for their personal religious and political benefit. There are clear parallels here with devotional verse: an expression or representation of apparently sincere devotion, meditation or prayer, a fundamentally spiritual undertaking, which at the same time follows the same forms and tropes as contemporary courtly, patronage-seeking poetry.

Just as the consciously crafted self-promoting representation of benefactors and landowners like Banastre within the churches they finance may seem to a modern sensibility to be fundamentally in tension with the space's common use and ownership and a 'true' sense of public benefit and sincere devotional use, so do Herbert's intimate, deeply personal expressions of apparently sincere prayer, meditation and devotion seem incongruous with the potential worldly benefits he might reap from them, in the form of patronage and pastoral, if not courtly, advancement. If modern readers and critics tend to overlook this function of Herbert's poetry this is a product, like so much of Herbert's reception, of his early editors' and biographers' careful framing of his life and works. As we have seen, Ferrar's prefatory letter 'The Printers to the Reader' (*EP* 42) emphasises Herbert's renunciation of courtly advancement:

[33] Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, status, and the social order in early modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 8-9; cf. Frances Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, literature, and evidence in seventeenth-century England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2013), Ch. 4.

> Quitting both his deserts and all the opportunities that he had for worldly preferment, he betook himself to the Sanctuarie and Temple of God, choosing rather to serve at God's Altar, then to seek the honour of State-employments.

What is more, Ferrar tells us, Herbert even attempts to abdicate the worldly glory of promotion within the church, but is drawn back in by his divinely-imposed obligation to serve his flock and oversee the restoration of the parish church of Leighton Bromswold, for which he served as rector:

> As for worldly matters, his love and esteem to them was so little, as no man can more ambitiously seek, then he did earnestly endeavour the resignation of an Ecclesiasticall dignitie, which he was possessour of. But God permitted not the accomplishment of this desire, having ordained him his instrument for reedifying of the Church belonging thereunto…

Against this backdrop, and in emphasising the "naked simplicitie" of the verse which follows, Ferrar presents *The Temple* as an expression of this rejection of worldly advancement, the voice of a solitary devotee unconcerned with the favour of his superiors. Much as Banastre's funeral monuments and plaques within St Guthlac's use the church building to present their subject as a devout and beneficent landowner, Ferrar's mediation of Herbert's verse in *The Temple* is not simply a devotional 'spin' on purely secular verse, but forms part of a complex negotiation of secular and sacred functions of the fundamentally material devotional objects of both poetry and the church building.

"Sure to be cross he would shift feet and face": Textual instability and devotional verse

The depth of spiritual feeling and the sincerity of the devotional use to which Herbert's verse has been put by contemporary and modern readers alike prevents reading the verse as *merely* worldly patronage-seeking. Despite the demonstrable social and financial security in which Herbert lived even as he turned away – or was shut out – from further worldly advancement, his verse gives voice to the spiritual and earthly dispossession that characterised the lives of early modern worshippers. Where Herbert does engage with relationships of secular power such as that between landlord and tenant, or with the place of the land itself, he takes on the voice of the dispossessed and displaced. For one, the speaker of 'Redemption' is found 'making suit to' his lord, and spends the extent of the poem 'seeking' him, moving from the heavenly 'manor' to the indeterminate "some

land… on earth" – at no point is the speaker granted any kind of fixed location. This does not mean that Herbert consciously attempts to speak for the materially poor, but rather that material dispossession – an image familiar through proximity if not through experience to him and his readers alike – provides a way of expressing his spiritual dispossession.

Certainly, worshippers' material circumstances, a 'dispossession' or 'displacement' from common land or space following enclosure or the rebuilding of church spaces, provide a fitting source of imagery for their spiritual experience – the subjective 'displacement' of one seeking assurance of election and a firm status within an ever-changing parish community. This is not mere coincidence: the material changes to land ownership often materially enabled the changes to worship spaces and practices that brought such spiritual anxiety with the Laudian reforms of the 1620s and '30s.

What is more, the imaginatively fruitful instability of the material world as early modern worshippers experienced characterised not only land ownership and use of public spaces, but also the textual landscape of early modern England. Fumerton discusses how the 'unsettled subjectivity' of the mobile, intermittently and fluidly occupied 'shallow poor' was reflected in the contemporary literary landscape in the form of broadside ballads; drawing on Tessa Watt's work on the genre she emphasises how their cheap production, 'multimedia' presentation (with woodcut illustrations and oral and musical performance making them accessible to the semi- and illiterate), and use decorating the walls of communal spaces like alehouses, all made them accessible and familiar to audiences without the means to access more 'highbrow' and stable literary works in comparatively expensive and exclusive books.[34]

Looked at in this way, the literary landscape of the seventeenth century seems to operate along a kind of axis of 'stability', with the most 'stable' texts – carefully compiled folios, boasting of authoritative or textual completeness, accessible only to the richest, circulated among private circles, as much a status symbol as a text – at one end, at the other the most 'transient' – the broadside ballad,

[34] Fumerton, *Unsettled*, Ch. 4, and 'Not Home: Alehouses, ballads, and the vagrant husband in early modern England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32.3 (Fall 2002), pp. 493-518; Watt, *Cheap Print* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).

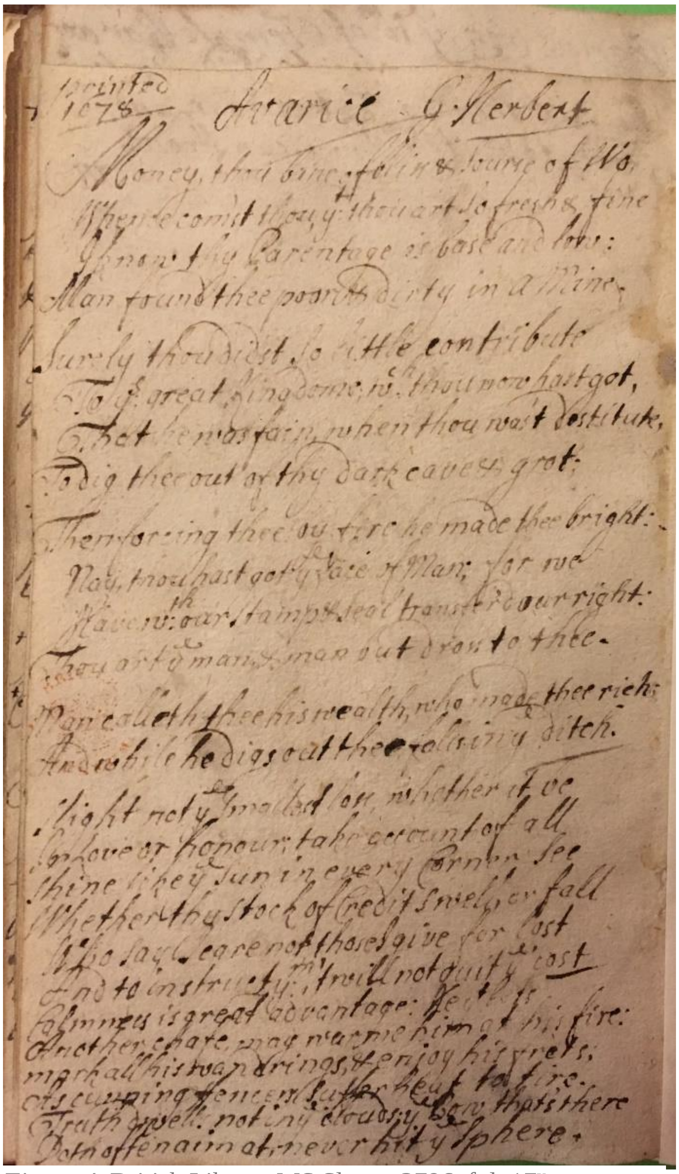


Figure 4: British Library MS Sloane 3796, fol. 17v. A late-seventeenth century notebook containing accounts, medical and veterinary receipts and charms. Lines in the right-hand margin separate 'Avarice' from stanzas 58 and 63 of 'The Church-porch'.

affordable and accessible to all, printed and disseminated widely, publicly performed, but also least likely to be preserved in private book collections – at the other.[35] In such a view, where should The Temple stand? Materially, its duodecimo format lends to portability, perhaps as a pocket-book like the Prayer Book or Bible. Yet the eulogising and authorising apparatus that accreted around *The Temple*'s poems – Ferrar's three-page commendatory epistle from the first edition, but later including an engraved portrait, a series of memorial poems, and Walton's full *Life* of Herbert – serve both to exalt Herbert as a figure of saint-like status, and to make *The Temple* itself a single, monumental edifice.

Increasing critical interest in the circulation of manuscript and printed literature has emphasised the way all texts were to some extent mutable. 'Commonplace book culture', to use Adam Smyth's fruitfully expansive term, demanded the excerpting, recontextualisation and redeployment of lines and passages in various forms to suit the compiler's

[35] Linda Woodbridge reminds us that such an axis would not be parallel: undoubtedly the poorest would not be able to access expensive folios and non-vernacular texts, but 'popular' literature – jest books, chapbooks, and 'rogue literature' in general – were popular across all strata of society; and indeed, the upper echelons actively participated in creating such lowbrow texts: "rogue literature was not written by rogues, and jest books were not penned by clowns." *Vagrancy, Homeless and English Renaissance Literature* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 19.

ends; this personal process was also evident in more widely-circulated acts of collection and compilation, as in the many verse miscellanies and anthologies that were disseminated in print and in manuscript across the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[36] Poems and excerpts might be circulated without authorial attribution, or misattributed, to support readings that seem fundamentally at odds with those invited by the text in its 'original' form. Contemporary (and near-contemporary) appearances of Herbert's poems in both manuscript and print exemplify this mutability. For instance, the compiler of a late-seventeenth century commonplace book places 'Avarice' (*EP* 276), a meditation on the human impulse to materialism and idolatry, alongside stanza 63 of 'The Church-porch', in which a financial metaphor explores the "losse" and "credit" of the spiritual life (see Figure 4).[37]

In this instance, the commonplace book's compiler reveals an interest in financial morality, but they do so not simply – as it may appear – by bringing together disparate poems from across the volume in which Herbert addresses the topic. In highlighting this reading of the poems, the compiler privileges the aphoristic, moralising, and materially practicable reading of the poem over the spiritual and experiential. As we have seen, this is particularly significant for 'The Church-porch', which has the important function within *The Temple* as a whole as a kind of preparatory rite, initiating the reader, through the process of reading the poem, into the 'proper' reading of *The Temple*: a means of reading that looks beyond the apparent sententious moralising that the poem deploys, to a more spiritual efficacy that is dominant within 'The Church'. To excerpt and recontextualise 'The Church-porch' – and the other poems of *The Temple* – uncouples them from this sequential, experiential mode of reading that has generally been seen as key to the volume.

Yet it certainly remains that the volume, and even the poems themselves, seem materially and formally to invite such decontextualising readings. As we have seen, editions from 1656 onwards

[36] Adam Smyth, 'Commonplace Book Culture: a list of sixteen traits', in *Women and Writing, c. 1340 - c. 1650: the domestication of print culture*, ed. by Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), pp. 90-110. cf. Joshua Eckhardt, *Manuscript Verse Collectors and the Politics of Anti-Courtly Love Poetry* (Oxford: OUP, 2009); Michelle O'Callaghan, 'Textual Gatherings: Print, community and verse miscellanies in early modern England', *Early Modern Culture* 8 (2010).

[37] London: British Library MS Sloane 3796, fol. 17^{v}.

included 'A Table' of subjects and occasions with page and line references for where *The Temple* addresses the given topic, inviting an occasional, non-linear use of the volume, driven by the reader's interests, needs and desires, rather than demanding a sequential reading. Approaches to *The Temple* that see reading the volume as a singular experience, by which the reader is brought, through Herbert's guiding poetic hand, to a closer relationship with God in the final, transcendent lines of 'Love (III)', must reckon with such uses of the verse, which the volume invites as much as it resists.

Perhaps most clearly, the very form of 'The Church-porch' leads the early modern reader to such a reading, already primed by scriptural and secular reading practices to scan the text for easily-excerpted sententiae: its stanzas, made up of an ABAB rhyming quatrain and a final, summarising, couplet, seems to emphasise the latter as prime material for such commonplacing.[38] Early printed editions indent the closing couplet from the rest of the stanza, as if to mark it out for such commonplace-harvesting. In his diary, the nonconformist minister Oliver Heywood effectively compresses the seventy-seven stanzas of 'The Church-porch' into two pages, by copying out only three stanzas interspersed with eighteen of the couplets (see Figure 5).[39]

Heywood's somewhat bold condensing of 'The Church-porch' is parallel with the material form of the diary itself: even in comparison to similar commonplace books, miscellanies, notebooks and the like kept by contemporary readers, this volume, and Heywood's hand within it, is small – around 12cm tall, a comparable size to the duodecimo format in which *The Temple* was printed – therefore materially manifesting the portability and usability that made *The Temple* so popular, and allowed Heywood's diary to accompany him on his travels so faithfully. For Heywood himself was, during the time he kept this diary between 1665 and 1673, an itinerant preacher, having been cited for nonconformity and excommunicated in 1662 for refusing to minister the Book of Common Prayer, and, subject to the Five Mile Act of 1665, unable to live within five miles of his previous position at

[38] Edward Vaughan and Nicholas Byfield are among the devotional writers who explicitly advise keeping special commonplace books for directed reading of scripture: Vaughan, *Ten Introductions, How to reade, and in reading, how to vnderstand…* (London, 1594), sigs K4^{v}-K5^{r}; Byfield, *Directions for private reading of the scriptures* (London, 1618), sigs A10^{r}-A12^{r}.

[39] London: British Library Add MS 45965, fols. 71^{v} – 72^{r}. The scale of this compression is all the more impressive for the diminutive size of the diary itself: each page is only 12.5cm tall

Coley, near Halifax; his diary records his movements around Yorkshire and Lancashire, where he preached at regular illicit conventicles, for which he was intermittently arrested.[40]

Heywood's use of Herbert's verse, then, is significant for a number of reasons: it demonstrates the breadth of Herbert's appeal to later-seventeenth century readers, not confined to those of a ceremonialist or conformist hue, as his depiction as a kind of 'Anglican saint' by the likes of Ferrar and Walton might suggest. Moreover, Heywood's travels around northern England through the 1660s and 1670s tell the story of a literally dispossessed and displaced Protestant worship,

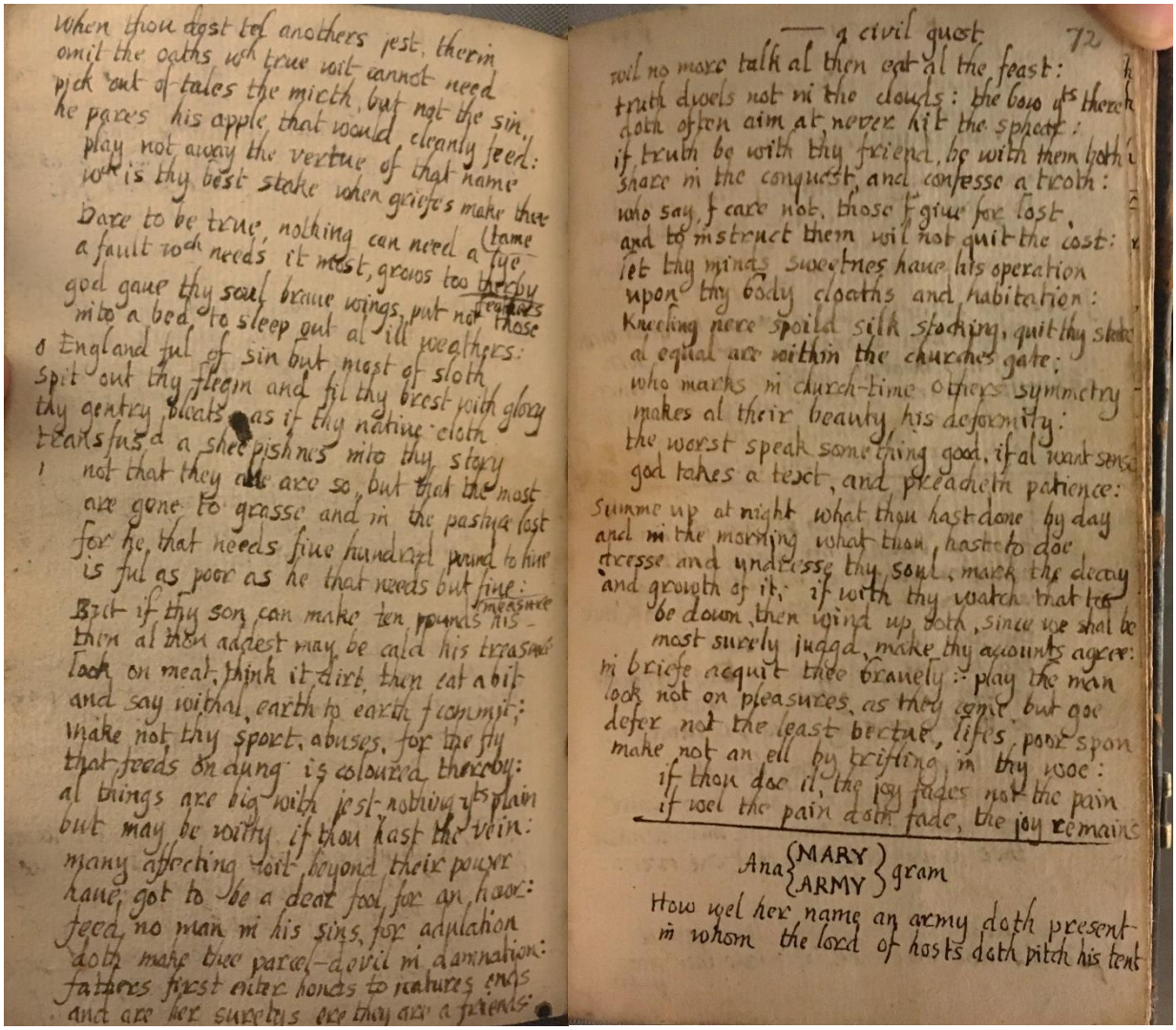


Figure 5: Diary of Oliver Heywood (c. 1665-73), featuring excerpts from 'The Church-porch', and 'Anagram'. British Library Additional MS 45965 fols. 71ᵛ-72ʳ.

