THE PRIEST IN THE TEMPLE:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GEORGE HERBERT’S
ENGLISH POETRY AND THE COUNTRY PARSON

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of English

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July, 1993

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Date 31 August 1993
This dissertation describes the relationship between George Herbert’s two principal works, The Temple (1633) and The Country Parson (1651). The introduction discusses the main problems faced by readers of The Temple: its paradoxical religious statements, its apparent lack of unity, its variable poetic voice, and its place in literary history. Chapter 1 argues that The Temple and The Country Parson are complementary: that they may have been written together and considered companionpieces, that they are similar in form and content, and that they should be read together. Chapter 2 places The Country Parson in the genre of the clerical manual, and explains its distinctive form as the influence of various kinds of renaissance prose, including the essay, the professional handbook, the courtesy book, the prose character, and the moral resolve. Chapter 3 provides the first thorough analysis of the prose style of The Country Parson, a style which may be loosely characterized as a combination of Ciceronian and Senecan attributes, but is better thought of as "Anglican" or "poetic." Chapters 4 and 5 apply The Country Parson to the problems faced by readers of The Temple, and describe the Anglican spirituality, pastoral voice, and coherence of The Temple, along with its proper place in literary history.
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George Herbert (1593-1633) lived a colourful, concentrated, and saintly life. He was born into an aristocratic family on the Welsh border. Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, George’s older brother, held great wealth and power. George’s mother, Magdalene Herbert (later Lady Danvers), was renowned for her beauty, intellect, and piety. George was a gifted student: first at Westminster School when Lancelot Andrewes was dean of the cathedral, then at Trinity College, Cambridge, under Dr. Whitgift, along with such notable contemporaries as Nicholas Ferrar, Giles Fletcher, and Barnabas Oley.

In 1615, Herbert was awarded the M.A. Later, in recognition of his unusual gifts, he was elected Major Fellow, appointed Praelector (Reader) in Rhetoric, and eventually made University Orator. During his tenure, Herbert wrote Latin poems, orations, epistles, and polemics; he compiled a book of proverbs, which he translated from foreign languages; and he began his English poems.

Izaak Walton, Herbert’s principal seventeenth-century biographer, probably over-dramatizes Herbert’s desire for court preferment, his dwindling hopes with the death of James I, and his consequent determination to seek humble service as a parish priest. Herbert was always devout, even if he did cherish too high an opinion of "his parts and personage" as a young man. He began to study divinity shortly after he completed his M.A., and he was probably discouraged from seeking further public
office more by his experiences as a member of parliament and by his opposition to the foreign policy of Charles I than by his lack of influence at court.

Nonetheless, Herbert did enter the church. In 1626, he was ordained deacon by John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln. He spent a large part of his small means rebuilding Leighton Church, and was briefly a canon of Lincoln Cathedral and resident chaplain to the Earl of Danby. But Herbert is remembered largely for his selfless service as a country parson at Bemerton, near Salisbury, during the last three years of his life. It was at Bemerton that Herbert wrote most of his poetic book, The Temple, as well as his prose manual for fellow clergymen, A Priest to the Temple or The Country Parson. And it was Herbert’s cure of Bemerton which was held up as an example to the restoration Church of England by Izaak Walton and Barnabas Oley.

Herbert’s literary influence has been variable but persistent. The Temple, a meticulously-crafted sequence of some 160 poems, has always had its admirers. But Herbert’s short, discursive Country Parson has had less of a following. Also, Herbert’s popularity has varied with changing literary tastes and fashions.

The Temple, published posthumously in 1633, was highly popular in the early seventeenth century, and imitated by Vaughan and Crashaw. However, later in the century, Dryden singled out The Temple for abuse in Mac Flecknoe (II. 203-210), and its influence diminished as neo-classicism became dominant. During the eighteenth century, Herbert’s poems were prized for their piety rather than their style, and were frequently paraphrased in non-conformist hymnals. By the nineteenth century, Herbert’s poems were generally thought to be quaint and obscure, though they were admired by Coleridge, and influenced Emily Dickinson and Gerard Manley Hopkins. In the early twentieth century, Herbert’s poetry was rediscovered with that of the other
metaphysicals, largely through Sir Herbert Grierson's anthology and his introductory essay. Herbert was embraced as a fellow modern by Eliot and Auden, Ford Madox Ford, and Aldous Huxley. Herbert's critical standing began a slow but steady rise, so that few would now question T.S. Eliot's appraisal of Herbert as a major poet.

The Country Parson made an untimely appearance at the beginning of the Interregnum, as part of The Remains of George Herbert (1651). In 1671, Barnabas Oley published The Country Parson with an inflammatory anti-Puritan preface. The Country Parson remained popular throughout the Restoration and into the eighteenth century, but was usually published separately from The Temple. During the nineteenth century, The Country Parson was largely the province of clerics. By the twentieth century, The Country Parson had almost ceased to be read: it seemed too quaint to be much help in the parish and too tedious and specialized to be of any literary interest.

My own acquaintance with The Country Parson was accidental, arising from a casual observation by one of my professors that the prose and poetry of George Herbert probably had more in common than was generally supposed. I have since become convinced that The Country Parson is the best commentary upon The Temple, and vice versa. The present study is an effort to provide a fuller historical context for both works, to "copie fair, what time hath blurr'd."

I wish to express my sincere thanks to those who have helped with this project, particularly to Professors P. G. Stanwood, Lee M. Johnson, and Mark Vessey; to my parents, Barbara and Terry Allen; and to my wife, Beth. I could not have completed this project without their perceptive advice and unflagging support. I also wish to express my appreciation for the life and work of George Herbert himself. If I can
help to "redeem truth from the jaws of time" in this quartercentenary of Herbert's birth, it will be but a small repayment for the many hours of pleasure which he has given me, and for his persistent efforts to "rhyme me to good."
INTRODUCTION: THE PARSON AND THE CRITICS

Lord, how can man preach thy eternall word?
("The Windows," 1. 1)

The connection between The Country Parson (1651) and The Temple (1633) is not immediately apparent. On first impression, Herbert’s brief, practical, and prescriptive manual for Caroline divines seems far-removed from the subtle distinctions and delicate lyricism of his poetry. Yet the different audiences and purposes of the works may mask their subtle similarities in form and content. Upon closer examination, one begins to notice that The Temple and The Country Parson explore such common themes as the psychology of sin and grace, the attractions and hazards of religious employment, the proper language of worship, and the meaning behind church ritual. One may observe that Herbert’s prose is characteristically clear, compact, and deceptively plain, recalling his poetry. And one may sense in both works an eclectic and rhetorical approach to traditional materials. These similarities in form, content, and artistic method raise the possibility that The Country Parson might help to explain what is otherwise confusing about The Temple.

Readers of Herbert’s poetry are certainly in need of such interpretive aid, for The Temple continues to pose fundamental problems. Five problems come to mind: 1) the apparently incoherent form of The Temple, 2) the nature of its implied poetic method, 3) the apparent contradictions of its implied religious and political views, 4) the character of its distinctive voice, and 5) the uncertain place it occupies in literary history. Specifically, are the three sections of The Temple and the poems which comprise them isolated entities or parts of a coherent whole? Should we read
Herbert’s poems as the plain heart-felt praise advocated in the "Jordan" poems, or as elusive statements of a complex and contradictory inner life? Do Herbert’s poems embody Laudian sacramentalism and loyalty to the king, or Calvinism and allegiance to parliament? Does Herbert belong to the "school of Donne" or to the "tribe of Ben"? This chapter describes these perennial problems faced by readers of The Temple, suggests how The Country Parson might help to resolve such problems, and begins to explain why the best commentary on the poetry has often been overlooked.

The first problem facing any reader of The Temple is its apparent lack of unity. The form of The Temple seems incoherent for several reasons. First, the three main sections of The Temple are so distinctive as to seem unrelated. Second, no obvious structure or ordering principle unifies the profusion of verse forms in the middle section. Third, sudden shifts and reversals of logic sometimes make individual lyrics seem incoherent.

The reader first encounters the relatively plain and didactic "Church-porch." Apart from "Superliminare," its 470 lines are divided into structurally identical six-line stanzas such as these:

```
Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both:
Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
The stormie working soul spits lies and froth.
    Dare to be true. Nothing can need a ly:
    A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.
```

```
Flie idleness, which yet thou canst not fly
By dressing, mistressing, and complement.
If those take up thy day, the sunne will crie
Against thee: for his light was onely lent.
    God gave thy soul brave wings; put not those feathers
    Into a bed, to sleep out all ill weathers.
    ("Perirrhanterium," 73-84)
```

Touches of wit such as the pun here on "sunne" (son) and the play on feathers hint at
the ingenuity and imagination of the lyrics. But many readers find the admonitions of "The Church-porch" a strange and tiresome prologue to the poetic riches of "The Church."¹

The middle section of The Temple comprises some 160 poems, almost all of which are short lyrics. Poems such as "Vertue" demonstrate the subtle wit and sincere devotion, the remarkable command of tone and stanzaic structure, the musical and domestic imagery, for which Herbert is justly admired:

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie:
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
   For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
Bids the rash gazier wipe his eye:
Thy root is ever in its grave,
   And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My musick shows ye have your closes,
   And all must die.

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
   Then chiefly lives.

For many readers, lyrics such as this not only epitomize Herbert's art, but build toward the triumphal conclusion of "The Church" in "Death," "Dooms-day," "Judgement," "Heaven," and "Love (III)."

To many, "The Church Militant" seems to be a dreary appendage following the artistic and spiritual apotheosis of "Love (III)." "The Church Militant" does seem at variance with the rest of The Temple and is sometimes dismissed as a separate and inferior work.² Although "The Church-porch" and "The Church" discuss and portray
immediate spiritual progress, "The Church Militant" provides an ironic historical survey of such progress. After the profusion of lyric form and perspective in "The Church," the rhyming couplets and narrative of "The Church Militant" seem monotonous:

Sinne did set out of Eastern Babylon,
And travell'd westward also: journeying on
He chid the Church away, where e're he came,
Breaking her peace, and tainting her good name.
At first he got to Egypt, and did sow
Gardens of gods, which ev'ry yeare did grow
Fresh fine deities . . . (ll. 103-109)

The separateness of "The Church Militant" is also suggested by the blank pages between it and "The Church" in the manuscripts. Still, most commentators assume that the three main sections of The Temple form a coherent whole, and continue to search for an ordering principle. For example, Carnes and Tye suggest that The Temple is unified by the meaning of its title: that its sections correspond to the porch, mid-temple, and holy of holies in the Hebraic temple or to the complex allegorical meaning of a temple in renaissance iconography. Lewalski and Stambler respectively equate the unity of The Temple with that of the Bible (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and Revelation) and a volume of courtly love poetry. Sherwood describes the continuity provided by "a quickening sense of self," and Patrides alludes to a "eucharistic structure." Stewart and Martz suggest that "The Church Porch" serves as preparation for the active Christian life which they feel Herbert portrays respectively in "The Church" and "The Church Militant." Although observations such as these help us to begin to organize the bewildering diversity of form in The Temple and point to an over-arching design, Herbert's overall purpose remains obscure.

Herbert's plan or purpose is least obvious in "The Church." The lyrics are so
meticulously crafted that one naturally expects them to be as carefully arranged, yet
the spiritual progress which they portray often seems halting and tentative. For
instance, the tranquil reflections of "The Pearl" are immediately followed by the bitter
recreminations of "Affliction (IV)," and the contrition of "Confession" leads to
"Giddinesse" rather than repose. While some readers feel that Herbert’s ordering of
the poems reflects the complex pattern of the Christian life, others see "The Church"
as a collection of isolated poems rather than a coherent whole.5

Individual poems also raise problems of formal coherence. Despite their
appearance of simplicity and their claims of self-evident truth, Herbert’s poems are
often complex and sometimes confusing. The titles of poems such as "The Water-
course," "Love-joy," and "Clasping of hands" seem only tangentially related to their
subjects. Poems such as "The Collar" and "The Glimpse" surprise the reader by their
sudden reversals of logic. And poems such as "Prayer (I)" and "The Answer" are
famous for their enigmatic conclusions. Modern commentators, who tend to regard
the lyric as an essentially private mode, have increasingly emphasized the complexity
and elusiveness of Herbert’s poetic art. Some even contend that the lyrics are self-
defeating or opaque. Yet the meaning of poems such as "The British Church" and
"The Pilgrimage" seems comparatively self-evident, and Herbert’s seventeenth-century
readers felt that his poems were clear enough to teach to school children and to sing in
church.6

The question of the unity of The Temple, particularly the integrity or coherence
of the lyrics, hinges on the relative values which Herbert attached to complexity and
clarity. Did Herbert mean to communicate clearly for the general good, or to record a
subtle personal experience? Such a consideration of Herbert’s purposes brings us to
the second serious problem facing the reader of *The Temple*, the character of the poetic method which the lyrics themselves imply.

Although the lyrics discuss Herbert’s ostensible poetic method, the voice’s statements are somewhat misleading. The "Jordan" poems advocate a plain, perspicuous style. Here, the voice disparages ingenuity and obscurity ("catching the sense at two removes") as well as ornamentation ("quaint words and trim invention"). We are told that those who serve God best "plainly say, My God, My King," for "There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn’d." But poems such as "The Forerunners," "The Posie," and "Trinitie Sunday" are more equivocal in their dismissal of wit. Certainly, a poem such as "Prayer (I)" is neither plain nor perspicuous, though it does help us to grasp something of the nature of prayer:

```
Prayer, the Churches banquet, Angels age,
    Gods breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav’n and earth;
Engine against th’ Almighty, sinners towre,
    Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-daies world transposing in an houre,
A kinde of tune, which all things heare and fear;
Softnesse, and peace, and joy, and love, and blisse,
    Exalted Manna, gladnesse of the best,
Heaven in ordinarie, man well drest,
The milkie way, the bird of Paradise,
    Church-bels beyond the starres heard, the souls bloud,
The land of spices; something understood.
```

Helpful as Herbert’s implicit descriptions of his poetic method in poems such as "Jordan" may be, the voice’s statements require corroboration or correction from another source.

One source is Herbert’s death-bed description of his poetry, according to Izaak Walton’s *Life of Herbert* (1670). Herbert’s reported description of *The Temple* as "a
picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have past betwixt God and [his] Soul before [he] could subject [it] to the will of Jesus" is almost universally accepted because it is not only believable but apt. Many of Herbert’s poems, most notably "The Collar" and the "Affiction" sequence, do portray great spiritual struggle leading to eventual repose. Many, such as "The Altar" and "Trinitie Sunday," also rely in part on visual impressions. Yet the joyful and liturgical qualities of poems such as "Praise (II)" and "Love (III)" suggest something beyond a "picture of spiritual conflicts."

Several recent studies have attempted to clarify Herbert’s poetic method through linguistic analysis. Heather Asals has described the process of "equivocal predication," which Herbert uses to portray the mingling of the physical and the divine, particularly in the eucharist. Todd and Pahlka have compared Herbert’s concept of language with Saint Augustine’s—an important consideration since Herbert’s last will and testament mentions "St. Augustines workes." Cook and Elsky have related Herbert’s attitude to nature and his use of concrete poetry to changes in renaissance technology and linguistic thought. These studies are valuable, both for their glimpses of Herbert’s artistic method and for their assumption that his method belongs to a tradition. Todd and Pahlka may well be right to place Herbert’s poetic method in the tradition of "Augustinian linguistics." If such is the case, however, we should consider the possible influence not only of Augustine’s ambitious theoretical work, On Christian Doctrine, but of his practical treatise, On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed, which often recalls The Country Parson.

Herbert’s familiarity with classical rhetoric, on which he lectured at Cambridge, itself suggests that his artistic purposes and methods were not as individual and personal as his death-bed remarks about spiritual struggle have led
many to believe. The second half of Herbert’s statement in Walton’s *Life* is actually a peremptory instruction to Nicholas Ferrar to read *The Temple*, "and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul, let it be made publick: if not, let him burn it." Here, the passion of personal utterance and the necessary clarity of public discourse find their proper proportion. Herbert’s pictures of spiritual conflicts are intended for the good of others. This clear conjunction of artistic and pastoral intention leads us toward *The Country Parson*, in which Herbert describes the arts of instruction and worship.

The extent to which we conceive of Herbert’s poems as personal or public utterances is ultimately a religious question, for we are implying that he is either an individual Christian pilgrim or a pastor of a flock. But the third serious problem facing Herbert’s readers is the apparent contradiction of the religious and political views implied in *The Temple*. Although few would question Joseph Summers’ observation that Herbert’s poetry and religion are "intimately and inextricably interrelated," the character of Herbert’s religious experience has been hotly disputed.11

The religious experience portrayed in *The Temple* often appears to be deeply catholic: that is, rooted in the traditions, prayers, and sacraments of the church. For the speaker of "H. Baptisme (I)," for instance, redemption is apparently conferred sacramentally, a process conveyed by the traditional imagery of the water springing from Christ’s side:

As he that sees a dark and shadie grove,
    Stayes not, but looks beyond it on the skie;
    So when I view my sinnes, mine eyes remove
    More backward still, and to that water flie,
Which is the heav’n’s, whose spring and vent
    Is in my deare Redeemers pierced side.
    O blessed streams! either ye do prevent
And stop our sinnes from growing thick and wide,
Or else give tears to drown them, as they grow.
In you Redemption measures all my time,
And spreads the plaister equall to the crime.
You taught the Book of Life my name, that so
What ever future sinnes should me miscall,
Your first acquaintance might discredit all.

As Clements and Bottrall note, Herbert’s perspective is sometimes so catholic as to seem medieval. Rosemond Tuve’s study of "The Sacrifice" takes this view, emphasizing the liturgical and iconographical background of Herbert’s poetry. Louis Martz also emphasizes the catholicism of Herbert’s thought by suggesting the influence of Counter-Reformation meditative techniques.

Quite often, however, the religion portrayed in The Temple seems decidedly reformed. One is often aware of a voice which seems to speak directly to God, and whose assurance seems to derive exclusively from the promises of scripture. This is the voice of "Judgement":

Almightie Judge, how shall poore wretches brook
Thy dreadfull look,
Able a heart of iron to appall,
When thou shalt call
For ev’ry mans peculiar book?

What others mean to do, I know not well;
Yet I heare tell,
That some will turn thee to some leaves therein
So void of sinne,
That they in merit shall excell.

But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline,
And thrust a Testament into thy hand:
Let that be scann’d.
There thou shalt finde my faults are thine.

Halewood, Strier, Veith, and Lewalski naturally take lyrics such as this as evidence of
a strongly-reformed perspective.13

But it is hazardous to evaluate the relative importance of Herbert's catholic and reformed thought on the basis of his lyrics alone. At one extreme, some critics describe an affinity for Roman ritual and theology which is difficult to reconcile with his censure of Roman Catholicism in "The British Church." At the other extreme, some describe a preoccupation with harsh Calvinist doctrines that belies the serenity of "Easter" or the practical devotion of "Praise (I)."14 Although individual lyrics such as "Anagram" and "The Water-course" are said to prove Herbert's religious views, these poems are subject to conflicting interpretations.15 Also, extreme interpretations overlook Herbert's typically Anglican inclusiveness and moderation.

Although Herbert's poems sometimes assume or imply doctrine, they are typically devotional and pastoral rather than doctrinal and contentious.16 Herbert's irenicism and devotion are particularly striking in a poem such as "To all Angels and Saints," which discusses prayers to the saints and adoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary--stock subjects of religious controversy:

Not out of envie or maliciousnesse
Do I forbear to crave your speciall aid:
    I would addresse
My vows to thee most gladly, Blessed Maid,
And Mother of my God, in my distresse.

All worship is prerogative, and a flower
Of his rich crown, from whom lyes no appeal
    At the last houre:
Therefore we dare not from his garland steal,
To make a posie for inferiour power.

Although then others court you, if ye know
What's done on earth, we shall not fare the worse,
    Who do not so;
Since we are ever ready to disburse,
If any one our Masters hand can show. (ll. 6-10, 21-30)

Although Herbert’s perspective here is broadly reformed, his tone is respectful and sympathetic, for his main concern is charity and worship rather than controversy.

The paradoxes and inconclusiveness of Herbert’s religious thought is only complicated by the implied political statements of the lyrics. During Herbert’s lifetime, politics and religion were virtually inseparable. We also know that Herbert’s early aspirations of courtly advancement were unfulfilled, and that he served in parliament. As Singleton and Schoenfeldt have shown, Herbert often adopts courtly motifs and language. The supplicant at court is portrayed most obviously in "Love (III)," but this motif may also inform a poem such as "Redemption":

```
Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
   Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
   And make a suit unto him, to afford
   A new small-rented lease, and cancel th’ old.
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.
I straight return’d, and knowing his great birth,
   Sought him accordingly in great resorts;
   In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts:
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
   Of theeves and murderers: there I him espied,
   Who straight, Your suit is granted, said, & died.
```

Despite its basic dependence upon biblical allegory, this poem appears to reflect temporal concerns by its depiction of a desperate tenant whose suit is only heard accidentally at the last moment by an exiled monarch in evil company. But, while Herbert’s poems may imply political meaning, they provide no clear statement of allegiance. For example, Herbert’s portrayal of the royal prerogative in "Redemption" might equally suggest a desperate desire for royal recognition, a criticism of political
patronage, or a plea for greater parliamentary power.

The traditional assumption that Herbert's poetry reflects a mild religio-political conservatism has recently been challenged. Herbert was long considered to be the retiring Anglo-Catholic priest portrayed in Walton's Life, a staunch upholder of the traditions of the church and a quiet supporter of the crown. Recent scholarship has suggested the contrary view that despite outward conformity, Herbert harboured Puritan sympathies—a hostility to the traditions of the church and the bishops and king who enforced them. But as Higham and Fincham have shown, there were many subtle gradations of political and religious thought in the early seventeenth century. To be sure of Herbert's allegiances, we would need the explicit statement of belief that we might find in a treatise rather than the vague political implications of a poem such as "Redemption."

The fourth serious problem which the reader encounters in The Temple is what Singleton calls "the enigma of the voice." Traditionally, Herbert's poetic voice has been considered to be as impassioned and personal as John Donne's. Such a description certainly fits the ragged declarations which open "The Collar" ("I stuck the board, and cry'd, No more. / I will abroad"), and explains the "inner tension" and "an all-pervasive consciousness of the self" which Bush and Patrides identify with Herbert's poetry. Herbert's voice is often characterized as "the private voice of a Christian pilgrim," with God as the primary audience and human readers as the secondary one, "overhearing" the exchange. Some commentators interpret the lyrics still more personally, as "representations of the self" or "spiritual autobiography." But Herbert's voice is not always impassioned and personal.

Singleton describes a bewildering variety of voices in The Temple. I would
rather say that Herbert has a remarkable ability to vary a single voice which retains its poise and composure despite the violent emotion it sometimes expresses. For instance, the passionate opening of "Affliction (IV)" recalls the tempests of "The Collar":

Broken in pieces all asunder,
    Lord, hunt me not,
A thing forgot,
Once a poore creature, now a wonder,
    A wonder tortur'd in the space
    Betwixt this world and that of grace.

My thoughts are all a case of knives,
    Wounding my heart
    With scattered smart,
As watring pots give flowers their lives.
    Nothing their furie can controll,
    While they do wound and pink my soul.
(ll. 1-12)

But unlike "The Collar," the urgency of the voice is moderated here by the regularity of the stanzas. Though still in the first person as the poem begins, the voice of "Affliction (V)" is composed and generalizing:

    My God, I read this day,
    That planted Paradise was not so firm,
As was and is thy floting Ark; whose stay
    And anchor thou art onely, to confirm
    And strengthen it in ev'ry age,
    When waves do rise, and tempests rage.

Herbert's voice is still more serene and concerned with public matters in poems such as "Perirhanterium," "Vertue," and "Prayer (I)" which we have considered already. And a careful study of poems such as "Affliction (V)" reveals the subtle movement from the personal ("I") to the public ("we" and "our"). The final problem facing Herbert's readers is the uncertain place of The Temple in literary history. Herbert has long been considered one of "the school of Donne," an association which is partly biographical. Walton makes much of the relationship between Donne and the Herbert
family, and the literary-historical association was strengthened when Donne and Herbert were jointly "discovered" by Sir Herbert Grierson in this century. George Williamson suggested that Herbert was carrying on the sacred side of "the Donne tradition." Joan Bennett described Herbert as a disciple of Donne in her influential study, Five Metaphysical Poets, and T. S. Eliot asserted that "Herbert is closer in spirit to Donne than to any other of the school of Donne."

Herbert’s poetry certainly owes something to Donne’s. Herbert’s poem "Death" seems to be patterned on Donne’s "Death be not proud," and "The Church Militant" suggests Donne’s "Satyre III" as F. E. Hutchinson has observed. As we have just seen, the voice of "The Collar" is reminiscent of Donne’s voice in the Songs and Sonets, and the conceits of "Prayer (I)" rival any of Donne’s for colour and ingenuity. Critics rightly praise Herbert for the Donnian qualities of impassioned lyricism, conversational tone and diction, and "an ability to record the moment of experience with dramatic immediacy." But Herbert’s poetry also has a polish, composure, and self-conscious craftsmanship which recall Ben Jonson’s Epigrams and Underwood.

There have always been suggestions that Herbert’s voice was somewhat public and his style something like Jonson’s. In 1648, George Daniel described Herbert as "Horace in voice"; in 1651, Henry Delaune mentioned Jonson and Herbert together as influences; and in 1657, Joshua Poole included Herbert in his neoclassical anthology, The English Parnassus. In this century, Hutchinson has observed certain neoclassical qualities in Herbert’s poetry, such as "coherence, craftsmanship, and ingenuity without obscurity." Bush has remarked upon Herbert’s "deep classicism: his muscular density, precision, and deceptive simplicity; a concern for subordinating details to an evolving, unified whole." Joseph Summers has drawn our attention to Herbert’s affinities with
Jonson, and Dick Higgins has described the classical tradition which informs Herbert's pattern poems.

The conventional view of a "school of Donne" and a "tribe of Ben" has occasionally been challenged. Joseph Summers would rather speak of Herbert as an "heir" of Donne and Jonson, who might emulate some stylistic traits and reject others. Anthony Low has suggested that Herbert is more of a "devotional" than a "metaphysical" poet, although the distinction between the two is not entirely clear. Michael Schoenfeldt has also challenged the literary-historical categories by describing the interplay of the personal and the public in the rituals of renaissance courtship which he sees in poems such as "Love (III)." Despite these alternative views, Herbert is still generally regarded as a metaphysical poet, so that even those who acknowledge some of the public qualities of The Temple tend to regard the work primarily as "a book of private devotions."

The instinct to provide a context for the lyrics by placing Herbert in a tradition is surely sound. By themselves, the lyrics can neither account for the rich and varied texture of The Temple nor solve the problems which I have just described. And, since individual poems can be interpreted in conflicting ways, we must turn elsewhere for guidance to valid interpretation. Janis Lull, Stanley Stewart, and Christopher Hodgkins have recently provided essential historical and bibliographic context.

Janis Lull provides a bibliographical context for The Temple. Lull’s study is particularly important for the question of unity because any cogent argument for unity rests on the recognition of the intentionality which she minutely examines. Without the principle of intention, readers are free to follow Palmer and order the poems however they see fit. Lull corroborates and extends Amy Charles’ earlier
study of the Williams manuscript, and shows in more detail how Herbert ordered the
lyrics of "The Church" so that the reader would make a complicated pilgrimage to
eventual consolation. Lull shows that Herbert's revisions of the poems in "The
Church" indicate a move away from the personal to a more universal voice. She
further suggests that the poems are designed to train the reader in scriptural
interpretation and to demonstrate submission to God. These conclusions suggest the
importance of The Country Parson in which Herbert fully describes the process of
communicating consolation, the proper use of the public voice, and the best way to
interpret scripture and submit one's self to God's will.

Stanley Stewart's insights are both historical and bibliographical. He explains
Herbert's connections with the nearby Little Gidding community headed by Nicholas
Ferrar, Herbert's eventual literary executor. Stewart describes the misunderstood high
church Anglican piety of Little Gidding. He also suggests how the Little Gidding
community directly affected the form and content of The Temple, both through its
biblical Harmonies and its preparation of the Bodleian manuscript. And Stewart
chronicles and explains the textual changes which non-conformists made to the poems
of The Temple when they were included in seventeenth century and later hymnals.
While I am not convinced that Herbert's religious experience can be so completely
identified with that of Little Gidding, Stewart provides a much-needed corrective to
the view of Herbert as an extreme protestant.

Christopher Hodgkins provides a useful discussion of Herbert's attitude toward
civil and ecclesiastical authority. Hodgkins capably describes the alliance between the
Caroline court and the bishops, the "crisis of authority" which resulted from growing
puritan opposition, and Herbert's possible desire to steer a middle course between
Puritanism and Laudianism. It is difficult to know which era actually formed Herbert’s churchmanship and conception of government: the Elizabethan period of his youth, the Jacobean period of his later education and public service, or the Caroline period of his pastoral life. But I would certainly affirm Hodgkins’ view that we need to consult The Country Parson as well as The Temple to determine the religio-political perspective which shapes Herbert’s poetry.

The Country Parson has not been entirely overlooked in this regard. Although some commentators express reservations about the relevance of Herbert’s discussion of parish life to his poetic art, many tacitly acknowledge the relevance of The Country Parson to The Temple. The Country Parson is sometimes mentioned, either as biographical background or in support of an interpretation of a poem. Louis Martz and John Tobin include The Country Parson in their recent editions of The Temple, which perhaps implies that the prose might help the reader to interpret the verse. More specifically, Helen Vendler mentions that "Herbert rarely forgot in his poetry the advice he gave to the parson preaching"; and Leah Marcus attributes the plainness of Herbert’s poetry to this advice.

Sometimes readers describe the pastoral qualities of The Temple without necessarily identifying them as such or referring to The Country Parson. For example, the late John Mulder suggests that Herbert’s poetic voice "plays different parts to suit different stages or occasions," an implicit acknowledgement of the rhetorical discernment which Herbert recommends in The Country Parson. Richard Hughes discusses Herbert’s "rhetorical world view," and notes that "it certainly does not produce a wooden or unoriginal art." Blau suggests that "Herbert thought of ‘The Church-porch’ as a sort of sermon based on practical divinity or casuistry, and that its
purpose, like that of all sermons, was to prepare its auditors for the prayers of 'The Church.'" Ostriker describes Herbert's ability to vary his voice to capture his auditors' ears, just as he creates pictures to capture their eyes; and she rightly asserts that he does not seek novelty itself, but the ability to appeal to "all sorts and conditions of men." Harman sees that Herbert's poems "consider the ways in which personal stories can be rewritten as biblical stories," implicitly acknowledging the pastor who writes them. Without ascribing them to any pastoral purpose, Bennett notes Herbert's ability to provide consolation in distress, as well as his "exquisite tact" and "subtle emotional management" in *The Temple*.

In addition to such implicit recognition of Herbert's broadly pastoral style, some commentators have drawn attention to aspects of his poetry which suggest the particular offices of a priest. Tuve describes liturgical or catechetical influences on the style of "The Sacrifice," and notes that poems such as "Praise (I)," "Whitsunday," and "Easter Wings" are "surprisingly more meaningful if read as the utterances of Herbert not only as 'any Christian' but consciously in his character as priest and preacher." Diana Benet observes that the poems in *The Temple* are fundamentally didactic, differing only in extent, and notes that "the priesthood is in harmony with the personality we discern behind *The Temple*." She further describes the importance of Herbert's religious vocation to the art of poems such as "Praise (I)" and "The Priesthood." Stanley Fish sees Chapter 21 of *The Country Parson*, "The Parson Catechizing," as a "theoretical context" for poems such as "Jesu" and "Love-joy." And Terry Sherwood has suggested that the "prayerful art" of *The Temple* presupposes an art of prayer. Such useful observations deserve to be explored further.

*The Country Parson* provides a detailed consideration of such matters as the art
of prayer, yet Herbert’s pastoral manual has received little scholarly attention. Although there are numerous reliable modern editions of the poetry, they rarely include the prose. The standard literary histories of the period do not discuss The Country Parson at much length. Many of the articles published in the George Herbert Journal mention The Country Parson, but few discuss it in detail. The three anthologies of Herbert criticism which have emerged in recent years include between them only one essay which directly concerns The Country Parson. Sidney Gottlieb’s "Survey of Contemporary Research" (1980) refers only briefly to The Country Parson, and only 63 of the 1453 entries in Roberts’ comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism (1905-1984) refer to The Country Parson at all. Individual poems such as "The Altar," "The Sacrifice," and "Love (III)" have received at least as much attention.

While such neglect may be unfortunate, it is understandable. As I suggested earlier, the differences in the audience and purpose of The Country Parson and The Temple mask their fundamental similarity in form and content. On the surface, The Country Parson does not appear to be of great literary interest. Some connection between Herbert’s two principal works may seem so obvious that it does not merit research. Also, Izaak Walton has made it difficult to see The Country Parson as a treatise by treating the work as a journal which he freely incorporated into his Life of Herbert. Even so discerning a reader as T. S. Eliot was therefore encouraged to read The Country Parson simply as an adjunct to Walton’s Life, and this remains the usual critical approach. Hutchinson, for example, assumes that The Country Parson is "for Herbert’s own use and an autobiographical document." And Mason, Ellrodt, and Bottrall also read The Country Parson essentially as autobiography.
The scholarly methods dominant until recently may also have contributed to the neglect of *The Country Parson*. New criticism trained scholars in the close reading of lyric poetry, a method of interpretation less suited to long discursive poems or prose, and largely unconcerned with the cultural conditions informing the author’s purposes. Of course, many new critics employed eclectic methods; still, the influence of new criticism probably helps to account for the lack of interest in Herbert’s long poems, in *The Country Parson*, or in their rhetorical strategies.

Recent changes in scholarly methods, which have broadened the definition of literature and encouraged political analysis, may have contributed to a renewed interest in *The Country Parson*. During the last two decades, several dissertations have begun to explore the form and content of *The Country Parson*.

Kollmeier (1976) has suggested that *The Country Parson* is a cross between the professional handbook and the prose character, that it portrays a golden world set apart from contemporary affairs, and that it betrays aristocratic prejudices. Malcolmson (1983) has suggested that *The Country Parson* subverts the courtesy book genre in order to attack the court and to help Herbert to fashion a new (priestly) self during his rustication. Wolberg (1987) has argued that *The Country Parson* is an Anglican response to the advent of puritan preaching manuals, and that it imitates continental courtesy books. And most recently, Hodgkins has suggested that *The Country Parson* is a clerical manual for conforming puritans and is anti-Laudian in form and content. These studies are important, not only because they acknowledge a definite connection between Herbert’s verse and prose, but because they begin to describe the general form of *The Country Parson*. Yet more work is needed, both to fully describe the genre and style of *The Country Parson* and to apply Herbert’s discussion of clerical life to the problems facing readers.
of The Temple.

My own view is that The Country Parson is the best commentary upon The Temple and vice versa. Generally speaking, The Country Parson tells us a great deal about the artistic methods and goals which inform The Temple; conversely, The Temple helps us to understand the singular structure and style of The Country Parson. This relationship of the works acknowledges both the obvious difference and the subtle conjunction of the audiences and purposes of The Temple and The Country Parson. The Temple has always attracted clerical readers such as the Wesleys, and The Country Parson has sometimes attracted laymen such as Izaak Walton. More importantly, it suits Herbert's purpose to slyly instruct readers of The Temple while he offers aesthetic pleasures, and to aesthetically satisfy the readers of The Country Parson while he instructs them. With Herbert, the concerns of the pastor and the poet are usually mingled.

Throughout this study, I assert that Herbert's poetry not only expresses personal devotion but implies a pastoral effort to instruct readers and draw them into communal worship. Occasionally, I suggest that the poetry betrays the specific actions or concerns of a priest, someone who ceremonially represents man to God and God to man. Although we can date few of his poems with any precision, there is reason to believe that Herbert wrote and revised his English poems throughout his adult life, as his religious vocation developed. The sonnets from Walton's Life of Herbert, the accompanying letter to Magdalene Herbert (1609), and the poems of the early Williams manuscript suggest that Herbert began writing poetry at Cambridge, long before he became an Anglican priest in 1630. But as early as 1617, Herbert speaks in a letter to Sir John Danvers of "setting foot in Divinity to lay the platform of [his]
future life." In 1619, Herbert confirms his desire for religious employment despite his university duties, in another letter to Danvers.

Herbert's nascent pastoral perspective is also evident in his extensive theological studies, and in the curiously formal advice, consolation, and instruction which he offers to his mother in her illness of 1622. By 1624, Herbert had obtained permission for ordination to the diaconate, though he deferred his ordination while he was in parliament. The Temple itself reflects Herbert's progress toward full religious employment and his related search for a sincere art of praise, as Diana Benet has shown. But the pastoral concerns and perspective which developed as Herbert wrote and revised his poetry find their fullest expression in The Country Parson and explain much of what is otherwise confusing about The Temple.

Given this conjunction of pastoral and artistic purposes, why do The Country Parson and The Temple now seem to be such unrelated works? I address this question in chapter 1 of the present study by attempting to reconstruct the publishing history of the works. I suggest that The Country Parson and The Temple may have been written at about the same time and that Herbert may have intended to publish them together, but that The Country Parson was published nineteen years after The Temple because death, disagreement, and political strife intervened. The prose became associated with the clerical reforms of the restoration, the poetry with the metaphysical movement and the Anglicanism of the earlier seventeenth century. Hence the dichotomy between priest and poet, prose and poetry. While the scenario I propose is conjectural, there are indications that Herbert's first readers saw more compatibility between The Temple and The Country Parson than modern readers do. Attempting to put myself in the place of Herbert's first readers, I describe various similarities in the form, content,
and method of the two works. For example, the same imagery, tone, and speech patterns are found in both The Country Parson and The Temple. Both works minutely describe the life of faith and appropriate attitudes and methods of worship. Both works are also organized in a similar loose and allusive manner, and are best read by the method of "diligent collation" which Herbert describes in The Country Parson.

Chapters 2 and 3 represent the core of my original research. Here, I consider The Country Parson itself, as a preliminary to its critical application. In chapter 2, I examine the distinctive form of The Country Parson. Previous research has suggested that The Country Parson belongs in the genre of either the courtesy book, the professional handbook, or the prose character. I argue that Herbert clearly intended to write a clerical manual: a work in the ancient tradition of writings by senior clergy to instruct their inexperienced brethren in clerical duties and conduct. Because the genre prescribed no set form, I suggest that Herbert was free to draw upon various kinds of renaissance prose, including not only the courtesy book, the professional handbook, and the prose character, but also the etiquette book, the essay, and the moral resolve. (Appendix I describes these kinds of renaissance prose, as well as the tradition of patristic, medieval, and reformation clerical manuals.) Herbert’s blending of various kinds of renaissance prose explains the distinctive form of The Country Parson and draws our attention to an eclectic attitude to literary tradition which also shapes The Temple.

In chapter 3, I undertake the first thorough analysis of the style of The Country Parson. Previous commentators have usually described Herbert’s prose style as "Senecan" and have sometimes suggested the influence of Donne, Bacon, or Sidney. But the style of The Country Parson, like that of The Temple, is not the result of a
single literary fashion, much less the influence of a single author. My analysis of Herbert’s diction, syntax, and figurative language reveals that the style of The Country Parson, like that of The Temple, is variable and rhetorically controlled. The prose--like the poetry--is not well served by the conventional literary historical categories. The style of The Country Parson may be described loosely as a compromise between the curt "Senecan" and the ornate "Ciceronian" styles. But we come closer to Herbert’s purposes by describing the style of The Country Parson as "poetic" or "Anglican." For Herbert seeks to convey in a poetic manner the experience of what he describes, in order to prepare his readers for the rigors of rural parish life. And Herbert reproduces the speech patterns and phrases of The Book of Common Prayer because he wishes to instill a sense of both the beauty and utility of Anglican ritual. (Appendix II and III discuss respectively the dubious distinction between Ciceronian and Senecan prose, and the slight possible influence of Sir Philip Sidney’s Apology for Poetry (1595), Sir Francis Bacon’s The Advancement of Learning (1605), and John Donne’s Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions (1624).)

Chapter 4 begins to address directly the problems facing the readership of The Temple by describing Herbert’s Anglicanism, as it is revealed in The Country Parson. This chapter is crucial, for it reveals Herbert’s habit of mind which comprehends and moderates the truth represented in opposite extremes. Such a process of comprehension informs both the implied religious and political views of The Temple, and explains the opposing opinions of Herbert’s many insightful commentators. Specifically, I suggest that Herbert’s religious life was both "protestant" and "catholic," but moderately so. In my view, The Country Parson describes a reformed catholicism which is typical of the "classical period" of Anglicanism from Richard...
Hooker (1554-1600) to Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667). The spirituality of this tradition is best understood, not in terms of doctrinal distinctions and ecclesiastical parties but in terms of a shared experience of the liturgy, a common attitude to the Christian life, and a characteristic approach to religious questions. Herbert’s classical Anglican spirituality -- as it is described in *The Country Parson* -- is not as radical, introspective, ascetic, or retiring as many critics of the poems contend. On the contrary, Herbert advocates a willing conformity to church discipline and a respect for civil authority, together with a joyful participation in all aspects of human life.

Chapter 5 addresses the remaining problems typically encountered by the readership of *The Temple*: its apparent lack of unity, its variable voice, and its place in literary history. With respect to the problem of unity, I suggest that Herbert’s pastoral persona, purposes, and methods contribute to the continuity of *The Temple*. Specifically, I argue that the three sections of *The Temple* are connected by the poetic voice’s persistent efforts to "rhyme us to good," and that the discursive, lyric, and narrative modes which give the sections their characteristic forms correspond to the methods and goals of catechism, worship, and preaching in *The Country Parson*. I suggest that the perplexing order of the poems in "The Church" may reflect Herbert’s desire to model Christianity for his readers as he did for his parishioners. And I describe how the complexity and obscurity of individual poems is limited by strategies that promote the clear and persuasive communication which Herbert advocates in *The Country Parson*.

I also explain how Herbert’s discussion of the parson’s voice and methods might help to resolve the related problems of Herbert’s poetic voice and place in literary history. Although many modern readers think of the religious lyric as a
private mode of expression, I describe a range of poems in The Temple whose voice and concerns are more or less public or private. Often, apparently urgent and spontaneous personal effusions subtly lead the reader into shared experience and general reflections, as in "Affliction (V)." Such rhetorical finesse recalls The Country Parson which describes the public art of controlled passion and calculated disclosure, and the need to minister differently to different people.

Finally, I address the problem of Herbert’s uncertain place in literary history. The fact that Herbert’s voice may be simultaneously as urgent and personal as Donne’s and as composed and public as Jonson’s partly explains the difficulty of fitting The Temple into the conventional scheme of literary history. I describe further "metaphysical" and "neoclassical" attributes of Herbert’s poetry. But I also suggest that Herbert’s poetic method appears to look back to the Elizabethan period and forward to the restoration and eighteenth century. The Country Parson draws our attention to a preoccupation with public concerns, rhetorical goals, and courtly entertainments which suggest an affinity with the poetic practice advocated by Puttenham, Gascoigne, and Sidney in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, Herbert’s use of rhyming couplets and verse satire anticipates the style of Dryden and Pope.
NOTES: INTRODUCTION


2 Martz describes "The Church Militant" as an "appendix" to "The Church" and Patrides discusses the critical tendency to feel that "The Church Militant" does not belong with the rest of The Temple. See Louis L. Martz, The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), and Patrides above.

3 In the early Williams manuscript, five blank pages separate "The Church" and "The Church Militant"; in the later Bodleian manuscript, the sections are separated by one blank page. Fish exaggerates the importance of this problem, as he argues for the indeterminacy of the text. See F. E. Hutchinson, The Works of George Herbert, textual notes 190, and Stanley Fish, The Living Temple: George Herbert and Catechizing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 9-10.


5 Singleton suggests that The Temple "resists interpretations of coherence"; Martz takes the opposite view, that "The Church" demonstrates the complex pattern of the Christian life described in "H. Scripture (II)"; Summers states that "instead of being 'about religion,' the poems [in "The Church"] are the reflections and creations of a religious life." See Marion White Singleton, God's Courtier: Configuring a Different Grace in George Herbert's Temple (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1; Louis L. Martz, The Poetry of Meditation, 296, and Joseph H. Summers, The Heirs of Donne and Jonson, 97.

6 Fish, Harman, and Schoenfeldt describe respectively "self-consuming artifacts," "collapsing poems," and "deeply unstable utterances"; likewise, Singleton
describes "a continually rewritten text" and "configurations of entanglement."
However, Patrides observes that in the seventeenth century, many of Herbert's poems were sung as hymns and that "Perirrhanterium" was taught to school children and became so popular that it became proverbial. Stewart also discusses Herbert's poems as hymns, but notes that the words were sometimes changed. See Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts: the Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); Barbara L. Harman, Costly Monuments: Representations of the Self in George Herbert's Poetry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Michael Schoenfeldt, Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Marion White Singleton, God's Courtier; C. A. Patrides, ed., George Herbert: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 6-7, 12, and Stanley Stewart, George Herbert.

