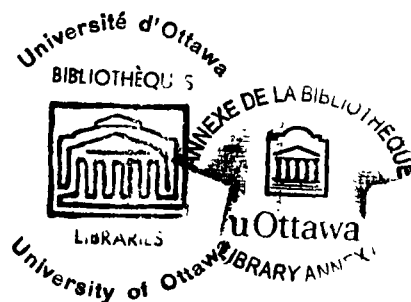


GEORGE HERBERT: PARSON AND POET

by Dalton James McGuinty

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Department of English as partial fulfill-
ment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy.



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INTRODUCTION

To ensure brevity within this introduction, some of the materials ordinarily covered under this heading are outlined as preliminary statements in Chapter One. Recapitulation of work in the area, the method followed, the significance and originality of this contribution, and chapter summaries, could not be outlined adequately with the economy befitting an introduction.

It is appropriate at this point to anticipate and answer a question rightly posed whenever an investigation into the world of a subordinate figure is undertaken. Of all the areas as yet unexplored, why does this study focus upon a relatively minor poet?

George Herbert and his poetry provide a healthy antidote for a modern misconception of the poet and his art. His work illustrates that poetry must not necessarily deal with what is remote, wondrous, beautiful and mysterious. He is not an ivory-tower dwelling escapist attempting to make a religion of beauty conceived as an absolute without relations to truth and goodness. He does not subordinate his art to the task of preaching an explicit religious, social or political doctrine. Nor is he concerned with using his art to reflect a sickly neurotic temperament wallowing in the cheap luxury of self-pity. In short, Herbert avoids the pitfalls which have trapped so many recent versifiers whose work is

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open to censure on artistic and/or religious grounds. A strong personal preference is a result of conceiving Herbert and his poetry in this way. Any work which may serve to create interest in Herbert and his poetry by supplementing or stimulating a reading of the poetry will accomplish a worthwhile task.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the investigation of one particular aspect of the work of a subordinate poet is excusable only on grounds of personal admiration. Perhaps a more valid reason for undertaking this study of a "minor" figure is based on the belief that his poetry should not be placed on as low a plane as it frequently is. Rather than being thought of as a relatively minor figure, perhaps George Herbert should be looked upon as having made a more significant contribution to English literature than he is usually given credit for. It is hoped that the insight into the poet derived from a survey of pertinent background, and summaries and comparisons of the poetry and prose, will reveal a personality and expose a literary contribution which should not be dismissed too quickly to the level of minor significance. It will be illustrated that, while he worked within the relatively narrow area of the religious lyric, an area of major importance, Herbert rediscovered, explored, polished, perfected, and generally enriched this type of poem with

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his technical skill and vibrant personality.

A third justification for this study has been effectively stated by one of the great contributors to the area of Herbert scholarship, George Herbert Palmer.

"The tendencies of an age appear more distinctly in its writers of inferior rank than in those of commanding genius. These latter tell of past and future as well as of the years in which they live. They are for all time. But on the sensitive, responsive souls, of less creative power, current ideals record themselves with clearness. Whoever, then, values literary history will be glad to seek out the gentle and incomplete poet, be willing for a while to dwell dispassionately in his narrow surroundings, without praise or blame will examine his numbered thoughts, and never forget that even restricted times and poets work out necessary elements of human nature and appropriately further its growth. A small writer so studied becomes large."¹

A final justification for the study is more personal. In a thesis prepared as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, George Herbert as revealed in The Country Parson, and through contemporary estimates, was discussed. By expanding this previous study into the areas of the poetry, pertinent background material, and relationships between the poetry and prose, the interest provoked by the previous study has been satisfied.

¹ George Herbert Palmer, The Life and Works of George Herbert, 3 volumes, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1905, p.xii. volume 1.

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For these reasons then, the present study was initiated. A strong personal admiration for the man and his work, the belief that Herbert is not as "minor" as he is often charged with being, the belief in the importance of lesser literary figures, and the opportunity of continuing a previous investigation, all justify the exploration.

CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

1 Preliminary Statements

Although none of the English works¹ of George Herbert was printed in his lifetime, four editions appeared within three years of his death in 1633 and, by 1709, thirteen editions had been published. Between 1709 and 1799 not a single edition appeared. Here and there a poet such as Cowper admired him.

"At length I met with Herbert's Poems; and gothic and uncouth as they were, I yet found in them a strain of piety which I could not but admire. This was the only author I had any delight in reading. I pored over him all day long; and though I found not here what I might have found - a cure for my malady, yet it never seemed so much alleviated as while I was reading him."²

In spite of occasional recognition of this type, Herbert was generally neglected.

¹ Herbert's literary remains consist of: The Temple, one hundred sixty-nine poems all but a few of which are concerned with religious topics; The Country Parson, a book of rules for parochial and other clergy; Luigi Cornaro's Treatise of Temperance and Sobriety translated to English; notes on Nicholas Ferrar's translation of The Hundred and Ten Considerations written by the Spaniard John Valdesso; seventeen personal letters and a will; Outlandish Proverbs, selected by George Herbert. The Latin writings consist of; a group of epigrams in reply to Andrew Melville's criticism of the ceremonies and polity of the Church of England; two collections of Latin poems "Passio Discerpta" and "Lucus"; poems on the death of his mother "Memoriae Matris Sacrum"; occasional Latin poems "Alia Poemata Latina"; three orations written while Orator at Cambridge; eighteen official letters written while Orator at Cambridge.

² Memoirs of the early life of William Cowper, quoted by F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.xlvii.

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When Herbert's poetic credit stood lowest, Coleridge was the first notable critic to rediscover him. There are references to his poetry in "The Friend" (1809-1810) and "Biographia Literaria" (1817). In "The Friend", Coleridge says of Herbert:

"The quaintness of some of his thoughts, not of his Diction, than which nothing can be more pure, manly, and unaffected, has blinded modern readers to the great general merit of his poems, which are for the most part exquisite in their kind."³

The period of Romanticism and the Oxford Movement turned the tide by the second quarter of the nineteenth century and in the next hundred years there have been many editions, both scholarly and popular, of The Temple. Herbert had "arrived" and it became respectable for critics to value Herbert's poetry although it became usual to apologize for his "quaintness" and his conceits. About half a dozen of his poems were made famous by the many handy editions which were issued for devotional purposes and by their inclusion in standard anthologies.

With the current revival of interest in Donne and his followers, there is a clearer understanding and a more accurate appraisal of the aims and methods of the Metaphysical Poets.

³ Ibid., p.xlix.

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"Conceits which pleased in the seventeenth century, gave offence in the eighteenth, and elicited a half-hearted defence in the nineteenth, are again seen to be no idle exercise of ingenuity but an effective way of expressing that blend of thought and passion which characterized such poetry".⁴

Certain excellences of Herbert as a poet are generally recognized at the present time. His economy of diction, his ability to knit together a poem with effective imagery, his success in constantly selecting a verse form admirably suited to content, his ability to vary the incidence of the rhymes and the length of lines, his success in employing the terms and rhythms of ordinary speech with effect, are admired characteristics of his poetry.

The most significant studies of Herbert, for the purpose of this thesis, are the two collections of the Works appearing in the twentieth century. All previous studies of Herbert, except for his Latin writings, were surpassed by the monumental three volume edition, The Life and Works of George Herbert, by George Herbert Palmer.⁵ In a series of introductory essays and a very full commentary, Mr. Palmer did much to interpret the many obscurities and allusions in Herbert's poetry. However some forty readings are inaccurately recorded in a less satisfactory treatment of the text, a result of Palmer himself not collating the

⁴ Ibid., p.xlix.

⁵ George Herbert Palmer, The Life and Works of George Herbert, 3 volumes, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1905.

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manuscripts. Palmer attributed most importance, after the introductory essays entitled "The Life", "The Man", "The Religious Poetry", "The Style", and "The Text and Order", to the fact that his was the first attempt to arrange the poems in chronological order. The validity of this claim is examined in Chapter Five. The indebtedness of every student of Herbert to Mr. Palmer for arranging the poems in a topical order, even though that topical order is not chronological to the extent he implied, must be recognized.

A second collection of the Works, entitled The Works of George Herbert, is the work of F.E. Hutchinson⁶ and was first published in 1941. Writing in the Modern Language Review, Sir Herbert Grierson referred to the work as "the final, all-inclusive edition of the writings of George Herbert, English and Latin." Besides a full commentary, the edition contains a series of introductory essays entitled "Biography", "Contemporary and later Reputation", "Manuscripts of The Temple poems", "Early Editions of A Priest to The Temple and other Writings", "Modern Editions of Herbert's Works", and "The Text of The Temple". These do much to enlarge, correct, and consolidate previous studies of the Works. Mr. Hutchinson corrects the inaccurate readings of Mr. Palmer's edition and evaluates the claim

⁶ F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1941.

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to a chronological arrangement made by the editor of that edition. Mr. Hutchinson's primary concern was to establish the text of The Temple and the occasional writings by a complete collation of all extant manuscripts and of the early printed editions.

With the current interest in the metaphysical school, it is natural that various critical studies of Herbert as a member of that school should have been produced. The most notable ones are the work of Joan Bennet⁷, J.B. Leishman⁸, Helen C. White⁹, and H.J.C. Grierson¹⁰.

While these writers differ on such questions as the relative merit of the members of the school, the similarities and contrasts between members, the extent of their literary dependence upon the leader, their influence upon modern poetry, etc., they follow a standard pattern of approach. The distinguishing marks of the writers - their use of language, technical originality, imagery, analytical bent, are discussed and illustrated by references to the poetry. As a member of the group, George Herbert is treated accord-

⁷ Joan Bennet, Four Metaphysical Poets, Cambridge, University Press, 1934.

⁸ J.B. Leishman, The Metaphysical Poets, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934.

⁹ Helen C. White, The Metaphysical Poets, A Study in Religious Experience, New York, MacMillan Company, 1936.

¹⁰ H.J.C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921.

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ingly and the marks distinguishing his work from that by other members of the school are highlighted.

Although studies of Herbert's works are usually concerned primarily with his poetry, his poetry is but one of the means whereby Herbert exerted his influence on his Church and his World. Herbert's influence was also due to his rules of living for parochial and other clergy set down in The Country Parson, and his reputation for sanctity during his years as a priest. Studies of Herbert's poetry make but passing references to his prose treatise. While various scholars¹¹ have recognized, at least to some degree, the necessity of taking into consideration Herbert's prose in order that a better understanding of the poetry may be arrived at, the idea has not been developed adequately.

Several purposes will be fulfilled by this contribution to the area and any claim to originality will be based on the fulfillment of these purposes.

Of prime importance in this study is the aim to explore the relationship between The Country Parson and The Temple to determine the extent to which they supplement each other by revealing contrasting and similar sides of George Herbert. The significance of this exploration has been suggested in a remark by Mr. Leishman. That critic

¹¹ Such as the following authors referred to previously: F.E. Hutchinson, H.C. White, J.Bennet, J.B. Leishman, H.J.C. Grierson.

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distinguishes between poetry which: "starts from a basis of very general and widely shared experience" and poetry which: "starts from an experience that may be very personal and peculiar".¹² If the poetry is of the second type, insight into the poet gained from any supplementary material may be of value. The prose of Herbert may be considered as such supplementary material and may be valuable for this purpose. This thesis will attempt to explore, isolate, and highlight the contrasts and similarities between the poetry and prose, thus facilitating a better understanding of both.

Mr. Leishman goes on to say¹³ that the purpose of Herbert's poetry, considered as something offered to the public, is to enable the reader to recreate in himself the experience of the poet which gave rise to the poetry. The ability of the reader to share this experience depends partly on his sensitivity and sympathy, and, to a degree, on the range and nature of the reader's experience. Anything which may increase the reader's sensitivity and sympathy and the range of his experience is valuable to the reader of Herbert's poetry. Added insight into the poet as revealed through his prose treatise will sharpen and intensify the reader's response to the poetry. "It seems foolish therefore to neglect or to reject whatever may increase sensitiveness and sympathy or supply deficiencies in experience".¹⁴

¹² J.B. Leishman, op.cit., p.109.

¹³ Ibid., p.109.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.109.

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The significance of the prose supplementing the poetry is suggested also by a distinction made by Mr. T.S. Eliot writing in the Spectator, (March 12, 1932). The writer distinguishes between religious poetry which depicts the religious fervor actually felt by the writer, and that which depicts merely those emotions which the writer wishes he could feel. The former is the better religious poetry in Mr. Eliot's estimation. The insight into the poet gained through the poetry, insofar as it is enlarged and clarified through the additional insight derived from the prose, may enable the reader to place Herbert with more certainty into the second category outlined by Mr. Eliot.

In the light of the aim to outline the extent to which The Country Parson supplements The Temple and thereby throw added light on George Herbert the religious poet, the material leading up to Chapter Six, "Contrasts and Similarities between The Country Parson and The Temple", may be considered as being merely a means to that end. This material dealing with the general and literary backgrounds of the works, and summaries of the content of the prose and poetry, should be considered as a useful end in itself.

While Herbert's works are recognized as having certain excellences, he is still destined to be relegated to the lower plane of minor poets. As such, he will be known mainly for the few famous poems made popular through

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their inclusion in anthologies and devotional collections. The chapters dealing with background and summaries of Herbert's prose and poetry, will provide a comprehensive and all-inclusive survey of the major works. This material may prove useful to scholars who may hesitate to wade into the depths of the works themselves.

When preparing his edition of Herbert's Works, Mr. Palmer hoped that he might be making a beginning toward applying to Herbert those comparative and encyclopaedic methods which had already been accorded to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, **Pope**, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, and Browning. It is hoped that this work, by presenting concise summaries of background, works, and commentary, will contribute to the area first explored by Mr. Palmer.

Any claim to originality and to making a significant contribution to the field of Herbert scholarship is then based on this thesis fulfilling the aims outlined. The outline of the extent to which the prose supplements the poetry throws added light on Herbert the religious poet and thereby paves the way for a better understanding and a more just evaluation of the poetry. The comprehensive but relatively concise summaries of pertinent background and contents of the prose and poetry, in the consolidated form in which they are presented, while they are by no means an adequate substitute for a reading of the works, may be of

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value to scholars. The summary of the more significant contrasts and similarities between the prose and poetry is an enlargement of an idea which has been hitherto referred to only in passing references.

After this outline of preliminary statements and a biographical sketch, the method followed will be to divide the study into chapters dealing with background providing a useful preparation for the approach to the works themselves, and then to summarize the content of the prose and poetry by isolating the ideas under topical headings. Contrasts and similarities afforded by a comparison of the prose and poetry will then be outlined.

Since The Country Parson was written partly for the purpose of reforming conditions, particularly in rural parishes, some knowledge of the conditions, both local and national, under which it was written is useful. This background material will be summarized under two headings: "The Civil and Ecclesiastical Organization of a Seventeenth Century Country Parish", and "Developments in Church and State during Herbert's Day". The reader so prepared is better able to understand the frame of reference within which the prose was written. In addition to the examination of conditions in a seventeenth century country parish and developments in Church and State during Herbert's lifetime,

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the background of The Country Parson must include a brief review of the literary genre to which Herbert's prose belongs. A summary of the chief figures in the history of Character writing - Theophrastus, Hall, Overbury, and Earle, - is sufficient for this purpose. This general and literary background is the subject of Chapter Two.

Chapter Three contains a summary of the contents of The Country Parson. The thirty-seven chapters of the prose treatise are summarized under topical headings: "The Country Parson as a Priest and as a Man", "The Country Parson's Relations with his People" and "The Country Parson's Relations with Church Authorities and those Outside his Parish."

The subject of Chapter Four is the literary background of Herbert's poetry. Because it is as a member of the Metaphysical School that Herbert is most frequently considered, the main characteristics of that poetry are outlined. When viewed in the light of the aims the Metaphysicals hoped to achieve, the means they employed take on added significance. This material is outlined by a discussion of the literary fashions the school attempted to react against, the significance of the term "metaphysical" as applied to the writers, the use of conceits, the use of the terms and rhythms of spoken language, and the analytical frame of mind of the authors.

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Chapter Five contains summaries of Herbert's one hundred and sixty-nine poems. The topical arrangement suggested by Mr. Palmer is followed and the justification for accepting that arrangement as being to a large extent chronological is examined with reference to the works of more recent scholars. The poems are grouped under two main headings, "Cambridge Poems" and "Bemerton Poems" with a minor division, "The Crisis", containing eighteen poems, between the two major divisions. Within the two major divisions, the poems are grouped topically under ten headings : "The Church Porch", "The Resolve", "The Church", "Meditation", "The Inner Life", "The Happy Priest", "Bemerton Study", "Restlessness", "Suffering", and "Death". The topical arrangement serves to highlight the various stages in Herbert's development and to facilitate the comparison of prose with poetry.

In addition to presenting a concise but comprehensive summary of the content of Herbert's poetry, Chapter Five also contains a series of short essays prefacing each of the major divisions and inner groupings within the divisions. These introductory essays outline the reasoning underlying the divisions and groupings and supplement the material of Chapter Four dealing with the literary background of The Temple.

The purpose of Chapter Six is to outline the

contrasts and similarities between The Country Parson and The Temple and thus illustrate the extent to which the prose supplements the poetry. The most obvious points of comparison are content and style. In addition, the prose and poetry will be compared to determine their relative significance as contributions to literature. Similarities of language will also be outlined.

"Summary and Conclusions" will present a summary of the materials covered in the main body of the thesis and the conclusions which may be based upon the preceding exposition.

2 Biographical Sketch

Although George Herbert lived less than forty years, his life covers one of the transitional periods in English literature. He was born in 1593 as the first books of "The Faerie Queene" appeared; as Shakespeare was publishing "Venus and Adonis" and writing his earliest plays and poems; the year in which Marlowe's promising career was brought to an end. He died in 1633 as Milton, a young man of 25, was leaving Cambridge; two years after the birth of Dryden; and the year following the birth of Locke and Spinoza. His life began with the days of literature of high romance, and ended on the threshold of the era of common sense.

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Herbert was born the fifth son of Richard and Magdalen Herbert, one of the most socially prominent families of the time, with a tradition of soldiering which gave little evidence of the path George Herbert's life was to follow. When George was three, his father died, and Magdalen Herbert set about preparing her ten children for their careers. The family tradition was carried on by most of George's brothers. Edward, his eldest brother, fought in the Low Countries, served as ambassador to France, and became Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Three other soldier brothers met early deaths and Henry, the brother to whom George was most attached through his life, became Master of the Revels, and was knighted. Only the brother next above George had a career that resembled his, for he died a Fellow of New College at twenty-five, a gifted scholar.

If for no other reason than his weak health, George was forbidden the soldiering career of his brothers, and his pious mother marked him out for divinity. Until he was twelve, he was kept: "under the eye and care of his prudent mother, and the tuition of a Chaplain or Tutor to him, and two of his brothers."¹⁵ He entered Westminster

¹⁵ Izaak Walton, The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert., George Saintsbury, ed. London, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.262 .

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School in 1605¹⁶ at the age of twelve, and remained there for three years: "till he came to be perfect in the learned Languages, and especially in the Greek Tongue, in which he after proved an excellent Critick."¹⁷ In 1608 Herbert was awarded a scholarship to Trinity College and four years later took his B.A. In 1614 he was appointed Minor Fellow, and in 1616 took his M.A. and was appointed Major Fellow. In October 1617, he was appointed Sublector Quartae Classic¹⁸ at Trinity, a position which involved a small amount of teaching. Several letters written during this period indicate his intention of entering the ministry and his scholar's love for books. To Sir John Danvers he wrote:

"I will open my case unto you, which I think deserves the reading at least; and it is this, I want books extremely; you know Sir, how I am now setting foot into Divinity, to lay the platform of my future life, and shall I then be fain alwayes to borrow Books, and build on another's foundation?"¹⁹

In another letter to Sir John the following year, he refers to "a parcel of Books"²⁰ his brother Henry was sending him, and asks that his allowance be increased in order that he may be able to buy the books he needs:

¹⁶ F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, All dates are taken from this work. With a few exceptions, Rev. Hutchinson relies on Walton.

¹⁷ Walton, op.cit., p.263.

¹⁸ Mr. Hutchinson describes this position only by stating that it involved a small amount of teaching.

¹⁹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.364.

²⁰ Ibid., p.366.

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"... if any course could be taken of doubling my Annuity now, upon condition that I should surcease from all title to it, and both pay for the surplusage of these Books, and for ever after cease my clamorous and greedy bookish requests."²¹

While he still professed to have a vocation to the ministry, Herbert's Cambridge years saw the development of traits which were not in line with a priestly calling. Walton relates how Dr. Nevil thought of Herbert:

"... exprest any Error, it was, that he kept himself too much retir'd, and at too great a distance with all his inferiours: and his cloaths seem'd to prove that he put too great value on his parts and Parentage."²²

The description is a far cry from the Herbert of Bemerton. The first definite sign of Herbert's attraction for the court life was shown when Herbert, fulfilling the duties of Reader in Rhetoric to which post he was appointed in 1618, neglected Cicero and Quintilian, and other prescribed authors in favour of a Latin oration by King James I. A schoolfellow commented severely on his choice of a subject. (Herbert)

"... Pass'd by those fluent Orators, that Domineered in the Pulpits of Athens and Rome, and insisted to Read upon an Oration of King James, which he Analysed, shew'd the concinnity of the Parts, the propriety of the Phrase, the height and Power of it to move Affections, the Style utterly unknown to the Ancients, who could not conceive what Kingly Eloquence was, in Respect of which those noted Demagogi were but Hirelings, and Triobulary Rhetoricians."²³

²¹ Ibid., p.367.

²² Izaak Walton, op.cit., p.210.

²³ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.xxvii.

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Herbert's hopes for court favor were raised when the office of Public Orator, which entailed welcoming the king and other distinguished visitors to the university, was about to be vacated. The office was the best means whereby a Cambridge scholar could advance himself at court, the previous Orator having become a Secretary of State and the present one, Sir Francis Nethersole, whose deputy Herbert was, was about to assume duties as secretary to the Queen of Bohemia. Herbert eagerly sought the help of influential friends to obtain the position. In a letter to John Danvers he describes the position he is seeking:

"The Orator's place ... is the finest place in the University ... for the Orator writes all the University Letters, makes all the Orations, be it to King, Prince, or whatever comes to the University; to requite these pains, he takes place next the Doctors, is at all their Assemblies and meetings, and sits above the Proctors, is Regent or Non-Regent at his pleasure, and such like Gaynesses, which will please a young man well."²⁴

Herbert goes on to say: "I hope I shall get this place without all your London helps, of which I am very proud."²⁵

When the vacating Orator expressed fear that the position might divert him from his vocation to the ministry, Herbert insisted that the position was compatible with the divinity that was still his aim. In another letter to

²⁴ Ibid., p.369.

²⁵ Ibid., p.370.

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Sir John Danvers, Herbert expresses this view:

"I Understand by Sir Francis Nethersols letter, that he fears I have not fully resolved of the matter, since this place being civil may divert me too much from Divinity, at which, not without cause, he thinks I aim; but I have wrote him back, that this dignity, hath no such earthiness in it, but it may well be joined with Heaven..."²⁶

Herbert does not hint that he wanted a secular career and the fact that he was appointed Orator in 1619 did not necessarily imply that his priestly vocation had been cast aside.²⁷

During his period as Orator, Herbert gained much favor with the king, and did much to enhance his possibilities for State employment. When King James presented the University with a copy of his book "Opera Latina", Herbert thanked him with a letter which so pleased the king that he referred to Herbert as "the jewel of that University."²⁸ When the king visited Cambridge in 1623 he met the young Orator, and was so impressed with him, that he afterwards invited him more than once to his lodgings at Newmarket. Walton relates that at this time Herbert had learned Italian, Spanish, and French: "... hoping, that as his Predessors

²⁶ Ibid., p. 370.

²⁷ That the position of Orator need not necessarily lead to a secular employment was illustrated also by Herbert's successor Dr. Robert Creighton, "a sober divine" who had no political ambitions and "ended his exemplary life as bishop of Bath and Wells." Ibid., p. xxxviii.

²⁸ Izaak Walton op.cit., p. 271.

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so he might in time attain the place of a Secretary of State²⁹

Herbert's attraction for the court life is also related by Walton:

"... the love of a court-conversation mixt with a laudible ambition to be something more than he then was, drew him often from Cambridge to attend the King wheresoever the Court was..."³⁰

"he enjoyed his gentile humor for cloaths, and Court-like company, and seldom look'd towards Cambridge, unless the King were there, but then he never fail'd; and, at other times, left the manage of his Orators place, to his learned friend Mr. Herbert Thorndike..."³¹

Walton tells how Herbert's court hopes were suddenly quelled by the death, in quick succession, of his influential friends, the Duke of Richmond, the Marquess of Hamilton, and King James. An oration at Charles' return from Spain advocating peace when the prince was bent on war did not curry his favor with the new king.³² It is not likely that a man of Herbert's ability was entirely dependent, for any secular success he might attain, on the influence of friends, but it is probable that the death of his court friends and his unfavorable relations with the new king did cause him to reconsider his plans. In June of 1624 Herbert obtained a six months leave of absence from Cambridge, and it is doubtful if he was at Cambridge much after this

²⁹ Ibid., p.274.

³⁰ Ibid., p.274.

³¹ Ibid., p.275.

³² F.E. Hutchinson, George Herbert: A Tercentenary, Nineteenth Century and After, March, 1933. pp.358-368.

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date. His last appearance as Orator was in July 1626 and when his mother, at whose request he had retained the Oratorship as long as he had, died in June 1627, he resigned a few months later. By this time Herbert had abandoned any thoughts of a secular career.

After the king's death in March 1625 Herbert retired to a house of a friend in Kent³³ and, on his return to London, announced his intention of taking orders. He was ordained deacon shortly afterwards, thereby eliminating all possibilities for State employment. As a deacon, he did not have to take up an active ministerial life, and could have regarded the prebend of Leighton which was given him, as a sinecure. Herbert took up his duties seriously and, with the help of Ferrar, undertook the restoration of the parish church which had lain in ruins for twenty years.³⁴

³³ In the latter months of that year Donne was sheltering from the plague in Sir John Danver's house at Chelsea and in a letter dated 21 December 1625, he writes: "Mr. George Herbert is here". We may assume that Donne as well as Lady Danvers (Herbert's mother), influenced his decision. F.E. Hutchinson *op.cit.*, p.xxxl.

³⁴ In a letter to his brother Henry, Herbert speaks of his being: "more beggarly now than I have been these many years, as having spent two hundred pounds in building." *Ibid.*, p.376. In his will Herbert bequeathed fifteen pounds to Leighton Church. *Ibid.*, p.382. Ferrar also refers to this building in his Preface to The Temple, *Ibid.*, p.4.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 21

There is little record of Herbert's actions between his entering holy orders and going to Bemerton. In 1626 he was "seized with a sharp Quotidian Ague"³⁵ and retired to his brother Henry's house for a year, where he cured himself "by such a constant Dyet."³⁶ Then he went to live with his step-father's elder brother Henry Danvers, at Dauntsey in Wiltshire, where he met Jane Danvers and married her, according to Walton, three days after the first meeting. After the marriage he lived for a year or more at Dauntsey³⁷ and, when the parish of Bemerton became vacant and was offered to him, it took the persuasion of King Charles, The Earl of Pembroke, and Bishop Laud to have him accept it. Herbert was instituted at Salisbury and installed at Bemerton on the same day, April 26, 1630, soon after his thirty-seventh birthday, and was ordained priest the following September. Herbert's devotion to his calling and his contentment at Bemerton are evident in Walton's account of his Bemerton years and in Herbert's own account of his life as a parson in The Country Parson. The Bemerton

³⁵ Izaak Walton, op.cit., p.284.

³⁶ Ibid., p.284.

³⁷ Aubrey reports: "When he was first married he lived a yeare or better at Dantesey house" John Aubrey, Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporairies set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 and 1696., Andrew Clark Ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1898: p.310.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 22

letters contrast with the earlier ones.³⁸ The letter to his brother concerning the provisions to be made for his orphaned nieces,³⁹ the three letters to Ferrar,⁴⁰ and the letter to Anne, Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery⁴¹ then at court, in which he offers his "Priests blessing, though it be none of the Court-stile"; all depict a humility and charity lacking in the Cambridge letters. Herbert lived at Bemerton for the remainder of his life. He died on Friday, March 1, 1633. "He was buryed (according to his owne desire) with the singing service for the buriall of dead, by the singing men of Sarum."⁴²

³⁸ Appendix A.

³⁹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.375.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.378.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.376.

⁴² John Aubrey, op.cit., p.309.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BACKGROUND OF THE COUNTRY PARSON

1 Significance of Background

The Country Parson was written during the last three years of Herbert's life. Izaak Walton relates how Herbert, when he was inducted at Bemerton, formulated rules for his conduct as a parson, and these rules he set down in his prose treatise.

"And that Mr. Herbert might better preserve those holy Rules which such a Priest as he intended to be, ought to observe; and that time might not insensibly blot them out of his memory, but that the next year might show him his variations from this years resolutions; he therefore did set down his Rules, then resolv'd upon, in that order, as the World now sees them printed in a little Book, call'd The Country Parson."¹

While Walton mentions only one reason for writing in this instance, it is evident, from other references in his biography, from evidence within The Country Parson, and from religious conditions of which George Herbert was well aware, that Herbert's reasons for writing were twofold.

The Country Parson is first of all a study of Herbert's own conditions experienced as a parson. After a life spent among the aristocratic in court and university circles, Herbert, upon assuming the life of a humble country parson, made a study of the conditions under which he was to work, drew up rules for the regulation of his

¹ Izaak Walton, The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert., George Saintsbury ed., London, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.294.

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future conduct, and added to these rules as fresh aspects of the life of a country parson presented themselves. While Walton refers to The Country Parson as having been written at the beginning of Herbert's years as a parson, it is likely that the book was added to from time to time during Herbert's Bemerton years, as fresh aspects of life in a country parish and the country parson's duties became evident to the author. The need for doing so is apparent if Herbert's life up to the time of writing is considered.

A second reason for writing is suggested by the fact that Herbert intended publication. In "The Author to the Reader", which prefaces the prose tract, Herbert states:

"The Lord prosper the intentions to my selfe, and others, who may not despise my poor labours, but add to those points, which I have observed, untill the Book grow to a compleat Pastorall".²

In his dictionary, Dr. Johnson defines "pastorall" as a book relating to the cure of souls. When examined with this intent of the author in mind, The Country Parson takes on added meaning and Herbert's second reason for writing is apparent. Herbert sought to remedy the religious conditions of which he was aware, particularly conditions in rural parishes which were in need of reform. The rules of his prose were one of the means whereby he could help

² F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1953, p.224.

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to bring about reform.

Particularly with the second purpose of The Country Parson in mind, the writing should be examined with some knowledge of the religious conditions which Herbert sought to reform. The content of the prose may be better understood in the light of the particular conditions current in a seventeenth century country parish and the more general developments in Church and State in Herbert's day. Implicit within the prose are references to particular local conditions as well as to developments on the national scene. The minute attention paid to the method of conducting church services and maintaining discipline within the congregation suggests the former. The position taken on certain theological questions suggests the more general religious developments.

In addition to the background information required for the proper evaluation of the contents of The Country Parson, some knowledge of the literary history of the form is also required. The particular conditions of life in a seventeenth century country parish, general developments in Church and State, and the literary genre to which The Country Parson belongs, will be discussed under separate headings.

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2 The Civil and Ecclesiastical Organization of a
Seventeenth Century Country Parish

When George Herbert was inducted at Bemerton, Richard Baxter was a boy of fifteen. Baxter relates how the old parson of his parish never preached, and the services of a thresher and a tailor who read the services on his behalf were replaced by those of the parson's kinsman, a stage-player turned parson. Baxter writes:

"After him, another neighbor's son took orders who had been a while an attorney's clerk and a common drunkard, and tippled himself into so great poverty that he had no other way to live".³

Baxter states that people in general were sunk in ignorance and irreligion and, of the twenty families in his parish, only some two or three lived seriously the Christian faith.

As a country parson, Herbert was subject to the parish organization which was one of the results of the Reformation. While the parish of medieval England was the domain of the Church, the legislation of Henry VIII made the Church subject to the control of the State. The powers of the Vicar or Rector were confined to ecclesiastical matters, and the civil affairs of the parish were the responsibility of the Church Wardens and other minor parish officials. The destruction of the religious houses during

³ J.M. Lloyd Thomas, ed., The Autobiography of Richard Baxter, London, J.M. Dent, 1925, p.3.

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the Reformation left the Church unable to carry on its care of the poor and, when the Elizabethan parliament was faced with the problem of poverty, it found it necessary to recognize the parish as a unit of local government, and to make it responsible for the care of the poor.

The seventeenth century country parish was replete with officials. Chief of these were the Church Wardens who were concerned with both ecclesiastical and civil affairs. The Constables looked to the execution of laws and the apprehending of offenders, the parish Surveyor cared for the highways, and the Overseer administered poor relief. All these officials were elected yearly, were obliged to serve without compensation, and were under the direct supervision of the Justice of the Peace for the county who was commissioned by the Queen. Other parish duties were performed by paid parishioners; the Well-master looked after the water supply; the Hogringer ensured that all hogs on the common pasture were ringed; the Clerk rang the church bell for services, set in order the Bible and Prayer-Book for the parson, and made necessary provisions for Christenings and Holy Communions; the Sexton cleaned the church, lit the fires, opened pews, dug graves, and was in charge of the general upkeep of the church building;

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the Beadle⁴ helped the Constable catch and punish rogues and helped to maintain order during church services.

The most important of the parish officials, and the ones with whom Herbert is most concerned in The Country Parson, were the Church Wardens. Elected by the people and responsible to the Justice of the Peace, the Wardens were the legal guardians of property belonging to their parish and church. By the Queen's Injunctions they were to provide: "a comely and honest pulpit"⁵ and a strong chest with three keys for alms and oblations; "one book of the whole bible of the largest volume in English";⁶ Erasmus' Paraphrases on the Gospel, a book to register the dates of weddings⁷, and other books for use in church services. The Bishops issued monitions from time to time reminding the Wardens of their duties. They were expected to supervise the conduct of the parishioners and sometimes even the parson was reprimanded by them.⁸ Twice a year the Archdeacon held court in some

⁴ E. Trotter, Seventeenth Century Life in The Country Parish (with special reference to local government), Cambridge University Press, 1919, p.7 "Vestry Book, Pitlington, Vol. lxxxiv, p.104, Maie 3, 1646: John Laying was appointed to be bedle for driving doggs out of the church in time of public worship, and other necessary duties."