[40] William Joseph Sheils, 'Heywood, Oliver (bap. 1630, d. 1702), clergyman and ejected minister', *ODNB* (2004); Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702: his autobiography, diaries, anecdote and event books : illustrating the general and family history of Yorkshire and Lancashire*, ed. by J. Horsfall Turner (Brighouse: A.B. Bayes, 1882), pp. 223-304.

Heywood deprived of his authority and position within the church and removed from his place of worship and home, his preaching by necessity peripatetic, his services suppressed as conventicles. Twenty of Herbert's poems appear, partially or complete, in Heywood's diary; the envoy 'To the King' from Marvell's 'Advice to a Painter to draw the Duke by' is the only other literary text included. Herbert's verse, it appears, resonated with Heywood, as it did with so many contemporary readers, who found in the transient subjectivity of its changing speaker-personae, the accommodating flexibility of its approach to religious controversies, and the inherent mutability of its paradoxically occasional and sequential verse forms a reflection of the material and spiritual instability that characterised their lives.

"Dissolution sure doth best discern": Commemoration in the church and *The Temple*

For early modern worshippers, the dead surrounded the living, and ways of remembering them abounded: elaborate tombs and effigies in churches commemorated the elite; the middling sort might be remembered by a brass plaque or engraved lidger stone, or in the symbolic bequest of a significant object.[1] Literary acts of commemoration also proliferated, with funeral sermons and elegies produced to praise and remember the deceased, and antiquarian guidebooks to visually impressive and historically significant tombs published. These visual, material and textual commemorative works served spiritual functions, making the dead a moral exemplar for the living and a comforting assurance of the triumph of Christ's grace over corporeal mortality. The antiquarian William Camden praises the epitaph's many functions: by it "love was shewed to the deceased; memory was continued to posterity, friends were comforted, and the reader put in mind of human frailty".[2]

Yet monuments were also problematic reminders of rejected pre-Reformation theology: treatment of death in liturgy and worship were scrutinised for any sign of superstition, and church monuments defaced as tainted by idolatry. Acts of commemoration were conscious constructions, shaping the present according to carefully fashioned visions of the past. In his immense catalogue of British funerary monuments, antiquarian John Weever defined the 'monument' as a "memoriall of some remarkable action, fit to bee transferred to future posterities".[3] But what was 'fit' to be remembered was decided by those with the means to commission their own monuments, a significant hurdle when sourcing materials and commissioning sculptors demanded substantial capital in both financial and social terms.[4] Monuments and memorials thus represent a material form of history: the parish church being a place that all were legally required to attend, the monuments housed within it

[1] Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual culture in the English death ritual c.1500-1800* (London: Reaktion, 1991), pp. 94-120; Catherine Richardson, '"Make you a cloak of it and wear it for my sake": Material culture and commemoration in early modern English towns', in *Monuments and Monumentality Across Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Michael Penman (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2013), pp. 68-78.
[2] William Camden, *Remaines concerning Britain their languages, names, surnames, allusions, anagrammes, armories, monies, empresses, apparell, artillarie, wise speeches, proverbs, poesies, epitaphs* (London, 1657), p. 355.
[3] John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631), sig. B1^{r}.
[4] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), Ch. 3.

were one of the most accessible art forms; yet to commission such monuments oneself was far from the reach of the majority of worshippers.

The parallels between church monuments and written memorials, literary or otherwise, are immediately apparent: literacy rates were rising, but those able to read and appreciate texts – whether written on church walls or in print form – far outnumbered those with the means to produce such texts themselves.[5] Significantly, even Weever's definition of the 'monument' reflects these similarities between plastic and verbal memorials, including as 'monuments' any "thing erected, made or written… Now aboue all remembrances… for worthinesse and continuance, bookes, or writings, haue euer had the preheminence".[6] Commemorative monuments and poetry both mediate between the living and the dead, fashioning a representation of the deceased for the benefit of the viewer, reader or listener. Moreover, the epitaph emerges as a coherent genre of poetry in the late sixteenth century, a by-product of increased literacy rates and post-Reformation anxieties about the relationship between present and past, and between matter and spirit.[7]

The Temple is uniquely positioned in the seventeenth century's intersecting literary and material cultures of commemoration. Herbert's career is embedded in both strains of the commemorative discourse. His first appearance in print was in his verses on the death of his mother, appended to the printed text of her funeral sermon. Commemorative texts such as these functioned as a natural extension of the system of patronage that most early modern literature navigated, praising the deceased subject to signal the writer's moral value and technical skill, and to raise their own, and their patron's, profiles. Moreover, Herbert's own reception was from the outset shaped by his posthumous quasi-hagiographical treatment by his printer Nicholas Ferrar, biographer Izaak Walton and later poets. Notably, the tenth edition of 1674 features Walton's *Life* and a title-page woodcut effigy of Herbert, and is bound with Christopher Harvey's imitative collection *The Synagogue: or the*

[5] Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500- 1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), pp. 19-21.
[6] Weever, *Monuments*. sig. B1^{r}.
[7] Scott Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England: The poetics of epitaphs beyond the tomb* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 14-15 and *passim*; on the emergence of the epitaph as a literary genre, cf. Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

shadow of the temple; all serve to memorialise Herbert not only as a poet but as a man, his life and works alike worthy of study and imitation.[8]

Herbert's contemporary readers would thus have encountered him as both an object and agent of commemoration. Ferrar's letter to the reader introduces the volume as a token from Herbert preserved as it was at his death: "The world therefore shall receive [*The Temple*] in that naked simplicitie, with which he left it" (*EP* 41-2). Notwithstanding Ferrar's emphasis on Herbert's devotion to his clerical calling, Herbert is presented from *The Temple*'s first pages as occupying a dual position, both creator and subject of the monument that *The Temple* functions as. Herbert is, according to Ferrar, "companion to the primitive Saints, and a pattern or more for the age he lived in". Such a concise affirmation of Protestant eschatology and the exemplarity of the deceased is a hallmark of post-Reformation epitaphs. *The Temple* becomes, like contemporary church monuments commissioned by their subject while still living, both a record of Herbert's poetic 'voice' and a monument to him. Nor is this solely a consequence of its posthumous publication; throughout the volume Herbert makes use of the opportunity mortality provides for examining his own poetic craft. Mortality is not merely a cause for spiritual introspection for Herbert's speaker, but for the poet too.

Herbert's poetry was only published in print on one occasion in his lifetime: the death of his mother Magdalen Danvers. *Memoriae Matris Sacrum*, a collection of nineteen Latin and Greek elegies commemorating her, was printed in 1627, appended to a sermon preached by John Donne at her funeral. In many ways, these poems demonstrate an expected, if masterful, deployment of standard classicising elegiac poetry: the extent of the speaker's mourning expressed in rivers of tears; invocations to Roman figures and deities; enumeration of the apparent virtues of the deceased subject. Yet crucially in these respects the poems share much in common with both Herbert's later devotional verse, and monumental epitaphs – whose job the collection effectively performs: to give voice to the

[8] George Herbert, *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. Together with his Life. with several Additions*, 10th edn. (London, 1674).

emotional experience of the living mourner, and to immortalise the deceased subject within a representation that renders them an example to the reader.

The first poem's opening lines, "*Ah Mater, quo te deplorem fonte? Dolores/ Quae guttae poterunt enumerare meos*?" ('Ah Mother, from what spring might I draw/ My Sorrows' waters? What drops could count my grief?', Hutchinson 422), resonate in the opening lines of *The Temple*'s 'Grief':

> Oh who will give me tears? Come all ye springs,
> Dwell in my head & eyes: come clouds, & rain:
> My grief hath need of all the watry things,
> That nature hath produc'd (*EP* 560).[9]

In both cases, the commonplace trope of tear imagery to represent grief prompts the speaker's poet-persona to consider his own verse: in 'Grief', the "two narrow spouts" of the speaker's tears are too limited to express the eponymous grief, as is his poetry:

> Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
> For my rough sorrows…
> … keep your measures for some lovers lute,
> For mine excludes both measure, tune, and time.

The same process, the commonplaces of grief-poetry giving way to technical poetic terms, is evident in *Memoriae* I, which concludes with a pun on "Mater" ('Mother') and "Metra" ('meters'). Moreover, in his closing assertion that "*ista Dolor nunc tibi Metra parit*" ('& so Sorrow/ for you now gives birth to meters'), Herbert applies the maternal connotations of 'parit', denoting childbearing, to his poetic composition; the subject of the poem's commemoration – his mother – and the means of commemoration – poetic composition – are brought together in Herbert's wordplay.

In *Memoriae*'s opening poem, Herbert's mourning and commemoration of Magdalene Danvers is a source of poetic inspiration and an occasion for composition, but at the same time reveals the insufficiency of Herbert's verse. The gap between the speaker's subject and their ability to represent or re-form that subject poetically animates Herbert throughout *The Temple* in more explicitly spiritual contexts: his poems continually seek literary models by which they may bridge this gap. Throughout *Memoriae,* for instance, Herbert makes reference to classical poetic patterns of mourning against

[9] Translations of *Memoriae Matris Sacrum* are by Greg Miller, in '*Memoriae Matris Scarum*', *GHJ* 33.1 (2010), pp. 1-53.

which his own poetry is to be measured: for instance, *Memoriae* II calls on all 'sombre women' to 'bring your lamentations', naming Cornelia and Sempronia, the mother and sister of Gaius and Tiberius Gracchi, women held up as models of feminine familial devotion but also shrewd and calculating political power – and here invoked as a kind of classical Muse for Herbert's verse (Hutchinson 422).

Memoriae's consistent concern with how existing poetic models can represent or perform personal grief is significant in the context of the sequence's publication with Danvers' funeral sermon. In invoking Roman and Greek elegiac models of commemoration, Herbert locates Danvers within the classical canon, extending the poem's scope, from its personal signficance to poetic endeavour more broadly; in setting the poems alongside Donne's sermon they are placed within the context of wider cultural patterns of commemoration. The final lines of Donne's sermon, immediately preceding *Memoriae* in the printed volume, acknowledge the exemplar function performed by the deceased subject within commemorative rites and orthodox eschatology, as he praises "That *body*, that was eyes to the blinde, and hands, and feet to the lame, whilst it liu'd, and being dead, is so still, by hauing beene, so *liuely* an example, to teach others, to be so".[10] In this context, Herbert's focus on his poetry's ability to perform his mourning and to represent his mother aligns it with the concerns of 'commemorative literature' more widely.

A sense of a distinct 'literature of commemoration' becomes clear if we extend our sights beyond commemorative poetry and sermons to include epitaphs, memorial brasses and other monumental inscriptions that worshippers encountered on a weekly basis in the parish church. Ralph Houlbrooke argues that verses inscribed in the church fabric represented the most common exposure to poetry for most of the population in the early modern period.[11] As in *Memoriae*'s use of classical models of grief to bridge the gap between the speaker's mourning and his verse, *The Temple* plays with the forms and tropes of this expansive 'commemorative literature' to consider Herbert's poetic

[10] John Donne, *A Sermon of commemoration of the Lady Danuers late wife of Sir John Danuers* (London, 1627), pp. 165-66.
[11] Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), p. 351.

acts of devotion. In 'Church-monuments' Herbert invokes the formal expectations of the church monument and its verbal inscriptions to interrogate practices of commemoration and memorialisation, and the ability of poetry to perform these functions. Similarly, in 'Grief' we have seen how Herbert uses tropes associated with personal mourning to express the spiritual 'grief' of the speaker's despair at Christ's absence. In both cases, the forms and features of commemorative verse – whether to be found in a poetry book or on a church wall – are put to use in exploring and performing Herbert's poetic programme.

Church monuments, and the culture of commemoration more widely, both material and textual, participate in discourses of representation, materiality, form and function that shaped how early modern worshippers experienced personal commemoration, but also how they were able to access the past, and how local, national and religious identities were constructed, in a religious culture with as fraught a relationship to its disavowed past as that of the post-Reformation, pre-Laudian Church of England. In his own commemorative verse as well as in *The Temple*, Herbert is invested in these problems, partaking in and playing with these troublesome acts of representation. First, however, it will be valuable to examine exactly how monuments themselves functioned within the context of the early modern parish church.

"Learn here thy stemme/ And true descent": Church monuments and the shaping of history at Lydiard Tregoze, Wiltshire

A visitor to the church of St Mary in Lydiard Tregoze, Wiltshire encounters aisles stuffed at all corners with elaborate monuments dating from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries, in marble, gold and painted wood. The chancel is dominated on the north wall by a polyptych showing a family portrait in memory of the parents of the first Baronet of Lydiard Tregoze, Sir John St John, and a family tree tracing the family's genealogy to the Norman Conquest (Figure 6). The chapel to the south of the chancel features an enormous monument (Figure 8), to the same Sir John – depicting him with his two wives either side and his thirteen children kneeling or lying around him – as well as

monuments to Sir John's sister and brother-in-law, and an eighteenth-century monument to the second Viscount; the south aisle also contains a monument to Nicholas and Elizabeth St John, the first Baronet's grandparents, dating to the late sixteenth century.

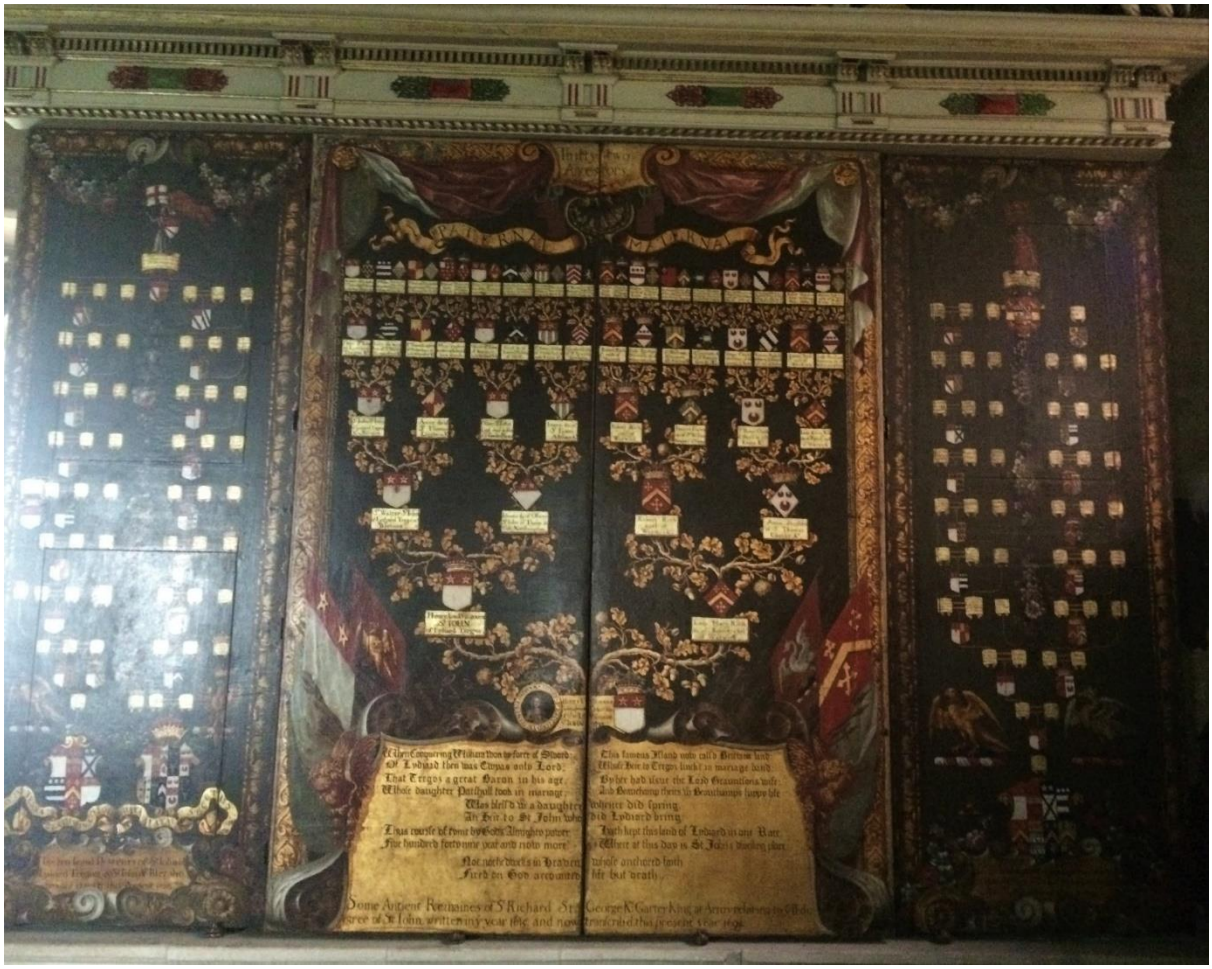


Figure 6: The chancel polyptych at St Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze, Wilts.