Although the voice apparently bids enchanting and embroidered language farewell in "The Forerunners" (9-11), his concluding salutation expresses reservation ("If you go..."). "Wits" are left to contest with one another while the voice lets his invention rest in "The Posie," yet the posie is itself a subtle double-entendre ("Less then the least / Of all Gods mercies, is my posie still"). "Trinity Sunday" seems to offer a straightforward denunciation of wit (8-10), but Herbert excludes "Trinity Sunday" from his final manuscript of The Temple.


10 See note 8 above. I discuss these passages from Walton's Life in chapter 1.


15 Lewalski and others feel that "The Water-course" proves Herbert’s belief in double-predestination, and that he was therefore an extreme Calvinist. Yet the statement that "God Salvation gives to man, as he sees fit {Salvation} (l. 10)
Damnation
merely indicates that God is man’s judge, not that man is predestined to heaven or hell. The conceit is partly controlled by rhyme and may be meant to suggest the shape of a waterfall. In the context of the earlier "Baptisme" poems, the water imagery of "The Water-course" might imply the mystical washing away of sin during baptism. See Barbara K. Lewalski, Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric, 4, 25, 286, and Gene Veith, Reformation Spirituality. Conversely, Stewart offers "To all Angels and Saints" and "Anagram" as proof of Herbert’s extreme catholicism. See Stanley Stewart, George Herbert, 76-79.

16 The stridency of "The British Church" is the exception to the rule, as Herbert’s most perceptive critics have realized. See Helen C. White, The Metaphysical Poets: a Study in Religious Experience (New York: AMS Press, 1936; rept. 1956), 166; Diana Benet, Secretary of Praise: The Poetic Vocation of George Herbert, 15; Mark Taylor, The Soul in Paraphrase: George Herbert’s Poetics (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 117.


18 Christopher Hodgkins, "Authority, Church, and Society in the Works of George Herbert" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 1. The contrary view, that Herbert is a conforming Puritan is put forth by Doerkson, Malcolmson, and Veith. See Daniel W. Doerkson, "‘Too Good for Those Times’: Politics and the Publication


20 Marion White Singleton, God's Courtier: Configuring a Different Grace in George Herbert's 'Temple,' 1; Terry Sherwood describes the sense of a conversation overheard in Herbert's poetry; see his Herbert's Prayerful Art (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 30-31.


Palmer is notorious as an editor of Herbert’s works for rearranging the poems in The Temple to create a pessimistic pseudobiography. See George Herbert Palmer, ed., The English Works of George Herbert, 3 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1905).


See Rosemond Tuve, A Reading of George Herbert, 25, 37, 151, 157, 190; Diana Benet, Secretary of Praise: The Poetic Vocation of George Herbert, 3, 32, 34-36, chap. 9; Stanley Fish, The Living Temple, 14.; Terry Sherwood, Herbert’s Prayerful Art, 4.


See Harold H. Kollmeier, "‘A Mark to Aim At’: Genre and Sensibility in George Herbert’s The Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York,
Stony Brook, 1976), Cristina Malcolmson, "Society and Self-Definition in the Works of George Herbert" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1983), Kristine A. Wolberg, "'All Possible Art': George Herbert's The Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 1987), Christopher Hodgkins, "Authority, Church, and Society in the Works of George Herbert" (Ph.d. diss., University of Chicago, 1988; now published as a book under the same title).

33 As Lull observes, we can only infer the history of the transmission of Herbert’s poems from his own hand to the printer. But whether Herbert wrote and revised the balance of The Temple at Wiltshire (as Charles thinks), or at Bemerton (as Hutchinson thinks), Herbert was ordained deacon or priest and engaged in pastoral duties at the time of his greatest poetic activity. See F. E. Hutchinson, ed., The Works of George Herbert, xxvi-xxxviii; Amy Charles, A Life of George Herbert (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 82, 127, 138, 159; Janis Lull, The Poem in Time, 11. This evidence will be considered at length in chapter 1.

34 For the sonnets from Walton’s Life and the various letters I refer to, see F. E. Hutchinson, ed., The Works, 206-207, 369-374.

35 See Diana Benet, Secretary of Praise: The Poetic Vocation of George Herbert (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), especially chapters 4 and 5.
CHAPTER 1: THE ACCIDENTAL SEPARATION OF THE COUNTRY PARSON AND THE TEMPLE

"The Country Parson is, of course, the book by which Herbert is best known."
--Anonymous (1862)

Most twentieth-century readers understandably regard The Temple as Herbert’s really important work, the crown of his literary achievement. The Country Parson seems comparatively unimportant, a brief autobiographical reflection inspired by Herbert’s professional activity. But, as the first part of this chapter suggests, the composition and publishing history of the works tells a different story. Herbert apparently considered The Country Parson to be at least as important as The Temple, and may have regarded the works as companionpieces. There is reason to believe that The Temple and The Country Parson were composed together and intended for joint publication. My reconstruction of the events leading up to and immediately following Herbert’s death in 1633 suggests that The Country Parson only came to be published nineteen years after The Temple because of strange circumstances outside Herbert’s control. Some of Herbert’s first readers and editors seem to have noticed the relationship between The Country Parson and The Temple. But once the works were physically separated, they remained separate in the minds of many readers, and the dissociation of the works only increased with time. Since both of the "little books" which Walton mentions have been lost, we cannot be absolutely sure of either Herbert’s purposes or the events of his last days. But whatever Herbert intended, the second part of this chapter suggests that The Country Parson and The Temple are intimately related, both in form and content. Indeed, Herbert’s principal works may be
thought of as a long and happily married couple whose identity and character are so interwoven that the one really cannot be properly appreciated without the other.

The Country Parson, like The Temple, has always been subject to the biographical fallacy.¹ Until recently, most commentators assumed that, in the words of F. E. Hutchinson, The Country Parson was "autobiographical and intended for Herbert’s own use." Even recent commentators, who are preoccupied with the social concerns addressed in The Country Parson, tend to over-emphasize Herbert’s personal objectives of professional development and "self-fashioning." The assumption that The Country Parson is mainly a diary or private rule of life may derive from a naive reading of Izaak Walton’s Life of Herbert (1665). According to Walton, Herbert made certain resolutions during his induction to St. Andrew’s church at Bemerton:

...his friend Mr. Woodnot [Arthur Woodnoth] looked in at the church window, and saw him lie prostrate on the ground before the altar; at which time and place--as he after told Mr. Woodnot--he set some rules to himself, for the future management of his life; and then and there made a vow to keep them.²

Sometime later, so that "time might not insensibly blot them out of his memory," Walton says that Herbert "set down his rules, then resolved upon, in that order as the world now sees them printed in a little book called "The Country Parson”" (298).

Walton describes The Country Parson as a book of rules, and uses The Country Parson as a source for his Life.³ But we need not blur the distinction between Herbert’s life and writing because Walton did; nor should we regard The Country Parson merely as a personal rule of life, for Herbert makes his larger purpose clear.

In his preface to The Country Parson ("The Author to the Reader"), Herbert states that although he has "resolved to set down the form and character of a true pastor that [he] may have a mark to aim at," he also intends his treatise for others:
The Lord prosper the intention 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. (p. 224)

In the first two chapters of *The Country Parson*, Herbert declares his intention to address all Church of England priests, whether they are found in universities, noble houses, or country cures. In his preface to the first edition, Barnabas Oley emphasizes "the great profit" of *The Country Parson* to "the clergy reader." And Walton himself elaborates Oley's recommendation, describing *The Country Parson* as "a book so full of plain, prudent, and useful rules that the Country Parson that can spare twelve pence, and yet wants it, is scarce excusable; because it will both direct him what he ought to do, and convince him for not having done it" (p. 262). To assume that *The Country Parson* was strictly for Herbert's own use is to overlook both the more important half of Herbert's stated intention and the testimony of Oley and Walton.

Much of *The Temple* was probably composed at about the same time as *The Country Parson*. As we have already seen, Herbert's letters suggest that he began to compose *The Temple* as early as 1614, while he was still at Cambridge. "The Church-porch" may be the earliest poem, perhaps written with his younger brother Henry in mind; "The Collar" and "The Church Militant" may have been written shortly after. But these early beginnings should not obscure the fact that most of the poems in *The Temple* were composed, and many were revised, later on.

According to Amy Charles, Herbert probably wrote English poems throughout most of his adult life. Although individual poems cannot be dated with much accuracy, the early Williams manuscript contains only 70 of the 160 poems included in the later Bodleian manuscript and the first edition. F. E. Hutchinson, who has sifted the textual evidence most extensively, believes that Herbert revised many of his
earlier poems and wrote most of his later ones while he was at Bemerton. If Hutchinson is correct, then The Temple and The Country Parson were definitely composed together, for The Country Parson was undoubtedly written at Bemerton during the last few years of Herbert’s life. Herbert’s preface to The Country Parson bears his name and the year 1632, the year before his death and the posthumous publication of The Temple. If the two works were composed at the same time, one would naturally expect The Country Parson and The Temple to share some aspects of style and theme, as indeed they do.

Amy Charles suggests that Herbert wrote many of his poems in the period between Cambridge and Bemerton. But Charles bases her assumption on the hectic life which Herbert supposedly led at Bemerton: hence, she states that Herbert composed the balance of his poetry during "the last uninterrupted leisure he would know." Herbert certainly did expend himself for his congregation at Bemerton; however, we should not conclude either that Herbert enjoyed no leisure at Bemerton, or that he could not write poetry amid the bustle of parish life. Despite the devotion to duty which Herbert advocates in The Country Parson, his essential duties would have been more circumscribed than those of a modern parish priest. Herbert probably had no more than 300 parishioners to attend, and he had a curate and a wife to assist him with his parish duties. Herbert had always been able to write creatively despite the demands of public and professional life, and much of his poetry obviously arises from the routine of parish life: daily offices, sermons, the eucharist, and the feasts and seasons of the church calendar.

But whether The Country Parson was written just after The Temple or along with it is something of a moot point. We can expect the works to illuminate one
another because they were written at about the same time and probably reflect similar concerns. As I suggested earlier, Herbert’s pastoral perspective was evident even at Cambridge. As Hutchinson and Charles observe, Herbert wrote most of his poems while he was either a deacon or a priest. So it is only reasonable to assume that The Temple might reflect Herbert’s pastoral purposes, despite its general audience and aesthetic delights.

Herbert’s famous deathbed remarks to Edmond Duncon, which I alluded to earlier, emphasize Herbert’s pastoral intention. Although critics usually quote Herbert’s remarks to Duncon as proof that Herbert’s poems are personal utterances, such an inference is not really warranted. According to Walton, Duncon (a neighbouring priest) visited Herbert about three weeks before Herbert died, and was surprised to note Herbert’s deteriorating physical condition. Herbert asked Duncon to convey The Temple manuscript to Ferrar, saying:

'Sir, I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Ferrar, and tell him, he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master: in whose service I have now found perfect freedom. Desire him to read it; and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul: let it be made public; if not, let him burn it: for I and it are less than the least of God’s mercies.'

There is little reason to doubt Walton’s account of this transaction, for Walton relies upon Duncon’s testimony and writes during Duncon’s lifetime, and because Walton’s statement is corroborated by a letter written by John Ferrar (Nicholas’s son). Herbert apparently appoints Nicholas Ferrar as a sort of literary executor, and describes his poems as a "picture of [his] spiritual conflicts." But Herbert also instructs Ferrar to let the pastoral value of The Temple determine its literary merit. "If he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public; if not, let him
burn it."

Although the second half of Herbert's statement is rarely mentioned, it calls for a virtual reversal of current assumptions about The Temple. We are prompted to consider the public meaning and importance of Herbert's private utterances. We are also called to reconsider the pre-eminence which we have accorded The Temple in the Herbert canon, for Herbert evidently considered The Country Parson to be at least as important as The Temple. It is difficult now to know whether Herbert valued The Country Parson for its literary merit, for its practical utility, or both. Still, the preface to The Country Parson asserts the value of the prose without the (albeit ritual) hesitation of the dedication of The Temple; and the tone of The Country Parson is sometimes confident to the point of stridency. If anything, Herbert was more concerned to publish his pastoral treatise than his poetry, for he commends his book of poems to Duncon almost as an afterthought. Yet The Temple went to press within months of Herbert's death in 1633, while The Country Parson was only published in 1651 - after a hiatus of nineteen years. This curious turn of events deserves some explanation.

Walton mentions two "little books." Judging by subsequent events, these books were probably manuscripts of the works we know as The Temple and The Country Parson. Walton's identical terms suggest the compatibility of The Temple and The Country Parson: that in their original form, they were similar in format, and complementary in content. What happened to these two little books after Herbert's death is a tangled story.

The book of poetry described by Walton cannot be the Bodleian manuscript for several reasons. The Bodleian manuscript is in folio (hardly a "little" book), it is
written in a Little Gidding hand, and it bears the inscription: "The original of Mr. George Herbert's Temple, as it was first licenced for the press." According to Hutchinson and Charles, the original little book of poems was probably taken by Duncon to Little Gidding, where it was copied by Ferrar's daughters (under his supervision) to produce what we know as the Bodleian manuscript. Ferrar then took this manuscript to Cambridge for licencing and printing. Hence, Hutchinson bases his edition of The Temple on the Bodleian manuscript textually, although he relies on the first edition for layout and incidentals. The transmission of the second "little book" is less clear. Walton states that

...this book [The Country Parson] fell into the hands of [Herbert's] friend Mr. Woodnoth; and he commended it into the trusty hands of Mr. Barnabas Oley, who published it with a most conscientious and excellent preface; from which I have had some of those truths, that are related in this life of Mr. Herbert. (298)

Oley did take The Country Parson to the printer and added a preface, but not until 1652. The question is, what happened to The Country Parson during the nineteen years between Herbert's death and its eventual publication?

Walton's assertion that Woodnoth gave the book to Oley is somewhat questionable. Arthur Woodnoth, a business agent of the Hererts and Ferrars, was staying at Bemerton rectory during the last weeks of Herbert's life. As the executor of Herbert's will, he may have received The Country Parson then or sometime previously. However, in the preface to the second (1671) edition of The Country Parson, Oley states that it was Duncon, not Woodnoth, who took The Country Parson to the stationer for printing. One would expect Oley to remember from whom he had received The Country Parson, though Walton did not alter his statement in 1674-1675 reissues of his Life of Herbert.
This conflicting testimony might be explained in several ways. First of all, Walton's language is more figurative than literal. Walton only says that The Country Parson "fell into the hands of [Herbert's] friend Mr. Woodnot": he does not say how or when Woodnot received the book. Herbert may have given The Country Parson to Woodnot directly. Herbert may have given both The Country Parson and The Temple to Duncon at the same time. Or Woodnot may have left The Country Parson to Duncon when he died in 1650. Let us briefly consider each possibility.

Herbert could have given The Country Parson to Woodnot anytime between its completion in 1632 and his death in 1633. We know that Woodnot stayed in the Bemerton rectory with the Herbersts, during the last three weeks of Herbert's life when Herbert ordered his last affairs. Herbert had just given Duncon his little book of poetry. Walton's death bed tableau indicates that Herbert sent his wife and nieces into the next room because they were "weeping to an extremity," leaving only "Mr. Bostock" (Herbert's lawyer) and Woodnot at Herbert's bedside (322). With Bostock as witness, Herbert gave his Will to Woodnot, his executor, with instructions for the care of his wife and nieces. Perhaps Herbert also gave The Country Parson to Woodnot at that moment. If so, Herbert's widow would have been left out of the transaction, but Woodnot would have considered it a sacred trust, and would probably have resented any interference. Such circumstances would account for subsequent events.

Perhaps Walton is simply mistaken in detail. As Hutchinson suggests, Duncon may well have received both little books at the same time. Such an eventuality is certainly consistent with Herbert's characteristic thoroughness and tidiness. If he did give both books to Duncon at the same time, Herbert clearly intended to publish The
Country Parson and The Temple together, perhaps as companion-pieces in one volume like Robert Herrick's Hesperides and Noble Numbers (1648). Such an arrangement would imply that The Country Parson and The Temple were compatible: that their different concerns, styles, purposes, and audiences somehow converged.

Finally, Duncon may have received The Country Parson indirectly from Woodnoth. Daniel Doerkson considers this possibility "closer to the truth" than the supposition that Duncon received The Country Parson directly from Herbert. But the letter which Doerkson offers as evidence is not as conclusive as he believes it to be, for it merely states that "Mr. George Herbert...left a booke stiled [the] Country Parson: [which] his Executor Mr. Woodnoth...was desirous (according to the authors purpose) to get printed, but for a while wanted [Herbert’s widow’s] consent." The letter provides further proof that The Country Parson did "fall into the hands of Herbert’s friend Mr. Woodnoth"; but like Walton’s Life, the letter does not say how or when.

Nonetheless, the letter which Doerkson discusses is important. For although the efforts of his agents to publish The Country Parson at the same time as The Temple implies Herbert’s intention to do so and Herbert’s conception of the works as companion-pieces, the letter provides direct testimony about Herbert’s intention. Woodnoth was trying to have The Country Parson published "according to the author’s purpose." The letter also suggests that Woodnoth’s efforts caused contention among those involved, because "for a while" Woodnoth "wanted the consent of [Herbert’s widow]" to publish The Country Parson. Such contention certainly became evident in the 1630s.

Amy Charles’s carefully researched portrait of Woodnoth suggests that he was
probably a difficult person to deal with. Although he was a successful goldsmith, he became tired of trade, yet maintained a shop. Although he contemplated the priesthood, he did not take holy orders. Although he managed the business affairs of Herbert’s stepfather, Woodnoth was unsatisfied with the result. Although he declined to manage Herbert’s affairs, Woodnoth agreed to act as his executor. And although he acted as a sort of purchasing-forwarding agent for Ferrar’s religious community at Little Gidding, Woodnoth did not live in community, despite his close family connection. One has the sense of divided loyalties, of someone likely to be capricious and easily nettled. Not the ideal executor, perhaps, but one imagines that Herbert—a pastor even on his death bed—was offering his weaker friend a last mark of encouragement and regard.

Charles thinks it likely that Herbert gave Woodnoth instructions about the disposition of his writings. As the executor of Herbert’s estate, Woodnoth would have felt a proprietary interest in the publication of all Herbert’s works; yet Ferrar had possession of *The Temple*, and considered himself Herbert’s literary executor. According to Doerksen, while Ferrar was seeing to the publication of the poems in Cambridge, Woodnoth was probably making parallel arrangements for their printing with Philemon Stephens in London.\(^ {20}\) The rivalry between the London and the university printers in the early seventeenth century is well known; unfortunately, Woodnoth’s loyalties were to London while Ferrar’s were to the university. But this was to prove merely the first of a series of historical accidents, which artificially produced the separate publishing histories of *The Country Parson* and *The Temple*, and the consequent perception that they were disparate works.

According to Charles, although Ferrar may have originally intended to publish
The Temple and The Country Parson together as "companion volumes," he was unable to do so because of licensing problems. The Temple was easily approved, despite a suspect couplet in "The Church Militant." Ferrar may have grown over-confident after the easy publication of The Temple, and foreseeing no problems or wanting a brief respite before publishing The Country Parson, he submitted another work for licensing—Hygiasticon: Or, The right course of preserving Life and Health into extreme old Age, which contained Herbert's translation of "A Treatise of Temperance and Sobriety." Ferrar's timing could hardly have been worse: Laud had just been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury (1633), sectarian tensions were growing, and censorship was therefore becoming more strict. Despite its innocuous title, the censors would not approve Hygiasticon.

Ferrar's strategy proved disastrous, for the wrangle about Hygiasticon forestalled publication of The Country Parson and prompted a falling out between Ferrar and Woodnoth. Duncon and the Herbert family then became involved, and allegations were hurled on all sides. Woodnoth continued to attempt to arrange the publication of The Country Parson, but his efforts were hampered by the recalcitrance of the quarrelling parties, the death of Ferrar (1637), and the remarriage of Herbert's widow (1638). The country soon became engulfed in civil war (1642-1649), which made publication all but impossible. Arthur Woodnoth died immediately after the war (1650), without having published The Country Parson. Presumably, Duncon finally took The Country Parson to Oley, who managed to get it published with an anonymous preface in 1651—nineteen years after Herbert had written it, and eighteen years after Herbert had intended it to be published.

A series of historical accidents had put asunder what should have remained
joined together. During the eighteenth century, a false dichotomy arose. Herbert’s substantial, popular, poetic book naturally became associated with the early seventeenth century in which it appeared, particularly with the undivided Anglican church and the metaphysical movement. The Temple was seen as a great literary accomplishment, the work of a consummate artist. However, Herbert’s slight prose treatise did not prove as popular as his poetry; nor was it associated with the early seventeenth century, but with the Interregnum when it appeared and with the Restoration when it gained acclaim. Inevitably, The Country Parson came to be seen as the plodding work of a parish priest for other priests, rather than as the imaginative work of a poet which might be read with interest by a wide audience.

Unfortunately, this false dichotomy continues to obscure the value and meaning of both works, but such was not always the case. There is some evidence that Herbert’s early readers saw past the prose/poetry, public/private, priest/poet dichotomies which vex modern Herbert criticism. And I would suggest that we too should attempt to recapture the undivided attitude of Herbert’s early readers, if we are fully to understand and to appreciate his work.

Even the titles of his works indicate the seventeenth-century perception of a continuity between Herbert’s verse and prose. Although both manuscripts of the poems bear headings ("The Church-porch," "The Church," and "The Church Militant"), neither manuscript bears a title. Ferrar supplied the title, "The Temple," as well as the subtitle, "Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations." The subtitle has encouraged questionable assumption that Herbert’s poems are urgent personal effusions rather than composed public statements. But Ferrar’s title justly captures the architectural conceit of the work, as well as its liturgical and pastoral qualities.
Herbert also appears to have left his prose work untitled. Although Oley might have chosen any title he fancied, he was probably guided by a desire to characterize the work and to honour what he knew of Herbert’s intentions. Like the subtitle of The Temple, the subtitle of the prose work (also provided by Oley) has exerted undue influence, partly because it is echoed in the chapter headings. Hence, most people probably know Herbert’s principal prose work by its subtitle, "The Country Parson," when the title of the work is actually "A Priest to the Temple." It has been suggested that Oley coined his title and subtitle, in order to capitalize upon the popularity of Herbert’s poetry and the prose character genre. This suggestion seems unlikely because of the nineteen-year lapse after the publication of The Temple, and because Oley was driven by literary, religious, and political motives—not mercantile considerations. Oley may have been following Herbert’s stated intention, as he entitled the work. But the least we can infer is that Oley understood that Herbert’s prose work somehow complemented The Temple, for the title "A Priest to the Temple" clearly associates the two works. Richard Crashaw implied a similar association of works when he entitled his poetic book Steps to the Temple (1646).

I would suggest that for Ferrar the implied association was pastoral: that he saw that the prose described the familiar priest of the Temple. Ferrar’s statement in his preface to the first edition of The Temple that "[Herbert] betook himself to the Sanctuarie and Temple of God, choosing rather to serve at Gods Altar then to seek the honour of State-employments" implies that "The Temple" is largely a vocational metaphor. If both Ferrar and Oley assumed that Herbert’s pastoral purposes infused and connected his verse and prose, it would seem reasonable to test their assumption ourselves.
We would be in good company. Another early biographer of Herbert, John Aubrey (1626-1697), mentions The Country Parson and The Temple almost in the same breath, and seems to understand that they were artificially separated. The sad story of the publication of The Country Parson might well have become common knowledge, particularly after Oley's mention of Woodnoth and Duncon in his preface to the second edition.

The conception of The Temple and The Country Parson as companionpieces is consistent with renaissance poetics which assumed that verse and prose were two branches of the same discourse rather than contrary modes of expression. In A Defence of Ryme (1602), for example, Samuel Daniel refers to both verse and prose as "poetry." In Anacrisis (1624), William Alexander praises Sidney as a poet for the prose Arcadia. In his Sessions of the Poets (1637), Sir John Suckling includes those who wrote "either in Verse or Prose." And in both Conversations with Drummond (1619) and Discoveries (1641), Ben Jonson stipulates that a writer does not have to write in verse in order to be a poet.

But whether or not Herbert's seventeenth-century readers regarded The Country Parson and The Temple as companion-pieces, Herbert's first readers were probably more aware of the public purpose and style of his poetry than modern readers tend to be. The fact that Herbert's lyrics were immediately put to music by John Jenkins (1592-1678) suggests a ready awareness of the public character of what we have come to regard as personal utterances. That the couplet, "A verse may find him who a sermon flies / And turn delight into a sacrifice," was so frequently quoted during the seventeenth century as to become proverbial is testimony to the widely recognized pastoral purpose of Herbert's poetry. Crashaw's Steps to the Temple (1646)
acknowledged Herbert's pastoral aim in *The Temple*, and Joseph Beaumont further
recognized Crashaw's indebtedness to Herbert. Seventeenth-century readers were so
much aware of the public purpose and style of *The Temple* that some apparently
thought of Herbert as a neoclassical poet, rather than a follower of Donne.  

One cannot tell the extent to which Herbert's first readers approached his
poetry through his prose. However, their awareness of the pastoral purpose and public
style of *The Temple* at least suggests that they saw less discrepancy between the prose
and verse than the modern reader does. Some connection between *The Country
Parson* and *The Temple* was apparently felt, despite the separate publication of the
verse and prose. Ironically, the separate publication of *The Country Parson* and *The
Temple* throughout the eighteenth century actually worked to Herbert's advantage.
The connection between the works was now lost: Herbert's reputation was preserved,
however, for eighteenth-century critics generally admired his prose style even though
they sometimes derided his poetry. 

In the nineteenth century, *The Country Parson* and *The Temple* began to be
published together. Robert Chambers still spoke for many when he declared in his
*Encyclopedia of English Literature* (1844) that "Herbert's poetry alone would not have
preserved his name, and that he is indebted for the reputation he enjoys, to his
excellent and amiable character...[and] to his prose work, the 'Country Parson'."
Editors of the numerous editions of Herbert's collected works usually emphasized the
piety or utility of *The Country Parson*, rather than its style or connection with the
poetry. However, one reviewer with a particularly good grasp of publishing history
did venture to suggest that *The Country Parson* "was conceived in its author's mind as
a companion volume to 'The Temple'."
Even when it appeared with *The Temple*, *The Country Parson* was often mistaken for a quaint autobiography. Defending *The Country Parson* from charges of affectation in 1854, R.A. Willmot argued that *The Country Parson* was solely for Herbert's own use. In 1905 and 1918, Palmer suggested that Herbert "kept his intellectual interests alive" among the rustics with "his beautiful notebook." Herbert gained popularity from the 1930s on, partly because his works were published together as well as separately. However, there is still more than a little of the belief that *The Country Parson* is a quaint, un-literary journal behind Hutchinson's assertion that *The Country Parson* is for Herbert's use only and that "he unconsciously portrays himself" in its pages, and in Charles's statement that "The Country Parson expanded as Herbert's experience grew." But *The Country Parson* is eminently public and prescriptive, and quite "poetic" in its structure, its speech rhythms, its use of figurative language, and its tendency to exemplify what it describes—characteristics I will discuss at length in chapter 3.

One rarely finds explicit nineteenth- or twentieth-century statements about the connection between *The Temple* and *The Country Parson*. Austin Warren's interjection, "But surely *The Country Parson* provides the best commentary on *The Temple*" is a happy exception. But one does sometimes discover tacit recognition that *The Country Parson* is poetic. For instance, the anonymous nineteenth century commentator mentioned previously says of *The Country Parson*:

> The literary merits, too, of the book are great. There is no fine writing in it; there are no grand passages. But the language throughout is choice, scholar-like, and equable; singularly simple, exact, and terse; above all, it is in perfect keeping with the ideas to be conveyed.

This could equally be a description of *The Temple*. Likewise, in *Shelburne Essays*
(1906), Paul Elmer More suggests that *The Country Parson* is "still attractive to the lay reader" because of its great "sincerity of aim" and its "fine simplicity"—because of its poetic qualities, in other words.

The poetry also has prose-like qualities. Although modern critics have been preoccupied with Herbert’s short lyric poems, previous readers were much taken with Herbert’s long discursive ones. "The Church-porch" and "The Church Militant" are now almost universally criticized for their weight of content and lack of formal variety. But one cannot argue that Herbert developed ingenuity and subtlety after he wrote these early poems, when sophisticated lyrics such as "Love (III)" occur in the Williams manuscript, and discursive poems such as "The Sacrifice" and "Providence" occur throughout *The Temple*. While many of Herbert’s poems are complex and "metaphysical" in style, others are so simple and plain as to seem "prosaic." Consider, for instance, the straight-forward quatrains of "Providence" or the simple narrative of "Love unknown":

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We all acknowledge both thy power and love
To be exact, transcendent, and divine;
Who dost so strongly and so sweetly move,
While all things have their will, yet none but thine.
("Providence," 29-32)

Walkt by my self abroad, I saw a large
And spacious fornace flaming, and thereon
A boyling caldron, round about whose verge
Was in great letters set AFFLICTION.
The greatnesse shew’d the owner. So I went
To fetch a sacrifice out of my fold,
Thinking with that, which I did thus present.
To warm his love, which I did fear grew cold.
("Love unknown," 25-32)
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Such verses would lose little if they were written as sentences. Of course, Herbert’s poetry is rarely prosaic in the pejorative sense of being bland or boring, but it is
sometimes prosaic in the literal sense of the word—it tends toward prose.

The general compatibility between the plainer poetry of The Temple and poetic prose of The Country Parson should alert us to the possibility of more specific formal connections between the works. And indeed, even a brief consideration of the style and structure of The Country Parson and The Temple suggests a number of similarities.

David Novarr has drawn attention to "the tone of sweetness and reasonableness which distinguishes The Country Parson." Chapters such as "The Parson’s Courtesie" (chap. 11), "The Parson’s Charity" (chap. 12), and "The Parson’s Mirth" (chap. 27) are particularly notable for their sweet and reasonable tone. But The Country Parson is not naively or uniformly sweet and reasonable: discord and struggle, sadness and strife are portrayed powerfully, although these disturbing and destructive forces are balanced and subsumed by grace. For example, the parson is often sad because he is forced to witness "God dishonoured every day, and man afflicted":

Neverthelesse, he sometimes refresheth himselfe, as knowing that nature will not bear everlasting droppings, and that pleasantnesse of disposition is a great key to do good; not onely because all men shun the company of perpetuall severity, but also for that when they are in company, instructions seasoned with pleasantnesse, both enter sooner, and root deeper. (Chap. 27, 267:33-268:5)

The tone of The Temple is balanced and modulated in a similar manner. Such winsome poems as "Man," "Praise (II)," and "Love (III)" are characteristic of Herbert. But even bleak and impassioned poems such as "Affliction (IV)" and "The Collar" are governed by a highly reasonable formal order, and eventually attain quiet joyful repose.

Apart from its characteristic tone and variety of form, Herbert’s poetry is
generally appreciated for its understated wit, simple diction, domestic metaphors, and spiritual insight. The Country Parson shares these traits to a significant extent, as in "The Parson as a Father" or in this passage from "The Parson’s eye" which describes covetousness:

More particularly, and to give one instance for all, if God have given me servants, and I either provide too little for them, or that which is unwholesome, being sometimes baned meat, sometimes too salt, and so not competent nourishment, I am Covetous. I bring this example, because men usually think, that servants for their mony are as other things that they buy, even as a piece of wood, which they may cut, or hack, or throw into the fire, and so they pay them their wages, all is well. (chap 26, 265: 19-27)

The Country Parson, is particularly rich in figurative language (especially metaphor), in sound effects, and in epigrammatic conclusions--poetic qualities which I wish to consider briefly.

Figurative language abounds in The Country Parson. For instance, in chapter 34 ("The Parson’s Dexterity in Applying of Remedies"), Herbert advises the Country Parson to encourage his parishioners "to labour still to be as fervent in Christian Duties as they remember themselves were, when affliction did blow the Coals...of cold and careless devotion"(280: 18-21). The chapters of The Country Parson, like the poems of The Temple, are in fact often best remembered for such domestic metaphors. For instance, chapter 9 ("The Parson's State of Life"), is made memorable by Herbert’s juxtaposition of "the sunshine and noon of prosperity" and "the cold midnight storms of persecution and adversity"--two eminently poetic conceits.

Herbert’s sound effects give The Country Parson a certain poetic quality. Sometimes, Herbert imitates actual speech in The Country Parson, as he does in his poems:
Alas, why do you thus? you hurt your selfe, not me; he that throws a stone at another, hits himselfe... (269: 12-14)

Come, say they, we have nothing to do, lets go to the Tavern, or to the stews, or what not. (274: 12-14)

At other times, Herbert uses alliteration--either to draw our attention to passages of particular importance or to emphasize connected ideas--just as he would in his poems:

Countrey people...think that all things come by a kind of naturall course; and that if they sow and soyle their grounds, they must have corn; if they keep and fodder well their cattel, they must have milk and Calves... (270: 25-38)

Now a prophesie is a wonder sent to Posterity, least they complaine of want of wonders. It is a letter sealed and sent, which to the bearer is but paper, but to the receiver and opener is full of power. (282: 35-38)

Because of such sound effects as these, one often "hears" The Country Parson as much as one reads it, just as one hears such Herbert poems as "Conscience" or "Praise (II)."

Herbert's chapters also display the powerful, epigrammatic closing lines for which his poems are famous. One thinks, for instance, of the pointed advice which concludes chapter 29 ("The Parson with his Church Wardens"). After much discussion of the role of the wardens in parish politics and much recommendation of diplomacy, the parson is finally advised to

Do well, and right, and let the world sink. (270: 23)

Such arresting and memorable statements recall the conclusions of "The Collar" and "Love (III)."

The structure of The Country Parson also reminds one of The Temple. Like the poems in The Temple, the chapters in The Country Parson appear largely self-contained. But like the poems--for instance, those in the "Affliction" or "Praise"
sequence—the chapters should not be taken out of context because they refer back and forth and depend upon one another for meaning. For example, the opening of chapter 34 refers to the previous chapter (279: 2-4). The severity of "The Parson Punishing" and "The Parson's Condescending" (chap. 25 and 35) must be balanced by the kindness of "The Parson's Courtesie" and "The Parson's Charity" (chap. 11 and 12). And duties described in "The Parson on Sundays" (chap. 8) are amplified in subsequent chapters.

Although The Country Parson does not have the tripartite form of The Temple, correspondences do suggest themselves. The concluding chapters of The Country Parson discuss "the military state of Christian life" (chap. 33 and 34), recalling "The Church Militant." And both The Country Parson and The Temple culminate in prayer and praise, with "L'Envoy" and the "Parson's Prayers" respectively.

Such correspondences in the style and structure of The Country Parson and The Temple indicate the compatibility of the works, if not their design as companion-pieces. The content of the works provides further internal evidence of their connectedness. The Country Parson not only echoes the imagery and phrasing of The Temple, it explains difficult lines and clarifies Herbert's literary purpose in the poetry. The Country Parson also provides a possible hermeneutic for The Temple, and overt statements of the religious and political views implied in the verse—something which will be explored further in chapter 4.

One is often aware that Herbert's principal works share imagery and phrases. For instance, the well-known images of the altar and the worm of conscience from The Temple reoccur in chapters 4 and 30 of The Country Parson. The Parson is advised to approach scripture with fearful joy, for "there he sucks and lives" (chap. 4,
228:33), recalling the voice’s joyful interjection in "The Holy Scriptures I":

Oh Book! infinite sweetnesse! let my heart
Suck ev’ry letter... (II. 1-2)

The unfortunate who is "disseized of his own inheritance" in The Country Parson (chap. 12, 244:30) recalls the presumption of the voice in "Submission" who would "disseize thee of thy right" (l. 12). And the Parson’s "sermons ready penn’d" (chap. 33, 278:24) naturally recall the poet’s lines ("sweetness readie penn’d") of "Jordan (II)" (l. 17).

Occasionally, The Temple provides a gloss for The Country Parson. For instance, Wolberg and others have criticized Herbert for his alleged worldly pragmatism in The Country Parson. Herbert’s enthusiastic description of the parson’s approach to his congregation on Sunday as that of a shopkeeper on market day is somewhat startling, despite the prevalence of mercantile metaphors in the New Testament. But such similes are analogical, like the simile of the poet as a shooting star in Herbert’s poem, "Star." To take such similes over-literally is to mistake Herbert’s meaning, something we learn from The Temple.

Conversely, The Country Parson often provides a valuable commentary upon The Temple. For instance, the peculiar urgency which informs "Charms & Knots" is none other than the urgent exercise of charity which is commended to the Parson (chap. 12, 244). Herbert’s description of the gay gravity and spare luxury appropriate to church furnishings (chap. 13) helps us to appreciate the aesthetic advocated in the "Jordan" poems. The liturgical form and sober dignity of poems such as "Miserie" and "Mortification" is explained by Herbert’s insistence upon decent and orderly worship (chap. 13). The process described in "The Parson Comforting" (chap. 15) is
put into practice in "The Dawning" and "Jesu." The "young and unwary spirits"
described in The Country Parson, chapter 18, are those for whom "Perirrhanterium"
and "Super-liminare" are most intended. And the relatively plain and discursive verse
of "Providence" and "The Church Militant" may reflect that "set and laboured and
continued speech" which is described in The Country Parson, chapter 21 (257:25).

The Country Parson often adds markedly to our appreciation of the poetry.
The many legal and medical metaphors of the poems gain greater meaning, once the
Parson’s legal and medical duties are described (chap. 23). The principle of not
stinting one’s servant at the table (chap 26, 265:19-27) adds another dimension to the
dynamics of "Love (III)." The limits of clerical learning which are described in The
Country Parson (chap. 26, 266:1-5) explain Herbert’s uncharacteristic criticism of
learning in "Divinitie." The extensive and discerning discussion of gluttony in The
Country Parson (chap. 26, 266: 6-18) enlarges our awareness both of the pressing
problem of dietary excess mentioned in "Perirrhanterium" and "The Size." The
parson’s technique of offering "instructions seasoned with pleasantness" (chap. 27,
268:1) helps us to appreciate the singular quality of Herbert’s poetic voice, which
remains somehow sweet and winning even when it is protesting and preaching. And
the close consideration of the psychology of doubt and repentance in The Country
Parson (chap. 33) helps us to analyze the complex motions of the soul in such poems
as "Repentance," "Affliction (I)," and "Unkindnesse."

As helpful as The Country Parson is as a local commentary, however, it may
be more valuable for the light which it sheds upon the general purposes and practices
which inform his poetry. Whatever his intentions, an author’s expository prose often
does illuminate his poetry for modern readers. Several renaissance examples suggest
themselves. Sidney’s *Defence of Poesie* helps us to understand the Christian Platonism and poetic methods which inform *Astrophel and Stella*. Donne’s linguistic reflections in his *Sermons* help us to appreciate the curious language of his *Songs and Sonets*. And Milton’s educational, religious, and political tracts add to our understanding of the great themes of *Paradise Lost*. Although it is difficult to know whether Sidney, Donne, or Milton intended their works to be read this way, such readings are surely valuable.

If one were to take a similar approach to Herbert’s works, as I believe we should, one would assume that Herbert’s pastoral purposes are not only described in *The Country Parson* but worked out in *The Temple*. Such a reading would see the main dynamic of *The Temple* as "how Gods goodness strives with mans refractorinesse," to use a phrase from *The Country Parson* (272:5-7). The readership of *The Temple*, like the congregation described in *The Country Parson*, might be thought of as somewhat flagging or refractory, and therefore in need of constant and skillful pastoral care. The poet would act like the parson who orders his life that he might tell his audience, "I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple" (*CP*, chap 3, 228:1). Like the parson, the poet would seek "to multiply and build up the knowledge [of salvation] to a spiritual Temple" for the sake of his audience (chap. 11, 255:4-5). Indeed, Herbert’s repeated reference to the "Temple" in his prose might be seen as an invitation to read *The Country Parson* not only as a pastoral manual for Caroline priests but also as an *ars poetica* for *The Temple*.

The approach I advocate would help to explain the surprising variety of poetic form in *The Temple*, as I indicate in chapter 5. Briefly, Herbert’s profusion of poetic form would be explained chiefly as the pastoral effort to adapt his mode of discourse
to suit a variety of people and situations discussed in *The Country Parson*. For example, the plain moralism of "The Church Porch" might serve to correct the wayward, in the manner of "The Parson in Sentinell" (chap. 18). The serenity of "Man" and the joyfulness of "Praise (II)" might encourage the sad or faint-hearted, as in "The Parson Comforting" (chap. 15). And the skillful merriment of "Heaven" might draw wits and revellers into "The Church," in accordance with the winning ways of "The Parson on Sundays" (chap. 8).

Such a pastoral reading of the works also points to a possible hermeneutic for *The Temple*. Herbert discusses biblical hermeneutics in "The Parson’s Knowledge," and Lewalski and others have suggested that the organization of *The Temple* is like that of the Bible.\(^{38}\) I would suggest that, like the Old Testament and the New Testament, *The Country Parson* and *The Temple* are interpreted best by the process of "diligent collation" which Herbert describes in *The Country Parson* (229:4-9). To read either work properly, its parts must be compared and balanced like the verses and books of the Bible: "The Collar" and "The Priesthood" culminate in "Aaron," and "The Parson arguing" (chap. 24) leads to "The Parson Blessing" (chap 36). But *The Country Parson* and *The Temple* also inform one another in a manner which recalls the Old Testament and the New. Like the Old Testament, *The Country Parson* provides rules of priestly conduct and tells the story of an unruly people. Like the New Testament, *The Temple* emerges from and fulfills what went before, and employs admonition, enigmatic parable, and prophetic narrative. Yet, like the Old Testament and New Testament, both *The Country Parson* and *The Temple* will remain somewhat obscure until they are diligently compared or "collated."

Finally, the approach I suggest would help us to evaluate the religious and
political views implied in the poetry, a matter which I discuss at length in chapter 4. As we saw earlier, many recent commentators have attributed the introspective quality of Herbert's poetry either to extreme protestant beliefs or to counter-reformation meditative techniques. Although these interpretations may be useful, they should be balanced by the teaching of The Country Parson, particularly its specifically Anglican beliefs and values and its criticism of the "strange doctrines" of "Papists" and "Schismatics" (chap. 24). Some commentators have also suggested that Herbert's poems depict social graces, political ambitions, and amorous intrigues which either curry favour with or condemn the Caroline court. As we saw earlier, poems such as "Redemption" do employ courtly motifs, though their political meaning is unclear. Poems such as "Jordan (I)," Unkindnesse," and "Frailtie" may be informed by the language and conventions of renaissance courtship. But as I will show in the following chapter, a careful reading of The Country Parson suggests that some commentators may have mistaken good manners, pastoral dignity, and agreeableness for courtly aspirations, and have over-emphasized the importance of courtly love in The Temple.
NOTES: CHAPTER 1

1 The "biographical fallacy" is a new critical term for the tendency to confuse the disclosures of the author and his literary persona. For such biographical readings of The Country Parson, see F.E. Hutchinson, ed., The Works of George Herbert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), xxxvi-xxxviii; Harold Kollmeier, "A Mark to Aim At': Genre and Sensibility in George Herbert's Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY, Stony Brook, 1976), iii-iv, 52-53; Cristina Malcolmson, "Society and Self-Definition in the Works of George Herbert" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1983), 5, 61.

2 A.H. Bullen, ed., Walton's Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wooton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert, and Dr. Robert Sanderson, 2nd ed. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), 293. All subsequent references will be to this edition, and will be indicated parenthetically by page number.


6 Lull reminds us that the history of the composition and transmission of Herbert's poems remains a matter of speculation. See Amy Charles, A Life of George Herbert, 127, and Janis Lull, The Poem in Time: Reading George Herbert's Revisions of "The Church" (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 11.

7 There are 164 or 169 poems in the Bodleian manuscript, depending upon whether "Superliminare," "Good Friday," "Easter," "Love (I and II)," and "H. Scriptures" are considered individual poems or pairs of poems. The Williams manuscript contains 77 poems altogether, but "The H. Communion," "Love," "Trinity Sunday," "Even-song," "The Knell," and "Perseverance" do not appear in either the Bodleian manuscript or the first edition. See F. E. Hutchinson, ed., Works, lii-liii, 200-205.

8 See Works, xxxvi-xxxviii. Herbert spent only the last three years of his life at Bemerton.

9 See F.E. Hutchinson, ed., Works, 223, 556.

10 Charles suggests that Herbert may have revised his poems at Bemerton, but that he wrote most of his poems previously; Lull accepts Charles's reasoning that the rigors of parish life would have prevented the writing of poems at Bemerton. See A

11 For a comparison of George Herbert's parish during the seventeenth century and as it is now, see the Reverend John Owen, "A Sermon Preached at St. John's Church (Bemerton), 15 July 1990," Cross-Bias 1990: 3. Chapters 10 and 34 of The Country Parson suggest that Herbert's wife shared in his ministry to a remarkable extent.

12 See A. H. Bullen, ed., Life of Herbert, 318. The phrase "perfect freedom" suggests that Herbert is framing his remarks in the terms of the second collect in the Anglican service of Morning Prayer, in which the priest and congregation pray to God "which art author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom." The phrase is an important one in Anglican circles, and Herbert frequently shows his Anglicanism in The Country Parson by expressing himself in the terms of the Prayer Book. See John E. Booty, ed., The Book of Common Prayer, 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1976), 59.