⁵ Ibid., p.21.

⁶ Ibid., p.21.

⁷ Ibid., p.21.

⁸ "T. Smith in The Parish, p.94, quotes from the articles of Montagu, Bishop of Norwich in 1638, questions issued to the churchwardens regarding the deportment, behaviour, and dress of their minister or curate". Ibid., p.31.

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central church at which the Wardens presented all offenders against the Canons, the Queen's Injunctions, the Bishops Monitions, the Statutes against recusants, or any other cases under the Church's jurisdiction. Typical offenders were those who absented themselves from church without sufficient reason, talked or misbehaved during divine service, or refused to pay the church rate. If the Wardens were found guilty of failing to present such offenders or of neglecting to look to the proper upkeep of the church,⁹ they were liable to be excommunicated or suspended. Among the civil duties of the Wardens were the collection and payment of the moneys of the parish and church. The main expenses were the upkeep of the church, wages of the parish clerk and sexton, fees for visitation, and the provision of such articles as robes for the clergy, a surplice for the parish clerk, and a dress for the beadle.¹⁰ Other expenses borne by the parish went to help maintain the country jail, the King's household,¹¹ and the casualties

⁹ Injunctions of Bishop Barnes, p.116. In 1578-9, 8 March Stockton. The Office of the Judge against Ralph Wright, Churchwardens. They lack the Communion Book, Excommunicated Absolved." Ibid., p.22.

¹⁰ "Westrly Book of the Parish of St. Nicholas Durham, 1676, Vol. lxxxiv, p.240. 'To Thomas Benyon for the beadle's coate making 3 s.6d. For trimming to it 1 s. 6d.'" Ibid., p.24.

¹¹ "Quarter Session Record, Vol. II, p.250, "Will Archer Constable of Norton Conyers for not executing a precept from the High Constables for money due for the provision of the King's maties, Household, etc." Ibid., p.10.

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of war.¹² The Wardens were obliged to render yearly accounts of the parish income which was derived mainly from the rents of houses and lands bequeathed to the Church, fees for lairstalls,¹³ pew rents, and the church rate to which every man paid in proportion to the amount of land he held or worked. Other income was derived from fines imposed on those who did not attend church on Sunday¹⁴ - chiefly Roman Catholics, or who were guilty of such offenses as failing to have a child baptized within a month of birth.¹⁵

With the civil and ecclesiastical duties of the Wardens and other parish officials under the parish organization which grew out of the Reformation, the country parson in the seventeenth century played a smaller part in the life of his parish. The parson's civil duties included

¹²"Various statutes were passed to provide for soldiers and sailors in the reign of Elizabeth. A final one in 1601 designed "to provide reliefe and maintenance to souldiers and mariners that have lost their limbes, and disabled their bodies in the defense and service of her Majesty and the State." Ibid., p.12.

¹³Lairstalls were portions of the Church floor sold as burying spots for the dead.

¹⁴"Quarter Sessions Records, Vol.6, p.79, Helmsley, July, 1664,"John Dickeson of Burniston-neglecting to go to the parish Church or any place of Common Prayer upon Sundays and festivals bet. 1st May and 1st June". Ibid., p.30.

¹⁵"Quarter Sessions Records Vol.III, p.246, Richmond, 1625. Will Greene of Lammouth gentn. Recusant, for not having a male child of his duly baptized within a month of its birth at his parish church of Leake, or in any other church penalty L100", Ibid., p.29.

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working with the Constables and Wardens in executing the Statutes, and at times he was called upon to conduct the local school. The church was the chief meeting place of the parish,¹⁶ and it is likely that the parson attended the affairs which took place within it. The church was the place where the Constables rendered their accounts to the Justice of the Peace, the overseers received and lent the parish stock, and the fathers of bastard children paid for their maintenance.¹⁷ Other civil duties were often taken on by parsons who were unable to provide for their families on the pittance which had been set for the celibate of the middle ages.¹⁸ Such duties led to disrespect for the priesthood and those parish officials who resorted to extortion,¹⁹ or were guilty of drunkenness

¹⁶ "Quarter Sessions Records, Vol.I, p.266 Northallerton, July, 1612. "That Tho. Jackson one of the High Constables of Hang Est, shall repair to the Church of Pattrick Brompton on Monday next, to render account to Sir Comers Darcy and Sir Arthur Dakins of all moneys received by him for bridges or other matters." Ibid., p.43.

¹⁷ Quarter Sessions Records, Vol. III p.238. Richmond, July 1625. "The father of a bastard child to pay the mother thereof 4d. a week until the child be 7 years old, the payment to be made week by week in Catherick Church on Sondaie, before noone." Ibid., p.46.

¹⁸ Quarter Sessions Records, Vol. II, p.16. Thirsk, Ap.1613 "Rob Tose of Skelton, Curate there, for keeping an alehouse there contrarie, etc." Ibid., p.42.

¹⁹ Quarter Sessions Records, Vol. VI, p.140. New Malton, Jan. 1670. "A Lestingham Clerk for extortion of 23s 6d. for proving a man's will." Ibid., p.42 .

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and assault,²⁰ did little to raise the esteem with which the officials were held. The attitude of the laity toward the parson and church services is indicated by incidents recorded. There were cases of fights within the church,²¹ the parson locking out his congregation, the priest being attacked²² and otherwise interrupted during services, and even being locked out²³ of his church by his parishioners.

In The Country Parson, Herbert, by his discussion of the necessity for the parson to overcome the apathy and irreverence of the people and the contempt with which he is held, indicates the state of religion on the local scene. Of the vast movements afoot on the national scene, Herbert gives little evidence. A study of the conditions under which The Country Parson was written should include some examination of national as well as local organization.

²⁰ Quarter Sessions Records, Vol. VI, p.77. Thirsk, Ap.1664, Qtho. Parker of Thormanley Clerk for neglecting to hang three gates, the same for uttering approbrious words; the same for assault; and again for being a common drunkard." Ibid., p.42.

²¹ Quarter Sessions Records, Vol.V. p.116. Thirsk, Oct. 1652. "A Draper of Easingwald for assault and affray upon a woman in the parish church upon the Lord's Day." Ibid., p.43.

²² Quarter Sessions Records, Vol.VI, p.248. Rich. Jan. 1676 "Two Northallerton Labr. for assault on the rector of Birkley in the Parish Church in the time of divine service." Ibid., p.43.

²³ Quarter Sessions Records, Vol. V, p.236. "North Allerton, Ap.1657. A Cansby man for locking the church door and keeping out the minister and people." Ibid., p.43.

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3 Developments in Church and State During Herbert's Day

Herbert's life of forty years included nearly a quarter of the reign of Elizabeth, the whole of that of James, and a third of that of Charles. Compared to the latter days of Henry VIII, the reign of religious persecution which characterized the last three years of the era of Mary Tudor, and the tumult and revolution which was to take place after his death, the time during which Herbert's message was delivered was one of comparative peace. During his lifetime there was no Armada to rouse the people to a pitch of patriotic frenzy, the Gunpowder Plot failed miserably, and no great explosion shook the social framework of his country. But if there was tranquility without, there were forces smouldering beneath the surface. The problem of the legal powers and limitations of the Crown, and the question of the form English Christianity was to take, was not yet solved.

On the religious scene, the reign of James was marked by the rise of the Puritans. The movement was one which had begun during the days of Elizabeth when the Established Church was without the theology of Hooker, Andrewes and Laud to enforce it, and the text-books of the middle ages - Thomas, Lombard, and Scotus - had been destroyed. The lack of theology, added to the scarcity of training facilities for the clergy, caused a vagueness

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which naturally caused men to turn to the one Protestant system which contained a logical system of theology, and the Institutes of Calvinism became the acknowledged textbooks of the English University.

Calvinism, with its doctrines of the utter corruption of human nature, predestination, and the congregation of the elect, had grown steadily in Elizabeth's reign. As the older clergy ordained in the time of Henry VIII died out, it was replaced by men who had lost the tradition of the Catholic Church, were ignorant of her theology, and did not understand the principles of her worship. The customs which the formulators of the Prayer Book had taken for granted soon dropped out of sight. Universities and benefices in large towns were filled with men who looked to Calvinism, and the laity, taught by them, and embittered by the struggle with Spain, was opposed to all contact with Rome. Deterioration in public worship quickly set in as the ties with Roman Catholicism were broken - as the Calvinists saw superstition in every rite and ceremony. Divisions among the Puritans arose as some, the Conformists, were content to remain within the Church of England, while the Non-Conformists refused to comply with the basic regulations of the Church. Ascendancy, not toleration was the purpose of the opposing sides.

Herbert's religion was of the "via media" between

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the "superstition" of Roman Catholicism and the "slovenliness" of puritanism, and it was during Elizabeth's reign that the Catholic problem rose anew. The action of Pius V in excommunicating the Queen in 1570, and the Armada of 1588, increased the national hatred of Catholicism, and the Queen embarked on a campaign of persecution which surpassed that of her predecessor. From 1570 to 1606 a series of penal statutes took away from Catholics not only their religious liberty, but even their ordinary rights as citizens. Although in the Catholics, Elizabeth faced a common enemy with the Puritans, she refused to join forces in the fight, and the separate battle between the Established Church and the Non-Conformists added to the religious turmoil of the times. Although in 1593, the year of Herbert's birth, the most vociferous of the Puritans, the Non-Conformists, were quelled by an act of banishment, for all those who refused to attend church or who attended unauthorized religious meetings, James I came to the throne in 1603 with two incompatible systems of religion striving for supremacy.

The religious beliefs of the Puritans can be summed up under two points. First, their insistence on the complete self-sufficiency of the Bible. Religious authority, either for the administration or for the interpretation of the Bible, was considered unnecessary. Secondly, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination: this

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doctrine originated with Calvin and spread from Geneva to countries affected by Puritanism.

The religion appealed to a minority of the people for several reasons. It appealed first of all because of its apparent self-sufficiency. Calvinism went further than any of the other reform doctrines in claiming the right of the individual to rely entirely on his own judgement. The doctrine appealed secondly because of its apparent logic. Calvin began with the conviction of the omnipotence of God's will. This will, he stated, is the final reason for everything and is absolutely irresistible. Since God's will is unchangeable, His decrees of destiny have been made from all eternity, and consequently individuals are damned or saved by divine decree previous to and independent of any action on their part. Calvin concluded that very few are saved and he developed the doctrine of conversion, that is, the firm belief that one belongs to the group that God had already decided to save. To accept the Puritan doctrine usually meant conversion in the sense of a firm conviction that one belonged to the small group of the elect on earth. The Puritans thought of themselves as a small band of innocent souls living in a world of sinners who were already damned.

Puritanism appealed also because of the enthusiasm and conviction which characterized the Puritans. The

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Puritans derived a powerful religious enthusiasm from their belief in their own righteousness and a feeling of solidarity, a feeling of being banded together in the name of God against the whole world. However small their numbers, the Puritans were a force to be reckoned with, particularly because of the sacrifices they were willing to make for their belief, and because of their strict code of conduct that commanded respect even though it aroused little admiration or love.

The Puritans continued to press their demands on James for the abolition of traces of Romanism in the Established Church. The changes they wanted went beyond dresses and ceremonies - they sought the abolition of the Church of England as it then existed, and the powers of the bishops limited by obliging them to consult the presbyters. James saw in their demands a move to limit his powers in the Church and reacted accordingly with a refusal to make concessions to the Puritans.

The Church of England set about defending its position against the Puritans and Catholics - a "via media" between the dogmas of Rome and the dogmatism of Puritanism. The Anglican Church had no oracle for the solution of all doubts and, by keeping herself bound to Scriptures in all her public documents, her Prayer-Book, Articles, and Canons, and by utilizing the power of the Crown, the Church of

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England sought to maintain its position. But if the religion of the Prayer-Book was to remain supreme, it needed justification by reason as well as by law. The men who fulfilled this function - Hooker, Andrewes, and Laud, give some insight into Herbert's Church as it existed during his lifetime. These men are particularly significant for they personify three distinct aspects of the Established Church of which Herbert was a member. Hooker signifies the reasonableness on which the Church of England sought to defend itself; Andrewes is the symbol of the Roman tendencies maintained within the Church; Laud, with his close ties with the Crown, illustrates the connection of Church and State.

Richard Hooker defended the episcopal form of Church government, the chief point of contention between Puritans and Anglicans, on the basis of reason. The first four books of his Ecclesiastical Polity were published in 1594, one year after Herbert's birth, and in it he advances the idea that Church government is a matter within the power of the Church to alter.

In his Ecclesiastical Polity, Hooker developed two main points. It contained first of all an argument against the excesses and fanaticisms of the Puritans and secondly, it was an attempt to defend the Church of England on the basis of human reason and logic rather than on faith and revelation.

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Hooker's argument against the excesses of the Puritans was one of many which finally succeeded in stripping Puritanism of some of its excesses. He was thereby taking a step towards the mentality of the eighteenth century which was primarily a mentality of moderation.

The second purpose of his book, to defend his religion on the basis of reason, was more novel. Previous apologists had attempted to show that their beliefs came from divine revelation. Hooker began a practice which was to become increasingly common, the practice of relying on only the human reason in matters of religion. Hooker made a concession to the Puritans when he stated that, although episcopacy has actually descended from the Apostles, it must not be considered indispensable: but he follows this up with an attack on the very foundations of Puritanism. He stated that man's faith and conduct must not be made subject to such a narrow rule as the authority of Scripture interpreted by a few dominant theologians. Hooker scorned reliance on Scripture alone, and held that the revelation of Scripture should be enforced by the reason of man. Revelation is the complement of, not the substitute for, natural law. The reason of man exercises its highest function when explaining the laws of God to man. Thus, for Hooker, the reason of man, tested by experience, and applied to

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life, is the true basis of authority, because it approaches most nearly the reason of God. Hooker defended the episcopal government of his Church on reasonable ground, and satisfied the minds of many thoughtful men.

Hooker figured prominently in a dispute between different factions within the Church of England during Herbert's day. Bancroft, Laud, and other ecclesiastical leaders held that Christ had a single system of religious organization in mind and this He entrusted to His Apostles. The Roman Catholics rightly claimed that theirs was the system intended by Christ, and the High Churchmen argued with them, not as to the truth of the doctrine held, but on a matter of historic fact, claiming that theirs was the Church intended by Christ. Hooker was the chief apologist of the Broad Churchmen who held that the organization of the Church of England was desirable because of its reasonableness, and maintained that Christ did not have but one religious organization in mind, but rather announced the principles which underlie every Church. The Broad Churchmen claimed that the religious organization which bears within itself the marks of reasonableness, order, and edification, is stamped thereby as the system intended by Christ as certainly as if Christ had expressly commended it. Although there is no indication that he held the tenet distinctive of High Churchmen - the belief that his Church had been

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designed and established by Christ, judged by his devotion to the Church of England and his insistence on elaborate ritual, Herbert was a High Churchman. But he never defends his Church on the basis of its being established by Christ. Herbert accepted the order of his Church because of his belief in its beauty and serviceability rather than because of its antiquity. Like the High Churchmen, Herbert firmly believed in ritual, but unlike them, he desired it for its beauty and serviceability, rather than as being in conformity to an ancient command.

Lancelot Andrewes holds one of the foremost places among the saintly bishops of the English Church. He was the rare combination of a courtier and bishop who was wholly devoted to the interests of religion. But it was not merely for his sanctity that he was recognized: his counsels were eagerly sought on both secular and ecclesiastical matters. He justified royal supremacy as implying only that authority which Scripture approves and emperors and kings had exercised; he asserted the moral authority of the Church of England on the grounds that only she taught what the Scripture taught; and he defended the English Church for its foundation in learning and its justification in history. While in the realm of principles he was uncompromising, with a wise toleration he enforced on others only a minimum of order and reverence in public worship. But in his own chapel he displayed the full

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ceremonial of the Church - much to the chagrin of Puritan elements within it. His altar furniture included copes, lights, incense, altar cloths, chalice veils, ---. He observed carefully days of fasting and abstinence set by the Church, and paid special attention to his duties as a confessor. Andrewes formed a strong link with the old and new in England.

"The torch of Catholic doctrine and practice had hardly died into embers under the blustering onslaught of Elizabethan Puritanism, before it burst forth again into renewed and purified life in the steady hand of Andrewes."²⁴

Although he maintained such traces of Popery, his sterling character and charming personality, added to his genuine sanctity, overcame any objections to his doctrine or ceremonial.

William Laud was a far different type. While Andrewes was essentially a student and a man of example who symbolized the Catholic element within the Established Church, Laud was a man of action who enforced the lessons Andrewes taught, and exemplifies the connection of Church and State during Herbert's lifetime. During the reign of James, the Established Church, with its precepts enforced by the power

²⁴ Henry Offley Wakeman, An Introduction to the History of England, London, Rivingtons, 1923, p.354.

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of the Crown²⁵ and the too willing acquiescence of bishops to the royal decree, became identified with royal supremacy, and Puritanism with the cause of constitutional government. Laud, as the Church leader who acted, with the power of the Crown behind him, to stamp out traces of Puritanism in the Church, stood out as one of the chief supporters of royal prerogative and a vigorous opponent of Puritanism. By his defense of the English Church by virtue of its double character as Catholic and anti-papal - its double appeal to Scripture and history, Laud was the successor of Hooker and Andrewes.

To the people of his day, Laud²⁶ was identified with the enforcement of unpopular Church discipline and the maintenance of unpopular royal prerogative. His accomplishments as a theologian and man of culture who rebuilt his

²⁵ In his character "The Church Papist" John Earle depicts the type who submitted to the Established Church merely to keep within the law. "Is one that parts his Religion betwixt his conscience and his purse, and comes to Church not to serve God, but the King. The face of the Law makes him weare the maske of the Gospel..." Edward Arber, Ed., John Earle Micro-Cosmographie, London, Alex Murray and Son, 1896, p.31.

²⁶ Apart from his duties enforcing unpopular Church discipline and his being identified with royal prerogatives, Laud's personality did little to make him popular. In Clarendon's sketch of Laud, he stated: "he did counte persons to little, nor cared to make his designes and purposes appeare as candid as they were". The greatest of his "naturall infirmities" was "a hasty sharpe way of expressinge himselfe." Thomas Fuller states: "Amongst his humane frailties, choler and passion most discovered itself." David Nicol Smith "Characters from the Histories and Memories of the Seventeenth Century." Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936, p.98.

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college and reformed his university, founded the university press, and was the first to reward the study of the Semitic languages, were put into the background. Although no advocate of absolute government, Laud preferred that the king should control Parliament rather than Parliament the king. The full weight of his ecclesiastical authority was behind Charles I and, in return, the patronage of the Crown was added to Church discipline in combating Puritanism. Through his Church discipline Laud was concerned with many of the details referred to by Herbert in The Country Parson: the warden's obligations, kneeling at reception of Holy Communion, the discipline of the laity, the catechizing of servants and children, and frequency of communion. All these were factors the country parson sought to remedy on the local scene and Laud dealt with by his Church regulations.

During Elizabeth's reign, the Established Church had been on the defensive against the onslaughts of Puritanism, but in Laud's day the Church, strengthened by its intimate alliance with the Crown, took the offensive. This power of the Church to wage an effective war against its enemies was paid for by its being identified with the cause of the king. Every act of royal misgovernment weakened the moral appeal of Herbert's Church, and ecclesiastical discipline was regarded as royal tyranny.

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When Charles met the Long Parliament in 1640, it was a matter of victory of Puritanism over the Church, as well as a victory of constitutional liberty over royal prerogative and Laud, loyal to his Church and king till the end, met the fate of his king.

Thus the Church to which Herbert owed allegiance was characterized by its attempt to defend itself on reasonable grounds, by the element of Romanism within it, and by its intimate alliance with the Crown. In Herbert's period nothing is of greater interest than the conflict between the royal prerogative and the growing powers of parliament and, as the opposition to James and his son was as much the result of their ecclesiastical policy as their civil administration, the developments within Church and State went hand in hand. The use of royal supremacy by James and Charles created unrest and unified the various classes who were in opposition to the Crown. James had the Tudor wish for autocratic rule without the Tudor faculty for retaining the support of the people. He intervened continually, especially in conflicts between ecclesiastical and secular interests and made the Church the subject of suspicion. When both king and Church attacked Puritanism, sympathy was evoked for the attacked and the cause of Puritanism became increasingly identified with the move for constitutional government.

The Crown's policy toward recusants, based on the

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sensible acceptance of the plea that loyal Catholics should be considered otherwise than as enemies of the State, resulted in much animosity. The foreign policy of the Crown favored Catholic alliance with the reigning houses of France and Spain and friendly relations with the Papacy. James' Queen, Anne of Denmark, became a Catholic and Charles' French wife made the Court a center where conversions became fashionable. When a papal nuncio entered England in 1634, it was widely believed that the Crown and the hierarchy intended a truce with Rome. The situation became worse when Andrewes' party, which seemed to emphasize the Catholic, and reject the Protestant heritage of Anglicanism, was given royal patronage under Charles I.

James dissolved parliament in 1607 and ruled for three years without it; he dissolved it again in 1611 and when he summoned it again in 1614, during its short life of two months it presented a new body hostile to him. More than seven years elapsed before James summoned his third parliament. In spite of promises made to the parliament of 1621, James' foreign policy and national policy toward recusants showed sympathy toward the Catholic elements. When Parliament met in 1624, the headstrong dealings of the king with Spain had firmly united the religious views of the extreme Protestants with the political aspirations after constitutional government. When James died in 1625, his

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successor firmly believed in his Divine Right. Charles was interested in the moral reform of the Church as well as the political aspects of religion. Early in his career he met Parliament's opposition by appointing to positions of influence clergy who were under the censure of Parliament. Such acts as this increased the friction, and the claims against the Established Church and for constitutional government went on towards the fatal issue of the Rebellion.

Such was the civil and ecclesiastical organization of a seventeenth century country parish, and the developments within Church and State which were taking place during Herbert's life. While in The Country Parson Herbert gives some indication of the irreverence of the laity and the contempt with which the clergy was held, neither in the prose nor the poetry does he give any indication of the national developments affecting Church and State. The conditions with which Herbert had to contend were the result of the Reformation which had centered religion around the Bible, and preached the responsibility of each man to work out his salvation by an independent study of the text. If this method had its advantages, it also tended towards the lawlessness of Herbert's day - a day of irreverence in clergy and laity alike. The Reformation did much to alter the national scene as well as the religion of the individual. The conflicts between religious sects

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and the growing demand for constitutional government, although they do not seem to have influenced Herbert's work as did conditions in a country parish, should be outlined if a proper understanding of the period in which Herbert wrote is to be gained.

It is no wonder that with such conditions there was felt by many a desire for the peace of a retired and contemplative life. Nicholas Ferrar realized this ideal in his monastic community of Little Gidding. While Ferrar's ideal was monastic, Herbert's was parochial, and in his parish at Bemerton, he sought, by his exemplary life, to influence those about him, and, by the rules he followed and set down in The Country Parson, to influence those who were to follow in his footsteps.

4 The Literary Genre to Which The Country Parson Belongs

Undoubtedly the conditions in a seventeenth century country parish and the developments in Church and State had their influence on the material of The Country Parson. The title page of the 1652 edition of Herbert's prose states: "A Priest to the Temple or The Country Parson His Character and Rule of Holy Life." The word "Character" indicates the genre to which Herbert's prose belongs. There were many examples of this type of prose published in Herbert's life, and they no doubt had their influence on the form of

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Herbert's prose treatise.

That literary genre to which The Country Parson belongs is defined as "a formal enumeration, partly individualized, of the habits and peculiarities that seem to differentiate a social, ethical, or political type."²⁷ The vogue grew from the Characters of Theophrastus, a Greek who lived four centuries before Christ, whose work was translated to Latin in England in 1592, and into English before 1610. In form and style the Characters of Theophrastus are very simple. After defining the character he is to discuss, he goes on to show the manifestation of such a quality in speech and action. A ribald fellow, "when the Hall or State is fullest of company, coming to those which sell nuts and apples, and other fruits standing by them, taketh them away and muncheth them, and wrangleth about their price and such like baubles".²⁸

In 1608 Joseph Hall's "Characters of Virtues and Vices" was published, and this is considered the earliest collection of Theophrastian sketches in English. His sketches each begin with a conceit, and are marked by clever expressions. The Covetous Man "grudgeth his

²⁷ E.C. Baldwin, "The Relation of the English 'Character' to Its Greek Prototype", Publication, Modern Language Association, Vol. 18, p.412, quoted by E.N.S. Thompson, Literary Bypaths of the Renaissance, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1924 p.1.

²⁸ Ibid., p.3.

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neighbour the water of his well," and "cries out above others of the prodigality of our times."²⁹ If the "Vain Glorious Man" has "bestowed but a little summe in the glazing, paving, parieting of God's House, you shall finde it in the Church-window" and he "picks his teeth when his stomach is empty, and calls for Pheasants at a common Inne."³⁰ In like vein he discusses the "Slothful Man", the "True Friend", and "The Male-content." Although Hall's Characters reflect a confusion in the religion and government of his country which contrasts with the definite standard of right and wrong reflected in those of Theophrastus, his book is a close following of the accepted model.

In 1614 appeared Sir Thomas Overbury's "A Wife ... Whereunto are added many witty Characters, and conceited Newes, written by himselfe and other learned Gentlemen his friends".³¹ As he died in the Tower the year before, his Characters may have been written even earlier than Hall's. His Characters are full of clever phrases and terse expressions; his humor largely dependent on puns. His Characters seem to have been written for his own amusement and they lack the didactic spirit of Hall or Theophrastus. The "Affectate Traveller", "... chuseth rather to be counted

²⁹ Ibid., p.10.

³⁰ Ibid., p.10.

³¹ Ibid., p.11.

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a spie, then not a politician: and maintaines his reputation by naming great men familiarly".³² A "Wise Man" "... Is the truth of the true definition of man that is, a reasonable creature."³³ "A Pedant" is described: "Hee dares not thinke a thought, that the nominative case governs not the verbe; and he never had meaning in his life, for he travelled only for words."³⁴ A whore "Is a high-way to the Devill, he that lookes upon her with desire, begins his voyage: he that staies to talk with her, mends his pace, and he who enjoyes her, is at his journies end."³⁵

In 1628, John Earle's Micro-cosmographie appeared with fifty-four Characters; twenty three were added in 1629, and one more in 1633. His Characters frequently begin with a terse definition and conclude with an abrupt conclusion and are similar³⁶ to those of Hall and Theophrastus. "A young rawe Preacher" is "a bird not yet fledg'd, that hath hopt out of his nest to bee chirping on a hedge, and will

³² Edward F. Rimbault, ed., The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Sir Thomas Overbury, London, Reeves and Turner, 1890, p.5.

³³ Ibid., p.60.

³⁴ Ibid., p.69.

³⁵ Ibid., p.82.

³⁶ There are fine distinctions to be drawn between the works of these Character writers - some show the influence of Theophrastus greater than others while others show the French influence - but essentially they are the same during Herbert's life.

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bee stragling abroad at what perill forever",³⁷ "A Grave Divine" is "one that knowes the burden of his calling, and hath studied to make his shoulders sufficient: for which he hath not beene hasty to launch foorth of his port the Universitie, but expected the ballast of learning, and the winde of opportunitie."³⁸ "A discontented Man" is summed up: "Hee is the sparke that kindles the Commonwealth, and the bellowes himself to blow it; and if he turne anything, it is commonly one of these, either Friar, traitor, or mad-man."³⁹ "A self-conceited Man" is "In summe ... a bladder blown up with wind, which the least flaw crushes to nothing."⁴⁰ Mr. Thompson states: "Earle's Micro-cosmographie contains the best English Characters of the strictly Theophrastian type."⁴¹

Thus, Herbert's life saw developments in the history of English prose as well as movements in Church and State, and he was undoubtedly influenced by the work of Hall and Overbury as he was by the reason of Hooker and the exemplary life of Andrewes. The Country Parson can be looked upon as a stage in the development of this literary genre.

³⁷ Edward Arber ed., John Earle, Micro-Cosmographie, London, Alex Murray and Son, 1896, p.22.

³⁸ Ibid., p.23.

³⁹ Ibid., p.27.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.33.

⁴¹ E.N.S. Thompson op.cit., p.16.

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Mr. Wendell states:

"The Course of Character-Writing in England during the first half of the seventeenth century may be broadly indicated by the names of Hall, Overbury, Earle, George Herbert, and Fuller."⁴²

Mr. Thompson refers to The Country Parson as "simply a character in extenso."⁴³

Even a brief review of contemporary Characters indicates the similarity between Herbert's prose and that which was in vogue during his lifetime. The didactic intent so conspicuous in Theophrastus and Hall is evident in Herbert's prose. Like other Characters written during the period, Herbert's prose begins with a definition of the character he is to sketch, and then a development of the habits which follow from that definition. But if these similarities are evident, there is also one major difference. Herbert's Character of The Country Parson was a projection of his own habits as a pastor. Rather than a brief summary of the dominant characteristics of a type, Herbert's prose is a detailed study of major and incidental aspects of a country parson's life. It is a much more personal and intimate revelation of a type than are Earle's sketches of "A Cooke", "A Constable", or "A Surgeon", or Overbury's sketches of "An Elder Brother", "A Pedant", "An Ostler",

⁴² Barrett Wendell, The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1904, p.166.

⁴³ E.N.S. Thompson, op.cit., p.27.

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"A Good Wife" or "A Whore".

Mr. Thompson states:

"Characters must stand in a series to produce their proper effect, and a fixed intent on the authors part to do one thing and nothing more - that is, to characterize a type or class - seems essential".⁴⁴

The effect which the reader of The Country Parson receives is different than that which follows the reading of the other Characters of the time. It is written in a much more serious vein and there is not the constant attempt on the part of the writer to give forth with as much wisdom as possible in the fewest words. Overbury defines a Character as "an imprese, or short embleme; in little comprehending much."⁴⁵ Herbert's Character does not fit this definition; practically all of his thirty-seven chapters are longer than any one of the Characters written during his lifetime. But The Country Parson contains the essence of the Character as defined by Mr. Baldwin, and is a list of the "habits and peculiarities that serve to differentiate a social, ethical or political type."⁴⁶ The literary type Herbert chose for the biography of his life as a parson was the result largely of influences working in Herbert's day, and in writing his Character of a country parson, Herbert helped to develop⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.1.

⁴⁷ Barrett Wendell, op.cit., p.166.

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this genre in English literature.

The organization of a seventeenth century country parish, the developments in Church and State during Herbert's day, and the development of the literary genre to which The Country Parson belongs up to the time Herbert wrote his prose treatise, should be understood before going on to an examination of the contents of The Country Parson.

5 Summary

Written during the last three years of Herbert's life, The Country Parson was written for two purposes. As a study of the writer's own conditions, it gave him a mark to aim at; as a work intended for publication, it was one means of bringing about reform of conditions in rural parishes.

With these purposes of the prose tract in mind, some knowledge of the religious conditions which Herbert sought to reform should be gained before evaluating the work. An outline of the civil and ecclesiastical organization of a seventeenth century country parish and illustrations drawn from contemporary sources provide this background information.

Since there are implicit references within the work to developments in Church and State as well as references to particular local conditions, some background regarding

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the more general developments on the national scene is also useful. The rise of Puritanism, the position of Herbert's Church between Puritanism and Catholicism, the ties between Church and State, are significant aspects of developments on the national scene. Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, and William Laud, reflect various aspects of this scene.

In addition to background conditions influencing the content of The Country Parson, some knowledge of the literary history of the form is also useful. The history of the literary genre may be traced briefly through the Greek Theophrastus, Joseph Hall, Thomas Overbury and John Earle. The Country Parson is a modification of the accepted literary models.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONTENTS OF THE COUNTRY PARSON

The contents of Herbert's prose treatise can best be summarized if the ideas are listed under several headings. The following headings are arbitrary, but they do serve to isolate and group similar ideas.

- 1 The Country Parson as a Priest and as a Man.
- 2 The Country Parson's Relations with his People.
- 3 The Country Parson's Relations with Church Authorities and those outside his Parish.

These general headings may be broken down into sections providing a still finer breakdown and grouping of ideas.

- 1 The Country Parson as a Priest and as a Man.
- (a) The Country Parson as a Priest

Although thirty-four of the thirty-seven chapters of The Country Parson begin with the words "The Country Parson", Herbert uses the words "priest", "pastor", and "parson", interchangeably, and begins The Country Parson by defining the term: "A Pastor is the Deputy of Christ for the reducing of man to the Obedience of God."¹ This definition implies both the dignity of the priesthood and the duties which follow therefrom. With the ascension of Christ, the instrument of God whereby man is raised from his fallen state of disobedience, deputies were appointed

¹ F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.225.

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to carry on His work, and thus priests came into being. The dignity of the priesthood follows from the priest's ability to do that which Christ did, by Christ's authority. The duties of the priesthood follow from the priest's responsibility to carry on the work of Christ.

The dignity and the duties of the priesthood follow regardless of the priest's cure. Herbert was particularly impressed with the dignity of the priesthood and is reported by Walton to have remarked:

"I will always contemn my birth, or any title or dignity that can be conferr'd upon me, when I shall compare them with my title of being a priest".²

As twenty-two of Herbert's forty years were spent in or around schools or universities, it is natural that Herbert has something to say of the academic species with whom he had reason to be familiar. The university chaplain may live in the university as a teacher or as a student. If a teacher, he should follow the teachings of the Apostle Rom. 12.6:

"Having gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching."³

² Izaak Walton, The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert, George Saintsbury ed., London, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.290.

³ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.226.

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The student pastor must not aim merely at gaining a knowledge of the Fathers and the Schoolmen, for such is not sufficient to make a minister: "The greatest and hardest preparation is within".⁴

The chaplain of a noble house has the same duty towards his house as has the parson to his parish. It is with the duties of the latter that The Country Parson is chiefly concerned, but the rules set down in the tract are applicable to the noble house chaplain: "in describing the one (which is indeed the bent of my discourse) the other will be manifest."⁵

Herbert makes no mention of the priest in the city parish but speaks of "mine own Nation only, also therein setting aside the Reverend Prelates of the Church".⁶ By "Nation", Herbert evidently means pastors of his rank only and would exclude the city pastor as being of higher rank or of different kind, i.e. "Nation". Herbert was acquainted with at least one such pastor - John Donne.

When living in accord with the dignity of the priesthood and fulfilling its duties, the country parson attempts to be a paragon of many virtues, but his predominant one is charity. "The Country Parson is full of Charity; it

⁴ Ibid., p.226.

⁵ Ibid., p.226.