Aesthetically, the effect of these monuments is one of spectacle and grandeur, as well as an incongruity in the combination of art styles – spanning four generations of the St John family and three centuries of fashionable art practices. The very gathering of disparate aesthetic styles within the small space of the St John Chapel, from the colourful Elizabethan Nicholas monument through the elaborate seventeenth-century Italianate alabaster St John monument to the neoclassical ornament of the Rysbrack monument, bespeaks a generational continuity even amid historical flux: styles have changed but the St John family remains dominant in the parish, both spatially in the church and politically in the life of the parish at large.

As a historical source, the monuments together portray a continuous local and familial history, ordained by a favourable God. The verse beneath the family tree on the chancel polyptych explicitly intertwines the history of the village of Lydiard Tregoze with that of the St John family: "Thus course of tyme by God's Almighty powre/ Hath kept this land of Lydiard in one Race" (see Figure 7). The unity of the 'race' of the St John family and the Lydiard Tregoze parishioners is emphasised by the verse's account of the area's and family's history from the Norman Conquest, when "Of Lydiard… was Ewyas only Lord", joined in marriage to the village of Tregoze, and four generations later brought to the St John family. The St John intergenerational dependency is key to each of the monuments that tower over the chancel and nave: the polyptych's central panel depicts the first Baronet with his wife and sisters and their parents, whom the painting commemorates; the elder Sir John St John depicted here erected the Nicholas monument in the South aisle to his parents in 1592. The St John monument to the first Baronet makes his representation of his progeny central. Not only is a continuous family history represented in these monuments, but a family history told by successive generations of that family as a manifestation of filial piety.

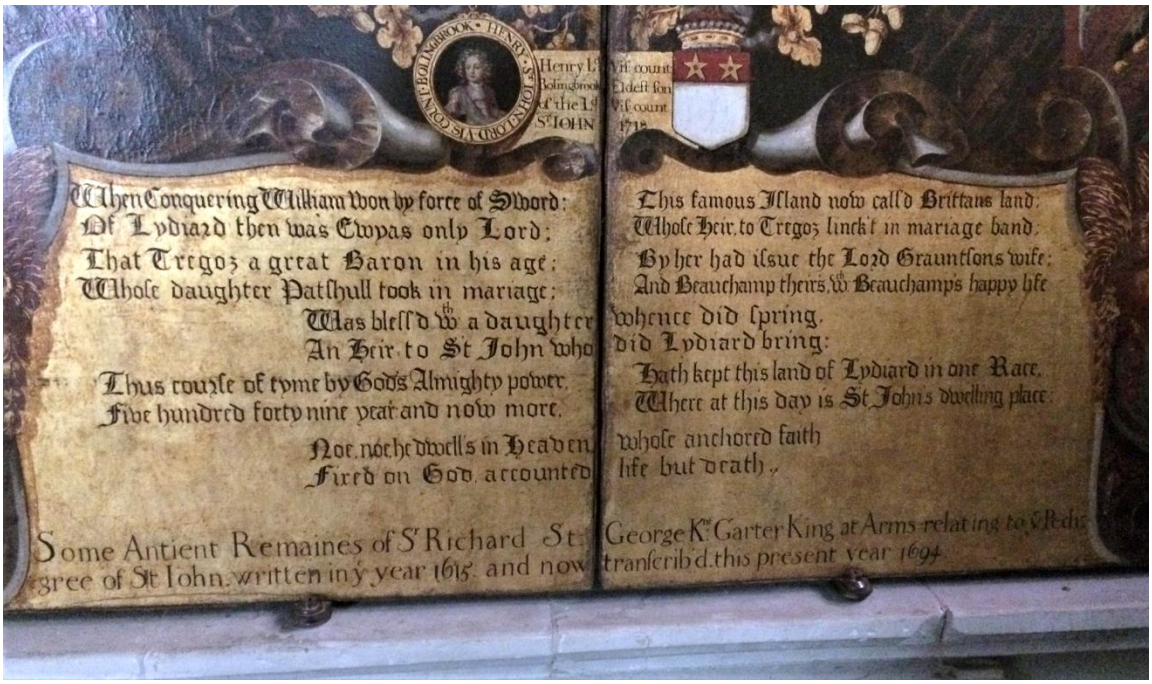


Figure 7: Poem beneath the family tree on the chancel polyptych at Lydiard Tregoze.

These monuments spatially dominate the church: the nave and aisles are largely taken up with pews, and so the domain of the common worshipper is not intimately acquainted with them, but any

approach to the chancel – to receive the sacrament, for instance – would leave the worshippers with the impression sense of manorial ancestors bearing down imposingly on them. In this context, the repeated addresses directly to the viewer at all sides and heights from the various monuments do not function simply as a standard *memento mori*, reminding the viewer of the inevitability and universality of death and the necessity of living with virtue. Rather, they also carry secular meaning, reminding the Lydiard villagers of the political, financial and religious dominance of the St John family over the village. Jude Jones points out that in the post-Reformation parish church, whose medieval wall-paintings of biblical scenes and saints' lives had largely been whitewashed over, monumental effigies would likely be the only human faces visible to worshippers besides their own and the minister's – the only faces of those not living. Consequently – and ironically working against the *memento mori*'s aim to undermine earthly power as brief and decaying – the permanence of secular power and the transience of one's own physical life are woven together in these effigies, reinforcing to worshippers "the rigid framework of the existing social order which holds elite systems in death as in life".[12]

St Mary's may be an extreme case in its number of monuments and their spatial dominance of the church, but across the country early modern funeral monuments function both to manifest economic and social power, and to reinforce it aesthetically. Peter Sherlock points to Lydiard's monuments as prime examples of the pattern of "convenient if necessary political fictions that paraded continuity with an antiquity where it did not always exist".[13] The century following the Reformation saw great changes to the fabric and features of the parish church; the period's turbulent political history also saw changes in the distribution of power among the gentry and nobility. These upheavals meet in the early-seventeenth century enthusiasm for monuments in parish churches intended to shore up precarious local power. David Howarth notes that social ambitions "made the tomb as much an expression of getting on in this world as it had to do with getting out of it",

[12] Jude Jones, 'Embodied Shadows: Reading Gender Issues Embedded in Early Modern Tomb Effigies and Mortuary Memorials, 1500-1680', in *Monuments and Monumentality Across Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 79-90, p. 84.
[13] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1988), p. 19.

emphasising the continuation of a familial line as much as the death of the individual subject.[14] The chancel polyptych is the clearest illustration of this in Lydiard, but heraldic devices and depictions of family groups in each monument similarly emphasise familial continuity alongside mourning the individual commemorated.

Figure 8: The St. John monument at Lydiard Tregoze

The monument has the potential to rewrite the historical memory that antiquarians like Weever saw them preserving. Weever himself decries such abuses:

> By some of our epitaphs more honour is attributed to a rich quondam Tradesman, or griping vsurer, then is giuen to the greatest Potentate entombed in Westminster… if one shall seriously suruay the Tombes erected in these our dayes… hee may easily discerne the vanity of our minds, vailed vnder our fantasticke habits and attires, which in time to come will be rather prouocations to vice, then incitations to virtue.[15]

As Weever sees it, the monument's twin functions of buttressing the fixed social order and 'inciting to virtue' are intimately connected. At Lydiard, the first Baronet St John was guilty of just this sort of

[14] David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649,* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 155-6.
[15] Weever, *Monuments*, sig. B6^{r}.

ambitiously overstated commemoration. In his will, he left £200 – more than £17000 in modern terms – to fund his funeral; on his death he was laid out in state in his house in Battersea with "the escutcheons more numerous than those used at the internment of a duke, and the pennons out of all proportion" – for which infraction of heraldic propriety his son was prosecuted by the Lancaster Herald.[16] The antiquarian John Aubrey, on his visit to Lydiard twenty years later, found the offending heraldic paraphernalia were still on display in the church.[17]

Sir John was not alone in ambitiously transgressing heraldic custom. Heraldry was tightly regulated: the style, size and number of banners, flags, devices and all the paraphernalia of the heraldic funeral were overseen by heralds, and recorded in detail.[18] Infractions like St John's were perceived as a threat to political stability at national, local and personal levels. A 1618 proclamation aimed to curb "the sinister practice of certayne mechanicall Trades-men" whose work included improper use of heraldry by causing all monument designs to be entered into a *Booke of Monuments* in the Office of Arms.[19] The proclamation above all finds it necessary to protect the proper distinction of nobility and gentry from common people, the former being "principall Pillars of this Land, who in all former Ages haue been thought fit to be distinguished from the vulgar and meaner sort and ranke of people". The threat of improper memorials was not just the "great offence and preiudice" of the nobility, but the "breeding of many ambiguous doubts and questions, which may happen in their Discents and Issues in future times". Monuments were meaningful records of genealogy, and therefore of claims to local and national power; the existence of this proclamation and complaints like Weever's suggests ambitious landowners frequently succumbed to the temptation to use them to fabricate a version of history more favourable to themselves, and more profitable to their descendants.

[16] Henry Lancaster, 'St. John, Sir John,1st Bt. (1586-1648), of Lydiard Tregoze, Wilts', in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604-1629,* ed. by Andrew Thrush and John Ferris (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), *History of Parliament Online*.

[17] John Aubrey, *Wiltshire. The Topographical Collections of John Aubrey F.R.S.*, ed. by John Edward Jackson (Devizes and London: Longman, 1862), pp. 170-71.

[18] Roger Kuin, 'Colours of Continuity: The Heraldic Funeral', in *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by Nigel Ramsay (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2014), pp. 166-89.

[19] *By the right honorable the lords, commissioners for the office of Earl Marshall of England* (London, 1618).

The funeral monument therefore appears to function as a tool for establishing claims to power by controlling the historical narrative they represent. The 1618 proclamation blames improper monuments for "doubts and questions" about "Discents and Issues"; a 1560 proclamation protecting monuments from iconoclasm is more explicit, concerned that "thoffence of all noble and gentle heartes, and thextinguyshyng of the honorable and good memorye of sundry virtuous and noble persons deceased", together with the 'darkened' knowledge of noble and gentle ancestry resulting from iconoclastic defacement, mean that "the true course of theyr inheritaunce may be hereafter interrupted, contrary to Iustice".[20] Monuments were, then, understood to record and perpetuate social order, as well as providing moral exemplars and personal consolation.

Moreover, monuments' historical and social significance operated on a national as well as familial or local level. This period saw the rise of a kind of tourism specifically to visit the tombs of the great, with antiquarians like William Camden producing guidebooks for such endeavours.[21] The *Booke of Monuments*, in which every monument was recorded, is held to be a safeguard against the vagaries of material decay or destruction of these monuments, by the 1618 proclamation that requires it: "if euer afterward any thing should happen to be added or diminished, or the Monument translated or defaced, as many are and haue beene, yet the truth may appeare by the said Register Booke." Monuments' value as representations of a national English heritage, and their capacity to serve as vehicles for unscrupulous agents' misrepresentation of this heritage, demand textual confirmation; as much as their material form and visual imagery manifest their performance of permanence and immutability, the textual record of these monuments is key to performing these functions.

If the monument both performs and triggers the production of historical record itself, this brings into relief the complex temporality of many monuments, which often inhabit multiple temporal

[20] *A proclamation against breakinge or defacing of monumentes of antiquitie, beyng set up in churches or other publique places for memory and not for supersticion.* (London, 1560).

[21] Nigel Llewellyn, '"Sumptuossissima, artificiosissima, magnificentissima…": Commemoration at Westminster Abbey, c. 1600', in *Demeures D'Éternité: Églises et chapelles funéraires aux XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles*, ed. by Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 2004), pp. 269-78; William Camden, *Reges, reginae, nobiles, & slij in ecclesia collegiate B. Petri Westmonasterij sepulti* (London, 1600).

moments at once. An inscription in Latin on the St John monument at Lydiard dates its erection to 1634, fifteen years before the subject's death:

> *Johannes St. John miles et baronettus annum agens nonum quadragensimum mortalitatis suae memor hoc monumentum marmoreum ponendum curavit anno MDCXXXIIII et sibi et duabus uxoribus Annae scilicet et Margaretae*[22]

The monument's construction, the inscription suggests, is as worthy of commemoration as the lives of its subjects. John being 'mindful of his mortal nature,' and so erecting the monument, establishes the act of commemoration itself as an example for viewers, as John and his wives are by their virtue.

Perhaps by setting himself up as living *memento mori*, erecting his own monument while still living, St. John merely intended to sidestep accusations of Weever's 'vanity of mind' that the monument's sheer splendour might invite. Nonetheless, the monument's inscriptions play with temporalities in intriguing ways; the epitaph for St. John's first wife, Anne Leighton, inculcates an immediacy in its insistent use of demonstrative pronouns:

> we raise this Pile of stone and in its Wombe
> laying that breathles Clay make it a Tombe
> A Tombe so pretious that what here within
> Sleeps for a while shal rise a Cherubin.

But the verse ends with a *memento mori* directed explicitly at the reader:

> first went the Mother, after her must goe
> Father and Children, and you (Reader).[23]

These lines move focus swiftly from the specific individuals of the St John family memorialised in the monument itself, and the act of memorialising ('rais[ing] this Pile of stone' on 'this day' in the 'dwelling place' of Lydiard), located precisely and immediately both geographically and temporally, to the monument's reception by the viewer, a reception left indeterminate: the 'Reader' could be a seventeenth-century parishioner or a twenty-first century tourist; either would be addressed in the same way, precisely because the death that awaits both is universal and undifferentiated.

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[22] 'John St John, Knight and Baronet, in this 49th year, mindful of his mortal nature, had this marble monument put up in the year 1634 to himself and his two wives, namely Anne and Margret'. trans. and ed. by J.T. Wharton, 'Monumental Inscriptions – 3', *Friends of Lydiard Park Annual Report* 5 (1972), pp. 63-79, p. 64.
[23] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

The chancel polyptych is more pronounced in this effect. The subscribed verse makes the sweep of history its driving force, and 'ends' by temporally locating the family tree at its original point of composure in 1615: "Five hundred forty nine year and now more,/ Where at this day is St John's dwelling-place". A final couplet is appended with the polyptych's restoration at the end of the century: "Noe, noe he dwells in Heaven whose anchored faith/ Fixed on God, accounted life but death". The polyptych verse thus repudiates itself, presenting a vision of human history not fixed but instead ultimately subsumed to the transcendent sweep of divine history, and the submission of all – those depicted on the polyptych, its creators and viewers – to the inevitability of death. The history of the artefact, and its reading by the viewer, are bound up with the parish's local and familial history; the final lines of the verse relocate both Sir John St John and, by extension, the reader, from the polyptych's erection in 1615 in Lydiard to 'Heaven', promoting a way of life of "anchored faith/ Fixed on God" rather than on the specific location or moment of the monument itself. In both cases, the religious and political function of the monument is consciously wrapped up in the successive acts of its construction and reception; this resonates tellingly in wider cultures of devotional poetry, and is reflected in *The Temple*.