13 David Novarr suggests that Walton's rendition of Herbert's words to Duncon may rely upon Ferrar's introduction to the first edition of The Temple, but that Walton also consulted the Herbert family. See The Making of Walton's Lives (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), 226-327, 341-343. Charles notes that Walton's information about the end of Herbert's life is more reliable than his other assertions, and that Walton's account of the transmission of the little book of poetry is corroborated by a letter by John Ferrar, Nicholas's son (Life, 182).


15 Hutchinson bases the text of his edition on the Bodleian manuscript, because it represents Herbert's nearest intention. Hutchinson uses the early Williams manuscript to corroborate the Bodleian where it differs from the first edition, and records these variants in the notes. Hutchinson corrects twenty-eight errors in the Bodleian manuscript in this way, none of them more than single words or syllables. Hutchinson follows the first edition for the layout of the poems and incidentals (spelling, punctuation, capitals, and italics), because the first edition is closer to the Williams than the Bodleian manuscript in this regard, and because Thomas Buck, a near contemporary of Herbert's at Cambridge and an excellent printer, set the first edition (Works, lxx-lxxiv). Charles concurs with Hutchinson's editorial principles (Life, 182). Mario A. Di Cesare has recently questioned Hutchinson's choice of the first edition for format.


17 See F.E. Hutchinson, ed., Works, 556. Novarr acknowledges that Walton may
not have been able to remember the details of what Woodnoth had said about Herbert’s induction to Beerton and The Country Parson manuscript, when he came to write his Lives. Nonetheless, Novarr believes that Walton remembered the gist of what Woodnoth had said. See The Making of Walton’s Lives, 332, 514-515.


19 See Doerksen, "‘Too Good for Those Times,’" 11, and Charles, A Life, 167-169, 78.

20 See Doerksen, "‘Too Good for Those Times,’" 11, and Amy Charles, A Life, 178-79.

21 The suspect couplet is:
Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,
Readie to passe to the American strand. (ll. 235-236)

Walton describes the censor’s concern over these lines, a matter which Charles discusses in A Life, 187.

22 See F.E. Hutchinson, ed., Works, li; Amy Charles, A Life, 185-86.

23 The full title of the work is, A Priest to the Temple, or The Country Parson: His Character and Rule Of Holy Life. For a discussion of the contributions of Ferrar and Oley to the subtitles and titles of Herbert’s works, see F. E. Hutchinson, Works, li, liii and Amy Charles, A Life, 157, 185-87.

24 On the influence of the prose character on Oley’s title, see Charles above. Though neither explains quite how Herbert does it, both Kollmeier and Malcolmson assume from the subtitle that Herbert incorporates a prose character into The Country Parson. See Harold Kollmeier, "‘A Mark to Aim At’: Genre and Sensibility in George Herbert’s Country Parson (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1976), v, and Cristina Malcolmson, "Society and Self-Definition in the Works of George Herbert" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1983), 27. I discuss Herbert’s use of the prose character in the following chapter.


26 Aubrey says that Herbert wrote "[A book of] Sacred Poems, called ‘The Church,’ printed [at] Cambridge, 1633; [and] a Booke entitled ‘The Country Parson,’ not printed till about 1650." Aubrey pairs these two works, among the others he mentions; and Aubrey’s statement that The Country Parson was "not printed till about 1650" suggests that it might have been printed much earlier. See Oliver Lawson Dick, ed., Aubrey’s Brief Lives (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), 137.

28 For discussions of seventeenth century musical arrangements of The Temple and of the modern view of the poems as impassioned personal utterances, see C.A. Patrides, ed., The Critical Heritage, 3, 35-36.

29 "Perirrhanterium," ll. 5-6: see The Critical Heritage, 2, 6-12. Patrides finds such statements as Daniel's "surprising" (7), because Patrides considers Herbert to be a metaphysical poet. The notion that Herbert was viewed as a neoclassical poet is mine.

30 For a discussion of Herbert’s contemporary and later reputation with particular reference to the poetry, see F.E. Hutchinson, Works, xlvii. Although Patrides expresses doubt about the popularity of the prose in the eighteenth century (Heritage, 19), Hutchinson describes various eighteenth-century editions of the prose (Works, lxiii-lxx).


32 See especially the introductions to the Jerdan (1853), Pickering (1850), and Willmott (1859) editions, together with the anonymous essay in The Christian Remembrancer (1862) written in response to these editions: The Critical Heritage, 24, 47n., 96n., 182-246.

33 The notorious editor, George Herbert Palmer, rearranged the poems of The Temple to create a pseudobiography of disillusionment. Charles’s suggestion that The Country Parson was expanded as Herbert’s experience grew implies a journal or diary, a work without a Sidnean "fore-conceit" or literary model. See C. A. Patrides, ed., The Critical Heritage, 33-34, 216-217, 294; F. E. Hutchinson, Works, xxxvi-xxxviii; Amy Charles, A Life, 159-160.

34 Although extremely apt, this remark is somewhat tangential to Warren’s main topic. See The Critical Heritage, 351.

35 This anonymous commentator also says that The Country Parson is "inexhaustible in its suggestiveness": an allusive or figurative quality suggests poetry. See The Critical Heritage, 244, 303.


37 See Harold Kollmeier, "‘A Mark to Aim At’: Genre and Sensibility in George Herbert’s Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1976), 154-166 and Kristine Wolberg, "‘All Possible Art’: George Herbert’s

38 Lewalski suggests that the lyrics in "The Church" belong to the Psalm genre and that "The Church Militant" is modelled on Revelation. Lull mentions the pertinent passage from The Country Parson and notes that the poems in "The Church" require collation. And Stewart speculates that Herbert's emphasis on collation might derive from the biblical Harmonies of Little Gidding. See Barbara Lewalski, Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 300-301, 304-305; Janis Lull, The Poem in Time, 13-14; Stanley Stewart, George Herbert (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986), 61. For a further discussion of Herbert's use of the Bible, see my chapter 4 and Chana Bloch, Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

CHAPTER 2: THE GENRE OF THE COUNTRY PARSON

The first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know what it is—what it is intended to do and how it is meant to be used.

C.S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost

The Country Parson is so distinctive that one naturally wonders what Herbert thought he was writing. Although many readers have mistaken The Country Parson for a diary of parish life, Herbert's purpose was more public and practical. The Country Parson is really a clerical manual—a work traditionally written by and for clergymen, which describes their pastoral duties and encourages them to lead exemplary lives. Such a work was urgently needed by the Anglican clergy of the 1630s, who may have been university educated but had little formal training for pastoral ministry. Herbert characteristically drew upon various kinds of prose, some of which are described more fully in appendix I. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the organization of The Country Parson reflects both the essay and the professional handbook. The opening and closing sentences of its chapters suggest the essay and the moral resolve. The pervasive idealism and concern with decorum may be attributed in part to the influence of the courtesy and etiquette book. But Herbert’s prose, like his poetry, is a distinctive blend of many influences and forms.

Recent efforts to find a literary antecedent or to place The Country Parson in a genre have been useful but misguided. Kollmeier (1976) concluded that Herbert tried to write a handbook like Dalton's Country Justice (1619), but failed because he was
temperamentally unsuited to such mundanity and could not help contaminating the
genre with a prose character.¹ Malcolmson (1983) placed The Country Parson in the
courtesy book genre, but concluded that Herbert was subverting the genre—and
therefore attacking the court—by interpolating a "character of holiness."² Wolberg
(1988) argued that Herbert was writing an Anglican response to Puritan preaching
manuals by modelling The Country Parson on a sixteenth-century Italian courtesy
book, Guazzo's Civil Conversation.³ Although these studies have suggested Herbert’s
indebtedness to various prose forms and have indicated a relation between the form of
The Country Parson and Herbert’s religious and political sympathies, these studies
have mistaken Herbert’s intention and have conflated form and genre.

"Genre" literally means a "kind" or "type" of literature, and is commonly
equated with form and technique.⁴ It is in this sense that we speak of the traditional
poetic "genres" of epic, drama, and lyric.⁵ Although such generic distinctions
recognize differences in form, they traditionally follow from the author’s fundamental
purpose.⁶ Hence, when we speak of "the genre"—the broad categories of dramatic and
non-dramatic poetry, and of fictional and non-fictional prose—we mean not only
different forms, but also a fundamental choice in the mode of expression. The author
must decide whether he will use one voice or many, whether he will describe or
portray action, whether he wishes to inform or to move his audience. We should,
therefore, not attempt to categorize The Country Parson generically according to its
form, as previous genre studies have done; rather, we should reconsider Herbert’s
purpose.

Also, for the sake of precision, we should distinguish between "genre," "kind,"
and "form." The Country Parson clearly belongs to the genre of non-fictional prose;
the question is, what kind of non-fictional prose did Herbert choose to write? Herbert had four principal kinds of non-fictional prose to choose from: conduct literature, clerical manuals, professional handbooks, and a new kind of non-fictional prose comprised of the essay, the prose character, and the moral resolve. Each kind of non-fictional prose might take various literary forms, but it would have a particular purpose and would imply certain beliefs and values.7

Herbert’s reading suggests a familiarity with all four kinds of prose. Herbert’s remarks in The Country Parson indicate that he read widely and attentively. "The Parson’s Accessary Knowledge" recommends a catholic and eclectic course of study:

The Countrey Parson hath read the Fathers also [in addition to the Scriptures], and the Schoolmen, and the later Writers, or a good proportion of all . . . (CP chap. 5, 229: 31-33).

And "The Parson’s Knowledge" recommends that the aspiring country parson "hath one Comment at least upon every book of Scripture" and suggests that he "compile a book and body of Divinitie which is the storehouse of his Sermons" (229:27-230:2). Surely such advice reflects Herbert’s own reading and his practice of keeping a commonplace book.

Other sources confirm the impression that Herbert read widely and retained what he read. For instance, we know from Walton and from the allusions in Herbert’s poetry that Herbert was steeped in the Bible and the Prayer Book. Herbert’s will also mentions "the Comment[ary] of Lucas Brugensis uppon the Scripture" and "Augustines works" (382: 19,21). Herbert translated Cornaro’s Treatise of Temperance and Sobrietie and wrote extensive notes on Valdesso’s Considerations (291-320). Herbert mentions Saint John Chrysostom and the Roman historians in "The Parson’s Dexterity
in Applying Remedies" (chap. 34, 282: 21-22); he mentions the Fathers again in "The Parson in reference" (chap. 19, 253: 6). Herbert refers specifically to two professional manuals, Michael Dalton's Country Justice (1619) and John Fernelius's Practice of Physick . . . [and] Select Medicinal Counsels (c. 1600) in "The Parson's Completeness" (chap. 23, 260:2, 261:5). Herbert may also allude to an Italian courtesy book in "The Parson's Surveys" (chap. 32, 275: 26). We know of Herbert's literary friendship with Sir Francis Bacon, from his Latin poems, from his letters (pp. 435-437), and from Bacon's dedication of his Translation of Certaine Psalmes (1625). We also know that over fifty of Herbert's "outlandish" proverbs are from Stephano Guazzo's Civil Conversation (1581), though Herbert may have gleaned them through an intermediary such as John Florio's Second Frutes (1591).

On the basis of such references and remarks, we may safely assume that Herbert had some acquaintance with patristic and medieval clerical manuals, with conduct literature, with professional handbooks, with Bacon's essays, and with the character--either in its seventeenth-century form or from Roman history. Although we cannot be sure that Herbert read the moral resolve, his reading was wide enough to encourage such a view. Still, it is one thing to assume that Herbert read a particular book, and quite another thing to assume that The Country Parson belongs to that book's genre because of similarities in form or content--a common mistake of much recent genre criticism.

Genre cannot be determined on the basis of form, as some critics contend. By nature, literary form is inconsistent and accretive. For example, Nicholas Breton, author of the conventional characters The Good and the Badde (1616), also wrote Characters Upon Essaies, Morall and Divine (1615), a fusion of the prose character
and essay forms. Montaigne is cited in defence of *La Galerie des Peintures* (1663), which suggests a link between the expository essay and fictive prose. The beginning of Owen Feltham's *Resolves: Divine, Morall, Political* (1623) strongly reminds one of a courtesy book; however, the work generally follows essay form. Sir William Cornwallis's *Essays* (1606) are essay-like in length and opening, and often in subject, but are less allusive than most essays and plainly owe something to the resolve in their endings. Feltham, "the prince of resolve writers," was probably inspired by Daniel Tuvill's *Essays* (1608-09) to write his *Resolves*, and therefore could not decide whether to call his work "essays" or "resolves." Richard Brathwait's *English Gentleman* (1630) is a model courtesy book--abstract, learned, extensive, and idealistic--but it ends with a prose character. And what is perhaps most important for our consideration of *The Country Parson*, clerical manuals are extremely various in form, and are sometimes written in verse as well as prose.

Many works of the same kind have different forms, and many works of similar form have radically different purposes and audiences, tones and values. For instance, although Lord Burghley's *Certain Precepts* (1561), Sir Walter Raleigh's *Instructions* (c. 1630), and Francis Osborne's *Advice to a Son* (1656) are all etiquette books, they vary greatly in form. And despite their obvious diversity of purpose and audience, George Herbert's *Country Parson*, Niccolo Machiavelli's *Prince* (c. 1532, trans. 1640), Henry Peacham's *Complete Gentleman* (1622), Sir Francis Bacon's *Essays* (1597, 1625), John Fernelius's *Physick* (c. 1600), and Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608), are all notable for their short chapters, strong opening sentences, and pointed advice.

Nor can genre be determined on the basis of content, as some critics of *The
All the books I have mentioned are "educative," broadly-speaking, and most deal with public affairs: they are therefore bound to have much in common. They frequently prescribe an educational program, discuss virtue and religion, advocate discernment in dealing with various types of people, and describe the exercise of authority, the art of apt speech, the need for liberality, and the fact of ingratitude and criticism. These topics emerge naturally from the experience of public life, whether one is a statesman, a gentleman, a professional, or a priest. Ideas also accumulate as we move from one work to another. For instance, Elyot recommends Erasmus's *Institution of a Christian Prince*. Tuvill freely incorporates Machiavelli and Guazzo, Montaigne and Bacon, Hooker and the Bible. And Cleland assimilates Elyot, Ascham, Mulcaster, and Montaigne. We might, therefore, seem to hear Machiavelli or Ascham when we read Herbert; but that does not mean that *The Country Parson* is Machiavellian or that Herbert is bent on describing the ideal schoolmaster.

Since genre can only be determined on the basis of an author's purpose, it is unfortunate that Herbert's purpose has so often been mistaken. Both Walton and Oley assumed that Herbert intended to write a kind of diary--a purely personal record of parish events and professional reflections. Many modern commentators have unwittingly perpetuated this misconception. As we have already seen, F. E. Hutchinson described *The Country Parson* as "an autobiographical document for Herbert's own use." And, like Hutchinson before them, Stewart and Bottrall treat *The Country Parson* as "background" to *The Temple*. *The Country Parson* may be "valuable for its picture of a rural clergymen in Seventeenth-Century England"; it may even verge on "spiritual autobiography" at times. But *The Country Parson* is certainly not
intended to be a diary, nor does it much resemble one.

There are moments of particular self-revelation in The Country Parson, just as 
there are in The Temple. Herbert seems to describe his own personality and habits 
when he observes that the parson’s principal temptations are "Spiritual pride and 
Impurity of heart" and that in turmoil the parson must "throw himself down at the 
throne of grace." He seems accidentally to slip into the first person, as he describes 
the parson’s domestic arrangements in "The Parson in his house":

For it is as unnatural to do any thing, that leads me to a sicknesse, to 
which I am inclined, as not to get out of that sicknesse, when I am in it, 
by any diet. (chap. 10, 242: 36-38)

Herbert clearly states that a parson’s advice (including his own, one presumes) should 
derive from his own personal experience (chap. 33, 278: 25-29). But drawing upon 
one’s own experience or unintentionally revealing one’s character, as novelists and 
poets frequently do, is different from writing a diary.

Those who mistakenly believe that Herbert intended to write a diary frequently 
misunderstand the structure of The Country Parson. A diary, whether it is well-written 
or not, is by nature episodic, rambling, and inchoate. A manual, unless it is very 
badly-written indeed, must be progressive, clearly-focussed, and complete. Yet 
Wolberg seems to be describing a diary when she says that:

Rather than a focussed argument . . . The Country Parson is a series of 
short, casually linked, self-contained discourses reflecting on the 
pastor’s life in a familiar, even intimate tone. There is little urgency 
here, no public voice, and no obviously apparent order or thesis.23

Miller, too, might well be describing a diary entry, when he declares that Herbert 
"does not attempt to be clear," as if Herbert has no audience but himself in The 
Country Parson.24 But, as we shall see, the style of The Country Parson is in fact
clear to the point of perspicuity, and this eminently public work does indeed have "a
definite order and thesis."

Of course, "definite order" need not mean a tightly-organized or highly-concrete structure. Herbert leaves room for elegant variation, perhaps following his
own advice to the parson "in journey":

... hee begins good discourses, such as may edify, interposing
sometimes some short, and honest refreshments, which may make his
other discourses more welcome, and lesse tedious. (chap. 17, 251: 3-6)

Although the thirty-seven chapters of The Country Parson are much alike, they are not
entirely uniform. For example, chapter 11 ("The Parson's Courtesie") is particularly
pithy: it is half the length of the following chapter ("The Parson's Charity"), but
pointed and discerning. Chapter 13 ("The Parson's Church") is unusually detailed,
dense and highly-organized. Chapter 26 ("The Parson's eye") is profuse: long and
abstract, often boring but occasionally vivid. Herbert's preface ("The Authour to the
Reader"), composed in long complex sentences, is notably elegant and aural--the
natural expression of a precise mind speaking aloud. The two prayers at the end of
The Country Parson ("The Authour's Prayer before Sermon" and "A Prayer after
Sermon") are comparatively short, effusive, and again highly aural. Yet like the
various poems and sections of The Temple, the chapters, preface, and prayers of The
Country Parson are much more alike than not; they work together effectively, and one
is conscious throughout of an overarching plan or purpose.

Still, it is not surprising that generations of readers have failed to apprehend
that purpose, and have continued to read The Country Parson as autobiography.
Walton hopelessly muddied the waters by drawing so heavily upon The Country
Parson for his Life of Herbert.25 Also, the title page of The Country Parson has led
unsuspecting readers astray. The first edition reads:

A PRIEST
To the
TEMPLE.

OR,
The Countrey Parson
HIS
CHARACTER,
AND
Rule of Holy Life.

The Author,
M'G.H.

LONDON,
Printed by T. Maney for T. Garthwait, at the
little North door of St. Paul's, 1652.

(See., Hutchinson, 23)

Readers of this title page may easily be left with the impression that The Country Parson is principally about Herbert’s "character" and "holy life" --that it is a diary or an autobiography. The title page leaves room for other errors as well. Several of the genre studies mentioned have concluded from the title page that The Country Parson is a prose character, and Stanley Stewart has concluded that The Country Parson is a kind of monastic rule. But such was not Herbert’s intention. As Amy Charles has shown, the subtitle is Barnabas Oley’s, not Herbert’s. And as stanzas 23 and 24 of
"Perirrhanterium" suggest, Herbert subscribed to a rule of life not in the Roman Catholic sense of monastic order but in the Anglican sense of good and reasonable self-governance.28

In fact, Herbert intended to write a clerical manual. According to his signed preface, Herbert wrote The Country Parson not just as an exercise in personal devotion or as a "mark to aim at" professionally, but also that his colleagues might have a guide:

The Lord prosper the intention 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. (p. 224)

Herbert further emphasizes his clear intention to speak to all Anglican priests by his blanket definition of the priesthood in chapter 1, and by his descriptions of the various kinds of priests to whom his remarks pertain in chapter 2. If Herbert seems to conceive of The Country Parson as a personal rule of life in the oft-quoted opening of chapter 28, one must also note that in the same passage Herbert implicitly recommends his rule to his colleagues in "the [clerical] profession" (268: 9-13). Thus, when Kollmeier contends that Herbert's "primary and most obvious intention is personal" whatever the "public uses" of The Country Parson, he reverses Herbert's purpose. Herbert's statement in the preface, his references to his colleagues, his determination to publish the work, and his extreme prescriptiveness indicate his intention to write a clerical manual.

Clerical manuals, which are written by and for clergy, provide both encouragements to personal sanctity and advice concerning pastoral duties such as preaching and catechizing. For a precise and accomplished craftsman such as Herbert, the decision to write a clerical manual was an ambitious one. The Country Parson
would take its place in a 1200 year-old tradition including such notable works as Saint Augustine's *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed* (A.D. 400), Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Rule* (A.D. 590-604), and Richard Baxter’s *The Reformed Pastor* (1656). The tradition also encompassed a bewildering variety of forms, but prescribed none.²⁹ To his credit, although *The Country Parson* has much in common with clerical manuals such as those of Augustine and Gregory, Herbert’s work is distinctive and probably unique. For Herbert combines considerable practical instruction in parochial administration with a striking portrayal of a parish priest—a potent exemplar of personal sanctity and social harmony, though not a "character," strictly speaking.

The distinctive quality of *The Country Parson* cannot be adequately explained as the subversion of one kind of prose, much less as the failure to write another. It is best explained as the enrichment of the clerical manual by the addition of aspects of form available in other kinds of prose. The essay provides Herbert with vivid openings, titles, and a principle of organization; the professional handbook provides a case-study format and ensures accessibility; conduct literature provides lessons in etiquette and portrays an idealized realm; the prose character conveys priestly virtue and satirizes non-conformists; the moral resolve provides an emotionally-convicting conclusion. Such a strategy tells us much about Herbert’s religion and art. His artistic method in *The Country Parson* is like his method in *The Temple*. Herbert assimilates much diverse traditional material, and transforms it, creating something new, beautiful and distinctive, not unmindful of public function but imbued with a strong personal presence. This method, with its implicit concern for utility, discernment, inclusiveness, and personal expression in a public context, is a powerful artistic reflection of Herbert’s Anglican spirituality.
The structure of *The Country Parson* probably owes something to both the essay and the professional handbook. Collections of essays—brief, learned and often colourful reflections on public affairs—became popular with the publication of Sir Francis Bacon’s *Essays* (1597). Robert Johnson was one of Bacon’s many imitators, and his essays may also have been known to Herbert. Professional handbooks were comprehensive reference works which physicians, magistrates, and others might quickly consult to determine accepted professional practice. Herbert mentions two such handbooks in the *Country Parson*: Michael Dalton’s *Country Justice* (1619) and John Fernelius’s *Practice of Physic* (c. 1600). These two kinds of prose, the essay and the professional handbook, are probably inter-related. For instance, Bacon and Fernelius conceived of their respective essays and handbook as "counsels": particular advice given in the public domain. Herbert, too, is determined to offer counsel to his colleagues: advice on everything from church furnishings to the qualities of a good wife. But if *The Country Parson* began as a series of short essays, it was later given something of the shape of a handbook.

*The Country Parson* is too comprehensive and finished a work to be the simple transcription of Herbert’s resolutions before the altar at his induction to St. Andrew’s at Bemerton, as Walton would have us believe. Walton’s statement does suggest, however, that *The Country Parson* may have begun as a commonplace book such as the one Herbert recommends to his fellow priests. Personal musings were transformed to public works by essayists in just this way. *The Country Parson* suggests a collection of essays in other ways as well. First, the chapters are self-contained, loosely organized, and invite individual reading, like essays in a collection. But, unlike a collection of essays, *The Country Parson* still
seems to be a coherent whole. Such a form nicely conveys Herbert’s implicit Anglican belief that individual expressions must be limited by a greater good. Implicitly, Puritan clerical manuals such as Richard Baxter’s *The Reformed Pastor* (1656) make the contrary claim: their relentless divisions and subdivisions emphasize isolated sections of the work and limit our sense of the whole, exemplifying individualism and schism. Like Bacon’s *Essays*, *The Country Parson* presents a persuasive mix of broad advice and sharp distinctions. Some of Herbert’s chapters are devoted to typical essay subjects such as education, marriage, and travel. And even something as simple as Herbert’s use of chapter headings—"The Parson a Father," "The Parson’s Library," and "The Parson preaching," for instance—may reflect the essay-writer’s use of titles.

Occasionally, *The Country Parson* seems to be modelled directly on the essay form. Although *The Country Parson* is typically concrete and concise, Herbert occasionally dilates or becomes abstract. Chapter 1, "Of a Pastor," is wholly abstract, though it is notably short. Chapter 26, "The Parson’s eye," is both unusually long and unusually abstract, involving a prolonged discussion of virtues and vices which brings the essay to mind:

> There are some vices, whose natures are alwayes cleer, and evident, as Adultery, Murder, Hatred, Lying, &c. There are other vices, whose natures, at least in the beginning, are dark and obscure: as Covetousnesse, and Gluttony. So likewise there are some persons, who abstain not even from known sins; there are others, who when they know a sin evidently, they commit it not. It is true indeed, they are long a knowing it, being partiall to themselves, and witty to others who shall reprove them from it. A man may be both Covetous, and Intemperate, and yet hear Sermons against both, and himselfe condemn both in good earnest . . . (264: 5-16)

Although Herbert eventually descends to concrete example and particular advice in chapter 26, he rarely does so in chapter 30. "The Parson’s Consideration of
Providence" (chap. 30) is just that, a parson's consideration of providence in the abstract, and stands alone in The Country Parson as a self-sufficient essay.

Most important of all, perhaps, The Country Parson resembles a collection of essays in its opening lines. Bacon is justly famous for the vivid, memorable openings of his essays:

'What is Truth?' said jesting Pilate; & would not stay for an answer. ("Of Truth")

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of vertue or mischiefe. ("Of Marriage and the Single Life")

Robert Johnson's essays are also notable for their openings, though they are not particularly notable in other respects:

Education is a good and continual manuring of the mind . . . (Essay 3)

Affability is like music which is made by a judicial correspondence of a sharp and flat . . . (Essay 10)

But the opening lines of Herbert's chapters are no less colourful and well-turned than Bacon's and Johnson's. One thinks particularly of the openings of "The Parson preaching" and "The Parson's Library" (chapters 7 and 33), or of the following openings of "The Parson's Charity" and "The Parson's eye":

The Countrey Parson is full of Charity; it is his predominant element. For many and wonderfull things are spoken of thee, thou great Vertue. (chap. 12)

The Countrey Parson at spare times from action, standing on a hill, and considering his Flock, discovers two sorts of vices, and two sorts of vicious persons. (chap. 26)

The openings of chapters 1, 7-10, 16 and 37 are also particularly well-crafted and memorable, reminding one of the essay.

Though Herbert apparently adopted aspects of the essay, The Country Parson
also diverges from the essay in form and content. Bacon’s *Essays* are notable for their
dialogue or debate with aphorisms chosen from his reading, for their free quotation
from the Bible and the classics, for their sometimes wandering logic, and for their
detached prudential tone.\textsuperscript{35} Herbert’s chapters are well-developed logically, seldom
allusive, and comparatively warm in tone. Johnson’s *Essays* are much more pragmatic
than *The Country Parson*. Essay 15 quotes Machiavelli, and describes a shamelessly
Machiavellian currying of favour which is the antithesis of the self-sacrifice and moral
integrity which Herbert describes in *The Country Parson*. But such divergences merely
suggest that *The Country Parson* is more than a collection of essays.

*The Country Parson* owes much to the professional handbook. In chapter 23,
"The Parson’s Completenesse," Herbert argues, rather surprisingly, that a priest must
not only be a pastor to his parishioners, but a lawyer and physician as well (250: 29-
35). He then recommends some quick but comprehensive references to aid the parson
in these specialized tasks, notably Dalton’s *Justice of the Peace* and Fernelius’s
*Method of Physick* (260: 2, 261: 7). Fernelius is recommended not only for his
practicality, but also because "he writes briefly, neatly, and judiciously" (261:6). One
could hardly have a better description of Herbert’s own style in *The Country Parson*,
and judging by this comment, Fernelius probably influenced Herbert in large ways and
small.

Several small influences suggest themselves. Fernelius may help us to
understand Herbert’s frequent recourse to proverbs and homely similes in *The Country
Parson*:

... by these [methods] hee keeps his body tame, serviceable, and
healthfull; and his soul fervent, active, young, and lusty as an eagle.
(chap. 9, 237: 26-27)
Man would sit down at this world, God bids him sell it, and purchase a better: Just as a Father, . . . hath in his hand an apple, and a piece of Gold under it . . . (chap. 30, 272: 6-8)

For example, Fernelius concludes his handbook by saying:

But to discourse over-long and over-accurately to an Artist, were to bring Owls to Athens, or Coals to New-Castle, according to the Proverb.

The influence of Fernelius's Physick may also help to explain Herbert's preoccupation with diet and indigestion in The Country Parson. Fernelius's handbook provided another model for Herbert's strong opening statements, and probably contributed to the often-prescriptive tone of The Country Parson.

But The Country Parson resembles Fernelius's Physick most in its penchant for detailed advice and in its case-study progress. The title page of the 1678 edition of Johannes Fernelius's Practice of Physick, as it was then called, explains the plan of the work:

The disease is propounded to Fernelius by another Physician on behalf of his Patient, an outlandish person.

The dialogue form of the work may have encouraged Herbert to compose a series of talks for his junior clerical colleagues, and indeed The Country Parson is still occasionally read aloud at clerical retreats or in seminaries. Fernelius's cases are labelled according to the situation discussed. So, for example, Counsel 7 is entitled "Of the Falling Sickness" and Counsel 62 is entitled "For a Swelling of the Spleen."

Fernelius's opening sentences frequently declare an opinion or enunciate a principle:

The truth is, these bald patches when they are not contracted by any sickness, nor through fault of any Humor, but from the first rise and feed, they hardly admit any cure. (Counsel 1)

As Lawyers from the Knowledge of the Fact understand what is Law
and Right in the Case, so must we fetch the whole way of our Cure from the right knowledge of the Disease. (Counsel 7)

One is then given considerable practical advice in a compressed, highly-organized form. In Counsel 4, "For a noble Matron vexed with the Tooth-ache," for example, we are to follow precise steps which are enumerated ("first . . . the day after . . . mean while . . . "). Fernelius's closing statements are usually, and often literally, prescriptive, as in Counsels 27 and 62.

The organization of The Country Parson frequently recalls the "case-study" progress of Fernelius's Physick outlined above. The headings of some of Herbert's chapters describe common parish problems, notably "The Parson arguing," "The Parson punishing," "The Parson in Contempt," and "The Parson with his Church-Wardens" (chaps. 24 & 25 and 28 & 29). The opening sentence of a chapter usually enunciates a pastoral principle which is then expounded and applied in various circumstances, as in "The Parson Comforting":

The Countrey Parson, when any of his cure is sick, or afflicted with losse of friend, or estate, or any ways distressed, fails not to afford his best comforts, and rather goes to them, then sends for the afflicted, though they can and otherwise ought to come to him. (chap. 15, 249)

The length of discussion is generally proportional to the importance and complexity of the topic, and digressions are rare. Herbert apparently aims at a business-like clarity, an exactness which comes in part from carefully-martialled detail, judging by his remarks in "The Parson Surveys":

... it will not be amisse in this exceeding usefull point to descend to particulars: for exactnesse lyes in particulars. (chap. 32, 275: 17-19)

Like Fernelius, Herbert often enumerates his advice as he considers a case. In chapter 28, for instance, Herbert enumerates several steps for the country parson to follow, to
prevent himself from being held in contempt:

This he procures, first by his holy and unblameable life . . . Secondly, by a courteous carriage . . . Thirdly, by a bold and impartial reproof . . .

(268: 20-30)

Such advice suggests the remedies prescribed by Fernelius. And like Fernelius's case studies, Herbert's chapters typically conclude with a strong summary statement, often asserting the importance of the pastoral principle discussed, as in "The Parson in Circuit" which describes the priest's regular visitation of his parishioners:

Wherefore neither distaineth he to enter into the poorest Cottage, though he even creep into it, and though it smell never so lothsomly. For both God is there also, and those for whom God dyed: and so much the rather doth he so, as his accesse to the poor is more comfortable then to the rich . . .

(chap. 14, 249: 4-9)

Like Fernelius, Herbert provides a wealth of specific practical advice in The Country Parson, particularly in such chapters as:

The Parson praying (chap. 6)
The Parson preaching (chap. 7)
The Parson's Courtesie (chap. 11)
The Parson's Church (chap. 13)
The Parson Comforting (chap. 15)
The Parson in Sentinell (chap. 18)
The Parson Catechizing (chap. 21)
The Parson in Sacraments (chap. 22)
The Parson's Completenesse (chap. 23).

"The Parson's Church" is perhaps the best example of such a chapter. Reading it, one learns exactly what to do in order to furnish and decorate a church appropriately, as well as what values adhere to such a task; however, theological abstractions are almost completely absent. The question is what to do, and we are told with becoming brevity and extreme practicality:
Chap. XIII.

The Parson's Church.

The Country Parson hath a special care of his Church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his Name by which it is called. Therefore first he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plastered, windows glazed, floors paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the Church be swept, and kept clean without dust, or Cobwebs, and at great festivals strawed, and stuck with boughs, and perfumed with incense. Thirdly, that there be fit, and proper texts of Scripture everywhere painted, and that all the painting be grave, and reverend, not with light colours, or foolish antics. Fourthly, that all the books appointed by Authority be there, and those not torne, or fouled, but whole and clean, and well bound; and that there be a fitting, and sightly Communion Cloth of fine linen, with an handsome, and seemly Carpet of good and costly Stuffe, or Cloth, and all kept sweet and clean, in a strong and decent chest, with a Chalice, and Cover, and a Stoop, or Flagon; and a Basin for Almes and offerings; besides which, he hath a Poor-man's Box conveniently seated, to receive the charity of well minded people, and to lay up treasure for the sick and needy. And 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, and as following the Apostles two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, Let all things be done decently, and in order: The second, Let all things be done to edification. For these two rules comprize and include the double object of our duty, God, and our neighbour; the first being for the honour of God; the second for the benefit of our neighbor. So that they excellently score out the way, and fully, and exactly contain, even in externall and indifferent things, what course is to be taken; and put them to great shame, who deny the Scripture to be perfect.
The organization of *The Country Parson* probably owes something to Michael Dalton's *Country Justice* (1619) as well as Fernelius’s *Physick*. Like Dalton, Herbert faced the task of providing educated but inexperienced professionals with the basics of good practice in a rural setting. And it would have been only natural for Herbert to consult Dalton’s work, which he respected, as he considered the shape of his own. Herbert would need to explain the general principles of pastoral care; but since the reader would also want to consult the manual for specific advice as particular problems arose, such information should be accessible. Dalton begins his work with general principles of law and jurisprudence, which is followed by an alphabetically-organized compendium of practical advice, a discussion of various statutes, and a detailed index. Although *The Country Parson* is not as accessible as *The Country Justice*, the two works are organized along similar lines.

The organization of *The Country Parson* as a whole is much like the organization of its parts. For example, in "The Parson’s Church" quoted above, Herbert moves from the general to the particular, from the abstract to the concrete, from what is most important to what is least important. The opening sentence states the principle: "The Countrey Parson hath a speciall care of his Church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his Name by which it is called" (246: 1-3). Herbert applies this principle in the rest of the chapter, but always discussing first things first. All things must be decent, but the parson must make sure that the church is structurally sound before he worries about its decoration:

> Therefore first he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plaistered, windows glazed, floore paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them. (246: 3-8)
The first section of *The Country Parson* is likewise most abstract but most important: for no priest can be much good at what he does unless he has first grasped what he is supposed to be. The country parson is required to be a pastor, "the Deputy of Christ for the reducing of Man to the Obedience of God" (chap. 1, 255: 1-2). The practice of reducing the congregation to obedience is then described in progressive detail, again putting first things first. The parson’s first duties are praying, preaching, and conducting Sunday services; once the parson has mastered these duties, he can turn his attention to his church wardens and his parishioners’ devotion to folk customs (chaps. 6-8; 29, 35-36). One moves from discussions of prayer in the abstract, to discussions of prayer technique, to the actual prayers which conclude *The Country Parson*. This movement from the general to the specific, from what is most important to what is least important, is one reflection of the order of Dalton’s *Country Justice*.

More specifically, Herbert follows Dalton in devoting his introductory chapters to defining the profession, including its various kinds of practitioners, their qualifications and necessary knowledge (chaps. 1-5). The middle part of *The Country Parson*, like the middle part of the *Country Justice*, describes general professional practice. We progress from what the priest does on Sunday (chaps. 6-8), to what he does at home (chaps. 9-12), to his general role in the parish as comforter and father, (chaps. 15-16), to a consideration of particular offices such as catechizing and celebrating the eucharist (chaps. 21-22). The last part of *The Country Parson*, like the last part of the *Country Justice*, is even more specific. We begin with advice on specific situations such as "The Parson in mirth," "The Parson with his Church-wardens," and "The Parson blessing" (chaps. 27, 29, 36). And we end by considering a particular text, as Dalton considers his statutes: in Herbert’s case, "The Authour’s
Prayer before Sermon" and "A Prayer after Sermon" (288-290).

Despite its wealth of good advice, The Country Parson is not as comprehensive as Dalton’s Country Justice, though the curious conclusion to Herbert’s preface seems to embrace Dalton’s ideal:

The Lord prosper the intention to my selfe, and others, who may not despise my poor labours, but add to those points, which I have observed, until the Book grow to a compleat Pastorall. (224)

Nor is The Country Parson as accessible as the Country Justice: for although Herbert works from the general to the specific and includes headings, he does not divide his work into sections, organize his middle section alphabetically, or supply an index. But when one understands that Herbert was intending to write a clerical manual instead of a professional handbook, these divergences are strengths, not the weaknesses that Kollmeier alleges them to be.38

By definition, a handbook must be comprehensive and highly accessible, a manual less so. Herbert shaped what might have been a series of tangentially related essays into a practical form, designed to meet the basic needs of the emergent professional. But he was equally concerned to create something which was aesthetically pleasing and which embodied the ideal of an undivided and inclusive church. "The Parson’s Church" suggests how firmly Herbert believed in the beauty of holiness, an idea which had particular currency in the early seventeenth-century Church of England.39 Herbert’s beautifully crafted prose and careful blending of literary traditions make The Country Parson a work of art as well as a treatise on the art of work. Herbert’s refusal to divide his work into sections exemplifies his concern that the Church of England should not be divided into factions or broken by schism. His invitation to his fellow clergymen to complete what he started "untill the Book
grow to a compleat Pastorall" is itself a plea for unity and an inducement to conform to the ways of the established church.

Because Herbert supports the existing religious and political hierarchy, several critics have assumed that The Country Parson is modelled on a courtesy book. Courtesy and etiquette books prescribe correct courtly behaviour, and suggest the best means of advancement at court. Such works vary considerably in form and content, from Niccolo Machiavelli's short, pragmatic treatise on getting and keeping power (The Prince, c. 1532) to Baldassare Castiglione's leisurely dialogue concerning courtly ideals (The Courtier, 1528) to Henry Peacham's practical guide to manners and deportment (The Complete Gentleman, 1622). Some ideological readings of The Country Parson suggest a Machiavellian quest for power, a preoccupation with mere appearances, a preference for Aristotelean rather than Christian virtues, and a condescending attitude to the lower classes. As we have seen, The Country Parson does discuss common courtesy book topics such as education (chap. 5), eloquence (chap. 6), courtesy (chap. 11), and liberality (chap. 12); but then so do Bacon's Essays and Augustine's Christian Doctrine. Although Herbert's country parson might seem authoritarian by modern standards, the idea of reducing a congregation to obedience is common to clerical manuals, and some--such as Gregory the Great's Pastoral Rule--make Herbert's occasional recourse to church authority seem mild.

The parson might seem Machiavellian in "The Parson's Courtesie" and "The Parson's Charity" (chaps. 11-12), but such manipulation only shows his biblical determination to "make his Parish good, if not the best way, yet any way" and to "give like a Priest" rather than a social worker (244: 1-5, 255: 30-38). Herbert's parson is highly conscious of appearances when he prays, but this does not mean that he is
insincere. He employs facial and hand gestures and manipulates his voice to provoke the congregation's devotion, but only "that being first affected himself, hee may affect also his people" (chap. 6, 231: 12-13). Herbert's parson is "temperate, bold, [and] grave in all his wayes," perhaps suggesting classical virtue; but he is also "holy [and] just"--above all, holy--epitomizing Christian virtue (chap. 3, 227: 1-3). Despite the title of chapter 35, "The Parson Condescending," the parson cares for the lower classes without condescension. Herbert occasionally disparages rural ignorance, small-mindedness, or churlishness; but his harshest criticism is reserved for indolent and conceited gentry and immoral "gallants" (chaps. 6, 32). The parson is most at home with the poor, for whom he sacrifices himself and seeks justice (chaps. 14, 22).

If *The Country Parson* draws upon conduct literature, it is more reminiscent of etiquette books than courtesy books. For instance, *Galateo* is much the same length as *The Country Parson* and considers similar topics, particularly domestic arrangements and discourse. But *Galateo* is most notable for such basic--and often crude--etiquette as not letting one's servants scratch themselves while they are serving at table, not laying one's nose on a cup someone else must drink from, and not falling asleep in company (20, 24, 26). Such basic etiquette emerges in *The Country Parson*, where the people are enjoined to

... do all in a strait, and steady posture, as attending to what is done in the Church, and every one, man, and child, answering aloud both Amen, and all other answers, which are on the Clerks and peoples part to answer; which answers also are to be done not in a hudling, or slubbering fashion, gaping, or scratching the head, or spitting even in the midst of their answer ...

(chap. 6, 231: 26-32)

The furnishing of the parson's church also suggests a kind of etiquette, though more of the kind found in Peacham's *Complete Gentleman*, an etiquette book much like *The*
Country Parson in its form and tone. Peacham’s directions are far more elevated than those in Galateo, and Peacham provides his reader with much detailed and practical advice, just as Herbert does in The Country Parson.\(^42\)

If The Country Parson does owe anything to a courtesy book such as The Courtier, it is idealism: the description of the perfect gentleman—in Herbert’s case, the clerical gentleman—and of the perfect kingdom. Castiglione intended "to form, in words, the perfect courtier"(I.xii). Herbert may have learned to form his cleric from history or prose characters; but like Castiglione, Herbert is adept at creating repose in chapters such as "The Parson’s Church." In Herbert’s case, the repose is more godly and less sumptuous than the court of Urbino. But Herbert’s goal is much like Castiglione’s,

creating, in a fiercely--and sometimes bloodily competitive world--an oasis of tranquility where the beauty of man’s great cultural achievements may be enjoyed.\(^43\)

Herbert does not create an oasis for the appreciation of art and literature, but he does create a tranquil atmosphere undisturbed by Papists and Puritans in which the devout may appreciate the teaching and ceremonies of the English Church. This Anglican ideal of unruffled devotion amid civil peace was what gave The Country Parson its great propaganda value in the Restoration.\(^44\)

Herbert’s ideal country parson was much recommended as a model to the Restoration clergy by Walton and Oley. Indeed, the country parson’s example is vivid and memorable, and Herbert’s clerical manual is distinctive largely for this reason. Herbert does not merely tell us what a priest should do, or even what he should be; Herbert shows us. He provides a picture of serene virtue in God’s service, perhaps as a counterpart to the "picture of spiritual struggle" in The Temple. Although The
Country Parson is not a prose character per se, one finds touches of the character scattered throughout.

The prose character was a brief, witty character sketch of a representative social type. Collections of such characters were popular in the early seventeenth century, most notably Joseph Hall's Characters of Virtues and Vices (1608), Thomas Overbury's Characters (1614), and John Earle's Microcosmographic (1628). The parson himself is a sort of diffuse character. Like John Earle's "Grave Divine," Herbert's country parson is learned, pious, obedient, just, skilled, and temperate. Like Earle, Herbert builds his prose character by summary statements of personal virtue and professional competence. Earle's divine knowes the burden of his calling and hath studied to make his shoulders sufficient: for which he hath not been hasty to launch forth of his port the University . . . The ministry is his choyce, not refuge, and yet the Pulpit not his itch, but feare. His discourse there is substance, not all Rhetorique, and he utters more things then words . . . In matters of ceremonie hee is not ceremonious, but thinkes hee owes that reverence to the Church to bow his judgement to it, and make more conscience of schisme, then a Surplesse. Hee esteemes the Churches Hierarchy, as the Churches glory, and however we jarre with Rome, would not have our confusion distinguish us . . . Hee is a maine pillar of our Church, though not yet Deane nor Canon, and his life our Religions best Apologie: His death is his last sermon, where in the pulpit of his bed hee instructs men to die by his example.45

In the preface to The Country Parson, Herbert declares his intention to "set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour." He then gradually builds up a picture of an ideal priest by the deft use of chapter headings and opening sentences:

CHAP. III. The Parsons Life.

The Country Parson is exceeding exact in his Life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his wayes.

CHAP. VI. The Parson praying.
The Countrey Parson, when he is to read divine services, composeth himselfe to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may expresse a hearty, and unfeyned devotion.

CHAP. VII. The Parson preaching.

The Countrey parson preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne . . .

CHAP. X. The Parson in his house.

The Parson is very exact in the governing of his house, making it a copy and modell for his Parish.

By scattering further summary statements about the parson's personal virtue and professional competence throughout The Country Parson, Herbert gradually builds up the character of the ideal parson (chaps. 1-2, 8-10, 16, 20, 26-28).