⁶ Ibid., p.225.

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is his predominant element"⁷ and he counts that day lost "wherein he hath not exercised his Charity".⁸ He is "exceedingly exact in his Life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his wayes,"⁹ and is particularly careful to avoid anything that may scandalize his parish such as covetousness, drunkenness, and the breaking of promises. By his "holy and unblameable life", and by "a courteous carriage and winning behaviour,"¹⁰ the parson attempts to gain the love and respect of all his parishioners. These are the principal means used by the parson to overcome the contempt in which he is likely to be held. In another passage, Herbert refers to the "general ignominy" which is cast upon the profession. In addition, the parson has thoroughly studied the "two highest points of Life, wherein a Christian is most seen",¹¹ patience in time of affliction, and the mortification of lusts and affections.

Just as the priest in a university must not aim merely at the acquisition of knowledge, the country parson must not be content merely with the acquisition of virtues. Pastors, however, are warned against "curiosity in prying into high speculative and unprofitable questions".¹² The parson's duty is to increase his knowledge of the Scriptures.

⁷ Ibid., p.244.

⁸ Ibid., p.244.

⁹ Ibid., p.227.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.268.

¹¹ Ibid., p.227.

¹² Ibid., p.238.

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In another text, Herbert states: "Holy Scriptures have not only an elementary use, but a use of perfection, and are able to make the man of God perfect".¹³ In the Scriptures, the parson finds: "Precepts for life, Doctrines for knowledge, Examples for illustration, and Promises for comfort".¹⁴

To assist him to understand the Scripture, the country parson has four means; first, a holy life; second, prayer; third, a "diligent collation of Scripture with Scripture";¹⁵ fourth, reference to the work of Commenters and Fathers who have handled the controversial texts. (In his will Herbert bequeathed: "to Mr. Bostocke St. Augustine's workes."¹⁶) When the parson is not reading the "Commenters and Fathers", or performing any of the other preparatory duties required for the proper understanding of Scripture, he must increase his knowledge in other fields. Knowledge of tillage and pastorage, law and medicine, is useful, the former in his teaching, "because people by what they understand, are best led to what they understand not",¹⁷ the latter in his attempt "to be all to his Parish, and not only Pastour, but a Lawyer also, and a Phisician."¹⁸ Herbert's

¹³ T.T. Carter, Nicholas Ferrar: His Household and His Friends, London, Longmans Green, 1893, p.219.

¹⁴ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.228.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.229.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.382.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.228.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.259.

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brother Edward, advised him to gain some knowledge of medicine. "It will become a gentleman to have some knowledge in medicine".¹⁹

(b) The Country Parson as a Man

As a man, the country parson is rather unmarried than married, since "virginity is a higher state than matrimony,"²⁰ and the ministry requires "the best and highest things".²¹ Unmarried, he keeps no women servants and does not talk with women except in company, and then only in a serious manner, for he realizes that he is suspected and envied in his unmarried state, and is continually on guard about his behaviour, speech and dress. He devotes much time to fasting and prayer, and reads the lives of the primitive monks that he may profit by their example of "daily temperance, abstinence, watchings, and constant prayers."²²

If the "temper of his body", demands it, or if his parish duties require him to converse with women among suspicious men, the parson is married. By "temper of his body", Herbert refers either to a strong sexual passion or

¹⁹ Edward Herbert, Lord of Cherbury, Autobiography, Sidney Lee ed., London, George Routledge, 1906, p.28.

²⁰ F.E. Hutchinson op.cit., p.236.

²¹ Ibid., p.236.

²² Ibid., p.237

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a state of ill health which requires the care of a woman. In a correspondence between Arthur Woodnoth and Nicholas Ferrar, both acquaintances of George Herbert, Woodnoth writes: "Touching marriage, he (Herbert) could not tell what to say though it had been his own case for in respect of health it might be convenient".²³

If the parson chooses to be married, "his judgement not his affection finds out a fit wife for him."²⁴ When choosing a mate, the parson prefers humility and a "liberall disposition" before beauty, riches, or honour, for he knows that from these qualities, a wise and loving husband can produce "any speciall grace of faith, patience, meekness, love, obedience, etc., and out of liberality make her fruitfull in all good works".²⁵ The parson's wife manages the household so that it is a model for the parish and, in addition, she has the responsibility of performing such duties as nursing the sick. (In a letter George Herbert requests: "If it would please my cousin to send Mrs. Herbert the receipt of the balsom."²⁶)

The parson's children must be good Christians and then good citizens, the oldest having the prerogative of his father's profession, and the others not apprenticed to

²³ B. Blackstone, The Ferrar Papers, Cambridge University Press, 1938, p.268.

²⁴ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.238.

²⁵ Ibid., p.238.

²⁶ B. Blackstone, op.cit., p.268.

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trades such as tavernkeeping or lace-making which "for the most part, serve but the vices and vanities of the world."²⁷

Other details of the parson's household refer to the parson's servants, family prayer, household furnishings, fasting and diet. All these details must be managed so that the parson's household will be a model for the parish.

2 The Parson's Relations with his People

(a) The Parson's Relations with his People in Church.

Herbert has a chapter devoted to the church building.²⁸ The parson must take special care to ensure that his church is a worthy house for church services. The walls, windows, floors, pulpit, seats, communion table, and baptismal font must be kept in good repair. The furnishings must be of the best materials and the walls must be painted with texts of Scripture: "the painting grave, and reverend, not with light colors, or foolish anticks."²⁹ The modest minimum of adornment deemed necessary by a clergyman of the school of Andrewes and Laud is indicated by Herbert's description of his church.

Conducting church services, administering sacraments, preaching, catechizing, are important aspects of the parson's relations with his people within the church. The minute

²⁷ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.240.

²⁸ Ibid., p.246.

²⁹ Ibid., p.246.

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attention given by Herbert to the method of conducting services, and to the congregation's behaviour within the church, points strongly to the widespread disorganization of public worship and the general need for reform. (In 1670 one John Eachard inquired into "The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion."³⁰) When the parson is to read services, he "composeth himselfe to all possible reverence",³¹ because he is impressed with the majesty of God and because he wishes to move the people to reverence "knowing that no Sermon moves them so much to a reverence ---- as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying."³² Particular reference is made to the behaviour of the parishioners during church services. "Talking, or sleeping, or gazing, or leaving, or halfe-kneeling, or any undutiful behaviour" or "answering the prayers in a hudling, or slubbering fashion, gaping, or scratching the head, or spitting even in the midst of their answer"³³ is not tolerated by the parson who frequently instructs his people how to behave at church services. Nor does the parson tolerate habitual late-comers or anyone leaving the services before he gives his blessing which is "not only a grave and reverend thing, but a beneficial also,"³⁴ the neglect of this power by priests having

³⁰ J.B. Leishman, The Metaphysical Poets, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934, p.110.

³¹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.231.

³² Ibid., p.231.

³³ Ibid., p.231.

³⁴ Ibid., p.285.

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caused the people to undervalue it. By interposing blessings in the services, his conversation, and letters, the parson leads others to value it. Mr. Hutchinson remarks that all Herbert's Bemerton letters, except a very short one, contain a blessing.³⁵

Baptism and Communion are the sacraments within the church which are referred to in The Country Parson, and to administer these the parson can assume the proper dignity only with the grace of God. Especially at Communion, he must realize the dignity of the act: "being not only to receive God, but to break and administer Him."³⁶ Herbert states explicitly his acceptance of the doctrine of the Real Presence. The parson ensures that those taking communion assume the proper reverence, and judges the proper time for first communion by the understanding of the recipient rather than the age. He administers Baptism only on Sundays or Feast days, permits "no vaine or idle names",³⁷ informs the God-parents of their responsibilities, and "adviseth all to call to minde their Baptism often; ---- being the first step into their great and glorious calling."³⁸

Although Confession is not discussed as a formal Church sacrament, there are many references to it in The

³⁵ Ibid., p.563.

³⁶ Ibid., p.257.

³⁷ Ibid., p.258.

³⁸ Ibid., p.258.

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Country Parson, and Herbert's high estimation of its importance is evident. The parson has examined for his own sake the act of repentance, understands the essence to be "a true detestation of the soul, abhorring, and renouncing sin, and turning unto God in truth of heart, and newnesse of life,"³⁹ and is able to explain it as "an act of the mind, not of the body."⁴⁰ Herbert's discussion of repentance shows that he minimizes the importance of any intermediary between the penitent and God.

Preaching is an important church function of the pastor. "The Country Parson preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne."⁴¹ If he intermits at any time "it is either for want of health, or against some great Festivall, that he may the better celebrate it, or for the variety of the hearers, that he may be heard at his returne more attentively." When he intermits, he is replaced by someone who will not "throw down what he hath built,"⁴³ and who will press some point which the parson has been unable to impress on his congregation. When preaching, the parson procures attention by his earnest speech, by directing his sermons to particular elements in his congregation, and by interfusing stories and sayings. "By these and other means

³⁹ Ibid., p.279.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.279.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.232.

⁴² Ibid., p.232.

⁴³ Ibid., p.232.

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the Parson procures attention; but the character of his sermon is Holiness; he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy."⁴⁴ He chooses texts of devotion rather than controversy and, after declaring the meaning, draws some observation from the whole text. He refrains from "crumbling a text into small parts ---- since the words apart are not Scripture, but a dictionary."⁴⁵ Herbert's is one of the earliest criticisms of the prevalent practice, illustrated in Andrewes' "Sermons" (1628), in which sometimes each word of the preacher's text, is separately considered for a page or more apiece.⁴⁶

There are other sermons than the formal ones he delivers in church." ... The temptations with which a good man is beset, and the ways which he used to overcome them, being told to another, whether in private conference, or in the Church, are a Sermon."⁴⁷ The parson has many such sermons, for he has overcome many temptations and mastered his lusts.

By church services devoted to catechizing, the parson infuses a knowledge of the means of salvation into his flock. Without first catechizing, he could not perform the other two points of his duty which consists of building up this knowledge, and inspiring the people to be guided by it. The parson questions the congregation on the doctrine of the

44 Ibid., p.233.

45 Ibid., p.235.

46 Ibid., p.557.(Hutchinson's note)

47 Ibid., p.278.

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catechism, requires all to be present, and reviews the material in other words: "for many say the Catechisme by rote, as parrats, without ever piercing into the sense of it."⁴⁸ The practice is more effective in teaching than sermons are, for at sermons men may sleep or wander.

Throughout the discussion regarding the conducting of church services, administering the sacraments, preaching, and catechizing, it is evident that the patience which Herbert mentions as being a requisite for the country parson, is a necessary virtue. The attitude of the people toward the clergy and their duties is suggested by the attention Herbert devotes to the means used by the parson to hold the attention of the people, and to overcome their apathy.

(b) The Parson's Relations with his People Outside the Church.

At times during the week-days, and on Sunday afternoons, the parson visits different quarters of his parish, where he meets his people without the dignity they assume for church services. The Sunday afternoon visiting is directed mainly at "reconciling neighbors that are at variance, or in visiting the sick, or in exhortations to some of his flock by themselves, whom his Sermons cannot, or doe not reach".⁴⁹ He questions the religious practices of the homes he visits,

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.256.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.236.

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and the ability of all in the household to read. He commends those he finds "religiously employed," and gives good books to those he finds reading. The parson warns those found working not to become too engrossed in worldly pursuits, "never raising their thoughts to God, nor sanctifying their labour with daily prayer,"⁵⁰ and to use their wealth as the means "to serve God the better, and to do good deeds."⁵¹ He admonishes his parishioners to see God's hand in the results of their labours, as he realizes the aptness of country people "to think that all things come by a kind of naturall course,"⁵² and, if they sow, they will inevitably reap grain. If the parishioner he visits is poor, the parson "opens not only his mouth, but his purse."⁵³ "If the Parson were ashamed of particularizing in these things, hee were not fit to be a Parson."⁵⁴

The parson also meets his people in his own home, for the parishioners are invited to return the parson's visits. Although the poor of the parish are invited into his home at times, they can best be helped with money, which they know how to put to use. Thus, the country parson pays his debt of charity to the poor of the parish by donations, and

50 Ibid., p.248.

51 Ibid., p.248.

52 Ibid., p.270.

53 Ibid., p.248.

54 Ibid., p.248.

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shows his courtesy to others by keeping "his table for those that are above alms."⁵⁵ Although he wishes his people to do good for other than temporal rewards, the parson invites the best of his parish into his home most often, for he realizes that temporal rewards are an effective stimulation to do good. This rewarding of the virtuous is to discharge the promise of God: "Godliness shall be gainfull."⁵⁶ The parson punishes the sinners in his parish by "withdrawing his bounty and courtesie from the parties offending,"⁵⁷ but he does not hate the sinner; rather he "pityes him as a father,"⁵⁸ for he knows that "some are called at the eleventh houre."⁵⁹ Thus, by inviting some and neglecting to invite others into his home, the parson acts "in Gods Stead," rewarding good and punishing evil.

Besides meetings which take place in the homes of the parishioners or in the parson's home, the parson meets his flock outside the church when it takes part in the procession ceremony. The parson "is a Lover of old Customes"⁶⁰, and particularly of the procession which calls God's blessing on the crops, sets the bounds of the parish, calls together his flock in a friendly ceremony, and is an occasion for all to

55 Ibid., p.243.

56 Ibid., p.254.

57 Ibid., p.254.

58 Ibid., p.250.

59 Ibid., p.250.

60 Ibid., p.283.

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contribute to the poor of the parish. He requires all to be present for this ceremony and reprimands those who fail to attend.

c General Problems the Parson Considers "at spare times from action."

The country parson "at spare times from action,"⁶¹ considers problems he is likely to meet when dealing with his people. Herbert distinguishes between: two sorts of vices; "necessary" and "additionary" religious practices; the "military" and "peaceable" state of the Christian life; and faults which may and may not be revealed by others. (Herbert is apt at making such distinctions. In a comment on Ferrar's translation of Valdesso he says: "Secondly, among Habits, some oppose Theological virtues ... other habits oppose moral virtues."⁶²)

The parson finds the nature of such vices as adultery, murder, and hatred, to be always clear, while the nature of others such as covetousness, and gluttony, is "dark and obscure."⁶³ A man may condemn intemperance and covetousness in earnest, and yet be intemperate and covetous, because the beginnings of these sins is "not easily observable."⁶⁴ The

⁶¹ Ibid., p.264.

⁶² T.T. Carter, op.cit., p.222.

⁶³ F.E. Hutchinson op.cit., p.264.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.264.

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parson has examined the nature of vices especially those "whose natures are most stealing, and beginnings uncertain."⁶⁵ He states examples of intemperance and covetousness and determines the point at which a man becomes covetous or intemperate.

A similar distinction is made between religious practices which are "necessary" and those which are "additional". "Necessary" religious practices are the minimum required if a Christian is to live up to the precepts of his religion. Thus it is necessary that a Christian "should pray twice a day, every day of the week, and four times on Sunday."⁶⁶ In addition to this required minimum, some may add to the hours of prayer, or to the number of religious practices, and such actions are "additional". If the Godly omit such practices and become perplexed, and worried, Satan may work "to enlarge the perplexity, until it spread and taint other duties of piety."⁶⁷ The parson interposes and makes the distinction which is "of singular use and comfort, especially to pious minds, which are ever tender, and delicate."⁶⁸ Caution must be taken by the parson lest the failure to perform the "additional" acts is due to "slackness or coldness,"⁶⁹ and the Godly are little affected by the

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.264.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.272.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.273.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.273.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.273.

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omission of the "additionary" prayers which it has been their custom to perform. Such an attitude may lead to the state wherein the Christian may fail to perform even the "necessary" religious practices. (In "The Author to the Reader" (p.224), prefacing The Country Parson, Herbert states: "not that I think, if a man do not all which is here expressed, hee presently sinns, and displeases God." Thus many of the duties Herbert assigns to the country parson are "additionary" and not "necessary".)

When considering the problems which are likely to confront his parish, the parson knows that there is "a double state of a Christian even in this Life, the one military, the other peaceable."⁷⁰ In the "military state", the Christian is "assaulted with temptations either from within or without,"⁷¹ while in the "peaceable state" he has joy and peace "and comfort in the Holy Ghost."⁷² The parson has a "Spirituall Judgement"⁷³ and, as he finds any of his flock in either state, he applies himself accordingly. Those in the "peaceable state" are advised to be vigilant to maintain the fervor they possess when severely tempted, and "to put bounds, and hoopes to their joyes"⁷⁴ by performing acts of sacrifice, in order that their "peaceable state" may

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.280.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.280.

⁷² Ibid., p.280.

⁷³ Ibid., p.280.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.280.

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last the longer and, if it leaves them, return the sooner. The parson "fortifyes, and strengthens with his utmost skill"⁷⁵ those he finds in the "military state" and, if they have concluded that there is no God, or that He exercises no providence over the world, the parson teaches them the truth.

Detraction, the talking about faults of others, is another problem which the parson must consider "at spare times from action,"⁷⁶ and he must determine when it is lawful to disclose the faults of another. (In a letter to Ferrar, Herbert says; "We are to regard others, and neither to scandalize them, nor wounde our own reputation."⁷⁷) If he forbid the relation of another's faults completely, "many an evill may not only be, but also spread in his Parish."⁷⁸ The parson must distinguish between those faults which are "notorious" and those which are "private". "Notorious" faults are common knowledge and of these, men may talk, "so they do it not with sport."⁷⁹ Likewise, faults which have been punished by law may be revealed to others, because the loss of one's good name is a part of the punishment intended. If the punished offender is "much troubled for his sins,"⁸⁰ and reforms, men must not speak of that "which even God himself hath forgotten."⁸¹ After mentioning "notorious"

75 Ibid., p.281.

76 Ibid., p.264.

77 Ibid., p.380.

78 Ibid., p.287.

79 Ibid., p.287.

80 Ibid., p.288.

81 Ibid., p.288.

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and "private" faults, Herbert discusses only the former. It is possible that he died before he was able to finish this, the last chapter.

3 The Country Parson's Relations with the Church Authorities and with those Outside his Parish.

(a) The Parson's Relations with the Church Authorities

Although there are no particular chapters devoted to the parson's relations with the Fathers of the Church, the fact that there are passing references to them in seven chapters of The Country Parson, is evidence that Herbert thought the matter to be of some importance. The country parson "carryes himself very respectfully, as to all the Fathers of the Church,"⁸² especially regarding the head of the diocese whom he honours "both in word and behaviour",⁸³ and he resorts to them when in difficulty. The parson attends "Clergy councils" and makes use of them for the benefit of the diocese, reminding those present of any defects in the ministry which he has observed. He uses the catechism and common prayer book of the Church "partly for obedience to Authority, partly for uniformity sake"⁸⁴ and, when preparing his church for services, he makes sure "that all the books appointed by Authority be there."⁸⁵ The counsel

82 Ibid., p.253.

83 Ibid., p.253.

84 Ibid., p.255.

85 Ibid., p.246.

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of the Church Fathers is also followed when he persuades the sick to make a confession. In addition to a holy life and a reading of Scriptures and the commentators, the parson relies on the guidance of the Fathers of his Church that he may perform his duties in a fitting manner.

The parson reminds the Wardens, the local lay authorities in the Church, of their responsibility, because the discipline of the parish is in their hands. Both civil and ecclesiastical law recognizes the dignity of their position, giving them power "to sue, and to be sued at the Law ... and to levy penalties for negligence in resorting to church, or for disorderly carriage in time of divine service."⁸⁶ The parson does not allow the position to be debased by being filled with "the lower ranke of people; but invites and urges the best unto it."⁸⁷ He advises the Wardens to read the Canons frequently in order that they may be at all times aware of their duties; and he urges them to spare no one found breaking the regulations: "yea, though they be tenants, or otherwise ingaged to the delinquent,"⁸⁸ for their obligation to God is above any temporal consideration. At Holy Communion, the parson checks with the Wardens to ensure that all elements are present and are of the best. (" In 1579, Ralph Wright, the churchwarden of

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.270.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.270.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.270.

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Stockton, was haled before the judge and excommunicated because his church lacked a communion book.")⁸⁹ He serves communion at least six times per year in order that the Wardens may more easily take account of those who do not partake at least thrice a year, and present them. (In his Character "A Church Papist", John Earle states: "Once a moneth he presents himselfe at the Church, to keepe off the Church-warden, and brings in his body to save his bayle.")⁹⁰ ("Canon CXII orders that the minister and wardens are within forty days of Easter to present to the Bishop or his chancellor the names of all parishioners who 'received not the Communion at Easter before' ".⁹¹) Besides his entreaties and example, the parson has the Church Wardens to help him enforce discipline in his parish.

(b) The Country Parson's Relations with those Outside his Parish.

When the parson is called out of his parish he "leaveth not his ministry behind him; but is himselfe wherever he is."⁹² If he stops at an Inn, he mingles with the guests to join in prayer in the hall both morning and

⁸⁹ E. Trotter, Seventeenth Century Life in a Country Parish, Cambridge, University Press, 1919, p.22.

⁹⁰ John Earle, Micro-Cosmographie, Edward Arber ed., London, Alex Murray and Son, 1869, p.31.

⁹¹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.560.

⁹² Ibid., p.267.

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evening. Although he is generally sad, "because hee knows nothing but the Crosse of Christ,"⁹³ in such a situation he "condescends to humane frailties both in himselfe and others; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, according to the pulse of the bearer."⁹⁴ When he stays at a house "where his kindred, or other relations give him any authority over the Family,"⁹⁵ the parson notes the apparel, diet, reading matter, language, bringing up of children, and the religious practices of the house, and discreetly informs the lord or lady of any defect he finds in any of these. Throughout The Country Parson Herbert insists that the parson exercise his power as a priest wherever he is. Here he adds the qualification that when in the home of another he must be related to those he is to reprimand or he would not do so.

The parson corresponds with his neighboring pastors, helps them when he can, and welcomes to his house any minister "how poor or mean soever."⁹⁶ During times of fire or famine, he helps a neighboring parish, "exposing the obligation of Charity"⁹⁷ to his own flock and, if he finds some neighboring parish over-burdened with poor, he "findes some way of relieving it, and reducing the manna, and bread

⁹³ Ibid., p.267.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.268.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.251.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.253.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.253.

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of Charity to some equality."⁹⁸

When surveying the general faults of the time in order that he may be able to cope with them when called outside his parish, the country parson has found the great sin of the land to be idleness, which leads men "to drink, to steal, to whore, to scoff, to revile, to all sorts of gamings."⁹⁹ He opposes this sin wherever he goes and impresses upon everyone the necessity of a vocation. (In a letter to Ferrar Herbert says: "when we exhort people to continue in their vocation, it is in opposition to idleness. Work rather than do nothing."¹⁰⁰ He advises married men that their chief responsibility is the bringing up of their families "in the fear and nurture of the Lord,"¹⁰¹ (There is evidence that Herbert thought little of elementary school training. In a letter to his brother he mentions a school mistress and says "you know what those mercenary creatures are."¹⁰²) He emphasizes their obligation to develop their lands "to the best advantage both of (themselves) and (their) neighbours:"¹⁰³ and they are, if possible, to devote some time to helping the community by "advancing the publick Stock, and managing Commons, or Woods, according as

98 Ibid., p.254.

99 Ibid., p.274.

100 B. Blackstone op.cit., p.270.

101 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.275.

102 Ibid., p.375.

103 Ibid., p.275.

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the place suggests."¹⁰⁴ Men with the "gravitie, and ripenessse of judgment for so excellent a ~~Place~~"¹⁰⁵ should offer to serve as Justice of the Peace. Herbert advises worthy men to fill the position in spite of the contempt with which it is held due to its abuse. (Herbert voiced the same sentiments concerning his entering the priesthood: "though the Iniquity of the late Times have made clergy-men meanly valued, and the sacred name of Priest contemptible; yet I will labour to make it honourable."¹⁰⁶)

The parson advises heirs to prepare for the time when they will manage the household by reading "Books of Law, and Justice,"¹⁰⁷ attending "Sessions and Sizes",¹⁰⁸ travelling over the kings dominions, and attending parliament. When these duties do not call them abroad, they should practice the use of arms. The parson too has the obligation to practice the use of arms "to do his Countrey true and laudable service, when occasion requires."¹⁰⁹ Younger brothers should study civil law, "the key of Commerce,"¹¹⁰ as well as "mathematics, Fortification and Navigation,"¹¹¹ and, if these studies are found dull, they can travel to the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.276.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.276.

¹⁰⁶ Izaac Walton, op.cit., p.277.

¹⁰⁷ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.276.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.277.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.252.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.277.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.277.

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new discoveries which, handled properly, may be a "religious imployment".¹¹² They may also travel to Germany and France, where knowledge of manufactures useful to their own country can be gained. (In a letter to his brother in France, Herbert writes: "Bee covetous, then, of all good which you see in Frenchmen, ... so shall you play a good marchant, by transporting French commodities to your own country."¹¹³)

The priest who realized the ideal of The Country Parson would treat nothing as trivial in his attempt to have his flock live a truly Christian life. While the prose treatise could be added to indefinitely, as new aspects of the country parson's life present themselves, those aspects which Herbert discusses are thoroughly treated. Those characteristics which follow from the word "priest", which the parson has in common with other pastors, and those which distinguish him from them; his personal sanctity and the necessity of living an exemplary life; his duties concerned with conducting church services; his relations with his parishioners and with people in general; and those problems which the country parson must consider at times when removed from his regular duties; all indicate the high mark Herbert sets for the country parson to attain.

¹¹² Ibid., p.278.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.366.

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The success of a pastor in realizing the ideal of The Country Parson is dependent on two main factors. An abundant Charity, and a knowledge of the precepts of his religion would enable the parson to teach by his example. But saintliness and an exemplary life are not sufficient. A keen insight into the temperament of the people with whom he deals, which insight would enable him to anticipate their difficulties, and meet them in an effective way, is also necessary, for the parson must teach by word as well as example. The ideal set in The Country Parson is a high one, for it is a rare individual who has the combination of personal sanctity and a keen insight into the temperament of rural folk. Whether or not Herbert was such an individual, and was able to realize the ideal of The Country Parson, could be judged by reference to contemporary estimates of his sanctity and life as a country parson.

4 Summary

The thirty-seven chapters of The Country Parson are summarized by isolating and grouping the ideas within a topical arrangement. "The Country Parson as a Priest and as a Man" breaks naturally into two subdivisions. "The Country Parson as a Priest" summarizes those ideas dealing with the dignity of the priesthood and the duties which follow therefrom. Distinctions between different types of

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pastors according to their different cures are outlined.

"The Country Parson as a Man" deals with the parson's marital state, his relations with his children, and the general organization and control of his household.

"The Parson's Relations with his People" may be broken down into the relations within the church, relations outside of the church, and general problems the parson considers "at spare times from action." Conducting Church services, administering sacraments, preaching, and catechizing are important duties involved in the parson's relations with his people within the church. Visiting the parishioners during week-days and on Sunday afternoons is done for various reasons. Neighbors who are at odds are reconciled, the sick are visited, the religious practices of the home are questioned, those "religiously employed" are rewarded, and various other important duties are performed through such relations outside the church. At various times and places the parson considers problems such as those arising from the distinction between necessary" and "additionary" religious practices, and the "military" and "peaceable" state of the Christian life.

"The Country Parson's Relations with Church Authorities and those Outside his Parish" involve his attendance and active participation in Church councils, his conformance with the regulations established by Church

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Fathers, his duties toward the local lay authorities of his parish, and his attitude toward laymen and clergy outside his own parish.

CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUND OF THE TEMPLE

As a poet, George Herbert fits into that category of poets who have had a significant influence upon the course of English literature by reacting against outmoded literary conventions. By "convention" is meant a rule or usage based upon general agreement. Conventions do not remain the same for any great period of time. When they are widely adopted they tend to appear not conventional or arbitrary, but natural. George Herbert lived at a time when certain literary conventions had outlived their usefulness and were in need of readjustment.

The late nineteenth century concept of poetry was that poetry should deal with what is remote, wondrous, beautiful, mysterious. The writers of the early seventeenth century began working at a time when there prevailed a view of poetry rather like the nineteenth century view. The greatness of Herbert and his contemporaries consisted very largely in their power to break away from this restricted and restricting view of poetry to something more dynamic and capable of containing wider effects. In order that the great dramatic verse and lyric poetry of the Elizabethan period could be written, it was necessary to overcome two strong literary conventions. The

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two conventions were the imitation of Petrarch and Euphuism.

The poetry of the early Renaissance in England was marked by the frequent imitations of the Italian poet Petrarch. The English writers found in the sonnets of Petrarch the very qualities which they considered lacking in their own literature. Petrarch was an excellent master from whom the qualities of polish, refinement, neatness in the turning of phrases, smoothness in versification, could be learned. Petrarch offered a kind of standard of civilized speech and thought which captivated the English writers of the early Renaissance. When Wyatt and Surrey introduced the Petrarchan sonnet form, they filled a need for English lyric poetry.

The second literary convention, Euphuism, derived its name from John Lyly's Euphues, an idealized portrait of the Elizabethan gentleman. The fashion popularized by Lyly carried over into prose the refinement and polish characteristic of the Petrarchan sonnet form. Neat balance of phrase, clause, and sentence, and abundant use of classical imagery, references and history, were characteristic of this prose which reflected an emphasis on decoration rather than on communication of ideas.

By the combination of these qualities, the Petrarchan sonnet fashion and Euphuism became quite unsuited for the purposes of lyric poetry or popular drama.

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The art of literature had become merely literary in the sense that the authors were more concerned with adhering to literary conventions than with using their art for the purpose of conveying meaning. Style, which should be considered as a means to an end, came to be looked upon as an end in itself.

It was in the popular drama that the Elizabethans were to produce their greatest work and in particular it was impossible to write really dramatic verse within these conventions. A play written in verse embodying the excellences of Petrarch would turn out at best to be a series of declamations or recitations. Dramatic verse written to reflect the learned refinements of Euphuism would fail to create and maintain the world of the living present required within good drama. For the purpose of drama, it was necessary to develop a language which would be neat and concise but at the same time convey the sudden transitions and the incomplete thoughts and feelings which are necessary if a play is to be anything more than a literary exercise.

Within lyric poetry, it was necessary that writers react against "the Petrarchan convention with its sugared diction" and bring love poetry "someway back to nature".² New qualities of spirit and form had to be given to lyric poetry if lyric poetry were to be something more than a

² F.E. Hutchinson, "The Sacred Poets", Cambridge History of English Literature Vol. VII. pp.26-47.

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mere reflection of fashionable literary conventions.

Many writers contributed to eliminating the influences of Petrarch and Euphuism. In particular there were three who ensured that drama and poetry would not become merely literary but would remain in close and vital contact with the true source of all great poetry - actual human experience closely observed and keenly felt. The reactors were William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and John Donne.

While the seventeenth century was a century of "big names" appearing in the Elizabethan Age, the Puritan Regime, and the Restoration, rather than a century of literary schools, two minor schools of poets appeared in the early part of the century.

John Donne and Ben Jonson, "the Schoolman and the classical scholar, one might say, emphasizing for the moment single aspects of their work",³ were the leaders of the Metaphysical Poets and the Sons of Ben. George Herbert reacted against the outmoded conventions restricting lyric poetry by embodying in his verse those characteristics which the term "metaphysical" implies.

"Donne's influence was powerful for good or ill. He smacked the Petrarchan convention with its sugared diction and brought love poetry someway back to nature. If his conceits are extravagant, his vocabulary is simple."⁴

³ H.J.C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921.p.xvii.

⁴ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit.

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The word metaphysical, (derived from the Greek words meta-beyond, and physikos - relating to external nature) was first applied to Donne and his followers by John Dryden. In his essay on Cowley, Samuel, Johnson summarizes and evaluates the main characteristics of the school. The term "metaphysical" in its strictest sense, refers to that division of philosophy which includes Ontology, or the science of fundamental causes and processes in things. In a looser sense, the term refers to all the more abstruse philosophical disciplines. Johnson had the latter meaning in mind.

The Metaphysical Poets are not mainly concerned with speculating about the nature of things as does John Milton in "Paradise Lost," or Alexander Pope in his "Essay on Man", or Alfred Tennyson in "In Memoriam".⁵ They may use poetry for such purposes, but it is not a dominant characteristic of their work. When members of the school wrote:

"At the round earth's imagin'd corners;"⁶

"And new Philosophy calls all in doubt;"⁷

"I saw Eternity the other night;"⁸

"I know the wayes of learning,"⁹

⁵ Joan Bennet, Four Metaphysical Poets, Cambridge, University Press, 1953, p.1.

⁶ John Donne, "sonnet IV", L.1.

⁷ John Donne, "An Anatomie of the World, The First Anniversary", L.205.

⁸ Henry Vaughan, "The World", L.1.

⁹ George Herbert, "The Pearl. Matth.13", L.1.

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they were not attempting to philosophize. They were not attempting to discuss whether the earth is round or flat, the validity of the "new philosophy", the characteristics of eternity, or the various branches of knowledge. They were concerned rather with using such speculations to express and define emotions.

Although Donne was familiar with the definitions and distinctions of the Medieval Scholastics; although Herbert was impressed with the danger of "prying into high speculative and unprofitable questions",¹⁰ and although Cowley was familiar with the achievements of science and the materialism of Thomas Hobbes, the Metaphysicals are not metaphysical in this large way. The "metaphysics" occur as a vehicle, never as the thing conveyed.

The word refers to style rather than to content.¹¹ Experience to them was as grist to an intellectual mill. The relations they perceive are more often logical rather than sensuous or emotional. They prefer words which call the mind into play rather than words which appeal to the senses or evoke an emotional response by drawing upon a literary heritage. Emotions are shaped and expressed by logical reasoning, and both sound and picture are subservient to this end.

¹⁰ F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.238.

¹¹ Joan Bennet, op.cit., p.2. ff.

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Another critic¹² states that the word metaphysical describes better what is the peculiar quality of their poetry - the fantastic. The work of the Metaphysicals contrasts with the simpler imagery of classical poetry and, in comparison with the conventional poetry of the earlier Elizabethan writers, the wit of the authors is less verbal and more intellectual. Learned imagery, argumentation, fine distinctions, the subtle evolution of their lyrics, a peculiar blend of passion, thought and feeling, are characteristics suggested by the term "metaphysical".

A modern critic¹³ is of the opinion that Donne and his followers should be thought of as part of the main stream of English Literature flowing through the seventeenth century, rather than as a distinct minor tributary.