"Dustie heraldrie and lines": Reading the monument and *The Temple*

Church monuments, then, function fundamentally by bridging the gap between discrete temporalities: their moment of creation or erection, the death of their subject or subjects (possibly multiple separate moments themselves), and the individual, possibly repeated or even habitual, moments of reception by worshippers or visitors viewing it. The various, often overlapping, acts of creation and reception involved in the monument make it as much a process as an artefact, in which the reader or viewer's participation is necessarily consciously invited. In this respect, *The Temple* itself invites viewing in these terms. Just as the viewer's approach to the church monument is commonly brought into focus in the use of direct addresses and *memento mori* admonishments in epitaphs, *The Temple*'s ordering architectural imagery – opening with a 'Church-porch' through

which the reader progresses to reach 'The Church' and the 'Altar', 'Windows', 'Floore' and so forth within – draws attention to the reader's progress through the edifice of *The Temple,* imagined spatially.

Yet when considering the reader's journey through the space of *The Temple,* we must remember our progress is mediated by a doorman, in the form of Nicholas Ferrar, Herbert's friend and *The Temple*'s editor, who, in his prefaced epistle 'To the Reader', does as much to set out the terms on which the reader enters *The Temple* as Herbert's speaker does in 'The Church-porch' (*EP* 41-43). The disavowal of such authorial intervention in Ferrar's statement that "the world shall receive it in that naked simplicitie, with which he left it" is a rhetorical gesture serving to point up the specific vision of Herbert that Ferrar goes on to draw more fully in the remainder of the letter, through his curated biography of Herbert. We are not merely to admire Herbert's "gifts of the minde", and the "industrie and happy education" that "perfected" them, but to follow him: "his faithful discharge" of his pastoral duties, Ferrar tells us, "was such as may make him justly a companion to the primitive Saints, and a pattern or more for our own time". Like the subject of the church monument, Herbert here exists to bridge the spiritual and epistemic gap between distinct times: here, between the 'primitive' Church and the modern day.

Moreover, Herbert's qualities and achievements are the lens through which Ferrar directs us to read *The Temple*: "many of these ensuing verses bear witnesse of… those inward enforcements" to Herbert's pastoral vocation. *The Temple* is to be read, Ferrar's epistle suggests, as an artefact of Herbert's exemplary piety, as much as for its literary or devotional value. This view of the volume is reinforced in subsequent editions: from the sixth edition of 1641, *Temples* were printed with an engraved effigy of Herbert himself before the title page, with an explicitly eulogising verse on the following leaf, entitled 'These Lines should have been under his Picture'. The title itself, as well as the content of the poem, emphasise the engraving and the printed poems themselves as artefacts facilitating the viewer's apprehension of Herbert's qualities:

> View but his *Porch*, and Temple, you shall see
> The Body of Divine *Philosophy*.

> Examine well the Lines of his dead Face,
> Therein you may discern, Wisdom and Grace.[24]

The church monument is commissioned by its subject, but physically formed by a mediating sculptor, not explicitly acknowledged in the monument itself; the result is a presentation of the monument's subject as fundamentally both active and passive, actively positioning himself as a passive object to be beheld and learnt from. The presence of Herbert in *The Temple* resonates with this: his poetic craft and virtue each at the same time actively create the volume, and are represented in it, the book itself becoming an artefact through which readers can contemplate and learn from these qualities.

Nigel Llewellyn argues that the church monument performs the function within the parish community of representing its subject's 'social body' – the concatenation of roles, relationships and activities that the individual performs – in the absence of the deceased natural body.[25] In manifesting the continuity, dominance and social and moral authority of the landowning family across the generations within the parish church, it is clear that the St John family's monuments at Lydiard perform this function; similarly, *The Temple*, with all its paratextual eulogising matter, serves to represent Herbert's 'social body' to its readers after his death – even to those for whom his 'social body' meant nothing before his death. To a large extent, this is enabled by the volume's posthumous publication: the hagiographic way in which Herbert is represented in Ferrar's preface and Walton's *Life* of Herbert – again, often printed with *The Temple* from its 1674 tenth edition – by which he is made a mouthpiece for Anglican devotion, is made possible by his death in 1633. Remaining unembroiled in the religious turmoil of the 1630s and '40s, 'Mr. George Herbert', a figure constructed by the complex of paratextual and biographical material within and around *The Temple*, comes to represent not merely the historical figure of George Herbert, but a hypothetical pre-Laudian unity in the church.[26]

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[24] George Herbert, *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. Together with his Life.* 11th edn. (London, 1678), sig. A4r.

[25] Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death*, pp. 46-49.

[26] Christopher Hodgkins finds a hypothetical Herbert who survived 1633 in his near-contemporary of apparently similar 'Old Conformist' leanings, Thomas Fuller, who perhaps surprisingly maintained connection with his associate Sir John Danvers even after the latter signed Charles I's death warrant; whatever Herbert's reaction to the profound ideological challenges of the Civil War might have been, his hagiographic reputation could not have survived unspoilt (*Authority, Church, and Society*, pp. 210-14).

We have seen that the rise of antiquarian interest in church monuments in the early seventeenth century saw the publication of a number of guide books to monuments, surveying their heraldry, iconography and epitaphs on national and regional scales.[27] Such records of monuments perform, on the printed page, the act of representation that the physical monument does within the community: in the parish church, the monument represents the subject within the parish community, while in the context of surveys by the likes of Weever or Camden, the description of the monument performs the role of its subject within the regional or national scope of the volume. Monuments bridge, for the viewer, the gap between the deceased subject and the living community of which they were a part; descriptive accounts of monuments textually manifest a national or local 'identity' in the form of a historical population of noble and gentle subjects. Like the monument itself, the antiquarian guide book engages with the act of writing history through carefully constructed acts of representation and reception: after all, it is not only the act of collating the 'significant' monuments that forms the community represented, but the reader's – invited or acted upon – undertaking to view them, even travelling across the country to do so.

The textual and material machinery of early modern commemorative culture – monuments themselves, antiquarian descriptions of them, the heraldic Book of Monuments that documents them, as well as the commemorative elegies, literary epitaphs and funeral sermons that are published in print – serves to reify and codify political values and doctrinal beliefs. Both are enabled by the particular culture of textual production and circulation of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, which saw texts become increasingly stabilised: as it became easier to reproduce exactly identical texts, it was also easier to replicate the text as encountered by readers across larger and larger spaces of time and distance. At the same time, with the concomitant increase in the scope and speed of their dissemination, these texts also became increasingly instable, circulating in manuscript or recontextualised in print anthologies, and thus exposed more frequently to alteration, in a readership beyond the controlled circle to which earlier texts were often restricted.[28]

[27] cf. Philip Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), pp. 90-109.
[28] cf. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric,* pp. 135-47.

The mechanics of textual dissemination shaped the senses of national, religious and literary identity that commemorative texts were able to construct. As print enabled the creation of a single, unified national liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer, it could streamline worship practices, providing a straightforward expression of the sanctioned theology of death in the Book of Common Prayer's Order for the Buriall of the dead, in the minister's speech over the body of the deceased:

> We therfore committee hys bodye to the grounde, earthe to earthe, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certein hope of resurrection to eternall lyfe, throughe oure Lorde Jesus Christe, who shall chaunge oure vyle body that it may be lyke to his glorious body… (*BCP* 172).

As well as streamlining worship practices and the espousal of doctrinal beliefs on a national level, even as those very beliefs were subject to intense debate, print publication enabled the material meaning of the church monument – local, site-specific and directly admonishing the beholder – to be 'translated' for the perusal of more distant print readerships: luxurious antiquarian volumes such as those by Camden and Weever represented the monuments as a kind of source-book for English national identity; Thomas Fuller's 1652 *History of the Worthies of England* similarly presented a kind of 'dictionary' of biographies of specifically English examples of virtue and valour; printed funeral sermons opened up the audience beyond the congregation of the funeral service to any interested book-buyer.[29] The possibilities of print publication coincided with a renegotiation of the doctrines of death and the practices of commemoration in the English Church, and thoroughly shaped the way commemoration was performed.

As the matter and practices of commemoration became more literary in form, in their representation and dissemination in print, 'literary' texts too became increasingly commemorative in function: as in *The Temple*'s later early modern editions, the paratextual apparatus that mediated the volume's contents served to eulogise the author and present a carefully curated view of his life and works, effectively as a kind of monument. The comparison is apt in all its complexity: just as funeral monuments like Sir John St John's present a retrospective view of the subject's life despite being

[29] Thomas Fuller, *The history of the worthies of England who for parts and learning have been eminent in the several counties: together with an historical narrative of the native commodities and rarities in each county* (London, 1662).

produced long before their death, volumes like Ben Jonson's 1616 *Workes* seem to offer a comprehensive survey of the author's previously-published works, but in fact represent a carefully edited selection of previous works, a performance of authorial majesty as much as a literary artefact.[30] Furthermore, the collected 'works' volume is the result of collaboration between often competing actors (compositors, publishers and booksellers, as well as the 'author' themselves), much like the church monument makes its subject's authority central, while effacing the sculptor who actually produced the work.[31]

Even the apparent material 'meaning' of these volumes, their 'monumental' size and singularity, can be deceiving: Jeffrey Todd Knight has shown how such volumes were often collated and bound strategically to allow later additions or convenient separation and re-binding of constituent texts.[32] The possibilities of monumentalising commemoration in print, with all the apparent material fixity and wide dissemination it allows, is paradoxically interwoven with the exigencies of a literary culture that prioritised excerpting, recontextualisation, and practical use. Even as, in its later early modern editions, *The Temple* is embedded within a prominent 'architecture' of commemoration, traces of the volume's use in manuscript commonplace books, notebooks and miscellanies, and printed anthologies, demonstrate that the volume was not interacted with as a static monument, fixed in its material form. Rather, its readers continually excerpt, recontextualise and reformulate its poems to their various personal ends.[33]

This fragmentation and reformation is not in tension with the commemorative impulse of its paratexts, instead enabling the monument-like function of the verse to be realised. Christopher Harvey's 1640 volume *The Synagogue: or the Shadow of the Temple* is routinely bound with subsequent editions of *The Temple*; from its title-page it declares itself to be written "In imitation of

[30] Sara van den Berg, 'Ben Jonson and the Ideology of Authorship', in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. by Jennifer Brady and W.H. Herenden (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1991), pp. 111-34.
[31] On the competing "agents of discourse" who determine the evolution of intellectual property and even the evolution of the concept of authorship in print in Jonson's work specifically, cf. Joseph Loewenstein, *Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 9 and *passim.*
[32] Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, collections and the making of Renaissance literature* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2013), pp. 175-77.
[33] See above, pp. 155-59.

Mr. George Herbert", thus claiming to fulfil Ferrar's hope that *The Temple*, like the funeral monument for its subject, will make Herbert "a pattern or more for the age he lived in", to be 'perused' for the reader's "benefit" (*EP* 42).[34] The volume's 'Dedication' emphasises its imitation of Herbert, but also, in its opening lines, distinguishes itself from its predecessor: where *The Temple*'s 'Dedication' opens with the speaker offering the volume to God – "Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee" – Harvey's simultaneously echoes and repudiates this line: "Lord, my first fruits should have been sent to thee".[35] Even as Harvey presents himself as a kind of literary descendant of Herbert's, he deploys the allusion in such a way as not simply to pay tribute to Herbert's literary or moral value, but to use *The Temple* as a raw material for Harvey's own poetry, germane for reformulation.

Even beyond such devoted literary imitation as Harvey undertakes in *The Synagogue*, uses of *The Temple* in literary and devotional texts frequently seem essentially commemorative in redeploying material from Herbert's poems in ways that both venerate and make practical use of the 'original'. Herbert's 'Death' (*EP* 647-48) offers a particularly potent case-study for this assertion. The poem itself makes use of many of the tropes of commemorative literature that we have observed: in its narrative, charting Death's development from a fearsome presence in human life, to something overcome by Christ's redemption of man, and "sought for, as a good", the poem effectively does what the epitaph, the funeral sermon, and Ferrar's epistle to *The Temple*'s readers all do, presenting a biography manipulated to evoke a particular didactic end in the reader.

The substance of the poem draws on the tropes of the epitaph form: its recurring concern with how the 'we' that encompasses speaker and reader alike is to face death, welcomingly and unafraid – "Thou art grown fair and full of grace,/ Much in request, much sought for, as a good"; "Therefore we can go die as sleep" – reflects the *ars moriendi* advice frequently to be found on monumental inscriptions.[36] The final stanza's image of death as a kind of sleep is, again, one particularly characteristic of post-Reformation inscriptions, which, like the Book of Common Prayer's 'Order for

[34] Christopher Harvey, *The Synagogue: Or, the Shadow of the Temple. Sacred Poems, and Private Ejaculations* (London, 1640).
[35] *EP* 45; Harvey, *The Synagogue*, sig. A3^{r}.
[36] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, pp. 340-57.

the Buriall of the dead', emphasise the quiescent, sleeping state of the physical body, to be restored to life at Judgement Day.

The poem consistently shows an interest in the ways in which the living are able to view and interpret death: the opening stanzas lament the inexpressiveness of death ("Thy mouth was open, but thou couldst not sing") and the insufficiency of human understanding of it ("we consider'd thee at some six/ Or ten yeeres hence"). The essence of this insufficiency, as the poem sees it, is that "We lookt on this side of thee, shooting short": we see only "Dry dust, which sheds no tears", "Flesh… turn'd to dust, and bones to sticks"; that is, only the material form of what death leaves, rather than the potential for resurrection and life it now brings. We have already seen how epitaph inscriptions such as those at Lydiard Tregoze make the viewer's reception and interpretation of the monument central; Herbert here makes this central to his verse meditation on death. Likewise, his emphasis on the distinction between 'mere' materiality, a product of "the losse of life and sense" that reduces "flesh" to "dust" and "bones" to "sticks", and a fuller view, that can "behold [death] gay and glad" and conceive both material and spiritual truths at once, "Making our pillows either down, or dust", resonates with the emphatic materiality of the epitaph form itself, which, as Newstok notes, was positioned, as a literary form, significantly at the intersection of the materially-specific inscription itself, and the printed verse form that imitated it.[37]

Yet 'Death' operates not merely by reformulating the tropes of the epitaph, but by inviting such reformulations itself. According to Robert Ray's collation of contemporary Herbertian quotations in *The Herbert Allusion Book*, 'Death' is one of the most widely referenced poems of 'The Church': he charts twelve separate allusions to the poem before 1700, with only 'Affliction (I)', 'Charms and Knots' and 'Providence' generating more (fifteen, thirteen and thirteen respectively).[38] The poem is put to a variety of uses, both devotional and literary. Henry Vaughan, for instance, concludes his discussion of death in *The Mount of Olives* with a prayer to "lay up treasure for our selves in heaven,

[37] Newstok, *Quoting Death*, pp. 35-37.
[38] Robert H. Ray, 'The Herbert Allusion Book: Allusions to George Herbert in the seventeenth century', *Studies in Philology* 83.4 (1986), pp. 1-182.

that where our treasure is, there our hearts may be also"; the end this brings about, Vaughan expresses by quoting the final stanza of Herbert's 'Death' in full (Vaughan 188). Likewise, the ejected minister Oliver Heywood quotes the full poem in his extended explication of the 'mercies of David', to illustrate his argument that "death [is] the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; our Saviour hath pluckt out its sting and altered the very nature of it".[39]

That a devout Anglican like Vaughan, and a nonconformist minister like Heywood, formally excluded from preaching for refusing to minister the Book of Common Prayer, can both find in Herbert's poem fit expression of their beliefs is testament both to the uncontroversial nature of the doctrine expressed in 'Death', and to the potent force the verse itself is felt to hold, able to satisfyingly conclude any point. Herbert's particular authority, felt as something greater than merely poetic, imbued with real religious authority, is certainly clear in Vaughan's treatment: shortly before quoting 'Death', he also reproduces 'Life' in its entirety, proclaiming Herbert, by way of introduction, to be "the most obedient *Son* that ever his *Mother* had, and yet a most glorious true *Saint* and a *Seer*"; a marginal note explains that he refers to "Mr. *George Herbert* of blessed memory" and points to "his incomparable prophetick Poems" (Vaughan 186). Herbert's verse, as represented by both Vaughan and Heywood, acts as an extended epitaph, evidence for his virtue and authority, and directly impelling the reader to live a more devout and moral life. Literary value and moral function prove mutually necessary as much in Herbert's verse as in the epitaph form they occasionally play with.