That Herbert's character is diffuse, not compressed into a single paragraph like Earle's, is further evidence of Herbert's ability to adapt various prose forms in The Country Parson. This form probably appealed to Herbert because he wanted to emphasize the importance of character (holiness) as well as professional competence, as we might gather from his statement that "the character of [the parson's] Sermons is Holiness" (233: 23), and from Herbert's concern with the inner man in "Aaron." So successful was Herbert's character of holiness that it became inseparable from Herbert himself. Partly because the character of the country parson provided the nucleus of Walton's "Holy Mr. Herbert," generations of readers mistook The Country Parson for biography. The wisdom of their misreading was that they were gripped by the character Herbert shaped.

But as Earle's "Grave Divine" indicates, the character provided an additional formal device which recommended conformity to church authority--another strong
indication of Herbert's conservative Anglicanism. The prose character also presented an apt vehicle for Herbert’s gentle criticism of his colleagues—as well as dissenters and trouble-makers—and for the unvarnished portrayal of rural life awaiting the aspiring country parson.

The counterpart of Earle's "Grave Divine" is his discerning and gently-critical portrait of "A Young raw preacher":

His backwardnes in the University hath set him thus forward . . . His collections of study are the notes of sermons, which taken up at S. Maries, he utters in the Countrey . . . he reads onely what hee gets without books . . . His prayer is conceited, and no man remembers his College more at large . . . He preaches but once a yeare; though twice on Sunday: for the stuffe is still the same, onley dressing a little altered . . . 46

We encounter such wit and counterpoint not infrequently in The Country Parson.

Consider, for instance, Herbert’s gentle jibe at Lancelot Andrewes’s (1555-1626) "crumbling" method of preaching:

... the other way of crumbling a text into small parts, as, the Person speaking, or spoken to, the subject, and object, and the like, hath neither in it sweetnesse, nor gravity, nor variety, since the words apart are not Scripture, but a dictionary, and may be considered alike in all the Scripture. (chap. 7, 235: 5-10)

Here we see Herbert at his poetic best, crumbling his own description into small jerky bits. He enjoys another moment of wry humour at the expense of young theologians, who worry about scholastic distinctions when they would be better prepared for the ministry by observing the ways of country folk

which while they dwell in their bookes, they will never finde; but being seated in the Countrey, and doing their duty faithfully, they will soon discover: especially if they carry their eyes ever open, and fix them on their charge, and not on their preferment. (chap. 26, 266: 1-5).

And a note of asperity creeps into Herbert’s witty criticism of obsequious resident
chaplains:

They who do not [reprove], while they remember their earthly Lord, do much forget their heavenly . . . and shall be so farre from that which they seek with their over-submissiveness, and cringings, that they shall ever be despised.

(chap. 2, 226: 31-36)

Herbert seems to adopt somewhat of Overbury’s method as his characters broaden to social satire. Overbury’s character of a Puritan is a witty tirade which nicely exposes the weaknesses of the extreme Protestant position:

. . . his firery zeal keeps him continually costive, which withers him into his own translation . . . any thing that that law allowes, but marriage and March beeere, hee murmures at. . . give him advice, you run into traditions, and urge a modest course he cryes out counclers. His greatest care is to contemne obedience . . .

Overbury not only refutes Puritan theology here, but he also makes the Puritan appear disagreeable and flighty. Perhaps because he wishes to preserve the ideal of peaceable Anglican devotion, Herbert does not present vivid characters of odious and divisive non-conformists. But Herbert caricatures the beliefs of "Papists" and "Schismaticks" in "The Parson arguing" (chap. 24), much as Overbury does above. And, having made the traditional Anglican distinction between "things necessary" and "things additionary," Herbert provides a character of over-scrupulosity which is particularly relevant to those with "Papist" or "Puritan" inclinations:

Now it so happens, that the godly petitioner upon some emergent interruption in the day, or by over-sleeping himself at night, omits his additionary prayer. Upon this his mind begins to be perplexed, and troubled, and Satan, who knows the exigent, blows the fire, endeavouring to disorder the Christian, and put him out of his station, and to inlarge the perplexity, untill it spread, and taint his other duties of piety, which none can perform so wel in trouble as calmness.

(chap. 31, 272:29-273:3)

Like Hall, Overbury, and Earle, Herbert offers concise descriptions of the
virtues and vices of numerous walks of life and estates. For example, we have the solid and virtuous newly-married land-owner:

The marryed and house-keeper hath his hands full, if he do what he ought to do. For there are two branches of his affaires; first, the improvement of his family; by bringing them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and secondly, the improvement of his grounds, by drowning, or draining, or stocking, or fencing, and ordering his land to the best advantage both of himself, and his neighbours. (chap. 32, 275: 20-26)

And, shortly after, we are treated to a defence of the office of Justice of the Peace, despite its abuses, and are presented with a telling character of the privileged but unstable young blood (276: 18-25; 276:10-277:24). Indeed, like the character writers mentioned above, Herbert seems somewhat to favour the judiciary and to despair of the gentry. Consider, for instance, the character of the haughty and conceited squirearchy which Herbert interpolates in "The Parson praying":

If there be any of the gentry or nobility of the Parish, who somtimes make it a piece of state not to come at the beginning of service with their poor neighbours, but at mid-prayers, both to their own loss, and of theirs also who gaze upon them when they come in, and neglect the present service of God, he by no means suffers it, but after divers gentle admonitions, if they persevere, he causes them to be presented: or if the poor Church-wardens be affrighted with their greatness, notwithstanding his instruction . . . he presents them himself . . . (chap. 6, 232:7-17)

Herbert is usually more sympathetic to his rustic parishioners. Occasionally, he describes them in unsavory terms, as when they huddle and slubber and spit in church. But such accounts must be put into their historical context, and must be weighed against Herbert's neutral characterizations:

Countrey people live hardly, and therefore as feeling their own sweat, and consequently knowing the price of mony, are offended much with any, who by hard usage increase their travell. (chap. 3, 227: 12-15)

The Countrey Parson considering the great aptnesse Countrey people
have to think that all things come by a kind of natural course; and that if they sow and soyle their grounds, they must have corn; if they keep and fodder well their cattel, they must have milk, and Calves; labours to reduce them to see Gods hand in all things . . . (chap. 30, 270: 24-29)

Although he may occasionally express his pastoral frustration, Herbert’s main concern seems to be to present a realistic picture of rural life to the aspiring rural clergyman.

The prose character may also have influenced the form of The Country Parson in more subtle ways. Overbury’s character of the Puritan works partly by association, for it is followed by "A Whore" and "A very Whore"—a particularly cutting association, since the Puritans often called the Roman Catholic Church the "Whore of Babylon." Herbert uses this same sort of associative wit more kindly in The Country Parson by juxtaposing his brief discussion of "The Parson’s Courtesy" with his much more extensive discussion of "The Parson’s Charity" (chaps. 11-12). Charity is obviously more important than courtesy for the country parson. Besides its tight argument, Earle’s character of "A Young raw preacher" has a strong opening and close: "A Young raw preacher is a bird not fleg’d . . . Next sunday you shall have him again." Such techniques provide a round finished quality to the prose character—a quality which most of Herbert’s chapters share, though their neat conclusions may owe something to the moral resolve as well.

The moral resolve was a new prose form which enjoyed a brief popularity in the early seventeenth century. In addition to his prose characters, Joseph Hall published a book of resolves (1605), as did Danel Tuvill (1622) and Owen Feltham (1628). The resolve was highly metaphysical and moralistic, and allowed ample personal reflection. Resolves often discussed public questions, and were sometimes of essay length, but differed from the essay in their moralism and pointed conclusions.
which sought to convince others. The poor modern equivalent might be a New Year's resolution, which someone not only made for himself but also tried to convince his friends to make.

The resolve may have contributed to the sense of finality which the chapters of The Country Parson often demonstrate. After all, Herbert not only wanted to give his chapters a finished quality; his intention to make better priests demanded that he move his colleagues and win their cooperation. The closing of Feltham's fifth resolve which discusses human suffering conveys something of the tone and effect of the moral resolve: "He that dyes dayly, seldome dyes dejectedly." The same sense of finality and moral certainty is often evident in Herbert's closing sentences:

They who for the hope of promotion neglect any necessary admonition, or reprooфе, sell (with Judas) their Lord and Master. (chap. 2)

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. (chap. 8)

One thing is evident, that an English body, and a Students body, are two great obstructed vessels, and there is nothing that is food, and not phisick, which doth lesse obstruct, then flesh moderately taken; as being immoderately taken, it is exceeding obstructive. And obstructions are the cause of most diseases. (chap. 10)

So the Countrey Parson, who is a diligent observer, and tracker of Gods wayes, sets up as many encouragements to goodnesse as he can, both in honour, and profit, and fame; that he may, if not the best way, yet any way, make his Parish good. (chap. 11)

Such closing sentences as these are not only artistically apt but also emotionally effective.

Herbert's more subtle conclusion of the whole book also recalls the resolve. In
the final chapters, the parson dexterously applies all sorts of remedies (chap. 34); he then makes peace with the country customs of his parish and wins his parishioners to good (chap. 35); he blesses the faithful (chap. 36); he suffers the inevitable detractions (chap. 37). Then he closes with prayer: "The Author’s Prayer before Sermon," and "A Prayer after Sermon" which ends:

Grant this dear Father, for thy Son’s sake, our only Saviour: To whom with thee, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one most glorious, incomprehensible God, be ascribed all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, ever. Amen.

While the parson prepares to take his leave and we prepare to take ours, he subtly draws us into a sense of community and worship. In this sense, we are convinced and made to participate—a technique which may owe something to the resolve.

Yet if Herbert employed elements of the resolve, he did so selectively. The normal temper of the resolve was one of contemptus mundi, a sentiment rare in The Country Parson and at odds with Herbert’s Anglican spirituality. The normal temper or tone of The Country Parson, even more than that of The Temple, is more like "Man" than "The Collar." But then Herbert was not writing resolves in the normal sense, any more than he was simply writing essays or characters, as he composed The Country Parson.

If one had to choose, The Country Parson is arguably more catholic than protestant, more like Augustine’s practical catechetical guide than abstract Puritan preaching manuals. But like the English Church, The Country Parson is ultimately both and neither. The Country Parson demonstrates an affinity with both the reformed and catholic aspects of the Christian tradition, for it discusses liturgy and the sacraments as well as catechizing and preaching. But there is a warmth and
inclusiveness manifest in the character of the priest and the church, which is unusual in either Protestant or Roman clerical manuals. One also finds in The Country Parson the strong and distinctively Anglican sense that the parson, and therefore the church, is integrated into society, and that the whole created order--nature and all human endeavour--is inherently good.

Herbert’s selective use of various prose forms in The Country Parson also reflects his Anglicanism. Like his poems, and like Anglican spirituality, The Country Parson is notably unsystematic and undoctrinal, valuing--but not imposing--order. What makes Herbert’s clerical manual distinctive is its blend of the practical and the abstract, its gradual picture of the ideal parson, and the way in which its chapters may be appreciated separately but form a coherent whole--an implicit plea for church unity.

And as the form of The Country Parson embodies the principle of unity, Herbert memorably captures that ideal in his description of parish life. The occasional Papist or Puritan may be found on the fringes, but the vast majority of the parish from the squire to the farmer are members of the congregation. The parson quietly and gladly conforms to church discipline, and loves the church’s ceremonies and traditions.

But Kollmeier and Hodgkins are wrong to think that Herbert is merely trying to capture, or recapture, an Anglican golden age. Rather, he is capturing the characteristically Anglican attitude in all ages. The Country Parson demonstrates what Marshall describes as the typically Anglican attitude to history: "a simultaneous appreciation of traditions and an open criticism of the past." This attitude guides Herbert’s artistic method, his balancing of innovation and tradition. He is willing to preserve and make edifying use of received tradition, but he is not bound by it. He can therefore draw freely upon new prose forms as he works in the ancient literary
tradition of the clerical manual. He can choose from the prose character, the essay, the moral resolve, the courtesy and etiquette books, and the professional handbook those elements which seem useful, and recombine them in a way which he finds good.
NOTES: CHAPTER 2

1 See Harold Kollmeier, "'A Mark to Aim At': Genre and Sensibility in George Herbert's Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1976), 8-9.


3 Kristine A. Wolberg, "'All Possible Art': George Herbert's The Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame, 1987), 34, 57.


6 For Plato, the choice was between description and mimicry (Republic 3, 392); for Aristotle, the principal choice was similar--relating and displaying events (Poetics 3, 1-2)--though he later mentions choices between objectivity and subjectivity, and between celebrating man's achievements and condemning his folly.

7 See appendix I, which describes the four kinds of prose that Herbert was able to draw upon as he composed The Country Parson. There I suggest the values and assumptions of each kind of prose.


11 Breton's work consists of fifty character sketches tending toward definition, with epigrammatic openings, arranged in a strict social hierarchy. "A Good Man" and "A Holy Man" (nos. 26 and 50) remind one of Herbert's country parson.


13 John L. Lievsay, The Seventeenth-Century Resolve: A Historical Anthology

14 Kristine Wolberg, "'All Possible Art'," 75, 82; Aristotle takes the opposite view—that content does not determine genre—in the Poetics, 1, 8.


17 Kristine Wolberg accuses Herbert of Machiavellianism in "'All Possible Art'," 89-93.

18 See Harold Kollmeier, "'A Mark to Aim At'," iii-iv.


22 Chap. 9, 238: 2-3, chap. 22, 257: 30-33: these passages recall Walton’s statement in his Life that Herbert had "too great regard for his parts and personage" when he was at Cambridge and Walton’s description of Herbert’s prostration before the altar at his induction to St. Andrew’s at Bemerton.

23 Wolberg, 74.


26 See Stewart’s discussion of George Herbert’s spirituality and that of the Little Gidding Community: he suggests that The Country Parson reflects their (semi-monastic) "rule."


28 The supplementary instruction to the Anglican catechism states that "every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a Rule of Life in
accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the church”. The instruction further describes such a rule, but the principle is the good ordering of life which ought to apply to all Christians rather than a specific set of rules for the clergy or those belonging to religious orders.

29 See appendix I for a description of the various forms of clerical manuals.

30 The respective titles of Bacon’s and Fernelius’s works are The Essays or Counsels Civill and Morall and The Practice of Physick... and Select Medicinal Counsels: the mention of “counsels” suggests a mutual purpose or conception.


34 Chapters 3-4, 9, and 17 respectively. Bacon’s "Of Marriage" and "Of Travaile" are similar in subject to Herbert’s "The Parson’s State of Life" and "The Parson in Journey."


36 In chapter 10, Herbert is much taken up with the sort of digestive difficulties which Fernelius considers in Counsel 28, "Of a Windy pain in the Stomack."

37 For example, see Kenneth Mason, George Herbert: Priest and Poet (Oxford: SLG Press, 1980).

38 Kollmeier, 60, 140.

39 The biblical concept of "the beauty of holiness" is to be found in 1 Corinthians 16:29 and Psalms 29:2, 96:9. But Lancelot Andrewes popularized this idea in Herbert’s time and developed its aesthetic aspects: holiness was beautiful in itself, but it was also fitting for holy things to be beautiful. The two ideas fuse in "The Parson’s Church."

40 Wolberg, 80-81.

41 See Wolberg, 93-96 and Michael Schoenfeldt’s Prayer and Power. Courtesy books usually advocate classical virtue, though some advocate Christian virtues as
well. On the Aristotelean virtues in Spenser, Elyot, and Ascham, see W. E. Henley, ed., _The Book of the Courtier, Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby_ (1561) (London: Nutt, 1900), xii.

42 See Virgil B. Heltzel, ed., _The Complete Gentleman_ (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), xiii. The similar titles of Peacham’s, Dalton’s, and Herbert’s eminently practical works suggest a coincidence of purpose.


44 Kollmeier, 12-60, provides a comprehensive discussion of the political uses of Walton’s _Life_ and Herbert’s _Country Parson_ during the Restoration.


48 Modern readers such as Kollmeier (164-165), Wolberg (75-77), and Schoenfeldt (Power and Prayer) are apt to criticize Herbert for his sometimes unpleasant references to the poor and rustic. But such indictments do not make sufficient allowance for the squalor of churches and the rural poor which one notes in such contemporary documents as Laud’s visitation records.


50 See Kollmeier, 95 and Christopher Hodgkins, "Authority, Church, and Society in the Works of George Herbert," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 4-5.


52 Ibid., 52.
CHAPTER 3: THE STYLE OF THE COUNTRY PARSON

I Joy deare Mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments and hue
Both sweet and bright.
Beautie in thee takes up her place,
And dates her letters from thy face,
When she doth write.


Prose style is notoriously difficult to characterize. And yet, when we read The Country Parson, we encounter a mode of expression which we recognize as characteristic of Herbert, yet subtly different from that in The Temple. In this chapter, I offer a full description and plausible explanation of Herbert’s prose style, something which has never been done. Although Herbert’s prose style can be described, it cannot easily be classified: for Herbert’s prose style is as eclectic as his poetry, and the conventional categories of literary history fit his prose no better than his poetry. Appendix II and III provide, respectively, detailed discussions of the conventional distinction between "Ciceronian" and "Senecan" prose, and of the possible literary influence of Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Francis Bacon, and John Donne. But for the most part, The Temple is the best commentary on The Country Parson, and vice versa. As we saw in chapter 2, Herbert drew upon various kinds of prose to create the unique form of his clerical manual. The same principle applies in microcosm, for Herbert’s sentences are variously "Baroque," "Ciceronian," and "Senecan." But none of these terms is wholly adequate--and the terms "grand style" and "Anglican plain style" are wholly inadequate--either to describe the stylistic merits of The Country Parson or to explain the origin of Herbert’s style.\(^1\)
Although Herbert's prose is often "Senecan" in the general sense of being witty, brief, and epigrammatic, Herbert is not merely imitating Seneca. His chief influence is the Prayer Book, and much else which distinguishes his prose style can only be called "poetic." Herbert's chief concern is effectiveness, and The Country Parson is typically plain and prescriptive. But like Herbert's poems, his prose does not sacrifice art to plainness. Herbert writes beautifully to convey the beauty of Anglican ceremony; he writes poetically to demonstrate the clerical techniques which he describes; and he writes in the style of the Prayer Book to convey the experience of faithful membership in the Church of England.

By "style," I mean chiefly the way in which individual sentences are written. In particular, I am concerned about such characteristics as sentence length and clarity, simplicity and naturalness of diction, neatness and directness of expression, the replication of actual speech patterns, the use of epigrams and proverbs, and other manifestations of wit. Renaissance prose is commonly classified according to these characteristics, and characterizations of The Country Parson must be therefore judged accordingly. But I am also interested in less tangible characteristics such as concentration, perceptiveness and candor, the use of figurative language, the memorable quality of certain lines, and structural wit. Such characteristics define the more "poetic" aspects of Herbert's prose style. Finally, I am interested in the particular qualities of Prayer Book prose: the multiplication of terms, an alliterative rhythm, balance and inclusiveness, and a dignified tone. Such characteristics make Herbert's prose style demonstrably "Anglican."

Herbert's prose style has been sadly neglected and frequently misunderstood. Until recently, neglect was the rule. For example, Margaret Bottrall and Stanley
Stewart both devote a chapter to the content of *The Country Parson* without so much as mentioning its style. Those critics who do mention the style of *The Country Parson* offer vague, sometimes contradictory, and often dismissive characterizations. The *Country Parson* is usually described as "plain" or "Senecan" prose, and occasionally as "courtly" or "Baroque" or "Anglican" prose.

Most critics underestimate the subtle and sophisticated style of *The Country Parson*, much as *The Temple* was once thought to be the simple effusions of a pious soul. Such oversight often arises from Herbert’s remark in "The Parson preaching" that "the character of [the parson’s] sermon is Holiness; he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy," and from Herbert’s subsequent criticism of Lancelot Andrewes’s metaphysical preaching style (chap. 7, 233, 235). George Williamson and W. Fraser Mitchell took Herbert’s remarks as a unilateral denunciation of wit in favour of the new vogue of plainness. Douglas Bush assumed that Herbert spurned wit in favour of a plain style in *The Country Parson*. And more recently, Hodgkins has characterized *The Country Parson* as "straight-forward didactic prose." But two objections must be raised. First, to say Herbert’s style is "plain" or "not witty" is to say very little. Second, Herbert does not condemn wit altogether, just witty sermons preached to unlearned countryfolk; nor does he equate holiness with plainness.

Kristine Wolberg has raised the alternative possibility that Herbert’s style might be ornate, despite his pronouncements in "The Parson preaching." But Wolberg’s suggestion rests more on inference than on analysis. Arguing that *The Country Parson* belongs in the courtesy book tradition, she characterizes its tone as "aristocratic" and its diction as "courtly," reasoning that "as an aristocrat himself, it is not surprising that Herbert would write like one." In fact, as we shall see shortly, Herbert writes more
like a gentleman than a courtier because of his audience and purpose. Although he is an aristocrat by birth, Herbert must develop a prose style suitable to the emerging professional class whom he is addressing and to the constraints imposed in writing a manual.9

Since it means little to say that The Country Parson is "plain" or "courtly"—particularly when such characterizations are unsupported by thorough stylistic analysis—one naturally turns to established (and alternative) literary-historical categories. Some clearly do not fit The Country Parson. The Baroque is one such category, if we accept Croll's definition:

Expressiveness rather than formal beauty was the pretension of the new movement, as it is of every movement that calls itself modern. It disdained complacency, suavity, copiousness, emptiness, ease, and in avoiding these qualities sometimes obtained effects of contortion or obscurity, which it was not always willing to regard as faults. It preferred the forms that express the energy and labor of minds seeking the truth, not without dust and heat, to the forms that express a contented sense of enjoyment and possession of it.10

Although the term "baroque" may say more about the organization and tone of a work than its diction and syntax, Croll's definition does point to the conservatism of The Country Parson. Consider the opening of chapter 7, for instance:

The Countrey Parson preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne: if he at any time intermit, 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. (232: 20-24)

What could be more suave, more easy, more contented, or less obscure?

Debora Shuger's recent description of a "Christian grand style" in Renaissance prose is another dubious help. The grand style consists of "affective oratory on matters of greatest public concern"; "passion" and "orality" are its hallmarks.11
Country Parson frequently addresses matters of great public concern, including the ceremonies of the Church of England and the necessity of obedience to religious and civil authorities. Occasional passages in The Country Parson, together with its preface and prayers, are passionate and highly aural. But if we conclude that The Country Parson is written in the grand style, we are still far from describing its style with any accuracy. For, by Shuger's criteria, most Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline divines write in the grand style, despite their obvious stylistic differences. And if the grand style can be either "periodic, full, and rhythmic" or "brief and austere," such a description contributes little to our analysis, for one of the most fundamental questions we must ask is whether the average sentence in The Country Parson is full or brief.

In fact, The Country Parson is comprised of sentences of variable length and complexity, achieving a stylistic via media between Ciceronianism and Senecanism. The closing sentences of the chapters are often short and incisive:

And justice is the ground of Charity. (chap. 23)

Do well, and right, and let the world sinke. (chap. 29)

This distinction may runne through all Christian duties, and it is a great stay and settling to religious souls. (chap. 31)

The chapters occasionally open with curt sentences (12 and 36) or with long, complex ones (3 and 21); however, the typical opening sentence is of moderate length and axiomatic (15 and 16). In the main body of the chapters, one finds occasional run-on sentences, such as previous description of the impolite rural congregation (chap. 6, 231: 20ff.). One also finds the occasional series of short declarative sentences in The Country Parson (chap. 7, 258: 1-20; chap. 31, 273: 3-15). Although his sentences become long and complex when he expresses intricate ideas (262:31-263:7), Herbert
usually provides relief. A short sentence follows a long one (chap. 7, 232:30-233:6; chap. 25, 284:27-285:1; cf. chap. 16). And a long sentence might be made easier to grasp by the enumeration of points (chap. 21, 255:1-8), or by dividing it in half (chap. 22, 257:26-30; chap. 26, 266:18-23). Syntactically, even though the ligatures of Herbert’s sentences are sometimes loosened, they are rarely loose, so that his sentences remain easy to follow despite their complexity (chap. 22, 259:10ff). Such strategies show Herbert striving to make his manual clear and readable.

Though it is almost always clear, *The Country Parson* is not always luminous, for manuals need not be scintillating. In "The Parson preaching," Herbert strings together a plethora of biblical allusions, and his subsequent disquisition on personal piety becomes tedious and verbose (chap. 7, 234:11-20; chap. 9, 237:13ff). Such passages do make dry reading, but they are also rare, and *The Country Parson* is often quite engaging. Sometimes, Herbert’s style seems surprisingly modern because of his tendency to use parallelism, to put the main thought first, and to write in the active voice (chap. 22, 258:1-20). Often, Herbert’s style is as graceful as it is clear, as in the conclusion of chapter 34, "The Parson’s Dexterity in applying Remedies":

> And all may certainly conclude, that God loves them, till either they despise that Love, or despaire of his Mercy: not any sin else, but is within his Love; but the despising of Love must needs be without it. The thrusting away of his arme makes us onely not embraced. (283)

Such a passage suggests Herbert’s desire both to convince and to inform, combining the purposes of the high and low styles.

One is certainly aware of particularly high or "Ciceronian" moments in *The Country Parson*. One thinks of the amplification and deflation, the complexity and prolixity, of such a passage as this from "The Author’s Prayer before Sermon":

> And all may certainly conclude, that God loves them, till either they despise that Love, or despaire of his Mercy: not any sin else, but is within his Love; but the despising of Love must needs be without it. The thrusting away of his arme makes us onely not embraced. (283)
Misery and sin fill our days: yet art thou our Creatour, and we thy work: Thy hands both made us, and also made us Lords of all thy creatures; giving us one world in our selves, and another to serve us: then did'st thou place us in Paradise, and wert proceeding still on in thy Favours, untill we interrupted thy Counsel, disappointed thy Purposes, and sold our God, our glorious, our gracious God for an apple. O write it! O brand it in our foreheads for ever: for an apple once we lost our God, and still lose him for no more; for money, for meat, for diet: But thou Lord, art patience, and pity, and sweetness, and love; therefore we sons of men are not consumed. (288: 12-22)

This passage might even be called "Baroque," given its earnest and euphoric tone, its sense of conversation and inquiry, its occasional ejaculations and pervasive wit. But these effects are much rarer and more muted in the main body of The Country Parson.

One is usually much more aware of a certain compactness, of a neatness and directness, of a precise and felicitous choice of words. For instance, consider the following passages in which Herbert discusses catechizing, celebrating the eucharist, and eliminating covetousness from the congregation:

And this is an admirable way of teaching, wherein the Catechized will at length finde delight, and by which the Catechizer, if he once get the skill of it, will draw out of ignorant and silly souls, even the dark and deep points of Religion. Socrates did thus in Philosophy, who held that the seeds of all truths lay in every body, and accordingly by questions well ordered he found Philosophy in silly Trades-men. (chap. 21, 256: 16-23)

The Countrey Parson being to administer the Sacraments, is at a stand with himself, how or what behaviour to assume for so holy things. Especially at Communion times he is in a great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break, and administer him.

(chap. 22, 257: 26-30)

Nay, to descend yet more particularly, if a man hath wherewithall to buy a spade, and yet hee chuseth rather to use his neighbours, and wear out that, he is covetous. Nevertheless, few bring covetousness thus low, or consider it so narrowly, which yet ought to be done, since there is a Justice in the least things, and for the least there shall be a judgment. Country people are full of these petty injustices, being cunning to make use of another, and spare themselves... (chap. 24, 265: 27-35)
In passages such as these, Herbert seems to be taking the advice he gives to the parson who is catechizing: "to presse and drive [knowledge] to practice . . . by pithy and lively exhortations" (chap. 21, 255: 1-8). For lack of a better term, his style is "Senecan": neat, direct, and precise.

Yet Herbert's diction is not uniformly simple and common, as one might expect if The Country Parson were uniformly Senecan. Although Herbert does so rarely, he does sometimes employ polysyllabic Latinate diction. For instance, in "The Parson Blessing," Herbert uses long, unfamiliar words to suggest a preoccupation with fashion and to distinguish between two courses of action, "reproof" and "refutation":

The Countrey Parson wonders, that Blessing the people is in so little use with his brethren: whereas he thinks it not onely a grave, and reverend thing, but a beneficial also. Those who use it not, do so either out of niceness, because they like the salutations, and complements, and formes of worldly language better; which conformity and fashionableness is so exceeding unbefitting a Minister, that it deserves reproof, not refutation: Or else, because they think it empty and superfluous. (chap. 36, 285: 1-9)

Herbert achieves his effect by implicitly contrasting the unfamiliar Latinate words which come to predominate with the simpler Anglo-Saxon words of its opening. In his choice of diction, as in the length and complexity of his sentences, Herbert usually tends toward simplicity for the sake of clarity. But Herbert's willingness to vary his style for effect suggests that his style is neither "Senecan" nor "Ciceronian," but a judicious mix of opposing qualities designed to create a particular effect. Often, Herbert aims at a simple clarity, which suggests self-evident truth. But sometimes, as in the example above, his intention is more "poetic" in the sense that it conveys the experience which it describes.

Herbert's word choice is, above all, discerning and decorous. He shows a
fondness for domestic similes and metaphors in *The Country Parson*, much as he does in *The Temple*. Thus, fasting and prayer keep the parson’s soul "lusty as an eagle"; "God is his own immediate paymaster, rewarding all good deeds to their full proportion" (chap. 9, 237: 27; chap. 20 254: 20-21). Although Herbert’s diction occasionally descends from the common to the coarse, it usually does so for effect. We have already seen the example of the unfortunate rural congregation "hudling," "slubbering," "gaping," and "scratching" through divine service (chap. 6). Herbert’s description of indigestion is similarly coarse:

> For it is certaine, that a weak stomack being prepossessed with flesh, shall much better Brooke and bear a draught of beer, then if it had taken before either fish, or rootes, or such things; which will discover it selfe by spitting, and rheume, or flegme.\(^{14}\)

Herbert’s diction is also notably common, as he reproduces the typical questions and answers of rural catechism (chap. 21, 257: 1-7). But one usually notices not so much a proponderance of one kind of word, long and unusual or short and common, but the directness, precision, and decorum of Herbert’s diction. For example, consider Herbert’s description of the parson’s speaking voice and comportment, when he reads the services:

> . . . no Sermon moves them so much to a reverence . . . as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying. Accordingly his voyce is humble, his words treatable, and slow; yet not so slow neither, as to let the fervency of the supplicant hang and dy between speaking, but with a grave liveliness, between fear and zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performes his duty.

(chap. 6, 231: 14-23)

It is difficult to imagine a more precise statement, or a more definitive, rhythmic, and graceful one. With a poet’s sense of decorum, Herbert reproduces the definitive, rhythmic, and graceful style of *The Book of Common Prayer* as he describes how the
parson should read divine services.

The reading of divine service suggests an aural and public quality, which is certainly one aspect of the style of *The Country Parson*, though one aspect only. As I have already observed, the preface reads like a well-mannered speech, and the prayers are effusively aural. But from time to time, one also comes across highly aural passages in the chapters. The passage quoted above from "The Parson praying" is remarkable for its careful syncopation of speech rhythms. Chapter 7, "The Parson preaching," contains several lively and highly aural passages, including sample apostrophes to aid preaching, and a notable interjection describing the delights of 2 Corinthians (233: 32-37, 234: 17-22). Herbert also demonstrates catechetical technique by describing a dialogue in "The Parson Catechizing":

... the Parson once demanded after other questions about mans misery; since man is so miserable, what is to be done? And the answerer could not tell; He asked him again, what he would do, if he were in a ditch? This familiar illustration made the answer so plaine, that he was even ashamed of his ignorance; for he could not but say, he would hast out of it as fast as he could. Then he proceeded to ask, whether he could get out of the ditch alone, or whether he needed a helper, and who was that helper.

(chap. 21, 257:1-10; see also 226:5-15)

Less obviously, Herbert provides sample correctives in "The Parson in Sentinell":

"Your meaning is not thus, but thus; or, So farr indeed what you say is true, and well said; but this will not stand" (chap. 18 252:11-2). In chapter 28, he portrays the parson reasoning proverbially with a contemptuous parishioner: "Alas, why do you thus? you hurt your selfe, not me; he that throws a stone at another, hits himself..." (269: 12-4). In chapter 32, he uses imagined dialogue to illustrate the dangers of idleness:
For when men have nothing to do, then they fall to drink, to steal, to whore, to scoffe, to revile, to all sorts of gamings. Come, say they, we have nothing to do, lets go to the Tavern, or to the stews, or what not. (274:10-14)

These examples of imagined dialogue are rhetorically restrained, and provide a heightened realism—a "case study" practicality which suggests the influence of the professional handbook. So, even though The Country Parson is sometimes aural—a quality usually associated with the Ciceronian style—it tends somewhat toward Senecanism in the plainness and practicality of its aurality. But Herbert is not merely being moderate or eclectic: he is striving for an almost poetic decorum or mimesis, for his manual will be most effective if it demonstrates what it describes.

The Country Parson is often epigrammatic or proverbial. Chapter 4 opens with a proverb:

The Countrey Parson is full of all knowledg. They say, it is an ill Mason that refuseth any stone: and there is no knowledge, but, in a skilfull hand, serves either positively as it is, or else to illustrate some other knowledge. (228: 14-17)

The epigrammatic conclusions of chapters 2, 24, and 29 have been quoted earlier. Chapter 30 also ends epigrammatically:

. . . Man would sit down at this world, God bids him sell it, and purchase a better: . . . So is the carnall and wilfull man with the worm of the grave in this world, and the worm of Conscience in the next. (272: 6-14)

In the body of the chapters, advice is sometimes summarized epigrammatically, as in chapters 7 and 34:

For there is no greater sign of holinesse, then the procuring, and rejoicing in anothers good. (234: 9-10)

If we would judg ourselves, we should not be judged; and if we would bound our selves, we should not be bounded. (280: 30-32).
But Herbert's penchant for epigrams and proverbs is not so much evidence of Senecanism as evidence of Herbert's dexterity as a manual writer. The use of epigrams and proverbs has several obvious advantages for the clerical manual. Their appeal to common experience and accepted wisdom bolsters the writer's argument. They make the writer's good advice more memorable. The generality of the proverb provides an easy point of departure, and the weight and concentration of the epigram provides closure. Herbert may sound like Seneca, just by writing well.

Herbert may also be witty without necessarily being Senecan. There are moments of eloquent understatement and gentle point in *The Country Parson*. One thinks of Herbert's tongue-in-cheek advice about domestic diplomacy in chapter 9, of his delicate puns on "heavenly" dispositions in chapter 26, and of his ironic depiction of fractious posterity in chapter 34:

. . . he gives [his wife]. . . halfe at least of the government of the house, reserving so much of the affaires, as serve for a diversion for him; yet never so giving over the raines, but that he sometimes looks how things go, demanding an account, but not by the way of an account. (238:36-239:3)

When he deals with any that is heavy, and carnall; he gives him those freer rules: but when he meets with a refined, and heavenly disposition, he carryes them higher, even somtimes to a forgetting of themselves, knowing that there is one, who when they forget, remembers for them . . . (267:17-21)

Now a prophesie is a wonder sent to Prosterity, least they complaine of want of wonders. It is a letter sealed, and sent, which to the bearer is but paper, but to the receiver, and opener, is full of power. (282:35-38)

Such a suave facility with words, such discerning distinctions, can only be called "wit." By definition, the Senecan style is "witty"; however, a strong vein of wit also runs through *The Temple* and *Outlandish Proverbs*.

It would seem, then, that Herbert's sentences are neither Senecan nor
Ciceronian. They are characteristically clear and readable and somewhat plain. But Herbert blends elaborate and aural "Ciceronian" prose with brief, witty "Senecan" prose according to his purpose, a purpose which is often quite poetic. Indeed, the poetic qualities of The Country Parson may be its most distinctive qualities. One thinks in particular of its concentration, its candor and perceptiveness, its many vivid expressions, and its memorable pronouncements.

One continually has the feeling that much has been packed into a small space, but packed in such a way as to produce compactness rather than clutter. Such concentration and tidiness often reminds one of Herbert’s poems. The chapters of The Country Parson are comfortably read in a sitting, but dense enough to be individually satisfying. Characteristically, little could be added to, or taken from, Herbert’s sentences; without seeming cramped, they tend towards a charged brevity. The opening sentence of chapter 4, for instance, reminds one of a headline: "The Country Parson is full of knowledge" (228: 14). Its closing sentence is economical without being terse:

Werfore he hath one Comment at least upon every book of Scripture, and ploughing with this, and his own meditations, he enters into the secrets of God treasured in the holy Scripture. (229: 27-30)

Somehow, Herbert sounds gracious while being businesslike, as in his admonitions that:

The Countrey Parson is sincere and upright in all his relations.  
(chap. 19, 252: 24-25)

Likewise he welcomes to his house any Minister, how poor or mean soever, with as joyfull a countenance, as if he were to entertain some great Lord. (chap. 19, 253: 18-20)

Chapter 13, "The Parson’s Church," is particularly remarkable for its
compression. Some of its compression comes from detail. The church is to be "swept, and kept cleane without dust, or Cobwebs, and at great festivalls strawed, and stuck with boughs, and perfumed with incense" (246: 8-10). Even Herbert’s long sentences have a sense of spareness and tidiness about them. Consider, for example, Herbert’s call to vigilance in "The Parson in Sentinell":

The Countrey Parson, where ever he is, keeps Gods watch; that is, there is nothing spoken, or done in the Company where he is, but comes under his Test and censure: If it be well spoken, or done, he takes occasion to commend, and enlarge it; if ill, he presently lays hold of it, least the poyson steal into some young and unwary spirits, and possesse them even before they themselves heed it. (chap. 18, 252:1-7)

There is a satisfying fullness here, but it is a fullness derived from the development of an idea, not the generation of rhetorical tropes and figures. Its clauses are carefully subordinated, not merely piled one on another. One has the feeling, common to readers of Herbert’s poems, that there is no more to be said, yet neither can anything be taken away without a loss of meaning.

Allied to its concentration, one of the most singular and impressive qualities of The Country Parson is its perceptiveness and candor. The Country Parson does not merely prescribe liturgical and homiletic technique; it describes the subtle and well-mannered handling of people to which the parson ought to aspire. "The Parson’s Courtesie," "The Parson’s Charity," and "The Parson Punishing" are particularly rich in this respect (chaps. 11, 12, 25). But one is often struck elsewhere by the justice or perceptiveness of Herbert’s assessments, or by the shrewdness of his counsel. Sometimes his counsel has a steely tone, as in the meting out of terror and love to his household in due proportion to their stations, or in the passage about country people’s "petting injustices" quoted previously (chap. 10, 241: 7-11; chap. 26, 265:34).
Although such passages frequently depict unvarnished human nature, a note of simple acceptance often underlies the businesslike statement of fact:

[The country parson] is very circumspect in all companyes, both of his behaviour, speech, and very looks, knowing himself to be both suspected, and envyed. (chap. 9, 237:13-15)

. . . Countrey people are drawne, or led by sense, more then by faith, by present rewards, or punishments, more then by future [ones].

(chap. 20, 254: 31-34)

The Countrey Parson perceiv[es] that most, when they are at leasure, make others faults their entertainment and discourse, and that even some good men think, so they speak truth, they may disclose anothers fault . . . (chap. 37, 286: 29-32)

Sometimes, such statements are more remarkable for their perceptiveness and candor than for their eloquence (chap. 28, 269: 5-15; chap. 35, 284: 15-16, 33-35).

However, they often provide a pleasing amalgam of incisiveness, wit, and candor.

One thinks, for instance, of Herbert’s comparison of Sunday and weekday comportment, or of the parson’s politic recourse to committee:

The Countrey Parson upon the afternoons in the week-days, takes occasion sometimes to visite in person, now one quarter of his Parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs: whereas on Sundays it is easie for them to compose themselves 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. (chap. 14, 247: 1-10)

Yet when ever any controversie is brought to him, he never decides it alone, but sends for three or four of the ablest of the Parish to hear the cause with him, whom he makes to deliver their opinion first; out of which he gathers, in case he be ignorant himself, what to hold; and so the thing passeth with more authority, and lesse envy. (chap. 23, 260: 7-13)

Although the deftness of such counsel may recall the speaker’s intellectual agility in The Temple, much of the pleasure of The Country Parson lies in such explicit and detailed comments about public life as these. Yet The Country Parson should remind
us not so much of another side to Herbert as of another side to The Temple--its public and discursive qualities.

Sometimes Herbert's pastoral advice is particularly striking and vivid. For instance, the parson warns his parishioners to

\[\ldots\text{take heed, lest their quiet betray them (as it is apt to do) to a coldnesse, and carelesnesse in their devotions, but to labour still to be as fervent in Christian Duties, as they remember themselves were, when affliction did blow the Coals. (chap. 34, 280: 17-21)}\]

The imagery continues, as "sparkes of such thoughts now and then break forth" (281:13). And to save his parishioners from atheism, the parson finally "dives unto the boundless Ocean of Gods Love and the unspeakable riches of his loving kindnesse" on their behalf (283:5-9). Often, a striking metaphor enlivens an otherwise mundane passage. We have already met the grisly "worm of conscience," and seen the parson "ploughing" along with his scriptural notes and "breaking" God to administer him (chaps. 4, 22, 30). Occasionally, Herbert's metaphors become effusive, as in "A Prayer after Sermon":

\[O \text{ Lord! thy blessings hang in clusters, they come trooping upon us! they break forth like mighty waters on every side. And now Lord, thou hast fed us with the bread of life: so man did eat Angels food \ldots} \]

(290:6-9)

More often, the parson's admonitions and policies are couched quietly in domestic metaphor, recalling "Praise (III):"

\[\text{Those that he findes in the peaceable state, he adviseth to be very vigilant, and not to let go the raines as soon as the horse goes easie. (chap. 34, 280: 14-16)} \]

\[\text{If there be any ill in the custome, that may be severed from the good, he pares the apple, and gives them the clean to feed on. (chap. 34, 283:32-284:1)} \]

But quiet or dramatic, such language has an imaginative potency which recalls
Herbert's poetry and is all the more striking because it occurs in a manual.

Partly because of its figurative language, The Country Parson is not only informative, but often memorable. Certain phrases and statements stick in one's mind, perhaps because of a particularly apt choice of words (chap. 34, 280: 28-30; chap. 36, 286: 15-18). Sometimes, a passage is more memorable for its clarity and grace (chap. 17, 251: 24-33), or for its neatness and precision (chap. 24, 262:19ff). Sometimes, a passage is memorable for all of these reasons. And certain chapters of The Country Parson also stand above the rest, just as some poems--"Man," "Aaron," and "Love (III)," for instance--stand above the rest of the poems in The Temple. One thinks, for instance, of Herbert's touching and vivid portrait, "The Parson a Father," and of his charming cameo, "The Parson in Mirth":

CHAP. XVI.

The Parson a Father.

The Countrey Parson is not only a father to his flock, but also professeth himselfe throughly of the opinion, carrying it about with him as fully, as if he had begot his whole Parish. And of this he makes great use. For by this means, when any sins, he hateth him not as an officer, but pityes him as a Father: and even in those wrongs which either in tithing, or otherwise are done to his owne person, hee considers the offender as a child, and forgives, so hee may have any signe of amendment; so also when after many admonitions, any continue to be refractory, yet hee gives him not over, but is long before hee proceede to disinherit, or perhaps never goes so far; knowing, that some are called at the eleventh houre, and therefore hee still expects, and waits, least hee should determine Gods houre of coming; which as hee cannot, touching the last day, so neither touching the intermediate days of Conversion.
CHAP. XXVII.

The Parson in mirth.

The Countrey Parson is generally sad, because hee 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. Nevertheless, he somtimes refresheth himselfe, as knowing that nature will not bear everlasting droopings, and that pleasantnesse of disposition is a great key to do good; not onely because all men shun the company of perpetuall severity, but also for that when they are in company, instructions seasoned with pleasantnesse, both enter sooner, and root deeper. Wherefore he condescends to humane frailties both in himselfe and others; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, according to the pulse of the hearer.

These chapters are indeed memorable, and such memorability has always been associated with the best poetry.

Although one remembers particular passages of The Country Parson such as those above, one is also left with a powerful overall impression of Herbert's Anglican spirituality. Herbert not only portrays the Church of England at its best through his character of the ideal country parson, he composes The Country Parson in an Anglican style, to which critics occasionally allude. Thus, Marcus mentions the efforts of writers such as Cosin and Hall and Herbert to instill a childlike devotion to the Church of England through a plain style. Kollmeier mentions the "Anglican sensiblity" of The Country Parson. And Bottrall, who may unintentionally recall the rhythms of the Prayer Book, remarks upon "the reasonable, courteous, and quiet disquisitions of The Country Parson." Such allusions as these suggest a common feeling that the style of The Country Parson is Anglican, but fail to explain how.

Herbert's style is Anglican because it reproduces the style of the Book of
Common Prayer.\textsuperscript{18} Undoubtedly, Herbert was deeply influenced by the style of the Prayer Book: it necessarily informed his thoughts and feelings in daily worship. But Herbert does not adopt the style of the Prayer Book in \textit{The Country Parson} unconsciously. As the author of a specifically Anglican clerical manual, Herbert is concerned both to instruct the clergy in Anglican worship and to inspire their willing conformity to its rites and discipline. He writes in the style of the Prayer Book both to demonstrate its use and attractions, and to draw his readers into the experience of the liturgy, much as the poetic voice in \textit{The Temple} seeks to instruct the reader and to draw him towards "the Church's mystical repast."