"May we not conclude, then that Donne, Crashaw, Vaughan, Herbert and Lord Herbert, Marvell, King, Cowley at his best, are in the direct current of English poetry ..."¹⁴

Rather than being thought of as being merely "quaint", "witty", "obscure", they should be considered as inheritors of certain traits evident in the works of Elizabethan dramatists such as Shakespeare, Middleton, and Webster. For the purpose of this outline, the Metaphysicals may be summarized as a group. To illustrate the main literary movement to which George

¹² H.J.C. Grierson, op.cit., p.xv.

¹³ T.S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", Selected Prose, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1953, p.111.ff

¹⁴ Ibid., p.120.

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Herbert was related, the main characteristics of the school may be isolated and summarized. Some insight into the literary current of which Herbert was a part may be gained.

In addition to those characteristics of style which the term "metaphysical" suggests when rightly interpreted, other predominant characteristics of metaphysical poetry may be outlined. The writer's use of conceits; the use of spoken language; and the analytical approach of the authors, indicate the most significant characteristics of the poetry. While

"it is difficult to find one precise use of metaphor, simile, or other conceit, which is common to all the poets and at the same time important enough as an element of style to isolate these poets as a group";¹⁵

the qualities of metaphor, language and analysis in the work of the Metaphysicals suggest some common traits.

A conceit may be defined as a far-fetched figure of speech; an elaborated comparison; an extended metaphor. The stimulus of words used is applied not directly to the senses or emotions but more to the faculty which apprehends a mathematical problem.¹⁶ The poet's attempt to look upon experience as grist to an intellectual mill and to look for connections between emotions and mental concepts resulted naturally in comparisons with an intellectual bias. To the game of elaborating fantastic conceits and hyperboles which had become fashionable throughout Europe, the

¹⁵ Ibid., p.111.

¹⁶ Joan Bennet, op.cit., pp.2-6.

Metaphysicals brought not only a full-blooded temperament and an acute mind, but a vast and growing store of the same scholastic knowledge¹⁷ as Dante.

Although Samuel Johnson emphasized the limitations of the metaphysicals, he did recognize the significance of their using devices which prevented their being merely conventional.

"To write on their plan it was necessary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphysical poet, nor assume the dignity of a writer, by description copied from descriptions, by imitation borrowed from imitation, by traditional imagery and hereditary similes, by readiness of rhyme and volubility of symbols."¹⁸

Coleridge refers to the style of the Metaphysicals as being:

"the reverse of that which distinguishes too many of our most recent versifiers; the one conveying the most fantastic thoughts in the most correct language, the other in the most fantastic language conveying the most trivial thoughts."¹⁹

The results are often startling and disconcerting and perplex the mind.²⁰ Perhaps the most familiar example is Donne's comparison of parting lovers to the legs of a compass.

¹⁷ H.J.C. Grierson, op.cit., p.xxi.

¹⁸ Samuel Johnson, quoted by H.J.C. Grierson op.cit., p.xxxiii.

¹⁹ S.T. Coleridge, quoted by H.J.C. Grierson op.cit., p.xxxii.

²⁰ H.J.C. Grierson, op.cit., pp.xx-xxi.

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Out two soules therefore, which are one,
 Though I must goe, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to avery thinnesse beate.

If they be two, they are two so
 As stiffe twin compasses are two,
 Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th' other doe.

And though it in the center sit,
 Yet when the other far doth come,
 It leanes, and hearkens after it,
 And growes erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to mee, who must
 Like th'other foot, obliquely runne.
 Thy firmness draws my circle just
 And makes me end, where I begunne. 21

The same poem opens with a description which was obviously not borrowed from a description.

As virtuous men passe mildly away,
 And whisper to their soules, to goe,
 Whilst some of their sad friends doe say,
 The breath goes now, and some say, no.

So let us melt, and make no noise,
 No teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
 T'were prophanation of our joyes
 To tell the layetie our love.22

In a poem addressed to Mrs. Magdalen Herbert, the mother of George Herbert, Donne describes Mrs. Herbert:

Call not these wrinkles, graves; if graves they were,
 They were loves graves; for else he is no where
 Yet lies not Love dead here, but here doth sit
 Vow'd to this trench, like an Anchorit.23

Donne draws upon his knowledge of astronomy to elaborate a comparison.

21 John Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", LL.21-36.

22 Ibid., LL.1-8.

23 John Donne, "The Autumnall", LL.13-16.

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Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,
 The intelligence that moves, devotion is,
 And as the other Spheares, by being growne
 Subject to forraigne motions, lose their owne,
 And being by others hurried every day,
 Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:
 Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit
 For their first mover, and are whirld by it.
 Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West
 This day, when my Soules forme bends toward the East.²⁴

In another passage Donne writes:

Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred
 Our eyes, upon one double string;²⁵...

Successfull metaphysical imagery demands and repays
 close scrutiny. The more closely the image is examined, the
 more many-sided become the relations which the poet has
 suggested. When Donne describes his mistress as:

O more than moon draw not up seas
 To drown me in thy spheare.²⁶

his mistress is "more than moon" because she is more fair,
 more dear; because she draws the poet to her as the moon
 attracts the tides; because she draws up tears as the moon
 will draw up the seas on which he is about to voyage; and
 her tears are salt like the seas and like the seas they may
 destroy him.²⁷

Although the poetry of George Herbert is simpler
 than John Donne's because his narrower range of experience
 limited his choice of subject matter and simplified his

²⁴ John Donne, "Good Friday, 1613-Riding Westward",
 LL.1-10.

²⁵ John Donne, "The Extasie", LL.7-8.

²⁶ John Donne, "A Valediction: of weeping", LL.19-20.

²⁷ Joan Bennet, op.cit., p.77.

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texture, his imagery, like Donne's "works through the mind rather than the senses and the structure of his poems is logical."²⁸ A successful fusion between thought and feeling is frequently reflected in the poetry of Herbert. Several examples illustrate his use of metaphors, which, in comparison with those of the earlier Elizabethans, are involved.

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 cancell th'old.

In heaven at his manour I him sought:
They told me there, that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession.²⁹

Prayer is referred to as:

Gods breath in man returning to his birth ...³⁰

In the poem "Sunday":

The Sundaies of mans life,
Thredded together on times string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternall glorious King.³¹

In another poem, Herbert describes the degrees of intensity of the love he feels for God:

²⁸ Ibid., p.49.

²⁹ George Herbert, "Redemption", LL.1-8.

³⁰ George Herbert, "Prayer", LL.1-2.

³¹ George Herbert, "Sunday", LL.29-32.

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Although there were some forty heavens, or more,
 Sometimes I peer above them all;
 Sometimes I hardly reach a score,
 Sometimes to hell I fall.

O rack me not to such a vast extent
 Those distances belong to Thee
 The world's too little for Thy tent,
 A grave too big for me.³²

Andrew Marvell also reflects this characteristic of
 the Metaphysical School.

As Lines so Loves oblique may well
 Themselves in every Angle greet:
 But ours so truly Paralel,
 Though infinite can never meet.³³

Richard Crashaw describes the tears of Mary Magdalen.

Upwards thou dost weep
 Heavn's bosome drinks the gentle stream.
 Where the milky rivers creep,
 Thine floates above; and is the cream.³⁴

While the members of the school show little of
 Donne's subtlety of mind or his immoderate thirst for human
 knowledge; while they lack Donne's complexity of mood and
 range of personal feeling; while they all adapted the style
 to suit their own purposes; the use of imagery which works
 through the mind may be considered a common characteristic.

The use of language is a second distinguishing mark
 which serves to identify the literary school of which George
 Herbert was a member.

³² George Herbert, "The Temper", LL.4-8.

³³ Andrew Marvell, "The Definition of Love", LL.25-28.

³⁴ Richard Crashaw, "Sainte Mary Magdalene or The
 Weeper", LL.19-22.

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Poetry may be thought of as always in the process of catching up with the language of the time. The material for good literature is the actual experience of mankind and this experience is available through the spoken rather than through the written language. The spoken language is the language in which the thinking, feeling, the interests and the attitudes of the vast majority of the people are carried on. The spoken language never dissociates itself from contact with and interest in, real objects and the actual concerns of human beings. This gives the spoken language the flexibility or responsiveness by which it continues to reflect changes in interest, in point of view, in belief, etc.

Written language tends to change less rapidly than the spoken language. Words are introduced into, and are accepted as a part of spoken language, before they become a part of the more conventional and artificial written language. Writing tends to separate itself from the actual interests and concerns of human beings. The written language thereby loses a good deal of its vitality and energy because the source of all true vitality in any art is found not in the art itself but in the actual experiencing of reality by mankind.

When a certain point is reached writing, especially poetry, must be brought back into intimate contact with

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experience or else settle itself into artificial conventions. This was the condition of poetry when Wordsworth revived it towards the end of the eighteenth century and this is the task which Eliot endeavored to accomplish in the early part of the twentieth century.

The drama of Shakespeare and the lyric poetry of Donne and the other Metaphysicals express profound thought and intense feeling through language which has the ring and movement of conversation. Both authors made the effort to reintroduce into poetry the actual language of men. In doing so, they established clearer, more satisfying and more exact contact between the mind and the actual world than was possible through the poetry written in imitation of Petrarch or the prose of Lyly. They gave to their work a wider appeal than was possible through the learned refinements of Euphuism and through their work a whole new range of effects became possible in poetry. The new type of lyric poetry possessed a greater vigor and no longer revered smoothness, polish, sweetness and refinement for their own sake.

The Metaphysicals deliberately deprived themselves of the hypnotic power with which a regularly recurring beat plays upon the nerves. Rhythms are used rather to arrest and goad the reader, forcing him to pause here and rush on there, governing pace and emphasis so as to bring out the

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full force of the meaning.³⁶ Perhaps their principal innovation was to make the rhythm of spoken language the staple of their rhythm. Mr. Grierson comments that the writers were not simply forcing accent to strain and crack a prescribed pattern³⁷ but rather were concerned with finding a rhythm that would express the passionate fullness of their minds. In particular, John Donne "writes as one who will say what he has without regard to conventions of poetic diction or smooth verse".³⁸ Donne's breakaway from the "sugared diction" of the early Renaissance writers was one of the important means whereby he rescued English love poetry from the conventions threatening to engulf it at the end of the sixteenth century.

The poetry of John Donne offers many examples of startling, jarring, arresting, phrases reminiscent of the ordinary language of speech.

For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love,³⁹...

Who ever comes to shroud me, do not harme

Nor question much

That subtile wreath of haire, which crowns my arme;⁴⁰..

I long to talke with some old lovers ghost

Who dyed before the god of Love was borne⁴¹

³⁶ Joan Bennet, op.cit., p.30 ff.

³⁷ H.J.C. Grierson, op.cit., p.xxiii.

³⁸ Ibid., p.113 ff.

³⁹ John Donne, "The Canonization", L.1.

⁴⁰ John Donne, "The Funerall", LL.1-3.

⁴¹ John Donne, "Loves Deitie", LL.1-2.

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Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;⁴².

When my grave is broke up againe
Some second ghest to entertaine,
(For graves have learn'd that woman-head
To be to more then one a Bed)⁴³

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne,
Which is my sin, though it were done before?⁴⁴

The simplicity which George Herbert achieves is:
"the result of concrete imagery, familiar diction, and a
sound pattern close to the rhythm of speech".⁴⁵ His words
recall the affairs of every day and his imagery is frequently
of the market place. Like Donne, Herbert avoids the poetical.
His words drop out in a natural prose order similar to the
language of ordinary speech. While the type of jarring,
arresting phrase which frequently opens the lyrics of Donne
is not characteristic of Herbert's poetry, the conversational
tone is common to the work of both poets.

Since, Lord, to thee
A narrow way and little gate
Is all the passage, on my infancie
Thou didst lay hold, and antedate
My faith in me.⁴⁶

I have consider'd it, and finde
There is no dealing with thy mighty passion:
For though I die for thee, I am behinde;
My sinnes deserve the condemnation⁴⁷

42 John Donne, "Sonnet IX", LL.1-2.

43 John Donne, "The Relique", LL.1-4.

44 John Donne, "A Hymne to God the Father", LL.1-2.

45 Joan Bennet, op.cit., p.60.

46 George Herbert, "H. Baptisme", LL.1-5.

47 George Herbert, "The Reprisall", LL.1-4.

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When first thou didst entice to thee my heart,
I thought the service brave:48...

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more.
I will abroad.
What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?49

Wilt thou meet arms with man, that thou dost stretch
A crumme of dust from heav'n to hell?50

What do I see
Written above there? Yesterday
I did behave me carelesly,
When I did pray.51

Typical of his school, Herbert used the language of speech
to speak familiarly of ultimate things.

Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?52

The passage is similar to others by Donne and Vaughan:

What if this present were the world's last night?53

I saw eternity the other night.54

The attempt to draw upon the terms and rhythms of
ordinary conversation, a feature which is common to members
of the Metaphysical School, is evident in Herbert's poetry.

A third characteristic of metaphysical poetry is its
reflection of an analytical frame of mind. The poet's use of
terms which call the mind into play rather than appealing to
the senses or evoking emotional responses through memory,
suggests this feature common to much of the poetry. The

48 George Herbert, "Afflection (1)," LL. 1-2.

49 George Herbert, "The Collar", LL. 1-3.

50 George Herbert, "The Temper", LL. 13-14.

51 George Herbert, "The Method", LL. 14-17.

52 George Herbert, "The Windows", L. 1.

53 John Donne, "Sonnet XIII"

54 Henry Vaughan, "The World", L. 1.

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poetry "usually comprises an analysis as well as a correlation of emotions".⁵⁵ Dr Johnson looked upon this characteristic as one of the serious limitations of the school.

"Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions and in descriptions not descending to minuteness. Those writers who lay on watch for novelty could have little hope of greatness; for great things cannot have escaped former observation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments; they could no more represent, by slender conceits, and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or scenes of life, than he who dissects a sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effluence of a summer noon".⁵⁶

The term "analytical" refers to both the writer's frame of mind reflected by the poetry, and to the approach required of the reader. Johnson goes on to say that when reading the poetry of the Metaphysicals, the mind is either made to recollect or inquire. Something which has been learned previously must be retrieved or something completely new must be examined; if their greatness "seldom elevates", their acuteness often surprises; if the reader's imagination is not always gratified, at least his powers of reflection and comparison are employed.

Sir Walter Scott also refers to the characteristic when referring to the poets. "They played with thoughts as the elizabethans played with words - to play with thoughts

⁵⁵ Joan Bennet, op.cit., p.3.

⁵⁶ Samuel Johnson, quoted by H.J.C. Grierson, op.cit., p. xxxv. ff.

you have to think".⁵⁷

The writer's use of conceits requires the reader to approach the poetry with the faculty which apprehends a mathematical problem. Emotional states expressed through comparisons drawn from geometry, astronomy, geography, astrology, alchemy, law, -----, require the reader to dissect, examine, analyse and ponder before the full effects of the devices are received.

In his religious poetry, Donne explores his feelings toward God as he explores his feelings toward his beloved in his secular poetry. In his "Hymn to God the Father", he distinguishes between various types of sin for which he asks forgiveness. His analytical bent is reflected in the distinction between original sin, sins presently being committed, the sin of being an occasion of sin for others, sins overcome after a long period, and the sin of despair. The neat distinctions are all the more apparent when presented within eighteen lines.

In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", Donne analyses in detail the feelings of separating lovers and expresses the feelings by means of intellectual hyperboles. The same analytical bent is apparent in poems such as "The Canonization" and "The Indifferent."

⁵⁷ Sir Walter Scott, quoted by H.J.C. Grierson op.cit., p. xxxi ff.

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Herbert resembles the leader of the school through the analytical approach his poetry reflects. In "The Collar," he analyses his motives and reactions to a collar not easily worn. In "The Temper", he distinguishes between the various states of love for God which he experiences when running the gamut of religious emotions. In "Prayer", the writer lists the various aspects from which prayer may be viewed.

Critics have levied various charges at the Metaphysical School. The use of far-fetched figures of speech has been attributed to the attempt to pursue logical ingenuity for its own sake. They have been accused of being concerned primarily with the attempt to show their own learning. The school has been charged with failing to give the common thoughts of mankind a satisfying expression due to its preoccupation with developing far-fetched figures of speech. The poets' attempt to be analytical has been pointed to as an additional cause for their failure to deal with general thoughts. Obscurity is a fault which has been attributed to the Metaphysical School.

If on occasion, the poets pursue logical ingenuity for its own sake, this tendency is no worse than the pursuit of sensation for its own sake. While certain poems ("The Flea"; "A Validiction: Forbidding Mourning"), contain images which appear to be indulged in for their own sake, this is not a general characteristic of the best metaphysical poetry.

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Rather than using images merely to show their learning, the images are more frequently used as means toward an end. If the writers are analytic in their approach to the experiences and states of mind which they express, it requires that they free themselves from outmoded literary conventions in their attempt to be original. In addition, the reader must free himself of the mental intoxication provoked by some poetry. To read ~~metaphysical~~ poetry, it is necessary to think. If the style of the Metaphysicals is obscure, the obscurity may be traced to one or a combination of various causes. Obscurity may be the fault of the writer due to a cleavage between the poet's image and the original impulse. Obscurity may result from the poet's use of recondite imagery. The obscurity may be the result of compression which is particularly acute in the imagery of the Metaphysicals.

Summary

A more complete understanding and a more accurate appraisal of the poetry of George Herbert is the result of some knowledge of the literary currents within which he worked. As a poet, Herbert reacted against outmoded literary conventions. The fashion of imitating the sonnets of Petrarch or the prose of John Lyly had outlived its usefulness when Herbert came upon the scene. He, and other members of the Metaphysical School, had common aims and

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their poetry had common characteristics. The significance of the word "metaphysical" as applied to the group, their use of metaphor, their attempt to draw upon the terms and rhythms of ordinary conversation, and the analysis required of the writer and the reader, all suggest distinguishing characteristics of the poetry of Herbert and his School.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONTENTS OF THE TEMPLE

The poetry of George Herbert consists of The Temple, one hundred and sixty-nine short poems, all but a few of which are concerned with religious topics. Two standard editions of Herbert's works may be used when summarizing the contents of The Temple. The English Works of George Herbert (3 vols., 1905; revised, 1907; reissued, 1907; reissued, 1915), by George Herbert Palmer of Harvard; and The Works of George Herbert, (one vol., 1941; reprinted from corrected sheets of the first edition 1945, 1953), by Rev. F. L. Hutchinson, sometime Fellow of All'Souls College, are the standard editions of the works of George Herbert.

George Herbert Palmer attributed much importance to the fact that his was the first attempt to arrange the poems in chronological order. Mr. Palmer was the first to discern that of the two manuscripts extant, the Bodleian and the Williams manuscripts, the Williams text contains only sixty-nine of the poems none of which refer to the author having reached the priesthood. On this evidence, Mr. Palmer inferred that the collection was completed before Herbert went to Bemerton in 1630.

On the strength of this inference, Mr. Palmer divided the poems into three sections. Of the three divisions, the first and third are major divisions and the second contains but eighteen poems. The first division has

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called "Cambridge Poems"; the second was called "The Crisis"; the third division was called "Bemerton Poems".

"We shall accordingly have poems of the Cambridge Period, extending from the beginning of his writing through his Oratorship to 1627; of the Crisis period, from that date through the years of stress and strain to the time of his taking orders in 1630; and poems of the Bemerton period, when as a priest he served his little parish from 1630 until his death."¹

With these divisions of the poems, more recent students of Herbert find no quarrel.

More serious risks² are taken by Mr. Palmer however, when he makes five sub-divisions within each of the main sections, "Cambridge Poems" and "Bemerton Poems". The inner grouping of the "Cambridge Poems" is listed under: "The Church Porch", "The Resolve", "The Church", "Meditation" and "The Inner Life". The grouping within the "Bemerton Poems" section is indicated by dividing the poems under the headings: "The Happy Priest", "Bemerton Study", "Restlessness", "Suffering", and "Death".

Mr. Palmer's inner grouping of the poems is useful if it is regarded as what he expressly calls it: "A classification according to the subject matter of the poems",

¹ George Herbert Palmer, The Life and Works of George Herbert, 3 volumes, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1905, p.188, volume 1.

² F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.lxviii.

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"a topical order".³ Caution is required however before his view that the grouping also presents: "a classification which is also largely chronological",⁴ may be accepted.

In the "Bemerton Poems" section for example, almost all the happier poems come at the beginning and are followed by poems of gloom. This "chronological arrangement" contradicts the contemporary evidence of Herbert's character and disposition at the end of his life.⁵ Mr. Aldous Huxley has described Herbert's temperament exactly:

"The climate of the mind is positively English in its variableness and instability. Frost, sunshine, hopeless drought and refreshing rains succeed one another with bewildering rapidity. Herbert is the poet of this inner weather."⁶

Mr. Hutchinson agrees with this estimate of Herbert's temperament.

"He is resilient and passes quickly from fits of depression to reassurance; the saddest poems either end with harmony restored or are followed in the original order by a poem in which he recovers peace of mind."⁷

The editor goes on to say that "on the whole more is lost that is gained by dispersing the poems in groups on such slender internal evidence".⁸

3 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.190.

4 Ibid., p.190.

5 Chapter One, Biographical Sketch.

6 Aldous Huxley, Texts and Pretexts, p.12. quoted

by F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.lxix.

7 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.lxix.

8 Ibid., p.lxix.

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While this caveat must be entered against taking Mr. Palmer's topical arrangement as being also "largely chronological," the indebtedness of every student of Herbert to Mr. Palmer for his work in arranging the poems in a topical order must be recognized. The "topical arrangement" presented, when evaluated and qualified in the light of Mr. Hutchinson's commentary, suggests a useful plan to be followed when summarizing the contents of The Temple.

1 Cambridge Poems

(a) The Church Porch

Mr. Palmer states⁹ that this work bears much the same relation to Herbert's other poetry as the Jewish Wisdom books - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiastical, and Wisdom, bear to the Psalms and the Prophets. Rather than religion, the poem reveals a shrewd knowledge of men, manners, and methods of winning eminence. The sententious morality which this collection of wise laws contains reveals the university courtier.

The title, "The Church Porch" takes on added significance when related to the title, The Temple. Propriety, beauty, good judgement, are set forth as the suitable intro-

⁹ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.3 vol. 11.

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duction to religion. The results of Herbert's secular experience are here offered to the reader as a preparation for the more important spiritual fervor which is to follow.

The poem contains no statement that its author is a priest although the poem does reflect a deep interest in the priest's work and office.

Judge not the preacher; for he is thy Judge.¹⁰

He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.¹¹

Jest not at preacher's language or expression.¹²

The poem begins with a discussion of the ruder sins (intemperance, oaths, lying, indolence), and advances to the niceties of worship. The instructions about public worship are more coherent than any other part of the poem.

The topics of "The Church Porch" and the order in which they appear are as follows.

I	Address to the Young Reader.
II-IV	Chastity.
V-IX	Temperance.
X-XII	Oaths.
XIII	Lying.
XIV-XVI	Indolence.
XVII-XIX	Education.
XX-XXI	Constancy.
XXII-XXIII	Gluttony.
XXIV-XXV	Self-Discipline.
XXVI-XXX	The use of money.
XXXI-XXXII	Dress.

¹⁰ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", L.427.

¹¹ Ibid., LL.433-434.

¹² Ibid., L.439.

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XXXIIII-XXXIV	Gaming.
XXXV	Conversation.
XXXVI-XXXVIII	Command of Temper.
XXXIX-XLII	Mirth.
XLIII-XLV	Behavior to the Great.
XLVI	Friendship.
XLVII-XLVIII	Suretyship.
XLIX-LV	Social Intercourse.
LVI-LVIII	Magnanimity.
LIX-LXI	Indebtedness to Others.
LXII	Personal nicety.
LXIII-LXV	Almsgiving.
LXVI-LXXI	Public Prayer.
LXII-LXXV	Preaching.
LXXVI	Review of the day.
LXXVII	Conclusion.

As "The Church Porch" is included in the Williams Manuscript, it was probably written before 1630. While the content of the poem may appear to be relatively unimportant in comparison to the poetry of religious autobiography, the value which Herbert placed upon it and how steadily he labored on its improvement may be seen in the many changes, major and minor, which were introduced during Herbert's Bemerton years. A comparison of lines as they appeared first in the Williams Manuscript and subsequently in the Bodleian, indicates the intervention of a smoothing artist.

O England! full of all sin, most of sloth
O England! full of sinne, but most of sloth.¹³

When base men are exalted, do not batel¹⁴
When basenesse is exalted, do not bate.

Need and bee glad and wish thy presence still¹⁵
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.

¹³ Ibid., L.91.

¹⁴ Ibid., L.265.

¹⁵ Ibid., L.326.

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(b)The Resolve

The eleven poems contained within this topical group-
ing announce the resolve of Herbert to become a poet and
state certain ends which he desires his poetry to accomplish.
Within this group he outlines his intention of reacting
against some of the contemporary fashions in love poetry.
While he will deal with a different type of love, he will
attempt to compete by using the same amount of passionate
enthusiasm and technical resources. Poets have misconceived
the theme of love by confining it to the human realm of
petty relations between men and women. Herbert will deal
with the more significant love between God and Man.

In his two youthful sonnets written to his mother
while at Cambridge,¹⁶ he reveals that he has already discov-
ered the emptiness and artificiality of love which is
restricted to human beings. True love poetry should be
addressed only to God.

My God, where is that antient heat towards thee
Wherewith whole shoals of Martyrs once did burn,
Besides their other flames? -----

Cannot thy love
Heighten a spirit to sound out thy praise
As well as any she?¹⁷

¹⁶ These sonnets were "in the first year of his going
to Cambridge sent his dear Mother for a New-Years gift".
Izaak Walton, quoted by F.E. Hutchinson op.cit., p.549.

¹⁷ George Herbert, "To His Mother, Sonnet I",
LL.1-3,6-8.

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Sure, Lord, there is enough in thee to dry
Oceans of Ink;¹⁸

In the poems "Love I" and "Love II", the poet expresses how the love that fashions the universe is a greater inspiration to poetry than is woman's love.

How hath man parcel'd out thy glorious name
And Thrown it on that dust which thou hast made
While mortall love doth all the title gain!¹⁹

Our eies shall see thee, which before saw dust,
Dust blown by wit till that they both were blinde.²⁰

Herbert's all-excluding devotion to God is defended against the love poets in the first "Jordan". That poetry which deals with human love is labored and artificial: "Catching the sense at two removes."²¹ Divine love shall make his poetry swift and simple: "Who plainly say, My God, My King".²² In the second "Jordan" he relates his own tendency to indulge in the very errors to which he is opposed.

"-- I sought out quaint words and trim inventions;
My thoughts began to burnish, sprout, and swell,
Curling with metaphors a plain intention,...²³

He quickly discovered that the only thing necessary for his type of poetry is love itself.

There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd,
Copie out onely that, and save expense...²⁴

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- 18 George Herbert, "To His Mother, Sonnet II", LL.1-2.
 - 19 George Herbert, "Love I", LL.3-5.
 - 20 George Herbert, "Love II", LL.9-10.
 - 21 George Herbert, "Jordan I", L.10.
 - 22 Ibid., L.15.
 - 23 George Herbert, "Jordan II", LL.3-5.
 - 24 Ibid., LL.17-18.

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In "Praise", the poet implores divine aid without which his poetic work cannot be done. He looks upon his willingness to accept aid, as a power in itself. In "The Quidditie", he acknowledges that in the eyes of the world his poetry is but a trifle.

My God, a verse is not a crown,
No point of honour, or gay suit,²⁵...

In "The Elixer", the poet encourages himself by recalling the transforming power of love for God.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold.²⁶

In "Employment", he guards against sluggishness.

Man is no starre, but a quick coal
Of mortall fire;²⁷...

The final poem of this grouping, "Antiphon", describes the adoration both men and angels give to God.

Chorus. Praised ~~be~~ the God of love,
Men. Here below,
Angels. And here above²⁸.

(c) The Church

Within this group are those ecclesiastical poems which celebrate the ~~feasts~~ and institutions of the Church. In contrast to most of the poetry, these poems contain little personal reference.

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- 25 George Herbert, "The Quidditie", LL.1-2.
 - 26 George Herbert, "The Elixer", LL.21-22.
 - 27 George Herbert, "Employment", LL.6-7.
 - 28 George Herbert, "Antiphon", LL.1-3.

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In religion, Herbert was an individualist, and the relations between God and his own soul are of prime importance to him. The notion of dedicating himself to the salvation of his fellow men is not conspicuous in the poetry.

It is in this relationship that he finds the foundation of the Church. The Church organizes and gives opportunity of expression to the love of the individual and God. The poet is devoted to the Church for this reason.

The poet who expressed the resolve to devote his powers to writing love poetry dedicated to the more significant love between God and man quite naturally devoted poems to singing the praises of the Church and its ordinances. Such poems celebrate God's going forth through the Church, its ordinances and ceremonies, to seek mankind. Mankind is ill at ease when it is separated from God, and the poems of this section indicate the means whereby God and Man may be united. The "ordered paths" and "fixed avenues"²⁹ through which the Loved One becomes accessible, are outlined. When Mr. Palmer outlines his reasons for isolating the poems of this grouping, he cautions us to remember that these poems, "no less than the poignant cries of separation and suffering, derive their meanings from the individual experience of love."³⁰

²⁹ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.113.

³⁰ Ibid., p.114.

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The section begins with an appropriate poem "Superliminare", which outlines the conditions of entering the Church of God.

Thou, whom the former precepts have
Sprinkled and taught how to behave
Thy self in church, approach, and taste
The Churches mysticall repast.³¹

Herbert has two examples of shaped verse, "The Altar" and "Easter-wings". In 1682 Dryden may have had Herbert in mind when in "MacFlecknoe", he satirically tells Shadwell:

Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in Acrostic Land,
There thou mayst wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.³²

In the first of these poems, the poet describes how the human heart, by allowing itself to be broken by affliction, may out of its fragments build an altar and make its pains God's praise.

"The Sacrifice" is one of Herbert's few long poems and it is his only poem put entirely into the mouth of another. The suffering of Christ is described by Him in elaborate detail. The poem contains elaborate realism, "an exaggeration of physical pain, a forced ingenuity in distressful incident and a failure to subordinate detail".³³

31 George Herbert, "Superliminare", LL.1-4.

32 John Dryden, "MacFlecknoe", LL.205-208.

33 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.114.

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O all ye who pass by, behold and see!
 Man stole the fruit, but I must climbe the tree;
 The tree of life to all but onely me.³⁴

Then with the reed they gave to me before
 They strike my head, the rock from whence all store
 Of heav'nly blessings issue evermore.³⁵

In treating this subject, Herbert allows himself the smallest possible departure from the words of Scripture, a fact amply illustrated in Mr. Palmer's notes to the poem.

Following "The Sacrifice", is a series of festival songs. In "Good Friday", the poet conjectures how he will number the sorrows of Christ.

O my chief good,
 How shall I measure out thy bloud?
 How shall I count what thee befell,
 And each grief tell?³⁶

The sorrows are as many as are his foes, the stars, the leaves and fruits of autumn, the hours or sins of a life. If inscribed on the poet's heart, they would leave no room for sin.

In "Easter", the feast is described as a day of gladness and rejoicing. "Whitsunday" expresses the poet's longing for direct enlightenment, such as once came in tongues of fire.

³⁴ George Herbert, "The Sacrifice", 201-203.

³⁵ Ibid., LL.169-171.

³⁶ George Herbert, "Good Friday", LL.1-4.

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Where is that fire which once descended
In thy apostles?³⁷

In "Trinity Sunday", the three stanzas of three lines each suggest a perfect adaptation of form to content. On Trinity Sunday the poet is reminded of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and their acts of creation, redemption and sanctification; inducing man to be purged, confess and strive; with heart, mouth and hands; in faith, hope and charity; through running, rising and resting.

In "To All Angels and Saints", the poet states his reason for not worshiping angels and saints. It is not because they are unworthy, but because worship of them is not commanded by God who "Bids no such thing".³⁸

The three following poems, "Christmas", "Lent", and "Sunday", return to the praise of Church festivals. In the sonnet "Christmas", the poet uses the homely analogy of a tired rider retiring to an inn. The inn proved to be his Lord's inn and since He was born among the beasts, he asks Him to make of his brutish heart a better lodging than He ever found at birth or death.

In "Lent" the poet praises abstinence. It is beneficial to us.

³⁷ George Herbert, "Whitsunday", LL.5-6.

³⁸ George Herbert, "To All Angels and Saints", L.18.

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True Christians should be glad of an occasion
To use their temperance, seeking no evasion
When good is seasonable.³⁹

Abstinence is commanded by the Scriptures and the Church.

The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church sayes, now;⁴⁰

The festival of Sunday is described in a poem of that name as a day more frequent, pompous, and full of human significance than all other holy days.

The Sundaies of man's life,
Thredded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternall glorious King.⁴¹

Sundaies the pillars are
On which heav'ns palace arched lies:⁴² ...

This day my Saviour rose,
And did inclose this light for his;⁴³...

Following the festival songs are grouped special modes of divine communications discussed in poems entitled "Prayer", "Scripture", "Baptisme", "Communion", "Musick".

In the first of two poems entitled "Prayer", prayer is described as:

God's breath in man returning to his birth,⁴⁴...
and is praised in a series of equally effective metaphors.
A second "Prayer", outlines how the great value of prayer

³⁹ George Herbert, "Lent", LL.13-15.

⁴⁰ Ibid., L.4.

⁴¹ George Herbert, "Sunday", LL.29-32.

⁴² Ibid., LL.22-23.

⁴³ Ibid., LL.36-37.

⁴⁴ George Herbert, "Prayer", L.2.

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is indicated by its revelation of God's accessibility, power, and love.

In two sonnets entitled "The H. Scriptures", the poet affirms first the worth of all parts of Scripture.

Thou art a masse
Of strange delights, where we may wish and take.⁴⁵

The second sonnet affirms the worth of all parts of Scripture in combination.

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie;⁴⁶...

Poems entitled "H. Baptisme" discuss first the poet's thought that his true nature, brought about by the sacrament of Baptism, is visible beneath his sins. The second poem presents a compact commentary on the value of realizing the worth of littleness.

O let me still
Write thee great God, and me a childe
Let me be soft and supple to thy will,
Small to my self, to others milde,
Behither ill.⁴⁷

In part 1 of "The H. Communion", the writer outlines the subtlety of God's approaches.

Not in rich furniture or fine aray,
Nor in a wedge of gold,
Thou, who from me wast sold,
To me dost now thy self convey;...

45 George Herbert, "The H. Scriptures I", LL.6-7.

46 George Herbert, "The H. Scriptures II", LL.5-6.

47 George Herbert, "H. Baptism II", LL.5-10.

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But by way of nourishment and strength
 Thou creep'st into my breast,
 Making thy way my rest,⁴⁸...