The kind of literary authority achieved through the 'monumental' presentation of *The Temple* seems to invite exactly the recontextualising, reformulating kinds of use in devotional works that seems formally to counteract it. Joshua Poole's 1657 poetic handbook *The English Parnassus* draws on Herbert as one of sixty classical and vernacular poetic sources; under the commonplace-heading 'Souls Departed', Poole reworks Herbert's image in 'Death' of "The shells of fledge souls left

[39] Oliver Heywood, *The sure mercies of David: or, a second part of Heart-treasure Wherein is contained the supream and substance of gospel-mercies purchased by Christ* (London, 1670), p. 237.

behind", to describe "Uncaged spirits,/ Fldige souls, that leave their shells".[40] This volume, published posthumously like *The Temple* itself, opens with a prefatory epistle by an 'I. D.' which compares such books to orphans, "exposed to the mercy of others":

> Were the learned Author of this laborious work alive to see this production of his abilities, and extraordinary industry come abroad, there needed not any to give account of it but himself.[41]

Yet the author of *The English Parnassus*, like that of *The Temple*, is not able to present his own work to its readers. 'I. D.' and Nicholas Ferrar both seem to anticipate this absence being felt, in the reading of the volumes, like the absence of a deceased friend or relative, the author's 'presence' to be performed by the book as if it were a monument itself.

There are clear resonances between literary texts and church monuments in their form and function – to represent an absent authority, whether of subject or of writer, to a surviving, potentially distant, audience. The very defining elements of the epitaph itself – its immediate, material form, and its site-specific meaning – make it a form impossible to render adequately in print media, stripped of these material specificities, but paradoxically these elements also make it such a prominent feature of early-seventeenth century printed poetry.[42] At the same time, print publication allows a particular construction of authority which can extend in time and space far beyond the limited reach of both manuscript texts and local monuments, but which in this extension enables the material circulated – whether literary text or monumental inscription – to be recontextualised, reformulated and redeployed to any number of ends.

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[40] Joshua Poole, *The English Parnassus: or, a Helpe to English Poesie. Containing A Collection Of all Rhyming Monosyllables, The choicest Epithets, and Phrases: With some General Forms upon all Occasions, Subjects, and Theams, Alphabetically digested* (London, 1657), p. 492.

[41] Ibid., sig. a2^{r}.

[42] John Sparrow, *Visible Words: a study of inscriptions in and as books and works of art* (London: CUP, 1969), pp. 101-02, 122-31.

"Mark here below": 'Church-monuments' and the poetics of commemoration

We have seen how monuments and commemorative literature played an important role in controlling, even manifesting, access to and understanding of local and national history and identity; they effectively function as what Pierre Nora terms a *lieu de memoire* or 'site of memory', in which communities choose what to collectively remember, and what to forget.[43] Yet this commemoration is carefully constructed, and often disjointed in its material construction or its representation, whether in marble or on the page. In the case of the monuments of Lydiard Tregoze, the restoration of the 1615 polyptych late in the century and the commemoration of Sir John St John's 1648 death by a monument produced in 1634, both temporal dislocations noted on the monuments themselves, testify to a process of commemoration – or rather, production of commemorative artefacts – that was so divorced from the specific object of commemoration as to function rather as a performance of *memoria* rather than a specific, local act of commemoration. In the context of Herbert's poetry, the probing into the status, intention and success of his own poetry that characterises *The Temple* is particularly telling; in 'Church-Monuments' Herbert is occupied with questions of representation across temporal, spatial and social lines that resonate with such tensions as shaped the material and doctrinal practices of commemoration in the early seventeenth century.

The poem is the first in what is often read as a cohesive sequence within *The Temple* framed around architectural features and fittings in the church building, and embodied and materialised acts of worship: 'Church-lock and Key', 'The Church-floore,' 'The Windows' and 'Church-musick' (*EP* 234-48). It is worth noting, as Rickey does, that this sequence does not exist in the Williams manuscript – the only one certainly put together by Herbert: 'Church-monuments' and 'Church Musick' were twenty poems apart; 'Church-lock and key' was titled 'Prayer', the word "locks" in the first line instead reading "stops" and therefore containing no reference to the titular material referent at all; neither 'The Church-floore' nor 'The Windows' appear before the Bodleian manuscript.[44]

[43] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French past*, 3 vols., trans. by Lawrence Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[44] Mary Ellen Rickey, *Utmost Art: Complexity in the verse of George Herbert* (Lexington: Kentucky Unviersity Press, 1966), p. 118.

Nonetheless, regardless of whether the 'sequence' as it appears in print was intended by Herbert himself or was interpolated by its Little Gidding transcriber, their placement alongside one another is significant. As we shall see, Herbert is fascinated throughout the 'sequence', and particularly in 'Church-monuments', by our ability to find meaning in material artefacts through material, devotional and literary patterns of representation – and the poems' arrangement within *The Temple* expresses this too.

The poem as a whole can certainly be read as a *memento mori* meditation: its final stanza reminds the reader that

> … flesh is but the glasse, which holds the dust
> That measures all our time; which also shall
> Be crumbled into dust (*EP* 236).

The intricacy of this image, however, should indicate to us that something more complex is happening than a straightforward reminder of human mortality. The image of earthly life as a strictly finite hourglass is clear enough, but it reaches a level of metaphysical complexity as the focus swings between the glass, the sand it contains, and the glass again – which is immediately to be 'crumbled into dust' itself. 'Dust' here calls to mind both the sand within the metaphorical hourglass – and thus the inexorable approach of mortality – and the words of the Book of Common Prayer's rite for Burial of the Dead, as the body is committed to the earth "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" (*BCP* 172). In the Prayer-Book rite, this line reminds the listener of the hope of spiritual and bodily resurrection and transfiguration, that Christ "shall chaunge oure vyle body that it may be lyke to his glorious body". In 'Church-monuments', Herbert's focus is instead on the impermanence and dissolution of human frames of understanding, in the form of the hourglass: both the temporal frame by which human life is measured, and the image by which Herbert himself conveys this in the poem.

Here and throughout the poem, Herbert fosters a fruitful ambiguity in his use of prepositions and pronouns that convey an immediacy that renders the actual subject of the lines unclear: is 'here' the imagined church monument the poem takes as its subject, or the poem itself? Is the speaking 'I' a

living worshipper, or the voice of the dead encased in an epitaph that the poem ventriloquises? In her commentary, Wilcox states that "The imagined scene of the poem is the church in which the speaker is attending a service. While the soul is busy with spiritual 'devotion', the body can learn from the monuments in the church" (*EP* 236). This reading is supported by the opening stanza, yet it is also significant to note that the emphasis in the poem on the strict separation of body and soul, the ability of the body to 'learn' about its mortality independent of the soul, echoes the same concern shown in Protestant epitaphs to distinguish the body lying in wait for its resurrection on Judgement Day and the soul already with God.[45]

We are presented, then, with three distinct possible ways to read 'Church-monuments': following Wilcox, as an account of a soul leaving the body to learn its mortality from a monument; as an imagined epitaph, which the reader approaches as they would one on a material tomb; or as a self-conscious poem, concerned primarily with the poetic endeavour of bridging the material and the spiritual by using the church monument as an analogy. In each case, the subjectivity of the speaker is a problem: the third-person reference to both "my soul" and "my flesh" by an "I" independent of either leads to the question of who or what this 'I' is; if the poem, as Wilcox suggests, portrays the distinct focuses of attention of soul and body during divine service, what is left as the poem's speaker?

This is a question left crucially unanswered in a poem so concerned throughout with the specific mechanics by which the body is to learn from the materiality of the church monument ("my bodie… may learn/ To spell his elements, and finde his birth/ Written in dustie heraldrie and lines"). In fact, the poem's speaker seems to *be* the soul, which does not reach the point of actually "repair[ing] to her devotion" within the poem, but is instead minutely concerned with what the body is to do: by the third stanza, it is still instructing "Deare flesh, while I do pray, learn here thy stemme/ And true descent". It seems the 'soul' that speaks in 'Church-monuments' cannot divest itself fully of its material attachment and lines of thinking. The poem distinguishes itself from the monument it

[45] cf. Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p. 110.

represents by portraying the impossibility of the kind of communication or learning that the monument manifests.

At the same time, Herbert invokes epitaph forms and tropes frequently within the poem. References to the final trump that will sound before Judgement Day abound in contemporary epitaphs; lines like "the blast of deaths incessant motion" deliberately recall such imagery. Similarly, the insistent use of demonstrative pronouns and adverbs, as in statements like "Here I intomb my flesh", "learn here thy stem/ And true descent", or "Mark here below", recall the '*hic iacet*' form of many epitaphs. Where Wilcox's reading effectively dramatises a kind of low-level psychomachia in an address from the speaker's soul to his body, if we read the poem as a kind of epitaph, the address is instead made to the reader themselves. As the *memento mori* trope of many post-Reformation epitaphs functions to make the viewer identify with the dead soul who speaks through it, 'Church-monuments' makes the reader identify with the 'body' "trust[ed]... to this school", that they too undertake to "learn/ To spell his elements, and finde his birth/ Written in dustie heraldrie and lines".

However, the poem also differs in key ways from the expected tenor of the epitaph. As Sherlock shows, many seventeenth-century tombs express overwhelming confidence in the election of the soul of the deceased. By contrast, 'Church-monuments', once its instructive intentions are set out in the first two stanzas, loses any such confidence, statements of intent giving way to insistent questioning of how this will be achieved:

> What shall point out them,
> When they shall bow, and kneel, and fall down flat
> To kisse those heaps, which now they have in trust?

'Them' here refers to the "Ieat and Marble put for signs" referenced in the previous stanza – that is, the monuments themselves, which the poem simultaneously describes and stands in for. In these lines, Herbert describes a distinctly inappropriately superstitious set of actions – bowing, prostration, kissing – before the monuments, married to a distinctly Protestant idea of mortality "held in trust" for all people. This enmeshment of what is orthodox and what is not leads to a sense of confused multiplicity, not only of actions to be undertaken in the imagined act of approaching the monument, but of ways in which meaning is to be derived from the poem.

The mental as well as material mechanics by which spiritual meaning is conveyed is clearly a central focus for Herbert in 'Church-monuments' as it is for the authors of the epitaphs such as those on the tombs in Lydiard Tregoze. There is a paradox at the centre of the monument itself: the monument exists as a permanent representation of something defined by its absence, or at least its physical decay and destruction – to use Sherlock's terms, the 'social body' and the 'natural body' of the deceased. The epitaph for Anne St John in Lydiard Tregoze juxtaposes God breathing life into clay to form man with the process of turning stone into the tomb; it is the addition of the lifeless body that paradoxically makes this almost alchemical transformation:

> God form'd a Mould of Clay which then beganne
> when he first breath'd into't to be a man
> we raise this Pile of stone and in its Wombe
> laying that breathles Clay make it a Tombe.

The literal epitaph on the St John monument, then, implicitly aligns the 'breathles Clay' with the 'Pile of stone', and the mason's work in carving the tomb with God's creation of man. Reading 'Church-monuments' as a mock-epitaph, on the other hand, this sort of analogy is consciously undermined. "Comparing dust with dust, and earth with earth", the body "laugh[s] at Ieat and Marble put for signes,// To sever the good fellowship of dust". In using the language of logic or rhetoric to denote the body's observations here – 'comparisons' and 'signs' – Herbert points up the redundancy of the artistic endeavours behind elaborate church monuments, since the body can recognise its own mortality just as well in dust and earth as in jet and marble. The quasi-alchemical action of the tomb-carver invoked on the St John monument is here punctured by Herbert; not even the physical presence of the body is required to perform its *memento mori* function, but rather simply the presence of any physical sign of decay.

As we have seen, however, Herbert is not merely pointing outward at the acts of representation and communication undertaken in the physical tomb, but also, as so often in *The Temple*, he looks to those attempted in his own verse. It is no coincidence that the Prayer-Book funeral service, in which the priest 'commits' the deceased's body to 'the ground', "earthe to earthe, ashes to ashes, dust to dust", echoes in the poem's promise that "dissolution" – that is, physical decay itself – will "compar[e] dust with dust, and earth with earth". Implicitly, the liturgical ritual process of death

fulfils the instructive function the poem aims at better than the elaborate symbolism of poetry, represented by the "Ieat, and Marble" of the following line. Where the latter have been artificially constructed, "put for signes", the former functions organically. And indeed, the burial rite, performed on the visible, physically decaying body itself, undertaken in the same form for rich and poor alike, and comprised of exclusively scriptural readings and prayers, is able to perform its functions of comforting and warning the living much more directly than elaborate monuments that were also subject to the ambitions and vanities of their commissioners.

So liturgy seems to be invoked in these lines as a straightforward, levelling way of treating death, in comparison to the complexities of interpreting 'jet and marble'. The jumble of extra-liturgical actions invoked in the following lines – to "bow, and kneel, and fall down flat/ To kisse those heaps" – serves to point up the juxtaposition between the simplicity of understanding material decay in material terms and the confusion engendered by elaborate constructions of commemoration, whether in sculpture, bodily devotion, or verse. Where does Herbert's verse fit in this continuum between a liturgical simplicity and an overly-elaborate worldliness? In many ways this is a struggle we have seen Herbert contend with throughout *The Temple*, as he tries again and again to embrace the former and distance his verse from the latter while consistently returning to framing devices – such as that of the monument here – that are markedly material and quotidian.

The final stanza offers us some indication. Throughout the poem, Herbert has refrained from any truly unexpected imagery, instead invoking the usual features of the monument in the parish church, through anatomising glances at "this heap of dust," "dustie heraldrie and lines", "Ieat, and Marble", and focusing on the acts of looking by which the viewer perceives and interprets them ("finde", "discern", "Comparing", "point out"). Finally in the nineteenth line, the focus moves from looking and learning to *knowing*, as Herbert begins his first characteristic metaphysically complex conceit of the poem in the lines about the 'hour-glass': "thou mayst know,/ That flesh is but the glasse…". The poem's aversion to the 'jet and marble put for signs' is not against elaborate representation in any form – a disavowal of ornate language or imagery such as Herbert often seems to make in *The Temple* – but against monumentalising representation, overreaching its momentary

existence for a permanent meaning. Much better to read one's mortality from the dust and earth, and much better to ground one's imagery, it seems, in what is commonplace and to-hand – like the church monument or the hourglass.

In the poem's final lines this sense of insistent immediacy and presence is made emphatic: "Mark here below" exploits the ambiguity in the word 'here', as to whether 'here' is an imagined church monument, or the page itself on which we read the poem. What is 'below' an epitaph is – or is to be imagined to be – the physical body of the deceased; one can read "how tame these ashes are" from the thought of the body itself. But reading these lines as concerning the poem's material form, the 'below' plays out in the action of reading, following the words *down* the page. The act of reading itself helps the reader "fit thy self against thy fall", even as, with the word 'fall' concluding the poem, the downward movement continues beyond it. In either case, the fact of the downward motion of 'marking below' helping to prepare for a 'fall' is in literal terms ironic, but at the same time a key feature of Herbert's soteriological theology that he expresses elsewhere in *The Temple*, as in 'Easter Wings' for instance (*EP* 147). "Mark here below" simultaneously confirms the poem's ecphrastic status as an imagined epitaph, and its self-conscious concern with the commemorative and devotional capacity of poetry, in both cases emphasising the importance of the act of reading, of the tomb's viewer's interpretation, on the conveyance of meaning through the poem-monument.

'Church-monuments' is concerned with sorts of the questions that the monument itself might raise in a contemporary worshipper: how to direct one's attention properly during prayer, the relationship of the living and the dead, how to comprehend one's own mortality. At the same time, it is informed throughout by anxieties about representation and communication that trouble the work of both monumental art and poetry. It is significant that in its complex meditation on the nature of poetic and artistic representations of the dead, the poem should take the generic plural title 'Church-monuments' even as it explicitly envisages or re-creates a single, specific monumental inscription.

The poem is emphatically 'here' for the reader, a generic but immediate location that speaks to the specific publication of the poem in an intimate octavo format that is, nonetheless, widely

disseminated in print. The poem demands a specific and complex act of reading: immediate and intimate, invoking a specific imagined 'monument', yet at the same time inextricable from the wider network of theological and poetic referents, allusions and conceits that it calls upon. 'Church-monuments', that is to say, demands of the reader the same interpretative practices that the funerary monument in the church itself requires, and which we have seen poetry published in print demanded of its readers. Herbert uses his verse, in its specific approaches to death and its broader approach to devotion, to interrogate as well as replicate the ways of thinking through materiality that informed the early modern spiritual experience, constantly involved in interpreting a world of consciously constructed representations and divine providence. The self-conscious, highly animated reading Herbert demands of his reader demonstrably shapes his successors' devotional verse – as we now shall see.

Epilogue: Reading *The Temple* reading the Bible: devotional, literary and material practice

The penultimate poem of the 1655 two-volume second edition of Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* gives voice to the speaker's deathbed address 'To the Holy Bible':

> O book! lifes guide! how shall we part,
> And thou so long seiz'd of my heart!
> Take this last kiss, and let me weep
> True thanks to thee, before I sleep.
>
> … Living, thou wert my souls sure ease,
> And dying mak'st me go in peace:
> Thy next *Effects* no tongue can tell;
> Farewel O book of God! farewel! (*WHV* 540-41).