The Book of Common Prayer has several stylistic attributes which deserve our particular attention. C.S. Lewis describes the Prayer Book's "coupling together of synonymous or nearly synonymous words," its "strongly supported rhythm," its "deliberative, sober, and majestic tone," and its "air of finality."\textsuperscript{19} The qualities which Lewis mentions are obvious in such well-known prayers as the Second Collect of Morning Prayer and the Prayer of Humble Access in the Holy Communion service:

\begin{quote}
O God, which art author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom: Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies, that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesu Christ our Lord.

We do not presume to come to this thy table (O merciful Lord) trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We be not worthy so much as to gather the crumbs under thy table, but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore (gracious Lord) so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

The sense here of balance and comprehensiveness, of practicality and enduring beauty, is the literary embodiment of Anglicanism.\textsuperscript{21} Such qualities are prominent in \textit{The
Country Parson. The multiplication of terms is the most obvious Prayer Book quality of The Country Parson. The Prayer Book often doubles or triples terms, as in its exhortation to lead "a godly, righteous, and sober life." The Prayer Book occasionally employs multiple terms, as in its proclamation of Christ’s "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, once offered." We have already met such a multiplication of terms in the descriptions of the parson’s "tame, serviceable, and healthful body" and of his sermon, which is "not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy." We have met an ironic multiplication of terms in the congregation’s "hudling, slubbering, gaping, and scratching." We see a similar multiplication of terms in another somewhat despairing description of country people "which are thick, and heavy, and hard to raise to a poynt of Zeal, and fervency, and need a mountaine of fire to kindle them . . ." (chap. 7, 233: 15-17). Such a multiplication of terms conveys a sense of comprehensiveness— the characteristically Anglican effort to include truth from whatever source—as well as a strong rhythm.

One should also note a particular kind of rhythm, however. In his discussion of "religious English," Ian Robinson describes the Prayer Book’s two-beat alliterative Anglo-Saxon speech pattern. This rhythm sometimes informs The Country Parson. We have already seen some examples, notably "the dark and deep points of religion" and "a Prophesie [which] is a wonder sent to Posterity, least they complaine of want of wonders" (chap. 21, 256: 18-20; chap. 34, 282: 35-36). Similar small examples come to mind: the advice to "dive not to deep into worldly affairs," and various passages in "The Authour’s Prayer before Sermon" (chap. 14, 247: 24; 289: 3-7, 26-29). However, this two-beat alliterative pattern is particularly prominent in "The Parson praying": 
The Country Parson, when he is to read divine services, cometh to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may express a hearty, and unfeyned devotion. This he doth, first, as being truly touched and amazed with the Majesty of God, before whom he then presents himself; yet not as himself alone, but as presenting with himself the whole Congregation, whose sins he then beares, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar to be bathed, and washed in the sacred Laver of Christs blood. (chap. 6, 231: 1-10)

"Heart and hands"... hearty and unfeyned devotion... touched and amazed... bears and brings... bathed and washed": such strong beats and alliteration do indeed recall the Book of Common Prayer. And it is only fitting that we should recall the Prayer Book as Herbert describes its proper reading.

The Country Parson also shares something of the "dignified, sober, and majestic" tone of the Prayer Book. The collect at the beginning of the order for Holy Communion suggests this tone:

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord.

In The Country Parson there are moments of mirth and cheerfulness (252, 268). There is even one moment of fervour (276: 8-10). But for the most part, the tone is the "grave liveliness" which is recommended for reading divine service (chap. 6, 231: 19-20). The passages quoted previously from "The Parson's Church" aptly demonstrate this moderate, reasonable, public tone. It is prevalent again in Herbert's description of the parson's household, which is hospitable but spare (chap. 10, 241). One even finds a kind of composure and moderation in "The Parson arguing" and "The Parson punishing" (chaps. 24 and 25). However, one of the best examples of the dominant tone of The Country Parson is the opening of chapter 25:
The Countrey Parson is a Lover of old Customes, if they be good, and harmlesse; and the rather, because Countrey people are much addicted to them, so that to favour them therein is to win their hearts, and to oppose them therein is to deject them. (283: 27-31)

A passage such as this takes us into an emotional world which accepts joy and hardship as they are mixed in everyday life, and which assumes that the established church is an integral part of society.  

According to Lewis, the Prayer Book's "air of finality" derives partly from its frequent use of antithesis. One thinks, for instance, of the antithetical exhortation in the marriage service which describes the seriousness of matrimony, a holy estate which "is not to be enterprised nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly . . . but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." Herbert is forever making distinctions in The Country Parson: for example, the value of sermons versus the value of the catechism, or the risks of devotional lapses in children versus adults (257: 20-25, 259: 2-6). Such distinctions seem simple, even when they are theological, because they are expressed in antithesis. Sometimes the antithesis is obvious and prescriptive: the communion elements should "be of the best, not cheape, or coarse, much lesse ill-tasted, or unwholesome"; the parson's food should be "plain and common but wholesome, what hee hath is little but very good" (chap. 10, 241: 15-16; chap. 22, 258: 21-23). Sometimes, the antithesis is less obvious and more descriptive, as in "The Parson preaching":

When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestnesse of speech, it being naturall to men to think, that where is much earnestness, there is somewhat worth hearing; and by a diligent, and busy cast of his eye on his auditors, with letting them know that he observes who marks, and who not; and with particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich. This is for you, and This is for you; for particulars ever touch, and awake more then generalls. (chap. 7, 232:30-233:6)
But whether Herbert's distinctions are obvious or subtle, they owe much to the style of the Prayer Book.

Finally, The Country Parson demonstrates a balance and comprehensiveness which reminds one of the Prayer Book. The sentences of invitation during Morning Prayer, for instance, balance the need for continual contrition against the need for particular confession, and mention all the purposes of Morning Prayer:

> Although we ought at all times, humbly to knowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask for those things which be requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.\(^{28}\)


Dealing with the poor and needy, the parson "opens not only his mouth, but his purse to their relief" (chap. 14, 248: 10-11). The parson also recognizes that "God in all ages hath had his servants, to whom he hath revealed his Truth, as well as to him" (chap. 4, 229: 20-25). Stylistically, balance and comprehensiveness are expressed in sentences which seem sometimes neoclassical in their symmetry, as in the previously quoted passage about the parson's blessing (285: 4-8). The parson's facility for balanced thought and expression remains, even in moments of enthusiastic prayer (290: 5-6). However, the best examples of the balanced and inclusive style of The Country Parson may be Herbert's consideration of celibacy (chap. 9) and the following passage describing the parson's courtesy:

> The Countrey Parson owing a debt of Charity to the poor, and of Courtesie to his other parishioners, he so distinguisheth, that he keeps his money for the poor, and his table for those that are above Alms. Not but that the poor are welcome also to his table, whom he sometimes purposely takes home with him, setting them close by him, and carving for them, both for his own humility, and their comfort, who are much cheered with such friendliness. (chap. 11, 243: 6-13)
This is the style of a church and a churchman who strive not only to balance various considerations but also to include everyone who will participate.

In addition to the particular features of the Prayer Book’s style which I have already described, the Prayer Book provides a model for much of what might be thought "Senecan" or "Ciceronian" in The Country Parson. For instance, the Prayer Book is notable for its condensed or "pithy" prose, perhaps derived from the Latin epigram.29 The most familiar passages of the Prayer Book--the collects and General Confession at Morning Prayer, the Prayer of Humble Access and the Eucharistic Prayer, the exhortation and vows of the marriage service, and the burial collects--are also striking for their clarity and common diction, their vividness, and their mix of long aural and short declarative sentences.30 The overall effect is one of memorable simplicity, of something which is stylistically varied yet somehow of a piece, of something which is very much like The Country Parson. Nor is the similarity unintended.

The Country Parson not only assumes participation in the established church (chap. 5, 237: 21-24; chap. 13; chap. 21, 255: 17-18); in a sense, The Country Parson reproduces the experience of faithful Anglicanism, much as Jeremy Taylor does in Holy Living. The country parson not only speaks in the cadences and multiple terms of the Prayer Book, he often echoes it (235, 236, 239:12-13, 269:8, 22-23; 289: 10-11, 24-29). At times, the parson actually quotes the Prayer Book directly (286:2-6), or even amplifies it (275:30-34), and his last word is a Prayer Book formula (290: 13-16). The chapters of The Country Parson sometimes end in prayer (236: 25-30), and set prayers end the work. We are drawn progressively into the liturgy.

And we are not alone. Herbert apparently recapitulates Hooker’s famous
statement of the natural law (270: 24-32) and may allude to the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity again (281: 25-31). Herbert certainly refers to Andrewes, and addresses his clerical colleagues directly throughout The Country Parson. We find ourselves "compassed about" with a cloud of very Anglican witnesses.

Herbert draws us into the experience of Anglicanism, as we read The Country Parson, for good reason. Such a rhetorical strategy clearly suits his purpose of training would-be country parsons. For Herbert seeks both to teach effectively and to inspire willing conformity by demonstrating what he describes.

That Herbert's prose enacts the Anglicanism it describes suggests a general quality of exemplification, a poetic quality which may be a natural mode of Anglican expression. The Country Parson also has numerous particular instances of exemplification: a highly aural chapter on speech art, which includes actual speech (232:30); the interposing of discourse as this process is being described (251: 2-6); a neat, brief, and judicious description of neat, brief, and judicious writing (262: 9-11); long and complex sentences, giving the effect of the refutatio they describe (262:31-263:7); even a pinched sound, as pinching is being described (265: 12-19). The Country Parson has other poetic qualities as well.

The chapters of The Country Parson resemble the poems of The Temple in their variable length and their loose and allusive ordering. As we saw in chapter one, many passages of The Country Parson recall the poems of The Temple in their deceptive plainness and precision, in their domestic metaphors and frequent proverbs, and in their didactic and aural qualities. Like the poetry, the prose may include sustained imagery such as "the Father of lights" who opens eyes and the "great lights able to dazle the eyes of the mis-led" in "The Parson arguing" (chap. 24, 262: 22, 263:
19). Also, the titles to the chapters of *The Country Parson* are sometimes as startling and enigmatic as those of *The Temple*. For instance, chapter 33 is entitled "The Parson's Library": we expect to meet a straight-forward description of his reference material, yet the chapter opens with the declaration that "The Countrey Parson's Library is a holy Life." Such turns of mind and habits of style often recall *The Temple*—powerful evidence that Herbert's poetry and prose are intimately connected.
NOTES: CHAPTER 3

1 See appendix II for a discussion of the limitations of the terms "Ciceronian" and "Senecan," and for the description of Renaissance prose style.

2 See appendix III for a discussion of possible minor influences on Herbert’s prose style.

3 See Edmund Miller, Drudgerie Divine: The Rhetoric of God and Man in George Herbert (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1979), 228, 232; Kristine Wolberg, "'All Possible Art': George Herbert’s The Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 1987), 5, 75, 79; Margaret Bottrall, George Herbert (London: John Murray, 1954), 81; Harold Kollmeier, "'A Mark to Aim at': Genre and Sensibility in George Herbert’s Country Parson" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1976), v, 95; Christopher Hodgkins, Authority, Church, and Society in the Works of George Herbert (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 211.


6 English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 328.

7 "Authority, Church, and Society" (1988), 211.

8 "'All Possible Art'," 75, 78-9.

9 In this respect, Herbert is more like Donne than Sidney. For a discussion of Donne’s middle class professional audience, see A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York: Pantheon, 1961).


12 She includes Donne, Andrewes, Browne, Taylor, Barrow, Hall, and "a host of lesser-known writers like John Cosin, Samuel Ward, and Mark Frank." See Sacred Rhetoric, 252.

14 Chapter 10, 242: 21-25. One of the subsequent sentences in this section is much more "Ciceronian," with its involved, almost serpentine, syntax, and its plethora of Latinate diction (242:38-243:4). One has the sense that Herbert is trying to be both precise and delicate.


16 Harold Kollmeier, "'A Mark to Aim at'," 95.

17 Cf. the "reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice" of the prayer after communion. See Margaret Bottrall, George Herbert (London: John Murray, 1954).

18 Previous efforts in this regard have been largely unsatisfactory. Van Wengen-Shute barely begins to describe the importance of the Prayer Book to The Temple as she draws our attention to various allusions. And Miller objects to the 'impersonal or businesslike' tone of The Country Parson, without realizing that its tone is that of the Book of Common Prayer. See Rosemary van Wengen-Shute, George Herbert and the Liturgy of the Church of England (Oegstgeest: Drukkerij de Dempoenaer, 1981); Edmund Miller, Drudgerie Divine, 219, 230-232; cf. C. S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth-Century, Oxford History of English Literature, 3, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 220-21.


20 Although Herbert would probably have used the 1604 version of the Book of Common Prayer, I quote from the 1559 version which is identical in all essentials. See John E. Booty, ed., The Book of Common Prayer, 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1976), 59, 263.

21 Much of what I say about the Prayer Book also applies to the Authorized Version. We might consider two of its most famous passages, Ruth’s speech to Naomi and the opening of Genesis. The first is written in complex sentences with numerous tropes, the second is written in clipped parallelism. But both are notable for their clarity, rhythm, and simple diction. We might also consider the doubling of terms which is common in Hebrew poetry, most often in the psalms. The overall effect is one of beauty, precision, and power. Like the style of The Country Parson, the style of the Authorized Version is "first and foremost a style for getting something said," with beauty as a by-product. See Ian Robinson, The Survival of English (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 26-27. The problem is that we cannot be certain which version of the Bible Herbert used.


28 Ibid., 50.

29 Ibid., 217.


32 The chapters, like the poems, work in groups and occasionally refer to each other. *The Country Parson* ends with a discussion of the "militant Christian life," just as *The Temple* ends with "The Church Militant." And, most important, "The Parson Catechizing" and "The Parson in Sacraments" (chaps. 21-22) have a kind of literal and figurative centrality in *The Country Parson* which recalls C. A. Patrides’ remark that "if *The Temple* has any structure, it is a eucharistic one (English Poems, 18)."
CHAPTER 4: GEORGE HERBERT'S ANGLICAN SPIRITUALITY

No institution is more baffling to outsiders than the Church of England, but its very illogicality and eclecticism commend it to many English minds . . .

---Margaret Bottrall, George Herbert.

One who wishes to know what Anglicanism is and has not much time for study cannot do better than to pay attention to the life, the poems, and the prose of George Herbert.

---Stephen Neill, Anglicanism.

In this chapter, I draw upon The Country Parson to address some of the apparent contradictions in the religious and political views implied in The Temple. As we saw earlier, poems such as "Judgement" and "The H. Scriptures" imply a reformed emphasis on the promises of scripture, yet poems such as "H. Baptisme" and "Aaron" imply a catholic concern for the sacramental and liturgical life of the church. Political paradoxes also suggest themselves. Poems such as "The Collar" and "The Reprisall" seem highly individualistic, while poems such as "The Foil" and "Sinne (II)" address common concerns. Poems such as "The Quip" and "Vanitie (II)" appear to reject courtly aspirations, but poems such as "Obedience" and "Love (III)" portray an almost feudal devotion to a master or lord. The Country Parson helps to resolve such apparent contradictions because it describes Herbert's Anglicanism which paradoxically incorporates elements of both reformed and catholic thought, which expresses private concerns in common prayer, and which encourages individuality as long as the individual respects established authority.

Although they have provided valuable insights, recent discussions of reformation theology and ecclesiastical controversy have not done justice to Herbert's
poetic art. Too often, Herbert's poems have been read as doctrinal statements attesting to catholic or reformed theology.¹ Doctrinal readings of "The Water-course" in particular have led to the prevalent view that Herbert was an extreme Calvinist with puritan leanings, someone at war with his own flesh and suspicious of all external authority.² But one cannot accurately infer such abstractions as double predestination from Herbert's verse. Although Herbert's religious and political beliefs clearly inform The Temple, his poems do not offer definitive statements of belief. Taken together, the poems present paradoxes of the kind I describe above. Read individually, their meaning is sometimes indeterminate, as in "Prayer (I)." Most importantly, Herbert's poems are more concerned with practical devotion than with abstract theology, as the conclusions of "The Collar" and "Love (III)" suggest.

As Stanley Stewart observes, anomalous views of the poems can be avoided by a proper understanding of their historical context.³ Stewart's own description of the beliefs and practices of Nicholas Ferrar's "Arminian nunnery" at Little Gidding is helpful in this regard, particularly in view of Herbert's friendship with Ferrar and the community's preparation of the Bodleian manuscript. Hodgkins' description of the tension between enforced Laudian ceremonialism and puritan inwardness and individualism is also helpful. A poem such as "Church-windows" may reflect such controversies to some extent. But Herbert was not much given to controversy. Religious controversy is certainly rare or muted in The Temple. As we noted earlier, the tone of "To all Angels and Saints" is conciliatory. The more strident tone of "The British Church" and "Church-rents and schisms" is ameliorated by a strong sense of celebration, and the thorny issues raised in "Aaron" are relieved of contention by Herbert's devotional emphasis. Herbert's one polemic work, Musae Responsoriae
(1620), is surprisingly irenic by the standard of the times. And the focus of The Country Parson is typically pastoral rather than controversial.

Given their devotional emphasis, Herbert’s poems are best read as complex artistic reflections of his Anglican spirituality. By "spirituality" I mean the complex fusion of belief and experience involved in Herbert’s particular way of living out the Christian life. In my view, Herbert’s spirituality is best understood by our imaginative recreation of the "classic period" of Anglicanism from Richard Hooker (1554-1600) to Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667). Anglican patterns of thought and worship often transcended theological and ecclesiastical controversy, particularly in rural areas during Herbert’s lifetime (1593-1633). The Jacobean bishops themselves displayed a unity in diversity, for they maintained traditional public worship and devoted themselves to pastoral care despite their evident theological differences.

Although Herbert’s Anglicanism has often been acknowledged, it has never been described adequately. I begin my discussion by defining Anglicanism and describing Herbert’s liturgical and pastoral practice, which I believe is "higher" (more sacramental and ceremonial) than Hodgkins suggests. I then suggest the main tenets of Herbert’s reformed catholicism. But I concentrate most on what most Anglicans of the period would have shared, despite their theological and ecclesiological differences: typical habits of mind, common approaches to religious questions, and prevalent attitudes towards the Christian life. Finally, because Herbert remained an individual within his tradition, I discuss some of the religious implications of his temperament and vocation.

First, let me clarify my terms. One must distinguish between catholicism and Roman Catholicism. By "catholic" I simply mean the universal beliefs and attitudes of
the pre-reformation church, as opposed to the later teaching of Rome (Roman Catholicism) which the reformers believed to contain errors. As an Anglican, Herbert's beliefs and attitudes were deeply catholic without being Roman Catholic. One must also distinguish between protestant and reformed thinking. Although the term "protestant" was sometimes used in Herbert's day, it was loosely applied to anyone who opposed Rome theologically or politically. Later, the term came to be associated with various non-Anglican denominations and their beliefs and practices. For the purposes of theological clarity, I speak of "reformed" thinking, by which I mean the teaching of such reformation figures as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Although these reformers shared a belief in redemption by faith in the promises of scripture, they also differed on the value of church tradition, the process of election, and the imminence of the apocalypse. Using the terms in their modern sense, Herbert's thinking was reformed without being protestant.

The term "Anglican" also requires explanation. Anglicanism is not really a protestant denomination (in the modern sense of the word). Nor can one use interchangably the terms "Anglican," "Church of England," and "Anglo-Catholic." "Anglican" and "Anglicanism" are cognates of the medieval Latin Anglicana Ecclesia, the term used by the authors of the Magna Carta and later by Bishop John Jewel to indicate the catholic church in England. Although, as we shall see, the Anglicana Ecclesia was always distinctive, during the Middle Ages its distinctiveness was largely submerged in the idea of Christendom. A medieval Englishman would not have thought of himself as a member of the Church of England but as a member of the (one) catholic church. During the Reformation, however, Englishmen were forced to think of the church in England as something apart from "the Church of Rome."
Theologically, England may have remained largely catholic under Henry VIII; however, it ceased to be catholic in the old sense when the sovereign and her subjects were excommunicated by the Pope during Elizabeth's reign.

Richard Hooker's translation of *Anglicana Ecclesia* as "the Church of England" reflects this new nationalistic and reformed constitution. A generation later, Herbert would not have thought of the Church of England as one denomination among many, but neither would he have simply assumed that he belonged to "the church." As Horton Davies reminds us, by the early seventeenth century those we now refer to as "Catholics," "Anglicans," and "Puritans" had developed rival conceptions of the church:

> For the Roman Catholic there was a sense of belonging to an international community that spanned oceans and centuries. For the Anglican there was the sense of the entire nation on its knees in common prayer. For the Puritan there was the sense of the gathering of several of the families of God, his elect.¹¹

Herbert probably retained many catholic views and feelings, as "H. Baptisme" suggests. He might even have argued, as Jewel had done, that the Church of England was the only unsullied expression of catholicism. But as "The British Church" indicates, Herbert felt that the Church of England was not only unique, but opposed to the churches of Rome and Geneva.

Officially, all Englishmen belonged to the Church of England unless they declared otherwise. There were those, particularly in the north, who retained considerable allegiance to the old Roman Catholic religion. And there were others, the so-called "puritans," who felt that the Reformation had not gone far enough, and sought to purify the Church of England of its vestiges of "Popery." Yet both minorities continued to worship in the Church of England during Herbert's lifetime,
and had much in common theologically with the majority of its members. Some care is therefore needed when we speak of early seventeenth-century "Anglicans."

Strictly speaking, there were no Anglicans in Herbert's day, only members of the Church of England. The term "Anglican" came into use during the eighteenth century, when it became necessary to refer collectively to the various branches of the Church of England which had been established abroad and formed the Anglican communion. The term "Anglicanism" was first used (perhaps by F. D. Maurice) in the nineteenth century to describe the beliefs of that communion. Because Anglicans continue to recognize the importance of Herbert to their tradition, it continues to be useful to speak anachronistically of Herbert as an Anglican or of Herbert's Anglicanism. But in so doing, we are implicitly placing Herbert in the mainstream of the Church of England, thereby emphasizing his differences with conforming puritans and recusants as well as continental protestants and Roman Catholics.

The fact that Herbert continues to represent "Anglicanism at its best" should not obscure the differences between the Church of England in his time and ours. During the early seventeenth century, the Church of England enjoyed a unique fusion of catholic sacramentalism and reformed evangelicalism. It also required an unusual degree of uniformity of practice. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reform and revival created separate evangelical "low church," sacramentalist "high church," and latitudinarian "broad church" traditions. Herbert is not really an "Anglo-Catholic" as Hodgkins describes him, because the term refers to a follower of the high church or Oxford Movement. However, it may be useful to describe Herbert's attitudes and beliefs as "high" or "low," as long as we acknowledge that for Herbert the one would not necessarily exclude the other.
Anglicanism is often misunderstood; it is not simply the result of the marital difficulties of Henry VIII, nor is it merely a compromise between Roman Catholic and reformed belief. Anglicanism offers an alternative to both traditions, a separate and distinctive kind of religious experience. Although Anglicanism is sometimes characterized as "reformed Catholicism" or "belief in the Thirty-nine Articles," Anglicanism is not a confessional faith. Unlike Roman Catholicism and protestantism, Anglicanism does not depend upon a personality such as Calvin, a particular principle such as justification by faith, or a system of doctrine such as Thomism. Despite the importance of the Articles of Religion, there is no single Anglican theology, though Anglican theologians do recognize a theological context and tradition. Anglicanism is really a spirituality or way of life, a world view which derives from participation in an historically unique church. The distinctive character of that church shapes the participant's beliefs and values.

"The British Church" which Herbert describes in his poem had already existed for well over a millenium. Because the church began in England during the second or third century, some scholars even speak of "the Patristic period of Anglicanism." Three British bishops attended the Council of Arles in 314, and Christianity flourished among the Celts long before Gregory the Great sent Augustine of Canterbury to England in 597. There had been one English church ever since the Synod of Whitby in 664. And this church had its own special character: most notably a dislike of authority, an ability to tolerate opposing views, and an appreciation of the ordinary rather than the exceptional Christian life. Its Celtic-Saxon heritage contributed a mix of mysticism and practicality, and the Norman invasion brought close church-state ties.
doctrine throughout the medieval period, the English Church differed in practice from Rome. Consequently, renaissance churchmen such as Archbishop Parker, and later, James Ussher, were able to argue that the Anglo-Saxon church was a nascent Church of England.

Although the English Church achieved independence during the Reformation, it was able to retain much of its medieval catholicism because of the largely political origin of the English Reformation and the church’s tradition of tolerance. Neither Henry VIII nor Elizabeth I thought they were establishing anything new; they assumed that they were reforming the Church that had always existed in England. And the catholicism of the Church of England was defended during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by such eminent spokesmen as John Jewel, Richard Hooker, Thomas Cranmer, John Cosin, and Jeremy Taylor.

The English Reformation was relatively conservative for other reasons as well. The harsh and radical tendencies of Calvinism were partially mitigated, first by Lutheranism and then by Arminianism. Also the innate practicality of the English Church led it to concern itself most with ecclesiastical and liturgical reform. While the continental churches debated such theoretical questions as the nature of the sacraments and the workings of election and free will, the Church of England characteristically expressed its newly-reformed Catholicism in the Book of Common Prayer.

Partly because of the peculiar character of the English Reformation, the Church of England permitted considerable theological latitude but required strict conformity to church order during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Theologically, churchmen differed considerably over the effectiveness of the human will and the
working of the sacraments. Extreme Calvinists believed in the total depravity of man and God’s limited grace; extreme Arminians believed in the efficacy of the human will and God’s unlimited grace. Although sacramental theology was far from uniform, Arminians tended to have a more catholic view of the sacraments and the priesthood than those whose views were more reformed. Yet, during Herbert’s lifetime (1593-1633), the church was able to accommodate those whose theology was as reformed as Abbot’s and those whose theology was as catholic as Andrewes'.

Such accommodation was possible because the church comprehended and moderated diverse points of view, and because it emphasized common prayer instead of doctrinal uniformity.

In England, religious controversy focused primarily upon matters of practice such as government by presbyters or bishops, the location of the altar, the wearing of vestments, and the signing of the cross during baptism. Herbert’s practice is not easy to characterize. Herbert has been described variously as a "Laudian" and as a puritan struggling to reconcile his beliefs with Laud’s uncompromising ceremonial order. But the moderation and serenity of The Country Parson argues against such extremes. I see little evidence of a puritanism which opposes or internalizes sacrament, ceremony, and authority. Nor do I see evidence of a Laudian effort to require complete uniformity in non-essentials.

The biographical evidence suggests that Herbert’s views were far from puritan. The interests of the Herbert family were closely allied with those of the crown and the established church. Walton emphasizes Herbert’s conservative Anglican upbringing, his censure of Melville’s Puritanism, his willing conformity, his delight in the liturgy, and his association with Nicholas Ferrar’s "Arminian Nunnery." Although the bishop
who ordained Herbert to the priesthood, John Davenant, was a moderate Calvinist, he
may well have taken a harsh view of puritan non-conformity.\textsuperscript{40} Herbert's first church
(St. Mary's at Leighton Bromswold), which he restored, had such unpuritan
furnishings as an altar on the East wall and a screen across the chancel.\textsuperscript{41} His second
church (St. Andrew's at Bemerton), also had a tradition of unpuritan practice, for
Herbert's successors were charged by the Puritans with bowing to the altar, having an
altar on the East wall, and allowing festivals.\textsuperscript{42}

Herbert's practice might be described as "Arminian," in the sense that he did
not emphasize preaching at the expense of the sacraments and that he advocated a
ceremonial decorum.\textsuperscript{43} The Country Parson advocates what we should now describe
as "high" ceremonial practice, although it does so with restraint. For instance, the
precise but spare description of church furnishings in "The Parson's Church" pays
particular attention to the altar cloths and communion vessels, and describes the use of
incense. But Herbert follows this description with the injunction that holiness does not
lie in practice:

And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in
things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and
slovenliness . . . (246: 22-25)

Herbert's desire "to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness"
recalls the painted and naked women (Rome and Geneva) which Herbert rejects in
favour of his "deare Mother" in "The British Church." But his warnings against
"putting a holiness in things" suggests a traditional Anglicanism which is neither
puritan nor Laudian.

I do not think that Herbert's ceremonial moderation required him to adopt an
extremely reformed position which limited the sacraments to signs and the ministry to
evangelism, as Hodgkins suggests. My reading of *The Country Parson* indicates that although Herbert was not excessively sacerdotal, he retained a "high" Anglican view of the sacraments and the priesthood. For instance, in "The Parson in Sacraments," Herbert speaks of "not only receiving God, but breaking and administering him," recalling his remarks in "The Priesthood":

> But th' holy men of God such vessels are,  
> As serve him up, who all the world commands:  
> When God vouchsafeth to become our fare,  
> Their hands convey him, who conveys their hands.  
> O what pure things, most pure must those things be,  
> Who bring my God, to me!  

(11.25.30)

Again, in "The Parson Praying," Herbert speaks of

> presenting with himself the whole Congregation,  
> whose sins he then beares, and brings with his  
> own to the heavenly altar to be bathed, and  
> washed in the sacred Laver of Christs blood.  

(chap. 6, 231: 7-10)

Herbert unequivocally supports the signing of the cross during baptism, a practice which raised great Puritan objections:

> He willingly and cheerfully crosseth the child,  
> and thinketh the Ceremony not onely innocent,  
> but reverend.  

(258: 7-9)

And Herbert pointedly refers to the parson in his sacramental capacity as a "priest" rather than a "minister"--another controversial point--as in his discussion of the benediction (chap. 36, 286: 6-25).

I also disagree with Hodgkins that Herbert conformed minimally or was reluctant to appeal to ecclesiastical authority. Throughout *The Country Parson*, Herbert advocates obedience and uniformity. Most explicitly, Herbert states that the country parson "carryes himself very respectfully, as to all the Fathers of the Church, so especially to his Diocesan, honouring him both in word, and behaviour, and
resorting unto him in any difficulty, either in his studies or in his Parish. He observes
Visitations, and being there, makes due use of them, as of Clergy counsels, for the
benefit of the Diocese" (chap. 19, 253: 5-11). "The Parson's state of Life" indicates
that Herbert's conformity was sincere, even zealous, not stinting or equivocal:

He therefore thinkes it not enough for him to observe the fasting dayes
of the Church, and the dayly prayers enjoyned him by auctority, which
he observeth out of humble conformity and obedience; but adds to
them, out of choyce and devotion . . . (chap. 9, 237: 21-25) 47

Herbert advocates humble conformity in matters of practice large and small. For
example, "[the country parson] useth and preferreth the Church-Catechism, partly for
obedience to Authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may
be every where professed" (chap. 21, 255: 16-19). The country parson also requires
his parishioners to kneel during prayers, something Puritans were loath to do.

Nor does he scruple to "call in Authority" when necessary to enforce such
practices (chap. 24, 263: 21-25). He instructs his church wardens in the canons and
visitation articles, and advises them that:

he wisheth them by no means to spare any, though never so great; but if
after gentle, and neighbourly admonitions they still persist in ill, to
present them . . . (chap. 29, 270: 18-21)

For Herbert, obedience to the church hierarchy is almost inseparable from
respect for the laws of the land and loyalty to the crown--a typically Anglican
perspective. 48 For instance, Herbert notes that the office of church warden

Neither hath the place its dignity from the Ecclesiasticall Laws only,
since even by the Common Statute-Law they are taken for a kinde of
Corporation . . . (269:32-270:1)

Herbert grants the interests of the state a moral primacy in the opening of chapter 19:

The Countrey Parson is sincere and upright in all his relations. And
first, he is just to his Countrey . . . (chap. 19, 252: 24-25)
And in chapter 32, the parson’s religious duty is once again closely allied with the preservation of the social order, recalling the "Exhortation concerning good order, and obedience to Rulers and Magistrates" from the Book of Homilies.49

Some sections of The Country Parson are particularly rooted in early seventeenth-century church policy. For instance, Herbert’s discussion of marriage and celibacy in "The Parson’s state of Life" parallels Edward VI’s statute on clerical marriage.50 Herbert’s description of correct--and incorrect--congregational behaviour in "The Parson praying" recalls the Canons of 1604 on "Reverence in Worship."51 And Herbert’s notes on teaching in "The Parson on Sunday" and "The Parson catechizing" resemble the Canons of 1604 on "Instruction in the Faith."52 But The Country Parson reflects classical Anglicanism and the ethos of the 1620s and early 1630s most of all through its general lack of contention.

Herbert’s main concern in The Country Parson is far more pastoral and devotional than controversial or polemical. Herbert barely mentions clerical vestments, and takes the episcopacy for granted, though much controversy surrounded both the wearing of vestments and the system of church government.53 Chapters such as "The Parson’s Life," "The Parson in his House," "The Parson in Circuit," and "The Parson Comforting" provide extensive, detailed discussions of the parson’s godly character and his provision of pastoral care, with scarcely a hint of controversy. Even "The Parson Arguing" advocates "a strict religious life" and being "voyd of all contentiousnesse" as the best approach in controversy (263: 16-18). Indeed, Herbert’s determination to discuss godliness and pastoral method on any occasion sometimes results in surprising turns of thought, as in "The Parson’s Library":

The Countrey Parson’s Library is a holy Life: for besides the blessing
that that brings upon it, there being a promise, that if the Kingdome of God be first sought, all other things shall be added, even it selfe is a Sermon.

(chap. 33, 278: 11-14)

Such pastoral and devotional orientation is typically Anglican, and especially typical of the early seventeenth century.\(^{54}\)

Herbert was ordained deacon by John Williams, dean of Westminster and bishop of London, in 1624.\(^{55}\) Williams made him canon of Lincoln Cathedral and prebendary of Leighton Ecclesia in 1626. Herbert was ordained priest--this time by John Davenant--in 1627, and was rector of Bemerton under Davenant from 1630 until his death in 1633.\(^{56}\) Herbert's generation, which had grown up in comparative religious peace, was able to take the Elizabethan settlement for granted. There were definitely signs of political tension and decreasing religious toleration in the first decades of the seventeenth century, as Hodgkins and others have shown.\(^{57}\) Herbert may have devoted himself to rural pastoral life in order to escape controversy. But the tone of The Country Parson suggests confidence rather than constraint. According to Fincham and Higham, there was relatively little contention until William Laud was elevated to the see of Canterbury in 1633, the year of Herbert's death. Florence Higham describes the relatively peaceful era during Herbert's ministry:

The Church was established, its personnel had improved, few empty cures were left, and the bishops who worked under Whitgift's direction were a distinguished and devoted group. A generation had grown into man's estate to whom the Liturgy had been known and loved since childhood.\(^{58}\)

Under these circumstances, it would not be surprising for Herbert to be preoccupied with personal sanctity and the practicalities of ministry rather than systematic theology or controversy. The very existence of The Country Parson testifies to the dearth of
formal training for the Anglican ministry in the early seventeenth century. The meagreness of the provisions and furniture in "The Parson at Home" suggests the grinding poverty in which clergymen typically lived. Yet the Caroline clergy set a standard for pastoral care from birth to death which is yet to be equalled—and this in a communion which is renowned for the extent of its pastoral theory and practice.

Despite his theological sophistication, Herbert's beliefs were probably few and simple. As I have shown in the previous chapter, we may assume that Herbert "read the Fathers and the Schoolmen, and the later Writers, or a good proportion of all . . . " (chap. 5, 229). But we should also assume that abstract theology belonged to "his younger and preparatory times"; for the practical work of the priesthood which informs The Temple, "all divinity may be easily reduced to . . . the Church Catechisme" (230: 8-9). One could hardly imagine a more Anglican statement of belief. As "Divinitie" suggests, Herbert is not really concerned with "curious questions and divisions" in The Temple; neither does he much develop doctrine in The Country Parson. What little abstract theology—as opposed to practical divinity and devotion—Herbert mentions in The Country Parson is eclectic rather than systematic, both reformed and catholic, and therefore typically Anglican.

Herbert's perspective is so obviously reformed in a poem such as "Judgement" that one easily overlooks the general catholicity of his thought and feeling in The Temple. Herbert not only has a high notion of the sacraments and of the priesthood, surely the obvious import of "Baptisme (II)" and "Aaron," but he also speaks constantly in his poems to common Christian experience. Poems such as "The Sacrifice," "Anagram of the Virgin Marie" and "The Pilgrimage" are so catholic as to seem almost medieval, which is why Rosemund Tuve's analysis remains persuasive.
Yet Herbert's catholicism is an integral part of his Anglican spirituality, for as H.R. McAdoo observes in *The Spirit of Anglicanism*,

... the Church of England always regarded the teaching and practice of the undivided Church of the first five centuries as its criterion... the whole tenor of seventeenth-century writing indicated that this undifferentiated Catholicism was the pivotal point for Anglican thinking.\(^{63}\)

Herbert's reference in his will to the works of Augustine and his numerous references to him and to the other Fathers and to the primitive church in *The Country Parson* also indicate the deep catholicism of his thinking. Indeed, this appeal to tradition and the Fathers is typically Anglican, especially Arminian.\(^{64}\) We would be safe to infer a strong belief in the doctrines of Creation and the Incarnation, for this emphasis is characteristic of Anglicanism, particularly of this period.\(^{65}\) Such belief pervades *The Temple*, perhaps most obviously in the opening and close of "Man":

My God, I heard this day,
That none doth build a stately habitation,
But he that means to dwell therein.
What house more stately hath there been,
Or can be, then is Man? to whose creation
All things are in decay.

... Since then, my God, thou hast
So brave a Palace built; O dwell in it,
That it may dwell with thee at last!
Till then, afford us so much wit;
That, as the world serves us, we may serve thee,
And both thy servants be.
(l. 1-6, 49-54)

Just as Herbert's incarnational thinking here is implied in devotion rather than defined by doctrine, so also it is expressed in *The Country Parson* by his attitude to the sacraments and his approach to pastoral care.

For Herbert, God is present in the world in a special way through the
sacraments because of the Incarnation. In "The Parson in Sacraments," for instance, Herbert declares that "God is not only the feast but the way to it," a view which informs "Love (III)" (chap. 22, 257: 29-30). Because Herbert thinks incarnationally, he assumes that pastoral care should be sacramental and pervasive, as we see in "The Parson Comforting":

the participation of the holy Sacrament, how comfortable, and Soveraigne a Medicine it is to all sin-sick souls; what strength, and joy, and peace it administers against all temptations, even to death it selfe . .

Herbert's doctrine of Creation is also implied or assumed rather than expounded, but his mention of "Gods generall providence extended even to lillyes" suggests a belief in God as sustainer of nature (249: 19-20). Herbert's statement in "The Parson in Mirth" that "nature will not bear everlasting droopings" also implies that Creation is the good and joyful thing described in "Man."

Although Herbert's deep catholicism is matched by the evangelicalism of poems such as "The H. Scriptures" and "The Call," it is difficult to evaluate the extent of his reformed views. Some commentators feel that Herbert has an extreme Calvinist perspective which involves a preference for a logical system, a preoccupation with justification by faith, and a subscription to the propositions of the Synod of Dort. But, as we noted earlier, such claims usually rest on interpretations of individual poems. The prose suggests a definite, but moderate, reformed perspective. Although Herbert does allude to certain reformed doctrines, he does so only at the end of The Country Parson, and then devotionally. In "A Prayer after Sermon," he exclaims:
Blessed be God! and the Father of all mercy! who continueth to pour his benefits upon us. Thou hast elected us, thou hast called us, thou hast justified us, sanctified, and glorified us: Thou wast born for us, and thou livedst and diest for us: Thou hast given us the blessings of this life, and of a better. (290: 1-6)

Here, in an explicit statement of belief, Herbert shows no inclination towards double predestination or other extreme Calvinist doctrines such as total depravity. Although this statement does not necessarily prove that Herbert's theology was Arminian, Herbert does seem to believe in unlimited grace and in a God with whom it is possible to be on intimate terms. Because God is manifested in the flesh, Herbert emphasizes no particular doctrine, except for the fundamental Christian belief in the Incarnation. Most important of all, however, he demonstrates his Anglicanism by viewing all doctrines relationally and by incorporating them in worship.

Like his catholic concern with creation and the Incarnation, Herbert's reformed thinking is typically implied rather than expounded in the prose as well as the verse. In The Country Parson, Herbert's reformed--but typically Anglican--approach to scripture is often evident as in "The Parson Blessing." This chapter begins, as so many of Herbert's poems do, with a devotional problem:

The Countrey Parson wonders, that Blessing the people is in so little use with his brethren: whereas he thinks it not onely a grave, and reverend thing, but a beneficial also. (chap. 36, 285: 1-3)

Herbert considers the relevant scriptural principles and apostolic example (285: 9-13). But as he carefully considers the scriptural evidence, he makes no effort to make scripture speak where it is silent (286: 26-28). Finally, he offers neither a Protestant injunction from scripture nor a Roman Catholic one from tradition, but makes an implicit argument that the priest's blessing is not contrary to scripture, and an appeal--in the absence of definitive teaching--to reason and utility (285:15-286:2). His
method, which will be discussed presently, owes much to that of Richard Hooker’s Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. But Herbert’s approach to scripture is characteristically Anglican in other ways. In the example above, he is notably reluctant to exceed the obvious meaning of scripture or to make it speak where it is silent, an Anglican habit of mind which one also sees in Herbert’s notes on Valdesso’s Considerations. Herbert also incorporates numerous scriptural references into his discourse seamlessly in The Country Parson, especially in "The Parson Preaching," just as Cranmer does in the Book of Common Prayer.

We surely stand to learn more about Herbert’s Anglican spirituality by exploring such habits of mind as these than by pursuing doctrinal distinctions which he steadfastly refuses to make. Certainly, for Anglicans of the period, belief did not involve assent to theological abstractions so much as participation in a common literary and religious culture. This kind of belief is implied in Herbert’s invitation for us to participate in both of his literary projects. The preface of The Country Parson recalls the liturgy both in the humble prayer of the author and in his clear invitation:

The Lord prosper the intention to my selfe, and others, who may not despise my poor labours, but add to those points, which I have observed, until the Book grow into a compleat Pastorall. ("The Author to the Reader")

The opening of The Temple is also liturgical. In "The Church-porch," the author provides two clear invitations to participate, the opening stanzas of "Perirrhanterium" and "Superliminare":

Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes inhance
Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure;
Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance
Rhyme thee to good, and make a bate of pleasure.
A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.
Thou, whom the former precepts have
Sprinkled and taught, how to behave
Thy self in church; approach, and taste
The churches mysticall repast.

Then, in "The Church," the author offers a prayer:

O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctifie this A L T A R to be thine.
("The Altar, ll. 15-16)

Because The Temple is infused with the participatory belief of the Anglican liturgy, critical efforts to reduce the meaning of Herbert’s poetry to abstract systematic theology inevitably fail.

The current debate about Herbert’s sacramental theology rests on theological distinctions which are foreign to Anglicanism, the very "curious questions and divisions" which Herbert pointedly rejects in "Divinitie." The Prayer Book of 1559 incorporated both the more Catholic communion sentence from the 1549 book, "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," and the more Protestant sentence from the 1552 book, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving." These two statements could be included without theological contradiction because the attitude supporting them was not one of systematic logic but of participation. Hooker had shifted attention from the changes which might or might not occur in the elements to their use by the faithful:

The bread and cup are his body and blood because they are causes instrumental upon the receipt whereof the participation of his body and blood insueth.

Hooker’s attitude is devotional:

... what these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough
that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, his promise in witness therof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, O my God thou art true, O my Soul thou art happy! (V.lxvii.12)

Such is Herbert’s attitude to the sacraments. We have already seen his devotional, relational, and participatory attitude to the sacraments in "The Parson’s Church" and "The Parson inSacraments." The same attitude pertains even in the most theologically abstract chapter of The Country Parson, "The Parson’s Consideration of Providence" (271: 33-36). This attitude also informs the Anglican Articles of Religion.73

Herbert’s typically Anglican attitude to the sacrament clearly informs poems such as "The Bunch of Grapes," "The Banquet," and "The Invitation." And whatever the apparent Eucharistic theology of "Love Unknown," such distinctions as transubstantiation, consubstantiation, real presence, and virtualism are transcended in the Eucharistic apotheosis of The Temple, "Love (III)." Here, as in Hooker’s Laws, what matters is the relationship between God and man—not a concept but a communal act which must be experienced by the communicant:

... let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat. (ll. 13-18).

John N. Wall aptly describes Anglican belief, which is intrinsically related to the liturgical life of the church:

The Church of England located its source of assurance not in a doctrine or an experience of conversion or election but in its life of worship made possible by the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible in English, and the preaching as represented by the Book of Homilies.74

During the Reformation, the Church of England had asserted its independence by the
emplacement of these books by royal decree, rather than by insisting upon doctrinal uniformity. The integrity of the church was subsequently maintained by these measures, particularly through the use of the Book of Common Prayer in its various versions:

Supporters and advocates of the Church of England found their sense of identity through that book; their opponents found their Christian identity elsewhere. As a result, the established Church could accept diversity in interpretation of the faith so long as the public worship of the Prayer Book continued, while those who found their identity in one or other doctrinal positions demanded that the worship of the nation be brought into line with that doctrinal position.