Part II states that the approach of man to God is hindered by sin.

For sure when Adam did not know
 To sinne, or sinne to smother,
 He might to heav'n from Paradise go
 As from one room t'another.⁴⁹

The section concludes with "Church-Musick" and "Church Monuments". Music is a refuge.

But if I travell in your companie,
 You know the way to heaven's doore.⁵⁰

Stately burial monuments incite the beholder to high aspiration and disentanglement from the body.

Deare flesh, while I do pray, learne here thy stemme
 And true descent;⁵¹

(d) Meditation

To this group Mr. Palmer assigns those poems which reflect profound meditations on abstract themes to which he infers the Cambridge period gave rise. Mr. Palmer states⁵² that one who takes love for his theme will find that there are three ways of exploring it. The poet may: "directly inspect the yearning moods of the soul, viewing them as

7-9. ⁴⁸ George Herbert, "The.H.Communion Part I", LL.1-4

⁴⁹ George Herbert, "The.H.Communion Part II", LL.33-36.

⁵⁰ George Herbert, "Church-Musick", LL.11-12.

⁵¹ George Herbert, "Church-Monuments", LL.17-18.

⁵² George Herbert Palmer op.cit., pp.112 ff.

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psychological facts of experience".⁵³ The poetry dealing with love in this way is grouped under the section to follow, "The Inner Life". A second way of exploring the theme is for the poet to "catalogue the regularities of love, its habitual modes of expression, the fixed avenues through which the loved one becomes accessible".⁵⁴ Such poems which mark out the ordered paths of love are grouped under the preceding heading, "The Church". A third way of exploring the theme of love is "to consider more abstractly the general relations involved in love, and treat these as theoretic subjects of contemplation".⁵⁵ Poems reflecting this approach treat love as a subject for philosophic analysis and are grouped under the heading "Meditation".

Poetry under this heading, studies of the natures of God and Man, is referred to as "the most serious studies of Herbert's Cambridge days."⁵⁶ The poems within this grouping are distinguished from the rest of the poems of this highly personal writer by their abstract and impersonal character. Herbert's favorite pronoun, I, appears infrequently. In spite of this, these poems, no less than the others, study the approaches of God and the individual soul.

⁵³ Ibid., p.113.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.113.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.113.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.207.

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The first poem of this section repeats something of the sententious wisdom of "the Church Porch". "Charms and Knots" returns to the didactic manner of his long moralizing work and contains ten couplets similar to the following.

Who goes to bed and doth not pray,
Maketh two nights to ev'ry day.⁵⁷

The main idea of "Man" is that man is everything, and more. Man possesses all the qualities of a tree, a beast; he is "all symmetrie"; "nothing hath got so far."⁵⁸

In "The World", the poet states that "the lords of life are, Love, Wisdom, Law, Grace, and Glory. Fortune, Pleasure, Sin, and Death have but momentary power".⁵⁹

Discussions of sin, faith, and redemption, themes seldom absent from Herbert's mind, follow. In "Sinne", the poet attempts to describe the hideousness of sin.

By sight of sinne we should grow mad.⁶⁰

In a sonnet of the same name, Herbert devotes the first quatrain to describing those protections from sin which arise from human guardianship; the second quatrain describes those protections arising from divine appointment; the third outlines those resulting from social sanction. The closing couplet states:

57 George Herbert, "Charms and Knots", LL.7-8.

58 George Herbert, "Man", L.19.

59 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.224.

60 George Herbert, "Sinne I", L.8.

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Yet all these fences and their whole aray
One cunning bosome sinne blows quite away.⁶¹

The poem "Faith" follows logically by expressing wonder at how, in spite of man's sin, God rewards us with faith.

Faith makes me anything, or all
That I beleeve is in the sacred storie⁶².

A sonnet entitled "Redemption", opens with the concrete imagery, familiar diction and a sound pattern close to the rhythm of speech which is characteristic of much of his poetry.

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 cancell th'old⁶³.

The poet seeks a new habitation and finds that He who must give it had already given it at the cost of His life.

Following within this group are poems containing reflections on human changeableness, a theme which is popular in the poets' work. In "Humilitie", the necessity of spiritual forces, - humility, fortitude, temperance, justice, - having harmony among themselves when attempting to control the brutal ones such as pride, is outlined by means of an allegory.

⁶¹ George Herbert, "Sinne II", LL.13-14.

⁶² George Herbert, "Faith", LL.17-18.

⁶³ George Herbert, "Redemption," LL.1-4..

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"Ungratefulnesse" states that the gifts of God, which express His love for us and are designed to draw us to Him, are not returned by man. In spite of God giving to man the gifts of the Trinity and Incarnation:

... man is close, reserv'd, and dark to thee.
When thou demandest but a heart,
He cavils instantly.⁶⁴

"Affliction" expresses the poet's belief that grief afflicts man for a purpose.

We are the trees whom shaking fastens more,⁶⁵ ...

In "Miserie", man's obstinate blindness is indicated as being the chief mark of man's wretched condition.

But Man doth know
The spring whence all things flow:
And yet, as though he knew it not,
His knowledge winks and lets his humours reigne.⁶⁶

In the poem entitled "Mortification", the poet sees in the needs of man at five ages prefigurements of the needs of death. The needs of infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and age suggests the needs of death, --- a shroud, a grave, a bell, a coffin, and a bier.

Man ere he is aware
Hath put together a solemnitie,
And drest his herse while he has breath
As yet to spare.⁶⁷

The section naturally concludes with verse about

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- 64 George Herbert, "Ungratefulnesse", LL.25-27.
 - 65 George Herbert, "Affliction", L.20.
 - 66 George Herbert, "Miserie", LL.59-62.
 - 67 George Herbert, "Mortification", LL.31-34.

death and the life beyond. The first of these eschatological poems, "Death", describes death as having been thought of at one time as:

..... An uncouth hideous thing,
Nothing but bones,
The sad effect of sadder grones,⁶⁸

That time is past and the death of Our Lord has given new meaning to life and death.

But since our Saviour's death did put some blood
Into thy face,
Thou art grown fair and full of grace.⁶⁹

"Dooms-Day" asks God to gather our members quickly from the dust.

Summon all the dust to rise,
.....
Dust alas, no musick feels.⁷⁰

The poems "Judgement" and "Heaven" fall naturally in that order. The first poem expresses the belief that man can find consolation in the thought of judgement by dwelling upon the love of God rather than upon the thought of his own worth. The second poem echoes the joys of immortality, --- light, joy, and leisure, which shall "persever" ever.

(e) The Inner Life

In the poems grouped under this heading the poetic modes most characteristic of Herbert are met for the first

⁶⁸ George Herbert, "Death", LL.1-3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., LL.13-15.

⁷⁰ George Herbert, "Dooms-Day", L.3, L.9.

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time. The immediate predecessors of Herbert had developed the love lyric to a highly polished and artificial perfection. Elizabethan and Jacobean poets found in the languishing lover a fit subject for their verse. Through long sequences of sonnets, the poet followed the approach of the undeserving lover to the exalted lady - a lady with a cold heart easily alienated once engaged, and of whose slightest favor the poet thinks himself to be perpetually unworthy.

The type of religious love lyric appearing in this group illustrates Herbert's most characteristic reaction against the literary conventions in lyric poetry current in his day. While he reacted against the content of popular lyric poetry, he retained the methods used. He brought over into the religious field the heart-searchings, the sighs, and the self-accusations which had hitherto been characteristic of secular love poetry. He attempts to draw upon his own experiences of the dealings of God with his own heart.

Grouped together at this point then:

" - so far as these can be parted from the similarly minded verses of preceding sections, - are all the poems which Herbert wrote while at Cambridge in which his changing moods of mind are studied and heightened for the purpose of reflecting vicissitudes in his love of God."⁷¹

The section begins with two glad notes. In "Our Life is Hid With Christ In God", the poet discusses the two

⁷¹ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., pp.279-280 Vol.II

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tendencies of life.

One life is wrapt in flesh, and tends to earth;
The other winds towards him whose happie birth---.72
.....

The subject of "Mattens" is that God awakens us each morning not to seek the things of this world but rather to seek Him.

In "The Thanksgiving" and "The Reprisall", the theme is turned to man's incompetence, at his best, to make gifts worthy of Him whom he adores. The first poem states that the mode of thanksgiving most appropriate to the Christian is to vie with his Master.

Nay, I will reade thy book and never move
Till I have found therein thy love,
Thy art of love, which I'll turn back on thee:73

The second poem reveals the poet's intention of sharing Christ's victory by conquering him who Christ conquers - himself.

Though I can do nought
Against thee, in thee I will overcome
The man who once against thee fought.74

The three following poems acknowledge that the failure of God to smile upon the poet is due to radical faults in himself. "The Sinner" expresses the poet's feeling of sinfulness and he takes consolation in the fact

72 George Herbert, "Our Life is Hid with Christ in God", LL.5-6.

73 George Herbert, "The Thanksgiving", LL.45-47.

74 George Herbert, "The Reprisall", LL.14-16.

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that "thou once didst write in stone"⁷⁵ and could move his hard heart to repentance. In "Deniall" the writer states the feeling of despair he once experienced at not having his prayers answered.

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue
To crie to thee,
And then not heare it crying⁷⁶

"Church - Lock and Key" states the error of our mistaking our inaccessibility to God for God's inaccessibility to us.

But as cold hands are angrie with the fire
And mend it still,
So I do lay the want of my desire
Not on my sinnes or coldnesse, but thy will⁷⁷

The faults within himself to which he attributes the failure of God to smile upon him are connected with specific acts of wrong-doing in poems entitled "Nature" and "Repentance". The feeling of revolt against God which causes him to resist the divine will is stated and repented in the first poem.

Full of rebellion, I would die,
Or fight, or travell, or denie
That thou hast ought to do with me
.....
O smooth my rugged heart, and there
Engrave thy rev'rend law and fear!⁷⁸

"Repentance" asks for God's mercy because man's sin is rooted in his frailty.

Cut me not off for my most foul transgression⁷⁹

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- 75 George Herbert, "The Sinner", L.14.
76 George Herbert, "The Deniall", LL.16-18.
77 George Herbert, "Church-Lock and Key", LL.5-8.
78 George Herbert, "Nature", LL.1-3, LL.13-14.
79 George Herbert, "Repentance", L.15.

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The remaining poems of the grouping are lamentations of instability. The poem entitled "Unkindnesse" contrasts the writer's treatment of a friend and his treatment of God.

I would not use a friend as I use Thee⁸⁰.
He is quick to defend his friend's good name; he grants his friend's requests; he gives his friend his rightful place.

Yet can a friend what thou hast done fulfill?
I write in brasse, my God upon a tree
His bloud did spill
Onely to purchase my good-will;
Yet use I not my foes as I use thee⁸¹.

"Grace" expresses the poet's feeling of helplessness and his craving for divine aid.

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandrie improve⁸².

The main idea of two poems entitled "The Temper", may be summed up in Wordsworth's line from the Ode to Duty:

I long for a repose that ever is the same.⁸³

The first poem opens with the lines:

It cannot be. Where is that mighty joy
Which just now took up all my heart?⁸⁴

The second "Temper" expresses the moods of varying intensity of love for God experienced by the poet who wishes that:

If what my soul doth feel sometimes,
My soul might ever feel!⁸⁵

79 George Herbert, "Repentance", L.15.

80 George Herbert, "Unkindnesse", L.5.

81 Ibid., LL.21-25.

82 George Herbert, "Grace", LL.1-2.

83 William Wordsworth, "Ode to Duty", L.40.

84 George Herbert, "The Temper" I", L.1-2.

85 George Herbert, "The Temper II", LL.3-4.

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In the final poem of the section, "A Wreath", the poet presents a "wreathed garland" which he hopes may, even in his "Crooked, winding wayes", express his tender reverence.

2 The Crisis

Mr. Palmer assigns the poems contained within this grouping to that period of Herbert's life covering approximately the years 1626-1630. During this period, opposing forces within the poet conflicted and brought to him the distress reflected within these poems.

By birth, temperament, and circumstances, Herbert seemed at one time to be destined for a life of fashion, worldly honor, pleasure, and secular learning.⁸⁶ The example of his brothers, the influence of powerful friends, his attraction to "all elegancies of speech, dress, and living,"⁸⁷ seemed to indicate "a brilliant man of the world; a richly endowed child of the Renaissance."⁸⁸ Such circumstances inevitably induced secular ambition.

At the same time, Herbert seemed to have been destined from childhood for the priesthood. In "The Glance", Herbert describes how he had felt God's eye to be upon him even in youth.

⁸⁶ Biographical Sketch, Chapter One.

⁸⁷ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.324.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.324.

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When first thy sweet and gracious eye
 Vouchsaf'd ev'n in the midst of youth and night
 To look upon me.⁸⁹

In a letter of 1617 he speaks of "now setting foot into Divinity".⁹⁰ In a letter to his mother written in 1622, he fears sickness as something which has made him "unable to perform those offices for which I came into the world and must yet be kept in it."⁹¹

These are the opposing forces whose conflict at a crisis period Herbert recorded in the poems to follow. Secular ambition contends with the love of God whose embodiment Herbert felt was the priesthood. They are regarded by Herbert as fundamentally incompatible. While he never doubts which of the two must ultimately win, at any particular moment he dreads the final decision.

My soul doth love thee, yet it loves delay?⁹²

Whether or not the reader agrees with the assumed antithesis, it is evident that there is magnificent poetic material contained within such experience.

⁸⁹ George Herbert, "The Glance", LL.1-3.

⁹⁰ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.364. Also Appendix A, Letters.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.373.

⁹² George Herbert, "Justice", L.11.

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"As an artist, in whom feeling is not falsified by representation, he watched every stage of the contest and recorded it with poignant splendor. Peculiar and possibly distorted emotions which sprang up in a single mind under special conditions of time, family, and belief, he fashioned into pictures of such universal and perpetual beauty that men of alien ideals have for three centuries been able to find in these experiences subtle interpretations of their own."⁹³

A poem entitled "Easter Wings", and shaped to resemble the wings of a bird in flight, opens this section. The human being, cramped by sin and sorrow, is set free by Christ. The poet became "most poore" and "most thinne" until strengthened and prepared for flight by Christ.

One of Herbert's longer poems, "Affliction", is assigned by Palmer to a date as late as 1628 and may be interpreted as a summary of the whole period of turmoil.

At first thou gav'st me milk and sweetnesses;
 I had my wish and way.
 My dayes were straw'd with flow'rs and happinesse,
 There was no moneth but May.
 But with my yeares sorrow did twist and grow,
 And made a partie unawares for wo

 Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
 The way that takes the town,
 Thou didst betray me to a lingering book
 And wrap me in a gown.⁹⁴

The double-minded man torn between the secular and religious life is portrayed.

⁹³ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.328.

⁹⁴ George Herbert, "Affliction", LL.19-24 - 37-40

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Three poems follow, "Employment", "The Answer", and "Content", expressing political disappointment and a sense of depression in being cast aside.

All things are busie; onely I
Neither bring honey with the bees,
Nor flowres to make that, nor the husbandrie
To water these.⁹⁵

"The Answer" expresses the poet's feeling that his life is passing but his work remains undone. He feels that there is ample reason for his delay - though what it is, he cannot precisely say.

I shake my head, and all the thoughts and ends,
Which my fierce youth did bandie, fall and flow
Like leaves about me;⁹⁶

In "Content" the poet advises himself:

Gad not abroad at ev'ry quest and call
Of an untrained hope or passion.
To court each place or fortune that doth fall
Is wantonnesse in contemplation.⁹⁷

He warns himself to be content with his lot and not to look abroad for the help of friends to aid his advancement.

The title of the poem "Vanitie" does not carry our meaning of desire for social esteem, but has its old sense of emptiness, futile action.

If souls be made of earthly mold,
Let them love gold;
If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred flie.⁹⁸

95 George Herbert, "Employment", LL.17-20.

96 George Herbert, "The Answer", LL.1-3.

97 George Herbert, "Content", LL.5-8.

98 George Herbert, "Vanitie", LL.11-14.

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In "Frailtie", the poet is aware that he is attracted both by the world and the priesthood and he sees that the latter, which he has loved from childhood, may be pushed aside by the former, which he inwardly despises.

Lord, in my silence how do I despise
What upon trust
Is styled honour, riches, or fair eyes,
But is fair dust!99

When the writer views both the worldly and the spiritual:

That which was dust before doth quickly rise,
And prick mine eyes.100

"Artillerie" deals with the projection upon God of our desires. Upon observing some meteor shower, he reflects that as influences pass from heaven to earth, so may others pass from earth to heaven.

But I have also starres and shooters too,
Born where thy servants both artilleries use.101

He asks God to:

Shunne not my arrows, and behold my breast.102

"The Starre" contains a petition to God to infuse His light into him:

That so among the rest I may
Glitter, and curle, and winde as they;103

The poems following deal with the debate over taking

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- 99 George Herbert, "Frailtie", LL.1-4.
 - 100 Ibid., LL.15-16.
 - 101 George Herbert, "Artillerie", LL.17-18.
 - 102 Ibid., L.28.
 - 103 George Herbert, "The Starre", LL.25-26.

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final Orders. "Dialogue" reflects the poet's debate about dedicating himself to the priesthood. If he thought that he were worthy of his Saviour:

Quickly should I then controll
Any thought of waving.¹⁰⁴

Rather than his lack of worth keeping him from God, he concludes that it should rather draw him to God.

"The Priesthood" states that the decision whether he is worthy to enter the priesthood must be made by God, not by himself.

Onely since God doth often vessels make
Of lowly matter for high uses meet,
I throw me at his feet.

There will I lie, untill my Maker seek
For some mean stuffe whereon to show his skill.¹⁰⁵

Herbert describes his searches for peace in a poem by that name. He sought peace first in solitude, next in beauty, then in high station, and only at the last in the service of God. Nothing can bring peace except that bread which came down from heaven.

"The Pearl" reflects the poet's willingness to resign gladly learning, honour, and pleasure, - whose full significance he knows.

¹⁰⁴George Herbert, "Dialogue", LL.3-4.

¹⁰⁵George Herbert, "The Priesthood", LL.34-38.

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I know the wayes of learning, both the head
And pipes that feed the presse, and make it runne;

I know the wayes of honour, what maintains
The quick returns of courtesie and wit;

I know the wayes of pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it.106

Mr. Palmer quotes Walton's comment to the effect that: "for his unforc'd choice to serve at God's Altar he seems in The Pearl to rejoyce".107

In Mr. Palmer's opinion, "Obedience" marks the formal ending of Herbert's long-deferred decision to enter the priesthood.

O let thy sacred will
All thy delight in me fulfill!108

In all objects which may direct us away from our final ends - pleasures or roses - we must consider ultimate effects. This thought is expressed in "The Rose". "An Offering" states the poet's belief that only God to whom he is rendering his heart has the power to make that gift clean and whole as it should be.

Yet thy favour
May give savour
To this poore oblation;
And it raise
To be thy praise,
And be my salvation.109

106 George Herbert, "The Pearl", LL.1-2,11-12,21-22.

107 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.380.

108 George Herbert, "Obedience", LL.16-17.

109 George Herbert, "An Offering", LL.37-42.

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The series of poems listed under "The Crisis" closes with a song of gladness and one of tender distrust of his own desert. "Praise" expresses gladness in being at last accepted by God.

Though my sinns against me cried
Thou didst cleare me.
And alone, when they replied,
Thou didst heare me.110

One of three poems entitled "Love", uses the analogy of the timid guest, conscious of his unworthiness, being welcomed by love.

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guiltie of dust and sinne.111

Love, the personification of Christ, acknowledges that He gave to the guest the eyes with which to view Him and He bore the blame for man's having abused His gifts.

You must sit down sayes Love and taste my meat.
So I did sit and eat.112

3 Bemerton Poems

The eighty-six poems contained within this division are divided into five groups: "The Happy Priest", "Bemerton Study", "Restlessness", "Suffering", "Death". Mr. Palmer attributes these poems to the last and briefest period of Herbert's life, the period extending from his going to

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- 110 George Herbert, "Praise", LL.13-16.
111 George Herbert, "Love", LL.1-2.
112 Ibid., LL.17-18.

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Bemerton in 1630 to his death in 1633. None of the poems listed are contained in the Williams Manuscript which was drawn up about 1628.¹¹³ While some of these poems may have been written during the last years of the "Crisis" period, as they contain no reference to the struggle there described, the editor has not included them in that group. Some of the poems listed within this division, especially some of those listed under the heading "Bemerton Study", "were probably written at least in part during the Cambridge years,"¹¹⁴ but substantially the poems of these five groups are Bemerton poems. Nearly all of the Bemerton Poems, apart from those within "Bemerton Study", contain allusions to the priestly character of the writer.

As a priest, Herbert justified the services of his Church because of their reasonableness, and not because they are authoritatively prescribed. "By the poetic development of ritual he sought to do for his people what he was at the same time doing for himself in The Country Parson".¹¹⁵ Mr. Palmer quotes Walton's comment to the effect that Herbert "made it appear to them that the whole Service of the Church was a reasonable, and therefore an acceptable, Sacrifice to

¹¹³ George Herbert Palmer op.cit., p.3, vol.III.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.3.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.5.

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God."¹¹⁶ The present division of poems expresses the joy Herbert felt when performing such priestly duties, a joy enhanced by his: "at last reaching a long hoped for good."¹¹⁷

After some examination of the conditions of the priesthood, he realizes that these conditions are summed up in the priest's abandonment of everything that can be called his own and his becoming completely absorbed into the life of his Master. Song after song is poured out expressing the delight which the poet feels in the realization of this union.

(a) The Happy Priest

The section opens with a short poem, "The Call", in which My Way, my Truth, my Life, my Light, my Feast, my Strength, my Joy, my Love and my Heart are appeals to God and are followed by references to the incomparable benefits derived by the petitioner.

The true priest is described in the poem entitled "Aaron". The priest must be sound in his own head and heart; from him "harmonious" sounds must proceed; he must find rest for the sinful; his dress or exterior must express an inner purity. In five stanzas, all having the same fixed rhyme, the theme is repeated.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.5.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.5.

Holinesse on the head,
 Light and perfections on the breast,
 Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
 To leade them unto life and rest.
 Thus are true Aarons drest.118

"The Windows" opens with a question:

Lord, how can man preach thy eternall word?119

The answer is that the preacher's heavenly doctrine must shine through his own life before it can affect those who would see God.

But when thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie,
 Making thy life to shine within
 The holy Preachers, then the light and glorie
 More rev'rend grows, and more doth win;
 Which else shows watrish, bleak, and thin.120

In another poem, the poet states his complete dependence upon God not only for the ability to perform good works but for the will to do them.

We must confesse that nothing is our own.121

"The Twenty-Third Psalm" is one of five psalms translated by Herbert. The note of security and joy resulting from the poet's complete resignation to his service to God is in keeping with the theme of the poems under the heading.

The God of love my shepherd is,
 And he that doth me feed
 While he is mine and I am his
 What can I want or need?122

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- 118 George Herbert, "Aaron", LL.1-5.
 119 George Herbert, "The Windows", L.1.
 120 Ibid., LL.6-10.
 121 George Herbert, "The Holdfast", L.7.
 122 George Herbert, "The 23 Psalme", LL.1-4.

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In "The Odour", the poet's love for God is thought of in terms of a fragrance. He wishes that love would yield a reciprocal fragrance, both to lover and to loved.

This breathing would with gains by sweetning me
 (As sweet things traffick when they meet)
 Return to thee;
 And so this new commerce and sweet
 Should all my life employ and busie me.¹²³

"A True Hymne" outlines the poet's conception of the most important characteristic of a poem. A poem is the utterance of feeling. A poem is perfect to the degree of completeness with which that feeling is expressed.

Yet slight not these few words
 If truly said, they may take part
 Among the best in art
 The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords
 Is when the soul unto the lines accords.¹²⁴

"The Posie" expresses the lover's delight in his own unworthiness.

Invention rest,
 Comparison go play, wit use thy will
 Lesse than the least
 Of all God's mercies, is my posie still.¹²⁵

In a twenty-four line poem entitled "The Quip", Herbert deals with a theme that appears in two of the Cambridge poems and one of the Crisis period poems.¹²⁶ He relates the appeals that beauty, pleasure, ambition, wit,

¹²³ George Herbert, "The Odour", LL.26-30.

¹²⁴ George Herbert, "A True Hymne", LL.6-10.

¹²⁵ George Herbert, "The Posie", LL.9-12.

¹²⁶ "The Quidditie", "The World", "The Pearl".

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have made, calling him from that service of God which he still feels to be a sufficient compensation for them.

"In this time of his decay he would often speak to this purpose: 'I now look back upon the pleasures of my life past, and see the content I have taken in beauty, in wit, in musick, and pleasant conversation, are now all past by me like a dream, or as a shadow that returns not, and are now all become dead to me, or I to them.'"127

Yet when the houre of thy designe
To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large, say, I am thine;
And then they have their answer home.128

The subject of the poem "Clasping of Hands", requires that the poem shall have but two stanzas, - reporting me and Thee.

Lord, thou art mine, and I am thine,
.....
Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine;129 ...

Throughout the poem only two rhymes are used, - mine, thine, and more, restore. The thought of "making two one" is looked at from two directions.

The careful pruning by the Divine Gardener is symbolized by the elimination of letters from a rhyme in the poem "Paradise".

I blesse thee, Lord, because I grow
Among thy trees, which in a row
To thee both fruit and order ow.130

127 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.32 quoting Walton's "Life....."

128 George Herbert, "The Quip", LL.21-24

129 George Herbert, "Clasping of Hands", L.1, L.11.

130 George Herbert, "Paradise", LL.1-3.

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The pruning of man's evil tendencies by God encourages growth and health.

"Gratefulnesse" implores God, who has already granted so much, to grant rest in Himself and thankfulness.

Thou that has giv'n so much to me
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.¹³¹

In the poem "Ungratefulnesse",¹³² we learn that the only thing God demands of us is a grateful heart. This poem shows how even this must be accepted from Him.

Praise of God for His watchful efficiency is the subject of the poem "Praise".

Thousands of things do thee employ
In ruling all
This spacious globe: Angels must have their joy
Devils their rod, the sea his shore,
The windes their stint. And yet when I did call,
Thou heardst my call, and more.¹³³

The poet praises God for assisting man in any action. He favours, in spite of His manifold tasks in looking after all the affairs of heaven and earth.

"The Invitation" invites every one that has a thirst, whether it be for food, wine, ease, joy, or love, to come to the banquet and find what elsewhere was sought in vain. The poem ends with the statement:

¹³¹ George Herbert, "Gratefulnesse", LL.1-2.

¹³² George Herbert, "Ungratefulnesse", in group D, "Meditation", Cambridge Poems.

¹³³ George Herbert, "Praise", LL.19-24.

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Lord I have invited all,
 And I shall
 Still invite, still call to thee
 For it seems but just and right
 In my sight,
 Where is all, there all should be.134

"The Banquet" follows logically in this topical arrangement. The marvellous delicacy of God's table is described.

O what sweetnesse from the bowl
 Fills my soul,
 Such as is and makes divine!135

The poem "Even-Song" is divided into two parts. The first part shows how little the writer brings to God.

What have I brought thee home
 For this thy love? Have I discharg'd the debt
 Which this dayes favour did beget?136

The last four stanzas show how much He brings to the poet.

My God, thou art all love.
 Not one poore minute 'scrapes thy breast
 But brings a favour from above.
 And in this love, more than in bed, I rest.137

"The Happy Priest" section closes with a call for universal praise, from all above and all below.

The heav'ns are not too high
 His praise may thither flie

 The church with psalms must shout
 No doore can keep them out.138

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- 134 George Herbert, "The Invitation", LL.31-36.
 135 George Herbert, "The Banquet", LL.7-9.
 136 George Herbert, "Even-Song", LL.9-11.
 137 Ibid., LL.29-32.
 138 George Herbert, "Antiphon", LL.3-4,9-10.

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(b) Bemerton Study

Within this group, those among the Bemerton Poems which seem least marked by the personal note are grouped. As these poems appear only in the manuscript of Herbert's later years, while they may have been brought over half-finished from Cambridge, in Bemerton they probably received their final form.

In this more abstract and contemplative type of verse, Herbert reveals one of his chief literary merits, - his power to charge a few common words with more than they usually carry. By his effective use of words, the poet forces the reader to examine new aspects of old truths. The aphoristic force of his lines present "jewels five words long which on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle forever".¹³⁹

"Providence", a poem of one hundred and fifty-two lines, is one of Herbert's few long poems. It has been called Herbert's "profoundest philosophic study."¹⁴⁰ The poem has four parts. An Introduction (LL.1-28), describes man's supreme and priestly character.

Man is the world's high Priest. He doth present
The sacrifice for all;¹⁴¹...

¹³⁹ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.69.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.70.

¹⁴¹ George Herbert, "Providence", LL.13-14.

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The beasts say, Eat me; but if beasts must teach,
The tongue is yours to eat, but mine to praise.¹⁴²

Parts Two and Three of the poem are a development of the thought of Psalm 104, which has been entitled "An exhortation to bless the Lord for his mighty power and wonderful providence". Part Two (LL.29-92) celebrates the fullness of God's house.

Thou art in small things great, not small in any,
Thy even praise can neither rise nor fall
Thou art in all things one, in each thing many,
For those art infinite in one and all.¹⁴³

Part Three (LL.93-140), points out God's "curious art in marshaling thy goods".¹⁴⁴

The hills with health abound; the vales with stores;
The South with marble; North with furies and woods.¹⁴⁵

Lines 141-152 concluding the poem announce the obligation of man to praise and the inadequacy of praise.

But who hath praise enough? Nay who hath any?
None can expresse thy works but he that knows them.
And none can know thy works, which are so many
And so complete, but onely he that owns them.¹⁴⁶

The subject of "Divinitie" is that man may easily be over-curious in theology, where in reality, the plain truths are the important ones.

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- 142 Ibid., LL.21-22.
 - 143 Ibid., LL.41-44.
 - 144 Ibid., L.94.
 - 145 Ibid., LL.95-96.
 - 146 Ibid., LL.141-144.

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But all the doctrine which he taught and gave
 Was cleare as heav'n, from whence it came.

 Love God and love your neighbour, Watch and pray.
 Do as ye would be done unto.147

Herbert defines his religious position as a "via media" between the extremes of Catholicism and Puritanism in "The British Church."

A fine aspect in fit array,
 Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
 Shows who is best.
 Outlandish looks may not compare,
 For all they either painted are,
 Or else undrest.148

In the poem entitled "Church Rents and Schismes", "schismes" refer to divisions within the Church and rents refer to the attacks from without. The former are more serious than the latter.

But when debates and fretting jealousies
 Did worm and work within you more and more,
 Your colour faded, and calamities
 Turned your ruddie into pale and bleak.149

"The Jews" expresses the idea that Christianity, grafted upon Judaism, has absorbed the vitality of the Jews.

Poore nation, whose sweet sap and juice
 Our cyens have purloin'd.150

Christianity should now repay the theft.

That your sweet sap might come again!151

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- 147 George Herbert, "Divinitie", LL.13-14; LL.17-18.
 148 George Herbert, "The British Church", LL.7-12.
 149 George Herbert, "Church-Rents and Schismes",
 LL.16-19.
 150 George Herbert, "The Jews", LL.1-2.
 151 Ibid., L.12.

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"Self-Condensation" expresses a modern application of the lesson of the trial of Our Lord. The multitude's preference for Barabbas over Christ has not ceased in our day.

Thou who condemnest Jewish hate
For choosing Barrabas, a murderer,
Before the Lord of glorie,
Look back upon thine own estate,
Call home thine eye (that busie wanderer),
That choice may be thy storie.¹⁵²

The person who loves the things of this world over Christ repeats the sin of the multitude.

The poem "Avarice" follows logically. While man has created money, it has become his master.

Man calleth thee his wealth, who made thee rich
And while he digs out thee, falls in the ditch.¹⁵³

"Decay" opens with a longing look to the past.

Sweet were the dayes when thou didst lodge with Lot,
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,¹⁵⁴...

The poet laments that it appears to him that throughout recorded history the field of intercourse between God and man has steadily narrowed.

But now thou dost thy self immune and close
In some one corner of a feeble heart.¹⁵⁵

That the Justice of God as revealed by Christ, is friendly, not hostile, is the subject of the poem "Justice".

¹⁵² George Herbert, "Self-Condensation", LL.1-6.

¹⁵³ George Herbert, "Avarice", LL.13-14.

¹⁵⁴ George Herbert, "Decay", LL.1-2.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., LL.11-12.

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At one time Divine Justice was "a fright and terrour".

But now that Christ's vail presents the sight,
I see no fears.¹⁵⁶

"Constancie" praises the sturdy righteousness which
is neither prompted nor checked by expediency.

He that doth still and strongly good pursue,
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true.
Whom neither force nor fawning can
unpinne or wrench from giving all their due.¹⁵⁷

The idea that:

God hath made starres the foil
To set off vertues, griefs to set off sinning,^{158...}

is expressed in "The Foil". Grief brings out the nature of
sin as heaven does that of virtue.

The subject of "Man's Medley" is summarized by H.C.
Beeching and is quoted by Mr. Palmer.

"Man has double joys and sorrows, answering to his
double nature; but the soul's joys are to be preferred,
as lasting into the world beyond."¹⁵⁹

If we rightly measure
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter then in present is.¹⁶⁰

"Giddinesse" expresses the rise and decline, the
consistency and inconstancy, of man.

He is some twentie sev'rall men at least
Each sev'rall houre.¹⁶¹

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- 156 George Herbert, "Justice", LL.12-14.
 - 157 George Herbert, "Constancie", LL.2-5.
 - 158 George Herbert, "The Foil", LL.5-6.
 - 159 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.124.
 - 160 George Herbert, "Man's Medley", LL.4-6.
 - 161 George Herbert, "Giddinesse", LL.3-4.

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In "Vanitie", the poet describes man's zeal and success in pursuing things remote and unimportant. The "fleet Astronomer", the nimble Diver", the "subtil Chymick", all seek and obtain worthless goals. The success of man in such endeavors is futile because:

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his deare God?162

Doting man is described as mistaking nothing for something in "Dotage". Although the things of this life are "guided emptinesse", "shadows well mounted", "nothing between two dishes", "rooted miseries", etc., man like the beasts, prefers a "loathsome den", over a court:

Where are no sorrows, but delights more true
Then miseries are here.163

The central idea of "Businesse" is that, after sinning, man has only one business, - energetic repentance. Lines one to fourteen describe the human side of sin.