The speaker's life story, given over the course of the poem, narrates their relationship with this humble volume that has accompanied them throughout their life. They learn to read from its words ("daily didst my yong eyes lead/ To letters, till I learnt to read"); in adolescence they neglect it, distracted by the lure of worldly pleasures ("with that first light gain'd from thee/ Ran I in chase of vanity… and never thought/ My first cheap Book had all I sought"); eventually its "meek, dumb looks" "overcam[e] my sinful strength,/ And having brought me home, didst there/ Shew me that pearl I sought elsewhere".

Vaughan pays tribute to the transformative power of reading scripture, emphasising not the doctrinal authority or intellectual hermeneutic endeavour, but the intimate, embodied and reflexive relationship between reader and Bible: as they come to know scripture more closely, in ways that are tactile ("Thou wert the first put in my hand…"; "with whose quick touch/ Refining still, I strugled much"), emotional ("thou cast by/ With meek, dumb looks didst woo mine eye"; "this milde art of love"; "quickning kindness, smiles and kisses,/ Exalting pleasures, crowning blisses"), and as such, deeply embodied: haptic sensation and emotional experience are both conceived to early modern minds as physically embodied phenomena.[1] As such, the speaker's bodily life and his spiritual

[1] cf. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the disciplines of shame in early modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Katherine Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

experience of scripture are inextricably intertwined; both the speaker's eternal, spiritual life, and their mortal, bodily one lies with their Bible.

'To the Holy Bible' shares much with Herbert's own 'The H. Scriptures. I.', in which the speaker exalts in the sensuous joys and bodily restoration found in reading the Bible: "Oh Book! infinite sweetnesse! Let my heart/ Suck ev'ry letter, and a hony gain,/ Precious for any grief in any part" (*EP* 208). Where for Vaughan the relationship with scripture lasts through, and serves to measure out, the life of the speaker, for Herbert scripture transcends and even extends the addressee's life: it will "cleare the breast" and "mollifie all pain"; it is "all health, health thriving, till it make/ A full eternitie". As elsewhere in *The Temple*, the line between figurative and literal meaning is fruitfully ambiguous. The first stanza invokes a metaphor of physical for spiritual health, scripture's anaesthetic and 'heart-clearing' qualities figuratively expressing its spiritually medicinal effects.[2] Yet in the second stanza, the metaphor seems to continue, albeit in a sparsely-worded turn of phrase, "Thou art all health," before the line break marks a vast change of scope, from the personal and corporeal to the universal: "health thriving till it make/ A full eternitie." What does it mean for "health" to "make/ A full eternitie"? As in his treatment of the heart throughout *The Temple*, the poem's vision of 'health' straddles the lines between straightforward imagery of physical for spiritual health, and a more metaphysical conceit.

The individual subjectivity of both Herbert and Vaughan's speakers are enmeshed with the scriptures they read and gain spiritual 'health' from. This 'distributed cognition' is perhaps most clearly expressed in Herbert's descriptions of the Bible as "the thankfull glasse,// That mends the lookers eyes", and "the well/ That washes what it shows".[3] The Bible, that is so central to, and so

[2] Notwithstanding the blurred distinction of the physical body from the spirit, which Richard Sugg explores in *The Smoke of the Soul*, this analogy was common in devotional and homiletic works, as when Donne describes the Psalms as "*Oleum effusum*… an Oyntment powred out upon all sorts of sores, A Searcloth that souples all bruises, A Balme that searches all wounds" (*LXXX Sermons*, p. 663), or when Dorothy Leigh compares the reading of scripture to Israelites' gathering Manna in the desert, "for as they by this Manua co[m]forted their harts, strengthened their bodies, and preserued their liues; so by this heauenly Word of God, you shall comfort your soules, make them strong in Faith, and grow in true godlinesse" (*The Mothers Blessing: or, The godly Counsaile of a Gentle-woman, not long since deceased, left behind for her children*, 7th edn. (London, 1625), p. 6).

[3] On 'distributed cognition', a conceptual framework by which complex cognitive, embodied and affective phenomena – like devotion – are understood as operating across a 'cognitive ecology' of minds, texts, objects

determines, the physical, mental and spiritual life of its reader, reveals to the reader their own spiritual state on the basis of their reading.[4] Vaughan may render his Bible into abstract concepts ("Gladness, and peace, and hope, and love"), and Herbert into vividly metaphorical images ("heav'ns Lidger here", "joys handsell"), but both also emphasise the material presence of the physical book: Vaughan by continually referring to the framing life narrative, and Herbert in the closing image of heaven 'lying flat' in the Bible, pointing to the flat page. As such, both poets move between imaginative and material manifestations of the Bible's influence on and relationship with the subject, reflecting the continually shifting and reflexive Protestant subject, engaged in constant scrutiny of one's own soul, imagining oneself as an individual soul before God as well as a member of a tightly-policed religious community.

"as dispersed herbs": Devotional reading and the material book

Herbert and Vaughan both understand the Bible, and the act of scriptural reading, as spiritual and material phenomena, that communicate to but also define the subjectivity of the reader. Vaughan imputes the material book with similar spiritual power in the antecedent poem in *Silex Scintillans*, 'The Book'. This poem praises God who 'knew' the eponymous book in its previous manifestations: the flax that would become the paper; the tree whose wood would be made its boards; the animal whose skin would become its parchment cover; and this God who will in the future "restore trees, beasts and men" (*WHV* 540). Joshua Calhoun has described 'The Book' as illustrating the 'social ecology of texts', the network of human and nonhuman agents traceable in the material production of the text.[5] As with 'To the Holy Bible', however, the book's material form also points to its spiritual importance – here manifesting not the reader's spiritual development, but the state of physical and

and environments, cf. Evelyn Tribble and Nicholas Keene, *Cognitive Ecologies and the History of Remembering* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), Ch.1 and *passim*.

[4] Narveson, *Bible Readers*, p. 3.

[5] Joshua Calhoun, 'The Word Made Flax: Cheap Bibles, Textual Corruption, and the Poetics of Paper', *PMLA* 126.2 (March 2011), pp. 327-44, pp. 339-342.

spiritual decay in which the world exists, "since mans fall", but before Christ's Second Coming, "When thou shalt make all new again".

Yet where the latter poem is explicitly about the Bible, 'The Book' is more ambiguous: the book's materiality *alone*, rather than its content, is meaningful here. The constituent parts of the book that Vaughan describes – linen paper leaves, wooden boards, parchment covers – could certainly describe a Bible, but could equally pertain to any printed book and even perhaps a manuscript notebook. Kate Narvseon discusses how the phrase "my book", when used by early modern compilers of devotional material refers often "not merely [to] a physical place for notes but a conceptual entity, a text of their own composing".[6] As Alan Rudrum has shown, 'The Book' also plays with the conceptual expansiveness of the 'book': "To see the world of nature *as* a book was a Medieval and Renaissance commonplace; Vaughan's originality is to see the world of nature *in* a book."[7] The conceptual flexibility of the early modern 'book' is as central to 'The Book' as its specific material form, resulting in a poem in which, again, the subject is both intimately knowable and yet at the same time unfixed and mutable.

Just as the speakerly subject of both 'To the Holy Bible' and 'The H. Scriptures. I.', then, is intertwined in complexly material and imaginative ways with the Bible that the poems set out to describe or address, so the material form of the 'book' is identified with its conceptual potential in 'The Book'. The diversity of meanings connoted by the term 'book', reflects the diversity of uses and forms of the material book in the period, traced by the likes of William Sherman in his study of early modern Bibles, which were routinely underlined, annotated and otherwise marked by their owners.[8] The model of 'active reading' that was a hallmark of humanist reading practices generated not only annotations and marginal compositions in printed texts, but also further volumes in both manuscript and print, new 'books' which, it is worth noting, Vaughan's titular 'Book' could equally be.[9]

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[6] Narveson, *Bible Readers*, p. 20.
[7] Alan Rudrum, ed., *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 641.
[8] Sherman, *Used Books*, Ch. 4.
[9] 'Active reading' is discussed by Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton in '"Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey read his Livy', *Past & Present* 129 (1990), pp. 30-78. The broad, 'generative' impulse of such reading and writing practices is further discussed by Adam Smyth, 'Commonplace Book Culture'; and in particular

The material form of the early modern Bible both determined the material uses to which it was put and helped to advance Protestant doctrine: as Peter Stallybrass argues, the codex form of the book, in enabling easy cross-referencing of scriptural passages from the Old and New Testaments, materially promoted typological reading of the Bible, and therefore enabled and manifested Protestant theology.[10] Matthew Brown, discussing popular devotional works circulating in early New England, discerns a distinctive 'thick style', which similarly prioritises cross-referencing and iterative reading.[11] The development of printing technology itself enabled the proliferation of easily-reproduced 'cheap print' including ballads, pictures and chapbooks, by which new doctrine – both officially sanctioned and heterodox – could easily reach believers across the social spectrum.[12] In short, it is becoming clear that material textual practices, literary form and doctrinal beliefs shaped and constituted one another in early modern England.

The interdependence of the material form and spiritual function of scriptural, devotional and literary texts in the early seventeenth century makes the mystery around the subject of 'The Book' all the more ambiguous: which book, exactly, is Vaughan describing? As we have seen, the material form that the poem concerns itself primarily with encompasses a variety of printed and manuscript texts; the deictic pronouns used throughout ("this *papyr*… this *Tree*… this harmless *beast*… this *skin*… this aged book") are equally ambiguous as to whether they point to another book the speaker describes, or to the material book itself in which 'The Book' appears – and in turn, in the latter case, this could refer equally to the printed copy of *Silex Scintillans*, a miscellany or anthology in which 'The Book' is excerpted, or a manuscript notebook into which the reader copies it out. Or perhaps, as Gerald Hammond suggests, the 'book' in 'The Book' is actually *The Temple*, whose influence is felt throughout *Silex Scintillans*: "only when [*The Temple*'s] influence is removed could the Bible be felt to have all that Vaughan sought."[13] Certainly, the relative *lack* of specificity of the eponymous 'book'

Victoria Brownlee, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), Ch. 1 and *passim.*

[10] Peter Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible', in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, ed. by Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: UPP, 2002), pp. 42-79.

[11] Brown, 'The Thick Style', pp. 69, 73.

[12] Watt, *Cheap Print*, esp. Chs 2, 4, 8.

[13] Gerald Hammond, '"Poor dust should still lie low": George Herbert and Henry Vaughan', *English* 35 (Spring 1986), pp. 1-22, pp. 18-19.

in the poem, when compared to the explicit reference to the Bible in the following poem, ensures at least the possibility that the 'book' is some other particular text. This ambiguity is significant, pointing to the porous boundaries between scripture and other devotional and literary texts, between the reading and writing of these texts, and between different material textual forms.

If there is an ambiguity at the centre of 'The Book', then, this ambiguity is fundamentally familiar to its readers: the familiarity of the material form of the book, and of the ways this material form is able to carry spiritual and social meaning, as well as the familiarity of the material and spiritual practices of reading and writing undertaken daily by the devoted early modern subject. 'The Book' plays with the concept and the object of the 'book', both in the ambiguity of what sort of 'book' is being referred to, and in the fundamentally uncertain presence of the book within the poem: the book's physical immediacy is the focus of four stanzas, but still it is only a collection of "scatter'd" materials, and the crux of the poem looks to the future, when these parts shall be 'restored' to their earlier, 'pre-book' forms.

This fundamental instability of the 'book', the impossibility of its representation except by describing its constituent parts as they are or will be, is a familiar problem to *The Temple*'s readers: we may compare, for instance, how Herbert represents 'Church-monuments' not through ecphrastic description but by focusing on their "dustie heraldrie and lines", their "Ieat, and Marble" (*EP* 235); or 'The Church-floore' by describing its "square & speckled stone", its "sweet cement", the "dust [blown] about the floore" (*EP* 244). Yet the impossibility of straightforwardly depicting the book itself, in a poem which, almost invariably, will be read *in* a physical book, sharpens this sense of an inherent difficulty of representation, as the poem successively points towards and looks away from its own material form.

As James Kearney has shown, the difficulties attendant on the representation and 'reading' of the book expose a central tension in Reformed culture. Reformers' underlying distrust of material objects in worship, as potential enticements to idolatry, struggles against the prioritisation of the Word as the source of salvation: much as the human subject cannot worship without a physical body in a

material setting, the Word cannot be conceived by the believer except through visual – and therefore potentially dangerously iconic – representation in written or painted words, and in material books. 'The Book' certainly seems to reside in this intractable 'crisis of representation' in an iconophobic yet logocentric culture.[14]

This "disenchantment of the book" seems to come to new acuity in England in the century following the Reformation, as the question of how exactly the Bible was to be read, both privately and especially in public worship, became confessionally inflected. [15] The central purpose of worship was subject to intense debate: was reading scripture alone, without explication through preaching, acceptable? Or would regarding preaching as a necessity degrade the power of scripture by seeing it as insufficient of itself for salvation?[16] Even divorced from its material manifestation in the book as an artefact, the problem of materiality and the Word strikes at the heart of the early-seventeenth century Church.

The question of how to read and use scripture clearly animated much religious writing in the period: theories of preaching and guides to prayer and meditation as well as to scriptural reading itself abounded; exegetical texts including sermons and commentaries circulated among both learned clergy and the common worshipper (especially in the marginal annotations in the Geneva Bible); prayers and liturgical texts – both the officially sanctioned Book of Common Prayer and personal prayers compiled by private believers – reformulated scripture freely; and individuals enthusiastically refashioned scripture into their own devotional works.[17] It would be easy to conceptualise a linear spectrum of such 'readings' in terms of the 'activity' of the 'reader': at one end would sit the 'bare reading' that so troubled the 'hotter sort' of Protestant in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, privileging readers' reception of the Word without regard to their apparent intellectual comprehension; on the other would be believers' own devotional, and sometimes literary,

[14] James Kearney, *Incarnate Text*, p. 32.
[15] ibid., p. 40.
[16] Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English preachers and their audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), Ch.1.
[17] cf. Green, *Print and Protsestantism*, Ch. 5; Brownlee, *Biblical Readings*, Ch. 1; Narveson, *Bible Readers*, Ch. 1.

compositions, quoting or playing with scriptural words and ideas, with clear authorial crafting; and between the two, the gamut of scriptural and quasi-scriptural works that proliferated in the early modern print marketplace and in private acts of reading and writing.

Such a conceptualisation, reductive as it inevitably is, is most useful in revealing the unresolved tensions at the heart of early modern literary and devotional cultures: between divine and human authorities and acts of creation; between the need for explanation and a resistance to human mediation; and between understandings of devotion and worship as fundamentally individual or communal experiences. 'The Book' is both troubling and useful for this reason: the description of the eponymous 'book', in so ambiguously denoting a particular material form that could sit anywhere on this spectrum, perhaps troublingly denies giving particular primacy to the Bible itself: conceivably, Herbert is as authoritative to Vaughan as the Bible is. Just as we have seen that the materiality of devotional literary activities undertaken by early modern believers must be considered inclusively, encompassing a range of reading, marking and writing acts, so must the question of divine authority and human agency not be ranged against one another, but considered as broadly continuous phenomena. Reading of the Bible and of human devotional poetry can prompt similar devotional experiences and help to create similar devotional outputs for writers like Vaughan, and the many other mid-seventeenth century devotional poets whose work explicitly follows Herbert's.

"Suck ev'ry letter": Herbert reading scripture in *The Temple*

How Herbert's verse 'reads' the Bible has been the object of much study. In *Spelling the Word* Chana Bloch argues that Herbert, wholly of a kind with the religious and literary practices of his time, placed *The Temple* in continuity with the Bible: the figures and events of the New Testament provided the typological fulfilment for the antitypes of the Old, and *The Temple*'s refashioning and redeployment of scriptural ideas and language extends the possibility for such interpretations through

literary form.[18] John Wall too sees Herbert's use of scripture as a rehearsal of orthodox doctrine, but places this in the context of an ongoing programme of scripturally-sanctioned political interventions through religious poetry by writers across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[19] More recently, Gary Kuchar builds on this centring of religio-political concerns, seeing in Herbert's use of the Bible a 'poetics of correction and revision' that reflects a turn over the early seventeenth century from the dogmatic emphasis on perseverance and assurance in faith, to a renewed cultivation of mystery, in which the unknown and unknowable are embraced, rather than necessarily troubling.[20]

Discussions of Herbert's use of the Bible in *The Temple*, that is to say, have largely focused on his use of scripture as reflecting and responding to prevailing political interests as much as spiritual or aesthetic concerns. But creative literary use of scripture – quotation, translation, refashioning – does not just comment on doctrine and religious practices, but itself constitutes the devotional practice. As Wall argues, "At the heart of the Church of England is not intellectual assent to a specific doctrinal position but the entering in to something *done*."[21] Official worship is defined explicitly by its liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer; 'conformity' to the Prayer Books' rites is taken, both by contemporary clergy and by modern scholars, as the measure of adherence to the Church's doctrines. And of course, in participating in the services and prayers of the Book of Common Prayer, the worshipper is participating in an act of scriptural quoting and redeployment that might be understood as much as a literary action as that undertaken in *The Temple*, or the sort of active, generative 'reading' in commonplace books, notebooks and the margins of Bibles that ordinary worshippers were engaged in on a daily basis.[22]

At points, indeed, Herbert's use of the Bible in *The Temple* seems practically liturgical. 'The 23 Psalme', for instance, is essentially a straightforward paraphrase of Psalm 23, but its use of Common

[18] Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 127-45 and *passim*.
[19] Wall, *Transformations of the Word*, pp. 166-69, 237-40.
[20] Gary Kuchar, *George Herbert and the Mystery of the Word: Poetry and scripture in seventeenth-century England* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 27-30.
[21] Wall, *Transformations of the Word*, p. 11.
[22] The literary nature and influence of the Book of Common Prayer is discussed at length by Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature*, and Gibbons, *Conflicts of Devotion*; see above, pp. 44-45.