Herbert acknowledges this process by stipulating that the parson's church must contain "all the books appointed by Authority" (chap. 6, 246: 14). He also continues the process by contributing a prose manual of pastoral care and a book of prayer and praise in verse.

Over time, Anglican spirituality became infused with "the restraint, the dignity, the fusion of fact and feeling" which characterizes the Book of Common Prayer:

The ordinary Englishman was familiar with the Prayer Book at home as well as in Church. It was part of the way of life which he took with him when he left his own country. Wherever English colonists, and particularly English ships, went, the Book of Common Prayer went also. . . With the dignity, even austerity, of the Prayer Book there goes also a basic simplicity which is not affected by the richness of its language. Its prayers are the expression of a filial relationship between a child and his father—a weak, sinful, and erring child, a Father of infinite majesty and power, but still a child and a Father.

Anglicanism is indeed so intimately related to the Book of Common Prayer as to be virtually inseparable from it.

The Country Parson, as we have already seen, is infused with the style of the Prayer Book. Herbert often alludes to the Book of Common Prayer, and he describes its proper use at some length in chapter 6, "The Parson Praying." In chapter 32,
Herbert amplifies the Prayer Book injunction to "bring up children in the fear and nurture of the Lord," much as Jeremy Taylor in *Holy Living* (1650) amplifies the Prayer Book injunction to "lead a godly, upright, and sober life." The *Temple* also reflects the spirituality of the Book of Common Prayer: both because it speaks with the same tone and assumptions in poems such as "Praise (II)", and because it replicates its liturgical patterns in poems such as "Mattens" and "Even-song," as well as in its overall structure. But such a spirituality depends little upon declared doctrine.

We learn much about Herbert’s spirituality from his approach to religious questions and from his attitude to the Christian life. To begin with, although Herbert’s thought is subtle, he is more concerned with common Christian experience than with religious speculation. This concern for the ordinary unheroic Christian life is characteristic of Anglican spirituality. We see Herbert’s decided preference for the ordinary in *The Country Parson*, as he describes the primitive church:

He [the country parson] often readeth the Lives of the Primitive Monks, Hermits, and Virgins, and wondreth not so much at their patient suffering, and cheerfull dying under persecuting Emperours,(though that indeed be very admirable) as at their daily temperance, abstinence, watchings, and constant prayers, and mortifications in the times of peace and prosperity. (chap. 9, 237: 27-33)

Herbert’s valuation of the ordinary is also implied in his lengthy discussion of domestic arrangements and daily activities in "The Parson in his House," "The Parson in Circuit," and "The Parson in Journey," which reflect his belief that "nothing is little in God’s service" (249: 2). Herbert is pre-eminently the poet of the ordinary: apart from his poems on the priesthood, Herbert writes about the ordinary experience of Christian hope and personal failing, often using the homeliest of similes and
metaphors. It is altogether typical of Herbert to advise us in "Perirrhanterium" to wind up our souls along with our watches, or to liken himself in "Employment (I)" to a flower in danger of being nipped in the bud. Herbert’s capacity to portray common experience powerfully in simple, everyday terms is one reason for his enduring popularity.

Herbert’s approach to religious questions reflects the traditional Anglican distinction between things necessary to salvation and things not, a distinction most clearly stated in Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593). Herbert mentions "fundamental things" in "The Parson arguing" and "things necessary" in "The Parson’s Library" (263: 4; 279: 15-31). But he makes the distinction most pointedly in "The Parson in Liberty":

The Countrey Parson . . . stands fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This Liberty he compasseth by one distinction, and that is, of what is Necessary, and what is Additionary. (chap. 31, 272: 15-21)

The distinction is important pastorally, for the parson seeks to relieve his overscrupulous and superstitious parishioners. Although Herbert may implicitly criticize puritanism and Roman Catholicism here, he emphasizes the freedom of his Anglican approach. As Lancelot Andrewes once said to his students at Pembroke, "What is necessary to be known, God has made easy, and what is not easy is not so necessary." This is Herbert’s attitude in "Divinitie," as he rejects "curious questions and divisions" in favour of "those beams of truth, which onely save":

Could not that Wisdome, which first broacht the wine,  
Have thicken’d it with definitions?  
And jagg’d his seamlesse coat, had that been fine,  
With curious questions and divisions?

But all the doctrine, which he taught and gave,
Was cleare as heav'n, from whence it came.
At least those beams of truth, which onely save,
Surpass in brightnesse any flame.

Love God, and love your neighbour. Watch and pray.
Do as ye woulde be done unto.
O dark instructions; ev'n as dark as day!
Who can these Gordian knots undo? (9-20)

Herbert's approach to religious questions is also Anglican in its rejection of infallibility. The Book of Common Prayer (1559) had resolutely declared that:

There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted

This declaration suggests that theological error and corrupt practice are inevitable, and that the great mistake is to pretend otherwise, making correction impossible. Such is the basis of Hooker's criticism of Calvinism and Roman Catholicism:

Two things there are which trouble greatly these later times: one that the Church of Rome cannot, another that Geneva will not, err.

If anything, Herbert's activity as a country parson stimulated his Anglican awareness of endemic error and corrupt practice, for he often condemns both in The Country Parson. We have already met the parson's correctives in chapters such as "The Parson Praying" and "The Parson in Liberty," and his vigilance is more evident still in "The Parson in Circuit," "The Parson's eye," and "The Parson in Sentinell." In The Temple, Herbert's rejection of infallibility is evident in poems such as "The Collar" which considers various unsatisfactory positions before dispensing with intellectual argument in favour of simple faith.

Herbert often seeks a via media in religious questions. Speaking of "the fine aspect and fit array of "The British Church," the poetic voice rejects "outlandish looks" because "they either painted are, / Or else undrest" (ll. 7-13). Commenting
upon ecclesiastical practices in chapter 36 of *The Country Parson*, Herbert protests that:

> In the time of Popery, the Priests Benedicite, and his holy water were over highly valued; and now we are fallen to the clean contrary, even from superstition to coldnes, and Atheism. (286: 15-18)

However, Herbert is not merely seeking compromise in such circumstances; he is embracing the traditional Anglican ideal of comprehension. According to Booty,

> Comprehension differed from compromise in that it was not a matter of steering between two fierce and foreign powers, but rather of understanding God's will for men in accordance with Scripture, tradition, and reason. This implied the rejection of error whatever its source and the affirmation of truth wherever it might be found.⁸⁸

We have already seen some evidence of Herbert's comprehension in *The Country Parson* in the inclusiveness of "The Author to the Reader," "The Parson's Church," and "The Prayer After Sermon." We also see Herbert's comprehension in his admission of "secular" considerations in religious questions, as in "The Parson's eye," and in "The Parson in Mirth" which weighs spiritual, humane, and pragmatic concerns (267: 9-14; 267-268). In *The Temple*, Herbert's comprehension is felt in such poems as "Trinitie" and "To all Angels and Saints" in which he is particularly determined to include all that is true and to exclude all that is false, regardless of personal feelings.

Ironically, Herbert's Anglican comprehension has allowed both his catholic and his reformed views to be over-emphasized.⁸⁹ Far from being ambivalent or contradictory, Herbert's poems may be most unequivocally Anglican when they seem most vocal for Rome or Geneva. For as C.J. Stranks observes:

> Just as a man conscious of having two hands will find himself using first one, and then the other, and sometimes both together, as the task of the moment dictates, so the Church of England sometimes seems to argue from a Catholic position, sometimes from a Protestant one, and sometimes from a fusion of both.⁹⁰
Herbert uses one hand and then the other when the poetic voice in "H. Baptisme (II)" makes the apparently Roman Catholic claim that one may "lay hold, and antedate [one's] faith" through infant baptism (ll. 4-5), and the apparently Protestant voice in "Judgement" relies upon adult faith in biblical promises (ll. 13-15).

The dexterity and inclusiveness of Herbert's thinking suggests the theological method articulated by Richard Hooker, who is sometimes referred to as the "father of Anglicanism." Hooker developed a method of bringing the three instruments of scripture, reason, and tradition to bear upon questions of faith and practice with sufficient dexterity to avoid the errors of both Rome and Geneva. Extreme reformation thinking emphasized scripture to the detriment of tradition and reason; extreme catholicism emphasized reason and tradition to the detriment of scripture. Hooker rejected extremism in favour of measure and restraint, advocating the dexterous application of all three instruments. In this essentially pastoral approach to religious questions, the practitioner is not so much a metaphysician as a physician: he is not building logical systems, but deciding what to leave, to cut, and to cure.

Sometimes Herbert employs his three instruments subtly, as in "The Parson in Sacraments" (259: 10-25); sometimes more overtly, as the passage from "The Parson Blessing" considered previously. This approach to religious matters contributes to the deliberative tone of The Country Parson— that thoroughly Anglican sense of sobriety, moderation, and balance which informs Herbert's discussions of alms-giving and correction (248: 10-14; 251: 2-6), and reaches its zenith in his discussion of celibacy:
The Country Parson considering that virginity is a higher state then Matrimony, and that the Ministry requires the best and highest things, is rather unmarried, then married. But yet as the temper of his body may be, or as the temper of his Parish may be, where he may have occasion to converse with women, and that among suspicious men, and other like circumstances considered, he is rather married then unmarried.

(chap. 9, 236:33-237:5)

Such an approach encourages discernment, one of a number of attitudes which inform Anglican spirituality. Speaking of the Church of Rome, Hooker said, "Wisdom therefore and skill is requisite to knowe, what partes are sounde in that Church, and what corrupted (IV, vii, 8)." The Book of Common Prayer also emphasizes the need for discernment, resisting the temptation to be "addicted to old customs" or to be "so newfangled as to innovate all things." Herbert’s Anglican discernment is particularly evident in chapter 35 of The Country Parson which we discussed earlier. Here, Herbert asserts that "The Countrey Parson is a Lover of old Customes, if they be good, and harmless...[But] if there be any ill in the custome, that may be severed from the good, he pares the apple, and gives them the clean to feed on." As Hooker said, the priest must use his skill "to know what parts of that Church are sound and what corrupted," to separate the succulent flesh of the apple from its skin or spot in Herbert’s metaphor. In doing so, the priest must guard his flock against both of the temptations mentioned in the Prayer Book—"addiction to old customs" and "new fangledness":

Another old Custome there is of saying, when light is brought in, God send us the light of heaven; and the Parson likes this very well. Light is a great Blessing, and as great as food, for which we give thanks: and those that thinke this superstitious, neither know superstition, nor themselves. As for those that are ashamed to use this forme, as being old, and obsolete, and not the fashion, he reformes, and teaches them... (CP, chap. 35, 284:22-31)

Nor are Herbert’s parishioners the only ones reformed and taught, for many of the
poems in *The Temple* school us in discernment. The "Jordan" poems which help us to separate true and false wit, and "Church-musick" or "Church-monuments" which prompt us to consider the spiritual value of conventional religious practice, are among the most obvious examples of poems which attempt to teach discernment. And "The Elixir" begins with a prayer for discernment:

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Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee. (ll. 1-4)
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In addition to these characteristic approaches to religious questions, we see Herbert's Anglican spirituality in his attitudes to the Christian life. Those who overemphasize the reformed aspect of Herbert's thinking sometimes attribute misleading attitudes to him. He is supposed to be preoccupied with doctrine, and to oppose the authority of church and state. He is sometimes thought to reject poetry, art, wit, and reason because of "a radical conflict between flesh and spirit." He is said to lack religious assurance, to feel that bliss is a distant prospect and that God is terrible and capricious. Such attitudes might seem to inform the "Jordan" poems, "The Watercourse," or "The Collar." But poems such as "Man," "Praise (II)," "Sunday," and "Aaron" suggest instead the traditional Anglican attitudes of confidence, practicality, joyfulness, and integration which inform *The Country Parson*.

As we have just seen, the distinctions Herbert makes in his discussion of celibacy are of a very practical nature. The English Church has always been concerned with the practical matters of the ordinary Christian life in its individual and public aspect. As John Booty reminds us, for all its erudition, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* "deals with practical matters of concern in the theological
controversies of Hooker’s day." In the same Anglican spirit, Cranmer begins his Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament (1550) with a statement of practical pastoral intent, and ends with a practical instruction in the worthy receiving of the sacrament which rests on the simplest of theological distinctions. Andrewes’ greatest achievements, his contribution to the Authorized Version and his Preces Privatae, are also useful and broadly accessible rather than theoretical or specialized. For all its subtlety and grace, The Temple itself throws spiritual light on "a life of humble, even monotonous, service" focusing on the common liturgical life of the church and everyday Christian struggles and consolations. Jeremy Taylor’s Holy Living (1650) is also eminently practical as well as profoundly reflective, offering much useful advice on such everyday matters as ordering one’s time and avoiding overindulgence at the table. Herbert reveals his own appreciation of such practical and moral instruction in "Perirrhanterium":

Beware of lust: it doth pollute and foul
Whom God in Baptisme washt with his own blood.

Abstain wholly, or wed. Thy bounteous Lord
 Allows thee choise of paths: take no by-wayes.

Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame,
When once it is within thee . . .

Yet, if thou sinne in wine or wantonnesse,
Boast not thereof; nor make thy shame thy glorie.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain:
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.

Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both.

Flie idlenesse, which yet thou canst not flie
By dressing, mistressing, and complement.
(II. 7-8, 13-14, 25-26, 49-50, 55-56, 73-74, 79-80)
The practical, moral admonitions of the pastor are often overlooked because of a common preoccupation with the lyrics of "The Church" rather than with the comparatively plain "Church Porch." Yet these injunctions not only suggest Herbert’s Anglican practicality, but they prepare the reader for the sanctified gallantry and love—and the consecrated bread and wine—of "Love (III)."

The biographies of Walton and Charles as well as The Country Parson suggest that Herbert’s rural priesthood required all the practicality and discernment which he could muster. Most of his duties were of a very humble order: roofs that needed fixing, sick people who needed tending, and officiating before a congregation which thought nothing of "sleeping, slumbering, or spitting" in church (chap. 6, 231). But Herbert was able to bring the characteristic Anglican concern for decency and order even to such basic matters. In The Country Parson, such concern is most clearly manifest in Herbert’s careful description of church furnishings and communion vessels in "The Parson’s Church," and becomes explicit in his final injunction that all is to be done as following the Apostles two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, Let all things be done decently, and in order: The second, Let all things be done to edification. (chap. 13, 246: 25-28)

This same concern later pervades "The Parson in Sacraments," and indeed, much of The Temple. Poems such as "The Church-floore," "Church-lock and key," "Church-monuments," and "Church-music" might seem merely quaint if one were unaware of this underlying Anglican attitude. But these poems have been beautifully constructed and ordered for edification in The Temple, just as their physical counterparts are carefully restored and ordered in "The Parson’s Church." In both
works, Herbert expresses a refined, controlled, public, and Anglican spirituality.

To modern sensibilities, one of the most curious aspects of Herbert's Anglican spirituality may be his preoccupation with (earthly) king and country. Herbert might seem to stray from his religious purpose as the poetic voice slips into social commentary instead of "sprinkling and teaching" the reader in "Perirrhantierium":

Art thou a Magistrate? then be severe:
If studious, copie fair, what time hath blurr'd;
Redeem truth from his jawes: if sooldier,
Chase brave employments with a naked sword
    Throughout the world. Fool not: for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

O England full of sinne, but most of sloth;
Spit out thy flegme, and fill thy brest with glorie:
Thy Gentrie bleats, as if thy native cloth
Transfus'd a sheepishnesse into thy storie:
    Not that they all are so; but that the most
Are gone to grasse, and in the pasture lost.
("Perirrhantierium," 85-96)

But such passages actually reveal Herbert's Anglican sense of the interdependence of church and state. This attitude, which was latent in the medieval Ecclesia Anglicana, intensified during the Reformation when the realm and the church were jointly threatened by Rome and Geneva, and so became coexistent in Anglican thought.105

The relationship between church and state was reciprocal: the church was maintained by the monarch, and the civil authorities were upheld by the church.106 Hooker foresaw the threat to religion and to law and order posed by Puritan zeal, and Taylor described the realization of Hooker's fears.107 Although Herbert's circumstances allowed him less anxiety than Hooker's or Taylor's, Herbert nevertheless shared their typically Anglican assumption that the Church of England was to be established "to God's glory, public peace, and the common good of men's
Such an attitude would oppose both the subversiveness and the political ambition which have lately been ascribed to Herbert. Notably, Herbert begins *The Country Parson* by saying that he speaks for his "own Nation only"; and throughout the work, he equates Christian duty with duty to the commonwealth (225: 20; 239: 19-23; 252: 24-25; 262: 15-18). Most explicitly, Herbert advises the parson "to discourse of such things as are both profitable and pleasant, and to raise up [his parishioner's] minds to apprehend God's blessing to [their] Church and State; that order is kept in one, and peace in the other, without disturbance or interruption of publick divine offices" (chap. 8, 236: 18-25). In "The Parson's Surveys," he declares that "it is also a debt to our Countrey to have a Calling, and it concernes the Common-wealth, that none should be idle, but all busied" (274: 26-28). Although Herbert alludes to "the diseases of the time" and "nationall sin" in this chapter, he affirms England's institutions (274: 6, 8). He candidly refers to the court as "the eminent place both of good and ill," but takes the king's dominion for granted and mentions Queen Elizabeth with reverence (277: 5-7, 31-33). He praises the judiciary, recommends parliament, and upholds the squirearchy. In typical Anglican fashion, the parson's civic and ecclesiastical duties are inseparable; yet one never has the sense in *The Country Parson* that Herbert aspires to courtly preferment.

The interests of church and state are also closely associated in *The Temple*, though this fact is often overlooked. The "national sin" which Herbert exposes in "Perirrhanterium" is later encountered and overcome in the lyrics. For instance, the "Employment" poems are often read as if they were expressions of personal vocational distress like Milton's sonnets, but Herbert argues for the social necessity of activity
and productiveness, and implicitly speaks against the national tendency towards sloth. "The British Church" is often read as a statement of mere denominational loyalty, but the "outlandish looks" which Herbert criticizes threaten the crown as well as the established church (ll. 10-12). And, by implication, "Love (III)" portrays a godly king, even as it portrays a kingly God.

"Love (III)" also portrays a feast. It is characteristic of Herbert to allude to the pleasures of the table during the most solemn religious moment in The Temple; in fact, he demonstrates his Anglicanism by doing so. Anglicanism does not divide the world into the religious and the profane, nor has it ever encouraged asceticism. Those who suggest that The Temple is dominated by a radical conflict between the earthly and the divine or who accuse Herbert of anti-intellectualism or philistinism surely fail to understand his essential Anglicanism.

Anglican spirituality involves an appreciation of--and a responsibility for--everything in Creation, including all human endeavour. Consequently, the whole world falls under the parson’s care in The Country Parson. "In the Parson preaching," he particularizes his speech to rich and poor, high and low, learned and ignorant, because all society is his province. In "The Parson in Journey," he does not scruple to pray in the roads and inns, or to admonish or encourage anyone he meets. In "The Parson’s Surveys," he considers it his duty to advise his parish on everything from agriculture to marriage and education. And it is particularly telling that he carries out these duties with that good humour and hospitality described in "The Parson in Mirth" and "The Parson’s Courtesie."

One of the distinguishing features of The Temple is also the cheerful mingling of what extremely reformed or Roman Catholic believers might consider worldly and
religious concerns. Besides their obviously religious references to scripture, prayer, and the sacraments, Herbert's poems are filled with references to commerce and architecture, music and agriculture, food and drink, dress and conversation. His poetry invests everyday objects and events with religious significance, and yet there is nothing "other-worldly" in the experience:

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven,
I will praise thee.
In my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.

("Praise [II]," ll. 9-12, 17-20)

Such a positive, even joyful, attitude is characteristic of Anglican spirituality. Although Herbert was acutely aware of his sin, he did not share the extremely reformed view that God was terrible and remote. Nor did Herbert share the extreme Roman Catholic view of the Christian life as heroic piety or relentless good works. For early seventeenth-century Anglicans such as Herbert, creation was beautiful and God was near. The point was not to withdraw from the world in order to work out one's salvation, but to experience the presence of God in creation and in daily life. Such an attitude emphasized the positive in human experience, and produced a joyful, quiet piety.

Herbert emphasizes the positive in *The Country Parson*, by suggesting the importance of good humour in spite of irreverence and affliction in "The Parson in Mirth," and by drawing attention to the "peaceable" as well as the active state of the Christian life in "The Parson's dexterity in applying Remedies" (280: 1-3). Although
Herbert does not shrink from struggle, he also emphasizes the positive in *The Temple*. The desperate struggles of "The Collar" end in child-like submission and peace, and the bitterness of "Affliction (IV)" gives way to consolation in "Affliction (V)." But many of Herbert's poems are suffused with joy and peace. One thinks, for instance, of the opening of "Man" in which the poetic voice speaks with serene assurance to the most high, a familiarity all the more striking because it assumes man's pre-eminent goodness in the created order:

My God, I heard this day,  
That none doth build a stately habitation,  
But he that means to dwell therein.  
What house more stately hath there been,  
Or can be, then is Man? to whose creation  
All things are in decay.  
(ll. 1-6)

One might also think of "Providence" in which the poetic voice enumerates man's excellencies and celebrates the wonders of Creation as God's "Secretary of praise":

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 thou art infinite in one and all.  
. . . . . . .

All things that are, though they have sev'ral ways,  
Yet in their being joyn with one advise  
To honour thee: and so I give thee praise  
In all my other hymnes, but in this twice.  
(ll. 8, 41-44, 145-148)

In lyrics such as these, Herbert's perspective is typically Anglican. Man is essentially good, creation is infused with divinity, and God is both easily approachable and near at hand.

Although I have described some of the characteristic attitudes and beliefs of the Anglicanism of Herbert's period, it is not enough just to put Herbert into his tradition.
If one is to describe his spirituality adequately, one must take into account Herbert's religious vocation: the celebrant's desire for purity as well as the effects of preaching, catechizing, and the yearly cycle of parish events.

Herbert's attitude to the sacraments could not help but be shaped by his administration of them. "The Priesthood" and "Employment (I-II)" show the speaker encountering his feelings of inadequacy as a vessel for dispensing divine grace:

But th' holy men of God such vessels are,  
As serve him up, who all the world commands:  
When God vouchsafeth to become our fare,  
Their hands convey him, who conveys their hands.  
O what pure things, most pure must those things be,  
Who bring my God to me!  
("The Priesthood, ll. 25-30)

In the conclusion of "Aaron," grace overwelms all feelings of inadequacy:

So holy in my head,  
Perfect and light in my deare breast,  
My doctrine tun'd by Christ, (who is not dead,  
But lives in me while I do rest)  
Come people; Aaron's drest. (ll. 21-25)

Surely the despair and consolation which alternate in so many of Herbert's poems reflect in part his heightened priestly experience of inadequacy and grace: his "great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break and administer him" (CP, chap. 22, 257).

The priest in The Temple is constantly catechizing and preaching. The reader is "sprinkled and taught" on "The Church Porch," and the Christian faith is explored and expounded in "The Church." The Country Parson suggests some of the effects which constant catechizing and preaching may have exerted upon Herbert's spirituality. Thus, Herbert's preaching apparently gave him a profound experience of the "moving and ravishing texts" of scripture (CP chap. 7, 233). Poems such as "The
"Odour," "Our Life is hid," and "The Pearl" are modeled upon these "ravishing texts."

Herbert’s clerical duties also provided him with a heightened awareness of "all his lusted and affections within, and the whole Army of Temptations without" (CP, chap. 33, 278). The priest’s intimate understanding of man’s fallen nature informs many of Herbert’s finest poems, including "Love (III)."

The reader of The Temple often has the sense of being in an enclosed world. One service leads to the next, and one season to another; though the quiet is sometimes interrupted by inner tempests, the world of experience is circumscribed. This atmosphere must be due at least in part to Herbert’s experience of the little world of the parish. The spiritual effect of parish life is difficult to evaluate, but it probably contributed significantly to the humility and spiritual intensity so characteristic of Herbert’s poems.

Finally, one must take account of the individuality of Herbert’s spirituality, for he brought his own personality to his faith and vocation. Here one might mention a number of characteristics: his childlikeness, his extraordinary range of emotion, his determination, his courtesy, his gaiety, and his extraordinary devotion. Some of these qualities are obvious in The Temple, others less so; however, all would have affected the spirituality which informs his poetry. For instance "The Parson in Mirth" describes "that pleasantness of disposition" which one encounters in "The Flower" and "The Call." Also, Edward Herbert’s remarks about his brother suggest something of the interplay of devotion and tempestuousness which marks "The Collar":

... his life was most holy and exemplary, in so much that about Salisbury where he lived beneficed for many years, he was little less than sainted: He was not exempt from passion and choler, being infirmities to which all our race is subject, but that excepted, without reproach in his actions.
Lord Herbert's description of the "passion and choler" in a "most holy and exemplary" life indicates the complexity of George Herbert's spirituality. A complex fusion of belief and practice cannot be reduced to doctrine; the best we can do is to attempt to describe Herbert's tradition, acknowledging the influence of his character and vocation. With respect to that tradition, W.H. Auden aptly described *The Temple* as "the finest expression we have of Anglican piety at its best."
NOTES: CHAPTER 4

1 As Gene Edward Veith observes,

The religious wars of the seventeenth-century, according to some observers, are being re-fought by twentieth-century literary critics. Once again, factions representing Catholics and Protestants, Anglicans and Puritans, are battling it out, each one struggling to attain hegemony over George Herbert . . .

Although Veith mentions an Anglican faction, to date the controversy has been almost entirely over whether Herbert is "Protestant" or "Catholic," as Veith's subsequent discussion demonstrates. Significantly, the title of the 1986 MLA special session to which Veith is responding is: "George Herbert's Theology: Nearer Rome or Geneva?" See "The Religious Wars in George Herbert Criticism: Reinterpreting Seventeenth-Century Anglicanism," George Herbert Journal 11 (1988): 20, and Johnson's discussion in the George Herbert Journal 15 (Spring, 1992): 1-19 of the inconclusiveness of such theological interpretations (note 2). For a basic discussion of Herbert's theology, see also Linda Post van Buskirk, "George Herbert's Anglican Theology" (Ph.D. diss., New Mexico State University, 1979).


3 See Stanley Stewart, George Herbert (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986), ii-iii, 2.

4 The term "irenic" is sometimes applied to the charitable and temperate arguments of Richard Hooker. Although Herbert ridicules puritans and Scotsmen, he also promises to be gentle and not to return Melville's insults (II, XX). Herbert allows for honest mistakes, and concludes with a prayer (XXXVI, XL). One is reminded much more of Richard Hooker's Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity than of John Milton's An Apology for Smectymnuus. See Mark McCloskey and Paul Murphy, eds. The Latin Poetry of George Herbert (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1965).

5 Wolf defines spirituality as "piety or devotion, the practice animating devotion," and acknowledges the importance of the Book of Common Prayer in shaping Anglican spirituality. Martz and Veith also discuss spirituality, though both


8 Bell observes that "Herbert was throughout the period of the 1650s regarded by Anglicans as an Anglican poet who wrote primarily for Anglicans," and Stewart notes the contemporary view, voiced by Walton and Oley, that Herbert "was neither Puritan nor Papist." Benet rightly describes Herbert as a "non-controversial Anglican." Asals indicates that Herbert is "a specifically Anglican (not Protestant) poet." Eliot asserts that Herbert was "from childhood a practicing and devout Anglican . . . and a vigorous opponent of the Puritans and Calvinists." Auden comments that Herbert’s poetry is "the counterpart of Jeremy Taylor’s prose: together they are the finest expressions of Anglican piety at its best." Although comments such as these recognize the distinctively Anglican quality of Herbert’s work, they do not adequately describe Herbert’s Anglicanism. See Ilona Bell, "‘Setting Foot in Divinity’: George Herbert and the English Reformation," Essential Articles for the Study of George Herbert’s Poetry, ed., John R. Roberts (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1979), 63-64; Stanley Stewart, George Herbert, 6; Diana Benet, Secretary of Praise: The Poetic Vocation of George Herbert (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 15; Heather Asals, Equivocal Predication: George Herbert’s Way to God (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 5; T. S. Eliot, George Herbert (London: Longman Green, 1962), 11-12; W. H. Auden, ed., Herbert: Selected Poems (London: Penguin, 1973), 9-10. Rosemary van Wengen-Shute begins to describe Herbert’s Anglicanism in George Herbert and the Liturgy of the Church of England (Oegstgeest: Drukkerij de Kempenaer, 1981).

9 Neill distinguishes between the teaching of Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli, and indicates the strong Lutheran influence in Anglicanism. Strier and Veith do not


12 According to Bouyer, the term "Anglicanism" was first coined by F. D. Maurice. See Louis Bouyer, Orthodox Spirituality and Protestant and Anglican Spirituality (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), 104.

13 George Herbert is honored as "pastor and poet" in many parts of the Anglican communion on February 27. Poems such as "Praise (II)" continue to be sung throughout the Anglican communion, and Herbert has made a lasting contribution to English church architecture.

14 Although this expression is W. H. Auden’s, other notable Anglicans have emphasized Herbert’s quintessential Anglicanism. Some are mentioned in my first chapter. See also Paul Elmen, The Anglican Moral Choice (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1983), 9.


17 See James E. Griffiss, Anglican Pastoral Care (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1985), 1. Cf. Ilona Bell’s plea for "greater theological [i.e. doctrinal]


19 This definition is now generally accepted and encompasses previous definitions of Anglicanism as a unique synthesis or method. See Paul Avis, "What is Anglicanism," The Study of Anglicanism, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty, 405, 410; Michael Ramsey, The Anglican Spirit, 14-19; Urban T. Holmes, What is Anglicanism?, viii.


24 Ibid., 13.

25 For example, celibacy—a traditional Roman clerical requirement—was not part of English clerical life until the late eleventh century. See Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, 13-14, 21.


28 Elizabeth I thanked God that neither she nor her subjects were following "any new or foreign religions, but that very religion which the primitive and Catholic church sanctions, which the mind and voice of the most ancient Fathers with one consent approve." See Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, 39; and Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross, eds., Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated From the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (London: SPCK, 1935).
John Jewel, bishop of Salisbury under Elizabeth I, wrote An Apology of the Church of England (1564) in which he argued that England had not forsaken "the church as it was in old time" but had cleansed itself of novelties and corruption.” See Booty’s edition, p. 100. John Cosin (1594-1672) bishop of Durham, and Jeremy Taylor, bishop of Down and Connor (1613-1667) also argued eloquently for the church’s Catholicity and apostolic continuity. See The Anglican Tradition, ed. G. R. Evans and J. Robert Wright, 208, 212-215.


See Florence Higham, Catholic and Reformed, 51.

Lancelot Andrewes, the Arminian bishop of Winchester and Ely, is remembered chiefly for his sermons and his contribution to the Authorized Version of 1611. George Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury under James, is remembered for his Calvinism and his marksmanship. Together, these eminent divines demonstrate the breadth of early seventeenth century Anglicanism. See Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, 135-137, 141.


39 See Izaak Walton's Life of Mr. George Herbert (1665), (London: Nelson, 1940), 241, 262-269, 275. In Musae Responsoriae, which is dedicated to James, Charles, and Lancelot Andrewes, Herbert defends infant baptism and the sign of the cross, the wearing of the suplice and the biretta, learning and liturgy.


45 Note Herbert's characteristically Anglican emphasis on participation and relationship rather than on any systematic interest in doctrine, as well as the reverence and joy which pervades his description.

46 The Canons of 1604 required signing with the cross during Baptism. Fully one-third of the canons (46 of 141) deal with such issues of practice, allowing little compromise; about fifty Puritan priests resigned in consequence. See Florence Higham, Catholic and Reformed, 41-42 and "Harmony from Dissonance," The Anglican Tradition, 186-204.

47 On Herbert's supposed non-conformity or rebellion, see Ilona Bell, "'Setting Foot in Divinity,'" 66; Christopher Hodgkins, "Authority, Church, and Society," 3-9, 22-25, 71; Malcolmson, "Society and Self-Definition," 3-4; Michael Schoenfeldt, Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship (Chicago: University of


49 Ibid., 142-143.

50 Ibid., 188.

51 Ibid., 200.

52 Although Herbert assumes and affirms episcopal government throughout The Country Parson, he begins by saying that he means to speak of priests, not bishops (chap. 2, 225: 20-22; chap. 19, 253: 5-15). Patristic manuals sometimes spoke to the episcopate as well as the pastorate. Herbert says little about vestments, stipulating only that the parson should be decently dressed; yet Herbert constantly emphasizes conformity to church authority, and "Aaron" certainly suggests his full acceptance of priestly vestments.


54 Amy Charles, A Life of George Herbert, 143-52.

55 Ibid.

56 Higham mentions Overall's promotion of Arminianism at Cambridge (c. 1607), the early peace of Abbot's primacy and the later trials and executions (c. 1612), the Synod of Dort (1619), and the debate between Laud and the Jesuit Fisher (1622). William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury from 1633, was an unbending and zealous Arminian. See Higham, Catholic and Reformed, 50-66.

57 Ibid., 34, 49.
Although Puritan clergy were trained to preach through their own "Exercises" and Roman priests were rigorously trained in seminaries following the Council of Trent, there was virtually no formal training for the Anglican priesthood in Herbert's time. Cranmer had advocated systematic training, and standards of general education had risen appreciably by Herbert's time, yet there would be little formal training for centuries to come; hence there followed a great need for such a practical manual as The Country Parson. See Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, 85, 110-12, 124-26.

See Higham, Catholic and Reformed, 38.

On the prominence of pastoral care in the Anglican tradition and the pastoral ideal achieved by the Caroline divines, see James Griffiss, Anglican Theology and Pastoral Care, 2. John Thomas McNeill comments that "no other great communion has given more attention to the cure of souls, either in theory or practice"; William Wolf confirms this judgment. See A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper, 1951), 246 and The Spirit of Anglicanism, 161. On Herbert as the ideal Caroline pastor, see James Griffiss, Anglican Theology and Pastoral Care, 15, and Urban T. Holmes, III, What is Anglicanism?, 57-58.


Chap. 15, 250: 1-4. See Patterson, noted above, on the pastoral implications of incarnational thinking and the sacramental character of Anglican pastoral care.

See Gene Veith, Reformation Spirituality, 35; Richard Strier, Love Known, xi; Christopher Hodgkins, "Authority, Church, and Society," 81.

Because Arminianism involves both a theology of grace and a particular understanding of prayer, sacraments, preaching, and ceremonial conformity, it is useful to distinguish between "ceremonial" and "theological" Arminianism. See note 43.

The Book of Common Prayer often incorporates doctrine in worship, the obvious example being the Creeds. The Articles of Religion on works, faith, and receiving the sacrament, are clearly relational. On these propensities in Anglican thought and practice, see Michael Ramsey, The Anglican Spirit, 18-19.
While at Bemerton, Herbert annotated Nicholas Ferrar’s translation of the Castilian work, Valdesso's Considerations (c. 1550). Herbert’s reluctance to exceed scripture is evident on 315: 9-10, 319:21-320:7. On this Anglican tendency, see Neill, Anglicanism, 80.


See note 69.


Wall, Transformations of the Word, 6.


Chap. 32, 275: 22-23, 30-36. Herbert refers to the exhortation which begins the marriage service, The Book of Common Prayer, 1559: The Elizabethan
Prayer Book, ed. John E. Booty (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1976), 290, and does in microcosm what Taylor does in macrocosm in Holy Living; yet both show their Anglicanism by amplifying important passages from the Book of Common Prayer.


82 More and Cross, Anglicanism, xxv.

83 See Higham, Catholic and Reformed, 49-50. Herbert’s remarks pertain in part to the rigorous devotion which he feels is necessary to maintain his Christian state as a priest, regular personal prayer and study as well as saying the daily offices (chap. 31, 272).


85 John E. Booty, ed., The Book of Common Prayer, 1559 (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1976), 14. As Hales put it, "Infallibility either in judgement, or interpretation, or whatsoever, is annext neither to the See of any Bishop, nor the Councils, nor to the Church, nor to any created power whatsoever" (More and Cross, xxviii).

86 Laws, I. All references are to the Folger edition, and will be indicated parenthetically.


Anglican Theology and Pastoral Care, 16; More and Cross, Anglicanism, xxiv. As More and Cross suggest,

To the Arians, Christ was neither quite God nor quite man, but something intermediary which resembled the natures of both without being purely either. Against this plausible and seemingly reasonable escape between the horns of faith’s dilemma . . . the Church, by the Definition of Chalcedon, simply thrust its way through the middle by making the personality of the Incarnate so large as to carry with it both natures. Evidently...at least the principle of measure does not produce a diminished or half truth, but acts as a law of restraint preventing either one of two aspects of a paradoxical truth from excluding the other. Nor is the middle way here a mean of compromise, but a mean of comprehension.

89 For example, Donald Dickson notes "the fluidity of Herbert’s position in this controversy [about his sacramental theology]," but ascribes his inconclusiveness to Herbert’s art and lack of Anglican uniformity: "Herbert’s Eucharistic Celebration," 1, 12. Richard Strier responds to the inconclusiveness of the MLA special session by advocating clearer doctrinal distinctions: ‘Getting Off the Map: Response to ‘George Herbert’s Theology: Nearer Rome or Geneva?’, George Herbert Journal 11 (1987): 41-48.

50 C.J. Stranks, Anglican Devotion, 270.

91 See Louis Bouyer, Orthodox Spirituality, 109; H.R. McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, 1. McAdoo draws attention to the distinctiveness of Hooker’s method, and defines Anglicanism in terms of it (v, v-vi). The correct analogy for Hooker’s method is not a three-legged stool or even three factors in an equation, for the authority of scripture is supreme according to Articles 6, 20-21. However, as Hooker realized, scripture is sometimes silent or unclear, and even when it speaks directly, it requires reason to be understood and must be taught (Laws, I.vii.4, III.viii.10-14).


94 Note Herbert’s use of domestic metaphor--a distinguishing feature of his poetry.

95 See the following statements about Herbert’s alleged extreme Calvinism and rebellion: Barbara K. Lewalski, Protestant Poetics, 25, 286; Christopher Hodgkins, "Authority, Church, and Society," 3-9, 22-25, 71, 101; Gene Veith, Reformation Spirituality, chap. 2; Michael Schoenfeldt, Prayer and Power, 60; Cristina Malcolmson, "Society and Self-Definition," 3-4; Ilona Bell, "‘Setting Foot in
Divinity'," 66.


98 Practicality is the concern for the common and useful; pragmatism is the test of use. Both terms have been applied to Anglican spirituality, notably by Owen Chadwick as he describes the attitude of the English clergy (The Reformation, 135), and by More and Cross as they discuss the topics of controversy in the English Church (xxxiii-xxxv, lxxii, 6). See also Paul Elmen, The Anglican Moral Choice, 9 and Horton Davies, From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 106.


101 Theoretical and specialized knowledge were certainly needed to produce the Preces and Authorized Version; the practicality lies in the usefulness and accessibility of the works. See Florence Higham, Reformed and Catholic, 48-52.

102 See Louis Bouyer, Orthodox Spirituality, 125.


104 The injunctions in 1 Corinthians 14 that everything pertaining to worship be done decently and in order are the common property of all Christians; however, these principles have assumed particular prominence in Anglicanism. See the preface to the Book of Common Prayer, Hooker's Laws, III.vii.1 and Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living (ed. Stanwood), 36-37. Walton's Life of Herbert portrays Herbert's deep concerns in this regard.

105 Stephen Neill and Owen Chadwick describe this process of coalescence admirably in Anglicanism (chaps. 3-5) and The Reformation (chaps. 4-6).

106 The monarch is "the defender of the faith," keeping the civil order required for religious devotion and appointing the bishops; the articles and prayers of the
Prayer Books support the crown.


110 Although Anglicanism values all human endeavour, it is particularly conducive to intellectual and literary activity. See A.M. Allchin, "Anglican Spirituality," The Study of Anglicanism, 313-25.

111 Once he had responded to Roman Catholic allegations, Jewel showed the positive nature of Anglicanism by asserting what Anglicans did believe in Part II of his Apology: Hooker refutes the Calvinist position, but shows the same desire to emphasize whatever is good (Laws, I.i.1). See also C.J. Stranks, Anglican Devotion, 278-79.

112 One thinks, for instance, of Pilgrim’s apocalyptic "plight" and his burdensome knowledge that he "walked through the wilderness of this world" in the opening of The Pilgrim’s Progress, a state which his salvation early in the tale does little to cure.

113 One recalls the rigours of Ignatius’s Spiritual Exercises or the exertions of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest in Piers Plowman. Anglicanism is not a rigorous tradition, and the fourteenth Article of Religion condemns works of supererogation.

114 Higham describes the yearly round of parish activities as it would have been in Herbert’s parish: Catholic and Reformed: A Study of the Anglican Church, 1559-1662, 70-72.

115 The range of emotion in The Temple (Herbert’s "inner weather," as Aldous Huxley called it) is well known; his determination is evident from Walton’s Life. For discussions of Herbert’s courtliness, see Marion Singleton, God’s Courtier: Configuring a Different Grace in George Herbert’s "Temple" (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and Michael Schoenfeldt, Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).


117 See note 8.
O that I might some other hearts convert,
And so take up at use good store:
That to thy chest there might be coming in
Both all my praise, and more!
"Praise (III)," ll. 39-42

The Country Parson helps us to understand not only Herbert's religious and political views, but also the apparent lack of unity of The Temple, the changeable nature of Herbert's voice, and the belief that he belongs in "the school of Donne." As we saw earlier, readers are often puzzled by the contradictory qualities of The Temple. Although the various poems and parts of The Temple seem tenuously related, most readers rightly assume that Herbert arranged his poems as carefully as he crafted them. Although Herbert's poetic voice is urgent and personal in poems such as "Affliction (IV)," it is controlled and public in poems such as "Mans medley." Although the dramatic opening and spurned love of "The Collar" and the extravagant wit of "Prayer (I)" suggest an affinity with John Donne’s Songs and Sonets (1633), the elegance, composure, and precision of poems such as "Man" and "Aaron" suggest an affinity with Ben Jonson’s Epigrammes and Underwood (1616). Even the most perceptive readers are unable to resolve these strange paradoxes without the benefit of The Country Parson, which describes Herbert's attitude to language, his modes of expression, and his artistic purposes. As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, The Temple is unified by Herbert's pastoral purpose, persona, and methods. His poetic voice is sometimes as impassioned and personal as Donne’s and at other times as composed and public as Jonson’s because a priest must make his personal life public. And Herbert’s poetry is both witty and plain, because as a priest he must be all things
to all men and minister differently to different people.

I shall begin by discussing the unity of The Temple, the most difficult--and the most revealing--problem facing its readers. Previous commentators have occasionally suggested that The Temple's profusion of form was somehow unified by its purpose. In the eighteenth century, Ryley suggested that we are "sprinkled and taught" on "The Church-porch," that "The Church" portrays the spiritual life of a "sound member" of the congregation, and that "The Church Militant" is a prayer for "the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on Earth." More recently, Martz has described "The Church-porch" and "The Church" as contemplative preparation for the active Christian life portrayed in "The Church Militant." And Fish has suggested that poems such as "Jesu" and "Love-joy" may reflect a catechetical method. These readings are certainly useful, and indeed insightful. Yet, for Ryley and Martz, the purpose of "The Church" is essentially private. My reading extends Fish's by drawing upon The Country Parson to further describe Herbert's rhetorical strategy and use of public modes of discourse throughout The Temple.

My suggestion that The Temple reflects the pastoral purposes described in The Country Parson does not diminish Herbert's artistry. Herbert wrote his lyrics partly for the artistic delight of doing so. But he obviously delighted in transforming secular traditions to sacred ends, as the "Jordan" poems indicate. I merely suggest that we explore Herbert's public purposes as well as his personal ones by imagining ourselves as part of Herbert's congregation and his voice as that of his country parson's.

The Country Parson tells us much about Herbert's pastoral purposes. For example, Herbert's ideal priest "desires to be all to his parish," to comfort his parishioners in their various afflictions and to school them individually in their faith.
But to be effective, he must "fit his discourse" to his various auditors, providing "as many encouragements to goodnesse as he can." Whether he is preaching, catechizing, or visiting, the parson procures his auditors' attention by "particularizing his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich." The parson speaks plainly to the plain spoken, the recalcitrant, and the unperceptive (chap. 21, 256-57).

Such pastoral considerations may account for the resolute plainness of "The Church-porch" and "The Church Militant" as well as poems in "The Church" such as "The Sacrifice" and "Providence." The parson speaks more subtly to "those of higher quality, [for] they commonly are quick, and sensible, and very tender of reproof: and therefore he lays his discourse so, that he comes to the point very leisurely, and oftentimes, as Nathan did, in the person of another, making them reprove themselves" (chap. 14, 248: 17-22). Such an awareness of the needs and temperament of Herbert’s more perceptive and aesthetically-sensitive auditors may explain the intricacy of his lyrics, as well as their elusive ordering and their example of a faith which is so deep and pure as to implicitly question our own. The parson also "condescends to humane frailties both in himselse and others; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, according to the pulse of the hearer" (chap. 27, 268: 5-8). Such concerns may account for such cheerful poetic fancies as "Paradise," which might otherwise seem out of place in a devotional work. But one should not mistake the variety and complexity of The Temple for mere obscurity.