Canst be idle? Canst thou play,
Foolish soul, who sinn'd to day?
.....
If thou hast no sighs or grones,
Would thou hadst no flesh and bones!164

Lines seventeen to twenty-eight deal with the divine side of sin.

162 George Herbert, "Vanitie", LL.22-23.

163 George Herbert, "Dotage", LL.17-18.

164 George Herbert, "Businesse", LL.1-2; LL.12-13.

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But if yet thou idle be,
 Foolish soul, who di'd for thee?
 Who did leave his Father's throne
 To assume thy flesh and bone?165

If the beginnings of sin are once admitted, evil
 thoughts, words and deeds follow in never-ending line.

My thoughts are working like a busie flame

 My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts

 My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.166

"The Water-Course" expresses the idea that affliction
 should be countered with repentance rather than complaint.

If troubles overtake thee, do not wail;

But rather turn the pipe and water's course
 To serve thy sinnes, and furnish thee with store
 Of sov'raigne tears, springing from true remorse:167

St Augustine's thought that Thou hast made us for
 Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in
 Thee is expressed in "The Pulley". When God poured all
 the blessings of strength, beauty, wisdom, honour, pleasure,
 upon man, he decided to withhold the gift of rest.

For if I should (said he)
 Bestow this jewell also on my creature,
 He would adore my gifts instead of me,
 And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature...168

"Marie Magdalene" draws a moral from the Bible
 incident. Mary met her Saviour with tears of repentance

165 Ibid., LL.15-18.

166 George Herbert, "Sinnes Round", L.3; L.7; L.13;

167 George Herbert, "The Water-Course", L.4; LL.6-8.

168 George Herbert, "The Pulley", LL.11-14.

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because:

..... she knew who did vouchsafe and deign
To bear her filth, and that her sinnes did dash
Ev'n God himself; wherefore she was not loth,
As she had brought wherewith to stain
So to bring in wherewith to wash.¹⁶⁹

The lesson is plain. The sinner must share, at least by
tears, in his own cleansing.

"The Agonie" states that the two greatest forces
of the world and the least understood, are sin and love.
While philosophers measure mountains, seas, states, kings,
heaven, etc;

... there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove,
Yet few there are that sound them: Sinne and Love.¹⁷⁰

These forces met at their height in Christ's last hours.
Sin had the power to crush Him in the Garden. Love had the
power to bring from the cross of Christ life for all.

"Sepulchre" contrasts the difference between hearts
and stones regarding their openness to Christ. Referring to
the sepulchre of Our Lord, the poet asks:

Whatever sinne did this pure rock commit,
Which holds thee now?¹⁷¹

Man's heart should be tender, hospitable, clean, restful,
and impressible. Christ found only stone to be so.

169 George Herbert, "Mary Magdalene", LL.13-17.
170 George Herbert, "The Agonie", LL.4-6.
171 George Herbert, "Sepulchre", LL.10-11.

O blessed bodie! Whither art thou thrown?
 No lodging for thee but a cold hard stone?
 So many hearts on earth, and yet not one
 Receive thee?¹⁷²

Christ's wounded side is "The Bag" in which He
 offered to carry our messages to His father.

If ye have anything to send or write,
 (I have no bag, but here is room)

 Look you may put it very neare my heart.¹⁷³

Christ's wounded side was a favorite theme with Herbert.
 Allusions to it occur in seven poems.

In "The Sonne", the poet expresses his admiration for
 his language because similarities of language often correspond
 with similarities of meaning.

How neatly doe we give one onely name
 To parents' issue and the sonne's bright starre!¹⁷⁴

As the sun rises gradually so too:

For what Christ once in humblenesse began
 We him in glorie call, The Sonne of Man. ¹⁷⁵

The letters J. and C. rightly stand for Joy and
 Charity and Jesus Christ. Wherever love and gladness is
 there too is Christ. The thought is expressed in a short
 poem, "Love-Joy".

Herbert's ingenuity is revealed in an anagram.

¹⁷² Ibid., LL.1-4.

¹⁷³ George Herbert, "The Bag", LL.31-32; L.36.

¹⁷⁴ George Herbert, "The Sonne", LL.5-6.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., LL.13-14.

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How well her name an Army doth present
In whom the Lord of Hosts did pitch his tent.175A

The final poem of this grouping, "The Church-Floore", is another example of the fancy of Herbert playing with its own ingenuities. The stones of the church floor signify patience, humility, confidence and charity. While the stones are sometimes attacked by "Sinne" and "Death", the blessed Architect built the floor strong enough to resist their onslaughts.

(c) Restlessness

Mr. Palmer has attempted to group under this heading those poems which suggest a reaction against the peace and contentment reflected in "The Happy Priest" and in "Bemerton Study" groupings. After thirty-seven years living in "the full tide of affairs", the duties of ministering to a small group of farm laborers, which duties he had initially thrown himself into with joyful eagerness, began to pall.

After the storms of The Crisis period, the restrictions of Bemerton at first were not irksome. He initially found peace and a settled mind. Previously summarized poems reveal him exploring his priestly duties, calling on the services of his Church to disclose their inmost significance, recording the moods of his soul. Referring to the probable

175A George Herbert, "Anagram".

time of writing of such poems, Mr. Palmer states:

"While it is not necessary to suppose that a majority of his poems were produced in these three years, still the early manuscript contains only a minority; and a large proportion of those which first appear in the later manuscript allude to the priestly office. Herbert's art must, therefore, have been busily pursued during this time of seclusion."¹⁷⁶

The occupations and diversions of life at Bemerton had their welcome and unwelcome sides, corresponding to the diversities of Herbert's own nature. As an Elizabethan and a man of the Renaissance, he loved gayety, pleasure, great place, intellectual companionship, the stir and glitter of the world. As a man of God, he loved an exclusive God, a God who was hostile to every species of earthly attachment.

When he entered the priesthood, he anticipated that with his love for God there would be no competing force. Such was not the case. The poems of this grouping reflect the renewal of the conflicts of The Crisis period.

"He is ever a struggling soul, eager for God and unity, but only less eager to make the wealthy world his own. He is no calm saint. Nobody can read the stormy poems of this Group and find the epithet appropriate which has been connected with his name by loose admirers in his and our age. Herbert is not holy. There was always a noise of thoughts within his heart. He was continually asking of God whether it were not better to bestow some place and power on him; and years spent in cold dispute of what is fit and not were apt to appear as only lost."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.172.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.173 ff.

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The group begins with what has been called the greatest of Herbert's autobiographical poems, "Love Unknown." Coleridge commented on the poem.

"This poem is a striking example and illustration that the characteristic fault of our elder poets is the reverse of that which distinguishes too many of our recent versifiers: the one conveying the most fantastic thoughts in the most correct and natural language; the other in the most fantastic language conveying the most trivial thoughts. The latter is a riddle of words, the former an enigma of thoughts;"¹⁷⁸

Mr. Palmer¹⁷⁹ interprets the poem as treating imaginatively the three periods of Herbert's manhood. Although he knew himself destined for the priesthood, his heart was first centered on academic and royal honours. He gained a dish of such fruit, intending eventually to offer it to the Lord.

To him I brought a dish of fruit one day,
And in the middle placed my heart.¹⁸⁰

But his heart needed to be detached from these things and cleansed. Then came the deaths of his friends and mother.

So I went
To fetch a sacrifice out of my fold.¹⁸¹

In addition came the resignation of his Oratorship, and his severe illness. These afflictions, falling upon him when cold toward God, made him supple, and when he tasted God's forgiving love, he turned to the priesthood. But even in

¹⁷⁸ S.T. Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria", XIX.

¹⁷⁹ G. H. Palmer, op.cit., p.174 ff.

¹⁸⁰ George Herbert, "Love Unknown", LL.6-7.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., LL.29-30.

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Bemerton he finds dull conditions and goading thoughts.

I found that some had stuff'd the bed with thoughts,
I would say thorns.¹⁸²

While this interpretation of the poem does require a large amount of speculation, it has validity in the light of external evidence.

The next four poems of the grouping, "The Familie", "The Discharge", "The Size", and "The Method", deal with reasons the poet finds for contentment.

In "The Familie", Peace, Silence, Order, Obedience, Joy, Grief, are outlined as being true members of God's Household.

This is thy house, with these it doth abound.
And where these are not found,
Perhaps thou com'st sometimes and for a day,
But not to make a constant stay.¹⁸³

"The Discharge" states that the poet, having now committed himself to God, is able to let anxieties cease.

Raise not the mudde
Of future depths, but drink the cleare and good.
.....
This houre is mine; if for the next I care,
I grow too wide,
And do encroach upon death's side.¹⁸⁴

That it is well that in this world there come to the Christian but small joys, is the subject of "The Size."

¹⁸² Ibid., LL.51-52.

¹⁸³ George Herbert, "The Familie", LL.21-24.

¹⁸⁴ George Herbert, "The Discharge", LL.27-28;
LL.33-35.

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Content thee, greedie heart.
 Modest and moderate, joyes to those that have
 Title to more hereafter when they part,
 Are passing brave.

 Call to minde thy dream,
 An earthly globe,
 On whose meridian was engraven,
 These seas are tears, and heav'n the haven.185

"The Method" describes our method of treating God,
 and His of treating us.

What do I see
 Written above therè? Yesterday
 I did behave me carelessly
 When I did pray.186

God's reaction to such treatment should be anticipated.

Poore heart, lament
 For since thy God refuseth still,
 There is some rub, some discontent,
 Which cools his will.187

In "Hope", he perceives how inadequate the reasons
 for contentment are. While the poet gives his time, prayers
 and tears, he gets small return. In return he gets only
 hopes, visions, immature fruit.

The ambitious heart, knowing its blindness, reluct-
 antly accepting the small appointed work, is the subject of
 "Submission". He asks the question of his Lord:

Were it not better to bestow
 Some place and power on me?188

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- 185 George Herbert, "The Size", LL.1-4; LL.44-47.
 186 George Herbert, "The Method", LL.13-16.
 187 Ibid., LL.1-4.
 188 George Herbert, "Submission", LL.5-6.

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He contents himself with the thought:

How know I, if thou shouldst me raise,
That I should then raise thee?
Perhaps great places and thy praise
Do not so well agree.¹⁸⁹

The poem may be interpreted as a painful contrast between the empty life at Bemerton and that to which he had aspired.

The contrast outlined in the preceding poem results in the "Dulnesse" outlined in the poem of that name. The poet wonders why, when gay wits celebrate their mistresses on every trivial occasion, he has such torpor in honoring his love.

Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull,
As if I were all earth?
O give me quicknesse, that I may with mirth
Praise thee brim-full!¹⁹⁰

The rebellious mood of "The Collar" may also have been the result of the contrast between the empty life at Bemerton and that to which he has aspired. Since the poem was not found in the earlier manuscript, Mr. Palmer concludes that the poet had already entered the priesthood and finds the experience irksome.

In the next three poems, "The Bunch of Grapes", "The Search", "Assurance", the sense that in the service of God there is little rewarding joy suggests that God has withdrawn His favor, and gives rise to tender lament.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., LL.13-16.

¹⁹⁰ George Herbert, "Dulnesse", LL.1-4.

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The idea that we experience all that the Israelites did in the wilderness, except the welcome reward at the end of the journey, is expressed in "The Bunch of Grapes". Instead of the refreshment which those who were under the Law from time to time obtained, we have continually the new wine of Christ's blood.

But much more Him I must adore
Who of the law's soure juice sweet wine did make,
Ev'n God himself being pressed for my sake.¹⁹¹

"The Search" expands the idea of Job XXIII,3. "Oh that I knew where I might find him."

Whither, O Whither art thou fled,
My Lord, my Love?
My searches are my daily bread,
Yet never prove.
.....
Where is my God? What hidden place
Conceals thee still?
What covert dare eclipse thy face?
Is it thy will?¹⁹²

The poem "Assurance" resulted from the poet's suspicious thoughts about God's favor.

Thou said'st but even now
That all was not so fair as I conceiv'd
Betwixt my God and me: that I allow
And coin large hopes, but that I was deceiv'd
Either the league was broke or neare it
And that I had great cause to fear it.¹⁹³

The poet takes refuge in Himself.

Then shalt thou be my rock and tower,
And make their ruine praise thy power.¹⁹⁴

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- 191 George Herbert, "The Bunch of Grapes", LL.26-28.
192 George Herbert, "The Search", LL.1-4; LL.29-32.
193 George Herbert, "Assurance", LL.7-12.
194 Ibid., LL.35-36.

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"Conscience" insists on obedience. The exactions of conscience are stern.

Not a fair look but thou dost call it foul
Not a sweet dish but thou dost call it soure.¹⁹⁵

The stern exactions of conscience are stilled by Christ.

If thou persistest, I will tell thee
That I have physick to expell thee.
And the receipt shall be
My Saviour's bloud. Whenever at his board
I do but tast it, straight it cleanseth me
And leaves thee not a word;
No, not a tooth or nail to scratch,
And at my actions carp or catch.¹⁹⁶

In one of the most pathetic poems of the series, "The Crosse", the writer expresses how, partly through illness, and partly through a restless heart, the priesthood is proving a disappointment. What he has obtained after years of desire, he now feels powerless to use.

And then when after much delay,
Much wrastling, many a combate, this deare end,
So much desir'd, is giv'n to take away
My Power to serve thee!

One ague dwelleth in my bones,
Another in my soul (the memorie
what I would do for thee if once my grones
Could be allow'd for harmonie).
I am in all a weak disabled thing,
Save in the sight thereof where strength doth sting.¹⁹⁷

The final poem of the group, "The Pilgrimage", is an autobiographical sketch reminiscent of Pilgrims Progress.

¹⁹⁵ George Herbert, "Conscience", LL.2-3.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., LL.11-18.

¹⁹⁷ George Herbert, "The Crosse", LL.7-10; LL.13-18.

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Written, probably, before Bunyan was born, - certainly when he was an infant, - it contains an outline of the Progress of the Pilgrim. We are shown the gloomy "cave of Desperation", "the rock of Pride", "the mead of Fancy", "the copse of Care", the "Gladsome hill", the "lake of brackish waters". Mr. Palmer quotes the comment of R.A. Willmott:

"Such a composition would hardly escape the notice of that Spencer of the people, who afterwards gave breadth and animation and figures to the scene." 198

(d) Suffering

There is no sharp dividing line between the poems of this group and the preceding group. They are separated by the varying degrees of emphasis laid on motives common to the two. Both groups reflect notes of disappointment over the priesthood, despondency, rebellion, dullness, self-reproach, penitence, mental perplexity, bodily pain, and fear of God's alienation. In Group C, "Restlessness", those poems which reflect the mental side of the poet's distress, - his intellectual discontent, are contained. Within the present group, those poems which declare physical suffering and attribute it to some possible fault in himself and negligence on the part of God, are listed. The selection of the poems of this group was made so as to illustrate the gradually increasing prominence of the consciousness of bodily ill.

198 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.235.

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A short poem stating the contradictions involved in the life of love opens the group.

Ah my deare angrie Lord,
Since thou dost love, yet strike,
Cast down, yet help afford,
Sure I will do the like.

I will complain, yet praise;
I will bewail, approve;
And all my soure - sweet dayes
I will lament, and love.¹⁹⁹

A fear that God has withdrawn Himself runs through the early poems of the group - "Grieve Not the Holy Spirit," "Confession", "The Storm", "Complaining". In the first of these poems, the poet states that he shall grieve the more since God is grieved over his sins. The Holy Ghost is addressed in the first stanza.

And art thou grieved, sweet and sacred Dove,
When I am soure
And crosse thy love?²⁰⁰

The poet addresses himself in the next three stanzas.

Then weep mine eyes, the God of love doth grieve.²⁰¹
God is addressed in the last two.

Lord, I adjudge my self to tears and grief,
Ev'n endlesse tears
Without relief.²⁰²

The note of unrest is continued in "Confession".

¹⁹⁹ George Herbert, "Bitter-Sweet."

²⁰⁰ George Herbert, "Grieve Not The Holy Spirit",
LL.1-3.

²⁰¹ Ibid., L.7.

²⁰² Ibid., LL.25-27.

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"No scrue, no piercer can
 Into a piece of timber work and winde
 As God's afflictions into man
 When he a torture hath design'd."203

There can be no peace in secret sin.

Wherefore my faults and sinnes,
 Lord, I acknowledge. Take thy plagues away.204

The calm of God's abode being invaded by human
 supplication is the subject of "The Storm".

It quits the earth, and mounting more and more,
 Dares to assault thee and besiege thy doore.205

In "Complaining", the poet asks God why He is so
 severe. He is so great and the poet is so small.

Art thou all justice, Lord?
 Shows not thy word
 More attributes? Am I all throat or eye,
 To weep or crie?
 Have I no parts but those of grief?206

The incomprehensibility of God's ways and the ways
 of man is the subject of "Justice". The first stanza descri-
 bes God's ways. While God has made him, He wounds him; while
 He relieves, death also comes; while He kills, He also
 reprieves. The second stanza describes our ways. Prayers are
 directed toward God, yet they stray; we intend to do good, yet
 we sin;

"my soul doth love thee, yet it loves delay".207

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- 203 George Herbert, "Confession", LL.7-10.
 204 Ibid., LL.25-26.
 205 George Herbert, "The Storm", LL.11-12.
 206 George Herbert, "Complaining", LL.11-15.
 207 George Herbert, "Justice", L.11.

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The contrast between the "Christian Temple" and the Jewish, is the subject of "Sion". The ornate temples of old, of purest gold and embellished with carvings, have been surpassed by the "Christian Temple" which is within.

For all thy frame and fabrick is within.
There thou are struggling with a peevish heart,
Which sometimes crosseth thee, thou sometimes it.208

The fear that God has withdrawn Himself changes in several poems entitled "Affliction", "Sighs and Groans", and "Longing", to a sense of physical pain, a pain which he believes, though sent by God, is sent in love.

The first of three poems entitled "Affliction" states the impossibility of our matching Christ's sufferings with our own.

Kill me not ev'ry day,
Thou Lord of life; since thy one death for me
Is more than all my deaths can be,
Though I in broken pay
Die over each houre of Methusalem's stay.209

If it is impossible for us to match Christ's sufferings with our own, why then should I have these perpetual and useless griefs?

A second "Affliction" discusses the fellowship of Christ in our sufferings.

Thy life on earth was grief, and thou art still
Constant unto it, making it to be
A point of honour now to grieve in me,
And in thy members suffer ill.210

208 George Herbert, "Sion", L.12-14.

209 George Herbert, "Affliction", LL.1-5.

210 George Herbert, "Affliction", LL.13-16.

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A third "Affliction" carries on the same theme.

Broken in pieces all asunder,
 Lord, hurt me not,
 A thing forgot,

 My thoughts are all a case of knives,
 Wounding my heart
 With scatter'd smart ..211

"Sighs and Groans" contains an appeal for mercy on the grounds of man's insignificance. The five stanzas end with the lines:

O do not bruise me!
 O do not scourge me!
 O do not grinde me!
 O do not kill me!
 My God, relieve me!212

The poem "Longing", is a succession of disjointed cries, lamenting absence.

With sick and famisht eyes
 With doubling knees and weary bones,
 To thee my cries,
 To thee my groans,
 To thee my sighs, my tears ascend.
 No end?

My throat, my soul is hoarse
 My heart is wither'd like a ground
 Which thou dost curse.213

In "The Glimpse", "A Parodie", "Joseph's Coat", and "Jesu", Mr. Palmer finds a kind of tender playfulness between the sufferer and the Friend who brings the bitter gift.214

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- 211 George Herbert, "Affliction", LL.1-3; LL.7-9.
 212 George Herbert, "Sighs and Groans", L.6;L.12;
 L.18;L.24;L.30.
 213 George Herbert, "Longing", LL.1-9.
 214 George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.247.

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"The Glimpse" refers to the tantalizing shortness of delight.

Whither away delight?
 Thou cam'st but now; wilt thou so soon depart ,
 And give me up to night?
 For many weeks of lingring pain and smart.
 But one half houre of comfort for my heart.215

"A Parodie" continues with another variation of the same theme. The pain of absence is related.

Ah Lord! Do not withdraw,
 Lest want of aw
 Make Sinne appeare,
 And when thou dost but shine lesse cleare,
 Say that thou art not here.216

A sonnet entitled "Joseph's Coat" states that the poet's grief is diverse. If one grief "had his full career" it would destroy him. Since God gives his grief the change-fulness of joy, he can even sing it.

But he hath spoil'd the race, and giv'n to anguish
 One of Joye's coats, 'ticing it with relief
 To linger in me, and together languish.217

The short poem "Jesu", states that the poet's heart, even when broken by calamity, finds rest in Christ.

Jesu is in my heart, his sacred name
 Is deeply carved there.218

That love is more effective than anger, and more worthy of God, is the subject of "Discipline".

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- 215 George Herbert, "The Glimpse", LL.1-5.
 216 George Herbert, "A Parodie", LL.16-20.
 217 George Herbert, "Joseph's Coat", LL.10-12.
 218 George Herbert, "Jesu", LL.1-2.

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Throw away thy rod
 Throw away thy wrath.
 O my God,
 Take the gentle path.219

The last poem of the group describes one of the sweet intervals of suffering when full joy and peace are felt in the presence of the Loved One. Like a flower, the poet's soul is liable to change and grief melts away to be replaced by joy.

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
 Are thy returns! Ev'n as the flowers in spring,
 To which, besides their own demean,
 The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
 Grief melts away
 Like snow in May,
 As if there were no such cold thing.220

(e)Death

Within this brief final group are gathered those poems which refer to approaching death. The consumption which overcame Herbert slowly, allowed him to retain his mental powers to the last, and gave long notice of death. Until within a few months of the end, he read prayers each day in his Chapel; though he was unable to sit up a month before his death, he was able to discourse plainly; the Sunday before he died, he sang his own songs and accompanied himself on the lute; in the last hours before death, he spoke with his family about religion, business, and the care of those he

219 George Herbert, "Discipline", LL.1-4.
 220 George Herbert, "The Flower", LL.1-7.

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was to leave, and died without pain. To the fact that Herbert's long dying was a life in death, we owe the splendid series of his death-songs. It is probable that all the poems of the present group spring from the last year or two of Herbert's life.

Previous groups indicate that every phase of his inner moods was interesting to the poet, and was considered fit material for poetry. Herbert published none of his poetry and it is probable that in poetry he found one of his few defences against pain. By objectifying his experiences, he detached himself from them.

Some of the poems of this group, like "The Forerunners" and "Life", mourn the cessation of his verse. The subject of the first poem is summarized by Mr. Palmer:

"The King's messengers have affixed their mark and seized my beautiful estate. For the King I cultivated it, and I alone offered him such beauty. If he will now take it and me, I am content".²²¹

Farewell sweet phrases, lovely metaphors
.....
Lovely enchanting language, sugar-cane,
Honey of roses, whither wilt thou flie?²²²

In "Life", the poet laments that his beautiful work in poetry has been so incomplete.

²²¹ George Herbert Palmer, *op.cit.*, p.316.

²²² George Herbert, "The Forerunners", L.13; LL.19-20.

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Farewell deare flowers! Sweetly your time ye spent,
 Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament,
 And after death for cures.
 I follow straight without complaints or grief,
 Since if my sent be good, I can not if
 It be as short as yours.223

The poems "Grief", and "Home", utter an anguished cry.
 "Grief" states that the distress of the writer is so great
 that it should have had greater means of expression.

Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
 For my rough sorrows.224

The subject of "Home" is a cry for union with God, - Thou
 with me here, or I with Thee there. The first five stanzas
 expand the first line of the refrain:

O show thy self to me.225

The remainder of the poem expands the second line of the
 refrain:

Or take me up to thee!226

"The Glance" describes how the joy, which the poet
 felt when his Love first looked on him, has been his stay
 in every ill.

..... many a bitter storm
 My soul hath felt, ev'n able to destroy,
 Had the malicious and ill-meaning harm
 His swing and sway.
 But still thy sweet originall joy,
 Sprung from thine eye, did work within my soul,
 And surging griefs, when they grew bold, controll,
 And got the day.227

223 George Herbert, "Life", LL.13-18.

224 George Herbert, "Grief", LL.13-14.

225 George Herbert, "Home", L.5.

226 Ibid., L.6.

227 George Herbert, "The Glance", LL.9-16.

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"The Dawning" also turns to the "sweet originall joy" of God's love. On Easter Day the habit of sadness must be replaced with joy.

Arise sad heart! If thou dost not withstand,
 Christ's resurrection thine may be,
 Do not by hanging down break from the hand
 Which as it riseth, raiseth thee.
 Arise, arise!
 And with his buriall-linen drie thine eyes.
 Christ left his grave-clothes that we might, when grief
 Draws tears or bloud, not want an handkerchief.²²⁸

The last three poems of the section, "Vertue", "Time", and "A Dialogue-Anthème", sport with the impotence of death. In the first three stanzas of, "Vertue", time is shown to be destructive. Time fades the "sweet day", the "sweet rose" and the "sweet spring", "for all must die". Vertue excels all of these phenomena of nature by never fading.

Only a sweet and vertuous soul,
 Like season'd timber, never gives;
 But though the whole world turn to coal,
 Then chiefly lives.²²⁹

The subject of "Time" is that the Christian's desire should never be for length of days which part us from God. Time, personified, is asked to whet his dull scythe so as to speed up his passage and shorten the earthly life that stands between the poet and the timeless life of eternity.

228 George Herbert, "The Dawning", LL.9-16.

229 George Herbert, "Vertue", LL.13-16.

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Thou art a gard'ner now, and more -
 An usher to convey our souls
 Beyond the utmost starres and poles.
 And this is that makes life so long,
 While it detains us from our God.230

The impotence of death is the subject of the final poem, "A Dialogue-Anthème". Christian and Death are the parties of the dialogue.

Death: These arms shall crush thee.
 Christian. Spare, not, do thy worst.
 I shall be one day better then before;
 Those so much worse that thou shalt
 be no more.231

4 Summary

The topical arrangement of Herbert's poems suggested by George Herbert Palmer is useful when summarizing the contents of Herbert's poems. Two major divisions, "Cambridge Poems", and "Bemerton Poems", are separated by a minor division entitled "The Crisis" containing eighteen poems. Each of the major divisions contains five subdivisions. Mr. Palmer's claim that his arrangement presents a "classification which is also largely chronological" must be evaluated in the light of the more recent scholarship of F.E.Hutchinson. In spite of Mr. Hutchinson's caveat against the chronology of Mr. Palmer's arrangement, it does suggest a useful plan to be followed when summarizing the contents of The Temple.

230 George Herbert, "Time", LL.16-20.

231 George Herbert, "A Dialogue-Anthème", LL.8-10.

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Within the "Cambridge Poems" division, "The Church Porch" is the title of the first subdivision. Within this grouping is contained one of Herbert's few long poems, "The Church Porch". This long poem begins with a discussion of the ruder sins, (oaths, lying, intemperance.), and goes on to discuss the niceties of worship. The inner grouping entitled "The Resolve" contains eleven poems which announce Herbert's resolve to become a poet and state the ends which he desires his poetry to accomplish. "The Church" grouping includes those ecclesiastical poems which celebrate the feasts and institutions of Herbert's Church. "Meditation" is the title of that subdivision which groups together those poems reflecting profound meditations on abstract themes to which, Mr. Palmer assumes, Herbert's Cambridge period gave rise. The final subdivision within the "Cambridge Poems" division is entitled "The Inner Life". This group contains poems which reflect for the first time the poetic modes most characteristic of Herbert. Into the field of religious poetry, Herbert brought the heart-searchings, the sighs, and the self-accusations which had hitherto been characteristic of secular love poetry.

"The Crisis" is the title of the division placed between the two major divisions. Mr. Palmer assigns the poems contained within this grouping to that period of Herbert's life covering approximately the years 1626-1630.

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The poems reflect an unrest and distress occasioned possibly by the opposing forces of secular ambition and priestly vocation conflicting within the poet. Secular ambition contends with the love of God whose embodiment Herbert felt was the priesthood.

The major division entitled "Bemerton Poems", contains eighty-six poems divided into five groups. Because none of the poems contained are included in the Williams Manuscript which was drawn up about 1628, Mr. Palmer assigns these poems to the period extending from Herbert's going to Bemerton in 1630 and his death in 1633. Nearly all of the poems contain allusions to the priestly character of the writer. "The Happy Priest" grouping contains poems discussing such topics as the qualities of a true priest, and the contentment resulting from the priest's resignation to the service of God. Peace, contentment, and quiet resignation are reflected. "Bemerton Study" contains those poems within the Bemerton division which seem least marked by the personal note. The more abstract and contemplative species of verse is included. Topics such as the nature of man, the dangers of being over-curious in theology, the Justice of God, are treated. Those poems which may be interpreted as suggesting a reaction against the peace and contentment reflected in the two previous groupings are included under the heading "Restlessness." Revolt against a collar not easily worn and the intellectual discontent resulting are revealed. "Suffering",

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like the preceding grouping, contains poems reflecting notes of disappointment over the priesthood, despondency, rebellion, self-reproach, penitence, and fear of God's alienation. While the preceding group of poems reflect the mental side of the poet's distress, the "Suffering" grouping contains those poems which declare physical suffering and attribute it to some possible fault in himself and negligence on the part of God. The poems illustrate the gradually increasing prominence of the consciousness of bodily ill. "Death", contains those poems which refer to approaching death. This splendid series of Herbert's death songs was made possible by the fact that Herbert's long dying was a life in death. Some of the "Death" poems mourn the cessation of his verse. Some poems reveal the poet's yearning for union with God.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTRASTS AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
THE COUNTRY PARSON AND THE TEMPLE

In the light of summaries of background and contents of The Country Parson and The Temple, the extent to which these works reveal contrasting and similar sides of George Herbert as a writer and as a personality, may be outlined.

That The Country Parson and The Temple supplement each other is by no means an original idea. Scholars such as F.E. Hutchinson, G.H. Palmer, H.C. White, J. Bennet, J.B. Leishman, have recognized that The Country Parson reveals an aspect of Herbert which is not so apparent in the poetry and which must be recognized before arriving at a final estimate of the writer. Poetry and prose complement each other by jointly revealing aspects of Herbert which are not apparent when they are examined in isolation.

To illustrate the extent to which The Temple and The Country Parson supplement each other by revealing contrasting and similar sides of Herbert, the works may be examined from various aspects. Differences in content and style may be discussed separately. The relative significance of the literary contribution made by Herbert in The Temple and The Country Parson provides a third aspect. Similarities in ideas and expressions may be listed to illustrate that the contrasts of content, style, and literary significance, are not the only results of a comparison of the poetry and prose. In the light of Chapters Three and Five dealing with the contents of

CONTRASTS AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
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The Country Parson and The Temple, it is possible to speak of the content and style of the prose and poetry without copiously illustrating the ideas forwarded by specific references drawn from the works.

1 Comparison of the Contents of
The Country Parson and The Temple

Thesis: The Country Parson deals primarily with man's relations to God as realized through His deputies within an organized religion. The Temple deals primarily with the highly personal spiritual autobiography of the writer who conceives himself as a lonely soul standing face to face with God. The Country Parson and The Temple supplement each other by jointly presenting a complete portrait of the writer's predominant ideas.

Exposition: The writer of The Country Parson had a double aim in mind. In the sense that the prose is a study of the writer's own conditions, it bears some resemblance to the poetry. The prose was written when Herbert took up his parsonage at Bemerton, three years before his death. Walton states explicitly¹ the time of writing and this, added to other biographical evidence², which indicates that up to this

¹ Izaak Walton, The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert, George Saintsbury, ed. London, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.294.

² Biographical Sketch, Chapter One.

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time Herbert had little occasion to become familiar with the minute details of the life of a country parson related in the prose treatise, leaves little doubt as to the period in Herbert's life during which The Country Parson was written. One obvious purpose in writing was to clarify in the writer's own mind the nature and extent of his duties and to regulate his future conduct. In "The Author to The Reader" he states: "I have resolved to set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour, that I may have a Mark to aim at."³

A second purpose for writing is suggested by the references to contemporary conditions within The Country Parson. The references indicate the low estimate which was placed upon the ministry, especially the country ministry, in Herbert's time. Herbert intended to have the work published as a means of bringing about much-needed reform.

Both purposes of the author reveal that he was primarily concerned with the "ordered paths" and "fixed avenues" dictated by organized religion as a means of clarifying and intensifying man's relationship to God. Having accepted the task of working with his Church to assist his flock along the ordered paths dictated thereby, he made the most of his situation. He attempted to develop all the capacities of the priesthood by showing how it may become a field fit for intelligent, energetic, stately, and holy living. He treats

³ F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.224.

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the duties of the country parson as a field hitherto unexplored. He distinguishes the work of the country parson from that of other pastors; he takes up the conditions of success in the parson's own nature; he outlines the duties in relation to Church services; he discusses the parson's relations to his parishioners and to people in general; and he finally considers cases of conduct where, though there is no clear duty, tactful and devout treatment will yield results which would be missed by carelessness. Herbert hoped that those who were to follow would "add to those points which I have observed untill the Book grow to a compleat Pastorall."⁴ Accordingly, he studies every feature of the country parson's life and counts nothing as trivial.

The writer's attention is directed outwardly. He reflects a keen understanding of his rural parishioners; he shows vision in anticipating difficulties they will encounter; he shows insight in determining modes of access to his flock; he indicates a readiness to carry the principles of his religion into homely detail; he reflects interest, zeal, and a sense of dignity in the methods by which he carries out his duties. Herbert's Church defended itself on the grounds of reasonableness outlined in Bishop Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, and The Country Parson is an account of a reasonable approach to religion. He could say with Sir Thomas Browne:

⁴ Ibid., p.224.

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"There is no Church whose every part so squares unto my conscience; whose Articles, Constitution, and Customs, seem so consonant unto reason, and as it were framed to my particular devotion as this whereof I hold my belief, the Church of England."⁵

The approach followed in the prose is accomplished in such manner as to make the prose transcend the period in which it was written. Changes in belief and social custom have not antiquated the ardent, candid and original little treatise. The excellence of the work is a function of Herbert's awareness and understanding of, and concern for, the formal practices of organized religion. Any evaluation of Herbert's religious ideas as revealed throughout most of his poetry must be qualified in the light of his approach to religion as revealed in his prose tract.

When treating man's relationship to God as recognized through His deputies, the writer does not depict a personal relationship between God and man. Rather he speaks of God as one whose majesty strikes man with awe and wonder. In his prose treatise, his "attitude to religion is essentially practical".⁶ If he leaves for a moment the practical aspects of religion to consider the majesty of God, he is deeply aware and impressed with His omnipotence.