Metre aligns it with the Sternhold-Hopkins Psalter, familiar from the Book of Common Prayer's daily services, rather than other, more technically faithful or literary translations.[23] To compare this direct paraphrase to the other poems in which Herbert directly names a Biblical source or reference is instructive: the relatively limited grouping, scattered across *The Temple*, includes meditative reflections on the cited verses that both question their implications ('Ephes. 4.30: *Grieve not the Holy Spirit, etc.*', *EP* 473-74) and affirm their lessons ('The Pearl. *Matth. 13*', *EP* 322-32), prayers apparently responding to the verse ('The Odour, 2. *Cor.* 2.', *EP* 604-05), and one which plays visually and verbally with the cited verse ('Coloss. 3. 3. *Our life is hid with Christ in God*', *EP* 305). 'Ephes. 4.30' in particular reads as scriptural meditation; the speaker, having heard or read the titular verse ("And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"), questions what the 'grief' here means ("And art thou grieved, sweet and sacred Dove,/ When I am sowre,/ And crosse thy love?"), and resolves to respond properly: in affect ("Then weep mine eyes, the God of love doth grieve:/ Weep foolish heart,/ And weeping live"); in practice ("When sawcie mirth shall knock or call at doore,/ Cry out, Get hence,/ Or cry no more"); and in verse ("Oh take thy lute, and tune it to a strain,/ Which may with thee/ All day complain./ There can no discord but in ceasing be.").

Herbert's meditation on Ephesians 4:30 thus becomes the occasion for his verse, which must consciously justify itself. The image of weeping is invoked across the poem, a metonym for the self-castigation and 'grief' that is appropriate when one considers one's own insufficiency, but it is also constrained by physical reality: the speaker cannot weep forever, "since still to wail/ Nature denies;/ And flesh would fail,/ If my deserts were masters of mine eyes". The image of endless weeping in fact defeats itself by continually being related to associated images in nature: the 'weeping' marble in the church, and the endlessly running stream, against both of which the speaker's human frailty proves inadequate. It is fitting, then, that resolution ultimately comes, as ever, in Christ's sacrifice: "thy sonne makes good/ My want of tears with store of bloud." The 'tears' imagery, hovering continually

[23] Rivkah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer, 1535-1601* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), p. 114.

in the poem between material reality and consciously poetic image, is resolved and replaced by Christ's blood, which is literally real, but only accessible through the textual mediation of scripture and the figurative signification of the sacrament. Vaughan's 'To the Holy Bible' and 'The Book' and Herbert's 'The H. Scriptures' poems understand the Bible existing within a tangible and spiritually meaningful 'ecology', the books' spiritual effect inextricable from the material contexts within which and means by which they are experienced; 'Ephes. 4.30' similarly shows the Bible verse's meaning accessible to the speaker only within a comparable 'ecology' of material forms, poetic images and doctrinal truths.

In 'The Odour, 2. *Cor.* 2', the terms are less intellectual, and more sensory; the problem is not how to understand God, through scripture or through poetry, but how to feel God – to smell, to taste, and to hear him. The apparent focus throughout is on the "sound" of the repeated refrain, "*My Master!*", but its meaning far escapes its aural element: the words have "An oriental fragrancie"; they are a "broth of smells, that feeds and fats my minde". The idea of 'sweetness', in various lexical forms, pervades 'The Odour'. Wilcox describes the term, in *The Temple*, "cover[ing] the full range of meanings from sensual pleasure and artistic beauty to moral virtuousness and redemptive love" (*EP* xliv). This idea of sweetness is drawn from the titular verse: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:15). 'Sweetness' is fundamentally, almost ineffably, sensory and worldly – something smelt, spoken, breathed – but at the same time essentially scriptural. Its multivalence, like the relationship between humanity and God, is a challenge to the poem that seeks to express it. The application of the olfactory and gustatory sense of 'sweetness', its warming, breathing, nourishing qualities, to the aural and textual manifestation of the human-divine relationship – as it is expressed in the words, "*My Master*" and "*My servant*" that lie at the centre of the poem – makes the use of scripture a complex sensory and cognitive experience in which Herbert's own poetic intervention is crucial.

In his poems that grapple closely with a single Bible verse, Herbert adopts different approaches – from the abundant imagery of 'The Odour' to the visual wordplay of 'Coloss. 3. 3.' – and different emotional ranges for his speakers. Yet the various poems share a sense of the Bible as something

experienced within a material, living, worldly context, something which exerts its shaping influence on the human subject, but which the speaker of the poem – as well as Herbert himself, and his reader – actively engages with and responds to. The speaker of 'The Odour' receives the "sweetning" breath of God's "*My servant*", because they "call" to him, "perfume" and "thrust [their] minde" into the words they are saying; the speaker's "*My Master*", in other words, operates like any vocal prayer or act of bodily worship within the Church of England liturgy.

In this respect, the parallels between Herbert's treatment of the Bible and Vaughan's treatment of Herbert's poetry are clear: both envision the texts that inspire and prompt their poems, not as something completely *other* than the physical world, a dematerialised spiritual Word that human readers cannot hope to comprehend, but as existing within the material, social and embodied world that the poets and readers inhabited. Herbert's equivocating about the 'sweetness' of God's voice may reflect its ineffability, but it is a quality that is undeniably worldly and material. The "quick touch" and "searching ray" of Vaughan's Bible, and the paper, wood and parchment materiality of his 'Book', offer worldly, material ways to access the meaning and effect of these texts. For both poets, the material world – or, precisely, the poetic representation of the material world – is the only way through which scripture, and the quasi-scriptural power of devotional verse, can be accessed.

"Frequent impressions, and numerous pages": Herbert and seventeenth-century devotional poetry

Several devotional poets of the mid-seventeenth century advertise themselves as following *The Temple*'s poetic model, proclaiming their volumes to be extensions to Herbert's, building upon *The Temple*'s titular architectural metaphor: among them Christopher Harvey, whose *The Synagogue, or, The Shadow of the Temple* declares itself on its title-page to be written "In imitation of Mr George Herbert", and was from its second edition in 1647 routinely bound and sold with subsequent editions of *The Temple*; Richard Crashaw, the preface to whose *Steps to the Temple* declares him "*Herbert*'s second, but equall"; and Ralph Knevet, who, in his collection 'A Gallery to The Temple', sought to

follow Herbert, "who rightly knew to touch Davids harpe", and who "by a religious cultivation, added new life to the wither'd branches, of this celestiall Balme tree".[24]

Among these Vaughan has been afforded the most critical attention, both as a poet in his own right and in exploring his poetic response to Herbert's work. Hammond detects a difference between Vaughan's treatment of Herbert as an unstructured "storehouse of ideas and images", and his "precise and purposeful" manipulation of scripture.[25] Wall sees the banning of the Book of Common Prayer and the reshaping of English worship in the Interregnum in which Vaughan was writing *Silex* as a key context, in which the volume partakes in a 'poetics of absence', Vaughan "the chronicler of the experience of that [Anglican] community when its source of Christian identity was no longer available".[26] Vaughan's treatment of Herbert is therefore defined by a powerful Anglican nostalgia, but also by the fact that *The Temple*, in a world without the Book of Common Prayer, both records, and allows access to the devotional experience of, a lost Anglican worship.

In this regard, Vaughan has common ground in his approach to Herbert with another, less acclaimed poetic admirer: Samuel Speed, a London printer and bookseller, who, while imprisoned in Ludgate for debts, produced a volume of meditations and devotional poetry, *Prison-Pietie*.[27] For Speed as for Vaughan, deprivation is the occasion of his devotional work – for Vaughan, the prohibition of 'proper' Anglican worship, and for Speed, the restriction on his freedom and pleasures while imprisoned. In the prefatory epistle to *Prison-Pietie*, Speed describes the "act of Contemplation" that the volume represents as the means by which "I made my Prison my Paradise".[28] Vaughan's Preface to *Silex* and Speed's epistle both set out to articulate their devotional poetics, statements the like of which do not survive from Herbert. Both set secular poetry against sacred:

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[24] C.A. Patrides, ed., *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 4-7, pp. 55-83; Christopher Harvey, *The Synagogve, or, The Shadow of the Temple. Sacred Poems, and Private Ejacvlations* (London, 1640); *The Poems of Richard Crashaw: English Latin and Greek*, 2nd edn., ed. by L.C. Martin (Oxford: OUP, 1957), p. 75; *The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet: a critical edition*, ed. by Amy Charles (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966), pp. 280-81; cf. Amy Charles, 'Touching David's Harp: George Herbert and Ralph Knevet', *George Herbert Journal* 2.1 (Fall 1978), pp. 54-69.

[25] Hammond, 'Poor dust', p. 1.

[26] Wall, *Transformations*, p. 275.

[27] Stephen Wright, 'Speed, Samuel (bap. 1633, d. 1679?), printer and bookseller', *ODNB* (2004).

[28] Samuel Speed, *Prison-Pietie: or, Meditations Divine and Moral* (London, 1677), sig. A3r. Subsequent references will be given in-line as *PP*.

Vaughan castigates those who "cast away all their fair portion of time, in no better imployments, then a deliberate search, or excogitation of *idle words*, and a most vain, insatiable desire to be reputed *Poets*", their texts as "*Vipers*" which "survive their *Parents* and for many ages after… infect whole Generations"; Herbert, Vaughan argues, was "The first, that with any effectual success attempted a *diversion* of this foul and overflowing *stream*" (*WHV* 388-91).

Speed similarly ranges "vain Songs… sung to the World, lascivious Ballads… sung to the Flesh, and Satyrical Libels… sung to the Devil" against "Psalms, Hymns and spiritual Songs", which alone, "making melody in the heart, are Songs sung to the Lord" (*PP* sig. A5^{r}.) For Speed the virtue of devotional and scriptural verse is in its ability to keep the reader's mind from "vain Imaginations, idle Companie, profane Discourse, and obscene Songs", which "tend not onely to the corruption of good Manners, but the ruine both of Precepts & Principles". Devotional verse, Speed argues, is a kind of mental training, which fortifies the reader against worldly distractions. Vaughan, on the other hand, sees this threat of worldly degradation even within devotional verse itself: he laments that Herbert's imitators, far from maintaining his legacy, "aimed more at *verse*, then *perfection*" and so "not flowing from a true, practick piety, it was impossible they should effect those things abroad, which they never had acquaintance with at home". Speed sees devotional poetry as a corrective to its human reader's inherent weaknesses; Vaughan, as further evidence of them.

In his most explicit statement of his aims, Speed declares that "Divine Verse hath these two operations: it is pleasant, and makes an impression in the memory of the Reader" (*PP* sig. A5^{v}). That Speed sees devotional poetry as working directly on the reader's "memory" is significant, aligning it with humanistic literary practices that emphasise easy cognitive 'digestion' and memorisation.[29] At the same time, recent studies have emphasised the particular importance of constructions and performances of memory in various elements of early modern religious material culture.[30] Religious

[29] Victoria Burke, ''Memorial Books': Commonplaces, gender, and manuscript compilation in seventeenth-century England', in *Ars Reminiscendi: Mind and memory in Renaissance culture*, ed. by Donald Beecher and Grant Williams (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009), pp. 121-143, pp. 123-24; cf. Ann Moss, 'Locating Knowledge', in *Cognition and the Book*, ed. by Karl Eneckel and Wolfgang Neuber (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 35-50.

[30] Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, pp. 515-31; David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National memory and the Protestant calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989),

activities and objects – pilgrimages, shrines, wells, monastic ruins and church monuments, ringing church-bells and keeping parish records – encouraged specific kinds of devotional activity in spiritually significant acts of commemoration. Memory itself was thus a potentially devotional faculty; Speed sees his verse serving this interdependently spiritual and cognitive purpose.

By contrast, for Vaughan what guarantees the efficacy of his devotional verse is dedicating the volume to the Church:

> I have begged leave to communicate this my poor *Talent* to the *Church*, under the *protection* and *conduct* of her *glorious Head*… I hope to [God's] *glory*, and my great *advantage*: that I may flourish not with *leafe* onely, but with some *fruit* also (*WHV* 392).

Vaughan's verse is not spiritually effective on its own account, through the inherent cognitive function of the poetry, but through God's assent and blessing. The "*fruit*" of his verse – the spiritual effect it may have on its reader – is not a product of Vaughan's literary skill or "practick piety", but is achieved through God's participation. Put in terms of the church building, Vaughan's poetry has relative rather than essential holiness.[31] This divine co-authorship is explicitly not confined to the "*leafe*" of the material book alone; the experience of reading *Silex* extends beyond the material act of reading, into the spiritual effect on the reader – an effect that Vaughan attributes fundamentally to God.

The different conceptions of devotional poetry put forward by Speed and Vaughan in the paratexts to their volumes are clearly put into practice in their respective treatments of *The Temple*. Vaughan's 'H. Scriptures' (*WHV* 441) clearly takes Herbert's 'The. H. Scriptures' poems as a model, drawing on similar images and turns of phrase: "Heav'n extracted lies in thee" echoes Herbert's "heav'n lies flat in thee"; "Thou art lifes Charter", "thou art heav'ns Lidger here".

> In thee the hidden stone, the *Manna* lies,
> Thou art the great *Elixir*, rare, and Choice;
> The Key that opens to all Mysteries,
> The *Word* in Characters, God in the *Voice*.

esp. Chs 7-11; Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, pp. 125-27; Andrew Gordon, 'The Paper Parish: The parish register and the reformation of parish memory in early modern London', *Memory Studies* 11.1 (2018), pp. 51-68.

[31] Morel, *Glorious Temples*, pp. 98-100.

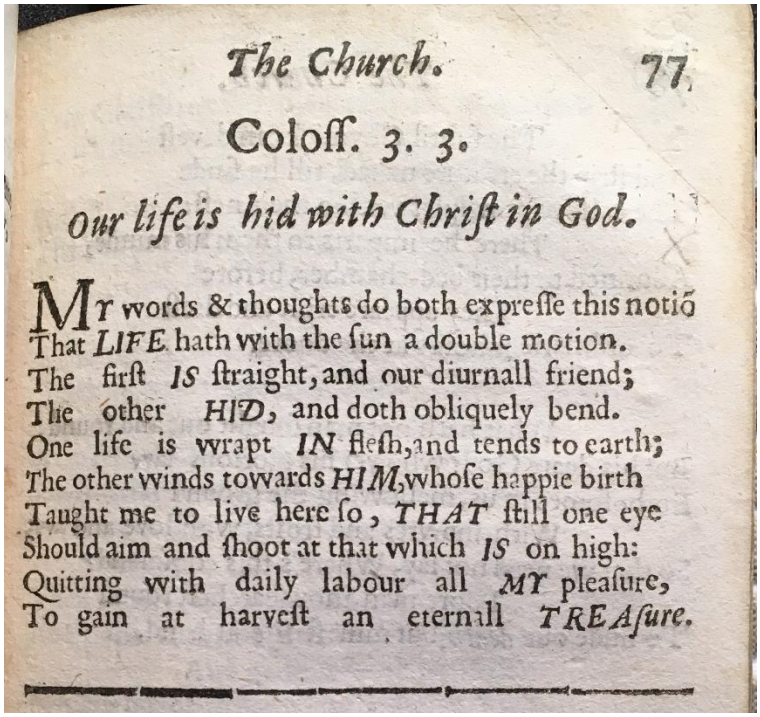
This second stanza thus expresses in characteristically metaphysical alchemical imagery the enlightenment the comes through typological interpretation of scripture; as such it reformulates Herbert's description in 'The H. Scriptures. II' of how

> This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
> Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie:
> Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
> These three make up some Christians destinie (*EP* 210).

Vaughan draws on, reforms and redeploys Herbert's imagery, so extensively and here in such concentration that we cannot but read the poem as overtly modelled on Herbert's.