Herbert’s poems are rarely vague or disconsolate. Admittedly,"The Answer" is remarkable for its enigmatic conclusion ("Show me, and send me, I have one reply / Which they that know the rest, know more than I"). "Church-monuments" does
disintegrate and "collapse," if only to convey its theme of decay. The bitter dejection of "Affliction (IV)" is itself unrelieved, though it is answered later. But we should not conclude that all of Herbert’s poems are "deeply unstable utterances" or assume that assurance eluded him, for his purpose in his poetry as well as his parish is "to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation . . . to multiply and build up this knowledge to a spiritual Temple" and to comfort the afflicted by comparing "the moment of griefs here with the weight of joyes hereafter." In fact, Herbert’s pastoral purposes are most evident in his characteristic effort to bring unstable utterances under control, as in "The Collar" and "The Storm." Here, violent emotion and tortured logic are expressed in ragged stanzas, whose turbulence is subdued and answered in the quiet regularity of the poems’ respective endings:

But as I rav’d and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thought I heard one calling, Child!
And I reply’d, My Lord.
("The Collar")

Poets have wrong’d poore storms: such dayes are best;
They purge the aire without, within the breast.
("The Storm")

Such a progress towards meaning and consolation recalls both the priest of The Country Parson who insists on "the evident declaration of meaning" and the poet of Walton’s Life of Herbert who would have his manuscript burned "unless it turn to the good on any dejected poor soul."

As a priest, Herbert is determined to communicate clearly and to comfort effectually. "To this end, [the country parson] hath thoroughly digested all the points of consolation" and has developed a facility for the "plain and evident declaration of meaning" (235: 1-2, 249: 17). Accordingly, Herbert does not sacrifice clarity to
artifice in *The Temple*, even though he retains more ingenuity and artifice than a superficial reading of the "Jordan" poems might suggest. Sometimes, he states his meaning so plainly that only a hint of wit remains, as in "Perirrhanterium":

Abstain wholly, or wed. Thy bounteous Lord
Allows thee choise of paths: take no by-wayes;
But gladly welcome what he doth afford;
Not grudging, that thy lust hath bounds and staies.
    Continence hath his joy: weigh both; and so
    If rottenness have more, let Heaven go.

Drink not the third glasse, which thou canst not tame,
When once it is within thee; but before
Mayst rule it, as thou list; and poure the shame,
    Which it would poure on thee, upon the floore.
    It is most just to throw that on the ground,
    Which would throw me there, if I keep the round.
(II. 13-18, 25-30)

Sometimes, Herbert employs more paradox and conceits, as in "Vertue" and "The H. Communion," though not so much as to obscure meaning. Although poems such as "Clasping of hands" and "Josephs coat" involve complicated logic and spiritual anxiety, the reader is not left to wander disconsolately, for they often conclude with bold, positive statements:

O be mine still! still make me thine!
Or rather make no Thine and Mine.
("Clasping of hands")

I live to show his power, who once did bring
My joys to weep, and now my griefs to sing.
("Josephs coat")

And even finely wrought lyrics such as "Love (III)" frequently retain a characteristic simplicity and clarity. What seems like elegant variation or artistic exuberance usually ends up contributing to the fabric and sense of a poem. The complex stanza structure of "Mans medley", for example, aptly conveys the sense of man's double
nature which gives him double joy and double trouble.

"The Call" nicely illustrates Herbert's pastoral emphasis on communication and consolation. Like "Prayer (I)," "Paradise," and "Coloss. 3.3," this short poem has a strength beyond its witty paradoxes, for its ingenuity is a means of communication rather than an end in itself.

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart;
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joyes in love.

The strength of "The Call" derives largely from Herbert’s proclamation of scripture, most obviously in its opening line but also in the first lines of the second and third stanzas. Herbert emphasizes his joyful invitation verbally by the repetition of terms, visually by the capitalization, and vocally by the extra beat which begins each line and creates a mystical seventh syllable.

Although the ordering principle of "The Church" is unclear without the aid of The Country Parson, the manuscript evidence indicates that Herbert carefully ordered his sequence of poems. As Amy Charles suggests, Herbert "clearly had in mind the tri-partite form that The Temple would follow," because both manuscripts are divided into the three sections of the first edition. The order of the first sixteen poems and the last nine poems remains virtually unchanged from the early Williams to the later
Bodleian manuscript, suggesting that Herbert always intended to lead us from the earthly grief of "The Sacrifice" to the heavenly consolation of "Judgement" and "Love (III)."₁³

Charles rightly describes Herbert's ordering of his poems as "allusive," for he clearly intends us to associate various poems in "The Church," but the order is not as obscure as Charles suggests.₁⁴ Herbert guides our steps through The Temple by the titles of his poems. He draws our attention to numerous sequences of poems by giving them shared titles such as "Affliction (I-V)" or "Love (I-III)." He also includes several groups of poems on a single subject such as church furnishings, church festivals, church services, or the priesthood. And he emphasizes the connections between his poems through repeated images, themes, and rhyme schemes.₁⁵

Indeed, so carefully has Herbert ordered our progress that it is perilous to read any poem out of context. By itself, the angry outburst which opens "The Collar" demands to be taken seriously; in context, the outburst is highly ironic, for the speaker makes much of his own suffering when Christ's crucifixion has just been described in "The Bag." If one were to take "The Answer" out of context, one would have the mistaken impression of personal doubt and poetic abdication--a "Fishian" Herbert (ll. 13-14). But the title suggests dialogue, and the context is a sequence of consolation, despair, and reconciliation ("A True Hymne," "The Answer," and "A Dialogue-Antheme.") One might also assume that Herbert spurns all earthly pleasures in "The Rose," were the pleasures it mentions not defined in the preceding poem, "The Forerunners." But Herbert's lyrics resemble his congregation: they depend upon one another for meaning, and the truth is present only when two or three are gathered together.
The ordering of the poems often reflects the profound understanding of both human failing and God's grace which characterizes The Country Parson.\(^{16}\) For example, the desperation of "Affliction (IV)" between the resolute faith of "The Pearl" and the sublime consolation of "Man" suggests the moral of "The Parson's Consideration of Providence," that while faith does not exempt one from suffering, suffering can increase faith. The fact that the anxiety of "Employment (II)" and "Denial" is punctuated by the festivity of "Christmas" reflects the pastoral importance given to festivals in "The Parson's Church." There is a touch of pastoral irony in the fact that "Sinne" occurs between "Mattens" and "Even-song," recalling Herbert's observation in "The Parson in Circuit" that "on Sundays it is easie for [his parishioners] to compose themselves to order, which they put on as their holy-day cloathes . . . but commonly the next day put off both" (247: 5-10). Such organization reflects not only the pastor's understanding of human nature and divine intervention but his own method of interpretation. "For all Truth being consonant to it self, and all being penn'd by one and the self-same Spirit, it cannot be, but that an industrious and judicious comparing of place with place must be a singular help for the right understanding of the Scriptures."\(^{17}\)

There are many good reasons to regard The Temple as a coherent whole, besides Herbert's careful arrangement of his poems. First, there is the bibliographic evidence. The manuscripts and the first edition bear the familiar page headings of "The Church-porch," "The Church," and "The Church Militant." And while "The Church Militant" is separated from "The Church" by five blank pages in the Williams manuscript, it is only separated by one page in the Bodleian manuscript, and is not separated at all in the first edition.\(^{18}\) Second, there is an obvious cultural argument.
Whatever Herbert's intention, the three sections of *The Temple* have become associated in our cultural memory because they have always been published together. Third, the first two sections are also linked by their conceit of physical progress through a church. One passes through the porch, pauses at the inside door ("Superliminare"), and approaches the altar. Fourth, the three sections are more alike in form than is generally supposed. On occasion, "The Church-porch" is almost as imaginative, conceited, and paradoxical as the lyrics ("Perirrhanterium," ll. 79-84, 451-56). Some of the poems in "The Church"--for instance, "Grace," "Providence," "Dialogue," "The Pearl," and the second part of "Christmas"--are as didactic and unadorned as "The Church-porch." And the conceit of physical progress, the personal interjections, the witty comments, the liturgical refrains, and the imagery and themes of "The Church Militant" all remind one of "The Church." But the best reason to regard *The Temple* as a single work is the coherence provided by Herbert's pastoral purpose, persona, and methods--all of which are described in *The Country Parson*.

As we saw earlier, the sheer variety of Herbert's poetic forms suggests his desire to be all things to all men. More specifically, his purpose in his poetry as well as his parish is "to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation in [his auditors] . . . and to multiply and build up this knowledge to a spiritual Temple" (255: 4-5). He proposes to instruct and convince his auditors without disenchanting or tiring them, by the process of "pausing yet pressing" them and "mingling his discourses" (231: 20). Just as the parson occasionally "intermits [preaching] against some great Festivall, that he may better celebrate it, or for the variety of the hearers, that he may be heard at his returne more attentively," so festive poems such as "Easter Wings" and "Christmas" punctuate the round of instruction and petition in "The Church" (232: 20-24). And
just as the parson offers his auditors "instructions seasoned with pleasantness to make
his higher purposes slip the easier," so the stern moralism of "Perirrhanterium" is
relieved by occasional wit and we find ourselves amused by poetic novelties such as
"Anagram" in "The Church."

The priest's persona is pervasive and sometimes explicit. Even the dedication
in The Temple suggests the priestly figure, someone who desires our good and who
would accomplish this pastoral purpose through his verses:

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

As in the "Jordan" poems, the urbane wit and finished quality of the verse belies the
humble poet and "first fruits."21 We do not overhear a private prayer so much as a
public one on our behalf, one that recalls the offertory prayer in the Anglican
communion service ("All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we
given thee"). The speaker implicitly challenges us to "make a gain" from The Temple,
a challenge which he makes explicitly in the verses which follow:

Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes inohce
Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure;
Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance
Ryme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure.
    A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies,
    And turn delight into a sacrifice.
("

Herbert's pastoral purpose could hardly be more clearly stated or his priestly persona
be more evident. The pleasures of The Temple are for our good, designed by the
priestly poet to lure us to the "mystical repast" portrayed in "Love (III)."
Herbert’s pastoral purpose and persona also provides a bridge between "The Church" and "The Church Militant." Although the word "FINIS" follows "Love (III)," suggesting that section is finished, the persona intones the Gloria:

Glory be to God on high
And on earth peace
Good will towards men.

The idea of God’s glory being revealed in history is then worked out in "The Church Militant," as its opening suggests:

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

Periodically, the voice forcefully reminds us of God’s glory with an almost liturgical refrain: "How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are! / Who may with thee compare?"

The sense we have of someone who creates an atmosphere of worship and represents us to God finds its final expression in "L’Envoy" and in the prayer which follows, which recall respectively "Praise (II)" and "Trinitie Sunday":

King of Glorie, King of Peace,
With the one make warre to cease;
With the other blesse thy sheep,
Thee to love, in thee to sleep.

Blessed be God alone,
Thrice blessed Three in one.

Appropriately, the priest has the last word in The Temple as well as the first.

Let us consider the pastoral purposes which inform "The Church" in more detail. As I have suggested, the poet-priest begins to "rhyme us to good" with the
admonitions of "Perirrhanterium." This poem is not simply addressed to Herbert's brother or even to his courtly type, as is sometimes alleged. For as much as "Perirrhanterium" admonishes "Gallants" and their besetting sins (drunkenness, idleness, wantonness, and affectation), no stratum of society is exempt from its warnings. Whether or not modern readers enjoy its style or tone, Herbert clearly intends everyone to benefit from such practical and timeless advice, even as the voice of "Superliminare" instructs us:

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

Avoid, Profanenesse; come not here:
Nothing but holy, pure, and cleare,
Or that which groneth to be so,
May at his peril further go.
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Thus prepared, we immediately proceed to "The Altar," where we begin to sample "the churches mysticall repast." As we continue our progress, we enter more deeply into the liturgical life of "The Church" and continue to be admonished and taught.

Sometimes the pastor acknowledges his joint office of poet and priest or reminds us of his purpose. The voice of "Obedience" confides:

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How happy were my part,
If some kinde man would thrust his heart
Into these lines; till in heav'n's Court of Rolls
They were by winged souls
Entered for both, farre above their desert!
("Obedience,"41-45)
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In "Bitter-sweet," the voice declares: "Since thou dost love, yet strike; / Cast down, yet help afford; / Sure I will do the like" (ll. 2-4). Only a priest can stand "in Gods stead to his Parish, and dischargeth God what he can of his promises" (chap. 20, 254:}
8-10). Occasionally, the poet implicitly takes God’s place:

Oh all ye, who passe by, whose eyes and minde  
To worldly things are sharp, but to me blinde;  
To me, who took eyes that I might you finde:  
Was ever grief like mine?  
("The Sacrifice," 1-4)

Sometimes the poet explicitly assumes the role of intermediary between God and man. For instance, the voice of "Praise (III)" frankly declares his desire to convert members of the congregation:

O that I might some other hearts convert,  
And so take up at use good store:  
That to thy chest there might be coming in  
Both all my praise, and more!

And the voice of "The Invitation" repeatedly invites the implied congregation of "The Church" to the eucharist:

Come ye hither All, whose taste  
Is your waste;  
Save your cost, and mend your fare.  
God is here prepar’d and drest,  
And the feast,  
God, in whom all dainties are. (1-6)

Indeed, this invitation echoes the exhortation and "comfortable words" before Holy Communion ("You that do truly and earnestly repent . . . Draw near / Come unto me, all that travail and be heavy laden and I shall refresh you").

Most often, the voice simply assumes the conjunction of his pastoral and artistic concerns. Thus, the vocation he speaks of in "Employment (I)" is both priestly and poetic, for his public employment involves God’s praise (23-24). The same could be said of the other poems in this sequence, "Jordan (I)" and "The Temper (I-II)." Although poetic style is the ostensible subject of these poems, Herbert speaks as a priest no less than a poet when he asks "How should I praise thee, Lord?" in "The
Temper (I)." The answer is also the same for both priest and poet, to "copie out . . .
sweetnesse readie penn'd," though the process is not as easy as Herbert makes it seem
in "Jordan (II)."

Just as "the Countrey Parson is very exact in the governing of his house,
making it a copy and modell for his Parish," so Herbert's poems portray a
representative Christian life. Despite his anxiety and temptations, he strives for
devotion, accepts forgiveness, and finds salvation. The very difficulty and
circuitousness of his spiritual progress suggests that he is not so much a model
Christian as a modeller of Christianity. We see Herbert's pastoral desire to make his
personal life public in order to benefit us most clearly in "The Pilgrimage," which
portrays a devout life in microcosm. We are also made aware of the priest's example
in "Providence," for the voice asks "But who hath praise enough? nay, who hath any?"
to make us realize the meagreness of our praise. In quite another way as well,
Herbert's pastoralism sometimes becomes tangible.

Herbert is determined to build up "The Church" physically as well as
spiritually. He describes the parson's plan of construction in "The Parson's Church,"
a chapter which we considered earlier in a different context:

First he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plaistered,
windows glazed, floore paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform,
especially that the Pulpit, the Desk, and Communion Table, and Font be
as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them.
Secondly, that the Church be swept, and kept cleane without dust, or
Cobwebs, and at great festivalls strawed, and stuck with boughs, and
perfumed with incense. Thirdly, that there be fit, and proper texts of
Scripture every where painted. (chap. 13, 246: 3-14)

Herbert follows this plan of construction in his poetry, just as he did in the
reconstruction of his first parish church in Leighton. Herbert creates walls by
dividing *The Temple* into "The Church-porch" and "The Church." He conveys the construction of an altar, perhaps a communion table:

A broken A L T A R, Lord, thy servant reares,  
Made of a heart, and cemented by teares:  
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;  
No workmans tool hath touch’d the same.  
A H E A R T alone  
Is such as stone,  
As nothing but  
Thy pow’r doth cut.  
Wherefore each part  
Of my hard heart  
Meets in this frame,  
To praise thy Name:  
That, if I chance to hold my peace,  
These stones to praise thee may not cease.  
O let thy blessed S A C R I F I C E be mine,  
And sanctifie this A L T A R to be thine.

Herbert heightens the reader’s sense of being in church with poems describing corporate prayer, the administration of the sacraments, the priesthood, church festivals, and church architecture. "The Church-floore" conveys the laying of floor stones and the sweeping of the church:

Mark you the floore? that square & speckled stone,  
Which looks so firm and strong,  
Is Patience:

And th’ other black and grave, wherewith each one  
Is checker’d all along,  
Humilitie:

The gentle rising, which on either hand  
Leads to the Quire above,  
Is Confidence:

But the sweet cement, which in one sure band  
Ties the whole frame, is Love  
And Charitie.

Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains  
The marbles neat and curious veins:
But all is cleansed when the marble weeps.
Sometimes Death, puffing at the doore,
Blows all the dust about the floore:
But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps.
Blest be the Architect, whose art
Could build so strong in a weak heart.

Although God is the divine architect, Herbert is also an architect in his capacity as priest and poet. The priestly character of Herbert's poetic voice is revealed in the opening of the poem which follows "The Church-floore"; for only a priest--or someone desperate to be a priest--would ask, "Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?" ("The Windows"). Although "The Odour" portrays the individual soul passing to heaven, it also suggests Herbert's perfuming of "The Church" with incense, as he recommends in "The Parson's Church." And, in addition to "The Odour: 2. Cor. 2. 15," Herbert paints verses of scripture in "The Church" with such titles as "Coloss. 3.3.: Our life is hid with Christ in God," and "Ephes. 4.30: Grieve not the holy Spirit."

Nor is Herbert's construction and furnishing of "The Church" the only pastoral practice which unifies The Temple.

Herbert provides a succinct summary of pastoral practice in "The Parson on Sundays." The parson begins his day with his private devotions or "ordinary prayers" as he calls them, and proceeds to his public duties:

Then having read divine Service twice fully, and preached in the morning, and catechized in the afternoone, he thinks that he hath in some measure . . . discharged the publick duties of the Congregation.
(235:21; 236: 6-10)

He spends the afternoon visiting the sick, reconciling neighbours, and otherwise providing "exhortations to some of his flock by themselves, whom his Sermons cannot, or doe not reach" (236: 10-13). "At night he thinks it a very fit time, both suitable to the joy of the day, and without hinderance to publick duties, either to
entertaine some of his neighbours, or to be entertained of them, where he takes
occasion to discourse of such things as are both profitable, and pleasant" (236: 18-22).
He then ends his day as he began it, with private prayer (236: 27). The various
priestly modes and methods which Herbert mentions here and describes elsewhere in
The Country Parson--private prayer, public worship, preaching, catechizing, and
entertaining--all inform the style of The Temple. I shall discuss the stylistic
influence of each mode in turn.

It is tempting to suggest that each of the three main sections of The Temple
reflects a single mode of expression described in The Country Parson. "The Church-
porch" does remind one of a long and moralistic sermon. There is a strong sense of
worship and ceremony in "The Church." And the recital of salvation history in "The
Church Militant" may suggest contemporary catechisms, as Fish observes. But
Herbert incorporates various modes of expression in each section of The Temple,
much as Herbert blends various kinds of prose to produce the distinctive form of The
Country Parson. Such strategies suggest not only an innate eclecticism but also an
Anglican inclusiveness.

Terry Sherwood is quite right to draw our attention to the pervasiveness of
prayer in The Temple, and to suggest that such prayerful art implies an art of prayer.
Sometimes we do indeed seem to overhear private prayer, as in the fervent conclusion
of "Confession":

Wherefore my faults and sinnes,
Lord, I acknowledge; take thy plagues away:
For since confession pardon winnes,
I challenge here the brightest day,
The clearest diamond: let them do their best,
They shall be thick and cloudie to my breast.
But *The Country Parson* indicates Herbert’s typically Anglican concern for public rather than private prayer, by saying only that private prayers may sometimes be added to "the fasting dayes of the Church and the dayly [common] prayers enjoyned him by auctority" (237: 20-25). In *The Temple*, what seems to be private prayer usually turns out to be public. In "The Quip," for instance, the voice repeatedly intones the words, "But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me" (ll. 8,12,16,20). Although each statement seems to be a private ejaculation, their cumulative effect is liturgical. "Prayer (II)" is almost completely emptied of the personal, to make room for God, whose presence is the subject (stanzas 1-3). The poem’s public declarations ("thou" and "our") vastly overshadow its private musings ("I" and "mine"), following Herbert’s injunctions on the liturgy in "The Parson Praying." Similarly, "Providence" progresses from the personal "I" to public statement "we," and includes a prayer on our behalf:

> Wherefore, most sacred Spirit, I here present  
> For me and all my fellows praise to thee:  
> We all acknowledge both thy power and love  
> To be exact, transcendent, and divine;  
> Who dost so strongly and so sweetly move,  
> While all things have their will, yet none but thine.  (ll. 25-32)

"The art of prayer" which Sherwood acknowledges is actually described by Herbert in *The Country Parson*, particularly in "The Parson praying" which I mentioned earlier in another context:

> The Countrey Parson, when he is to read divine services, composeth himselfe to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may expresse a hearty, and unfeyned devotion . . . .presenting with himselfe the whole Congregation, whose sins he then beares, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar . . . knowing that no Sermon moves them so much to a reverence, which they forget againe, when they come to pray, as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying . . . .Besides his example, he having often instructed his people how to carry themselves in divine
Although Herbert is concerned with inward devotion here, he is much more concerned with its outward expression and with its pastoral effect. All manner of technique and artifice may be employed to this pastoral end, so long as the priest's devotion is genuine. Notably, his techniques are both visual and vocal, spiritual and emotive.

The parson is also concerned that his congregation be suitably instructed, so they know "how to carry themselves in divine service." In fact, he is prepared to go to considerable lengths to prompt them to respond properly to his prayers, "gently and pausably, thinking what they say; so that while they answer, 'As it was in the beginning, &c. they meditate as they speak" (231: 32-34).

The priest instructs the reader "how to behave [him]self in church," most obviously in "The Church-porch." But the reader is also instructed how to pray in "The Offering":

Come, bring thy gift. If blessings were as slow
As mens returns, what would become of fools?
What hast thou there? a heart? but is it pure?
Search well and see; for hearts have many holes.

But all I fear is lest thy heart displease,
As neither good, nor one: so oft divisions
Thy lusts have made, and not thy lusts alone;
Thy passions also have their set partitions.
These parcell out thy heart: recover these,
And thou mayst offer many gifts in one.

There is a balsome, or indeed a bloud,
Dropping from heav’n, which doth both cleanse and close
All sorts of wounds; of such strange force it is.
Seek out this All-heal, and seek no repose,
Untill thou finde and use it to thy good:
Then bring thy gift, and let thy hymne be this. (ll. 1-4, 13-24)

Herbert follows these instructions with a hymn written in the dimeters familiar from
"Praise (II)." He ends "The Method" with a strong admonition to pray and a proclamation of grace (29-32). "Windows" emphasizes the (liturgical) fusion of the said ("word") and the seen ("glass"), "Doctrine and life, colours and light."

"Mortification" ends in prayer (35-36) and introduces a note of pageantry or ritual.

Perhaps "Affliction (V)" best demonstrates the use of multiple modes and moods, by reflecting the liturgical technique of "The Parson praying." Although the "Affliction" poems are commonly read simply as statements of personal struggle, the voice in "Affliction (V)" quickly moves from the personal ("I") to the corporate ("we," "us," "ours"), from despair ("tempests") to consolation ("Angels" and "relief"):

My God, I read this day,
That planted paradise was not so firm
As was and is thy floating Ark; whose stay
And anchor thou art onely, to confirm
And strengthen it in ev'ry age,
When waves do rise, and tempests rage.

At first we liv'd in pleasure;
Thine own delights thou didst to us impart:
When we grew wanton, thou didst use displeasure
To make us thine: yet that we might not part
As we at first did board with thee,
Now thou wouldst taste our miserie.

There is but joy and grief;
If either will convert us, we are thine:
Some Angels us'd the first; if our relief
Take up the second, then thy double line
And sev'ral baits in either kinde
Furnish thy table to thy minde.

Affliction then is ours;
We are the trees, whom shaking fastens more,
While blustering windes destroy the wanton bowres,
And ruffle all their curious knots and store.
My God, so temper joy and wo,
That thy bright beams may tame thy bow.

The striking simplicity and intimacy of the opening of this poem recalls the opening of
"Man" ("My God, I heard this day"). This is not only the intimacy of the devout, but of the priest whose duties require constant discourse with God. Herbert develops an analogy between Eden (pleasure) and the Ark (tribulation), leading to the syllogism of stanza three: "There is but joy and grief; / If either will convert us, we are thine." But as closely argued as it is, this poem also relies upon its visual suggestions of the cross and its resolution in prayer. Here, as in a poem such as "Coloss. 3.3." ("Our life is hid . . . "), Herbert follows his advice to the parson in prayer to use visual as well as auditory effects. The reason is obvious, once one adopts the parson’s perspective, for some members of the congregation will respond most to spectacle, others to shifts in mood, still others to argument.

The parson’s methods are also seen in the eucharistic poems. Although The Temple is not simply unified by a "eucharistic structure," the priest’s administration of the sacraments provides continuity to "The Church," reflecting the centrality of the eucharist in Anglican worship. Most obviously, "The Priesthood" and "Aaron" reflect the priest’s hesitation over "what behaviour to assume for so holy things . . . being not only to receive God but to break and administer him" (257: 26-30).

But th’ holy men of God such vessels are,  
As serve him up, who all the world commands:  
When God vouchsafeth to become’ our fare,  
Their hands convey him, who conveys their hands.  
O what pure things, most pure must those things be,  
Who bring my God to me!  
("The Priesthood," 25-30)

The order of the poems in "The Church" sometimes conveys the celebrant’s perspective. "The Church" begins with "The Altar," a poem that recalls "the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" of Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer. "The H. Communion" is linked to "The British Church" by its concern with "fine
"Love (I)" and "Love (II)," which describe the purification of desire, look back to "The Altar" and forward to "Love (III)." And the implied setting of "The Dawning" is the mystical banquet of "Love (III)" and "The Altar" at which a sad heart becomes thankful and eyes are restored.

Sometimes the reader is aware that he is being led to worship by the priest. For example, the priest brings the reader and worshiper under the divine gaze in "The Glance," and then leads him to worship in "The 23d Psalme." The priest does not merely receive the eucharist, he also celebrates it for us. For instance, Herbert fashions hieroglyphs of altars in "Marie Magdalene," not only conveying the idea of sacrifice, but bringing us visually to the altar. Then, in "The Invitation," the poet-priest not only invites us to approach the altar ("Come ye hither All"), but also prays that God will inform the "dainties" at the "feast":

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Lord I have invited all,} \\
\text{And I shall} \\
\text{Still invite, still call to thee:} \\
\text{For it sees but just and right} \\
\text{In my sight,} \\
\text{Where is All, there All should be. (II. 31-36)}
\end{align*}
\]

Surely this is an exhortation or prayer, rather than a personal reflection.\(^{33}\)

Herbert's pastoral modes of expression are seen in The Temple not only in its frequent public prayer and eucharistic worship, but in its frequent sermons. "Perirrhanterium" is a sermon by Herbert’s definition ("a set, and laboured, and continued speech"), and explores the traditional sermon topic of deadly sins and cardinal virtues.\(^{34}\) Although "Affliction (III)" appears to be a personal discussion with God, it is also a sermon in the sense that "a holy Life . . . even it selfe is a Sermon. For 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" (chap. 33, 278: 11-18). The sort of sermon is exemplified by "The Pearl," in which the voice recounts past ruling desires (learning, courtliness, and sensuality), and concludes with a strong statement of faith. Poems like "The Pearl" and "The Glimpse," which are homiletic rather than devotional, seem rather pointless when they are misread as personal statements.

The most obvious examples of preaching in The Temple are the poems alluded to earlier as verses painted in "The Church": "Colos. 3.3 ("Our life is hid . . . )," "Ephes. 4. 30 ("Grieve not the Holy Spirit . . . )," and "The Odour" (2 Cor. 2. 15). Here, the parson ingeniously explicates and expounds his text, preaching sermons in miniature. But Herbert’s preaching technique subtly informs many other poems. Some of Herbert’s advice in "The Parson Preaching" is purely rhetorical: he explains precisely how to get and keep his auditors’ wandering attention. "When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art," by "earnestnesse and particularizing his speech," by warning his auditors of the gravity of his discourse, and by telling them stories and sayings which they will remember (232:30-233:22). The Temple is full of such rhetorical strategems. The earnestness of Herbert’s poetic voice is well-recognized, although it is often attributed to Donne’s influence or to Herbert’s personal devotion. The monotonous form of "Providence" is offset by Herbert’s use of "particulars," or things which touch his audience individually, as in his mention of children and parents and various activities in stanzas 11 and 12. Many of Herbert’s poems incorporate memorable sayings and a tone of "grave liveliness" (231: 19). Poems such as "Peace" and "Love unknown" also incorporate stories. The voice of "Peace," like the preacher’s voice, is "not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy"
(233: 23-24). And the voice of "Love unknown" begins by announcing his intention to tell a story: "Dear Friend, sit down the tale is long and sad."

Part of Herbert's homiletic technique is a carefully cultivated "character of holiness."

It is gained, first, by choosing texts of Devotion, not Controversie, moving and ravishing texts whereof the Scriptures are full. Secondly, by dipping, and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts, before they come into our mouths, truly affecting, and cordially expressing all that we say; so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is hart-deep. Thirdly, by turning often, and making many Apostrophes to God, as, Oh Lord blesse my people, and teach them this point; or, Oh my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and doe thou speak thy selfe; for thou art Love, and when thou teachest, all are Scholers. (233: 26-37)

The best examples of "moving and ravishing texts" are those painted on the walls of "The Church." The parson's visual appeals to his audience suggest the hieroglyphs of poems such as "Affliction (V)," a well-recognized aspect of Herbert's poetic art. And we see the parson's apostrophes to God in such poems as "Miserie" and "Ephes. 4.30." Herbert actually alludes to the preacher in stanza eight of "Miserie," and has the voice warn us from the pulpit that we must wake up and change our values (49-50). But the poem is given its drama mainly by the voice's expostulation, "My God" and "I mean myself." The preacher also apostrophizes with God in "Ephes. 4.30," "Weep foolish heart, / And weeping live" (ll. 8-9).

Although the parson "preacheth constantly," he does not preach continuously. For while a sermon may challenge and inflame his auditors, the very elevation of his discourse is sometimes a disadvantage. For "whereas in Sermons there is a kind of state, in Catechizing there is a humblenesse very sutable to Christian regeneration" (255: 9-10). In "The Parson Catechizing," Herbert describes in considerable detail and
with great psychological insight the technique of leading a catechist to the correct answer (chap. 21, 256). He emphasizes the importance of using common, simple words, of beginning with what the one candidate knows, and of indirectly catechizing those who hear the catechism. Such pastoral practices pervade The Temple.

Perhaps more than any other English poet besides Wordsworth, Herbert sanctifies the ordinary. In chapter 5, I showed that Herbert’s Anglican spirituality is reflected in his preoccupation with the ordinary Christian life and his joy in Creation. But Herbert’s use of homely metaphors and simple diction in poems such as "Vertue" and "Confession" is also governed by his pastoral purpose. For, as he says in "The Parson Catechizing," "things of ordinary use are not only to serve in the way of drudgery, but to be washed, and cleansed, and serve for lights even of Heavenly Truths" (257: 13-15).

We also find many examples of questions and answers in The Temple. Although poems such as "Dialogue-Antheme" and "Judgment" are usually read as internal dialogues, they also suggest catechetical instruction. For example, "Businesse" is an intriguingly paradoxical poem, yet not so much witty as instructive. Here, the voice interrogates the "foolish soul" who is idle spiritually despite his "busyness." The couplets are exhortations; the regular three line stanzas provide the answers. The public quality of this poem is particularly evident if it is compared to "Dialogue," in which the voice speaks directly to God. "Time" provides an amusing example of catechetical technique, perhaps reflecting the parson’s frustrations. Time is personified as a rather thick-headed country fellow who goes about with a dull scythe. He is examined respectfully by the country parson, duly admonished and taught; but Time still misses the point. As in "Businesse," the offset couplets of "Time" help to create
the sense of questions and answers viewed objectively. The parson’s technique of indirect catechism informs poems such as "The Method" and "Heaven." The speaker of "The Method" is outside the individual and God, yet an expert in their relationship—a priest. ("Poor heart" could be a parishioner as much as the voice’s heart.) The powerful emotion of the poem is acceptable because we seem to overhear—yet tacitly participate in—an examination. The convention of the echo poem, which might seem quaint or trivial in another’s hands, is turned to good pastoral use in "Heaven." The voice asks questions which elicit responses that one could not altogether have predicted. The point of the interrogation, however, is to uncover "those delights on high" (l. 1). The congregation—in this case, the readers—look on, intrigued by the process and delighted by the result, but they are also slyly instructed.

In addition to such formal arts as catechizing and preaching, Herbert’s pastoral practice involves the informal art of entertaining. Herbert’s ideal priest is always hospitable, despite his poverty, and he makes a particular point of entertaining or going out to dinner on Sundays (236: 18-21, 241: 10-20, 245: 5-9) The parson also cultivates a "winning" demeanor and simple "pleasantness of disposition" (236: 16, 268: 4).

We have already met many examples of Herbert’s charming and winsome voice. "Man" and "Praise" show him at his light-hearted best, though the voice sometimes retains—or regains—its characteristic attractiveness even in bleak poems such as "The Collar." In "Even-song," the voice echoes the General Thanksgiving of the Book of Common Prayer in the petition for "power this day, / Both to be busy, and to play."37 Yet "the power to work and the leisure to rest" often converge in Herbert, for he is most busy when he seems most playful.
Such would be my interpretation of Herbert’s most fanciful poems. Those commentators most concerned with Herbert’s private devotional aims understandably feel that he is too witty for his highly-serious religious purpose. After all, Herbert’s *Temple* does house a curious array of toys and trifles: shaped poems and acrostics, an anagram, various word games ("Jesu," "Love-joy," "Paradise"). Such exercises of poetic fancy have led some to believe that Herbert is self-indulgent or a clandestine courtier. In fact, such light-hearted and witty entertainments are evidence of Herbert’s pastoral shrewdness. Like Saint Paul, he is adept at addressing the worldly as well as the devout. The parson is determined to appeal to the "young and unwary spirits" in his parish, particularly the gallant who is most likely to be idle and scornful.

Although *The Temple* is, to some extent, "a compendium of literary novelties," Herbert is not simply amusing himself nor is he experimenting for the sake merely of experimentation. Herbert’s literary novelties are best seen as pastoral devices to win "sweet youth" by offering the "baits of pleasure" which he mentions in "Perirrhanterium" (ll. 1-6). Once the youth is attracted to church, he is subtly instructed. The witty and paradoxical "Charms & Knots" turns out to contain useful axioms. "Jesu" is a word game, but a serious moral underlies the joy of playing: "That to my broken heart, he was I ease you, / And to my whole is JESU." "Love-joy" also appears to be a toy, but turns out to be a dialogue to discover meaning, and it is catechetical, as we have already seen. The diminishing acrostic-like line endings of "Paradise" are not ends in themselves so much as witty reminders of the Cross. And even the cheerful parlor game of echoes is ingeniously designed to uncover "delights on high" in "Heaven."
At their simplest, poems such as "Love (III)" and "The Banquet" describe a good meal. Their sense of festivity and hospitality is, in part, a pastoral device. The hospitality offered is not the lavish entertainment described in Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," but the spare luxury of George Herbert's rural parsonage. Yet "Love (III)" and "To Penshurst" work in much the same way: we begin by admiring the feast and end by admiring the Lord who provides it.

The similarity between Herbert's "Love (III)" and Jonson's "To Penshurst" suggests the related problems which I alluded to earlier: Herbert's changeable voice and his association with Donne in literary history. Herbert's voice varies from the urgent and apparently personal utterances of "The Collar" to the composed and public proclamations of "The British Church." And, while poems such as "Prayer (I)" are adorned with metaphysical conceits such as "reversed thunder" and "church-bells beyond the starres," poems such as "Providence" are conspicuously plain. Herbert's poetry is clearly not well served by the traditional literary-historical distinction between "the School of Donne" writing witty and conceited poems in a personal voice, and "the Tribe of Ben" writing neoclassical poems in a plain style and public voice. Although the conventional version of literary history has been challenged by Joseph Summers and others, Herbert is still praised for being Donnian, and the religious lyrics of Herbert and his contemporaries are still considered by many to be "essentially private poetry, that is, poetry that examines and focuses on the inner movements of thought and feeling."41

The problem is that Herbert's poetry bears only a superficial resemblance to Donne's, and that Renaissance poets such as Donne and Herbert were not inclined to write personal poetry in the way a modern poet might. Herbert and Donne are
concerned to move their audience, not just to express their inner thoughts and feelings.

And as we have seen in this chapter, Herbert also continually instructs the reader by subtly employing catechetical, liturgical, and homiletic techniques. John Donne is famous for his urgent and seemingly personal poetic voice, displayed at its dramatic best in "The Canonization":

For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love,
   Or chide my palsie, or my gout,
My five gray haires, or ruin'd fortune flout,
   With wealth your state, you minde with Arts improve,
   Take you a course, get you a place,
   Observe his honour, or his grace,
Or the Kings reall, or his stamped face
   Contemplate, what you will, approve,
   So you will let me love.42 (ll. 1-9)

The irregularity and passion of such lines suggest actual speech by drawing our attention to the speaker himself. Herbert’s voice seems as personal as Donne’s in such poems as "The Collar":

I struck the board, and cry’d, No more.
   I will abroad.
What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the rode,
   Loose as the winde, as large as store.
   Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me bloud, and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit? (ll. 1-9)

Yet we seem to hear another voice in "Man":

My God, I heard this day,
That none doth build a stately habitation,
   But he that means to dwell therein.
What house more stately hath there been,
Or can be, then is Man? to whose creation
   All things are in decay. (ll. 1-6)

Urgent personal concerns have been replaced by detached public considerations.
Ragged lines have given way to moderate expression, and actual speech patterns have been dropped in favour of prepared speeches. But both aspects of Herbert’s style can be reconciled once we grasp the pastoral purpose of The Temple; for a priest’s vocation requires him to make his personal life public.

We have already seen the delicate coexistence of private and public utterance in "The Parson praying" and "The Parson Preaching." It is of course possible to find poems which seem to be either very personal or very public. "The British Church" is largely public because of its national perspective and tone. The sequence of poems which begins with "The World" and contains "Our Life is hid," "Vanity," "Lent," and "Virtue" is strongly public and temperate. "Love-unknown," "Constancie," and "The Foil" also have a public voice. Despite Patrides’ allusion to "the all-pervasive consciousness of the self" in The Temple, it is actually difficult to find many poems which are simply personal. "Life" may be one of the few examples:

I Made a Posie, while the day ran by:
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
    My life within this band.
But Time did becken to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
    And wither’d in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart:
I took, without more thinking, in good part
    Times gentle admonition:
Who did so sweetly deaths sad taste convey,
Making my minde to smell my fatall day;
    Yet sugring the suspicion.

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 care not if
    It be as short as yours.
Here, we seem to have a simple private reflection, yet the voice addresses the universal concern of mutability and mortality. Indeed, the private and the public converge in *The Temple*, as they do in Anglican worship.

Sometimes, poems which seem to be mere "private ejaculations" are given public meaning by their context. For example, the voice in "Trinitie Sunday" is personal, but the context is corporate. "Vertue" is generally private but ends with the public application of a moral. The personal sadness of "Affliction (IV)" is tempered by its juxtaposition with the public "Man" and "The Pearl." "Unkindness" suggests a private conversation overheard, but is just as plausibly a prayer before the congregation or a private word with God.43 "Prayer (II)" is almost completely public in emphasis, yet it retains the individual "I." "The Bunch of Grapes" has a personal beginning, a corporate middle, and a personal end. "Praise (II)" is a personal statement, yet this beautifully spare hymn is a vehicle for communal assent. And "A Wreath" incorporates a personal statement in the highly public form of a garland and a prayer.

Most often, Herbert's poems appear to be personal but they become public, leading us into common prayer or praise. The reader is gradually taken from personal reflection to public praise, for example, in the Easter sequence. We begin with the tentative question-posing private voice of "The Sinner" and "Good Friday," and move from the anecdote of "Redemption," to the homily of "Sepulchre" and the song of "Easter." Plural pronouns gradually replace singular ones, as we read through the sequence. Similarly, "Sinne (II)" might seem personal ("O that I . . . "), but plural pronouns predominate, and the poem is public in context--occurring between "Mattens" and "Even-song"--just as sin is publicly confessed in these offices.
"Submission" is an understated personal exchange with God alone, but it is linked in theme and imagery to the highly liturgical and public "Love (III)." What seems to be an overheard conversation in "Sion" becomes a sermon, as the struggle is implicitly generalized to God "struggling with [everyone's] peevish heart." The singing, multiple groans, and wings of the last stanza create a liturgical atmosphere.

"Home" is a particularly telling example of Herbert's public and private person:

Come Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,
While thou dost ever, ever stay:
Thy long deferrings wound me to the quick,
My spirit gaspeth night and day.
O show thy self to me,
Or take me up to thee!

How canst thou stay, considering the pace
The bloud did make, which thou didst waste?
When I behold it trickling down thy face,
I never saw thing make such haste.
O show thy, & c. (II. 1-11)

"Home" might be misconstrued as a private poem—a direct, individual address to God, but it is more like a psalm in which private struggles are made public and find a liturgical form. There was a move toward liturgy at the end of the previous poem ("Sion"), and Herbert now emphasizes the sense of each stanza with the refrain: "O show thy self to me, / Or take me up to thee!" Herbert skillfully compels the reader to repeat this cry, though it begins as a personal one. The reader is actually "taught" the refrain because it is only written twice, and must then be recalled. Such liturgical instruction suggests the parson's concern to teach his congregation "to answer gently and pausably, thinking what they say; so that while they answer . . . they meditate as they speak" (chap. 6, 231: 32-34). The liturgical movements of "Sion" and "Home" are put in just this kind of perspective in "The British Church" which follows.
The public aspects of Herbert's voice lead to the question of his place in literary history. Although he is conventionally considered a "metaphysical" poet, Herbert may have as much in common with Jonson as with Donne. Herbert's poems sometimes recall some of Donne's. We have already seen the dramatic opening of "The Collar," its emotional turbulence, and its ragged lines. "The Crosse" also opens with real Donnian impassioned speech: "What is this strange and uncouth thing?" Herbert's poem, "Mortification" suggests the Donnian preoccupation with death, its "winding sheets" recalling Donne's "Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." There is a genuine strain of Donnian imagination in "Ephes. 4. 30": "Marbles can weep; and surely strings / More bowels have, then such hard things" (23-24).

But the similarities between Herbert's poems and Donne's should not obscure their differences. For instance, "The Discharge" opens with what sounds like an allusion to Donne's "Sun Rising": "Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know?" Yet Herbert's opening is pastoral, dictated not by literary influence but by the meaning of the preceding poems and the priest's intention. "Conscience" reminds one of Donne's "Batter my heart"; however, what is for Donne a matter of personal drama is for Herbert an occasion for sacramental assurance ("My Saviours bloud: when ever at his board/ I do but taste it, straight it cleanseth me" (14-15). "Sinnes Round" is a cheerful, demonstrative little poem, despite its morbid subject. "The Bag" turns on a lurid conceit, yet for all its ingenuity, the conceit is a public one, derived from diplomatic service. "Death" opens with a ragged "strong line" to be proud of: "Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing,/ Nothing but bones," recalling the dramatic opening of Donne's "Death be not proud." Herbert's conceit is no less grotesque than Donne's, but his conclusion is gentle and pastoral. Characteristically, Herbert can
befriend even Death and make him sing. Death finally becomes "full of grace," a
helpful servant to the Christian soul who would not tarry. The difference between
Herbert’s poetry and Donne’s is not one of quality but of personality and office: the
dramatic dean of Saint Paul’s versus the self-effacing country parson of Bemerton.

Herbert’s poems frequently suggest the polish, classicism, moderation, and
public, monumental qualities of Jonson’s verse. One cannot help but be impressed by
the dramatic opening and grisly conceit of "Affliction (IV)": "Lord, hunt me not, / A
thing forgot . . . My thoughts are all a case of knives." Yet the poem is carried by
the workmanlike use of dimeter couplets, setting up--and finally relieving--the voice’s
anguish. The sense of order, control, and self-conscious construction suggest the
poetry of Jonson. One thinks particularly of Jonson’s ode to Sir Lucius Cary, or of
Jonson’s epigram on the death of his first daughter:

Here lies to each her parents ruth,
MARY, the daughter of their youth:
Yet, all heavens gifts, being heavens due,
It makes the father, less, to rue.
As sixe moneths end, shee parted hence
With safetie of her innocence;
Whose soule heavens Queene, (whose name shee beares)
In comfort of her mothers teares,
Hath plac’d amongst her virgin-traine:
Where, while that sever’d doth remaine,
This grave partakes the fleshly birth.
Which cover lightly, gentle earth.