Latin epigrams written during his first years at Cambridge indicate that, at that time, Herbert thought of

⁵ Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*. Section Two.

⁶ J.B. Leishman, *The Metaphysical Poets*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934, p.113.

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religion primarily as an affair of ritual and ordinance. In reply to Andrew Melville who had attacked certain features of the English Church as meaningless and injurious to piety, he reflects the attitude toward religion with which The Country Parson is primarily concerned. He does not write as a defender of God, of his own soul, or of holy agencies which he felt were personally dear to him. In a spirit of blind partisanship, he defends an established and external institution which he felt must be exempt from criticism. This early attitude toward religion, which was to be revealed a second time in the prose treatise, is in sharp contrast to that reflected in the majority of the poems.

It is paradoxical that it was during this period while defending ecclesiasticism that Herbert first revealed his acceptance of his call to vindicate personal religion as a poetic theme. The two sonnets⁷ written in 1610 announce the literary and religious program which was to result in the religious "autobiography" of The Temple. At this time, discovering himself to be a poet, he fixed the field most suitable to his genius. He resolved to become a life-long poet; an exclusively religious poet; and while studying love, as secular poets do, he vowed to study the love between God and man, and present a poetic account of "the many spiritual

⁷ Contained in Group B "The Resolve", under "Cambridge Poems".

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conflicts" within his soul.

The writer's concern with spiritual autobiography in the poetry deprives it of the type of implicit contemporary reference contained in the prose. Like Browning, Herbert could say: "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth study."⁸ Whether he is viewing the great alliance between God and man from man's viewpoint or God's, he is highly personal and subjective in the poetry. Out of his one hundred and sixty-nine poems, only twenty-three do not employ the first person; and half a dozen of these are addresses in the second person to his own soul.⁹ In contrast to the prose, practically all his poetry is poetry of the personal life.¹⁰ Herbert's central theme is the psychology of his religious experience.

The poetry reveals the highly individualistic conception of religion which the poet held. It is of his own salvation that he most frequently speaks. The desire to sanctify himself in preparation for the service of others, one of the main ideas of The Country Parson, rarely appears. In keeping with the spirit of his age, he thought of piety mainly as personal allegiance. The influence of Puritanism is evident. The social implications of religion had been

⁸ Quoted by George Herbert Palmer, The Life and Works of George Herbert, Boston, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1905, p.108 vol.1.

⁹ Ibid., p.109.

¹⁰ J.B. Leishman, op.cit., p.114.

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replaced with the emphasis on each man standing before his Maker and answerable to Him alone. In Herbert's Church, the idea which had been accepted by the Puritans with peculiar heartiness and reverence was at work. Asceticism and "freedom from the world" were often regarded as the path of piety.

Just as the poetry reveals the poet as a seeker after God conceived as a detached individual, so too does it consider the subject of the search - God Himself. God is not a spiritual principle, a being conceived by philosophers, but rather an independent person, very much like ourselves. Like ourselves, he reflects skill, love and hatred, grief, self-sacrifice. From Him, Jesus Christ is indistinguishable. He may be talked to as a personal friend. Such religious realism has immense advantages for artistic purposes. This concrete, vivid, way of thinking of God gave free rein to the religious imagination.

In contrast to the feeling of awe towards God depicted in The Country Parson, the poetry generally depicts an intimate and personal relationship, with man speaking directly to God or God to man. It is a much more intense and personal relationship than that which man has with God through His deputies. Mr. Leishman sums up this characteristic of most of the poetry, which distinguishes it from the prose.

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"One thing in which, so far as I know, he is unique among religious poets, has perhaps struck the reader's attention - the extraordinarily intimate and personal nature of his attitude to God, whom he addresses with the confidence, the familiarity, the playfulness sometimes, of a father, a friend, or a lover."¹¹

The poems of The Temple are replete with examples of this approach. He declares that he would praise God with mirth; he wishes that he could praise God as a lover praises his mistress; he speaks to God as he would speak to a powerful acquaintance. In poem after poem the poet is familiar with God and speaks to Him with "a familiar diction and a sound pattern close to the rhythm of speech."¹² Miss White summarizes this intimacy between Herbert and his God:

"----- it is very difficult to read Herbert's poetry and escape the conclusion that his standard of the fullness of relation between the soul of a Christian and his Maker was something much higher and steadier than he could well believe himself capable of achieving, let alone helping others achieve."¹³

This "fullness of relation" contrasts with the relation between God and Man depicted in The Country Parson.

The most characteristic poetry of Herbert is that which dwells upon the poet's personal attitude toward his side of the grand alliance. In the majority of his poems, he speaks face to face with God. Poems such as the "Afflictions", "The Call", "Clasping of Hands", "The Collar",

¹¹ J.B. Leishman, op.cit., p.136.

¹² J.Bennet, Four Metaphysical Poets, Cambridge, University Press, 1953, p.60.

¹³ Helen C. White, The Metaphysical Poets, A Study in Religious Experience, New York, MacMillan Company, 1936, p.162.

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"Deniall", "The Elixer", "The Flower", "The Glance", "The Glimpse", "Gratefulnesse", "Longing", "The Method", "The Odour", "The Pearl", "The Search", "Submission", "The Temper", "Unkindnesse", "A Wreath", are most characteristic of the poet. They are highly personal yearning and sobbing, self-conscious, talks with God. To specify what belongs to this group would be to ennumerate most of the poetry written by Herbert.

Any generalization regarding the contrast between the poetry and prose because of the different attitudes towards religion reflected, must be qualified by reference to those few poems which treat of ideas similar to those with which The Country Parson is primarily concerned. It cannot be concluded that every poem in The Temple is a spiritual autobiography. Some of the poems catalogue the regularities of love, its habitual modes of expression, the fixed avenues through which the Loved One becomes accessible. Poems of this type are grouped predominatly under "The Church" grouping within the "Cambridge Poems" division. Poems such as "Good Friday", "Easter", "Trinitie Sunday", "Christmas", "Lent", "Sunday", "Prayer", "The H. Scriptures", "H. Baptisme", "The H. Communion", and "Church-Music", deal with aspects of formal religious practices and reflect attitudes similar to those reflected in The Country Parson. Rather than an intense feeling of closeness to God resulting in a casual, familiar approach,

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poems deal with the approach to a more impersonal God conceived as an object toward which the ordinances and beliefs of the Church are directed. However these poems are not the most characteristic verses of the author. With the exception of the few didactic poems expanding doctrine or the ritual of his Church, all his poetry is spiritual autobiography.

In addition to the different attitude toward religion reflected in the poetry and the prose, the works also differ due to the difference in emotional bearing reflected. In the words of Mr. Hutchinson "No one could have written of the pastoral life as Herbert did in A Priest to the Temple without having experienced much of its happiness. In this book he unconsciously portrays himself ...".¹⁴ This is the attitude toward Herbert that has been most widely circulated, and is due to a large extent to Walton's "Biography." Walton paints a glowing portrait of the Saint of Bemerton. He throws so strong a light on Herbert's three consecrated years that few readers notice how unlike they are to the vacillating thirty-six. Walton's work has been referred to as "a most serious obstacle to a cool assessment of Herbert."¹⁵ While what Walton says is substantially true, there is much that he does not say. Herbert is often pictured as an aged saint who,

¹⁴ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.xxxviii.

¹⁵ George Herbert Palmer op.cit., p.46.

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through spending a lifetime in priestly offices, came to find interest only in devout emotions. Walton's Life has done much to confirm this fantastic picture. In reality, Herbert died under forty; was a priest less than three years; spent his remaining thirty-six years among men who loved power, position and pleasure. This important part of his life is not revealed in the prose. The prose reflects an emotional bearing of quiet saintliness. The poetry reflects continued struggle and religious anxiety due to a difficult choice between the religious and the secular life and later a collar not easily worn. It is the poetry of: "continued wrestling and continued submission".¹⁶ The prose alone reflects only that aspect of Herbert's temperament which became dominant during the "Happy Priest" period of the Bemerton years. Poetry and prose must be examined in order to see a well-rounded revelation of Herbert's character.

2 Comparison of the Style of
The Country Parson and The Temple

Thesis: The style of the prose is relatively simple, direct, and is in little need of commentary. In comparison the poems are intricate, complex, oblique, and subtle. Antique diction, the private character of the poetry, greater complexity of subject, and greater condensation, are the more significant

¹⁶ J. Bennet, op.cit., p.56.

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causes to which the contrast of styles may be attributed. The intricacy of the poems is more evident in the light of a summary of some of the technical devices employed by the poet.

Exposition: The contrast between the neat style of The Country Parson and the intricacy of the poems is apparent. The prose was drawn up for a practical purpose and as such, it is written plainly, instructively, without affectations. It is difficult to find sentences whose full meaning is not understood at a glance. There are few containing any decoration likely to divert the reader's attention from the matter. The long linked sentences run swift and straight. The reader's needs rather than the writer's emotions are the main guide. The neatness and simplicity of the prose may be thought of as an example of the reaction in prose against the flowery, over-elaborated style made popular by John Lyly and his followers.

The obscurity of style which contrasts the poetry with the prose may be traced to several causes. The first cause is the antique diction contained. While such diction is common to both prose and poetry, the combination of condensation of thought through the use of words which have a charged, packed, profound meaning, and the use of antique terms, gives to the poetry an obscurity which is not to be found in the prose. The orderly, casual, business-like exposition in the prose usually places the antique terms in a context in which their meaning is clear.

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Mr. Palmer has estimated¹⁷ that less than fifty of Herbert's words would appear strange in a book today. About half of this fifty are altogether dead and, when encountered, convey to the ordinary reader no meaning whatever. Words such as ingross, (concentrate), abjects, (degraded persons), quip, (retort), quidditie, (the essence of a thing, that which makes anything to be what it is), board, (to approach), crosse, (contrary), disseized, (dispossessed), are obsolete; when used in the poetry, they add to the obscurity. Other words falling into this category are: bandie, cyens, demain, glazing, handsell, imp, indear, jag, licorous, lieger, optick, pomander, rheume, sconse, snudge, sommers, stour, vizard. The prose treatise needs practically no commentary. Much of the commentary on the poetry deals with obscure terms used.

Trouble is also caused by the use of familiar words in the poetry in senses which differ in some particular from those current today. For example: complexion, (disposition), consort, (concert), his, (its), move, (propose), neat, (refined), owe, (own), stay, (be absent), store, (abundance), storie, (history), still, (always), then, (than), whenas, (while). The use of such deceptive words in the poetry is likely to cause the modern reader to miss Herbert's meaning. Their occasional use in the prose does not have the same result.

¹⁷ George Herbert Palmer op.cit., p.141.

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Commenting upon this type of obscurity in Herbert's work, Mr. Palmer states:

"No other English poet, not even Donne or Browning, gives his reader such frequent pause. . . . If at times poems like The Elixer, Gratefulnesse, The Method, Submission, the second Temper, Unkindnesse, show that he might have been as simple in verse as he regularly is in prose, the moments lucidity merely makes the prevailing darkness deeper".¹⁸

A second cause of the obscurity which contrasts the poetry with the prose, is the private character of the poetry. That Herbert intended wide publication of The Country Parson, and that the prose was written with this purpose in mind, is evident from the writer's statement in "The Author to the Reader" which prefaces the work. The writer asks others to "add to those points, which I have observed, untill the Book grow to a compleat Pastorall."¹⁹

None of Herbert's English poems received public criticism. References in poems such as "The Dedication", "The Church-Porch", "Superliminare", and "The Rose", indicate that the poems were written with a purpose of ultimate publication. The corrections made during the period between the Williams and Bodleian manuscripts indicate the same thing. The poems as first written were fashioned for handing out among friends. Rather than preparing the poems for the press

¹⁸ Ibid., p.150.

¹⁹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.224.

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as he did The Country Parson, it is more likely that they were written with only a general notion that some day they may be presented to the public. When writing The Country Parson, the expected reaction of readers was sure to be a weighty influence steadily constraining the writer toward intelligibility.

One result of this relatively private character of the poems is that connections of thought which existed in the poet's mind are frequently not worked out; transitions and allusions are often abrupt, frequently giving little evidence of having been calculated with a view to the reader's comprehension; the reader is called upon frequently to fill in with his imagination.

Closely related to this cause of obscurity is the choice of titles for the poems and for the prose chapters. If the poems had been prepared for the press, it is unlikely that five poems would have been given the same title - "Affliction". Titles such as "Artillerie", "The Bunch of Grapes", "Church-Lock and Key", "Clasping of Hands", "The Collar", "The Discharge", "Dotage", "The Elixer", "Giddinesse", "The Glance", "Joseph's Coat", "Man's Medley", "Mortification", "The Pulley", "The Quidditie", "The Quip", "The Size", "The Windows", convey little information. Such titles are understood only when the poem of which they form an integral part is read. The titles do little to smooth the reader's path of approach. Rather than preparing the reader by suggesting

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content, they demand the reader's patience and imagination.

In contrast, the titles of the chapters of The Country Parson prepare the reader by suggesting content. "The Parson's Knowledge", "The Parson Praying", "The Parson Preaching", "The Parson in his House", "The Parson in Journey", are representative titles. They are in sharp contrast to the poetry titles whose significance is vague.

A third cause of the obscurity distinguishing the poetry from the prose is the greater complexity in the theme of the poetry. While the first two causes of obscurity may be attributed to the writer or the reader, this third cause is a result of the matter being conveyed.

While The Country Parson is a business-like outline of those practical aspects of religion encountered within the "ordered paths" and "fixed avenues" of approach to God, The Temple contains primarily poetry of struggle. "Herbert's poetry is the expression of an ardent temperament with a single emotional outlet."²⁰ It is not a "record of quiet saintliness", but rather it portrays "continued wrestling and continued submission." Herbert himself called it: "a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul."²¹ The account of the clash within the poet between

²⁰ J. Bennet, op.cit., p.58 ff.

²¹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.xxxvii

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the mighty opposites of the worldly and the spiritual was too strongly felt to be told with the smoothness and precision characteristic of The Country Parson. Writers of a later period were able to write with a smoothness and precision resulting in ease of comprehension, but lack of originality and shallowness of thought was the price that had to be paid.

Mr. Leishman distinguishes between poetry which:

"starts from a basis of very general and widely shared experience", and poetry which: "starts from an experience that may be very personal and peculiar."²² The obscurity of the poetry is added to by the highly personal and individual experiences related therein. At least if the experiences are not particular to Herbert in kind, they are so in degree. In comparison, the experiences related in The Country Parson dealing with the "ordered paths" of religion are more widely shared hence more easily understood by the reader.

A fourth cause of the relative obscurity of the poetry is the condensation which is particularly acute in the type of poetry Herbert wrote. Greater economy of diction is a natural distinction between poetry and prose. Between The Temple and The Country Parson this difference is particularly apparent.

The attempt to put as much meaning as possible into few words was one of the important characteristics of

²² J.B. Leishman op.cit., p.109.

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the Metaphysical School. Herbert, as a poet, is particularly skillful in this area. His compactness in poetry has seldom been equalled. This is one of the chief sources of the obscurity which is felt by modern readers.

The intricacy of the poems and the stylistic contrast they afford with the prose, become more apparent in the light of a resume of some of their technical characteristics.

That Herbert was a conscious craftsman who devoted much time and energy to the technique of the art of poetry is evident. As a member of a group interested in revolting against the graceful conventionalities and the "linked sweetnesses long drawn out" which had been popularized, he sought veracity, full individual experience, surprise, freshness of phrase, and intellectual stimulus. He loved intellectual complication and difficulty. In verse he saw a medium into which more subtlety and suggestion could be packed than into prose. His technical devices were the appropriate means to reach his ends. The technical complexity of his verse stands in marked contrast to the relative simplicity of the prose.

He most frequently uses the iambic foot, two syllables with the accent on the second. In this rhythm all but eleven of his poems are written, these eleven being trochaic. Everywhere his rhythm is of extreme regularity. He does not follow Donne in carelessness of rhythm. Though regular, his line is far from mechanical. He shifts its pauses; he

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substitutes a trochee for an iambus; he stops the sense at the end of a line; he runs the sense over into the next.

In accordance with the largely intellectual cast of his verse, he employs little vowel color. His vowel effects are not an important part of his poetry. Seldom too does he employ alliteration. In spite of his fondness for music, he pushed his thought into the foreground and fixed his attention on harsh, intricate, experience, avoiding the musical devices of his art. Another result of his intellectual aims was his avoidance of the long and melodious lines prized by his predecessors. His longest line is ten syllables.

Rhyme was a necessary factor, not an occasional adjunct of his verse. There is no instance of blank verse in Herbert. He writes no unrhymed stanza. He tolerates nothing so loose as rhyming alternate lines, allowing the remainder to go unrhymed. When he occasionally uses an unrhymed line, he does so for a purpose. While his rhyme is universal, it is often rude. Rhymed words frequently have little similarity: feast and guest; mud and food; matter and water; etc. His use of identical rhyme is strange to the modern ear.

In stanza form, Herbert invents for each lyrical situation exactly the rhythmic setting which befits it. Mr. Palmer has computed evidence to illustrate the richness of his invention.²³ Of his one hundred and sixty-nine poems,

²³ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.137 ff.

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one hundred and sixteen are written in meters which are not repeated. Two out of every three are unique. While forty-one cases of four-lined iambic stanzas occur, these present twenty different types. Nineteen are used but once; six, twice; two, three times; and only one as many as four times. Different effects are secured by varying the number of feet in a line and by varying the rhyme scheme. His twenty-two poems written in five lined iambics are unique. Of his eleven poems in trochaics, seven are unique and only two repeated. This illustrates the scope of his metric power and his persistence in fitting thought to form. He expresses each emotion individually and the same expression is used a second time only for similar emotions.

No favorite stanza can be attributed to Herbert. He employs only one type as many as five times. He has forty-six varieties of six-lined stanza; four, of seven-lined; eight, of eight-lined; and five, of ten-lined. Within these stanza forms he has an inclination to widely spaced rhymes, often jumping rhymes to the fourth, fifth, seventh, and even the tenth line away.

In the light of the greater complexity of style in the poetry due to antique diction, the private character of the poetry, greater complexity of theme, greater condensation leading to the intricate technical devices employed, the

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stylistic contrast afforded by a comparison of The Country Parson and The Temple is apparent.

3 The Relative Significance of the Literary
 Contribution made by Herbert in The Temple
 and The Country Parson

Thesis: In The Country Parson, George Herbert made a contribution to the development of English prose which is of minor significance. His contribution was of moderate value to a literary genre already well explored and developed. In The Temple, he rediscovered, enriched, popularized, and added precision to the religious lyric. In so doing he made a contribution of major importance to English poetry. This distinction suggests a third point of comparison between the poetry and prose.

Exposition: A third distinction between the prose and poetry of George Herbert is due to the greater significance which the poetry has as a contribution to literature. This significance is not immediately apparent to the reader. However, when the works are viewed in the light of their literary backgrounds, this important distinction becomes apparent.

As a contribution to the prose of English literature, the significance of The Country Parson may be summarized briefly. The prose may be considered as carrying on a literary fashion first developed by the Greek Theophrastus, introduced into English literature by Joseph Hall in 1608,

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further developed by Sir Thomas Overbury in 1614, and extended by John Earle in 1628. The Country Parson, with the distinguishing marks outlined in Chapter Two, is "simply a character in extenso!"²⁴ As a landmark in the development of English prose, it does not stand out. It does not innovate a literary fashion; while it may be viewed as a reaction against outmoded literary conventions in prose, there were more significant reactions; it does not round out and complete the earlier contributions of less skilled craftsmen in the field; it merely constitutes a contribution of moderate value to a literary genre already explored and developed.

In contrast to the relative insignificance of the prose as a literary contribution, the poetry of George Herbert must be considered as one of the landmarks in the development of the religious lyric.

The religious poetry written before Herbert's time may be classified under four headings: Vision, Meditation, Paraphrase, and Hymn.²⁵ The poetry of Vision was written by writers who stand above their world, concerned with the divine rather than the human. In Saxon times, "Cynewulf" looked into the wonders of the Advent, Ascension, and Doomsday. The author of "Piers the Plowman" had visions of

²⁴ E.N.S. Thompson, Literary Bypaths of the Renaissance, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1924, p.27.

²⁵ George Herbert Palmer, op.cit., p.87 ff.

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Heaven before his eyes. Milton was later to celebrate the wonders of the Nativity and the Passion. Such authors are concerned primarily with God's relations to the world rather than with man's relations to God. The poetry of Vision resembles the Medieval Miracle Play.

The poetry of religious Meditation was much commoner in Herbert's early life. Spenser practiced it in his two "Hymns in Honour of Divine Love and Beauty"; Constable did likewise in his "Spiritual Sonnets to the Honour of God and his Saints;" Drayton carried on the fashion with his "Harmonies of the Church". In poetry of this type, the writers are not concerned with recording their own emotions. Such poetry reflects meditation on themes such as God, man, death, and duty. It studies a problem and tries to reach a general truth. It lacks the individual note and is not lyric.

The poetry of Paraphrase was a natural result of the emphasis on the Bible brought about by the wide acceptance of private interpretation. What better source for poetry or sacred song could be found than the original source? A favorite form of religious utterance was versified Paraphrase of some portion of the Bible. The Psalms were the most commonly chosen parts, and almost every prominent poet attempted a few. Translation of Psalms became a literary fashion. Wyatt and Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Wither, Fletcher, Bacon, and Carew all versified Psalms. In addition

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to the versification of Psalms, Surrey put Ecclesiastes into verse; Quarles versified Job, Samson, Esther, and the Song of Solomon; Drayton told the story of Noah, Moses, and David.

The Catholic Church had always had its Latin hymns. Many were translated by Luther and the German reformers. In general, English Protestants contented themselves for the most part with versions of the Psalms. As Puritanism advanced, the Bible tended to overshadow all other inspiration. In 1623, the first hymn-book that ever appeared in England was composed by George Wither. It was not widely accepted. The author complained:

"for divers ages together there have been but so many hymns composed and published as make not above two sheets and a half of paper".²⁶

To each of these four varieties of religious poetry, Herbert made good contributions. "The Sacrifice", and "The Bag", are poems of Vision. "The Church-Porch", "The Church Militant" and many of the poems contained within "The Church", "The Inner Life", and "Bemerton Study" groups, are poems of Meditation. He also translated half a dozen Psalms. Possibly the two "Antiphons", one of the poems entitled "Praise", "Easter", "The Holy Communion" and "An Offering" may pass for Hymns.

²⁶ Quoted, Ibid., p.93.

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In spite of Herbert's work in each of these previously explored areas, his distinctive merit must be sought elsewhere.

The significance of his contribution to literary history is due to his work with a new variety of sacred verse, the religious lyric. This fifth type of religious verse is different from the preceding four. The religious lyric is a cry of the individual heart to God. The writer stands face to face with God. He is not concerned with describing an event; he explores no general problem; he leans on no authoritative book. He draws entirely upon his inner feelings. He utters the love, the timidity, the joy, the vacillations, the remorse, the anxieties, the frustrations, he experiences. His attention is always exclusively fixed on God and himself. The religious lyric involves two beings only - the individual soul and God.

While Herbert thought out the form, studied its aesthetic possibilities, and helped to prepare the type for future generations, a certain preparation had been made by Robert Southwell. In 1595, the year of his execution, were printed two volumes of his verse. Possibly Herbert derived from him the idea of taking religion for his province. Southwell's book was popular in Herbert's boyhood and Mr. Palmer notes similarities between the language and meter of some of the works of Southwell and Herbert. In spite of resemblances, there are also differences between the works of

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the two poets. As a Catholic, Southwell is frequently more concerned with the saints rather than intimate communings with God. The type of religious lyric characteristic of Herbert, in which the relation between the poet and God is traced with the same fervency of passion which enters into the human relation, does not occur in Southwell.

Thomas Campion is a nearer predecessor of Herbert. In the personal quality of his religious verse, and in the beauty of its structure, he may be considered a forerunner. In another way however, he is distinct. Most of his religious poems are songs written with reference to a musical setting. They lack the introspective passion; they do not reflect the emotional outlet of as ardent a temperament. It is unlikely that Herbert obtained much aid from his poems.

Perhaps the closest rival to Herbert in his own field is John Donne. In his "Holy Sonnets" there is a passionate, deep communing with God. The "Holy Sonnets" however, comprise but a small part of Donne's poetry. It was left to Herbert to transfer to a comprehensive body of religious poetry the subtler analysis and the record of complex moods which had been Donne's great contribution to love poetry.

Religious poetry of the personal life was common among continental Catholics, the mystics, and the German Reformers. As it is grounded on one of the most constant cravings of human nature, it was common in other places

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long before Herbert made his contribution; but it had not yet found full voice in England.

Rather than discovering the type, Herbert discerned its importance and its place in human life. He is the first in England to express adequately the universal feeling of man as a lonely soul facing his Maker. He rediscovered the type; he enriched it with his own ingenuity; he drew upon his ardent temperament which provided ample material, and in so doing gave to the form a striking subject; he added precision. He firmly established the religious lyric as a type of English poetry. The species of verse quickly became so firmly established that it is difficult to conceive that it did not always exist.

This was George Herbert's real contribution to English literature. The significance of this contribution contrasts with the relative unimportance of the literary contribution represented by his prose.

4 Similarities in Ideas, Terminology, and Figures
 of Speech in The Country Parson and The Temple.

Thesis: A comparison of The Country Parson and The Temple reveals similarities as well as contrasts. Terms and phrases which are obscure in the poetry may be clarified frequently by reference to passages in the prose in which they appear.

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Exposition: While The Temple and The Country Parson are in sharp contrast because of the different attitudes toward religion reflected, the difference in complexity of style, and the difference in significance of the literary contribution they represent, some comment on an obvious similarity between the two works is appropriate. A list of some repetitions of ideas, unfamiliar words, and figures of speech is enlightening and it may be divided under these headings.

Examples of similar ideas may be listed under, "Ideas Relating to the Parson", and "The Parson's Relations with his People". The list is by no means exhaustive, but it does illustrate that, while The Temple and The Country Parson do contrast and supplement each other with differences of content, style and literary significance, the prose and poetry have some similarity due to the similarity of ideas expressed.

(a) Repetition of Ideas

i Ideas Relating to the Parson.

The idea of the parson being aware of the sinfulness of the world is repeated in the poetry.

"The country parson is generally sad, because he knows nothing but the Crosse of Christ, his minde being defixed on it with those nailes wherewith his Master was: or if he have any leisure to look off from thence, he meets continually with two most sad spectacles, Sin, and Misery; God dishonoured every day, and man afflicted."²⁷

²⁷ F.E. Hutchinson op.cit., p.267.

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Nothing but drought and dearth, but bush and brake,
 Which way so-e're I look, I see.²⁸

The rules given to the parson regarding keeping his
 word and watching his dress are also given to the youth in
 "The Church Porch", about to set out in the world.

"The Parson's yea is yea, and nay nay; and his apparrell
 plaine, but reverend, and clean, without spots, or dust,
 or smell; the purity of his mind breaking out, and
 dilating it selfe even to his body, cloaths and habi-
 tation".²⁹

When thou dost purpose ought within thy power,
 Be sure to doe it, though it be but small:
 ... Who breaks his own bond forfeiteth himself."³⁰

In clothes, cheap handsomnesse doth bear the bell.³¹

Let thy mindes sweetnesse have his operation
 Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.³²

Ideas on marriage are common to both the prose and
 poetry.

"The Country parson considering that virginity is a
 higher state then matrimony, and that the Ministry
 requires the best and highest things, is rather un-
 married, then married."³³

Abstaine or wedd: if thou canst not abstain
 Yet wedding marrs thy fortune, fast and pray:
 If this seeme monkish; think which brings most paine
 Need or Incontinency:³⁴

28 George Herbert, "Home", LL.49-50.

29 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.228.

30 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.115-117.

31 Ibid., L.187.

32 Ibid., LL.371-372.

33 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.236.

34 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.13-16.

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If the parson marries:

"His wife is either religious, or night and day he is winning her to it ... he requires ... of her ... first, a trayning up of her children and mayds in the fear of God."³⁵

I will not marry; or, if she be mine,
 She and her children shall be thine.³⁶

The proper approach to Scripture is discussed in the poetry as well as the prose. The first means the parson uses to help him understand the Scripture is: "a holy Life, remembering what his Master saith, that if any do God's will, he shall know of the Doctrine, John 7."³⁷

The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords,
 Is, when the soul unto the lines accords.³⁸

How dare those eyes upon a Bible look,
 Much lesse towards God, whose lust is all their book.³⁹

Charity is the predominant element of the country parson. "The country parson is full of Charity; it is his predominant element."⁴⁰

The poetry also deals with Charity.

If thou dost give me wealth, I will restore
 All back unto thee by the poore.⁴¹

Who shuts his hand, hath lost his gold:
 Who opens it, hath it twice told.⁴²

³⁵ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.239.

³⁶ George Herbert, "The Thanksgiving", LL.23-24.

³⁷ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.228.

³⁸ George Herbert, "A True Hymne", LL.9-10.

³⁹ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.11-12.

⁴⁰ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.244.

⁴¹ George Herbert, "The Thanksgiving", LL.19-20.

⁴² George Herbert, "Charms and Knots", LL.5-6.

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Give to all something; to a good poor man,
 Till thou change names, and be where he began.⁴³

The disesteem of worldly wealth is a topic common
 to the prose and poetry.

"... the country parson is very circumspect in avoiding
 all conveteousnesse, neither being greedy to get, nor
 niggardly to keep, nor troubled to lose any worldly
 wealth; but in all his words and actions slighting,
 and disesteeming it, even to a wondering, that the
 world should so much value wealth, which in the day
 of wrath hath not one dramme of comfort for us."⁴⁴

Money, thou bane of blisse, and sourse of wo,
 Whence coms't thou, that thou art so fresh and fine?
 I know thy parentage is base and low:
 Man found thee poore and dirtie in a mine."⁴⁵

He that hath made a sorrie wedding
 Between his soul and gold, and hath preferr'd
 False gain before the true,
 Hath done what he condemnes in reading:
 For he hath sold for money his deare Lord,
 And is a Judas - Jew.⁴⁶

For gold and grace did never yet agree:
 Religion alwaies sides with povertie.⁴⁷

... Wealth is the conjurers devil;
 Whom when he thinks he hath, the devil hath him.
 Gold thou mayst safely touch; but if it stick
 Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.⁴⁸

43 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.377-378.

44 F.E. Hutchinson op.cit., p.227.

45 George Herbert, "Avarice", LL.1-4.

46 George Herbert, "Self-Condernation", LL.13-18.

47 George Herbert, "The Church Militant", LL.251-252.

48 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.165-168.

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ii The Parson's Relations with his People

The rules for the parson discoursing are repeated in The Temple. The parson is: "unmoved in arguing, and voyd of all contentiousnesse."⁴⁹

Be calm in arguing: for fiercenesse makes
 errour a fault, and truth discourtesie.⁵⁰

The parson holds the rule: "... that to put men to discourse of that, wherein they are most eminent, is the most gainfull way of Conversation."⁵¹

Entice all neatly to what they know best;
 For so thou dost thy self and him a pleasure.⁵²

Idleness and the proper raising of children are discussed in both the prose and poetry. In The Country Parson, Herbert writes: "The great and nationall sin of this Land (the parson) esteems to be Idlenesse; great in it selfe, and great in Consequence."⁵³

Oh England! full of sinne, but most of sloth.⁵⁴
 "To them, (the idle), after he hath shew'd the unlawfulness of spending the day in dressing, complementing, visiting, and sporting ...".⁵⁵

⁴⁹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.263.

⁵⁰ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.307-308.

⁵¹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.260.

⁵² George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.295-296.

⁵³ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.274.

⁵⁴ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", L.91.

⁵⁵ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.277.

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Flie idlenesse, which yet thou cans't not flie
 By dressing, mistressing, and complement.⁵⁶

The young idle man can "busie himself ... in those new
 Plantations and discoveryes, which are not only a noble, but
 also as they may be handled, a religious imployment."⁵⁷

Some ship them over (send the sons away),
 And the thing is done.⁵⁸

"Or let him travel into Germany, and France, and observ-
 ing the Artifices, and Manufactures there, transplant
 them hither, as divers have done lately, to our
 Countrey's advantage."⁵⁹

Keep all thy native good, and naturalize
 All forrain of that name;⁶⁰

"The Heirs are to prepare in all the fore-mentioned points
 (the proper management of the estate) against the time of
 their practice."⁶¹

Some great estates provide, but doe not breed
 A mastring minde; so both are lost thereby.⁶²

Some till their ground, but let weeds choke
 Their sonne.⁶³

The responsibility of the citizen to his community is
 a common topic. If the head of the household is not fully
 occupied with the care of his family: "... the Village or Par-
 ish whither either he lives in or is neer unto it, is his

56 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.79-80.

57 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.298.

58 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", L.100.

59 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.278.

60 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.361-362.

61 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.276.

62 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.103-104.

63 Ibid., L.98.

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employment."64

Be usefull where thou livest, that they may
 Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.65

The use of Herbs for their medicinal value is frequently referred to. The country parson has a knowledge of medicine: "This is done by seeing one Anatomy, reeding one Book of Phisick, haveing one Herball by him." He knows: "what herbs may be used in stead of drugs of the same nature."66

Most herbs that grow in brooks, are hot and dry
 Cold fruits warm kernells help against the winde.
 The lemmons juice and rinde cure mutually.
 The whey of milk doth loose, the milk doth binde.67

Herbs gladly cure our flesh.68

"so, where the Apothecary useth either for loosing,
 Rubarb, or for binding, Bolearmena, the Parson useth
 damask or white roses for the one, and plantaine,
 shepherds purse, knot-grasse for the other, and with
 better successe."69

A rose, besides his beautie, is a cure.70

What is fairer then a rose?
 What is sweeter? Yet it purgeth.
 Purgings inmitie disclose,
 Inmitie forbearance urgeth.71

Farewell deare flowers, sweetly your time ye spent,
 Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament
 And after death for cures.72

The parson's duties on Sunday are echoed in the

64 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.276.

65 George Herbert, "The Church Porch," LL.325-326.

66 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.261.

67 George Herbert, "Providence", LL.129-132.

68 George Herbert "man", L.23.

69 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.261.