It must be significant, moreover, that this is done in a poem extolling the spiritual value of cross-referentiality in scriptural interpretation. If the Bible, as Vaughan suggests, is able to admonish the speaker's stony heart – "O that I had deep Cut in my hard heart/ Each line in thee! Then I would… Return upon himself the *Law,* and *Stones*" – it can apparently only do so with extensive support from Herbert's verse. The speaker's internalisation of scripture represents a 'return' of scripture to heaven, in the use of Biblical words in prayer ("groans/ Of my Lords penning"); this blurring of human and divine authority in Vaughan's poem is revealed as a manifestation of Christ's saving sacrifice ("Read here, my faults are thine… *Sweet Saviour thou didst dye!*"). The pervasive influence of Herbert's verse here serves not to dilute the power Vaughan ascribes to scripture, but to reinforce the sense, shared by Herbert's depiction of the Bible cross-referencing and 'commenting on' its reader, of scriptural power as a dispersed phenomenon: its power is amplified by the multiple voices through which it is mediated.

Throughout *Silex,* Vaughan draws heavily on the imagery and the literary forms of *The Temple*. In *Prison-Pietie* Speed's use of Herbert as a model is rather more straightforward. Multiple poems within the volume seem to do little other than restate, in strikingly similar language and verse forms, poems of Herbert's. 'On Christ's Death' (*PP* 60-61), for instance, like Herbert's 'The Sacrifice' (*EP* 96-103) presents Christ's lamentation on the cross, in the form of short stanzas (two rhyming couplets in 'On Christ's Death', three rhyming lines in 'The Sacrifice') each ending with a repeated refrain (in Herbert, "Was ever grief like mine?"; in Speed, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*").



The Church. 77.

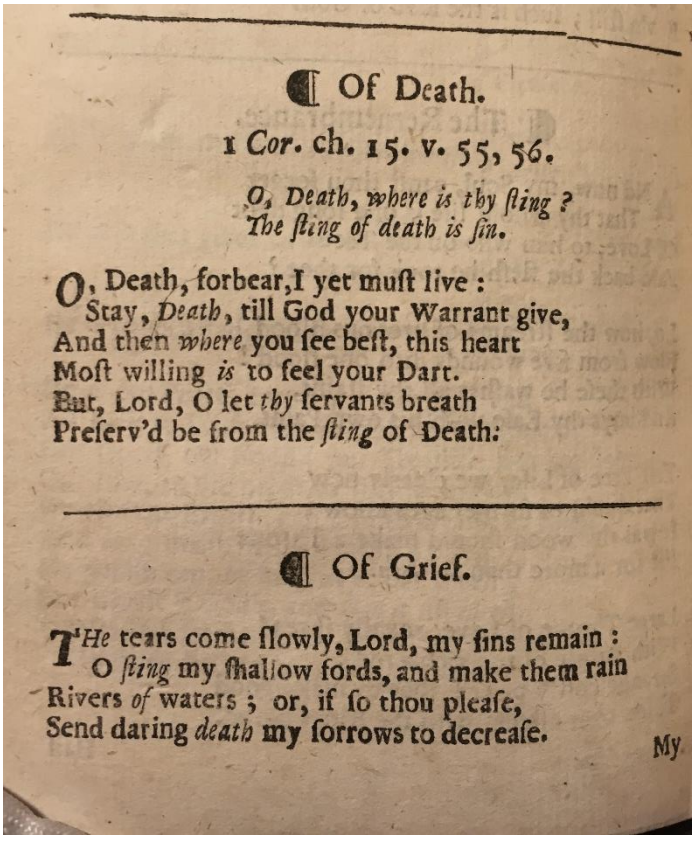
Coloſſ. 3. 3.

Our life is hid with Chriſt in God.

MY words & thoughts do both expreſſe this notiõ
That *LIFE* hath with the ſun a double motion.
The firſt *IS* ſtraight, and our diurnall friend;
The other *HID*, and doth obliquely bend.
One life is wrapt *IN* fleſh, and tends to earth;
The other winds towards *HIM*, whoſe happie birth
Taught me to live here ſo, *THAT* ſtill one eye
Should aim and ſhoot at that which *IS* on high:
Quitting with daily labour all *MY* pleaſure,
To gain at harveſt an eternall *TREASURE.*

Figure 9: 'Coloss. 3. 3.', George Herbert, *The Temple* 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1633), p. 77. British Library 1076.i.25.

Figure 10: 'Of Death' and 'Of Grief', Samuel Speed, *Prison-Pietie* (London, 1677), pp. 70-71. NAL Dyce 12mo 9380.



¶ Of Death.

1 *Cor.* ch. 15. v. 55, 56.

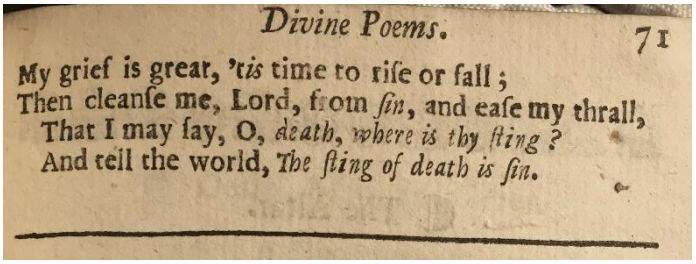
O, Death, where is thy ſting?
The ſting of death is ſin.

O, Death, forbear, I yet muſt live:
Stay, *Death*, till God your Warrant give,
And then *where* you ſee beſt, this heart
Moſt willing *is* to feel your Dart.
But, Lord, O let *thy* ſervants breath
Preſerv'd be from the *ſting* of Death:

¶ Of Grief.

THe tears come ſlowly, Lord, my ſins remain:
O *ſting* my ſhallow fords, and make them rain
Rivers *of* waters; or, if ſo thou pleaſe,
Send daring *death* my ſorrows to decreaſe.

My



Divine Poems. 71

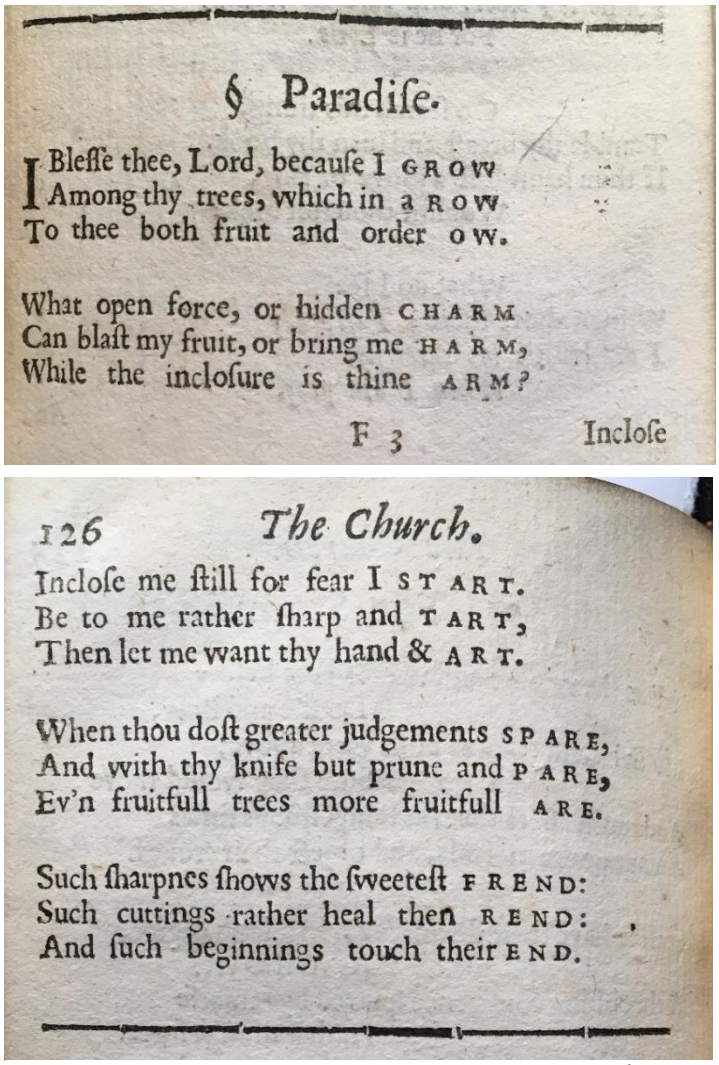
My grief is great, 'tis time to riſe or fall;
Then cleanſe me, Lord, from *ſin*, and eaſe my thrall,
That I may ſay, O, *death*, *where is thy ſting?*
And tell the world, *The ſting of death is ſin.*

Speed's paired poems 'Of Death' and 'Of Grief' use the same typographical trick as Herbert's 'Coloss. 3. 3.', in which a 'hidden message' is revealed in italics diagonally through the poem – though Speed cannot help restating the message in the final couplet of the latter poem, in italics, lest it escape the reader's notice: "That I may say, *O, death, where is thy sting?*/ And tell the world, *The sting of death is sin*" (*PP* 70-71; see Figures 9-10). 'The Petition' similarly echoes Herbert's 'Paradise' visually and formally: both consist of three-line stanzas, each line ending with the final world of the previous line with its first letter removed, printed in upper case: "Stand by me, Lord, when dangers STARE;/ Keep from my Fruit such choaking TARE,/ That on Confusion grounded ARE" (*PP* 97; see Figures 11-12).

The experience of reading these poems, to a reader familiar with Herbert's work – as most of Speed's late-seventeenth century readers surely were – must be more acutely that of recalling Herbert's work than of appreciating Speed's. Nor does Speed only imitate Herbert so closely; as a nineteenth-century editor of Jeremy Taylor's Hymns rather uncharitably puts it, Speed incorporated the examples of his various inspirations "with such changes as take the gipsy-form of defacing in order to conceal the larceny."[32] The extent of Speed's own authorial innovation seems minimal, particularly in comparison with the richer response to Herbert that Vaughan provides.

Yet there is more value in *Prison-Pietie* than 'mere' imitation, or the destructive 'defacement' or "larceny" that Grosart sees. In poems like 'The Sacrifice', 'Coloss. 3. 3.' and 'Paradise' the poetic and visual form of the poems are what drives the spiritual experience of reading them: the harrowing experience of personating Christ's suffering on the cross in 'The Sacrifice', extended in unvaryingly repeating stanzas over several pages; the spark of recognition as one decodes the message in 'Coloss. 3. 3.'; the immediate visual effect of the capitalised, visually repetitive word forms in 'Paradise' that must then be renegotiated into the meaning of the poem as it is read more fully. Speed replicates rather than varies these effects in his own versions. From a modern literary viewpoint, they are

[32] Alexander Grosart, *Miscellanies of The Fuller Worthies' Library: The Poems and Verse-Translations of the Right Rev. Jeremy Taylor, D. D. Lord Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore. For the first time collected and edited after the author's own text* (Printed for private circulation, 1870), pp. 67-68.



§ Paradiſe.

I Bleſſe thee, Lord, becauſe I GROW
Among thy trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW.

What open force, or hidden CHARM
Can blaſt my fruit, or bring me HARM,
While the incloſure is thine ARM?

F 3 Incloſe

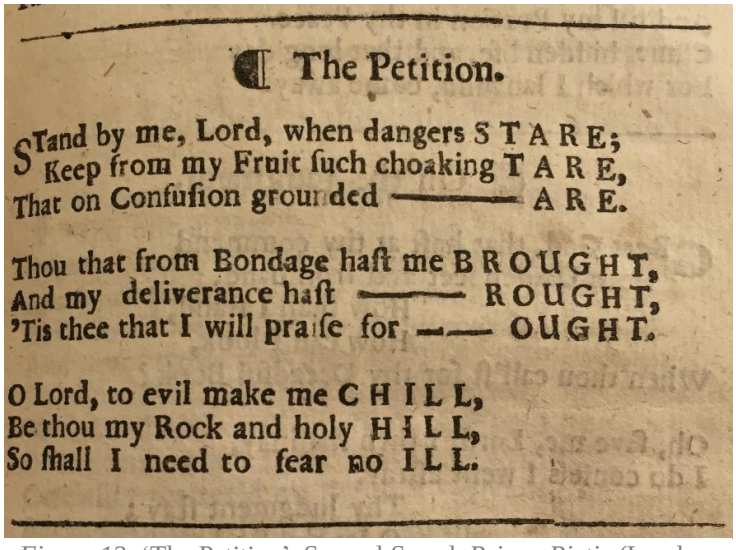
126 The Church.

Incloſe me ſtill for fear I START.
Be to me rather ſharp and TART,
Then let me want thy hand & ART.

When thou doſt greater judgements SPARE,
And with thy knife but prune and PARE,
Ev'n fruitfull trees more fruitfull ARE.

Such ſharpnes ſhows the ſweeteſt FREND:
Such cuttings rather heal then REND:
And ſuch beginnings touch their END.

Figure 11: 'Paradise', George Herbert, *The Temple*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1633), pp. 125-26. British Library 1076.i.25.



¶ The Petition.

STand by me, Lord, when dangers STARE;
Keep from my Fruit ſuch choaking TARE,
That on Confuſion grounded ——— ARE.

Thou that from Bondage haſt me BROUGHT,
And my deliverance haſt ——— ROUGHT,
'Tis thee that I will praiſe for —— OUGHT.

O Lord, to evil make me CHILL,
Be thou my Rock and holy HILL,
So ſhall I need to fear no ILL.

Figure 12: 'The Petition', Samuel Speed, *Prison-Pietie* (London, 1677), p. 97. NAL Dyce 12mo 9380.

uninteresting; but regarding them not as primarily aesthetic literary artefacts, but as devotional tools, as Speed's epistle surely invites us to, the experience of reading Speed's poems is no more disappointing and derivative than using the same meditational techniques on more than one occasion.

Speed's poems show no real authorial invention: his most striking verse takes its form and effect wholesale from Herbert. However, as we have already seen, Herbert himself was deeply suspicious of 'invention' as as poetic quality, denouncing "quaint words, and trim invention" in 'Jordan (II)' and telling it to "rest" in 'The Posie' (*EP* 367, 632).[33] The Herbert-lite verse in *Prison-Pietie* asserts no authorial inventiveness, merely replicating the pious model of *The Temple*. Paradoxically, Speed's apparently derivative poetry seems to represent the apotheosis of Herbertian devotional poetics: the words and

[33] See above, pp. 19-20.

form of the poem, and the devotional action it engenders, remain, even as the authorial presence recedes.

Prison-Pietie presents a devotional reading practice devoid of the poetic and moral authorial presence that is inescapable in *The Temple*, thanks to Ferrar's eulogising prefatory epistle, and the wider culture of hagiography that accreted around Herbert's legacy over the seventeenth century. The 1674 tenth edition of *The Temple*, appearing three years before *Prison-Pietie*, amplifies the hagiographic representation of Herbert, including a portrait engraving alongside the title-page, three epigraph poems praising Herbert, and Izaak Walton's *Life of Mr George Herbert* appended after Harvey's *Synagogue*, and a 'Table' recommending particular poems for given occasions or topics.[34] The 1652 volume *Herbert's Remains*, compiled by much-reduced royalist minister Barnabas Oley, gathers *The Country Parson, Jacula Prudentum*, a collection of commonplaces attributed to Herbert's compilation, and other 'sundry peeces' of Herbert's, together with another eulogising *Life* of Herbert by Oley himself.[35] In both volumes, Herbert's works are made lively and useful: the 'Table' to *The Temple* positions it for regular, active use; and the practical manual *The Country Parson* and the commonplaces of *Jacula Prudentum* are similarly worldly and functional. At the same time, Herbert himself is almost beatified by the apparatus surrounding his depiction.

This combination of canonisation and functionality, it seems, primes readers to produce works, like *Prison-Pietie*, that 'read' Herbert as a source of uncrossable moral and religious authority, but also rehearse and redeploy his verse forms freely. By inviting such a variety of 'readings' – as works of literary inspiration and divine blessing, devotional exercises and moral exemplars – *The Temple* is positioned as foundational to contemporary devotional literary activity, comparable to the Bible or the Prayer Book. We have seen that *The Temple* presents the reader with a world into which they are invited, one which may be inhabited, interpreted and used in ways that replicate, represent and react to the complex material and spiritual world in which its readers lived. In *The Temple*'s poems, Herbert

[34] George Herbert, *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. Together with his Life. with several Additions*, 10th edn. (London, 1674).
[35] George Herbert, *Herbert's Remains, or, Sundry Pieces Of that sweet Singer of the Temple, Mr George Herbert, Sometime Orator of that University of Cambridg* (London, 1652).

practices these kinds of ‘readings’ of the Bible, the material world, and the spiritual experience of the Protestant believer; in inviting the reader to participate in such ‘readings’, Herbert typifies a kind of literary devotional activity that makes the material acts of reading and writing devotionally productive.

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