We do not necessarily find in Herbert’s poetry the moderate emotion of Jonson’s odes
or epigrams, but we do have Jonson’s sense of a monument--something indelible,
created for a wide audience and posterity--in such poems as "Man" and "Aaron."
Herbert, as we have seen, creates monuments in "The Altar" and "The Church-floore,"
in "Easter Wings" and to a lesser degree in "Perirrhanterium;” but Herbert’s control
and craftsmanship are conspicuous in many of his lesser-known lyrics as well. Although "The Search" describes God's absence, it is so evenly constructed that it belies any sense of urgency or despondency. Yet Herbert is not Jonson. The temperate expressions of the English Horace are finally too cool and controlled for parish life, which requires ardent faith and discernment.

In some respects, The Temple seems more Elizabethan than Jacobean. The arrangement of the poems in "The Church" resembles that of an Elizabethan sonnet sequence. Herbert's poetry is meant to serve a rhetorical purpose, and is decorated with courtly artifice in the pattern of Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie (1589). As Joseph Summers has noted, Herbert has considerable affinity with Sidney. Thus, the first fourteen lines of "Grief" imitate the delicate grief of an Elizabethan sonnet. Herbert's sweet and polished version of Psalm 23 also suggests his affinity with Sidney, whose translation of the Psalms was well-known. The Country Parson also resembles Sidney's Apology for Poetry (1598), not only in its style and in its attempt to ameliorate political and religious controversy, but in its implicit description of its author's poetic purposes and methods.

Herbert also seems to look forward to Dryden and the eighteenth century. His spareness and control, his fondness for couplets, and the public uses of his poetry all suggest the later poet. Herbert's sardonic satire in "The Church Militant" anticipates Pope's Dunciad (1728):
Religion thence fled into Greece, where arts
Gave her the highest place in all mens hearts.
Learning was pos'd, Philosophie was set,
Sophisters taken in a fishers net.
Plato and Aristotle were at a losse,
And wheel'd about again to spell Christ-Crosse.
Prayers chas'd syllogismes into their den,
and Ergo was transform'd into Amen.

Ah, what a thing is man devoid of grace,
Adoring garlick with an humble face,
Begging his food of that which he may eat,
Serving the while he worshippeth his meat! (ll. 49-56, 111-116)

But Herbert is finally himself. Like all great poets, Herbert defies neat literary-historical description. "Love (III)" is widely quoted, anthologized, and set to music because it is essentially Herbertian:

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
    Guiltie of dust and sinne.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
    From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
    If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
    Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungrateful? Ah my deare,
    I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
    Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
    Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
    My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
    So I did sit and eat.

The deceptive simplicity of "Love (III)," with its psychological truth, humility, and devotion are typical of Herbert. But the most distinctive quality of "Love (III)" is undoubtedly the passionate serenity of its poetic voice--the voice of the pastor inviting us to share in the church's mystical repast.
NOTES: CHAPTER 5

1 Although many scholars now question the traditional version of literary history which imagines a "School of Donne," Herbert is still generally regarded as an imitator of Donne, and The Temple is thought to be a collection of personal utterances. For a further discussion of this problem, see my introduction.

2 Although critics sometimes despair of finding the organizing principle of The Temple and occasionally deny that it has one, they continue their search. For example, see Robert Ellrodt, "George Herbert and the Religious Lyric," Essential Articles for the Study of George Herbert's Poetry, ed. John R. Roberts (Hamden, Conn: Archon, 1979), 5.

3 Joseph H. Summers makes this point with respect to Herbert and Andrew Marvell in The Heirs of Donne and Jonson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), and Douglas Bush makes a similar point in his description of "two Herberts" in English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 144-46. However, the classical aspects of Herbert's style have received little attention, and most critics would still agree with Ellrodt that Herbert's "best lyrics are Donnian" (p. 3). My purpose here is not so much to assess the relative influence of Donne and Jonson as to explain the "metaphysical" and "neoclassical" aspects of Herbert's style as reflections of his rhetorical strategy to "rhyme us to good."


9 Ibid., 249:25-27, 255:4-5; Michael Schoenfeldt describes Herbert's poems as "deeply unstable utterances" in Prayer and Power, and various commentators have doubted Herbert's assurance.
To see how much Herbert valued clear communication in his poetry, we have only to follow his revisions of "Charmes & Knots," or to examine the poems in the Williams manuscript which he later excluded.

"The Call" is modelled on Jesus' claims about himself, particularly, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:5) and "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).


See Hutchinson, Works, liv-lvi and Charles, The Williams Manuscript, xxviii. The order of the poems in the Bodleian manuscript and the first edition is identical, with the exception of "Anagram."


Other sequences include "Antiphon (I-II)," "H. Baptisme (I-II), "Employment (I-II)," "Jordan (I-II)," "Justice (I-II)," "Praise (I-III)," "Prayer (I-II)," "The H. Scriptures (I-II)," "Sinne (I-II)," "The Temper (I-II)," and "Vanitie (I-II)." An example of a group of poems on a similar subject is "The Church-floore," "Church-lock and key," "Church monuments," and "Church musick." Poems such as "Sunday," "Avarice," "Anagram," and "To All Angels and Saints" are linked together by image, theme, and rhyme scheme.

In particular, see chapters 12, 26, and 30: "The Parson's Charity," "The Parson's Eye," and "The Parson's Consideration of Providence."

Chap. 4, 229:5-9; Herbert's "diligent Collation" reflects the Articles of Religion (6 & 20), which state that no scriptural text may be interpreted to mean something repugnant to the whole of scripture.

The diminishing space between "The Church" and "The Church Militant" in the manuscripts and first edition suggests that Herbert conceived of The Temple as a whole, or at least that his first editors believed that he did. Although we cannot date the lyrics with any certainty, "The Church-porch" is thought to be early, on the basis of the evident reference to biographical and historical events. (See Amy Charles's Life and Hutchinson's Works, p. 543.) "The Church Militant" and "The Church-porch" were probably composed first and the lyrics composed last to bridge the gap.

One's progress through The Temple is spiritual as well as physical. See P.G. Stanwood's discussion of circular patterns in "Time and Liturgy in Herbert's Poetry," in The Sempiternal Season, 21-31, and also, with broader application, in "Liturgy, Worship and the Sons of Light" in New Perspectives on the English
The central conceit of "The Church Militant" is the geographical and moral progress of the church from east to west through history. Both "The Church" and "The Church Militant" end where they begin. The poems of "The Church" are occasionally narrative and sometimes employ rhyming couplets, as in "The Church Militant." The liturgical refrain which punctuates "The Church Militant" is "How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are! / Who may with thee compare?" "The Church Militant" also incorporates witty comments (51-56, 60-62), vivid imagery (23-24, 44), and the assumptions of "The British Church" (5-9, 90-92).

Herbert’s poems seem both to celebrate and to spurn wit, to deride it as shameless and to deploy it shamelessly. Despite the reservations about wit expressed in "Perirrhanterium" (235-246) and "The Sacrifice" (141-142), both poems are ingenious, paradoxical, and conceited. "Proud wits" are justly daunted by God’s judgment in "Justice" (II, 7-12); however, Herbert employs the witty conceit of judicial scales becoming buckets to convey the penitents heavenward. In "The Forerunners," the voice bids enchanting and embroidered language farewell (9-11), but the concluding salutation seems to express some reservation ("If you go . . ."). "Wits" are left to contest with one another while the voice lets his invention rest in "The Posie," yet the poesie is itself a subtle double-entendre ("Less then the least/ Of Gods mercies, is my poesie still"). "Trinity Sunday" seems to offer a straightforward denunciation of wit (8-10), but Herbert excludes "Trinity Sunday" from his final manuscript of The Temple. It may be important to note, in light of my discussion of Herbert’s place in literary history, that Ben Jonson likewise dismisses wit in a highly witty fashion. See Robert C. Evans, "Wit and the Power of Jonson’s Epigrammes (Paper presented at the Tenth Biennial Renaissance Conference at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, October 17, 1992).


In particular, see stanzas 15-21 and 65-72.


D. J. Enright notes that poems such as "The Altar" and "The Windows" partake of "that orderly, deliberate, and businesslike nature which rebuilt churches," The New Pelican History Guide to English Literature, "From Donne to Marvell," ed.


29 On the use of salvation history in catechism, see Stanley Fish, The Living Temple, 145; on the art of prayer, see Terry Sherwood, Herbert's Prayerful Art (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 3-4.

30 Behind the hymn lie the Anglican prayer after communion ("Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving") and the exhortation before communion ("oblation and satisfaction"). See John E. Booty, ed., The Book of Common Prayer, 263-264. Similarly, "The Method" concludes with a strong admonition to prayer and a proclamation of grace (ll. 29-32).

31 C. A. Patrides alludes to a "eucharistic structure" in the introduction to his edition of Herbert's English poems.

32 In the prayer following communion, the congregation asks God "mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." See The Book of Common Prayer, 1559, ed. John E. Booty, 264.

33 Herbert's "Come ye hither All" recalls the priest's exhortation before confession in the service of Holy Communion ("You that do truly and earnestly repent . . . Draw near, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort . . . "), as well as the "comfortable words" repeated by the priest ("Come unto me all that travail and be heavy laden, and I will refresh you"). Herbert's invitation to God to join (and become) the feast suggests the priest's invocation immediately before communion ("Hear us, O merciful Father, we beseech thee; and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine . . . may be partakers of [Christ's] most blessed Body and Blood . . ."). See The Book of Common Prayer, 1559, 259-260, 263.

34 See Chapter 21, 257: 20-25. Chaucer's Parson's Tale is really a sermon on the seven deadly sins and the corresponding cardinal virtues. This topic figured prominently in late medieval clerical manuals mentioned in chapter 3 and discussed in appendix I.


36 Although l. 7 reads "Then weep mine eyes," ll. 8 and 9 seem to be directed
toward an implied audience. The unrhymed dimeters help to imitate speech here. "A Parodie" also contains an expostulation of sorts (ll. 26-30), though this poem is principally a dialogue between the converted man and his soul.

37 See the General Thanksgiving in the Book of Common Prayer.


40 See M.M. Mahood, "Something Understood," 124, for a discussion of Herbert's literary "novelties."


43 Although the voice speaks in the first person singular, such expressions of contrition are common in the psalms which are incorporated in Anglican worship.


45 Cf. Donne's "Sun Rising": "Busie old foole, unruly Sunne, / Why dost thou thus / Through windowes and through curtaines call on us?" (ll. 1-2)

46 "Death be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so."

47 Cf. Emily Dickinson, "My mind is like a loaded gun."

49 For a discussion of Sidney’s influence on Herbert, see Joseph H. Summers, George Herbert: His Religion and Art, and my appendix III.


51 For example, Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales is medieval in its use of allegory, but modern in its use of rhyming couplets. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), whom Herbert so obviously influenced, combines classical quantitative meter, medieval alliterative lines, and protomodern blank verse: his poetry therefore has little in common with Victorian verse generally.
APPENDIX I: FOUR KINDS OF RENAISSANCE PROSE

This appendix provides a brief survey of the four kinds of Renaissance prose which Herbert was able to draw upon, as he composed The Country Parson: courtesy books, clerical manuals, professional handbooks, and a newer kind of prose consisting of essays, prose characters, and resolves.

COURTESY BOOKS

Courtesy books are but one form of a vast literary category best described as "conduct literature." A guide to conduct might take the form of a sermon, a translation of an ancient work, an Italian courtesy book, an original work designed to educate a prince, or the pious and practical admonitions of a parent. Henley includes Milton's Of Education and Spenser's Faerie Queene in this tradition. We might also wish to include Polonius's surprisingly apt advice to Laertes in Hamlet. Although such literature probably originates in antiquity, with notable contributions from Plato and Cicero, it reached a zenith in the Renaissance with the development of courtesy and etiquette books.

Courtesy books probably originated in Italy, were often written in dialogue form, and concern the education, conduct, and comportment of the courtier or prince. Standard topics include the qualities of a gentleman or court lady, the etiquette of courtly love, the education of the future courtier or prince, and the duties of the courtier as a state counsellor. The most influential foreign courtesy books during the English Renaissance were probably Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (1528, trans. 1561), Machiavelli's The Prince (c. 1532, trans. 1640), and Stephano Guazzo's
Civil Conversation (1574, trans. 1586). But Englishmen also wrote their own courtesy books, notably Sir Thomas Elyot's The Boke Named the Governour (1531), Roger Ascham’s The Scholemaster (1570), and John Cleland's Institution of a Young Nobleman (1607).

Etiquette books were similar to, but distinct from, courtesy books. They were written for well-bred citizens and gentlemen, not princes and courtiers, contained more practical advice than courtesy books did, and tended to be simpler in form. Della Cassa's Galateo is an early continental example of the etiquette book, and The Babees Book is probably the earliest English example. Henry Peacham’s The Complete Gentleman (1622) and Richard Brathwaite’s The English Gentleman (1630) are typical etiquette books, providing an abundance of good advice in a compact, highly-readable form. Other notable etiquette books include Lord Burghley's Certain Precepts (1561), Sir Walter Raleigh’s Instructions (c. 1630), Francis Osborne’s Advice to a Son (1656). The Earl of Chesterfield’s famous Letters to his Son (1774) continues the Renaissance tradition of the etiquette book into the eighteenth century.

Courtey and etiquette books share certain values and assumptions. They are written to produce the scholar-gentleman:

- someone learned, yet skilled in arms and athletics, versed in public affairs, a joyous companion, and socially able at court. His principal profession is chivalry; however, he is not only a warrior and councillor, but also a lover and follower of learning, and adept in the fine arts.

It is to this end that Elyot would "form the gentil wits of noblemen’s children" and Spenser would "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Courtesy and etiquette books are typically idealistic and learned. They are idealistic in the sense that they set high standards and make scant allowance for
human duplicity and moral baseness. And they are learned in the sense that they are repositories for learning, referring profusely to the classics, the Bible, and other conduct literature. Courtesy and etiquette books are much concerned with the actions of great men. Machiavelli proposes this as the topic of his study, and emphasizes his perspective by asserting that princes have either great ability or fortune. Castiglione is also concerned with great men: his book is dedicated to a gentleman living at the courts of princes, winning favour and praise from men, "the perfect courtier". The point of the courtesy or etiquette book is self-improvement and ultimately self-promotion. One might learn basic table manners from Galateo; one might be schooled in witty speech and polite entertainment from The Courtier; one might learn about political expediency and public relations from The Prince. But the point is to improve one's self and one's lot in life. In Chesterfield's words, "social graces are the great aim and desire"; yet not social graces for themselves, but as a means of secular preferment.

CLERICAL MANUALS

Clerical manuals--books of instruction for the clergy--are in some respects similar to conduct literature. Both kinds of literature teach similar things: proper comportment, verbal arts, and the duties appropriate to those in one's charge and to one's superiors. Both kinds of literature may also incorporate classical form and content, particularly the dialogue form and Cicero's teaching. But these similarities should not obscure the fundamental differences between clerical manuals and conduct literature. Generally speaking, the clerical manual inculcates the Christian virtues, the ultimate goal being self-sacrifice and heavenly reward, whereas conduct literature
inculcates the Aristotelean virtues, the ultimate goal being self-promotion and earthly reward.

Clerical manuals are extremely divergent in form, tend to be unsystematic and practical, and are typically written for those of humble rather than exalted station. Clerical manuals are sometimes instruments of Reformation, and generally serve to preserve good order and to foster church unity. This type of discursive prose arguably begins with the New Testament, particularly the Pauline epistles. St. Cyprian is also said to have instructed the clergy by letter. But the clerical manual per se emerges in the patristic period, experiences a resurgence in the late medieval period, and gathers impetus again during the Protestant Reformation.

From the beginning, clerical manuals are diverse in form and content. John Chrysostom (A.D. 374) and Ambrose (A.D. 391) provide largely abstract considerations of the office and character of the priest. Ambrose adapts Cicero's Offices for this purpose, just as Augustine adapts Cicero's Rhetoric in On Christian Doctrine (A.D. 396-427). Augustine's On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed (A.D. 400) discusses teaching method and dispenses doctrine. (Its practicality and comfortable tone look forward to The Country Parson.) Julianus Pomerius's late fifth-century work, On the Contemplative Life, is again quite abstract and idealistic. Gregory the Great is primarily concerned with the episcopate in his Pastoral Rule (590-604); however, he says much about the cleric as governor, teacher, and physician of souls. His work is heavily laden with biblical instruction and sample sermons. And at the close of the patristic period, Isidore of Seville writes a sort of summary work, On the Duties of the Clergy, which considers the liturgical offices and diverse categories of the faithful.
Medieval clerical manuals often emphasize confession and church doctrine; pastoral rule was the consideration of the monasteries, and preaching manuals became separate works. Although the Council of Liege had recommended regular confession as early as 710, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 made the custom mandatory.\(^\text{16}\) Friars could hear confessions as well as priests; and in 1281, Archbishop Peckham, himself a Friar, decreed that the laity be instructed in the articles of faith, the ten commandments, works of mercy, the seven deadly sins, the seven virtues, and the seven sacraments.\(^\text{17}\) The Decretals of Gratian also enforced the regular preaching of homilies.\(^\text{18}\)

These edicts naturally caused an outpouring of clerical manuals, for the clergy had to be instructed before they could instruct the laity. The resultant manuals were extremely diverse in form, and incorporated various quantities of canon law, traditional doctrine, pastoral theology, and ethics.\(^\text{19}\) Although clerical manuals were often written in Latin during the medieval period, a number were written in--or translated into--English.\(^\text{20}\) Several works deserve our particular attention, because they were influential or because Herbert may have had access to them in the Salisbury Cathedral library.

Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, wrote the curious and highly influential *Templum Dei* (1230). Although this work is mainly concerned with the examination of a penitent, it begins with an exposition of 1 Corinthians 3: 17, develops an allegory, and provides extensive schemata of legal and theological commonplaces.\(^\text{21}\) About 1200, medieval clerics also developed a new sermon pattern, which allowed numerous points of amplification or "proof" rather than the traditional Augustine sequence of ideas leading to a conceptual conclusion.\(^\text{22}\) The new style was first
expounded by Thomas of Salisbury (Thomas Chabham) in his *De arte praedicandi* (1205), which was widely imitated.\(^{23}\)

Buchard’s *Decretum* (1015) was probably the first handbook for the confessor, and was known colloquially as the "Corrector."\(^{24}\) However, a Yorkshire cleric (Robert of Flamborough) wrote a similar work, the *Liber Poenitentialis* (1208), which he dedicated to the Dean of Salisbury. It is written in dialogue form, and emphasizes doctrinal and canonical instruction. Chaucer’s *Parson’s Tale* derives from another penitential manual, emphasizing the seven deadly sins.\(^{25}\)

John Mirk’s *Instructions for Parish Priests* carries the late medieval manual into the Renaissance. A canon regular of Lillshall, Shropshire, Mirk was best known for his *Liber Festialis*, a collection of sermons for the principal festivals of the Christian year—an invaluable help for the unlearned priest.\(^{26}\) But his *Instructions* is particularly interesting because it is written in Middle English rhyming couplets (1935 lines altogether) and because it summarizes much medieval pastoral theology. It begins with a brief exhortation to lead a godly and upright life, provides a compendium of common pastoral practice, and includes a disquisition on the seven deadly sins and their remedies.

Clerical manuals fell into some disrepute during the Reformation, because of the Protestant abhorrence of the priestly administration of the sacraments and the imposition of penance.\(^{27}\) For Protestants, private prayer and the sermon became the accepted means of grace, and confession to God alone was thought to be sufficient for salvation. The teachings of the New Testament and the wisdom of the pews provided adequate guidance for the Christian life. And a caste of priests with its attendant "priestcraft" codified in books seemed not only unnecessary, but frankly repugnant, to
the priesthood of all believers. Yet Protestant ministers still found it necessary to reflect upon the nature of their pastoral vocation, and they were particularly concerned to cultivate good preaching technique. By Herbert's time, a number of Puritan pastoral manuals had appeared, though as yet the established church had written no suitable manual of instruction.

The Puritan manuals remind one of sermons, if they are not actually in sermon form, and are often long and abstract. William Perkins's *Of the Calling of the Ministerie* (1606) is sub-titled "Two Treatises," but is actually a compilation of two sermons. The first, on Job 33: 23-24, argues that the minister is a messenger and interpreter, and should therefore be holy and expect contempt. The second, on Isaiah 6: 5-6, asserts that a minister should know his own sins and those of his flock, but that his main--really his whole--duty is to teach. The work is divided according to the texts expounded. John Jackson's *The Worthy Church Man* (1628) is an even more obscure sermon on "polishing the twelve stones in the High-Priests Pectorall" (Exodus 28: 17-20 and 39: 10-13). Probably an effort to reinterpret the priesthood in Protestant terms, Jackson's sermon is curious, crabbed, and of little pastoral use.

Two Puritan manuals deserve our particular attention because they were prominent in their day but much different in form and content from *The Country Parson*. Though not actually a sermon, Richard Bernard's *The Faithfule Shepheard* (1607, 2nd ed. 1621) is much concerned with preaching. The first two books briefly describe the nature of the ministry, the training necessary to it, and the need to know one's congregation. The latter two books provide an extremely precise and prescriptive guide to preaching. The work is relentlessly systematic--each chapter is divided and subdivided into numbered sections--and therefore seems rather wooden. Richard
Baxter’s *The Reformed Pastor* (1656) is perhaps the best-known Puritan clerical manual.\(^{28}\) Although Baxter is best remembered for his desire to make informal catechizing the constant mainstay of pastoral care for all ages, *The Reformed Pastor* is surprisingly abstract.\(^{29}\) Like *The Faithful Shepheard*, *The Reformed Pastor* is relentlessly divided into parts, sections, and chapters. With its wealth of exclamations and rhetorical questions, *The Reformed Pastor* sounds as if it were declaimed from the pulpit; and its combative, pedantic, and prescriptive qualities suggest Protestant enthusiasm.

**PROFESSIONAL HANDBOOKS**

Though it has obvious affinities with clerical and conduct literature, the professional handbook was more specialized and practical than either. The professional handbook provided general principles and applied specifics; it was designed for quick reference, not leisurely reflection or general instruction. With a good handbook, a moderately educated but largely untrained official could discharge his public duties efficiently. Indeed, two such handbooks are actually mentioned in *The Country Parson*, Dalton’s *Country Justice* and Fernelius’s *Physick*, as part of the country parson’s necessary knowledge.\(^{30}\) For in the early seventeenth century, the parish priest might well be expected to tend the sick in lieu of a physician and to settle disputes before they became court cases. I will limit my discussion of the handbook to these two, both because they are representative of this kind of prose and because Herbert may well have considered them as he decided on the form of *The Country Parson*.

Michael Dalton’s *Country Justice* (1619) is encyclopedic in both senses of the
word—capacious and alphabetically organized. It begins with a general consideration of common law, public peace, and various legal officials and their duties, particularly the Justice of the Peace, his jurisdiction and attributes (pp. 1-23). Dalton then provides a compendium of likely judicial concerns: everything from "ale houses" to "recusants," "ryotts," and "rogues" to "watermen" (pp. 24-133). In each case, the JP’s duties, problems, and common practice are clearly and simply described. A lengthy discussion of various statues follows (pp. 134-331). The last section describes special considerations and duties (pp. 332-372). Dalton’s work is exceedingly useful, if bland stylistically. It is organized from the general to the specific, and its alphabetical order and comprehensive index permit quick reference.

Little is now known about John Fernelius; however, the 1678 edition of his works advertises him as "Doctor of Physick in the University of Paris" and "Chief Physician to the King’s Majesty," and his Herbal and Physick were apparently popular works in the early seventeenth century (CP 23). Fernelius's Practice of Physick assumes some medical knowledge, but provides remedies for both common and difficult cases. As the subtitle indicates, "The disease is propounded to Fernelius by another Physician on behalf of his Patient, an outlandish person." Some eighty "counsels" concerning various maladies are listed under such headings as: "For a noble Matron vexed with the Tooth-ach" (IV), "Of the Falling-Sickness" (VII), "Of a Windy pain in the Stomach" (XXVII), and "For a Swelling of the Spleen" (LXII). The case is dispatched in a single paragraph, including typical symptoms, a prognosis, and prescription. The Physick does not train one adequately or systematically as a physician; however it does provide the intelligent layman with just enough medical knowledge, professional conduct, and specific advice to meet a given situation.
THE ESSAY, PROSE CHARACTER, AND MORAL RESOLVE

The essay, the prose character, and the moral resolve were the literary vogue of non-fictional prose during the Renaissance and early seventeenth century. Since the essay, character, and resolve vary and intermingle in form, they are best thought of as a single kind of prose. Although it had its roots in antiquity and was probably influenced by the courtesy or commonplace book tradition, such practitioners as Francis Bacon, Joseph Hall, and Owen Feltham made this kind of prose seem new and fashionable in its seventeenth-century form. And, most important of all as we think of Herbert's possible use of this kind of prose in The Country Parson, this kind of prose was eminently suited both to personal reflection and to social reform.

The essay in its modern form begins with Montaigne, whose Essais (1580, 1588) were imitated by Francis Bacon (1597, 1625) and translated into English by John Florio (1603). The essays of Bacon and his many English imitators typically allow some personal reflection, but address such large social questions as the nature of truth, the best means of education, or the danger of superstition. The essay often tends to have a detached judicial tone, and to enunciate and engage a point of view which arises from one's reading. Essays typically begin with a bold statement, which is either expounded by example or refuted by logic. They are meant to be appreciated individually, and tend to be arranged chronologically rather than thematically in collections.

Two collections of essays deserve our special attention: Sir Francis Bacon's Essayes of Counsels Civil and Morall (1597) and Robert Johnson's Essaies, or, Rather Imperfect Offers (1607). Herbert is sure to have read the former, both because of its extreme popularity and because of his existing literary ties with Bacon. Herbert may
also have read Johnson's *Essays*, since the work is dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (p. 6). These works also typify the essay form, though William Cornwallis, Joseph Hall, and Daniell Tuvill, also wrote notable collections of essays.

The prose character was a short descriptive passage of a witty and satirical turn. Though it allowed some personal expression, it was conceived of as a social corrective. The best-known collections of prose characters are Joseph Hall’s *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608), Thomas Overbury’s *Characters* (1614), and John Earle’s *Microcosmologie* (1628). Although many characters are earthy and colourfully written, Hall’s tend to be somewhat flat, idealistic, and cold. However, Hall’s characters do demonstrate the highly-conservative temper of the form. For instance, Hall’s "faithful man" clearly reflects his own Anglican spirituality. Overbury’s characters are if anything more witty and satirical than Hall’s, yet somehow warmer. In "A Reverend Judge," for instance, Overbury shows that he is aware of the common vices of the profession, but proclaims its ideal attributes and appearances. Overbury’s character of a Puritan exposes the chief weaknesses of the extreme Protestant position, yet does so with good humour. Earle’s discerning and gently-critical portraits of "A Young raw preacher" and "A Grave Divine" are particularly reminiscent of passages from *The Country Parson*.

But even if he had not read Hall, Overbury, and Earle, Herbert might have learned the art of characterization from history. Early characters such as Hayward’s Henry IV were heavily indebted to Tacitus and Plutarch, and one also finds character sketches in Thucydides, Livy, and Cicero. North’s *Plutarch* (1579) was enormously popular in the early seventeenth century. We might think of Ben Jonson’s round, beautiful description of Sir Francis Bacon as orator. We might contrast Clarendon’s
complimentary and James Howell's critical descriptions respective of Jonson's literary ability and tendency to praise himself at table. We might think of Clarendon's description of William Herbert as notably able, unaligned, and a womanizer. Such descriptions share the ability to make us feel close to the man, a feeling we often have when reading *The Country Parson*.

The moral resolve is an early seventeenth century form, contemporary with the essay and sometimes mingling with it. Lievsay defines the resolve as:

... a meditation in prose akin to holy reflections, exclamations, observations, prayers, and vows . . . an instrument for perfecting or reforming private and public morals; the only remnant we now have being the New Year's resolution.\(^35\)

According to Lievsay, "the resolve writer eyed a situation, either public or personal, adjudged it to be either desirable or undesirable, and resolved upon an appropriate course of action."\(^36\) The resolve, like the essay, is often witty and conceited, and is sometimes connected with the sermon.\(^37\) The resolve begins with Hall's *Meditations and Vowes, Divine and Morall* (1605). Other notable examples are Daniel Tuvill's *Christian Purposes and Resolutions* (1622) and Owen Feltham's *Resolves: a Double Century* (1628).

Hall's resolves are brief and general, notable for their Senecan style and human insight. Their openings and qualified idealism sometimes remind one of *The Country Parson*, but they are more metaphysical and less discursive. Tuvill's resolves are longer and more biblical than Hall's, almost like sermons. They are somewhat similar to Bacon's essays in style--particularly in their openings--and in length, but closer to meditation or to exhortation in content. Feltham's resolves are at least essay length, epigrammatic, and highly allusive. "Of Preaching" (XX) is abstract and critical, but quite extensive--at least as long as *The Country Parson*--but essentially negative.
NOTES: APPENDIX I


2 W.E. Henley, ed., The Book of the Courtier Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby (London: Nutt, 1900), xi-xii.

3 Although Polonius's speech is often ludicrously stylized and his counsel is not always trustworthy, the few "precepts" he gives to Laertes on his departure (I.iii. 58-80) are both apt and memorable; so much so that "neither a borrower nor a lender be" and "to thine own self be true" have become proverbial.


7 Ibid.

8 Henley, The Book of the Courtier, x.


10 Henley, The Book of the Courtier, xiii.


12 See Christian Gauss, ed., Niccolo Machiavelli: The Prince (Markham, Ont.: Penguin, 1952) 31, 48. All subsequent references will be to the editions listed in the bibliography, unless otherwise specified, and will be indicated parenthetically by page number.


15 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 675; see also *Patrologia Latina*, 83: 736-826.


18 Davis, 291.


23 Ibid., 137.


29 Packer mentions Baxter's fame for catechizing. The first two chapters of
The Reformed Pastor, which treat the pastor's "oversight" of himself and his flock, are very general, although the first part of chapter 2 does list various kinds of parishioners. The long final chapter is a call both to clerical repentance (part 1) and to continual catechizing and preaching (part 2). Baxter's practical directions in catechizing (articles 1 & 2) are appended almost as an afterthought.


32 The character begins with Theophrastus, the essay perhaps with Cicero. Commonplace books may give rise to essays, as in Jonson's Discoveries. Essays and courtesy books share many of the same subjects: hence, Kiernan describes Bacon's Essays as "a conduct book addressed to the active life of 'civil business'" (Essays, xix), and Bowers describes Robert Johnson's Essais in much the same terms (p. 1).


34 Vivian de Sola Pinto describes Plutarch's "vivid moral portraiture" and Tacitus's greater intimacy and psychological insight. See English Biography in the Seventeenth Century (Toronto: Harrap, 1951), 14-15.


36 Ibid., 2.

37 Ibid., 3.
APPENDIX II: CICERONIAN AND SENECAN PROSE STYLE

Although *The Country Parson* is often said to be written in "Senecan" prose, such statements do not adequately describe the style of the work. Several prose styles existed in the Renaissance, and the plainest was coming to predominate, as Herbert composed *The Country Parson*. But the terms "Ciceronian" and "Senecan" are too vague and convoluted to be of much help, and the idea of a wholesale shift from imitating Cicero to imitating Seneca is reductive.

George Williamson's description of "movements" and "leaders" suggests a somewhat simplistic view of literary history:

The Ciceronian movement had no sooner reached its climax in the formal periods of Hooker than the Anti-Ciceronian movement found a leader in Bacon, whose terse manner of expression became the hallmark of style among later essay and character writers. Prose style cannot be accurately described in terms of such partisanship. Prose style is a complex personal quality, shaped in part by many unconscious and eclectic influences. An author's prose style may also vary considerably within a single work or between one work and another. Writers are not inclined to form movements and appoint leaders with the degree of self-consciousness and unanimity which Williamson implies. And, as Douglas Bush reminds us, different kinds of prose were used for different needs and occasions during the whole of the Renaissance. One has only to compare the preface and narrative of John Lyly's *Euphues* to see that even a fashion-conscious writer will change his prose style at need.

Williamson contrasts the "Ciceronian" and the "Senecan" styles:

In general, the curt Senecan style is an essay style marked by the cultivation of brevity, staccato form, and point; its rhythm is spasmodic . . . Where Ciceronian periods build climaxes, Senecan sentences make
points . . . Among seventeenth-century prose forms, the witty or pointed style finds its natural place in the essay, character, letter, paradox, and problem.\(^3\)

Croll prefers to speak of an "Asiatic" and "Attic" style, and emphasizes their respective relations to oratory and essays:

The oratorical style was distinguished by the use of the *schemata verborum*, or 'schemes,' as we may now call them, which are chiefly similarities or repetitions of sound used as purely sensuous devices to give pleasure or aid the attention. The essay style is characterized by the absence of these figures, or their use in such subtle variation that they cannot easily be distinguished, and, on the other hand, by the use of metaphor, aphorism, antithesis, paradox, and the other figures which, in one classification, are known as the *figurae sententiae*, the figures of wit or thought.\(^4\)

Such descriptions have their uses. Whether there was a movement of the kind that Williams describes, the reaction against exaggerated "Ciceronian" rhetoric is difficult to deny.\(^5\) The later Renaissance produced a different kind of wit and perhaps a greater quantity of plain prose.

But such generalizations about style become even more tenuous when they are ascribed to vague or isolated causes. According to Croll, the history of prose style from the late Renaissance to the early seventeenth century involves "a successful attempt to substitute the philosophical *genus humile* for the oratorical *genus grande* in the general practice of authors and the general favor of readers."\(^6\) Seneca and Tacitus become popular in the early seventeenth century for their respective high moralism and political shrewdness.\(^7\) A new style emerges, which favours inquiry, practicality, and individual experience.\(^8\) One culture replaces another: *Arcadia, The Faerie Queene,* and *Euphues* are no longer read aloud in assemblies; instead, individuals read the poems of Donne and the essays of Bacon.\(^9\) Inevitably, omissions are made in such sketchy intellectual histories.
The history of prose style in the Renaissance and early seventeenth century is not just a war among the followers of Seneca and Cicero. Croll underestimated the stylistic influence of Ramism and the New Science. Herbert himself may have exerted a stronger influence than is usually acknowledged. According to John Wallace,

... the simplicity of spirit and word of men like John Hales and George Herbert, harkening back to a moderate Anglicanism which existed before Jacobean politics, was in the long run the greatest influence for plainness in England.

But the greater problem with the Senecan-Ciceronian distinction arises from the history of rhetoric.

The tension between aural and literary art, between public and private discourse, between exaggerated and plain form, date from the inception of rhetoric in ancient Greece and continue through the Roman period. Although Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian all advocate ornament, they prize naturalness and general usage over artifice. Clarity was held to be the highest virtue of good style, but rhetoricians acknowledge that the effect one would actually achieve would depend upon choosing the appropriate style for the audience and occasion, and upon one's ability to create a good impression. Prose style was at least as much a process of balancing competing demands as a static choice between set forms.

The very terms "Ciceronian" and "Senecan" are also vexed. Using the term "Ciceronian" to designate one style is somewhat dubious, since Cicero himself recognizes three styles: a full and rounded style; a plain style, though not devoid of vigour and force; and a combination of both, whose merit is to steer a middle course. The inherent problem of the term is exacerbated when one speaks of the "curt and
loose Anti-Ciceronian" styles, both of which seem to be synonymous with the
"Baroque" style. A similar problem attends the use of "Senecan," for once the
category becomes so elastic as to include "curt," "loose," and "mixed" varieties,"Senecan" prose seems to exclude nothing at all.

The categories of "Senecan" and "Ciceronian," together with their social and
intellectual underpinnings, are therefore applicable only in the broadest terms to The
Country Parson. Herbert's prose is sometimes "witty" in Croll's sense of highly
developed metaphors, aphorisms, antithesis, and paradox. The preponderance of aural
and verbal qualities may also tell us something about Herbert's blending of tradition
and innovation. But the most important qualities of Herbert's style, together with their
most obvious explanation, lie beyond the Senecan-Ciceronian distinction.
APPENDIX II: NOTES


3 See The Senecan Amble, 188-189; Philological Quarterly, 324.


5 Williams discusses Erasmus’s Ciceronianus (1528), Jewell’s Contra Rhetoricam (1548), and Bacon’s Advancement of Learning (1605) in this regard. See The Senecan Amble, 11. One also thinks of Polonius’s exaggerated rhetoric in Hamlet (1601), another indication of the late Renaissance reaction against "Ciceronianism."

6 See Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, 62.


8 See Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, 60-61, 66.

9 Ibid., 63-68.

10 See John Wallace, Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, 48.

11 Ibid., 49.


13 See Aristotle’s Art of Rhetoric, III.i.; Cicero’s De Oratore, III.xxiv; and Quintilian’s The Institutio Oratia, VIII.i.25, iii.

14 On clarity, see Quintilian, The Institutio Oratia, VIII.i.22; on audience and occasion, see Cicero, De Oratore, III.i.v; and on creating a good impression, see Aristotle, Rhetoric II.i.

15 De Oratore, III.liii.

16 According to Croll, the Baroque style is identified by its free syntax, by a lack of "ligatures between clauses." See Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, 210-11.

17 See Croll, Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, 60, 188; George Williamson,
"Senecan Style," Philological Quarterly, 324 and The Senecan Amble, 188.
APPENDIX III: THE INFLUENCE OF SIDNEY, BACON, AND DONNE

Although the Prayer Book was by far the most important influence on Herbert's style in The Country Parson, other minor influences might be suggested. Herbert's well-known literary and personal affiliations with Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Francis Bacon, and John Donne suggest some influence on The Country Parson. But such a supposition faces numerous obstacles. Such literary affiliations have been established with respect to Herbert's poetry. One cannot really speak of a "Sidnean" or "Baconian" or "Donnian" prose influence, because their styles vary so considerably from one work to the next. The style of The Country Parson sometimes reminds one of Sidney's Apology for Poetry, Bacon's Essays, or Donne's Devotions; however, the style of The Country Parson is often sharply divergent from that of any of these works. And even when the influence of these works seems plausible, it remains unprovable. Joseph Summers has described Herbert's family and literary-political connections with the Sidneys:

Both the sophistication and the evident influence of Sidney might almost be assumed from the very name 'Herbert,' for George Herbert's fourth cousins and future patrons were William and Philip Herbert, third and fourth Earls of Pembroke, the sons of Sidney's sister Mary. William, the most wealthy nobleman in England of the time, continued his mother's practice and patronage of England's poetry; he was friend or patron to most of the best poets of the age. As an adolescent and an adult, Herbert probably read the poetry of the Sidney-Herbert connection for political as well as literary reasons.¹

Summers has also described the influence of Astrophel and Stella upon The Temple, noting that "Sidney is one of the few poets whom Herbert obviously echoed."² Since Herbert obviously read Sidney's poetry, we might assume that he read Sidney's prose as well, given the importance of the family connection.
Although one would be hard put to describe any stylistic similarity between The Arcadia and The Country Parson, Sidney's Apology for Poetry (1595) may have influenced the style of The Country Parson, at least indirectly. Many general similarities suggest themselves. Both are short treatises concerned with communication in the public realm. Both are judicial in tone and conservative in their conclusions. Both are fervently nationalistic and imbued with a strong sense of what Sidney calls man's "erected wit" and "infected will." Both are highly rhetorical, having a strong sense of audience, seeking to persuade, and reproducing actual speech. Both are tidily written, gently ironic, and somehow memorable. Although such similarities are superficial, they do suggest a possible correspondence of plan, purpose, or conviction.

However, looking more closely, one is struck by differences as well as similarities. Herbert does create a kind of Anglican version of the "Golden World" which Sidney describes (pp. 23-24). Herbert also creates a sort of personification or "speaking picture" of the ideal country parson, much as Sidney personifies poetry, history, and moral philosophy. Herbert's preface is as aural, leisurely, and prolix as Sidney's exordium. But here the similarities end. The Apology is much more platonic than The Country Parson. Although Sidney's sentences can be as short and pointed as Herbert's on occasion, they are usually longer, more aural, more serpentine, and more obviously ornamental than Herbert's (pp. 10, 17, 24). In short, the prose of the Apology is more Elizabethan or "Ciceronian" than that of The Country Parson. Herbert and Sidney were, after all, a generation apart and lived and wrote in different circumstances. Van Dorsten nicely captures Sidney's ethos, the ethos of Pembroke rather than of Bemerton:
Sidney's writings show him to have been accomplished without pedantry or professionalism, and possessing in a rare degree the gift of modesty.\(^5\)

Certainly in his Apology, Sidney is every inch the Elizabethan courtier. At least for the purposes of The Country Parson, Herbert is much more the Jacobean gentleman: sometimes pedantic, always professional, and rarely modest despite his humility.

As Sidney may have contributed something to the conception of The Country Parson, Bacon may have contributed something to its style. Again, Joseph Summers notes a close literary and personal connection:

Herbert wrote three letters and three Latin poems to Francis Bacon between June 1620 and May 1621 . . . In 1623, Herbert translated parts of Bacon’s The Advancement of Learning for incorporation in De Augmentis Scientiae. And in 1625, Bacon dedicated his Translation of Certaine Psalms to Herbert.\(^6\)

Summers suggests a general similarity between Bacon’s prose and Herbert’s: "an emphasis on the audience which helped to keep both from the excesses of extreme Senecans and Ciceronians."\(^7\) Considering Herbert’s injunction against witty sermons, Summers concludes that "A Priest to the Temple is written in that terse style which Bacon advocated [in the Advancement of Learning] for the communication of information."\(^8\) Edmund Miller makes a similar claim in Drudgerie Divine.\(^9\)

It is difficult, however, to imagine that the style of The Advancement of Learning (1605) influenced the style of The Country Parson any more than the Arcadia did, and for many of the same reasons. Although The Advancement advocates orderly and perspicuous prose (II.vii.2), its own style is more often Ciceronian, as in its description of poetry (II.iv); and at times it can be witty, as in its conclusion. However, as Summers has observed, both The Advancement of Learning and the Apology for Poetry describe writing as the process of making pictures.\(^10\) One
cannot help but think of Herbert's statement that *The Temple* was "a picture" of his spiritual struggles, and wonder if Bacon was not partly responsible, with Sidney and the prose character tradition, for Herbert's vivid picture of an ideal parish and parson.

Bacon's only direct influence would be through his *Essays* (1597-1625).

Michael Kiernan characterizes the style of the *Essays* as

... a candid analysis of human nature and a pragmatic assessment of political and social behaviour ... a prudential tone ... sophisticated syntactical patterns and colloquial diction which serve the rhetorical task at hand ... succinct aphoristic statement ... by vivid language which is particularly apparent in dramatic opening statements ... and homely imagery."^{11}

Kiernan could be describing the style of *The Country Parson*. However, Kiernan also mentions the allusiveness of the *Essays*, which *The Country Parson* does not share, and an earlier critic draws attention to the *Essays' tone of icy detachment which is so different from the quiet fervency of *The Country Parson*.^{12} It is impossible to imagine Herbert arguing, as Bacon does in "Of Atheisme," that atheism is preferable to superstition. The allusiveness and learning of the *Essays* sometimes makes it difficult to read aloud, whereas the dialogue and practicality of *The Country Parson* encourages the practice. But the greater problem in ascribing an influence to Bacon's *Essays* is that since most essays share the characteristics which Kiernan describes, the influence is as likely to be generic as particular.

The sense of the spoken voice and the vivid figurative language of *The Country Parson* might suggest a certain affinity with Donne's *Devotions* (1624). I say "affinity" because a prose influence might be too great a claim here, despite Donne's well-known poetic influence. Again, the work is largely discursive and is divided into chapters, each with a title. Again, we have dramatic openings ("Variable, and
therefore miserable condition of man!"), as well as incisive distinctions ("that religion which is a disease"), and memorable statements ("no man is an island"). However, Donne's language--for instance in Meditations 1 and 17--is effusive and ornate, often abstract and sometimes wildly imaginative. Unlike Herbert, he develops his ideas and images and speech patterns until they become ends in themselves. One is reminded again of the highly public and thoroughly composed quality of The Country Parson. And yet the Devotions does demonstrate numerous attributes which The Country Parson shares: a speaking voice, vivid metaphors, powerful sound effects, and the inclusion of prayer and narrative in a discursive work. The problem once again is that while the two works may seem similar at times, their differences are equally great, and there is no way to demonstrate influence without access to Herbert's commonplace book or a manuscript version of The Country Parson.

If we are to explain the style of The Country Parson on the basis of influence, that influence must be demonstrated and pervasive, which is why I suggest the Prayer Book. Other influences are probably minor and certainly speculative. Such speculations can sometimes be helpful, but usually because we come to understand what The Country Parson is, partly by understanding what it is not.
APPENDIX III: NOTES


3 J. A. Van Dorsten, ed., Sidney: A Defence of Poetry, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), 24-25. All subsequent references will be to this edition, and will be indicated parenthetically by page number.

4 See Sidney's Apology, 28-30. Strictly speaking, only poetry is a personification; the historian and moral philosophers are types. But allegories such as Piers Plowman frequently mix the two. Herbert's country parson is not a personification, but he is essentially a type, and the medieval type is much like the renaissance prose character.

5 See the Apology, 9.

6 Religion and Art, 32, 40.

7 Ibid., 99.

8 Ibid., 99-100, 195-197.

9 See Drudgerie Divine: The Rhetoric of God and Man in George Herbert. (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1979), 244-245.

10 Religion and Art, 98.


12 Ibid., xlii; and see Christopher Morley, ed., The Essays of Sir Francis Bacon (New York: Heritage Press, 1944), vi-vii.
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