70 George Herbert, "Providence", L.78.

71 George Herbert, "The Rose", LL.17-20.

72 George Herbert, "Life," LL.13-15.

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poetry. When the parson awakes on Sunday: "his thoughts are full of making the best of the day, and continuing it to his best gaires".⁷³

Summe up at night, what thou has done by day;
 And in the morning, what thou has to do.⁷⁴

"Then the parson haveing read divine Service twice fully."⁷⁵

Twice on the day his due is understood.⁷⁶

The parson does not tolerate habitual late-comers: ..."he by no means suffers it."⁷⁷

Sundaies observe; think when the bells do chime,
 'Tis angels musick; therefore come not late.⁷⁸

The parson looks to the conduct of the people in church:

"... by no means enduring either talking, or sleeping, or gazing, or leaning, or halfe-kneeling, or any undutifull behaviour in them."⁷⁹

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare,
 God is more there, then thou:⁸⁰...

In time of service seal up both thine eies,
 And send them to thine heart;⁸¹...

"... none goes out of church as he came in, but either better

⁷³ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.235.

⁷⁴ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.451-452.

⁸⁵ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.236.

⁷⁶ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", L.391.

⁷⁷ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.232.

⁷⁸ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.387-388.

⁷⁹ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.23-25.

⁸⁰ Ibid., LL.403-404.

⁸¹ Ibid., LL.415-416.

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or worse;"⁸²

Look to thy actions well:
 For churches are either our heav'n or hell.⁸³

The idea of the parson's church being a mean between the "superstition" of Romanism and the "slovenliness" of Puritanism is common to The Country Parson and The Temple. In looking after his church, the country parson sees that the proper instruments of worship are present; "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 slovenliness".⁸⁴

Outlandish looks may not compare
 For all they either painted are,
 Or else undrest.⁸⁵

One of the furnishings of the parson's church is "a Poor mans Box conveniently seated."⁸⁶

As we have boxes for the poore.⁸⁷

Fasting is spoken of in both poetry and prose: "... fasting dayes were fully performed by keeping of the two former, (eating no pleasing, or over-nourishing things, eating no (flesh) had not Authority interposed:"⁸⁸

82 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.233.

83 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.425-426.

84 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.246.

85 George Herbert, "The British Church", LL.7-12.

86 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.246.

87 George Herbert, "Praise", lll, L.28.

88 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.242.

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True Christians should be glad of an occasion
 To use their temperance, seeking no evasion,
 When good is seasonable;
 Unlesse Authoritie, which should increase
 The obligation in us, make it lesse,
 And Power it self disable.⁸⁹

To be in both worlds full
 Is more than God was, who was hungrie here.
 Would'st thou his laws of fasting disanull?⁹⁰

The parson instructs his people to dedicate their work
 to God: "... they labour profanely, when they set themselves
 to work like brute beasts, never raising their thoughts to
 God, nor sanctifying their labour with daily prayer."⁹¹

Not rudely, as a beast,
 To runne into an action;
 But still to make thee prepossest,
 And give it his perfection.⁹²

The parson reminds everyone of his obligation to
 fulfill his station in life.

"Having gifts differing, according to the grace that is
 given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according
 to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our
 ministring; or he that teacheth, on teaching, etc."⁹³

Art thou a Magistrate? then be severe:
 If studious, copie fair, what time hath blurr'd;
 Redeem truth from his jawes: if souldier,
 Chase brave employments with a naked sword.
 Throughout the world.⁹⁴

When preaching on repentance, the parson tells his

89 George Herbert, "Lent", LL.13-18.

90 George Herbert, "The Size", LL.13-15.

91 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.247.

92 George Herbert, "The Elixer", LL.5-8.

93 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.226.

94 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.85-89.

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people: "... there is no help for a fault done, but confession."⁹⁵

Wherefore my faults and sinnes
 Lord, I acknowledge; take thy plagues away.
 For since confession pardon winnes,
 I challenge here the brightest day,^{96...}

Yet by confession will I come
 Into thy conquest: though I can do nought
 Against thee, in thee I will overcome
 The man, who once against thee fought.⁹⁷

Yet, if thou sinne in wine or wantonnesse,
 Boast not thereof; nor make thy shame thy glory.
 Frailtie gets pardon by submissiveness;
 But he that boasts, shuts that out of his storie.⁹⁸

When praying, the parson "composeth himselfe to all possible reverence ... as being truly touched and amazed with the Majesty of God."⁹⁹

What do I see
 Written above there? Yesterday
 I did behave me carelessly,
 When I did pray.¹⁰⁰

The parson reminds his people of "... the miserable comparison of the moments of griefs here with the weight of joyes hereafter."¹⁰¹ The same idea is repeated in several poems.

But **oh** the folly of distracted men,
 Who griefs in earnest, joyes in jest pursue;
 Preferring, like brute beasts, a lothsome den
 Before a court¹⁰²

⁹⁵ F.E. Hutchinson, *op.cit.*, p.247.

⁹⁶ George Herbert, "Confession", LL.25-28.

⁹⁷ George Herbert, "The Reprisall", LL.13-16.

⁹⁸ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.49-52.

⁹⁹ F.E. Hutchinson, *op.cit.*, p.231.

¹⁰⁰ George Herbert, "The Method", LL.14-17.

¹⁰¹ F.E. Hutchinson, *op.cit.*, p.249.

¹⁰² George Herbert, "Dotage", LL.13-16.

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Yet if we rightly measure,
 Man's joy and pleasure
 Rather hereafter, then in present, is.103

First, there is no pleasure here:
 Colour'd griefs indeed there are,
 Blushing woes, that look as cleare
 As if they could beautie spare.104

Prayer is discussed in both the prose and poetry. "It is necessary, that all Christians should pray twice a day every day of the week, and four times on Sunday, if they be well."105

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven
 I will praise thee.
 In my heart, though not in heaven,
 I can raise thee.106

Who goes to bed and does not pray
 maketh two nights to ev'ry day.107

The parson: "besides the common prayers of the family, he straitly requires of all to pray by themselves before they sleep at night."108

Though private prayer be a brave designe,
 Yet publick hath more promises, more love.109

When inquiring into the details of his parishioner's households, the parson remembers: "nothing is little in God's service."110

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- 103 George Herbert, "Man's Medley", LL.4-6.
 104 George Herbert, "The Rose", LL.5-8.
 105 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.272.
 106 George Herbert, "Praise", LL.17-20.
 107 George Herbert, "Charms and Knots", LL.7-8.
 108 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.240.
 109 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.397-398.
 110 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.249.

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The idea is repeated in "The Elixer".

Nothing can be so mean
 Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
 Will not grow bright and clean.¹¹¹

Teach me, my God and King,
 In all things thee to see,
 And what I do in anything,
 To do it as for thee:¹¹²...

One of the ways the parson accepts the contempt with which he is likely to be held is: "a sad way, grieved at his own, and others sins, which continually breaks Gods Laws and dishonour him with those mouths, which he continually fills, and feeds."¹¹³

The idea of man's complete dependence on God is repeated in several of the poems. In "The Sacrifice", Christ, speaking of those who would crucify Him says:

Who cannot wish, except I give them bread.¹¹⁴

The poet, addressing God says in The Country Parson: "... for thou art not only the feast, but the way of it."¹¹⁵

(b) Repetition of Unfamiliar Words

Editors frequently refer from the poetry to the prose to establish the meanings of unfamiliar words or common words

¹¹¹ George Herbert, "The Elixer", LL.14-16.

¹¹² Ibid., LL.1-4.

¹¹³ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.269.

¹¹⁴ George Herbert, "The Sacrifice", L.7.

¹¹⁵ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.257.

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used in a new way.

Board

An old good servant boards a child.116

The word "board" is used to mean border on - an old good servant approaches to the status of a son of the house. The word is from the French "aborder".

Affect in things about thee cleanliness
 That all may gladly board thee, as a floure.117

The word is used here to mean "make advances to".

Commerce

"... as one country doth not bear all things, that there may be a Commerce; so neither hath God opened, or will open, all to one, that there may be a traffic in knowledge between the servants of God, for the planting both of love, and humility."118

This is a favorite word and idea of Herbert's meaning intercourse or dealings, and appears in three of the poems.

Surely if each one say another heart
 There would be no commerce,
 No sale or bargain passe: all would disperse,
 And live apart.119

This breathing would with gains by sweetning me
 (As sweet things traffic when they meet)
 And so this new commerce and sweet
 Should all my life employ and busie me.120

116 Ibid., p.241.

117 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.366-367.

118 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.229.

119 George Herbert, "Giddinesse", LL.21-24.

120 George Herbert, "The Odour", LL.26-30.

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All countrys have enough to serve their need
 If they seek fine things, thou dost make them run
 For their offence; and then dost turn their speed
 To be commerce and trade from sunne to sunne.¹²¹

Frame

The parson visits his parishioners in their homes
 because:

"... on Sundays it is easie for them to compose them-
 selves to order, which they put on as their holy-day
 cloathes, and come to church in frame but commonly
 the next day put off both."¹²²

The words "in frame" are used to mean "into a suitable
 disposition" and are used again in "The 23rd Psalme."

Or if I stray, he doth convert
 And bring my minde in frame:
 And all this not for my desert,
 But for his holy name.¹²³

Gallant

"... the onely opposer to this Doctrine is the Gallant,
 who is witty enough to abuse both others, and himself,
 and who is ready to ask, if he shall mend shoos, or
 what he shall do?"¹²⁴

The word "Gallant" is used in a derogatory sense to mean the
 shiftless idle type. The word is used in "The Church Porch",
 to refer to those who drink to excess.

If reason move not Gallants, quit the room,
 (All in a shipwrack shift their severall way)
 Let not a common swine thee intombe:¹²⁵

¹²¹ George Herbert, "Providence", LL.105-108.

¹²² F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.247.

¹²³ George Herbert, "The 23rd Psalme", LL.9-12.

¹²⁴ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.275.

¹²⁵ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.43-45.

Towards great persons use respective boldness.¹²⁷

When trying to lead those who hold strange doctrines to the true faith, the parson determines the basis of their belief, "as if it be a Papist, the Church is the hinge he turnes on; if a Schismatick, scandall."¹²⁸

The humble soul compos'd of love and fear
Begins at home, and layes the burden there,
When doctrines disagree.
He sayes, in things which use hath justly got,
I am a scandall to the Church, and not
The Church is so to me. 129

The country parson directs the conversation of his company to proper channels: "... this he doth discretely, with mollifying, and suppling words; This was not so well said, as it might have been forborn."130

Mr. Hutchinson quotes R. Southwell's "S. Peters Complaint": "Pour suppling showers upon my parched ground",

126 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.253.

127 George Herbert, "The Church Porch", L.253.

128 F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.262.

129 George Herbert, "Lent", LL.7-11.

130 F.E. Hutchinson, *op.cit.*, p.252.

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to illustrate this figurative use of the word.¹³¹

Herbert uses the word in the same way in the poem
 "Grace".

Sinne is still hammering my heart
 Unto a hardnesse, void of love;
 Let suppling grace, to crosse his art,
 Drop from above.¹³²

(c) Repetition of Figures of Speech

"But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in
 the book of books, the storehouse and magazene of
 life and comfort, the holy Scriptures. There he
sucks, and lives."¹³³

Oh Book! infinite sweetnesse! let my heart
Suck ev'ry letter, and a hony gain.¹³⁴

"As he opened the day with prayer, so he closeth it,
 humbly beseeching the Almighty to pardon and accept
 our poor services, and to improve them, that we may
 grow therein, and that our feet may be like hindes
 feet ever climbing up higher and higher unto him."¹³⁵

Yet through these labyrinths, not my groveling wit,
 But thy silk twist let down from heav'n to me,
 Did both conduct and teach me, how by it
To climbe to thee.¹³⁶

When discussing customs of country people Herbert
 states: "If there be any ill in the custome, that may be

¹³¹ Ibid., p.560.

¹³² George Herbert, "Grace", LL.5-9.

¹³³ George Herbert, "The H.Scriptures", LL.1-2.

¹³⁴ George Herbert, "The H.Scriptures", LL.1-2.

¹³⁵ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.236.

¹³⁶ George Herbert, "The Pearl", LL.37-40.

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severed from the good, he pares the apple, and gives them
 the clean to feed on."¹³⁷

When thou dost tell another jest, therein
 Omit the oathes, which true wit cannot need;
 Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sinne
 He pares his apple, that will cleanly feed."¹³⁸

In the introduction to The Country Parson, Herbert
 states that the mark he set for the parson is high since "...
hee shoots higher that threatens the Moon, then hee that aims
at a Tree."¹³⁹

Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high;
 So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be:
 Sink not in spirit: who aimeth at the sky,
Shoots higher much then he that means a tree.¹⁴⁰

"... he that throws a stone at another hits himselfe."¹⁴¹
 Who by aspersions throw a stone at the head of
 others hit their own.¹⁴²

5 Summary

The contrasts and similarities which illustrate the
 extent to which The Country Parson and The Temple supplement
 each other, may be illustrated by a comparison of the content,
 the style, and their relative worth as contributions to

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- ¹³⁷ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.283.
¹³⁸ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.64-68.
¹³⁹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.224.
¹⁴⁰ George Herbert, "The Church Porch", LL.331-334.
¹⁴¹ F.E. Hutchinson, op.cit., p.269.
¹⁴² George Herbert, "Charms and Knots," L.9.

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literature. Similarities of ideas, terminology, and figures of speech, may also be noted.

In content, the contrast is readily apparent. The prose is largely impersonal, the poetry is mainly religious autobiography; one is concerned mainly with organized religious practices, the other depicts a highly personal and intimate relationship between the poet and God; one suggests an attitude of quiet saintliness, the other depicts wrestling and submission. Either work, considered in isolation, presents an incomplete portrait of the author.

The contrast is continued when styles are compared. The prose is relatively simple, direct, and in little need of commentary. The poetry is intricate, complex, oblique, and subtle. The more significant causes to which the contrast of styles may be attributed are the use of antique diction, the private character of the poetry, the greater complexity of subject-matter, and a greater degree of condensation. The intricacy of the poems becomes more evident in the light of a summary of some of the technical devices employed.

A third contrast is afforded by the relative significance of the literary contribution made by Herbert through The Country Parson and The Temple. In prose, the author made a contribution of moderate value to a literary genre already well explored and developed. In poetry, he made a contribution of major significance to English literature by

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rediscovering, enriching, popularizing, and adding precision to the religious lyric. Prior to his contribution, there had been much religious poetry describing religious events, exploring general religious problems, paraphrasing biblical passages, and voicing group praise to God. However the cry of the individual heart to God, the writer standing face to face with God, which is the essence of the religious lyric, was a neglected type of religious poetry in England. Herbert's contribution in filling this need is of much greater significance than his prose contribution to the art of Character writing.

A comparison of The Country Parson and The Temple reveals similarities as well as contrasts. Ideas are repeated. Unfamiliar words used in the poetry may be clarified by an examination of their use in the less complex prose. Figures of speech are sometimes used in common. Examples cited are by no means a complete list, but they do illustrate the similarities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

For several reasons an exploration into one aspect of the works of George Herbert, a relatively minor poet, is justified. The poet has many qualities to commend him. By his success in using poetry to clarify our insight into significant relations between man and God, by his refusal to escape to the "art for art's sake" dream world and to make of beauty an absolute without relations to truth and goodness, by his success in overcoming the temptation to subordinate his art to the task of preaching an explicit doctrine, and by his revelation of a personality possessing both strength of character and intellectual power, George Herbert's works are a healthy antidote to the work of many recent versifiers.

In the light of these qualities, it is unfortunate that Herbert has not been given the attention he deserves. The result is that Herbert is frequently considered a minor member of a minor seventeenth century literary school whose work is characterized by a certain "quaintness" and the conceits which are to be found therein. The fact that he rediscovered, explored, polished, perfected, and generally enriched the religious lyric by drawing upon his technical skill and vibrant personality, is not sufficiently recognized.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to investigate a particular aspect of Herbert's work, and thereby help to remedy the present misconceptions regarding the poet.

Chapter One presented a recapitulation of scholarship

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in the area, an outline of the method to be followed, a definition of the significance and originality of this contribution, summaries of chapter contents, and a biographical sketch.

While four editions of Herbert's works appeared within three years of his death in 1633 and, by 1709, thirteen editions had been published, between 1709 and 1799 not a single edition appeared. While an occasional recognition came from poets such as Cowper, it was left to Coleridge to rediscover him when his poetic credit stood lowest. In the next hundred years after the first quarter of the nineteenth century there have been many editions, both scholarly and popular, of The Temple. With the current revival of interest in the Metaphysical Poets, certain excellences of Herbert's poetry are generally recognized at the present time, and editors such as George Herbert Palmer and F.E. Hutchinson have produced the most significant studies of the poet.

Critics such as Joan Bennet, J.B. Leishman, Helen C. White, and H.J.C. Grierson, have produced critical studies of Herbert and his school.

Studies of Herbert have been concerned primarily with his poetry and only passing references have been made to his prose treatise, The Country Parson. While scholars have recognized the value of taking into consideration Herbert's prose in order that a better understanding of the poetry might be arrived at, the idea has not been developed adequately.

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The prime purpose of this study has been to determine the extent to which The Country Parson and The Temple supplement each other by revealing contrasting and similar sides of George Herbert. This is an enlargement of an idea hitherto referred to by scholars only in passing references. By exploring, isolating, and highlighting the contrasts and similarities between the poetry and prose, a better understanding of both may be reached.

A secondary purpose of this thesis has been to present a comprehensive but relatively concise summary of pertinent background and contents of the prose and poetry in a consolidated form. This summary may prove useful as a supplement or introduction to Herbert's works.

Chapter Two presented a summary of the background of The Country Parson. Since the prose treatise was a study of the writer's own conditions, as well as a means of bringing about reform of conditions in rural parishes, an outline of the civil and ecclesiastical organization of a seventeenth century country parish, and illustrations drawn from contemporary sources, provided a useful introduction. Information regarding the more general developments on the national scene is also useful. This includes the rise of Puritanism, the position of Herbert's Church between Puritanism and Catholicism, and the ties between Church and State. In addition, the chapter contains a summary of the history of

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the literary genre to which Herbert's prose belongs.

The purpose of Chapter Three was to present a summary of the contents of The Country Parson. The thirty-seven chapters were summarized under a topical arrangement of the ideas. "The Country Parson as a Priest", summarizes those ideas dealing with the dignity and the duties of the priesthood. "The Country Parson as a Man", is the topical heading for those ideas dealing with the parson's marital state, his relations with his children, and the general organization and control of his household. "The Parson's Relations with his People", heads those ideas dealing with those relations in the church, and the general problems the parson considers "at spare times from action". "The Country Parson's Relations with Church Authorities and those Outside his Parish", heads a summary of the ideas suggested by the heading.

On the assumption that a better understanding and a more accurate appraisal of the poetry of George Herbert will result from some knowledge of the literary currents within which he worked, Chapter Four presented a summary of the aims and methods of the metaphysical School. When reacting against the outmoded literary conventions of the early Elizabethans, the Metaphysical Poets drew upon the rhythms and language of ordinary conversation, used far-fetched figures of speech, and reflected an analytical approach to their subjects. While his poetry has particular characteristics, George Herbert also reflects the dominant traits of his school.

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Chapter Five summarized the contents of the one hundred sixty-nine poems in The Temple. While there is some dispute regarding the chronological arrangement of the poems, the poems are arranged under the topical headings suggested by Mr. George Herbert Palmer. Two major divisions entitled "Cambridge Poems" and "Bemerton Poems" are separated by a minor division containing eighteen poems entitled "The Crisis". The two major divisions are subdivided into ten groupings. "Cambridge Poems" are grouped under: "The Church Porch", "The Resolve", "The Church", "Meditation", and "The Inner Life". "Bemerton Poems" are grouped under: "The Happy Priest", "Bemerton Study", "Restlessness", "Suffering", and "Death". Introductory essays have outlined the reasons for placing the poems of each topical division and grouping within the selection in which they appear.

The main conclusions justified by the evidence outlined in Chapters Two to Five have been summarized in Chapter Six. Herbert's prose and poetry contrast and therefore supplement each other in three ways.

In content, the prose reflects an attitude of quiet saintliness in one concerned primarily with man's relations with God as recognized through the "fixed avenues" and "ordered paths" of organized religion. This is the aspect of Herbert's temperament emphasized by Walton who wrote his biography thirty-seven years after his death, without

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first-hand knowledge, and focussing upon the last few years of Herbert's life. In contrast, the poetry reflects "continued wrestling" and "continued submission", in one who stands as a lonely soul face to face with God and is preoccupied with an intensely personal and individual relationship with God.

Poetry and prose together reveal a more accurate portrait of the poet than either one reveals in isolation. By complementing each other, they lead to a better understanding of the writer and hence enable the reader to view the poetry with greater insight.

In style, the poetry reveals a technical skill not evident in the prose. The simplicity of the prose contrasts with the intricacy and obscurity of the poetry. The greater complexity of the poetry was attributed to the antique diction contained, the private character of the poetry, the greater complexity of poetic theme, and the high degree of condensation within the poetry.

In the relative importance of the prose and poetry as literary contributions, there is a third contrast between Herbert's prose and poetry. The prose represents a contribution of moderate value to a literary genre already explored and developed. While it is impressive as a work of inspiration, by artistic standards it suffers by comparison with the work of lesser figures. In contrast, Herbert's poetry reveals a highly polished technical skill used for the purpose of revealing an ardent temperament. In poetry, he

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rediscovered a type of poem which had been neglected in English literature. He enriched, popularized, and added precision to the religious lyric, and in so doing he made a contribution of major significance to English poetry.

In addition to contrasts in content, style, and literary significance, a comparison of the poetry and prose also revealed similarities. The prose supplements the poetry by clarifying the meaning of antique terms, common words used in uncommon ways, and figures of speech. When used in the less complex prose, language whose meaning is obscure in the poetry becomes clear.

In addition to highlighting contrasts and similarities between the prose and poetry, thus preparing the way for a better understanding of the poetry, this thesis also presented background ideas of general interest to the student of Herbert. The outline of the civil and ecclesiastical organization of a seventeenth century country parish and the developments in Church and State in Herbert's day, the outline of the work of contemporaries within the literary genre to which The Country Parson belongs, the summary of the aims and methods of the Metaphysical Poets, and the introductory essays dealing with the chronology of the poems, all enable the reader to make a more penetrating analysis and a juster evaluation of Herbert's poetry. A reader so informed is more likely to react more sensitively to the poems. Thus, while

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the background ideas presented were primarily a means leading up to the comparison of the prose and poetry, they are also to some extent an end in themselves.

Several aspects of the life and works of George Herbert remain to be explored. Whether the "continued wrestling" and "continued submission" reflected in many of the poems was due to a collar not easily worn or whether it was due to the more general refusal to submit to the Divine Will, is disputed. Estimates of Herbert, by contemporaries such as Isaac Walton, Nicholas Ferrar, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Francis Bacon, and John Donne, may throw light upon this issue.

An investigation to explore more fully the common use in prose and poetry of antique terms, common words used in uncommon ways, and figures of speech may be made. Many of the textual difficulties in the poetry could be solved in this manner.

While critics have explored the resemblances between the Metaphysical School and modern poets, the more particular problem of the contrasts and similarities between the poems of George Herbert and those written by modern writers of religious lyrics such as Gerard Manly Hopkins and Francis Thompson, could be investigated profitably.

APPENDIX A

Letters

In addition to The Country Parson and The Temple, the letters of George Herbert provide insight into the character of the writer. Several purposes are served by an examination of a chronological arrangement of the letters. The validity of the divisions outlined in Chapter Five between the "Cambridge Poems", "The Crisis" and "Bemerton Poems" is verified. While the divisions provide mainly a topical arrangement of the poems, the chronological arrangement which is implicit in the division is more justified in the light of the letters. In addition, the contrast in emotional bearing afforded by an examination of the prose and poetry, as outlined in Chapter Six, is emphasized by evidence within the letters. In general, the contrasts between the outlook reflected in the prose and that revealed by most of the poetry is afforded also by a comparison of the few Cambridge and Bemerton letters extant.

Of the seventeen extant personal letters of Herbert, six were written from Bemerton and the remainder from various places along the path to Bemerton parsonage. The letters written from Bemerton show how far the writer had travelled since his Cambridge days. Just as The Temple reveals the poet's arduous journey leading to the comparative peace and quiet of Bemerton, and The Country Parson reveals implicitly the happiness of the Bemerton years, so too do the letters

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reveal the man, both as he had been and as he had become.

In a letter accompanying the two sonnets sent to his mother at New Years 1609, the poet proclaimed his intentions. He laments the fact that so many love poems are consecrated to Venus and bewails the fact that so few are directed "towards God and Heaven." In reaction against these literary fashions, the poet declares his resolution to be: "that my poor Abilities in Poetry, shall be all, and ever consecrated to God's glory".¹

Two letters were written to Sir John Danvers in 1617. In the first of these, the writer expresses his gratitude for the "infinite kindnesses" which he feels he is able to repay only with "a constancy of obedience". The second letter, written from Trinity College in March of 1617, is a petition for financial aid. The student is badly in need of books: "I want Books extremely".² In poor health, he is encountering extra expenses, "to buy somewhat tending towards my health".³ He must follow a special diet: "I am fain to dyet in my Chamber at mine own cost".⁴ Sometimes he must leave the university to ride to Newmarket, "and there lie a day or two for fresh Air; all which tend to avoiding of costlier matters, if I should fall absoluteley sick."⁵ Because he feels that

¹ F.E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, p.363.

² Ibid., p.364.

³ Ibid., p.364.

⁴ Ibid., p.364.

⁵ Ibid., p.365.

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his university years are so important for "the foundation of my whole life",⁶ which is to be a life of Divinity, he does not hesitate to ask for assistance.

In a letter written the following year to his brother Henry who was at that time in France, he expresses his intention "to impart unto you some of those observations which I have framed to myself in conversation"⁷, when he has sufficient time, with the hope that he will comment upon them. In addition, he echoes an idea stated in The Country Parson when he advises his brother to "Bee covetous, then, of all good which you see in Frenchmen, whether it be in knowledge, or in fashion, or in words."⁸

A letter written the same year to Sir John Danvers asks "if any course could be taken of doubling my Annuity now, upon condition that I should surcease from all title to it, after I entered into a Benefice", in order that he may "for ever after cease my clamorous and greedy bookish requests."¹⁰

In accord with a request by Sir John Danvers that he write to Sir Robert Harley "to acquaint you with those passages of newes which this time affords"¹¹, a letter written in 1618 contains a list of miscellaneous items which is little more

⁶ Ibid., p.365.

⁷ Ibid., p.365-366.

⁸ Ibid., p.366.

⁹ Ibid., p.367.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.367.

¹¹ Ibid., p.368.

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than small talk about matters he had occasion to become aware of while performing his duties as Praelector in Rhetoric at Cambridge. Merchants from the Low-Countries have come to treat of matters pertaining to Merchants at the Indies; the king is involved in a dispute regarding fishing by Dutchmen off the coast of England; Lord Buckingham arrived at chapel on Christmas Day one hour before services; "Sir Charles Howard and his Lady are at much difference";¹² and various matters of like significance are related.

Prior to his being appointed to the position of Public Orator at Cambridge in 1619, Herbert wrote to Sir John Danvers to request his assistance in procuring the position. He describes it in glowing terms:

"The Orators place (that you may understand what it is) is the finest place in the University, though not the gainfullest; yet that will be about 30L per an. but the commodiousness in beyond the Revenue; for the Orator writes all the University Letters, makes all the Orations, be it to King, Prince, or whatever comes to the University; to requite these pains, he takes place next the Doctors, is at all their Assemblies and Meetings, and sits above the Proctors, is Regent or Non-regent at his pleasure, and such like Gaynesses, which will please a young man well"¹³

He hopes that he will be appointed to the position, "without all your London help, of which I am very proud."¹⁴

A letter to the same friend, on the same subject, was written the month following. He is concerned because a

¹² Ibid., p.368.

¹³ Ibid., p.369-370.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.370.

powerful friend, Sir Francis Nethersol, whose influence he had been depending upon, fears that the position of Public Orator "may divert me too much from Divinity."¹⁵ Herbert states that "it may very well be joined with heaven."¹⁶

He requests information about his sick sister from Sir John in a letter written the same year, at the same time informing him that, "concerning the Orators place all goes well yet."¹⁷ To his sister he pledges his prayers for a quick recovery in a short letter written in 1620.

The writer refers to his postponed vocation in a letter of May 1622 to his sick mother. When consoling his mother in her illness he states:

"For my self, dear Mother, I alwaies fear'd sickness more than death, because sickness hath made me unable to perform those Offices for which I came into the world, and must yet be kept in it".¹⁸

The six remaining letters, written from Bemerton, contrast with the letters of the poet's Cambridge days. In the words of Mr. Hutchinson:

"they manifest an achieved character of humility, tenderness, moral sensitiveness, and personal consecration, which he was very far from having attained or even envisaged when he was dazzled by the attractions of the great world".¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid., p.370.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.370.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.371.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.373.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.xxxvi.

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A letter to his brother, Sir Henry Herbert, in which he insists on taking charge of two destitute nieces, rather than allowing them to be separated, even though he was far less able to do so than were his brothers, illustrates his kindness and concern for others.

In a letter to Lady Anne, Countess of Pembroke, he offers his blessing, "a Priests blessing, though it be none of the Court-stile, yet doubtless Madam, can do you no hurt."²⁰

The remaining letters written from Bemerton to Sir Henry Herbert and Nicholas Ferrar, deal mainly with his rebuilding of the church building at Leighton. "I thanke you heartily for Leighton, your care, your Counsell, your Cost."²¹

The pattern suggested by the letters is in conformity with that revealed in The Temple and The Country Parson. He dedicates his poetry to the service of God; he seeks financial aid in two letters; he advises his brother in secular matters; he passes on gossip picked up around the university; he is greatly impressed with the position of Orator and is concerned with using as many influential friends as possible to procure it; he confesses to his mother that he still has his priestly vocation in mind. These Cambridge letters reflect the hesitation, the attraction for secular position, the concern with worldly matters, characteristic of his early years.

²⁰ Ibid., p.377.

²¹ Ibid., p.379.

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The delicacy and good sense with which he discusses the provision to be made for his nieces, the graceful reference to his priest's blessing being "none of the Court-stile", the complete devotion to his calling and his fitness for it, all are reflected in the Bemerton epistles. They reflect a humility, a tenderness, and a personal consecration contrasting with his earlier attitude.

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Willey, Basil, The Seventeenth Century Background, London, Chatto and Windus, 1934.

In what has been called the most significant book on the subject, Mr. Willey enquires into the influence upon traditional beliefs, especially theological and poetic beliefs, of the intellectual currents of the early part of the century.

Willey, Basil, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury: A Spiritual Quixote of the Seventeenth Century", Essays and Studies by Members of The English Association, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1942, Vol. XXVII, pp.22-29.

The outline of the significance of Lord Herbert's contribution to the intellectual currents of his time, presented in this article, adds nothing to the treatment of the subject given in The Seventeenth Century Background.

ABSTRACT

For several reasons an investigation into the area of a poet who is most frequently considered as a minor figure is justified. George Herbert and his poetry provide a healthy antidote for the modern misconception of the poet and his art. The contribution made by Herbert to the development of the religious lyric is frequently not sufficiently recognized. As a relatively minor figure, the tendencies of his age may appear more distinctly in Herbert than in those writers of commanding **genius**. These reasons justify the exploration of a particular aspect of the life and works of the writer.

Although studies of Herbert's works are usually concerned primarily with his poetry, his poetry is but one of the means whereby he exerted his influence on his Church and his World. Herbert's influence was due also to his rules of living for parochial and other clergy set down in his prose work, The Country Parson. A valid distinction may therefore be made between George Herbert the parson as revealed in The Country Parson, and George Herbert the poet as revealed in The Temple. While various scholars have recognized, at least to some degree, the necessity of taking into consideration Herbert's prose in order that a more complete insight into the poet may be gained, the problem has not been explored adequately. It is the prime purpose of this thesis to expose and explore this problem.

The general, religious, and literary background

related to Herbert's prose, is explored. This includes the civil and ecclesiastical organization of a seventeenth century country parish, developments in Church and State during Herbert's day, and the literary genre to which the prose belongs.

The contents of The Country Parson are summarized by isolating and grouping similar ideas in a topical arrangement.

The background of The Temple contains an outline of the literary conventions which Herbert and other members of his school reacted against and the means they employed to react against them.

The contents of The Temple are summarized by grouping the poems within three divisions containing ten minor groupings, according to their subject. A series of introductory essays explain the validity of such groupings and the extent to which the arrangement is chronological.

In the light of summaries of pertinent background developments and the contents of the prose and poetry, conclusions are reached regarding the extent to which The Country Parson and The Temple supplement each other by revealing contrasting and similar sides of George Herbert. Contrasts in content, style and in their relative significance as contributions to literature, are outlined. Similarities of language and expressions are also noted.

While Chapters Two to Five presenting summaries of pertinent background and the contents of Herbert's prose and

poetry may be considered as means toward the end of noting the similarities and contrasts between the prose and poetry, and the extent to which they supplement each other, the summaries may also be considered as ends in themselves. This material, insofar as it contains a relatively concise condensation of pertinent background ideas and the contents of Herbert's major works, presented in a consolidated form, may be of use either as an introduction to or a supplement for the reading of the works themselves. Thus, while the prime purpose of this thesis is to present an outline of the more significant contrasts and similarities between the prose and poetry, and the extent to which they supplement each other, which presentation is an enlargement of an idea which has been hitherto referred to by scholars only in passing references, it also fulfills a secondary purpose.

Several conclusions are valid in the light of evidence presented. In content, the prose differs greatly from the poetry. While The Country Parson reflects an attitude of quiet saintliness in one primarily concerned with serving God through the ordered rituals and customs of organized religion, the dominant theme of the poetry is the spiritual autobiography of one standing face to face with God with whom he feels an intensely personal relationship. Prose and poetry jointly present a more complete portrait of George Herbert than they do in isolation. "Quiet saintliness" and "continued wrestling and continued submission" both are aspects of Herbert's character.

In style, the intricacy of the poems contrasts with the relative simplicity of the prose. The greater obscurity of style in the poems may be attributed to several causes. The use of antique diction, the private character of the poems, the strangeness of the titles of the poems, and the greater complexity of moods revealed, all contribute to making the poems more intricate.

The Temple also contrasts with The Country Parson because of the greater significance of that collection of poems as a contribution to literature. While in prose Herbert made a contribution of moderate significance to a literary genre already explored and developed, in poetry he rediscovered, explored, polished and refined the religious lyric by applying to it technical skill and by drawing upon his own vibrant personality for content.

Similarities of language used in the prose and poetry are also noted. The resemblance extends to figures of speech as well as to the use of antique terms and common terms used in uncommon ways.